The Peripatetic Aesthetic, Counter-Mannerism and

the Myth of the Carracci Reform

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A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts (Research)

Department of Art History

May 2016

University of Sydney
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ABSTRACT

In the spirit of the late historian Eric Cochrane, this thesis is a rejection of the perception of Italy in the mid-to-late sixteenth century as a period of cultural “decline.” Not only did a new interest in the writings of Aristotle, in the mid-sixteenth century, see the birth of modern literary criticism but also the emergence of a peripatetic aesthetic that would define the visual arts until the end of the seventeenth century. The peripatetic aesthetic was associated with cultural currents that were working to break down the elite domain of humanism in the courts of Italy, by positively proclaiming Aristotle’s conception of the democratisation of both aesthetic judgment and reason. Coupled with an emphasis on the importance of legibility, this led painters to adopt Counter-Mannerist approaches to painting which, in turn, complemented the concerns of the Counter-Reformation Church.

In this context, the art historian Elizabeth Cropper has acknowledged that ‘the essential working definition of art stated by Varchi, Barbaro, or Zuccaro had not changed by Bellori’s day.’ This continuity within the period has led me to question the so-called exceptional nature of the Carracci as reformers of painting - who supposedly instigated the “baroque” style at the end of the sixteenth century. In fact, I argue that the stylistic models of reform adopted by the Carracci were apparent in the work of artists living in many of the major cultural hubs of the Italian peninsula. The marked tendency of past historians to downplay these reformers in order to promote a Carracci exceptionalism I argue has more to do with the cultural value judgments of these scholars, who, both covertly or overtly, sought to establish heroic Carracci-based narratives of reform as a means of “rescuing” the arts from the perceived cultural decline of the mid-to-late sixteenth century.

I further contend that justification for this was taken from the seventeenth century Roman antiquarian circle of Angeloni and Bellori. These antiquarians, I argue, had sought to promote Annibale Carracci as a means of reinforcing their own desired personal links to Rome’s antiquarian past and, in turn, as a means to further associate themselves with the belief in its present cultural immanence. In all these instances of cultural appropriation – whether by art historians or Roman antiquarians - I argue that the advancement of an autonomous “Carracci reform” of painting said more about the identity of the advocates than about the initial cultural context and identity of the artists in question.
INTRODUCTION

‘This exhibition tells the extraordinary story of a small group of artists who changed the course of art history. In the decades after the deaths of the great Renaissance masters, such as Raphael and Michelangelo, the art of painting was thought to have gone into steep decline. But then, in the late sixteenth century, the Carracci family of painters from Bologna burst onto the scene with tremendous energy and vitality, raising art to new heights. Their heroic achievements set standards that were to remain authoritative for more than two hundred years.’


This thesis has been undertaken as a direct challenge to the accepted historical claims given in the above summary of the Carracci Reformers and, to demonstrate that there never was a family of artists who single-handedly reformed painting. The Getty Museum’s simplified account, given above, is a revealing explication of how the Carracci Reformers are perceived within the most generic accounts of art history; by clearly setting out many of the uncritically accepted assumptions about the art historical narrative of the mid-to-late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. However, such a simplification may be to our present advantage by essentializing the commonly held narrative of the period.¹ In many respects, it reads as a loose paraphrase of the biographer Giovan Pietro Bellori’s (1613-1696) introduction to the life of Annibale Carracci, by expounding the Carracci as the saviours of art within the context of a cyclically linear view of art history,² with aesthetic rises to greatness

¹ The above account was not intended for an academic audience but was rather written to propagate an interest in Bolognese painting, amongst a museum going public that is largely oblivious to its existence.

² Bellori’s introduction to the life of Annibale Carracci states, ‘...the art that from Cimabue to Giotto had advanced gradually over the long course of two hundred and fifty years, was soon seen to decline, and from a
followed by declines into decadence. This historical schema originated with Pliny the Elder’s account of the arts of antiquity, first given in his *Natural History* and reaffirmed in early-modern Italy in Lorenzo Ghiberti’s mid-fifteenth century *Commentarii*. It was then most significantly mirrored in the mid-sixteenth century in both Giorgio Vasari’s first and second editions of the *Lives of the Most Excellent Painters, Sculptors and Architects*.

The Getty’s description also employs the word ‘heroic’ in relation to the Carracci’s so-called achievement – a term applied to Bellori’s *Lives* by the Bolognese lawyer and canon, Carlo Cesare Malvasia (1616-1693) to describe the stylistic quality that he maintained he would avoid ‘altogether’ within his own account of the lives of Bolognese painters. Indeed, in Malvasia’s life of the Carracci, and in his *Felsina pittrice : vite de pittori bolognesi*, more broadly, we encounter a far more mundane and idiosyncratic biography of the artists. There is, for example, an underlying sense of envy and rivalry amongst both the Carracci and their pupils that is minimised or entirely ignored within the Bellorian account. For example, Malvasia records Annibale’s resentment for Guido Reni, recounting one instance in which he hurls a reproduction the young artist had made of his work on to a table in front of a client; and in relation to the Farnese Ceiling, he describes Annibale’s ‘usual jealousy’ at
having to collaborate with his brother Agostino. Bellori, in stark contradiction, asserted that Annibale of all the Carracci was particularly, ‘without envy and without ambition.’

In a vein more inclined to temper narrated heroism, Malvasia likewise felt no sense of discontinuity in recounting Annibale’s discerning letters sent from Parma to his uncle Ludovico; followed later in the life by accounts of the two brothers defecating into the shoes of peasants – not so far below them on the social hierarchy - for ‘entertainment’ while copying Correggio’s works in the city. Bellori, by stark contrast, sought to depict Annibale as obliviously indifferent to the pettiness of social distinction, stating further, that ‘if we reflect upon... [the] actions and sayings of his, we shall recognise in him the temperament which is truly that of a philosopher.’

Historically, Bellori’s narrative has come to dominate post-Vasarian accounts of early modern Italian art history. Until recently, Malvasia was viewed as an erroneous and partially unreliable source. While this is no longer seen to be the case, there is certainly an element of fact in the belief that Malvasia highlighted the flawed humanity of Annibale to counter the mythological status he was obtaining in Rome from the early 1640s onwards - much to the detriment, as Malvasia rightly

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10 Ibid, p. 95.

11 Julius von Schlosser described Bellori as ‘the most important historian of art not only in Rome but in all of Italy, even in Europe, in the seventeenth century.’ Cited in the introduction to ibid, p. 2.

12 As Anne Summerscale has recounted, ‘The distinguished art historian Hans Tietze in the early 1900s questioned Malvasia’s reliability and went so far as to accuse him of altering or even manufacturing documents. This point of view was carried further by Scholser and Mahon, among others. In recent decades, however, meticulous scholarship by Dempsey, Alfredi, De Grazia, Perini, Zapperi, Feigenbaum, and a number of other writers has largely vindicated Malvasia’s reputation as a diligent and scrupulous researcher.’ See Summerscale, Malvasia’s Life of the Carracci diss., (Pennsylvania, 2000), p. 38.
perceived, of his Bolognese uncle, Ludovico’s fame.\textsuperscript{13} As Elizabeth Cropper has noted, ‘a new myth... was being woven around the figure of Annibale Carracci in the 1640s.’\textsuperscript{14}

Within the context of early-modern art biography, I would argue, the analysis of such sources within the discipline of art history has often been overly preoccupied with issues of textual “accuracy”, often to the detriment of fully comprehending the typological nature in which pre-modern biography and history functioned.\textsuperscript{15} Italian historiography operated within regional communities which all aimed to lay claim to - and even sought to own - the cultural narrative of the Italian peninsula. As Claire Pace rightly states, ‘Vasari’s Florentine chauvinism, his \textit{campanilismo}, was echoed and reflected in similar eulogies of the painting of other Italian cities.’\textsuperscript{16} Thus, my aim is less about finding out which ‘account’ of the arts in Italy is closer to fact, and more about what these contending points of view tell us about the competitive nature of regional \textit{campanilismo} that was inherent within the Italian peninsula.\textsuperscript{17}

Yet, as Janis Bell states, Bellori has often escaped what one might term to be the “level playing field” for early-modern art biographical \textit{campanilismo}; ‘because’ in her words, ‘we still subscribe to a view of Rome as the centre of the art world.’\textsuperscript{18} Bell notes further, regarding Bellori’s modern art publications that they, ‘... served to promote those artists and views to which he was also partisan, indirectly supporting

\textsuperscript{13} This is summarised in the appendix “The Seicento Biographies” in Clare Robertson’s \textit{The Invention of Annibale Carracci} (Milano: Silvana, 2008), pp. 200-1.


\textsuperscript{17} As Goldstein states, early-modern Italian art history shared in common the tendency of all Italian historiography more broadly, ‘to view the world narrowly, in terms of local history (\textit{campanilismo}).’ Goldstein, p. 649. Also see footnote 12.

the living patrons and artists who were his friends.’ Thus, the artists and connoisseurs associated with the antiquarian Roman circle to which Bellori belonged were seen as direct heirs of the art’s most recent rise to greatness, and what was conveniently perceived and interpreted as preceding this body’s existence; its so-called decadence. An intimate member of this circle, Giovanni Antonio Massani, stated in his often quoted 1646 preface to a series of *Diverse figure* engravings based upon eighty drawings of Annibale’s, that as the ‘greater number of good connoisseurs increases, so the more clearly is... [Annibale’s] virtue perceived, and the more famous his name becomes.’ Annibale’s fame is thus described as synonymous with the rising connoisseurs of the mid-seventeenth century. As I will seek to demonstrate in this thesis, the cultural self-fashioning of this body of connoisseurs and antiquarians within seventeenth century Rome was pivotal to the narrative of Annibale and the Carracci, as the heirs of antiquity, the saviours of art, and to the delegitimizing of all other prominent mid-to-late sixteenth century reformist painters amongst whom the Carracci had themselves significantly emerged. Furthermore, the predominance of French painters in Rome within Bellori’s circle would ultimately ensure that such a narrative would be canonically enshrined in the Académie Royale de Peinture et de Sculpture. The later proliferation of art academies, based on the French model in eighteenth century Europe, led to universalisation of the Bellorian account of art history.

However, the fact that the Bellorian account has largely remained intact and at the forefront of art history has as much to do with the cultural biases associated with the later evolution of modern Italian and broader European history as it does with the earlier enshrinement of such a narrative in the Academic institutions of the fine arts.

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The Nineteenth century Italian *Risorgimento* historian Francis De Sanctis universalised what a leading revisionist of the mid-to-late sixteenth century Eric Cochrane has called the post-Renaissance ‘decadence thesis.’\(^{21}\) As Julius Kirshner (summarising Cochrane’s assessment of De Sanctis and his generation) wrote: they were ‘intent on finding a scapegoat for the assorted ills that delayed Italy’s transition into modernity’,\(^{22}\) and that further, these ‘nationalist historians of the *Risorgimento* attributed decadence to foreign invasions and Spanish domination’\(^{23}\) and that ‘for De Sanctis, culture could only flourish within the confines of an independent and democratic national state.’\(^{24}\) In refutation of this progress driven “Whig” analysis of history, Cochrane noted in his seminal work, *Florence in the Forgotten Centuries*, that Ducal rule was governed by the precept that ‘if everyone was made to obey the law, then everyone was entitled to its protection’, elaborating further, ‘that for the first time in Florentine history, a government became particularly solicitous for the lower classes of the population, whom the Republicans had always disdained, but whom Cosimo would no longer allow to be mistreated.’\(^{25}\) In historical examples such as these, Cochrane sought to reject the view that non-Republican governments of the later-sixteenth century could be employed to buttress a decline thesis by simplistically disregarding non-Republican rule as despotic and reactionary.\(^{26}\) Furthermore, Cochrane’s work significantly aimed at ‘destroying the universal assumption that, with Florence’s fall from republican grace in 1530... the well of creativity that had sustained Florentine culture in the Renaissance suddenly dried


\(^{22}\) p. 1.

\(^{23}\) Ibid.

\(^{24}\) p. 1


\(^{26}\) As Cochrane notes, by the late 1540s and 50s, ‘most Florentines were convinced of the superiority of their own over all previous ages.’ Ibid, p. 86. Also see Cochrane, *The Late Renaissance 1525-1630* (London: Macmillan, 1970), pp. 12-3.
Art historians of the nineteenth century mirrored the analysis of Italy’s nationalist historians, with no less a person than Jacob Burckhardt himself equating the ‘consolidation of Spanish hegemony’ in Italy as pivotal to the Renaissance’s “end.”

Nonetheless, a gradual rehabilitation of the seventeenth century ‘baroque’ did occur via an art historical evolution that began tentatively amongst mid-to-late Nineteenth century art historians, such as Cornelius Gurlitt with his 1883 *Das barock- und rococo-Ornament Deutschlands* and peaking in the English speaking world with publications such as Rudolf Wittkower’s, 1958, *Art and Architecture in Italy, 1600 – 1750*. Post World War One art historical scholarship saw the historical time-frame of the period of ‘decline’ gradually reverting back to the narrower parameters of the Bellorian account. In addition, the dramatic formal qualities of the baroque came to be seen, in quasi-Burkhartian terms, as “redeemed” from their religious origins in the “backward” Counter-Reformation culture of the mid-to-late sixteenth century.

Furthermore, Cochrane noted that due to the modern discipline of art history’s origins in Protestant Northern Europe, the sociocentricism of Nineteenth

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30 This was summarised in what appears now to be an absurd debate between Werner Weisbach and Nikolaus Pevsner over whether mannerism or the baroque was the more “characteristic” style of the Counter Reformation. Thus Emile Mâle declared in his definitive 1932 survey, *L’Art religieux après le Concile de Trent* that a ‘fully developed reformed-Catholic style of painting’ only emerged around c.1600. As Cropper and Dempsey have rightly stated, ‘The old quarrel between Weisbach and Pevsner over the style of the Counter-Reformation has never been settled, but by being dropped has been assumed to be (italics added).’ See Cropper and Dempsey, “The State of Research in Italian Painting of the Seventeenth Century” in *The Art Bulletin*, Vol. 69, No. 4 (Dec., 1987), p. 502.

31 As Dempsey and Cropper further note, ‘It has become increasingly clear that the history of painting after Raphael, and especially after Counter-Reformation attacks on Michelangelo’s *Last Judgment* and Vasari’s canonization of the Florentines of the *terza età*, cannot be understood as a separate unit (*Pevsner and Weisbach again*). To a great extent this arises from the work on the “reformation” of art by the Bolognese...’ Ibid, p. 505. Interestingly the authors see a connection between the Carracci cultural-aesthetic redemption narrative and Pevsner and Weisbach’s simplistic periodic distinctions. Surprisingly this has not led them – as in this thesis – to jettison the Carracci reform myth in its entirety.
century historians perceived a ‘line of progress from Scholasticism to the French Revolution pass[ing] solely through Luther, and that Catholicism, particularly Tridentine Catholicism... [had been by its very nature] inimicable to free expression in all the arts and sciences as well as in theology.’

Thus, art historians, even of the twentieth century, by inference, often had a propensity to deem the Italian art of the mid-to-late sixteenth as lacking in creative endeavour. As Sydney Joseph Freedberg in *Painting in Italy 1500-1600* prominently stated as late as 1971 of the art of Rome in the mid-to-late sixteenth century, ‘Boredom is the prerequisite of the Counter-Maniera style... invading even the art of the few painters whose inspiration may be too considerable and too authentic to be sealed off wholly.’

By contrast, the Mannerism both of this period and preceding it was partly emancipated from this prognosis due to the seminal work of art historians such as Walter Friedländer. This occurred in the context of post-World War I Europe where an appreciation of what was seen as Mannerism’s eccentric originality came to be perceived as synonymous with contemporary artistic movements such as German Expressionism.

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32 Cochrane, *Florence in the Forgotten Centuries* (Chicago: 1973), p.xiv. Francis de Sanctis echoed this Northern European cultural dominance of the historical discipline, when he expressed the view that the Counter-Reformation was more assertively opposed to human liberty than to Protestantism.


Freedberg elaborates this further stating, ‘The [impression Muziano’s] works make is not just a function of the grand scale of their forms nor of the evident power that inhabits their restraint but of the oppressive melancholy in Counter-Reformation spirituality that Muziano conveys to us (italics added).’ p. 501.

The blatant cultural value judgment Freedberg attaches to the Counter-Reformation “period” are a by-product of uncritically accepting the premises of Nineteenth Century scholarship discussed above.

Freedberg’s macrohistorical assertions can be seen living on in covert ways. The predominantly late sixteenth century scholar Marcia Hall stated as recently as 2011, ‘I didn’t see a conservative and backward looking art, as the Counter-Reformation before the Baroque was generally described.’ Hall then partially reneged on these words, by going on to say, ‘I did see plenty of boring painters making pictures for churches in this period, to be sure, and I have dutifully written about them in earlier books.’ See Hasan Niyazi. “Interview with Marcia B. Hall by Hasan Niyazi · May 27, 2011”. *Three Pipe Problem.*


35 In the early twentieth century, Alois Riegler conceived of the Baroque and Mannerism as positively expressive rather than as an antithesis to “classicism.” Friedlander and a small circle of German scholars were inspired by
The art historian Federico Zeri’s 1957 *Pittura e Controriforma* was pivotal in promoting a revaluation of the reformist artists of the later sixteenth century while simultaneously solidifying earlier negative preconceptions about the so-called Counter Reformation era. Zeri continued a tendency to view the art of the later sixteenth century as narrowly (and slightly naively) interchangeable with the cultural impacts of the Counter Reformation. Yet as Gauvin Alexander Bailey has perceptively noted, the artist Scipione Pulzone, whom Zeri and later Freedberg saw as the ‘poster-boy for Jesuit anti-Maniera’ conservatism, had two major works of his criticised on the grounds of religious indecorum by none other than Pope Clement VIII. In 1594 Pulzone’s *Seven Archangels*, painted for the Angel’s chapel in the Gesù, was ordered covered over by the pontiff and the Magdalene in his *Lamentation* in the Passion Chapel ‘altered to have a more devout appearance.’ Such a reaction to an artist who was a leading promoter of a radically severe ‘classical’ reformist style in Rome does raise the question as to whether Pulzone’s avant-garde and unique stylistic approach was, itself, a source of concern for a pontiff whose criticisms emerged in the context of inspecting the religious decorum of Roman churches in preparation for the Jubilee year of 1600. Bailey further notes that a seven angel painting by Federico Zuccaro was made to replace the Pulzone, and concludes that given how similar the religious iconography was between

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36 *Pittura e Controriforma* (Einaudi, Torino 1957). Gauvin Bailey has noted how Zeri’s notion of mid-to-late sixteenth century “classical” painters, such as Santi di Tito and Scipione Pulzone, as exhibiting an ‘art without time’ has often been cognitively reversed to imply a ‘time without art.’ See Bailey’s, “Introduction: A Time without Art?” in *Between Renaissance and Baroque: Jesuit Art in Rome, 1565-1610* (Toronto: 2003), p. 3.

37 See ibid, p. 198.

38 p. 213.

39 pp. 70 and 211-4.


41 Ibid.
Pulzone and Zuccaro’s work ‘the Pulzone... [must have been] rejected for aesthetic reasons.\(^{42}\)

It is for this reason that I have not made use of the term ‘Tridentine’ or ‘Counter-Reformation artists’ to describe the reformist painters of the second half of the sixteenth century. As the historian Paolo Prodi has argued in his 2012 introduction to a new translation of Cardinal Gabriele Paleotti’s *Discourses on Sacred and Profane Images*, Paleotti’s leaving Bologna was likely due to ‘the project for the reform of the Bolognese church having not succeeded’ and that ‘underlying... [Paleotti’s] later orientation... is the pessimistic observation that thirty years after the Council of Trent, no reform of sacred art has taken place, and the abuses are more rampant than ever.’\(^{43}\) This makes the claim of Italian scholars associated with the 1956 first large scale exhibition dedicated to the Carracci, which equated the artists as the very epitome in art of Paleotti’s prescriptions in the *Discourses*, to appear as unstable as the assertions Zeri made at much the same time in relation to Pulzone.\(^{44}\) That is, regardless of their profound interconnectivity, reform as understood in art cannot be *essentially* equated as being synonymous with the religious reform of the Counter Reformation.\(^{45}\)

By questioning traditional narrow conceptions of the influence of the Counter Reformation on reformist painters, this thesis argues that the influence of Tridentine culture on painters needs to be understood within the parameters of a renewed interest in peripatetic philosophy, which at this time was flourishing in the context of the universities of mid-sixteenth century Padua.\(^{46}\) The literary and aesthetic theory

\(^{42}\) p. 213.

\(^{43}\) Paolo Prodi’s introduction to *Discourses on Sacred and Profane Images* (Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute, 2012), p. 25.

\(^{44}\) Ibid, pp. 26-8.

\(^{45}\) As John Marciari states, ‘Thus, in response to the frequently-made argument that... much late-Cinquecento art – the “Counter-Maniera” – is the result of the Counter-Reformation, the argument here is that the characteristic style of the second half of the Cinquecento has as much (more, even) to do with the “artistic context” as with the religious or historical context’ John Marciari, *Girolamo Muzaino and Art in Rome, circa 1550-1600* (Yale: Yale university, 2000) diss., pp. 148-9.

that emerged predominantly out of Padua, was pivotal for - and more solidly demarcates - the emergence of a “Counter-Mannerist” artistic reform in the arts.\footnote{Rensselaer Lee - almost begrudgingly at times - addressed the connection between the criticism of poetry and that of painting. See “Ut Pictura Poesis: The Humanistic Theory of Painting,” in The Art Bulletin, XXII, 1940, pp. 197-269.}

Paleotti’s own religious concerns with didactic clarity in painting and the representation of the depiction of a given narratives action is almost entirely indebted to translations and commentaries devoted to Aristotle’s \textit{Poetics}, which began to appear half a century prior to his \textit{Discourses}.\footnote{Paleotti is derivative of Aristotle’s conception of the \textit{unity of the action} in his use of the term “operation”. See Book 2, Chapter 2 in \textit{Discourses on Sacred and Profane Images} (Los Angeles: 2012), pp. 159-60.} It was, in fact, such an evolution in the culturally perceived Renaissance unity between religious belief and classical scholarship, and its proliferation in education, which gave “Counter-Reformation culture” its very voice.

Regrettably the \textit{voice} of mid-to-late sixteenth century culture - mirroring its religious and artistic identity - has likewise, since the nineteenth century, been treated with equal contempt. As John Snyder wrote in 1989:

\begin{quote}
the literary criticism and the literary theory of the second half of the sixteenth century are, in point of fact, still largely a terra incognita. Most modern scholars would agree that this immense body of work stands “at a critical point in the history of Western criticism, that point at which the doctrines of classical antiquity were transformed into something new and different, which in its turn became the basis of modern literary criticism” \and the basis of modern aesthetics as well. The common accepted truth of literary history has, however, stimulated surprisingly little serious modern research into the texts of the period. Over the course of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, under the influence of Romantic literary historiography and, later, of neo-Romantic stylistics and philology, the Age of
\end{quote}
Criticism has generally been treated with disdain by critics and intellectual historians alike... Such a view of the latter half of the Cinquecento as a period of unchecked cultural decline in Italy that has filled our libraries with forgotten, or forgettable, works is by now badly out-of-date and is already in the process of revision, but it still lingers on in many quarters... A careful reading of late Renaissance theoretical works reveals this Aristotelianism not to be an unquestioned item of faith, but a flexible and composite system of thought, often combined with other systems of thought (Neoplatonism, among others) in a freely individual way.49

This, largely Paduan derived, literary and aesthetic theory which blossomed as a result of a new engagement with Aristotle’s Poetics gave definitive and creatively defined parameters for reformist artists such as Pulzone - and equally specified the Carracci’s conception of the arts as well.50 As Peter M. Lukehart notes in his thesis on the contemporaneous Genoese painter Giovanni Battista Paggi’s conception of painting, that while:

the sources for Paggi’s ideas concerning religious education clearly derive from the texts of Paleotti, Gilio et al., the ultimate source for this argument regarding the goal or justification of an action is Aristotle. At this point, it is instructive to recall that Paggi’s library contained the works of many of the “trattatisti” of the Counter-Reform, as well as the complete works of Aristotle.51


50 For example, Annibale in his letters to his cousin Ludovico from Parma discusses painting in terms of verisimilitude, which likewise finds its origins in the Poetics.

The library of Girolamo Muziano - whom I argue in this thesis, one might call the original “Annibale”, in being the first to bring a peripatetically based Counter-Mannerist art reform to Rome - likewise included the complete corpus of Aristotle, besides numerous commentaries on his works. Muziano also owned a copy of Raphael Borghini’s *Il Riposo*, a text that in a very populist sense made passing mention of issues relating to Horatian decorum and an Aristotelian based pictorial clarity, via an informal analysis of local Florentine painting.

Likewise, Annibale’s letters to Ludovico from Parma reveal an Aristotelian understanding of *mimesis* and *verisimilitude*, a concept which came to great prominence among the Paduan scholars of the mid-sixteenth century and was pivotal, in this instance, to his analysis of Correggio. As Annibale states, ‘...all the works of these others represent things as they can be, but Correggio as they truly are.’ By marked contrast, the Mannerist painter Pontormo offered an earlier clear rejection of the emergent argument for *verisimilitude* in an open letter to Benedetto Varchi when he stated that, ‘It is possible in a “history” [painting] to interpose actions that *never occur* in nature, and beyond that... to surpass her through art to give them grace and to adapt and arrange them to their best advantage...’

Chapter One aims to lay the common conceptual groundwork that all reformist artists shared with the Carracci during the mid-to-late sixteenth century. At variance to this, Carracci scholarship has uncritically adhered and sought to

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52 As John Marciari states, “…the often repeated judgment that the Carracci saw their own way out of the “mannerism” of Bolognese artists... by looking at a variety of models from Venice and Lombardy as well as from Florence and Rome offers a similar case [to Muziano].’ Marciari, *Girolamo Muziano and the Art in Rome, circa 1550-1600* (Yale: 2000) diss., p. 161. See Appendix I: Muziano’s Library in ibid, p. 468.


55 Ibid, p. 158.

affirm a negative reading of the period. Whether it was Denis Mahon’s assertion that the reformist interpretation of eclecticism derivative of peripatetically inspired art criticism, evident in, for example, Ludovico Dolce’s Dialogo was essentially alien to the art of the Carracci, or Posner’s claim that their achievements were creatively “spontaneous” and intrinsically owed nothing to the aesthetic criticism of the period, or Dempsey’s assertion that their use of hue, colour and chiaroscuro, set them apart. In marked contrast, this thesis aims to show a group of artists who were utterly at one with the reformist culture that was scattered and interwoven between the cultural town hubs of Italy. The Carracci, I argue, identified themselves as reformists precisely because, at the same time in nearby Ferrara, Counter-Mannerist reform was just as pivotal to the art of Scarsellino; as in Genoa it became to Luca Cambiaso and then Giovani Battista Paggi; in Siena to Ventura Salimbeni and Francesco Vanni; in Florence to the generations of artists who accompanied

57 To cite one of more than numerous examples, ‘But it would remain for the Carracci to push beyond the historical barriers of an art then in full decline, and bypass the hierarchies, classifications, and Aristotelian character of Paleotti’s treatise...’ Vera Fortunati Piertrantonio, “Emilian Art in the Sixteenth Century: Grace and the Grotesque” in The Age of Correggio and the Carracci (Washington: National Gallery of Art, 1986), p. 44.


61 Ludovico Carracci 1616 Martyrdom of St Margaret for the Theatine church in Mantua borrowed heavily from Scarsellino’s depiction of the same subject, completed just five years prior for the Oratory of Saint Margaret in Ferrara. Numerous other derivations can be seen between the Carracci, their pupils and the Ferrarese artist.

62 John Marciari and Suzanne Boorsch’s analysis in Francesco Vanni: Art in Late Renaissance Siena (Yale: Yale University Press, 2013) uncritically promotes the notion that the Carracci are a largely one directional source of innovation for Vanni. I believe the monograph emphatically underemphasises the vast influence Barocci had upon Vanni while overemphasising the Carracci. Marciari states that ‘...contact with the Carracci...probably led Vanni to Barocci as well.’ [p. 7] I am rather in agreement with Dempsey’s assertion that it was rather ‘Francesco Vanni’s trip from Tuscany to Bologna and Lombardy at the age of twenty... in search of Barocci’s Correggesque antecedents [that] played an important part in stimulating the twenty-three-year-old Annibale and the twenty-eight-year-old Ludovico to explore simultaneously with Vanni the principles of Barocci’s style...’ (italics added) p. 14.
both Santi di Tito and Ludovico Cigoli; in Venice to Palma il Giovane; in Urbino to Federico Barocci and following, Andrea Lilio; in Gaeta near Naples to Scipione Pulzone; in Perugia to Ippolito Borghese and in Bologna itself, to Bartolomeo Cesi. It is far beyond the scope of this thesis to comprehensively address this movement; rather I aim to historically emancipate its existence via a repositioning of the Carracci, as one group of artists, very much culturally embedded amongst its many protagonists. The notion that the Carracci perceived of themselves as an exception within such a culturally interactive and broad geographic group is disputed in the succeeding chapters of this thesis, in an analysis of their undeniable connection to the Florentine Reformers.

Chapters Two to Six present a reciprocative analysis of both mid-sixteenth century art criticism, Carracci scholarship and the relevant primary written source material in relation to the visual source material of the period. Chapter Two addresses the effect of an evolving literary criticism, contingent to Aristotle’s Poetics, on the immediate localities of Padua and Venice as notably seen in the work of the painter Battista Franco. Chapter Three discusses the initial impact of the peripatetic

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63 Sydney Freedberg states in c.1600 that ‘it requires only the briefest confrontation [?] for us to see that the near-contemporary pictures of Pulzone or a Santi are still, despite the quota they may show of naturalism, bound to a mentality of idealization and convey more a sense of an accomplishment of art than they do of the sense of reality. The work of these contemporary painters may constitute a reform of style, but by contrast Annibale... has achieved a revolution.’ See S.J. Freedberg, Circa 1600: A Revolution of Style in Italian Painting (Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1983) p. 5. These claims for a ‘mentality of idealization’ have been very recently called into question by Lisa Bourla; as is evident in the Abstract to her 2013 thesis The Reform of Drawing and the Natural Act of Painting: Lodovico Cigoli and his Florentine circle c. 1600 (Pennsylvania: University of Pennsylvania, Jan 1, 2013). Regrettably Bourla’s dissertation was not made available for reading at the time of my research.

64 The prices of altarpieces by Ludovico and the Carracci pupils in Bologna rose in the early decades of the seventeenth century. However they were often equalled by the painter Alessandro Tiarini. Tiarini was a Bolognese born artist who like Ludovico before him, had as Malvasia states, ‘spent so many years in Florence’ studying under Domenico Passignano. See Summerscale, Malvasia p. 490. In fact it was Ludovico who encouraged Tiarini to return home - perhaps to strengthen the reform agenda in Bologna? Tiarini had also studied under the other leading Bolognese reformist, Bartolomeo Cesi. Cesi and Tiarini can therefore be seen as a significant alternative reformist lineage that at times came a very close second to the Carracci. For a comparative – though not exhaustive – analysis of market prices for paintings in Bologna see Table 10 “Costs per Square Meter and per Figure of Bolognese Altarpieces” in Richard E. Spear and Philip Sohm, Painting for Profit: The Economic Lives of Seventeenth-Century Italian Painters (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010), pp. 149-50.

65 Freedberg coined the term in Painting in Italy: 1500-1600 (New Haven: 1993, pp. 620-32. I have employed it due to its usefulness as a collective designation for these artists.
aesthetic in Rome via the artist Girolamo Muziano. The conceptual and stylistic agenda of reformist artists including the Carracci - and Annibale in particular - are understood within the context of the definitive influence that the art of Muziano had on both Rome and the Italian peninsula more broadly. Chapter Four, offers a critical refutation of Dempsey’s established analysis of the Carracci, particularly within the context of a further examination of Malvasia’s life of the artists. Chapter Five is a visual analysis of successive reformist painters who both predated and were contemporaneous with the Carracci. This demonstrates that the visual language of reform adopted by the Carracci was in no sense unique to them but rather dependent on a well established eclectic reformist model. Chapter Six aims to show that the formal qualities associated with Annibale Carracci’s “Roman classicism” were also evident amongst earlier painters and contemporary artists working in Rome and the Italian peninsula. This is also related to an analysis of the development of a Carracci reform myth, showing its historical progression in written seicento sources. The contexts of these sources are shown to emerge from less immediately perceived broader cultural and aesthetic initiatives.

**A note on my use of the term ‘Counter-Mannerism’**

I have employed Sydney Freedberg’s term “Counter-Mannerism” in a far more literal and direct sense than he intended, to refer to those artists whose work was consistently ‘counter’ to the aesthetic and formal premises of Mannerism. In contrast to my use of the term, I believe Freedberg’s own qualification of the phrase to be highly ambivalent, with his justification reading as a paralogism. There is a clear disconnect in his use of the word “counter” as defining an art that he claims

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66 The term “Mannerism” was itself first used by Luigi Lanzi in 1792.

67 Citing Freedberg, ‘If we are careful to take the prefix ‘counter’ in an exact sense – as it is used, for example, especially in the conception of a counterpart (or further: counterproof, counterpoint, contrapposto), implying parallelism and relation between two terms at the same time as their opposition – then the term ‘Counter-Maniera’ may serve us as a verbal handle that will help us grasp the nature of this style’ Freedberg, *Painting in Italy* (New Haven: 1971), p. 429.
was both against and correspondingly a “counterpart” to Mannerism. Freedberg’s play on the varied uses for the word *counter* actually reads as a fruitless attempt to demarcate the mid-to-late sixteenth century into a simplistic *zeitgeist* of periodization in support of the decadence thesis discussed above.

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68 Ibid.
Chapter One: Padua and the Poetics

Aristotle’s Poetics

Aristotle’s *Poetics* (c.347-322 B.C.) is the earliest known treatise exclusively devoted to the literary theory of poetry, coming down from the classical period. The work sought to understand poetry according to its formal aspects, as opposed to the more exclusively social and religious dimensions negatively addressed by Aristotle’s teacher, the philosopher Plato.69

These two approaches to poetry had dramatically different ramifications. The religious and hence inspired nature of poetry meant that for Plato, poetry was an irrational force - that is, one not centred or emerging out of reason. Poets, in their religious function, were not unlike the Delphic oracle who, ‘sits on the tripod of the Muses... [and is] not in... [her] right mind, but like a spring let[ting] whatever is at hand flow forth.’70

For Plato, the poetic imitation of the natural world was very much seen as the embodiment, as it were, of a superficial frenzy; where random parts of phenomena, were perceived by the senses and copied without any concern for an underlying essential form or logic. It was in reaction to such negative claims that Aristotle wrote a treatise on poetry that centred upon its form, reasserting its basis on rational and intelligible principles.71

Imitation was then importantly redeemed by Aristotle as that aspect that teaches us about the world; rightly observing that from the earliest age, we learn via copying. However, Aristotle added that the function of poetry - and for that matter all the arts - is one step above these particular lessons that we gain from imitation in our day to day experience; in that poetry gives us a general and more universal


70 See Plato’s *Laws* 719c and *Phaedrus* 245a.

imitation of nature.\textsuperscript{72} Furthermore he stated that this general picture brings our own
human nature into much greater clarity and focus, and is thus far more successful as
a means for instructing us about ourselves than our singular natural abilities are in
taking away perceptive representations of human experience from daily life.\textsuperscript{73}

The arts are then, for Aristotle, a form of mimesis; that is both an imitation
and a representation of ourselves and the world we inhabit. In this way Aristotle
avoided Plato’s criticism that imitation was nothing more than an irrational act of
copying. The artist’s representation is a form of imitation based on general forms
that present things ‘not as they are, but as they ought to be.’\textsuperscript{74} Hence, in tragedy,
Aristotle describes the poets function as not representing things as they have
occurred, like the historian; but rather as they are likely to happen. This
verisimilitude, or plausibility, is then an essential and definitive characteristic of all art
forms for Aristotle.\textsuperscript{75}

In addition, the means in poetry by which verisimilitude is made apparent is
via the unity of the action of the poem’s protagonists.\textsuperscript{76} This is how the intentions and
psychology of the characters are embodied in what they do – what in the
Renaissance was termed the affetti.\textsuperscript{77} What they do should express, in turn, both an

\textsuperscript{72} In the Renaissance poetry was perceived as being synonymous with all the arts.

\textsuperscript{73} Ibid, p. xxxi

\textsuperscript{74} Poetics 1460b.

\textsuperscript{75} xxxi – xxxii.

\textsuperscript{76} See the Poetics Chapter 8, which is significant enough to quote almost entirely: ‘A plot does not possess
unity, as some people suppose, merely because it is about one man. Many things, countless things indeed,
may happen to one man, and some of them will not contribute to any kind of unity: and similarly he may carry
out many actions from which no single unified action will emerge... Homer... In composing his Odyssey, he did
not put in everything that happened to Odysseus – that he was wounded on Mount Parnassus, for example, or
that he feigned madness at the time of his call to arms, for it was not a matter of necessity or probability that
either of these incidents should have led to the other; on the contrary, he constructed the Odyssey round a
single action of the kind I have spoken of, and he did this with the Iliad too. Thus, just as in the other imitative
arts each individual representation is the representation of a single object, so too the plot of a play, being the
representation of an action, must present it as a unified whole; and its various incidence must be so arranged
that if any of them is differently placed or taken away the effect of wholeness will be seriously disrupted. For if
the presence or absence of something makes no difference, it is no real part of the whole.’ See “Aristotle

\textsuperscript{77} In Bellori’s Lives of the Modern Painters, Sculptors and Architects, Domenichino is a student of the Carracci,
singled out for his skill in the affetti, a quality Bellori describes as being amongst the highest aims of the art of
overarching and a progressive continuity in the poem’s plot. The characters actions are then themselves representative of the poem’s storyline.

Aristotle also draws a distinction between the different art forms of tragedy and epic poetry. This is chiefly because the tragic poet presents the form of the plot as actions rather than narration. Tragedy’s emphasis on action, for this reason, makes it the focus of the Poetics and is justified as being so because of what Aristotle perceives as being its cultural utility - that is, the ability of the actions of the characters in tragedy to arouse in the audience both pity and fear, bringing about a catharsis or ‘resolution’ in such emotions.78

Precisely what Aristotle meant by catharsis was - and still is - the subject of much debate.79 The closest definition comes not from the Poetics but from Aristotle’s Politics, where the philosopher is discussing the benefits of music:

The emotions which violently affect some minds exist in all, but in different degrees, for example, pity and fear, and ‘enthusiasm’ too, for some people are subject to this disturbance. We can see the effect of sacred music on such people when they make use of melodies that arouse the mind to frenzy, and are restored to health and attain, as it were healing and catharsis. The same effect will necessarily be...

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79 Mid-to-late sixteenth century debate often centred on whether catharsis worked as an agent to remove pity and fear, or whether these emotions were themselves intermediaries for removing other less desirable passions. See Bernard Weinberg, A History of Literary Criticism in the Italian Renaissance (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961), p. 408.
experienced in the case of those prone to pity or fear, or any other emotion, in the proportion appropriate to each individual; all experience a catharsis and pleasurable relief.80

Aristotle’s sanctioning of art’s utility, via the role of inducing the catharsis of the emotions, I would argue, was as broad in its effect upon the visual arts in the early modern period as the overall formal and mimetic qualities for poetry that the philosopher had laid out in the text.81 While many of the Protestants of Northern Europe rejected the role of the arts within the church as idolatry, and the Council of Trent had declared that images should be free from lascivia (sensual appeal), there was nonetheless an awareness that the Poetics could be situated very coherently within the Peripatetic tradition adopted by the church since the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Evident, for example, in Thomas Aquinas’ scriptural interpretation of Psalm 83:3, “My heart and my flesh have rejoiced in the living God’, this was the intellect in unison with the emotions in the pleasure of expressing devotion, as he states, ‘we are to take ‘heart’ for the intellectual appetite and ‘flesh’ for the sensitive appetite.’82 Thus Paleotti in his 1582, Discourse on Sacred and Profane Images, references Aristotle’s definition of catharsis in the Politics, in a metaphor for cathartic violence clearly derivative of the text ‘if, words in either spoken or written form are... effective at altering how we feel, then the [painted or sculpted] figures that exhale piety, modesty, sanctity, and devotion will obviously force themselves into us with even greater violence.’83


81 This is evident in Weinberg, A History of Literary Criticism in the Italian Renaissance (Chicago: 1961), pp. 315-6 and 533.


83 Paleotti, Discourses on Sacred and Profane Images, (Los Angeles: 2012), p. 119 (italics added). In his Discorsi del Poema heroico of 1594, Torquato Tasso, derivative of the Poetics, favours poetry and the other arts over demonstrative action in theological discourse, because the former are also a means to catharsis, ‘il conducere alla contemplation delle cose diuine e il destare in questa guise con l’imagini comma fà il Theologo mistico,
We also see communicated in Paleotti’s *Discourse* the integrated dual function that the *Poetics* gave to the arts, specifically in relation to painting, where both the clarity of a subject, embodied in its verisimilitude, along with its power to move the viewer are outlined:

There is leeway when that which is narrated or depicted has a high degree of probability [that is, verisimilitude] and is also apt to move hearts and excite devotion. We have all observed that contemplative persons and preachers customarily relate many things about the passion of our Lord that have not been written down in the gospels: the wailing of the Madonna, the long prayers made by our Lord in the supplication in the garden, the harshness of the flogging... and other things they recount to move the emotions more strongly and cause hearts to melt. Such narrations of pictures, if they are combined with judgment and verisimilitude, will shield the preacher or painter from the charge of temerity. But if they are only things imagined in order to draw tears and awaken fervent devotion, having no regard for the decorum of the person or factual probability and verisimilitude, then the author has no defence against the charge of rashness.84

Thus the mid-sixteenth century emergence of Aristotle’s *Poetics*, as a defining text for the arts,85 was influential in two respects. Namely, the new philological issues it raised concerning order, structure and clarity – that being the formal qualities of the arts for which the *Poetics* had been written - were placed under new scrutiny within the context of this rediscovered source of aesthetic analysis.86 Furthermore, in the

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85 See the following subheading, “The Poetics and the Paduan school of Aristotle.”

86 Largely prior to the middle of the sixteenth century, the Poetics was only known through the twelfth century commentary on the text by the Andalusian scholar Ibn Rushd - otherwise called by his Latinized name, Averroes.
visual arts such an influence became paramount; leading to a renewed system of aesthetic criteria that instigated both a critique and a rejection of Mannerism in the latter half of the sixteenth century.

In the following chapters, I will argue that two modes of influence: both a studied analysis of plot and form, on the one hand, and a justification for the arts as a vehicle of psychological religious interconnectedness on the other, would be exemplified within two developments of visual artistic reform in the mid-to-late sixteenth century. The first might be termed a “classical” reformist mode, initially embodied in the painting of the Brescian, Paduan / Venetian trained artist Girolamo Muziano – that was later established into a cohesive and “severe” aesthetic tradition by the Florentine painter Santi di Tito and a sensual mode of reform whose progenitor was the painter from Urbino, Federico Barocci. My aim will be to seek to show how the duality of these two modes of reform, issuing in part from the

87 A distinction between imitative poetic form, on the one hand and catharsis on the other, occurred within some literary interpretations of both tragedy, poetry and the arts more broadly. This was seen within Francesco Robertello’s 1548, In librum Aristotelis de arte poetica explications; Julius Caesar Scaliger’s 1561, Poetices libri spatem and perhaps most significantly in Giulio Del Bene’s 1574, Che egli e necessario à I’esser poeta imitare azione. In all instances, poetic structure is given precedence over an independent concern for catharsis. Thus poetic form and catharsis were not always perceived as being congruent. See Hoxby, What Was Tragedy?:Theory and the Early Modern Canon (Oxford Scholarship Online: 2015), pp. 62 and 67 and Weinberg, A History of Literary Criticism (Chicago: 1961), p. 398.

88 The significance of Santi di Tito and Federico Barocci as two of the most important reformists, from the 1560s onwards, has received regular - if cursory - notice by scholars. As Marcia Hall reiterates, ‘The impact of reform thinking must have been strong on the artists [Federico Barocci and Santi di Tito] who came to Rome in the second half of the 1550s... It was difficult for them to ignore the fact that new criteria for sacred art was being put in place... [in fact, Barocci and Santi] embraced the principles of the reform of sacred images more unequivocally than any of the other painters [in the city].’ Hall, After Raphael (Cambridge: 1999), p. 271 (italics added).

This duality of reform, is noted as being just as influential in the later decades of the sixteenth century by Ian Verstegen, ‘Barocci provided a chromatic alternative to the pietistic sentiment expressed by Pulzone [the prominent stylistic successor in Rome to Santi di Tito] and Muziano; they directed the counter-maniera toward an archaizing ideal and Barocci demonstrated a new means of appeal to the viewer.’ Verstegen, “Federico Barocci, Federico Borromoeo, and the Oratorian Orbit” Renaissance Quarterly, Vol. 56, No. 1 (Spring, 2003), p. 65.

My conception of Federico Barocci as instigating a stylistically sensual reformist mode of painting, finds further precedence in Stuart Lingo’s analysis of voghezza, in relation to the artist in his monograph, Federico Barocci: Allure and Devotion in Late Renaissance Painting (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), pp. 126-28. However, given that Lingo’s argument is contingent upon contemporaneous art criticism, it is patently inexplicable as to why the Poetics is completely ignored as the most significant conceptual source for the arts -and thus Barocci - within the period.
effects of the *Poetics* on mid-to-late sixteenth century Italian culture, were absorbed by Reformist artists, amongst whom were the Carracci.
The Poetics and the Paduan school of Aristotle

The reader of Renaissance criticism sees before him, above all, a patchwork ... abstracted from Aristotle’s Poetics, Horace’s Ars poetica, the rhetorical treatises of Aristotle, Cicero and Quintilian, Plato’s Republic, Ion, Laws, Phaedrus and Sophist, Plutarch’s “How a Young Man Should Read Poems,” and a host of works of smaller importance... those from Aristotle were of greatest importance from the 1540s onward.


In just one year, 1536, the Venetian born Paduan scholar, Vittore Trincavelli published the Poetics in its original script; the Florentine nobleman, Alessandro de’ Pazzi’s posthumous Latin translation, side by side with the Greek original, was also produced in Venice in a portable form and Daniello Bernardino’s La Poetica, the first work of literary criticism based upon the Poetics was likewise printed.90

Alessandro de’ Pazzi’s Latin edition, was a catalyst for the cultural and intellectual movement that saw the Poetics metamorphose from a work of obscurity - even in antiquity - very rapidly to a place of canonical status within Italian literary criticism.91 As a result, within just over half a decade, the Poetics had already become a part of the elite curriculum at the University of Ferrara - the poet Giraldi Cintio stating in his Discourse on Comedies and Tragedies of 1554, that it was a common exercise to employ the Poetics in comparing a Greek Tragedy to a comparative play by Seneca.92

89 Italicics added.


91 p. 13.

92 p. 39.
Pazzi’s success was due to the fact that his translation could be cross-examined with the original – something two earlier editions: Lorenzo Valla’s translation of 1498 and Aldus Manutius’ first printed Greek text of 1508, had not offered. Furthermore, the 1536 edition was published alone rather than being obscured within an anthology of other classical works. In keeping with the rising popularity for printed books, of a ‘small, portable and inexpensive format... [that contrasted] with the sizeable tomes of earlier editions’ the text was, for the first time, accessible to anyone who could read Latin. Thus Pazzi’s translation became the source of some of the most significant commentaries on the Poetics, such as Francesco Robertello’s In librum Aristotelis de arte poetica explications of 1548 and Vincenzo Maggi’s In Aristotelis librum de poetica communes explanations of 1550.

Spurred on by Pazzi’s translation, in the early 1540s lectures on the Poetics additionally began outside of the University context at the Academia degli Infiammati (The Academy of the Inflamed), founded by a loose body of students associated with Marcantonio Genova, an Aristotelian lecturer on belles-lettres in Padua. Earlier Renaissance academies, such as those inspired by the Neoplatonism of the Florentine physician Marsilio Ficino, had aimed to move ‘philosophical debate from a formal Scholastic question-and-answer toward[s] the pleasure of literature.’ The pupils of Marcantonio fostered a comparative literary approach to the Peripatetic corpus which Quattrocento humanists had taken a century prior in relation to Neoplatonism - departing from the scholastically syllogistic modus operandi of the university curriculum. This perspective was in turn spread by members of the Infiammati to other academies throughout the Italian peninsula, thus drawing in as

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94 Ibid.

95 p. 373. It should be noted that many mid-to-late sixteenth century commentaries on the Poetics were inclusive of Horace’s Ars Poetica. This was in part due to the Poetics being perceived of as extending the decorum in literary style associated with the arts in Horace’s text. The Art of Poetry had been the most significant work on the arts prior to the emergence of the Poetics. See Weinberg, chapter four “Ars Poetica: The Confusion with Aristotle” in Ibid.


Bernard Weinberg notes, ‘groups of gentlemen critics and amateur literati’ ensuring ‘the removal of the Poetics from the scholar’s study and the university lecture-hall to the open disputes of the academies... [engendering] considerable... growth of knowledge about [the text].’

In 1549, the Florentine humanist Bernardo Segni translated the Poetics into the Italian vernacular from Robertello’s Latin version. A decade later and the Poetics had moved beyond the academies with the emergence of vernacular commentaries as well as abbreviated non-specialist summaries. As Weinberg further remarks, ‘The Poetics becomes, in a sense, a more “popular” document; formal and erudite commentaries in Latin, [and] searching linguistic analysis, tend to give way to treatments which will be accessible to a larger and less professional audience.’

This was very much connected to a broad movement towards an egalitarian dissemination of knowledge with in which the members of the Academia degli Infiammati played an appreciable role. Benedetto Varchi - a leading figure amongst the Infiammati – was the first individual to comprehensively discuss the visual arts in the context of an eclectic combination of classical sources with literary precedence that gave primacy to the Poetics. On returning to Florence from exile, Varchi proclaimed a peripatetic aesthetic in public lectures estimated by Cochrane to have been to audiences numbering as many as two thousand. As Leatrice Mendelsohm notes:

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100 p. 478.

101 This is discussed in more detail under the following subheading, “The embodiment of the Poetics in mid-sixteenth century art criticism”

102 Weinberg, p. 429.

the influence of [Varchi’s] lectures should not be seen as restricted to a small circle of intellectual elite. A conscious aim toward popularisation played a part in the dissemination of Varchi’s ideas on art and artists, to the extent that they came to be reflected in public taste...104

It is true that Aristotle’s *Poetics* was not the only stimulus for what was a conscious rise in the promotion of cultural literacy in the middle of the sixteenth century.105 Yet, due to the very content of the text itself - as will be discussed below - it has been shown to be undeniably pivotal.

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104 Ibid.

105 Ibid footnote 30.
The embodiment of the Poetics in mid-sixteenth-century art criticism

Another more commercially based social force was affecting a move away from the singularly scholastic and elite humanist consumption of knowledge at precisely the same time as the Poetics came to literary preeminence. This was most significantly embodied in the “birth” of proto-journalism with the impetus of Pietro Aretino’s Epistolaries - what ultimately became his six volumes of letters. The first published in 1538 was the most influential, followed in the 1540s by later editions.106

The character of these volumes was a mixture of parody, gossip and ‘an ingratiating courtly tone.’107 Aretino’s epistolaries discussed the fine arts among many other aspects of cultural life, in spite of not articulating anything in the way of a coherent art criticism, they nonetheless provided a broader critical articulation of the visual arts to a wider readership.108 The epistolaries prompted the publication of a proliferation of works - forged ahead by the Venetian publishing industry - whose intention was as much to entertain, as it was to educate. Moreover, two other Paduan academics - authors of works on the Poetics - Daniello and Girolamo Fracastoro were not only within the social orbit of Aretino but were passionate advocates for such literature.109

Paolo Pino’s Dialogo of 1548 was one of many small format manuals, or tascabili, that were part of a broad industry producing treatises on numerous topics - on subjects such as love, beauty, women, music and manners. Moreover, the authors of two art critical works that followed Pino’s Dialogo a year later were produced because the authors were individuals who made a career in publishing as poligrafi -

106 Introduction to Paolo Pino, Dialogo di pittura, trans., Lora Anne Palladino (Ann Arbor: Michigan University, 1985) p. 28.

107 Ibid.


Daniello and Fracastoro’s appreciation may in part have been due to Aristotle having written works now lost, that were intended for popular consumption, known as the exoterics. These were written as poetry, letters and essays or in a dialogue format, while by contrast treatises were written for the more educated elite. See A.P.Bos, Cosmic and Meta-Cosmic Theology in Aristotle’s Lost Dialogues (Leiden: Brill, 1989), p. 125.
that is, eclectic popularisers - namely Anton Francesco Doni and Michelangelo Biondo.\textsuperscript{110}

Pietro Aretino and the \textit{poligrafi} - such as Doni and, at a more moderate level, the author of the 1557 \textit{Dialogo della pittura}, Ludovico Dolce - were often identified with the \textit{prosatori}.\textsuperscript{111} The \textit{prosatori} were a movement of writers inspired by the literary theorist and scholar Pietro Bembo’s passion for the Italian vernacular. Bembo asserted the equality of Trecento Tuscan poets, Boccaccio and Petrarch with the Latin authors of antiquity. Aretino and the \textit{prosatori} went further though, rejecting Bembo’s Trecento limitations; they championed the production of original contemporary works as well as translating numerous classical authors into the vernacular.\textsuperscript{112} The centre of their influence was in Venice, their aim being to make their living independently of the courts of Italy.\textsuperscript{113}

In analysing the popular art criticism that first emerged at this time, it must be noted that notions of poetic clarity, which we have seen as definitive to the arts as recounted in the \textit{Poetics}, had a great deal of appeal for these champions of Bemboism.\textsuperscript{114} Aristotle had asserted that the ability of an audience to rationally comprehend the verisimilar depiction of reality in the arts, and in turn, to experience catharsis was - irrespective of social standing - universal. This position was antagonistic to the hegemony of courtly Neoplatonic humanism, evident in the artistic analysis of the late fifteenth and early sixteenth century where, as Hathaway notes, ‘poetry was [seen as] more prophetic, more mystical, or more cabbalistic than anything that ordinary mortals would study, understand and appreciate’\textsuperscript{115} As previously stated, Plato had viewed imitation as a hindrance to knowledge - being a

\textsuperscript{110} Pino, \textit{Dialogo di pittura} (Ann Arbor: 1985) p. 29. The holdings of the British Library indicate that more books were produced in Venice between 1551 and 1575 than at any other time in the 1500s. See Brian Richardson, \textit{Print Culture in Renaissance Italy} (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), p. 109.

\textsuperscript{111} Aretino and Dolce were also both members of the Academy of the Inflamed.

\textsuperscript{112} See Richardson, \textit{Print Culture in Renaissance Italy} (Cambridge: 1994), p. xi and xii.


\textsuperscript{114} Hathaway, \textit{Marvels and Commonplaces} (New York: 1968), p. 15.

\textsuperscript{115} Ibid, p. 7.
mere facsimile of an adulterated and thoughtless (or at best inspired)\textsuperscript{116} reproduction of nature which was itself a distorted copy of the mathematically perfect and universal Forms, he had taught, lay behind the aggregate of existence.\textsuperscript{117} Plato’s position was later reshaped by the third century platonic philosopher Plotinus - whose works were translated by the Florentine humanist Marsilio Ficino and published in 1492 - sanctioning the arts as a lower, yet very real \textit{emanation} of Plato’s true Forms.\textsuperscript{118} Plotinus stated that ‘art exhibited in the material work derives from an art yet higher.’\textsuperscript{119} However, this still inferred that the arts were an opaque expression of truth at the dissipated outer boundaries of its emanation. Plotinus therefore remained consistent with Plato in viewing the highest form of knowledge as ultimately being beyond mere sense perception, and thus obtainable only to a socially intellectual elite.\textsuperscript{120} The visual opacity of sixteenth century Mannerist art was a by-product of this platonic cultural milieu, with its allegorically obscure subject matter believed to be concealing more abstract universal truths. The members of the \textit{Academy of the Inflamed} had rejected this position through consolidating Aristotle’s argument for poetry with Bembo’s championing of the common tongue in the vernacular. This was directly inspired by Bembo himself, who had both returned to and left Padua in the decades just prior to the \textit{Poetics} literary ascent; a time in which the major source of his influence was published in 1525, his \textit{Prose della vulgar lingua}.\textsuperscript{121} Thus Sperone Speroni, a prominent figure amongst the second generation of the \textit{Infiammati}, argued for a curriculum at the Academy that was to be completely taught in the Italian vernacular, and for subjects that expressed an exclusively

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{116} \textit{Phaedrus} 254a
\item \textsuperscript{117} \textit{Phaedo} 109a-111c and \textit{Republic} 514a-520a
\item \textsuperscript{118} See \textit{Ennead} 5.1.6
\item \textsuperscript{120} John Shearman pioneered the view of Mannerism as a courtly art. See Chapter 4 in Shearman, \textit{Mannerism} (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1967).
\item \textsuperscript{121} Hathaway, \textit{Marvels and Commonplaces} (New York: 1968), p. 15.
\end{itemize}
utilitarian view of the function of the arts, mirroring a great deal of contemporary interpretive commentary on the *Poetics*.

Pino’s choice of an art treatise in the form of a dialogue was not an uncommon format for *tascabili*, fulfilling the said function of being both enjoyable and didactic. Plato had employed the dialogue to illustrate the debates of Socrates. However, it was the more declamatory conversation employed by Cicero that influenced Pino and his contemporaries - allowing them to outline concepts peppered with quasi-biographical innuendo from the lives of the talking protagonists.

What makes this populist book all the more significant as a work of art criticism is the author’s categorical statement in the introduction that he will ‘discuss painting as a painter’. In addition, Pino’s dialogue occurs between two painters, the more experienced Fabio and his friend, Lauro. From this we can perhaps conjecture who Pino’s perceived readership was.

In the dialogue, Fabio describes artistic invention in terms derivative of both Leon Battista Alberti’s elaboration for the depiction of *istoria* in his treatise *De pictura* (On Painting) and the *Poetics*, as ‘properly differentiating, ordering and arranging’


125 Ibid.

126 See *De Pictura*, book II, 41-2. Both Alberti’s conception of *istoria* (historical painting) and Aristototle’s formulation for tragedy are prescribed as a plot/action *synergy*. I believe that it is too much of a coincidence to assume that Alberti’s conception for *istoria* was conceived independently of peripatetic thought. Furthermore, I would suggest that *istoria* as a concept, came out of Alberti’s study of Averroes’ middle commentary on the *Poetics*. In Mark Jarzombek’s essay “The Structural Problematic of Leon Batista Alberti’s *De Pictura*”, in *Renaissance Studies* Vol, 4, no. 3, Sept., 1990, pp. 273 – 285 (see especially pp. 280 – 285), he convincingly argues that the composition of Alberti’s *On Painting* takes its origins from medieval understandings of scientific method that had come down from Averroes’ commentaries. Alberti would have obtained such a background as a young student in Bologna.

Furthermore, Averroes calls tragedy, *eulogy* in his commentary. This is due to the term being a closer parallel with Arabic poetry, for which he had aimed to identify a comparison. I have found it compelling that references to eulogy (tragedy) in Charles E. Butterworth’s translation of the middle commentary (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), seem in part to mirror Alberti’s description of *istoria*. An analysis of a contemporaneous Latin translation may likely confirm this.
things said by others, fitting the subjects well to the figures actions, that all may be directed to the expression of the [work’s] intent. The unity of the visual arts with the literary is made evident, in that artistic invention is described here as the ordering of ‘things said by others’ – that is, painting is understood as being the physical embodiment of the spoken narrative.

However, Pino’s Dialogue is also sympathetic, and even sometimes admiring of formal Mannerist tendencies in painting, calling some of these painters ‘excellent’. In one passage he even breaks from what is his usual call for peripatetic decorum, stating:

...figures standing, reclining, seated, one of them twisting, another lamenting, some rejoicing, one of these labouring, another resting, some living and some dead, always varying the invention to suit the action of the istoria one intends to paint; and never to relinquish the natural as a model... *and in all your works be sure to include at least one figure that is all contorted, mysterious and difficult, so that from it you may be seen to be [a painter of] worth by whomever understands the arts perfection.*

The significance of this relates to the fact that De Pictura was first republished in Venice in the sixteenth century, in the year 1547. This was just one year prior to the spate of peripatetically inspired works on art criticism (discussed above) began to appear in print.

127 p. 334.

128 (italics added). This is connected to the highly influential dictum of Horace *ut picture poesis*, likely derivative of the Greek poet Simonides and cited by Plutarch, that ‘painting is silent poetry and poetry painting that speaks’.

129 p. 307.

130 p. 335 (italics added). The description of the action is also derivative of Alberti’s account of variety in an istoria.
Here, Fabio answers a central criticism of Mannerist painting by arguing that a contorted figure should make an appearance in the painting but only in a subservient role to the general coherence of the istoria. In this way, Pino appears to articulate a kind of aesthetic compromise. On the one hand, he affirmed the new mid-sixteenth century interest in an Aristotelian aesthetic model based on coherence and decorum, and on the other, he allowed for the formal expression of artistic virtuosity to be displayed in the depiction of the human form.

Pino’s treatise articulated the aesthetic moderation that characterised the arts of the Veneto with respect to Mannerism. In turn, such an aesthetic position came to govern the kind of moderate reformism adopted by many Mannerist painters of the second half of the sixteenth century. This was particularly the case in Rome where the most publicly available models for painting in the city were decorative frescoed facades, such as those painted by Polidoro da Caravaggio, Maturino da Firenze and Taddeo Zuccaro on the exterior of buildings. The education of young artists in the city was utterly contingent to these decorative facades which, unlike the works of Raphael and Michelangelo, did not require any negotiation on their part to access. These proliferated in abundance just prior to the sack of Rome and continued to set a predominantly Mannerist aesthetic precedent throughout the century. For many later sixteenth-century Mannerist painters, an aesthetic model grounded in Aristotle would be adjusted and moderated by the learnt stylistic dictates of this prominent Roman Mannerist-derived artistic template.131

However, Pino was himself, clearly aware of the contradiction within such an attempt at aesthetic union. He knew not only from Aristotle but also from Pliny’s account of the great Apelles that exposing a painting to the public was definitive grounds for defining its quality and worth in the cultural sphere.132 Pino articulates this contradiction further through the words of Fabio:

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132 Pino cites Pliny substantially throughout the Dialogue.
Fabio: ...And so it will happen that an excellent painter will make a figure resembling the living model, *in a pose of such difficulty, that it will be not only not understood, but censored* by whomever does not know the scope of our art. And so the man will deprive himself of honour with the very toils he invests in its acquisition.133

The public censorship of such painters cannot have failed to call into question for Pino himself the “excellence” of such artists on both Aristotelian and Plinyian terms; particularly as Pino’s understanding of painting mostly tends towards defending the peripatetic position. Nonetheless, we have seen that Pino’s judgment is somewhat divided and Mannerist virtuosity, both technical and creative, still continue to colour the author’s opinions.

The Florentine expatriate Doni wrote his *Disegno* as a rebuttal to Pino’s assertion of painting's supremacy over sculpture; placing Pino as the mouthpiece for the art of painting in a dialogue addressing the *paragone* of the two arts.134 Michelangelo Biondo’s work in turn appears to have been a deliberate reply to Doni, in defence of painting. His stylistic format is a conversational treatise in the first person rather than in the convention of the dialogue. In the spirit of the *Academy of the Inflamed* and the *prosatori* Biondo, like Pino, rejects the perceived tautology of abstract learning embodied in earlier academic - and court - based cultural hubs of knowledge stating ‘I say a law ought to be written so as to damn those who not only do not discover fruitful things, but then study to conceal them.’135 Biondo, who seeks painters for his readership, interestingly apologises for not being one himself and in

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134 Doni’s argument for the supremacy of sculpture over painting is mirrored in Benedetto Varchi’s second *Lezione* and reflective of a largely Florentine position that was to lose favour in the second half of the sixteenth century. See Mendelsohn, *Paragone* (Ann Arbor: 1982), pp. 69-72.

reversal to Pino, appeals to the ancients as an authority he is familiar with.\textsuperscript{136} Yet, to allay any intimidation his readership might experience, he states, in the spirit of the \textit{prosatori}, ‘If what I treat ought to be said in various ways, and diverse languages, I tell you I will be brief and succinct, and will not forget either to write clearly.’\textsuperscript{137}

Biondo was a pupil of Agostino Nifo, a Paduan scholar, who produced both an edition of Averroes’ commentaries on Aristotle in the late 1400s as well as many widely read works of his own on the philosopher.\textsuperscript{138} Like Pino and Dolce later, Biondo sees Aristotle as a defining source for painting. However, he offers nothing new here in terms of our understanding of peripatetic aesthetics so far mentioned.\textsuperscript{139} It is rather, ultimately, with Ludovico Dolce’s 1557 \textit{Dialogo di Pittura} that we find a more extensive expression of sentiments emerging out of aesthetic criticism associated with the \textit{Poetics} which will be championed by reformist artists of the mid-to-late sixteenth century.

Dolce employs the dialogue format, using the now deceased Pietro Aretino and a Florentine humanist, Giovan Francesco Fabrini, as his mouthpieces. As with Francesco Doni’s work, they are both representatives of two \textit{paragoni} within the arts.\textsuperscript{140}

In his listing of great Italian artists, Michelangelo Biondo had covertly implied that Raphael was the most ideal source for artistic imitation. Dolce goes much further, emphatically asserting Raphael’s artistic hegemony through the mouthpiece of Aretino as a rebuttal to his other protagonist Fabrini’s unqualified praise of

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\begin{small}
\textsuperscript{136} Ibid, p. 6.
\textsuperscript{137} p. 47.
\textsuperscript{138} p.2.
\textsuperscript{139} Biondo cites a short description of the nature of the arts from Book VI of Aristotle’s \textit{Nicomachean Ethics} (1139b-1140a), rather than the \textit{Poetics}. The passage Biondo elaborates upon covers the teleological and purposeful nature of the arts.
\textsuperscript{140} To what extent the words put into the mouth of Aretino reflect his own views, has been a source of debate. The mutual respect the two men felt for one another is evident in Dolce’s dedication of his translation of Horace’s \textit{The Art of Poetry} to Aretino and likewise in Aretino sending two sonnets to Dolce in 1553. Given Dolce’s close acquaintance with the humanist circles of Venice, there is at the very least, no doubt that the \textit{Dialogue} is representative of the aesthetic discourse prevalent at the time amongst the Venetian republic of letters.
\end{small}
\end{flushleft}
Michelangelo. Aretino declaring that, at the papal courts of Julius II and Leo X, Raphael was favoured by ‘men of letters’ over Michelangelo. He concludes with an assertion regarding the universality of contemporary taste, derivative of the intermingling of Bemboism and peripatetic literary criticism, ‘Amongst the general public too, if we were to listen to those who are from the common crowd, we would find them similarly on [Raphael’s] side.’

This *paragone* of aesthetic modes sets the tone for the dialogue’s overall aim of seeking to define painting through the lens of Raphael and Michelangelo, ending with Titian as an exemplar of the former. The conception of artistic decorum, born of mid-sixteenth century readings of Aristotle’s *Poetics*, is employed throughout the text in the service of justifying this supremacy. In fact, the employment of the *Poetics* does not simply result in an argument that privileges Raphael over Michelangelo rather, by debating from an Aristotelian perspective that definitively prescribes what painting should intrinsically be, on classical grounds, Michelangelo loses his credibility as a painter and is theoretically sidelined.

Dolce, later, has Aretino go on to make a condensed summary comparing the relationship of Plato and Aristotle to Michelangelo and Raphael; Florentine art to the Venetian; and literary theory to the visual arts:

Aretino: If a man matching together Plato and Aristotle were to decide in favour of one or the other, he would not be regarded as a calumniator were he to demonstrate that, while both of them were great philosophers *still one outclassed the other*. And in discussing our two painters [Michelangelo or Raphael] I hope to touch on some of the finest complexities of art. Were these to be collected and

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141 p. 91. The universality of the arts - as referenced here, in the judgment of the common crowd - obviously has its origins in the *Poetics*. Alberti in *On Painting* reiterates a similar perspective, suggesting the likelihood of a second hand knowledge of Aristotle, via Averroes’ commentary on the *Poetics*, ‘The istoria which merits both praise and admiration will be agreeably and pleasantly attractive that it will capture the eye of whatever learned or unlearned person is looking at it and will move his soul.’ See Alberti, *On Painting*, trans. John R. Spencer (London: Routledge, 1970), p. 75.
written down by you or by others, they would prove not unserviceable to a quantity of people – people who, even if they paint well, have small understanding of what painting is...\(^{142}\)

Dolce is, here, arguing that Aristotle, not Plato, is the preferred theoretical model for the arts and that through the mouthpiece of Aretino he will define painting along peripatetic aesthetic parameters. By inference, the Platonic aesthetic model favoured in Florence is perceived as deficient and only exacerbates an intellectual aesthetic opacity. An art built upon a singularly Platonic aesthetic framework is thus worse than deficient from an Aristotelian point of view, producing painters who may have great technical facility but are devoid of the knowledge of art’s cultural function, viewing its intention as designed to be, in part, hidden. Aretino then states further in the text, epitomising the peripatetic utilitarian cultural turn we have earlier mentioned, ‘Those people, Fabrini [who believe painting is a mechanical art], are unaware how useful and necessary it is, and how much of an ornament [it is] to the world and our affairs.’\(^{143}\)

As with Pino, some examples of this reliance on Aristotle (and Alberti) include an emphasis on the communicative power of the actions as shown in Fabrini’s response to Aretino:

\begin{quote}
Aretino: ...[the painter] depicts... the thoughts and feelings of the spirit.
Fabrini: A good point, sir; but these things come across to us by way of certain outward actions – often it will be the arching of an eyebrow, the creasing of a forehead, or other
\end{quote}

\(^{142}\) 99 (italics added).

\(^{143}\) 105. (italics added).
such indices. That the interior secrets become plain; so that in many cases there is no need for the window of Socrates.  

In turn, the same linear arguments for clarity of narrative, inspired by the *Poetics*, are also laid out in the *Dialogue* by Dolce in relation to painting:

Aretino: ...As for disposition, it is necessary that the artist move from section to section following the course of time in the narrative he has undertaken to paint, and do so with such propriety that the spectators judge that this affair could not have taken place in any other way than the one he has depicted. He should not place later in time what ought to come earlier, nor earlier what should come later, but lay things out in a most ordered fashion, according to the way they succeeded one another.

Fabrini: Aristotle in his *Poetics* gives this same piece of instruction to writers of tragedy and comedy.  

In addition, it is also the same collectively universal aesthetic conception found in the *Poetics* that we have described earlier in relation to arts communicative power and ability to induce *catharsis* that leads Dolce to clarify and express sympathy with the judgment of those who are not men of letters:

Aretino: ...all men are endowed by nature with a certain sensitivity towards good and evil, and similarly towards beauty and ugliness... There are in fact a number of people who pass judgment correctly on poems and other forms of

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144 97.

145 121 (italics added).
writing without being men of letters; and it is usually the masses who provide poets, public speakers, musicians and (to an even greater extent) painters with fame and reputation. That is why Cicero said that, great as the distinction might be between the learned and the ignorant, there was little of it when it came to judging; and why Apelles would expose his figures to the criticism of all corners. I could also add that judging of three goddesses was put in the hands of a shepherd. My argument does not turn generally on the masses, but specifically on certain men of fine intelligence, who have refined their powers of judgement with the aid of literature and practical experience. In this way they can reliably judge a variety of things, and most expressly painting.146

In fact, Dolce has Aretino express a high opinion of the natural human faculty for judgment - inspired by both the significance Aristotle gives to empirical knowledge147 and, likewise, mirroring the Academy of the Inflamed in rejecting a scholastic or humanistic hegemony over understanding per se. In applying this to painting, he states:

Aretino: ...every intelligent man is capable of judging painting... his capacity will be that much stronger if he should make it his practice to look at antique objects and the paintings of masters of quality. For once he holds in his mind a certain image of perfection, it will be easy for

146 103 (italics added).
147 Posterior Analytics 71.5-7.
him to judge how far painted objects approach that perfection or deviate from it.148

Dolce is thus arguing that the capacity to judge works of art is, as Aristotle stated, contingent with natural observation rather than a specialised or esoteric knowledge. Following this approach to understanding, even the common crowd, as cited above, will favour Raphael.149 By contrast, Dolce expresses a witty, sharp-tongued criticism of Michelangelo that is worthy of the real Aretino himself:

Aretino: But I will give you on the subject of Michelangelo the comment which a learned and holy man has to offer, so they say, on the satirical poet Persius, whose obscurity is improperly extreme: “If you do not want to be understood, I do not want to understand you”; and with these words he cast him into the fire, treating him as an appropriate sacrifice to Vulcan. Similarly, I wish to say that if Michelangelo does not want anyone to understand his intentions, apart from a small number of intellectuals, then I, who am not one of the intellectual few in question, leave thinking about them to him.150

Likewise, Dolce criticises the proportion and decorum of the figures of Michelangelo and his followers:

148 105
149 91.
150 167
Aretino: If we are realizing a nude figure we can go about it in two different ways; that is, we can present it either as heavily musculated, or as delicate... Here again one needs to observe the propriety which we make into a datum in the case of invention.\textsuperscript{151}

Dolce gives Ganymede and Samson as extreme examples of delicate and muscular figures respectively; warning against making a muscularly robust Ganymede or a soft and delicate Samson. Dolce has Aretino argue in favour of the ‘delicate manner’, which, he points out, the classical sculptor largely favoured. Whereas delicate figures can be used by an untrained painter in an attempt to hide a lack of anatomical knowledge, excessively muscular figures are detrimental to the overall decorum of a picture with their flayed appearance detracting from the subject by being an unnecessary visual distraction.\textsuperscript{152}

Aretino is also made to criticise empty rhetorical gestures and movements in figures that are excessively strained rather than descriptive of the subject, ‘since human beings are not always in motion, [n]or so violent that they look deranged; instead this element needs to be handled... in line with the variety and circumstances of the subjects themselves.’\textsuperscript{153} To which, in agreement with the principles of decorum outlined by Aretino, Fabrini retorts, ‘The man who does not keep to this principle should be obliged to give up painting.’\textsuperscript{154}

To summarise, Ludovico Dolce’s dialogue had succinctly articulated how a neoplatonic aesthetic opacity had crossed over from the discipline of philosophy into the visual arts. This was visually embodied in the abstraction of the human body evident in Mannerist works. For Dolce and others, Aristotle’s \textit{Poetics} described a

\textsuperscript{151} Ibid p. 143.

\textsuperscript{152} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{153} p. 147. Dolce is also highly critical of sinuous and unnaturally elongated figures, in a passage that appears to covertly centre upon Parmigianino, ibid, p. 141.

\textsuperscript{154} 147.
cultural view of the arts that was non-elitist and universal in its receptivity. The Poetics, for its mid-sixteenth century readership, affirmed the precedent described by Pliny in relation to the famed painter Apelles - who regarded it as essential to subject his works to the scrutiny of the common person - that artistic worth was intrinsically connected to its perceived broader cultural value and role within society.

An aesthetic egalitarianism was also evident within the arts more broadly, with vernacular works on rhetoric and letter writing proliferating and the very language of classical precedent, for a multiplicity of disciplines, gaining greater traction in social groups - such as artists - with no formal background in the study of letters. Much of this was the result of the proliferation of vernacular texts, pioneered by the Venetian publishing industry, which led to a greater knowledge and ability to articulate literary-aesthetic criticism amongst artists. In other words, the capacity to conceive of the visual arts in terms of aesthetic reform, along both conceptual and formal grounds, was contingent on the growth of popular literature as an industry. This, in turn, further bridged the intellectual divide between artist and patron.

In the following chapter, I will seek to articulate artistic reform, contingent to literary-aesthetic criticism surrounding the Poetics, which came to fruition in the middle of the sixteenth century. Through an analysis of key artistic figures who saw the Poetics as exemplifying a call to greater cultural communicability - a position that opened the way for an aesthetic reform in painting - I will seek to show that what is usually described by art historians as “the Carracci reform” was already in complete evidence prior to - and simultaneously with - the Carracci painters.
Chapter Two: Battista Franco: An aesthetic conversion - from Michelangelo to Raphael

It makes logical sense to suppose that the appropriation of Aristotle’s *Poetics* upon the visual arts would have been most prominently felt first in Venice, given its visual dominance in the North of Italy and its geographical proximity to Padua. Thomas Puttfarken, in his monograph *Titian and Tragic Painting*, discussed how the effect of the *Poetics* on mid-sixteenth century thought informed Venice’s most renowned painter Titian. Yet it is crucial to note - as Puttfarken acknowledges - that it is overwhelmingly the *drama* of Greek Tragedy, rather than its *structure*, that Titian adopted. Despite the praise Ludovico Dolce heaped on Titian, whom he described as representing the seamless, stylistic continuation of the artistic decorum found in Raphael, the Venetian painter who most patently experimented with visually embodying the form of Greek tragedy, as articulated in the *Poetics*, (on at least one significant occasion) was Tintoretto.

The influence of the *Poetics* has often been noted in relation to Tintoretto’s 1548/9 *Christ Washing His Disciples Feet* (fig. 1). The self-conscious linear, narrative progression of the disciples undressing from left to right has been seen as a visual manifestation of Aristotle’s call for the plot in poetry to progressively unfold with the greatest degree of clarity.


157 For example Roland Krischel states of the painting, in his monograph on *Tintoretto*: ‘Typical... is the ingenuity he employs, while preserving the Aristotelian unities of time, place and action, in showing various phases of the same act (in this case the removal of the disciples’ footwear, the washing of their feet, and the covering of their feet again) by distributing them between different figures.’ Krischel, *Tintoretto 1519-1594* (Oldenburg: Koneman, 2000), pp. 32-3. While rightly addressing the paintings contingency to the *Poetics* in terms of the unity of action (and possibly time), Krischel is incorrect in addressing all three unities of action, time and place. The notion of three dramatic unities was only first specifically accounted for by Castelvetro in his 1570 vernacular commentary, *Poetica d’Aristotele vulgarizzata et sposta*.

158 Ibid.
Tintoretto, as if to emphasize, all the more, that this early work was an unmistakable visual embodiment of contemporary literary criticism, reproduced in the receding background, Sebastiano Serlio’s plans for a stage setting of Greek tragedy, from his 1545 second book on architecture (fig. 2).

Towards the end of Ludovico Dolce’s dialogue, Aretino states that, ‘one does not see amongst the young anyone newly coming up who offers hope of duly achieving some decent level of excellence...’ Aretino then, almost half heartedly, singles out the painter Battista Franco (c.1510–61) as the one exception. This suggests that, for contemporaries, next to the greats of Venetian painting like Titian and Tintoretto, Battista Franco looked comparatively second rate. Nonetheless, I believe there are grounds for viewing the conceptual trends that Franco pioneered within his late Venetian career which would come to prove so crucial at the level of pictorial design for centuries to come.

For most of his career, Franco avidly “plagiarised” and followed the manner of Michelangelo so closely that in, some instances, his drawings have been erroneously misattributed to the master (fig. 3) (fig. 4). Yet, during the years he spent in Urbino and Rome (c.1543 - c.1552), prior to his return to his native Venice, Battista Franco began an evolution away from the paradigm of Michelangelo, becoming ever more obsessed with antique stylistic models. Such an evolution was definitely contingent upon the kind of peripatetically defined aesthetic discussions recreated in the dialogues of individuals like Paolo Pino and, more particularly, Ludovico Dolce, who were examined in the previous chapter.

This interest in a peripatetic aesthetic, I believe, calls into question the analysis

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160 See for example, the British Museum, A seated nude youth; whole-length, head in profile to left, his right leg raised Black chalk, Museum Number pp,2.123.

161 This is particularly evident in his last trip to Rome, from 1548-52, when Franco’s interest in the antique takes on a rigorously proto-archaeological quality that continued unabated on his return to Venice in c. 1552. It is from this period that Bellori in his life of Federico Barocci, describes his master’s teacher as a ‘scholar of ancient statues (italics added).’ See Anne Varick Lauder, Chapter VII “Copies after the Antique and Polidoro da Caravaggio” in Battista Franco: His Life and Work with Catalogue Raisonné, Vol.1 Dissertation (Cambridge: University of Cambridge, 2004), pp.105-116.
of Franco in his late career as the “Michelangelo of Venice.”\textsuperscript{162} On the contrary, the stylistic change in the art of Franco is so radical, that it could have only been brought about by a moment of crisis within his very agenda for painting. That is, Battista Franco came to be convinced that he had been utterly wrong to choose Michelangelo as his aesthetic paradigm; the evolution in contemporary peripatetic aesthetic thinking, for him, was like a conversion to a different paradigm, with its basis in Raphael.

This artistic conversion reached its apogee when Franco returned to Venice in c.1552. Here he initially painted what, I would argue, may be termed the first truly baroque composition within the history of art - a painting now in the Uffizi in Florence entitled, \textit{Christ Fallen under the Cross} (fig. 5). The great aesthetic revolution in this picture lay not in Franco’s use of colour but more significantly within the work’s overarching design principles. The recognizable diagonal created across the composition by the fallen cross is, for the first time, firmly countered by a \textit{baroque diagonal} that rises from the bottom right of the picture and, following the direction of Christ’s back, reaches its summit in the man holding aloft a white flag.\textsuperscript{163} Other subsidiary diagonal forms exert further formal tensions, such as the two men to the right, one man in blue and red with his back to the viewer and the other standing upon a rock who attempt to lift the fallen cross. As these men serve to further emphasize the fallen Christ, another figure to the left in green with his back to us walks into the narrative further highlighting the opposing diagonal with its peak in the raised flag.

These overarching dramatic formal qualities draw the attention to the emphatic actions and expressions of the figures around the fallen Christ – where the


\textsuperscript{163} This will be a formal baroque device repeated by a plethora of artists. Within Venice itself, it is later commonly employed by Franco’s Venetian compatriot, the reformist painter, Palma the Younger. Palma would experience a similar aesthetic conversion to Franco in the early 1580s. See David Rosand, \textit{Palma Giovane and Venetian Mannerism} (Columbia: Columbia University, Ph.D., 1965), p.168. The only earlier proto-baroque precedence for the use of a flag to create a diagonal tension within a painted composition is Titian’s 1519-1526 Pisaro altarpiece. However this appears to have had an extremely minimal immediate lasting influence. Even Paolo Veronese’s occasional proto-baroque compositional employment of a flag, is not in evidence before the mid-1550s.
moral depravity of the crucifixion is made more overt by the contrasting empathy of St. Veronica with her cloth, and the glances that bear down upon Christ, the object of abject humiliation. In keeping with the principles of the Poetics, Franco has removed the fainting of the Virgin to a subsidiary narrative in the background thus compartmentalising the action of the narrative as Aristotle recommended (fig. 6). The compassion of Veronica to the fallen Christ and the surrounding crowd are then the picture’s unadulterated focus - with the Virgins fainting a further extension of this central tragic theme.

Mirroring the words of Dolce’s Aretino; banished from Franco’s painting are the strained anatomical forms or Herculean musculature and complex layered allegory evident in his earlier work. In its place, the clear drama of narrative is delineated with both an emotive force of descriptive action and facial expression that is simultaneously natural and calmly understated rather than overtly and needlessly energetic.165

The paradigm of Raphael is further exhibited here in the painting’s great debt to the artist’s late work of the same subject, Lo Spasimo of 1517 (fig. 7). It must be acknowledged that there are many other sixteenth century Italian adaptations of the subject which to a greater (or more often lesser extent than Franco) hark back to the model of Raphael. However, in keeping with Raphael’s composition, the figures in these versions often dominate the sides of the painting, crowding in on the fallen Christ, with the receding landscape exhibiting no more than a minor point of subsidiary interest. In marked contrast, Franco contains the narrative entirely within the landscape. This is a feature that Anne Varrick Lauder identifies as a ‘characteristic Northern’ quality.167 I would further suggest that it is not so much a

164 ‘Tragedy, then, is a representation of an action... in a language that is pleavourably embellished, the different forms of embellishment occurring in separate parts...’ Poetics chapter 6, (1449b) (italics added).

165 Interest in the painting is evident by the fact that Franco produced a further painted derivation of the work and a print. See Lauder, Battista Franco, Vol.1 Dissertation (Cambridge: 2004), pp. 129-30.

166 See for example, Giorgio Vasari’s Christ Carrying the Cross, oil on panel, 59 x 44.2cm, c.1562-65. Spencer Museum of Art.

167 Ibid, p. 128.
singly northern hallmark of painting but rather the product of the confluence of northern artists living in the vicinity of the intellectual climate of Padua. Furthermore, it was such a fusion that brought about the emergence of what would later be termed the Italian classical landscape tradition - to which the Carracci would be indebted too.

Lauder has rightly acknowledged the debt that Franco’s Christ Fallen under the Cross has to a 1540 painting of the same subject painted by the Flemish artist residing in Padua, Lambert Sustris (fig. 8). For the first time - but without Franco’s overt use of a ‘baroque’ compositional diagonal - the classically conceived narrative of Sustris is intrinsically occurring within the broader setting of the landscape.168

Landscape was pioneered as, an independent genre, in the work of the Italian artist Domenico Campagnola (fig. 9) and, then in the paintings of Sustris (fig. 10) (fig. 11) (fig. 12), with a further elaboration in the early 1570s in the paintings of the German artist, Christoph Schwarz (fig. 13).169 All of these artists had at one point worked in the studio of Titian.

Comparisons are often made between the landscapes of Campagnola and Titian. However, a major formal point of departure is the way in which these painters embedded the narrative within their depictions of the landscape to an extent that was largely foreign to the Venetian Master.170 Aristotle had stated that ‘tragedy

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170 The significance of Padua based artists for the origins of Italian classical landscape has in my view, been entirely overlooked by art historians. The influence of the much neglected Flemish painter Lambert Sustris on Italian art is also yet to be fully investigated. The limitations of this thesis have not allowed me to give an analysis of the similarities between the narrative depictions of the landscape in Sustris, Muziano and Schwarz with that of the Ferrarese painter Ippolito Scarsellino, the Carracci and most particularly the Carracci’s latter pupils, Domenichino and Albani. In keeping with the Campagnola/Sustris landscape tradition, the Bolognese painters depicted a reinvented landscape that is far less emotively and empirically atmospheric than the works of the prominent Venetian Masters, such as Titian. This is supported by the Scarsellino scholar, Maria Angela Novelli, who sees the Ferrarese reformist’s landscapes as having their derivation in Sustris. Novelli also notes that Sacrasellino’s c.1600 Way to Calvary Painting is also derivative of Sustris’ Brera picture. Given the very close stylistic similarities between Scarsellino, the Carracci and the landscapes of the earlier Northern artists active in Venice and Padua, the evidence for this appears sound. See Maria Angela Novelli, Lo Scarsellino (Bologna: Zanichelli, 1955), p. 28.
endeavours, so far as possible, to confine itself to a single revolution of the sun, or but slightly to exceed that limit...' Contemporaneous with Sustris’ painting of 1540, literary critics of the early to mid-1540s came to evaluate this suggestion about the time frame of a tragedy in terms of a dramatic principle for theatre they named, the unity of time. Just as the more obviously articulated conception of the ‘unity of the action’ in Aristotelé’s text implied both a coherent plot, defined by the action of the protagonists, that was in turn believable in terms of mimesis; the unity of time was meant to ensure that the length the period of the play encompassed was also plausible to the audience. Only a matter of years before Franco’s painting, the Paduan-trained scholar Vincenzo Maggi’s In Aristotelis librum de poetica communes explanations was published in Venice. In extrapolating this definition of the unity of time, Maggi began to infer the natural importance a given place and location would have to time’s unity. In other words, there was only so much geographically that a given drama could believably cover if a twenty four hour day was coherently defining its limits.

There can be no doubt that these concerns about the plausibility of narrative settings correspondingly developed in painting in which further emphasis came to be laid on how the time frame of a given story limited it to a single location. Place and location then began to develop a much greater significance and in the process the earlier critical condemnation of northern landscape in Italy, came to be completely revaluated from the perspective of its perceived peripatetic relationship


172 It should be noted that this is not entirely a late sixteenth century elaboration, as Aristotle states in his Categories, ‘...an action or a change is called long because the time is long. For it is not in its own right that each of these others is called a quantity. For example, if one is to say how long an action is, one will determine this by the time, saying that it is a-year-long or something of that sort...’ “Categories” in The Complete Works of Aristotle: The Revised Oxford Translation Vol. 1, trans. J.L.Akril (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995), p. 9.


174 pp. 58-60. In addition to the influence of Peripatetic thought, the rise of the landscape as an Italian genre in the Veneto was also connected to the massive upsurge in agriculture on the mainland. Between the 1530s and 50s around Padua, 190,000 acres were cultivated and 250 new villages were created. This would have bore down a cultural emphasis upon the natural environment, in the minds of mid-sixteenth century inhabitants. See Fisher, in Open Peer Reviewed Journal, pp. 15-6.
with the painted narrative. Thus, Franco could make the unusual decision to have the fainting Virgin further back in the landscape, as a subsidiary scene, while, simultaneously, continuing to participate in the principal action, her response amplifying its emotional content. Peripatetic action, place and time, had now found a coherent expression in the art of painting through the birth of the historical narrative embedded in the classical landscape setting.\(^{175}\)

Finally, the other equally radical, aesthetic paradigm shift in Battista Franco’s artistic expression related to the drawing of the human figure. His earlier, often hesitant, interpretation of Michelangelo’s draughtsmanship was replaced by far more vigorous and naturalistic chalk studies drawn from life (fig. 14). While, previously, Franco tended to equally delineate every anatomical feature, now he had become more selective of the undulating musculature whose subtle convexed contours only recalled Michelangelo, as absorbed by Raphael (fig. 15) - otherwise showing no resemblance to his former idol.\(^{176}\) The combination of sensuality and naturalism in these drawings, which owe a debt to the draughtsmanship of Raphael, would become the hallmark of many later reformist painters; most specifically Franco’s own former pupil in Urbino, Federico Barocci, the moderate reformist Federico Zuccaro, the reformists Jacopo da Empoli, Francesco Vanni, Bartolomeo Cesi, and the Carracci.

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\(^{175}\) As stated in previous footnotes, the notion of the three unities was only finally articulated by Castelvetro in 1570, see Spingarn pp. 61-63. I have rather been referencing the evolution of the concepts behind the three unities prior to their complete formulation in literary theory.

Chapter Three: Girolamo Muziano – the original Annibale Carracci

The peripatetic expression of historical narrative, embedded within the context of the landscape, came to Rome - the cultural capital of Italy - via a pupil of the innovators of landscape in Padua, Girolamo Muziano.177 Indeed, Muziano’s first depiction of frescoed landscape was earlier shown in the background of a comparatively ‘clumsy’ Battista Franco Resurrection, painted just prior to Franco’s return to Venice.178 Within his first years in Rome, Muziano gained a reputation for his Paduan/Venetian-inspired landscapes. Between 1552 and 1553 he painted a Flight into Egypt (fig. 16), described as the first Roman grand narrative painting with figures contextualised within a broadly dominant landscape setting. This altarpiece was, perhaps, partly inspired by the verticality of Titian’s Death of St. Peter Martyr (fig. 17); one of the few paintings by that Master to partially embed the narrative within a landscape context, where towering trees overshadow the moment of the saint’s death. 179

In 1555, Muziano painted the largest painting of his career at Subiaco for his patron Marcantonio Colonna, a Resurrection of Lazarus (fig. 18). The work was designed as a pendant to a now lost composition by Daniele da Volterra, an artist with Mannerist traits whose style was also seen as defined by a degree of classical grandeur.180 The Raising of Lazarus so impressed its patron that he ordered it brought to Rome and placed on prominent public display. Eventually, it was moved to Santa

177 Muziano arrived in Rome in late 1549. Girolamo Siciolante da Sermoneta is said by Marcia Hall to predate Muziano in instigating a grand naturalistic style in Rome. See Hall, After Raphael: Painting in Central Italy in the Sixteenth Century (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 194-5. Hall’s perspective is based on a particularly early and less tenable attribution of dating for the paintings of Siciolante. This is contradicted by the foremost Siciolante scholar, John Hunter, who names Muziano as the source of Siciolante’s later reform style, which he argues developed in the 1560s. See Hunter, The Life and Work of Girolamo da Siciolante, Ph.D. diss, (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 1983).


179 Marciari, pp. 92-5.

180 Muziano and later reformers drew inspiration from Daniele da Volterra, stripped of his Mannerism. See ibid, pp. 105-9 and Tosini pp. 48-55. Volterra’s crucifixion inspired both Muziano and early works by Federico Barocci, such as his Perugia Cathedral Deposition of 1567-9.
Maria Maggiore, the basilica patronised by the Colonna family.\textsuperscript{181} Perhaps, not since the similarly self-conscious exhibiting of Leonardo’s cartoon of the Madonna and St Anne, had a work of art been so praised, as Giovanni Baglione states, by the ‘popolani, nobili, e signori’.\textsuperscript{182} Even Michelangelo, on seeing the painting, was said to have described Muziano as amongst the ‘first artists of that age’.\textsuperscript{183}

In the \textit{Raising of Lazarus} Christ is shown at the centre of the painting. He gives a simple gesture with his right hand towards Lazarus who, having left the tomb is seen restored to life at his left. In emphatic contrast to the classical simplicity of Christ’s action, John Marciari, in his dissertation on the artist, states that, ‘the crowd does not distract from the main narrative focus but acts instead as a... commentary on it... the faces exemplify[ing] the range of reactions the viewer might share: alarm, amazement, reflection, and so forth. Similarly, the hand gestures of the bystanders contribute to the narrative in a didactic manner...’\textsuperscript{184}

Muziano has simplified the central theme of the drama and caused all other action to be subordinate to it. The central narrative and purpose of the painting is so clearly spelt out, while the variety of emotive action in the accompanying crowd has been employed specifically to manifest the complexity of its cathartic unfolding upon the human psyche of the viewer. This is all framed in a convincing landscape of columned buildings to the left and classical ruins to the right, with the narrow suggestion of a receding sky in the middle. Two diagonals cross the picture, meeting at Christ’s gesture to Lazarus, and unifying both crowd and architecture, much as Leonardo’s \textit{Last Supper} had earlier achieved. Numerous scholars have noted that nothing comparable had been seen since the High Renaissance: an intensity of

\textsuperscript{181} Ibid, p. 106.

\textsuperscript{182} Baglione’s \textit{Vita} p. 250, cited by Marciari, p. 107. Also see ibid footnote 122, p.106. Muziano is one of the most significant painters mentioned in Baglione’s \textit{Vita}. This is less evident in the content of his biography - as Baglione’s praise of all the artists he mentions tends towards the generic – but is rather made apparent in the length of the life, equalled by only a few artists. These are Federico Barocci, Federico Zuccaro, Giovanni and Cherubino Alberti, Caravaggio, Annibale Carracci, Orazio Borgianni, Domenichino and Cavalier d’Arpino. We can thus deduce whom Baglione regarded as the most significant artists in Rome between 1572 and 1642.

\textsuperscript{183} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{184} Ibid, pp. 111-2.
emotion in response to a simple centralised action, all united under an overarching geometry.\textsuperscript{185} The monumentality of Michelangelo may be present in the picture but, in contrast to prevalent Mannerist adaptations, such a characteristic had been made subordinate to the compositional and emotive decorum. Muziano had established a precedent for progressive reformist painting which would only grow from this point-forward until the end of the sixteenth and into the seventeenth centuries. Indeed, the ‘Florentine Reformers’ of a later generation, inspired by such an example, would compositionally formalise the depiction of the viewers in a given narrative - tightly positioning them around the vertical borders of the picture, emotively inviting us into the central story (fig. 19) (fig. 20).\textsuperscript{186}

As mentioned in the previous chapter, Mannerist facade painting had a stylistic hegemony over young artists coming to Rome to study from its artistic heritage. This was due to the accessibility of these works which could be freely viewed by students at street level.\textsuperscript{187} The \textit{Raising of Lazarus} and Muziano’s subsequent pictures acted as models for an alternative aesthetic paradigm. As Marciari has said of the painting, ‘it could have seemed like a return to the great age of painting seen in the works of Raphael... from the 1510s and 1520s.’\textsuperscript{188}

The immense significance of Muziano bringing a reform style to Rome from the Veneto has been largely ignored and downplayed by scholars of both the


\textsuperscript{186} Muziano’s second version of \textit{The Raising of Lazarus}, painted at Orvieto, became even more severely classical in the sombre frieze-like layout of Christ and the crowd of figures set against a backdrop of the Palatine or ruins of the Baths of Diocletian. See Tosini, \textit{Girolamo Muziano} (Roma: 2008) pp. 85-6. This sobriety is ‘cathartically broken’ by what can only be described - I believe - as possibly the first truly baroque figure in the history of art, shown in St Peter, forcefully reeling back at the sight of Lazarus having emerged from the tomb.


sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Such indifference also covertly adds uncritical weight to the historically accepted notion that Annibale Carracci, in coming to Rome from Bologna, brought reform for the first time to the cultural heart of Italy. In this context, it is highly significant that Annibale’s largest work on canvas, *The Alms-giving of St Roch* of 1594-5 (fig. 21), has been described by John Marciari as mirroring the most immense canvas of the Brescian painters own career, the *Raising of Lazarus*. In the comparative analysis of Annibale and Muziano that will follow, it must be emphasised that the primary written sources for Annibale’s time in Rome are scarce, thus we are forced to rely heavily upon a formal analysis of his paintings.

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189 One reason scholars have been reluctant to give due acknowledgement to the “Muziano reform” of the mid-sixteenth century, is an apparent disjointedness between works that appear the total embodiment of classical naturalism and some others that are elongated or slightly Mannered. Such a quality has been explained as Muziano employing a kind of hybrid-“classicism”, comparable to the late work of Ludovico Carracci. This is likely partially true, in view of the greater monumentality exhibited in some compositions. However, I believe it is more likely that the more overt traits appear to correlate with Muziano having to employ more assistance, particularly as he became the premier painter under the pontificate of Gregory XIII. Absolutely no work attributed to him prior to the late 1560s, exhibits any of these qualities that could be labelled “mannered.”

Muziano also made extensive use of his pupil Cesare Nebbia, who stylistically moved much more towards a moderate reformism, which amalgamated the decorative aspects of Perino del Vaga-inspired Roman Mannerism. See Marciari, *Girolamo Muziano and Art in Rome*, diss (Yale: 2000), pp. 253-4 and 386-408.

It is also apparent that not all reform artists imposed their aesthetic values upon their pupils. For example the moderate Bolognese reform artist, Lorenzo Sabatini’s Raphaelesque style is largely absent in the work of his pupil Deny’s Calvaert. This is very clear in Calvaert’s treatment of the St Michael, compared to Sabatini’s Madonna in the *Holy Family with St John and Michael* in the church of San Giacomo Maggiore in Bologna.

In contrast to Muziano and Nebbia, stylistic rifts around reform could develop between artists of differing persuasions. Federico Zuccaro’s anger at Taddeo correcting a painting he was working on was, I believe, likely due to the fact that the younger brother was embracing a reformist classicism that was the antithesis of his older brothers Mannerist style. See Vasari’s *Life of Taddeo Zuccaro*, 1568, vol.7, p.89.

What further makes the authorship of these mannered qualities, Muziano’s unlikely, are the radical stylistic discrepancies within the Ruiz chapel commission of the late 1560s in the church of Santa Caterina dei Funari. The classical naturalism of the *Deposition* on the main altar is so markedly contrastable to the monumentally elongated and mannered figures in the altarpieces to either side, that it simply makes no sense that Muziano so drastically choose, of his own volition, to bring these together within the same project. The two modes of painting are highly contradictory within the same commission, even if one wanted to argue that he was appreciative of both. Surprisingly both Tosini and Marciari are silent regarding the marked differences in the Ruiz chapel commission.

190 See for example, Marciari, *Girolamo Muziano and Art in Rome*, diss (Yale: 2000), pp. 466-7, where he states, ‘the latter’s huge canvas of St. Roch distributing Alms... is to some degree an “improvement” on Muziano’s *Resurrection of Lazarus...’

Excluding the diagonal movement of figures in the *St Roch*, plausibly cited by A.W.A. Boschloo as derivative of an engraving of the Mannerist painter Salviati’s 1538 *Visitation* by Bartolomeo Passeroti (fig. 22), the other major formal features of the picture can be shown to be emphatically mirrored in the *Lazarus*. In the final painting however, the overall architectural setting more closely resembles the Muziano painting than the engraving after Salviati.

A similar left to right diagonal thrust of the crowd in the St. Roch is prominent in the Muziano painting – although this is also counterbalanced by a more subtle right to left diagonal – which in both paintings reaches its summit in figures with arms prominently reaching out over the crowd (fig. 23) (fig. 24). In the Muziano, members of the crowd point in the direction of the miracle, and, in Annibale’s work, the strikingly similar gesture at the apex of the diagonal depicts St Roch distributing alms. The prominence of the cripple being wheeled in from the right likewise mirrors the figure and mute colouring of Lazarus in Muziano’s work (fig. 25) (fig. 26).192

There is also in both paintings, as Boschloo says of the *St Roch*, ‘a lack of cohesion, although not a conspicuous one, because the massive figures placed parallel to the picture plane detach themselves somewhat from the turbulent group in the background.’193 Both Muziano and, in turn, Annibale employ this as a peripatetic aesthetic convention, using the larger foreground figures as a point of access into the crowd and, thus, to draw the viewer into the narrative.194 This is again entirely absent in the engraving after Salviati, being based upon a work with no cathartic sensibility. Ultimately, both works share a conceptual similarity, citing Boschloo again on *St Roch* where, ‘the great diversity of facial types and expressions makes a highly varied effect, [yet] the unity of mood is not broken for a second.’195

192 This is also noted by Marciari, *Girolamo Muziano and Art in Rome*, diss (Yale: 2000), p. 466.


194 This is might also be loosely based on Alberti’s account of *istoria* in *De Pictura*, where he notes the use of a specific figure that draws the viewer into the narrative. I have earlier footnoted Alberti’s understanding of *istoria* as plausibly derivative of Aristotle’s *Poetics*, via his likely knowledge of Averroes’ middle commentary on the text.

195 Ibid.
In 1594 Annibale went to Rome to finalise the Farnese commission. He had received the *St Roch* commission much earlier, in the late 1580s, and had undertaken preliminary drawings for the work that, as Clare Robertson has confirmed to me, do not in any way resemble the formal qualities evident in either the final painting or in Muziano’s the *Raising of Lazarus.* 196 Annibale did not properly complete the commission until just before his departure for Rome in 1595. Thus it is entirely possible that the similarity of the two paintings was due to Annibale seeing the famed work on his visit to Rome to finalise the Farnese project. Moreover, if Muziano was recognised as Rome’s first major reformer, he may have perceived it as fortuitous that he was completing both the largest and last painting of his Bolognese career prior to moving to the city, just as Muziano had made his initial fame there with his greatest canvas.

This is further justified by the influence the first reformer in Rome had on the Carracci, more broadly, in relation to the depiction of figures in the landscape. As Marciari further states, ‘individual works by the Carracci also bear great enough resemblance to Muziano to suggest that their interest in him was more than casual (fig. 27) (fig. 28).’ 197 Historians have mentioned the impact the Paduan Campagnola/Sustris tradition had upon Annibale. This was in part via Muziano’s landscapes in Rome and, most specifically, via a series of prints he drew of penitent saints, done in conjunction with Cornelis Cort in the 1570s. 198 Such an influence was not, however singularly linear in derivation, as it was being mirrored in the nearby Ferrarese reformist painter, Ippolito Scarsellino (fig. 29) (fig. 30). The Scarsellino scholar, Maria Angela Novelli, has noted ‘that [Scarsellino] was clearly influenced by certain Northern artist’s active in Venice in the late Cinquecento such as Lambert

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196 This is in relation to footnote 207 in Clare Robertson’s monograph, *The Invention of Annibale Carracci* (Milan: Silavana, 2008), p. 89. Nicholas Turner, drew Robertson’s attention to an early study for the *St Roch* painting that looked nothing like the final design or anything that could resemble the Muziano painting.


198 As Donald Posner states regarding Annibale Carracci’s 1585-86, *Vision of St Eustace*, ‘it has been shown [by Nicolas Turner] that Annibale’s picture derives from two prints, a St Eustice and St. Jerome, after Girolamo Muziano... the landscape, as it is composed on the surface and structured in depth, follows Muziano’s designs, and even motifs – from the ravine setting, to the posture of the saint and his relationship to the stag, to the two trees silhouetted against the sky – are taken from the prints.’ Posner, *Annibale Carracci*, (1971), p. 114.
A correlation must then be upheld between Annibale coming into contact with these works and his own greater foray into landscape after arriving in Rome. While the origins of depictions of both St Francis and St Jerome in the wilderness lie with Venice, it is in the Counter-Reformation emotive piety, first represented in the more demonstratively ecstatic depictions of saints conveyed in Muziano’s paintings (fig. 31) (fig. 32) (fig. 34), that defined the cultural *zeitgeist* for representations of the subject by Federico Barocci (fig. 33), the Sienese reformist Francesco Vanni (fig. 35), the Florentine Ludovico Cigoli (fig. 36) and the Carracci (fig. 37).

As Judith Mann and Babette Bohn have also noted regarding the universality of this imagery in the late sixteenth century Italian peninsula, ‘a new interest in penitential saints as models for meditation [was]... perhaps first developed by the Brescian painter Girolamo Muziano for a series of prints that were issued in the 1570s, they were produced in most major artistic centres of Italy by such artists as Ludovico Cigoli (Florence) [and] the Carracci (Bologna)...’

Furthermore, to my knowledge, no scholar has acknowledged the impact Muziano clearly had on Annibale’s most stylistically significant altarpiece in Rome, the Cerasi chapel *Assumption of the Virgin* of 1600 (fig. 40). Much like Boschloo’s description of Annibale’s *St Roch* painting, the visual analysis Donald Posner gives of the *Assumption* in his seminal work *Annibale Carracci: A Study in the Reform of Italian Painting around 1590*, can be quoted verbatim in relation to Muziano’s 1581

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202 Ibid.
- 82 *Ascension of Christ* in Santa Maria in Vallicella (fig. 38): ‘the picture conveys an impression of crowding and of expressive severity that is almost oppressive.’\(^{203}\) As with Annibale’s *Assumption*, it was like nothing else that Muziano had ever painted; gaining such notoriety that it was almost identically repeated again for the chapel of the Ascension in Santa Maria in Aracoeli (fig. 39).\(^{204}\)

There is precedence only in Muziano for the treatment of the Apostles who are crowded around a central ascending figure that almost negates the landscape setting occupied; by this means, emphasising the immaterial spiritual world to which both Christ and the Virgin ascend in both pictures. In addition, the foreground colouring of the drapery of the two Apostles, St Peter and St Andrew, is virtually identical in both images, as is the yellow aura that surrounds both Christ and the Virgin.

Besides the formal aspects both works share, Muziano’s painting, although emotively intensified by the compression of figures, is counterbalanced by the serenity of the form of Christ who, in the instructive stance of his last words, appears to derive his composure from the Apollo Belvedere. In marked contrast, the sensual reform style of Barocci that led Annibale, among many other artists of the late sixteenth century to Correggio,\(^ {205}\) results in a Virgin who is projected both up and towards the viewer’s space, with the Apostles much more inclined to reel backwards in awe.

Given that we have seen how important *setting* was for a peripatetic conception of the *istoria*, Muziano’s *Ascension* was a very uncharacteristic work for the artist. Such a painting that pares down the narrative to its most basic, scholars have noted, was derivative of the influence the artist Scipione Pulzone had on the art of Rome in the 1580s (Fig. 41).\(^ {206}\) Pulzone, already under the sway of Santi di Tito,


\(^{204}\) A further copy of the *Ascension* was also made in 1594 by Girolamo Massei and sent to Naples. Ibid, p. 322.

\(^{205}\) This will be addressed in more detail in the following subheadings.

visited Florence in 1584. Santi was an artist whose own reformist spark had been ignited on coming to Rome as a young man in the late 1550s, and imbibing the first flowering of the Muziano reform movement in the city.\footnote{ibid.}

Only three years prior, in 1582, Federico Barocci’s \textit{Visitation} (fig. 42) - also painted for the Chiesa Nuova - impacted Rome in much the same way as Muziano’s \textit{Lazarus} had almost thirty years before, ushering into the city the sensual reformist style of the Master of Urbino.\footnote{The Duke of Urbino’s ambassador, Grazioso Graziosi, noted that there was a three day procession to see the \textit{Visitation}. See chapter 3 “\textit{The Visitation and The Presentation of the Virgin}” in Ian Verstergen, \textit{Federico Barocci and the Oratorians: Corporate Patronage and Style in the Counter Reformation} (Kirksville: Truman State University Press, 2015).} Barocci had earlier been in Rome at the same time as Santi and, together with Federico Zuccaro, had come under the spell of the Brescian Master.

Muziano, like the reformers who followed in his footsteps, experimented with the sensual mode of reform in his 1578 \textit{Crucifixion with Saints Francis and Anthony} for the Capuchin convent of Frascati (fig. 43).\footnote{Muziano’s \textit{Crucifixion} is clearly a far more accomplished work than Annibale’s youthful 1583 version of five years later, which Freedberg claimed was a watershed of artistic reform. A claim it should be noted, that did not receive universal acceptance amongst Carracci scholars. See Freedberg, \textit{CIRCA 1600: A Revolution in Style in Italian Painting} (Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1983).} Thus, by the 1580s, Rome saw the prevalence, in the city, of two divergent modes of reform that had evolved from the singular style of Muziano.

Annibale had already absorbed the stylistic influence of Barocci along with his brother and cousin in Bologna. His deliberate imitation of Muziano’s \textit{Ascension} rested precisely upon it being a work that sought to adopt the severe classical style of Santi di Tito, as seen in Rome through both his pupils and followers - including his most prominent, Scipione Pulzone.\footnote{The prominent painters work may have further made an impression on Annibale when he arrived in Rome, as Pulzone died in the very month of the artist’s arrival. Alessandra Aconci and Alessandro Zuccari, \textit{Scipione Pulzone: Da Gaeta alle Corti europee} (Gaeta: Diocesan Museum, 2013), p. 27.} As Posner remarks of the \textit{Assumption}:
The drawing is harsh and angular. Draperies are stiff, almost metallic. Heads and hands, especially of the Virgin, are rendered in broad, faceted planes, as if carved from stone... the dramatic requirements of the theme do not account for the painting’s basic stylistic qualities, which it shares with all works, regardless of subject matter, that Annibale made from this time on.211

This analysis could just as easily be applied to a work painted by Santi di Tito, Scipione Pulzone, or any number of their followers. Such a stylistic effect, as Marciari comments upon Pulzone, ‘is not accidental, but rather, is the result of a deliberate reduction of classical gestures (not unlike those later used by Annibale Carracci) to their most basic.’212

In addition, Gauvin Bailey has identified the origin of the pose of the ascending Virgin with arms outstretched, to Giuseppe Valeriano’s Assumption for the chapel of the Madonna della Strada (fig. 44), and Federico Zuccaro’s derivation from Valeriano of the same for the Pucci chapel at SS. Trinita dei Monti (fig. 45).213 Valeriano was one of the most prominent followers of the style of Santi and Pulzone. As Bailey states, his ‘Assumption is a much closer prototype’ (and I would add more apparent) than Posner’s citing of Raphael’s Transfiguration (fig. 46).214 Later, I will seek to demonstrate further, and in more detail, that the Roman style of Annibale and his pupils was far less unique and autonomous than the Carracci’s biographers would have us believe. However, first it is necessary to probe in more depth the relation of the Carracci reformers, as a whole, to the Counter-Mannerist movement.

214 Ibid.
Chapter Four: The Florentine Reformers, Malvasia and the myth of the “Carracci Reform”

‘[Ludovico Carracci], on moving to Florence to work under Passignano...’ 215

Malvasia

‘...and Federico Barocci, who might have restored and succoured art, languished in Urbino and gave it no relief at all.’ 216

Bellori

‘In fact Annibale and Ludovico Carracci’s first contacts with Barocci’s style date from about the same time that Ventura Salimbeni and his half-brother Francesco Vanni were adopting Barocci’s style for the same reasons, in the early 1580s, and were probably inspired by their Tuscan colleagues.’ 217

Gauvin Bailey

Charles Dempsey’s seminal work *Annibale Carracci and the Beginnings of the Baroque Style* was written in notable critical response to Donald Posner’s 1971 monograph *Annibale Carracci: A Study in the Reform of Italian Painting around 1590*. Dempsey rejected Posner’s analysis of Annibale Carracci as a non-intellectual craftsman who was essentially distinctly concerned only with the formal qualities of his art. He was correct to criticise Posner’s position in perceiving an ahistorically false dichotomy,


within the early-modern period, between the formal qualities of art and aesthetic criticism. However, I would further deviate from Dempsey’s 1977 monograph; for I believe that his argument, pitting the Carracci’s “intellectual” art against the anachronism of Posner’s detached formal analysis employed a term that could only make historical sense when applied to individuals emerging out of a class of scholars. An art that is termed “intellectual” is a far too self-conscious designation when the sophistication of the painters in question was a product of the overarching changes to the nature of education and the broader and egalitarian dissemination of humanism that occurred in the mid-to-late sixteenth century - that I have in part demonstrated in chapter one.

To a large extent, Dempsey’s 1980 article, *Some Observations on the Education of Artists in Florence and Bologna during the Later Sixteenth Century*, corrected and refined this earlier exaggeration. In this essay, Dempsey described the effect the increase in the level of education had upon artisans and tradesmen of the latter sixteenth century. As Dempsey pointed out, Malvasia’s account of Ludovico urging his cousins to leave school to pursue painting could not be seen to result in an entirely missed education. The school they attended, the Scuola di Grammatica, was, as the name implies, a Latin school. Thus, when Malvasia stated that the younger Annibale was pulled out of school after he had just learnt to read and write, it was Latin, not the vernacular that he was referring to.

The basic principles of the teaching of the elite humanist schools of the Renaissance had, in part, been disseminated down to the middling and some of the trades classes. Dempsey describes this education ‘typically [beginning] with elementary grammar, followed by advanced grammar, then humanities (the reading of authors), culminating in rhetoric.’ The cultural effect this had on the visual arts,

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219 Ibid, pp. 559-60.

220 p. 561.

221 Ibid.
which I have sought to outline more broadly in chapter one, is summarised very succinctly by Dempsey:

The foundation these artists received as schoolboys was... that of a humanistically devised education, its purpose being eloquence (or the mastery of spoken and written styles of expression, both in theory and in practice), and its basis being grammar, rhetoric, poetry, and the exempla of history and moral philosophy. The latter two provided painters with their subjects, the former three with the techniques for arranging and presenting those subjects.222

Dempsey reiterates further that the example was not unique to Bologna but universal in Italy, ‘to the generation of the Carracci and the painters of the Florentine reform.’223

However, moving on from this debate around the dissemination of knowledge in the late sixteenth century, I believe that a far more intrinsic error of discontinuity defines the case Dempsey lays out for the beginnings of the baroque style. This goes further beyond a mere, if significant, refinement of terminology.

Dempsey, in the opening of his 1977 monograph, begins with an analysis of some of the broader aspects of artistic reform, along with the individual painters who, in part, inspired its conception amongst the Carracci. In certain respects, Dempsey willingly gives ground to these other reformers, to a degree that is foreign to Posner and much previous scholarship - enamoured as it often has been to a narrative of Carracci uniqueness and “reformist exceptionalism”.224

Contradicting such historical orthodoxy, Dempsey ‘certainly’ suggests that the Siennese painter ‘Francesco Vanni’s trip from Tuscany to Bologna and Lomabardy...

222 p. 568 (italics added).

223 Ibid.

224 See Introduction.
together with his younger half-brother Ventura Salimbeni, in search of Barocci’s Correggesque anecdotes played an important part in stimulating... Annibale and... Ludovico to explore simultaneously with Vanni the principles of Barocci’s style...’

Dempsey rightly emphasized this in order to specifically refute Posner’s claim that Annibale’s awareness of Barocci had been, in his words, creatively “spontaneous.”

A paragraph later Dempsey elaborates even further that the ‘theme of reform was not the rhetorical invention of the likes of Agucchi and Bellori... [rather] ...the common factor in pointing the way toward the reform sought by all the major young artists of the Carracci[’s generation] was Federigo Barocci.’ Dempsey is here refuting Bellori’s Roman-Bolognese centric narrative of reform which relegated Barocci to a position of geographical failure - ‘languishing in Urbino.’ Strangely, Dempsey later partially endorses Bellori’s bombastic historical account with the entirely contradictory notion that Barocci’s ‘languishing’ was true enough until the reform inspired by him emerged in full swing across the North of the Italian peninsula.

Thus, one detects in Dempsey, as in all Carracci scholarship, a “Romantic” reticence to give any ground away from the heroic Bellorian narrative of Roman-Bolognese reform.

Nonetheless, this in turn leads Dempsey to hone in on reform in Florence, where he acknowledges the aesthetic hegemony of Barocci for the second generation of reformist artists in that city. He rightly states that this had taken its initial inspiration from the first Florentine movement of reform, pioneered most prominently by Santi di Tito until Santi’s pupil, Ludovico Cardi - called Cigoli - and Gregorio Pagani, had seen Barocci’s masterpiece, the Madonna del Popolo. The 1579 unveiling of the painting in Santa Maria della Misericordia in Arezzo led Cigoli, in


turn, to visit Perugia with the artist Domenico Passignano to see Barocci’s famed Deposition.\(^\text{230}\)

Dempsey then makes mention of Malvasia’s very perfunctory indication of Ludovico Carracci’s working experience in Florence as a young painter in the studio of Passignano. He rightly elaborates that Ludovico ‘had direct access to the young group of Santi di Tito’s disciples in reform who were at that moment discovering the art of Barocci’\(^\text{231}\) – or, to be more precise, already proactively implementing it. Dempsey later extrapolates that, ‘Ludovico very likely brought back to Bologna [the style of Barocci] after his early days of study in Florence’.\(^\text{232}\) He even concludes, that ‘the ideas that nourished the Carracci at the outset flowed to them from Florence and its Academy.’\(^\text{233}\)

It is relevant at this point to give a brief outline to the context behind artistic reform in Florence. The dispersion of pro-Republican Florentine intellectuals across the Italian peninsula, following Alessandro de Medici’s ascension to power in 1532 as the city’s first ruling prince, ironically worked to break down the cultural regionalism endemic in the Italian peninsula.\(^\text{234}\) As briefly noted in chapter one, a leading figure amongst these cultural figures was Benedetto Varchi. He was pivotal in galvanising an intellectual network between Florence, Padua, Venice, Bologna, Ferrara and Rome, via the extensive communities of Florentine fuorusciti.\(^\text{235}\) Thus in 1541, Cosimo Rucellai a member of the Academy degli Humydi - a forerunner of the Academia Fiorentina – could write to Varchi requesting copies of public lectures given by Bartolomeo Lombardo and Vincenzo Maggi on Aristotle’s Poetics.\(^\text{236}\) As Leatrice Mendelsohn states, particularly via the influence of Varchi, ‘Paduan

\(^{230}\) Ibid, pp. 15-16.

\(^{231}\) p. 17.

\(^{232}\) p. 37.

\(^{233}\) p. 19.

\(^{234}\) Cochrane, Florence in the Forgotten Centuries (Chicago: 1973), pp. 3-10.


\(^{236}\) Ibid, p. 8.
Aristotelianism, [of] the Averroist type... [slowly] infiltrated the essentially Platonic milieu of Florence.'237

Even though Cosimo I gave conditional allowance for exiles to return to the city, Florence’s dispersed communities still remained instrumental in ensuring the cultural exchange of ideas throughout the Italian peninsula of the mid-to-late sixteenth century.238 Yet, when Varchi returned from exile, the peripatetic cultural turn in Florence was greatly accelerated so that, by 1550, the city had surpassed Venice in the publication of classical authors in the vernacular.239 A peripatetic view on the accessibility of language also infiltrated debates around the nature of the church’s liturgy, with some among this new generation of Florentine Aristotelian humanists even opposing its Latin form.240 Just as the second generation of the Florentine Reformers were interested in the sensual and cathartic capacity of Barocci’s art, the Camerata241 rejected the perceived lack of vocal audibility in polyphony, favouring the monophonic, which they believed was closer to classical Greek music and thus able to more succinctly, as Eric Cochrane elaborates, ‘express the passions with greater effectiveness.’242 The father of Galileo Galilei, Vincenzo Galileo, was himself a great mentor to the Camerata. In his anthology of exemplary pieces of music, he included Alessandro Striggio’s Lament of Psyche, precisely because of its perceived cathartic power in reducing the guests at the wedding of Francesco I and Joana of Austria to collective tears.243 In addition, Galileo Galilei - who became a close friend of the painter Ludovico Cigoli - in similar peripatetic fashion, wrote the


238 p. 4

239 Ibid.

240 Cochrane, Florence in the Forgotten Centuries (Chicago: 1973), p. 82.

241 The Camerata de’ Bardi were a circle of intellectuals, musicians and poets who met under the patronage of Count Giovanni de’ Bardi to both discuss and guide trends in the arts, particularly music and drama.


word “obscure” above every line of his favourite poet Ariosto that was not immediately understandable.\textsuperscript{244} It was thus from this rich, broader, cultural perspective that a dual peripatetic concern for both clarity and catharsis defined the emergence of the Florentine Reformist painters. As a university city, Bologna was most certainly contingent to this cultural development. However, without question, it was Florence, via the cultural dispersion of its intellectual class, and with the most solid economic base it had witnessed since the Trecento under Ducal rule, which was inherently at its lead.\textsuperscript{245}

In returning to Dempsey’s account of reform, which does up until now, largely support the above analysis. Dempsey now makes an abrupt change of orientation in what follows, in his statement that, ‘Florence has played a major role in the narrative so far, but shall do so no more.’\textsuperscript{246} The reasons given for this resemble an unqualified assertion, rather than an analytical evaluation. The Florentines, Dempsey tells us, were ‘betrayed by [their] very tradition and failed by their Academy.’\textsuperscript{247} He qualifies this – although one is loath to call it that – with the statement that ‘they did not sufficiently dare.’\textsuperscript{248} In the spirit of a poorly written piece of art criticism – as opposed to historical analysis - we are left none the wiser by this elaboration. Then, in the character of some modern day “Bolognese biographer”, having uncritically negated the Florentine Reformers, Dempsey announces, ‘we must turn to Bologna, where the true spark of the reform was struck.’\textsuperscript{249} He keeps to his word and we hear next to nothing more of Florence.

Dempsey thus adds to the uncritical tradition, within both Carracci and broader historical scholarship of the mid-to-late sixteenth century, of conveying the period in a negative light. I will not seek here to give coverage to this in detail, as it

\textsuperscript{244} Ibid, p. 168 and 156.

\textsuperscript{245} Between 1540 and 1620 wool production, a staple of the economy, returned to levels not seen since the mid-fifteenth century. p. 56.

\textsuperscript{246} Dempsey, \textit{Annibale Carracci and the Beginings of Baroque Style} (Fiesole: 2000), p. 20.

\textsuperscript{247} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{248} p. 20.

\textsuperscript{249} Ibid (italics added).
has received broad focus within my introduction. Instead, my aim is to demonstrate the comparative silencing of Florence’s influence within Malvasia’s life of the Carracci - the biographer Dempsey did a great deal to rescue from accusations of historical unreliability. It is, after all, very often the historical silence of primary biographers and sources which inherently contributes to the uncritical muteness of later scholarship.

Unlike Bellori, who entirely ignores any discrepancies to the *campanilismo* of his Roman-Bolognese narrative, Malvasia feels the need to, at least tentatively, address them.250 This is evident in the following account of one of Ludovico’s early commissions for the chapel of St. Andrew in S. Domenico, Bologna:

> Among the first such works by Ludovico were the lateral frescoes and the ceiling of Saint Andrew in S. Domenico, which the Lambertini assigned to him for a small fee as an inexpensive addition to the altarpiece, a commission given to someone in Florence whom they claimed was a very fine painter without an equal in Bologna. Consequently miracles were expected of this foreign painter by all the masters who had at that time had greater reputations than the Carracci...251

Malvasia then recounts that Ludovico, knowing he was in serious competition with the Florentine Master, paints his subjects in two modes - one graceful and the other forceful.252 Perhaps there is the hint of apocryphal hyperbole here, as the notion of artistic competition, fought over by two different stylistic modes had a tradition

250 Bellori’s highly selective choice of artist’s lives is a most prominent case in point.

251 Summerscale, Malvasia, pp. 199-200.

dating back to Brunelleschi and Ghiberti’s contest for the bronze doors of Florence’s baptistery. Malvasia then recounts:

When the altarpiece [of the Florentine] was finally delivered and set up opposite Ludovico’s frescoes, the virtues of Ludovico’s work stood out all the more clearly, and yet one hears that Ludovico who dreaded the unfavourable outcome of such a comparison, retreated outside the city in order not to be confronted with all the reports and clamour of the first days, and thus escape the anticipated embarrassment and mortification while apprehensively waiting for a detailed report from his cousins. The story that one hears is that Agostino, who always enjoyed a practical joke, enlisting Annibale, teased Ludovico by telling him that the new altarpiece deserved the very highest praise, and that he would have done well to have handed over the risky challenge of competing with such a masterpiece to someone else, as he himself would not be able to deny when he went to see the work. At noon the next day, when the visit was finally undertaken, Ludovico’s heart was pounding with dread, and what a great consolation and relief it was for him to see it – the whole incident provoking great laughter among everyone in his company.

We learn, from Malvasia’s account, that the Lambertini family regarded the Florentine artist they had commissioned for their chapel, as being without ‘equal in Bologna’. We are also told that the Bolognese painters who preceded the Carracci also had great respect for this Florentine, possibly even inferring that he – and even Florentine art of the time – was to be emulated and looked up to. Most interesting is

253 See Vasari’s lives of Ghiberti and Brunelleschi.

Ludovico’s reaction at the unveiling of the main altarpiece in the chapel, where he is overcome by such a strong sense of self-doubt that he feels compelled to retreat as far away as possible, outside the city walls.

However, what is most intriguing about the story is the silence over who this influential Florentine painter was? It is rare for Malvasia to leave out the identity of an individual in his biographies. If anything, he is often inclined to give descriptions and cite primary sources that digress from his own point of view. On one other rare occasion where Malvasia emits a name, Giovanna Perini has shown that it was as a covert means of criticising the Roman antiquarian world to which Bellori belonged. In this instance, Malvasia describes how Agostino Carracci fooled an unnamed antiquarian by returning a copy of a borrowed Parmigianino drawing, rather than the original. By recounting the purported poor judgment of the individual, Malvasia aimed to imply that the contemporary antiquarian world of Rome, in which Bellori was a leading figure, did not possess the intellectual discernment to evaluate the Carracci tradition. Thus Malvasia was directing criticism at the judgment of this group of individuals by favouring Annibale Carracci’s late Roman style over the work of his Bolognese cousin Ludovico. At the same time, Malvasia limits any direct offence by not naming the antiquarian in question. Yet, by and large, Malvasia gives a great deal of voice to the views of those in Rome who praise Annibale over his preferred favourite of the three Carracci, Ludovico.

A statement made in Malvasia’s preface to the Felsina Pittrice sheds some further light on his silence towards the Florentine painter. He remarks, ‘...I hope it will be well received in Venice as it will be poorly viewed by the school of Rome and badly received by that of Florence.’ The life of the Carracci, is without question, the

255 I was unsuccessful in my attempt to consult the archives in the church of S.Domenico in Bologna to see if any surviving documentation existed, naming the Florentine painter of the chapel. The church’s interior was drastically altered in the Eighteenth century. This was particularly the case for the side chapels that run along the nave and transepts.


257 Cited in the introduction to Malvasia p. 9 (italics added). For the context of this statement in relation to the Florentine biographer Baldinucci, see the conclusion of this thesis.
cornerstone of the *Felsina*, setting out the claim for the innovation of the Carracci - and by inference the Bolognese - in reforming Italian painting. It is thus reasonable to deduce that this remark is largely in reference to the lives of the Carracci. In his account, Malvasia gives great credit to Venice as a source of both inspiration and influence for the three artists. While its inevitably poor reception in Rome, is also well known to be the result of Malvasia’s rejection of Annibale’s late style as the culmination of artistic reform - asserted by Bellori and his Roman antiquarian circle. The fact that Malvasia was, at the point of publication, prepared for outright animosity from a Florentine audience appears to me to be explained by the way he did his utmost to erase the presence of the Florentine reformers from the historical record of the Carracci; skimming over the time Ludovico spent working under one of the three most influential reformists in Florence – and for that matter Italy (and Rome itself) – Domenico Passignano. He later followed this with the tentative account of Ludovico’s competition with, what was likely, an intentionally unnamed Florentine Reformist artist.

Malvasia may have felt unable to pass over the incident, given it was amongst Ludovico’s first major commissions. Yet he managed to give it an heroic angle by suggesting that Ludovico’s frescoes eclectically employed two modes of art, the forceful and the graceful, thus equalling the Florentine’s altarpiece. However, what is very pertinent here is that it is an *eclectic* model that is the bar by which an aesthetic competition is undertaken. This is a *paragone* repeated in the context of competition throughout Malvasia’s life of the Carracci. Secondly, Malvasia stated that Ludovico’s frescoes succeeded only in equalling the Florentine’s altarpiece, and not that he surpassed it. Thus Malvasia covertly stated to his audience where the standards for reform actually originated. Finally, in not naming the painter, as with the anonymous Roman antiquarian, Malvasia’s audience are far less inclined to probe further - to question whether Ludovico really did equal the Florentine. This, in turn, might have led Malvasia’s readers to look more deeply into the prominence Florence historically had in reform within the North of Italy, and thus Bologna. This is something that would obviously have left Malvasia’s, and for that matter Bellori’s, triumphant narrative of “the Carracci reform” historically in jeopardy. At least, to Dempsey’s
credit, he tells us far more about the influence that Florence had on the Carracci reformers than any Bolognese biographer would have dared to do.
Chapter Five: The Carracci and Reformist Eclecticism

*It is necessary to realize that the anti-mannerist vision which changed the face of our culture, seen by Lanzi as taking place in Italy around 1580, is not due only to the Bolognese, e.g. the Carracci, but also to the Tuscans. A history of Tuscan painting from Santi di Tito onward would offer some surprise in this direction and especially because of Cigoli.*

*Giuliano Briganti*

Carracci scholarship has ignored - or at the very least peripherally passed over - the fact that the synthesis of Correggio with a Venetian model was established, at least two decades prior to the Carracci by earlier reformist painters. It is always inferred that Annibale’s visit to Parma, where he copied from Correggio and later Veronese in Venice, was like Posner’s account of coming into contact with Barocci “spontaneous.” In opposition to this, both mid-to-late sixteenth-century scholarship and historical sources make it blatantly clear that Annibale, his brother and cousin were simply following a well-worn, Lombard/Venetian eclectic formula, established by previous reformist painters.

Girolamo Muziano was instrumental in initially pursuing the transformation of the *Università dei pittori* into an Academy.* In the late 1580s, according to Filippo Visconti, Muziano had, as Maryvelma Smith O’Neil has written, ‘drawn up a

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259 The importance of Correggio is actually inferred by Malvasia near the end of the life of the Carracci when he states that long before Annibale went to Parma, that ‘even as a boy, almost without having learned the principles of painting... [he was] already showing a taste for the style of Correggio.’ Summerscale, Malvasia, p. 519.

coherent plan for the renewal of Roman art’. Muziano proposed two galleries for the Academy, one filled with the best statues in Rome and another for life drawing - emphasizing that an artist’s education needed both the best works of Lombardy and Venice in addition to those of Rome and the antique. The models Muziano is said to have recommended were Titian, Correggio and Veronese; that is, the same northern Italian painters who were adopted by the Carracci within their own Academy. Visconti’s account dates to the late seventeenth century and has been doubted as a reliable source by some scholars. Yet, given that Muziano was an artist who overtly sought a synthesis of both Northern Venetian and Roman models, the claim, at least, seems highly consistent with the aims of his stylistic eclecticism. If Visconti’s account is reliable, it is likely that Barocci’s impact upon the art of Rome in the late sixteenth century had an effect on Muziano’s choice of Correggio, who appears to have had no direct stylistic influence upon Muziano.

In 1560s Genoa, a similar aesthetic conversion to that of Battista Franco’s occurred in the artist who would become the city’s leading painter: Luca Cambiaso. Cambiaso’s development was described, in Raffaele Soprani’s life of the artist, in


The Academy of St. Luke may not have had a systematic life drawing program until the seventeenth century but this does not negate a more informal practice amongst earlier artists working in Rome. Furthermore, the lack of surviving life drawings is a poor indication for Muziano’s practice, as it is for the equally ‘sober’ and ‘static’ (p. 204) painter of the seventeenth century, Nicolas Poussin – who we know from Bellori, drew from life at the studio of Domenichino. Marcari employs Giovan Battista Armenini’s, De’ veri precetti della pittura to justify the claim that mid-sixteenth century artists in Rome had lacked teachers. This is an assertion that I believe Marcari – and earlier scholars – have taken far too much at face value. In Chapter III of Book Two of the Precetti, Armenini ends with a very short account of sixteenth century life drawing practice. Armenini’s life spanned the entire mid-to-late sixteenth century and there is no sign in his description, of life drawing dying out as a practice - or being revived. It is rather, dispassionately mentioned as one of the necessary skills for an artist.


terms of three stylistic phases. The first style dated to the 1550s, when Cambiaso is heavily indebted to the Sienese Mannerist painter Domenico Beccafumi. The influence of Beccafumi upon Cambiaso was due to Beccafumi’s earlier patronage by the Genoese condottiere Andrea Doria in the 1530s (fig. 47). Yet, in the early 1560s, Cambiaso completely abandoned Beccafumi as a model (fig. 48) and scholarship is unanimous in recognising the strong influence both Raphael (fig. 49) (fig. 50) and Correggio, fused with Venetian models such as Veronese and Titian, have upon the painter. In Cambiaso’s final, so-called “geometric” style, the artist looked back to the simplicity of Trecento and Quattrocento models for reasons that will be further touched upon in relation to the late Roman style of Annibale Carracci.

It is this middle reform style that is of interest here. Beginning with the Madonna and Child with Saints John the Baptist and Saint Benedict of c.1560 (fig. 51), Cambiaso’s Virgin is displayed with a slightly tilted head that mirrors precisely Correggio’s Madonna del Latte (fig. 52). In addition to this model of the Virgin being repeated on numerous occasions (fig. 53) (fig. 56), the figure of the infant Christ has a regular tendency to resemble the posture of the infant Christ sunken back into the body of the Virgin, as seen in both the Madonna del Latte, and, even more prominently, in Correggio’s Madonna with Saint Jerome (fig. 54) (fig. 55). Then, in Cambiaso’s 1585 Holy Family with the Young Saint John the Baptist (fig. 57), we see the use of a pillar to the left - in accordance with Venetian models of the Holy Family (fig. 58) (fig. 59) (fig. 60) - from which Joseph peers across and a ‘Correggio Virgin’ takes support.

The synthesis of Correggio and Veronese in the work of Cambiaso is most apparent in his profane subjects of the same decade. In his c.1565 Venus and Adonis (fig. 61), Cambiaso derives the figure of Venus from Correggio and Adonis from Veronese (fig. 62). Scholars have noted that the figure type of Venus is comparable to the same in Correggio’s Venus with Mercury and Cupid (fig. 63). However, an even closer model in terms of posture and facial expression is the figure of Mary


266 Cambiasso is known to have made extensive copies of Correggio’s paintings, such as the Madonna del Latte.
Magdalene in Correggio’s *Madonna with St Jerome* (fig. 54). A series of subjects, depicting Venus and Adonis/Mars, show the strong prevalence of this dual source.

The most influential synthesis of a Correggio and Venetian model for reform occurred in the mid-to-late 1560s and 70s in the work of Federico Barocci. Like Cambiaso in the 1560s, Correggio had become for Barocci, a predominant addition to the Raphael/Venetian synthesis of the earliest reformers - who significantly included Barocci’s own teacher, Battista Franco. An initial example is the artist’s 1566-7 *Crucifixion with the Virgin and St John the Evangelist* (fig. 64) – a work, as Judith Mann has mentioned, which was ‘his earliest altarpiece to break away completely from a Mannerist conception.’

Numerous scholars have acknowledged the debt the painting owes to Titian’s 1558 Ancona *Crucifixion* (fig. 65). The bursting light in the sky behind Christ and the treatment of his figure were clearly derived from Titian’s broad and mature handling of paint. While the overtly rippling, undulating contours of John the Apostle’s legs, his animated drapery and the sensuality of the infant angels are all clear stylistic derivations from Correggio.

From the 1570s onwards, Barocci’s larger paintings, from the *Madonna del Popolo* (1575-78) (fig. 66), to the *Matyrdom of St Vitalis* (1580-83) (fig. 67) and *The Last Supper* (1590-99) (fig. 68) are all looking to Veronese’s banquet paintings of the 1560s and 70s in order to find solutions to the depiction of large group scenes (fig. 69). Whereas Mannerist artists had sought variety of gesture to formally imply an underlying *sprezzatura* within a given subject, Barocci aimed to use variety as a means of instructive delight, mirroring Paduan literary critics such as Julius Caesar Scaliger who had stated that, poetry ‘imitates... with great splendor’ and that such imitation ‘is intermediate to another [end] which is final, and which is to teach with

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269 Barocci’s innovatively idiosyncratic depiction of crowds is noted by Mann and Bohn in relation to the *Madonna del Popolo*. See Mann and Bohn, *Federico Barocci* (New Haven: 2013), p. 10. Barocci was not unique in synthesising Veronese’s banqueting scenes with other complex group-pictures. Such eclectic synthesis was very common amongst both Milanese and Genoese painters at this time; synthesising Veronese with Raphael’s *School of Athens*, the *Disputa* and the figural compositions of Leonardo’s *Last Supper*. 
The didactic nature of the crowded narrative was also in keeping with that pioneered in Muziano’s *Lazarus*, whilst allowing for a greater level of idiosyncratic subsidiary action and an emphasis on beautiful materials and objects to charm the senses – all qualities for which Veronese was most famous.

The *Madonna del Popolo* was carefully composed under a clear and overarching message of devotion to the Virgin and charitable acts to the poor; whilst also expressing the Virgin’s function of acting in her intercessory role on the behalf of the faithful to Christ. The work was Barocci’s first successful synthesis of a crowd whose idiosyncratic actions and dress mirrored Veronese, whilst also drawing upon the energy of contour found in Correggio - thus becoming an important initiating source, for the second generation of Florentine Reformers, into the sensual reformist Correggio/Venetian mode of the painter of Urbino.

However, it is important to note, that as significant as Barocci was for Ludovico Cigoli, Domenico Passignano and many other Florentines of their generation, it was Barocci’s sources, as much as the artist himself, that they emulated. Baldinucci tells us that after Cigoli saw his second major Barocci, the *Crucifixion* at Perugia, he ‘threw himself into a study of Correggio.’ Thus, as the Carracci would later do, on being made aware of Barocci’s eclecticism, they searched out both Correggio and the Venetian Masters to *sensualise* the naturalism of their painting style, and to emotively magnify its ability to convey peripatetic *catharsis*.

It is also significant that, although Baldinucci calls Cigoli ‘the Florentine Correggio and Titian’, both he and his other biographer, Cigoli’s nephew G.B. Cardi,

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271 Ibid, pp. 10-12.

272 Stuart Lingo also notes the silvery white optical dissipation of the figures of the crowd in the background of the *Madonna del Popolo* that he rightly sees as derivative of Veronese and Tintoretto, to denote aerial perspective and the effect of the light of heaven. Lingo, *Federico Barocci* (New Haven: 2008), pp. 198-99.


gave no details regarding the study of Venetian models by the artist.\textsuperscript{275} It is very much as if, like the Carracci’s biographers, it is enough that they concede an aspect of artistic regeneration to outside forces rather than give an unqualified recognition of the debt Florence’s leading painter had to the city that stood ideologically on the other side of the disegno - colore debate.\textsuperscript{276}

This brings us to the other myth of the Carracci: the notion that they revived disegno, by basing it more systematically upon the life model. Once again, Carracci scholarship often cites the following account by Malvasia as though it demonstrates a phenomenon in drawing practice unique to them:

Whether they were eating, drinking, resting, or going about every operation, every motion, every act, every gesture would compel them to take charcoal-holder in hand to record the experience, thus interrupting, with almost excessive \textit{gusto}, the normal duties of conversation no less than the ones necessary to the conservation of health. While eating, they would draw, with bread in one hand and chalk or charcoal in the other...\textsuperscript{277}

Comparatively the young Cigoli is described in the biography of his nephew G.B. Cardi as going to Santi di Tito’s ‘place, every day to draw from life, [making] good

\textsuperscript{275} Mignacca, \textit{The painter Ludovico Cardi, traditionally known as Cigoli}, diss. (Sydney: 1972), p.162.

\textsuperscript{276} Late sixteenth-century Venetian draughtsmanship had a notable influence upon the Florentine Reformists who adopted the former’s use of drawing with the brush, particularly for applying white gouache highlights to preliminary drawings for paintings and other studies. The Venetian practice was greatly admired in Rome, as later noted by the painter Marcan tonio Bassetti in a letter of 1616, to his reformist Venetian Master Palma Giovane. See Catherine Whistler, \textit{Venice and Drawing 1500-1800: Theory, Practice and Collecting} (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2016), pp. xxvii-xxx.

\textsuperscript{277} Summerscale, Malvasia, p. 420. The very similar account of Santi di Tito, given by Baldinucci states, that he ‘spent all his spare time [drawing], especially in the evenings, when he was not able to work with colors. In those hours, when one could not draw from life in the public academy, which he frequented, along with every other first-rate master, and when he had nothing else to draw, he drew in red chalk his wife, his sons and daughters, the maidservant, the chairs, the stools, and finally the cat.’
progress in the understanding of posture, proportion, movement and the layout of [pictures].” Dempsey affirms this link, noting in both G.B. Cardi and Baldinucci’s biographies of Florentine painters that, ‘It was a group of young artists gathered around Santi di Tito, who, like Annibale, were tirelessly devoted to practice and to drawing from nature, who drew from the life in the studio, who drew from casts, who drew in the streets, who simply drew and redrew…” In fact, scholarship is unanimous in not only recognising a turn towards the empiricism of drawing in Florence but also an overarching interest in the city for the study of anatomy, amongst both the more radical or moderate reformers and Mannerist artists (fig. 70) (fig. 71) (fig. 72).

Carracci scholarship is thus faced with an unacknowledged problem. If both the eclectic model that the Carracci followed in painting and their conception of disegno were already evident as aims for painters, decades prior to them, and of equal import amongst their Florentine contemporaries, does this make the claim for reform in painting by the Carracci, as justified by these two criteria, problematic - or even historically apocryphal? As discussed in the introduction, Sydney Freedberg’s response to this, in both Painting in Italy 1500-1600 and Circa 1600 was to treat the Carracci as some kind of prescribed benchmark to which all other prior, or contemporary reformers, were but poor substitutes. Such an analysis conveniently affirmed both the liberal and protestant historical biases towards the art of the mid-to-late sixteenth century. It made the Carracci, history’s aesthetic saviours, and a


278 Dempsey, Annibale Carracci and the Beginnings of Baroque Style (Fiesole: 2000), p. 15


281 See my Introduction.

282 As Dempsey states, ‘it was not for nothing that Italian art of the age... came to be seen by Protestants of all periods, and by political liberals of all religions in the nineteenth century, as an art false in its values, evocative of incense and the trappings of ritual, the foundation for the all but idolatrous worship practised by the ignorant and superstitious.’ Dempsey, The Art Bulletin, (Dec., 1980), p. 565.
positive distraction from the non-democratic, Ducal rule of Florence and the “backward” piety of the Counter-Reformation.

Likewise, Dempsey was also aware that, to preserve a semblance of the Bellorian/Malvasian reform narrative, he had to do, in the positive for the Carracci, what Freedberg and many earlier scholars had sought to demonstrate in the negative. That is, he attempted, in *Annibale Carracci and the Beginnings of Baroque Style*, to make a claim for reform that was less dismissive of the intentions of earlier artists while arguing for a superior refinement of intention on the Carracci’s part. Dempsey was also forced to fall back on a more inclusive argument for reform due to Posner’s erroneous claim that the Carracci’s discovery of Barocci had been creatively spontaneous. As a result, Dempsey appears to infer that the Carracci did not pioneer eclecticism or disegno but rather, to state it crudely, they did it better.283

Rightly, Dempsey realised that an argument for the Carracci pioneering drawing from nature would have appeared weak, given that he had already been willing to acknowledge the primacy this aspect of reform had in Florence and for which he admitted the Carracci owed a due debt. Yet, strangely, Dempsey’s chief argument for the uniqueness of the Carracci, and in particular Annibale, becomes ‘the issue of color and chiaroscuro as integral to the reform.’284 This was something Dempsey had stated, in the second sentence of his introduction, that the Carracci developed ‘coloristic conventions for integrating hue with chiaroscuro.’285 Thus according to Dempsey, by inference, this was not something the Florentine Reformers - particularly those of the second generation - had achieved. However, an inference it remains, as in the remainder of *Annibale Carracci and the Beginnings of Baroque Style* Dempsey maintained his promised, tight-lipped approach to the Florentines – artists who drew upon the very same influences for their own coloristic conventions and to whom, Dempsey acknowledges, the Carracci were indebted for the very reform they implemented!


284 Ibid, p. 20.

285 p. VII.
The following brief analysis of one of Cigoli’s most influential paintings, his 1597 *Matyrdom of St Stephen* (fig. 73), will make apparent the importance of the unification of both hue and chiaroscuro in the works of the second generation of Florentine Reformers. Many Carracci scholars, including Dempsey, have acknowledged that Veronese’s language of composition, rather than his use of colour, is the most evident factor in the works of the Carracci. It is rather the chiaroscuro of Correggio that is adopted by the Carracci to unify the image in terms of both hue and shade.\textsuperscript{286} Eneide Mignacca, in her thesis on Cigoli, states precisely the same regarding the *Matyrdom of St Stephen*:

The indirect knowledge of Venetian pictorial texts may have sparked Cigoli’s interest for the grandiose type of composition. This granted, and all the Venetian elements taken into account, one must on the other hand recognise that what amalgamates the parts is a chiaroscuro derived, as in many other works painted by Cigoli in that period, not from Venice, but still from Correggio.\textsuperscript{287}

A little earlier Mignacca stated, ‘Cigoli has ambitiously implanted Venetian movement and atmosphere on Florentine schemes... [with the] chiaroscuro [derivative of Correggio]... in fact, offer[ing] the link between the parts.’\textsuperscript{288} Thus one author has visually perceived in Cigoli precisely those qualities that Dempsey was at pains to state were most unique to the Carracci as reformers. Furthermore, Baldinucci significantly recounts how:

\textsuperscript{286} 23.


\textsuperscript{288} Ibid, p. 105 (italics added).
this picture, according to art experts, amongst whom the famous Pietro da Cortona, was proclaimed the most beautiful of all the paintings found in our city; it is universally held that had Cigoli only painted this picture, he would have earned himself, with it, and legitimately so, the name of the Florentine Correggio.’

To be dubbed the ‘Florentine Correggio’ was, as Dempsey correctly understood in relation to the Carracci, precisely to be an artist who was capable of subtly synthesising hue and chiaroscuro. Moreover, for a painting to be described as the most beautiful in Florence was also, by inference, praising the work’s sensory appeal, which, in Renaissance aesthetic thinking, predominantly meant its colour.

Scholars who would wish to brush aside such praise, under the guise that to have painted the most beautiful painting in late sixteenth-century Florence was simply to be at the top of a provincial artistic school of mediocrity, need to address the fact that the phrase ‘most beautiful’ was made in the context of all the paintings in the city - both past and present. Indeed this level of praise for Cigoli goes beyond the confines of Florence in Baldinucci’s exhaustive Notizie de' professori del disegno da Cimabue in qua in which only Michelangelo and Cigoli are given the title of divino – an appellation which would have smacked of hyperbole were it seen by his contemporaries not to be wholly justified.

However such praise was not provincially based as the epithet ‘the third most

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289 Baldinucci cited in ibid, p. 103, “questa tavola, al parere d’uomini segnalati nell’arte, e fra questi del celebre Pietro da Cortona, fu predicata per la più bella di quante egregie pitture possiede la nostra città; ed è concetto universale che quando il Cigoli non avesse fatto altro che quest’opera, sarebbesi con essa sola, a gran ragione, guadagnato il nome di Correggio Fiorentino.”

Baldinucci’s very criteria for assessing painting, was, as Eva Struhal notes, ‘based on accordamento (an aesthetic category that favors the harmonization of all formal elements in a painting by stressing the final overall impression on the observer) and colore.’ Struhal, “Filippo Baldinucci’s Novità: The Notizie De Professori Del Disegno and Giorgio Vasari’s Vite”, in The Paradigm of Vasari: Reception, Criticism, Perspectives (Venezia: Marsilio Editori, 2016), p. 200.


291 See for example, Miles Chappell, “Reform and Continuity in Late Florentine Drawing” in Master Drawings. Vol. 43, No. 3, (Fall, 2005), pp. 339-348.
beautiful painting in Rome292 was attached to Cigoli’s destroyed *St Peter Healing the Lame Man* (fig. 74), one of six large pictures painted on slate for St. Peters and completed in 1604.293 This was only behind Raphael’s *Transfiguration* and the Carracci’s pupil Domenichino’s *The Last Communion of St Jerome* (fig. 75). The similarly broad, affirmative consensus of Cigoli’s painting in Rome might then raise the question of the artist’s work being regarded as more beautiful than Annibale’s late Roman altarpieces in the eyes of the city’s public? Domenichino may be ahead of Cigoli but, if we are to believe the Carracci biographers that reform was born from an exclusively Bolognese source, Cigoli’s altarpiece should not have been anywhere near a list of the most beautiful paintings in the city. In addition, painters who took their artistic lineage from the Carracci, such as Andrea Sacchi, positively affirmed this view of Cigoli’s picture.294 Ultimately, given that Cigoli’s work is rated so highly next to Domenichino’s painting - a work regarded as one of the greatest masterpieces of the Bolognese school in Rome - one is surely left to conclude that the margin between the inventive use of colour adopted by Cigoli was rather smaller than Dempsey’s claims for such an incomparably innovative employment of colour by the Carracci and their school. Thus Bellori’s call for Annibale to be ‘venerated... as the restorer of and prince of art’ based on him having ‘attuned himself principally to the sweetness and purity of Correggio and to Titian’s power and distribution of colors...’295 reads more like a fictional heroic account of artistic reform - an expression of Roman-Bolognese *campanillismo* - than as historical fact.

292 Noted by Andrea Sacchi as recorded by Giovanni Battista Passeri, the pupil of Domenichino in his *Vite de pittori, scultori ed architetti: che anno lavorato in Roma, morti dal 1641 fino al 1673*, published in 1772.


294 Ann Sutherland Harris affirms that before 1630 it was a combination of ‘Barocci, Cigoli, Ludovico Carracci and Titian who had the greatest impact on Sacchi’s work’. See Harris, *Andrea Sacchi: Complete edition of the Paintings with a Critical Catalogue* (Princeton: Princeton New Jersey, 1977), p.5. Harris also notes that Sacchi’s use of both colour and the treatment of textured fabrics may be more broadly derivative of Florentine Reformers working in early seventeenth century Rome. As she states, ‘The impact of Florentine artists in Rome, with the exception of Cigoli, is generally ignored.’ Footnote 20, page 39.

Beyond the realm of aesthetic judgment, it also needs to be made evident that in terms of fame and success in Rome, the Carracci initially lagged well behind their Florentine Reformist contemporaries. When, for example, the Carracci were offered the Farnese commission, Ludovico did not wish to take it, apprehensive, as Malvasia states, ‘to risk starting anew in a strange place.’ Ludovico recommended Agostino as his replacement. Yet Cardinal Odoardo Farnese ‘was [initially] unwilling to recognize Agostino as anything more than a great engraver... and feared that what would be beneficial to Agostino would be to his own disadvantage.’ The two brothers ultimately fell out with one another over the Farnese Gallery (fig. 76). This resulted in Agostino deciding to leave his brother to undertake the commission alone, likely believing that he could find other employment within the city. Agostino was not successful and finding himself with no major source of income, returned to beg Annibale to take him back, even pleading that he would ‘work only from Annibale’s drawings... if that would make him happy, and if not, he would just sketch out the work... and even grind his earth colours for him.’ Ultimately Odoardo Farnese intervened, urging his brother, Duke Ranuccio, to employ Agostino to undertake the decoration of a room in the Palazzo Giardino in Parma. Things did not run smoothly for Agostino here either, with rivalry emerging from other artists and the room he painted being purposefully locked by his enemies, ‘so that he was forced to borrow the mason’s ladder in order to go in through the window’ to work. This combination of negative circumstances caused Agostino to fall into a state of depression which led to his ill health. Moreover, Agostino had been struck at the very heart of his allegiance to artistic reform with Federico Barocci - the idol of both Bolognese and Florentine reformers – reacting with indignation at Agostino sending him an emulative engraving he had made of the artist’s painting, Aneas and Anchises - a work he dedicated to Odoardo Farnese (fig. 77). Clearly Barocci had not interpreted

296 Summerscale, Malvasia, p. 275.
297 Ibid.
298 p. 277.
299 279-80.
the reproduction, as, ‘an expression of the esteem he had for his merit and talent’300 but rather as a means to garner financial gain at the expense of Barocci’s own success. Malvasia recounts that Agostino had ‘never in his life experienced such mortification.’301 This litany of misfortune and its effect on Agostino’s health, ultimately lead to his death.

In briefly recounting the personal aspects of the Farnese commission, I have sought to emphasise how tenuous, the situation was for the Carracci brothers when they came to Rome. This is a reality that is often deemphasized, in Carracci scholarship, to favour a more Bellorian account of the “heroic” success of the Farnese Ceiling that, in part, followed.

By marked contrast, the success of Ludovico Cigoli, and that of the artistically established Domenico Passignano, was immediately open to them in the city. In the same year that the Farnese ceiling was unveiled, Passignano was summoned to paint one of what became the six altarpieces in the *navi piccole* for St. Peters.302 He was to remain in Rome for thirteen years, working on numerous commissions for Pope Clement VIII (1592 – 1605) and Paul V (1605-21) as well as for many high papal officials.303 By contrast, Annibale and Caravaggio did not receive any papal commissions and were mostly patronised by a few wealthy individuals.304 It is worth noting, in this context, Bellori’s claim that Paul V, on hearing of Annibale’s depression following the low payment of five hundred scudi for the Farnese Ceiling, supposedly moved to assist in the distribution of commissions to his Bolognese pupils.305 Bellori’s account may be historically problematic, as noted by Posner in his

300 266.
301 Ibid.
304 Ibid, p. 111
305 Montanari, Bellori p. 100.
thesis, *The Roman Style of Annibale Carracci*, that the Bolognese artists who followed Annibale’s late manner had difficulty gaining major commissions in the first decade following his death.\(^{306}\) This seems strange if Paul V had worked behind the scenes to gain them employment. It also does not follow that Reni’s phenomenal success was linked to the unveiling of the Farnese Ceiling as, by this time he was already being independently promoted in Rome by the Cavalier d’Arpino.\(^{307}\) As Malvasia makes clear in his lives of the Carracci, and of Domenichino and Reni; Annibale was threatened by Reni’s success.\(^{308}\) In fact, he actively worked to promote Domenichino at Reni’s expense - perceiving him as a hazard rather than an asset to his own reputation.\(^{309}\)

Reni, Lanfranco and Domenichino did grow to become rivals to Passignano. However when the most significant, seventeenth-century, decorative campaign of St. Peter’s was instigated in the 1620s by Pope Urban VIII, Passignano was the only painter to receive two commissions as well as a gold chain on the completion of his work.\(^{310}\) By contrast, both Domenichino and Lanfranco, who were then at the very height of their fame, were not singled out from amongst the other Roman artists who

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\(^{307}\) As Posner notes, ‘When Annibale’s pupils were just commencing as independent artists – Reni had already completed a major commission in St Cecilia in Trastevere, in the Vatican Palace, at S. Gregorio al Celio, and was decorating a chapel in the Quirinale Palace.’ Ibid, p. 204.

\(^{308}\) This is discussed in Cropper and Dempsey’s “The State of Research in Italian Painting of the Seventeenth Century” in *The Art Bulletin*, Vol. 69, No. 4 (Dec., 1987), pp. 500-1. They cite an unedited version of a letter that appears in Malvasia’s *Felsina Pittrice* by Annibale to Ludovico, discussing Reni’s success. To quote an exert: ‘...but I do not at all envy his [Reni’s] fortune, though I weep greatly for my own in being too eager to favour me by causing service to the Farnese to fall to me, and then following by reserving to him the splendour and liberality of the Borghese. Yet I do not say that Guido was not very right to bargain and to make liberal requests, having been made aware of the way I was treated in a work of so many years.’ p. 500. Annibale’s claims not to envy Reni’s success are contradicted by later disparaging remarks regarding Reni’s talent, ‘...whence in perspective, in the distribution and grouping of figures, in the laying out of the planes in all of which, although he has patience he is in fact naked.’ pp. 500-1.


produced altarpieces.\textsuperscript{311} This outcome cannot fail to be compared with Cigoli’s earlier acclaim, associated with \textit{St Peter Healing the Lame Man}, from the previous commission for St. Peter’s. Again, at this earlier date, both Cigoli and Passiganno were set apart by being paid the huge sum of one-thousand scudi each for their consecutive altarpieces, a stark contrast to Annibale’s paltry five-hundred scudi payment for an entire ceiling decoration just a few years prior.\textsuperscript{312} Moreover, the Bolognese papal diplomat Giovanni Battista Agucchi had also petitioned unsuccessfully for Ludovico Carracci to obtain one of the commissions for St. Peter’s. Thus, contemporaneously with Annibale’s Roman career, the Florentine Reformers were, by contrast, rewarded with the highest of accolades.

Towards the end of his \textit{Life of the Carracci}, Malvasia becomes less guarded in citing historical sources that run counter to his own Bolognese reformist narrative. The documents cited largely favour Annibale, and his later Roman style, as being synonymous with the reform of painting, where Malvasia had argued for the Carracci’s collective success and Ludovico’s artistic supremacy. Yet, it is surprisingly Malvasia’s own words that offer the greatest revelatory contradiction to his narrative, when he writes:

\begin{quote}
This alone did [the Carracci] lack: that fortune smile on them... but the incorruptible and glorious rewards of praise and fame, which \textit{they did not attain in their lifetimes} even to the degree that they had been granted to Calvaert, the Passerotti, Samacchini, Fontana, and the Procaccini... nor, if we pass beyond our native Bologna, \textit{to the degree of fame granted to a Zuccaro, a Schedone, a Vanni, a Cigoli, a Pomarancio, a D’Arpino, and a Caravaggio}, \textit{whom we now see condemned by modern enlightened taste}, which by general acclamation requires
\end{quote}

\begin{footnotes}
\item \textsuperscript{311} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{312} p. 133.
\end{footnotes}
they cede their place and restore the greater part of the usurped honors in full measure to the Carracci.313

This startlingly unanticipated passage, not only describes the Carracci’s fame and success as being retrospective but, by inference, their so-called ‘reform of painting’ as ex post facto. It is also of particular interest, whom Malvasia, here, names among the non-Bolognese painters that are said to have achieved what the Carracci did not. They are all either leading reformers - or painters who later adopted reform. Federico Zuccaro who, early, moved away from the Mannerism of his brother Taddeo; later turning ultimately, in his maturity, toward a moderate centre between reform and Mannerism. Such an aesthetic approach was widely dominant in Rome until the 1590s.314 In addition to the aforementioned reformists of Siena and Florence, Francesco Vanni and Ludovico Cigoli, two artists are mentioned who later adopted a reformist mode of art, Cavalier D’Arpino and Pomarancio.315

The context of Malvasia’s passage is a perceived lack of recognition of Ludovico, comparative to the praise Annibale was being given in the later seventeenth century. The words may partly be read as hyperbolic - an over emphasis on past failure to explain Ludovico’s current lack of recognition? In the context of Rome, a complete absence of fame is contradicted in the very earliest Roman account of Annibale given at Caravaggio’s trial of 1603, where the artist lists him as among ‘the good painters’ in company with three of the prominent names mentioned by Malvasia: Cavalier d’Arpino, Federico Zuccaro and Pomarancio.316 Nevertheless, a hyperbolic reading of the passage can only take us so far. Malvasia undoubtedly

312 Summerscale, Malvasia, p. 475 (italics added).

314 This moderate approach to reform is for example, typified in the works of the Oratory of the Gonfalone. See Hall, After Raphael (Cambridge: 1999), pp.208-210.


states that the former artists’ contemporaneous fame must in hindsight be removed from them and given to the Carracci.

What, one must ask, had led to a situation where the Carracci had gone from being named amongst these other painters, to Malvasia’s time, when they were seen as deserving to be perceived in an autonomous light? In an attempt to answer this concluding question, I believe we need to look more closely at both the Roman style of Annibale Carracci and its seventeenth-century cultural reappropriation.
Chapter Six: The Roman style of Annibale Carracci and the invention of the “Carracci Reform.”

…it should be stressed that the severe classicism of Annibale’s late style had an immediate life in Rome of only about a lustrum.317

Donald Posner

In the above argument, I have sought to show that the Carracci were not unique in terms of an aesthetic reform towards naturalism, or of drawing and colour. Furthermore, Carracci scholarship has, at times, hesitantly conceded that these characteristics of reform were evident in other reformers and as equally apparent in the second generation of Florentines. The claim that remains left to be addressed is that the Carracci were exceptional reformers in their, synthesis and integration of classical antique models into reform - that in doing so they followed a precedent set by, but not seen since, Raphael.

In the Rome of the 1590s and early 1600s, the sensual mode of reform was heavily dominated by artists captivated by its progenitor, Federico Barocci. In c.1600’s Rome, Annibale had not only to contend with the many artists derivative of Barocci in the city but also from the Carracci’s own school, in the person of Guido Reni. Reni was a genuine usurper in the Roman market as the Bolognese exempla par excellence of the Barocci-reformist tradition.318 Moreover, I believe we can see the success of these Barocci-derived painters, both the Florentine and Sienese Reformers and Reni, as at least a partial reason for a dramatic stylistic change in Annibale’s art.


during this time. I state this without meaning to downplay the substantial connection Annibale had with both the ancient city and the contemporary Roman antiquarian art world as it was to be experienced in the period.319

Furthermore, just as we saw how the Carracci drew upon the second generation of Florentine Reformers to define reform in Bologna, I would contest that Annibale now looked indirectly back to the first generation of Florentine Reformers. In the Rome of the late sixteenth century, this mode of painting had become the ‘classical’ reformist contender to the reformism of Barocci. As has been noted, one of the artists who dominated in this mode of reform in the city, from the 1570s onwards, was Scipione Pulzone. Others of its champions in Rome included both the influential Giuseppe Valeriano and Durante Alberti.320

The antecedent to this was in the 1570s, when many painters across Italy adopted a more austere style, which deemphasised sfumato and atmosphere in favour of legibility and a hardening of forms.321 The expression of such a style in the work of Santi di Tito negated any tendency towards a perceived insipidity, often acknowledged in its other proponents, by conceptually framing such a mode of painting with the overarching addition of forcefully expressive rhetorical gesture.322 Thus the praise given by Bellori for Domenichino’s portrayal of the affeti, I contend, had its origins in works such as Santi di Tito’s 1576 painting for Santa Maria Novella, The Raising of Lazarus (fig. 78).323 Jack Spalding rightly acknowledged, in his dissertation on Santi, that no painting so clearly expressed Aristotle’s conception of

319 The Roman antiquarian world of the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries is still a growing and contested area of modern scholarship. See for example, Janis Bell “Introduction” in Art History in the Age of Bellori: Scholarship and Cultural Politics in Seventeenth Century Rome (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).


322 See for example the subject paintings of Giovanni Battista Moroni, painted in the 1550s and 60s. See Giovanni Battista Moroni (London: Royal Academy of the Arts, 2014).

323 Wohl, Bellori pp. 246 and 248.
the unity of action in dramatic theory, combined with the communicative expression of gesture in classical rhetoric.\textsuperscript{324}

In Mannerist painting, as, for example, in the hand gestures of Michelangelo’s nudes – very notably first seen in his sculpture David (fig. 79) - had become a model repetitiously reappropriated in order to express either forceful movement, or elegance of form, at the expense of any narrated meaning (fig. 80 - 83).\textsuperscript{325} The most common ‘classical’ reformist gesture, designed to directly counter the purposeless strain of these pseudo-Michelangelesque contortions, was that of its complete opposite: the open palm. An action that serves to direct the viewer’s attention to the narrative, or convey its feeling in gesture (fig. 84 - 85), was not only seen in the works of the artists active in Rome, mentioned above (fig. 86 - 91), but was also included along with Annibale (fig. 94 - 97) in the works of his classical reformist pupils Domenichino (fig. 98 - 99) and Albani (fig. 100). The same simplified use of gesture would, in turn, later be adopted by Nicolas Poussin (fig. 101 - 103) and a large body of other ‘classically’ inspired French painters (fig. 104 - 105).

The reformist derivation and continuity that, I am suggesting existed between all these artists, is further evident in the unabated interest in the importance of rhetorical action that was maintained throughout most of the seventeenth century. By the 1600s, the study of gesture had become a recognised discipline across Europe, exemplified in works like Giovanni Bonifacio’s L’Arte dei Cenni, published in Vicenza in 1616,\textsuperscript{326} and the Englishman, John Bulwer’s two volumes, Chirologia or The Natural Language of the Hand and The Art of Manual Rhetoric, published in 1644. Bulwer expanded upon sixteenth century Italian rhetorical theory, even speaking of the communicative supremacy of gesture over speech as, ‘the naturell language of the

\textsuperscript{324} Spalding, Santi di Tito, Diss., Princeton University, 1976, p. 41. Throughout the Renaissance and due to classical precedence, rhetoric was closely associated with poetry, as in for example Cicero, On the Orator, I, xvi. This association was only further emphasised by both Paduan literary critics. Quintilian in Book XI, iii of the Institutes of Oratory, had likewise emphasised the importance of bodily action as contingent to the effective employment of rhetoric. Aristotle’s unity of action in poetry was thus perceived as correlative with rhetoric as a discipline.

\textsuperscript{325} Marcia Hall has rightly stated that for Mannerists artists, ‘It is as if without their grandiloquence... [they] would find the narrative trivialised.’ Hall, After Raphael (Cambridge: 1999), p. 255.

Hand, as it happened to escape the confusion of the curse of Babel.\textsuperscript{327} In an illustration (fig. 106) to Bulwer’s text entitled, “A Corollary of the Speaking Motions”, Melissa Hudler states how Bulwer had sought to convey ‘expressions of trust, affection, love, and grief [as] discourses that possess distinct and culturally understood hand gestures’\textsuperscript{328}. Hudler’s interpretation is entirely consistent with Bulwer’s confident account of the ‘speaking ability of the hand’:

And this naturall expression seems to result from the sympathy between the will and the Hands for, the will affectionately inclined and moved to stretch forth her selfe, the Hand, that is moved by the same spirit, willing to goe out and set a glosse upon the inward motion, calls it selfe into a forme extending to a semblance of the inward appetite; neither is the Hand at any time found too short for such an expression if the will be disposed to cooperate with it.\textsuperscript{329}

What is important to note, in Bulwer’s illustration’s, are the predominance of the open palm, and how strikingly similar the hand gestures are to those that appear in the works of the ‘classical’ reformists mentioned above. The frontality of hand gestures was also consistent with the limiting of the broader use of foreshortening in ‘classical’ reformist painting more generally; as evident in the work of artists from Santi di Tito onwards. Consequently, we cannot then take claims of a “return to Raphael”\textsuperscript{330} or the High Renaissance amongst any of the above mentioned artists, to

\begin{flushleft}

\textsuperscript{328} Melissa Hudler, chapter three, “‘For with our hands’: The Rhetoric of Gestures in The Winter’s Tale, The Rape of Lucrece, Titus Andronicus, and Epicone” in \textit{The Rhetoric of Stasis, Gesture and Dance in Renaissance Literature}, diss., Anglia Ruskin University, 2014, p. 4.

\textsuperscript{329} Cited in Hudler p. 2.

\textsuperscript{330} This claim is evident in both contemporary sources and mid-to-late sixteenth century scholarship.
\end{flushleft}
mean precisely what we assume such a statement to imply at face value. The later ‘classicism’ of the mid-to-late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries embodied an evolving understanding of the action of the narrative, as perceived in both Aristotle’s *Poetics* and classical rhetoric, at a level unknown to the early decades of the sixteenth century. If we compare, for example, Durante Alberti’s 1588-9 *Transfiguration* (fig. 91) in the Trinity chapel of the Gesù with Raphael’s *Transfiguration* (fig. 46), we see Alberti has gone to far greater lengths to reduce even the slightest foreshortening in his depiction of the three disciples on the Mount. This is a quality that as mentioned above, is most evident within the gestures of the hands. The frontality of Peter’s left arm and hand (fig. 92) which would be expected to be on more of a receding angle is, here, intentionally avoided by Alberti. Furthermore, the right hand of John the disciple is firmly planted on the ground, in such a way that it, likewise, reads as almost frontal (fig. 93). In such a painting, cathartic emotion and a resolution of the subject occurs *via* the viewer’s reading of these clearly spelt out mimetic actions. Catharsis is, then, the *end* result of scrutinising the action of the painting and the purely emotive, formally overt means of gaining the viewer’s attention – such as dramatic foreshortening - are denied or subordinated as they are perceived as counterintuitive distractions to the primary reading of the picture.331

Evidence in Malvasia also supports the view that Annibale reappropriated, rather than entirely created, a new style in Rome ‘Annibale was proving to be an overly conscientious adherent of the maxim *cum Romae fueris* [when in Rome do as the Romans], struggling hard to reduce his natural style to that more studied one...’332 Moreover, Malvasia is highly critical of Annibale adopting this manner, identifying it correctly with the alternative ‘stony style’ (the maniera statuina) as he calls it, otherwise most prevalent in the city. Regarding the Farnese ceiling, he states,

331 Gauvin Bailey, also commenting on Durante Alberti, states that his *Matyrdom of St Andrew* for the Novitiate Chapel of S. Andrea al Quirinale, ‘gives us restrained and conventional poses, and his focus on the main action in the centre and the large figures of his protagonists recall the emphasis on legibility and the classicizing compositions of reformist painters such as Santi di Tito... Durante also arouses the viewer’s emotions. Andrew’s followers, who are all shown frontally or in three-quarters view to reveal their facial expressions, exhibit a variety of emotions out of which the viewer can find a match for his own response.’ Bailey, *Between Renaissance and Baroque* (Toronto: 2003), p. 53.

332 Summerscale, Malvasia, p. 466.
‘...this work for the Gallery... caused him to constrain his natural talents too much, and even to fall into that statue like, stony style a little, so that he lost the Venetian and Lombard boldness of touch which he once showed in such abundance but now lacked.’\textsuperscript{333}

\textsuperscript{333} Ibid, p. 282.
Seicento Sources and the Antiquarian Circles of Angeloni and Bellori

Historically, the origins of the myth of the Carracci reform began at the funeral of Agostino Carracci. Dempsey has described the funeral as a collective effort by the Bolognese to promote Bologna as a legitimate cultural equal to Florence and Rome. Its orchestration by the Bolognese literati and painters was a genuine attempt to emulate the extravagance of the funeral of Michelangelo, held in 1564. However, it is surprising that such a lavish event, for someone who was largely no more than a successful northern Italian engraver, is broadly perceived by scholars as being culturally inconspicuous. Agostino died in 1602 and, as previously mentioned, only years before, Odoardo Farnese had initially refused to allow him to work on the Farnese Ceiling on the very grounds of his being known only as ‘a great engraver.’ It is equally conspicuous that, with largely failure to show since being under Farnese employment, Agostino was grouped with the other Carracci in Benedetto Morello’s account of the funeral, being described for the very first time as ‘...the sole restorers of the true way of painting in their homeland (not to speak of abroad)...’ Morello’s account was, itself, dedicated to Odoardo Farnese, who had funded the lavish spectacle. The motivation of Odoardo is not clear; however, the same cannot be said for the Bolognese artists involved in its decoration, as set out in Morello’s opening lines:


335 Although Dempsey perceived the funeral as an act of publicity that attempted to ensure the future of the Carracci Academy, he takes no note of the incongruity of Agostino’s career in relation to such pomp. Ibid, p. 558. Giulio Mancini attests to this, stating, ‘Agostino did few things, but they were most beautiful.’ Mancini, Considerations on Painting, trans., Theron Butler (Case Western Reserve University: 1972), p. 333.

336 p. 275.

337 Summerscale, Malvasia, p. 290.

338 Ibid, p. 287.
In honouring the memory of their fellow academician Agostino Carracci with a solemn funeral, the academicians of Bologna known as Incaminati also honoured themselves with this token of their exceptional devotion to their friend and with this demonstration of perfect artistic judgment and magnificent liberality, in which they not only surpass all the expectations of the public, but advanced their own powers.339

This broader cultural motivation of the Bolognese painters must also be seen in conjunction with the surviving letters of Ludovico, after the departure and deaths of his cousins, in which he describes his intention to build an academy based on the institutional examples of the Academia del Disegno in Florence and the Academia di S. Luca in Rome.340 As Anne Summerscale states, ‘both the tenor and content of Morello’s report, as well as of [the academician Lucio] Faberio’s oration [at the funeral], echo this aspiration to match the achievements and ceremonial functions of the existing academies in Florence and Rome.’341 Furthermore, Dempsey states that ‘the effort invested in the funeral of Agostino munificently celebrated in 1603, and so clearly modelled after the funeral given Michelangelo by the Academia del Disegno seems to confirm [such an aim].’342 However, it should be noted that, despite Ludovico’s best efforts, the Carracci Academy, unlike the Academies of Florence and Rome, did not outlive the death of Ludovico.343 The demise of the Carracci Academy appears to be both a cultural and historical contradiction if we are to believe that the Carracci had implemented an autonomous reform which had received universal recognition across Italy for altering the course of art. At the very least, it must

339 pp. 287-8 (italics added).
341 Ibid.
diminish Malvasia’s claim for the cultural supremacy of Bologna as the heart of Italian reform.

Nonetheless, Odoardo Farnese must have been impressed enough with Annibale’s work, to the extent that he was willing to patronise Agostino’s funeral as a means to promote Bolognese propaganda. In turn, I would suggest that Bolognese expatriates in Rome appeared to have been spurred on by such favour to assert Bologna over Florence as the “true” model for late sixteenth century reform. This is evident if one contrasts Morelli’s already hyperbolic, yet regional, description of the Carracci as ‘the sole restorers of painting in the homeland’\textsuperscript{344} with the Bolognese papal diplomat Giovanni Battista Agucchi’s eulogistically universal account of the Carracci reformers - written somewhere between 1607 and 1615\textsuperscript{345} - that, very early on in their careers, the Bolognese painters had come ‘to the realization that it was up to them to rescue art from the decline into which it had fallen...’\textsuperscript{346}

Certainly, Odoardo’s patronage of the funeral cannot be entirely linked to what Clare Robertson describes as, the secular uniqueness of the Farnese Ceiling.\textsuperscript{347} To the contrary, the most significant fresco commission prior to the Farnese Gallery in Rome was undertaken by the Sicilian painter Tommaso Laureti for the Sala dei Capitani on the Capitoline Hill. The final, austere, classical masterpiece of the fresco program, \textit{The Justice of Brutus} (fig. 107), painted in the early 1590s and compositionally based upon Raphael’s \textit{School of Athens} (fig. 108), is one of the clearest signs of a painter fusing Raphael with both the antique and a secular classical literary precedents.\textsuperscript{348} Thus, when Annibale arrived in Rome, such an associative fusion,

\textsuperscript{344} Morelli has ignored the career of the Bolognese reformist Bartolomeo Cesi. See Summerscale, Malvasia, p. 290 italics added.

\textsuperscript{345} During this time Agucchi was temporarily withdrawn from public service and devoted himself to the study of art, history, mathematics and astronomy.

\textsuperscript{346} Cited in Ibid, p. 235.

\textsuperscript{347} Robertson, \textit{The Invention of Annibale Carracci} (Milan: 2008) p. 176.

\textsuperscript{348} See Roger Aiken, \textit{The Capitoline Hill During the Reign of Sixtus V}, Ph.D, thesis (Berkley: University of California, 1977), pp. 84-6. Aiken says of Lauretti’s work that it resembles the more moderate and reformist style of Federico Zuccaro. This may be a fair analysis for the majority of the frescos. Yet a stylistic change to a more radical reformist model cannot be denied in relation to the \textit{Justice of Brutus}, a satisfactory distinction which Aiken fails to make.
located at one of the most historically significant locations in the city, could not have failed to have influenced the aesthetic choices of the artist.

This stylistic derivation is made more compelling by the association Lauretti’s work has with Odoardo Farnese’s father, Alessandro. A statue of Alessandro was erected in the Sala dei Capitani by Pope Sixtus V and the Roman Senate, to honour his successful campaign in ruthlessly suppressing the Dutch Protestant Revolt of the Netherlands and here regaining a sizeable area of Northern Europe for Catholicism (fig. 109). Lauretti’s fresco program for the rooms on the Capitoline, deriving from Livy’s account, celebrated the military and judicial deeds of the leaders of Rome’s founding. Thus, the placement of the statue of Alessandro was meant to mirror the Roman example in its new Christian guise. Such reciprocal symbolism was, I would suggest, the very likely inspiration for Odoardo’s original fresco cycle, planned for the Salone of the Palazzo Farnese, representing the military exploits of his father, for which Annibale was originally called to Rome. It may, then, have been Odoardo who impressed upon Annibale, his desire for a similar stylistic derivation to Lauretti; mirroring the association with his father and resulting in Annibale imitating Lauretti’s example, in looking closely at antique models and fusing them with Raphael - a process which led ultimately to the Farnese Ceiling. In addition to this, Annibale would have known of Lauretti from Bologna as the artist had spent much of his career in that city prior to moving to Rome. Thus, the evolution of Lauretti’s work, from Mannerism to the classical austerity of The Justice of Brutus, probably further fascinated Annibale at a very personal level.

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349 pp. 136 and 184 and Robertson, p. 114.

350 pp. 184-6. Horatius depicted in the fresco by Lauretti had also been honoured with a statue, according to Livy, for courageously defending the Bridge of Piles. In antiquity statues of Rome’s heroes are recorded as being erected on the Capitoline. The commissioning of the statue of Duke Farnese - or more correctly the grafting of his portrait onto an antique body – was designed to vividly recall this distinction.

351 p. 88.

352 The change that came over Lauretti’s style during the Capitoline commission has been acknowledged by other scholars such as Giorgio Leone, Cettina Mangano and Cecilia Perri. They note that following the Capitoline commission, Lauretti’s high altarpiece, the Matyrdom of Saint Susanna painted for the church of the same name, moved away from ‘the formal repertoire in Mannerist style that had characterized his previous work.’ See “Beyond Naples” in Caravaggio’s Rome: 1600-1630, Essays, ed., Rossella Vodret (Milano: Skira,
The propagation of the myth of the Carracci reform, I suggest, rests with its symbiotic relationship to a community of prominent antiquarians living in Rome at the end of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. In the early 1600s, this circle gravitated around the antiquarian Francesco Angeloni, meeting regularly at his self-titled, *Museo Angeloni*. Lisa Beaven has remarked that Cardinal Camillo Massimo, one of its influential associates, considered that his own patronage and collecting embodied the ‘belief that the ancient past was alive before him, and that it related to him personally.’ This is an assertion that could well be applied to a great many in this circle. In one sense, it is no more than a continuation of the Renaissance identity that had emerged with Petrarch: in perceiving antiquity as culturally immanent in the present. The marked difference was very much in terms of a growing and more rigorous contemporary proto-archaeological expression. The Oratorians and the Jesuits had been the Sixteenth century’s archaeological precursors, promoting a Paleo-Christian revival in the arts that was heavily informed by a more systematic analysis of the remains of Rome’s past, with a specific new focus on early-Christian art. In addition to drawing conceptually upon classical rhetoric and poetic theory, the ‘archaic’ simplicity evident in the art of Scipione Pulzone, Durante Alberti and the Jesuit painter Giuseppe Valeriano found further precedents from the flattened forms of ancient Roman or early Christian sculptural reliefs and Byzantine mosaics.

2012), p. 353. The other equally influential work on the Farnese Ceiling was the contemporaneous *quadratura* ceiling in the *Sala Clementina*, frescoed by Giovanni and Cherubino Alberti, mentioned briefly below.


358 Gauvin Bailey notes how this trend was integrated with a renewed interest in early-Renaissance painting, ‘Another inspiration for many Paleo-Christian Revival painters that is rarely mentioned in the scholarship can be
In contrast to Jesuit and Oratorian scholarship which has characterised the view of artists such as Pulzone, Alberti and Valeriano as very much by-products of such a religious and archaeological identity, Carracci scholarship has been less inclined to see Annibale and his Bolognese compatriots as being framed culturally by the interests of a contemporary Roman antiquarian community. At this point it is worth recalling Dempsey’s criticism of Posner’s ahistorical account of Annibale’s absorption of Barocci, as ‘creatively spontaneous’.359 The lens through which Annibale saw the art of Rome was one connected to the world he encountered there. For example, how would Annibale have been remembered if Odoardo Farnese had not changed his plan, from a decorative celebration of his father Alessandro, in the Salone of the Palazzo Farnese, to the Ovidian inspired frescoed gallery?360 In this decision, Odoardo was clearly altering the very aim of his patronage – from, originally creating renown from the heritage of his family’s deeds, to a symbiotic dialogue between one of the largest collections of antiquities in Rome, and the antique stylistic derivations of both the gallery and its subject matter. We must, then, recognise that Annibale’s later mythicised reputation as the restorer of ancient art, was utterly contingent upon the choices of his patron. I will argue that this, fed into the “identity” that the antiquarian circle of Angeloni were looking for in a contemporary painter.

In addition, Carracci scholarship has failed to adequately emphasize the fact that, with the exception of the Roman painter Giovanni Baglione (and perhaps partially the physician Giulio Mancini361), all the writers who spoke of an autonomous Carracci reform or who implicitly affirmed Annibale’s pre-eminence –

found in the Florentine and Umbrian painting styles of the Trecento and Quattrocento; their simplicity, stillness, and bright colours appear in some of the Jesuit paintings. Popular with several reformist schools in sacred painting, this return to the ‘devout style’ was also one of the ingredients of the Carracci revolution at the dawn of Baroque painting, as has been recently elucidated by Charles Dempsey (italics added).’ Bailey, Between Renaissance and Baroque (Toronto: 2003), p. 125.


360 See Robertson, Chapter Four “In Farnese Service: The Salone and the Camerino” in The Invention of Annibale Carracci (Milano: 2008), pp. 103-4.

361 As a connoisseur and art collector he would have most certainly have had significant contact with the antiquarian circle of Angeloni.
Agucchi, Giustiniani, Angeloni, Massani and Bellori - were socially connected to the same Roman antiquarian community.\textsuperscript{362} It is essential, then, that we examine the extent to which the narrative constructed around Annibale, as the reformer of painting, was a projection of the identity of this circle rather than a dispassionate descriptive account of reform in Italy.

This vibrant antiquarian circle was essentially defined around its relationship to Francesco Angeloni and his \textit{Museo Angeloni}, located within his house on the Pincio Hill. Angeloni, like Giovanni Antonio Massani, had been a secretary to Agucchi and, under the influence of his Bolognese \textit{campanilismo}, had no doubt been inspired to gain possession of almost all of Annibale Carracci’s drawings for the Farnese Gallery.\textsuperscript{363} The \textit{museo} also significantly attracted both Bolognese and French painters who, in conjunction with this circle of antiquarians, had a profound influence upon Bellori. Bellori, in turn, came to maturity within this same context.\textsuperscript{364}

At face value, the Sienese physician Giulio Mancini’s \textit{Considerazioni sulla Pittura} appears to be amongst the most convincing early arguments for a perceived autonomous reform – or at least independent stylistic expression - of painting by the Carracci in Rome. This is seen in the author’s conceived four tracts of painting in the city, defined by Caravaggio, the Carracci and Cavalier d’Arpino; with a final fourth category amalgamating all other artists whom Mancini describes as having no stylistic continuity to delineate them in terms of a school.\textsuperscript{365} Those mentioned in the fourth category include, Giovanni Baglione, Ludovico Cigoli and Domenico Passignano.

However, Mancini’s divisions, based on a categorisation of stylistic continuity, starts to break down at closer examination. Giuseppe Cesari cannot be called a

\textsuperscript{362} On the subject of the still unsatisfactory picture we have of antiquarian communities in Rome, see Louis Marchesano, “Antiquarian Modes and Methods: Bellori and Filippo Buonarroti the Younger” in \textit{Art History in the Age of Bellori} (Cambridge: 2002), p. 76.

\textsuperscript{363} Montanari’s introduction to \textit{Bellori’s Lives} (Cambridge: 2005), pp. 5-6.

\textsuperscript{364} Ibid, p. 5.

painter whose career embodied stylistic continuity any more than Baglione.366 Rather, the success of both artists, rested upon their ability to evolve and adapt to changes in painting - especially between 1590 and c.1600. By contrast, Ludovico Cigoli and Domenico Passignano on coming to Rome - along with the Sienese reformers - were the least altered stylistically from their Barocci inspired agenda.367 Why then did Mancini, in terms that would inspire Bellori later, reduce the Roman art world down to such a narrow and simplistic form of categorisation?368

As noted by Denis Mahon - much as we have seen with Malvasia - Mancini was just as culturally defined by *campanilismo*.369 This is evident in the way the Sienese physician and art collector took every opportunity to accuse Vasari of inaccuracy; born out of his anger for Vasari’s own Florentine-centric account of Italian art history.370 The general antagonism that the first publication of the *Lives* caused within regions outside of Tuscany would have only been further galvanised by the aforementioned cultural presence of once pro-Republican Florentine, expatriate intellectuals – the *fuorusciti* - scattered throughout the towns and cities of the Italian peninsula, and their artistic ‘privilege and primacy’ under Florentine

366 The most important fresco commission unveiled in the Jubilee year of 1600 was Giuseppe Cesari’s *Ascension* for the transept of Saint John Lateran. The fresco is most certainly defined stylistically as much by reform as the Farnese Gallery unveiled a year later. While Bellori aesthetically frames Cesari according to the work of his earlier career, Mancini gives the entirely contradictory - yet more accurate statement - in relation to Cesari’s placement within his four tracts of painting, in noting that Cesari’s ‘fame began under Gregory XIII and so he seems to belong to more than one period, making it uncertain where he should be placed’ (italics added). Mancini’s *Considerations on Painting*, trans. (1972), p. 149. Furthermore, Annibale’s antagonism towards Cesari was born largely from the assistance he gave to the career of Guido Reni. I would argue that this was apocryphally altered over the seventeenth century to imply an antagonism born of stylistic differences.

367 Annibale and Agostino, as we have shown, by contrast moved away from a singularly Barocci inspired reformism, reinterpreting and amalgamating the “classical” reformism of Santi di Tito, as seen in the work of Scipione Pulzone and Durante Alberti.

368 Denis Mahon states, ‘There can however be no question of… [Bellori’s] knowledge of Mancini’s work… abundant evidence that Bellori had a Mancini manuscript in his hands is to be found in the *pastille* which he added to a copy of Baglione’s *Vite*; facts and stories from Mancini’s *Parte Seconda* are to be found in many of these, and in several instances Mancini’s text is virtually reproduced ad verbatim by Bellori.’ See Mahon, *Studies in Seicento Art and Theory* (Westport: 1971) originally published in 1947, p. 316-7.

369 See ibid, pp. 33-5 and 327-329.

370 pp. 327-329.
Popes, such as Clement VIII, on coming to power in 1592. Thus, I believe, there are good reasons to see Mancini as another author who would happily discount the influences of contemporary Florentine painting within Italy’s cultural capital.

Strangely, Mancini did not emphasise his Siennese-Tuscan countrymen’s influence on the so-called dominant four groups around c.1600. Given that the Barocci-inspired Siennese reformers, Ventura Salimbeni and Francesco Vanni, were, in fact, among the very first artists to have embodied the Barocci mode of reform in the late 1580s and 90s in both Sienna and Rome - inspired as they were by the immense success of the Urbino artist’s Visitazione of 1586. Vanni’s later career in Rome had seen him awarded a knighthood and the large sum of 800 scudi for his Fall of Simon Magus (fig. 110), an altarpiece painted on slate, as part of the series of works on the life of Saint Peter, commissioned in 1603 for St. Peters Basilica - for which, as we have seen, Cigoli and Passignano were richly rewarded. One explanation for this is the later time frame in which the Considerazioni developed within its many versions between 1617 and 1621. This was a period in which the careers of Lanfranco and Domenichino were on the rise in the city. Furthermore, as Denis Mahon significantly noted, it is only within the later editions of Mancini’s text – in


372 As Maria Cristina Terzaghi notes, ‘The artistic situation in Rome during the early 1590s appears to have been very fluid. Given Federico Zuccaro’s absence in Spain and the fact that Giuseppe Cesari’s fame was not yet established, the Barocci style found fertile ground to take root. This accounts not only for Barocci’s canvases in Rome but also the presence of artists like Francesco Vanni from Sienna, the stepbrother of Ventura Salimbeni... keen followers of Barocci and the favourite of Cardinal Paolo Emilio Sfondrati.’ Terzaghi, “Rome Seen from Milan, Rereading the Debuts of Painters from Lombardy and Piedmont in Rome” in Caravaggio’s Rome, Essays (Torino: 2012), p. 190.


374 Complicating matters further for scholars, Mancini actually continued to make additions and alterations to the text until his death in 1630.

keeping with the period in which the Bolognese ascent was more secured – that he felt, ‘inclined to rate the Carracci school as the best.’

As a leading individual of the same antiquarian circle as Angeloni, Vincenzo Giustiniani in his Discorso sopra la Pittura written around c.1620, likewise places Caravaggio and the Bolognese painters in the highest of graded styles. Corresponding to Mancini, Vincenzo’s categorisation does not sit well as a coherent stylistic system of classification. For example, he judges Rubens as being largely an empirical painter, and Barocci and his Roman followers as masters of style without adequate naturalism. Just as strangely, Caravaggio, along with the Bolognese painters, is placed ahead of all other artists, being peculiarly singled out as more adequately balancing naturalism with style and invention!? Vincenzo’s likely agenda is of more significance here than the incoherence of his hierarchy of classification. I believe Caravaggio’s studied naturalism was, no doubt, appropriated as a reflection upon the emergence of a more rigorous empiricism within antiquarian circles; much as Annibale’s Roman-style classicism was seen as definitive of antiquarianism proper. Bellori’s early appreciation for Caravaggio mirrored this sentiment, exemplified in his marginal notes to Baglione’s life of the artist, in which he praises his skill of imitation, described as so lacking in his contemporaries.

Thus, Vincenzo likewise, equated his contemporary patronage of Caravaggio and the Bolognese artists with recent moves towards a more systematic analysis of the

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376 Quoting Denis Mahon’s analysis of Mancini in his Studies in Seicento Art and Theory (Westport: 1977 - originally published by the Warburg Institute), 1947, p. 37. This is reiterated in the most recent Mancini scholarship, with Frances Gage noting his interest in collecting drawings by Annibale Carracci in the mid-1590s, but that it is much ‘later that he would come to admire [him] above that of any other artist of recent memory (italics added).’ See, Gage, Painting as Medicine in Early Modern Rome: Giulio Mancini and the Efficacy of Art (Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2016), p. 25.


378 Bellori wrote in the margin of his copy of Baglione, ‘Caravaggio is worthy of great praise, for he alone set himself to imitating nature, contrary to the practice of all others, who imitated artists.’ See footnote 201 to Montanari’s introduction to Bellori’s Lives. It should be noted that Giovanni Previtali rejected the claim that these marginal notes were to be attributed to Bellori. Yet as Montanari notes, similar sentiments are expressed by Bellori in his “Life of Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio” Ibid, p. 184. This is also later evident in another highly significant patron of the arts associated with the circle of Angeloni, Cardinal Camillo Massimo. Massimo, on the one hand favoured Bolognese and French artists whose work was heavily antiquarian in derivation and on the other, the naturalism of the painter Velázquez. See Beaven, An Ardent Patron: Cardinal Camillo Massimo and his antiquarian and artistic circle (London: 2010).
antiquarian past, exemplified in the publication of his sculptural collection, the *Galleria Gustiniani*.379

Progressing to the very early 1640s; the myth of the Carracci reform, first propagated in Rome by Agucchi, became an inspiration for an artistic revival of “classical” reformism defined by Annibale’s late Roman style.380 In part, this move can be seen as a reaction away from the dominance of the “High Baroque” and its most prominent manifestation in the Palazzo Barberini ceiling of Pietro Cortona, painted between 1633 and 1639 (fig. 111).381 Yet, as previously noted, the so-called “baroque strand” of Roman art predated the Bolognese painters in the Barocci-reformism that evolved throughout the 1590s, following the artist’s 1586 *Visitation*. Thus, even granted the inspiration gained from the grand manifestation of *trompe l’oeil* in Annibale’s Farnese ceiling (fig. 76),382 Bolognese painters in Rome, were in part only continuing a sensual aesthetic trend that had come to prominence in the last decade of the sixteenth century - via Barocci and the many artists working in the city - who were at different stylistic levels - indebted to him.

Elizabeth Cropper, in her 1984 monograph, *The Ideal of Painting: Pietro Testa’s Düsseldorf Notebook*, gave some attention to this renewed interest in Annibale.383 However, there has not been an adequate correlative analysis of the Florentine “classical” renewal, which occurred at precisely the same time, in relation to its reformist source, with an equally resurgent interest in the art of Santi di Tito.384


382 Even the *trompe l’oeil* of the Farnese Ceiling was not original at the time, certainly finding inspiration in the contemporaneous *Sala Clementina* in the Vatican, started a year earlier than the Gallery by the brothers Giovanni and Cherubino Alberti. See Morton C. Abramson, “Clement VIII’S Patronage of the Brothers Alberti” in *The Art Bulletin*, Vol. 60, No. 3 (Sep., 1978), p. 535


384 Eva Struhal states, ‘While usually we associate discontent about the state of the arts and efforts towards their reform with another cultural context – Rome during the 1640s and 1650s and the opposition of Italian
Moreover, the reaction that greeted Pietro Cortona’s ceiling frescoes for the Pitti Palace (fig. 112) - painted in Florence during the years following the Barberini ceiling - mirrored the kind of division that surfaced in Rome in response to the sensualist stylistic hegemony of Cortona.385

The mid-century Florentine artist, Lorenzo Lippi, led the response against this sensualist strain of reformist derived painting in favour of what he perceived as the genuine Florentine ‘classical’ tradition of Santi di Tito and Jacopo da Empoli. Lippi’s c.1640 conversion to a classicist, stylistic mode of art was aimed, much like his Roman contemporaries, at addressing the aesthetic bifurcation of peripatetic aesthetic discourse in Florence, as well as throughout the Italian peninsula more broadly.386 In a discussion with his close friend, Salvator Rosa, Lippi stated that the art of Italy had once again entered a decline in abandoning the classical purity of Santi.387 Thus, even when the late Roman style of Annibale begins to develop a greater autonomous aesthetic momentum in the early 1640s, as Elizabeth Cropper states, with the artist gaining the prestige of time and the emulative conception of an “Old Master”, in Florence much the same heroic reformist status was simultaneously being propagated in relation to Santi. Baldinucci, in his life of Lippi, recounts the pseudo-historical account of the artist passing through Parma, where supposedly he

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385 The artistic debate between Andrea Sacchi and Pietro Cortona and its embodiment of the two stylistic modes of painting has been covered thoroughly by others, so I see no necessity to address it in any detail here, see for example, Elizabeth Cropper, The Ideal of Painting (Princeton: 1984), p. 24. For Lippi on Cortona see, Claudio Pizzorusso, “Lorenzo Lippi e la “tradizione dell’ordinario” in Puro, Semplice e Naturale: nell’arte e Firenze tra Cinque e Seicento (Firenze: Giunti, 2014), p.59.


387 See Struhal, pp. 48-9. Rosa uses a witty rebuttal to Lippi’s preference for Santi, contrasting the artist with the greater monetary success of Tintoretto in the contemporary art market. In addition it must be noted that Carlo Ridolfi’s promotion of Tintoretto also began in the early 1640s, with his 1642 life of the artist La vita di Giacopo Robusti. Rosa is thus defending the contrasting Florentine tastes for sensual Venetian painting done alla macchia - that is with “stains” and wild strokes, in a style that was the complete antithesis of Lippi’s. Ibid, p. 48. However, Struhal also suggests that Rosa’s own late narrative paintings gained their conceptual grounding in the prior intellectual environment he had been engaged in with Lippi in Florence, rather than later in Rome. See, p. 53.
did not bother seeing the frescos of Correggio, and stating that there was nothing for him to learn there.\textsuperscript{388} This is comparable to Pietro Testa’s ‘classical’ rejection of the sensual, clouded firmament of Correggio’s dome (fig. 113). Where Giovanni Battista Passeri\textsuperscript{389} records him as saying ‘that it was a very serious mistake to surround the Throne of the Trinity and the Home of the Blessed with clouds. For such places were havens of peace and everlasting serenity, and clouds only made them turbulent and dark.’\textsuperscript{390} As Francis Haskell rightly noted, this was ‘a direct attack on the whole baroque tradition.’\textsuperscript{391} Significantly, this attack and the classical renewal were clearly broader than both the geographical and artistic scope of either Rome or the Bolognese school.

The historical grounds for why a far greater degree of attention has been given to Annibale’s Roman style, rather than Santi’s, lies both with the reputation the Roman antiquarian circle of Angeloni and Bellori gained over the seventeenth century and to the rise of another classical movement that also emerged in the early 1640s amongst French painters in what has been termed, by Jacques Thullier, \textit{French Atticism}.\textsuperscript{392} As Cropper notes:

\begin{quote}
[Pietro] Testa was not alone in his rediscovery or reaffirmation of Annibale’s mastery... French artists in particular studied and copied the [Farnese] ceiling in these years. Pierre Mignard made his copies of the frescoes in 1644, some few years after his brother Nicolas had recorded some of the designs in prints. All these activities point[ed]
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{388} Pizzorusso in \textit{Puro, Semplice e Naturale} (Firenze: 2014), p. 60.

\textsuperscript{389} Passeri was a painter and pupil of Domenichino, he also wrote \textit{Lives of the painters, sculptors, and architects who practiced in Rome, and died between 1641 and 1673}, published in 1773.


\textsuperscript{391} Ibid.

to the new myth that was being woven around the figure of Annibale Carracci in the 1640s.\textsuperscript{393}

Cropper follows this by citing Massani, in his preface to the 1646 \textit{Diverse figure} that mirrors Malvasia’s c.1670s retrospective analysis of the Carracci’s fame quoted above, ‘the more time passes and sets the death of the artist at a greater distance, \textit{and as the number of good cognoscenti increases, so the more clearly is his virtue perceived, and the more famous his name becomes.’\textsuperscript{394} The \textit{cognoscenti} in question are the Roman antiquarian circle from which Massani himself comes - thus in this passage we further have evidence about who is shaping the Carracci myth. Moreover, Massani would have taken additional inspiration from the publishing of Francesco Angeloni’s \textit{Historia Augusta} in 1641, in which he followed Agucchi in praising the Carracci as the restorers of painting.\textsuperscript{395}

A symbiotic relationship, which was connected to overarching political forces, was formed between the French artists in Rome and the antiquarian circle of Angeloni and Bellori. Towards the end of Louis XIII’s reign, the first minister to the king, Cardinal Richelieu, mounted, as Gail Davidson states, an ‘artistic revolution, paralleling his political goals that sought to establish France’s cultural supremacy in Europe.’\textsuperscript{396} The \textit{soft power} agenda of Richelieu, aimed to ‘strip Italy of her role as the dominant cultural paradigm by importing the Italian artistic heritage to France and recasting it in a French mold.’\textsuperscript{397} Thus, the desire for Roman antiquarians to associate contemporary artists like Annibale Carracci with Italy’s ancient past, and the interest

\textsuperscript{393} Cropper, \textit{The Ideal of Painting} (Princeton: 1984), p. 57.

\textsuperscript{394} Cropper, \textit{The Ideal of Painting} (Princeton: 1984), p. 58 (italics added), ‘che quanto piú il tempo si è andato, e si vã allungando doppo la morte dell’Artefice, e moltipica il numero de’ buoni conoscitori; tanto piú si rende cospicua la virtu di lui, e maggiormente ne viene il suo nome celebrato.’


\textsuperscript{397} Ibid.
of French artists in this appropriation, entirely suited the aims of Richelieu. Moreover, France’s leading painter in Rome, Nicolas Poussin, was no less a part of this aesthetic phenomenon. He was, then, creating his ‘severe classical manner’, first embodied in his 1641 *Institution of the Eucharist* (fig. 114) which was painted during his stay in Paris. This was followed by his second set of Sacraments, whose ‘monumental figures in sculptural draperies disposed in an austere symmetrical arrangement, [in] shallow space and emphatic gestures’ looks, not only, to Bolognese ‘classicism’ but, as I have argued, further back to the rhetorical gestures and frontal figures inherent in the ‘classicism’ of Scipione Pulzone and Santi di Tito.

In addition, Poussin’s *Sacraments* shared with Pulzone and other late sixteenth century Roman ‘classicists’ a strong contemporary adaptation of early Christian imagery. For example, Pulzone and Valeriano had made derivative versions of the early Byzantine icon of the Madonna and Child, the *Salus Populi Romani* (fig. 115), said to have been painted directly from life by St. Luke. In the same tradition of making early Christian sources imminent in the present, from the 1640s onwards Poussin drew upon a plethora of paleo-Christian, early Byzantine and antique sources with ever greater rigour. In one example, a preliminary drawing for his second version of *Ordination* (fig. 116), Poussin borrowed the image of Christ handing the *rotulus* to St. Peter from an engraving of the *Traditio legis* sarcophagus found in the Oratorian scholar Antonio Bosio’s study of early Christian art, the *Roma Sotterranea* (fig. 117).

In 1642, *Le Vite de’ Pittori, scultori, architetti, ed Intagliatori dal Pontificato di Gregorio XIII del 1572. fino a’ tempi de Papa Urbano VIII. nel 1642*, written by one of the most influential artists of early seventeenth century Rome, was published. The *Lives* were divided up according to artists who had worked in Rome under the pontificates

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398 p. 47.
400 See Tony Green, *Nicolas Poussin Paints the Seven Sacraments Twice* (Lancaster: Gazelle, 2000).
of the Popes of the later sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. Baglione is the only non-antiquarian / cognoscente source for the Carracci reform. In relation to Annibale, he states ‘that the disegno and colore to which Michelangelo and Raphael had given birth, appeared languid, and was in part brought down by the time when the Carracci fortuitously revived it for the glory of our century.’ Maryvelma Smith O’Neil, in her monograph on the artist, has remarked that Baglione appears ‘notably reluctant to categorically state that it had been in complete decline.’ This reluctance is, I believe, only one reason why the text cannot be taken at face value. Its awkward setting within the broader context of Baglione’s Lives also needs to be accounted for. The length of Baglione’s life of Annibale is equal to that of the most prominent artists in Rome working during this period: Girolamo Muziano, Federico Barocci, Federico Zuccaro, Giovanni and Cherubino Alberti, Caravaggio, Orazio Borgiani, Domenichino, and Cavalier d’Arpino. Thus, despite Baglione’s acknowledged avoidance of art criticism and his “guide book approach” to biographical art history, a fairly close continuity exists in this list between the artists who reformed or altered painting in the mid-to-late sixteenth century and their prominence in Baglione’s Lives up until 1642. Moreover, if Baglione gave any real accent to painting being ‘languid’ prior to the Carracci’s arrival in Rome, then, for example, his praise, in the Lives, for how the Barocci-inspired painter Andrea Lilio had most completely assimilated the famed artist’s colore prior to the late 1590s makes little sense.

The motivation for Baglione’s impromptu remark about the Carracci, I believe, likely has everything to do with two individuals significantly connected to the antiquarian milieu of the Museo Angeloni - Angeloni’s adopted nephew, or son Bellori and ‘a highly respected member of [his] circle’, the literary poet, Ottavio

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403 Ibid.


Tronsarelli. Only a year prior to the publication of the Lives, Tronsarelli ‘had been enlisted for his competence as an antiquarian to evaluate Angeloni’s L’Historia Augusta for the Vatican censors.’ The Lives themselves also opened with a Latin elegy to Baglione by Tonsarelli, followed by Bellori’s canzone, "Alla pittura." Both Tronsarelli and Bellori appear to have had, in the early 1640s, somewhat similar perspectives on the evolution of art to those of Mancini and Guistiniani before them. That is, the Carracci and their school are portrayed as being at the pinnacle of painting; yet, in keeping with earlier antiquarian authors, this does not constitute their hegemony over the scope of other artistic achievements in late sixteenth-seventeenth-century Rome. Tronsarelli had, himself, composed and published ekphrastic poems to works – in addition to the Carracci trained painters, Giovanni Valesio and Domenichino - for Cavalier d’Arpino and Giovanni Antonio Lelli, a pupil of Cigoli. Likewise, Bellori’s canzone mirrored the praise of the earlier antiquarian writers, lauding Annibale and Caravaggio as the successors to Raphael and the High Renaissance and giving away his ‘classicist’ bias with the addition of Domenichino. Yet at this time, like Mancini and Guistiniani’s broad accounts, Bellori positively cites the other painters noted by Baglione for their significance.

Baglione’s Lives were immensely successful. Notwithstanding, between Bellori having penned the canzone in his twenty-fourth year and his thirtieth, a major change in perspective had come over the author. As Bellori wrote in the margin to his copy of the Lives:

Annibale Carracci was the restorer of painting, which had already died out and vanished in his life time, and since Raphael the world had not seen a greater painter than him, who may be compared to him in many things, because Raphael too restored painting to

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407 Ibid.
408 184
beautiful truth, just as Annibale Carracci did. Therefore Baglione wronged him by writing so little about him, and including him in the number of so many daubers.409

It has been suggested that Bellori’s outburst was due to him not having read Baglione’s text prior to publication. This seems an unsubstantial argument to me considering that, as mentioned, Bellori had earlier praised Baglione’s eclectic group of the most notable artists who were given substantial biographies in the Lives.410 Furthermore, Bellori asserted that Baglione’s Lives lacked artistic judgment because he had rushed them along in the space of four years as ‘a vendetta against [the painter] Gaspare Celio in whose Chiesa di Roma Baglione was never mentioned.’411 No matter the degree of animosity between the painters, evidence rather suggests that Baglione had been compiling the Lives as far back as the 1620s.412 Bellori was also unfair in the way he passed over Baglione’s aim in writing the Lives. As Baglione had himself prefaced, ‘I write biographies of artists, and I am not their judge.’413 His was a broad art appreciation of Rome rather than an aesthetic ‘certainty of judgement’ - or art theoretical analysis.414 Furthermore, evidence points towards Tronsarelli - perhaps along with Bellori himself - pressuring Baglione to publish the Lives, with

409 Cited in Montanari’s introduction to Bellori’s Lives p. 16.


411 Cited by O’Neil, p. 183.

412 The resources such an influential figure of the Roman art world had at his disposal are outlined by Maryvelma Smith O’Neil in her monograph, ‘As one of the most distinguished figures in the Academy of St Luke for five decades and a member of the exclusive Pontifical Academy of the Virtuosi at the Pantheon since 1600, Baglione was well positioned to avail himself of a rich fund of documents from these corporative institutions that has since been almost completely destroyed or, in the case of the latter, completely inaccessible to research. In some instances the exact correspondence between his remarks and the avissi sent by correspondents in Rome indicates that he had recourse to manuscripts now in the Vatican Library. Given his considerable stature as a Cavalier di Cristo, it is likely that he would have been afforded access to parochial records of sacramental life known as the Stati d’Anne.’ See O’Neil, Giovanni Baglione (Cambridge: 2002), p. 189.

413 185.

414 Ibid.
the intention of imputing their own agendas of promoting the antiquarian interest in Annibale Carracci into the *Lives* – O’Neil even suggesting that Tronsarelli had asserted ‘Baglione... cast himself as a latter day Vasari’ – an appropriation that O’Neil acknowledges would have conflicted with the candidly summarised approach Baglione had adopted.\textsuperscript{415}

The bringing together of French interests in Roman antiquity with antiquarian culture, that had developed into a significant hub in the gatherings at the household of Angeloni, were the driving forces in the change that had occurred in Bellori’s artistic perspective. As a member of Angeloni’s house, he had become close friends with French painters such as Charles Errard, François Perrier and Nicolas Poussin – the latter of whom Bellori met at least every three days.\textsuperscript{416} As a young man, Bellori had also been ‘a pupil of Domenico Zampieri’\textsuperscript{417} and had formed a strong friendship with another student, Giovan Angelo Canini.\textsuperscript{418} Poussin was also associated with Domenichino, attending his studio to draw from the life model when he first came to Rome.\textsuperscript{419} Following Domenichino’s move to Naples, Bellori then went to study with Poussin.\textsuperscript{420} As Giovanna Perini has rightly stated, ‘How odd for young Bellori to attend the workshop of a Frenchman, Poussin, when Rome was swarming with Italian artists of talent!’\textsuperscript{421} Furthermore, it was Poussin who, via the French collector Paul Fréart de Chantelou, managed to secure the dedication of Angeloni’s *Historia Augusta* to the king of France.\textsuperscript{422}

\textsuperscript{415} 189.

\textsuperscript{416} Janis Bell, in the Introduction to *Art History in the Age of Bellori*, (Cambridge: 2002), p. 4.

\textsuperscript{417} According to a marginal note by Padre Resta in Baglione’s *Lives*: Baglione 1935, p. 15.


\textsuperscript{419} Ibid, “Life of Poussin” p. 311.

\textsuperscript{420} Ibid, pp. 6 and 8.


\textsuperscript{422} Ibid.
Three years after the publication of Baglione’s *Lives*, Bellori produced his first antiquarian work with the French painter, François Perrier.\(^{423}\) It was, in truth, the first collaborative monograph between an antiquarian and an artist in western history; consisting of a collection of fifty engraved prints of ancient bas-reliefs with captions by Bellori, published in Paris in 1645.\(^{424}\) Thus, critically, the cultural momentum within this subculture was evolving to be ever more collectively symbiotic. Furthermore, with such a tight-knit collaborative identity came an aesthetic narrowing and rejection of anything that did not reflect the same antiquarian ideals advocated by Bellori and his circle. This was evident in the subject matter of predominantly French painters, studying in Rome in the antiquarian orbit, who produced a much higher percentage of strictly classically derived works. By contrast, Annibale and his ‘classical’ Roman pupils – with the marked exception of Francesco Albani – produced few mythological subjects comparable to their religious output. Yet, the breadth of Annibale’s ceiling and the antiquarian context in which it was set, in relation to the Farnese collection, made it possible to ignore any discrepancies in the antiquarian appropriation of the Carracci and the Bolognese.

It was for these reasons that Bellori and a percentage of Rome’s antiquarians came later to reject Baglione’s eclectic narrative of art history, reframing the past to suit the continuity they wished to see as alive in their own time - between an antiquarian conception of ancient Rome and contemporary artistic culture. Furthermore, as the centre of European power moved to France, in an effort to preserve Italy’s cultural hegemony, it became critical to present both a seamless narrative of Italian art and to assure Francophile patronage; to be perceived as being both its owners and its guardians.\(^{425}\)

Bellori’s ability to sway cultural perceptions to favour the evolving Roman antiquarian art historical narrative among artists themselves, is evident in his appointment as secretary to the Academy of St Luke in 1652, ‘as well as the following


\(^{424}\) Ibid.

year, and many other times thereafter. In the 1650s, he also worked on two illustrative projects, one dedicated to Raphael’s Stanze and the other to Annibale’s Farnese Ceiling. The association he sought to emphasise between the works of two painters, produced by the same author, would have been furthered, as Tomaso Montanari describes, ‘Owing to… Bellori [taking] the antiquarian’s interpretative and editorial typology – that of a book employing both a text and some engraved images to illustrate a monument – and apply[ing] it to modern art.’ Thus, this novel approach to the presentation of contemporary art, furnished in the associative format of an antiquarian text, again established a desired continuity between the ancient past and the present.

In 1664, Bellori delivered his famous discourse, L’Idea, to the Academia di San Luca, in the same year that his close friend Carlo Marratta - who was growing in influence both in Europe and as a contender in Rome to Gian Lorenzo Bernini - became its director. Maratta was an artist in direct lineage to Annibale’s Roman ‘classicism’ via his teacher Andrea Saachi who had been trained by Albani and was likewise a by-product of the Roman antiquarian culture of the seventeenth-century. In 1667, Bellori was appointed head rector of the Academy and attempted to restore the theoretical lectures that Federico Zuccaro had instigated, but along the aforementioned parameters of the seventeenth century Roman antiquarian aesthetic.

When Louis XIV came to power in 1661, he and his minister Colbert fervently sought to continue the soft power approach to culture begun by Richelieu, deciding to found a French Academy in Rome in the same year - with Bellori’s friend, the artist Charles Errard, appointed its director. As Montanari states, following the subsequent rejection of Bernini’s plans for the Louvre in 1665, ‘there had been a shift

427 Ibid. This association had been propagated a few years earlier in 1650, when Bellori first made the suggestion of a joint tomb dedicated to both Raphael and Annibale in the Pantheon.
428 p. 25.
429 p. 11.
from the idea of imitating Rome to one of the primacy of Paris, which no longer required a model.\textsuperscript{430}

Thus, I believe Bernini’s favourable mention of both Annibale Carracci and Nicolas Poussin on his visit to Paris, as recorded by Chantelou, was significantly designed to align the sculptor with the Roman antiquarian artistic narrative that had come to dominate the Académie royale de peinture et de sculpture through its founding members whose own conception of the arts had been so greatly defined by the circle of Angeloni and Bellori.\textsuperscript{431} This is not to assume any outright insincerity in the analysis Bernini gave of the two artists but rather to bridge any perceived antagonism towards his more sensualist approach from that of the “Atticists.” Thus, Bernini’s thorough analysis of Poussin’s Second set of Sacraments can be read as openness on his part to stylistic modes of art different from his own. Yet, even more importantly, it is as an endorsement of the revived interest in Annibale Carracci and the ‘classical’ reformism that had reacted against its sensual cousin which had previously dominated the arts in Rome from the 1590s until the 1640s.\textsuperscript{432} Indeed, Poussin’s second Sacraments were the first cycle of paintings, begun in the early 1640s, made precisely as an embodiment of this revived Santi di Tito ‘classicism.’ Furthermore, during his visit to Paris, Bernini presented himself as Poussin’s vindicator to the French when, as early as the 1620s, he defended the artist’s Saint Erasmus altarpiece in St Peter’s Basilica against Guido Reni’s likely criticism of the work to Urban VIII (fig. 118).\textsuperscript{433} This may be all the more significant as Reni had been a leading painter under the previous Bolognese Pope Gregory XV, whereas Bernini had the hegemony under the following Pope, Urban VIII. Bernini knew that the

\textsuperscript{430} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{431} In this view I am giving further context to a perspective that has already been acknowledged by scholars, as Tony Green writes, ‘It is impossible to know how much of Bernini’s favourable commentary on Poussin’s paintings and on the Sacraments in particular, was aimed at gratifying his host. Bernini needed to retain Chantelou’s support for the Louvre project, which was about to be wrestled from powerful Parisian artists [French Atticists], as [Jacque] Thuillier noted.’ Green, Nicolas Poussin Paints the Seven Sacraments Twice (Paravil: 1988), p. 351.

\textsuperscript{432} Tony Green gives an excellent analysis of Bernini’s viewing of the Sacraments. Ibid, pp. 355-363.

\textsuperscript{433} p. 352.
French had, through the campaign of the Roman Antiquarian circle of Angeloni / Bellori, come to view the Bolognese painters as synonymous with antiquity. It was, then, perhaps clever of him to demonstrate an example in which he stood in opposition to both a Bolognese Pope and the sensual Bolognese artist Guido Reni – an artist Annibale had come to despise for his success - in order to defend a painter whose work exemplified the classical reformism the French had come to favour.434

Bernini’s praise for Annibale Carracci, likewise, cannot be seen merely at face value. Though a young protégé, he was only eleven years old when the former painter died.435 Thus, any remarks made by Annibale to him, as recounted by Bernini while visiting Paris, were from the early part of his childhood.436 Likewise, suggestions by Annibale to learn all the positions of the human figure by repetitiously copying Michelangelo’s Last Judgment were not profoundly original and merely bore witness to the kind of advice older artists in Rome might have given to any young pupil throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.437 Rather, Bernini was likely aiming to curry favour by associating himself with Annibale as an inspiration for French Atticism, as for example in his account of Annibale’s suggestion that St. Peter’s needed a significant feature under both the dome and at the far end of the nave.438 This is not to deny that Annibale was a significant reformist painter from whom Bernini would have gained inspiration but rather, to acknowledge that Bernini’s own tendencies towards a non-‘classical’ theatrical

436 Roman parish records have shown that Annibale and Bernini lived in close proximity to one another.

Bernini goes on to recount Cigoli’s criticism of the practice of drawing from the fresco, due to the exaggerated musculature of the figures. He would have been well aware that this was likewise a view shared by the French Atticists and many artists in contact with the antiquarians in Rome. See for example, chapter one, “Vincenzo Giustiniani: The Greek Style, the Exquisite Taste, and the Prehistory of Neoclassicism” in Cropper and Dempsey, Nicolas Poussin (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996).

extravagance took inspiration from the same lineage as the painters who had developed French Atticism.

It is within this context of aiming to gain favour in the light of French Atticism that we can, likewise, see the agenda of Bellori’s *Lives* in omitting Bernini. We have seen that Bernini used the example of his artistic hegemony under a Florentine Pope, Urban VIII, to demonstrate that the ‘classicism’ favoured by the French could still receive significant support. In marked contrast, I have sought to show that all the sources connected to the antiquarian circle of Angeloni tended to look for either non-Florentine or, more specifically, Roman precedents for the contemporary heritage of artistic reform. This Florentine antagonism had emerged a century earlier as a result of depictions of that city in Vasari’s *Lives* as culturally hegemonic; and in the enmity – as well as favour – that the earlier and still-active descendents of the intellectual circles of Florentine *fuoriusciti*, scattered throughout the major Italian centres after the defeat of the short-lived Republican government of 1529-30, provoked.\(^{439}\) Both Leatrice Mendelsohn and Eric Cochrane described the exiles as having the dual effect of breaking down Italian cultural regionalism while, at the same time, inflaming it by their presence in Rome and elsewhere as the *other*.\(^{440}\)

This context must still be taken into account when considering Bellori’s *Lives*. I would argue, like other art historical authors, that the work frames his reactive bias to both Vasari and the presence of Florentines within the Roman cultural sphere more broadly. When we look at who is omitted from Bellori’s narrative, they are almost all, without exception, artists connected to Florence. Bernini, though born in Naples, was from a Florentine family whose father had been an influential sculptor under Florentine patronage. Pietro da Cortona came from a town in the Grand Duchy of Tuscany and was, in turn, welcomed in Rome as the pupil of Andrea Commodi, a significant student of Cigoli.\(^{441}\) The originator of the “classical”


\(^{441}\) See Barbara Scherschel, *Agostino Ciampelli* diss., (Trier: Trier University, 1995).
reformist style itself, Santi di Tito, came from Borgo Sansepolcro in the Duchy of Tuscany, as did Durante Alberti and his relations, the Alberti brothers - who at the same time as Annibale but beginning earlier in 1596, prefigured the baroque quadratura of the Farnese ceiling in the Sala Clementina (fig. 119). Of the Florentine Reformers working in Rome, Cigoli is only superficially mentioned twice in Bellori’s Lives. In one instance, Bellori mentions a small collaborative work he undertook with Annibale (fig. 120) - which can easily be read as a form of deference to the painter of the Farnese ceiling. In the other, he disparages Cigoli’s work in the Pauline Chapel of Santa Maria Maggiore, the last great commission of his career (fig. 121). Of course, for Bellori’s narrative to remain coherent, this broader account of reform had to be silenced. The antiquarian circle of Rome had been so influential in forming the late style of Annibale and, in turn, of the French who had come to Rome – moreover Bellori’s own career and reputation had been nourished since childhood within this circle – making it entirely within his interest to promote a myth of reform that propagated a sense of collective, cultural self-identity. Angeloni, as secretary for a period of time to Agucchi, had absorbed the exclusively Bolognese narrative of reform to which the papal diplomat had given voice. This in turn had been reappropriated by Angeloni to make Annibale the source of Roman as well as


444 Perini in Art History in the Age of Bellori (Cambridge: 2002), pp. 56-7 and 60-2.

445 Angeloni had also been secretary to Cardinal Ippolito Aldobrandini. For both see, Montanari, Introduction to Giovan Pietro Bellori (Cambridge: 2005), p. 5.
Bolognese campanilismo. In both instances of the regional appropriation of Annibale, we have seen that this account was antipathetic to a Florentine cultural narrative.

The Roman artistic hegemony that Bellori would have wished for came in April 1670, with the election to the papal throne of Emilio Altieri as Pope Clement X. His appointment ended ‘the prodigious chain of Tuscan popes’\textsuperscript{446} : Urban VIII, Alexander VII and Clement IX. The new Pope belonged to an old Roman family, thus his election has been described by Montanari as inspiring amongst the Romans ‘a sense of belonging that was almost nationalistic.’\textsuperscript{447} Camillo Massimo, ‘that Francophile patron of the classicist lobby’\textsuperscript{448} and a prominent individual in Bellori’s antiquarian circle, from one of the oldest families in the city, was immediately made a Cardinal and just over a month later, Bellori himself was appointed commissioner of the antiquities of Rome and its environs.\textsuperscript{449}

It was thus in this context of renewed Roman campanilismo that Bellori’s Lives were aptly published in 1672. Italian art biography, from Vassari onwards, was a battle for local ownership of the historical narrative. Malvasia would later in 1678, express an anti-Florentine sentiment, partially as a result of becoming aware of Baldinucci’s efforts to produce a comprehensive Florentine update on Vasari’s Lives.\textsuperscript{450} On the same grounds, the Florentine ecclesiastic and jurist, Leonardo Dati, had written in 1646 to the Academy del Disegno proposing a continuation of Vasari’s Lives, stating:

\textsuperscript{446} Ibid, p. 11.
\textsuperscript{447} 11.


\textsuperscript{449} Beaven, p. 327.

I hear that in Venice and Bologna they have substantially realized this idea which I have just formulated. In Rome, Signor Giovanni Baglione already treated succinctly the works executed there between 1572 and 1642. Giorgio Vasari won a premier place for our city, which we will lose should his work be carried on by foreigners. 451

Dati died before he could realise this project, which was later taken up by Abbott Giovan Battista Brocchi, master of grammar and humanities to Francesco Maria de’ Medici. Brocchi had contacted the Genoese biographer, Raffaele Soprani, who, much like Malvasia on later hearing of Baldinucci’s project reticently passed on information - while at the same time being proactively spurred on to publish his own lives. When Brocchi subsequently died, the material of both men passed into the hands of Baldinucci. 452

Baldinucci’s Notizie began with the substantial financial backing, broad connections and administrative machine at the disposal of the cultured Cardinal Leopoldo de’ Medici. However, with the death of Leopoldo, Baldinucci was solely responsible for researching the work. This was made all the more thankless by Leopoldo’s nephew, Cosimo III’s total unwillingness to finance the project. 453 Worse, with Leopoldo’s death, Baldinucci now feared financial ruin having abandoned his earlier sources of income as a financial advisor to Florence’s aristocracy. 454

What is of interest here is the fact that had Leopoldo lived to see the Notizie published the covert acquiescence that Baldinucci ultimately ceded to those who promulgated the Annibale Carracci narrative of reform, would, almost certainly, not have been included. During Leopoldo’s life and after his death, Baldinucci came under fire both from Malvasia and then, later, from within Florence itself, for his

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453 pp. 55-69.

454 50 and 69.
account of art’s revival under Cimabue and Giotto. The Florentine, Ferdinando del Migliore, partially out of envy, went so far as to criticise Baldinucci for not being adequately patriotic in his account and argued that he should have rejected Vasari’s claim that Cimabue had first learnt painting from Greek foreigners. Migliore correctly noted that, contrary to Vasari’s account, the chapel of Saint Luke in Santa Maria Novella did not exist at the time of Cimabue’s alleged meeting of the Greek painters there.

It is, therefore, critical to consider, that had such a questioning of ‘the beginnings of art’ occurred prior to the publication of Bellori’s Lives we might well conclude that Bellori himself would have described modern art’s origins as differently as he did its “restoration.” In a letter to the Florentine librarian, Antonio Magliabechi, written in 1684 Bellori states:

I owe as much affection as anyone else for the immortally meritorious Lombard school. Florence and Tuscany, I have said, claim the beginnings of art and also the resurrection of letters... Signor Baldinucci has written very well on this score. However, other more apparent reasons lead us to test this against the evidence of the Lombard writers.

Bellori appears here to be only too willing to reassess a Florentine origin for the beginnings of the rebirth of art. Moreover, a decade prior, Bellori and Massimo had come to Rome’s cultural defence when Leopoldo had purchased statues from the Ludovisi collection in 1669, and had later removed the most prominent Roman sculptures in the Villa Medici to Florence. Leopoldo was also one of the most

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455 See Goldberg, chapter four “Filippo Baldinucci, Ferdinando del Migliore, and Giovanni Cinelli: Baldinucci and His Critics” in Ibid.


extensive collectors of antiquarian coins in Italy; thus, following his 1669 Ludovisi purchases, Massimo, as Beaven states, moved to intensify ‘his [own] collecting of ancient coins.’ This same political /cultural agenda partly lay behind Bellori’s 1672 publication about two coins within Massimo’s collection. Beaven has further stated that this ‘should be seen in the light of a fierce rivalry between Bellori and Massimo, on the one hand and the Medici court, on the other, to acquire and interpret the best Roman coins’ along with both the ancient and modern artistic heritage of Italy more broadly.

The aim of Baldinucci’s *Notizie*, undoubtedly designed within this context of competition for cultural hegemony in the Italian peninsula, was to reassert the Vasarian claim for Florence’s supremacy, but it died with Leopoldo. As a single individual campaigning in Florence, Baldinucci focused all his attention on defending the city’s claims against the many attacks - both from without and within - against the origins of art’s renewal with Giotto and Cimabue. His need for both money and patronage meant befriending the very antiquarians in Rome who were propagating the Carracci reform narrative. Thus, I believe we can rightly argue that, in light of his later circumstances, it was not expedient for Baldinucci to oppose the second, modern claim for art’s renewal at the same time as having to defend the former.

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460 Goldberg, pp. 39-42 and Beaven, p. 328.

461 Beaven, p. 328.

462 Goldberg, p. 183.

463 pp. 106-10 and 117.
Reappropriating Reform

Agucchi, Bellori, and the other Roman antiquarians in their circle, may have seen Federico Zuccaro as the exemplar for rewriting art history in their favour. Scholars have acknowledged that Romano Alberti’s, 1604, *Origine, et progresso dell’Academia del Disegno, de pittori, scultori, et architetti di Roma* served as a biased mouthpiece for Zuccaro’s agenda for the fledgling institution deliberately erasing Muziano as the source for its beginnings. Indeed, Bellori’s reform narrative, at the beginning of his life of Annibale, is hauntingly similar to Alberti’s account of the establishment of the Roman Academy:

...Painting, sculpture, and Architecture, which had-lacking the proper use and order of benefits and being judiciously practiced-declined...in excellence and dignity... Moved by this good zeal, and praiseworthy desire, united in large part by said painters, especially the most important ones, to reform the laws and statutes of the entire body of the profession, and all together [they] erected this Studio and Academy.

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465 Cited in Peter Lukehardt, “Introduction” *the Academy Seminars* (New Haven: 2009), p. 3. See Romano Alberti, *Origine, et progresso dell’Academia del Disegno, de pittori, scultori, et architetti di Roma* (Pavia: 1604; reprinted Bologna, 1978), p. 1: “Desiderando i Pittori di Roma erreggere uno studio, & Academia del Disegno, in aiuto, e in dirizzo de’ giovani studiosi, che nelle nobilissime professioni del Disegno, vogliono studiare Pittura, Scultura, & Architettura: essendo che già in gran parte si vedessero scadute esse nobilissime professioni, mancando il proprio uso, & ordine di bene, e sensatamente essercitarle, & in conseguenza l’eccellenza, e dignità di esse professioni. Mossi da questo buon zelo, & laudabile desio, uniti gran parte delli detti Pittori, & li più principali, à riformar gli ordini, & statute del corpo tutto della professione, & insieme erreggere esso studio, & Academia.” Bellori, in his introduction to the life of Annibale Carracci states, ‘...the art that from Cimabue to Giotto had advanced gradually over the long course of two hundred and fifty years, was soon seen to decline, and from a queen it became lowly and common... and artists abandoning the study of nature, corrupted art with the maniera, by which we mean the fantastic idea, based on artistic practice and not on imitation... I shall go further and say what will seem incredible to relate: there was not one painter to be found inside Italy... And so, when painting was reaching the end, the stars turned more favourably toward Italy, and it pleased God that in the city of Bologna, mistress of sciences and of studies, a most sublime genius should arise, and that
As Muziano was the ‘most important’ painter in Rome at the time, we can easily place him back in the narrative as a leading protagonist for these aims. Not only does Bellori seem to have borrowed the principles of a Roman reform of painting, in part, from the agenda of the Academy of Saint Luke, in his 1664 speech L’Idea, he further established himself as Zuccaro’s theoretical successor. Furthermore, like Zuccaro, he followed through on this with the establishment of formal lectures at the Academy. Finally, Bellori lionised Annibale as the new Raphael, both practically at the Pantheon and in his biographical account of the artist’s death, just as Federico Zuccaro had done for his brother Taddeo. As Mariah S. Loh notes, Annibale’s death appears in the biographical sources as a conflation of both Vasari’s account of Raphael and Taddeo Zuccaro’s deaths. Federico Zuccaro was the first individual to associate another artist, his brother Taddeo, both geographically and conceptually with Raphael. This is a strange association as Taddeo’s work largely mirrored the stylistic Mannerist trends established by Perino del Vaga and continued by Polidoro da Caravaggio. It was only towards the end of Taddeo’s career, from the time he decorated the Villa Farnese at Caprarola, that his work adopted the Raphaelesque style of his brother. Thus, Federico was refashioning his brother’s identity as a means of promoting his own moderate reformist and academic agenda; much as the antiquarian circle surrounding Angeloni would do with Annibale. Moreover, Bellori further reveals a similar practical refashioning of history when he states, regarding

with him art, fallen and nearly extinct, should rise again. This man was Annibale Carracci...’ Montanari, Bellori, (Cambridge: 2005), p. 71.

466 Bellori’s speech mirrored Zuccaro’s earlier Idea published in 1607.


Maratta’s inscription that he had placed at Raphael’s funeral monument, that his friend ‘was pleased to honor our style.’

Conclusion

In summary, Chapter One elucidated how the broadening social dissemination of art criticism, contingent upon the Italian literary criticism of the mid-sixteenth century, established a conceptual substructure for the emergence of Counter-Mannerism. Chapter Two advances the claim that the initial application of mid-sixteenth century art and literary criticism influenced the arts within the immediate scholastic vicinity of Padua and nearby Venice. The career and works of Battista Franco serve as a model to demonstrate the relationship of the paragone of Michelangelo and Raphael to the beginnings of a peripatetic, reformist, aesthetic identity. Chapter Two further demonstrates how innovations in mid-sixteenth-century literary criticism closely coincided with the dual developments in painting related to narrative action and setting, and argues for the likely origin of the later within the literary conclusions of the former. Chapter Three aims to address the stylistic benchmark that Girolamo Muziano established for subsequent reformist artists particularly in relation to some of the seminal later works of Annibale Carracci. This argument is integrated with the findings of contemporary scholarship associated with the period. Chapter Four demonstrates the deficiencies in Dempsey’s seminal monograph, Annibale Carracci and the Beginnings of Baroque Style, via an analysis of Malvasia’s “Life of the Carracci” from his Felsina pittrice: vite de pittori bolognesi. In this analysis, I establish the conceptual and stylistic contingency of the Carracci reformists to their Florentine contemporaries. Chapter Five visually demonstrates how the eclectic stylistic model of reform adopted across Italy by Counter-Mannerist artists was not, in any respect, unique to the Carracci. Chapter Six addresses the antiquarian claims placed upon Annibale’s Roman style within the context of the surviving written Seicento Carracci sources that perpetuated the reformist myth.

In conclusion, Annibale Carracci was not an exception in terms of his role in the reform of painting in the later sixteenth century. It was, rather, the way he and the other Carracci were appropriated by a seventeenth-century Roman antiquarian circle and, in turn, the founders of the French Academy that was unique. The earlier evolution of reform was either discredited - or minimised in the case of Barocci -
precisely because the circle of Angeloni and Bellori wished to commandeer and take control of the contemporary narrative of Italian art. This was due to the perceived threats to Rome’s cultural hegemony via a manifold of contending forces such as the cultural authority of Vasari’s Lives and contemporary Florentines intent on reinforcing Florence’s cultural position, the demise of Italy as a cultural power with the ascent of France, the rise in popularity of more intimate and naturalistic genre scenes undertaken by Northern painters known as the Bamboccianti.471 Yet, attempts by Bellori’s Roman antiquarian circle to preserve Rome’s cultural hegemony were, in part, a failure. Italy became to France and Europe, it might be said, what ancient Greece had been to the Roman Empire: the traditional centre of cultural identity without any of the accompanying authority or hegemonic stylistic power. However, success was more assured on the conceptual front with the academic system of art education largely affirming the Bellorian narrative of the Carracci, a narrative that persisted until the emergence of Romanticism in the nineteenth-century.

I have sought to apply the premise of Elizabeth Cropper’s statement, in her analysis of Pietro Testa, that ‘the essential working definition of art stated by Varchi, Barbaro, or Zuccaro had not changed by Bellori’s day’472 to what I have attempted to describe as its logical resolution; that the peripatetic aesthetic that had emerged in the literary circles of mid-sixteenth century Italy intrinsically defined the emergence of Counter-Mannerism, and that on, both theoretical and stylistic grounds, there is no well-founded historical reason for perceiving the Carracci as exceptions to the rule.

There never was an autonomous Carracci reform of painting. If we are to look for an artist who first altered painting in Rome, along the lines Bellori equated with Annibale, that honour must go to Muziano. The ‘classical’ naturalism of works such as Muziano’s Lazarus led painters in Rome to adopt a moderated Mannerism that took a middle ground between classically derived reformist naturalism, on the one hand, and the Roman Mannerism exemplified in the work of Perino del Vaga and Polidoro da Caravaggio on the other. However, the trajectory of reform was less culturally centric and its progress less linear. Instead, it was more of an


interconnected, trans-Italian web with many of the major town hubs of Italy producing inter-related reformists. In the 1560s, two modes, which I have called the ‘classical’ and the ‘sensualist’ emerged in reformist painting. It was pioneered by two artists who had both taken inspiration from Muziano as young men in Rome: Santi di Tito and Federico Barocci respectively. Malvasia described the Roman/Florentine reformist mode as the ‘stony style’ and, while acknowledging that Ludovico Carracci incorporated it, criticised Annibale for excessively embracing this manner over the sensualism of Lombardy (typified by the work of Barocci). The final demise of Mannerism was already occurring in Rome throughout the 1590s, prior to Annibale’s arrival in the city, and was strongly influenced by the after effects of the 1586 instalment of Barocci’s Visitation. This firstly led predominantly Sienese and Marches painters, followed by local Roman artists, to gradually adopt a reformed naturalism over the ensuing decade. In the 1640s, the hegemony of Barocci’s reformism was reduced by a resurgent interest in the ‘classicism’ of Santi di Tito in Florence and the late style of Annibale Carracci in Rome. Thus, I believe we can state, for example, that Annibale’s preference for Domenichino’s Flagellation of St Andrew (fig. 122) over Reni’s Saint Andrew Led to Matyrdom (fig. 123) in S. Gregorio Magno is not narrowly limited to the stylistic and theoretical concerns of the Bolognese. Rather it should be viewed as a far more expansive argument, contested between reformists weighing up the peripatetic interpretations of style first set out in the work of Santi di Tito and Federico Barocci, for whom Domenichino and Reni can be viewed, here, as mere substitutes.473 Such an interpretation has significant repercussions for how we evaluate - or regard as valid - the supposedly contesting stylistic terms and periodization of the so-called classical and baroque.

Images

Figure 1 Tintoretto, *Christ Washing the Disciples Feet*, oil on canvas, 228 cm × 533 cm, 1548–1549. Museo del Prado, Madrid
Figure 2 Sebastiano Serlio's, The scena tragica, from *Architettura*, Book II, engraving, 1545
Figure 3 Battista Franco, *Tarquinius Sextus attacking Lucretia*. Pen and ink over black chalk on paper, 39.4 x 22.3 cm. London, The British Museum, SL.5236.117
Figure 4 Battista Franco, *Battle of Montemurlo*, oil on canvas, 173 x 134 cm, 1537. Firenze, Palazzo Pitti, Galleria Palatinae Appartamenti Reali.
Figure 5 Battista Franco, *Christ Fallen under the Cross*, oil on canvas, 115 x 158 cm, c. 1552. Firenze, Palazzo degli Uffizi.
Figure 6 Detail of Fig. 5
Figure 7 Raphael, Christ Falling on the Way to Calvary (Lo Spasimo di Sicilia), oil on panel transferred to canvas, 306 x 230 cm, c.1517. Museo del Prado, Madrid.
Figure 8 Lambert Sustris, *Road to Calvary*, oil on canvas, 106 x 131 cm, 1540. Milan, Pinacoteca di Brera.
Figure 9 Domenico Campagnola, *The Good Samaritan*, 62.9 x 86.4cm, c. 1530. Miami, University of Miami, Lowe Art Museum

Figure 10 Lambert Sustris, *Baptism of an Ethiopian Eunuch by the Deacon Phillip*, oil on canvas, 71 x 132 cm, 1545-1550. Musée du Louvre, Paris.
Figure 11 Lambert Sustris, *Landscape with Antique Ruins and Bathing Women*, oil on canvas, 101 x 105 cm, 1552-3. Kunsthistorisches Museum, Wien.

Figure 12 Lambert Sustris, *Baptism of Christ*, oil on canvas, 129.4 x 236.1 cm, 1591. Caen, Musée des beaux-arts.
Figure 13 Christoph Schwarz, *The Rape of Proserpine*, oil on canvas, 66 x 95.9 cm, 1573. Cambridge, Fitzwilliam Museum.
Figure 14 Battista Franco, Study of a Man Bending Over, Black chalk on blue paper, 16 x 11 cm, 1560-61. Chicago, Collection of Jean and Steven Goldman.
Figure 15 Raphael Sanzio, *Four Fighting Men*, Red chalk over stylus underdrawing on paper, 37.9 x 28.1 cm, 1510 – 1511. Oxford, Ashmolean Museum.
Figure 16  Girolamo Muziano, *Flight into Egypt*, fresco, 450 x 410 cm, 1552-3. Rome, Santa Caterina della Ruota
Figure 17 After Titian, *Death of St. Peter Martyr*, oil on canvas, 243 x 144 cm, 1580. London, Trafalgar Galleries
Figure 18 Girolamo Muziano, *The Raising of Lazarus*, oil on canvas, 295 x 440 cm, c.1555. Vatican City, Pinacoteca Vaticana
Figure 19 Santi di Tito, *Supper at Emmaus*, oil on panel, 435 x 270 cm, 1574. Florence, Santa Croce

Figure 20 Domenico Passignano, *St Peter Healing a Cripple at the Gate of the Temple*, oil on canvas, 72 x 56.7 cm, c. 1590. Moscow, State Pushkin Museum of Fine Art
Figure 21 Annibale Carracci, *Alms-giving of St Roch*, oil on canvas, 331 x 477 cm, c. 1594-95. Dresden, Gemäldegalerie.

Figure 22 Bartolomeo Passeroti (after Salviati), *The Visitation*, Etching, 31.1 x 48.3 cm, c.1550s to 1590s. Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, Bartsch XVIII.3.2
Figure 23 Detail of Fig. 17

Figure 24 Detail of Fig. 20
Figure 27 Annibale Carracci, *The Vision of St Eustace*. Oil on canvas, 86 x 113 cm. Naples, National Museum of Capodimonte.

Figure 28 Cornelis Cort after Girolamo Muziano, *The Vision of St Eustace*, engraving, 52 x 39 cm, 1573. The Fitzwilliam Museum
Figure 29 Ippolito Scarsella, known as Scarsellino, *Salamacis and Hermaphroditis* c. 1585. Oil on wood, 42 x 56 cm. Galleria Borghese, Rome

Figure 30 Ippolito Scarsella, known as Scarsellino, *Christ and His Disciples on the Road to Emmaus*, c. 1595, oil on canvas, 98 x 117 cm. Rome, Galleria Borghese
Figure 31 Girolamo Muziano, *Saint Francis Receiving the Stigmata*, oil on canvas, 200 x 164, 1575-77. Rome, Santa Maria della Concezione
Figure 32 Girolamo Muziano, *Saint Francis Receiving the Stigmata*, oil on canvas, 168 x 119 cm, c.1575-78. Bologna, Conservatorio del Baraccano.
Figure 33 Federico Barocci, *Stigmatization of Saint Francis*, oil on canvas, 360 x 245 cm, 1594-95. Urbino, Galleria Nazionale delle Marche.
Figure 34 Girolamo Muziano, *Saint Francis Adoring the Crucifix*, oil on canvas, 180 x 113 cm, c. 1575-1578. Private collection.

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