



el greco

ambition & defiance

Edited by Rebecca J. Long

With essays by Keith Christiansen, Richard Kagan, Guillaume Kientz, Rebecca J. Long, Felipe Pereda, José Riello, and Leticia Ruiz Gomez and contributions by Jena Carvana

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Nativity, a half-length Saint Jerome turns to address the viewer, while in the *Resurrection* (fig. 8), Saint Ildefonso, by his gaze and gesture, indicates the scene in the middle ground. The *Resurrection* contains a number of motifs that reach back to an altarpiece that Parmigianino had completed in Rome in 1526 showing the Madonna and Child appearing to Saint John the Baptist and the sleeping Saint Jerome (fig. 9). El Greco clearly admired it deeply as an example of how extreme artifice could evoke a visionary experience, and his foreshortened soldier reads like an homage to Parmigianino.

The figure of a soldier running away from Christ in El Greco's *Resurrection* calls to mind another fresco in the oratory of the Gonfalone as well: one by the Siennese-trained painter Marco Pino.²⁵ Pino was an artist in full command of the complexities of pose, gesture, and composition that are at the heart of Mannerism, but he translated the purely formal qualities typical of the style into what has been termed a "mystic irrationality" that has close affinities with El Greco's art.²⁶ Pino's *Resurrection* presents a dazzling display of his abilities, with a soldier contorted into a knot of fear. It's the kind of visualization of a literary metaphor that appealed to informed viewers. At the same time, there is something visionary in this acrobatic display, and it is this that makes him particularly relevant for El Greco. Pino elaborated upon the same idea in an even more brilliant painting—the *Resurrection* in the Galleria Borghese (fig. 10). Light adds a further dimension to the work, and if we compare these two pictures with the *Resurrection* El Greco completed some two decades later for a complex altarpiece in Madrid (fig. 11), we can see that for all their differences—and unquestionably they proceed from two distinct imaginations—they share a number of formal features. The key difference is that however agitated in mood, Pino's work represents the Resurrection in corporeal terms, whereas El Greco's depicts it as a more disembodied, visionary experience in the indeterminate space of the imagination. Interestingly, the

FIG. 8

El Greco. *Resurrection*, 1577–79. Oil on canvas; 210 × 128 cm (82 1/16 × 50 3/8 in.). Church of the Monastery of Santo Domingo el Antiguo, Toledo.

FIG. 9

Parmigianino (Girolamo Francesco Maria Mazzola; 1503–1540). *The Madonna and Child with Saints John the Baptist and Jerome*, 1526–27. Oil on poplar; 342.9 × 148.6 cm (135 × 58 1/2 in.). National Gallery, London, Presented by the Directors of the British Institution, 1826.



FIG. 10

Marco Pino (Italian, c. 1525–c. 1587). *Resurrection of Christ*, 1565–75. Oil on panel; 131 × 97.5 cm (51 9/16 × 38 3/8 in.). Galleria Borghese, Rome, inv. no. 203.

FIG. 11

El Greco. *The Resurrection of Christ*, 1597–1600. Oil on canvas; 275 × 127 cm (108 1/4 × 50 in.). Museo Nacional del Prado, Madrid, P825.





CAT. 15

The Assumption of the Virgin, 1577/79
Oil on canvas; 403.2 × 211.8 cm (158 3/4 × 83 3/4 in.)
The Art Institute of Chicago, Gift of Nancy Atwood
Sprague in memory of Albert Arnold Sprague, 1906.99



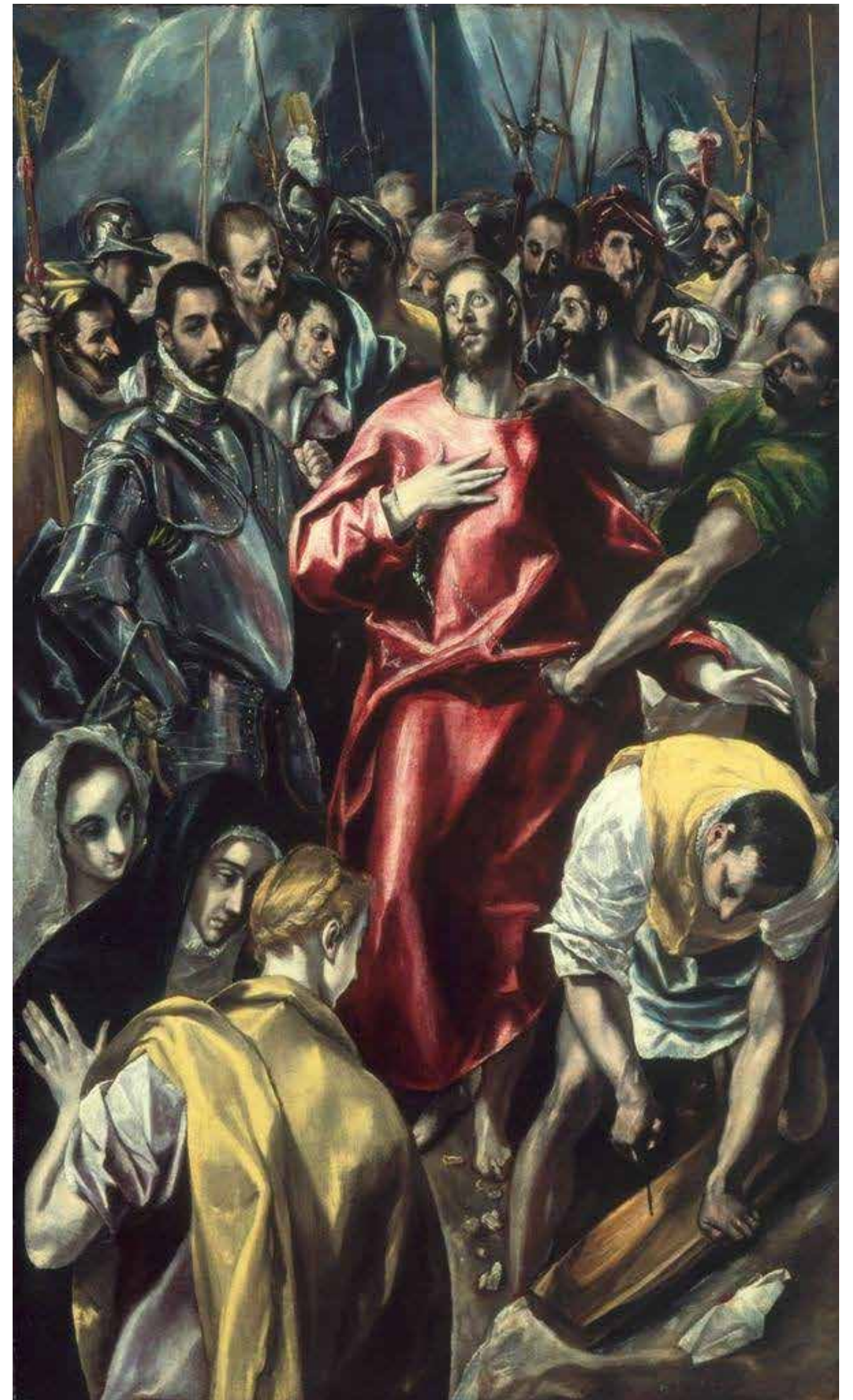
CAT. 16

The Holy Trinity, 1577–79
Oil on canvas; 300 × 179 cm (118 1/8 × 70 1/2 in.)
Museo Nacional del Prado, Madrid, P00824



CAT. 17

Holy Face (From Santo Domingo), c. 1587-96
Oil on panel; 130 × 90 × 14 cm (51³/₁₆ × 35⁷/₁₆ × 5 1/2 in.)
Private collection



CAT. 18

The Disrobing of Christ, 1580/95
Oil on canvas; 156 × 98.8 cm (64¹⁵/₁₆ × 38⁷/₁₆ in.)
Bayerische Staatsgemälgesammlugen—Alte Pinakothek,
Inv.-Nr. 8571



CAT. 36

Saint Francis Venerating the Crucifix, c. 1595
Oil on canvas; 147.3 × 105.4 cm (58 × 41½ in.)
The Legion of Honor, Gift of the Samuel H. Kress Foundation



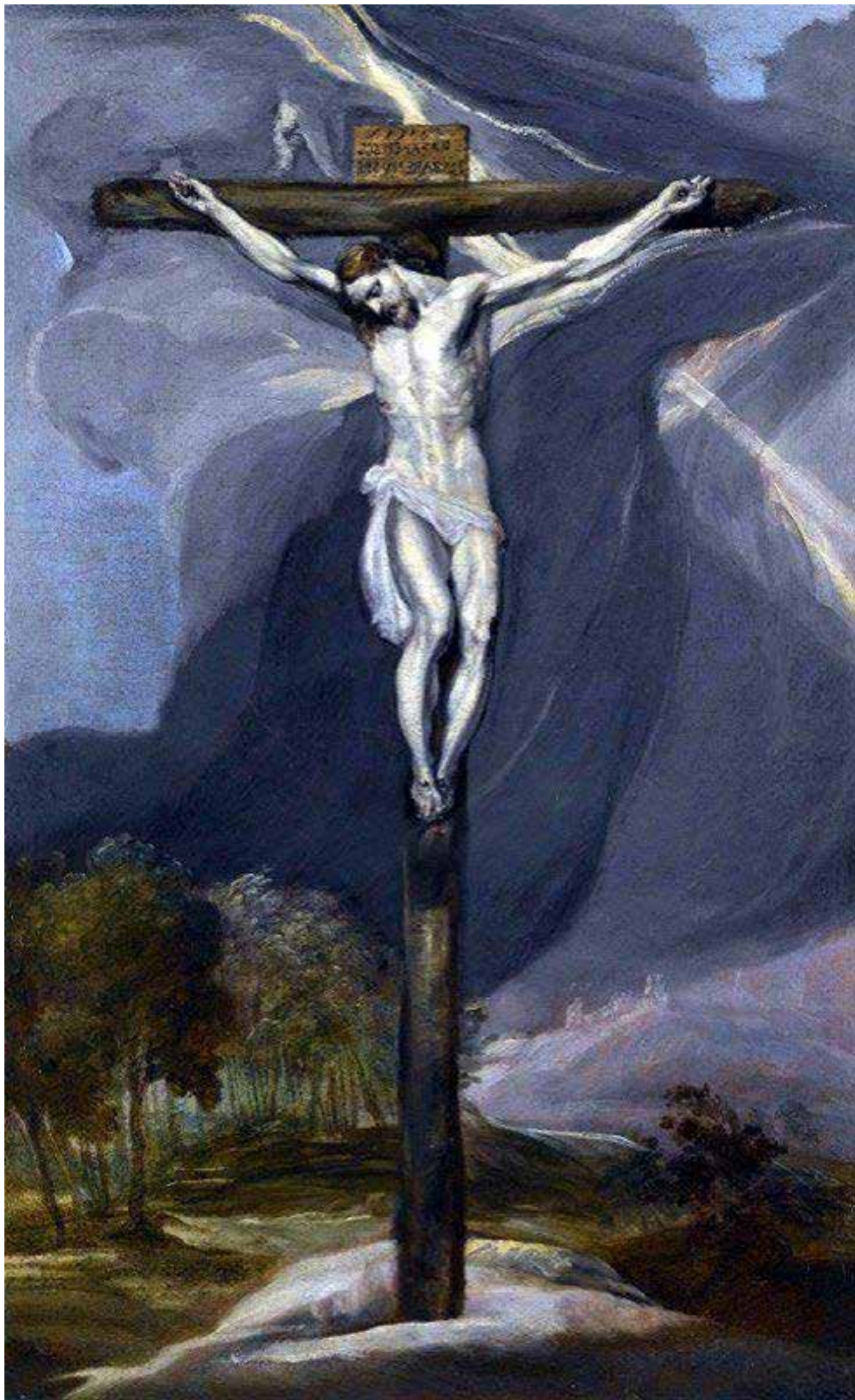
CAT. 37

Saint Francis Kneeling in Meditation,
1595/1600
Oil on canvas; 92 × 74 cm (36 ¾ × 24 ⅞ in.)
The Art Institute of Chicago, Robert A. Walter Memorial Fund, 1935.372



CAT. 38

Saint Dominic in Prayer; c. 1586–90
Oil on canvas; 118 × 86 cm (46 ⅞ × 33 ⅞ in.)
Collection Arango



CAT. 43

Crucifixion, c. 1575–77
Oil on canvas; 67.5 × 42 cm (26⁵/₁₆ × 16⁵/₁₆ in.)
Private collection

CAT. 44

Crucifix, c. 1600
Wood and polychrome
52 × 30 × 12 cm (20 × 11⁷/₈ × 4³/₄ in.)
Private European collection