EARLY MODERN FACES

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Anne Dunlop

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FOREWORD

EARLY MODERN FACES: EUROPEAN PORTRAITS 1480–1780 draws on the extensive art collection of the Sarah Campbell Blaffer Foundation in Houston, Texas. Born in Waxahatchie and raised in Lampasas, Mrs. Blaffer (1885–1975) was the daughter of a founder of Texaco. She married Robert E. Lee Blaffer (1876–1942), the scion of a German family that had settled in New Orleans in the 1830s; Robert Blaffer had attended Tulane University. Later, he moved to Texas and co-founded Humble Oil.

In 1947, Mrs. Blaffer established the Robert Lee Blaffer Memorial Collection at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, in honor of her late husband, donating several signature works. In 1964, she created the eponymous foundation for religious, charitable, and educational purposes. The Sarah Campbell Blaffer Foundation trustees, including Mrs. Blaffer, decided in 1971 to use some of the foundation's resources to acquire works of art that would be made available to people throughout Texas as a sort of "museum without walls." After her death in 1975, the trustees assembled a remarkably encyclopedic collection of Netherlandish, Italian, British, and French Old Master paintings that have been exhibited in many museums and galleries not only in Texas, but nationally and internationally as well. Because of its didactic nature, the collection is as fully representative as possible and thus includes history painting, genre painting, landscape, still life, and—as is well in evidence in this exhibition—portraiture. The foundation has also collected European prints, focusing on the subjects of artmaking and self-portraiture, war, and science and nature.

The foundation collection, which continues to grow, is now exhibited in dedicated galleries in the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, but the works remain available for exhibition elsewhere. It is with great pleasure that, through the initiative and work of Professor Anne Dunlop and her art history students in the Newcomb Art Department, as well as the faculty and staff of the Newcomb Art Gallery and the School of Liberal Arts, we are able to share some of the works in the collection of the Sarah Campbell Blaffer Foundation with the students, faculty, and staff of Tulane University and the people of New Orleans.

James Clifton
Director
Sarah Campbell Blaffer Foundation

PORTRAITS SOMETHING TO COME HERE VERY DIFFERENT Modern Faces: European Portraiture, ca. 1480–1780" draws on the extensive art collection of the Sarah Campbell Blaffer Foundation in Houston, Texas. Born in Waxahatchie and raised in Lampasas, Mrs. Blaffer (1885–1975) was the daughter of a founder of Texaco. She married Robert E. Lee Blaffer (1876–1942), the scion of a German family that had settled in New Orleans in the 1830s; Robert Blaffer attended Tulane University and, moving to Texas, subsequently co-founded Humble Oil.

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Lisa Rotondo McCord
Deputy Director for Curatorial Affairs & Curator of Asian Art
New Orleans Museum of Art

CURATOR'S PREFACE

THE RISE OF THE PORTRAIT was a fundamental artistic development in early modern Europe. Between about 1500 and 1800, there was an explosion of such images in every medium. To examine this early history, and how it has shaped our own ideas of portraiture, *Early Modern Faces* brings together nearly ninety paintings and prints by artists from Veronese and Rembrandt to Goya and van Dyck. At the center of the exhibition is the idea of performance. In these images of kings, nobles, and saints, in the artists' self-portraits and pictures of unknown beauties, artists and sitters worked to stage themselves for a projected audience. In every portrait, there is a tension between the drive to record the actual appearance of a particular person, and the drive to create a social, historical, or ideal persona.

Early Modern Faces is the largest exhibition of Old Master art ever held at Tulane University's Newcomb Art Gallery, and one of the most important shows of European art in the history of New Orleans. It is a further achievement that the catalogue entries presented here have been researched and written by Tulane students, graduate and undergraduate, as part of a seminar that I taught in 2013.

Many people and institutions have worked to make this exhibition and this catalogue possible. First thanks must go to the Sarah Campbell Blaffer Foundation of Houston, Texas. For *Early Modern Faces* the Blaffer Foundation has lent on an unprecedented scale. James Clifton, the Foundation's director, sought out the collaboration with Tulane and has supported it at every stage. He also generously allowed us to include a selection of prints from a show he had previously curated, *Portrait of the Artist*. Leslie Scattone coordinated loans, met and worked with students, and answered research questions; without her, this show would not have happened.

The other major lender was the New Orleans Museum of Art, and I am particularly grateful to Susan Taylor, the Montine McDaniel Freeman Director, and to Lisa Rotondo McCord, the Deputy Director for Curatorial Affairs, who have worked to ensure the most rewarding collaboration of our two institutions. At Tulane, Sally Main, Charles Lovell, and Dean Carole Haber of the School of Liberal Arts supported this project from the first stages. It has been a further pleasure to work with the staff of the Newcomb Art Gallery.

For making this catalogue possible, I thank the Samuel H. Kress Foundation, the Georges Lurcy Charitable and Educational Trust; and at Tulane University, the Newcomb College Institute,

Fig. 1. William Hogarth, Self-Portrait with Pug. *1748/49. Etching and engraving, 380 x 287 mm. SCBF 1983.5.89.*

the Interdisciplinary Committee on Art and Visual Culture, the Center for Scholars, and the Art History division of the Newcomb Art Department. Teresa Parker Farris and Tana Coman have made the catalogue a physical reality. Finally, I thank C. Jean Campbell of Emory University, whose catalogue essay here looks at how portraits are discussed in the earliest writings of European art history, and Holly Flora and Teresa Parker Farris, who read early drafts of my own work.

Anne Dunlop

LOOKING THE PART: PORTRAITS AND PERFORMANCE

Anne Dunlop

Believe me, men are not born, but fashioned.

Desiderius Erasmus, *De pueris statim ac liberaliter instituendis* (1529)

WE ARE SURROUNDED BY PORTRAIT IMAGES. As thumbnails they identify callers on our phones or social network feeds; in our passports they prove our own identities. A picture of the president looks down on us in federal buildings; other presidents stare out from our money. Self-portraits are ubiquitous: the *Oxford English Dictionary* chose "selfie" as 2013's "Word of the Year." Our taste for portraits is rooted in our biology: neuroscience reveals that we are hard-wired to recognize faces, and human infants show response to them soon after birth. If as a basic definition we take a stand-alone image of a notionally recognizable person, almost every human culture has created portraits.

So it can be hard to remember that the modern idea of the portrait has a history, and a long and complicated development. Every portrait embodies a fundamental conflict between the drive to record the actual appearance of a particular person, and the desire to shape a social, historical, or ideal persona. Yet third parties—we the viewers— always form part of the scenario. Portraits present a carefully staged fiction: that we are now standing where the artist once stood, seeing a single frozen moment that he or she once saw (Berger 1994)—even as we know that making a painting, a sculpture, or an engraving must take time, and even though we often have no way to judge whether or not the image is a good likeness or whether the person portrayed ever even existed. It can be hard to shake the idea that we are presented with a record of a real face (Loh 2010; Soussloff 2006, 5–24).

It is the goal of this exhibition, and more briefly of what follows here, to think about this staged encounter as a three-way exchange among creator, sitter, and viewer. *Early Modern Faces* focuses on Europe in the early modern period (the years between about 1500 and 1800), a place and time where portraits emerged as a fundamental form of artistic production. The goal is to explore the sources that shaped early portraiture, and the ideas we have inherited about it. *Early Modern Faces* presents objects from all over Europe, and of many different genres, each with different expectations of how a sitter should be presented, and how much social position should be stressed rather than private character or individual appearance. In some cases it is clear how sitters sought to stress particular social roles, or, conversely, how artists worked to assert their own role in the performance. As we will see, however, all such images were part of a larger social theater: in early modern Europe, individuals were encouraged to act out, very consciously, both social and personal roles. The rise of portraiture was both a symptom of and a factor in this development, and it has shaped our modern genre.

Fig. 2. Jan Saenredam after Hendrick Goltzius, detail from Allegory of Sight and the Art of Painting. *Engraving, 244 x 184 mm. SCBF 1997.6*

LOOKING THE PART

The word "portrait" came into modern English through Old French, where it can be found as early as the twelfth century. It has Latin roots, from the verb *protraho*, meaning to draw out or draw forward, which also gave us the word "protracted." The term in Italian or Spanish came instead from *retraho*, meaning to draw back, and relates to our verb "to retract" (Weppelmann 2011, 64 nt. 1). In both cases, however, there exists the idea of distance covered in time or space. This gap, between an origin (the sitter, the artist) and the trace left behind (the work), lies buried in all portrait images. It is also a clue to the most common early uses of them. Portraits made up for distance or absence. They served as bridges between the living and the dead, or the earthly and the divine. Portrait images and statues were ubiquitous in the ancient world, including in Greece and Rome, but primarily in two contexts: they were used for commemorations, including of dead heroes or ancestors, and they gave a face to absent power, whether human rulers or gods. The Roman writer Pliny (about

79 CE) claimed that all art-making started with a portrait, when a young woman in ancient Greece, in love with a man who had been called off to war, traced the shadow cast by his face to have a record of him when he was gone.

The first surviving post-antique stand-alone portraits are also of holy figures and of rulers, individuals who, in the understanding of the time, had been divinely anointed to hold earthly rule (Fletcher 2008). They begin to emerge around 1300, at a moment when the arts and culture of antiquity were being rediscovered, as commemorations on tombs, cathedrals, throne rooms, and castle halls. Yet they immediately complicate any modern expectation of portraits as records of people's appearance: there is some evidence that, in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries especially, images that looked too much like the sitter were thought to have failed to capture the greater truth of the person's character or soul, the much more difficult but also much more important task (Perkinson 2009, 27–62). This essence—we might think of it as character—was the mark of a true portrait. As early as 1315, the Italian doctor and writer Pietro d'Abano argued that the painted face should reveal the true character (*dispositio*) of the sitter's soul, not just the person's exterior appearance (Falomir 2008, 66). Stories from antiquity told by Pliny and others made the same point. One favorite tale reported that Alexander the Great had only allowed the painter Apelles to portray him, because no other artist could create a perfect balance between Alexander's character, his public role, and his actual appearance. Creating the correct public face seems to have been paramount; as early as 1255 the Spanish king Alfonso X of Castile and Leon (1221–1284) issued a decree on how he was to be portrayed (Falomir 2008, 66).

This dialectic between exterior appearance and inner character, or between private person and social status, was at the heart of early modern debates about identity, and in this the rise of portraiture is arguably a symptom of a much larger social shift. Increasingly, from the fourteenth century, European elites were encouraged to picture themselves as they might be seen by others, from the outside, and to model both their appearance and their behavior to match this image. This self-fashioning, as it has been called, was widely popularized from the mid-1500s by the *Book of the Courtier*, written by the diplomat and aristocrat Baldessare Castiglione of Mantua and published in 1528. Set as a series of dialogues, the book argued that true nobility must be seen to embody every kind of grace. It was a performance, and only endless secret work would allow it to *appear natural*; according to Castiglione, the "true art" of creating a social identity was to make it "not seem to be art" (Castiglione 1967, 67).

Exterior images like portraits were essential to this process. Beyond their role as records, portraits were models, collected as representations of exemplary figures to be emulated by viewers. In the late 1370s, the ruler of Padua, Francesco da Carrara, had a room painted with portraits of ancient Roman statesmen and heroes (Dunlop 2009, 114–120). Some of these portrait collections became famous, making their owners famous as well: the doctor and historian Paolo Giovio (1483–1552) set up more than four hundred portraits of historical and contemporary figures in a villa in northern Italy, and then published two books to publicize his endeavor. Such galleries might serve as props, bolstering an image

Fig. 3. Hans Collaert II after Johannes Stradanus, detail from Oil Painting, *c. 1590. Engraving, 203 x 270 mm. SCBF, 1998.9.14*

of learning or culture (Aleci 1998), but they were also a kind of backdrop for their owner's actions. We might think of them as halls of mirrors, cognates of the real halls of mirrors in which European elites acted out their roles. Already in the late 1300s, there were rooms with large mirrors at the Milanese court in Pavia (Dunlop 2009, 153), and Louis XIV's Versailles is still famous for its *Hall of Mirrors*, begun in 1678. One's persona was to be created from the outside in, and theorists insisted that portraits could shape this process. In 1543, Claudio Tolomei, a writer, intellectual, and future bishop, wrote to the painter Sebastiano del Piombo about his portrait. Tolomei first noted that being painted by an artist like Sebastiano brought fame to the sitter (using the story of Alexander and Apelles). Then he added that his portrait would serve as a kind of ideal mirror, in which Claudio would see both himself and the artist. And, confronted by his own ideal image, he would work to correct all his faults (Fletcher 2008, 51). If the early modern period made the representation of one's inner self a skill to be cultivated, a kind of social performance, portraits can be seen as a record of how, and how well, sitters could collaborate with artists to turn themselves into a desired image (Berger 1992, 97).

It is striking how quickly most early modern portraits focused on the sitter against a neutral and unspecific ground, minimizing attention to the setting. As with a stage-set, we assume that the few things pictured provide clues to the sitter's position, identity, or character. Curtains are one of the few items commonly included, which linked the images to their actual conditions of viewing: early portraits were often kept hidden in cases or covered by curtains to protect them. This may have furthered the sense of theatrical unveiling, and the curtains so often included mark the stage being set. Certainly sixteenth- and seventeenth-century playwrights made much of the links of posing for portraits and social performance: the scenario of an artist painting a portrait was staged over and over in early modern theater. The French dramatist Molière wrote a short play, *Le Sicilien*, in which a young man steals away his

lover from her jealous guardian by posing as an artist who has come to paint her picture. In *El pintor de su deshonra*, the Spanish playwright Calderón de la Barca staged the same scenario in a tragedy; in another play, *Darlo todo y no dar nada*, he retells the story of Apelles painting portraits for Alexander the Great. One artist makes too idealized a likeness, another is not ennobling enough. Only Apelles can find the just balance.

Yet if the idea of performing the self lay at the center of both early modern identity and of early portraits, it took different forms depending on the typology of the image. Different genres had different conventions, different balances of likeness and idealization, and different roles for artist, sitter, and potential viewer.

COURT PORTRAITS AND LINEAGE

It is unsurprising that the earliest treatises on portraiture were written by artists who specialized in court images of kings, queens, and the nobility (Falomir 2008, 70). In no other genre was the relation of likeness and idealization, public persona and private individual, quite so fraught. The idea of performing the self was widespread, and can be traced in the famous speech "All the World's a Stage," in Shakespeare's *As You Like It*, but it was articulated perhaps most bluntly at the highest levels of society. The British king James I warned his son in 1599 that a ruler was a person "set upon a stage," and urged him to learn to "frame" his smallest actions and outward behavior so the audience could judge his inner character accordingly (Kuchta 2002, 28).

In royal portraits, the specific person depicted needed to seem distinct from, and more important than, all others. In a 1550s painting of Henry VIII with Mary I (cat. 7), the unknown English artist did this by copying earlier famous portraits of the rulers. Even the jester—a notable figure of the court—may be based on earlier images. The plain background separated the monarchs from any specific real-world setting, and they sit, stiff and iconic, behind a table that serves to distance them from us. About a century later, the painter Claude Lefèbvre armed the French king Louis XIV with symbolic props: fine lace and fabrics suggest wealth and status, and Louis's sword, armor, and elaborate parade helmet all stress his role as a military leader (cat. 8). The armor is covered in the fleur-de-lys, symbol of the French royal house. The fiction here is that Louis has just become aware of the painter's or the audience's presence, and turns his head to look. The slight furrowing of his forehead suggests both a fleeting moment and interior life. Yet like the English painter, Lefèbvre may never have seen his royal sitter, and used other portraits to create his own, thereby confirming viewers' pre-existing idea of the monarchs.

Early ruler portraits were often made for pragmatic ends, such as royal marriage negotiations, that encouraged idealization over likeness. Notoriously, Henry VIII is said have been disappointed that Anne of Cleves was not the beauty suggested by a picture made by Holbein, even as images of the aging king made the best they could of morbid obesity and an ulcerated leg. His father Henry VII had been more careful: looking for a prospective bride, he gave his proxies a long list of things to check (whether the woman had hair on her upper lip, for instance). He also decreed that a painter should be found to make as exact a likeness as possible, and forced to correct it until it showed the unvarnished truth (L. Campbell 2008, 36). Portraits were also made to bolster dynastic claims. In the thirteenth century, Alfonso X of Castille

Fig. 5. Master of the Sforza Altarpiece, detail from Madonna and Child with Saint Roch and a Donor *(cat. 5)*

y Leon had statues of his male and female ancestors in Segovia, and the Holy Roman Emperor Charles IV had a great hall with his ancestors—traced backed to Noah—done around 1356–1357 (Falomir 2008, 66; L. Campbell 2008, 35). In neither case can actual likeness have been sought. Such dynastic displays spread to the aristocracy and finally to those who simply aspired to higher social status, driving an ever-growing production of portraits: the images of Lord and Lady Cary (cat. 11, 12) and of Lady Campion (cat. 13) are examples. Family portraits like the one by Doncker (cat. 14) can be considered a later variant of the dynastic ideal.

SAINTS AND SACRED IMAGES

The most common form of early portraiture is the sacred portrait. These are images of saints, usually long dead, whose appearance was often unrecorded in their lifetime. It is a category that may seem odd to modern viewers: saints were portrayed as they ought to have looked or as they were pictured in earlier images, yet sacred portraits were considered to represent the deeper truth of the sitter's character better than any simple likeness. Thus a painting of Saint Paul (cat. 5), could be recognized as an accurate portrait of him because it drew on existing visual conventions—his balding head and his green and red robes—but also because, in showing him studying and frowning in thought, the artist presented the truth of the apostle's character. Conventional signs called attributes functioned as other signs of identity. Paul was usually shown with the sword that had been used to kill him; thus although Paul is seated and working, a sword is still pictured beside his desk. Similarly, the lamb held by Saint Agnes (cat. 20) would have immediately identified her for early modern viewers. It was both a Latin pun on her name (*angus*) and an animal associated with innocence and purity. Because sacred figures were well known through character and convention, their portraits could be very particularized—Gregory the Great had been dead for hundreds of years when an artist in early seventeenth-century Rome painted him as someone we still feel we might know (cat. 4).

Yet among the many thousands of images of Christ, Mary, and the saints, there were a very few believed to be true likenesses, made during the time of the holy figures and recording their actual

Fig. 6. Hendrick Goltzius, Circumcision. *1594. Engraving, 480 x 335 mm. SCBF 2000.7*

appearance. Most of these works were in Rome, though seldom visible to the faithful, and they served as anchors for the Catholic church's visual system. There were Madonnas said to have been painted by the evangelist Saint Luke, and artists would sometimes give Saint Luke their own features in scenes of Mary posing for him (fig. 2). For Christ, there were portraits, but there was also an imprint of his face on a cloth that, according to legend, he had been handed on the way to Calvary. The Zurbarán canvas (cat. 1) shows this "cloth," called the veronica (meaning something like "true image"). These "true portraits" of Mary and Jesus were the most important portraits in Catholic Europe. When, from the early sixteenth century, Protestant reformers argued that Christians should not have images for worship, Catholic use of devotional images was defended by recalling that Christ had taken a human form and had let himself be painted. Even before this, however, there was clearly anxiety about the status of sacred portraits as true portraits. In 1421, a letter was "discovered" that purported to be an eyewitness description of Christ from one Publius Lentulus to the Roman Senate. The letter (probably written not long before its discovery) noted that Christ had even features, a broad forehead, and smooth brown hair that waved below his ears. The description seems ironically to have been based on the existing visual traditions for painting Christ's appearance, but it served to reinforce the claims of authentic likeness for holy portraits.

Portraits of Christ, the Virgin Mary, and the saints were quite literally stand-ins for the (necessarily absent) holy figures they represented. In Siena in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, yearly tribute was presented to a large painting of the Virgin Mary called the *Maestà*, meaning majesty or power. In nearby Florence, citizens were fined more heavily for bad behavior if it might have been "witnessed" by any image of the Virgin close by (Trexler 1980, 68–69). The need to treat the portrait as the sitter was later extended to some earthly rulers as well: in the France of Louis XIV, an image of Louis was placed on the throne in his absence, and accorded the same respect due to the king.

There is another way in which sacred images shaped early portraiture. Some of the very earliest portraits come as donors pictured in devotional images, as for instance in the panel where Saint Roch presents an unknown Italian man to the Virgin and Child (fig. 5 and cat. 3); or in the panel where a Flemish cardinal witnesses the moment (many centuries earlier) when Christ appeared at the consecration in the mass (cat. 2). The appearance of the donor in these images was often carefully calibrated. The under-drawing of the cardinal shows that the artist worked to get his features right, leaving lines around the eyes, for instance, but

minimizing what seems to have been a prominent nose. Artists would also sometimes include themselves in religious scenes, where their presence was both self-promotion and a marker of piety. The Dutch artist Hendrick Goltzius appears in his print of the circumcision of Christ, tucked in at the back right of the composition (fig 6). There may be a further self-reference: to incise this image, Goltzius would have used a blade similar to the one represented cutting into Christ's flesh. The cutting portrayed points to the actual cutting of the printing plate.

Donor portraits in devotional images have been interpreted as stand-ins for the sitters, perpetually in worship on the donor's behalf (Warburg 1999), as well as mirrors (to paraphrase Bishop Tolomei) of what they should be. Yet donor images also created a public face for an individual's piety and status. Costume signified in an age when what one could wear was determined not only by wealth (clothing was very expensive), but also by rank: in sixteenth-century England for instance, those who were not noble were forbidden to wear silk (Kuchta 2002, 35–37).

BEAUTY AND STATUS

In that their audience was carefully calculated, donor images are precursors of later stand-alone portraits. There was an explosion of such portraits from the mid-fifteenth century, although religious and social conservatives complained that people who had no right to commemoration were having their portraits painted. By the sixteenth century, in northern Europe in particular, where the Protestant Reformation had reduced the demand for religious commissions, painters began to specialize in portrait images, and in the open art market that emerged, portraitists could make a good living. Portraits were created to mark important events or changes in status, and they circulated as tokens of friendship or to mark social networks; already, in the mid-fourteenth century, admirers of the writer Petrarch kept images of him (Mann 1998). By the time Dirck Hals painted a group of revelers drinking and making merry (cat. 15), portraits had become a common form of decoration in both public and private spaces.

As images of the social self, however, portraits were subject to different norms for male and female sitters. When a man was portrayed for his peers, the public persona was typically presented. Thus in the mid-seventeenth century, the diplomat Lord Hebdon (cat. 10) was shown, warts and all, with documents stressing his service to the Russian tsar and perhaps his recently acquired nobility, somberly dressed but confidently posed and staring to confront all comers. There are a half-dozen surviving copies of this portrait, and it is possible that they were given as tokens of friendship (and obligation). Occasionally, members of the lower classes were also pictured, as for instance the bagpiper player painted by ter Brugghen (cat. 21). This image also exists in multiple copies, which suggests it was a popular subject in seventeenth-century Holland (and Europe).

There were different challenges and conventions in the representation of women. They were less likely to have professional roles, and legally they were usually defined in relation to men, as daughters, wives, widows, or mothers. Poets and theorists of painting stressed that beauty or the lack thereof was a woman's defining public feature. Thus female sitters were very often idealized according to contemporary norms: white skin, rosy cheeks, small white teeth, bright and flashing eyes, high foreheads, and blonde or light brown hair (Pommier 1998, 66–74). Images of beauties were thought to be pleasant subjects for private houses, and they were sometimes created by artists primarily to show off their skills. It was a further spur that a beautiful appearance was thought to reflect a beautiful character, an idea that was traced to Plato by early modern scholars; it underpinned the early modern "science" of physiognomy, which claimed to read a person's character from the features of the face (Syson 2008, 23–24.) The small portrait of an unknown woman by Bruyn (cat. 16) shows just how conventional female portraits could be. It was probably done to mark a betrothal or wedding, like many female portraits, and the sitter is shown with rings and flowers, props that were often included in such images. The woman is unnaturally white (over-cleaning has made this worse), black-eyed, red-lipped. The inscription gives her age and name, almost to compensate for the lack of other identifying features. The artist made many similar images, changing only the face and jewelry.

So it can be difficult to know whether a real woman or an ideal beauty is shown in a given work. It is not clear whether the lady holding the lute in the painting by Parrasio Micheli ever existed (cat. 19), or whether Veronese's Saint Agnes is a lay woman who chose to show her devotion by being pictured in the guise of the saint, or the artist's idea of how a perfect virgin should look. Even where a particular sitter was clearly pictured, idealization often intrudes: the young woman done around 1540 by Corneille de Lyon (cat. 17) wears the same gown that he used for at least two other female sitters. Only rarely does a female image depart much from convention. The pensive older woman painted by Bartolomeo Veneto is beautifully dressed and her skin suspiciously flawless (cat. 18), yet she is particularized enough that critics and historians have assumed she must have been famous in her own right, perhaps as the lover of a famous man; she has been identified as the former mistress of the Duke of Milan, who had been painted years before by Leonardo da Vinci. Why else, goes the reasoning, would she have been recorded? The addition of the small ungent jar painted after the figure's completion may indicate that some belated justification of her likeness was required.

The problems of staging female identity can be seen in the giant canvas of Elizabeth, Viscountess Cary (cat. 12). Its size suggests it was done as a pendant to the portrait of her husband, made perhaps twenty years earlier (cat. 11). This places the portrait in a dynastic mode, and the sunbursts on her gown seem to echo an emblem found on her husband's painted gloves. She is shown lavishly dressed, blond and pretty, and younger than she would have been around 1620. Nothing here immediately reveals that Elizabeth Cary was the first published female playwright in England, as well as a public intellectual, a gifted linguist and translator, a religious nonconformist, and the mother of a very large family. But she and the artist have also suggested that her image here is a persona, carefully composed for future eyes. Her headdress is part of a costume—its meaning now lost to us—suggesting that Elizabeth is consciously playing a part. It is also a reminder of her own interest in performance and display.

Male sitters might also be idealized, particularly young men or members of the lower classes rather than mature men, like Hebdon or Viscount Cary, considered notable in their own right. In the theory of the time, inherited from Aristotle among others, young men were like women in their changeability and strong passions, which only full male maturity would offset. Images of

young men were also thought to be pleasant subjects, and more likely to be idealized according to fashion or to serve as painters' displays of skill (Simons 1997). As a saintly young man and soldier, the *Saint Sebastian* by Simon Vouet (cat. 6) is meant to be attractive to viewers, but the painting was also created in a milieu where beautiful young boys were sought after and admired by older men. Lower-class men could also become objects of the gaze, which may explain the smooth and brightly-lit skin of the bagpipe player's naked shoulder—like the saint, the musician seems to be slipping out of his clothes. A French or Flemish painter in the later seventeenth century made an unknown young man into a smiling display of light and dark hues and limited colors—exactly what the theorists of the French Académie praised as most desirable in painted figures (cat. 22). About a generation later, Nicolas de Largillière presented the Parisian judge Pierre de Mongazon with rosy cheeks, snowy skin, and smiling green eyes, his pleasing appearance trumping any reference to his professional status (cat. 23).

STAGING THE SELF

Nicolas de Largillière was a portrait specialist, and he made a very good living from his trade. When he turned to paint himself, however, it was as a painter of religious works (cat. 24). His self-portrait shows an elegantly-dressed man making an image of the Annunciation, at a moment when such religious images, not portraits, were considered the most noble form of art. Self-portraits are a special type of performance: they seem a closer mirror of the sitter's desired persona, given that the artist and the sitter are one and the same. Yet they were just as carefully staged, and tell us what artists aspired to be, or what they thought they should be.

In the many prints and paintings where an artist has constructed a public version of his or her identity or working conditions, we can also trace the changing claims made by artists to bolster their social status, which rose over the period covered by *Early Modern Faces*. Some artists stressed their illustrious prototypes, including the holy painter Saint Luke (fig. 2). Others, like Tintoretto, included themselves as discreet witnesses in religious scenes (cat. 26), turning the paintings they produced for others into acts of personal piety. Still others might stress their study of ancient art (a

Fig. 7. Abraham Bosse, detail from The Noble Painter, *c. 1642. Etching, 257 x 327 mm. SCBF 1999.31*

sign of learning and culture), or portray ancient stories in which artists were honored, including the many tales of Apelles. Or they presented themselves in the spaces of their work—often in solitary study and thought, like scholars in their studios. Some might even make themselves or their art into jokes: Hendrick Goltzius presents a crotchety old man, apparently with bad eyesight, trying to capture a beautiful woman who is either Venus or a personification of painting (a female noun in Latin languages) or both.

Yet even as the status of artists rose, portraiture never gained the supreme status accorded to paintings of sacred and secular history or allegory. Portraiture was criticized for being too tied to the particular at a time when art was supposed to present universal moral ideals. By the end of the period covered by this exhibition, artists were often specialists, and portraitists often made a very good living. Yet even well into the eighteenth century, when no educated viewer disputed that art was an intellectual activity like poetry or mathematics, few artists represented themselves primarily as portraitists. Paolo de Matteis of Naples shows himself painting an elaborate historical allegory (cat. 25); even the satirical English artist Hogarth shows himself painting an allegorical muse of Comedy; and in his *Battle of the Pictures*, no portraits, only landscapes and history paintings, vie for supremacy. A singular exception is the noble and elaborately-dressed painter of Abraham Bosse, apparently hard at work on a portrait—but it is of the French king, Louis XIII, and portraits of Cardinal Richelieu and Queen Anne of Austria sit on the floor nearby (fig. 7).

In one of the latest works in *Early Modern Faces*, the Spanish Goya presents a monkey making a portrait of an ass—an acid comment on the status and pretensions of both society painters and sitters (fig. 8). And yet it is worth ending with the portrait of Bishop Antoine Triest, painted by the Flemish artist Anthony van Dyck (cat. 9). When it was painted in the 1640s, van Dyck was famous throughout Europe, and it is striking that the bishop—an important and learned man—allowed the artist's hand to be seen so clearly as part of his own self-presentation. His features emerge in long sweeps of paint, and the loose brushwork of his robes reads as a curtain of pigment as much as any kind of fictive cloth. In this theatrical picture, sitter and painter come together to make a public face emerge before our eyes.

Fig. 8. Francisco Goya, Ni mas ni menos (Neither more nor less). *1799. Etching and aquatint, 198 x 150 mm. SCBF 1997.21*

15

THE PORTRAIT AS FRAME AND MIRROR

C. Jean Campbell

Giovanni, thus bereft of Gentile, whom he had always loved most tenderly, went on doing a little work, although he was old, to pass the time. And having devoted himself to making portraits from life, he introduced into Venice the fashion that everyone of a certain rank should have his portrait painted either by him or by some other master.[*]

Giorgio Vasari, "Life of Jacopo, Gentile and Giovanni Bellini" (1568)

AMONG THE CHANGES MADE FOR THE EXPANDED, 1568 edition of Giorgio Vasari's *Lives of the Most Illustrious Painters, Sculptors and Architects* was the addition of woodcut portraits, one to open each of the lives collected in the monumental work (Gregory 2003). These woodcuts are one of several products of what Patricia Rubin calls Vasari's "dogged search for portraits" among the works known to him through various sources. Others include Vasari's decorative cycles for Medici Florence, and the related list of famous men and the painters who painted them included in the *Zibaldone*, Vasari's book of inventions (Rubin 1995, 205–08). If the once obligatory tour of Florence as one of the capitals of European culture still unfolds as a portrait gallery of famous men, poets and painters among them, it is in large part owing to Vasari's efforts.

Here is not the place to unravel the fiction of Florence as the cradle of Renaissance and European culture. Instead, I will take the opportunity to consider one of Vasari's contributions to the making of the complex textual, pictorial, and material fabric we now call Florence, positing it as an early and defining moment in a long-standing modern discourse on portraiture. Within that modern discourse, the expectation that a portrait is primarily—or only—a picture that represents a specific, historically locatable individual is both tacitly maintained and consistently belied in the encounter with the evidence. In recent decades, that expectation has also been complicated by studies that focus on the functions of portraiture: aesthetic, rhetorical, mytho-poetic, commemorative, religious, and otherwise anthropological. With the turn to relational models in recent decades, the idea of the "autonomous portrait" as a marker of the Renaissance has given

way to considerations of the beholder's share, stretched to focus on questions of material, medium, and making, and broken down to blur such old categorical distinctions as that between sacred image and portrait (Campbell 2013).

Bearing these issues in mind, let me turn to one of the fruits of Vasari's effort to assemble portraits, namely the insistent identification of portraits among the works described in the pages of the *Lives*. Vasari's description of Bronzino's altarpiece of 1552 for the Zanchini Chapel in the Florentine church of Santa Croce is a case in point. Viewed through the lens of Vasari's description, Bronzino's *Descent of Christ into Limbo* appears as a veritable portrait gallery:

> [T]here are in it most beautiful nudes, men, women, and children, young and old, with different features and attitudes, and portraits of men that are very natural, among which are Jacopo da Pontormo, Giovan Battista Gello, a rather famous Florentine academician, and the painter Bacchiacca, of whom we have spoken above. And among the women he portrayed there are two noble and truly most beautiful young women of Florence, worthy of eternal praise and memory for their incredible beauty and virtue, Madonna Costanza da Sommaia, wife of Giovan Battista Doni, who is still living, and Madonna Camilla Tedaldi del Corno, who has now passed to a better life (Vasari 1906, 7: 599–600).

In addition to naming fellow painters and an academician, all notable for their works, Vasari here identifies two Florentine ladies, Costanza da Sommaia and Camilla Tedaldi, as examples of beauty and virtue. The description thus celebrates the very practice that the Dominican preacher Girolamo Savonarola condemned in his complaint that Florentine churches were filled with paintings in which holy figures had been given the recognizable bodily forms of Florentine women and their daughters (Savonarola 1930, 387; Dempsey 1992, 113, 133). In this case the portraits Vasari identifies have all been confirmed by modern scholars on the basis of external pictorial evidence (Matteoli 1969; Gaston 1983).

While not all the portraits Vasari identifies in the pages of the *Lives* are similarly verifiable, they all passed his own arduous test of truth in a process that involved both finding and inventing. In fact, as he indicates in the Preface to the first part of the *Lives*, his search for a portrait to support a given life did not always bear fruit. Explaining those cases, and excusing himself from blame, Vasari tells us that "if any is lacking a portrait, it is not my fault, but rather because none was to be found (*trovato*) anywhere" (Vasari 1906, 1: 244). If the blank frames that open eight of

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[*]This and all subsequent translations of the 1568 *Lives* are my updated adaptations of Gaston du C. de Vere's 1912–15 translation (Vasari 1906).

Fig. 9. Agnolo Bronzino, Descent into Limbo. *1552. Oil on panel, 443 x 291 cm. Museo dell'Opera di Santa Croce, Florence.*

the lives in the 1568 edition are thus witness to a relentless but unfinished pursuit (Gregory 2003, 52), they also represent an unfulfilled desire. In the former case, the term *trovare* designates the discovery of a piece of external material or evidence; in the latter, the internal act of poetic invention.

The pursuit of portraiture in the making of the 1568 *Lives* is part of a larger pattern discernible in Vasari's works, both written and painted. As Rubin explains, the re-evaluation of portraiture in Vasari's *Lives* goes hand-in-hand with a reconsideration of the value of painting as historical record, and of painters as famous men (Rubin 1995, 208). Yet, the enthusiasm with which Vasari, following the pattern he articulates in the life of the Bellini, embraced the practice of finding/making portraits suggests that something more was at stake for him than either positive historical documentation or moral exemplification.

According to the above-cited passage from the life devoted to Jacopo, Gentile, and Giovanni Bellini, portraiture, which arises from love and loss—in this instance the loss of a beloved brother—is fundamentally a compensatory act (Vasari 1906, 3: 168–69). In making this claim Vasari attaches his discussion of portraiture to a pervasive Western mythology concerning image-making and its origins, the ancient and modern permutations of which Maurizio Bettini explores in *The Portrait of the Lover* (Bettini 1999). In Vasari's configuration of the familiar strands of mythology, portraiture is doubly rooted, first, in the ancient practice of making images of ancestors, famous citizens, and men of extraordinary talents, and, second, in a modern, culturally located and affectively charged act of translation. Speaking of the ancient practice and its ends, Vasari delivers one justification for portraiture in the form of a rhetorical question: "To what other end…did the ancients set up images of their great men in public places, with honorable inscriptions, than to kindle in the minds of their successors a love of excellence and of glory?" (Vasari 1906, 3: 169). Finally, however, he turns from the matter of ancient precedents to the question of poetic origination and the translation of beauty into a living language. Immediately following the discussion of the ancient practice of setting up in images of great men in public places, Vasari notes that, in addition to making portraits from life and instigating a fashion for honorific portraits among Venetian citizens, Bellini made a singular portrait of a more intimate sort, this one for his fellow Venetian, the poet Pietro Bembo:

> For Messer Pietro Bembo, Giovanni…made a portrait of the lady that he loved, so lifelike that, even as Simone Sanese had been celebrated in the past by the Florentine Petrarch, so was Giovanni deservedly celebrated in his verses by this Venetian, as in the following sonnet: 'O imagine mia celeste e pura,' where, at the beginning of the second quatrain, he says, 'Credo che'l mio Bellin con la figura…' (Vasari 1906, 3: 169).

Thus described, the exchange of a painted portrait for poetic verse between Giovanni Bellini and Pietro Bembo reinvents the moment that Vasari and his Florentine contemporaries claimed as the founding act of a Tuscan vernacular tradition, namely Simone Martini's translation of heavenly beauty in his portrait of Petrarch's beloved lady Laura (Cropper 2004; Campbell 2013). While Vasari takes care to identify Bembo as a Venetian, and indicates that the exchange between the painter and the poet took place in Venice, "before he [Bembo] went to live with Pope Leo X" in Rome, it

bears remembering that Bembo was recognized in Vasari's time as the poet most centrally involved in the sixteenth-century revival of Petrarchan lyric and the promotion of Tuscan as a literary language. Vasari's account of the origins of Venetian portraiture must therefore also be understood as a rehearsal of the project in which he himself was deeply involved, namely the establishment of "Tuscan style" as the pre-eminent vernacular (Cropper 1987). More broadly speaking, as Robert Williams explains, Vasari and his collaborators aspired imaginatively to conjoin the various techniques of linguistic and/or visual art, thereby bringing cultural practice into view as a sort of *metatechne* and making it into a powerful, albeit contingent, instrument of knowledge (Williams 1997). In commemorating the pending extinction of a local familial lineage, Vasari seizes on the affective bond between Gentile and Giovanni Bellini—and the moment of loss—to make something new. He effectively transplants the beating heart of the familial lineage and makes the Venetian moment into a new beginning for a much grander lineage of painters.

Vasari's description of the Zanchini altarpiece effects a similar sort of translation, albeit one that is much more difficult to discern because he is working with material that is much closer to home. At first glance it seems that Bronzino's painting and Vasari's description mirror each other quite closely as products of Florentine culture in the middle decades of the sixteenth century. Shortly after Bronzino populated his altarpiece with recognizable likenesses of Florentine painters and academicians, Vasari reciprocated in the pages of the *Lives* by positioning Bronzino at the beginning of a line of living painters belonging to the newly founded *Accademia del Disegno* (Vasari 1906, 7: 593–641). More than this, however, Vasari invented a new sort of portrait from the sumptuous stuff of Bronzino's altarpiece. In both the painting and Vasari's description of it, the portraits of Costanza da Sommaia and Camilla Tedaldi openly declare their place in the established Florentine tradition of portraying beauty in the figure of the idealized beloved (Dempsey 1992; Cropper 2004). In Bronzino's painting the two beauties are positioned at the borders. They hold the viewer in mesmerizing suspension and thus initiate the dynamics of desire, even as the centripetal forces generated by the gestures drag the viewer's attention inexorably toward the middle of the painting, and to the absence marked by the stone slab of the tomb over which the gleaming body of the resurrected Christ triumphs. As Vasari recognizes, the confrontation with the faces of the beloved ladies frames the central and regenerative moment of a Christian poetics, which is to say the moment between death and resurrection. In describing the portraits of Costanza and Camilla, Vasari notes that while the first is "still living," the second has "passed to a better life." He also assembles and foregrounds the lineage of Florentine academicians and painters in a way that Bronzino does not. One way of interpreting this move would be to say that Vasari transformed the subject of the painting, moving it from the sacred ground of the church to the secular-political ground of the Florentine academy, thereby making an altarpiece into a corporate portrait. Such a reading, however, would have to ignore the fact that Vasari frames his description of Bronzino's altarpiece with a remarkably precise description of its location in Santa Croce, and of its function as the centerpiece of a family tomb. After describing the rich marble furnishings of the Zanchini chapel and its tombs, Vasari guides the reader to the space in question, noting that the chapel is located on the left as

one enters Santa Croce through the central door, and that it is positioned opposite the chapel of the Dini family. It would be more accurate to say that Vasari brings the sacred subject into contact with a new frame of reference, thus hopefully endowing an overtly political project with deep social significance, and with generative potential.

Vasari's pursuit of portraiture is, of course, different from modern studies of portraits in many ways, not least because portraiture remains within the project rather being presented as a subject unto itself. Yet, as a demonstration of the power of portraiture as an instrument of cultural reflection and reconstruction, it stands at the beginning of the long modern tradition within which the discovery and explanation of portraits has served to frame a historical perspective and a social imperative. The cumulative effect of those moments has been to install portraiture as a central question and testing ground for the study of early modern European culture. If the topic of portraiture seems natural to the period represented in the current exhibition, both its definitions and proper subjects remain elusive. Even as the general idea of the portrait as an image of an identifiable individual continues to hold sway, the artifacts and themes that are variously included in and excluded from modern studies of portraiture tell the story of a lively but still-ambiguous subject. A brief consideration of the contributions of Jacob Burckhardt (1818–1897) and Alois Riegl (1858–1905), the two German scholars who are generally identified as the principal players in the early history of the study of European portraiture, will serve to illustrate some of the productive uncertainties upon which the modern academic discourse is built. Neither scholar occupies a straightforward or coherent position with relation to those traditions of scholarship that claim him as founder.

For his part, Jacob Burckhardt initiated the notion of the Renaissance as the rebirth of the individual (Burckhardt 1990). Furthermore, much as Jules Michelet had done in his nation-building *History of France* (Michelet 1848–51), Burckhardt punctuated his narrative with vivid verbal portraits. Whereas Michelet's portraits serve to personify or lend a face to significant moments in European and French history, in Burckhardt's narrative the portraits actualize and lend substance to the claim that Renaissance civilization was the product of contentious and contending individual personalities. Though he practiced the art of portraiture in his own writing, Burckhardt did not claim pictorial portraiture as one of the symptoms of the emerging "cult of individuality," the condition that necessitated the making of the "state as a work of art."

Unlike the monumental essay *The Civilization of Renaissance Italy*, first published in German in 1860 and translated into English by 1868 as *The Civilization of Renaissance Italy*, Burckhardt's work on Italian portraiture, *Das Porträt in der Malerei*, published posthumously in 1898, has never received an English translation, and is not widely read in Anglo-American scholarship (Burckhardt 1993). Although the two works are indeed related, they are distinct manifestations of Burckhardt's attempt to understand what might be called the modern human condition. While they may productively be read as pendants, the late work on portraiture and the earlier essay on Renaissance civilization do not simply overlap. Nor does the work on portraiture develop from or support the earlier work in any obvious way. In fact, as Aby Warburg observed in writing his own contribution to the history of Renaissance portraiture, Burckhardt refused to articulate a causal relation between the rise of the individual and the emergence of the genre of portraiture (Warburg 1999, 186). It is to Warburg, not to Burckhardt, that we owe a whole array of questions that still occupy scholars of Renaissance portraiture, including the role of patronage, the social and ritual functions of images, and the relation of painted portraits to the ephemeral votive images that filled the sanctuaries of churches (Warburg 1999). Burckhardt's discussion of portraiture is of a wholly different nature. It has primarily to do with questions of art, and is underpinned by a notion of aesthetic autonomy. In this sense, he planted the seed that would later develop into the habit of searching for independent or autonomous portraits, a habit exemplified by the essays collected in John Pope-Hennessy's *The Portrait in the Renaissance* (Pope-Hennessy 1989). Unlike Pope-Hennessy, who surreptitiously fused Burckhardt's notion of the "cult of individuality" with the idea of an autonomous portrait, Burckhardt regarded individuality and aesthetic autonomy as necessarily different things. If anything, his search for aesthetic autonomy was a refuge from society (which was also his own) and an antidote to a world made up of contending individuals.

In 1898, Alois Reigl (Reigl 1999) moved the question of portraiture away from Italy to the Netherlands, and away from the matters of individuality and aesthetic autonomy to the question of social interaction (Soussloff 2006, 25–57). While he is justifiably regarded as the founder of the significant strand of scholarship devoted to the group portrait as a characteristic product of early modern Netherlandish art, the relation of the project he published in *The Netherlandish Group Portrait* to the subsequent tradition of scholarship is partial and uneasy (Riegl 1999). As Frauke Laarman explains, the essay is both an obligatory point of departure for anyone writing in that tradition, and a nearly insurmountable obstacle. The impediment in question arises from Riegl's forceful exclusion of family portraits—and the question of familial lineage—from the discussion of group portraiture (Laarman 2001). For Reigl, whose enterprise was to find an authentic national character or deep form of social organization in the discernible forms of Netherlandish group portraits, family portraits were nothing more than expansions of the hierarchical portraits of individuals that he associated with Italian society. In order to imagine anything like a smooth progress from Riegl's essay to Ann Adams recent book, *Public Faces and Private Identities in Seventeenth-Century Holland* (Adams 2009), it is necessary to effect an equally forceful exclusion of Riegl's central concern and real subject.

For all the ways portraiture has served as evidence in various arguments concerning the intellectual, cultural, and social history of the early modern period, the question of what constitutes a portrait is far from settled—and this is not a bad thing. In its most productive moments, the study of portraiture has also been a compensatory and self-reflexive act of portrayal. To borrow the phrase that Ovid placed in the mouth of the grieving Laodamia as she caressed a wax image of her deceased husband, we might say that the portrait that is both recognized and produced in such moments is always "more than it seems."

Portrait: the representation of a person of rank and standing whose effigy, resemblance and likeness deserve to be remembered for posterity.
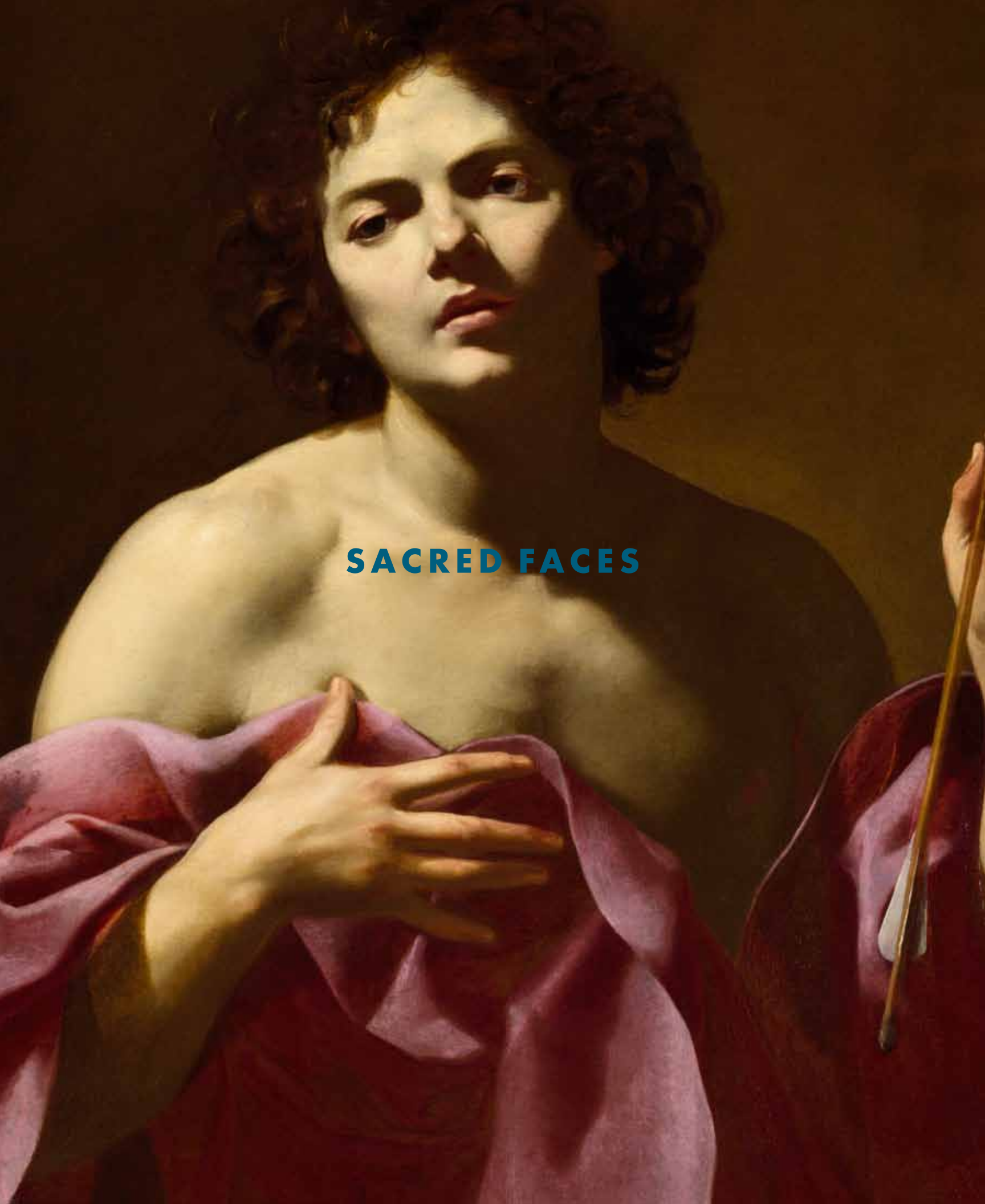
Sebastián de Covarrubias, *Tesoro de la lengua castellana o española* (1611)

CONTRIBUTORS

A.C.	Allison Caplan
A.D.	Anne Dunlop
A.R.	Antine Rieger
A.T.	Ariel Tusa
D.D.	Dylan DeLisle
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CATALOGUE

Saints…should be portrayed with the effigy they had in life, or with some verisimilitude, or at least as good and intelligent persons who look the way they are likely to have looked.

Archbishop Gabriele Paleotti, *De sacris et profanis imaginibus* (1582)

SACRED FACES

1. Francisco de Zurbarán (1598–1664)
Veil of Saint Veronica, c.1630
Oil on canvas, 107.3 x 79.4 cm (42¼ x 31¼ in)

Condition: good

Provenance: possibly Count Casa Gonzalez, 1889; purchased from Artex International, 1980.

Sarah Campbell Blaffer Foundation 1980.9

THIS WORK IS ONE EXQUISITE EXAMPLE AMONG MORE THAN A a dozen Veronica veils that the Spanish artist Francisco de Zurbarán painted during his lifetime. Sometimes referred to as a "divine trompe-l'oeil," the painting approaches the representation of a holy likeness through the use of illusionistic techniques (Caturla 1965, 203). A cloth appears to hang in mid-air, suspended by strings, while tacks secure the central folds. Delicate traces of red paint conjure Christ's face, suggesting a coalescing apparition. He turns towards the viewer in three-quarter view, as if catching our glance in a passing moment. Zurbarán thus stages an interactive viewing experience of seeing and being seen, positioning the viewer as a spectator of Christ's suffering.

The legend of Veronica, recorded in the apocryphal *Gospel of Nicodemus*, memorialized an event from the Passion when, on the way to Golgotha, Christ wiped his face on a woman's veil, miraculously leaving an imprint on the fabric. Later, the woman's name was reconfigured as the derivation of the term for *vero eikon* or "true icon." Though this legend was widely accepted as the Veronica image's origin, the idea of a true portrait of Christ can be traced back earlier to the first purported representation, the *Mandylion* of Edessa, said to have been done in Christ's own lifetime. Purloined from Constantinople in the twelfth century, it was brought to the West, where it disappeared. The renowned Veronica veil in the papal collections would emerge in its place as the officially-sanctioned true portrait of the Savior. The link between the western Church and the Veronica veil was secured when it was elevated as a cult image to coincide with the adoption of transubstantiation as Church dogma. Though the Vatican restricted access to the original, copies of the image spread throughout Europe in engravings, paintings, and illustrated psalters, as if echoing the unbounded capacity of the divine body to reproduce itself in the Mass. It was also included as one of the instruments of Christ's Passion (*arma Christi*) (see cat. 2).

The Veronica veil embodies the dialectical tension between relics (miraculous physical remnants) and portraits (deliberate representations of a likeness). As a contact relic, the original veil was understood as an *acheiropite*, or image not made by human hands. Envisioned as a true portrait, it became closely associated with the idea of Incarnation, which insisted on Christ's dual nature as the divine made human. The image spurred heated debates about the function of representative art. At stake was the belief that neither relics nor images were appropriate objects of worship, an argument long supported by Judaic tradition as well as by Pauline theology. Supporters of images contended that imprints like the Veronica veil could serve as physical evidence of Christ's lived humanity, and as evidence that He wanted his followers to recognize and remember Him in hopes of a future coming. Moreover, if images could inspire devotion, art could promote Christ's teachings among the illiterate masses and non-believers. The use of images like the Veronica veil to inspire correct piety was reaffirmed at the last session of the Council of Trent in the sixteenth century following the Protestant rejection of holy images.

In response to the Tridentine resolutions, Zurbarán and his contemporaries developed a novel artistic idiom to express sincere dedication to Christ. In the Veronica veil, Zurbarán envisioned a portrait of a suffering, human Christ in whom the viewer might see himself or herself reflected. Placed on an altar or in a private space of worship, this work could inspire contemplation of His sacrificial act and its power of salvation, or even induce a visionary experience.

The Blaffer painting demonstrates a technical mastery and creative re-imagining of the subject. Zurbarán's adaptation differs significantly from earlier interpretations, which render Christ's face frontally. The lifelike portrait serves not only to enhance the illusory quality of the subject, but also to announce Zurbarán's ability as an artist well-versed in draftsmanship and representation. He synthesizes elements of the original relic and the conventions of portraiture, reasserting the value of artistic agency. The original Veronica imprint, after all, required no artist, thus relegating representative art to a lower position than its miraculous counterpart. In response to this dilemma, Zurbarán used red pigments to echo Christ's bodily fluids—blood and sweat—thereby subordinating the physical remnants of the relic to his own artistry. In so doing, Zurbarán inserted himself into the work as the interpreter of Christ's image. Finally, the artist refered to his trade in the draped cloth which appears almost like an unstretched canvas. Bringing the focus to the "image within the image," he effectively abandoned the actual canvas, invoking instead a miraculous vision that transcends the two-dimensional strictures of the picture plane. —*S.W.*

Belting 1994, 1998
Caturla 1965
Clifton, Nirenberg and Neagly 1997
Delenda 2009
Kessler and Wolf 1998
Stoichita 1995

2. Pieter Claeissins (the Elder)
(Nicolai Petrus Moraulus), c. 1499–1576
The Mass of Saint Gregory, c. 1530
Oil on oak panel, 66.1 x 77.8 cm (26 x 30⅝ in)

Inscribed on front: Opus Petri Nicolai Moravli Brvgis In Flandria In Platea Q. Dicitr D Ovd Sack

Condition: fair; cracking and small scratches throughout, wood grain and under-drawing visible. Areas of restored losses, especially in priests' robes. Thick resin varnish. 1990 restoration.

Provenance: collection of Baron Carl von Aretin; Von Aretin sale, Munich, Mauer, 1887; Johannes Nepomuk Sepp, Munich, purchased before 1909; Hugo Helbing, Munich, March 8, 1911; purchased from Spencer Samuels and Company, New York, 1963.

Sarah Campbell Blaffer Foundation 1963.1

T HIS PAINTING REPRESENTS A DONOR OR DONORS, AT LEFT, inserted into the Mass of Saint Gregory the Great. In the story of this miracle, Christ appeared on the altar before the sixth-century Pope Gregory at the moment of transubstantiation, as a sign that Christ was present in the transformed bread and wine. Gregory appears at center, with his eyes fixed on Christ as the Man of Sorrows. To either side are deacons who hold lit consecration candles and swing censers, both indications that transubstantiation has just occurred (Göttler 2001, 122). A third deacon holds a music book. Christ sits on an open sarcophagus, surrounded by the *arma Christi*, figures and implements associated with his Passion. These include Judas with a bag of silver, Peter denying Christ to a maid, the High Priest Caiaphas, and possibly the governor Pilate. The implements include the rooster whose crowing marked Peter's third denial, Malchus's ear that Peter cut off, and the column, scourge, lance, sponge, hammer, and nails. Under the altar is an inscription, beginning, "Petri Nicolai Morauli," thought to be the signature of the artist Pieter Claeissins of Bruges.

At the base of the altar platform are a cardinal holding Gregory's papal tiara and a bishop holding the papal cross. It has been suggested that these figures are portraits, because they have individualized features (Clifton 1997, 132). Infrared photographs, taken at 950–1100 nm (fig. 10), provide support that the cardinal is a portrait. The underdrawing shows that the artist altered the mouth and chin and reduced a more bulbous nose to the slightly

crooked one seen in the final painting, perhaps because Claeissins was trying to capture a real individual's features. In contrast, the deacons' faces are drawn with sure, fluid lines and show no evidence of revision. Yet though the bishop's face was not reworked, he could still be a portrait. It is likely that the cardinal, and possibly the bishop, commissioned this painting and that these are donor portraits recording the commission. Interestingly, another painting by Claeissins from forty years later includes a Saint Francis with features almost identical to the cardinal (Negro 2005, 346–7). At this later date, Claeissins may have used studies he did of the cardinal to give Saint Francis an individualized face, transforming the features from a portrait into a saint's imagined likeness.

In early modern Northern Europe, the Mass of Saint Gregory was frequently represented in paintings, reliefs, and prints. Many of these works include donor figures, a number of whom hold Gregory's papal crown, as the Blaffer cardinal does. Lay people rarely appear in these images, but clerics often commissioned such works for display in churches or for private devotion (Bynum 2006, 209). The scene's popularity is explained in part by the Catholic Church's policy of granting indulgences, or reductions in time spent in Purgatory, for prayers said before the Mass of Saint Gregory (DeLeeuw 1995, 36). Having a portrait of oneself praying in a Mass painting may have been seen as equivalent to praying in person before the image.

Although the Mass of Saint Gregory is usually understood as a quasi-historical event, the presence of donors within the composition complicates this understanding. Claeissins represents the Mass as a particular moment, indicated by the swinging censers that are halted mid-air. In contrast, conventions of portraiture dictate that portraits go beyond the sitter's fleeting appearance to convey permanent qualities of his character and inner self. The disjuncture between the timelessness of the donor portrait and the single moment of the mass underscores another temporal disjuncture. The donor exists in the sixteenth century, a present shared by the painter and intended viewer. Gregory's mass dates to the sixth century, and Christ as the Man of Sorrows reaches back further, to the time of his life on earth. In bringing together these three periods, Claeissins brings Gregory's mass and Christ's resurrection into the sixteenth-century present, defined by the donor. The Catholic mass's ability to bring Christ's Passion to modern celebrants underpinned beliefs that Christ's resurrection could bring about their own salvation. This collapsing of time was also central to the *arma Christi*, which condensed separate moments of Christ's suffering into tangible objects that existed simultaneously with one another. The *arma Christi* corresponded to Catholic relics, holy objects from Christ and saints' lives believed to contain power because of their continuing connection with heavenly beings. The Catholic mass, relics, and Claeissins's painting all work to make past moments present before contemporary worshipers. In this interplay, the donor's portrait is not only a likeness, but an anchor that defines the moment of the present when Christ and Gregory's experiences are renewed. —*A.C.*

Bynum 2006
Clifton 1997
DeLeeuw 1995
Göttler 2001
Martens 2004
Negro 2005

Fig. 10. Infrared photo of underdrawing in faces of cardinal and bishop

3. Master of the Sforza Altarpiece
Madonna and Child with Saint Roch and a Donor, c. 1495
Oil on panel, 86.4 x 67.9 cm (34 x 26¾ in)

Condition: good; general craquelure, bowed on left and right side, small losses (retouched 1988).

Provenance: collection G. Cora, Turin and Florence; purchased from Colnaghi, London.

Sarah Campbell Blaffer Foundation 1983.3

D ONOR PORTRAITS PLAYED A LARGE ROLE IN RENAISSANCE devotional culture. Patrons who commissioned a religious scene either as an altarpiece for a church or for private devotion often had themselves included in the work. In earlier Italian paintings, the donors might appear on the outer edges of the scene or on a much smaller scale than the holy figures. However, in later votive paintings, such as this one, the donor is shown in a more interactive role, as an individualized participant with the Virgin and Christ Child.

This image is a *sacra conversazione*, or sacred conversation, as it presents religious figures from different time periods. In the center of the painting is the Virgin Mary seated and dressed in her traditional blue mantle. Conservation reports show that a string of prayer beads once hung from the Virgin's left wrist, but they are no longer visible due to over cleaning. The naked Christ Child reclines on her lap, leaning toward the donor and making the gesture of benediction. The Virgin looks demurely downward at her son, while the donor looks up at Christ who meets his gaze. Standing on the left side of the image is Saint Roch, the patron saint of plague victims, who appears rather melancholy as he looks out of the work to meet the viewer's gaze. Saint Roch, seen here in traditional pilgrim's garb with a staff, cloak, and hat, traveled from France to Rome caring for victims of the plague. He acts here as an intercessor between the kneeling donor and the Virgin Mary. The saint's hand on the donor's shoulder and the group's overall proximity to one another emphasize the immediacy of the donor's plea to the Madonna. The patron's choice of Saint Roch suggests he could be giving thanks for escaping illness or praying to avoid it in the future. However, Saint Roch is typically shown raising his robe to expose a black plague bubo. As his affliction is not represented in this image, perhaps he is simply the donor's patron saint.

No extant documents identify the patron, and the artist is also unknown. He is referred to as the Master of the Sforza Altarpiece after his most famous work (c. 1495), now in the Pinacoteca di Brera in Milan. It depicts Ludovico Sforza (c. 1452–1508), the Duke of Milan, kneeling with his wife and sons before the Madonna and Child. It is surprising the artist's name is unknown as he was employed by the distinguished Ludovico *il Moro*. Working in the Milanese court, the Master may have studied under Leonardo da Vinci, who was there from 1482 to about 1499 and whose style became popular among the artists whom Duke Ludovico employed. In the Master's painting, the long, elegant Madonna, the soft, golden curls of the Christ Child, the hazy landscape in the background, and the strange rocky formation behind the Virgin show the influence of Leonardo's 1483 *Virgin of the Rocks*

Fig. 11. Master of the Sforza Altarpiece, The Madonna and Child. Before 1495. Metalpoint with pen and brown ink, heightened with white, on blue-green prepared paper, 371 x 296 mm. British Museum, London, 1861.0810.1

now in the Louvre. A metalpoint drawing in the British Museum, once even attributed to Leonardo, shows a preparatory sketch for *Madonna and Child with Saint Roch and a Donor* (fig. 11).

Art historians suggest that the composition and use of color in this painting place it early in the Master's career, perhaps before the Sforza Altarpiece. The identity of the Master of the Sforza Altarpiece has been much debated, and he has been identified with several prominent fifteenth-century artists, but no argument has been conclusive. Though little is known about the Master, this devotional painting demonstrates his skill in rendering naturalistic human figures and experimenting with light. As an early work of the Master, *Madonna and Child with Saint Roch and a Donor* shows a fusion of Milanese iconographic tradition with influences of Leonardo's innovative techniques of *chiaroscuro* and *sfumato*.   —A.T.

Campbell 2004
Giorgi 2012
Pignatti 1985
Roberts 2009
Syson 2011

4. Circle of Giovanni Lanfranco (1581–1647)
Pope Gregory the Great, c. 1630
Oil on canvas, 126 x 97 cm (49½ x 38¼ in)

Condition: damage to upper left vertical of frame (repaired)

Provenance: Mrs. Helen Corvie Riversleigh, Downahill, Glasgow; David Koetser, Zurich; Andrea Busiri-Vici, Rome; purchased from Didier Aaron and Cie., Paris, 1977.

Sarah Campbell Blaffer Foundation 1984.21

T HE SUBJECT OF THIS PORTRAIT IS GREGORY I, CALLED Gregory the Great, a saint who was pope from 590 to 604 (see cat. 2 for a miracle of the saint). Portraits of Gregory were widespread due to his role as a Doctor of the Catholic Church and defender of religious iconography. Many earlier church officials believed that using images was heresy because followers worshiped the images as opposed to using them as a vessel for prayer. Pope Gregory I advocated for iconography within the Church, arguing that, "Illiterate men can contemplate in the lines of a picture what they cannot learn by means of the written word." His belief about images allowed them to be a vital part of the Church.

The thousand-year difference between the time Gregory the Great lived and the time Lanfranco painted makes it clear that Gregory did not pose for this portrait. The painter was limited in his representation to images available in his own time. The first known portrait of Pope Gregory I was painted for a monastery he had founded. When John the Deacon saw this portrait in the ninth century, he said Gregory was shown "rather bald," with a golden-brown beard, a chin "of a comely prominence" and "beautiful hands." Later images were influenced by this original portrait. From this description, it is clear that the artist of *Pope Gregory the Great* did not use this original painting or later copies of it as an example. Pope Gregory does appear to be mostly bald, but he is also clean-shaven. Other differences include John the Deacon's statement that Gregory had long, curled hair on the sides of his head, whereas this image shows none.

Typical portraits of Gregory the Great display standard attributes such as his papal garb, a processional cross, and a dove. In this portrait, he is shown without his papal tiara and there is no processional cross. One theory is that the viewpoint here is similar to that of a servant in a story about the pope. The story surrounding the dove pictured with Pope Gregory comes from *Saint Peter the Deacon* (Vita, xxviii). Peter claimed that when Gregory was dictating his homilies on Ezekiel, a veil was placed

between him and his secretary. Because the pope would pause for long periods, the secretary made a hole in the veil to see why he was pausing. On the Pope's head sat a dove that would place its beak into Gregory's mouth and when the beak was removed the pope would speak. It appeared that the dove, a symbol of the Holy Spirit, was placing words into the pontiff's mouth. The painting gives the viewer the perspective of peering through the veil and seeing Pope Gregory in the privacy of dictation.

Without having its beak in Gregory's mouth, the dove's position still draws attention to Gregory's ear, as do Gregory's rounded cap and the round trim on his cope. On the right side of the painting, the prominence of Gregory's white sleeve leads the eye from his outstretched arm up to his ear where the white dove is hovering. The dove's position next to Gregory's ear gives the appearance that the pope is listening to the dove. This follows the idea that the dove gave Gregory the words to speak and the Holy Spirit spoke through him. Without the dove's beak in his mouth, the face of Gregory is completely visible, appropriately for a portrait.

Pope Gregory the Great was originally attributed to Giovanni Lanfranco. Born in Parma, Lanfranco was one of the first Italian Baroque painters and his work was widely copied. Controversy over the attribution resulted in doubt about it in scholarly and artistic circles. Many notable scholars have attributed this piece to Lanfranco, but it is now generally deemed to have been completed by someone within his circle, a group of artists in Rome who were influenced by the painter but did not necessarily train with him. While the true origins of the painting remain a mystery, it is easy to identify its time period and to see how, with Lanfranco's artistic renderings and collaborative work gracing many important religious institutions and cathedrals, he was credited with this portrait of Pope Gregory the Great.   —*D.D.*

Barasch 1993
Richards 1980

5. Probably Valentin de Boulogne (1590–1632)
Saint Paul Writing his Epistles, c. 1618–1620
Oil on canvas, 99.5 x 133 cm (39⅛ x 52⅜ in)

Condition: small abrasion, retouched; several small surface indentations; overcleaned prior to acquisition; 1992 cleaning and revarnishing

Provenance: J. Seymour-Maynard collection, London; Christie's, London, January 29, 1954; acquired by Schiff; Richard C. Pritchard collection (previously Kingston Langley, Chippenham, Wiltshire); Heim Gallery, London; purchased at Christie's, London, July 5, 1991.

Sarah Campbell Blaffer Foundation 1991.4

O NE OF THE MOST PROMINENT FOLLOWERS OF CARAVAGGIO, Valentin de Boulogne has long been discussed in terms of his predecessor's dynamism and chiaroscuro. In many ways his *Saint Paul* mirrors the figure in Caravaggio's *Saint Jerome* (Galleria Borghese, Rome, c. 1605), who also sits writing in contemplation. Images of both saints in the midst of their intellectual process are identifying features. Saint Paul the Apostle is often depicted writing his biblical *Epistles*, so this particular composition can be easily associated with his life and work.

There is some dispute as to the attribution of the painting. Most scholars agree that it is a true Valentin de Boulogne, but it has also been featured in exhibitions on the work of Nicolas Tournier and was at one point sold as a work by Orazio Gentileschi. All three artists worked in Rome. Tournier painted there from 1619–1626, making it possible for him to have painted the *Saint Paul*.

X-rays of this painting show at least three separate under paintings, indicating that the canvas was reused again and again during an unsuccessful time in Valentin's career. The bottom layer shows an artist at his canvas, possibly a self-portrait. This was then covered with a scene of the Mocking of Christ, whose face is visible in the final composition as an inverted shadow on Paul's table. Another Saint Paul was painted above the Mocking of Christ in a vertical orientation, which Valentin then abandoned in favor of the final horizontal configuration (Nicolson 1969, 168). In the end, the artist decided that this particular image was best, leaving it to be viewed above the earlier versions.

The entire concept of religious portraiture relies on the recognition of contemporary viewers. Just as Cesare Ripa's 1593 *Iconologia* documents the various artistic conventions that early modern Italians immediately would have recognized, a long-standing tradition of depicting the saints dictated a standard of imagery beyond physiognomy. Iconography of early Christian figures has been so ingrained in the Church that portraits of these long-dead saints are as identifiable as a person seen time and time again. Valentin used iconographic conventions associated with Saint Paul to create a portrait that does not rely on physiognomy for recognition. Seventeenth-century viewers would have seen Paul's bald head and his red and green costume as features just as identifiable as a crooked nose or cleft chin in a person they knew. A sword rests in the right corner in reference to Paul's beheading and he writes his famous *Epistles*, another clear identifying feature. While there is obviously no clear existing image of Paul's face as it would have appeared in life, his iconography identifies this as his likeness. —*A.R.*

Christie's 1954
Nicolson 1969

6. Simon Vouet (1590–1649)
Saint Sebastian, c. 1615–1620
Oil on canvas, 96 x 73.5 cm (37¾ x 29 in)

Condition: very good

Provenance: possibly Ferrante Carlo, Fabritio Valguarnera, and Abbate Corsetti, Rome; Cannon Hert, Salisbury, 1914; sale, Sotheby's New York, January 12, 1989, lot no. 73; purchased from Newhouse Galleries, New York, 1990.

Sarah Campbell Blaffer Foundation 1990.5

T O WHAT EXTENT IS SIMON VOUET'S *SAINT SEBASTIAN*, OR any painting of a saint, a portrait? Whether or not the painter had a sitter model for this work, it cannot be taken to represent the saint's actual physical appearance. Sebastian died in the third century; no images from life survive. Instead, this painting shows the image of an *idea* of how a religious and historical figure should be perceived, not dissimilar to portraits of kings (like those of Louis XIV and Henry VIII in this exhibit), which represent the idea of royal authority as much as they do a specific individual. Who then are we meant to understand Saint Sebastian to have been?

A number of sources would have informed seventeenth-century viewers' expectations of the image. The thirteenth-century bishop Jacobus de Voragine wrote the canonical hagiography in *The Golden Legend*, a collection of the lives of the saints. Sebastian was a Roman soldier martyred for his faith under Emperor Diocletian. His executioners first tried to kill him by the Roman equivalent of a firing squad, wounding him with so many arrows that he appeared, according to Jacobus, "as full of arrows as an urchin is full of pricks" (Voragine 1900, 104–109). By divine will the saint survived, only to die when the emperor condemned him once more. Literate individuals might also have known Sebastian's story from chapbooks circulating at the time. Popular audiences could have seen *sacre rappresentazioni*, religious dramas performed in public spaces. These emphasized the saint's pious life and noble acceptance of torture, but also described his physical appearance. One such play from 1608 gives a witness's vivid account of the saint's martyrdom:

> I see him there, bound on that wood
> And I see the tense bows fire (alas),
> In his flanks, his throat, and his beautiful chest
> A stormcloud of wounding arrows in flight.
> And now the blood begins to fall
>
> Over the flesh, like a beautiful coral
> On clear and candid crystal.
>
> It was a new miracle to see then
> The shedding of his blood, living rubies.
>
> Without a movement of his lips or eyes,
> Without lament, without terror.
> But already the many and fresh wounds make
> the ivory of his beautiful flesh seem
> tinted with rosy and beautiful glazing.

The writer supplies us with an explanation for his focus on the saint's beauty: "horror, in that delicate beauty, was made all the greater" (Jones 1999, 86).

This was the aesthetic theory behind images like Vouet's *Saint Sebastian:* the presence of beauty was believed to intensify horror, thus increasing the viewer's identification with the subject (Jones 1999, 36). But would all viewers have seen Vouet's saint in this way? The cropped composition creates intimacy and immediacy. The saint's sensuously parted, flushed lips and heavily hooded eyes add to the eroticism conveyed by his stance; he is almost collapsing as he leans towards the viewer, and holds a cloth that could slip at any moment from his elegant pink fingertips. Vouet's Sebastian has no wounds; only the single arrow in his left hand alludes to his martyrdom.

In 1563 the Council of Trent had forbidden images "painted or adorned with a beauty exciting to lust." Vouet's painting seems dangerously close to a prohibited category. The problem was not new. According to Vasari, Fra Bartolommeo's fifteenth-century painting of Sebastian, "naked, very lifelike … sweet in countenance," had to be removed from its altar because of the lascivious desires it inspired in female viewers. Likewise, sensual, evocative representations of Saint Sebastian have elicited homoerotic and sado-masochistic interpretations and desires.

Simon Vouet was born in Paris but lived and worked in Italy, primarily in Rome, from 1612 to about 1627. While this painting is unsigned, scholars attribute it to Vouet and date it to early in his Italian period. The painting may be mentioned in the 1631 inventory of one Don Fabritio Valguarnera's possessions, made for his trial in Rome for diamond theft. A half-length *Saint Sebastian* in the inventory is attributed to "Monsù Ovetto," whom scholars have identified as Vouet (Temperini 1996, 51). Vouet's work shows strong influences of Caravaggio and the Bolognese school, and Caravaggio's impact can be seen clearly in this painting's foregrounding of the figure, strong contrasts of light and dark, and somber palette. The connection to Caravaggio complicates the portrait-like qualities of Vouet's image. One of the hallmarks of Caravaggio's style was that he worked directly from life, often using lower-class individuals as models for saintly figures (Vodret 2010, 8). If Vouet copied not only Caravaggio's style but also his methods, perhaps this is a portrait not only of the "idea" of a saint, but also of a desirable, likely lower-class, adolescent actually present in Vouet's studio. For the right patron, this complicated combination of sacred and profane might have had a particular appeal: a titillating image disguised as a saint. —*E.C.F.*

Boaccardo and Salomon 2007
Jones 1999
Temperini 1996
Vodret 2010

There is scarcely anything that touches the hearts of simple people so much as portraits of their princes and lords, which are recognized by the living and which perpetuate their memory for posterity; if they see them well done they honor and bless them.

Letter to Louis de Gonzague, Duc de Nevers (1577)

RULERS, POWER, AND LINEAGE

7. English school
Henry VIII, Mary I, and Will Sommers the Jester, c. 1554–1558
Oil on canvas, 132.1 x 165.1 cm (52 x 65 in)

Condition: poor; losses and fine cracking in paint, hole in support, chemical abrasion, increased transparency, delaminating from canvas.

Provenance: 2nd Earl of Sunderland (1641–1702); by descent, Althorp House (recorded by Vertue 1733); 8th Earl Spencer; purchased from Colnaghi & Co. Ltd.

Sarah Campbell Blaffer Foundation 1985.6

T HIS PASTICHE OF MULTIPLE PORTRAITS SHOWS KING HENRY VIII (r. 1509–1547) and his daughter Queen Mary I (r. 1553–1558) with their jester, William Sommers. Mary was Henry's daughter by his first wife, Catherine of Aragon, whom Henry famously divorced in 1531. Henry and Mary are shown seated at a table, while Sommers stands behind in a green robe with a rope belt, holding a staff and lap dog.

The work reflects the importance of copies for the dissemination of royal portraits. The images of Henry and Mary come from two portraits done seventeen years apart. Henry is copied from Hans Holbein's 1537 full-length portrait mural of the king (fig. 12), once in Whitehall Palace. Henry was shown with his parents and third wife, Jane Seymour, but with few symbols of rule; instead his broad chest and confident stance conveyed his majesty. The Turkish rug in the Blaffer may also be copied from this mural. Mary's image comes from a 1554 portrait by Antonis Mor, done after Henry's death, to mark her engagement to King Philip II of Spain. Mor, Philip's court painter, portrayed Mary wearing the pearl pendant

Philip gave her as an engagement present. (It was the world's largest pearl at the time, and later owned by Elizabeth Taylor.)

Most contemporary viewers probably knew these paintings not from the originals, but from copies. Both portraits were copied extensively by other artists, often in a reduced bust-length format. Mor himself created three full-length portraits of Mary, now in the Prado, Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, and Castle Ashby; and a 1604 source states that he "copied the head of this queen…a number of times on small panels, which he gave to great men" (Woodall 1991, 197). Copies were sometimes made from other copies, without their artists having seen the originals. The Blaffer painting may have been done from two such bust-length copies of Holbein and Mor's works. Mary may have been copied from a reduced portrait like the one at Woburn Abbey, described in George Scharf's 1890 Catalogue, to which it bears a striking resemblance. Both differ from Mor's original in showing Mary's hands clasped and omitting her pink engagement flower (see cat. 16 for such flowers), and it is possible that the artist inserted the table in the foreground to accommodate two figures cut off at the waist. Such copies allowed greater reach for royally sanctioned images, and they permitted loyal elites to own and display their rulers' portraits in their homes.

The Blaffer painting's representation of Henry and Mary, without Mary's siblings, suggests that it was made between 1554, when Mary sat for Mor, and 1558, when Mary died and Elizabeth became Queen. Sommers's presence in the composition has prompted many scholars to interpret the painting as a private commission (Weir 2008, 49). Nonetheless, his inclusion does not necessarily indicate this. Will Sommers was Henry VIII's court jester, and after Henry's death, Sommers served Mary as well. He is recorded to have had a particularly close relationship with the King. Sommers appears in multiple royal portrayals, including family portraits in the Boughton House, the Royal Collection, and the Yale Center for British Art, and in Henry's personal psalter. In all but one of these portrayals he wears the same green robe shown in the Blaffer painting. These portraits suggest that Sommers was seen as an intimate of the royal family. He was included even in works, like the psalter, made directly for the King. Thus, Sommers himself may have been copied from another painting.

It is possible that an English aristocrat commissioned this painting as a sign of allegiance to Mary and the Tudors, soon after the queen's coronation, and that Sommers was included as a person with close familial ties. The work's first known owner, from the mid-seventeenth century, was the second Earl of Sunderland, a member of the royal Order of the Garter and part of the same family as Princess Diana. This provenance makes it unlikely that the painting was an obscure production. If instead Sommers commissioned the painting, it could have been to signal his allegiance or continued relevance under Mary. However, given his intimate relationship with the family, one wonders why he would have chosen such iconic, and impersonal, representations of the rulers. In either case, the painting should be read alongside other court portraits as a work meant to support the ruling family's needs for representation. —A.C.

Scharf 1890

Fig. 12. Hans Holbein, Henry VIII from Whitehall Palace mural, 1537: copy by Remegius van Leemput, c. 1750. Ink and watercolor on paper, 25.8 x 13.7 cm. National Portrait Gallery, London

8. Attributed to Claude Lefèbvre (1632–1675)
Louis XIV of France, c. 1670
Oil on canvas, 116.8 x 89.5 cm (46 x 35¼ in)

Condition: bulges in background surface, cracks on top right corner, over cleaned; paint losses and uneven varnish; frame separated in bottom right corner.

Provenance: Sotheby's, December 5, 1923; purchased Hirschl and Adler Gallery, New York City; gifted to New Orleans Museum of Art, 1956.

New Orleans Museum of Art 1956.67

BORN IN 1632, CLAUDE LEFÈBVRE STUDIED UNDER CLAUDE d'Hoey and subsequently under fellow court portraitist Charles Le Brun. Upon seeing Lefèbvre's forays into genres other than portraiture, Le Brun is said to have advised Lefèbvre to stick to portraits, as they demonstrated his talent best. Lefèbvre painted this portrait of Louis XIV in the same period that other court artists like Le Brun, Mignard, Rigaud, Largillière, and Despert were making images of the king. Both Largillière and Mignard had been credited with the creation of this image. Only in 1978, after the discovery of line-work done by Nicolas Pitau, an associate of Lefèbvre, was the painting generally attributed to him. Its simple, austere style departs from other court portraits at the time, and ultimately gains this image its attribution; however, even Lefèbvre does not deviate from the extravagant, costumed images typical for Louis XIV. In this portrait, Lefèbvre's use of texture effects a more painterly style, with thick brushstrokes that, due to the scale of the image, emphasize style yet do not mar the clarity of the sitter. While Lefèbvre shies away from the spectacular imagery often provided by other painters, he still depicts Louis XIV as an iconic body—that is, a depiction of a sitter that represents both the individual's appearance as well as his metaphorical role in society.

Lefèbvre's *Louis XIV* engages the idea of the king's body as an apotheosized concept distinct from its direct representation. Artists such as Le Brun and Rigaud visually furthered Louis XIV's "L'État, c'est moi" ideal in their works, and Louis XIV's various costumes used his image as performance and as representation of France. Le Brun and Rigaud both employed the artistic technique of portraying Louis XIV as "royal *persona ficta*;" that is, the portrayal of the king as more than a man. Thus his appearance does not deviate much from portrait to portrait. This repeated use of the same physical features emphasizes his role as an icon, an easily identifiable image that means more than what appears on the canvas. One image of Louis XIV by Rigaud actually took the place of the King when he travelled, and to turn one's back on the portrait was considered offensive. Thus two bodies, actual and iconic, occur in one image, with generalized and recognizable physical presentation giving way to an exaggerated depiction of Louis XIV symbolizing more than just his body.

In a deviation from his strict adherence to realistic portraiture elsewhere, Lefèbvre captures an idealized representation of Louis XIV, following court portraitists before him. Lefèbvre paints the Sun King framed from a little below the waist to above his head. The artist includes few details about the location of the portrait, choosing instead to concentrate on costume that serves as a visual biography. Wearing armor as well as more formal apparel, Louis adorns himself in the clothing of both a soldier and a ruler. This iconography may refer to the war-ridden reign of the Sun King, as well as to the numerous treaties he took part in. However, the white sash tied around his body and the lush red cloth in the background may allude to his dedication to the arts as well as to his lavish lifestyle. Lefèbvre costumes Louis XIV in decadent clothing; his signature dark palette deviates from other portraiture, by Rigaud and Le Brun, for instance, but it similarly uses rich greens and dark reds to suggest power. Lefèbvre provides the link between the idealized representation of the physical Louis XIV and the Louis XIV of the state in his repetition of the fleur-de-lys on the sleeve. While the symbol would not be uncommon on the clothes of the ruler, it was the heraldry of the Kingdom of France and also on France's flag at the time, making the sitter a symbol of the nation itself. —*E.T.*

Desaulniers 1995
Burke 1992
Kantorowicz 1957
Marin 1995
Mansel 2005

9. Sir Anthony van Dyck (1599–1641)
Portrait of Antoine Triest, Bishop of Ghent, c. 1627
Oil on canvas, 80 x 63.8 cm (31½ x 25⅛ in)

Condition: good; small surface abrasion in upper center; restored 1993

Provenance: Bishop Antoine Triest, 1627–28; Pierre Crozat, Paris, 1741; Korsakoff Collection; Russian State Hermitage, Leningrad, 1822–1931; sale, Lepke's, May 12–13, 1931, Berlin; Frank T. Sabin, London; Weldon Collection, New York; Brod Gallery, London, 1977.

Sarah Campbell Blaffer Foundation 1977.2

ALTHOUGH ANTHONY VAN DYCK IS BEST KNOWN FOR HIS work in Italy and later in England, between those periods he created several significant works such as this portrait of Antoine Triest. Following the death of van Dyck's father and sister, the painter returned from Italy to his homeland of Flanders in 1627. In this period, van Dyck's work took on a more somber and introspective tone. Even his portraits show a shift toward a more melancholy style. The change is reflected in his portrait of Triest, who regards the viewer with a severe and dignified gaze.

Antoine Triest served as the bishop of Ghent from 1622 until his death in 1657. He was a great patron of both Rubens and van Dyck, commissioning and collecting works by both artists throughout his life. Triest also collected tapestry, sculpture, drawings, prints, and other rare objects. The judiciousness of his taste is reflected more in the manner of this painting than in its content. By commissioning van Dyck, the bishop shows his appreciation for art through the painter's style rather than by having himself depicted in the midst of his collection.

The austere background and Triest's simple costume are at odds with van Dyck's earlier Italian works. Gone are the invisible brushstrokes that made the artist's fabrics so iconic, replaced with very visible, thickly-laid paint. While van Dyck experiments with a new technique for depicting light on fabric, he still emphasizes the lushness of the bishop's cloak without making the costume overly opulent. Antoine Triest is depicted without the staff or *zucchetto* that would normally identify him as a bishop, giving the viewer a more personal connection with the sitter outside of his profession. His status as a religious figure is still communicated by his red cloak and brown robes, but more subtly than if he displayed all the trappings of his position. The Flemish bishop prefers an intimate view that focuses on his personality and on van Dyck's style instead of his own material possessions. Other portraits of Triest include the epithet in Latin *confidenter* ("boldly" or "with confidence"), suggesting that his role as a confessor was particularly significant to him. This is again in keeping with the personal nature of this work.

This portrait of Triest was copied by many of van Dyck's followers, an engraving by Pieter de Jode the Younger being the most famous. It serves as a testament to van Dyck's success. As a cross between a religious portrait and a state portrait, the overall effect is extremely simplified. Triest is depicted with few of the trappings associated with his position, but with enough visual cues for the viewer to identify his profession. There is little attempt to aggrandize or glorify his status as a clergyman. Instead, his quiet dignity is enough to show the bishop as a man of taste, and at work. —*A.R.*

Blake 2000
Depauw, Luijten, Duverger 1999

Fig. 13. Anthony van Dyck and Jacob Neefs, Self-Portrait of Anthony van Dyck. *c. 1630–45. Etching and engraving, 243 x 157 mm. SCBF 2001.6*

10. Ferdinand Bol (1618–1680)
Portrait of a Gentleman, possibly Sir John Hebdon, 1659
Oil on canvas, 133.7 x 106.4 cm (52⅝ x 41⅞ in)

Signed and dated lower right: FBol fecit Ao 1659

Condition: good

Provenance: E.F. Weber Collection, Hamburg, 1881; sold, Berlin, Lepke, February 20–22, 1912; Anton W. Mensing, Amsterdam; sale, Amsterdam, F. Muller, November 15, 1938; purchased, Knoedler, New York, 1938; sold, London, Sotheby's (Lord Carew sale), June 26, 1957; purchased, Daan Cevat; Kurt Meissner, Zurich; purchased from K. and V. Waterman, Amsterdam, 1977.

Sarah Campbell Blaffer Foundation 1977.5

UNTIL THE 1950S, IT WAS ASSUMED THAT THE SITTER IN THIS portrait was a long-forgotten and unremarkable Dutch gentleman. The issue was complicated, however, by the existence of five identical bust-length copies of the portrait, all attributed to the Dutch artist Ferdinand Bol (1616–1680), whose signature is found on the Blaffer work and on three other versions. In the early 1950s, when one version was exhibited at the Royal Academy in London, the sitter was identified as Sir John Hebdon (1612–1670). The British agent of Tsar Alexis I of Russia (1629–1676), Hebdon was anything but ordinary. His appearance in a Dutch painting attests to the trans-national networks that were then forming between Restoration England, the trade capital of Amsterdam, and the burgeoning imperial power of Alexis I's Russia.

Hebdon was a peripatetic merchant, ambassador, and sometime-spy, acquiring anything and everything for the demanding tsar, from exotic songbirds and soldiers to physicians, alchemists, actors, and state secrets. In 1652 he was even responsible for discovering the whereabouts of a pretender to the Russian throne (Hebden 2003, 5). After capturing the offender, Hebdon returned him to Russia, a feat which must surely have pleased Alexis. As the tsar's most prominent emissary, Hebdon was dispatched on missions to repair relations with the English king, Charles II, following the Restoration, to Venice to establish

trade, to Amsterdam, repeatedly, to acquire luxury goods, and to other far-flung regions of Europe.

In 1659 Hebdon received a Grant of Arms (the right to heraldry, restricted in England to the aristocracy) for thirty-five years of service as a liaison to the Russian empire, an event which likely prompted the creation of this portrait. Documentation confirms his presence in Amsterdam in that year, when he must have engaged Ferdinand Bol to memorialize his newly acquired noble status. Bol was one of Rembrandt's foremost students, and had already established his reputation as a skilled portraitist. He would have been an attractive choice for this illustrious client.

The beautiful mess of papers on the small table in the lower right may be Hebdon's Grant of Arms, or perhaps official documents issued from the tsar himself. One clue suggests the latter. On the particularly ornate stationery, a motif emerges from the loose brushwork. The blurry form appears to be a double-headed eagle, the symbol of the Russian empire. This extraordinary detail is also a reason to assert the identity of the sitter as Hebdon (Neumeister and Krempel 48).

The existence of the five other versions also speaks to the sitter's cross-cultural activities. In an effort to concretize his diplomatic relations, Hebdon may have commissioned the additional copies of this larger original, sending them to his various trade partners abroad. Doing so would have helped to ensure positive relations with associates, his portrait functioning as a sort of business card or token of commercial and diplomatic friendship and obligation.

Such portraits depicted power through culturally-coded gesture. Note the commanding placement of Hebdon's right arm on his hip. This posture is the body language of self-possession and authority, adopted from military poses found in early modern portraits (Spicer 86, 90). The emphasis on Hebdon's jowly face, pockmarked cheeks, flat eyes, and large hands also conveys his age, wisdom, and experience. Depicting his subject in an understated black overcoat and the unadorned fallen collar typical of the 1650s, Bol draws attention to Hebdon's imperious expression and the remarkable manner in which he presides over the disorderly pile of official correspondence.

Ferdinand Bol was the son of a well-to-do Dordrecht physician. He moved to Amsterdam, and apprenticed with Rembrandt from 1636 until 1642. Rembrandt certainly influenced his pupil's propensity for subdued scenes and dynamic lighting. Bol's portraits after 1650 reveal a taste for interior settings as well as a more fully-developed personal style, evident in this portrait. The emphasis on the eyes, hands, and mouth as the vehicles of expression is a hallmark of Bol's mature work. Highlighting Hebdon's temperament and individuality in this manner, Bol lends his subject a visual presence striking in its economy of form and color. —S.W.

Blankert 1982
Hebden 2003
Liedtke 1995
Longworth 1984
Neumeister and Krempel 2005
Spicer 1991

Fig. 14. Detail of the stationery with the Russian imperial double-headed eagle.

11. Marcus Gheeraerts the Younger (c. 1561–1635)
Henry Cary, First Viscount Falkland, c. 1603
Oil on canvas, 216.2 x 127 cm (85⅛ x 50 in)

Inscribed "An 1603," "Il variar nemico de Effetti,"
"Henry Carey (sic), Viscount Falkland"
Condition: good
Sarah Campbell Blaffer Foundation 1985.19

A S AN IMAGE OF THE FIRST VISCOUNT FALKLAND, THIS painting marks the beginning of the visual legacy of the Cary family. Henry Cary is larger than life, standing fully upright and directly confronting the viewer. While only a knight when this work was created, here the future Viscount Falkland asserts himself as if he is already a member of the higher nobility.

The portrait is characteristic of the painter Marcus Gheeraerts's fairly stiff style around 1600. Cary is unnaturally posed, with a sense of forward movement. He wears court dress with an ornamental pair of gauntlets embroidered with a sunburst motif. An inscription on the upper left reads, "Il variar nemico di Effetti," which means "Inconstancy is hostile to success." Another artist, probably a specialist working in Gheeraerts's studio, may have executed some of the more elaborate details, like the carefully painted needlework on the doublet and cloak and the rush-matting on the ground.

Henry Cary's costume conforms to the Sumptuary Laws enacted under Queen Elizabeth I of England in 1574. These "Statutes of Apparel" were designed to maintain strict class structure, and they recall the feudal system of the medieval era; both rank and position would be immediately identified by the color and material of clothing. Cary wears a complete ensemble of brilliant white satin embroidered with silver and gold thread in addition to the sword at his left hip. According to the Statutes of Apparel, only knights, barons, and higher-ranking individuals could wear gold or silver embroidery or carry a sword. Henry

Cary having only become a knight in 1599, his portrait can be viewed as a declaration of his noble status. This striking costume could also however have been for a theatrical performance. The golden sunburst pattern on his gloves is found on his wife's dress in a pendant portrait, painted twenty years later, in a similarly theatrical costume (cat. 12).

Cary was born in Aldenham, England in 1575 to Catherine Knyvett and Sir Edward Cary, Master of the Jewel House at the court of Elizabeth I. He was knighted in July 1599, and in 1602, he married Elizabeth Tanfield, daughter and heiress of the Lord Chief Baron of the Exchequer. After graduating from Exeter College in Oxford, Henry Cary served in France and the Low Countries where, at the siege of Ostend, he was taken prisoner. In 1617 he became Comptroller of the Royal Household and a Privy Counsellor, as well as a member of the House of Commons. In November 1620, King James 1 appointed him Viscount Falkland. From 1622 to 1629, however, Cary's service as Lord Deputy of Ireland was blighted by his incompetence. He was known for being easily offended, and he carried out extremist anti-Catholic policies. He and Elizabeth separated in 1626 following his wife's conversion to Catholicism. Henry Cary died in 1633 after breaking his leg and succumbing to fatal gangrene. Of the eleven children born to Lord and Lady Falkland, there are records of eight: four sons and four daughters, including Lucius Cary, Second Viscount Falkland, who became Secretary of State to King Charles I. Lucius was killed at the Battle of Newbury in 1643 after failing to negotiate a peace agreement between Parliament and the King, leading to the English Civil War.

Marcus Gheeraerts the Younger was the premier portrait painter to both Queen Elizabeth I and King James I. Born in Bruges in 1561, he immigrated to England with his father, Marcus Gheeraerts the Elder (1525–1599), escaping the persecution of Protestants in the Netherlands. In London, Marcus the Younger found success at court, but from about 1617, his popularity waned as a result of competition from new immigrant artists, including Paul van Somer (c. 1576–1621), who painted Viscountess Falkland's portrait.

Viscount Falkland's portrait was famously displayed in the collection of Henry Walpole at his home, Strawberry Hill, in the late eighteenth century. It was even attributed to Paul van Somer in 1784, but van Somer was not in the country in 1603, the approximate date of the work. There has been some confusion about the reliability of the Blaffer painting's provenance; the differences in dimensions recorded at various times suggest that two works exist or existed of this composition. —S.G.A.

"Elizabethan Sumptuary Statutes"
Gilbert and Bellings 1882
Iddon 2011
Moseley n.d.
Kelsey 2004
Walpole and Park 1806

Fig. 15. Detail of Henry Cary's gloves with thunderbolts and sunburst emblems

P AUL VAN SOMER (OR PAULUS VAN SOMEREN) WAS A FLEMISH painter, born in Antwerp around 1576. In London by 1616, he became a favorite of Queen Anne of Denmark, wife of James I. Although van Somer did not sign this work, scholars recognize him as its author.

Elizabeth, Lady Falkland (1585/6–1639) was the only daughter and heiress of Sir Laurence Tanfield, Chief Baron of the Exchequer under James I—and one of the most learned women of her time. She was the first English woman to have an original play printed, to author an English history, and to publish a translation of a religious work (from French). She married Henry Cary, then an ambitious young courtier, in 1602 (cat. 11). When Cary departed almost immediately to war in the Spanish Netherlands, Elizabeth was required to write to him. Her parents, concerned that her cleverness would be off-putting to her husband, arranged to have the letters written by a less educated lady, whose simple style would, presumably, charm her new husband. Ultimately it seems Elizabeth's quick wit and intelligence appealed to Henry Cary. They had a happy marriage and eleven children, but Elizabeth's 1626 conversion to Catholicism would result in an estrangement. It also made her a notorious public figure.

This painting represents a time prior to Elizabeth's conversion. Her attire combines an elaborate headdress of lace, red ribbon rosettes, and a wig of blond hair, imitating the sun (or perhaps sunflowers) and appropriate for a masque, with an everyday dress and black overgown. The suns embroidered on her gown perhaps mirror those on Lord Falkland's gloves in his earlier portrait (hers was likely meant to be a pendant). After Elizabeth's death, her daughter Lucy, a Catholic nun, wrote *The Lady Falkland: Her Life,* a semi-hagiographical biography. In it she describes her mother as despising fashion: "Dressing was all her life a torture to her, yet because he [Lord Falkland] would haue it so, she willingly supported it, all the while she lived with him ... euen to teadiounesse" (Wolfe 2001, 116). If we are to believe the description, this portrait is a representation less of Elizabeth Cary and more of the wealth and pride of her husband, particularly given its presumed date of 1620, corresponding nicely with his elevation to Viscount. Elizabeth Cary may even be represented pregnant with their eighth child, hence her large form compared

to other contemporary portraits (although this may also represent her normal physique—she was said to be short and somewhat overweight). If so, the portrait could also represent Lord Falkland's virility and the continuation of the Cary dynasty.

But we should not discount Lady Falkland's agency entirely. Lucy Cary's biography positions her mother as a paragon of Catholic womanhood—long-suffering in her resistance to luxury. The young Elizabeth Cary's character may have been more nuanced than her daughter's presentation suggests. Between 1602 and 1609, as a new bride living with her in-laws, Cary wrote *The Tragedy of Mariam,* published in 1613. This closet-drama, or play written to be read within noble households, explores the successes and failures of women's speech. Mariam, the play's protagonist, modestly restricts her voice, but because she refuses to advocate on her own behalf, her husband ultimately executes her for treason. Salome, Mariam's rival, represents improper female speech, but by talking insinuatingly to Mariam's husband, she causes Mariam's demise.

Despite her subtle representation of women's speech in this play, throughout her life Elizabeth Cary was unafraid of bold expression. The implicit social critique in *The Tragedy of Mariam* pales next to her later fearless defense of the Catholic faith. This portrait may thus be as much a self-representation as it is a tribute to her husband. Masques were opportunities for noblemen and women, who would never have acted in a public theater, to take on alternative identities before other members of the court (although they did not strictly act in masques either—masquers danced, while professional actors took on the speaking parts). Elizabeth Cary's contemporaries would have known her to be a literary woman, but for Elizabeth, a woman of 35, in her eighth pregnancy, the daringly low-cut gowns typical of masque attire might not have been appropriate. Her portrait thus combines a suitably modest gown with an extravagant headdress, informing viewers that she was both a wife and mother, and a proud intellectual. —*E.C.F.*

Wolfe 2007
Raber 2001
Peterson 2006
Ribeiro 2005
Harris et al. 1973

VICOUNTES FALLAND.

13. Cornelius Johnson (1593–1661)
A Lady of the Campion Family, c. 1630
Oil on oak panel, 75.6 x 60.3 cm (29¾ x 23¾ in)

Inscription: signed and dated "C.J. fec/1630"

Condition: good; a few losses have been inpainted; revarnished.

Provenance: by descent in the Campion family of Danny Park, Hassocks, Sussex; Sotheby's, March 14, 1984; private collection of Richard Green.

Sarah Campbell Blaffer Foundation 1985.5

C ORNELIUS JOHNSON WAS THE FIRST ENGLISH ARTIST TO leave behind a large body of signed paintings, prompting Ellis Waterhouse to characterize him as the first master of a truly native English painting tradition. Best known as a portraitist, Johnson executed numerous likenesses for the British gentry. He also worked for King Charles I and was eventually dubbed "his Majesty's servant in ye quality of picture maker" (Waterhouse 1994). Despite these accolades, Johnson remains an elusive figure. Though he was born in Britain, he was of German extraction, and he moved to the Netherlands in 1643. He may have trained there as well, though stylistic similarities with the painters Robert Peake and Marcus Gheeraerts the Younger, both active in England, complicate this assessment (for Gheeraerts' work, see cat. 11). He worked under several different names: Johnson began signing his paintings as "Cornelius Jonson van Ceulen" and "Cornelis Janssens von Ceulen" on his arrival in Holland.

The woman Johnson depicts here is equally mysterious. As the title of the portrait indicates, the sitter is a member of the Campion dynasty, but her precise identity has eluded art historians for more than a century. The Campions provided Johnson with regular patronage. From 1630 to 1640, they commissioned at least six portraits from him. Five depict women, including a very similar portrait of a young woman, done about 1640 (most recently sold in Dublin in 2011). Alexander Finberg asserts that the identities of the Blaffer and the Dublin sitters have been reversed: the Blaffer portrait (usually identified as Mary Campion) is more likely to be her mother, Eleanor Duffield, and the portrait of the younger woman would be Mary (Finberg 1922).

The two sitters bear a strong resemblance to one another, suggesting that they are indeed mother and daughter. The question

then becomes: which generation sat for *A Lady of the Campion Family*? It would seem logical to conclude that the earlier portrait shows the mother, Eleanor, while the later portrait, which appears to depict a younger sitter, is a representation of Mary, her daughter. Unfortunately, any conclusion is complicated by the fact that artists occasionally depicted patrons as significantly younger than they really were. Nevertheless, that the woman portrayed in this particular portrait is Eleanor Campion (née Duffield) seems compelling based on the available evidence.

For a portrait, this image reveals surprisingly little about Eleanor. The pomp of the Campion dynasty and Johnson's bravura representation of her opulent dress eclipse the sitter's identity almost entirely. Through a portrait like this, the Campion family was able to provide a visual demonstration of wealth, power, and noble lineage. The sitter's expensive jewelry and elaborate dress function as familial status statements. Compared to her extravagant outfit, Eleanor herself seems almost incidental. The dress's stomacher, paned sleeves with ribbon, and fallen lace collar were extremely fashionable around 1630, which confirms the painting's date. The sitter appears to have plucked her eyebrows and eyelashes, a cosmetic practice which was not uncommon at the time. In addition to an elegant and ostentatious hairclip, Eleanor wears a pale lavender brooch on her left sleeve; women in this era frequently embellished their clothing with novel fineries. Her decision to wear a ring on a simple necklace, however, is relatively uncommon. It is possible that the sitter is displaying a mourning ring or her former engagement ring in honor of a deceased husband. Johnson's subject is a relatively older woman, which might support the possibility that she is a widow.

From 1625–1640, Johnson painted numerous portraits of patrician women with nearly identical hairstyles and strikingly similar outfits. The strong resemblance among the sitters and their universal correspondence to contemporary notions of beauty show that Johnson was idealizing his female subjects. In an age when women were regarded as extensions of their husbands and families, and beauty implied virtue, portraits of attractive women could ennoble the family pedigree. There is a tension in Johnson's paintings between the artist's pretense of capturing an authentic individual likeness and his efforts to convey the sitter's social persona and dynastic position.

Johnson's own interest in costume and his eagerness to display his virtuoso painting skills may have caused him to focus on Eleanor's dress at the expense of other aspects of her character. The result is a woman who is subsumed by her outfit. Despite the apparently straightforward composition, *A Lady of the Campion Family* is in some sense a specious representation of the sitter, whose identity remains elusive. —N.M.

Bayer 2008
Waterhouse 1994
Finberg 1922
Millar 1972
Miscellanea genealogica 1868
Ellis 1994

Fig. 16. *German gimmel rings and other wedding rings.*
Gold with precious stones, sixteenth century (and
nineteenth century). British Museum, London

14. Herman Mijnerts Doncker (active c. 1620–1656)
A Family Group, 1644
Oil on canvas, 187.6 x 251.8 cm (73⅞ x 99⅛ in)

Condition: good

Provenance: on loan to the North Carolina Museum of Art, Raleigh, 1959–1978; purchased from Newhouse Galleries, New York, 1979.

Sarah Campbell Blaffer Foundation 1979.3

Fig. 17. Detail of the small son

A T FIRST GLANCE, A MODERN VIEWER MIGHT SEE HERMAN Doncker's *A Family Group* as a portrait of a mother, a father, and their three daughters. This is not the case. This portrait actually depicts a family with two daughters and one son. In typical family groupings painted by Doncker and his contemporaries, the setup is relatively rigid: the mother and father stand side by side in the middle of the portrait with children on the outside, separated by gender. The male children are placed on the father's side and the female children on the mother's side. Sometimes this gender distinction can also be seen in a child's attire. The daughters are shown in long dresses and the sons in miniature versions of their father's garb. In *A Family Group,* the child standing on the father's side is shown in a long silver gown, but that child is a young boy.

Even though he is dressed in a manner similar to his sisters, gender can be determined here by items each child is holding. The two children on the mother's right are shown with small fans and berries, and the mother is also holding a fan. The child on the father's left holds berries and a small hunting bird. He has a small sheath around his waist that could be holding a blade. These items would not be given to young girls. Another distinction between the two genders is the style of their collars. While the mother and two daughters' collars split into a triangular shape, the father's and son's collars lie flat across their chests.

The little boy is depicted in a long gown due to his age. If the boy was younger than five, he probably had not yet gone through a breeching ceremony, an important life event for young boys, when their long hair was shorn and they received their first pair of trousers. The breeching ceremony could also serve to celebrate that the child had survived infancy. It was a step towards preparing the boy to be the head of the household. The boy might be given items such as a chest for keeping private things and even the right to command his mother. The father in this painting is gesturing in the direction of the young boy, pointing out that the boy is his heir.

Herman Doncker was a Dutch painter who signed his paintings H. D. or H. Doncker. Most images painted by Doncker or attributed to him are single person portraits or portraits of family groups, often in landscapes. Not much is known about him, but the seventeenth century in Holland, called the Golden Age, brought new artistic subjects such as still life, landscape, and genre painting. By the time Doncker began painting, there was an enormous market for family portraits. Families began to commission such works, artists began to specialize, and many, like Doncker, could make a significant amount of money.

The size of the image indicates the status of the family. In such a large painting, Doncker chose to portray the family on a smaller scale and create a background that could show off his skills as a painter. The classicized pastures and buildings lend the family an air of wealthy property owners. This would have be an important claim of status because of the lack of land available in Holland.

Paintings in the northern Netherlands were characterized by closely observed realism, attention to detail, bright colors and fabrics, and religious symbolism. These ideals are reflected in Doncker's *A Family Group*. In several other family portraits done by Doncker, the families are shown in all-black attire. This is not the case here. This family grouping is depicted in bright shades of green, pink, and silver. The colors and rich silky fabrics were also an indication of wealth. The father appears to be wearing a dark color, similar to men in other images, but his collar seems to be made from a rich fabric.

The family portrayed in Doncker's portrait would have been a prominent, wealthy family. While someone viewing the image today might see it as a nice portrait of a family with three little girls, contemporary viewers would have known immediately that the third little girl was in fact a little boy, ensuring the family line. —*D.D.*

Mitchell, *Art of the Netherlands*

15. Dirck Hals (1591–1656)
Merry Company, c. 1630
Oil on canvas, 52.1 x 83.2 cm (20½ x 32¾ in)

Condition: fair; tear (repaired) in upper center, significant retouching

Provenance: collection of Baldwin Wallace College, Berea, Ohio, 1963; P. de Boeur, Amsterdam, 1978

Sarah Campbell Blaffer Foundation 1978.15

Fig. 18. Details of the portraits on the walls

D IRCK HALS WAS THE YOUNGER BROTHER OF THE RENOWNED Frans Hals. Early in his career, he began exclusively to paint "merry companies" like this one, a genre that depicts revelers dancing, drinking, and often music-making. Loosely based on a secularization of the Prodigal Son narrative, such scenes ostensibly warn against self-indulgence, pride, and excess. Scholars debate, however, whether Dirck Hals's renditions moralize or instead celebrate conviviality.

This work purports to capture a snapshot of the subjects in mid-action, when, of course, the figures were actually posed for the artist. The conceit is that, having just walked in the room, the viewer is suddenly noticed by the figures. A moralizing reading would suggest that the viewer must decide whether or not to join them. As often in Hals's merry companies, his subjects seem stiff and doll-like, although this lively scene is one of his bawdier examples (note an especially forward man on the far left.) The rendering of the figures' fine fashionable clothes reveals a close attention to intricate details. The stark setting gives the impression of a stage filled with actors, and these may in fact be members of a dramatic performance guild.

Though it is a genre painting, *Merry Company* shares with seventeenth-century Dutch portraiture a preoccupation with the interior spaces and social relations of upper-middle-class domestic life. Hung in a public room of a Dutch home, *Merry Company* would have been one work among several portraits, landscapes, or genre scenes, and it shows an affluent living space decorated with such paintings. By mirroring the interior setting in which the painting itself might have been displayed, *Merry Company* engages the *mise-en-abyme* device: the contemporary viewer would relate to the painted revelers in the same way that the painted revelers relate to the figures in the portraits pictured on their walls. Viewers see an image of themselves and of their own interaction with paintings.

Merry Company conflates the space of the merrymakers and the space of the hanging portraits in other ways, too. Several of the "real" figures are less finished than the "painted" figures (notice, for example, the blurred face on the right and several in the center background). At the upper left, the man about to descend the stairs appears, at first glance, to be a bust-length portrait; though closer examination reveals that he is one of the merrymakers, the man is nonetheless playfully "framed" by the doorway. This vignette is an echo of the nearby tondo, whose subject seems to lean out of the portrait's picture plane as one leans out of a window. Moreover, the figures in the portraits wear clothes of similar style and luxury to those of the carousers. Both the portraits and the "real" figures
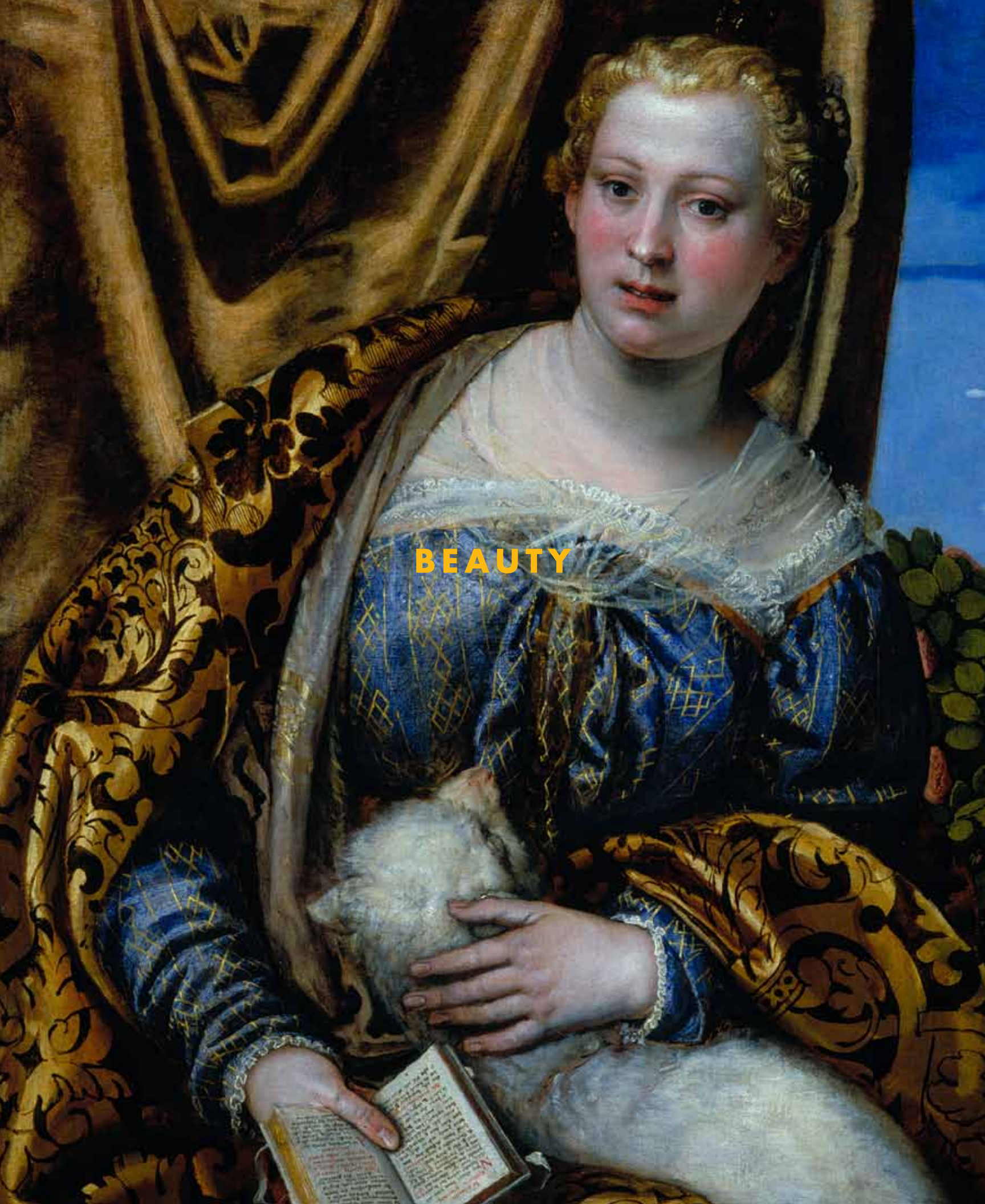
address the viewer, again confusing the fictive distinction between the sitters' three-dimensionality and the portraits' flatness. Thus the painting announces its own fiction, for the canvas on which Hals paints the genre scene is the same flat surface on which he paints the portraits.

The portraits hanging behind the merrymakers offer insight into the status and function of portraits in seventeenth-century Dutch life. Letters and estate records show that the people of Haarlem enthusiastically bought and displayed the paintings of contemporary, regional artists. In a 1640 letter, an English traveler expressed surprise at the zeal with which the Dutch collected paintings for their homes (Kolfin 2005, 179). Portraits were a performance of class and status, not only by the sitter, but also by the owner who displayed the painting on his walls: both commissioning and owning a painting cost a considerable amount. The fact that history paintings, considered the most popular and prestigious of Western genres, do not appear on the walls of Hals's merry companies may suggest that the artist slights the stratified tradition of academic painting. However, Holland defined the hierarchy of subjects less strictly, so the omission might simply reflect the artist's preferences.

Hals was born in Haarlem, a city in the Northern Netherlands whose prosperous regent class created a high demand for artistic innovation in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. His brushwork and compositions show the influence of his older brother, with whom he may have trained. Perhaps Dirck Hals's most notable accomplishment was his success in raising the merry company motif from a simple subject to a unique genre. —*M.M.*

Alpers 1983
Brown 1984
Kolfin 2005
Smith 1987
Stoichit 1997
Wheelock 2011

In women, the first rule to observe, with absolute diligence, is to paint beauty, using art, as much as possible, to take away the errors of nature.

Giovan Paolo Lomazzo, *Trattato dell'arte della pittura, scoltura et architettura* (1584)

BEAUTY

16. Barthel Bruyn the Elder (1493–1555)
Portrait of an Unknown Lady aged 23 years, c.1530–1550
Oil on panel, 39.4 x 28.6 cm (15½ x 11¼ in)

Inscription: Aetatis 23, A° 1535/Chatrina g'nant, bartl Bruyn

Condition: good; small losses infilled and inpainted

Provenance: private collection, Ansbach, Germany; Agnew's Gallery, London; collection of Lady Robertson; Agnew's Gallery, London.

Sarah Campbell Blaffer Foundation 1978.6

Fig. 19. Barthel Bruyn the Elder, Portrait of a Woman. *1533. Oil on wood, 30.5 x 22.5 cm. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 62.267.2*

T HE GERMAN PAINTER BARTHEL BRUYN THE ELDER WAS AN extremely prolific portraitist. Born and trained somewhere in the Lower Rhine region, near the Netherlands, he was firmly established in Cologne by 1515. Bruyn adopted many traditional Dutch painting techniques, including fine attention to detail, and received most of the major religious commissions in Cologne. He became a popular portraitist among the regional bourgeoisie, but also pursued work beyond Germany. Perhaps most notably, he depicted Anne of Cleves, the fourth wife of King Henry VIII. Bruyn's success allowed him to purchase two houses in Cologne. After his death, his sons continued his artistic dynasty using the aesthetic conventions established by their father.

Bruyn the Elder had a distinct, recognizable, and formulaic portraiture style. He tended to depict subjects in a three-quarter view from the waist up, generally clutching an object of symbolic significance (fig. 19). *Portrait of an Unknown Lady aged 23 years* is a quintessential example of Bruyn's work. From approximately 1530 to 1550, he executed a plethora of strikingly similar images. The inscriptions on the front of this portrait, which have faded significantly, may not be reliable, since Bruyn did not usually sign his artwork. It is possible, perhaps even likely, that the lettering was added later by another hand. Nevertheless, the date of 1535 is plausible and consistent with the available evidence. The accompanying caption "Chatrina g'nant" ("called Chatrina") may be a reference to the portrait's sitter, whose identity, however, remains unknown.

The artist depicts a pale young woman in a sumptuous black dress holding a conspicuous crimson carnation. The significance of these flowers in early Renaissance portraiture remains ambiguous. Scholars have suggested that, depending on the context, such flowers might symbolize divine devotion, the Passion of Christ, fidelity, or earthly love. In this portrait, the latter is the most probable interpretation. When held by young women, in particular, a red carnation (also referred to as a "pink") was often an emblem of matrimony or engagement. In what was originally a medieval Netherlandish tradition, brides would hide a "pink" somewhere in their undergarments on the day of their wedding. Later that evening, their husbands would search for the concealed flower. Red carnations were therefore associated with marriage, so it is reasonable to assume that this is a betrothal portrait. The woman's prominent rings and elaborate belt also connote matrimony. She appears to be wearing gimmel rings, a pair of matching marriage bands that were often set with rubies and emeralds. These rings were particularly popular in Germany during the early Renaissance (see fig. 16). Belts were also emblematic of marriage because of an old superstition: by caressing the relic of the Holy Virgin's girdle, women thought that they could ensure successful childbirth. Because artists frequently created betrothal portraits in pairs, Bruyn may have executed an accompanying painting of the young lady's fiancé or husband, since lost.

In *Portrait of an Unknown Lady aged 23 years*, Bruyn the Elder plays with the distinctions between the seen and unseen, chaste and erotic. Though the dark color of the young woman's dress is understated, her exquisite belt, bejeweled fingers, and frilly vermillion sleeves carry sensual connotations (and imply that she is a member of the wealthy bourgeoisie). The undulating flounces of her bright shirt cuffs echo the voluptuous curves of the red carnation and hint at the richness of what may lie beneath her relatively staid outer garment. A prominent white linen headdress conceals her hair, adding to the sitter's game of sartorial peek-a-boo. These allusions to the young woman's latent eroticism seem to foreshadow her imminent matrimonial fate, when her husband will unwrap her like a present in search of the pink.   —*N.M.*

Bayer 2008
Dunbar 2005
Hackenbroch 1979
Levey 1959
Levi d'Ancona 1977
Lubbeke 1991

17. Corneille de Lyon (c. 1500–1575)
Portrait of an Unknown Woman, c. 1540
Oil on panel, 16.3 x 13.5 cm (6³⁄₈ x 5¼ in)

Condition: good; fine craquelure on the face;
some damage to eighteenth-century frame.
Sarah Campbell Blaffer Foundation 1987.3

CLAUDE CORNEILLE DE LYON, ALSO CALLED CORNEILLE DE LA Haye, was a Flemish painter born in The Hague. His original name may have been Cornelizen. In 1533, he was serving as the court painter to Queen Eleanor of France in Lyon, and he would work as official portraitist to the courts of the Dauphin (later King Henry II) and King Charles IX. No painting attributed to him is signed, with the exception of a portrait of Pierre Aymeric, a Consul of Lyon. It is authenticated by an inscription on the reverse, dated April 21, 1534, in the hand of the sitter: "Corneille de la Haye in Flanders, painter of the Queen Heliénor, Queen of France." All other attributions are based on a group of portraits once in the collection of François-Roger Gaignères (1642–1715). Only those of the highest quality may be by Corneille's hand, as he had a large workshop. His technique changed very little over the course of his long career. He almost exclusively painted courtiers on small panels with a blue or green background. The sitter is usually shown at half-length, slightly turned towards the light, which typically originates from the left.

As with most of Corneille's work, the sitter here cannot be identified. The anonymous woman is fashionably and richly dressed. Her gown is light blue with a white sheen, probably made from silk or satin. It is lined with amber-colored fabric with small black tassels framing the bust. Two gold chains intersect above the bust line, drawing the eye to her face. Her head is large in proportion to her body and her features are prominent in relation to the size of her head. Her dark eyes look out past the right side of the painting and her rose-tinted mouth is slightly upturned. The portrait was not originally meant to hang on a wall; the frame is later. Its very small size suggests that it was a portable object to be held and turned in the hands. There were originally verses by the French poet Pierre de Ronsard (1524–1585) on the back of the panel, but when this was replaced in 1881 they were not recorded.

This portrait was once thought to be of Claude of France (1499–1524), daughter of King Louis XIII, and Queen Consort of François I. This identification has been disproved, as the unknown woman does not bear any resemblance to the depiction of the Queen Consort at her tomb in St. Denis Cathedral. Also, the style of both the sitter's hood and dress are of the early 1540s, long after Claude's 1524 death. It was a period of marked transformation in French fashion. The bodice of the sitter's gown has a very wide neckline, sitting on the outer edge of the shoulders and curving upward at the bust. During this era, sleeves became much more fitted at the upper arm than earlier in the century, increasing in volume towards the wrist with a turn-back exposing fur or rich lining with under-sleeves.

Portrait of an Unknown Woman is similar to two other portraits attributed to Corneille that were sold by Christie's London in 2000 and 2008. The first, *Portrait of a Lady in a Blue Dress, holding a Puppy*, shows an unidentified woman in the same outfit as the Blaffer sitter, including the hat and chain necklaces. The anonymous sitter of the second painting, *Portrait of a Lady, holding a Lamb*, also wears the outfit. The two miniature oil paintings from Christie's share a green background and are rendered in much sharper detail than the Blaffer's *Portrait of an Unknown Woman*. Also, the other two sitters' chain necklaces are on the outside of their dresses, and both are holding a small animal.

The serial nature of this work could mean that Corneille kept fine costumes in his studio for quickly painting those without enough time or money to commission a more individualized portrait. It could also indicate that this portrait is a copy by a member of Corneille's workshop of another painting. In the absence of outside markers of identity, the conventions of these works are open enough that the true explanation is uncertain.   —*S.G.A.*

Oxford Dictionary of Art
Lubomirska 2011

18. Bartolomeo Veneto (c. 1480–1531)
Portrait of a Lady, sometimes called Cecilia Gallerani, c. 1518–1520
Oil on panel, 57.5 x 44.5 cm (22¾ x 17½ in)

Condition: fair; paint layer compromised by early restoration efforts; partially cleaned; areas of retouching visible under ultraviolet light.

Provenance: collection of Count Paolo Thaon de Ravel, Turin, c. 1800; private collection, Turin; Colnaghi, London, 1982 and 1984.

Sarah Campbell Blaffer Foundation 1984.26

Fig. 20. Bartolomeo Veneto, Portrait of a Gentleman. *c. 1520. Oil on panel transferred to canvas, 76.8 x 58.4 cm. National Gallery of Art, Washington DC. Samuel H. Kress Collection 1939.1.257*

B ARTOLOMEO VENETO (C. 1480–1531) FOCUSED ON RELATIVELY small-scale portraits rather than religious and civic projects that might have garnered him a more lasting reputation. He worked in the northern Italian cities of Venice, Padua, Ferrara, and Milan between 1502 and 1531, but went unmentioned by the biographer Giorgio Vasari. Creighton Gilbert once suggested that Bartolomeo's concentration on portraiture resulted in few public records of him (Gilbert 1973, 2). The artist seems to have been aware of the need to reinforce his public presence and the inclusion of tiny inscribed paper scrolls (*cartolini*) is common in his paintings—though absent in this work. They originally named both painter and subject but many are now abraded. There are about forty attributed pictures. Of these, three-quarters are portraits.

Bartolomeo's devotion to private portraiture and his need for new clientele may have contributed to his frequent relocations. Each move exposed the painter to major portrait artists of the period. In Venice, for example, he probably worked under Gentile and Giovanni Bellini, and would have felt the influence of Antonello da Messina, Titian, and Giorgione. Arriving in Milan by 1510, Bartolomeo encountered a culture still strongly influenced by Leonardo da Vinci.

Bartolomeo's superb late portraits present male and female sitters wearing elaborate costumes: fine fabrics, fashionable hats, and jewelry (fig. 20). Most look directly at the viewer and all possess a demeanor both thoughtful and composed. With an intelligent, melancholic expression, the mature woman of *Portrait of a Lady* is instead plainly dressed. A gauze veil, suggesting modesty, falls from her hat to cover her otherwise bare shoulders. Dark sleeves contribute to the sober mood. Restrained ornamentation is evident in the delicate embroidery on her blouse. She holds the bottom of a long necklace looped around her thumb in a contemplative manner. The placement of the hand directs attention to a simple ring with a red stone. The carefully articulated chain thus allows the viewer to feel with his eyes that which she fingers with her hand. Traveling up through the composition, an almost vertical line begins with the band of the ring, and carries through the gold-tipped ties of her bodice to her nose and the part of her hair. The intense lighting illuminates the subject in a manner that builds intimacy between subject and viewer (Pagnotta 2002, 28–29). There is a vitality in the woman's eyes that supports this rapport while also suggesting the expression of an inner state.

The inclusion of an ointment jar on a ledge in the right foreground most likely refers to Saint Mary Magdalene, to imply that the sitter wishes to appear penitent. X-ray technology reveals that the jar and the shawl draping the figure's head and shoulders were added by the artist after the picture's completion (Pagnotta 2002, 24). The late application of symbols of contrition may suggest the sitter's direct involvement in her manner of depiction and her desire for additional evidence of piety.

Writing for the commercial gallery Colnaghi & Co., Clovis Whitfield was the first to identify the sitter as an aging Cecilia Gallerani, the former lover of Lodovico Sforza, Duke of Milan (Whitfield 1982, 8–9). Cecilia appeared in an innovative and influential portrait by Leonardo, *Lady Holding an Ermine* (c. 1489), now in Kraków. Pagnotta suggested, based on the attributes, that the sitter is a reformed courtesan, and possibly Gallerani, while Rubin, citing facial similarities to other Bartolomeo subjects, finds the identification implausible. Other portraits by the artist have also on occasion been identified as the famous mistress, and the Brooklyn Museum has in its collection a version of the work, generally dated after the Blaffer painting. It includes pronounced shadows not seen in the Blaffer picture and the sitter's chain is absent.

Bartolomeo's emphasis on portraiture reflected the increasing interest in the individual that characterized the Italian Renaissance. His attention to costume detail illustrates the period belief that clothing might shape character, and by extension, the portrait could reveal inner truths. Recent scholarship reminds us that the sitter and artist worked in collaboration to create a picture that might render an ideal as much or more than a lifelike representation. —*T.S.*

Gilbert 1973
Pagnotta 2002
Pignatti 1985
Rubin 1982
Roberts 2009
Whitfield 1982

19. Parrasio Micheli (c. 1516–1578)
A Young Woman Playing a Lute, c. 1570
Oil on canvas, 95.3 x 83.2 cm (37½ x 32¾ in)

Condition: good; craquelure over entire surface;
a few retouchings; revarnished 1996.

Provenance: Cecil Amelia Blaffer Foundation

Sarah Campbell Blaffer Foundation 1978.23

P ORTRAITS OF BEAUTIFUL YOUNG WOMEN BECAME INCREASINGLY popular in sixteenth-century Venice. Female portraiture had previously often been reserved for royalty, historical persons, or to celebrate betrothals or marriages, but wealthy bourgeois as well as aristocratic families began commissioning paintings of their wives and daughters during this period. The genre gradually expanded to include muses, models, courtesans, and ideal beauties. It is often difficult to identify a sitter, even when we know a real woman did exist, as portraits of women were typically generalized and highly idealized.

Parrasio Micheli's *A Young Woman Playing a Lute* is a prime example of this challenge. This is an ideal of femininity as set down by Petrarch, the fourteenth-century poet who regained popularity in the sixteenth century. A century earlier, female portraiture often bound women to bust-length and strict-profile view. Set at a diagonal, Parrasio's sitter is seen in three-quarter-length, and while her chin is tilted slightly to the left, she looks out at the viewer. Her direct gaze is in strong contrast to the demure looks of many female subjects. The luxurious pink-and-gold-striped sleeves highlight her fleshy arms and bosom. A gold-trimmed blouse peaks out of her stomacher, revealing her ample décolletage. Her fine, golden blonde hair is pulled back from her face, knotted in the back, and vermilion cheeks highlight her creamy, ivory skin. Yet the pensive expression on her face seems to conflict with her exuberant dress. The artist thus presents the sitter with alluring modesty, particularly in contrast to similar paintings by Micheli. His 1550 work *The Lute-playing Venus with Cupid* in the Szépmûvészeti Múzeum, Budapest, for example, depicts a bare-breasted goddess of love.

In *A Young Woman Playing a Lute*, the sitter is swathed in sumptuous damasks and satin brocades. In sixteenth-century Venice ladies of varying classes dressed in extravagant costume.

It was said one could only distinguish between them based on how much jewelry they were wearing. This is not to say that these jewels or even the dress belonged to this sitter, assuming she existed. For men and women, portraiture was a means of self-fashioning. While men could present the attributes of their profession or accomplishments, women were often restricted to displays of sartorial ornament. However, Italian cities attempted to control the ostentatious dress of their citizens with the creation of sumptuary laws (see cat. 20 for these laws).

The lady's lute, an instrument typical of 1560s Venice, lends itself to various readings. The lute, almost identical to the one depicted in Micheli's 1550 *Venus*, could be a prop so that the sitter might present herself as an accomplished woman. She is possibly meant to recall Venus, as music was said to inspire true love. Her resemblance to Micheli's many paintings of Venus with a lute is undeniable, and pearls were also an attribute of the Greek goddess. However, it has also been suggested that the lady is presented in the guise of Saint Cecilia, the patron saint of music, composers, and poets.

Parrasio Micheli was a Venetian artist who studied under Titian and later with Paolo Veronese (see cat. 20). He was well connected culturally and politically, but according to his biographer Carlo Ridolfi, "he was more gifted with wealth than intelligence." Comparing this painting with his earlier ones, and noting the similarities to Veronese's treatment of light and color, suggests a date of around 1570. Created toward the end of the artist's lifetime, *A Young Woman Playing a Lute* is one of his best works.   —*A.T.*

Cropper 1976
Pignatti 1985
Simons 1988
Tingali 1997

P AOLO VERONESE WAS THE SON OF A VERONA STONEMASON, hence his nickname. He moved to Venice in 1553 and found great success with the city's elite patrons. The subjects of his portraiture include members of many high-ranking families from the large Venetian aristocracy. He often included portraits within larger decorative schemes such as the frescos (1560s) for Palladio's Villa Barbaro in Maser. Throughout the villa, members of the Barbaro clan gaze at the visitor with a mixture of surprise and composure. This suggestion of a sudden and unexpected encounter also occurs with the unidentified sitter in the *Portrait of a Woman as Saint Agnes*.

The young lady, with curled hair styled close to her head, looks up from her prayer book (the *Canticle of Simeon*) to meet the gaze of a viewer who has interrupted her devotions. Her parted lips suggest she is ready to speak. She strokes a lamb representing the Son of God with gentleness and humility—a rendering that evokes depictions of Saint Agnes. John Garton suggests the artist's blending here of portraiture and saintly representation is unique within his work and that it may refer to the sitter's purity, shortly before her marriage.

The woman's extraordinarily white skin, rouged cheeks, and blond hair represent fashionable ideals of the period. Outward beauty purportedly indicated a virtuous character, and Venetian women employed extreme means to achieve the desired effects. For example, acknowledged methods of lightening the skin included applying makeup containing lead or mercury as well as using leeches. Garton remarks that sixteenth-century Venetian women look alike because artists and sitters adhered to circumscribed criteria for beauty, reinforced by pictures and the written word (Garton 2008, 66). The poet Agnolo Firenzuola's *On the Beauty of Women,* first published in 1548, states that skin should be white with the luster of ivory. He assigns various desired red hues to different parts of the body, such as vermilion cheeks and ruby lips. Hair should not only be blonde, but specifically yellow or honey-colored (Firenzuola 1548, 45).

The obsessive use of luxurious fabrics in clothing, home furnishings, and public display was characteristic of the early modern period. This was especially true for Venice with its thriving silk trade. Of all fine textiles, silk was the most desirable, and local sumptuary laws limited its wearing for a variety of reasons. Legal restrictions reflected an attempt to link dress with an individual's social station, to enforce religious propriety, to protect the local economy, and to influence marriage customs. Legal restraints did not apply, however, to dress represented in pictures, allowing a sitter to make a claim, of some permanence, to social position, without the nuisance of fines (Garton 2008, 64–65). By the 1580s, silk had become more affordable, but still indicated social standing. Whether the woman in the *Portrait of Saint Agnes* actually owned the clothing she wears or it was borrowed or invented, it undoubtedly was meant to show her at her finest and to display the painter's skill at vividly rendering the visual qualities of luxury. Typically used at church or court, her drape—a luxurious pomegranate-patterned cloth of gold brocade—was of a type that dominated Italian textile production between 1420–1550 (Herald 1981, 81).

Throughout his career, Paolo Veronese embraced the contemporary ideals of *sprezzatura* and decorum in the same climate of extravagance that sumptuary law attempted to control. Yet several events in his later years may have encouraged the inclusion of the lady's saintly attributes in this painting. The Council of Trent (completed 1563) brought restraints on religious imagery, and Veronese was called before an inquisition in 1573 to defend his enormous and profane version of *The Last Supper*. The artist may have been genuinely affected or may simply have conformed to his patron's desires for a more spiritual picture. (Pedrocco 2004, 153).

Garton proposed that Veronese's artistic success depended on what he called "the skill of discerning social ambition," and the artist was a master of imbuing physical likeness with idealized grandeur. In his approximately forty surviving independent portraits, the power of individual personalities transcends their often-idealized contexts. *—T.S.*
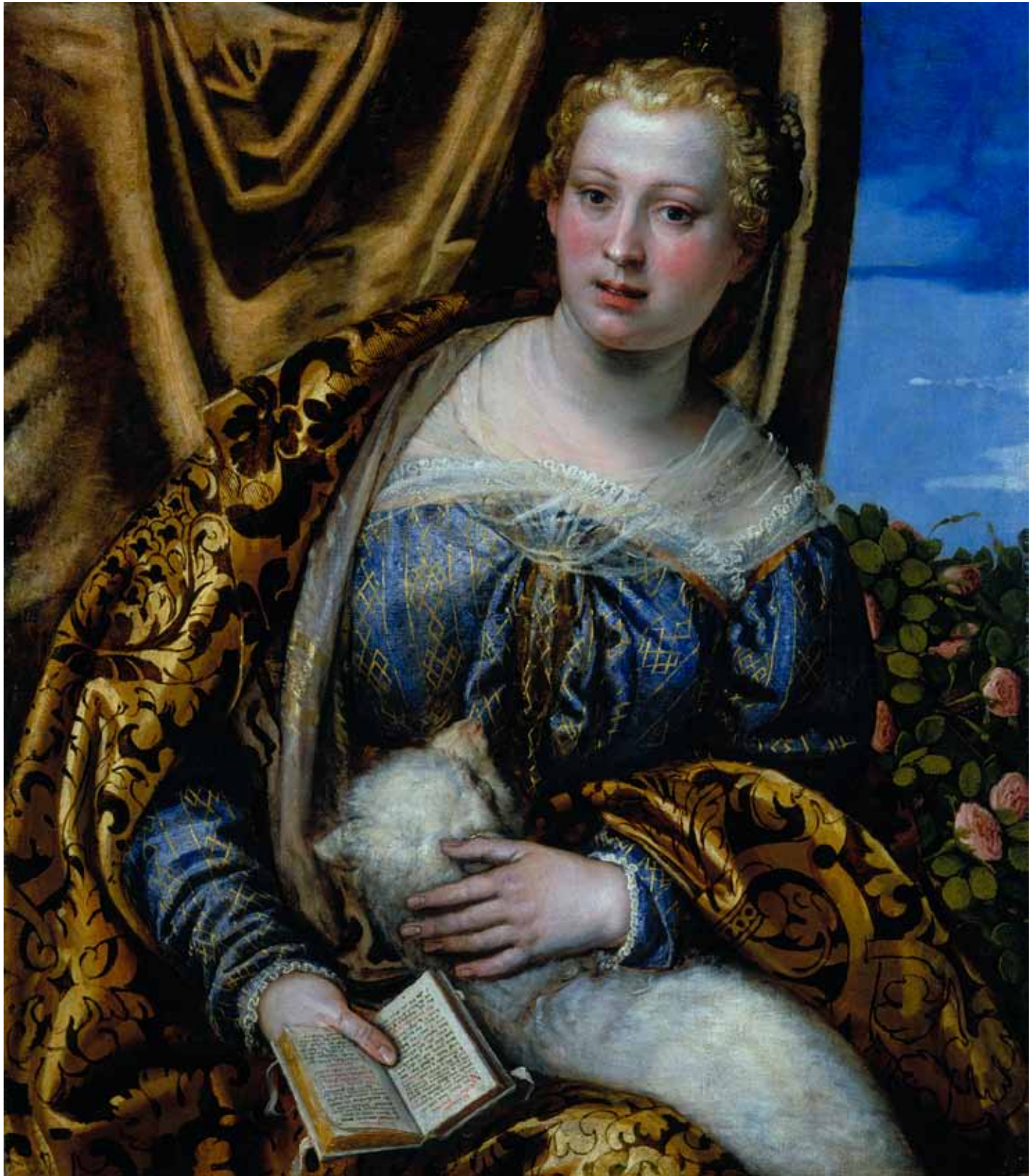
Duits and Garton 2012
Firenzuola 1548
Garton 2008
Herald 1981
Monnas 2008
Pedrocco 2004
Pignatti 1985

21. Workshop of Hendrick ter Brugghen (1588–1629)
The Bagpipe Player, c. 1624
Oil on canvas, 89.9 x 83.2 cm (35⅜ x 32¾ in)

Condition: good; traces of old overpainting and discolored varnish at edges; cleaned and treated 1980.

Provenance: collection of Osborn Kling, Stockholm, c. 1930; sold Christie's, London, June 28, 1935; Ragnar Aschberg Collection, Stockholm, 1954; Dennis Vanderkar, London, 1967; art market, The Hague, 1969; purchased Shickman Gallery, New York, 1978.

Sarah Campbell Blaffer Foundation 1978.11

HENDRICK TER BRUGGHEN'S FASCINATION WITH GENRE portraiture would dominate his artistic output in the latter years of his life, as he developed rather formulaic half-length compositions depicting musicians in performance. *The Bagpipe Player* falls into this category. The musician is shown in strict profile, gazing into the distance. He blows through the blowpipe, filling his clutched bag with air to produce a bellowing drone. The bagpipe player's concentrated gaze suggests he is unaware of the viewer or the world around him, and is lost in the creation of music. The neutral background and sharp raking light lend to this calculated effect. Light hits the sitter's bare shoulder and accompanying bag, illuminating the primacy of his music making, while the musician's face is left in shadow. This underlines the interplay in the portrait: as the bagpipe player fingers the chanter to produce the desired melody, a sense of harmony pervades the portrait, and all focus centers around the creation of his music.

Wind instruments such as the bagpipe were traditionally regarded as less sophisticated than stringed instruments because playing them required performers to distort their faces to generate sound. Contemporary viewers associated such exaggerated facial expressions, however brief, with ill-breeding and impurity. Thus the bagpipe was associated with lower-class country folk, especially peasants and shepherds.

This portrait avoids such negative connotations, as the viewer is presented with only one side of the musician's face, disguising his expression almost entirely. The performer's garb seems antithetical to the base associations of his instrument, as he is clothed in a loosely draped shirt and robe somewhat reminiscent of antique fashions. The light on the musician's bare shoulder adds to the idealization of his body and is complemented by the soft folds in his loose-fitting clothes. The purposeful revealing of the sitter's shoulder and the curve of his back invites the viewer to consume his beauty. His creamy skin appears strikingly smooth and flawless for his low status.

The Bagpipe Player is a close replica of a signed and dated work by ter Brugghen, acquired by the National Gallery of Art in 2009 (fig. 21). Leonard Slatkes, the author of the most recent catalogue raisonné for the artist, contends that the overly sharp contours and slick tonal transitions in the present painting differ from ter Brugghen's signature style, and he suggests the work was made in ter Brugghen's workshop without his participation (Slatkes 2007). This version has been cropped on all sides, presenting the viewer with an intimate portrayal of the painting's subject.

The existence of multiple copies is quite common in ter Brugghen's oeuvre. It may point to the composition's high demand among prospective patrons. Another possible reason for these repetitions could be ter Brugghen's signature style of painting. He worked without preparatory drawings, thereby filling his canvases with *pentimenti*. Subsequent copies could be interpreted as efforts to produce a "clean copy" for prospective clients, though this does not appear to be the case in this particular portrait, as the outline of the upper drone pipe, which rests on the sitter's bare shoulder, has clearly been amended.

Hendrick ter Brugghen was raised in the province of Utrecht. He trained under the venerable Dutch master Abraham Bloemaert (1566–1651) from age fifteen to eighteen, then traveled to Italy to refine his skills. Ter Brugghen returned to Utrecht in 1614 and would remain there until his death in 1629. All his surviving paintings are dated to the final ten years of his life. The impetus for ter Brugghen's depiction of painted musicians is widely attributed to his Utrecht colleague, Dirck van Baburen (c. 1594–1624), who placed considerable emphasis on this theme in his own paintings. Ter Brugghen was undoubtedly familiar with van Baburen's work. The two artists probably operated a joint studio together, and would have influenced each other's style. —*M.S.H.*

Slatkes 2007
Stetchow 1965
Wheelock 2010
Winternitz 1979
Wright 1981

Fig. 21. Hendrick ter Brugghen, A Bagpipe Player. *1624. Oil on canvas, 100.7 x 82.9 cm. National Gallery of Art, Washington DC, 2009.24.1*

22. French or Flemish school
Portrait of a Man, c. 1670–1690
Oil on canvas mounted on board, 73.7 x 62.9 cm (29 x 24¾ in)

Condition: poor; rubbed, loss of glazes, vertical tear (repaired), right side
Provenance: Mr. and Mrs. A. Hays Town, Baton Rouge
New Orleans Museum of Art 1960.29

Fig. 22. Self-Portrait of Pierre Mignard,
engraved by Gérard Edelinck. 1690–1700.
Engraving, 251 x 185 mm. SCBF, 1996.13

THIS PAINTING IS A PUZZLE. BOTH THE SITTER AND THE ARTIST are unknown, but the work can be linked to the circles of the seventeenth-century French Royal Academy, where the ideals of portaiture and the role of beauty in art were vigorously debated. The portrayal of this sitter according to contemporary norms of youthful male beauty stakes a claim in these debates.

The man wears a simple collar, and the dark colors of his clothes suggest sobriety and fade into the background, setting off his face. This allowed the painter to juxtapose loose brushwork in the fabric and more controlled handling in the sitter's skin and features. The man's bright and shining eyes, straight nose, rosy cheeks, and full red lips all conform to seventeenth-century ideals, and he wears a slight and welcoming smile. The sitter's gaze is an interesting artistic compromise: he looks out of the frame, as men were expected to address the world, and yet his eyes are directed slightly to the left, avoiding direct confrontation with the viewer and exposing him to scrutiny. The artist has insisted on the man's long dark hair, slightly disarrayed to suggest both a chance encounter and an intimate setting. The faint trace of the man's facial hair underlines his youth and evokes the softness of his skin and hair.

When the *Académie Royale de Peinture et de Sculpture* was founded in 1648, one of its explicit mandates was to make portraits of the French king, Louis XIV, then only nine years old (Pommier 2003). The members of the Academy wanted to set universal norms for art: most argued that artists should present moral lessons (essentially stories from antiquity and sacred history) and aim for ideal beauty over the particular. This made portraits a problem: they were by definition images of particular individuals, even when that individual was the king of France. A compromise had to be found, especially since many of the members of the Academy made a good part of their living as portraitists. So portraiture was decreed to be second only to history painting, because man was the most ideal of God's creations; and truth to nature was set as its goal.

Unfortunately, as the collector and theorist Roger de Piles (1635–1709) noted, society ladies and gentlemen did not want portraits that failed to make them more beautiful than they were. De Piles suggested that artists should try to paint only attractive sitters ("advantageous heads") to minimize the need to improve on nature's work. But he also argued that the degree of truth to nature should reflect the importance of the sitter. For heroes and public figures it was paramount, as their portraits would be documents for posterity, but for women and young men, the painter could correct things that made them unattractive—a crooked nose, for instance. In images of women and young men, there was, therefore, more freedom for the artist to foreground his or her skill and to make an attractive painting rather than

a truthful one, and the young man shown here has become a subject for such artistic display. Masculine beauty was important in Louis XIV's France: the king himself was praised for his elegance and attractive legs.

This painting has been attributed to almost every major French artist of the seventeenth century, including Pierre Mignard, president of the Academy in the 1690s and First Painter to the King. The poor condition of the work complicates any attempt to identify the artist, and it does not figure in Rosenberg and Fumaroli's survey of French works in American collections. In 1976, however, Rosenberg noted in a letter to the Museum that the painting recalled works by Laurent Fauchier (1643–1672) and Jacob Ferdinand Voet (1639–after 1689). Both men were portrait specialists. Fauchier trained briefly with Mignard; the Flemish Voet worked in Rome from at least 1663 before moving to France in 1684 and finishing his career in the highest court circles in Paris. Based on costume and on similarities to other attributed works, including in the Walters Art Gallery in Baltimore, Voet seems a more likely author, but as both artists are shadowy figures, the question must remain open.   —*A.D.*

De Piles 1766
Pommier 2003
Rosenberg and Fumaroli 2013
Mérot 1995
Mérot 1996

23. Nicolas de Largillière (1656–1746)
Pierre Cadeau de Mongazon, c. 1715
Oil on canvas, 81.3 x 64.8 cm (32 x 25½ in)

Condition: good
Sarah Campbell Blaffer Foundation 1988.1

T his portrait of Pierre Cadeau de Mongazon (1687–1763) commemorates the sitter's first appointment as magistrate of the *Cour des Aides* in Paris. His features, which suggest a man of around thirty years old, lead to a date of approximately 1715. The sitter's carefully proportioned face breaks into a slight smile, indicating both pride for his new social situation and direct engagement with the spectator. The immediacy of his presence is underlined by the frontal light and half-length arrangement of the portrait. Largillière's coloristic approach in many of his early-eighteenth-century works can be seen in this portrait. Never sacrificing accuracy in the crucial details of the portrait—understood to be the face and hands—Largillière still achieved a look of *tout ensemble.*

This portrait of Mongazon is more characteristic of Largillière's work than his self-portrait, also in this show (cat. 24). It is an illustrative example of Largillière's masculine portraiture; the shoulders are in profile and the face is turned forward. The sitter is depicted as a *honnête homme,* a "proper man," or a morally upright member of French society, whose humility, worldliness, and restraint were prized in the late seventeenth century. He wears a powdered wig (representative of his position as magistrate), a black velvet jacket embroidered in gold, and a white cravat, typical of the nobility of the time. Seen here, the combination of liveliness, in the new judge's smile, and grandeur, in his position, merges the goals of a state portrait with the intimacy of a personal portrait. Most of Largillière's clients were aristocrats of the legal profession, or *noblesse de robe,* and parliamentary portraits recur in his work.

Pierre Cadeau de Mongazon came from what had been a mercantile family. His great-grandfather and namesake, Pierre Cadeau, was a *marchand-mercier,* or haberdasher, who was appointed *juge-consul* of Paris in 1620. His father, Jacques Cadeau, acquired nobility on the occasion of his nomination as *Sécretaire du Roy au Grand Collège,* which ensured his family's

membership in the French peerage for the next four generations. Pierre was born of his father's first marriage to Marie Boucher. In 1713, he was appointed *Conseiller* to the Second Chamber of the *Cour des Aides* of Paris. The *Cour des Aides,* one of the sovereign courts in *ancien régime* France, was principally concerned with customs and taxation issues. He became a member of the First Chamber in 1746 and was nominated emeritus in 1759.

Nicolas de Largillière's paintings are known for combining two disparate conventions of portraiture: the metaphorical depictions preferred by courtiers, and the more realistic portrait style favored by the bourgeoisie. He integrated naturalism with artifice to give each portrait both its own individual character and a timeless charm. He trained in Antwerp under the still-life painter Antoine Goubeau (1605–1672), and then in England at the studio of Peter Lely (1618–1680), court painter to Charles II. In 1680, he moved to Paris. He was discovered by Charles Le Brun (1619–1690), the Director of the French Royal Academy, who fostered his career. He became one of the leading portraitists of the era, in competition with Hyacinthe Rigaud (1659–1743), the official portraitist to the court of Louis XIV. In 1696, Largillière was received into the Academy based on his *Portrait of Charles Le Brun,* which depicts the professor at work on a painting surrounded by mythological and allegorical figures. Largillière was accepted as a history painter instead of as a portraitist: portraiture was considered a secondary genre, deserving of admiration if, through allegory and myth, emphasis was placed on the sitter's position in society rather than on character or personality. By 1738, Largillière was himself the Director of the Academy, becoming a pivotal figure in the transition from the Baroque style to the Rococo portrait in the eighteenth century. —*S.G.A.*
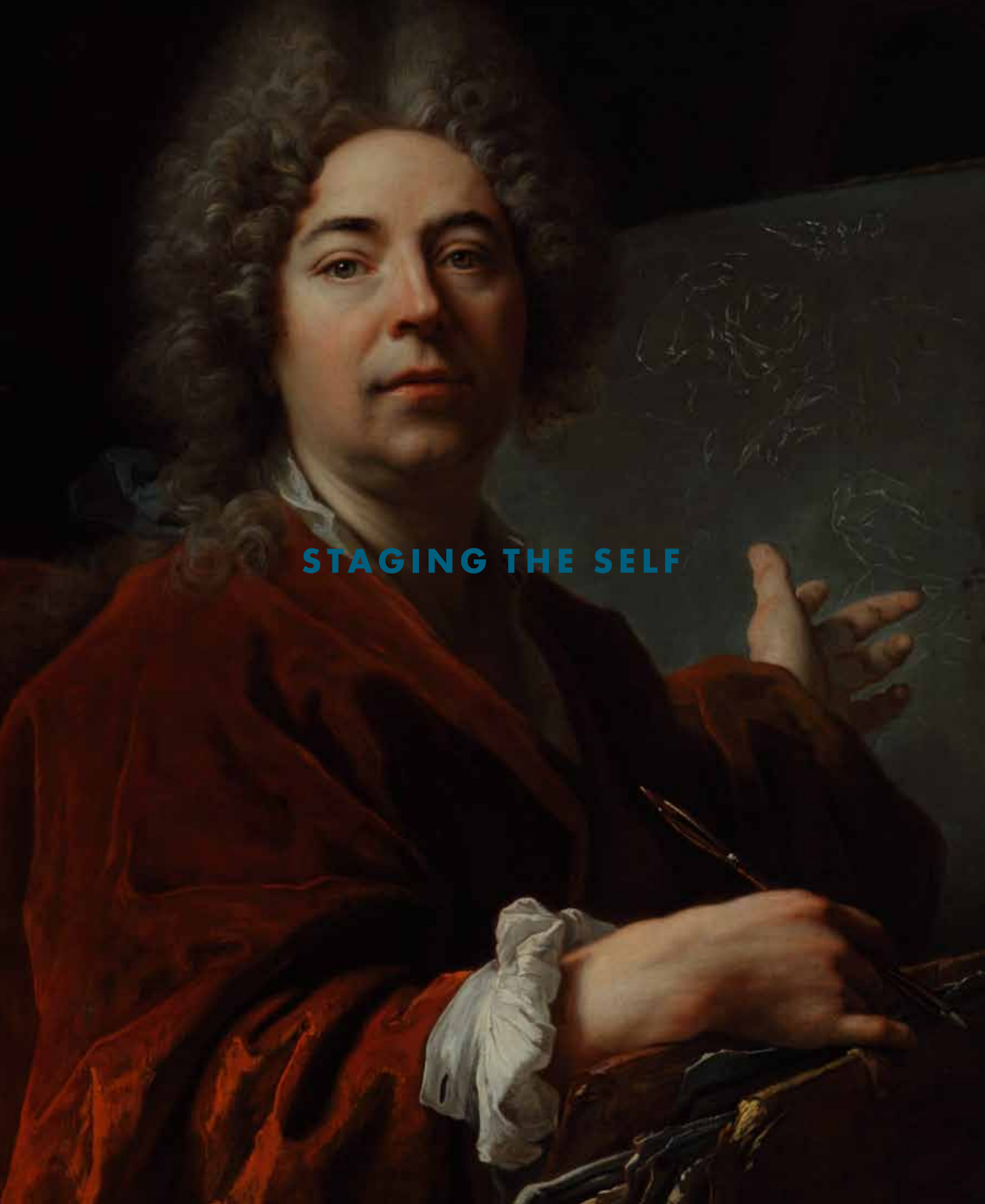
Old Masters 1914
Southgate 2000
Sterling 1998
Waterhouse 1952

No other description is as difficult, nor as useful, as the description of the self.

Michel de Montaigne, 'On Practice,' *Essais* (c. 1580)

STAGING THE SELF

24. Nicolas de Largillière (1656–1746)
Self-Portrait, 1711
Oil on canvas, 81.3 x 66 cm (32 x 26 in)

Inscription: Nicolaus de Largillière/seipsum pinxit. Aet. Suae. 55/Ann. dom. 1711

Condition: adequate; some scuffs, stains and cracks, all repaired.

Provenance: private collection, France (probably reigning Dukes of Brunswick); Ravestyn Collection; Counts von Moltke; Paul Cailleux, Paris, 1938–41; private collection, Paris, to 1964; private collection, Givaudan family, Switzerland, to 1982; Guy Stair Sainty, Ltd., New York, 1982

New Orleans Museum of Art 1982.164

Fig. 23. Jean Pesne after Nicolas Poussin, Self-Portrait of Nicolas Poussin in 1649. *c.1661. Engraving and etching, 357 x 246 mm. SCBF 1996.15*

NICOLAS DE LARGILLIÈRE WAS ONE OF THE FOREMOST portraitists in eighteenth-century France. During this "age of portraiture," the rise of a moneyed bourgeoisie contributed to an increased demand for the painted representation of self. However, Largillière also found favor with Charles II and James II of England (r. 1660–85 and 1685–88, respectively) and Louis XIV of France (1643–1715). Although Largillière's repertoire was not limited to portraits, the French Academy lauded these works above all and ultimately appointed him chancellor of the Academy in 1743. His oeuvre includes numerous self-portraits and several versions of the present painting, which raises interesting issues about performance, vocation, piety, and the representation of self.

Myra Nan Rosenfeld attributes Largillière's considerable success to his masterful fusion of two trends in portraiture: allegorical court portraiture, in which the elite took on various personas to suggest certain traits; and bourgeois portraiture, which preferred a more intimate and naturalistic style. In his *Self-Portrait,* the artist's proximity to the picture plane and his dramatic gesture towards his canvas create a sense of informality and dynamism, a marked departure from the rigidity of conventional seventeenth-century representations. Nicolas Poussin's *Self-Portrait* of 1649 (fig. 23) likely inspired Largillière, although he transforms Poussin's rigid space into a more dramatic composition. Largillière's adeptness in rendering a sitter's likeness earned him high praise as well. The Academy in the eighteenth century expected portraits to resemble their subjects precisely, for the face was considered a visible reflection of character.

Since self-portraits collapse the artist and the sitter, their visual language carries a special and personal significance. To a certain degree, Largillière presents himself as a craftsman among his tools. In his right hand, he holds a *porte-crayon,* a metal tube into which a piece of chalk could be slid for sketching. A beautifully and intricately rendered portfolio represents previous accomplishments, while with his left hand, Largillière gestures towards a work only just begun. The link is only conceptual, however, for he is neither working nor wearing clothes suitable to work. His fine red robe and fashionable wig stray far from the messy reality of painting.

The Annunciation scene, faintly outlined on the rear canvas, shows the Angel Gabriel's announcement to Mary that she would give birth to Christ. It may be interpreted in several ways. As a fixture of Christian iconography, the Annunciation may suggest Largillière's piety. The loosely-rendered religious scene does not detract from the painted artist, however, limiting the sense that this is a devotional image. Alternately, the inclusion of the Annunciation may refer to the academic preeminence of history painting (which included religious subjects) over portraiture. While this reference could signal an anxiety about the artist's own place in the academic hierarchy, the fact that the outlines of the Annunciation seem diminutive next to the vivid and robust (self-) portrait suggests the ascendency of Largillière's portraits.

The outlined Annunciation also, however, points to the academic priority given to the drawing and initial conception of a work over the coloring and completion of it, an idea that persisted from the Renaissance into the nineteenth century. When sixteenth-century Reformation iconoclasm threatened the legitimacy of images for worship, the Annunciation—that is, Mary's conception of the Word made Flesh—was evoked by Catholics seeking to justify image-making. Christ's transformation from the abstract to the physical parallels the artist's creative process, and so the Incarnation and its announcement became linked to the defense of the arts. In this sense, *Self-Portrait* demonstrates the Academy's prioritization of the initial "incarnation" of a work over its final implementation. Largillière thus makes a self-aggrandizing assertion of mastery. The work is a self-promoting representation of the artist's professional status.

At least three other, similar, versions of Largillière *Self-Portrait* exist, although only one includes the Annunciation scene. That painting, also dated to 1711, hangs in the Château de Versailles. Some scholars suggest that Largillière may have had only a supervisory or otherwise limited role in the production of some of his self-portraits, although his signature shows that he at least laid claim to this work. The issue of authorship raises interesting questions about the nature of self-portraiture. Self-portraits pretend to be less mediated than other portraits: instead of an artist rendering a second figure (the sitter) for a third party (the viewer), they seem to collapse the roles of artist and sitter. By omitting a person in the portraiture process, self-portraits purport to be more authentic, and less removed from the actual sitter. However, doubts about the authorship of Largillière's works reveal that such relationships may be much more complex. —*M.M.*

Art Institute of Chicago 1996
Rosenfeld 1982
Shackelford 1986
Temperini 1996
Woods-Marsden 1998

25. Paolo de Matteis (1662–1728)
Allegory of the Consequences of the Peace of Utrecht, after 1713
Oil on canvas, 77.2 x 101.6 cm (30 x 40 in)

Condition: good
Provenance: purchased from Colnaghi Gallery, London
Sarah Campbell Blaffer Foundation 1980.4

ORN NEAR SALERNO, PAOLO DE MATTEIS TRAINED IN NAPLES under Luca Giordano and quickly advanced through the ranks of the city's painters. While he was still under Giordano's tutelage, prominent French and Spanish nobility noticed de Matteis's work. When the city's Monte dei Poveri commissioned a large public image from him, de Matteis chronicled his execution of the work in the *Allegory of the Consequences of the Peace of Utrecht,* implementing his new style in conjunction with his artistic control over the image, and tying an allegory of war and peace to the role of the artist and the representation of self.

Scholars generally agree on both the attribution to the artist and the interpretation of the allegorical components. Because of the events within the image, and the date of the ratification of the Peace of Utrecht, it is accepted that *Allegory of the Consequences of the Peace of Utrecht* and the copies of it were all created after 1713. The Peace of Utrecht, a smaller treaty within a series of

Fig. 24. Jean Daullé after Pierre Mignard, Catherine Mignard, Comtesse de Feuquières. *1735. Mezzotint, 469 x 320 mm. SCBF 1998.13*

treaties ending the War of the Spanish Succession (1701–1714), helped settle conflicts between Spain, Great Britain, France, Portugal, and especially Flanders and Austria.

Nestled slightly left of center, Paolo de Matteis sits at his easel, painting an allegory within the allegory of the Peace of Utrecht. He looks at the viewer, hand outstretched as if in mid-brush stroke. On the canvas being painted, Austria and Flanders are represented by two women with a two-headed eagle and a lion and globe, respectively. Personifications of vices and virtues based on well-known iconography surround the seated painter, a reference to an artistic tradition of representation, as well as a choice not to overcomplicate the image with novel symbolism.

In the main composition, de Matteis uses a monkey to symbolize the art of painting, which at the time was sometimes criticized as an "imitative discipline." De Matteis not only included himself in a historical scene, he strayed from typical self-portrait conventions in his plain appearance and relatively shabby clothing. Though de Matteis satirically paints himself in commonplace attire, he challenges the role of the history painter as it was typically understood at the time. While rooting himself within the symbolic, de Matteis presents his own image directly, by painting himself within the scene as an allusion to control over representation. De Matteis forgoes depicting an easel within the painting; instead, a classicized nude holds the weight of the canvas as he paints. This reference implies that the artist's work should not be taken lightly, and that the role of the painter includes the heavy responsibility of accurate representation. Similarly, it can be seen as an attempt to elevate the role of the artist, as de Matteis equates the importance of European peace to the recording of its occurrence.

The painter's face echoes descriptions of him as "simian" in eighteenth-century sources: his pronounced forehead, small eyes, and thick eyebrows are "primate-like" in their depiction. While de Matteis thus provides a kind of caricature of himself, he may also have presented his appearance as simian to allude to the artist's traditional role in "aping" nature, as well to provide symbolic representation of his artistic prowess. Versions of this painting exist in Hamburg, Naples, and Houston. All are different sizes, yet the image of the painter remains almost exactly the same with the exception of a few adjustments to his clothing, and all are attributed to him. These copies, which function as records of sorts, allude to the commission and execution of the *Allegory of the Consequences of the Peace of Utrecht* as a larger public work and a milestone in the painter's career. Therefore, as documents of that success, it seems reasonable that there would be more than one. —*E.T.*

Pestilli 2013
Stone, 1997
Pignatti, 1985
Rosanthal, 1987
Schüutze, 1994
Haskell, 1980

26. Jacopo Robusti, called Jacopo Tintoretto (1519–1594)
The Mocking of Christ, c. 1585–1590
Oil on canvas, 157 x 105 cm (61⅞ x 41¼ in)

Condition: fair; vertical scratch from Christ's right hip to left knee; horizontal scratch near bottom; seam visible near middle of Christ's extended leg.

Provenance: purchased from a private collection, November 1, 1920, London. Sarah Campbell Blaffer Foundation 1980.8

J ACOBO ROBUSTI'S NICKNAME "TINTORETTO" DERIVES FROM his father's profession as a cloth-dyer, or *tintore* in Italian. Tintoretto's final years marked the pinnacle of his career, and the demand for his work necessitated the expansion of his workshop. Tintoretto recruited his daughter Marietta and sons Domenico and Marco to meet the growing requests, and he worked continuously until his 1594 death.

In *The Mocking of Christ,* considered one of Tintoretto's last works, the subdued coloring creates a dark atmosphere lit by a diffused light, typical of the late style of the artist. Christ is unquestionably the focal point of the composition, as His body stretches across the canvas in a flowing diagonal. Light enters from the upper left and beams on the Savior's idealized and muscular body, which absorbs and radiates the illumination toward the torturers who surround Him. The persecutors mirror Christ's downward gaze, as they execute their assigned tasks with heads bowed, suggesting the vile nature of their actions. In the midst of such horrific treatment, Christ's body remains heroic. Tintoretto emphasizes the Savior's bicep and abdominal muscles, while shying away from the gory nature of His torment. Blood is only shown in light touches below the crown of thorns and is altogether absent on Christ's upper torso, where one torturer prods Him with a wooden staff.

The shadowy figure beside Christ's head is intriguing. Many scholars have suggested it is Tintoretto himself (Pignatti 1985; Pallucchini & Rossi 1982). With cropped hair and a wispy beard that flows far below the neckline, the ghostly figure strongly resembles Tintoretto's *Self-Portrait* of 1588, now in the Louvre. A self-portrait in a Passion scene is certainly possible, as there are two other cases where Tintoretto seems to have inserted himself into a religious composition: a *Flagellation of Christ* of 1585–1590 (Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna) and a *Deposition* of 1594 (S. Giorgio Maggiore, Venice).

Yet if the figure is in fact Tintoretto, it is hard to understand the place he has given himself within the Passion episode. While his lower body is in shadow, his face seems to be pushed to the foreground, allowing him to witness Christ's horrific mockery at close proximity. The figure's eyes have lost their brilliance, with the pupils hardly visible. Yet his role as a contemplative witness can be assumed, as Tintoretto does not show the figure performing any action, which separates him from the surrounding tormentors, each of whom inflicts some form of punishment. Here the viewer observes a silent witness, whose lugubrious presence is indicated only by the highlighted grey flecks in his beard, illuminated by the soft-glowing halo of Christ.

Assuming that the shadowy spectator is indeed Tintoretto, one must ask why the painter would insert himself into such a gruesome depiction. Carlo Ridolfi (1594–1658), the artist's biographer, noted that toward the end of his life Tintoretto "gave

Fig. 25. Detail

himself over to the contemplation of heavenly things," and that Tintoretto "spent much time in pious meditation in the church of the Madonna dell'Orto and in conversation on moral themes with the fathers, who were his intimates."

In *The Mocking of Christ*, Tintoretto attests to his piety by placing himself on the same plane as Christ, thus representing his veneration for the Savior. The vertical staff held by Christ and the one held by the torturer at the upper right overlap, not only forming a cross, but also framing Tintoretto's face. This painting and the two others in Vienna and Venice, all dated to the final years of the artist's life, provide evidence that the painting of such scenes could have been a contemplative exercise. Equally important, each portrait is found in a different scene of the Passion, indicating that Tintoretto may have been working on a theme, emulating the Stations of the Cross. Tintoretto thus becomes more than a witness to these events, as he assumes the role of contemplative worshipper, gazing at the horrific death of his Messiah and acknowledging the inevitability of his own passing. —*M.S.H.*

Falomir 2007
Ilchman 2009
Pallucchini and Rossi 1982
Pallucchini 1979
Pignatti 1985
Ridolfi 1984

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Fig. 26. William Hogarth, William Hogarth Painting the Comic Muse. *1758. Etching and engraving, 403 x 351 mm. SCBF 1983.5.1*