After Raphael

Painting in Central Italy in the
Sixteenth Century

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expressed their focus on prayer. But Muziano seems to have been uncomfortable with direct address to the viewer, and this work is less successful than his others, where the emphasis is on a serious and dignified rendering of the narrative.

It is difficult to define a style that would encompass Barocci, Cavalieri d’Arpino, Caravaggio, and these works as well, but what they have in common—and it seems to be one of the things the Oratorians sought—is an understanding that the worshiper’s affective participation must be solicited. One effect of the Tridentine reform, then, was to curb the autonomy of the patrons within the church and to impose on them various forms of control, either of subject or form or style, or of all three. This control paved the way for the kind of unified and harmonious treatment of the interior that characterizes many Italian Baroque churches.

**FEDERICO BAROCCI (1535–1612)**

Barocci was of the same generation as Santi di Tito. Like him, Barocci made the trip to Rome—the sojourn that had become by that time indispensable to any ambitious painter—as the final phase of his training and at the beginning of his independent career. Also like his Florentine contemporary, Santi, he arrived in Rome during the pontificate of Paul IV. The impact of Reform thinking must have been strong on the artists who came to Rome in the second half of the 1550s when the uncompromising pope was seriously threatening to have Michelangelo’s Last Judgment torn down.

It was difficult for them to ignore the fact that new criteria for sacred art were being put in place. Compelled to consider such issues at the very moment he was formulating his personal style, Barocci and the others like him—Santi and the slightly younger Federico Zuccaro in particular—embraced the principles of the reform of sacred images more unequivocally than any other of the painters. Barocci had been born in Urbino. Like his fellow countryman Taddeo Zuccaro, he revered Raphael, and from his earliest work one can see the influences of both Raphael and Taddeo. The young Barocci was exceedingly fortunate in getting the commission to paint in the Casino of Pius IV, the villa this pope built in the Vatican gardens, where he was paid in 1561–3.

Following this auspicious opening to his career, Barocci suffered a reversal of fortune and fell seriously ill. He returned home to Urbino where several years passed before he was able to paint again.

He must have spent considerable time studying the paintings of Correggio (1489–1534), for when he appeared again on the scene with his Deposition for the cathedral in Perugia in 1569 (Fig. 179), he presented a style deeply influenced by Correggio’s. What he took from Correggio was what no painter in central Italy was offering and what the Counter-Reformation Church was then on the brink of recognizing was the most fruitful direction for sacred images to explore, namely, appealing to the viewer’s emotions. With the help of Correggio, what Barocci reintroduced was the rhetorical mode of addressing the worshiper, which had been made suspect by the strict reformers in the Church. Like Taddeo who never sacrificed the rhetoric he learned from Raphael, Barocci resurrected the art of persuasion.

The style that delighted in the sensuous and used chiaroscuro and color to solicit the viewer had really
been pioneered by Leonardo da Vinci early in the century, and Correggio's debt to him has always been recognized. What Correggio had learned from Leonardo about the seductive mystery of shadows, Barocci in turn learned from his study of Correggio's paintings.

But Correggio had gone beyond Leonardo in the depiction of untempered emotion, and it was this aspect that Barocci introduced to the central Italian scene in the 1570s. The emotion his figures express verges on the sentimental. It was an area the sophisticated artists, in particular the Florentines, were careful to avoid. The ingenuousness of Barocci, however, is contagious, and it is easy to become caught up and transported by his pictures. Spiritual ecstasy seems to be within easy reach. By contrast the didacticism of the Counter-Maniera painters, who considered it their task merely to put the narrative before the viewer, looks arid, as does the arte sacra of Scipione PulZONE and Giuseppe Valeriano, which Federico Zeri tried to persuade us was the true expression of the Counter-Reformation and the most promising product of the movement. Both fall far short of Barocci, however, in terms of aesthetic quality and future influence.

Barocci's Saint Jerome in Prayer (Pl. XXIX) combines several Counter-Reformation themes, and it can serve to exemplify the appeal of his style. The importance awarded to venerating the cross in these years gave prominence to such subjects as Saint Francis receiving the Stigmata in a vision of the crucifix and Jerome moved to penitence by contemplating the cross. These subjects begin to appear frequently, as do others in which the cross speaks, as for example to Saint Thomas Aquinas. (Santi di Tito made an altarpiece of this subject for the Florentine church of San Marco, where it is still to be found.) The power of the cross to heal and to inspire was emphasized to refute its denigration by the Protestants. The Catholic Church responded also to the Protestant rejection of certain of the sacraments, including Penance, by having related subjects represented with increased frequency in art. This reaction provided further incentive to represent the penitent Saint Jerome.

The subject of the hermit saint, who has removed himself from the world so as to castigate his flesh, was probably no more attractive to the worldly Roman of the Cinquecento than it is to the worldly contemporary viewer. Jerome holds a rock in one hand, with which he intends to beat his breast, and the crucifix in the other. His gaze, an ecstasy of agony, speaks to us of his inner state, but the tenderness and nobility in his face draw us to him. The skull in the shadow and the hourglass catching a glint of candlelight remind us of what we would rather forget: how fleeting life is and how imminent the judgment, but Barocci's color and light pull us into the scene, whereas the harsh treatment of so many other painters only repels. Barocci has rejected the formula that equates the ascetic and penitential subject with the suppression of sensuous and aesthetic appeal. With a sleight of hand that no Counter-Reformation prelate would call him to account for, he renders Jerome's red robe as if it were made of gleaming satin, and where we expect from other renditions of the subject a hair shirt, he shows a warm gray tunic that reflects the glowing red. The pinkish tone is picked up in Jerome's flesh, depicted with a ruddy health quite alien to the tradition of the subject. Subtly the viewer is allured by the color scheme that moves the warm pink tones out into the shadowy cave and the moonlit landscape. Barocci does not invite such analysis; in fact, he probably expected his picture to operate at a subliminal level, enticing us to empathy. If we share Jerome's emotion we, too, may be moved to penitence. But as in a successful oration where the listener should not be aware of the rhetorical devices employed to persuade him or her, so the painter concealed his rhetorical art. He was so successful in this that aim no one in the Church took up a Glió-style attack on Barocci for his "error" in depicting Jerome in the desert with glowing flesh and a red satin robe. Barocci found the means to represent a state of emotional elation like that described by the great mystics, in which the mind is no longer totally in charge, and the emotions carry one to a transcendent sphere. In Barocci's pictures we are in a world of ecstasy, a state out-of-body, or at least out-of-intellect.

Correggio had shown how to create a visual excitement in the picture that would inflame or transport the viewer's emotions. Barocci, in imitating Correggio, depicts movement in excess of that expected or required; this movement is a visual equivalent for emotions that are moved. Like Correggio he opens the way for the viewer to cross the liminal space into his pictures, never making use of repoussé figures, for example. His first full demonstration of the new style was in the Deposition he painted in Perugia in 1568-9 (Fig. 179). Movement in the picture, often not entirely rationally
motivated, is created by wind that swirls the draperies, by the exaggeratedly swift thrust of the woman who rushes to the aid of the swooning Madonna, and by arbitrary shadow. It would be difficult to construct a wax model of this scene, as the mid-century painters like Salvati had done, and Tintoretto in Venice was doing, in which a shadow would fall in this fashion across the middle of Christ’s body, for example. Yet no one would deny its pictorial effectiveness, and no one seems to have quibbled with the license the painter has taken in this and other respects.

In the intimidating atmosphere of the 1560s created in the wake of Gilio’s treatise published only five years previous, and of Carlo Borromeo’s insistence upon the strictest construction of the Decrees of the Council of Trent, Barocci displayed an admirable courage and self-assurance.

His fellow painters recognized that Barocci had made an important discovery. When his Visitation was installed in the Chiesa Nuova in Rome, it was reported by a contemporary that it pleased everyone, particularly those in the profession, and that for three days there was a line to see it.49 Several of the Florentines made a pilgrimage to Arezzo to see his Madonna del Popolo after it was installed in 1579 and were so impressed they then made another excursion to see his earlier altarpiece in Perugia. The leader seems to have been Ludovico Cigoli, who we remember departed from the Counter-Maniera of his master, Santi di Tito, in favor of a more affective style inspired by Correggio and Barocci.50 At a time when deep, gloomy chiaroscuro was the fashion in Florence, these painters must have been impressed by Barocci’s high-value palette. Barocci’s color is unabashedly cheerful and

ornamental, seemingly in contradiction to the mood of suffering one expects in a Deposition. But what the Church censured in Maniera paintings as ornament inappropriately designed to serve art has here been harnessed in the service of devotion.

What Barocci created provides the formula that would evolve into the visionary style of the Italian Baroque and be carried to northern Europe by Rubens, who was deeply impressed by Barocci during his

Figure 179. Barocci, Deposition. 1569. Cathedral, Perugia.
Roman sojourn at the beginning of the new century. Rubens would have been very much aware of Barocci through his two altarpieces on display in the Chiesa Nuova, his Visitation (1586) and the Presentation of the Virgin (1593–1603). It was fortunate for both Barocci and for Filippo Neri that they found each other, for they were well suited. Not just the directness of Barocci's manner but its joyousness appealed to Neri, who would sit prayerfully before the Visitation for hours. Although the prettiness of his style, and particularly of his color, recalled the Maniera, what made Barocci's manner acceptable where someone like Salvati's was not was the evident sincerity of his piety. Salvati and the others of his generation could not give expression to emotion, pious or otherwise, with the ingenuousness and exuberance that inspired Barocci.

Barocci devoted himself exclusively to sacred images and a few portraits. The only surviving exception is his painting of Aeneas's Flight from Troy. The original version, now lost, was made in 1586–9 to be exported to the court of Rudolf II in Prague, and the surviving replica is signed and dated 1598 (Pl. XXX). It is of great interest to see how he treated a mythological subject and to recognize that it is exactly the same style that he used in his sacred works. The compositional model of relief is in no way suggested here. On the contrary, on the example of Correggio's mythological paintings, he used oblique lines to draw the viewer in and cross the picture between the figures and the viewer's space. Aeneas, still in his armor, struggles toward us with his father on his shoulder and his young son clinging to his thigh. The rubble of the battle in the foreground and the receding building carry us into the inferno of the burning city. The flames are reflected on the marble columns and balusters at the left, rimming them with pink. The unnaturally rosy complexion of Aeneas's wife would seem to be caused both by the heat and the excitement, if one were to stop to analyze it, but instead, we are caught up in the flutter of her drapery and her disheveled hair. Her sensuous flesh is tinged with a warm gray, like the tone of the background. Movement, physical and emotional, is conveyed by the strong yet delicate shadow that cuts across her body. Chiaroscuro is, in fact, used in a way quite distinct from central Italian practice, deriving here from Correggio and, it should be noted, from Titian. Light has an arbitrary life of its own, as we saw before in his Perugia Deposition.

This kind of naturalistic chiaroscuro had never appealed to the central Italians, who were often more interested in emulating the clarity of sculptural relief. Nothing of the relieflike style remains in Barocci, even when he undertakes a subject chosen from ancient literature. Here, if anywhere, we would expect to find Barocci looking at sculpture and looking at the models of classicizing painting from earlier in the century, for example, the Fine in the Bolognese (Fig. 180), of his mentor, Raphael, where a similar family group had been represented. The comparison is informative. Barocci makes Raphael look almost pedantic in the perfectly composed harmony and sculptural balance of the group, whereas his Aeneas, feet awkwardly spread, staggers a bit under his burden. There is an immediacy and a seeming spontaneity quite removed from the cool and studied perfection of either Raphael or his followers.

The careful divorce of affect from intellect that characterized Classic and Maniera painting has broken down; the barrier has been crossed and the road opened to a new relationship between spectator and image. Barocci's paintings call for a "suspension of aesthetic distancing" on the part of the spectator. The kind of empathetic relationship with the event that he undertook to establish was very much what the Church would see as the way of the future.

CARAVAGGIO (1571–1610)

When we come to Caravaggio we leave the world of the official art of Pope Sixtus V and Clement VIII. Michelangelo Merisi was born in the town of Caravaggio in northern Italy near Milan, from which he took his name, and came to Rome probably in 1592. He was not trained by a distinguished painter and he did not arrive with letters of introduction to potential patrons. In his early career he was one of those artists who practiced a new marketing technique: he made still-life and genre paintings on speculation, as artists do today, hoping to sell to a buyer who happened to like his work. His earliest known works, half-length single-figure paintings, usually of a boy, often with a vase of flowers or a basket of fruit (e.g., Rome, Borghese Gallery), were the kind of small paintings he made for the market. They were of a kind of subject more familiar in his native Lombardy than in Rome, and therefore their novelty made them more apt to attract attention.

The source of their iconography was a kind of image
it was ready. The pope repaid the hospitality by canceling the cardinal’s pension as a “poor” cardinal, saying that he
was “too rich.” Borromneo wrote Cardinal Gambera in 1590
reproaching him for his extravagances. Cited by Coffin
(1979), 349-1.
10. The projects mentioned here are only a sampling. For full
documentation, see *Roma di Sisto V*.
11. Only Veronica is admitted from an extra-Gospel source; see
Barroero (1991a), 141, for description, attributions, and
reproductions.
12. On Sixtus’s Franciscan mysticism and its role in the design of
the Sistine Chapel in Santa Maria Maggiore, see Ostrow
(1996b), chap. 1.
13. Bevilacqua, 36. On Rocca, see Paolo Muma and Nicoletta
Antoniano probably made the final selection of subjects for the Vatican Library from those proposed by
Federico Randali; see Dalma Fracaroli, “Nota su Federico
Randali e Silvio Antoniano,” in Bld, 496. On the program
for the Lateran Palace, see Barroero (1991b).
14. The iconography of each of the rooms is summarized by
15. On the various Constantian cycles at the end of the
century in Rome, see Freiberg (1995a).
16. The best illustrations, all in color, are in Pietrangeli, 222–85.
17. Saunders analyzed these engravings in the context of
iconoclasm.
18. Le vite de’ pittori scultori et architetti del pontificato di Gregorio
XIII, del 1572 in fine a’ tempi di Papa Urbano Ottone nel 1642
(Rome, 1642). Contributions to the separation of hands
were made by Alessandro Zucchi (1992) and Bruno Haas,
“Per una identificazione dei maestri dei cicli pittorici
sisten,” in *Roma di Sisto V/ 47–58.
21. Rudolph Wittkower aptly described the style advocated by
Sixtus V as one that “tends toward dissolving Mannerist
complexities without abandoning Mannerist formalism.”
See *Art and Architecture in Italy, 1600–1750*, Pelican History of
22. Ostrow (1996), 620; see his n. 26 for bibliography.
23. Zucchi decorated the apse with a fresco of the *Descent of the
Holy Spirit*, that is, *Pentecost*, commissioned under Pope
Gregory XIII and dated (158). He worked again in the
church on the interior of the facade and the first chapel on
the right, the Tolla Chapel, beginning in 1588. Piliibury
(1974) published the documents. See also Valone, and *Roma
24. For example, the Lateran basilica and the Lateran
Baptistery, Santa Costanza, Santa Cosma e Damiano. See
Ostrow (1996b), 357.
25. Irving Lavin first pointed out that late Cinquecento marble
reverent seemed intended to undermine the architectural
system, in contrast to Bernini’s innovative use of the same
materials. See his *Bernini and the Unity of the Visual Arts*, 2
vols. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 1:59–75, as
cited by Ostrow (1990), 25.
26. The legacy of this kind of colored marble reverence to the
Baroque was, of course, enormous. It was used already in
the 1590s by Clement VIII for his chapel in Santa Maria
sopra Minerva.
28. Federico C. Church, *The Italian Reformers* (1932; reprint,
30. For an up-to-date assessment of the early Jesuits, see
O’Malley (1993b), especially chap. 7, “Religious and
Theological Culture.”
31. I am following Hibbard (1972) in this section; especially
35–61.
32. In a forthcoming book on the Gesù Nuovo in Naples,
Maria Ann Conelli strengthens the evidence presented by
Hibbard that the program was evolved by 1590 and that it
was specifically Jesuit in its concerns.
33. Mariano’s altarpiece has been transferred to the Jesuit
College in Rome. It is illustrated in *Roma di Sisto V/ 172.
34. Hibbard (1972), 39.
35. The altarpiece was for the Chapel of the Passion, the
second chapel on the right. The frescoes were executed by
Guaspore Celio in the mid-1590s.
37. On the document requiring symmetry in the design and
materials of the chapels, see Daniele Ferrara, “Artisti e
committenti alla Chiesa Nuova,” in *La Regola e la Fama,
108–9.
38. Zucchi (1981a), 149.
n. 27.
40. This was in May 1583, three years before the painting was
completed: Barbarieri, Barchini, and Ferrara, 56 and n. 244.
Cited by Zucchi (1993), 343. Reuben’s contract for the
high altarpiece reflects a similar degree of control by the
fathers. They required to see an example of his work; the
design he proposed had to meet their requirements; and
they reserved the right to refuse the finished painting and
simply return it to him. Jaffe (as in note 39), 87.
42. Zucchi (1981a), who noted this motif running through the
China Nuova altarpieces, has argued convincingly that the
Mary in Caravaggio’s *Entombment* (PL XXXII) with her
arms outstretched is depicted in the ancient attitude of
prayer, 97–105.
43. Baglione (1642) included a short life of Barocci. Bellori’s
biography, published in his *Vite* (1672), is our principal
source for the career of Barocci.
44. On the Casino and its decoration, see Graham Smith
(1997b), Walter Friedlaender (1932), and specifically on
Barocci, Emiliani, 1, 15–32. The other principal painters
were Santi di Tito and Federico Zuccaro. This commission
provided the opportunity for the three of them to shape
their reformed styles in tandem. The frescoes have suffered
badly.
45. Zeri, *Magister, 72*, pointed out that art “outside of time” —
sempre tempo was Zeri’s phrase — transgressed the Council of
Trent’s prescription that paintings should adhere strictly to sacred narrative and was therefore not a style that the Counter-Reformation would have championed. Sydney Freedberg’s damning phrase, “the affection of simplicity” (1993), 660, applies to the ante sacrum, but not to Barocci.

46. Emiliani, 2:303-3, who reproduced detailed photographs of the few drawings for this sparsely documented painting.

47. Scavizzi (1986) identified a number of subjects dealing with the cross that received increased attention in the Counter-Reformation, among them the Brazen Serpent and the legend of the True Cross.

48. Mâle (1932), 65–72, discussed depictions of penitence, especially Peter’s and Mary Magdalen’s, although he did not mention Jerone. The special association of Sixtus V with Jerone, discussed by Ottrow (1996), 11–19, would have given added prominence to the saint in this period.

49. Letter from Grazioso Grazioni, the minister of the duke of Urbino, 1586, quoted by Emiliani, 2, 217–19.

50. Cigoli and Pagani went together to Arezzo, and then Cigoli persuaded Pasimiano to accompany him to Perugia, Dempsey (1987), 62. For the Madonna del Popolo, see Emiliani, 1, 128–49.


52. Emiliani, 2, 331, who also reproduced and discussed the preparatory drawings.


54. See Hemburger, who made the case for Caravaggio’s genre paintings as allegories on the model of Netherlandish prints.


58. See discussion in Chapter 5.

59. Jacob Hess, “Modelle e modelli del Caravaggio,” Commentari 5 (1954), 272–3, associated her pose with the classical statues now in Florence in the Loggia dei Lanzi, but in Rome in Caravaggio’s time. See Bober and Rubinstein, no. 160. This figure may or may not be precisely the source of the Madonna’s crowned foot, but the motif is one that suggests an antique prototype.

60. Most recently, Gilbert (1995), 155.

61. Trinchieri Camiz (1991) has convincingly pushed the date forward on the basis of documents regarding the purchase, sale, and repurchase of the property by Del Monte.


63. W. Friedländer (1913) reproduced an eighteenth-century engraving in which the tomb at the left is clearly legible, fig. 102, but it could have been an invention of the engraver rather than a reflection of something Caravaggio painted that has disappeared from sight. For the view that Christ is being lowered into the tomb in the area of the chapel altar, see Gatto McWright.

64. In this section I am following the model and using the insights of Janis Bell’s analysis of Caravaggio’s color and light, demonstrated on the Supper at Emmaus in London (1993).


66. See Bell (1995) for demonstration of this point.

67. Bellori’s text is reprinted with a translation in Panofsky, 154–77, and especially 174.

68. For a bibliography of nineteenth-century views of the decline into la maniera described by Bellori, see Smyth (1992), n. 8. Smyth translated Bellori’s comments, 22–3: “This vice, destroyer of painting, began to germinate in matters of honoured reputation and became rooted in the schools that then followed. Wherefore, it is incredible how much they degenerated, not only in comparison with Raphael, but with others who initiated la maniera. Florence, which prided itself on being the mother of painting, and the whole region of Tuscany, which was illustrious by reason of its painters, already were silent... and the others of the school of Rome, no longer raised their eyes to look at the abundance of examples, antique and modern, had forgotten every praiseworthy advantage to be obtained from them.” It can be argued that Bellori is condemning not those “who initiated la maniera,” but those who allowed it to degenerate into fantastica Idea no longer based on nature.


70. See Chapter 3, 194.

71. This is a highly debated topic. For a review of the evidence since Nicholas Pevsner first examined it in Academias of Art, Past and Present (1949), see Goldstein (1988), chap. 1, whose conclusions are followed here.

72. Peignanbaum, 60–1.

73. Bouchloo (1972), chap. 7, pointed out Palmeri’s influence on the Bolognese artistic scene. For review of this issue and bibliography, see De Grazia Bohlman, 28.

74. His Supper of Saint Gregory is today in the Pinacoteca in Bologna.

75. Published by Fantzi, who established that Annibale, not Agostino, was the author.


77. Denis Mahon, in a heartfelt effort to rehabilitate the Carracci’s reputation, argued that Annibale was not a restorer of the Classic style of the High Renaissance but a reformer, 198. Remsheller Lee’s review of Mahon (Art Bulletin 33 [1951]: 204–12) reassessed the appraisal of the Carracci as eclectic. In 1971 Donald Posner published his two-volume monograph on Annibale Carracci. Taking a position similar to Mahon’s, he gave only minimal consideration to Annibale’s relationship to previous painting, for which he was attacked by Charles Dempsey in 1977. Dempsey distinguished Annibale’s use of Corteggio and Raphael from mere imitation; rather, he said, Annibale “imitated nature with their guidance.” 35. Dempsey undertook to define and define the Carracci academy.

78. How this kind of imitation continued in the seventeenth