

Trinity with Saint Jerome, by Andrea del Castagno

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In Renaissance painting, Jerome is usually shown in his study translating the Bible into Latin. Here Andrea del Castagno (1410–1457) depicts Jerome’s vision of the Trinity, a much rarer subject. Jerome is flanked by Eustochium and her mother, Paula, Jerome’s beloved disciple and associate. Jerome is depicted as a penitent based on the most quoted paragraph of his famous *Epistle 22* to Eustochium, which describes his years in the Syrian desert: “Whenever I found a deep valley or rough

mountainside or rocky precipice, I made it my place of prayer and of torture for my unhappy flesh.” In a later collection of letters and writings attributed to Jerome, the author writes, “I have seen with the sight of divine vision. . . . My witness is the Trinity itself, which I saw, I know not with what kind of sight.” Castagno represents the Trinity as a Throne of Grace (Heb. 4:16), drastically foreshortened—for which he was criticized by the clergy. Jerome’s red cardinal’s hat is seen at his feet and his animal symbol, the lion, is visible behind him.