

Portrait of the Artist as Michelangelo: Maarten van Heemskerck's *Self-Portrait with the Colosseum*

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Maarten van Heemskerck's (1498-1574) *Self-Portrait with the Colosseum* (Figure 1) now in the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, is a historical and metaphorical physical commemoration of the artist's Roman experience.¹ The shoulder-length portrait shows Heemskerck alongside a depiction of Rome's most famous antique monument, the Colosseum. Between the portrait and Roman building is a *cartellino* at the bottom center of the painting, which records the sitter's name and his age of fifty-five in the year the painting was made, 1553.² Although the painting records Heemskerck's Roman sojourn from 1532 to 1537, by the time it was executed he had been back in the Netherlands for almost twenty years. Karl van Mander's 1604 biography of the artist describes a number of self-portraits that Heemskerck did "in oil, at various ages, very distinguished, subtle and well painted."³ Although none of these portraits survive, the sense that the Cambridge painting is one of a series, each representing a different age or event, has shaped our modern perception of the work and its significance. Heemskerck's self-portrait is more than *memento vita* recalling the artist's trip to Rome; it is a contemplative image,

evoking not only the artist's visit to Rome, but also his personal development and artistic heritage.

Shortly after Heemskerck entered the guild of St. Luke in Haarlem in 1532, he traveled to Rome in order to study classical antiquities and the work of the Italian masters, a tradition that had been established by Northern artists of the previous generation.⁴ In Van Mander's record of his activities in Rome, Heemskerck is described as walking around the city making sketches of the ancient ruins and the works of Michelangelo.⁵ Both aspects of Heemskerck's studies in Rome shaped not only the artist's style, but in the case of the Cambridge portrait, his artistic identity in the context of Michelangelo's example.

At first glance Heemskerck's self-portrait seems to belong to a portrait tradition found both in Italy and the North, which places the sitter in front of an architectural background. In the case of a portrait by Luca Signorelli, the unknown sitter appears before a triumphal arch and a building that recalls the Pantheon.⁶ Scholars presume that the sitter's interest in humanist pursuits led to the decision to place him in front of this idealized, classical Roman vista. A background of clearly

¹ The two sources that examine Heemskerck's life and work are Rainald Grosshans, *Maerten van Heemskerck. Die Gemälde*, (Berlin, 1980); and Jefferson Cabell Harrison, *The Paintings of Maerten van Heemskerck: A Catalogue Raisonné*, Diss. U of Virginia, 1987. For the literature on the Cambridge portrait see Leon Preibisz, *Martin van Heemskerck. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des Romanismus in der niederländischen Malerei des XVI. Jahrhunderts* (Leipzig, 1911) 49, no.12; Robert F. Chirico, "A Note on Heemskerck's 'Self-Portrait with the Colosseum,'" *Marsyas* 18 (1976): 21; Grosshans (1980) 207-208, no. 79; Robert F. Chirico, "Maerten van Heemskerck and Creative Genius," *Marsyas* 21 (1981-1982): 7-11; Harrison (1987) Volume II, 730-742; Josua Bruyn, "Oude en nieuwe elementen in de 16de-eeuwse voorstellingswereld," *Bulletin van het Rijksmuseum* 35 (1987): 138-163; Ilja M. Veldman, "Maerten van Heemskerck en Italië," *Nederlands Kunsthistorisch Jaarboek* 44 (1993): 125-142; and *Fiamminghi a Roma, 1508-1608: Artistes des Pays-bas et de la Principauté de Liege a Roma a la Renaissance* (Bruxelles: Société des expositions du Palais des beaux-arts de Bruxelles; Gand: Snoeck-Ducaju & Zoon, 1995) 220-221, Catalogue 113.

² The cartellino reads "Martijn Van he[e]msker / Ao Aetatis sua LV / 1553." On the importance of inscriptions in self-portraits see Philippe Lejeune, "Looking at a Self-Portrait," in Paul John Eakin, ed., *On Autobiography, Theory and History of Literature* 52 (1989): 110.

³ The passage that describes these self-portraits falls at the end of the biography, which are, therefore, to be distinguished from a different set of self-portraits that are discussed in the context of the larger paintings described

at towards the beginning of Van Mander's text. Karl Van Mander, *The Lives of the Illustrious Netherlandish and German Painters*, 1616-1618 Edition (Doornspijk, Netherlands: Hessel Miedema and Davaco Publishers, 1994) Volume I, 246.

⁴ For Heemskerck's trip to Rome see Bengt Cnattingius, *Maerten van Heemskerck's 'St. Lawrence Altar-piece' in Linköping Cathedral*, *Antikvariskt arkiv* 52 (Stockholm: Almqvist and Wiksell, 1973) 44-62; and Ilja M. Veldman, *Maerten van Heemskerck and Dutch Humanism in the Sixteenth Century*, translated by Michael Hoyle (Maarsen: Gary Schwartz, 1977) 9-18. For the tradition of Northern artists traveling to Rome see Elisja Schulte van Kessel, "Les Institutions flamandes et ½zeerlandias à Rome durante la Renaissance," *Fiamminghi a Roma, 1508-1608: Artistes des Pays-bas et de la Principauté de Liege a Roma a la Renaissance*, (Bruxelles: Société des expositions du Palais des beaux-arts de Bruxelles; Gand: Snoeck-Ducaju & Zoon, 1995) 54-60.

⁵ Van Mander 241. Jefferson C. Harrison discusses Heemskerck's *Brazen Serpent* (1549), and his reliance upon Michelangelo's use of the Laocoön and His Sons. Jefferson C. Harrison, "'The Brazen Serpent' by Maerten van Heemskerck: Aspects of its Style and Meaning," *Record of the Art Museum, Princeton University* 49 (1990): 16-29.

⁶ The portrait is dated between 1489 and 1491 and is located in the Staatliche Museen, Berlin. For a discussion of the painting and its bibliography see Tom Henry and Laurence Kantor, *Luca Signorelli: The Complete Paintings* (New York: Rizzoli, 2002) 114, 174.

identifiable buildings is used for the portrait of Giovanni Rucellai (1403-1481) attributed to Francesco Salviati and dated to 1540.⁷ Rucellai is seated in front of the Palazzo Rucellai, the Loggia dei Rucellai, the façade of Santa Maria Novella, and the chapel of the Holy Sepulcher in San Pancrazio, all works commissioned by Rucellai himself. But, by the time the painting was commissioned, Rucellai had been dead for almost sixty years. In this retrospective portrait, the architecture serves to identify the sitter and his history. Heemskerck's inclusion of the Colosseum in his self-portrait identifies a central event in his life—his trip to Rome—and since it was made twenty years after he had left Rome and settled in Haarlem, it also depends upon recollection.

A similar biographical identification of sitter and site can be seen in Albrecht Dürer's *Self-Portrait* from 1498.⁸ The artist depicts himself dressed in high fashion within an enclosed space with a window that opens onto an expansive Alpine vista.⁹ The portrait type chosen by Dürer—a sitter in front of a landscape seen through a window—was common enough; it is the implication of the artist's travel recorded by the landscape and the costume that distinguishes Dürer's representation. The view of the Alps and the self-presentation as a *gentilhuomo* suggest a connection with Dürer's earlier trip to Italy.¹⁰ Here, as with the Rucellai portrait, a particular historical moment is implied. This, too, is true of Heemskerck's self-portrait.

An even closer precedent for Heemskerck's commemoration of his foreign travel is his own teacher Jan van Scorel's *The Knightly Brotherhood of the Holy Land in Haarlem*, dated between 1527 and 1530.¹¹ The panel is one of five group portraits executed by Scorel, each of which records a pilgrimage made to the church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem.¹² The

artist included his self-portrait to document both his membership in the Jerusalem brotherhood and his personal journey to the sacred site of Christ's crucifixion and burial.

In the Haarlem painting, a figure on the far left holds a small panel on which is a drawing of the medieval tomb of Christ. This image within an image serves as a visual representation of the destination for each member's pilgrimage. Heemskerck used a similar idea of a painting within a painting, employing a *trompe l'oeil* device in order to distinguish the two different images. The inscribed *cartellino* is fictively attached to the painting by dots of red wax, one of which is visible because the upper left corner of the paper has fallen away from the canvas. As has been noted by previous scholars, since Heemskerck's own image overlaps the *cartellino*, he has depicted himself standing in front of a separate painting of the Colosseum onto which he had attached the *cartellino*.¹³

Heemskerck's single self-portrait thus implies the presence of two paintings, an image of the Colosseum, and, in front of it, an image of the artist. Both parts are given equal weight, dividing the composition into two halves. In the painting of the Colosseum there is a smaller portrait of the artist. In the lower right a figure is seated on a block of stone, probably an ancient fragment. He faces the Colosseum and is in the act of sketching on a large piece of paper. This small figure is dressed in a dark overcoat, bright red stockings, and a large hat. His attire can be traced to the late 1530s because of its similarity to the February 20, 1535, entry from the *Fashion Book of Matthäus Schwarz*.¹⁴ This small self-portrait shows the artist at work in Rome, making sketches of antique monuments as described in Van Mander's biography.¹⁵ In the larger self-portrait, however, Heemskerck wears a dark overcoat with

⁷ The commission of the painting is problematic, for a discussion see, Alessandro Cecchi, *The Renaissance From Brunelleschi to Michelangelo: The Representation of Architecture* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1994) 453, no. 39.

⁸ For specific discussions of the self-portrait see Fedja Anzelewsky, *Dürer: His Art and Life*, translated by Heide Grieve (New York: Alpine Fine Arts Collection, 1981) 89, figure 76; Joseph Leo Koerner, *The Moment of Self-Portraiture in German Renaissance Art* (Chicago and London: U of Chicago P, 1993) 37-39.

⁹ Portraits of a sitter depicted within an interior and in front of a window opening onto a landscape are commonly found prior to Dürer's *Self-Portrait* (1498). See Lorne Campbell, *Renaissance Portraits, European Portrait Painting in the 14th, 15th and 16th Centuries* (New Haven and London: Yale UP, 1990) 115-8. Campbell also discusses the interior setting with or without a window opening onto a landscape in both Northern and Italian portraits in the fifteenth century. He distinguishes these from the more common portrait type where the entire backdrop is a landscape. (Campbell 120-4) Whereas Dürer's self-portrait relates to the first type, Heemskerck's is formally closer to the latter.

¹⁰ Dürer's first trip to Italy is generally dated between 1494 and 1495. For a discussion of the Italian elements of the self-portrait see Erwin Panofsky, *The Life and Art of Albrecht Dürer*, Fourth Edition (Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 1955) 42.

¹¹ The painting is located in the Frans Hals Museum, Haarlem. For a discus-

sion of the painting, see Alois Riegl, *The Group Portrait of Holland*, originally published "Das holländische Gruppenporträt" *Jahrbuch der Kunsthistorischen Sammlungen des aller höchsten Kaiserhauses* 23 (1902): 71-278, translated by Evelyn Kain and David Britt (Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute for the History of Art and the Humanities, 1999) 84-85. Joanna Woodall, "Painted Immortality: Portraits of Jerusalem Pilgrims by Antonis Mor and Jan van Scorel," *Jahrbuch der Berliner Museen* 31 (1989): 149-163.

¹² In order to become a member of the Jerusalem brotherhood, one had to make this journey. Scorel, who was a member of both the Haarlem and Utrecht chapters, had made his own pilgrimage in 1520. Woodall (1989) 151.

¹³ Chirico (1976) 21; Harrison (1987) 734-735.

¹⁴ Schwarz, a bookkeeper in Augsburg, had periodically recorded the history of his evolving fashion starting in 1520 and continued up until his death in 1564. In addition to the one mentioned in the text, a few of the entries are reproduced in Christian von Heusinger, "A Unique Fashion Book of the Sixteenth Century," *Apollo* 123 (1986): 165, plate VI. For a discussion of the fashion book, see Gabriele Mentges, "Fashion, Time and the Consumption of a Renaissance Man in Germany: The Costume Book of Matthäus Schwarz of Augsburg, 1496-1564," *Gender and History* 14 (2002): 382-402.

¹⁵ The identification of the second self-portrait was made by Chirico (1981-1982) 7.

a ruffled white collar, attire that is closer in style to fashions imported from Spain and popular around the middle of the century.¹⁶ Later in date, this self-portrait was made in 1553, as the *cartellino* records, when Heemskerck was fifty-five. The Cambridge painting, thus, records two separate moments—Heemskerck's trip to Rome in the 1530s and his later recollection of that experience.

Both these self-images are intimately bound up with another "portrait"—that of the Colosseum. One of the most famous structures in the city of Rome, painters, humanist scholars, and poets were all drawn to it. Beginning with Martial's statement from his *Epigrams* of 80 CE, that the Colosseum had surpassed all of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World, its importance was regularly acknowledged.¹⁷ In the eighth century the Venerable Bede emphasized its universal Christian significance: "While stands the Colosseum, Rome shall stand. When falls the Colosseum, Rome shall fall. And when Rome falls—the world."¹⁸ This idea of the Colosseum as the center of Rome, and of the world, was embedded in medieval and Renaissance maps of the city. In the map found in the 1447 edition of Fazio degli Uberti's *Dicta mundi*, the Colosseum appears in the upper center next to an allegorical figure of seated Roma.¹⁹ Over a century later, in Pirro Ligorio's *Map of Modern Rome*, 1553, the Colosseum is again placed almost precisely in the center, a visual analog of its metaphorical role as symbol of the city.²⁰

The Colosseum was, in fact, one of the most studied ancient monuments in the Renaissance. By the middle of the fifteenth century artists like Francesco di Giorgio included detailed entries and reconstructions of it in their sketchbooks.²¹ Other artists made measured drawings and detailed studies of the building. The southern perspective used by Heemskerck in his painting is identical to analytical studies made by both Francesco di Giorgio and Antonio da Sangallo.²² Heemskerck

himself made numerous sketches of the ancient monument, either as the principal subject or in the background. There are two surviving drawings that served as the model for the Cambridge painting, one of which is a view from the Arch of Constantine.²³ In both the drawings and the painting Heemskerck emphasizes the remains of two passageways which had been exposed when part of the exterior wall fell. Heemskerck included three figures in the painting that occupy these spaces; two are in animated conversation above, while a solitary figure below is lost in thought. Made explicit by their inclusion is the intellectual contemplation of the Colosseum—as historic artifact and modern ruin—required by the painter, the sitter, and the viewer.

A woodcut print known as "Mr. Perspective," which was published between 1499 and 1500 and accompanied an anonymous poem, "Le Antiquarie prospettichi depictore," includes a representation of a nude artist in front of the Colosseum.²⁴ The four-page poem is a guide through the antiquities of Rome. The author dedicates the poem to Leonardo da Vinci, while referring to himself as "Prospettico melanese depictore." The problematic text has been associated with the painter and architect Donato Bramante, who had just arrived in Rome from Milan. It has even been suggested that the figure is a portrait of the architect himself.²⁵ Whether or not he can be identified as Bramante or as an allegorical representation of the Architect, the Master of Perspective's skill and knowledge are reinforced by the inclusion of the Colosseum. A similar implication must surely lie behind the use of the same ancient building in Heemskerck's self-portrait.

The 1569 frontispiece for the series of engraved images, entitled the *Clades, or Disasters of the Jewish People* is yet another self-portrait; once again Heemskerck placed his image in the context of Roman antiquity.²⁶ This time a fictive marble portrait bust of the artist is set on the base of what

¹⁶ Harrison (1987) 735-36.

¹⁷ Martial, *Epigrams, de Spectaculis* I. For the significance of the Colosseum from the time of its erection in 72-79 CE to the nineteenth century see Michela di Macco, *Il Colosseo: funzione, simbolica, storica, urbana* (Rome: Bulzoni, 1971).

¹⁸ Charles Till Davis, *Dante and the Idea of Rome* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1957) 3.

¹⁹ The *Dicta mundi*, or *Dittamondo*, was written by Uberti between 1346 and 1367. For a discussion of the 1447 map of Rome see Amato Pietro Frutaz, *Le piante di Roma*, three volumes (Rome, 1962) I, 129-130; II, plate 153.

²⁰ Ligorio executed a map of ancient Rome with the Colosseum in the middle. For a discussion of all of his Roman maps see David R. Coffin, *Pirro Ligorio: The Renaissance Artist, Architect, and Antiquarian* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State UP, 2004) 16-19; and Howard Burns, "Pirro Ligorio's Reconstruction of Ancient Rome: the 'Antiquae Urbis Imago' of 1561," in Robert W. Gaston, ed., *Pirro Ligorio: Artist and Antiquarian* (Milan: Silvana Editoriale, 1988) 19-92.

²¹ For the study of ancient architectural monuments during the Renaissance, see Christoph Luitpold Frommel, "Reflections on the Early Architectural Drawings," in Henry A. Millon and Vittorio Magnago Lampugnani, eds.,

The Renaissance From Brunelleschi to Michelangelo: The Representation of Architecture (London: Thames and Hudson, 1994) 101-12; for a discussion of di Giorgio's drawing see 106.

²² For a discussion of Sangallo's drawing of the Colosseum see Millon and Magnago Lampugnani 107-108.

²³ Both drawings are reproduced in Christian Hülsen and Hermann Egger, *Die römischen Skizzenbücher von Marten van Heemskerck* (Soest, Holland: Davaco, 1975): Folio I, 72, plate 70r; Folio II, 76, plate 56v. Elena Filippi reproduces the view of the Colosseum that includes the Arch of Constantine in *Maarten van Heemskerck: Inventio Urbis* (Milan: Berenice, 1990) plate 57.

²⁴ For a discussion see Ingrid D. Rowland, *The Culture of the High Renaissance: Ancients and Moderns in Sixteenth-Century Rome* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1998) 105-107.

²⁵ Doris D. Fienga identifies the image as a self-portrait by Bramante. For her argument see "Bramante autore delle 'Antiquarie Prospettiche Romane': Poemetto dedicato a Leonardo da Vinci," in *Studi Bramanteschi* (Milan, Urbino, and Rome: De Luca Editore, 1970) 417-426.

²⁶ The print was engraved by Phillips Galle in 1569 for a second edition of a series entitled, *Inventiones Heemskerckianae ex utroque testamento*. For a

must be an honorific column. In both the book print and the Cambridge painting, he has a long face, forked beard, square forehead, short hair and slightly receding hairline. One of these two images was used for the Hendrick Hondius's 1610 portrait of the artist engraved for the second edition of the *Pictorum effigies*.²⁷ Engraved just five years before his death, the frontispiece is probably Heemskerck's last self-portrait. The Cambridge painting is the only other autonomous self-portrait to survive, although other self-portraits, some identified by Van Mander, are included within larger narrative paintings. For example, the inside of the shutters for the Draper's altar in the Haarlem Cathedral (1546), is described by Van Mander as "...two lavish pictures with many details and well painted had various portraits of some ordinary people appearing as well as his [Heemskerck's] own."²⁸ Van Mander's ambiguity has led modern scholars to identify the figure resting on the ancient sarcophagus at the painting's center as Heemskerck.²⁹ The author cites *St. Luke Painting the Virgin* (1532) as another painting in which Heemskerck includes his self-portrait.³⁰ Van Mander identifies the ivy-wreathed figure who stands behind the artist-saint (and whom he calls a sort of poet), as a portrait of Heemskerck himself. Oddly, rather than follow the tradition of the artist depicting himself in the guise of St. Luke, Heemskerck here chose a secondary, poetic character.³¹

In a much later painting of the same subject (Figure 2), Heemskerck has isolated St. Luke, the Virgin, and the Christ Child within an architectural setting.³² Heemskerck does not depict himself as St. Luke. The saint is in the act of painting the Virgin in the foreground, with an expansive Italianate

courtyard in the background. The courtyard is identifiable as the Casa Sassi; Heemskerck had made a drawing of this same courtyard filled with antiquities when he was in Rome.³³ This drawing served as the model for the painting, but with the addition of a figure in the act of sculpting a marble statue, who is placed in the middle ground, surrounded by ancient statues. The pose of the sculptor is based on a woodcut print from the title page for the *Triumpho di Fortuna*, published in 1526.³⁴ In the print, the sculptor is identified as "Micheal, Fiorentino," while the sculptor in Heemskerck's drawing does not have a similar label, but does wear a turban, an accessory that was included in a portrait of Michelangelo executed by Giuliano Bugiardini in the early 1520s.³⁵ The sculptor in the Rennes painting is thus a conflation of two known portraits of Michelangelo, suggesting that Heemskerck wanted the viewer to be able to easily identify the figure as the Italian master. Instead of his own self-portrait as St. Luke, Heemskerck chose to include a portrait of the most admired artist in all of Europe. Here Michelangelo sculpting in the courtyard serves as a surrogate for Heemskerck painting the Virgin. Implicitly Heemskerck not only associates himself with Michelangelo the individual, but also with Michelangelo's activity as an artist.

Heemskerck's preoccupation with the Italian artist was noted by Van Mander, who says that "he never slept away his time nor neglected it with boozing [while in Rome], but instead he copied many things, as much after the antique as after the works of Michelangelo..."³⁶ The notion that Heemskerck's interest in the antique was at least equal to his

brief discussion see Thomas Kerrich, *A Catalogue of the prints which have been engraved after Martin Heemskerck*, (Cambridge, 1829) 2; and Veldman, who discusses the possibility of a second self-portrait in the background, Veldman (1977) 149. A reproduction of the print is included in *The New Hollstein Dutch and Flemish Etchings, Engravings and Woodcuts, 1450-1700: Maarten van Heemskerck*, part I (Roosendaal, Netherlands: Koninklijke Van Poll, 1994) 204, plate 237.

²⁷ For a discussion of the print and a reproduction see Veldman (1977) 111, plate 67.

²⁸ Van Mander 242. For a discussion of the altarpiece and the inclusion of the artist's self-portrait see Harrison (1987) II, 611-632. Reproduced in Erik Zevenhuizen, *Maerten van Heemskerck, 1498-1574: 'Constigh vermaert schilder'* (Heemskerck and Amsterdam: Histrosche Kring Heemskerck and De Bataafsche Leeuw, 1998) 41, plate 32.

²⁹ Grosshans identifies the figure resting on the sarcophagus as the artist, (1980) 171-176.

³⁰ Van Mander 238-241. The painting is presently located in the Frans Hals Museum, Haarlem. For a discussion of the painting and its commission see Harrison (1987) 250-262, which includes an extensive bibliography; Elena Filippi, "San Luca dipinge la Vergine (1532): lo specchio della 'maniera' in Maarten van Heemskerck," *Il Veltro* 35 (1991): 267-283; for the painting's context in Heemskerck's oeuvre see J. H. Bloemasma, "De Italiaanse kermis van een Hollandse boerenzoon: Leven en werk van Maerten van Heemskerck," in Erik Zevenhuizen 17-60.

³¹ For a summary of the tradition of artists' portraits used in depictions of St. Luke painting the Virgin see Zirka Zaremba Filipczak, *Picturing Art in Antwerp 1550-1700* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 1987) 23-4. The bibli-

ography that discusses the tradition includes Carl Hentze, *Lukas der Muttergottesmaler* (Louvain, 1948). For a discussion of individual works see Colin T. Eisler, "Histoire d'un tableau: Le Saint Luc de van der Weyden," *l'Oeil* (1963): 4-13; Max J. Friedländer, *Early Netherlandish Painting, VIII: Jan Gossart and B. van Orley* (Leiden, 1972): no. 24; Zygmunt Waibiłzski, *L'Accademia Medicea del Disegno a Firenze nel Cinquecento* (Florence, 1987) 111-154; Zygmunt Waibiłzski, "St. Luke of Bavaria by Engelhard de Pee," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 52 (1989): 240-245.

³² This version of "St. Luke Painting the Virgin" is located in Rennes and generally dated to 1553. For a discussion of the painting see Veldman 113-121, who follows earlier scholarship in dating the painting to 1553; Grosshans discusses the painting at length and dates it to 1550 based on style; Harrison 692-698.

³³ Chirico 10. The drawing was also used for an engraved print. For a discussion see Hülsen and Egger Volume I, 42-45.

³⁴ Chirico 10. For a discussion of the print and the publication see Geraldine A. Johnson, "Michelangelo, Fortunetelling, and the Formation of Artistic Canons in Fanti's *Triumpho di Fortuna*," in *Coming About...: A Festschrift for John Shearman* (Cambridge: Harvard University Art Museums, 2001) 199-206.

³⁵ The portrait is currently located in the Casa Buonarroti. For a discussion of the painting see Ernst Steinmann, *Die Portraitdarstellungen des Michelangelo* (Leipzig: Klinkhardt and Bierman, 1913) 16-20, especially 19-20.

³⁶ Van Mander 241.

interest in Michelangelo neatly reverses the expectations that artists went to Rome to study classical antiquity. Evidence of Heemskerck's fascination with all aspects of Michelangelo's artistic production can be seen in his well-known drawing of Michelangelo's *Bacchus* in the garden of Jacopo Galli.³⁷

Even after he left Rome, Heemskerck kept track of Michelangelo's artistic production. When the paintings dating to after Heemskerck's return to Haarlem in 1537 are considered as a whole, it becomes evident that the artist must have known almost every famous work created by Michelangelo, even if only in the form of prints.³⁸ In addition to the works by Michelangelo, Heemskerck was even familiar with portraits of the Italian master that were made during his lifetime.³⁹ Vasari mentions that there were two painted portraits of Michelangelo executed from life.⁴⁰ More renowned than Bugiardini's portrait of Michelangelo wearing a turban is a second, unfinished depiction that was begun by Jacopino del Conte sometime around 1540 (Figure 3).⁴¹ The portrait served as a model for numerous copies that were sent throughout Italy, and presumably across the Alps.⁴²

Heemskerck was perhaps even familiar with Ascanio Condivi's physical description of Michelangelo, published in the biography of the artist in 1553,

His temples project somewhat beyond his ears and his ears beyond his cheeks and the latter beyond his face...his lips are thin, but the lower one is slightly thicker so that seen in profile it projects a little...the eyebrows are scanty, the eyes might be called rather small, horn colored but changeable, with little flecks of yellow and blue...the hair is black and likewise the beard, [which] is forked, between four and five fingers long, and not very thick.⁴³

Michelangelo's striking facial features, as described by Condivi, are the same features that are reproduced in

Heemskerck Cambridge painting. Given that the publication of Condivi's text and the painting were in the same year, it is hard to suggest that Heemskerck knew the book prior to the painting's execution. It is just as likely that Heemskerck knew what Michelangelo looked like from his own time in Rome.

The similarities between Heemskerck's self-portrait and Michelangelo's literary and painted portraits are too great to be mere coincidence. In fact, it is the suggestion of this paper that the Cambridge self-portrait is Heemskerck's interpretation of himself in the guise of Michelangelo. Heemskerck's sharply forked beard, prominently featured just left of the painting's center, recalls that worn by Michelangelo. Indeed, Heemskerck's facial features, pose, and dress closely follows del Conte's portrait. These parallels immediately reveal the intent of artistic self-fashioning: because of his experiences in Rome, Heemskerck sees himself and wants others to see him as the Northern equivalent of Michelangelo. The depiction of the Colosseum in front of which Heemskerck has depicted himself as an artist sketching, suggests Heemskerck's analytical attitude to the past, both the past embodied in Rome's ancient monuments and his own past when he was studying in the Eternal City. His contemporary self-portrait as Michelangelo allows him to contemplate his past along with his present and, implicitly, his future. Made fifteen years after his departure from Rome, the painting deliberately records what to him were the most salient aspects of the experience—his study and his ability to work in the style of the antique and of the artist who superseded it, Michelangelo. The painting firmly connects Heemskerck with one of the most important artists in history, and thus like Scorel's pilgrimage portrait, it assures Heemskerck's artistic longevity.

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³⁷ Filippi gives a brief discussion of the drawing and bibliography, 100. There is evidence to suggest that Heemskerck made sketches after more works by Michelangelo, which can be seen in a series of prints from 1551 after Michelangelo's *Ignudi*. Heemskerck's original drawing, however, are now lost. The prints are reproduced in *The New Hollstein Dutch and Flemish Etchings, Engravings and Woodcuts, 1450-1700: Maarten van Heemskerck*, part II (Roosendaal, Netherlands: Koninklijke Van Poll, 1994) 229-233, plates 553-572.

³⁸ For the prints after the works by Michelangelo that were available in the North see Bert W. Meijer, "'Fiamminghi a Roma': On the Years after 1550," *Bollettino d'arte* 100 (1997): 117-119; and Jef Schaeps, "Michelangelo aan de Rijn: Reproductiegrafiek naar Michelangelo in het Leidse Prentenkabinet," *Leids Kunsthistorisch Jaarboek: Beelden in veelvoud, De vermenigvuldiging van het beeld in prentkunst en fotografie* 12 (2002): 65-107.

³⁹ It is certain the Heemskerck was familiar with Leone Leoni's medal portrait of Michelangelo. For a discussion of Heemskerck's familiarity with it

and use of the portrait in prints see Eliana Carrara, "Michelangelo, Leone Leoni ed stampa di Maarten van Heemskerck," *Annali della Scuola Normale Superiore di Pisa: Studi in onore del Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florenz per il suo centenario (1897-1997)* (Pisa: Classe di Lettere e Filosofia, 1996) 219-225.

⁴⁰ The passage is not included in the 1550 edition of Vasari's *Vite*. Only in Giorgio Vasari, *Lives of the Painters, Sculptors and Architects*, translated by Gaston du C. de Vere (New York and Toronto: Alfred A Knopf, 1996) Volume II, 727.

⁴¹ Steinmann 21-40, especially 23-26.

⁴² One such copy was executed by Marcello Venusti and is located in the Casa Buonarroti. For a further discussion of these copies see Steinmann 26-40.

⁴³ Ascanio Condivi, *The Life of Michelangelo*, translated by Alice Sedgwick Whol, edited by Hellmut Wohl (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State UP, 2000) 108.



Figure 1. Maarten van Heemskerck, *Self-Portrait in Front of Colosseum*, 1553, oil on panel, 42.2 x 54 cm, Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge.



Figure 2. Maarten van Heemskerck, *St. Luke Painting the Virgin*, c. 1553, oil on panel, 158 x 144 cm, Musée des Beaux-Arts, Rennes, France. Photo Credit: Musées Nationaux / Art Resource, NY.

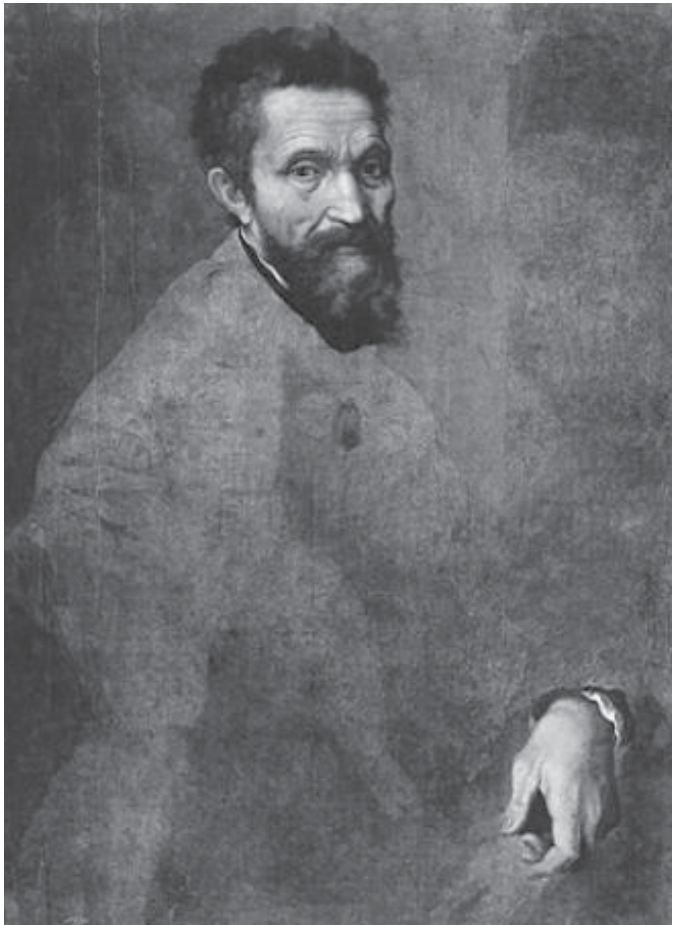


Figure 3. Jacopino del Conte, *Portrait of Michelangelo*, c. 1540, oil on panel, 88.3 x 64.1 cm, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.