CARAVAGGIO'S CRUCIFIXION OF ST ANDREW: 
FROM THE ABSTRACTION OF THE LAW TO THE AFFLICTED BODY

by

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ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the *Crucifixion of St. Andrew* (1607) painted by Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio (1573-1610) during his first sojourn in Naples. This painting was probably commissioned by Conde de Benavente, who was viceroy of Neapolitan kingdom, at this time part of the Spanish imperial state. The unusual choice of Latin cross depicted in this painting links the image to the debates about Andrew's martyrdom that circulated at the end of sixteenth and the beginning of seventeenth centuries, especially through the writing of Justus Lipsius.

Seeking to mark the presence of Spanish authority through the veneration of Andrew, a saint related both to the royal family and to local sites and practices of worship, the image produces a site of exchange between the space of Neapolitan streets and the realm of sacred representation. However, this exchange with the space of the street gives new vectors of meaning to the *historia* of Andrew’s death. As this apocryphal story provides the account of the sudden paralysis of the executioner’s body, and through this physical immobility points to the suspension of executive power, the link to the urban space of Naples produces dangerous ambiguities of meaning.

These ambiguities are concentrated in the figure of the woman with the goitre, depicted watching the crucifixion and as the only protagonist who fully understands the significance of this event. The materiality of the woman’s body inscribes her as a migrant to the city, linking her to the spaces of the street and the market. It is precisely these volatile spaces that presented an uncontrollable threat of riots. My thesis examines these multiple conjunctions of the image in relation to the threat of riot, which indeed regularly occurred in Naples. Both the requests for institutional reforms in Naples, often linked to the uprisings in the city, and the Spanish political doctrine found their bases in ancient philosophy. While the formulations of Spanish statecraft sought to contain this thought and enable its deployment by the state, its links with the uprisings demonstrate forcefully the inability of such containment. I conclude that Caravaggio’s painting shows similar disjunctures, producing a highly ambiguous narrative, which displaces urban conflicts into the realm of religious painting.
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The people are a large and varied beast
That does not know its own power
But tolerates the blows of sticks and stones
And is led by a simpleton without any vigour

Whom they could break with a single blow:
But they fear and serve him at every turn;
Nor do they know how feared they are,
Or that they are kept in awe by the spells of the rich.

How amazing! They submit by their own hands
To torture and imprisonment to death and destruction
For a fraction of what they give to the king.

All that exists in earth and heaven is theirs,
But they do not know it, and if anyone
Tells them so, they knock him down and kill him.

Tommaso Campanella

In his painting the Crucifixion of St. Andrew (1607 Fig. 1), Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio (1573-1610) represents the invisible moment of change, when the crowd becomes aware of its power. High on the cross, the saint's head falls upon his shoulder as he loses consciousness in the final moments of an agony that has lasted two days. During this time Andrew preached to the gathered crowd, and moved people to demand his liberation. The threat of a riot forces the authorities to comply and take Andrew down from the cross. But Andrew desires to die as a martyr, and it is this will that causes the miraculous events that surround his death. Caravaggio represents the brief moment where action is suspended before its resolution. At this moment the direction of the action and the forms of its resolution remain unknown.

At the bottom left corner of the *Crucifixion of St. Andrew* Caravaggio painted the image of a woman. Her head raised to see the miraculous event on the cross, she exposes the goitre on her neck. The rough face with deep creases on her forehead, scarred and hollowed cheeks, is turned up toward the cross, looking at the saint. Other protagonists of this scene of punishment focus at the knot of hands in the upper left corner. In this corner three hands are tied: the hand of Andrew tied to the cross by the ropes, and the two hands of the executioner tied internally through paralysis. That the executioner’s hands become figuratively bound like Andrew’s is a response to the saint’s prayers to die as a true martyr.

In the bottom right corner, painted as if standing in front of the cross, is the figure of Egeas, consul of Patras in Achaia, where this apocryphal story took place. Although turned away from us, and towards the cross, we see his profile framed by the large dark rim of his hat decorated with feathers. His facial features and self-assured expression are rendered distinct against the dark hat. It is a face of a well-groomed man, in full strength, confident of his social position and ability to exercise authority. His face is turned toward the site of suspended action in the upper left corner, his expression claiming authority. Egeas is still overseeing the execution. His posture reflects the same confidence already seen on his face, with his left arm in the shiny armour thrust towards the viewer and his hand resting upon his hip. The face of the man in the red cloak who stands behind Egeas is not visible. Only the ear emerges out of the darkness. Although present, his reaction to the events remains undepicted. But the astonishment on the face in the triangular space

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between Egeas’s arm and the cross is visible in spite of the darkness. While his gaze is fixed upon the cross, his mouth gapes open in disbelief.

The expression on Andrew’s face suggests the torment inflicted by the punishment, but also a loss of consciousness, which was compelled by the enormity of the body’s suffering. It is precisely at this moment, when the intensity of the punishment is at its greatest, that the saint escapes his executioners. Maintaining a hold on his body, the authorities lose their hold on his psyche. The ebbing of his consciousness is also a border and a passage of his individual experience of social existence. Next to this body, suspended in liminal space, the body of the executioner stands on a ladder. To reach Andrew’s arm on the cross, the executioner’s body sways toward Andrew’s body on the cross in order to maintain his balance. His hands and face disappear in the shadow but the light cast on his shoulder reveals his labouring muscles. The same light falls on Andrew’s torso, exposing ribs and strained tendons. One body, described through the layers of firm muscles, is in a moment of action and will, while the other, described through bone and tendon, is tenuously related to consciousness. The folds of the executioner’s white shirt cross his torso diagonally, meeting the folds of the ochre lower garment and the red loincloth that covers Andrew’s body. The narrowest parts of these folds meet at the point where the executioner’s hip touches Andrew’s. For all their differences, the folds of their draperies tie Andrew and the executioner together. The body that is to be a carrier and instrument of the will of the law is tied to the one that is abandoned by consciousness and does not claim any right or responsibility for its fortune.

The same light that renders visible the torment and slow exhaustion of the sinews of Andrew’s body reflects from the metal covering Egeas’s left arm. Placed with the
relaxed confidence of his lagging understanding, Egeas's left arm still demonstrates the illusion of control, administrative organisation, and power. The sharp line of light, reflected from his upper arm converges with one of the lines that tie the bodies of Andrew and his executioner. This convergence exemplifies the necessary mediation of the administrative power with the immaculate armour as the sign of the office. At the same time, the supernatural light that appears on the right side of the painting is diffuse and paradoxical in that it is neither reflected from any surface nor illuminating any object. This light, which leaves a dark shadow on Andrew's body, operates in the manner of mystical poetry, which uses such paradoxes to convey the unspeakable experience. It is a 'dark beam' of mystical poetry translated into painting. This difference between sharp reflection on the armour and the mystical light, splits the homogeneity of illumination. The image of crucifixion is thus split between the depiction of the administrative supervision of execution enacted by state power and the representation of Andrew's radical will to die.

The arrested action effected by the internal experience of paralysis is difficult to represent in painting. The miracle in question is one of internal change and internal experience. The painted image deals with the problem of representing on the one hand internal change in Andrew (whose ebbing consciousness maintains a very tenuous relationship to his body), and on the other hand the internal experience of the executioner (who is stunned by his sudden inability to move). The difficult representation of both internal corporal experience and external action is not the only doubling of the narrative in this image. Although it depicts early Christian apocryphal story of the punishment and

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death of Andrew in the Greek city of Patras, the image at the same time refers to early modern punishment procedures. In antiquity crucifixion had been an especially shameful punishment bringing contempt to those who died crucified. During late antiquity, crucifixion became a marker of shame in the literature against Christianity. With the advent of Christianity the depictions of the crucified move from the graffiti that mock the “folly of the message of cross” to the depiction of the crucifixion as the central image that presents the entire doctrine of Christian salvation. (Fig. 2) In early modern Europe crucifixion as an exotic form of punishment did not appear in penal practice. Yet its depiction proliferated, informed by the observation of other practices used in early modern executions, and perhaps referring back to those practices.

It is through the interaction of Caravaggio’s image and the urban space of Naples that I seek to develop a narrative about the threat of a riot, present as a threat both in the story of Andrew’s death and in the city. My narrative about the inability to contain the uprising and the performance of punishment as a social representation of order and law will be concerned with the “aparallel evolution” of the image and urban space in an attempt to open up the multiplicity of trajectories, refusing the closure and containment of this image. The project started with the specific notion of event discussed by Gilles

7 I take the notion of the “folly of the message of the cross from Martin Hengel, who expands on apostle Paul, Hengel, *Crucifixion*, 15-21 passim.
8 Ibid., 28.
10 For the notion of aparallel evolution see Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, (Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press: 2002) 11. “The same applies to the book and the world: contrary to a deeply rooted belief, the book is not an image of the world. It forms a rhizome with the world, three is an aparallel evolution of the book and the world: the book assures
Deleuze as something yet to come and always already passed. It continued with the notion of the constant and infinite split of the moment into the past and the future. In the operation of Caravaggio’s image, I recognize this infinite split as a process constantly questioning the present attempt to enact the punishment or to foreclose the eruption of revolt. Deluze’s notion of will to event, which “allows the active and the passive to be interchanged more easily, since it is neither one nor the other, but rather their common result (to cut – to be cut)” provided the central impetus to look for different vectors of forces put in motion by Andrew’s will. Three sets of notions provided the basis both for the visual analysis of the image and for the thinking about urban space: connection or parallel; touch, conjunction or convergence; and disjuncture. I seek to find not only conjunctions but also discrepancies, gaps and inconsistencies. I find all these relations in Caravaggio’s image through the will to embodiment, or the actualisation of the event in the body and flesh, regardless of whether that event is an abstract embodiment of the law, of will to resist, or to understand. I will argue that the representation aligns with the political philosophy of viceroy Don Juan Alfonso Pimental y Herrera, Conde de Benavente, who probably commissioned the painting and took it with him to Spain at the end of his mandate, but also exceeds and subverts its demonstration. As my starting point I take Deleuze’s thought, which engages with the currents of philosophy from antiquity and especially with the stoics, to demonstrate the attempt and the failure to contain these currents in early modern Europe.

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12 Ibid., 164.
13 Ibid., “Three sorts of synthesis are distinguished: the connective synthesis (if...than), which bears upon the construction of single series, the conjunctive series (and), as a method of constructing convergent series; and the disjunctive series (or), which distributes the divergent series: connexa, conjuncta, disjuncta.”
I will demonstrate in this thesis that the vectors of thought which circulated both within and between quite distinct and often conflicting social groups find their own conjunctions, sometimes predictable, but often surprising. The various currents of ancient philosophy other than Plato and Aristotle provoked increased interest and circulated throughout Europe in the seventeenth century. The new interpretations of these currents, especially of stoics, epicureans and kynics were sometimes closely bound to the state interest, and other times to the rebellious utopian projects.15

This fragmentation of the doctrinal currents was not only present in the revival of the ancient philosophical thought. I see similar fragmentation in the urban space, in both horizontal and vertical cleavages of Neapolitan society, which parallels, for instance complicated relations between new scientific ordering of the universe and the popular practice of divination. The veneration of saints assumes radically different aspects through various practices of worship and diverse modes of viewing. The narratives which emerge out of these venerated images change with each viewer and possibly with each act of viewing. My thesis will argue that, through the very act of viewing, the memory of current unrest and questions over authority are put in motion, although Caravaggio’s Crucifixion of St Andrew was commissioned by Spanish viceroy to present a link between the Spanish royal family and the popular worship of this saint. These divergent interests enter the process of viewing producing an excess of narratives, which cannot be stabilised into a single unified meaning. As these multiplications of an image commissioned to assert legitimacy and authority cannot be arrested, the image becomes coextensive with contradictory social forces.

14 Ibid., 146
CHAPTER I: In Naples

The map of Naples published in Paris in 1629 by Antonio Barrata claims to be an accurate and new depiction of the city. (Fig. 2) This claim is not just stated in the text above the map, it is also substantiated within the map itself. The streets and important sites are depicted in detail, and identified by their names. This plan, which Leonardo di Mauro considers the most informative for the study of the changes and building activity in the city focuses on the depiction of the ‘citadella.’

Its construction started at the beginning of seventeenth century under the viceroyalty of Fernando Ruiz de Castro, as a building which would house the military and political power in the city. The enormous city of Naples with its multitude of buildings and streets spreads behind the new composite structure of the ‘citadella’. While the city is rendered from an all-encompassing aerial viewpoint, the perspective is changed in the lower part of the map. Here the viewer is positioned close to numerous ships that leave the city or come into the port. Barrata’s map shows a vast city with ports bustling with activity. It stresses urban density and the intensity of its communications with other places.

The inhabitants of the city were numerous. In his Description of the Kingdom of Naples, Enrico Bacco, gives an account of the increasing number of people living in Naples who require ever-growing quantities of supplies for the city’s day to day operation:

Already, in a calculation made in 1614, the number of souls was found to exceed 167,972. But today it is found to have grown so much more, and

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17 Ibid., 88.
the number of hearths to sixty thousand, so that to give five to a hearth more or less, and no more, there are 500,000 people. Add to them the monasteries and ecclesiastics and the foreigners, and those who visit the city at every hour, besides those who come and go and do not make an ordinary residence, who increase in great numbers, so that every day in the city and in the borghi they eat more than six thousand *tomoli* of grain. This does not include those who make bread at home, which is a large part, or the different clerics, religious, or nuns who are numerous.\(^\text{18}\)

Anxiety about the possible shortage of grain correlated with the increased price of bread articulated various tensions within the city. It is this anxiety that gave initial impetus to the uprising in 1585, but the subsequent form and direction of this uprising played out more complex social tensions present between the various groups in Napolitan society: nobility, groups with diverse financial and political power within the increasingly differentiated bourgeoisie, the poor, and the Spanish government.\(^\text{19}\) Both the memory of the uprising and the severe repression that followed the revolt were still present when Caravaggio came to Naples.

While the direct cause of the uprising of 1585 was the increased price of bread in the city, the underlying cause was the long-term discrepancy between income and prices that occurred in this period throughout Mediterranean area of Europe.\(^\text{20}\) This increasing pauperisation did not affect all social groups and strata. This was also a time when some members of high bourgeoisie actually consolidated their financial power.\(^\text{21}\) These processes were articulated in Naples through the conjectures of disparate interests of Spanish viceregal rule, the power and interests of aristocracy, very heterogeneous

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\(^{19}\) Villari *Revolt*, 22.

\(^{20}\) Vilari *Révolt*, 22.

bourgeoisie, increasingly pauperised small craftsmen, boatmen or shopkeepers and the large groups of the poor often from outside of the city – the lazzaroni.  

While the Spanish government strove to increase control of the state over possessions in Italy, (Milan, Naples, Palermo, Cagliari) the rule of the viceroy was necessarily mediated by the local nobles. In the three kingdoms of Naples, Sicily and Sardinia, constitutional traditions of administrative organisation formed the basis of de facto rules about the partnership between feudal aristocracy and sovereign power. “It was for the king to make laws, but how these laws were to be interpreted and applied depended on the local magistrates and lawyers.” The interpretation was especially relativised in relation to the economy and fiscal policies. The main element in Spanish fiscal policy in Naples was foscatico, or funzioni fiscali. It was a repartition tax, assigned to communities in direct proportion to the number of households. However, as the census was rarely renewed and the fluctuation of the population large, the levy was unevenly distributed. In the middle of the sixteenth century indirect taxation exhort the strongest fiscal pressure on the Napolitan kingdom. Indirect taxation raised the prices of popularly consumed goods, and the inhabitants of the city of Naples bore a disproportionate amount of these taxes. This eventually led to a permanent state of bankruptcy in the middle of seventeenth century. As the private financiers seized the various sources of income, including the tax collection, the barons severely abused the

23 Carlo Carpa “The Italian States in the Early Modern Period” 422.
24 Ibid., 422.
25 Ibid., 424.
26 Ibid., 424.
27 Ibid., 424.
28 Ibid., 424.
peasants on their manors.\textsuperscript{29} In Naples itself, the discrepancy between the growth of the population and the rate of production led to fierce battles against immigration from the surrounding areas.\textsuperscript{30} Attempts to constrain the crowds by legal means had an underlying agenda to strengthen the link between the privileged bourgeoisie and the ruling aristocracy.\textsuperscript{31} As the “People’s” representatives endorsed such a link the institutions of the People suffered serious blows. Reaction to these developments was ritually played out in the 1585 lynching of the People’s representative Giovan Vincenzo Starace:

Starace’s body was dragged through the streets, his corpse mutilated and emasculated, his house was sacked. The ritual was to have been completed by burning Starace’s house; by this ‘almost as if to make a sacrifice to God’, the rebels intended to kill the women of the house. In the event, however they limited themselves to carrying away the furnishings (which had a value, according to the papal nuncio, of 25,000 ducats). This gesture had a symbolic significance for ‘they did not sack the house out of a desire to steal’, the objects taken away were distributed to monasteries.\textsuperscript{32}

This ritual reversal lynching included many elements of the triumphal procession.\textsuperscript{33} The procession of rioting Napolitans went first through the working class district, the Sellaria, then along the main lines to end up in front of viceroy’s palace.\textsuperscript{34} The revolt was directed both against bourgeois privilege and against Spanish rule.\textsuperscript{35} While previously demands for autonomy from the Spanish rule circulated mainly in aristocratic spheres, here they were taken up by the popular uprising.\textsuperscript{36} Extensive repression followed the uprising.

Concerned with the political insurrections and repercussions in other areas, notably

\textsuperscript{29} Ibid., 425.
\textsuperscript{30} Ibid., 425.
\textsuperscript{31} Villari, Revolt, 23.
\textsuperscript{32} Ibid., 24.
\textsuperscript{34} Villari. Revolt 25.
\textsuperscript{35} Ibid, 26–27 passim.
Flanders, the authorities captured several hundred people, some sentenced to death others tortured and some sent to galleys. Around 12,000 fled the city. While the uprising took up the form of a ritual procession in order to subvert its messages and values, the repression which followed, referred in turn to the ritualised actions of the revolt. "The repression was made as terrifying as possible by the revival of spectacular systems of torture, which at that time were rarely adopted in penal practice. These represented an original and more cruel form of the rites of the revolt." While direct statements related to the revolt were suppressed, urban legends circulated. Rumours about a cart of fire running through the city, a man on horseback with black torches, and screaming heads of the executed, spread throughout the city. Thorough investigations were directed toward uncovering the principal motivators of the revolt and the people who gave explicitly political overtones to the uprising. Among them was a pharmacist Giovan Leonardo Pisano, who, through his brother Giovan Antonio Pisano, professor of medicine at the University of Naples and one of the teachers of Giovan Battista Della Porta, had contacts in circles dedicated to natural philosophy.

The rioting crowds on the streets were not the only threat to the heterogeneous rule of the Spanish, Italian barons, and financial bourgeoisie. Philosophical and scientific debates in Italy, and especially in Naples proved threatening to the interests of groups in power. They were very closely monitored. The academies, which flourished in seventeenth century Naples, were suspected of fostering political conspiracy. Here, the

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36 On issues related to urban aristocracy see Villari, Revolt, 8. On anti Spanish revolt see Villari, Revolt, 27.
37 Ibid., 28.
38 Ibid., 28.
39 Ibid., 29.
40 Ibid., 29. Contact with the circles of Della Porta and also through the owner of great collection Ferrante Imperato. Discussed both by Villari and William Eamon, "Natural Magic and Utopia in the Cinquecento: Campanella, the Della Porta Circle, and the Revolt of Calabria" passim.
study of the philosophy of antiquity was tied to the study of nature. An interest in nature coupled with a revival of interest in ancient philosophy especially of stoic notions of the universe as a living entity, prompted requests toward the ‘restoration of nature’ in all spheres of human life as a corrective of the actual social organisation.\textsuperscript{41} Nature was regarded as a source of order against which to measure human institutions.\textsuperscript{42} Human institutions observed in the sixteenth and seventeenth century Naples did not withstand the scrutiny of Napolitan academies dedicated to natural philosophy.

The influence of natural philosophy was nowhere more evident than in the failed uprising led by Tommaso Campanella (1568-1639) almost fifteen years after the 1585 uprising which led to Starace’s lynching. Campanella integrated natural philosophy and millenarian prophecy with a radical request for the establishment of an ideal society.\textsuperscript{43} Campanella turned away from the Aristotelian tradition, which had gained importance during the Counter-reformation, toward the sensate philosophy of Bernardino Telesio (1509 – 1588). In his formulations of new sensate philosophy, Telesio takes up the stoic teaching of \textit{pneuma} to criticise Aristotelian hylomorphism.\textsuperscript{44} Campanella prided himself in belonging to the philosophical currents of Magna Graecia – Pytagoras, Empedocles, Thomas Aquinas, Giordano Bruno and Bernardino Telesio.\textsuperscript{45} Ancient philosophy, and particularly, stoicism, was revived in the process of articulating a new understanding about the physical universe. This trend was always linked to requests for political

\textsuperscript{41} Ibid., 375.
\textsuperscript{42} Ibid., 375, also D. P. Walker \textit{Spiritual and Demonic Magic from Ficino to Campanella}, (London, University of Notre Dame Press, 1975) 203-223.
\textsuperscript{43} Eamon, “Natural Magic and Utopia in the Cinquecento” 370.
reforms. Naples had a long tradition of political demands for social reforms based on natural philosophy.⁴⁶

Naples is one of the centres where the debate between post-tridentine Aristotelianism and new currents of natural philosophy were taking place. The Neapolitan lawyer, Giacomo Antonio Marta, argued for Aristotelian principles, provoking Tommaso Campanella to write his *Philosophia Sensibus Demonstrata*, in defence of Telesianism.⁴⁷ This work was written in the Calabrian countryside in 1587. In 1589 Campanella moved to Naples to stay in the Dominican monastery San Domenico Maggiore.⁴⁸ This monastery along with the San Pietro Martire, was the site of violent attempts to reorganise monastic life 1586 and again in 1594, as these two monasteries, in particular, became a fertile ground for all kinds of scientific and philosophical enquiries.⁴⁹ Not just Campanella but also Giordano Bruno lived and worked in this monastery closely related to the Neapolitan university.⁵⁰ As much as this clash expresses a struggle over theological and philosophical issues, it also articulates struggle within the social life of the city, as the Neapolitan nobles requested the reform of the monasteries.⁵¹ At the same time, the People’s representatives vehemently supported the monks.⁵² Once in Naples, Caravaggio would also work on the commission for the monastery San Domenico Maggiore painting *The Flagellation*. (Fig. 3) Moreover, Caravaggio’s

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⁴⁵ Eamon, “Natural Magic and Utopia in the Cinqucento” 371 Hylomorphism, which posits the distinction between matter and form provided the basis for the philosophy of Thomas Aquinas which at this time, during counter-reformation, gained new prominence.
⁴⁶ Eamon, “Natural Magic and Utopia in the Cinqucento” 370.
⁴⁸ Ibid., 20.
⁴⁹ Villari, *Revolt*, 42.
⁵¹ Villari *Revolt*, 43.
⁵² Villari *Revolt*, 44.
Madonna of the Rosary (Fig. 4) painted in Naples depicts the Virgin surrounded by St. Dominic and St Peter Martyr. The visual conjectures of this image are coextensive with the inclusive popular worship of the Madonna and the activities of the Dominican order. The social clashes within the city became the medium through which the disputes of counterreformation were fought. The theoretical formulations of these disputes followed, on the one hand, attempts to formulate the new philosophical currents such as Telesianism, on the other, attempts to contain them.

Campanella hoped to establish a theocratic commune, described in his City of the Sun, with the help of the heterogenous crowd which included libertine Dominicans, immigrants, heretics and bandits. Since his first arrival to Naples, he was also in contact with Della Porta’s circle. The conjectures of the investigations in the realm of natural philosophy and demands for social change emerge out of the text written by Tommaso Campanella:

Consequently when I consulted old histories concerning the Kingdom of Naples, which always had upheavals [revoluzone] with beginning, middle, and end in short under diverse families, it occurred to me that revolution [mutazione] ought to happen soon furthermore when I spoke to the people, they seemed to complain of the ministers of the kingdom... Afterwards when reasoning with several astrologers – especially with the Neapolitan Giulio Cortese, Col Antonio Stigliola, great mathematician, and Giovan Paolo Vernaleone – all in Naples three years ago – I understood from them that political revolution [mutazione di stato] ought to occur to us.

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The term *mutazione* is to signify a far-reaching cosmological change, and the political change would be one among other manifestations of such change. This cosmic change was supposed to lead to another, purified and more constant world.\(^{56}\)

But divination was not limited to the circles that tried to discern the rules of nature and thus acquire ability to predict future events based on astrology. Popular divination and magic usually practised by women was condemned and persecuted by the church. "Inquisitorial trials of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries reveal that the church regard popular divination as a particularly dangerous form of magic, in part, perhaps, because of its tendency to encourage openness toward political novelties."\(^{57}\) The riots in Naples touch upon the various points in the social stratification of the city. They also tie into the multiple currents of thought and conceptualisation both of society and the universe. Some of these conceptualisations belonged to the aristocratic learned societies, while others link with street and popular divination.

The disparate interests that produced such conflicting political and social space presented a serious challenge for the Spanish government. The appointment of a Neapolitan viceroy was one of the most important events in Spanish politics.\(^{58}\) The viceroy enjoyed significant independence in his rule over twelve provinces of more than two million inhabitants, two hundred thirty nobles above the rank of baron, twenty one archbishoprics and more than one hundred bishoprics.\(^{59}\) The court of Spanish viceroys of Naples was promoted as a site of classical erudition and knowledge about the most current tendencies in literature, attracting the interest of ambitious scholars with every

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\(^{56}\) Ibid., 35.

\(^{57}\) Eamon, "Natural Magic and Utopia in the Cinqucento" 388.

Don Fernando Ruiz de Castro Conde de Lemos encouraged literary academies.  

The presence of Spanish viceroys was visible within the city through their architectural activities. Both Lemos and Benavente sought not just to mark their presence but to insert such markers within specific, highly charged sites. The renovation of the burial crypt of St Andrew in Amalfi cathedral is case in point. The inscription that commemorates this renovation acknowledges both Conde de Lemos, and Don Juan Alfonso Pimental y Herrera, Conde de Benavente for their role in renovation. It is Conde de Benavente who took Caravaggio’s *Crucifixion of St Andrew* to Spain in 1610, at the end of his mandate.  

From the thirteen century onwards, Amalfi had been an important site for the veneration of St Andrew. During this time his bones were taken from Constantinople after the city was pillaged by Crusaders. Philip III, Spanish king from the house of Hapsburg approved the renovation of St Andrew’s crypt at the Cathedral of Amalfi. St Andrew was a patron saint of the Spanish ruling family, inherited from the Burgundian court. Philip the Good of Burgundy, declared St. Andrew the patron saint of his family and court. From Burgundy this tradition spread to the Spanish Hapsburgs – the ruling house of Spain at this time also ruling over Naples, having come into Spanish possession in 1503. The renovation of the crypt in Amalfi inserted a marker of state authority upon the site of a locally venerated saint. While the insertion of such markers

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59 Ibid., 291.  
60 Ibid., 291.  
61 Ibid., 297.  
62 Ibid., 3.  
63 Ibid., 3.  
64 Ibid., 3.  
66 Ibid., 18.
within the city through architectural works and renovations was part of the Spanish viceroys self-fashioning, this specific instance argues for the alignment of the Spanish royal house with the crowds that seek the protection of the saint.\footnote{Here, I am using Stephen Greenblatt’s concept of self-fashioning as a power to control the identity. See Stephen Greenblatt, \textit{Renaissance Self-Fashioning, From More to Shakespeare}, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980) 1-9 passim.} This alignment would also present Spanish Habsburgs as rulers with a popular mandate, indirectly positioned against the Italian nobility known for baronial abuses. Thus local veneration of Andrew emerges both as a site of popular worship and as a site where the Spanish royal patronage is publicised. The renovation of Andrew’s burial crypt demonstrates the symbolic instruments of Spanish rule, which sought urban markers to assert its presence.
Political Philosophy

The conflictual space of Naples with so many tensions within all spheres of urban life presented a considerable challenge to the viceroys. The possibility of positive knowledge which would provide the means for social navigation in high politics was deemed necessary, and found in the debates of Spanish political philosophy. Jesuit Pedro de Ribadeneyra, not only published *Libro de las Vidas de los Sanctos* — one of the textual sources for the iconography of Caravaggio’s *Crucifixion of St Andrew*, but also engaged in political philosophy. One of the most noticeable characteristics of Spanish political philosophy at the end of sixteenth and the beginning of seventeenth centuries is its anti-Machiavellian orientation, with Ribadeneyra as one of the most prominent voices in this current. The Spanish authors dispute with Machavelli was concentrated upon two main issues: firstly, the subordination of religion to the state and secondly amorality. However, as Donald W. Bleznick has shown, the overt attack on Machiavelli did not prevent Spanish authors from allowing repression and deception to covertly enter their political philosophy, albeit only when necessary, and used cautiously to avoid the establishment of an unjust and therefore and un-Christian rule:

Mariana recommended the use of guile to pacify the domestic uprising which might occur when people lose their fear and respect of the prince. Then, when things quiet down, he proposed fit punishment for the leaders of the rebellion. He felt that it was not proper for the king to lie but admitted that it was necessary to hide the truth in order to administer the republic more easily and to gain for himself the affection of his subjects.

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68 Pedro de Ribadeneyra, *The Lives of Saints with Other Feasts of the Year According to the Roman Calendar*, (St. Omers: Joachim Carlier, 1669) 903-908 passim.

69 See Pedro de Ribadeneyra, *Trattato della Religione e Virtuti che Tener deue il Principe Christiano per Gouernare e Conservare i Suoi Stati: Contra quel, che Nicolò Macchiavelli, Dannato Auttore, & i Politici (Cosi Indegnamente Chiamati) di Questo Tempo Empiamente Insegnano*, (Genova: Appresso Giosseffo Pauoni, 1598) passim.


71 Ibid., 546.
The puritanic Ribadeneira advised that the prince live with great secrecy and dissimulation to protect himself from his enemies, but he stipulated that this had to be done in such a manner that the prince did not make himself a disciple of Machiavelli nor lose sight of Christian simplicity.\(^{72}\)

Ideas close to Machiavelli's circulated profusely in Spanish political philosophy, but disavowal would constantly accompany this circulation.

Lipsius's works provided the opening in this theoretical impasse. Justus Lipsius (1547-1606) blended the classical doctrines of statecraft based on Tacitus and Seneca with traditional Christian values.\(^{73}\) It is this melange that would prove not only acceptable but fundamental for the formulation of the Spanish policies. Lipsius first gained respect in intellectual centres of Madrid and Seville, for "his terse Latin and religious Piety," especially after his final conversion from Protestantism to Catholicism in 1591.\(^{74}\) His works became popular both as valuable directions in the statecraft and as sources of literary pleasure. They provided historical studies, which would examine "hidden motivations of statesmen so that the able practitioner of statecraft might discern the intentions of spokesman for rival states."\(^{75}\) "Soon Lipsius' insight into the affairs of men were regarded by certain Spaniards as 'unique and singular on earth' and his piercing analysis earned him the honourable title of the "lynx-eyed."

The ability of the sharp and discerning gaze of the lynx to extract the most pertinent information was the most prestigious attribute. In Naples itself, this reference to the precision of vision is found in the name of Academia dei Lincei, the academy of the lynx-eyed, founded in 1603 by

\(^{72}\) Ibid., 548-549.


\(^{74}\) Corbett, "The Cult of Lipsius", 143-150, passim.

\(^{75}\) Ibid., 141.
Federico Cesi. The Academy sought to articulate new knowledge that would permit investigation into the order and organisation of nature. It appears that the clarity of gaze was valued in the articulation of both political and natural philosophy. But the multiple currents of political and natural philosophy did not always run parallel. Their conflicts were keenly felt in Naples itself.

**Caravaggio’s Arrival**

Both Conde de Lemos and Conde de Benavente were extremely keen on acquiring paintings by Caravaggio, who came to Naples with the reputation of a controversial but also boldly innovative painter. Caravaggio’s reputation as a painter reached the city before his hasty and unexpected arrival. The painter fled from Rome after a violent quarrel. The account of these events was recorded in the correspondence between Fabio Massetti and Este family. In his letter from May 31st 1606, Fabio Massetti writes:

“Caravaggio, the painter left Rome badly wounded, having killed on Sunday night a man who had provoked him to a quarrel. I am told that he set out in the direction of Florence and that possibly he may proceed to Modena.” The incident was recorded in police archives as well on May 31st 1606.

76 Ibid., 143.
78 Green, “The Literary Court” 297.
79 Friedlaender, *Caravaggio Studies*, 312.
over a game involving 10 scudi which the dead man had won from the painter.\textsuperscript{80}

The documents found in the historical archive of the Bank of Naples provide the basis for the reconstruction of Caravaggio’s activities during his first sojourn in Naples. The document records the payment of two hundred ducats received from Nicolò Radolovich, grain merchant from Bari, for a painting of \textit{Virgin with a Child with San Domenico and San Francesco}.\textsuperscript{81} At the end of September and first days of October of 1606, Caravaggio was in Naples. The first commission for a painting came immediately after his arrival from the Radolovich family. The canvas was to be finished by December. According to Vincenzo Pacelli it was “a composition half way between the \textit{Madonna of the Rosary}, which shows the group of Madonna with Child surrounded by figures of saints, and the \textit{Seven Acts of Mercy}, (Fig. 5) for Pio Monte.”\textsuperscript{82} In the \textit{Seven Acts of Mercy}, which was finished by the 9\textsuperscript{th} of January 1607, the Virgin was shown with child and the glory of angels.\textsuperscript{83} That Caravaggio received his first commission immediately after his arrival attests to his reputation and the interest in his works. Pacelli argues that the wider exchange between Rome and Naples brought word about Caravaggio’s innovative works.\textsuperscript{84} The possible circulation of copies and originals would also significantly contribute to the artist’s reputation.\textsuperscript{85} Caravaggio received two

\textsuperscript{80} Ibid., 286.
\textsuperscript{81} Vincenzo Pacelli “New Documents concerning Caravaggio in Naples” \textit{Burlington Magazine} 1977, v.119, 897, 819-829, 819.
\textsuperscript{82} Ibid., 819.
\textsuperscript{83} Ibid., 819.
\textsuperscript{84} Ibid., 819.
\textsuperscript{85} Pacelli argues that the Jesuits would not welcome Caravaggio based on the record of trial found in baglione, about Caravaggio’s candidature to paint a Resurrection of Christ for the Church of Gesù in Rome, which was refused.
payments from de Franchis family, 250 and 40,09 ducats. It cannot be established with
certitude, but it is likely that the payment was made for the Flagellation painted for San
Domenico Maggiore as a commission of the de Franchis family. In the literature that
discusses the changes of Caravaggio’s approach to painting in terms of its visual
language, the Flagellation was considered as an example of his ‘classical’ period, not
guilty of the excessive naturalism and lack of decorum which were the target of so much
critique.

Pacelli considers the Crucifixion of St Andrew as a work closely related to the
Flagellation due to stylistic similarities such the draperies on the executioner and Andrew
compared to the ones on Christ in the Flagellation. Pacelli also discusses the copies of
Caravaggio’s Crucifixion of St Andrew, since he found the document about the payment
to Louis Finson, one of northern followers of Caravaggio, dated in 1608, which would
ascertain his presence in Naples. Previously, the main objection to the attribution of this
painting to Finson was the lack of evidence that he was in Naples prior to 1612. In that
case Finson would have been unable to see the painting that Conde de Benavente took
with him to Spain in 1510. Pacelli’s discussion indirectly dates the painting of the
Crucifixion of St Andrew during Caravaggio’s first sojourn in Naples. However, Finson’s
copy is not the only one. While Tzeutschler Lurie’s and Denis Mahon’s argument that the
painting now owned by the Cleveland Museum is painted by Caravaggio is generally
accepted, other copies exist. Three versions of the Crucifixion of St Andrew can be found
in Switzerland, (formerly in the Back-Vega collection in Vienna and probably painted by

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86 Ibid., 820.
87 Ibid., 820.
88 Benedict Nicolson, “Caravaggio and the Caravaggesques: Some Recent Research,” Burlington
Finson), the Musée des Beaux-Arts in Dijon, and the Museo Provincial de Santa Cruz in Toledo. These copies are witness to the resonance of Caravaggio’s *Crucifixion of St Andrew*, and their circulation links this painting to increasingly diverse social spaces. In this sense it parallels Caravaggio’s links to the city of Naples and various patrons. The history of the commissions that Caravaggio got upon his sudden arrival in the city shows his celebrated position that only acquired more prestige accompanied by the higher prices of his paintings. This history, however, also shows his position as a new comer to the city, a position fraught with uncertainties. During this first sojourn in Naples Caravaggio got commissions from patrons that played crucial roles in Neapolitan society, but carried with them links to disparate and often contradictory interests. His activity slices into city conflicts where all of his patrons such as the Dominican monasteries, increasingly influential bourgeoisie, or the Spanish viceroy put forward certain claims through patronage. However none of these claims are entirely conveyed through the paintings. There is always a residue, which emerges through the ways Caravaggio rendered his depiction of any of the commissioned themes. The inquiry into his procedures and visual vocabulary thus reveals new conjunctions of narratives and the urban space.

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89 Ibid., 825.
90 Tzeutscheler Lurie and Denis Mahon, “Caravaggio’s Crucifixion of St Andrew” 3.
CHAPTER II – Rectification through Punishment

As much as the uprising in 1585 took ritualised form, its repression was conveyed through the high visibility of punishment:

These exemplary executions of so many of the poor, many of them not deserving punishment, have sown such terror in the hearts of the people that, while such measures will certainly not have made the people better disposed to the royal government, these sights will so have terrified their minds, and likewise their tongues, that I do not think they will contemplate a new commotion for any reason whatever.\(^{91}\)

The visible drama of punishment was translated into the permanent marker in urban space. To ensure the persistence of this memory the house of the pharmacist Giovan Leonardo Pisano was razed to the ground. It was replaced by a monument which displayed the body parts of executed citizens.\(^{92}\) The memory and visibility of the punished body was to guarantee the quiet submission of the unruly Napolitan crowd prone to revolt. As a narrative about the possibility of riot, and failed attempt to prevent it, Caravaggio’s *Crucifixion of St Andrew* proffers the same crux, which was present in the urban space itself. As a narrative about the enactment of punishment gone wrong, the unpredictable consequences of Andrew’s refusal of administrative, judicial and executive authority, the image refers to the established ideal of penal procedures and their social operation.

In the ideal ordering of punishment, the punished body is situated in a gap, becoming a sign of crisis and revealing itself as a site of knotted human relations. The punished enters the realm of social representation, being transformed into a sign of

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\(^{92}\) Ibid. 29.
crisis.\textsuperscript{93} The victim of punishment becomes doubled, re-presented both as a sign of crisis and as the narrow passage toward its resolution. As Siebers argues, "the accused individual embraces a series of sacred extremes, seemingly oscillating between two contradictory positions.\textsuperscript{94} The accused becomes the identified site of disorder, and her or his expulsion and punishment becomes the instrument of the re-establishment of order. The punishment becomes a "\textit{sacra rappresentazione}.\textsuperscript{95} The establishment of order in the moments of crisis is carried out through the punished body of the transgressor.

The punishment is the site where the political, social, and religious intersect:

...while political Power was aiming to respond to an offence by exercising its own terrible force, while it was "rectifying disorder" through a terrifying example which illustrated its own inviolability, at that same moment the fact that the condemned man accepted his punishment, that he recognized the gravity of his offence (as something which violated a system of higher values), the fact that he expressed repentance at the very moment he was about to pay the terrible price for his crimes -- all of this meant the execution was transfigured into a sacrifice. The execution became part of the "sacred world," it formed part of the "divine plan." It was the highest, the most difficult example of an \textit{ars moriendi}, and the most edifying: the grateful acceptance of torment was a way of redeeming the faults of a life that had failed to follow the duty of \textit{bene vivendi}.\textsuperscript{96}

Thus the sacred contradictions of the accused body that is identified as a source both of violence and disorder and the possibility of their rectification became exemplified to the extreme in the act of punishment. Through this process the transgressive and punished body is extracted from the social tissue. Various ritualised operations reassert the difference of a transgressive body and integrate it as a new, separate category. Thus, the body travels from mimesis to representation, from a sameness, from being similar to any

\textsuperscript{93} Tobin Siebers, \textit{The Mirror of Medusa}, (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1983) 21.
\textsuperscript{94} Ibid., 83.
other body on the street, in the port or in the market, to an assertion of radical difference. Such difference provides the basis for the definition of community. But, in the *Crucifixion of St. Andrew*, this orderly enactment of punishment has gone wrong. Already in the apocryphal story the social mechanism of punishment is laid bare and subverted by the threat of communal uprising. The radical difference of the saintly body in the narrative of Andrew's death is recognised as part of community. In this case punishment is experienced as a loss, as a painful severance, that should not occur. Through his radical will for the event of his death Andrew uncovered the nature of punishment as an irreparable tear inflicted on the social body.

**Doubt - David and Goliath**

Doubt about the mechanism of punishment as the possibility to rectify disorder and re-establish the wholeness of the social body is already manifest in Caravaggio’s *David with the Head of Goliath*, painted in 1605-1606.97 (Fig. 6) Already in this painting we witness pairing of executioner and executed, conveyed in an even more radical way than in the *Crucifixion of St Andrew*. In *David with the Head of Goliath*, this doubt is present through the assertion of undeniable links between the executioner and the

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96 Puppi *Torment in Art*, 51.
97 Michel Foucault in *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, identifies the process which locates the process of rectification into the punished body of transgressor. Public execution belongs to the series of rituals which reassert the power through the reproduction of the crime and its anullement in the public punishment. Seventeenth century witnesses the practice of the sovereign’s avenging of the crime, which is never just directed toward the offended person, but always also against the sovereign and therefore requesting the vengeance even in cases when no individual has been injured. See Foucault 47. It is the power of the sovereign that is to be present in the community in the unrestrained form and reasserted through the destroyed body of the criminal, as a guarantee of the community’s unity and protection. See Foucault 50 But seventeenth century witnesses different requests for the changes in penal procedures leading to what Foucault calls disciplining regimes which produce docile bodies. See Foucault 135-194 passim. Part of this process is the changed attitude toward the body of the criminal which becomes the object of pity. The punishment becomes directed not against the body but against life taken in the abstract sense, as the right to exist. The penal procedures become non corporeal directed either toward the change of the criminal or toward his or her inevitable but invisible removal from society. See Foucault 13. Caravaggio’s *David with the Head of Goliath* presents a tangent to these processes, rather as a disturbing
executed. In this painting David is not positioned as the abstract instrument of law whose individual will becomes displaced in the enactment of punishment. While in the *Crucifixion of St Andrew* we never get to see the executioner's face, in *David with the Head of Goliath* this face is as present as the face of the victim. The links are direct, not mediated through the abstraction of the law or presence of state authority. The rupture in social tissue of community, inflicted by the punishment is present in both paintings. However in the *Crucifixion of St Andrew* the narrative is complicated by insertion of the state authority, leading to the multiplication of the social relations represented in the painting. The doubt present in *David with the head of Goliath* is the doubt about the operation of punishment as a cathartic moment when the community would ideally be resituated within reinforced boundaries. Already present as doubt about punishment as a protection of community, this doubt is made more complex through the insertion of state authority.

Caravaggio’s *David with the Head of Goliath* brings together all the differences and categorisations that define a community - defender, enemy; inside, outside; pure and defiled - only to begin their erosion and questioning. Painting his self-portrait as the slain Goliath, Caravaggio takes on his own decapitation, presenting, in this image, his own body as the punished body. The identification of Caravaggio's self portrait as the decapitated head of Goliath has been discussed since the seventeenth century, and is now generally accepted. The identification of Caravaggio's self portrait as the decapitated head of Goliath has been discussed since the seventeenth century, and is now generally accepted. The Age of Caravaggio. Catalog (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art: Electa/Rizzoli), 338. By lending his likeness to the protagonists of various narratives, Caravaggio follows the already existing tradition as a “self projection in a fictional context, that is to say in historia,” a procedé that has already been recorded in the accounts of the classical Greek art. Victor Stochita, The Self-Aware Image: An Insight into Early Modern Meta-Painting, (Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997) My analysis of this painting is based on Louis Marin's compelling analysis of this image in his To destroy painting, (Chicago : University of Chicago Press, 1995) 162.
sphere of the excluded ones, whose exclusion bounds and defines the society. As Goliath, Caravaggio takes on the role of the uncanny individual whose punishment would solidify the orders of the chosen people. It is precisely at the moment when social representation is brought to the fore, asserting the different natures of the transgressor and the punisher, that the image turns on itself, insisting on the reflection of Goliath’s face within David’s. What are their similarities, differences and identities? They are situated differently in the story, and the viewers see them positioned differently, yet their resemblance cannot be obliterated.

Caravaggio portrays the face of the young David as an echo of Goliath’s decapitated head, producing a moment of uncertainty about their identity, difference, and similarity through a series of repetitions of facial features. The executioner becomes the anamorphotic image of the victim, his reflection, and double. The painful crease of their respective right eyebrows is the same in both faces, as is the outline of the nose that emerges out of shadow. At the moment of the greatest difference between the slain enemy and the victorious young David, Caravaggio inserts the markers of their similarity. Even after Goliath’s double death, first inflicted by the stone that hit his forehead and then secured by the severing of his head, his head still looks alive. His expression is one of intense contemplation, marked by the unfocused eyes that characterise the gaze directed inward. But, Caravaggio complicates the narrative, taking the reflective look not from the position of the victorious hero but from that of the fallen victim. The image splices the moment just before the death occurs with its already accomplished finality complicating the notions of punishment, and the relationship between the community and the punished body.
Through the ritual of punishment, the transgressor ceases to be just the representation of crisis, but becomes also the representation of its resolution entering the realm of sacred images, becoming a replica and a double.\textsuperscript{99} That the criminal’s face resembles any other face in the group that watches the execution might be troubling, and inconsistent with this nature of sacred representation. The mimesis that might subvert the representation must be hidden, covered, forgotten. However, Caravaggio’s \textit{David with the Head of Goliath} begets the site of exchange between the punished transgressor and the executioner. This exchange is brought about through the similarities between David’s and Goliath’s faces, through the repetitions introduced in the formal organisation of the image, and through the link established by the sword that has already cut one body and potentially cuts another. Once induced, this constant exchange cannot be suspended. It produces a space that allows simultaneous occupation of the role of punished transgressor and punisher.

In the moment just after he defeated the giant soldier of the inimical Philistine army, David could have expressed his victorious jubilation. David holds the sign - Goliath severed head situated within the painting as if on a \textit{clipeus} – that signifies the transformation of the threat, crisis, and danger of defeat into a victory offering - the promise of the future. Punishment could have been an occasion for catharsis in the defeat of the enemy that threatened this future. But here, in Caravaggio’s image, the repetitions, reflections, and similarities situate both the threat and the punishment within the interiority of the social body and psyche. Instead of a catharsis brought about by the victory, Caravaggio’s image shows the tears, located deep within the social tissue.

\textsuperscript{99} Michel Foucault, \textit{Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison} 38.
Instead of jubilant victory, this renewed infliction of the wound bursts the envelope of the body, reflecting in each face only the work of mourning.

**Infamy and the Abstraction of the Law**

In the *Crucifixion of St Andrew* doubt in punishment as the mechanism to reconstitute community attains new forms of visibility. The difficulty of representing doubt parallels the problem of representing the unrepresentable experience of change, the internal experience of paralysis, which affects the executioner’s body. Produced as the hardened embodiment of the law, the muscles of the executioner’s body are immobilised. The contradiction of their perfect form, which attests to the strength, agility, and mastery of movement, and the frozenness of this body, is tasked with visually presenting the internal corporeal experience of paralysis. Shooting off into social continuum the vector of this contradiction passes through the body of executioner, through its suspension and immobility to become the questioning of the law and its operation. Through the paradox of the suspended performative ability of this body, doubt about the legitimation of the executive authority is rendered visually representable.

Andrew’s body is pared with the executioner’s through the direct visibility of abstract conflict. Both bodies are extracted from the group and placed on the cross. The upper part of the image is reserved both for the punished body and the body of the executioner. In Caravaggio’s image this body cannot move. The executioner’s will has been doubly displaced, first by the abstract will of the law and the operation of executive power, and then by Andrew’s will invoking divine intervention. But even initially, as the embodiment, not of individual will, but of the abstraction of the law, the relation between the office of executioner and the judicial and governmental system was not a simple one.
The office of executioner is not entirely absorbed by the state power, although it is specifically in the early modern period that it underwent significant changes.

Throughout Europe, the period of early modern changes in social and state organisation and judicial procedures affected the conceptualisation of the executioner's position and status in society. While in the late medieval period the office of the executioner carried the stigma of infamy, in the early modern period legal steps were taken to protect this office from public rage. Medieval executioners had been marginalised in different ways: often they were physically harassed and insulted, contact with them was regarded as a source of pollution by contagion, and their use of space was restricted.\textsuperscript{100} Even public rage was bound by the avoidance of contact. When executioners were attacked they were usually stoned.\textsuperscript{101} The early modern period brought the ambivalence toward the executioner. While the stigma of infamy persisted, various powers were attributed to the executioner. They were viewed as persons with extraordinary and magical powers.\textsuperscript{102} The instruments of their trade were also imbued with magic, as well as the bodies of the condemned and executed.\textsuperscript{103} Furthermore, the increased legal regulation of the position of executioner brought more protection and higher pay.\textsuperscript{104} However, even this regulation of the office was not without its intrinsic ambiguity. The same legal authorities that sustained the system of punishment could disavow their complicity. There are legal documents that lay bare this process of disavowal:

\textsuperscript{101} Ibid., 18.
\textsuperscript{102} Ibid., 31.
\textsuperscript{103} Ibid., 30.
\textsuperscript{104} Ibid., 36.
An interesting document from Frankfurt shows the authorities denying complicity in the hangman’s actions. In 1446 the council decided that instead of being paid per execution, the executioner would henceforth receive a regular weekly salary. The motivation for this decision was stated as follows: ‘so that the council is not guilty of his activities, but that he is only an accomplice and servant of the court.’

It is around 1500 that the executioner’s office became institutionalised as part of the judicial system. At the same time notions of crime were increasingly legislated, following the development of inquisitorial judicial procedure. The executioner’s office became inscribed in the abstract operation of the judicial apparatus, and his actions became the abstract operation of the law. The notion of infamy shifted to marginalised bodies: “in the course of sixteen century whole social groups became criminalised: beggars, vagrants, prostitutes and marginal groups, and the poor in general.” In Caravaggio’s Crucifixion of St. Andrew, the two bodies extracted from the group at the foot of the cross, encircle the extremes of social continuum. The unconscious punished body is linked to the body that no longer operates with individual will, but as the abstraction of the law. Coupled in this way, the punished body and the body of the executioner – two extremes of the social continuum, abstraction of the law, and the unconsciousness of the body as a ‘thing’ - present the most dramatic rendering of the whole continuum.

Through the very materiality of the human body, Caravaggio’s Crucifixion of St Andrew injects paradoxes into the productive flux of social life. Specific physical features

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105 Ibid, 33.
106 Ibid, 36.
107 Ibid, 42.
108 Specific notion of the sovereignty in relation to body’s materiality is at this specific moment in transition see Jonathan Sawday, The Body Emblazoned: Dissection and the Human Body in Renaissance Culture, (New York: Routledge, 1995), 54-66 passim and 79-80 passim. See also Foucault, Discipline and Punish, 47.
of each of the bodies in this image are instances of the production, sustenance, interaction and destruction of the body in the social process. This process attains its foremost visibility through the representation of the punished, unconscious body as a 'thing' that can be manipulated, suspended, stretched and tied. While Andrew's will manifests itself as a social agent that intervenes in the ideal ordering of the punishment, despite the fear of bodily annihilation, it is this body that is the token of his social existence. Through the torment of the crucifixion, Andrew's body becomes constituted as a crux between two modes of being in the world, one bound to the operation of the positive law, the other to the promise of other possibilities to organise the community. Again, through this notion of corporeality and its close tie to the past experience of suffering on the cross that already has lasted three days, but is invested in what is yet to come, the temporality of the image is split. In this split both the past of the punishment that already had incited the protest, and the yet to come of Andrew's will which suspended the executive authority, the questioning of the present of positive law is enacted. This law and the agents of its enforcement are blocked, their authority rendered relative, both in the supposed universality of its value and in the supposed inevitability of its application.

The cross

The patibulum, the horizontal bar of the cross to which Andrew is affixed, diverges only slightly from the frame of the painting. This slight diagonal allows the right side of the cross to visually recede backward, opening the space of the representation. The position of the crossbar suggests the existence of space behind the painted surface of

Caravaggio's image. This visual space within the painting allows the figures in the lower part of the painting to encircle the cross. Their respective locations prompt the viewer to understand that the figure of Egeas is in front of the cross, and that the stunned man on the right and woman on the left are positioned behind the cross. And that is where the development of the internal visual space of Caravaggio's painting almost stops.

Without the hazy light on the right side of the painting, the density of the darkness would unambiguously close the background of the scene. Analysing the black space in Caravaggio's paintings, Louis Marin defines it as a "totally determined space – not an empty space, then, but one that is full, totally dense and closed." While the relation of the depicted light on the right side to the illumination of the scene remains unclear, it intersperses the darkness allowing the promise of the opening, and the possibility of space. This possibility would, however, remain vague, as the space might be suggested but not described. It is amorphous, especially in relation to the precisely defined folds of the executioner's white drapery or the metal plates and fastenings of Egeas's armour. But it is also amorphous in relation to the background on the other side of the painting where the density of the black approaches the surface. It is as if the background defines the space of Andrew's martyrdom coextensively with the slight diagonal of the patibulum.

Although it diverges from the strict horizontal, the crossbar does not prevent the full frontality of Andrew's figure. His body on the cross is swayed as its weight strains the tendons of his shoulders, and his ribs protrude. Still as this body is turned toward us, we witness fully this punishment, at the centre of Caravaggio's composition. The vertical stake of the cross is placed at the midpoint in relation to the frame. Viewed in such a way

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110 Louis Marin, *To Destroy Painting*, 160.
as a frontal depiction of crucifixion, this rendering of Andrew’s martyrdom, recalls the images of another crucifixion – the crucifixion of Christ.
This type of Latin cross is not usually chosen for the depictions of Andrew’s martyrdom. Peter Paul Rubens chose the usual form of the cross as the x shaped *crux decussate*, for his rendering of this theme (Fig. 7). Discussions about the specific choice of Latin cross were initiated by Perez Sanches who disputed the identification of the painting with the one mentioned by Giovanni Pietro Bellori, precisely because of the unusual shape of the cross. Responding to the views expressed by Perez Sanchez, Benedict Nicolson argued for the identification of the painting as Caravaggio’s *Crucifixion of St Andrew*, bringing into the debate both textual sources and several visual precedents. Nicolson, provides other contemporary depictions of the *Crucifixion of St Andrew* upon a Latin cross, such as the one in a Venetian publication of *Legendario dalle Vite de’ Santi*, from 1600 (Fig. 8). Subsequently Tzeutschler Lurie and Mahon have brought into the debate other discussions of the cross written by Joannes Molanus, the sixteen century scholar. Molanus declared the form of *crux decussate* as an erroneous depiction of the crucifixion of St Andrew. However it is the writing of Justus Lipsius, circulated in the court in Valladolid, that provided the direct textual justification for the choice of Latin cross, in his book *De Cruce Libri Tres*. Thus the narrative of St. Andrew’s death, depicted in Caravaggio’s painting, is an updated version, which closely follows the most current debates in classical erudition. While recognition of classical reference presupposes knowledge of the text and the debates that surround Lipsius’s studies, another type of knowledge and experience would follow different trajectories of memory.

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113 Tzeutschler Lurie and Denis Mahon, “Caravaggio’s Crucifixion of St Andrew,” 12.
Resonating through the memory of numerous, and ubiquitous images of the crucified body of Christ, the formal characteristics of Caravaggio’s rendering of Andrew’s martyrdom recall a long tradition of devotional image – the icon. The visual meditation present in the religious life long before the Counter-reformation had already established the procedures for linking sacred histories to the lived space.\(^{115}\) The narrative is made present through the visual image more insistently than through the textual image. This making of sacred history into a present experience justified the making of the image, as “church authors maintained that the eye tends to be impressed easier than the forgetful ear, hence the image seemed better than text to stir up lazy feelings.”\(^{116}\) So multiple links are established in this process, the image to the text and both to the sacred narrative articulated through different media. Such links branch out to include other recognisable images and texts, which engage with related narratives.

What is the impact of this invocation of a recognisable image? How does this memory of another crucified body change and complicate the narrative? Currents of the history of the icon are many and complex. The debates, refutations and affirmations are numerous, flaring up at different points in history, most prominently during iconoclastic clashes in Byzantium over the course of the eight and ninth centuries, and than later with the reformation.\(^{117}\) Questions around the depiction of Christ’s crucifixion reached enormous theological complexity. Leaving aside the developments of the Byzantine theology of icon, which started with the works of John of Damascus, I would like to

\(^{114}\) Ibid. and Justus Lipsius De Cruce Libri Tres, ad Sacram Profanamque Historiam Utiles. (Lutetiae Parisionum: apud C. Beys, 1598) 60.


\(^{117}\) For the account of these processes see Hans Belting, Likeness and Presence, 144-163 passim.
focus more strictly on the issues surrounding the depiction of the crucified Christ.\textsuperscript{118}

Belting summarises the repercussions these debates had in the realm of the visual image:

The image of Crucifixion by necessity insisted on the question of who actually died on the cross, (or... did not die, because he had no body that could die).... When icons depict Christ with his eyes closed, they offer an argumentation in favour of his death, which he suffered by virtue of his human nature. Such panels do not, therefore, simply narrate an episode from the Passion of Christ but take up the discussion of the God-man as the Crucified.\textsuperscript{119}

Far from being just an argument on whether to depict Christ as living or as already dead, this debate reaches into the question of whether Christ's body was a human one, capable of being wounded, experiencing pain and ultimately mortality. Thus the debate around the depiction of the crucifixion, translates as the debate of the historical body of Christ.\textsuperscript{120}

The intricacies of this debate would resurface through the clashes of the Reformation and Counter-reformation. The discourse also broadened to include other figures and other bodies. More specifically, in relation to Caravaggio's paintings, the seventeenth century notions on the importance of death and the historical body in the economy of Christian salvation, had been discussed in relation to the historical body of the Virgin Mary. Pamela Askew, in her study of Caravaggio's \textit{Death of the Virgin}, (Fig. 9) asserts that the body of the Virgin capable of experiencing pain and mortality was not only acceptable but very much in line with the counter-reformation requirements ensuring the emotional poignancy of painting. According to Askew, the image was refused for a different reason.


\textsuperscript{119} Belting, \textit{Likeness and Presence}, 139.

\textsuperscript{120} Ibid., 139.
Askew argues against the view that the fathers of Santa Maria della Scala, withdrew the image commissioned for the tomb of Laerzio Cherubini, because the Virgin was depicted dead. She insists on the importance of the humanity in both Christ and the Virgin. The image, then was problematic for the fathers, not because the Virgin as already dead, and therefore a mortal body. Rather, it was problematic because she was shown as a ‘haloed commoner,’ instead of being represented as a queen of heaven - Regina Coeli, in line with the views of the Carmelite order. The insistence on the Virgin’s mortality inspires personal sympathy and identification, as well as present a “counterpropaganda to the Protestant objections to her cult.” The historical body of the Virgin, her suffering and mortality are one of the issues through which the theological clashes of reformation and counter-reformation have been fought.

How does the narrative of the historical, mortal, tormented body of Andrew fit into these considerations? What are the repercussions of the visual invocation of Christ’s crucifixion in Caravaggio’s image? What are the possible outcomes of the invited comparison between these images? Earlier, I inquired into the relation of the image and the textual sources for the non-traditional choice of the Latin cross. Now I would like to follow the relations of Caravaggio’s painting to other images. More specifically, to modes of viewing which take into consideration already established types of images, such as the devotional image, and narrative image, as well as new currents of genre painting.

At first it might appear that Caravaggio’s image contains layers which circulate around the central depiction of Andrew’s crucified body. This depiction of a Christian saint recalls the central image of the whole doctrine not just because the type of cross

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122 Ibid., 63.
chosen recalls the devotional images of the crucified Christ, but also because of Caravaggio’s compositional choices. Caravaggio places the cross at the very centre, in the manner usually deployed for the depiction of Christ’s crucified body. Through the doubling of the bodies on the cross, this iconic image is further developed as a depiction of the story from the last moments of Andrew’s life. It continues the tradition of visual rhetoric, already established for centuries, where character study (éthopoia), in which the feelings of a character are reimagined, is brought together with the description of the event (ekprasis). This procedure produces a narrative that poignantly depicts the lives of the saints, or other events crucial to the Christian doctrine of salvation.\textsuperscript{124} The doubling of the iconic and narrative image is further stressed in several ways. It is asserted not just through the choice of the historically unspecified draperies on the bodies of Andrew and the executioner, their proximity and extraction from the group below, but also through the same strong light cast on both bodies.

Following this train of thinking it would be easy to conclude that the protagonists of the story, depicted at the foot of the cross, only exist to secure the memory of the narrative of Andrew’s death by linking it to the present. After all the tradition recommending that meditation on events from the life of Christ be linked to familiar sites, objects and faces is already long established one.\textsuperscript{125} Read in these terms the different reactions of the group at the foot of the cross show various modes of engagement with the miraculous event.\textsuperscript{126}

\textsuperscript{123} Ibid., 24. 
\textsuperscript{125} Baxandall, \textit{Painting and experience}, 45-47. 
\textsuperscript{126} The visual display of various reaction to the miracle is suggested by Victor Stoichita in his analysis of visionary painting, Victor I. Stoichita, \textit{Visionary Experience}, 96.
The gestures and facial expressions depicted provide external signs of the internal reactions, in already established Albertian tradition. In his treatise *On Painting*, Leon Battista Alberti writes: “A *‘historia’* will move spectators when the men painted in the picture outwardly demonstrate their own feelings as clearly as possible. [...] these feelings are known from movements of the body.” So, these different reactions link the martyrdom with historical time, through the emotional participation of the viewers. But Caravaggio adds contemporary viewers at the scene of punishment – *giustitia* within the space of representation. The depicted group also views the central devotional and the narrative image of Andrew’s torment. In these terms the newer type of genre frames the devotional and the narrative image in order to make them resonate even more strongly in the present.

But a more careful reading of the gestures and expressions that react to the miracle on the cross fissures such a frame. While the group is unified by the single direction of their gazes, there is no unity in the understanding of the event. The face of a man with his open shirt, visible between Egeas and Andrew’s leg, is caught in a moment of utter confusion and disbelief. Egeas stands in front of the cross. This spatial arrangement has its temporal correlative in the consul’s failure to understand the full significance of the event. In contrast, the woman who stands behind the cross, fully comprehends the meaning of the miracle.

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127 Alberti *On Painting*, 76, quoted in this form in Stoichita, *Visionary Experience*, 164. Full quote: “A *‘historia’* will move spectators when the men painted in the picture outwardly demonstrate their own feelings as clearly as possible. Nature provides – and there is nothing to be found more rapacious of her than she – that we mourn with the mourners, laugh with those who laugh, and grieve with the grief-stricken, Yet these feelings are known from the movements of the body.”
CHAPTER III: Disjuncture of Knowledge

The rough face of the woman with a goitre resists a complete transformation into the viewer that long ago, in a far away place, watched the crucifixion of Andrew. Not just her costume and face but the very materiality of this body resembles a body in the street or at the market. This face and the body recognisable from urban space establishes, in this staging of giustitia, a correlate to the early modern practices of urban regulation. While different types of punishment mark specific urban spaces, the instruments of punishment are invariably present at seventeenth century Italian markets. Since the materiality of the woman’s body situates her as a migrant to the city, another recognisable conjunction is established. Caravaggio’s image itself echoes the links between the market space with the profusion of bodies that was difficult to regulate, increasing uncontrollably like the flesh on the woman’s body, and the staging of punishment. This link is an echo of the spatial organisation and practices constant in an early modern Italian city. The woman with the goitre, recognisable as a face that can be seen in the street, enters the arena of sacred representations founded upon what is seen on the street in order to anchor the experience of the sacred. Her resemblance to faces seen on the street brings the narrative into the present, to insure the poignancy of the representation.

Written instructions that circulated during the time of counter-reformation urged painters to ensure the emotional force of images by representing the sacred through the image of the punished body.


129 Ibid., 44-45.
Almost every theologian of the period who addressed the issue agreed that works of art should portray the subject in the most realistic manner possible. Gillio da Fabriano, whose dialogue *Degli errori de' pittori* appeared just one year after the closing of the Council of Trent, recommended that painters should depict Christ and the martyrs not with idealized poses and expressions, but ‘afflicted, bleeding, spat upon, with torn skin, wounded, pale, and unsightly.’ Antonio Possevino added that the painter must experience the horror himself if he was to move the spectator, while G. P. Lomazzo further exhorted the artist ‘to go and watch the gestures of the condemned men when they are brought to the scaffold, to note the arching of the brow, those movements of the eye.’

Yet seventeenth century authors often critique Caravaggio’s procedure for his supposed failure to select the best from nature as reported by Karel Van Mander in 1604, and as emerging out of Giovanni Pietro Bellori’s writing on Caravaggio. According to the critics, the specific mode of likeness or similarity in Caravaggio’s paintings did not conform to the notion of *verosimile* that requests that angels look like angels, rather than like boys from the street. Although *veri*, or “true to the reality of experience,” the depicted protagonists of the painted scenes are not coded in terms of *verosimilitude*, since models that posed for the painting are not obliterated through the process of painting, but transpire through the religious and mythological figures. It seems that the complete transformation of his models into the protagonists of the scene is prevented by the “excess of mimesis.”

Yet this reference to the street is not the only one present in Caravaggio’s image.

If the woman with the goitre is a recognisable figure from everyday life, she is also a

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133 Ibid. 39 – 49 passim.
recognisable image. (Fig. 10) Crib figures produced in seventeenth century Naples often show persons afflicted with goitres, women among others. The people shown are engaged in various scenes and activities, and the individuality of each figure is stressed. These depictions, which include both the painting and the sculptural reconstruction of the scene, touch on the miraculous, entering realm of the images which conduct magic powers or attest to the supernatural intervention. They recreate the sacred narrative, bringing the viewers into its immediate physical proximity. In this sense the operations of images are closely related to the operations of relics. But they are also related to different forms of popular magic and divination, so problematic in the city of Naples, and often persecuted not just for their religious unorthodoxy but also for the potential to kindle kinds of novel political ideas.

There is yet another conjunction between the figure of the woman with the goitre and the urban space. While the goitre is not an endemic illness in areas close to the sea and where fish are consumed, it was often found in other parts of southern Italy, where it had been recorded since the antiquity. The Roman satirist Juvenal who spent his youth in Aquinum, an area between Naples and Rome provides an inventory of various pathological conditions, including goitre. Vitruvius mentions a high incidence of goitre in

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138 While in Naples the persecution cases because of involvement with reformation currents had not been as numerous as in other places, the illicit magic becomes the most common charge from 1570 to 1720. John Tedeschi and William Monter “Toward a Statistical Profile of the Italian Inquisitions” in *The Prosecution of Heresy, Collected Studies on the Inquisition in Early Modern Italy*, 89-126. 94. The issue of magic superstition and official church viewpoints after council of Trent, “Sacerdote ovvero Strione: Ecclesiastical and Superstitious Remedies in 16th Century Italy” in *Understanding Popular Culture, Europe from the Middle Ages to the Nineteenth Century* ed. by Stiven L. Kaplan, (New York: Mouton Publishers, 1984) 54-
Sabini Hills. The woman in Caravaggio’s image could be read as one of the ‘vagrants’ who came into the city only to become part of the communities afflicted by poverty and criminalised in early modern European legislature. She could belong to the large numbers of marginalised Neapolitan lazzaroni. It is not her dress, which is contemporary, but generalised and therefore not identity specific, but the very materiality of this female body with the goitre, an affliction characteristic of the population living in the mountains around the city, that inscribe her within the groups of vagrants. As if the uncontrollable growth of bodies that multiply in the city regardless of any legal restraints show as the uncontrollable flesh on her neck.

During the eleventh century the doctors of Salerno, at this time a significant medical centre, investigated both conservative and surgical treatments for goitre. The conservative treatments included substances containing iodine, the element that cures the enlargement of the thyroid gland, such as balla and spongia marina. The treatment and the preparation of some of the medicines required various performative aspects like singing Pater Noster. Such actions would be a constitutive part of the medical treatment well into sixteenth century. But the person afflicted with goitre could also seek saintly intervention, and it is Andrew who is a patron saint of people with sore throats and deformed necks. The veneration of Andrew is part of the popular medical treatment, which is to act directly on the body to cure illness.

83. Popular magic and divination as a political threat discussed by Eamon, “Natural Magic and Utopia in the Cinquecento” passim.
139 Merke, History and Iconography of Endemic Goitre, 97.
140 Ibid., 23. also Spierenburg The spectacle of Suffering 42.
141 Merke, History and Iconography of Endemic Goitre 112.
142 Ibid., 113.
143 Ibid., 113.
The X-ray image of the painting shows that Caravaggio first painted her hands higher, in a gesture of prayer. Her understanding that social authority was replaced by the divine one is already present in this gesture, where the woman, recognising the saint, already prays for intercession. The gesture of praying for intercession separates the woman’s figure from the realm of magical beliefs deemed as superstition both in church and in circles dedicated to natural philosophy. While hoping for the fulfilment of desire, intercession does not guarantee the result. In this sense intercession does not belong to the realm of technology, where the results are obtained through the correct manipulation of certain objects or through implementation of certain procedures, like in magic and science. Rather, intercession builds a series of social links between the viewers with their representatives within the space of the image and saints. However, this gesture of prayer is no longer visible. In the final version, Caravaggio lowered the hands. This change in the gesture stops the external performance of the woman’s knowledge of the miracle, leaving her face to voice her understanding of the event. Lowering the hands, Caravaggio also exposes her neck, deformed and afflicted by illness. The body in the image, which is the echo and resemblance of the situated body, a body that is historically and spatially contingent, is the only body imbued with understanding of the event’s significance. The markers of fragmentary comprehension found in other faces, are not sufficient to produce a coherent narrative. Egeas still does not know that his command will be suspended; the astounded man with the open shirt fails to comprehend the full significance of the event. It is only through the knowledge of the woman that the story reaches its completion, the possibility to be retold, heard and become socially

145 Ibid., 18.
146 Dillenberger, Images and Relics, 13.
meaningful. It is only through her understanding that the event of the miracle attains its social existence.

Correspondingly, it is only through the vision of the woman with the goitre and through her understanding of the event that older types of images discussed in the previous chapter - the devotional and the narrative image - still find their place in the religious painting. Older images such as the icon or storytelling depictions of the lives of the saints, common in Caravaggio’s time as well as in present, enter the viewing process as a memory and as recognition. This memory and recognition plays a part in the viewer’s understanding of the scene, complicating both temporality and the narrative structure. Time and narrative are extended by the viewer, whose presence can be included within the group at the foot of the cross in the space between the consul and the woman, closing the partial circle formed by the depicted viewers. They include not just the event of Andrew’s martyrdom, but also the central image of the doctrine and thus a whole history of salvation. The woman’s engagement with the devotional image of crucifixion marks her as the only agent whose comprehension encompasses the full significance of the event.

In the Crucifixion of St Andrew, Caravaggio paints the unrepresentable. He deals with the problem of making visible understanding, astonishment, vain confidence, unconsciousness and paralysis. Yet it is only through those invisible processes that the event attains social existence. It is only through the woman’s invisible understanding that the scene can attain its visibility. Her ‘distant view’ is the only one that can include

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147 Ibid., 13.
148 Stoichita, in Visionary Experience, discusses the ways to visually represent the unrepresentable in the context of visionary painting. 79.
149 Stoichita, “The Distant view” in Visionary Painting, 78-102 passim.
everything that brings the scene into being. Thus placed behind the cross and
temporally after the event, the figure of the woman becomes a place where the narrative
begins. There is not, and there cannot be anything behind her, only dark background. The
consequence of having this closed dense matter in place of the virtual cavity of the
painting affects both the way we read spatial relations within the image and the narrative
itself. The density of darkness does not allow any further development of space. “As a
result, a “black” painting is a represented space that expels the objects the painter wanted
to include, forcing them outside of the painting and beyond its surface.” The painting
develops from the woman’s vision of the cross forward, toward the viewer. As much as
she is, through her understanding, the starting point of the narrative, the woman is also a
starting point in the spatial organisation of the image.

Ambiguities of the image

Caravaggio’s Crucifixion of St Andrew, was painted at the moment when Spanish
imperial power struggled to articulate the terms of its reproduction and permanence. To
this end complex histories were invoked, both the history of the Christian church and its
institutionalisation, but also the history of philosophical thought, always straining to
contain and to reconcile these currents with the state operation. But the vector of this
force in strife for articulation is just one among many that tear this moment in Neapolitan
history. Not only in the social space where opposed forces assert their interests in the
deeply conflictual urban space of Naples, but also in the realm of knowledge, where
natural philosophy undergoes a transition. The singularity of Caravaggio’s Crucifixion

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150 Ibid., 78-102 passim.
151 Marin, To Destroy, 161.
152 Ibid., 161.
of St Andrew touches on many aspects of this moment, as the image splits, multiplies itself, becomes coextensive with contradictory forces, demonstrates newly articulated knowledge through the return of past event.

Commisioned as a historia of the final moments of the patron saint of the Spanish ruling family, the image is based on contemporary, sixteenth century discussions about Andrew’s martyrdom. The image seeks to mark the presence of Spanish authority through the veneration of the saint related both to the royal family and to local sites and practices of worship. It takes into account the healing practices, which strive to enlist the help of saints to cure specific afflictions. As a narrative from early Christianity brought into the present through the depiction of contemporary viewers, the Crucifixion of St Andrew translates the story and the values present in early communal church into a legitimization of the state.\textsuperscript{154} As an image aligned with the most current classical studies, it also puts forward a set of claims about the patron who commissioned the painting. It inscribes the patron within the ranks of classical erudites, aware of the most contemporary debates. At the same time the viceroy’s choice of the well known but controversial painter, attests to a discerning but not conventional taste.\textsuperscript{155} The specificities of Caravaggio’s Crucifixion of St Andrew, coupled with the veneration of the patron saint of the Spanish Royal family, suggests both loyalty to the Spanish king and the political abilities of the patron of the painting. For the small audience of Spanish high administrators, already familiar with classical studies, the claim to classical knowledge


\textsuperscript{155} Haskell argues that the tastes of Spanish viceroy’s of Naples strongly directed the specific characteristics of Neapolitan painting, taking directions radically different from the painting in Rome. Francis Haskell Patrons and Painters, A study in the Relations Between Italian Art and Society in the Age of Baroque, (London: Chato & Windus, 1963) 171.
would be paired with the indirect, oblique, but nevertheless present claim to political aptitude. It is not just that the veneration of St Andrew as the patron saint of the Spanish Royal family, expresses the viceroy’s loyalty to the king, but also the specific choice of a Latin cross suggests his knowledge and acceptance of the “governmental cult” of Lipsius. The lynx-eyed, Justus Lipsius, so important in the formulation of Spanish political doctrine, is the author who stated that the cross on which St Andrew died, was a Latin cross, and not a crux decussate. While the theme expresses the viceroy’s respect for the royal family, the specific choice of the textual sources for the painting claims knowledge of statecraft. This choice demonstrates knowledge of the most contemporary political philosophy, attesting to the refinement, political aptitude and artfulness, so valued in urban and courtly environments. The mechanism of its operation is a double play, reconciliation of ethics that declares its universality, with the pragmatic demands of statecraft. Its characteristics are the realistic clear gaze, absence of crude naivete, artfulness and skill. Spanish absolutism not only produced truly modern state apparatus, but also through its courtly academic societies, and the circulation of classical and political knowledge, a correlative subjectivity necessary for its operation.

To ensure the presence of the narrative for the contemporary viewer, and ground the promise of saintly protection sought by both the Spanish royal family and the numerous poor and ill living in Naples, the image becomes porous, allowing the external social frame to reappear within the space of representation. However, this exchange is not unidirectional. The metal surface of Egeas’s armour protrudes into the viewer’s space, as

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155 I am using Corbett’s term.
156 Justus, Lipsius, De Cruce libre tres, 60.
if extending the claim to power. Similarly the executioner’s shoulder and the shoulder blade protrude away from the dark background as an island of firm muscles. As if pulled toward the viewer’s space, his upper body sways, while his hands are fixed on the cross. His feet balance on the ladder, bare as would only be appropriate within the space of the sacred. In the narrative that emerges out of Caravaggio’s image spaces and temporalities multiply. The outside and the inside of the representation become superimposed, the space of the street merges with the sacred space.

What happens if the image invokes social unrest when it is situated in a city marked by riots? The face of a man caught in the moment of utter confusion and disbelief, with his open shirt could be a face seen on the street, or in front of the contemporary scene of punishment. The moment of the miracle, the moment of suspension of the public performance of social sanction, for this astonished man is also the moment of disbelief in the possibility that existing codes of authority can be suspended, and radically different ones asserted. The street brought into the representation of religious narrative, through the excess of mimesis expels it into the present. 160 This is also a point where the image that was to participate in a specific construction of state power, lays out its irreconcilable disjunctions.

As the viceroy’s commission, celebrating the patron saint of the Spanish ruling family, and as a display of contemporary erudition crucial for cutting edge political doctrine, the image is aligned with the operation of Spanish Imperial power within the city. But this alignment is just one tangent among many, and moreover a tangent which

160 Louis Marin formulated and discussed the notion of the excess of mimesis in relation to the seventeenth century commentators of Caravaggio. See Marin, To Destroy Painting, 100-112.
harbours within itself a fundamental disjuncture in the legitimisation of rule. The social and doctrinal tensions within the city bear upon the very mechanism of representation. In the *Crucifixion of St Andrew*, the city of Naples itself becomes displaced in the narrative of the event from another place. On the abstract level of its operation the image barely keeps together its participation in the veneration of the patron saint of the ruling family and the means through which this representation is brought into being. Once the street slips into religious narrative through the excess of mimesis, the image itself becomes a crux, in relation to the city and its conflicts.

In its unity as a painting commissioned by a viceroy, as a narrative of hope for saintly help sought both by royalty and crowds of poverty stricken *lazzaroni*, it refers to popular practices of worship, and the type of images associated with such practices, yet it also claims the sophistication of classical erudition. Through the reconciliation of these diverging forces the image asserts the ability of the patron to rule over an important, but deeply conflicted part of the empire. Still the *Crucifixion of St Andrew* is also an image of the unsuccessful claim to executive power. Not just through the narrative of the suspending such power, but also through the disjunctures of the very mechanism of its legitimation. Firstly, it harbours a fundamental disjunction of state power claiming authority based on the events and narratives of the communal early Christian church. Secondly, it reveals the disjunction between the modern absolutist state apparatus which claims to be based both on Christian ethics and classical knowledge and the actuality of Neapolitan institutions, marked by baronial abuses of peasantry, the increasing financial power of the high bourgeoisie coupled with the increasing poverty of the citizens.
While the image puts forward its claims through knowledge, the unity of such a construct falls apart both within and outside of the painting. The classical erudition that is able to establish the correct rendering of the ancient event, is juxtaposed with the complete understanding of the meaning of the event, accorded in Caravaggio’s painting only to the woman standing behind the cross. This contrast between two modes of knowledge points to another type of multiplication – the emergence of the new narrative with each act of viewing. At this point the viewer’s gaze joins the gazes of the scene’s protagonists. Each viewing situates Andrew differently. One saint emerges as a protector of the ruling family brought into existence by the gaze conjoined with the courtly knowledge that circulated in Valladolid. A very different saint is brought into being through the veneration of the afflicted who sought saintly protection and cure. Yet another is called up by the gaze, which questions the inevitability of state punishment and the foundations of its authority.

Caravaggio seemingly builds the narrative from the depiction of the crucifixion itself, presented in the form of devotional image, developed into the story of divine intervention, and linked to the present by the insertion of contemporary viewers. However, the unity of narrative is disrupted through the disruption of the unity of knowledge, as only one of the protagonists in this staging of giustitia, attains its full understanding. Linked diagonally like the diagonal link of the draperies that tie the bodies of Andrew and his executioner, the bodies of Aegeas and the body of a woman play out opposite moments in the understanding of the event. As the faces are unified through the focus of their gazes, at the brief moment when Andrew hovers in the liminal space of unconsciousness, the liminal social space is also constituted. Different bodies and
consciousness are brought together. But this brief unity only exacerbates their differences. The bodies of Andrew and the executioner, clad in draperies out of time, are coupled with bodies in contemporary costume. While the paradigm and the historically contingent are brought together, following the counter-reformation instructions to painters, the frame and boundary of the painting burst - they cannot contain the narrative within the space of religious paradigm.
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Figure 1. The *Crucifixion of St. Andrew*, (1607), Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio, Cleveland, The Cleveland Museum of Art.
Figure 2. The map of Naples published in Paris, (1629) by Antonio Barrata.
Figure 3. The *Flagellation*. (1607), Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio, Naples, San Domenico Maggiore.
Figure 4. The *Madonna of the Rosary*, (1607), Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio, Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum.
Figure 5. The *Seven Acts of Mercy*, (1606-1607), Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio, Naples, Pio Monte della Misericordia.
Figure 6. The *David with the Head of Goliath*, (1605-1606) Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio, Rome, Galleria Borghese.
Figure 7 The *Crucifixion of St. Andrew*, Peter Paul Rubens.
Figure 8 Illustration from *Legendario dalle Vite de’ Santi*, (c. 1600).
Figure 9 The *Death of the Virgin*, (1601) Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio.
Figure 10 Crib figure from Naples (XVII century).