

THE TAKING OF CHRIST

The Taking of Christ is a painting, of the arrest of Jesus, by the Italian Baroque master Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio. Originally commissioned by the.

Regarding the detail of the polished metal arm of the soldier in the center of the picture, Franco Mormando suggests that it was meant by the artist to serve as a mirror, a mirror of self-reflection and examination of conscience such as in Caravaggio's *Martha and Mary Magdalene in Detroit* : as do many spiritual writers and preachers of the period, the artist may be 'inviting his viewers to see themselves reflected in the behavior of Judas' through their own daily acts of betrayal of Jesus, that is, through their sin. Only the moon lights the scene. The painting was a well-documented commission, and was frequently copied by contemporary artists. By the twentieth century, however, the painting had disappeared, having been sold by the family in , and misattributed to Gerrit van Honthorst, a Dutch follower of Caravaggio. Breaking with the past, the artist offered a new visual rendering of the narrative of the Gospels, reducing the space around the three-quarter-length figures and avoiding any description of the setting. This is further intensified by the strong lighting, which focuses attention on the expressions of the foreground figures. Scholars resumed searching for the original in the s, as many of them no longer accepted the authenticity of a painting in the Odessa Art Museum, now known to be a copy made for another member of the Mattei family in This prompted comment in the Irish and British media in February He offers no resistance, but gives in to his persecutors' harsh and unjust treatment, his anguish conveyed by his furrowed brow and down-turned eyes. In that man's features Caravaggio portrayed himself, at the age of thirty one, as a passive spectator of the divine tragedy. All emphasis is directed on the action perpetrated by Judas and the Temple guards on an overwhelmed Jesus, who offers no resistance to his destiny. The account books of Asdrubale record a payment of 12 scudi in for this work. At the far left, a man St John is fleeing; his arms are raised, his mouth is open in a gasp, his cloak is flying and being snatched back by a soldier. It has all the features associated with his great works: a dramatic story, chiaroscuro lighting, expressive figures, combined with a spiritual dimension and magnificent surface detail. Judas has just kissed Jesus to identify him for the soldiers. The painting was stolen from the museum in and found in Germany. The main light source is not evident in the painting but comes from the upper left; the lesser light source is the lantern held by the man at the right believed to be a self-portrait of Caravaggio; also, presumably, representing St Peter , who would first betray Jesus by denying him, and then go on to bring the light of Christ to the world. The flight of the terrified John contrasts with the entrance of the artist; scholars claim that Caravaggio is making the point that even a sinner one thousand years after the resurrection has a better understanding of Christ than does his friend. The fleeing disciple in disarray on the left is St John the Evangelist. Later in that decade, still unrecognised for what it was, the painting was sold to an Irish paediatrician, Marie Lea-Wilson, who eventually donated it in the s [b] to the Jesuit Fathers in Dublin , in gratitude for their support following the shooting of her husband, Capt. The Taking of Christ was painted by Caravaggio for the Roman Marquis Ciriaco Mattei at the end of , when he was at the height of his fame. The fleeing disciple in disarray on the left is St John the Evangelist. Regarding the detail of the polished metal arm of the soldier in the center of the picture, Franco Mormando suggests that it was meant by the artist to serve as a mirror, a mirror of self-reflection and examination of conscience such as in Caravaggio's *Martha and Mary Magdalene in Detroit* : as do many spiritual writers and preachers of the period, the artist may be 'inviting his viewers to see themselves reflected in the behavior of Judas' through their own daily acts of betrayal of Jesus, that is, through their sin. The flight of the terrified John contrasts with the entrance of the artist; scholars claim that Caravaggio is making the point that even a sinner one thousand years after the resurrection has a better understanding of Christ than does his friend. Sir Denis Mahon , who had in authenticated the Dublin version, in stated that the Sannini version was Caravaggio's original, but that the Dublin version was a copy by Caravaggio himself. Description[edit] There are seven figures in the painting: from left to right they are John , Jesus , Judas , three soldiers the one farthest to the right barely visible in the rear , and a man holding a lantern to the scene. Seracini said this proved it was not the original; Paoletti disagreed. Two of the more puzzling details of the painting are, one, the fact that the heads of Jesus and St. The man carrying the lantern at the extreme right, who looks inquisitively over the soldiers' heads, has been

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interpreted as a self-portrait. John seem to visually meld together in the upper left corner, and, two, the fact of the prominent presence, in the very center of the canvas and in the foremost plane of the picture, of the arresting officer's highly polished, metal-clad arm.