

## “Ma c’hanno da fare i precetti dell’oratore con quelli della pittura?” Reflections on Guercino’s Narrative Structure

THAT GUERCINO, IN THE COURSE of his long and productive career, experienced an unusually clear change in style is inescapably apparent, especially when one compares an early work, say from the period 1615–1620 (see cat. 17), with a late work, perhaps from the 1650s (see cat. 56). This exhibition should encourage viewers to make just such comparisons. Art historians have always acknowledged this phenomenon and interpreted it as either a radical break or a fundamental change in style. Scholars are at odds in judging the quality of the different phases, in setting the limits of these phases, and in giving reasons for the moments of change.

Guercino’s change in style includes an obvious decrease in movemented chiaroscuro effects and an equally unmistakable lightening of the palette, as noted already in the seventeenth century by Guercino’s friend Francesco Scannelli.<sup>1</sup> It also includes a calming of the compositional structure, which Denis Mahon in his pioneering study of 1947 attributed to the influence of Monsignor Agucchi’s classicistic art theory during Guercino’s Roman period (1621–1623).<sup>2</sup> Only very recently has David M. Stone attempted to revise this theory with a more finely differentiated periodization of Guercino’s oeuvre that places the actual periods of change before and after the artist’s stay in Rome. Stone attributes these changes to internal artistic reasons rather than to external theoretical influences.<sup>3</sup> Particularly since the increased attention paid in recent scholarship to the reception of antiquity among the protagonists of the high baroque such as Bernini, it is now clear that “classical” or “classicistic” and “baroque” are not mutually exclusive or even opposing concepts in baroque art.<sup>4</sup> Both tendencies could be present in the taste of one and the same patron, in the style of one and the same artist. Both “classical” and “baroque” are modern concepts, which, however, provide several practical advantages for the description of works of art and related phenomena.<sup>5</sup> It was the goal of every work of art to convince viewers or listeners of the depicted emotional state as far as possible in order to move them to cathartic empathy. In sum, the question was simply whether this goal was better achieved through the example of nature or through the selective use of models found in art. The much debated eclecticism of the Carracci had finally reconciled both possibilities and made them available to artistic practice. In contrast, the art theory of the period constituted an independent literary genre with conservative tendencies.<sup>6</sup>

Although the direct normative effect of Agucchi’s writings on Guercino’s art is thus rightly reduced, Mahon and Stone ultimately remain in agreement that in the years following Guercino’s return from Rome, between 1623 and 1630, his style falls into a rather experimental, one could even say groping phase that leads to the mature style of the last two decades of his life. That his stay in Rome had consequences for the painter ultimately remains undisputed, even if



these consequences are no longer seen as negative<sup>7</sup> and even if they now seem to depend upon the assimilation of experiences and impressions gained in Rome (and elsewhere), rather than on direct pressure from a theoretical viewpoint or the tastes of Roman patrons.

The late phase of Guercino's production has been subjected to very contradictory estimations. Marangoni's theory of a "self-betrayal" stands in stark contrast to Bigongiari's equally extreme and unfounded transfiguration of the late works as visionary dream sequences played out in a sublime silence.<sup>8</sup> Closer to the truth, but still rather generally, Luigi Salerno observed in his Guercino monograph that the "calculated pose" and the "beautiful gesture" occur more frequently in the post-Roman works and that, as so often in Italian seicento painting, the deportment of the figures approaches that of actors on a stage. Salerno thereby recognized Guercino's attempt to develop an "iconography of gestures," as employed by other exponents of Emilian painting, above all by Guido Reni. According to Salerno, Guercino was thus in theory and practice a precursor of the classicizing tendency of the baroque period that was so highly valued and pursued in French art of the period.<sup>9</sup>

The tradition of contradictory judgments of Guercino's different stylistic phases began in his own lifetime. As yet it has been primarily the critics of the painter's early tenebrist works who have been known and cited. The first to be named here is Scannelli, who in 1657 sought to explain the artist's change in style, stating:

Evidently the more convincing reason is that which the painter from Cento [Guercino] gave in response to this question when he explained to me that it was the taste of the majority, and above all of those who ordered works [from him]; and he had often heard complaints from those who possessed works of his first manner that in these the eyes, the mouth, and other members were hidden (so they said) in dark shadows and that as a result they could not consider certain parts as fully executed; very often they assured him that they could not recognize the faces or occasionally the actions of the figures. And so, in order to satisfy the majority as far as possible, and especially those who paid money for the requested work, he had executed the paintings in a lighter manner [*modo più chiaro*].

This passage has been cited as the classic proof that Guercino was forced by necessity to adapt his style to the "classical" taste of his patrons. On the face of it, the text indicates the following: in 1657, or in the years just before, criticisms were raised against the darkness of Guercino's paintings, and specifically in reference to early works, which the critics had by that time already possessed for a period, and which they must initially have purchased of their own accord precisely because they liked them. The basis of this criticism was not the quality of the paintings as such, but the fact that the figures and their actions were not



clearly recognizable. Doubt is cast on the truth of this anecdote by Scannelli's subsequent explanations for the lightening of Guercino's palette, as Stone has demonstrated.<sup>10</sup> In any case, this passage is useful as an indication of a general change in contemporary taste, but hardly constitutes proof of real external pressure on Guercino from his patrons.

A recently discovered document from 1623 points in the same direction. In that year an agent charged with finding a first-rate painter for an altarpiece in Arezzo writes from Rome to say that it is very difficult to obtain a painting from Guido Reni in reasonably good time and for an appropriate price, so he suggests Guercino, even though he would rather pay 500 *scudi* for a Reni than 300 for a Guercino, since the latter paints "rather darkly."<sup>11</sup>

From this it may be concluded immediately that some collectors who around 1620, let us say, esteemed Guercino's contemporary works had at that time no problem identifying the actions depicted. Stone has rightly stressed that the Ludovisi, to cite one example, called the painter to the papal court directly on the basis of their Bolognese commissions and precisely because they admired paintings like *The Raising of Tabitha* (fig. 1). These are in fact the same Ludovisi whose "classical" taste Mahon suspected behind the pressure exerted on the painter by Agucchi. Already in the period when Guercino was still working in his early style, others had raised objections to that style, as the letter of 1623 shows. This seems, however, to have been a minority view, for the ever widening circle of the artist's patrons and clients from just after his stay in Rome until the mid-1650s is due above all to the fact that further commissions were initiated on the strength of existing works,<sup>12</sup> just as occurred in the case of the Ludovisi calling the painter to Rome.

Around 1650 certain patrons—the majority, according to Scannelli's report on Guercino—had other requirements for the perspicuity of narratives. The question thus arises whether behind the much-cited change in taste there is not a slow, general change in the method of communicating and perceiving narrative content, a change that is not restricted to painting. This is the question that will be investigated here.

At the outset, it should be determined in practical and biographical terms whether the apparently market-inspired attempt to conform to his customers' tastes, as defined by Scannelli and postulated by Mahon, actually brought Guercino the greater financial benefits always implied as the goal of his change in style. Newer documentation and research indicate that it did not. On the contrary, it is apparent that from c. 1660, or just after the publication of Scannelli's book, Guercino's circle of patrons became increasingly restricted. Already in the 1650s he had had to reduce his price per figure, which formed the basis for calculating the prices of his pictures.<sup>13</sup> In the next century the Bolognese Pope







Benedict XIV made reference to this decline in a letter of 26 February 1756 to the Bolognese senate: "Now that we have reached the end, we do not wish to change our manner, in order that the same not happen to us as happened to our famed Guercino, when in his old age he changed his style of painting and no longer found anyone who esteemed or purchased his works."<sup>14</sup> This is an exaggeration, for Guercino was until the end of his days a wealthy man adept at running his business; a good number of patrons remained loyal purchasers and continued to serve him as go-betweens of no small importance. If, however, one recalls the artist's astute entrepreneurial spirit, it seems highly unlikely that for external reasons he would have changed his style in a way that can be shown to have brought him no financial benefit. Nor did the change in his style of painting bring him general praise: Giovanni Battista Passeri, the artists' biographer who died in 1679 (his manuscript was completed before 1673), as well as his contemporary German colleague Joachim von Sandrart, saw in Guercino's new painting style not an improvement, but rather a loss with respect to the powerful early manner. Passeri, like Scannelli before him, attributed the change to Guercino's transfer to Bologna and his resulting assumption of Reni's monopoly of the Bolognese market; Passeri used this turning toward a "little prized, insipid style" as an admonitory example for those who follow the dictates of taste.<sup>15</sup> That Guercino oriented himself after the successful Reni following the latter's death has long been an art historical topos but, as will be shown, one that should be regarded with a certain degree of skepticism.

An indication of the criteria by which paintings, and specifically those by Guercino, were judged in Bologna around the middle of the seventeenth century is found in a text, instructive in many respects, that is known to literary scholars, but has not been published in its entirety. In the scholarship on Guercino, this text has not been interpreted nor has its importance for the question of the artist's change in style been fully recognized. The text is an epistolary set piece written in 1646 by Commendatore Giovanni Battista Manzini (1599–1664) and addressed to the Benedictine monk Giuseppe da Piacenza. The author discusses the criticism by an unnamed "dauber" (*pittorino*) of a *Hercules* by Guercino:

I hear from Your Excellency the objection raised by that dauber against the *Hercules* of Signor Giovanni Francesco Barbieri, and I have allowed myself the most biting sarcasm. What, Sir, does he mean by "hardness"? What softness can one require of a laboring Hercules? This is a leonine, not a distaff Hercules. He should be imagined at the breast of the Hydra, not at that of Omphale. Those who reproach his hardness complain that the sword cuts. That the club is knobby.

It has always been true that every eagle does not have sun-like eyes. I hear you reply that you mean the hardness of manner, not the hardness of the figure, and for my part I ask,

1. *The Raising of Tabitha*, 1618, Galleria Palatina, Palazzo Pitti, Florence



Sir, what does it mean to be hard of manner? Hardness of manner in the painter is exactly the same as hardness of manner in the orator. By this I mean a certain raw mixture, which, combining unharmonious parts in the service of the whole, unifies these, but does not make a union; they were conceived together but are not consonant, and give an undefinable bitterness and unpleasantness to the composition, in which the ear, or the eye, not meeting that soft, low, and delicate field which it had presupposed, prepares to take offense, and not for having encountered something unpleasant, but for not having encountered that pleasantness which it expected. Now if this, and no other, is the aforementioned hardness of manner, of which Zoilos accuses our Zeuxis, and which certain others have reproached in things of mine, let us briefly examine, according to the rules of the masters, what sort of errors we have committed, he and I, in creating a Hercules or some other subject no less elevated, grave, or serious than Hercules . . . .

But what have the rules of the orator to do with those of painting? These two arts are so strictly conjoined and related, that there has been no lack of masters who have prescribed the very same rules of one to the other and assigned each as the guide of the other. (For the original text, see the appendix following this essay.)

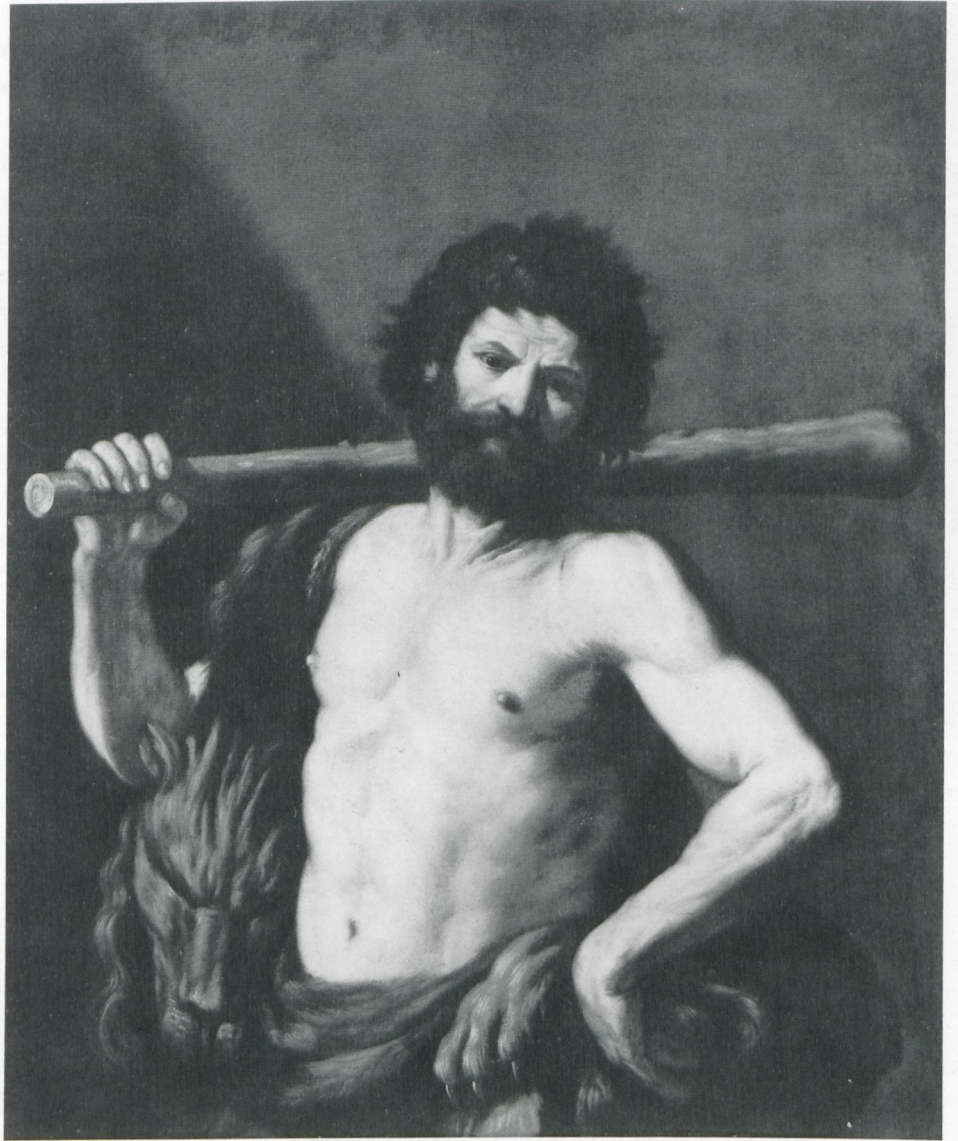
Manzini then cites authors from antiquity to show that the ancients had already encouraged painters “to give energy to their brushes . . . to invigorate their manner,” for the best way “to achieve a powerful style is to give it a bit of hardness.” He goes on to observe that

. . . the excellence of the painter increases with his ability to give his manner more naturalness and truth. Now truth, said Heraclitus, certainly does not live in the flourishing gardens of Adonis, but in the most barren horrors of an uninviting and frightening cavern. This style, and the manner most suited to truth . . . which inspires one to have heart and understanding, does not love the level, but rather the steep. It will be strong and robust, not weak and flaccid.

[While the soft style produces only temporary pleasure], on the contrary, the opposite style, armed with iron, not flowers, offers itself suddenly to the eyes, is powerful enough to overwhelm them, and engenders admiration, and sometimes even terror. It employs greater talents. It can always delight, instruct, engage, enrapture. In it, one sees the muscles, admires the foreshortenings, observes the anatomy, discovers its art. That deformed tenderness . . . is more of the female painter than of the male.

Thus I conclude that in painting, and equally in eloquence, the best things are not the most tender, but the most robust, and our Signor Gio. Francesco, who needs no Mercury to show him the way, has from his earliest days understood this, and adheres to the serious, leaving to croak in peace those effeminate souls to whom nothing looks like a painting that is not executed like a miniature. For him it is sufficient to be esteemed by the best, so that it matters little that others do not agree. It is not possible to please everyone . . . His works are sought after, used, praised, and purchased for princely prices even by private persons. What





more could one desire? . . . I have nothing more to say other than to remember myself to the Honorable Sgualdi as his servant, and to tell you that if you decide to return the painting, which that lunk head has criticized, I offer to raise the price yet again, so that the seller might have the satisfaction of having earned more from poor wares than from good.<sup>16</sup>

The letter is initially interesting for its mention of an unknown depiction of Hercules by Guercino<sup>17</sup>—one that, according to the date and description indicated by the letter, might have resembled a painting formerly in a Bolognese private collection (fig. 2) but that cannot be considered further here. The au-



thor of the letter, Manzini, deserves particular attention, for he was a close friend of Guercino's. He had been in Rome as a student in 1623 and thus could have known works executed there by the artist. It is not known exactly why the painting defended by Manzini does not appear in Guercino's account book. Between 1644 and 1650 Manzini acquired five paintings by Guercino, without in every case having to pay the painter's regular price. He later sold or gave away some of these paintings. In one instance Manzini is known to have served as a go-between: he took a painting back from the purchaser and subsequently gave it as a gift, without Guercino recording a single payment, perhaps because his friend—who was also both his patron and his agent—reimbursed him in kind. The painting in question is *Lot and His Daughters* (Salerno 1988, cat. 275), executed in 1650 and now in Dresden, with which Manzini ultimately honored the duke of Mantua in 1651. As reward he was ennobled as a marchese, so this was a thoroughly profitable business. Around 1670 Manzini's family commissioned a painting, probably from Benedetto Gennari, that shows Guercino with a portrait of Manzini still on his easel (Pinacoteca Civica, Cento).

Manzini, like his younger brother Luigi, with whom Malvasia often confused him, was among the leading men of letters in Bologna. In 1633 he had published, under the title *Il Trionfo del penello*, a collection of texts by various authors in praise of Guido Reni's *Rape of Helen* (Musée du Louvre, Paris). In his writings, which include numerous theater pieces as well as works of idyllic and religious or devotional nature, he shows himself to be an ardent champion of a grand, elevated style of rhetoric, which, drawing upon ancient literature, should incite the reader or hearer to courageous deeds. He rejected stylistic softness and decoration in favor of a certain hardness and witty sharpness.<sup>18</sup> This stylistic position is evident in the letter quoted above. The text makes as clear as reasonably could be desired that Manzini saw his ideal of a "manly loftiness" fulfilled precisely in Guercino's paintings of the 1640s—and implicitly in earlier works. We discover further that at this time some critics found Guercino's style "too hard," even though the painter had taken great pains, according to the sources cited earlier and their modern interpreters, no longer to paint "too darkly" in order to conform to the tastes of his patrons! The very style that the "dauber" found too hard, Passeri felt to be too soft. Or were Passeri and Scannelli referring in their judgments on the late style only to works created after c. 1650? Had all previous changes—so striking to us today—passed unremarked by these two contemporaries?

There is no more reason to doubt the authenticity of Manzini's testimony than to doubt that of the learned physician Scannelli. Manzini states that Guercino was a sought-after and highly paid painter (his prices reached their highest level in the 1640s following his transfer to Bologna and the death of Reni),<sup>19</sup> who naturally had his critics since "it is not possible to please everyone." For the





moment, this banal statement should be accepted at face value: many people liked Guercino's paintings, many did not. We have criticisms of the early style but also evidence—namely, the artist's meteoric career—that it was esteemed, and we have both praise and blame of the late style. The chance preservation of historical documents—or better, the luck of discovery—has so far led to an overvaluing of Scannelli's testimony. It seems sensible to step back from the hypothesis that the painter changed his style simply to meet the desires of his patrons (especially since the same taste, according to the sources, was not shared by all) and instead to examine the paintings themselves as a necessary first step in a reexamination of the criteria employed by contemporaries.

Fortunately, there are several subjects that Guercino treated repeatedly over the course of his career. Among these is the return of the prodigal son. The early version in Vienna (cat. 18), painted in 1619 for Cardinal Serra, depicts the moment in which the returning son removes his tattered clothing while a page offers him fine shoes and garments. This is not the more commonly depicted moment of the son's contrite return, but rather a later scene, which the artist drew from the text of Luke 15:22: "But the father said to his servants, 'Bring quickly the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet.'"

3. *The Return of the Prodigal Son*,  
c. 1627–1628, Galleria Borghese, Rome



All the figures are captured in spontaneous, mundane actions. As a sign of loving acceptance, the father lays his right hand on the son's sharply illuminated naked back. The son's nakedness is certainly to be understood as an allusion to his physical and spiritual need, and it stands in contrast to the sumptuous garments worn and presented by his father's servant. With his other hand the father assists his son by reaching for the rich shirt eagerly held out by the servant in a gesture that forms a contrapuntal, contrasting diagonal to the arms of the son and the father. The center of the action, although not the geometric center of the picture, lies at the point where the hands meet. While none of the faces is fully illuminated, light falls directly on the naked back at the left, on the active hands, and on the new shirt that will soon cover the nakedness of the newly returned son. All other areas lie in darkness. No figure is evenly lit or legible in all its contours. The glances of all three figures are directed toward the action in which they are presently engaged. This is a calm, self-enclosed family picture; placement of the figures close to the picture plane draws the viewer into a mood of trusting abandonment on the one hand and of loving absorption on the other.

Following his return from Rome, Guercino treated the same theme in a painting that can be dated to c. 1627–1628 and is now in the Galleria Borghese, Rome (fig. 3). The same Gospel verse is depicted, but this time the prodigal son is at the right. Again the father, placing his arm around his son, is the unifying element; again the son is in the act of removing his tattered shirt as the servant brings new clothing. Closer observation shows, however, that a slightly earlier moment has been chosen: the father is still completing the sentence recorded by Luke the Evangelist; the servant is not yet holding out the clothing, as the father, standing at the opposite side, points with an expressive gesture to the son, indicating the person for whom the clothing is intended. This depiction combines a literal portrayal of the biblical text with the household scene imagined in the earlier picture. The lighting here stresses the arm that is being undressed and the hands bringing the new garments as well as the pointing gesture of the father. The inclusion of the viewer is achieved less through the complicity of direct participation than through the more frontal and central figure of the father who presents the son to both the servant and the viewer. The pointing gesture, derived from rhetoric, is a gesture of communication, and it, rather than the unified execution of an action (for example, the giving of the garment), establishes the connection between the son and the servant. This active, extroverted moment can be “read,” and it is only thus significant that the painter has reversed the earlier composition. By so doing, he avoids having a gesture, the movement of which leads to an understanding of the picture, read from right to left—that is, contrary to the normal direction of reading. In contrast to the earlier version, in which light and shadow are diffused

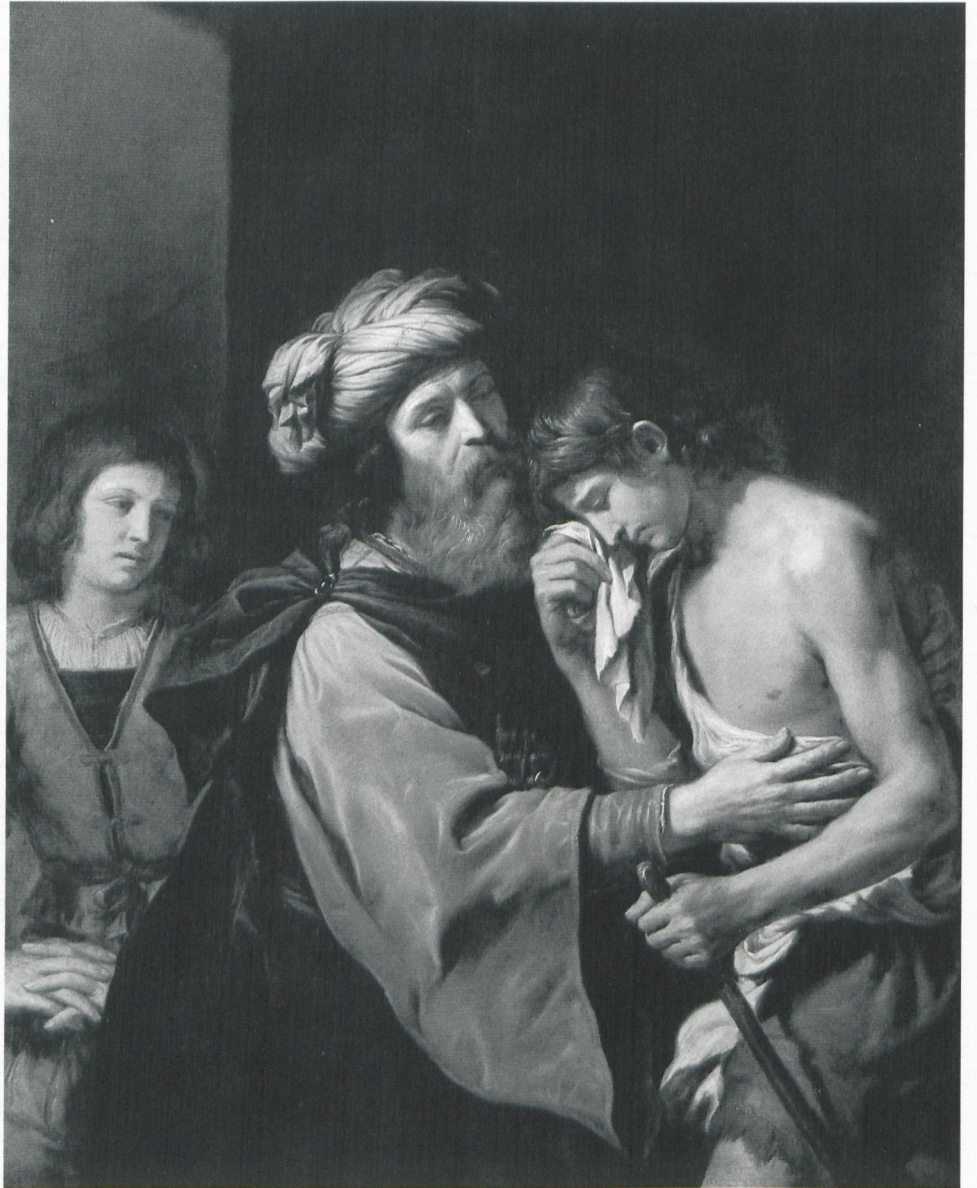


across the surface in an almost autonomous pattern and illuminate the significant areas as if by chance, here the light creates much larger unified surfaces. The painter also took care that the faces of the father and the servant should be recognizable, while he purposely left that of the returning son in complete darkness. By means of a clever direction of light, the illuminated parts stand before a dark background, the dark head before a light background; in rhetoric one would call this crisscross of elements a chiasmus. This device not only serves to make the contours more legible, but it creates a compositional balance. It also creates a balance of content that stresses the head of the son, the ultimate goal of the father's pointing gesture, as an equally important counterbalance to the son's outstretched arm from which the shirt is being removed. In sum, the later version displays a clearer legibility and disposition of compositional elements than the earlier one and seeks a direct confrontation with the viewer rather than the viewer's inclusion within the picture. Also, the moment chosen for the later version allows a gesturally codified *demonstratio*, or rhetorical demonstration.

Some twenty-two years later the painter treated the same theme anew in a painting now in Poland (fig. 4). This time he chose the commonly depicted moment of the story where the son, embraced by his father, speaks: "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son" (Luke 15:21). This is the central text for the Counter-Reformation concepts of contrition and conversion (which also inspired the enormous popularity of the iconography of the Penitent Magdalen). In this painting of 1651 Guercino remains close to the textual account but omits many anecdotal elements, such as shoes, shirt, and ring. The father, who has just arrived on the scene, is still embracing his son, who, apparently having just spoken, dries his tears with his right hand and still holds his walking stick in his left. In the left background a servant observes the scene and is moved to tears. This figure functions as a mirror image, so to speak, of the viewer, who is thus invited to surrender to the same empathetic state inspired by the interaction between father and son. A passage central to the desired religious practice of contrition is thus conceived as a realistically human but narratively static moment, which, through the figure of the servant, is moved to the different visual level of the mirror image (which no longer simulates reality). Strong colors and even light guarantee the legibility of the scene.

The version of the same subject in San Diego, executed c. 1654–1655 (cat. 53), presents yet another change. In view of the similarity in costume and the use of identical figures, one might at first think that the same moment is depicted: the returning son cries, a sign of his contrition as previously noted. Yet he also turns his head away from his father, an expression of shame in the sign language of rhetoric, to which we shall return. Furthermore, the hands of father and son





4. *The Return of the Prodigal Son*, 1651,  
Diocesan Museum, Wloclawek, Poland

are entwined in a classic gesture of reconciliation and, as carriers of meaning, are positioned at the center of the composition. The hands allude to a subsequent and theologically significant verse from the Gospel of Luke in which the father grants his forgiveness: “for this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found” (Luke 15:24). Both figures face the viewer almost frontally and depict two moments in the narrative: contrition and forgiveness, climax and



catharsis. Because no real action is depicted, but instead two morally significant emotional states—or the “essence” of the text—the figures, particularly that of the son, appear more artificial to modern eyes than those in any of the earlier versions. The communication of the passions is not achieved through the depiction of a real mood or a real action, but through recognized rhetorical gestures. This rather statue-like stiffness, in which the protagonists serve primarily to exemplify moments of self-examination, is relieved by the figure of the page at left, who regards the viewer directly and, as in a theater, opens a curtain.

In this series of examples we have traced a development from an action in which the viewer may actually be included—an effect increased by an expressive painterly technique—toward an orthodox exposition of the text and toward a clear depiction of moral examples. Whether the development as plotted here is generally valid will be tested in the analysis of further examples.

The painter depicted the subject of the chaste Susanna at her bath three times. The first version of *Susanna and the Elders* (cat. 12) was painted in 1617 for the cardinal archbishop of Bologna, Alessandro Ludovisi. In the right half of an all-encompassing twilight landscape, opened by a view into the far distance, we see a self-absorbed Susanna at her bath. The female nude, painted from life, is bathed in a soft light, one wants to say moonlight. In the left half, hardly visible in the darkness, appear the two voyeurs. Transported, the first observes the bather but with his right hand makes a silencing gesture directed outside the painting. The diagonal formed by his arms constitutes an additional link between Susanna and the viewer. The older man behind him looks directly at the viewer and makes a gesture that demands attention, caution, and silence. The viewer is thus unmistakably drawn into the circle of spectators. No one has yet addressed Susanna or sought to seduce her or to blackmail her. Guercino has thus captured an imagined moment between two biblical verses (Daniel 13:18 and 19). The two judges could just as well be edified by the beauty of a figure who, to use an apposite phrase from Heinrich von Kleist's essay “Über das Marionettentheater,” has not yet lost her grace through the guilt of knowledge. It is precisely this gracefulness, which results from the certainty that she is not being observed as well as from a complete lack of vanity, that constitutes Susanna's innocence. The visual formula used by Guercino to depict this virtue is the naturalistic, unretouched female nude, which he used again, with an equal lack of reference to the viewer, in his *Landscape with Bathers* (fig. 5). There are echoes here of Annibale Carracci's enchanting nude figure of the bathing Medea in the frescoes of Palazzo Fava (1584), a figure that was revolutionary in its apparent naturalism.<sup>20</sup> The isolation of the figure in the right half of Guercino's picture, physically separated from the voyeurs by the view into the distance, stresses Susanna's inviolability. Only at second glance do the type of depiction and the arrangement of the

FOLLOWING PAGES

5. *Landscape with Bathers*, c. 1618, Museum  
Boymans-van Beuningen, Rotterdam

6. *Susanna and the Elders*, 1649–1650, Pina-  
coteca Nazionale, Parma











composition make clear to the viewer-accomplice that his enraptured gaze commits the sin of voyeurism. Guercino appeals only to the viewer's own inner court of morality and does not depict the whole reprehensible story from the biblical text (he does not even adhere to the indicated time of noon). He reads between the lines of the text in order to invent an apparently intimate scene, in which the viewer is effortlessly included. Only if viewers possess sufficient ethical grounding do we recognize the scene's moral content, and then only if we act as do the depicted elders. A subversive game with the act of vision lurks behind this representation, for naturally every glance directed to the painting after such an act of self-recognition commits the same "sin" as do the two judges depicted in it.

Completely different is a painting, known through a copy in the Palazzo Pitti, executed the next year (1618; Salerno 1988, cat. 50) for the vice-legate of Ferrara, Monsignor Carafa. Here we have a frontal view of the brightly illuminated figure of Susanna in the center of the painting. Surprised, she makes a spontaneous defensive gesture toward heaven, while one of the two elders at the right snatches away the towel that covers her nakedness. Guercino has invented a dramatic depiction of a criminal act, of the "physical" attack on innocence. This is an accompanying action, so to speak, for Daniel 13:19–20: "When the maids had gone out, the two elders rose and ran to her and said: Look, the garden doors are shut, no one sees us, and we are in love with you; so give your consent, and lie with us." The two elders are clearly recognizable as criminals, Susanna as victim. Guercino thus conforms more closely to an iconographic tradition represented by Artemisia Gentileschi's painting of 1610 in Pommersfelden.<sup>21</sup>

Guercino follows this pictorial formula even more closely in the version of *Susanna and the Elders* from 1649–1650 (fig. 6), particularly in the figures of the two elders placed behind the stone balustrade. These figures are now presented to the viewer as frontally as Susanna herself and in as strong a light. Yet the content is completely different: no assault takes place. Of the two blackmailers at right, the one at the rear appears engrossed in his observation of Susanna, while the other makes a rhetorical gesture with his hands as if to set forth the alternatives open to Susanna: "If you refuse, we will testify against you that a young man was with you, and this was why you sent your maids away. Susanna sighed deeply . . ." (Daniel 13:21–22). No twilight, no dusky underbrush draws the viewer into the picture. On the contrary, Susanna is presented as a single figure on a stone bench, using a refined, subdued palette and a gentle, even light. She directs her eyes toward heaven, raises her right hand to swear her innocence, and with her left grasps the towel that covers her lap, slightly modifying the Venus Pudica's classic gesture of modesty. The action, which in the 1617 version "seduced" the viewer, in the truest sense of the word, to a cathartic self-recognition through inclusion in the painting, is replaced here with the presen-





7. *Erminia Finding the Wounded Tancred*,  
1618/1619, Galleria Doria-Pamphili, Rome

tation of Susanna as the exemplary embodiment of devout innocence and chastity. She becomes such a symbol only through her gestures and facial expression; the representation of her body, an artfully illuminated, idealized nude, lacks the natural innocence of the self-absorbed bather of 1617.

The development runs here from a sort of erotic complicity with the viewer through the depiction of the assault on innocence to a coded sign of devout chastity. The earliest stage, which promotes self-knowledge in the viewer through active participation, can hardly have corresponded to the contemplative edification that post-Tridentine theology sought to promote.

Guercino's two representations of a secular theme drawn from the poet Tasso's *Gerusalemme Liberata* (published in 1581) also demonstrate the artist's tendency increasingly to exclude viewers from active mental participation in the depicted narrative, in favor of placing us before a self-enclosed world. The artist himself selected the commonly depicted story of Erminia and the Shepherd<sup>22</sup> when in 1619 the duke of Modena requested a painting from his hand (see cat. 20). In his catalogue entry Denis Mahon notes how much this early version differs from the later version of 1648 in Minneapolis (cat. 45), in that the artist first chose a much more spontaneous, naturalistic representation that draws the viewer in. Again the later version follows the text more closely. It depicts the







exact moment when the armed Erminia encounters the group of shepherds: "Beholding one in shining arms appear / The silly man and his were sore dismayed / But sweet Erminia comforted their fear."<sup>23</sup> The three sons at the right have interrupted their music, the old man his basket-weaving. By contrast, the early picture encompasses the mood of the entire episode and presents the old shepherd's words from the subsequent stanzas in which he introduces his sons (outside the picture as if next to the viewer): "These are my sons" (stanza 11), while "Erminia hushed and still, his wise discourses heard, with great attention" (stanza 14). The atmospheric setting of the scene is condensed into an imagined transitory moment and is thus not unlike that of *The Return of the Prodigal Son* in Vienna (cat. 18). In the later version this effect is replaced by a punctiliously correct presentation of all the persons mentioned by Tasso, leaving nothing to the viewer's imagination.<sup>24</sup>

Similarly, the late *Erminia Finding the Wounded Tancred* places the scene at several removes from the viewers, while the early version draws viewers into the strong chiaroscuro atmosphere by bringing the figures, partially cut off by the frame, almost into our space (see figs. 7 and 8).

It has frequently been observed that Guercino repeatedly strove to find a powerfully expressive moment within every narrative; he did this as well by experimenting with innumerable drawn variations. In his early period, it has been suggested, this was a search for the "passing, but significant moment."<sup>25</sup> Already in his youth he is said to have concentrated on the confrontation of half-length figures and entrusted the spontaneity of the scene to hand gestures.<sup>26</sup> However, the moment thus depicted does not always correspond to an exact passage in the textual source. Often, as we have seen, the artist "staged" a sort of subtext drawn from his intuitive understanding of the actual text; a significant example of this procedure is the unusually fascinating depiction of *Salome Visiting John the Baptist in Prison* (c. 1624–1626) in the collection of Denis Mahon (fig. 9). These early works establish their relationship with the viewer either through the painterly creation of mood or, additionally, through impulsive gestures. In Guercino's large early altarpieces, spatial depth and the inclusion of the viewer are achieved by a whirling, centrifugal system of interconnected gestures and glances, which at a specific point extends beyond the frame. He depicts the protagonist of his *Samson* (fig. 10) of 1619 (now in New York) in a structurally similar manner, as a nude seen from behind in an almost spiral-like pose and moving forcefully in all directions. This unorthodox, rather associative approach to subjects—in sum a very personal interpretation—is an essential ingredient of Guercino's realism. As Salerno has rightly observed, the artist later tended to follow an established iconography of gestures, calculated poses,<sup>27</sup> or, according to Stone, the codified pose, the rhetorical gesture.<sup>28</sup> Yet it is character-





9. *Salome Visiting John the Baptist in Prison*,  
c. 1624–1626, Collection of Denis Mahon,  
London

istic of Guercino that he apparently reexamined the textual source on each occasion and drew fresh inspiration from it.<sup>29</sup> It is said that even in his late period he played through so-called “baroque” solutions in his drawings, only to select the more “classical” solution for the actual painting.

The series of sketches for the recently and happily restored altarpiece, *Christ Appearing to Saint Theresa* of 1634 (Bologna 1991, cat. 78) shows what is meant by this. The likely first pictorial idea is indicated by a drawing in Seattle that depicts the moment of the Transverberation following the iconography that was established by Palma Giovane (1544–1628) in his Roman altarpiece of 1615 and achieved world fame in Bernini’s sculpture in the Cornaro Chapel.<sup>30</sup> In a subsequent series of drawings Guercino devoted himself exclusively to the figure of Saint Theresa and her gestures; he immediately rejected the piercing of the heart with the arrow in favor of a kneeling pose with eyes raised toward heaven as if partaking of a vision. In determining the position of the hands, he played through amazed fright (hands to the side with open palms), devout





10. *Samson Arrested by the Philistines*, 1619,  
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York

prayer (folded hands), and faithful surrender (hands crossed across the breast), and selected the last of these for the final oil version.<sup>31</sup> Just how much Guercino in his early period already valued the language of gesture, especially that of the hands, is shown by their central position in the *Return of the Prodigal Son* in Vienna (cat. 18), to cite only one example. Yet these are the spontaneous, natural gestures of common people, while the gestures of the later works or the sketches for the figure of Saint Theresa are closely linked to a statement of meaning. They speak a language that we shall now investigate.

In Manzini's text his standard for judging a history is its characteristic function of depicting "elevated" subjects with the goal of requiring "greater abilities." The desired moral effect on the viewer can be achieved only by a style of delivery appropriate to the subject. This style must also be capable of providing an underlying tenor for expression of the work's central moral statement that unites all its various aspects. Manzini's preference for this underlying, unifying tone is "hardness." The comparison of painting to rhetoric, as drawn by Manzini, is obligatory in this context, both in the seventeenth century and in



baroque scholarship of the twentieth, at least since Giulio Carlo Argan in a fundamental essay drew attention to this relationship.<sup>32</sup> What Manzini demands in his text, like his comparison of the painter to the orator, is by no means original. The question of stylistic appropriateness, of decorum itself, which Manzini treats briefly, had been—to mention only the history of painting—a topos since Alberti (hence the relevant passage has been omitted from the present quotation of Manzini's text). When Gabriele Paleotti (1522–1597) drew the same parallel between the painter and the orator and wrote of the analogy between paintings and books (“conformità c'hanno le pitture co i libri”), he was on the face of it only taking up a tradition of art theory.

A new aspect of decorum (the required appropriateness of style to subject matter) was its combination with an ideological purpose. Christian painting, the sole subject of Paleotti's treatise of 1582, has the single goal of “persuading the populace and moving it to embrace something pertinent to religion” (“persuadere il popolo, et tirarlo co'l mezzo della pittura ad abbracciare alcuna cosa pertinente alla religione”). For the propagandistic medicine to be appealing, art must inspire pleasure, be incidentally instructive, and move the feelings of those who view it (“dare diletto, insegnare et muovere l'affetto di chi la guarderà”).<sup>33</sup> The diffusion and direct effectiveness of this well-known post-Tridentine treatise on the practice of painting should certainly not be overestimated. Yet it established ideas that would later become general knowledge quite simply because Paleotti's position repeats in principle rules fundamental to rhetoric since antiquity, and which by his time could be seen as banalities.

Let us glance briefly back at the quintessential handbook of ancient rhetoric, Quintilian's *Institutiones oratoriae*, which from the sixteenth to the eighteenth century constituted the basis of European instruction in rhetoric. Paleotti's stated goal of persuading the hearer or viewer of a Christian message is replaced here by the sole purpose, served by all the means set forth by Quintilian, of persuading the judge to take the position of the defendant by means of a plea that is not only rationally convincing but also emotionally irresistible (the same is applicable to political addresses). The demonstration of facts must be supported by the stimulation of emotional states, which in Greek are divided into *pathos* (= *adfectus*) and *ethos* (= *mores*). The latter indicates weightier, longer lasting emotional states and values such as esteem, integrity, and goodness, relevant to ethics and morality. The former refers to the passions and their amplification, such as rage, ire, hate, and love. If in theatrical categories *ethos/mores* is more appropriate to comedy, then *pathos/adfectus* is more appropriate to tragedy and thus to the elevated style.<sup>34</sup>

Of fundamental importance in the ability of arguments to convince is not only their quality but also the vividness of the orator's delivery; hence at the be-



ginning of the appropriate chapter Quintilian compares the orator-lawyer with the actor and posits voice and gesture as equally essential. He then presents a detailed practical compendium of bodily poses, facial expressions, and hand gestures suited to produce certain emotional states (*adfectus*) in the listener. The result is a sort of catalogue of pathos stimulants that is far from unique among ancient authors. Naturally, the gestures and conduct of the orator must be consonant with the content of the oration,<sup>35</sup> in order not to be counterproductive. The comprehensive treatise of ancient rhetoric presented by the first-century rhetorician Quintilian—supported by many sources, of which he names Cicero, through whom he knew Aristotle—makes clear that rhetoric's actual purpose of persuasion can be divided into degrees: to instruct, to please, and to move (*docere, delectare, and movere*), of which the first is directed to the intellect, the last two to the heart.<sup>36</sup> Similarly, Aristotle, in the second book of his *Rhetoric*, had already established rules for the nonverbal communication of specific emotions, which, as he emphasizes, can only be effective if universally comprehensible.<sup>37</sup>

All the elements of theories of expression in art since Alberti—namely, the concept of decorum and considerations of how effectively to establish an affective link with the viewer—are foreshadowed in Quintilian and were already common in the Renaissance. Thus there is nothing new in Paleotti, and yet it is precisely the subtle yet programmatic Counter-Reformation nuancing and the link with things “pertinent to religion” that in the seventeenth century would assure the new topicality of these rules in all the arts. Toward the end of the sixteenth century there occurred a new, direct return to the roots of rhetoric, reflecting a desire to establish a definitive canon for the communication of specific contents. Content, or *word*, should have priority over means. These means should be conceived to be so efficacious and universally comprehensible that they cannot fail to have an effect on the viewer through the calculable stimulation of emotion. Giovanni Paolo Lomazzo's treatise on painting, written two years after Paleotti's, is among these attempts to establish such a canon of expressive means for art. It is not at all surprising that Lomazzo in his second book methodically enumerated, chapter by chapter, all conceivable emotional states and attempted to give appropriate, but rarely practical, poses, facial expressions, and gestures for each, using figures from biblical and ancient history.<sup>38</sup> To demonstrate his conception of how the movements of the soul directly inspire those of the body, he cited examples from the art of antiquity and of the Renaissance (for example, the Laocoön for the depiction of pain).

By and large, the encyclopedic confusion of Lomazzo's mass of material probably prevented its practical use by later artists. Several gestures were already such common knowledge, however, that in the illustrations to Cesare Ripa's often republished *Iconologia* they were incorporated as essential elements in the



depiction of certain emotional states. For instance, the Rome edition of 1603 includes, among others, the following figures: Oratione (Prayer), in the age-old orant pose with bent arms raised at her sides, palms open; Humiltà (Humility), with hands crossed over her chest, slightly bent head, and downward glance; and Desiderio Verso Dio (Longing for God), with heavenward glance, her left hand on her heart, her right extended diagonally downward at her side.<sup>39</sup> These “formulas” had already been prepared by the masters of the Renaissance, above all by Raphael.<sup>40</sup>

Lomazzo conceived of painting as a narrative technique whose purpose is to communicate a message with the help of a fully rationalized language analogous to verbal communication. This conception is part of a tripartite system that corresponds to the ancient rhetorical model for the construction of an oration from *inventio* (invention), *dispositio* (disposition), and *elocutio* (elocution).<sup>41</sup> As early as Ludovico Dolce’s *Dialogo della pittura intitolato l’Aretino* of 1557, this tripartite system was equated in painting with *favola* (the subject to be depicted), *disegno* (in the sense of both drawing and composition), and *colorito* (color). The so-called classicists, whether Agucchi or Poussin, did not abandon this rhetorically based division, which forms the basis for seventeenth-century French academicism.<sup>42</sup>

The subordination of artistic means to the word, or content, was operative in all the arts. The most productive “misunderstanding” in the reception of ancient rhetoric—namely, the attempt to revive Euripides’ monody and ultimately antique drama itself<sup>43</sup>—led at the end of the sixteenth century to a reconsideration of the solo voice with instrumental accompaniment and at the beginning of the seventeenth to the invention of modern opera. In the foreword to his *Nuove musiche* (Florence, 1601), Giulio Caccini described the new music as *in armonia favellare* (“speaking in music,” identical with Emilio de’ Cavalieri’s *recitar cantando* of 1600). This musical discourse must subordinate itself completely to the emotive content of the text, and it only achieves perfection through the vocal artistry and theatrical abilities of the singer. Monteverdi justified the introduction of the *stile recitativo* (recitative style), his *seconda prattica*, by saying that music should be the servant of the text (“l’oratione sia padrona dell’armonia e non serva”).<sup>44</sup> If music was to achieve the power to persuade as postulated by Quintilian, it would also require a binding canon of forms, which was in fact soon manifested in a comprehensive set of musical figures with clear emotional content.<sup>45</sup>

Decorum depended upon the character of the *favola* (story)—that is, upon the level of the content, for which, on analogy with Cicero’s types of oration, there existed three categories: high, middle, and low (*genus grande, medium, and tenue*). The high style, known later in France as *le grand style*, is that which



propagates faith and authority through the depiction of lofty heroic deeds.<sup>46</sup> In music the new style had developed initially in the pastoral genre.<sup>47</sup> With his *Combattimento di Tancredi e Clorinda*, a musical setting of a heroic episode from Tasso's *Gerusalemme Liberata* that had its première in Venice in 1624, Monteverdi achieved the full musical realization of a *stile concitato* (agitated style), later renamed the *stile rappresentativo* (representative style), analogous to the *genus grande*. Among the expressive means of this new style of tonal symbolism belong rhythmically compressed instrumental effects derived from the music of antiquity, sharp contrasts of keys (for example, minor keys for humility, the heroic "Doric" D major for martial deeds), and freely inserted dissonances. These constitute, incidentally, that "hardness" Manzini so valued in Guercino's paintings as a sign of the elevated style.<sup>48</sup> These stylistic means were developed further in Rome, the center for the new musical genre of opera, and employed by Monteverdi in his late works, such as his *Ritorno d'Ulisse in patria* of 1640, staged the same year also in Bologna.<sup>49</sup> Thus progress in the doctrine of the passions in the other arts by no means escaped the Bolognese.

This rhetorically determined new music naturally tended, as indicated by Caccini's introduction, to support vocal delivery with appropriate gestures—in other words, it tended toward the theatrical. It has often been recalled what a lasting impression was left by the presentation of Emilio de' Cavalieri's *Rappresentazione di anima e di corpo* in Rome during the Holy Year of 1600.<sup>50</sup> From this point onward Rome would become the center for developments in modern opera, along with Monteverdi's pioneering achievements in North Italy. The Barberini actively promoted opera with the construction of a separate opera theater in their palace, in which Bernini, commonly known as the quintessential "baroque" artist, was active as director and stage designer. At the same time, the Barberini were among Guercino's most important patrons, and the cardinals who most often ordered paintings from him in Cento were those who had been appointed by Pope Urban VIII (a Barberini).<sup>51</sup> It is quite significant that the Barberini patronized Pietro da Cortona (1596–1669) and Bernini as well as the "classicizing" student of Francesco Albani, Andrea Sacchi (1599–1661), and Guercino; while Cassiano dal Pozzo, secretary to the papal nephew Francesco Barberini, brought François Duquesnoy (1597–1643), Pietro Testa (1607/1611–1650), and Poussin together in the most antiquarian of all classicisms then conceivable. And yet, if the concept of the "baroque" is equated with all-encompassing theater, it is not least on account of the Barberini. Even if Guercino no longer traveled to Rome, he must have been kept reasonably up to date on the important developments occurring there by his contacts with patrons from Barberini circles.

The other principal supporters of the new type of musical theater were the Jesuits, who since the staging of Agostino Agazzari's *Eumelio* in the Roman



Seminary (1606) had made themselves very effective in the successful propagation of the Catholic faith. In 1622 Johannes Hieronymus Kapsberger's *Apotheosis of Saint Ignatius Loyola* was presented in the Jesuit College: did Guercino see it? At the same time, the Jesuits also took up the staging of biblical stories, a tradition founded by Philip Neri's Oratorian movement at the end of the sixteenth century. It is thus not surprising that essential developments in opera history came in the area of religious opera, such as the 1632 production in Rome of Stefano Landi's *Sant'Alessio*, and in the *theatrum sacrum* (sacred theater).<sup>52</sup>

For the correct communication of content there developed a detailed language of gesture for actors, which was also employed in the Jesuit theater. A retrospective, although still valid, compendium of this gestural system was handed down by the Jesuit Franziskus Lang in his *Dissertatio de actione scenica . . . Imagines symbolicae pro exhibitione et vestitute theatriali* (Munich, 1727). Specific gestures are correlated to each passion: "We express aversion by turning the head to left and extending our slightly raised hands in the opposite direction, as if warding off a loathsome thing. . . . We express pain by bringing our clasped hands together at the breast or at the abdomen. . . . We express remorse by pressing our hands to our heart."<sup>53</sup> It is hardly surprising to find a group of these gestures already included in a handbook written almost one hundred years earlier that attempted to translate Quintilian's gestures into a systematic, illustrated set of directions. Working in the tradition of English neo-Ciceronianism, John Bulwer published in 1644 his inventory of current rhetorical gestures (*Chirologia*) along with a prescriptive set of rules (*Chironomia*), in which he made an explicit appeal to the precedent of Quintilian. Further sources may be found in the tradition emanating from the *Hieroglyphica* by Piero Valeriano (1477–1558?) as well as from French treatises on rhetoric, such as that of the Jesuit Ludovico Cresollius (d. 1634).<sup>54</sup> Thus, by the mid-sixteenth century, the correlation of specific passions to specific gestures was a long-established international phenomenon, which had its roots in ancient rhetoric and was apparently propagated by the Jesuits as a means of engendering in the public feelings calculated to increase faith.<sup>55</sup> In music an analogous repertory of gestures was established on the same basis. This repertory was successfully united with theatrical decoration to create a propagandistic *Gesamtkunstwerk*.

This excursus on the new music, which developed out of a desire to recreate ancient oratory and was concurrently the motivating force in the development of an all-encompassing theater in the baroque period, has led back to a single common root, rhetoric. It has also shown how intensely the formation of an international system of the passions, for all forms of expression, was pursued in the first half of the seventeenth century.



The same discussion of style and form occurs in the literature of this period, and not only in the active literary circles of Bologna.<sup>56</sup> We have already seen just how far Manzini—to cite a random example who was by no means a major player—was involved in Bolognese literary discourse. The task of establishing a binding formal canon also arose for painting, as demonstrated by the above-mentioned examples of Paleotti and Lomazzo. In all arts the affective link with the public was established when pathos-filled forms of expression moved the viewer or listener either to empathy or to an Aristotelian catharsis, a sort of “homeopathic purification of the soul.”<sup>57</sup> The governing concept of the baroque period was Aristotle’s notion of catharsis, the educational effect set forth in his *Politics*.<sup>58</sup> It was according to these criteria that Manzini judged Guercino’s paintings.

The alternate possibilities of drawing an appropriate depiction of the passions either from nature or from canonical works of art have very often been interpreted in terms of the conflict between “baroque” and “classical.” In practice, this choice proves secondary because the Counter-Reformation search for propagandistic persuasiveness in the arts, carried out since the beginning of the baroque period, itself derived from a specific reception of antiquity, namely the reliance upon rhetoric. Accordingly, the concepts of “classical” and “baroque” always become particularly inexact when, as noted at the outset, a given work or artist is to be assigned unequivocally to one or the other tendency. The designation “classical” is primarily applied to the tendency that follows the models of ancient art—or the equivalent canon of the high Renaissance. The early exponents of this tendency are all to be found in Rome from about 1620; after all, that’s where ancient statues were to be found. Extensive proof exists that Guido Reni, who was able to stay in Rome somewhat longer and more often than Guercino, studied ancient statues and kept casts of them in his studio in Bologna. We know that the opposite is true of Guercino; he was as little interested in old statues as he was in the works of the high Renaissance. What then is the source of his “turn to classicism”?

Analysis of several examples has shown that over time Guercino ceased to translate freely a textual source into a mood established by purely painterly means and also ceased to break through the picture’s surface plane, and thus its ontological boundedness, by using direct gestures extending beyond the frame or by bringing the picture plane close to the viewer. Instead, he tended more and more to reproduce specific passages from the Bible and other texts or to employ an orthodox exegesis. In other words, he sought to depict either the actual moment of dramatic climax as experienced in the theater or in the read/heard text, or to depict directly the cathartic passion as intended by Counter-Reformation theology. These paintings were conceived so as to allow



no confusion with reality, but were raised unequivocally to the level of contemplation directed toward a moral example. Physical (re)action gave way to a controlled *repraesentatio* through gestures that Guercino had derived from the same rhetoric underlying contemporary theater. In the late painting in Washington (cat. 47) the gesture with which Joseph repulses the advances of Potiphar's wife is precisely the same as that described by Franziskus Lang in his theater treatise as the symbol for rejection of the loathsome. Since his youth, Guercino had had a unique feeling for the dramatic, and this led him to place these figures in close physical conflict, with Joseph using his other arm to fend off the woman's grasping hand. This violently realistic touch must have been among the elements that Manzini defined as "hardness."<sup>59</sup> As we also saw, Susanna (fig. 6) becomes a symbol of chastity and faith, and the prodigal son (cat. 53) an example of repentance and shame, both purely on the basis of their gestures. All these figures make gestures, commonly known from rhetoric and theater, that are unequivocal and recognizable in their connotation of a specific passion. Regularization guarantees a control of the moral direction in which the catharsis tends and precludes all dangerous ambivalence, such as was possible in the early *Susanna* (cat. 12). From the combination of solidly accepted signs there arises, parallel to the passage selected for depiction, a second visual text. Legs and feet play no role in this language of gesture (if only for a negative reason, namely, the noble hero must not be presented with crossed legs). Guercino's striking preference for the horizontal format with half-length figures signifies in this respect a reduction to the essential carriers of meaning.

Along with clarity of gestural expression comes clarity of composition, which can be seen also in the late altarpieces in the increasing reduction in the number of figures. In this connection it should be recalled that around 1636 in the Roman Accademia di San Luca an intense controversy was carried out between Pietro da Cortona, exponent of the "high baroque," and Andrea Sacchi, a "classicist." The dispute was over which was preferable: compositions with many figures (to be associated with the epic poetry of Aristotle), or those with few figures (analogous to tragedy).<sup>60</sup>

Thus Guercino stood on the side of the lofty, the high style (*genus grande*), as imagined by the Bolognese defenders of a florid, but effective, "manly" rhetoric. To this clarity and perspicuity also belongs *elocutio*, rechristened *colorito* by Dolce, which is inextricably linked with *dispositio/disegno* and the *favola*, or the lofty subject matter (and Guercino painted almost exclusively history pictures, which correspond to tragedy). Guercino sought to achieve this perspicuity of color not only through increasingly large areas of unified tonality but also, in his transitional phase, with a sort of chiasmus of dark figures before a light background juxtaposed with illuminated figures before a dark back-



ground. This effect has already been noted in the *Prodigal Son* from the Galleria Borghese, Rome (fig. 3). It becomes evident immediately after the artist's return from Rome in the 1624 *Queen Semiramis Receiving News of the Revolt of Babylon* (cat. 28). It can also be seen in the division of the background into light and dark in the proportion 1:1 or 2:1 in paintings such as the c. 1625–1626 *Samson Bringing the Honeycomb to His Parents* (cat. 30) and the lost *Semiramis* from Dresden of c. 1627–1628.<sup>61</sup> Guercino later retains this technique as such, but it gives way more and more to color of unified tonal value that no longer draws its chiaroscuro effects from the contrast between light and shadow using a restricted range of colors, as in the early works, but from the balancing out of different hues of the same tonal range.<sup>62</sup>

If Salerno is correct in arguing that Guercino made noticeable efforts toward an “iconography of gestures” and that his figures approximate the comportment of actors on a stage, it must still be emphasized that, given the consistency with which Guercino approached this “iconography” and created it for himself, he was not in any way simply adopting, under outside pressure, pre-existing formulae developed by others, such as Guido Reni. There is a fundamental difference between Guercino and Reni, whose classicism is based on fidelity to antiquity and the sculptural conception of figures and on the typing and heroizing of the individual, or solo actor, as in operatic recitative. The common root of both is the rhetorical doctrine of the passions, which found ultimate expression in theater in the baroque period. Yet where “frozen action”<sup>63</sup> reigns in Reni, not least due to his study of antiquity and a tendency toward abstraction, Guercino always preserves the actual moment of action, the temporally and visually occurring discourse. (It was not without reason that Guercino refused to complete a painting begun by Reni.<sup>64</sup>) Furthermore, it would be superficial to understand Guercino's mature style simply as influenced by the theater, even if his early interest in it is documented. Rather, he intuitively perceived that certain expressive gestures were becoming accepted through constant repetition and that his contemporaries increasingly believed these gestures to be unmistakably understandable. Indeed, Stone has rightly stressed Guercino's visual intelligence;<sup>65</sup> the artist's caricatures demonstrate that he was an astute observer of changes in expression resulting from physiognomic deformities or from abnormalities of figure, posture, or gesture. At the same time, Guercino also recognized that a set repertory of dogmatic textual exposition was simultaneously crystallizing out of the frequent presentation of the same subject matter in all the arts. It is known that Guercino was himself a believing Christian (he refused to go to England because, among other things, heretics lived there).

Guercino's development followed a continuous and slowly advancing inner logic in which abrupt “radical breaks” are hardly to be discerned and in which



composition, gesture, and color change in relation to one another. The simple exchange of “light” for “dark” proposed by Scannelli is but a symptom of this development, and certainly only the most noticeable. Guercino’s stay in Rome, where important developments were brewing and where he perhaps had his eyes opened to phenomena that he had not previously observed or could not perceive in the provinces, evidently played the role of catalyst. Yet this continuous development was no more complete in 1630 than in 1645, but persisted until the end of the artist’s life.

As was the case in all the arts, it was not until a good half century after the end of the Council of Trent that efforts at a recovery of affective persuasiveness through appeals to ancient rhetoric produced a binding canon of forms. From the mid-seventeenth to the end of the eighteenth century this canon remained part of the curriculum of academic instruction. Guercino cannot have conformed to this development after the fact, as suggested by the passage in Scannelli and above all by some of its later interpretations, because this development was not yet concluded. Rather, one should lean toward Salerno’s interpretation that Guercino was one of the protagonists in this development, and precisely as a variant that appears to have emerged without reference to ancient sculpture. In contrast to ancient statues, which dominated the scene only in Rome (but were slowly becoming more accessible in casts belonging to collectors and academies), the survival of rhetoric in popular sermons, in the theater, and in public ceremony and the “tableaux vivants of public etiquette”<sup>66</sup> was also ever present in the “provinces.”

Correspondingly, between 1600 and 1650 the public’s habits of perception changed. If, as reported by Scannelli in 1657, patrons really complained to Guercino of insufficient perspicuity in the narratives of his early paintings, they hardly did so because they were unable to recognize the return of the errant son in Vienna’s *Return of the Prodigal Son* (cat. 18), but rather because this painting did not present them with the religious topos that in the meantime they had come to expect. A figure seen from behind and half from the side, not to mention in shadow, was of no use, because for set moral statements there had been established equally set visual conventions that were accepted only as the universally understandable correlate of a given emotional state. If the early works could delight (*delectare*) and move (*movere*), their inability to instruct (*docere*), an integral component of both proper rhetoric and Counter-Reformation propaganda, was now understood as a flaw. What then makes the late paintings “classical” and the early paintings “baroque”? Not so much classicism in the Roman sense, even if the result is similar, as above all a reception of ancient rhetoric, possibly supported by developments in other art forms. For contemporaries such as Manzini, this rhetorical element made Guercino simply a good



painter, neither "classical" nor "baroque." The writer and historian Count Virgilio Malvezzi (1599–1654) considered the synthesis of classical tendencies with the art of Caravaggio, seen in terms of rhetorical persuasiveness, fully achieved in the art of his Bolognese contemporaries. In his writings Malvezzi analyzed even more penetratingly than Manzini the transposition of the passions into music, literature, and painting, and he thus transcends the one-sided idealistic classicism of a writer such as Monsignor Agucchi.<sup>67</sup>

It should not be concluded from Guercino's thorough-going and gradual stylistic development and its relation to rhetorical principles that he was a paragon of learning. At nine years of age he was apprenticed to a provincial painter after, as his nephew later stated, he had visited the infants' school, or the reading and writing school (*scuola di leggere e scrivere*), in Cento. This means that he did not complete, if he even began, the grammar school (*scuola grammatica*), which children usually entered between the ages of five and seven, depending on how quickly they had completed their lessons in infants' school.<sup>68</sup> In the grammar school Latin and finally rhetoric were taught as well as basic knowledge of biblical and classical texts, including those of Ovid, Cicero, and Quintilian.

Although we must assume that Guercino did not possess a complete secondary (Latin) education, he was apparently capable of independently selecting subjects for his paintings. When the duke of Modena sought a painting from his hand, the artist chose an episode from Tasso (cat. 20), and when in 1660 Don Antonio Ruffo commissioned a pendant for a Rembrandt painting, Guercino decided upon a cosmographer. Tasso was among the principal points of reference in Bolognese literary circles; of the contemporary painter Albani, a notorious failure in school, it was said that he always had his Tasso at hand.<sup>69</sup> Reading of and familiarity with Tasso in the seventeenth century presumably involved little more than the reading of *Robinson Crusoe* in the twentieth. Guercino's epistolary style was correct and in fact rather literate, in contrast to that of Reni, which the biographer Malvasia found decidedly distressing.<sup>70</sup> That Guercino in his early period carefully considered the fundamentals of his art is demonstrated by the fact that already in 1616 he was running his own drawing school. Throughout his life, moreover, he associated with educated patrons of European stature. In Cento he soon established friendly relations with the educated priest Padre Mirandola. Even though we know little about Guercino's three years in Rome, it appears that he exchanged ideas with other artists and with the learned men in the circle of the Ludovisi (for example, with Monsignor Agucchi and Domenichino, as Mahon assumed). Thanks to the commissions listed in Guercino's *Libro dei Conti* and the letter by Giovanni Battista Manzini published here (see appendix below), we know that the artist cultivated friendly relations in Bologna with trend-setting writers and theoreticians like Manzini,



and that he probably discussed rhetoric and the depiction of the passions with them. Precisely in the 1630s and in the years immediately after Guercino's transfer to Bologna, the intellectual middle class formed part of his most influential group of patrons.<sup>71</sup> According to Ezio Raimondi, their primary concerns in these years, with specific reference to the writings of Tasso, were a classicizing theologization of poetry, an ethical reform of rhetoric, and the cult of the heroic.<sup>72</sup> Around 1645 Guercino's paintings completely fulfilled this rhetorical requirement, as is made clear in Manzini's text.<sup>73</sup> Guercino's education, however he may have come by it, was in any event sufficient for him to reflect on the conditions of his art by drawing on information gained in the observation of his environment in the broadest sense (and his drawings show that he was an unusually curious and astute observer). This education also allowed him to handle textual sources independently and thoroughly, as an analysis of several paintings has shown. A painter need not express himself in writing on these subjects, particularly when his paintings, as in the case of Guercino, do this so clearly.

## *Appendix*

Al P. D. Giuseppe da Piacenza Monaco Benedettino

Intendo da V. P. l'opposizione, che vien fatta da quel pittorino all'Ercole del Sig. Gio. Franc. Barbieri, e me son fatto le più putide beffe. Che, Domine, vuol egli dir costui di durezza? Qual morbidezza puossi desiderar' convenevolmente in un Ercole faticante? Quest'è un Ercole da Leoni, non da conocchie. Vá concepito a petto dell'idra, non a petto d'Onfale. Chi lo rimproccia di durezza, si duole che la Spada riesca tagliente. Che la clava sia nodosa.

Insomma egli fù vero sempre, che ogni aquila no hà luci da sole. Sento che ripigliate doversi intender della durezza della maniera, non di quella della persona, ed io altresì ripiglio Domine, che vuol dir questo esser duro di maniera? La durezza della maniera, considerata nel pittore, è lo stesso totalmente che la durezza della maniera, considerata nell'oratore. Voglio dire, una certa ruvida mistione, che, combinando al servizio del tutto le fra se non amorevoli parti, fa che unite, ma non unione; conspirate, ma non consonanti, diano un non sò che d'aspro, d'inameno alla composizione, nella quale non incontrando l'occhio, ò l'orecchio quel campo morbido, piano e dilicato, ch'egli si era presupposto, stà per offendersene, e questo non già in riguardo d'haver incontrato male; ma di non haver incontrato quel bene, ch'egli attendeva. Hor se questa, e non altra, è la tracciata durezza della maniera, che il Zoilo appone al nostro Zeusi, e che da



qualche altro fu talvolta opposta ancora a qualche cosa mia, vediamo un poco, per regola de'maestri, qual sorte d'errore habbiam commesso, ed egli, ed io, avvalendocene nella fabbrica di un Ercole, ò d'altra cosa, non menò d'Ercole, generosa, grave, e seriosa . . .

Ma c'hanno da fare i precetti dell'oratore con quelli della pittura? Sono così strettamente congiunte, e cognate queste due arti fra di loro, che non son mancati maestri, che le stessissime regole dell'una hanno prescritte & assignate per moderatrici anche dell'altra.

[Manzini here cites authors from antiquity to show that the ancients had already encouraged painters "to give energy to their brushes . . . [and] to invigorate their manner," for the best way "to achieve a powerful style is to give it a bit of hardness."]

. . . il pittore è tanto più eccellente, quanto sà dar più di naturalezza, e di verità alla sua maniera. E la verità, disse Eraclito, non alloggia mica ne gli orti più fioriti d'Adone; ma ne gli horri più scabri d'un'antro spaventoso, non che inameno. Questo stile, e quella maniera, ch'è nata alla verità . . . che preme ad haver anima, e spirito, non ama il liscio; ma'l risalto. Vuol esser nervosa, e robusta, non molle, e morbida.

[While the soft style produces only temporary pleasure] . . . ma per lo contrario la contraria, che, armata di ferro, non di fiori, si offre subito a gli occhi, possente per investirli, genera ammarizione, e talvolta anche terrore. Spende maggiori talenti. Hà sempre come giovare, insegnare, trattenerne, rapire. Veggonsi in essa i muscoli, s'ammiran gli scorzi, si disamina l'anatomia, si scuopre l'arte. . . . Quella tenerezza slavata . . . è più tosto da pittrice che di pittore.

Conchiudo, che nella pittura, & ugualmente nell'eloquenza, le migliori cose non sono le più tenere, ma le più robuste, e'l Sig. Gio. Francesco nostro, che non hà bisogno di Mercurio, che gli aditi la strada, ben se n'avide fin da giovinetto, e lasciando gracchiar' a quegl'ingegni effemminati, a quali non par dipinta nissuna cosa, che non sia miniata, attendere al sodo. . . . Basta a lui, che di lui altamente sentano i migliori, che poco importa, che qualcheduno disenta. Non si può piacere a tutti. . . . Le cose sue sono desiderate, praticate, incantate, e pagate da principe, fin trà i privati, che più si puo desiderare? . . . Io non hò, che dir più, se non ricordarmi servidore al Reverendissimo Sgualdi, e dirvi, che se vi dasse l'animo di far tornar' addietro il quadro, che cotesto scimunito hà biasimato, m'esibisco di vantaggiare il pagamento, sì che'l venditore potrà goder d'aver guadagnato più sù le merci cattive, che sù le buone.



## Notes

The quotation in the title of this essay is from the selected letters of Giovanni Battista Manzini to Giuseppe da Piacenza quoted extensively in the text. It can be translated, "But what have the rules of the orator to do with those of painting?"

1. Scannelli 1657; see also Stone 1989, 123–132, with citation of the original, which is given also in Mahon 1947, 23 n. 73.

2. Mahon 1947.

3. Stone 1989, 9, 26–35, 132–167. Mahon's understanding of the change in style as provoked by Agucchi and Domenichino was earlier doubted by Donald Posner, "The Guercino Exhibition at Bologna," *Burlington Magazine* 110 (1968), 600.

4. See also Herbert Beck and Sabine Schulze, eds., *Antikenrezeption im Hochbarock* (Berlin, 1989); and Stone 1989, 24.

5. Salerno 1988, 1–10, also stresses this in direct relation to Guercino. See further Stone 1989, 74–101; and Charles Dempsey, "The Greek Style and the Prehistory of Neoclassicism," in *Pietro Testa, 1612–1650: Prints and Drawings*, ed. Elizabeth Cropper, [exh. cat., Philadelphia Museum of Art] (Philadelphia, 1989), xxxvii–lxv.

6. On this see Mahon 1947, 5–6; and more recently Stone 1989, 64–73.

7. For an example of the negative view, see Marangoni 1920, 17–40, 133–142.

8. Marangoni 1920; Pietro Bigongiari, "L'altro Guercino," in *Il Caso e il caos I: Il Seicento fiorentino tra Galileo e il "recitar cantando"* (Milan, 1975), 15–21.

9. Salerno 1988, 60, 62.

10. Scannelli 1657; Stone 1989, 136–148.

11. David Franklin, "Guido Reni, Guercino, Matteo Rosselli and an Altarpiece for SS. Annunziata in Arezzo," *Burlington Magazine* 133 (1991), 446–449.

12. These and the following economic insights are provided by the highly informative interpretation of the *Libro dei Conti* (the account book painstakingly maintained from 1629 by Guercino's brother and subsequently by the artist himself) in Olivier Bonfait, "Il Pubblico del Guercino: Ricerche sul mercato dell'arte nel XVII secolo a Bologna," *Storia dell'arte* 68 (1990), 71–94, especially 82–86.

13. Bonfait 1990, 76, 80.

14. Quoted in Bonfait 1990, 91 n.16.

15. See also Mahon 1947, 47; and Stone 1989, 152–153, with the original text.

16. *Delle lettere del Sig. Commendatore D. Gio. Battista Manzini, volume primo: All'Eminentiss. e Gloriosiss. Principe Il Sig. Card. D'Este* (Bologna, 1646). I owe my knowledge of this text to a remark by Ezio Raimondi, "Literatur in Bologna im Zeitalter Renis," in *Guido Reni und Europa*, ed. Sybille Ebert-Schifferer, Andrea Emiliani, and Erich Schleier [exh. cat., Schirn Kunsthalle, Frankfurt am Main] (Bologna, 1988), 83, in which the wrong work by Manzini is cited; Raimondi states that Manzini regarded Guercino as an exponent of the elevated style in painting. The source for finding the correct title, but with an incorrect year of publication, is Ezio Raimondi, *La Letteratura barocca* (Florence, 1961), 208.

17. On this, see *Guercino* [exh. cat., Schirn Kunsthalle, Frankfurt am Main] (Bologna, 1991), cat. 77b.

18. On Manzini, see Giovanni Fantuzzi, *Notizie degli scrittori bolognesi*, 9 vols. (Bologna, 1786), 5:208–215; also Raimondi 1961, 209; and Raimondi in Frankfurt 1988, 81–83. On Manzini's collection of Guercino's works, see Salerno 1988, 5, 288, 309, 327, 345, 410; and Loire 1990, 53.

19. Bonfait 1990, 76.

20. For the combination of study from the model and from antiquity in this figure, see Norberto Gramaccini, "La Médée d'Annibale Carracci au Palais Fava," in *Les Carraches et les décors profanes: Actes du colloque organisé par l'Ecole française de Rome* (Rome, 1988), 491–519.

21. On this painting, see August Rave, in *Die Grafen von Schönborn: Kirchenfürsten, Sammler, Mäzene*, ed. Gerhard Bott [exh. cat., Germanisches Nationalmuseum] (Nuremberg, 1989), 374–376, cat. 292. Rave sees Artemisia's painting as derived from a lost composition by Annibale Carracci known in a copy in the Galleria Doria-Pamphili; see also Annibale's print (B-1) in Diane De Grazia Bohlin, *Prints and Related Drawings by the Carracci Family: A Catalogue Raisonné* [exh. cat., National Gallery of Art] (Washington, D.C., 1979), 444, cat. 14. On the dating of Artemisia's painting to 1610, see Roberto Contini,



- in *Artemisia*, ed. Roberto Contini and Gianni Papi [exh. cat., Casa Buonarroti] (Florence, 1991), 109–113, cat. 7.
22. The story is no longer very familiar: Erminia, living in exile in Saracen-controlled Jerusalem and smitten with love for the Christian hero Tancred, dons the armor of Clorinda, a warrior-maiden fighting on the side of the Saracens, and attempts to enter the Crusaders' camp. Before reaching her goal, Erminia is discovered, mistaken for Clorinda, and pursued. Her wanderings lead her to an old shepherd and his three sons, in whose camp she finds peaceful refuge as a dairymaid. This last episode, an idyllic interpolation in the martial epic, is described by Tasso in canto 7.
23. Canto 7, stanza 7; English version from the translation by Edward Fairfax (London, 1901).
24. This has been noted in Helston and Henry 1991, 20, under cat. 6.
25. Helston and Henry 1991, 25, under cat. 8.
26. Helston and Henry 1991, 30.
27. Salerno 1988, 50.
28. Stone 1989, 26–29, 30; for a general discussion, see also the stylistic analysis by Mahon 1947, summed up 24–30.
29. This was noted in a talk, "Guercino as a Narrative Painter," given by Tom Henry at the National Gallery, London, 11 July 1991, the manuscript of which he generously provided me.
30. See Stone 1991, cat. 31.
31. The sequence was exhibited in Bologna and discussed in Bologna, *Disegni*, 1991, nos. 78–82.
32. Giulio Carlo Argan, "La 'Rettorica' e l'arte barocca," in *Atti del III congresso internazionale di studi umanistici* (Rome, 1955), 9–14.
33. Gabriele Paleotti, *Discorso intorno alle imagini sacre et profane* (Bologna, 1582), 66: bk. 1, chap. 21, "Dell'officio et fine del pittore christiano, a similitudine de gli oratori."
34. Marcus Fabius Quintilianus, *Institutiones oratoriae libri XII*, vi.2.8.
35. Quintilianus, *Institutiones*, xi.3.
36. See Heinrich Lausberg, *Handbuch der literarischen Rhetorik* (Munich, 1973), § 256–258.
37. On this see also Rudolf Wittkower, *Art and Architecture in Italy 1600–1750*, reprint of 3d ed. (Harmondsworth, 1986), 140; and the summary in Argan 1955, 9.
38. Giovanni Paolo Lomazzo, *Trattato dell'arte de la pittura* (Milan, 1584; reprint Hildesheim, 1968), bk. 2, chap. 10, 105–186. See also Gérard LeCoat, *Rhetoric and the Arts 1550–1650*, European University Papers, ser. 18 [Vergleichende Literaturwissenschaften], vol. 3 (Frankfurt am Main, 1975), 58–61.
39. Cesare Ripa, *Iconologia* (Rome, 1603; reprint Hildesheim, 1970), 102, 215, 372.
40. Georg Weise and Gertrud Otto, *Die religiösen Ausdrucksgebärden des Barock und ihre Vorbereitung durch die Italienische Kunst der Renaissance* (Stuttgart, 1938), provides an iconographically rich treatment of this issue, which is, however, limited by its positivistic viewpoint.
41. See Charles Dempsey, "Some Observations on the Education of Artists in Florence and Bologna During the Later Sixteenth Century," *Art Bulletin* 62 (1980), 568.
42. See LeCoat 1975, 30.
43. See Anna Amalie Abert, *Claudio Monteverdis Bedeutung für die Entstehung des musikalischen Dramas* (Darmstadt, 1979), 3.
44. Foreword to the *Quinto libro de madrigali* (1605).
45. See the fundamental studies, each with further literature and sources: Friedrich Blume, "Barock," in *Die Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, 14 vols. (Kassel, 1949–1968), published separately in *Epochen der Musikgeschichte in Einzeldarstellungen* (Kassel, 1974), 168–232; Gino Stefani, *Musica barocca: Poetica e ideologia* (Milan, 1974); and Werner Braun, *Der Stilwandel in der Musik um 1600* (Darmstadt, 1982).
46. LeCoat 1975, 33.
47. See the explanation by Abert 1979, 3.
48. LeCoat 1975, 125–153, with a comprehensive analysis of the *Combattimento*, and 181; also Abert 1979, 12.
49. Abert 1979, 36–37.
50. See Irving Lavin, "Bernini and Antiquity—The Baroque Paradox: A Poetical View," in Beck and Schulze 1989, 23–26.
51. Bonfait 1990, 84.
52. See Per Bjurström, "The Roman Baroque Stage and Theatrum Sacrum," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 27 (1968), 212.
53. Quoted in Hans Tintelnot, *Barocktheater und barocke Kunst: Die Entwicklungsgeschichte der Fest- und Theaterdekoration in ihrem Verhältnis zur barockem Kunst* (Berlin, 1939), 315.



54. John Bulwer, *Chirologia: or the Natural Language of the Hand, and Chironomia: or the Art of Manual Rhetoric*, ed. J. W. Cleary, with foreword by D. Potter (London and Amsterdam, 1974).
55. The role of the Jesuits is also emphasized by Lavin 1989, 22, with further literature.
56. For a complete discussion, see Raimondi in Frankfurt 1988.
57. Lausberg 1973, § 1222–1225.
58. Lavin 1989, 28.
59. The same gesture of repulsion, called *ex-eractione repellit*, is enacted, in reverse, and enriched by a nuance of appeasement, by the woman at the right of a painting in Modena dated to 1631 (Salerno 1988, cat. 133). The cavalier standing next to her haughtily indicates the door. The painting was associated with a *Joseph and Potiphar's Wife* mentioned by Malvasia, and thus—despite descriptions as *Amnon and Tamar* in seventeenth-century inventories—catalogued as depicting the same subject as the Washington *Joseph*. The gestures, with their established connotations, make this designation simply nonsensical. The subject is self-evidently Amnon's banishment of Tamar, as the seventeenth-century inventory takers realized. Stone 1991, 74–76, under cat. 29, made the same identification, although for other reasons, and now proposes a more plausible date of c. 1628 for the Modena painting.
60. Wittkower 1986, 263–266. It should be noted that André Chastel, "Sémantique de l'index," *Storia dell'arte* 38/40 (1980), 415–417, argued strongly against interpreting seicento paintings without an understanding of the semantics of gestures in the baroque period. Some years later Cropper and Dempsey were able to state that the notion that seventeenth-century art is rhetorical had become generally accepted, but that no serious investigation of the relationship between word and image had yet been undertaken. See Elizabeth Cropper and Charles Dempsey, "The State of Research in Italian Painting of the Seventeenth Century," *Art Bulletin* 69 (1987), 494–509, especially 506.
61. Salerno 1988, no. 121. The variations in dark areas before a light background and vice versa have been discussed by Stephan Loire, "La Circoncision du Guerchin au Musée des Beaux-Arts de Lyon," *Bulletin des musées et monuments lyonnais* (1988), no. 2, 28.
62. See also Stone 1989, 81, and his discussion of Dempsey's thesis on the concept of chiaroscuro.
63. Franca Varignana, "Guido Reni und das Theater," in Frankfurt 1988, 92–93.
64. Salerno 1988, no. 54, with quotation of Scannelli's account. It is significant that Argan 1955, 10, pointed out the discursive character in the art of Guercino's admired model, Lodovico Carracci.
65. Stone 1989, 17.
66. Raimondi in Frankfurt 1988, 77. See also the fundamental observations of Hans Georg Gadamer, "Bemerkungen über den Barock," in *Atti* 1955, 61–63: "rhetoric, in contrast to the immediate expression of the speaking mind, requires the command of a set system [*Topik*] of expressions, images, and figures, hence a shared world of conventions that determine word and comportment . . . Goethe's overcoming of the baroque ideal of style was epoch-making. Ever since, the naturalness of immediate poetic expression has been one of the highest ideals."
67. See Raimondi in Frankfurt 1988, 87.
68. See the informative investigation of the education of Bolognese artists in Dempsey 1980, 559–564.
69. Raimondi in Frankfurt 1988, 71; and Dempsey 1980, 560.
70. Salerno 1988, 5; on Reni, see Sybille Ebert-Schifferer, "Guido Reni: Klassische Norm, christliches Pathos und reine Farbe," in Frankfurt 1988, 29.
71. Bonfait 1990, 80.
72. Raimondi in Frankfurt 1988, 74, 77.
73. Salerno 1988, 62, comes intuitively to a similar conclusion about the close relation between Guercino's late history paintings and literary theory.