Fall from Grace: The Reception of Guido Reni in Britain from the Seventeenth to the Nineteenth Century

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Abstract

This thesis concerns an extreme revolution in taste in European art: the transformation of British attitudes towards the seventeenth-century Bolognese artist Guido Reni (1575–1642). Reni was one of the most collectable and revered artists in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Britain. However, his reputation suffered a dramatic decline and in the nineteenth century he became deeply suspect in the British popular imagination. His works were subject to critical reassessment and he was judged by a new standard of taste. This thesis sets out to understand this rise and fall in Reni's reputation. It explores how Reni's reputation was first established in Britain in the seventeenth century. Various aspects of his high status in the eighteenth century are considered, including the collecting of his works by prominent aristocrats and the attraction of copies after his paintings for a wide variety of his individuals. It is argued that the decline in Reni's reputation occurred much earlier than previously acknowledged and can first be observed in the eighteenth century. It is particularly associated with a series of observations made by various members of the Royal Academy at the turn of the nineteenth century. The continuing deterioration in Reni's reputation in the nineteenth century is considered and shown to be less clear-cut than is usually assumed. Responses to Reni are shown to reflect wider historical changes in Britain and transformations in the nature of artistic discourse.

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Introduction

In 2017, following extensive conservation treatment, a studio copy of Guido Reni's (1575–1642) *The Toilet of Venus* (Fig. 1) at the National Gallery, London, was rediscovered as an autograph work by the master, accomplished with his studio. The painting was commissioned in 1622 by Federico Gonzaga, Duke of Mantua, and arrived in Britain in the 1620s as part of Charles I's wholesale acquisition of the Gonzaga collection. It entered the National Gallery in 1826 as part of a donation of six paintings by William IV but was removed in 1861 as a 'superfluous' picture and sent to the National Gallery of Scotland. In 1932, it returned to London and from 1956 to 1976 was displayed as part of the Government Art Collection at Lancaster House. In 1988, Brian Sewell disparaged the painting in the *Evening Standard*, suggesting: 'If ever there were an argument for burying pictures in the basement of the gallery, never to be seen again, it is embodied in this picture.'[1] However, since its reattribution, the painting has enjoyed a renaissance and was included in the Royal Academy's 2018 exhibition *Charles I: King and Collector*, where it was highlighted in the *Financial Times* for its 'lustrous charm and humour.'[2] It is now on prominent display within the national collection in the Gallery's Central Hall. The critical fortune of this painting over the centuries, and even within the last twenty years, exemplifies the vicissitudes of Reni's changing status in Britain. Both exalted and derided, Reni has been subject to reappraisal of the most dramatic nature.

Reni and his Bolognese contemporaries were among the most revered and collectable artists in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Britain. Their works were the hallmark of a refined collection, with autograph paintings and copies adorning the walls of residences across the country. Reni was a major influence on British artists and writers, and his works were instantly recognisable, referenced in fiction and poetry. However, in the nineteenth century, his reputation suffered a dramatic decline and he became deeply suspect in the British popular imagination. His works became the subject of critical

[1] Sewell, 'Picture This' *(*1988).
[2] Wullschlager, 'Grand Passions' (2018).

reassessment and he was judged by new standards of taste. Revulsion towards Reni is traditionally held to have occurred in the 1840s and 50s and is manifest in the controversy surrounding the National Gallery's high-profile acquisition of several paintings by the master. It is associated with rising concern regarding the authenticity of Reni's paintings and most commonly attributed to a catalogue of reproaches made by the influential art critic John Ruskin (1819–1900), who vehemently deplored the Gallery's activities and included Reni in his 'School of Errors and Vices.'[3] Ian Chilvers, in *The Oxford Dictionary of Art and Artists* (2012), provides a characteristic statement of this view, citing the 'scornful attacks of Ruskin (who detested the Bolognese painters in general),' the 'vulgar and sentimental' nature of Reni's paintings and 'the failure to distinguish his own works and those by his countless (often extremely insipid) imitators.'[4] The catalogue for the 1988 exhibition *Guido Reni, 1575–1642* at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art follows a similar trajectory, highlighting Ruskin's view of Bolognese paintings as 'overly sentimental while lacking in sincerity and religious conviction.'[5]

In this thesis, it is argued that the current view of Reni's reputation in Britain is too binary, with too much emphasis placed on Ruskin and the events of the mid-nineteenth century. As is demonstrated, criticism of Reni existed, in fact, since the eighteenth century and extensive rejection of the artist occurred at the turn of the nineteenth century, with a series of observations made by various Royal Academicians. Whilst the severity of criticism only became more potent over the next fifty years, the diverse reactions of various Presidents and Professors of the Royal Academy, particularly Henry Fuseli (1741–1825), played a critical role in turning the tide of opinion against the artist. Criticism not only concerned the perceived sentimentality of Reni's paintings but other aspects of his works, including his approach towards depicting ideal beauty, the distinct nature of his 'manners', his choice of religious subject matter, the impact of his gambling habit on his character and artistic output, and the Carracci School's 'eclectic' approach towards art. The attention paid to these qualities fluctuated over time.

[3] John Ruskin to parents, 10 [11] July 1845. Cit. Shapiro, *Ruskin in Italy* (1972), 144.
[4] Chilvers, *Dictionary* (2012), 522.
[5] Emiliani, Schaefer, and Raimondi, *Reni* (1988), 1. See Parrish, 'Changing Tastes' (2015), 2.

Furthermore, even late in the nineteenth century, one can find residues of Reni's enduring status, indicating that his fall from favour was not quite as extreme as previously acknowledged.

There are two crucial texts for the reception of Bolognese art in Britain: Francis Russell's essay 'Guercino in England' in the catalogue for the 1991 exhibition *Guercino in Britain: Paintings from British Collections* at the National Gallery, London; and Gabriele Finaldi and Michael Kitson's catalogue for the 1997 exhibition *Discovering the Italian Baroque: The Denis Mahon Collection*, also at the National Gallery, London.[6] Stephen D. Pepper, Richard E. Spear, and Tatiana Senkevitch have further briefly addressed Reni's changing reputation in Britain.[7] Fundamental texts which adopt a broader approach towards assessing the critical fortunes of artists and changing nature of taste include: John Steegman's *Consort of Taste* (1950); John Rigby Hale's *England and the Italian Renaissance: The Growth of Interest in its History and Art* (1954); and Francis Haskell's *Rediscoveries of Art: Some Aspects of Taste, Fashion and Collecting in England and France* (1976).[8] Key publications on Reni himself include: the works of Otto Kurz and Sir Denis Mahon; the 1954 exhibition *Mostra di Guido Reni* at Palazzo dell'Archiginnasio, Bologna; Pepper's 1984 monograph; the exhibition *Guido Reni, 1575–1642,* held in Bologna, Los Angeles, and Fort Worth in 1988; and Spear's *The Divine Guido: Religion, Sex, and Money in the World of Guido Reni* (1997).[9]

In a letter of 1628, Reni explained the difference in price between pictures produced by 'ordinary' painters and those by 'extraordinary' painters, hoping that his patron would value his work appropriately.[10] Reni has always trod a fine

[6] Russell, 'Guercino and England' (1991); Finaldi and Kitson, *Discovering Italian Baroque* (1997).
[7] Pepper, *Reni* (1984); Spear, *From Caravaggio to Artemisia* (2002); Senkevitch, 'Critical Reception' (2008).
[8] Steegman, *Consort of Taste* (1950); Hale, *England and Italian Renaissance* (1996); Haskell, *Rediscoveries* (1980).
[9] Kurz, 'Reni' (1937); Mahon, *Studies* (1947); Cavalli, *Mostra* (1954); Pepper, *Reni* (1984); Emiliani, Schaefer, and Raimondi, *Reni* (1988); Spear, *'Divine' Guido* (1997).
[10] Guido Reni to ?, 8 April 1628. Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles, Special Collections, 850407.

line between accepted into the canon as an extraordinary artist, one of the best of his kind, and being dismissed as an ordinary if not poor artist, unworthy of adulation and praise. This thesis explores why Reni holds such a contradictory position and how such changes in taste can occur. Since the early twentieth century, scholars have accounted for fluctuations in artists' reputations using the model of a 'cycle in taste.'[11] This introduces the notion that each generation reacts against the taste of the previous generation and that artists and artworks naturally fall in and out of favour. Correspondence between Ernst Gombrich and Quentin Bell, published in *Critical Enquiry* (1976), exemplifies the type of debate which exists surrounding the existence of and need for a fixed and inherited canon among art historians.[12] In 'Motivating History' (1995), Keith Moxey demonstrates how the canon has frequently been taken for granted within art history and seen as self-evident; the subjectivity of the art historian has been overlooked and canonical value has been equated with traditional value. Citing the role of art-historical theories such as feminism in dismantling the canon, Moxey argues that the canon is in fact malleable and that different canons can co-exist simultaneously.[13] This aligns with Francis Haskell's view in *Rediscoveries of Art* (1976) that 'the whole concept of trying to establish such hierarchies… now appears to be a somewhat futile one.'[14] The reactions of beholders to artworks are historically and emotionally charged, and the same artist or painting can be understood differently by different people at different times. This is defined by Haskell as the 'relativity of taste.'[15]

In this thesis, it is argued that the situation is far more nuanced than the concept of a 'cycle in taste' implies and not all artists are subject to re-evaluation of the same kind. Furthermore, there were varying views on Reni at any given time. The reactions of different audiences to Reni are explored and it is demonstrated how and why views on art changed. The perceived aesthetic 'quality' of Reni's

[11] Steegman, *Consort of Taste* (1950), 281. For the 'taste cycle', see Boime, 'Review of *Rediscoveries*' (1978), 610.
[12] Gombrich and Bell, 'Canons and Values' (1976), particularly 397, 407.
[13] Moxey, 'Motivating History' (1995). In terms of taking the canon for granted, Moxey cites Panofsky, 'History of Art' (1947), 18, fn. 13, and Gombrich, *Art History* (1975), 54. See Moxey, 'Motivating History' (1995), 396-97.
[14] Haskell, *Rediscoveries* (1980), 4.
[15] Haskell, *Rediscoveries* (1980), 4.

works is not assumed or assessed but several factors which influence an artist's reputation are identified. These include: developments in the art market; changes in the accessibility of art; theoretical developments in the discipline of art history; intellectual, religious, moral, and political changes in a particular country or society; the social values and backgrounds of distinct audiences; the activity of the governing classes; the influence of 'tastemakers' (typically collectors, dealers, travellers, connoisseurs, and writers) whose opinions held great sway; institutional display within galleries and exhibitions; and activities in the contemporary art world. Each of these strata are examined and interlinked, producing a composite picture of Reni's reputation through an analysis of biography, literature, travel, the art market, collecting, artistic production, and display. With respect to tastemakers, consideration is given to a wide range of voices, not all of equal weight. This is particularly the case in the nineteenth century, where the views of the cognoscenti are examined alongside those of the general public and those who claimed to speak for them. In addition, a number of wider themes are explored, including national identity, the status of copies and prints, and the place of Old Masters in the literary and historical imagination.

In Part One, Reni's reputation in seventeenth-century Britain is considered. Attention is paid predominantly to the years 1600–88. This period is divided into three distinct chronological sections, marked by significant changes within the monarchy: 1603–42; 1642–60; and 1660–88. The first section explores how Reni's reputation was first established in Britain and identifies a number of significant paintings acquired by prominent individuals. The second section considers the activity of three travellers who explored Reni's works on the Continent during the Civil War and Interregnum and helped to spread his reputation in Britain. The third section examines several collectors and travellers who engaged with Reni's works in the second half of the century. It is demonstrated that by the end of the seventeenth century, Reni's œuvre had become widely known in Britain and his status as a celebrated artist had become entrenched and broadly accepted by a diverse group of individuals.

In Part Two, Reni's reputation in eighteenth-century Britain is considered. Attention is paid predominantly to the years 1689–1789. In comparison to the

seventeenth century, when relatively few major works by Reni were collected, a substantial number of paintings by and after Reni entered the country in these years. This period is thus divided into four thematic sections which each span the course of the century. In the first section, the activities of four prominent aristocratic collectors are considered, each of whom actively sought Reni's works and displayed them in public-oriented and private spaces in their newly constructed houses. In the second section, copies after Reni are examined – objects which became immensely popular in this period. These range from small-scale handheld objects to large-scale ceiling paintings, specifically incorporated into interior schemes. It is argued that copies played a crucial role in promoting Reni's reputation in Britain and exemplify his broad acceptance into the canon. In the third section, Reni's reputation in art and travel literature is considered. It is demonstrated that while his revered status remained largely intact in this period, some reservations began to emerge. In the final section, Reni's reputation among Royal Academicians at the turn of the nineteenth century is explored. The pronouncements of these individuals are shown to have been immensely significant in dismantling Reni's reputation in Britain at this time.

In Part Three, Reni's reputation in nineteenth-century Britain is considered. This was a time of great change in taste and fashion in the country, involving the 'most vociferous' reversal of artistic value of any period.[16] Towards the end of the nineteenth century, the poet and literary critic John Addington Symonds (1840–1893) stated: 'There are few things more perplexing than the vicissitudes of taste and celebrity.' He noted how 'during the last half-century, taste has been more capricious, revolutionary, and apparently anarchical than at any previous epoch.'[17] The changes to Reni's reputation that occurred in this period are especially extreme and thus offer a particularly fruitful avenue for research. Attention is paid predominantly to the years 1790–1903. This period is divided into three chronological sections which mark significant changes to Reni's reputation. In each, different thematic areas are considered: the art market;

[16] Haskell, *Rediscoveries* (1980), 5.
[17] Symonds, *Catholic Reaction II* (1887), 368.

collectors; galleries; exhibitions; travel; and Reni's critical reputation. The first section focuses on the years 1789–1840, a period of transformation for Reni in Britain. Whilst respect for the artist was largely maintained, criticism began to accumulate, and his reputation became increasingly unstable. In the second section, the years 1841–61 are explored. This was a watershed for Reni's reputation and the period in which it was most significantly altered. Particular attention is paid to the activities of the National Gallery and display of paintings at the 1857 Manchester Art Treasures Exhibition, as well as the judgements of Ruskin and the journalist John Morris Moore (1811–1885). In the final section, Reni's reputation in the years 1862–1903 is considered. It is shown that Reni's status significantly diminished in this period and he became subject to widespread institutional rejection. Particular attention is drawn to pronouncements made by Symonds. However, there was also a great deal of ambiguity in this period and Reni's reputation was not fully destroyed at this time. There were even hints that he may have been coming back into fashion. Following this, Reni's artistic rehabilitation in the twentieth century is briefly considered in a Coda, which particularly focuses on the important role of Mahon.

However, before examining the reception of Reni in Britain, it is important first to address his reputation in seventeenth-century Italy. Many of the ideas about Reni seen in Britain over the next two centuries had roots in the writing of Reni's peers, and it is crucial to establish the received opinion of Reni during these years. It was in the artistic biographies of Giovanni Pietro Bellori (1613–1696) and Carlo Cesare Malvasia (1616–1693) that Reni's identity as a 'divine' artist of grace and beauty was first established.

Guido Reni's Reputation in Seventeenth-Century Italy

Early in his career, Reni was admired as an artist of supreme talent and skill. In 1612, Domenichino (1581–1641) described his paintings as 'heavenly things, painted by the hand of an angel! Oh what airs of paradise, what expression of emotions! Oh, what truth and liveliness! Now this is real painting!'[18] The same year, Giuseppe Cesari, called Cavaliere d'Arpino (1568–1640) decreed: 'Our paintings are made by a man, Guido's by an angel.'[19] Such praise only grew in strength as Reni's career progressed, with an unprecedented number of poems written in his honour. In *Felsina Pittrice* (1678), the art historian Carlo Cesare Malvasia (1616–1693) stated, 'no painter has ever been celebrated in so many published compositions as Guido.'[20] One such collection, *Lodi al Signor Guido Reni* (1632), included a four-line sonnet by Francesco Maria Praeda (dates unknown), dedicated to 'the divine Guido Reni, Apelles of his age… foremost in the art of painting.'[21] Such praise continued after Reni's death, with Giovanni Battista Passeri (1610–1679) describing Reni in *Vite de' pittori, scultori ed architetti* (1672) as 'the noblest, most majestic painter who ever lived – not only in my opinion, but by common consent.'[22] The picture that emerges from contemporary Italian sources is one of a divine artist with supernatural talent and an exemplary ability to depict ideal beauty and grace. This functioned as a crucial component of Reni's reputation alongside various aspects of his character and became embedded in British descriptions of the artist.

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[18] Cit. Pericolo, 'Beyond Perfection (2019), 60. Malvasia, *Felsina Pittrice* (1841), Vol. 1, 232.
[19] Malvasia, *Felsina Pittrice* (2019), Vol. 1, 62-3, in reference to Palazzo Quirinale, Rome.
[20] Malvasia, *Felsina Pittrice* (2019), Vol. 1, 190-91.
[21] Van Gastel, 'Reni and Poets' (2011), 194, identifies Giacomo Giacobi (dates unknown) as the editor. *Lodi al Signor Guido Reni* (Bologna, 1632), trans. Elizabeth Vandiver. Cit. Spear, '*Divine' Guido* (1997), 260-61. See also *Ode per le nozze del signor Annibale Marescotti e donna Barbara Rangoni* (Bologna, 1637). Cit. Malvasia, *Felsina Pittrice* (2019), Vol. 1, 190-91.
[22] Passeri, *Vite de' pittori, scultori ed architetti, che anno lavorato in Roma: morti dal 1641 fino al 1673* (Rome: Gregorio Settari, 1772). Cit. Hibbard, 'Reni's Immaculate Conception' (1969), 19.

The Italian tradition of artistic biography was established by Giorgio Vasari (1511–1574) in *Le Vite de' più eccellenti pittori, scultori, e architettori* (1550). Such biographies of seventeenth-century Italian writers provided crucial source material for later British writers but are not an altogether reliable core of documentary material. A form of creative writing, they are highly subjective, with biases and misinformation. They frequently featured anecdotes – freestanding stories which could be used differently by different writers and had potency as memorable, pithy tales with emotional weight. Their continued resonance is evident from their use by eighteenth-century British writers such as Jonathan Richardson the Elder (1667–1745), the first figure to incorporate a story by Malvasia directly into an English text in *An Essay on the Theory of Painting* (1715). Twentieth-century scholars also focused on seventeenth-century Italian stories about Reni, Richard E. Spear giving them a psycho-sexual reading and Giovanna Perini offering a more contextual approach.[23] Recent academic writing has explored the inconsistent ways this material has been used by art historians, with Martin Delbeke, Evonne Levy, and Stephen F. Ostrow emphasising how artistic biographies have been either vehemently rejected as biased and irrelevant or unquestioningly accepted as objective and authoritative.[24]

In this chapter, attention is paid to the accounts of Reni provided by Giovanni Pietro Bellori (1613–1696) and Malvasia. Their biographies were the sources most widely read by British audiences and thus most fundamental in shaping opinions of the artist. Other biographers of Reni, such as Passeri and Francesco Scannelli (1616–?1663), are less relevant for English sources but fed into popular texts such as Luigi Lanzi's (1732–1810) *Storia Pittorica dell'Italia* (1792/96).

[23] Spear, *'Divine' Guido* (1997); Perini, 'Malvasia's Florentine Letters' (1988); Perini, 'L'arte di descrivere' (1989); Perini, 'Biographical Anecdotes' (1990).
[24] Delbeke, Levy, and Ostrow, 'Prolegomena' (2007), 5-10.

Giovanni Pietro Bellori

In 1672, the Roman painter and antiquarian Giovanni Pietro Bellori published *Vite de' Pittori, Scultori et Architetti Moderni*, a series of biographies which advanced a classicist theory of art.[25] Nine contemporary artists were represented: Annibale Carracci, Agostino Carracci, Federico Barocci, Caravaggio, Rubens, van Dyck, Domenichino, Giovanni Lanfranco, and Poussin. In 1942, three further lives were published posthumously which had been intended for a second part to the *Vite*: Reni, Andrea Sacchi, and Carlo Maratti.[26] Whilst Reni's biography was not included in the published *Vite*, Bellori referenced him in other biographies and in his prefatory essay, 'L'Idea del pittore, della scultore e dell'architetto Scelta dalle bellezze naturali superiore alla Natura,' which derived from a lecture delivered at Accademia di San Luca, Rome, in 1664.[27] Bellori's *Vite* was widely disseminated after its publication and quickly became known in Britain, with William Aglionby (c. 1642–1705) borrowing from it for his account of Bolognese masters in *Painting Illustrated in Three Diallogues* (1685) and intending to translate six of the lives in a later publication.[28] John Dryden (1631–1700) likewise quoted from the prefatory essay in the Preface to his 1695 translation of Charles Alphonse du Fresnoy's (1611–1668) *Arte Graphica* (1668).[29] In 1728, a second edition led Bellori's text to become even more well-known in Britain. It is Bellori's references to Reni in the published *Vite* which are discussed here, as it is these with which British readers would have been familiar.[30]

In Bellori's essay 'L'Idea', he introduced a crucial notion associated with Reni: ideal beauty. For Bellori, people, as imperfect reflections of a greater ideal, should be represented as they ought to be, not as they are. Artists should 'form

[25] See Bell and Willette, *Art History* (2002).
[26] Crossover with stories in the prefatory essay 'L'Idea' suggests that Bellori wrote Reni's 'Life' in the 1640s.
[27] Reni is paradoxically set up as an exemplary artist embodying the 'Idea' yet is not given a coherent life of his own.
[28] Aglionby, *Painting Illustrated* (1685), 84-5. See Kitson, 'British Artists' (1992), 435.
[29] Du Fresnoy, *De Arte Graphica* (1695), viii.
[30] There is a distinction between the modern historiography of Bellori and the first wave of primary source material.

in their minds an example of higher beauty, and by contemplating that, they emend nature without fault of colour or line.' In this way, the 'Idea constitutes the perfection of natural beauty and unites the truth with the verisimilitude of things that appear before the eye.'[31] This was achieved through the careful study of nature and the selection and unification of different aspects of beauty from diverse sources, much like how the fourth-century Greek artist Zeuxis depicted Helen's ideal beauty by combining the best features of five living models.[32] For Bellori, there was a fine balance between replicating nature and producing fantasy – artists should follow an 'ideal middle way.'[33] Therefore art 'not only rivals but becomes superior to nature, revealing its works to us elegant and finished, whereas nature is not wont to display them to us perfect in every part.'[34] In this respect, Bellori idolised classical art and Renaissance painting, particularly Raphael. At the beginning of 'Life of Annibale Carracci', he proclaimed that 'the divine Raphael' had increased art's beauty to 'sublime heights' through his adherence to idealism. Following Raphael's death, artists abandoned 'the study of nature' and 'corrupted art with the *maniera*,' resulting in the decline of art. This was only restored by 'the sublime genius' of Annibale Carracci and the school he established in Bologna, as 'art, fallen and nearly extinct, [rose] again.'[35]

Bellori bestowed special praise on Reni, a member of the Carracci School, for being the painter 'who in beauty surpassed every other artist of our era' and for priding himself on 'painting beauty not as it presented itself to his eyes, but resembling the one that he saw in his Idea.'[36] By way of example, he cited Reni's *St Michael* (Fig. 2; Santa Maria della Concezione, Rome). At its creation in 1635, it was widely speculated that Satan depicted in the painting was based on Cardinal Giovanni Battista Pamphilj, later Pope Innocent X (1574–1655), who had clashed with Reni in 1627. In *Felsina Pittrice* (1678), Malvasia claimed that

[31] Bellori, 'Idea.' In Bellori, *Vite* (2005), 57-8.
[32] Bellori, 'Idea.' In Bellori, *Vite* (2005), 58. The primary sources are Cicero's *Rhetoric* and Pliny's *Natural History*. See Mansfield, *Too Beautiful to Picture (*2007).
[33] See Raben, 'Bellori's Art' (2006), 133.
[34] Bellori, 'Idea.' In Bellori, *Vite* (2005), 58.
[35] Bellori, 'Annibale Carracci.' In Bellori, *Vite* (2005), 71-2.
[36] Bellori, 'Idea.' In Bellori, *Vite* (2005), 59.

Reni had asked him to curb gossip regarding the resemblance between Pamphilj and Satan, denying that he would ever slander 'so eminent a person,' although if Pamphilj 'resembled the ugly mug of the devil, this was not his brush's fault.'[37] By contrast, in his account, Bellori quoted Reni discussing his intention to portray St Michael as angelically as possible, as seen in heaven:

> I should like to have had the brush of an angel or forms of paradise, to form the archangel and to see him in heaven, but I was unable to ascend so high, and on earth I sought them in vain. So I looked at the form that I established for myself in my idea. The idea of ugliness is also to be found, but this I set forth in the Devil and leave it there, for I flee him even in thought and do not care to keep him in my mind.[38]

Both Bellori and Malvasia suggested that beauty was a crucial component of Reni's conception of *St Michael*, in that the artist envisaged a broader contrast than merely the biblical narrative of a victory of good over evil. For both authors, the painting intentionally functioned as an allegory of the superiority of pure idealistic beauty over the worldly imperfection of true humanity and realist painting.[39] Furthermore, for Bellori, Reni exemplified his notion of the 'Idea'.

Carlo Cesare Malvasia

In 1678, Malvasia published *Felsina Pittrice*, a series of biographies of Bolognese artists. His intention was to promote the skill of native artists of his hometown, affording them renewed attention. He divided his text into four sections, marking distinct periods in the history of Bolognese production: the primitives; Franco Francia; the Carracci; and the four eminent pupils of the Carracci School: Reni, Domenichino, Albani, and Guercino. He published *Felsina Pittrice* alongside two other texts focusing on Bolognese art: *Le Pitture di Bologna* (1686), a guidebook that did not require a great knowledge of Italian; and *Il Claustro di S. Michele in Bosco di Bologna* (1694), a description of the

[37] Malvasia, *Felsina Pittrice* (2019), Vol. 1, 84-5.
[38] Bellori, 'Idea.' In Bellori, *Vite* (2005), 59.
[39] In the unpublished 'Life' of Reni, Bellori further explored these themes. See Bellori, 'Guido Reni.' In Bellori, *Vite* (2005), 347, 367.

Carracci School's paintings in a religious complex on the outskirts of the city.[40] Whilst these were never fully translated into English, they were known to British audiences from an early date. Aglionby used *Felsina Pittrice* in *Painting Illustrated in Three Diallogues* (1686) and Richardson included an anecdote from Malvasia in *An Essay on the Theory of Painting* (1715).[41] In Thomas Nugent's (c. 1700–1772) *The Grand Tour* (1749), visitors to Bologna were recommended 'a little book called *Le Pitture di Bologna*, with which you may furnish yourself in this city.'[42] Sir Joshua Reynolds (1723–1792) featured a direct quote from *Felsina Pittrice* in his Fifteenth Discourse (1790) to the Royal Academy and personally owned a copy of the publication as well two copies of *Le Pitture di Bologna*.[43]

Several themes emerge in Malvasia's account of Reni. The first concerns Reni's character and appearance, with a vivid image presented of a handsome man whose beauty was 'an external beam of the inner qualities of his soul.' Reni apparently served as a 'model for the most beautiful angel' for Ludovico Carracci despite his 'great humility.'[44] An eccentric man, Reni was 'commonly held to be a virgin' and 'always feared poisoning and witchcraft.' For these reasons, 'he wanted no woman in his house and detested dealing with them.'[45] Generous with his money, he had financial problems and became addicted to gambling. The 'most grievous harm to Guido,' according to Malvasia, 'was always gambling, to which he more than ever fell prey in his final years, and because of which he almost completely lost his early affection for the art and the reputation he treasured so deeply.'[46] Reni was also highly religious and particularly devoted to the Virgin. Describing this lifelong commitment,

[40] Malvasia, *Le Pitture Di Bologna* (1969); Malvasia, *S. Michele in Bosco* (1694).
[41] Aglionby, *Painting Illustrated* (1685), 84-5; Richardson, 'Essay on Theory' (1773), 95-6.
[42] Nugent, *Grand Tour* (1749), Vol. 3, 294.
[43] Sir Joshua Reynolds, Fifteenth Discourse, Royal Academy, 10 December 1790. Cit. Reynolds, *Discourses* (1997), 273. See Perini, 'Reynolds' (1988), 158-59, and Wenderholm, 'Reynolds' (2013), 214. Reynolds's copy of *Felsina Pittrice* was sold at PrPh Gallery, New York, *Philobiblon: One Thousand Years of Bibliography* 3 (2008), No. 216. Reynolds' copies of *Le Pitture di Bologna* were sold in Reynolds's posthumous sale. See Sale Cat. Reynolds (1798), Nos. 1998, 2000.
[44] Malvasia, *Felsina Pittrice* (2019), Vol. 1, 15-6, 22, 23.
[45] Malvasia, *Felsina Pittrice* (2019), Vol. 1, 164-65, 152-53.
[46] Malvasia, *Felsina Pittrice* (2019), Vol. 1, 105-06.

Malvasia stated: 'In his youth he would go every Saturday to the Monte della Guardia to venerate her image, and every evening, infallibly for as long as he lived, he went to the Madonna della Vita.' The strength of his devotion led many to believe that 'Mary had deigned to appear to Guido,' enabling him to represent her 'more beautiful and modest' than other artists. Towards the end of Reni's life, his piety was discernible in a vision in which he saw himself in a procession of the Virgin and found himself healed of a foot malady.[47]

Alongside this vivid description of Reni as a person, Malvasia also gave a sense of his artistic pedigree in Bologna. After studying with Denis Calvaert, Reni became a member of the renowned Carracci School, led by Ludovico, Annibale, and Agostino Carracci. He was encouraged to study the works of past artists and select their best qualities for incorporation into his own style. Sir Denis Mahon identifies the 'main foundation for the edifice' of this approach to be a sonnet attributed to Agostino Carracci, published by Malvasia.[48] In his biography of Reni, Malvasia described the technique as 'the perfect manner of the Carracci, the only synthesis and the quintessence of all the best styles.'[49] Indeed, 'like the bee from the flowers, so Guido went about tasting the exquisite and most perfect from all,' deriving figures from Raphael, postures from Correggio, and grace from Parmigianino.[50]

As well as offering an anecdotal account of Reni's life, Malvasia presented a critique of Reni's artistic output and analysis of his development over time. He highlighted Reni's propensity to be copied, indicating that 'everyone in his studio sought to be his ape by counterfeiting his style.' Reni apparently declared: 'Let them do so; as long as they take from me, I don't mind. I'd be bothered if they worked from their own invention and equaled me.'[51] Malvasia further reported that Reni 'allowed free access to the copyists or retouched some of their works.' Many of his pictures were completed by others and passed off as

[47] Malvasia, *Felsina Pittrice* (2019), Vol. 1, 166-67.
[48] Malvasia, *Felsina Pittrice* (1841), Vol. 1, 129. Mahon, *Studies* (1971), 208. See 212-29 for the Carracci School's 'eclecticism', and Mahon, 'Eclecticism' (1953).
[49] Malvasia, *Felsina Pittrice* (2019), Vol. 1, 15-6.
[50] Malvasia, *Felsina Pittrice* (2019), Vol. 1, 176-77.
[51] Malvasia, *Felsina Pittrice* (2019), Vol. 1, 170-71.

originals and Reni was apparently 'extremely upset' at hearing of such frauds.[52] Furthermore, after Reni's death, a vast number of paintings were left uncompleted in his studio; some were sold in their current state, others were completed by assistants.[53]

For Malvasia, there was a clear distinction between works produced in the two halves of Reni's career, the turning point identified as the mid-1620s. Reni's 'first manner' featured bold, saturated colours, a strong contrast between light and shade, firm brushstrokes, and figures with dynamic expressions. Drawing on aspects of Tintoretto, Caravaggio, and the Carracci, they had widespread appeal and 'a certain sovereignty, tenderness, and nobility,' as well as 'great invention.'[54] Indeed, their novelty was a key factor in their appeal.[55] Examples include: *The Crucifixion of St Peter* (Fig. 3; Pinacoteca Vaticana, Vatican City); *The Assumption of the Virgin* (San Ambrogio, Genoa); and *The Crucifixion* (Pinacoteca Nazionale, Bologna). The instigation for this manner was Annibale Carracci's suggestion in *circa* 1595 that a new style of painting could be adopted from the success of Caravaggio:

> I would oppose an extreme tenderness to his fierceness of colour. Does he use a compact and falling light? I would want it diffused and face-on. Does he conceal the difficulties of art amidst the shadows of night? I would like to uncover in the bright light of noonday the most learned and erudite researches. If he throws down on the canvas whatever he sees in nature, without seizing the good and the best, I would choose the most perfect parts, the most correctly ordered, giving to the figures that nobility and harmony lacking in the originals.[56]

By contrast, Reni's 'second manner' is characterised by subdued colours, often with strong tones of white lead, clear and open light, gentle and free brushstrokes, and an emphasis on delicacy and grace. The distinction between

[52] Malvasia, *Felsina Pittrice* (2019), Vol. 1, 76-7.
[53] Malvasia, *Felsina Pittrice* (2019), Vol. 1, 128-30. For Reni's studio, see Spike, 'L'Inventario' (1988).
[54] Malvasia, *Felsina Pittrice* (2019), Vol. 1, 48-9.
[55] For instance, Malvasia, *Felsina Pittrice* (2019), Vol. 1, 44-5.
[56] Malvasia, *Felsina Pittrice* (2019), Vol. 1, 28-9.

these two styles intensified over time. In later works, Reni used white lead extensively, intending that his paintings would eventually yellow to their 'true and good natural colour,' forestalling their deterioration.[57] More reminiscent of works by Veronese and Titian, paintings which exemplify this style include: *The Immaculate Conception* (Fig. 4; The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York); *The Triumph of Job* (Notre Dame, Paris); and *St Michael*.

For Malvasia, the move from the 'first manner' to the 'second manner' constituted a complex change in Reni's practice, resulting in 'unfamiliar and foreign' paintings which required careful scrutiny:

> The most learned, then, will always prefer Guido's second manner, whereas his first manner will always be favoured by the most curious. The first manner will stop you in your tracks, but the second will teach you. And if common opinion holds his second manner to be too languorous and delicate, connoisseurs will instead extol it as the most knowledgeable and supreme.[58]

However, whilst Malvasia is here positive about Reni's 'second manner', suggesting that it could be perceived to surpass his first if carefully studied, elsewhere he was less enthusiastic.[59] In one section, he identified a clear decline in Reni's output, attributable to his advanced age, gambling habit, and anxious state of mind.[60] In another section, he claimed that works of Reni's 'second manner' should not be ranked as highly as works of his first:

> I would like to pardon them as the products more of necessity than genius, as works made more for the sake of spirit than glory; but I never know how to excuse the depraved motive compelling him. I will only pray the reader to believe that these are not the works that brought him his great fame, although the contrary is asserted by their possessors (speaking in their own interest) or by the inexpert… I will say further,

[57] Malvasia, *Felsina Pittrice* (2019), Vol. 1, 184-85.
[58] Malvasia, *Felsina Pittrice* (2019), Vol. 1, 182-83.
[59] For Malvasia's changing attitude, see Pericolo, 'Beyond Perfection' (2019), 22-3.
[60] Malvasia, *Felsina Pittrice* (2019), Vol. 1, 100-01.

> and in all sincerity (in agreement with common opinion) that even the paintings of his second manner (as it is called) ought not to be ranked at the same level as the impressive ones he executed early on, even though they are more learned, noble, and deeply considered than the earlier ones, so much so that they were, and still are highly celebrated.[61]

Malvasia was not alone in identifying two distinct periods in Reni's œuvre and finding his later style problematic. Scannelli, in *Il Microcosmo della pittura* (1657), preferred Reni's 'first manner' to his second, finding that they showed 'a greater excellence and naturalness, even if plebeian minds find them less valuable.' Indeed: 'I do not see why the former, as such, should not be acclaimed over all his other paintings and imitated.'[62] Similarly, for Passeri, whose *Vite* was published posthumously in 1773, Reni's 'second manner' again constituted a decline in his output:

> Although separately each one is very beautiful and well-painted, as a whole they nonetheless do not show the great inventiveness, that richness of composition, the judicious handling of passages of shadows and light, nor the appropriateness in the figures and their expressions, which were so excellent in the earlier works.[63]

Despite such concerns, Malvasia considered Reni an exemplary artist who embodied qualities of grace and ideal beauty. Throughout his biography, he utilised the term 'sprezzatura', formulated by Baldassare Castiglione (1478–1529) to describe a quality of nonchalance or careless ease, to characterise Reni's grace.[64] One particular story demonstrates the ease with which Reni could depict a figure of great beauty, as Count Filippo Aldovrandi (dates unknown), at Guercino's (1591–1666) instigation, asked Reni 'to reveal the identity of the woman he employed in obtaining the beautiful airs of his Madonnas, Magdalenes, and others.' In response:

> Guido ordered his colour grinder, who had the ugly mug of a criminal,

[61] Malvasia, *Felsina Pittrice* (2019), Vol. 1, 114-15.
[62] Cit. Pericolo, 'Beyond Perfection' (2019), 39.
[63] Passeri, *Vite* (1934), 99, fn. 1.
[64] See Castiglione, *Il Cortigiano* (2002), 32. See Malvasia, *Felsina Pittrice* (2019), Vol. 1, 24-5.

> to sit down and look at the sky, and with him as model he produced a little head of a female saint, the sight of which was so wondrous that it seems to the count something made by enchantment, when Guido said: 'My dear Count, tell your man from Cento that beautiful ideas need be in the head, and that any model will then serve.[65]

This story became extremely well-known in Britain and reveals the extent to which Reni was associated with ideal beauty and Bellori's 'Idea'.

* * *

This examination of the received opinion on Reni in seventeenth-century Italy demonstrates that he attracted a great deal of attention in his lifetime and commanded much respect. Whilst some aspects of his works were found problematic, particularly the stylistic features of his 'second manner', the overall impression is one of a heavenly artist who epitomised grace and ideal beauty. It is this powerful image which confronted British travellers and collectors when they encountered Reni's works in Italy. Over the course of the next two centuries, this positive view of Reni changed, and various aspects of his paintings became controversial. As subsequent critics debated whether his paintings were satisfactorily beautiful or excessively so, these early accounts became crucial in the development of different viewpoints and greatly influenced individuals forming an understanding of seventeenth-century Bolognese painting.

[65] Malvasia, *Felsina Pittrice* (2019), Vol. 1, 180-81.

The Reception of Guido Reni in the First Half of the Seventeenth Century

Political, religious, and legal changes during the reign of James I (1566–1625) and decade following the accession of Charles I (1600–1649) significantly affected the development of collecting in Britain. Not only did Italian art become increasingly popular, but procuring works became more manageable, with paintings by established masters, such as Raphael and Titian, and contemporary artists, including Caravaggio, Bartolomeo Manfredi, Giovanni Baglione, and Domenico Fetti, assuming prominent positions in British private collections. However, the desire for works by Reni is a particularly remarkable phenomenon. Despite his location within the Papal States and strong Catholic faith, it is possible, even in these early years, to discern British fascination with the artist. Moreover, there is evidence that he appealed to collectors of a variety of means, religious beliefs, and political persuasions. Such individuals engaged with Reni's works on the Continent and actively acquired his pictures. Some even met the artist himself. Consequently, a significant quantity of Reni's paintings and drawings entered the country from an early date. This level of selection marks Reni's works as curious additions to collections. His reputation in Britain was further cemented by the commissioning of copies and engravings of his famous pictures.

In this chapter, the activities of several figures before and during the reign of Charles I are considered, all of whom either interacted with Reni on the Continent or collected his works. Their activities can be considered illustrative of wider collecting habits in seventeenth-century Britain. This is the period in which Reni's reputation in Britain was first established, so it is essential to consider how collectors developed a taste for Reni and obtained his pictures when it was far from straightforward to do so.

Nicholas Lanier

The first British individual known to have been aware of Reni was Nicholas Lanier (1588–1666), a courtier who served as 'Master of the King's Musick' from 1625 until his death. Early in the seventeenth century, Lanier met Reni in Italy, most likely in his studio in Bologna. In 1610/11, Lanier accompanied William Cecil, Viscount Cranborne, later 2nd Earl of Salisbury (1591–1668) on a trip to Italy to further his education.[66] Whilst Cranborne was encouraged not to venture into the Papal States, it is not implausible that Lanier made a personal trip to Bologna.[67] There are several pieces of evidence in support of this meeting, the most compelling being a drawing of Lanier by Reni (Fig. 5; Los Angeles County Museum of Art), likely given to him by the artist. Close facial similarities with a recently discovered portrait from 1613 – *Nicholas Lanier with The Liberation of St Peter* by Hendrick van Steenwyck II (Weiss Gallery) – suggest that the two pictures represent Lanier at a similar age.[68] Reni's *St Peter Penitent* (Royal Collection Trust), in Lanier's possession before being sold to Charles I, provides further support for a meeting at this date. In Abraham van der Doort's (c. 1575/1580?–1640) inventory of the Royal Collection, compiled in *circa* 1640, the painting is described as 'done by Gui=do Bullones Item the Picture being onelye a head of St Peetr Bought by ye Kinge of Mr Nicholas Laneere upon a Strayning frame'.[69] It is not included in a list of works exported by Lanier from Rome in 1626 and thus likely obtained on an earlier trip.[70]

The fact that the LACMA drawing exists suggests that either Reni and Lanier had a great affinity or there was a prospect of Lanier commissioning a painted

[66] Historical Manuscripts Commission, *Marquis of Salisbury* (1899), Vol. 21, 212. Warrant, 17 February 1610 [O.S.], TNA E351/543 mm. 240-54, in Andrew Ashbee, ed. *Records of English Court Music* (Aldershot: Scolar Press, 1986–96), Vol. 4, 87. Cit. Chaney and Wilks, *Jacobean Grand Tour* (2014), 154.

[67] Marc'Antonio Correr to Doge and Senate, 16 September 1610 [N.S.], *Cal. S.P. Venice, 1603–1613*, 42. Cit. Chaney and Wilks, *Jacobean Grand Tour* (2014), 155.

[68] Susan E. James dates the drawing to 1625/26, while Jeremy Wood proposes 1610/11. See James, 'Reni's Drawing of Lanier' (1996), 16, and Wood, 'Connoisseurship' (2010), 39-40.

[69] Bodleian Library, Oxford, MS. Ash 1514, f. 14. Cit. Millar, 'Van der Doort's Catalogue' (1958–60), 10.

[70] Wood, 'Connoisseurship' (2010), 39-40. For works exported by Lanier in 1626, see Gori, *Archivio* (1880), Vol. 4, 77-8.

portrait from the artist.[71] There are a remarkable number of portraits of Lanier, including: a self-portrait (Faculty of Music, University of Oxford); a triple portrait by William Dobson (1611–1646) (Courtauld Institute of Art, London) featuring Lanier, Dobson, and Sir Charles Cotterell (1615–1701); and portraits by van Dyck (Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna) and Jan Lievens (now lost), the latter of which was engraved by Lucas Vosterman (Victoria & Albert Museum, London). That Lanier would also choose to be represented by an Italian artist such as Reni is not wholly surprising. Moreover, there is even a possibility that Lanier went to Bologna with the specific intention of meeting Reni. Both men shared a background in music, as Reni's father, the musician Daniele Reni (d. 1594), trained him at the harpsichord. Additionally, Daniele Reni's predecessor as *maestro di cappella* at San Petronio, Bologna, was Domenico Maria Ferrabosco (1513–1573), whose son Alfonso the Elder (1543–1588) settled in Britain in 1562. Alfonso's son, Alfonso the Younger (c. 1575–1628), remained in Britain and became a court musician and music tutor to Prince Henry Frederick (1594–1612). Alfonso and Lanier moved in the same royal circles and, in 1610, their association was further established when Alfonso married Lanier's aunt Ellen (d. 1638). This familial connection may have been a prompt for Lanier to visit Bologna.

Lanier's appreciation and understanding of art was recognised within his lifetime. In 1625–26, he embarked on two journeys to Italy to purchase pictures for Charles I, playing a key role in the wholesale acquisition of the Gonzaga collection in Mantua. He negotiated the sale with Sir Isaac Wake (c. 1581–1632), the Venetian Ambassador, together with the Netherlandish merchant dealer Daniel Nys (1575–1647). In August 1625, Nys described Lanier as having 'a great enthusiasm for pictures and drawing' and 'buying the earth with his well lined purse.'[72] This is corroborated by Roger North (1653–1734), who reported that, in the process of purchasing pictures for Charles, Lanier would 'at the same time agree to have a good parcel of waste paper drawings, that had been collected, but not much esteemed, for himself.'[73] Lanier became one of the first

[71] Wood, 'Connoisseurship' (2010), 40.
[72] Daniel Nys to Alessandro Striggi, 2 August 1624. Cit. Spink, 'Lanier in Italy' *(*1959), 243.
[73] North, *Autobiography* (1887), 202.

major British collectors of drawings at a time when there was a lack of appreciation for the art form.

Alongside the LACMA drawing and painting of *St Peter*, other works by Reni are associated with Lanier. Two drawings by Reni (Royal Collection Trust) bear the 'Lanier star', a symbol marked on drawings within Lanier's collection: *A Woman's Head* and *The Virgin and Child*, the latter now attributed to Circle of Reni.[74] These were acquired by Lanier in either 1610–11 or 1625–26, most likely in the manner described by North. This is supported by Malvasia, who stated that 'no great personage, however grand, ever passed through this city without asking to meet [Reni] personally or to watch him paint' and that Reni gave away works 'to those who pleased him.'[75] A further drawing in the Royal Collection may also have belonged to Lanier; it is related in subject to *Virgin and Child*, although it does not itself bear the 'Lanier star'.[76] There is also evidence that Lanier's family owned works by Reni. In August 1652, John Evelyn (1620–1706) recorded 'excellent things of *Polydor*, *Guido*, *Raphael*, *Tintoret* &c' in the Greenwich collection of Lanier's uncle Jerome Lanier (1620–1706), a man 'greatly skill'd in Painting & Musique.'[77]

The interaction between Lanier and Reni provides the first example of Reni's works entering a British collection and the first instance of a British individual having contact with and awareness of the artist. The LACMA drawing is remarkable, both in terms of content and date of execution, and the additional acquisitions indicate Lanier's continued approval of Reni and intention to build his reputation in Britain.

[74] RCIN 903196 bears a 'large star' while RCIN 903419 bears a 'small star'. For Lanier's stars, see Wood, 'Lanier' (2003), 85-121.
[75] Malvasia, *Felsina Pittrice* (2019), Vol. 1, 162-63, 186-87.
[76] Kurz, *Bolognese Drawings* (1955), 2, fn. 5.
[77] Evelyn, *Diary* (2000), Vol. 3, 74-5, 2 August 1652.

George Villiers, 1st Duke of Buckingham

The second individual to acquire a work by Reni was the influential collector George Villiers, 1st Duke of Buckingham (1592–1628), whose collection comprised nearly 400 pictures. In 1619, Buckingham engaged Sir Balthazar Gerbier (1592–1633) as Keeper of his collection, art adviser, and agent, sending him to Italy in 1621 with instructions 'to choose for him rarities, bookes, medals, marble statues, and Pictures great store.'[78] The speed at which Buckingham's collection was assembled was noted by Gerbier in 1625: 'out of all the amateurs, and Princes and Kings, there is not one who has collected in forty years as many pictures as your Excellency has collected in five.'[79] Buckingham's enthusiasm as a collector was further acknowledged by the diplomat Sir Dudley Carleton (1599–1654), who described him in 1625 as 'the most earnest lover of paintings (I thinck) in the world.'[80]

The first Reni to enter Buckingham's collection was the significant, large-scale *The Four Seasons* (Fig. 6; Kunsthistoriches Museum, Vienna), included in a list of pictures acquired by Gerbier for Buckingham in 1621, at the beginning of his time abroad. It was described as 'the great peece of Guido Boulonese of the fower seasons' and was purchased for £70, making it the second most expensive purchase of Gerbier's trip after Titian's *Ecce Homo* (Kunsthistoriches Museum, Vienna).[81] In 1621, Reni was briefly based in Rome, where Gerbier likely acquired the painting directly from his studio. Gerbier's own taste undoubtedly influenced the acquisition; he had a known partiality for Veronese and the Bolognese School and may have desired to appear au fait with contemporary art for his patron.[82] On arriving in Britain, *The Four Seasons* was displayed prominently in the Great Chamber of Buckingham's residence at York House, London.[83] It remained in the collection until 1650 when it was sold to Archduke

[78] Gerbier, *Balthazar Gerbier* (1646), 2.
[79] Sir Balthazar Gerbier. Cit. Millar, *Age of Charles I* (1972), 17.
[80] Sir Dudley Carleton to Dudley Carleton, 6 January 1625. National Archives, London, P.R.O. S.P. 84/122/16. Cit. Hill and Lockyer, 'Carleton and Buckingham' (2003), 29.
[81] Bodleian Library, Oxford, MS. Tanner 73, ff. 122-23. Cit. Philip, 'Gerbier and Buckingham' (1957), 156. The 'great peece of Titian of Pilatus' apparently cost £275.
[82] See McEvansoneya, 'Some Documents' (1987), 29.
[83] Bodleian Library, Oxford, Rawlinson MSS A.341, f. 30. Cit. Davies, 'Buckingham Collection'

Leopold Wilhelm of Austria (1614–1662) in a bulk sale in Brussels organised by George Villiers, 2nd Duke of Buckingham (1628–1687).[84] Its attribution is now in dispute; Michael Levey, Stephen Pepper, and Richard E. Spear have suggested that it is a studio work or possibly by the hand of Francesco Gessi (1588–1649).[85] Nevertheless, it was attributed to Reni in the seventeenth century.

Shortly after *The Four Seasons* arrived in Britain, Reni's colossal *The Baptism of Christ* (Fig. 7; Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna) entered another British collection, indicating the spread of admiration for the artist. The picture was commissioned in 1623 by Johannes Jacobs (fl. 1623–1642), a Flemish silversmith and founder of the Flemish College in Bologna, and was shortly afterwards sent to Flanders.[86] By 1625, it was included in a list of 46 pictures belonging to James, 2nd Marquess of Hamilton and 4th Earl of Arran (1589–1625), drawn up after his death.[87] It is unclear how Hamilton acquired the picture so quickly after its commission, but the quality of his collection was widely acknowledged by 1622, when he was identified as one of five significant English collectors in a life of Titian published by Tizianello (c. 1570–1650).[88] In the list of 1625, entitled 'Coppy of the Note of pictures & payntings Belonging to the Right honnorable Marquis Hamleton deceased delivered to my Lord Duke according to my Lord Marquis his warrant of 14th March 1624/5', the painting is described as 'a great peece of St. John Baptising Christ of Guido Bullonese.'[89] The 'Duke' referenced in the title is now acknowledged as Buckingham, whom Hamilton had supported politically.[90] Buckingham appears to have been offered Hamilton's collection in 1625, either in a will or posthumous sale, and took

(1907), 379.

[84] Fairfax, *Buckingham Collection* (1758), 12.

[85] Levey, *Later Italian Pictures* (1991), xv; Pepper, *Reni* (1988), 348, Appendix 2, B2; Spear, *'Divine' Guido* (1997), 242-43. The Kunsthistoriches Museum still ascribes the picture to Reni.

[86] Malvasia, *Felsina Pittrice* (2019), Vol. 1, 96-7.

[87] 'Coppy of the Note of pictures & payntings Belonging to the Right honourable Lord Marquis Hamleton deceased delivered to my Lord Duke according to my Lord Marquis his warrant of the 14th of march 1624/5.' Lennoxlove, East Lothian, Hamilton MSS M4/3. Cit. McEvansoneya, 'Hamilton Collection' (1992), 526, No. 32.

[88] McEvansoneya, 'Hamilton Collection' (1992), 525.

[89] 'Coppy of the Note.' Cit. McEvansoneya, 'Hamilton Collection' (1992), 526, No. 32.

[90] McEvansoneya, 'Hamilton Collection' (1992), 524.

possession of the painting then. Philip McEvansoneya suggests that *The Baptism of Christ* was selected to complement *The Four Seasons*, proving that Buckingham's collection was 'demonstrably up-to-date.'[91] The work is not mentioned in the 1635 inventory of Buckingham's collection but was included in the 1650 sale to Archduke Leopold Wilhelm of Austria.[92] In unpublished marginalia in Brian Fairfax's (1633–1711) description of Buckingham's collection, *The Baptism of Christ* is listed as sold for the exorbitant sum of '11,145 gilders.'[93] The inclusion of such important, large-scale works as *The Four Seasons* and *The Baptism of Christ* in Buckingham's collection indicates the potential for a British audience to appreciate exemplary works by Reni in an influential and prominent setting at an early date, aiding the spread of his reputation.

Charles I

The largest repository of Reni's works in Britain in this period was the collection of Charles I and his wife Henrietta Maria (1609–1669). After his brother's death in 1612, the young Prince Charles inherited a significant collection of Italian art. This was supplemented by that of his mother Queen Anne of Denmark (1574–1619), a patron of the arts who promoted the study of Italian among her children.[94] These collections greatly influenced Charles's artistic pursuits, together with the activities of Buckingham, Thomas Howard, 14th Earl of Arundel (1586–1646), and the architect and connoisseur Inigo Jones (1573–1652). A letter written by Girolamo Lando (fl. 1622), Venetian Ambassador in England, in 1622 reveals the extent to which Charles's love of painting was recognised as a young man: 'he loves old paintings, especially those of our province and city.'[95] This appetite was fostered on his trip to Spain in 1623 with

[91] McEvansoneya, 'Italian Pictures' (2003), 323.
[92] Fairfax, *Buckingham Collection* (1758), 12. See McEvansoneya, 'Hamilton Collection' (1992), 525-26.
[93] British Library, London, Add. MS 17915, f. 4v. Cit. McEvansoneya, 'Vertue, Walpole, Buckingham' (1996), 4.
[94] See Wilks, 'Art Collecting' (1997), 41-5, and Meyer, 'Charles I' (1913), 14.
[95] 'Relation of England of Girolamo Lando, Venetian Ambassador 21 September 1622.' *CSPV* (1621–23), 452. Cit. Peck, *Consuming Splendor* (2005), 184.

Buckingham, where he was introduced to a substantial royal collection, presented with gifts of art, and commissioned paintings from artists such as Velázquez. Consequently, even before his accession in 1624, Charles had amassed an impressive collection of both contemporary and Renaissance art. In 1625, Rubens (1577–1640) described him as 'the greatest amateur of painting among the princes of the world.'[96] In 1627, Rubens further commented: 'when it comes to fine pictures by the hands of first-class masters, I have never seen such a large number in one place as in the royal palaces and in the gallery of the late Duke of Buckingham.'[97] By 1638, Charles's collection comprised over 1,500 works, representing the majority of celebrated Italian masters.

In 1634, Pope Urban VIII (1568–1664) sent the Italian priest Gregorio Panzani (1592–1660) on a diplomatic mission to Britain to gather information about the status of Catholics. Following Charles's marriage to Henrietta Maria in 1625, the papacy nurtured hopes that he might convert to Catholicism and sent gifts to the royal couple, including paintings. In his role as papal emissary, Panzani sent letters to Cardinal Francesco Barberini (1597–1679), Secretary of State in Rome, regarding the possibility of reconciliation with the Catholic church. This correspondence also reveals much about artistic taste in Britain at this time, specifically the predilections of Charles, as Panzani advised on paintings deemed appropriate as gifts. In March 1635, Panzani indicated the King's well-known taste in paintings and revealed his hopes for a beautiful gift from Rome.[98] In April, Barberini questioned whether Charles preferred copies of celebrated paintings or original works and ancient or modern masters.[99] In June, he repeated

[96] Sir Peter Paul Rubens to Palamède de Fabri, Sieur de Valavez, 10 January 1625. Cit. Magurn, *Rubens Letters* (1955), 101–02.

[97] Sir Peter Paul Rubens to Nicolas-Claude Fabri de Peiresc, 9 August 1629. Cit. Magurn, *Rubens Letters* (1955), 321-22.

[98] Gregorio Panzani to Cardinal Francesco Barberini, 23 March 1635. National Archives, London, Rome Transcripts, P.R.O. 31.9.17B: 'Che questo Rè habbia gusto de Quadri io lo confermo per cosa notorissima e come tale molti di questi Ministri mi hanno detto 'istesso concetto, cioè, che quà s'aspettana da Roma ne venisse un' bel regalo, Anzi tutti mi hanno esovtato à scriverlo.' Also cit. Wittkower, 'Inigo Jones' (1948), 50.

[99] Cardinal Francesco Barberini to Gregorio Panzani, 11 April 1635. National Archives, London, Rome Transcripts, P.R.O. 31/10/10, f. 89: 'V.S. dimandò de i quadri, ma non ha scritto, se voglia copie, o originali, se antichi o moderni, o altri particolari, i quali V.S. un'altra volta si compiacerà d'acennare perchè, chi ha un gusto, chi ha un altro intanto le mando quelli, che vedrà nella congiunto lista…'

the request and gave an indication of artists under consideration in Rome. Identifying Pietro da Cortona, Domenichino, Lanfranco, and 'Mr Rufino' as living artists close to the Carracci style, he noted that Reni blossomed in the Carracci style in Bologna and was known to be esteemed. He further identified Albani and Guercino, also members of the Carracci School, and Ribera (Lo Spagnoletto), a Spanish artist based in Italy who was influenced by Caravaggio. He then asked whether the Carracci would be accepted in place of ancient masters.[100] In response, Panzani stated that Charles did not mind whether paintings were modern or old, provided that they were of good quality.[101] In July, Panzani expanded on this, stating that Charles had a good nose for paintings and preferred artists of the previous generation to contemporary painters, due to their rarity. Nevertheless, high-quality modern works might please the King and he proposed ascertaining whether the Carracci might be a possibility. Crucially, the one modern artist whom he knew for certain that Charles admired was Reni.[102] There may have been some personal bias here, it being convenient that Charles admired the Bolognese master as this allowed his Catholic sympathies to be exploited. However, Charles was aware of Reni by this stage, given the presence of his works in Britain and the Gonzaga Collection. The fact that Panzani picked

[100] Cardinal Francesco Barberini to Gregorio Panzani, 7 June 1635. National Archives, London, Rome Transcripts, P.R.O. 31/10/10, f. 116: 'Mi dispiace di non haver potuto fin hora procacciar quadro degno della Regina, ho pero posta da quadro parte fin hora qualche cosa che potra servir per accessorio mentre spero trovare almeno un quadro a proposito. V.S. intanto mi scriva più particolarmente il senso et gusto di cotesti poesi. Prima se circa i quadri antichi o nuovi secondo se di quali maesti siano ne gl'antichi, siano ne moderni, et di quali maniere più si dilettino.
Qui vive Pietro Cortonese, Domenichino, Giovanni Lanfranco, et Mr Rusino i quali tirono assai verso la Maniera de i Caracci, nella quale fioriscono in Bologna Guido, il quale e di quella stima che V.S. sa, s'è ancora l'Albani ma per ordinario fa in piccolo v'è il Guercino da Cento, ma questo ombreggia non puoco più le sue figure, et l'avantaggia lo Spagnoletto, che vive in Napoli. De gl'antichi più stimati non torno in particolare a dire i nomi essendo noti a V.S., solo dimando se i quadri de i Caracci, che qui sono in stima quanto siano quegli de i pittori antichi sono costi stimati.'

[101] Gregorio Panzani to Cardinal Francesco Barberini, June 1637. National Archives, London, Rome Transcripts, P.R.O. 31/9/17B. Cit. Wittkower, 'Inigo Jones' (1948), 50.

[102] Gregorio Panzani to Cardinal Francesco Barberini, 11 July 1635. National Archives, London, Rome Transcripts, P.R.O. 31/9/17B: 'Intorno alli Quadri non li posso dir altro di particolare, solo che questo Rè se intende assai, et hà buon naso, e senza dubbio piaceranno più gli antichi buoni che li moderni per la rarità. Pure se ancora a li moderni fussèro buoni piaceranno. Domandarò, se le opere del Caracci qui piaccino particolarmente hò inteso, che le opere di Guido gli piaccino singolarmente.' Also cit. Wittkower, 'Inigo Jones' (1948), 50.

Reni from Barberini's list and made such a direct claim is striking, confirming the likelihood of Charles's true preference for the master.[103]

Reni's paintings were commissioned by a broad spectrum of monarchs, with Malvasia claiming that there was not a prince who did not seek a work for their museum or study.[104] Such pictures included *The Abduction of Helen* (Musée du Louvre, Paris), commissioned in 1627 for Philip IV of Spain (1605–1665) and later intended for Marie de'Medici (1575–1642), Queen of France and mother of Henrietta Maria.[105] In addition, Malvasia recorded that Reni produced three versions of *The Rape of Europa* for foreign collectors, including Charles.[106] Unfortunately, there is no evidence that the picture entered Charles's collection and it may never have been completed.[107] Nevertheless, a survey of the inventories of Charles I reveals that at least fourteen paintings associated with Reni were in his possession. Alongside works which entered the collection by chance through mass sales and intermediaries are pictures directly intended for Charles and Henrietta Maria.

The first and most significant of Reni's works to arrive in the Royal Collection were *The Feats of Hercules* (Figs. 8-11; Musée du Louvre, Paris). Levey describes this series as 'the most important acquisition the King had made of a living Italian artist's work.'[108] The four paintings were commissioned in 1617–20 by Ferdinando Gonzaga, Duke of Mantua (1587–1626) and were included in

[103] Panzani also stated on 11 July 1635 that Orazio Gentileschi suggested that the King would like Lanfranco, Spagnoletto, and the Carracci. See Gregorio Panzani to Cardinal Francesco Barberini, 11 July 1635. National Archives, London, Rome Transcripts, P.R.O. 31/9/17B: 'Ho parlato con un Pittore Fiorentino, che è quà assai buono, chiamato il Gentileschi, et destramente gli ho dimandato del Rè e mi ha confirmato, che il Rè hà buon naso in queste materie, et credo non gli spiaceranno l'opere del Lanfranco, del Spagnoletto, et del Caraccio, per non havere questo Re opere delli detti, sicome hà delli altri Pittori celebri… Qui hà spasso il Montagù, et è venuto all'orrecchie del Rè, che si vendono bellissimi Tavole della Signa del Cardinal Ludovisio di Raffaelle, del Correggio, Titiano, e Leonardo da Vinci, quali sicome sono state predicate per bellissime al Rè cosi dubbio piacerebbono molto.' Also cit. Wittkower, 'Inigo Jones' (1948), 50.

[104] Malvasia, *Felsina Pittrice* (2019), Vol. 1, 72-3.

[105] When the picture reached Paris, the French queen was in exile. It entered the collection of Louis Phélipeaux de la Vrillière (1598–1681).

[106] Malvasia, *Felsina Pittrice* (2019), Vol. 1, 72-3.

[107] See Finaldi and Kitson, *Discovering Italian Baroque* (1997), 136.

[108] Levey, *Later Italian Pictures* (1991), xxii.

the 1627 inventory of the Gonzaga collection, valued at 1,440 lire.[109] They entered the Royal Collection as part of Charles's wholesale purchase of the Gonzaga collection. The acquisition cost approximately £16,000 and included significant works by Titian, Raphael, and Caravaggio, allowing Charles to develop his collection swiftly and broadly. The first part of the collection, including *The Feats of Hercules*, was dispatched to Britain in 1628. On its arrival, the series was prominently displayed, with three of the paintings (*The Death of Hercules*, *The Rape of Deïanira*, and *Hercules and the Hydra*) listed in inventories of the Royal Collection drawn up after Charles's death as being in the Gallery at St James's Palace, London.[110] *The Death of Hercules* was placed in a particularly conspicuous position in the middle of the sequence of Titian's *Emperors* (destroyed), facing a portrait of Charles. Timothy Wilks suggests that the works had strong symbolic connotations for Charles, given the significance of Herculean imagery as an imperial motif attached to his brother which he later adopted.[111] *The Death of Hercules*, the dramatic moment before the Greek hero's apotheosis, may have been singled out in the display for its allusions to the Stuarts' heroic attributes and divinely sanctioned role on earth.[112] At Charles I's sale, the series was valued at £400 and sold on 23 October 1651 to 'R. Grynder' and others.[113] They were subsequently acquired by the French banker Everhard Jabach (1618–1695) and sold to King Louis XIV of France (1638–1715) in 1662.

A further painting by Reni which derived from the Gonzaga collection was *The Toilet of Venus* (National Gallery, London). Whilst the painting was not included in the 1627 inventory of the Gonzaga collection, a picture attributed to Reni matching this description was mentioned by Andrea Barbazzi (1581/82–1656) in a letter to Duke Ferdinando Gonzaga of 1622.[114] The picture appears to have

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[109] Cit. Morselli, *Le Collezioni Gongaza* (2000), 278, No. 777.

[110] 'In the Gallerie att St Jameses.' Victoria & Albert Museum, London, MS. 86. J. 13, ff. 103-12, Nos. 27, 38, 43. Cit. Millar, 'Van der Doort's Catalogue' (1958–60), 227.

[111] See Wilks, 'Paying Attention' (2005), 159-60.

[112] Wilks, 'Paying Attention' (2005), 159-60.

[113] National Archives, London, MS. in P.R.O., Miscellaneous Exchequer Auditors of Land Revenue, L.R.2, 124, f. 167v. National Archives, London, P.R.O. S.P. 29/447/24, 1. Millar, 'Inventories and Valuations' (1970–72), 274. Also cit. Levey, *Italian Pictures* (1991), 123.

[114] Andrea Barbazzi to Duke Ferdinando Gonzaga, 10 August 1622: 'Venere servita dalle tre Grazie.' Cit. Braghirolli, 'Reni and Gonzaga' (1885), 103. See Morselli, *Gonzaga* (2002), 51. Spear associates *The Judgement of Paris* with a picture in Wallraf-Richartz-Museum, Cologne.

been commissioned in 1622 by Gonzaga together with a companion piece of *The Judgement of Paris* (possibly on loan to Wallraf-Richartz-Museum, Cologne in 1987) and was in his possession prior to the sale of the late 1620s. *The Toilet of Venus* was likely sold to Charles along with *The Feats of Hercules*, arriving in Britain in 1628. In the 1649 inventory of Somerset House, 'Venus. sitting to be dressed by ye 3 graces' done by 'Guido. Bullones' was valued at £200.[115] On 23 October 1651, it was sold to 'Harrison' and others.[116]

The next Reni to enter the Royal Collection was *Portia* (present whereabouts unknown), purchased in Germany by James, 3rd Marquess and 1st Duke of Hamilton (1606–1649) during the Thirty Years' War.[117] A letter from Charles of 1632 reveals that Hamilton was specifically instructed to acquire pictures and statues in Munich on the King's behalf.[118] The painting is listed in van der Doort's inventory as 'brought – from Germaine by my Lord Marquesse – Hambleton,' on display in the Chair Room at Whitehall.[119] Shortly afterwards, in 1637, Reni's *Judith and the Head of Holofernes* (present whereabouts unknown) was purchased by Charles along with 22 other Italian pictures belonging to William Frizell (c. 1610–after 1662), the King's postmaster for foreign affairs. A protégé of Arundel, Frizell likely acquired the paintings after he travelled to Italy in 1636.[120] In van der Doort's inventory, the painting is listed in the Breakfast Chamber at Whitehall in the lodgings of Marie de Rohan, Duchess of Chevreuse (1600–1679), a French courtier based in Britain.[121] The picture is associated with 'lady Cutting holofernes. head. by Guido' valued at

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See Spear, *'Divine' Guido* (1997), 350, Appendix 2, B10.

[115] Corsham Court, Wiltshire, Corsham MS, f. 24, No. 285. Cit. Millar, 'Inventories and Valuations' (1970–72), 316. The work is also included in a copy of Abraham van der Doort's inventory of the Royal Collection. Cit. Vertue, *Catalogue of Charles I* (1757), 4, No. 18.

[116] Levey, *Later Italian Pictures* (1991), 123.

[117] See Wilks, 'Plundered Art' (2013), 46.

[118] Cit. Burnet, *Memoirs of Hamilton* (1852), 28-9.

[119] British Library, London, Add. MS. 10112, f. 5, No. 4. Cit. Millar, 'Van der Doort's Catalogue' (1958–60), 62. See also Vertue, *Catalogue of Charles I* (1757), 152, No. 2.

[120] See Reade, 'Frizell' (1947), 72.

[121] Bodleian Library, Oxford, MS. Ash. 1514, f. 83. Cit. Millar, 'Van der Doort's Catalogue' (1958–60), 61, and Ogden and Ogden, 'Van der Doort's Lists' (1947), 248.

£40 at Somerset House in September 1649 and sold to 'Stone' and others on 23 October 1651.[122]

The Civil War inventories reference six other paintings by Reni in Charles's possession: *Head of St Peter* (Royal Collection Trust, previously owned by Lanier), *St Sebastian with a Pilgrim*, a copy of *St Peter and St John*, *St Mary Magdalene*, *Cupid Standing*, and *Moses holding two stone tablets* (present whereabouts all unknown). Furthermore, a letter in the Barberini archives indicates that in February 1637 Charles was presented with a copy (present whereabouts unknown) of Reni's *St Michael* (Santa Maria della Concezione, Rome) as a gift by a member of the Capuchin order, namely Barberini's brother Antonio, Cardinal of Sant' Onofrio (1569–1646).[123] George Conn (d. 1640), papal agent to the English court in 1636–39, described how Charles 'recognised at once that the St Michael was of the school of Guido Reni and at first hesitated whether it were not by his own hand, but then concluded absolutely that it was not, but praised it none the less excessively.'[124] This indicates Charles's familiarity with Reni and his high degree of connoisseurship, although there may also have been some flattery at play here too. All of Reni's paintings in the Royal Collection appear to have left in the sale of the King's pictures, besides *St Peter, Judith*, and *The Toilet of Venus* which were later returned.

Henrietta Maria

Whilst Charles was clearly interested in Reni, Henrietta Maria's activity is particularly intriguing. In 1637, she commissioned Reni to paint a picture for the ceiling of her Bedchamber at Queen's House, Greenwich, a residence designed by Inigo Jones and completed in 1635. This marks the first time that a painting by Reni is known to have been specifically produced for a British audience.

[122] Corsham Court, Wiltshire, Corsham MS, f. 18, No. 82. Cit. Millar, 'Inventories and Valuations' (1970–72), 303.
[123] Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Vatican City, Barb. Lat. 8640, f. 139r. Cit. Madocks Lister, 'Trumperies' (2000), 154, fn. 10.
[124] Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Vatican City, Barb. Lat. 8645, f. 287. Cit. Lightbown, 'Charles I' (1989), 60-1.

According to Malvasia, Albani (1578–1660) was at one point involved in its production; however, Reni later removed his contribution.[125] Henrietta Maria's inclination towards Reni is not wholly surprising; his works were in the Royal Collection and she had a known partiality for contemporary Italian art, also selecting Orazio Gentileschi (1563–1639) to produce paintings for Queen's House. This interest can be associated with her Catholic faith and the past patronage of her mother, Marie de' Medici, as well as the influence of her husband. She also received paintings from Italy as diplomatic gifts, including several works sent from Barberini in 1635–37. Henrietta Maria used Barberini's services in commissioning Reni's painting and he played a significant role in its creation. The work – *Bacchus and Ariadne on the Island of Naxos* – drew a great deal of attention at the time of its production, with Malvasia describing it as 'the last of his greatest and most outstanding paintings.'[126] However, it ultimately came to a tragic end, destroyed in Paris shortly after its completion.

The earliest known reference to the commission is in a letter of March 1637 in which George Conn informed Barberini that Henrietta Maria would send 'the measure of a picture, which Her Majesty wishes to have executed by Guido, for her chapel at Greenwich.'[127] The reference to the Chapel appears to be an error; elsewhere, the Queen's Bedchamber is more convincingly cited as the intended location.[128] In May 1637, Conn revealed that Henrietta Maria was aware that there had been past difficulties with Reni over commissions for foreign monarchies and stated: 'Her Majesty leaves it up to Your Eminence to commission the story and figures you will deem more suitable, and the price will be to your entire satisfaction.'[129] In November 1637, Barberini reported to Conn that the painting 'had been ordered.'[130] He mediated with Reni directly, likely

[125] Malvasia, *Felsina Pittrice* (2019), Vol. 1, 116-17; 343, fn. 344.
[126] Malvasia, *Felsina Pittrice* (2019), Vol. 1, 116-17.
[127] George Conn to Cardinal Francesco Barberini, 2 March 1637. Panzani's Despatch, Vatican Papers 40, f. 136. Cit. Everett Green, *Henrietta Maria's Letters* (1857), 35.
[128] The intended location is typically given as the ceiling of Henrietta Maria's Bedchamber at Queen's House, Greenwich. See Albion, *Charles I* (1935), 396.
[129] George Conn to Cardinal Francesco Barberini, 1 May 1637. Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Vatican City, Barb. Lat. 8640, f. 262v. Cit. Madocks, 'Trop de beautez découvertes' (1984), 545, fn. 4.
[130] Cardinal Francesco Barberini to George Conn, 21 November 1637. Cit. Levey, *Later Italian Pictures* (1991), xxiv.

through Cardinal Giulio Sachetti (1587–1663), papal legate in Bologna in 1637–40, who approached the artist Giovanni Francesco Negri (1593–1659) for advice.[131] Barberini's initial choice of subject, *Cephalus and Aurora*, was changed by January 1638 to *Bacchus and Ariadne on the Island of Naxos*.[132] In February 1638, Barberini revealed his pleasure that Reni had embraced this new subject.[133]

In 1639, Basil, Viscount Feilding, later 2nd Earl of Denbigh (c. 1608–1675), English Ambassador at Venice in 1634–39, visited Reni's studio in Bologna and possibly saw the painting in progress. In February 1639, he wrote to James, 3rd Marquess of Hamilton (1606–1649): 'Att Bologna I saw two pictures [w]hich will be finished next summer, the one by Guido Rheno, the other [b]y Albano intended either for the King or Queene.'[134] By August 1640, the fame of the picture had reached England, with Carlo Rossetti (1614–1681), papal agent from 1639, informing Barberini that Henrietta Maria had heard much talk about the painting and greatly desired its arrival. He suggested that an English ship be sent to Civita Vecchia or Livorno and did not believe that the painting should be placed on the ceiling at Queen's House since it was 'so beautiful and unique.'[135]

By September 1640, the picture was finished and sent to Rome, where Barberini expressed concern that both the story and the way it was painted, with nude figures, were 'lascivious.' As its subject had been chosen in Italy and not by the

[131] See Malvasia, *Felsina Pittrice* (2019), Vol. 1, 342, fn. 343.
[132] Cardinal Francesco Barberini to George Conn, 9 January 1638. National Archives, London, Rome Transcripts, P.R.O. 31/10/11, f. 144. Also cit. Levey, *Later Italian Pictures* (1991), xxiv-xxv.
[133] Cardinal Francesco Barberini to George Conn, 20 February 1638. National Archives, London, Rome Transcripts, P.R.O. 31/10/11, f. 153: 'Di già si è cominciata da Guido la historia di Arianna però non mi pure di protertrattar hora a farla motore et dipingere quella di Cefalo tanto più che questa di Arianna fu da lui prontamente accettata come li andasse più a gusto, et io credo che importi assai incontrare il genio de i pittori.'
[134] Basil, Viscount Feilding to James, 3rd Marquess of Hamilton, 1/11 February 1639. National Archives of Scotland, Edinburgh, GD 406/1/9515. Cit. Shakeshaft, 'To Much Bewiched' (1986), Appendix 1, Letter 64. That it was possible for visitors to Reni's studio to see the picture is supported by Assarino, *Sensi d'umiltà* (1639), 27-9.
[135] Carlo Rossetti to Cardinal Francesco Barberini, 24 August 1640. National Archives, London, Rome Transcripts, P.R.O. 31/9/18, f. 350. Also cit. Madocks, 'Trop de beautez découvertes' (1984), 545, fn. 6.

Queen, he decided to 'delay its shipping lest those heretics over there become more scandalised.' Instead, he arranged for a sketch to be sent to Britain. He informed Rossetti: 'I do not think that Guido has done a better painting and, considering his age, he will not be painting many more. But, as I say, its faults are serious ones in so much as they offend decorum.'[136] Nevertheless, Henrietta Maria was not discouraged; the next month, Rossetti reassured Barberini that she remained willing to receive the painting and, if necessary, the artist himself could be held accountable for any offence.[137] In February 1641, Barberini announced that he was preparing to send the picture, although he remained concerned about its perceived impropriety 'in these parliamentary times.'[138] On 10 March, Rossetti again informed Barberini that even though Reni had chosen not to cover any nudity, the picture remained acceptable to the Queen and would be placed in the 'Villanova' (presumably Queen's House) but not on the ceiling.[139] On 16 March, Barberini again expressed concern about being associated with the picture but stated that he would be prepared to help when it became clear that it was by the Queen's orders.[140] In April, Rossetti suggested that the painting be given to the Englishman 'Fairfax' in Livorno so that it might come safely to London.[141] Further correspondence between the two men concerns additional

[136] Cardinal Francesco Barberini to Carlo Rossetti, 8 September 1640. Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Vatican City, Barb. Lat. 8648, ff. 135r-v. Cit. Madocks, 'Trop de beautez découvertes' (1984), 546, fn. 7.

[137] Carlo Rossetti to Cardinal Francesco Barberini, 19 October 1640. National Archives, London, Rome Transcripts, P.R.O. 31/9/19, f. 74. Also cit. Madocks, 'Trop de beautez découvertes' (1984), 546, fn. 12

[138] Cardinal Francesco Barberini to Carlo Rossetti, 2 February 1641. National Archives, London, Rome Transcripts, P.R.O. 31/9/19, f. 350. Also cit. Madocks, 'Trop de beautez découvertes' (1984), 546, fn. 13.

[139] Carlo Rossetti to Cardinal Francesco Barberini, 10 March 1641. National Archives, London, Rome Transcripts, P.R.O. 31/9/19, ff. 41-2: 'la Regina mi ha dimandato della Salute di S. Sta et di V. Emza, et havendoli ancora parlato del Quadro, mi ha soggiunto S. Mta, che ne pigliarà particolar cura acciò sia dato ordine a qualche Capitano di Vascelli, che quì lo conduchi sicuramte soggiungendomi S. Mta che ne restarà molto tenuta alla cortesia di V. Emza, et benchè il Pittore habbia non così copertamte dipinto, non dimeno il Quadro sarà a S. Mta accettissmo, e si crede, che non sia per metterlo altrimte nel sofitto, facedone di già molta stima, ma penso che andarà alla Villanova tanto a S. Mta grata, che è umiltone.'

[140] Cardinal Francesco Barberini to Carlo Rossetti, 16 March 1641. National Archives, London, Rome Transcripts, P.R.O. 31/9/20, f. 54: 'Hora io non ricordo alla Regina il quadro dell'Arianna per non mancare in cotesta parte fastidii ne per le ragioni scritte a V.S. mi par di poter apparire in publico il donatore ma quando apparisca che d'ordine di Sua Maesta si possa, io non mancherò di assistere.'

[141] Carlo Rossetti to Cardinal Francesco Barberini, 19 April 1641. National Archives, London,

possible routes for the picture and references to the rarity of the painting in Reni's œuvre, with the final known mention of the painting made in July 1641.[142] It is from this point on that the story becomes murky.

In Joseph Berrington's (dates unknown) *Memoirs of Gregorio Panzani* (1793), it is stated that the picture was entrusted to the English courtier and secret agent Walter Montagu (c. 1603–1677), who was based in Rome in 1636 and France in 1641–43. It is unclear when Montagu supposedly took the painting but it was apparently in his possession when he returned to Britain via Paris: 'By the hands of this gentleman [Barberini], the cardinal presented the king of England with a large picture of Bacchus, the work of the celebrated Guido, understanding that his majesty was a great admirer of such curiosities.'[143] Nevertheless, it is unlikely that the picture came to Henrietta Maria through this channel. A diary entry by the Austrian Cardinal Count Ernst Adalbert von Harrach (1598–1667) in January 1646 presents an entirely different timeline. von Harrach journeyed to Rome in 1632, 1637, 1644, 1655, and 1667 and claimed that Barberini wished to hand the picture to Walter Leslie (1606–1667), a Scottish soldier and diplomat who was sent to Italy in 1645. In his diary, von Harrach claimed that Barberini paid 1,800 ducatoni for the picture but Leslie dared not accept it because he had received orders not to visit the Barberini. According to von Harrach, the painting's subject was the Seven Kings led by the Romans in triumph.[144] Despite this alternative subject, Mattia Biffis argues that this is a reference to Reni's *Bacchus and Ariadne*.[145] The suggestion that the painting remained in Rome in 1646 is supported by a letter of 1645 in which Barberini requested that Paolo

Rome Transcripts, P.R.O. 31/9/20, f. 129: 'La Regina mi ha fatto sapere, che quando VE si voglia compiacere d'inviarli il Quadro, lo potrà mandare al Sr Ferfax Inglese a Livorno, che averà ordiner di riceverlo, et mandarlo sicuramente a Londra.'

[142] Cardinal Francesco Barberini to Carlo Rossetti, 20 April 1641. National Archives, London, Rome Transcripts, P.R.O. 31/9/20, ff. 137v-138r. Also cit. Madocks, 'Trop de beautez découvertes' (1984), 546, fn. 14. Cardinal Francesco Barberini to Carlo Rossetti, 25 May 1641. National Archives, London, Rome Transcripts, P.R.O. 31/9/20, ff. 201-02. Also cit. Madocks, 'Trop de beautez découvertes' (1984), 546, fn. 16. For the final mention of the picture, see Carlo Rossetti to Cardinal Francesco Barberini, 27 July 1641. Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Vatican City, Barb. Lat. 8650, f. 112r. Cit. Madocks, 'Trop de beautez découvertes' (1984), 546.

[143] Berrington, *Memoirs of Panzani* (1793), 191.

[144] Cardinal Ernst Adalbert von Harrach, 19 January 1646. Cit. Biffis, 'Barberino gli volse donare un quadro' (2018), 149.

[145] Biffis, 'Barberino gli volse donare un quadro' (2018), 149.

Gismondi, known as Paolo Perugino (1612–1685), produce a full-scale copy, presumably from the original.[146] Furthermore, in April 1647, the Queen's Chancellor Sir Kenelm Digby (1603–1665) informed Barberini: 'I have written to Paris that you should be told in what condition the Queen's picture arrived, and your great concern for it.'[147] Susan Madocks considers it 'attractive' to suppose that the picture referenced here is *Bacchus and Ariadne*.[148]

It thus seems likely that the painting was sent to Henrietta Maria in 1647 when she was based in France during the Civil War. Certainly, it was in her possession by August 1648, when Patrick Conn (fl. 1648), nephew of George Conn, wrote to Barberini from Paris. According to Conn, 'the poor queen' was 'reduced to such poverty' from the war that 'a member of her court… offered to pawn that fine painting by Guido given by Your Excellency, but he was not able to raise even a thousand scudi on it.'[149] By 1650, the painting entered the collection of the French financier Michel Particelli d'Emery (1596–1650). Following d'Emery's death, his widow destroyed it, objecting to its excessive nudity. According to Malvasia, it was torn to shreds and set on fire; André Félibien (1619–1695) similarly claimed that it was torn to pieces.[150] The composition is known through a 1640 engraving (Fig. 12), produced by Giovanni Battista Bolognini (1611–1688), a secondary 1727 engraving by Jacob Frey (1681–1752), and numerous copies and possible fragments.

Three copies are of particular significance here as an intriguing coda to the story.[151] The first is by Giovanni Francesco Romanelli (1610–1662), a member

[146] Cit. Malvasia, *Felsina Pittrice* (2019), Vol. 1, 345, fn. 351.
[147] Sir Kenelm Digby to Cardinal Francesco Barberini, 28 April 1647. Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Vatican City, Barb. Lat. 8616, f. 111r. Cit. Madocks, 'Trop de beautez découvertes' (1984), 547, fn. 20.
[148] Madocks, 'Trop de beautez découvertes' (1984), 547.
[149] Patrick Conn to Cardinal Francesco Barberini, 7 August 1648. Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Vatican City, Barb. Lat. 8666, ff. 23r-v. Cit. Madocks, 'Trop de beautez découvertes' (1984), 547, fn. 22.
[150] Malvasia, *Felsina Pittrice* (2019), Vol. 1, 118-19. See also André Félibien, *Entretien sur les vies et sur les ouvrages des plus excellents peintres anciens et modernes, Quatrième partie* (Paris: Sébastien Mabre-Cramoisy, 1685), Vol. 4, 206-07. Cit. Malvasia, *Felsina Pittrice* (2019), Vol. 1, 346, fn. 352.
[151] For other copies, see Guarino and Seccaroni, 'Il Bacco e Arianna' (2018), 39-48.

of Barberini's household. According to Malvasia, after *Bacchus and Ariadne* arrived in Rome in the 1640s, Pope Urban VIII 'ordered a copy from Romanelli… so as to ship it to the queen in place of the original, or else to keep the copy for himself, as some instead claim. In so doing, the pope added he did not want Italy deprived of such a great treasure.'[152] This is the only reference to Romanelli producing a copy in the 1640s and to a copy being sent to Henrietta Maria in place of the original. Whilst Romanelli did produce a pendant to *Bacchus and Ariadne* in 1640, on the subject of *The Marriage of Peleus and Thetis* (now lost), his copy of *Bacchus and Ariadne* was painted in the 1660s.[153] In July 1660, Romanelli wrote to Barberini, stating that he would make a picture of a similar size to *Peleus and Thetis*, choosing as his subject *Bacchus and Ariadne*, the same as the picture which had met such a 'tragic end.'[154] Whilst the subject was the same, Romanelli's painting functioned as a version of the original rather than a direct copy. Romanelli received a down payment of 100 scudi on 16 November 1660 (receiving 800 scudi in total) and the picture was delivered to Barberini on 29 May 1662.[155] According to Filippo Baldinucci (1625–1697), Romanelli's 'Banquet of the Gods' (*Peleus and Thetis*) and 'Bacchanal' (the version of *Bacchus and Ariadne*) were destined for James, Duke of York (1633–1701) and Charles II (1630–1685), but were never shipped.[156] This does not appear to be the case; rather, Romanelli's *Bacchus and Ariadne* was destined for the newly restored Charles II, arriving in his collection in the early 1660s. Levey suggests that it came with another work, either *Peleus and Thetis* or a closer copy of Reni's *Bacchus and Ariadne*, perhaps by Romanelli or his studio. It is also possible that it arrived with both.[157] In 1681, 'two very large pieces of painting' were seen by James Yonge (1646/47–1721) at Hampton Court which correspond to Romanelli's pictures, 'sent to the King

[152] Malvasia, *Felsina Pittrice* (2019), Vol. 1, 118-19.
[153] There is a preparatory study of *The Marriage of Peleus and Thetis* in Teylers Museum, Haarlem.
[154] Giovanni Francesco Romanelli to Cardinal Francesco Barberini, 27 July 1660. Cit. Pollak, 'Italienische Kunstlerbriefe' (1913), 60.
[155] Malvasia, *Felsina Pittrice* (2019), Vol. 1, 345, fn. 351.
[156] Filippo Baldinucci, *Notizie de' professori del disegno da Cimabue* (Florence: Per Santi Franchi, 1847 [1681–1728]), Vol. 5, 420. Cit. Malvasia, *Felsina Pittrice* (2019), Vol. 1, 345, fn. 351.
[157] Levey, *Later Italian Pictures* (1991), xxvii.

by Cardinal Barberini of excellent work.'[158] In the reign of James II, a 'large Bacchanalian' was further recorded at Hampton Court, Surrey.[159] However, by 1714 this picture was reattributed to Ciro Ferri (1634–1689) and put in storage.[160] In 1947, it was destroyed, with one surviving fragment: *Bust of a Cupid Shooting an Arrow* (Holyroodhouse, Edinburgh). As for Romanelli's purported close copy of Reni's picture, a work was recorded in the Royal Collection during the reign of George III (1738–1820) which possibly corresponds to this picture or a copy associated with Giuseppe Belloni (fl. 1645–1676).[161] This was also destroyed in 1947, the only surviving fragment being *Head of Modesty (*Holyroodhouse, Edinburgh). In Ottocento Gallery, Sussex, a further copy of Reni's painting, dated to shortly after 1642, has recently been attributed to Romanelli.[162] This is possibly the work mentioned by Malvasia as commissioned by the Pope.

In the 1660s, Barberini commissioned a further pair of copies of *Bacchus and Ariadne* by Giuseppe Belloni, another Rome-based artist in his circle. The payment for these works spanned several years; a deposit for the first was paid on 2 May 1664, with the balance settled on 9 July 1665 and the packaging for a 'large frame for the History of Ariadne sent by order to England' paid on 13 February 1666. On 12 February 1672, a further deposit of 25 scudi was paid to Belloni, with a payment made for a frame on 18 March 1673.[163] It is likely that Belloni produced the copies after Barberini's own copy of Reni's work by Paolo Perugino, executed *circa* 1645. Both paintings appear to have come to Britain, with at least the picture sent in 1673 intended for Charles II.[164] It is unclear what happened to this work, but Levey suggests that it might also be identifiable with

[158] F.N.L. Poynter, ed., *The Journal of James Yonge (1647–1721): Plymouth Surgeon* (London: Longman, Green & Co., 1963), 172. Cit. Levey, *Later Italian Pictures* (1991), xxvii.
[159] British Library, London, Harl. MS. 1890, f. 81. Cit. Levey, *Later Italian Pictures* (1991), xxvii.
[160] Vertue, *Catalogue of James II* (1758), 1049; 'The Pictures in the Store Rooms at Somerset House October: 28: 1714,' British Library, London, Add. MS. 19933, 253. Cit. Levey, *Later Italian Pictures* (1991), 156, also xxvii.
[161] Levey, *Later Italian Pictures* (1991), xxvii, fn. 77.
[162] See ottocento.co.uk/romanelli. Accessed 4 November 2019.
[163] Guarino and Seccaroni, 'Il Bacco e Arianna' (2018), 41-2.
[164] Guarino and Seccaroni, 'Il Bacco e Arianna' (2018), 42. See also, Levey, *Later Italian Pictures* (1991), 127-28, No. 584.

the above-cited copy of Reni's picture listed in the Royal Collection during the reign of George III and destroyed in 1947.[165]

The final copy was produced by Giovanni Battista Bolognini, Reni's pupil, in *circa* 1640–42.[166] Slightly smaller in scale than the original, it has recently been rediscovered and is now in a Private Collection in Montevideo, Uruguay. According to a card on its framework, discussed by Andrea Emiliani, the picture has a history in England dating back to the eighteenth century. After leaving Italy, it entered the Earl of Essex's collection and in 1777 was bought at Christie's by John Ashburnham, 2nd Earl of Ashburnham (1724–1812). In 1850, it was sold at Christie's and acquired by William Duncombe, 2nd Baron Feversham (1798–1867), who displayed it in the State Room at Duncombe Park. It was identified there by Gustav Friedrich Waagen (1794–1868) in 1857 as 'a genuine example of this often repeated and somewhat artificial composition.'[167] It is evident from this picture's afterlife that Reni's painting continued to hold interest for British collectors long after it was first conceived. This is supported by the spread of the image in print. Through these replicas, Reni's image secured its intended place not only in the British Royal Collection but in the British public imagination, despite its own tragic fate abroad.

Henrietta Maria's decision to commission a picture by Reni in 1637 is hugely significant. It demonstrates the high degree of respect which Reni enjoyed in Britain and the attraction of his works for a contemporary royal household. This was a high-profile and significant painting and the only known instance of Reni consciously producing a work for a British audience. That Barberini sent a version of Reni's picture to the newly crowned Charles II in the early 1660s is a further intriguing episode. As a restoration gift, it was a thoughtful gesture which would have played a significant role in renewing Britain's relationship with Rome. It was also a personal gift, deliberately referencing a painting in Charles's mother's collection which he may have seen as a child in France during the Civil

[165] Levey, *Later Italian Pictures* (1991), 127-28, No. 584.
[166] Higgot, 'Mutual fruitfulness' (2019), 7.
[167] Emiliani, 'Reni' (2018), 25. Waagen, *Galleries and Cabinets* (1857), 493-94.

War. If a direct copy of Reni's original picture had been sent at the same time, this makes the connection even more intimate.

James, 3rd Marquess of Hamilton

The final major collector of Reni in this period was James, 3rd Marquess of Hamilton, who had been involved in the purchase of Reni's *Portia* for Charles I. Hamilton was also a significant collector in his own right, owning 600 pictures by early 1643.[168] As stated, from autumn 1636 to summer 1638, Hamilton was in correspondence with Basil Feilding, English Ambassador at Venice. Much of their communication concerned the acquisition of paintings from three major Venetian sources: the merchant and dealer Bartolomeo della Nave (d. 1636); Michiel Priuli (d. 1638?), Procurator of San Marco; and the Flemish painter and dealer Nicolas Régnier (1591–1667). Hamilton described himself as 'much in looufe with pictures' and his desire to purchase paintings is evident in his statement, 'I would not have missed them for trebill what they cost.'[169] In 1637, Feilding arranged for three pictures by Reni, or retouched by him, to be sent to Hamilton. One of these, 'la testa di Helena di Guido' (present whereabouts unknown), was included in a list of pictures entitled 'In casa del Pittor Renier' and valued at 25 Ducats, while the other two, 'Cena di Guido Reni' (present whereabouts unknown) and 'S. Pietro di Guido Reni' (Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna), were included in a separate list of eighteen pictures valued at 2,600 Ducats.[170] In a letter to Feilding of 22 July, Hamilton described *Head of Helen* and *St Peter* as 'some copies lykwys as thoes of guido.'[171] However,

[168] Brown, *Kings & Connoisseurs* (1995), 57.

[169] James, 3rd Marquess of Hamilton to Basil, Viscount Feilding, 8/18 April 1636. Warwickshire County Record Office, Warwick, Fielding MS. C1/70. Cit. Shakeshaft, 'To Much Bewiched' (1986), Appendix 1, Letter xxxix; James, 3rd Marquess of Hamilton to Basil, Viscount Feilding, 8/18 March 1638. Warwickshire County Record Office, Warwick, Feilding MS. C1/98. Cit. Shakeshaft, 'To Much Bewiched' (1986), Appendix 1, Letter lxii.

[170] 'In Casa Del Pittor Renier,' Papers of the Dukes of Hamilton and Brandon, Lennoxlove, East Lothian. Cit. Waterhouse, 'Paintings from Venice' (1952), 22, List B, No. 25. 'Single sheet in another hand,' Papers of the Dukes of Hamilton and Brandon, Lennoxlove, East Lothian. Cit. Waterhouse, 'Paintings from Venice' (1952), 23, List D.

[171] James, 3rd Marquess of Hamilton to Basil, Viscount Feilding, 22 July (O.S.) 1637. Warwickshire County Record Office, Warwick, Feilding MS. C1/84. Cit. Shakeshaft, 'To Much Bewiched' (1986), Appendix 1, Letter xxviii.

Feilding defended the authenticity of *St Peter*, stating: 'The Helenas head of Guido Reno is of his schoole, but thought to be touch'd by him, but for St. Peeters head I am assur'd itt is an original, and am promis'd a certificate thereof from Guido Rheno, and that itt is of his most fierce and best way.'[172] On their arrival in Britain, the pictures were displayed in Chelsea Palace, Hamilton's London residence, built in 1638.

* * *

The paintings by Reni which arrived in Britain during the reigns of James I and Charles I are remarkable examples of contemporary artworks entering prominent and significant collections. Not all reflect the personal taste of their owners; some were acquired through agents and dealers or by accident and chance, included in *en bloc* sales. However, others were actively selected or commissioned, revealing the emergent fashion for Reni's works. This is despite Reni's religious persuasion and geographical location within the Papal State, both factors which ostensibly would have prevented many collectors from accessing and appreciating his œuvre. The presence of large-scale works such as *The Four Seasons*, *The Baptism of Christ*, and *The Feats of Hercules* in the influential collections of Hamilton, Buckingham, and Charles I demonstrates Reni's burgeoning reputation in Britain. This is confirmed by Henrietta Maria's commission of 1637.

A final event of the period mirrors activity at the very beginning, when Lanier encountered Reni in 1610. In 1638, the sculptor Nicholas Stone Junior (1618–1647), son of Nicholas Stone (1586–1647), master-mason to the Crown, embarked on a tour of Italy with his brother, the artist Henry Stone (1616–1653). On 27 June 1642, they arrived in Bologna, where Stone admired 'a rare peece of the hye altar Guido Reni' at San Michele di Bosco and praised 'many rare peeces,' including 'some also Dominikino and of Guido the Carratties.'[173] On

[172] Basil, Viscount Feilding to James, 3rd Marquess of Hamilton, 11/21 August 1637. Suffolk Record Office, Ipswich, GD 406/1/9548. Cit. Shakeshaft, 'To Much Bewiched' (1986), Appendix 1, Letter xxxii.

[173] British Library, London, Harl. MSS. No. 4049, f. 42b. Also cit. Spiers, 'Nicholas Stone' (1918–19), Appendix, 184.

28 June, he recorded a meeting with Reni in the artist's studio: 'On Saterday mor[n]ing I spoke with Sr Guido Reni and se his worke.'[174] This is the last instance of British interaction with Reni during his lifetime and, indeed, the last mention of the artist during the reign of Charles I.

[174] British Library, London, Harl. MSS. No. 4049, f. 42b. Also cit. Spiers, 'Nicholas Stone' (1918–19), Appendix, 184.

Guido Reni and British Travellers during the Civil War and Interregnum

Four days after Reni's death on 18 August 1642, Charles I (1600–1649) raised the Royal Standard at the Battle of Edgehill, marking the start of the English Civil War. In this period, Puritanism became increasingly radicalised, with rising instances of iconoclasm.[175] On 30 March 1643, an armed Commons Committee raided the Queen's Chapel at Somerset House, London, allegedly hurling Rubens's *Crucifixion* (lost) into the Thames.[176] Such sentiments are further evident in 1645 when, as George Villiers, 1st Duke of Buckingham's (1592–1628) collection was sequestered and prepared for sale, doubts were raised over the propriety of Parliament profiting from the sale of 'superstitious and lascivious' pictures.[177] A committee led by Sir Robert Harley (1579–1656) was formed to 'have the Care of the Sale of the Pictures in York House.'[178] In their report, the group expressed the opinion that paintings containing images of God, Christ, the Holy Spirit, and the Virgin should be burnt and only paintings and statues found not 'superstitious' should be sold.[179] Following Charles I's execution in January 1649, an Act enabling the sale of the Royal Collection was passed on 4 July 1649 and his paintings were brought to Somerset House, London, for valuation and auction. The decision to sell the King's pictures was driven as much by financial need as the rise of militant Puritanism among Parliamentarians and distaste for Charles's perceived extravagance and tolerance of Catholicism. The sale lasted until 1652 and resulted in many significant works leaving Britain and entering the collections of royal households throughout Europe. The iconoclastic sentiments of the 1640s continued in the Interregnum

[175] See Collinson, 'From Iconoclasm to Iconophobia' (1997), 282.
[176] See Loomie, 'Rubens's Crucifixion' (1998), 680-82.
[177] Lawrence Whitacre, *The Diary of Lawrence Whitacre*. British Library, London, Add. MS 31116, f. 206v, 23 April 1645. Cit. McEvansoneya, 'Sequestration and Dispersal' (1996), 136.
[178] 'House of Commons' (1645), 121.
[179] McEvansoneya, 'Sequestration and Dispersal' (1996), 136.

of the 1650s, with a debate taking place in the House of Commons in February 1651 on whether 'all Cathedral churches, where there are other churches or chapels sufficient for the people to meet in for the worship of God, be surveyed… pulled down, and sold.'[180]

The disorder of the 1640s and 50s and the loss of the Royal Collection, together with other notable collections such as those of Buckingham, Hamilton, and Arundel, had grave consequences for British collecting. However, interest in art did not cease and Reni remained an important figure for many collectors and travellers. Royalists were faced with a difficult decision during the Civil War; they could follow Charles to Oxford in 1644 and face battle in support of the King; they could switch sides and defend the Parliamentarians; or they could flee overseas to escape impeachment. Many chose the third option, leading to a significant rise in travel during the years 1640–60. However, Royalist exiles were not the only British travellers in this period; young gentlemen continued to journey overseas to further their education and many travellers went abroad to avoid a warring Britain. The experience of these individuals on the Continent had a major impact on the nature of British collecting. As Luigi Salerno emphasises, in the Restoration 'travel and travel books had become part of artistic education' and their views thus had a broad impact.[181] Several of these travellers encountered Reni's works, three of whom are considered here.

John Evelyn

In 1643, the virtuoso and author John Evelyn (1620–1706) commenced a period of extensive travel as a means of escaping the turbulence of the Civil War. On 2 October 1643, he obtained permission from the King to travel overseas, arriving in Calais on 11 November.[182] He remained on the Continent until 1652, with intermittent journeys back to Britain. During this time, Evelyn spent three years travelling through Italy and France before settling in Paris in 1647. Upon his

[180] See Chaney, *Grand Tour* (1985), 55-6.
[181] Salerno, 'Literature on Painting' (1951), 246.
[182] Evelyn, *Diary* (2000), Vol. 2, 82, 11 November 1645.

return to Britain, Evelyn resided at Sayes Court, Deptford, and in 1660 became one of the founders of the Royal Society. His renown as an art authority is evident in his essay *Sculptura* (1662), the first English text to expound the new technique of mezzotint. Evelyn provided an account of his time overseas in a diary which ran from 1640 to his death, published posthumously in 1818. Whilst it features many personal observations by Evelyn, much was written at a later date using numerous written sources, including other travel accounts. Evelyn's tour of Italy was relatively comprehensive, there being few sights that he did not visit or mention. He arrived in Rome on 4 November 1644 and remained in the city until 27 January 1645, returning again on 7 February 1645 after visiting Naples. On 5 May 1645, he left Rome to return to France, making stops at various cities on the way. In his diary, Evelyn recorded numerous pictures by Reni at prominent churches and palaces in Rome and Bologna, demonstrating an awareness of the master and degree of admiration for his work.

Evelyn's enjoyment of Rome and pleasure with the art of the city is evident in his statement: 'A thousand Wonders extant, more than these / Tempt Travellers from the Antipodes: / Such living *Pictures* from rare hands appeare, / As if mens shadows, real Bodys were: / Like *Villa's, Fountaines*, & luxurious Fields / No Earths *Elizium* but thine *Rome*, yeilds!'[183] His first reference to Reni can be found in an account of his visit to Santa Maria in Vallicella (Chiesa Nuova) on 8 November 1644, where he noted several 'divers good Pictures,' including the work of 'Guido Rheno'.[184] This appears to be a reference to Reni's *St Philip Neri* in the Chapel, mistakenly described by Evelyn as 'that most precious Oratory of Philipus Nerius their founder.'[185] Other pictures by Reni described by Evelyn in Rome include: paintings at Santa Maria Maggiore; *St Andrew being led to Martyrdom* (San Gregorio, mistaken for Santa Cecilia in Trastevere); *The Crucifixion of St Peter* (San Paolo alle Tre Fontane; now Pinacoteca Vaticana, Vatican City); and *Aurora* (Palazzo Pallavicini-Rospigliosi, then owned by Cardinal Mazarin and described by Evelyn as the Palace of 'Cardinal

[183] Evelyn, *Diary* (2000), Vol. 2, 405, 18 May 1645.
[184] Evelyn, *Diary* (2000), Vol. 2, 233, 8 November 1644.
[185] Evelyn, *Diary* (2000), Vol. 2, 233, 8 November 1644. The painting is now in the Convent of the Church and replaced in the Chapel by a mosaic copy.

Bentivoglio'). All of these were singled out for particular attention by Evelyn: 'most incomparable is the Cupola painted by Cavaliere Gioseppe, Rheni, and the present Baglioni'; 'in the Church are divers rare paintings, especialy that story on the Wall of Guido Reni'; 'that most excellent picture of Peters Crucifixion is of Guido's'; and 'well-adorn'd with Columns and paintings, especialy those of Guido Rheni.'[186]

During his time in Bologna, Evelyn again visited the major sights, recording works by Reni in San Michele in Bosco and Santa Maria della Pietà: 'there are in this Convent many rare Paintings of *Guido Rheni*, above all the little Cloister of 8 faces painted by *Carrachio* in *fresco*'; and 'at the Mendicanti are the Miracles of St. *Eloy* by *Rheni* after the manner of *Caravagio*, but better.'[187] His appreciation of Bologna's artistic heritage is evident in his observation: 'Indeede this Citty is full of rare Pieces, especialy of *Guido*, *Domenico*, and a Virgin nam'd *Isabell Sirani* now living, who has painted many excellent Pieces, & imitates *Guido* so well, that many skillfull Artists have ben deceiv'd.'[188]

Richard Symonds

Shortly after Evelyn's visit to Italy, another British traveller arrived in the country, recording his observations in notebooks: Richard Symonds (1617–1670), a virtuoso with a specific interest in antiquaries, history, and heraldry. On 1 January 1649, Symonds left Britain, spending seven months in Paris before arriving in Rome in November 1649 where he remained for two years. In 1651, he made a brief trip to Naples before commencing his journey back to Britain in April. He visited various cities in Italy, including Parma and Milan, on his way

[186] Evelyn, *Diary* (2000), Vol. 2, 244, 275-76, 308, 379, 12 November 1644, 20 November 1644, 23 January 1645, 26 February 1645.
[187] Evelyn, *Diary* (2000), Vol. 2, 432, 424, May 1645. As E.S. de Beer observed, Evelyn was mistaken in following Balthasar de Monconys, *Journal des voyages de Monsieur Monconys, Conseiller du Roy en see conceals d'estat & priué, & Lieutenant criminal au Siege Presidial de Lyon* (Lyon: chez Horace Boissat & George Remeus, 1665–66), suggesting that this section was written two decades later. Two works by Reni were at Santa Maria della Pietà, including *Pietà* (Pinacoteca Nazionale, Bologna), but the three pictures relating to St Éloi were produced by Giacomo Cavedoni (1577–1660).
[188] Evelyn, *Diary* (2000), Vol. 2, 424, May 1645.

to France. While in Rome, Symonds studied art under Giovanni Angelo Canini (1609–1666), a proponent of the Carracci School and former student of Domenichino. Canini introduced Symonds to many leading antiquarians and artists, fostering in him an appreciation of the Carracci School.[189] During his time in Rome, Symonds became a modest collector of prints, drawings, and books, and visited major palaces and churches, making notes on paintings and sculpture.

In France, Symonds admired Reni's *Annunciation* (Musée du Louvre, Paris) in the Convent of the Carmelites in Paris, noting that it was 'one of the best & costliest quires in Paris for painting, loftiness, & building & especially antiquity.'[190] In Italy, Symonds recorded pictures associated with Reni at Santa Maria in Vallicella, San Paolo alle Tre Fontane, San Martino ai Monti, Palazzo Borghese, Palazzo Farnese, Palazzo Mattei, Palazzo Spada, Palazzo Pallavicini-Rospigliosi, and Palazzo Sora (then owned by the Boncampagna family).[191] At Palazzo Spada, Symonds praised 'another large quadro done by one of Guido Renys schollars & finish'd by himselfe Del Rapio d'Helena, Good & Commendable.'[192] At Palazzo Pallavicini-Rospigliosi, Symonds sympathetically described Reni's *Aurora*: 'The Houres hand in hand dauncing about the chariot led wth 4 horses a breast. The blushing morning a young lady strewes garlands of flowers afore.'[193] At Palazzo Sora, Symonds observed that 'this place has more of Guido than any other in Rome' and recorded a comment by Canini that 'Guido Reni in faces for ayre of angels & Virgins & puttini excelled all others… Those Angels at Trinita di Pellegrini with what modesty and sweetness they write on ye Trinity.'[194]

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[189] See Brookes, 'Symonds and Palazzo Farnese' (1998), 148.

[190] Richard Symonds. British Library, London, Harl. MSS. 1278, ff. 22r-v. See Millar, 'Exile in Paris' (1967), 159.

[191] British Library, London, Add MS. 17919, ff. 30r, 12v; British Library, London, Egerton MS. 1635, ff. 1v, 10r, 22v, 25r, 30r, 55v, 56v, 81v, 82r, 82v. Cit. Brookes, 'Symonds and Rome' (2007), 77, 80, 86, 87, 89, 101, 102, 114.

[192] British Library, London, Egerton MS. 1635, f. 55r. Cit. Brookes, 'Symonds and Rome' (2007), 101. This is now considered a copy of *The Abduction of Helen* (Musée du Louvre, Paris).

[193] British Library, London, Egerton MS. 1635, f. 56v. Cit. Brookes, 'Symonds and Rome' (2007), 102.

[194] British Library, London, Egerton MS. 1635, f. 82r. Cit. Brookes, 'Symonds and Rome' (2007), 114. Palazzo Sora was not known for paintings by Reni; Symonds may have referred to

It is also possible to discern Symonds's admiration for Reni in the substantial collection he amassed during his time abroad. The inventory *Stampe Comprate in Roma 1650–1651* includes two lists of works associated with Reni: 'Aurora painted in Fresco at Monte Cavallo, cut by Guercino 2 sheets f. / S. Francesco praying Cutt by Bloemart / 2 bambinos Our Saviour & S John cut by Guido himselfe – 4. / A Madon, & babe asleep in Oval. f.' and 'La fortuna flying / the maid with S Gio Baptists head / A Madonna. –'[195] Symonds can be considered the epitome of an ambitious collector of comparatively modest means for whom prints and drawings were desirable and obtainable, paintings prohibitively expensive. His collection demonstrates the diverse range of collectors who were interested in Reni and the variety of his works entering Britain.

Richard Lassels

The third prominent figure to write about Reni was Richard Lassels (c. 1603–1668), a Catholic priest who served as travelling companion for the nobility. Lassels first visited Italy in 1637–38, staying in Rome with Peter Fitton (1602–1657), a friend of Bellori. Fitton introduced Lassels to Italian art and encouraged in him a degree of connoisseurship. When the Civil War began, Lassels again swiftly journeyed overseas, serving as chaplain to Lady Anne Brudenell (fl. 1644) in Paris from 1644. In 1649, he was asked to accompany Lady Catherine Whetenhall (d. 1650) and her husband Thomas (fl. 1649–1650) on a tour of Italy. The party arrived in Rome in December 1649 and spent several months in the city before exploring other parts of the peninsula in the spring of 1650. Lassels produced an account of the tour for Thomas, presenting it to him in Paris in 1651. In this manuscript, he recalled various artworks observed by the group, including Reni's fresco at San Michele in Bosco, Bologna, a work 'of famous Guido of estimable value' that was beginning to show its age.[196] This reference reveals the fame attached to Reni's name by this time and the extent to which his celebrity had grown amongst the English travelling cognoscenti.

studio works or now unknown pictures.

[195] Ogden and Ogden, 'Seventeenth Century Collection' (1948), 55, 59.

[196] British Library, London, Add. MS. 4217, f. 16v.

Over the next two decades, Lassels produced several other accounts of journeys to Italy. The first is *Description of Italy* (1654), produced as a written guide for David Murray, 2nd Lord Balvaird (d. 1668) when Lassels was unable to travel abroad with him. A similar reference to Reni's frescoes in San Michele in Bosco can be found: 'Take particular note of the little painted cloyster famous for the pictures there of that famous master of Bolognia Guido Rhenj.'[197] In 1663 and 1664, two versions of what became Lassels' most famous work, *The Voyage of Italy* (1670), were produced in manuscript copies. In 1668, Lassels died in Montpellier while accompanying Richard, Lord Lumley, later 1st Earl of Scarbrough (1650–1721) and Ralph Sheldon (1623–1684) to Italy. After his death, the latest version of *The Voyage of Italy* was edited and published in Paris in 1670, with a second version published in London the same year. *The Voyage of Italy* is the first original English guidebook to Italy and the most substantial contribution to this genre of the time. It strongly influenced subsequent travel writers and provided a framework for itineraries around the peninsula.

The Voyage of Italy contains numerous references to Reni. In Rome, Lassels mentioned paintings in Santa Prassede, Villa Ludovisi, Santa Maria in Vallicella, and Palazzo Pallavicini-Rospigliosi.[198] He singled out a painting at Villa Ludovisi for particular praise: 'a rare picture of the B. Virgin *Mary* made by *Guido Rheni*. It's the best picture of her that ever I saw.'[199] In Bologna, Lassels again mentioned Reni's work in San Michele in Bosco while in Padua he drew attention to Chiesa degli Eremitani: 'The picture of the High Altar in the *Augustins* Church, made by *Guido Rheni*, and that of *S. John Baptist* in the Sacristy, of the same hand are both exquisitely well done.'[200] In Venice, he mistook Veronese's *The Wedding at Cana* (Musée du Louvre, Paris) at San Giorgio Maggiore for a work by Reni, which he evidently enjoyed: 'In the Refectory, I saw an admirable picture of the supper of Cana in Galilea, made by

[197] National Library of Scotland, Edinburgh, Adv. MS. 15.2.15, ff. 89-91. Cit. Chaney, *Grand Tour* (1985), Appendix 1, 166.
[198] Lassels, *Voyage of Italy* (1670), Vol. 2, 154-55, 176-77, 179; 225-26; 350.
[199] Lassels, *Voyage of Italy* (1670), Vol. 2, 176-77.
[200] Lassels, *Voyage of Italy* (1670), Vol. 1, 145-46; Vol. 2, 432.

Guido Rheni. I visited it often, and could never satiate my eyes with such a rare piece.'[201] This publication played a major role in promoting the artist in Britain.

* * *

Reni is further mentioned in two more travel accounts of this period, the first being Henry Cogan's (dates unknown) *The Court of Rome* (1654). Cogan once acted as secretary to Sir Henry Wotton (1568–1639) in Venice and had become an impoverished Cavalier gentleman in Kent.[202] His volume was essentially a translation of Girolamo Lunadoro's (1575–1642) *Relatione delle corte di Roma* (1611) and Fioravante Martinelli's (1599–1667) *Roma ricercata nel suo sito* (1644). The second half, based on Martinelli, provided recommendations for ten-day itineraries around Rome. Reni's works were highlighted in two locations: the chapel of St Philip Neri at Santa Maria in Vallicella, 'adorned with much splendour and religion,' and Palazzo Pallavicini-Rospigliosi.[203] The final travel account is the personal diary of Francis Mortoft (fl. 1658–1659), who travelled to Italy in 1658–59; he stayed in Rome for three months and singled out 'Ariadne and Bacchus, done by Guidaren' in Villa Montalto (Los Angeles County Museum of Art).[204]

In this period, engagement with Reni took place predominantly on the Continent. Several important pieces of travel literature demonstrate the growth of Reni's celebrity and the way in which particular paintings, such as the frescoes at San Michele in Bosco, *Aurora* at Palazzo Pallavicini-Rospigliosi, and chapel of St Philip Neri in Santa Maria in Vallicella, were beginning to be recognised as essential sights for tourists. In contrast to earlier in the century, collecting of paintings was less prevalent. Nevertheless, although several major works by Reni in collections belonging to Buckingham, Hamilton, and Charles I were removed from Britain, interest in the artist persisted. In the sale of the Royal Collection, Philip Sidney, Lord Viscount Lisle, later 3rd Earl of Leicester (1619–1698) acquired *Judith and the Head of Holofernes* (present whereabouts

[201] Lassels, *Voyage of Italy* (1670), Vol. 2, 416-17.
[202] Stoye, *English Travellers* (1952), 137.
[203] Cogan, *Court of Rome* (1654), 216; 252-53.
[204] Mortoft, *Travels* (1925), 20 January 1659.

unknown), a work Charles had purchased from William Frizell (c. 1610–after 1662) in 1637.[205] Lisle went on to acquire at least three more paintings by Reni. New types of collectors also began to purchase Reni's works, with Symonds bringing back a modest collection of drawings from Italy. The extent to which Reni's reputation was cemented in this period is evident from his inclusion in William Sanderson's (1586?–1676) *Graphice* (1658), an art-historical tome on drawing. Sanderson recorded artists of the recent past whom he considered particularly commendable and Reni's inclusion in this list signifies his common acceptance in the canon: 'The late age produced many brave *Masters*, but somewhat inferior to the former; *viz. Anniball* and *Ludowick Carosier* (two brothers). And another *Michael Angelo* (called Corrowageo,) *Joseph d' Arpinas*, *Guido Paleneza* and many other their equals; at present, *Peter de Cordova*."[206]

[205] Maddicott, 'Lisle' (1999), 8.
[206] Sanderson, *Graphice (*1658), 18.

The Reception of Guido Reni in the Second Half of the Seventeenth Century

In May 1660, Charles II (1630–1685) arrived in London to reclaim the throne of England and Ireland. The new King sought to establish his authority by restoring the Royal Court to its former glory and acted quickly to recover his father's collection. Although many of Charles I's (1600–1649) paintings were dispersed throughout Europe, never to return, a significant number re-joined the Royal Collection at this time. Charles II also became a collector in his own right, acquiring pictures through patronage and sales. At his death, the Royal Collection comprised nearly 1,100 pictures and over 100 statues.[207] Such paintings were diverse in type and subject and included many Italian works with a spiritual sentiment in line with Charles's religious beliefs. Over the course of his reign, Charles strove to foster political and religious tolerance, converting to Catholicism on his deathbed. In 1685, he was succeeded by his brother, James II (1633–1701), a committed Catholic who was also interested in art and ruled for three years. The reigns of these two Kings were a time of considerable activity in collecting, with several pictures associated with Reni entering British households. It was also an important phase in the history of travel literature and art writing, with Reni featured in an essential publication of the age: William Aglionby's (1641–1705) *Painting Illustrated in Three Diallogues* (1685).

Charles II

The Royal Collection was the most abundant repository of Reni's works in this period, with Charles II, Henrietta Maria (1609–1669), and possibly James II each acquiring pictures by the master. The influx of paintings began with the return of many of Charles I's (1600–1649) paintings in 1660, including *St Peter*

[207] Brotton, 'Art of Restoration' (2005), 134.

Penitent (Royal Collection Trust) and *Judith and the Head of Holofernes* (present whereabouts unknown), the latter returned by Philip Sidney, Lord Viscount Lisle (1619–1698), in September 1660.[208] Michael Levey suggests that *St Mary Magdalene* (present whereabouts unknown), valued at £15 at St James's Palace, London, and sold to J.B. Gaspars on 22 March 1649/50 for £17 10s, may also have been recovered.[209] In addition to restoring his father's collection, Charles also received two large instalments of art in 1660 during his exile in the Netherlands. The first was the so-called 'Dutch Gift', promised on 2 June 1660 by the States of Holland and West Friesland in anticipation of Charles's return to England. This constituted 24 Italian paintings and twelve statues from the collection of Gerrit (1599–1658) and Jan Reynst (1601–1646), as well as a group of paintings by Gerrit Dou and Pieter Saenredam. The Reynst brothers had acquired the pictures from the Venetian collection of Andrea Vendramin (c. 1565–1629). The Dutch Gift was presented to Charles at Banqueting House, London, in November 1660 by Dutch ambassadors whom the King 'heartily thanked… for so worthy a present.'[210] The pictures went a long way towards restoring the character of the Royal Collection to its pre-Civil War form. The group included one work by Reni: 'Allegory of Painting / Cupid placing a laurel wreath on the head of a seated woman, shown half-length and holding a palette and brushes' (present whereabouts unknown, possibly 'after? Francesco Gessi', Royal Collection Trust). There is an engraving of the picture in the Reynst collection, yet a work matching its description cannot be found in the 1666–67 inventory of the Royal Collection.[211] However, the 1688 inventory does mention an unattributed 'Allegory of Painting.'[212] Furthermore, two versions of the subject 'after' Reni are included in the 1705–10 inventory during the reign of Queen Anne (1665–1714).[213] Sir Denis Mahon hypothesises that the picture

[208] 'Inventory of works of art returned to the Crown in 1660 by Lord Viscount Lisle.' Centre for Kentish Studies, Maidstone, De L'Isle and Dudley Papers, U1500 E111, No. 83. Cit. Maddicott, 'Lisle' (1999), Appendix 2.
[209] Levey, *Later Italian Pictures* (1991), 123.
[210] Cit. Logan, *Reynst Brothers* (1979), 81.
[211] See Mahon, 'Dutch Gift III' (1950), 17.
[212] Bodleian Library, Oxford, MS. 891, f. 50v, Whitehall, No. 168. Cit. Mahon, 'Dutch Gift III' (1950), 17.
[213] MS. in Surveyor's Office, Kensington, No. 106 and Somerset House, No. 10. Cit. Mahon, 'Dutch Gift III' (1950), 17.

never arrived in Charles II's possession or possibly entered and was swiftly removed.[214] Nonetheless, if it did form part of the Dutch Gift, it was the first new painting by Reni to arrive in a British collection since the reign of Charles I.

When he was based in Breda in 1660, Charles II also decided to purchase 72 paintings for £2,860 from William Frizell (c. 1610–after 1662), the same dealer who had sold works to Charles I in 1637. The large sum demonstrates the importance of art for Charles as both a personal interest and means of reinforcing the authority of the monarchy. At the end of two lists of these works, Charles wrote: 'Frizell, keep these picktures till I send for them,' indicating that he intended first to return to Britain without them.[215] The group includes three paintings by Reni: 'One head of Guido Reni' (present whereabouts unknown); 'St. Peeter of the painting of Guido Reni'; and 'St. Jerom of dtto Guido' (both Royal Collection Trust, each valued at 150 florins (£15)).[216] These pictures are integral to our understanding of Charles's taste. Although he had a particular interest in Northern European painting, Charles shared his father's taste for Italian artists such as Reni, Jacopo Bassano, Andrea del Sarto, Veronese, and Titian. Consequently, these paintings, when they arrived in 1662, could be displayed comfortably alongside works formerly belonging to Charles I, allowing for a degree of continuity between father and son.

In addition, several other works by Reni entered the Royal Collection shortly afterwards. The 1666–67 inventory mentions an unattributed 'Lot and his Daughters leaving Sodom' which possibly corresponds to a *circa* 1615 copy (Royal Collection Trust) after Reni's painting at the National Gallery, London, listed in the 1685 inventory at Windsor Castle.[217] In the same inventory, three further works by Reni are recorded at Whitehall and two at Windsor Castle. It is unclear whether these entered the collection during the reign of Charles II or

[214] Mahon, 'Dutch Gift III' (1950), 17.
[215] British Library, London, Add. MS. 23,199, ff. 30-1. Cit. Reade, 'Frizell' (1947), 74. Also cit. Gleissner, 'Reassembling a Royal Collection' (1994), Appendix 2, 113.
[216] British Library, London, Add. MS. 23,199, ff. 28, 30-1, Nos. 13, 36, 37. Cit. Reade, 'Frizell' (1947), 73-4. Also cit. Gleissner, 'Reassembling a Royal Collection' (1994), Appendix 2, 112, 114.
[217] British Library, London, Harl. MS. 1890. Cit. Levey, *Later Italian Pictures* (1991), 126-27, No. 580. See also Vertue, *Catalogue of James II* (1758), 68, No. 767.

James II. At Whitehall was also displayed ‘A paintress with a Cupid, putting a laurel upon her head (An Allegory of Painting)’ (Royal Collection Trust), possibly the picture which entered the collection as part of the Dutch Gift.[218] The other two paintings are ‘A Magdalen’s Head and A limning, being a Magdalen after Guido’ (present whereabouts of both unknown).[219] The pictures at Windsor Castle were ‘A Magdalen lying at length, with a book and Death’s head by her’ (present whereabouts unknown) and ‘Judith with Holofernes’s head, and an old woman by her’ (Royal Collection Trust).[220]

Henrietta Maria

A further member of the royal family to maintain an interest in Reni was Henrietta Maria. Following the Restoration, Henrietta Maria split her time between Britain and France, where she was based at Château de Colombes, outside Paris, from 1668. After her death in 1669, Charles despatched the French Ambassador Ralph Montagu (1638–1709) to form an inventory of her collection, comprising 79 paintings and one statue. Some originated from Charles I’s collection, but others were new additions, either loaned from Charles II or acquired elsewhere, suggesting that the Queen Mother remained an active collector. The majority of paintings concerned religious subject matter, but portraits also featured heavily. Among the pictures in Henrietta Maria’s possession were two works by Reni: ‘St Catherine’ (possibly *St Catherine of Alexandria*, Royal Collection Trust) in the Queen’s Privy Chamber and ‘The *Divine Love’ (present whereabouts unknown) in the Queen’s Dressing Room. In a second hand next to the latter was written: ‘This is an excellent Piece, brought from Engld the last time, tis fixt over the Chimney, but ‘tis thought removeable.’[221] Several works in Henrietta Maria’s collection relate to her affinity with the Virgin, St Mary Magdalene, and St Catherine of Alexandria, with Reni’s painting one of three representations of the latter saint. Henrietta

[218] Vertue, *Catalogue of James II* (1758), 15, No. 167.
[219] Vertue, *Catalogue of James II* (1758), 38, No. 437; 50, No. 575.
[220] Vertue, *Catalogue of James II* (1758), 69, Nos. 782, 785.
[221] National Archives, London, P.R.O. S.P. 78/128, f. 192r. Cit. Griffey and Hibbard, ‘Colombes’ (2012), Appendix.

Maria's affinity with St Catherine is further manifest in her 1639 portrait (Philip Mould & Company, London) as the saint by van Dyck. Erin Griffey and Caroline Hibbard link Reni's *St Catherine* in Henrietta Maria's possession to comments in van der Doort's inventory of *circa* 1640 and a letter written by George Conn (d. 1640) in 1636: 'I carried with me the Saint Catherine, not intending to leave it at that time, but merely to satisfy the queen's curiosity, saying that I had orders to present it afterwards in a frame, but her majesty would not have patience; declaring that she would take that trouble upon herself, she took away from me the tin case and the packthread with which it was tied, and gave orders that the picture should be fastened to the curtains of her bed.'[222] *St Catherine* was evidently a work of particular significance to Henrietta Maria and the presence of two paintings by Reni in her French collection is a mark of her continued admiration for the artist.

Henry Bennet, 1st Earl of Arlington

Several other collectors in this period acquired works by Reni through travel to the Continent or the use of intermediaries. As earlier in the century, the acquisition of art was an important means by which members of court society could visually demonstrate their wealth and status as well as communicate the strength of their diplomatic network and depth of artistic knowledge and taste. The collector's house was both private and public, serving as a space in which one could entertain, develop a network of political allies, and confirm social ranking and influence through the cultural and financial weight of a collection.[223] Artists considered suitable for such collectors are identified in lists drawn up in 1670–71 by John Dodington (1628–1673), English Resident in Venice, for Henry Bennet, 1st Earl of Arlington (1618–1685). Bennet was a prominent statesman who became Lord Chamberlain in 1674. Having spent time on the Continent, he developed a significant collection at his residence Goring House, London. Dodington's lists illuminate artistic taste at this time, with Helen

[222] Griffey and Hibbard, 'Colombes' (2012), 173.
[223] See Jacobsen, 'Luxury Consumption' (2009), particularly 298, 306.

Jacobsen identifying Bennet a 'leader of taste at the Restoration court.'[224] Dodington highlighted artists whose pictures were included in local sales in Venice.[225] These include: Titian, Veronese, Palma Vecchio, Bronzino, Andrea Schiavone, Rutilio di Lorenzo Manetti, Jacopo Bassano, Poussin, Salvator Rosa, Caravaggio, Guercino, and, importantly, Reni. Whilst there is no evidence that Bennet actually owned a work by Reni, his inclusion in Dodington's lists indicates his suitability as an eminent artist for a prominent British collector.

Sir Thomas Isham, 3rd Baronet

The first British collector outside of the Royal family known to have acquired a work associated with Reni is Sir Thomas Isham, 3rd Baronet (1656–1681). Isham kept several Italian books on painting and architecture in his Library at Lamport Hall, Northamptonshire, acquiring Bellori's *Vite* (1672) in Rome in 1672.[226] His sound knowledge of Italian art informed his activities as a collector. In October 1676, Isham embarked on a tour of the Continent with his cousin Reverend Zacchaeus Isham (1651–1705), visiting Italy, Switzerland, and France over two-and-a-half years.[227] From December 1676 to May 1678, the pair stayed in Italy where Isham developed a substantial collection, acquiring twenty paintings in Rome. There are two surviving manuscript lists of his pictures, both drawn up shortly after his return to Britain, one in the hand of Reverend Richard Richardson (fl. 1676–1678) and the other Isham's servant J. Ogilby (fl. 1676–1678).[228] The first mentions a copy (Lamport Hall, National Trust) by Constantine Grasso (dates unknown) of Reni's *Bacchus and Ariadne* (Los Angeles County Museum of Art), described as 'Theseus A copy after som famous painter.'[229] In letters dated 1678 from Buno Talbot (fl. 1678), Isham's agent in Rome, it emerges that the work was commissioned by Isham in

[224] Jacobsen, 'Luxury Consumption' (2009), 310.
[225] John Doddington, November 1670. National Archives, London, P.R.O. S.P. 99/48 II, ff. 226-32. John Doddington, 7 March 1671. National Archives, London, P.R.O. S.P. 99/49, f. 80. Both cit. Jacobsen, 'Luxury Consumption' (2009), 302.
[226] See Burdon, 'Isham' (1960), 18.
[227] See Burdon, 'Isham' (1960).
[228] Burdon, 'Isham' (1960), 3-7.
[229] Burdon, 'Isham' (1960), 6.

exchange for seven pistols after he saw Reni's painting in Villa Montalto, Rome.[230] Reverend Zacchaeus Isham's accounts also reveal that Isham acquired five prints after Reni in Rome and Venice.[231] Reni was evidently an artist of particular interest to Isham. *Bacchus and Ariadne* is a noteworthy acquisition, being the first example of a British traveller commissioning a painted copy of an original in Italy as a souvenir. This became increasingly common in the next century, with a multitude of copies arriving in the country, particularly of Reni's *Aurora* (Palazzo Pallavicini-Rospigliosi, Rome).

William Murray, 1st Earl of Dysart

Shortly afterwards, another copy after Reni was recorded in a British collection, this time at Ham House, Richmond-upon-Thames. The property was built in 1610 and given by Charles I to his childhood friend William Murray, 1st Earl of Dysart (c. 1600–1655) in 1626. In 1637–39, Murray extensively altered the decoration of the house with his daughter Elizabeth (1626–1698). After her father's death, Elizabeth continued to renovate the house. In 1672, she married John Maitland, 1st Duke of Lauderdale (1616–1682). It is unclear when *Head of Helen* (Fig. 13; Ham House, National Trust), a copy of a detail from Reni's *The Abduction of Helen* (Musée du Louvre, Paris), was purchased but it is recorded in the 1679–83 inventory of the collection compiled by Jan Wyck (c. 1645–1700), first as by an Italian hand and then as by 'Guido'.[232] Its position as an oval inset above a door in the North Drawing Room makes it the first known copy after Reni to be specifically integrated as a designated element of a decorative scheme in Britain.

[230] Northamptonshire Record Office, Northampton, Isham MSS. I.C. 1099, 4509. Cit. Burdon, 'Isham' (1960), 6; 23, Appendix A.
[231] Northamptonshire Record Office, Northampton, Isham MSS. I.C. 1099, 4509. Cit. Burdon, 'Isham' (1960), 23, Appendix A.
[232] See nationaltrustcollections.org.uk/object/1140146. Accessed 30 March 2020.

Sir Peter Lely

A further collector known to have owned works by Reni was Sir Peter Lely (1618–1680), portrait painter at the court of Charles II. Lely had a high-quality and wide-ranging collection of paintings, prints, and drawings and is an instructive example of a different type of collector to those explored so far – the 'connoisseur-artist'. Having an impressive collection of art informed Lely's practice and provided him with the gravitas to participate in artistic debates and demonstrate his wealth and status. At his death, Lely's collection was dispersed in a series of sales. The collection included numerous paintings by Italian masters, including two works attributed to Reni: 'A Head of St. Peter', sold on 18 April 1682 to 'Mr Austen' for £9; and 'A Cartoone of Guido Rene' (present whereabouts of both unknown), listed in Lely's account book as sold for £1 18s (£1.90) to Philip Sidney, 3rd Earl of Leicester, formerly Lord Viscount Lisle.[233] 'Mr Austen' has been identified as Thomas Austin (fl. 1680), a friend of the artist Prosper Henry Lankrink (1682–1692).[234]

Other Collectors

Three other paintings associated with Reni are recorded in Britain at this time. On 2 June 1684, a sale of 'a collection of divers excellent pictures of the most eminent masters, both ancient and modern' took place at Banqueting House, London. It was advertised in the *London Gazette* on 12 and 15 May by the sculptor and carver Grinling Gibbons (1648–1721) and the painter Parry Walton (d. 1699). The fact that it was promoted so far in advance, together with its royal setting and high prices, indicates that this was a significant event, designed to attract a large and wealthy audience.[235] In the catalogue, three works linked to Reni can be identified: 'lot and his Daughters – Guido Reni' (Lot 47); 'The Art of Painting – Guido Reni' (Lot 78); and 'A Madonna, our Saviour sleeping –

[233] Cit. Editorial, 'Lely's Collection' (1943), 186. See National Archives, London, PROB 11/365/138 ff. 37v-43v, 37v, 39v. Cit. Dethloff, 'Lely's Collection' *(*1996), 26, 31.
[234] See Dethloff, 'Lely's Collection' (1996), 42.
[235] Richard Stephens, 'Sale of Pictures at the Banqueting House, 2 June 1684.' In *The art world in Britain 1660 to 1735*. artworld.york.ac.uk. Accessed 25 August 2017.

After Guido Reni, by Cav.Raspentino' (Lot 145). The *Madonna* was re-listed in a further sale of 'divers Excellent Italian Pictures of the most Eminent Masters' organised by Gibbons and Walton on 11 May 1686, in which it was described as 'A Madonna after Guido Reni – Cavalere Raspeutino' (Lot 78).[236] The provenance and whereabouts of all three pictures are unknown, yet their inclusion in the sale indicates Reni's rising position in the emergent London art market of the late seventeenth century.

Travel Guides

As observed during the Civil War and Interregnum, foreign travel became increasingly prevalent as the century progressed. In the 1660s, many travellers wrote about their experiences in diaries and letters, including Sir Philip Skippon (1641–1691), a naturalist and son of the Parliamentarian soldier Philip Skippon (c. 1600–1660). In 1663–66, Skippon embarked on a tour of the Continent with his tutor, the naturalist John Ray (1627–1705), and fellow student, Nathaniel Bacon (1647–1676). On returning to Britain, Skippon wrote an account of this journey in a diary, published in 1732. He included a cursory list of works by Reni in Rome, at sights including Castel Sant'Angelo, Palazzo Apostolico, San Bernardo alle Terme, and Palazzo Pamphilj.[237] He also referenced a work in Chartreuse Notre-Dame-du-Val-de-Bénédiction, Villeneuve-lès-Avignon (*The Annunciation*, now lost).[238]

Another traveller to mention Reni was Andrew Balfour (1630–1694). In 1667–71, he wrote letters to his friend Patrick Murray, 2nd Lord Elibank (1632–1671) offering practical advice for continental sightseeing. The letters were published posthumously in 1700. At San Domenico, Bologna, Balfour noted: 'There is to be seen here, a rare Peece of Painting, the Innocents made by *Guido Reni*; all the parts of this Convent are worthie the taking notice of…'[239] This is the first

[236] 'A Catalogue of divers Excellent Italian Pictures of the most Eminent Masters, 1686.' In *The art world in Britain 1660 to 1735*. artworld.york.ac.uk. Accessed 26 February 2020.
[237] Skippon, 'Journey' (1746), 668; 675-76; 688; 690-91.
[238] Skippon, 'Journey' (1744), 738-41.
[239] Balfour, *Letters* (1700), 208.

reference in English to Reni's *Massacre of the Innocents* (Pinacoteca Nazionale, Bologna), a work which became increasingly popular and was known through an engraving by Giovanni Battista Bolognini (1611–1668) of 1640–70. The painting was again referenced in 1676 by Sir Pury Cust (1655–1698/99), who remarked in his diary: 'the admirable picture there of the Innocents by the hand of Guidorene.'[240]

Further travellers to mention Reni include John Clenche (fl. 1675) and Gilbert Burnet (1643–1715), later Bishop of Salisbury. In *A tour made in France & Italy, made by an English Gentleman, 1675* (1676), Clenche recommended a substantial number of Reni's paintings in Rome, at Santa Maria Maggiore, San Paolo alle Tre Fontane, Santa Maria in Vallicella, Santa Maria della Vittoria, Palazzo Pallavicini-Rospigliosi, Villa Ludovisi, and Villa Montalto.[241] In 1686, Burnet remarked upon the frescoes in San Michele in Bosco, Bologna, stating that the Cloister was 'so nobly painted in Fresco, that it is a great pity to see such work exposed to the air; all was retouch'd by the famous Guido Reni, yet it is now again much decay'd.'[242] The frescoes were particularly popular paintings by Reni, yet, as Burnet remarked, they suffered major losses due to their external location. By the eighteenth century, they had almost completely disappeared, and this loss significantly affected Reni's reputation. Burnet's reference is thus pertinent, revealing the great repute which Reni had achieved by this time, with the description of 'the famous Guido Reni.'

As the century progressed, the number of works by Reni included in travel literature increased significantly. In his 1679 translation of Giacomo Barri's (d. 1690) *Viaggio pittoresco d'Italia* (1671), William Lodge (1649–1689) detailed works in a host of cities, including Rome, Perugia, Pesaro, Fano, Forlì, Ravenna, Faenza, Bologna, Conegliano, Padua, Modena, Reggio, Carpi, Milan, and Lucca.[243] Throughout, Reni's pictures were commended as 'most fair,'

[240] Cust, 'Journal' (1898), 341.
[241] Clenche, *Tour* (1676), 46, 48, 58, 68, 75, 77-8, 78.
[242] Burnet, *Burnet's Travels* (1737), 139.
[243] Lodge*, Painters Voyage* (1679), 4, 6, 8, 9, 10, 11, 13, 14, 16, 21, 25, 28, 29, 31-2, 34, 35, 37, 39-40, 40-1, 43, 105, 109, 138, 138-39, 140, 151, 156.

'singular,' 'beautifull,' 'rare,' 'most noble,' and 'stupendious.'[244] Similarly, in *An Account of Divers Choice Remarks, as Well as Geographical as Historical, Political, Mathematical, Physical and Moral, Taken in a Journey through the Low-Countries, France, Italy and Part of Spain* (1682), the physician Ellis Veryard (1657–1714) listed paintings by Reni in Milan, Bologna, Ravenna, Fano, Senigallia, Rome, and Frascati. Lodge and Veryard were the first English writers to include such a variety of sights, establishing the new breadth of interest in Reni outside Rome and Bologna.[245] Veryard's admiration is evident in descriptions of 'a beautiful Work of *Guido Reni*' at the Duomo, Ravenna, 'incomparable pieces of *Guido Reni*' at San Pietro in Valle, Fano, and 'an exquisite piece of *Guido Reni*' at Santa Maria in Vallicella, Rome.[246]

Art Writing

In 1685, *Painting Illustrated in Three Diallogues* was published by the physician William Aglionby. This was a crucial text in art writing, serving an integral role in the promotion of Italian art in Britain. Drawing on texts by Bellori, Malvasia, and Vasari, as well as Charles Alphonse Du Fresnoy's (1611–1668) *De arte graphica* (1667), Aglionby marked various stages in the development of art. He observed a decline in Italian art since the sixteenth century, stating: 'After the Death of Raphael and his Schollars (for, as for Michael Angelo he made no School) Painting seemed to be decaying; and for some Years, there was hardly a Master of any Repute all over Italy.' Whilst Cavaliere d'Arpino and Caravaggio were great masters at Rome, they had significant flaws, drawing too extensively on nature.[247] A transformation occurred with the Carracci, who 'renewed Raphael's Manner,' Annibale Carracci 'a most Accomplish'd Painter, both for Design, Invention, Composition, Colouring, and all parts of Painting; having a Soveraign Genius, which made him Master of a great School of the best

[244] Lodge, *Painters Voyage* (1679), 6, 8, 9, 10, 25, 105.
[245] Veryard, *Divers Choice Remarks* (1701), 116, 142, 143, 144, 148, 151, 152, 180, 182, 184, 192, 207.
[246] Veryard, *Divers Choice Remarks* (1701), 148, 151, 182.
[247] Aglionby, *Painting Illustrated* (1679), 84.

painters Italy has had.'[248] Describing Reni, Aglionby stated: 'though a Schollar of Hannibal's, yet thought the Sweetness and Colouring of Lodovico to be preferr'd to Hannibal's; and indeed the Heads of Guido are not inferior to those of Raphael himself.'[249] Aglionby underscored Reni's fame and reputation: 'Guido Rheni acquired both more Reputation and Riches than any of the School of the Caraches, there being hardly a Prince in Europe that has not endeavoured to get some of his Pieces, which he sold at what Rates he pleased.'[250] Nevertheless, except for Reni's 'inimitable Graces,' Aglionby felt that Domenichino 'seems to out-do him in everything else; and particularly, in greatness of Invention.'[251]

* * *

Painting Illustrated in Three Diallogues reveals much about the high regard Reni had achieved in Britain by the late seventeenth century. Whilst no major works arrived in this period, Reni continued to attract attention, with several collectors obtaining paintings and copies becoming sought-after works in their own right. Reni's growing fame is evident in the rise of references to his paintings in travel literature and Aglionby's allusion to his 'Reputation and Riches.' This repute is palpable in the possible allusion to Reni's *Aurora* in *Paradise Lost* (1667), the epic poem by John Milton (1608–1674). Describing dawn, Milton stated: 'the gray / Dawn, and the *Pleiades* before him danc'd / Shedding sweet influence…'[252] Milton was blind by 1652 and possibly only knew of Reni's painting through its literary reputation. This reference is thus a powerful signifier of the extent of Reni's fame by this time; not only was he deemed comparable to Raphael, but his works had become sufficiently recognisable to be recalled in poetry.

[248] Aglionby, *Painting Illustrated* (1679), 85.
[249] Aglionby, *Painting Illustrated* (1679), 87.
[250] Aglionby, *Painting Illustrated* (1679), 87-8.
[251] Aglionby, *Painting Illustrated* (1679), 88.
[252] Milton, *Paradise Lost* (1667), Book Three, lines 370-77. Merritt Yerkes Hughes argues that line 374 might refer to Reni's *Aurora*. See Milton, *Complete Poems* (2003), 355-56.

Grand Purchases in the Eighteenth Century

'I confess I wd not willingly purchase any but wt were such as Raphaels (if to be had at an easy rate), Titian, Correggio, Paul Verones, hanniball Carachio, Albani, guido reni, Old palma, tintoret, leonardo da Vinci & any of ye allow'd famous Masters of these I wou'd desire only such as pleasing subjects that one can with delight behold ye design as well as contemplate ye ability of ye workmen'

James Brydges, 1st Duke of Chandos, 1716.[253]

In 1716, James Brydges, 1st Duke of Chandos (1673–1744) wrote to Henry d'Avenant (fl. 1716), his agent in Genoa, detailing the types of picture he wished to acquire. Lacking a collection, Brydges was determined to purchase high-quality paintings economically and expediently. He focused on a small group of celebrated masters, including Reni. In this pursuit, Brydges can be compared to three other eighteenth-century aristocratic collectors: Sir Robert Walpole, 1st Earl of Orford (1676–1745); Thomas Coke, 1st Earl of Leicester (1697–1759); and John Spencer, 1st Earl Spencer (1734–1783). These were not the only collectors of the period to invest in Reni, yet their activities are particularly revealing.[254] They did not merely follow established collecting habits but were leaders of fashion, aware of current tastes. Wealthy gentlemen, they built their

[253] James Brydges to Henry D'Avenant, 19 July 1716. Stowe Manuscripts, Huntingdon Library, San Marino, ST 57, Vol. 13, f. 121.

[254] The Dukes of Devonshire acquired Reni's *Perseus and Andromeda* (formerly Colnaghi, London), recorded in the collection in 1713; Henry Somerset-Scudamore, 3rd Duke of Beaufort (1707–1745) shipped three pictures to Britain in 1727; Dr Robert Bragge (fl. 1740–1789) owned five works by 1754; the Earls of Radnor owned several works, including *The Rape of Europa* (National Gallery, London); Sir Andrew Fountaine (1676–1753) was possibly given Reni's self-portrait (present whereabouts unknown) by Cosimo III de Medici (1642–1723); Sir Luke Schaub (1690–1758) owned four works by the 1760s, including *The Circumcision* (present whereabouts unknown), later sold to Lord Grosvenor (dates unknown); William Ponsonby, 2nd Earl of Bessborough (1704–1793) obtained two works in 1759; and Paul Methuen (c. 1672–1757) owned several works, including a full-scale copy (Corsham Court, Wiltshire) of *The Baptism of Christ* (Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna), acquired at the 1726 sale of William Cadogan, 1st Earl Cadogan (1675–1726).

collections from scratch and displayed them in newly constructed, elegant houses. They each desired high-quality works from the top end of the market which embodied a refined aesthetic. Reni clearly satisfied this demand, with all four actively aspiring to acquire his works, for which they spent great sums. Their collecting habits elucidate the nature of British aristocratic taste in the eighteenth century and Reni's standing in the canon.

James Brydges, 1st Duke of Chandos

Born in 1673, Brydges was the son of James Brydges, 8th Baron of Chandos (1642–1714) and Elizabeth Barnard (1643–1719). In 1698, he was elected MP for Hereford and ascended swiftly at parliament, gaining the favour of John Churchill, 1st Duke of Marlborough (1650–1722). In 1705–13, he served as Paymaster-General of the Forces Abroad and soon amassed a fortune from several commercial schemes. In 1719, he became 1st Duke of Chandos and 1st Marquess of Carnarvon. When Brydges's wife Mary Lake (c. 1666–1712) died, he inherited an estate at Cannons, Middlesex, where there was an existing Jacobean mansion. In 1713–24, Brydges undertook a huge building project at an unprecedented cost of £200,000, constructing a grand new house. He employed leading architects, including William Talman (1650–1719), James Gibbs (1682–1754), and Sir John Vanbrugh (1664–1726). The decoration comprised Baroque features, including painted ceilings by Sir Godfrey Kneller and Sir James Thornhill, and the latest fashions in design, including Palladian Ionic columns and Venetian windows. However, the year construction finished, Brydges suffered massive losses in the South Sea Bubble which, combined with disastrous investments, led to financial ruin. At his death, the estate was in debt and, in 1747, the furnishings and fittings were sold, the house demolished shortly afterwards.

Featuring an overwhelmingly rich interior, Cannons rapidly became known as one of the finest residences in Britain. Shortly after its construction, Daniel Defoe (1660–1731) noted its 'beauty,' commenting: 'no nobleman in England, and very few in Europe, lives in greater splendour, or maintains a grandeur and

magnificence, equal to the Duke of Chandos.'[255] In 1724, John Macky (d. 1726) declared: 'The Disposition of the Avenues, Gardens, Statues, Painting, and the House of *Cannons* suits the Genius and Grandeur of its great Master.'[256] However, its very magnificence also attracted censure. In 1731, Alexander Pope (1688–1744) wrote an Epistle to Richard Boyle, 3rd Earl of Burlington (1694–1753) with a description of 'Timon's Villa', a tasteless and extravagant house, 'Where all cry out, / What sums are thrown away!'[257] This was widely considered a veiled critique of Cannons. The poem, and the lavish praise of figures such as Defoe, reveals Brydges's extreme ambition.

Brydges's spectacular rise to riches is inherently connected to his collecting activities. Born into the minor gentry, Brydges was concerned with assimilating into the highest ranks of nobility. He acquired all the necessary attributes for his new status, including a fashionable collection – an important indicator of affluence and learning. Brydges's letter to d'Avenant, referenced earlier, demonstrates his desire to have a publicly acclaimed collection. As Susan Jenkins attests, much of Brydges's artistic judgement derived from contemporary sources, including Jonathan Richardson the Elder (1667–1748), whom he knew personally, and Italian authorities, such as Vasari.[258] Never having embarked on a Grand Tour, he attended auctions in London and relied heavily on the judgement of agents, dealers, friends, and relatives, including his nephew William Leigh (1691–1757).[259] Brydges found paintings 'entertaining as well as valuable ornaments to a house' and was keen to build a first-rate collection at a low price, boasting: 'I shall by degrees have a better collection and more numerous than any in England and at little expence considering the

[255] Defoe, *Tour* (1927), Letter 6.
[256] Macky, *Journey* (1724), Vol. 2, 5.
[257] Pope, *Epistle* (1731), lines 99-108.
[258] For Richardson's approval of Reni, see Richardson, *Essay on Theory* (1725), 251. For Brydges's knowledge of Richardson, see Jenkins, *Portrait of Patron* (2007), 128. For Brydges's knowledge of Vasari, see James Brydges to Henry D'Avenant, 22 September 1716. Huntingdon Library, San Marino, Stowe Manuscripts, ST 57, Vol. 13, f. 46.
[259] See: James Brydges to Walter Senserf, 9 February 1713. Huntingdon Library, San Marino, Stowe Manuscripts, ST 57, Vol. 8, f. 251: 'as we are at a distance can be but indifferent judges of ye goodness of Pictures…' James Brydges to Walter Senserf, 27 March 1713. Huntingdon Library, San Marino, Stowe Manuscripts, ST 57, Vol. 9, f. 54: 'I… leave all ye rest to your judgement.'

value of them.'[260] He eventually became concerned about the cost of so 'engaging a Temptation.'[261] Whilst he admired Dutch and Flemish artists, particularly Adriaen van der Werff, he was aware of prevalent fashions and also sought high-quality Italian paintings. He demanded subject matter suitable for general approbation, writing that his pictures 'shd give no offence to ye modesty of any who happen to see them.'[262] In a letter to d'Avenant, he revealed a further facet of his collecting policy: 'I am for buying none which are not of the best hand and excellently well done of their kind… the very sound of a copy shocks me.'[263] Brydges thus desired only the best and most representative works of his preferred artists.

In 1725, John Gilbert (fl. 1725) compiled an inventory of Cannons, revealing that the majority of valuable works were displayed in the Library, one of two principal State Rooms.[264] The Library featured a painted ceiling by Antonio Bellucci and a select group of treasured paintings by Reni, Rubens, van Dyck, François Duquesnoy, Andrea del Sarto, Luca Giordano, Willem van der Velde II, Sir Godfrey Kneller, and Sir Peter Lely. The two works by Reni were 'The Rest on the Flight into Egypt' and 'The Angel appearing to Hagar' (present whereabouts of both unknown), together valued at £150 (around the mid-range of prices in the room, the highest being £400 for Rubens's 'The Tribute Money').[265] The first is the earliest work by Reni known to have entered Brydges's collection. In April 1713, Brydges asked Leigh to send him a catalogue from Paris marked with prices of paintings 'judg'd to be worth of any

[260] James Brydges, 1st Duke of Chandos to Henry D'Avenant, 4 November 1720. Huntingdon Library, San Marino, Stowe Manuscripts, ST 57, Vol. 18, f. 194. James Brydges to Henry D'Avenant, 7 August 1716. Huntingdon Library, San Marino, Stowe Manuscripts, ST 57, Vol. 13, f. 38.
[261] James Brydges, 1st Duke of Chandos to Henry D'Avenant, 18 August 1719. Huntingdon Library, San Marino, Stowe Manuscripts, ST 57, Vol. 16, f. 261: 'I had determined to put my self to no further Expense but I cou'd not resist so engaging a temptation.'
[262] James Brydges to Anthony Hammond, 1 January 1715. Huntingdon Library, San Marino, Stowe Manuscripts, ST 57, Vol. 12, f. 227.
[263] James Brydges to Henry D'Avenant, 7 August 1716. Huntingdon Library, San Marino, Stowe Manuscripts, ST 57, Vol. 13, f. 36.
[264] John Gilbert, 'An Inventory of his Grace the Duke of Chandos's Seat att Cannons taken June the 19th 1725.' Huntingdon Library, San Marino, Stowe Manuscripts, ST 83, ff. 59-257. Cit. Jenkins, 'Inventory of Cannons' (2005), 93-192.
[265] Gilbert, 'Inventory,' f. 98. Cit. Jenkins, 'Inventory of Cannons' (2005), 126.

Connoisseur.'[266] In July, Brydges stated that he was 'willing to give 2000 livres [c. £87] for ye Flight into Egypt by Guido.' He also expressed an interest in paintings by Domenichino, Andrea Schiavone, and Annibale Carracci.[267] The pictures were sent to England through 'Mr Frond' and in February 1714 Brydges wrote to his brother-in-law Theophilus Leigh (1648?–1724) seeking clarification: 'The pictures he bought… have come. Three. One very large, the others small. What was their price and who painted them?'[268] This might suggest that Brydges lacked connoisseurship or that the paintings did not make a great impression upon him. However, the high cost of Reni's painting confirms Brydges's specific desire to acquire it and its display in the Library further reveals its status.

The second work can be identified with a picture by Reni described in the correspondence as 'The Angel Waking Elijah', purchased through the dealer Jacques Meyers (fl. 1715) of Rotterdam. In February 1715, Brydges informed Meyers that he would acquire the painting if was authentic, high-quality, and priced appropriately.[269] In May 1716, he described the picture as very beautiful and haggled on the price, offering 3,000 guilders (c. £300).[270] However, on its arrival in August, Brydges told Walter Senserf (fl. 1716): 'Now it is come, I cannot say but that I do like it, tho' at ye same time I judge ye price extravagantly dear, having had pieces from Italy sent me of much better hand & work at half

[266] James Brydges to William Leigh, 3 April 1713. Huntingdon Library, San Marino, Stowe Manuscripts, ST 57, Vol. 9, f. 63.

[267] James Brydges to William Leigh, 10 July 1713. Huntingdon Library, San Marino, Stowe Manuscripts, ST 57, Vol. 9, f. 128. For rough price conversion, see Forster and Forster, *European Society* (1969), 410.

[268] James Brydges to Theophilus Leigh, 15 February 1714. Shakespeare Birthplace Trust, Stratford, DR 671/90, f. 14. Cit. Jenkins, *Portrait of Patron* (2007), 13.

[269] James Brydges to Jacques Meyers, 17 February 1715. Huntingdon Library, San Marino, Stowe Manuscripts, ST 57, Vol. 12, ff. 271-73: 'La piece de Guido del' ange qui reveille Elic est une piece qui me plaira for, si le prix ne m'effraye, & si alle est véritablement blemenc une de ses capitaux.'

[270] James Brydges to Jacques Meyers, 28 May 1716. Huntingdon Library, San Marino, Stowe Manuscripts, ST 57, Vol. 14, f. 59: 'Permette moi, Monsieur, de vous faire offer de 3000 Gilds pour votre tableau de Guido Reni…' The price is confirmed in James Brydges to Jacques Meyers, 12 August 1716. Huntingdon Library, San Marino, Stowe Manuscripts, ST 57, Vol. 14, f. 147: 'Je vous demande pardon que je ne vous ai pas plutot faire remettre les 3000 pour le tableau. Il en effectivement tres beau…' For rough price conversion, see Feinberg, 'Africans and Europeans' (1989), 162.

ye price.'[271] He made a similar point to Meyers and in October told Senserf that he would be 'a little more cautious for ye future' when dealing with Meyers.[272]

The most valuable Reni in the inventory was 'Philomon Bacchus & Ceres the old Nurse of Bacchus restor'd to her former youth by Ceres att the request of Bacchus for her former service to him in his youth' (present whereabouts unknown), valued impressively at £700.[273] An unfamiliar work in Reni's œuvre, the subject appears to be a confused allusion to Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (7.294-96). It is possibly identifiable with a painting of 'restoring Old Age to Youth,' mentioned by Brydges in August 1717 as sent by 'Cap. Sowers.' Brydges described the painting as an 'excellent' and 'capital' piece but confessed: 'I shd. Not if I had seen it have chose it my self for tho' ye Subject… is not melancholy, yet ye manner of executing it in this picture, is I think, so to a great degree it being very dark painted & nothing venerable or moving in ye faces of ye old women, as we see often to be in ye works of those in years.' Nevertheless, he thanked Senserf for obtaining it 'so cheap as eight hundred guilders [c. £80].'[274] The picture was displayed in the Anty Room, an important space for guests before entering the Saloon or Library.[275] The ceiling was decorated by Francisco Sleter and two other paintings hung on the walls: 'A large Chartoon of the Creation by Raphell' (valued at £300) and 'A Family piece of Villars Duke of Buckingham after Van Dyck' (valued at £30).

The remaining works by Reni, 'A Madonna with St Catherine and John the Baptist' and 'A Madonna' (present whereabouts of both unknown), were displayed in the Picture Room, a small reception space.[276] They were hung

[271] James Brydges to Walter Senserf, 3 August 1716. Huntingdon Library, San Marino, Stowe Manuscripts, ST 57, Vol. 14, f. 147. James Brydges to Walter Senserf, 24 August 1716. Huntingdon Library, San Marino, Stowe Manuscripts, ST 57, Vol. 14, ff. 165-66.
[272] James Brydges to Jacques Meyers, 25 August 1716. Huntingdon Library, San Marino, Stowe Manuscripts, ST 57, Vol. 14, ff. 167-68. James Brydges to Walter Senserf, 5 October 1716. Huntingdon Library, San Marino, Stowe Manuscripts, ST 57, Vol. 14, ff. 207-08.
[273] Gilbert, 'Inventory,' f. 86. Cit. Jenkins, 'Inventory of Cannons' (2005), 120, see also 95.
[274] James Brydges to Walter Senserf, 20 August 1717. Huntingdon Library, San Marino, Stowe Manuscripts, ST 57, Vol. 15, f. 8. For rough price conversion, see Feinberg, 'Africans and Europeans' (1989), 162.
[275] Gilbert, 'Inventory,' f. 86. Cit. Jenkins, 'Inventory of Cannons' (2005), 120, see also 95.
[276] Jenkins, 'Inventory of Cannons' (2005), 95.

alongside works of a similar sacred theme by Dürer, Carlo Maratti, van Dyck, Guercino, and Quentin Massys, as well as history and landscape paintings. 'A Madonna' can be identified with 'Madonna and Child', sold to Brydges by Meyers in 1715 for £150 together with 'Lot and his Daughters' by Alessandro Veronese (Alessandro Turchi) (possibly Private Collection, Germany), and, as a separate purchase, 'Ghent Kermis' by David Teniers the Younger (present whereabouts unknown).[277] In January 1715, Brydges indicated that he desired the pictures but found the cost considerable, offering 200 livres sterling for all three.[278] In May 1716, he revealed that connoisseurs in London doubted the authenticity of Reni's picture.[279] The final work in the inventory is a copy of Reni's 'Dido and Aeneas' (present whereabouts unknown), valued at £20.[280] This was one of only two paintings in the Tapestry Room, displayed alongside an anonymous half-length portrait of Lord Chandos.

In addition to the inventory, a manuscript in the Bodleian Library, Oxford, includes a list of pictures apparently sent to Brydges in *circa* 1740 with an indication of sizes and prices.[281] It includes seven works attributed to Reni

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[277] See Jonckheere, 'Meyers' (2008), 127-29. See: James Brydges to Jacques Meyers, 17 February 1715. Huntingdon Library, San Marino, Stowe Manuscripts, ST 57, Vol. 12, f. 273. James Brydges to Jacques Meyers, 20 March 1715. Huntingdon Library, San Marino, Stowe Manuscripts, ST 57, Vol. 12, f. 323. James Brydges to Jacques Meyers, 16 January 1715. Huntingdon Library, San Marino, Stowe Manuscripts, ST 57, Vol. 13, f. 22. James Brydges to Jacques Meyers, 20 April 1716. Huntingdon Library, San Marino, Stowe Manuscripts, ST 57, Vol. 13, f. 14.

[278] James Brydges to Jacques Meyers, 16 January 1715. Huntingdon Library, San Marino, Stowe Manuscripts, ST 57, Vol. 13, ff. 21-2: 'Ceux que je souhaitetai le plus sont la Madona et Infant de Guido Reni; Loth et ses Filles par Alexandre Veronese et le Foir de Gand de Teniers, mais le prix qu'il m'en a demandé est si excessive, que de longtems je ne pouvois me resoudre a y songer. J'ai en fin pourtant lui offert une somme (il me semble) asses considerable pour les deux primieres, laquelle J'entens ne vous est pas agreable. Je suis bien faché de ne pouvoir pas offrir une somme plus large, et je vous prie d'attribuer la faut a ma bourse, plutot qu'au manquement de la bonne volonte a repondre a vos souhaits. Pour prevenir neanmoins la peine et l'hazard que le renvoy de ces tableaux donnera, si vous me laisseres monsieur les trois surnommees à deux cens livres sterling, je les prendrai sur ce pied la.'

[279] James Brydges to Jacques Meyers, 28 May 1716. Huntingdon Library, San Marino, Stowe Manuscripts, ST 57, Vol. 14, f. 59: '… celui de la madone de l'infant quoi qu'il soit d'une tres bonne main personne pourtant de nos connaissances le veulent reconnaitre pour un de Guido Reni.'

[280] Gilbert, 'Inventory,' f. 126. Cit. Jenkins, 'Inventory of Cannons' (2005), 137.

[281] Bodleian Library, Oxford, MS Rawl. D903, f. 1. Copy in 'Chandos' Collector File, Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles.

(present whereabouts of all unknown): ‘Abell’, ’St. Michel’, ‘Fuite en Egypt’, and ‘Charité Romaine’, all valued at ’3000’; ‘Teste de St Sebastiin oval’, valued at ‘1500’; and ‘Teste de la Vierge en oval’ and ‘Teste de St. Catherine oval’, both valued at ‘1,000’. The origin of these works is unclear, but the volume is inscribed ‘à coll: Ducis Chandos 10.II.1748.’ The manuscript suggests that Brydges continued to acquire Reni’s paintings after the date of the inventory and that his works could still be found in his collection at his death.

Reni’s paintings were displayed prominently at Cannons alongside works by prestigious artists such as Raphael, Andrea del Sarto, van Dyck, Rubens, and Carlo Maratti. Brydges clearly considered Reni worthy of conspicuous display and capable of elevating his status as a collector and gentleman. His inclusion of Reni within a narrow set of criteria for collecting confirms the artist’s prevailing reputation in Britain. In several ways, Brydges can be compared to Sir Robert Walpole, 1st Earl of Orford.[282] Exact contemporaries, both were born into the minor gentry and began their careers as MPs. High-achieving, self-made men, they built fortunes primarily from political achievements rather than through inheritance. They owed political success to an association with John Churchill, 1st Duke of Marlborough and constructed grand houses to consolidate their newly found status, using artworks as tools. A discrepancy in power meant that Brydges often sought to gain Walpole’s patronage. The degree of competitive emulation between them and the complexity of their relationship are important factors to consider when examining their collections.

Sir Robert Walpole, 1st Earl of Orford

Born in 1676, Walpole was the son of the MP Robert Walpole (1650–1700) and Mary Burwell (1654/55–1711). In 1700, he married Catherine Shorter (c. 1682–1737) and in 1701 was elected MP for Castle Rising and later King’s Lynn. Walpole’s career progressed swiftly; he served as Secretary at War, Treasurer of the Navy, Privy Councillor, and Paymaster of the Forces. In 1721, as the highest-profile Whig politician, he was appointed First Lord of the Treasury, Chancellor

[282] See Jenkins, ‘Powerplay’ (2003).

of the Exchequer, and Leader of the House of Commons. Parliament was led under his premiership until 1742, when he was elevated to the House of Lords as Earl of Orford.

Walpole began collecting in *circa* 1717. Like Brydges, he never embarked on a Grand Tour and acquired paintings through alternative means. However, Walpole's collecting policy contrasted greatly with that of Brydges; instead of focusing on select celebrated masters, he accumulated an encyclopaedic collection. His preferred artist was Carlo Maratti and he eventually dedicated a room to his paintings. In 1728, Walpole's collection – displayed at his property in Arlington Street, London – was singled out by the French writer and connoisseur Antoine-Joseph Dezallier d'Argenville (1680–1765). As Andrew Moore suggests, this indicates the early acclaim it had achieved, even on the Continent.[283] The eminence of Walpole's collection and its illustrative qualities explain the laments of the British public when it was sold to Catherine the Great of Russia (1729–1796) in 1779. The MP John Wilkes (1725–1797) argued that it was 'one of the first' collections in Europe and 'of acknowledged superiority to most in Italy.' He suggested that Parliament buy it as a training tool for native artists.[284] Regret at its loss was still felt in the nineteenth century: 'England will never retrieve such a lost opportunity of establishing a National Gallery worthy of its rank as a civilised nation… the chance of, at once, possessing chef d'œuvres of so many celebrated masters, and for so trifling a sum, will never again occur.'[285]

As the leading politician in Parliament, Walpole was a prominent figure and attached great importance to his residences, wishing to impress visitors and validate his status. He spent vast sums on his properties, and they played a critical role in constructing his public image. His collection was displayed principally at three residences: Orford House, Chelsea; 10 Downing Street, London; and Houghton Hall, Norfolk. He took possession of the first in 1714 and engaged Vanbrugh in 1715–16 to enlarge the building. A fashionable

[283] Moore, 'Aedes Walpolianae' (2002), 22.
[284] John Wilkes. Cit. Morel, 'Houghton Revisited' (2013), 37.
[285] Augustus Bozzi Granville, 1829; Livret, 1838. Cit. Morel, 'Houghton Revisited' (2013), 32.

residence, Orford House had a variety of captivating settings for entertaining guests.[286] The eminence of its decoration is manifest in Robert Dodsley's (1703–1764) comment that it was 'adorned with a noble collection of pictures, which was afterwards removed to Houghton-hall in Norfolk, and is now thought the finest collection in England.'[287] The second property was at the epicentre of Walpole's political activity. In 1732, George II (1683–1760) bestowed upon Walpole three buildings on Downing Street for his services to the nation. Walpole commissioned the fashionable painter, designer, and architect William Kent (1685–1748) to unite the buildings and create an elegant residence which reflected his taste and refinement. The refurbishment lasted three years; public interest in its progress is palpable in press coverage.[288] Its decoration included a precise picture-hang, comprised predominantly of pairs, accentuating Walpole's appreciation of aesthetic similarities and scholarly associations. In 1761, Walpole's son, Horace (1717–1797), proudly recalled that the paintings in Downing Street and Chelsea were displayed 'where queens and crowds admired them.'[289]

The final residence, Houghton Hall, was Walpole's family seat in Norfolk, which he inherited in 1700. In 1720–35, Walpole undertook an ambitious building project, knocking down the existing red-brick manor house and constructing a large mansion in its place. Like Brydges, Walpole adopted the latest fashions, including elements of the established Baroque style and contemporary Palladianism. He engaged Kent to design the building, incorporating Italian architectural features to create an effective setting for his collection, fostering the paintings' geometric and thematic integration. Works were distributed according to status and theme, with large Old Masters placed in the Saloon and Dining Room, smaller pictures in the Cabinet Room, and full-length portraits in the Yellow Drawing Room. When the paintings from Downing Street were transferred in 1742, a purpose-built top-lit Picture Gallery was constructed. This

[286] See Beaver, *Memorials* (1892), 289.
[287] Dodsley, *London and Environs (*1761), Vol. 2, 101.
[288] *The London Daily Post* (23 September 1735). Cit. Wheatley, *London* (1891), Vol. 1, 519.
[289] Horace Walpole to George Montagu, 25–30 March 1761. Cit. Walpole, *Correspondence* (1941), 348.

held the majority of large Baroque Italian and Flemish paintings and was a unique space in country house construction, innovative in design and lighting. The last room to be built, it represented the apogee of Walpole's activities as a collector. As Moore suggests, Houghton was a 'monument' to Walpole's achievements and designed to rival the finest houses of the aristocracy.[290] A self-aggrandising project, similar to Cannons, it afforded Walpole the splendour appropriate to his statesmanship and standing and enabled him to consolidate his power and commemorate his admission into the highest levels of society. The residence was also the site of important political meetings known as 'Norfolk Congresses'.

In 1731, Horace compiled an inventory of Walpole's collection, indicating that, of 431 paintings, 113 were displayed at Houghton.[291] The position and status of works were also evocatively recalled in Horace's *Aedes Walpolianae* (1747), both a catalogue and eulogy. By emphasising the authenticity and quality of paintings on display, Horace celebrated and immortalised the collection. The pictures were further commended by various visitors, including Edward Harley, 2nd Earl of Oxford (1689–1741), who described them as 'exquisite' in 1738: 'the more one sees the more one admires and desires to see.'[292] The following year, the engraver and antiquary George Vertue (1684–1756) declared: 'the great Collection of noble original pictures exceed all others in number and variety… So many rare pictures statues requires time to view well & review at several times to conceive their great merit & beauty.'[293] Such praise continued throughout the eighteenth century, with Arthur Young (1741–1820) remarking in 1769 that Walpole's collection was 'undoubtedly the first in England, after the

[290] Moore, *Houghton Hall* (1996–97), 31.
[291] Horace Walpole, 'A catalogue of the Right Hon.ble Sir Robert Walpole's collection of pictures, 1736.' Bound into Horace's personal copy of *Aedes Walpolianae*, 2nd ed. (1752). Pierpoint Morgan Museum, New York, PML 7586. Cit. Dukelskaya and Moore, *Capital Collection* (2002), Appendix 3. The inventory cites paintings at four residences: Houghton Hall, 10 Downing Street, Orford House, and 16 Grosvenor Street.
[292] Historical Manuscripts Commission, Portland MSS, Vol. 6, 171a. Cit. Morel, 'Houghton Revisited' (2013), 55.
[293] Vertue, 'Notebooks IV' (1937–38), 121.

royal one' and 'many of the capital pieces are in what is called the picture-gallery.'[294]

Walpole owned seven works associated with Reni, five of which were mentioned in the 1731 inventory. Whilst the number might seem negligible, they were prominent works and displayed at all three of Walpole's foremost residences. The earliest to have been acquired was *The Adoration of the Shepherds* (Fig. 14; The Pushkin Museum of Fine Arts, Moscow), a painting celebrated during Reni's lifetime and engraved in 1655–93 by François de Poilly (1623–1693).[295] Purchased from the collection of Louis Phélypeaux, Marquis de la Vrillière (1672–1725), French Secretary of State in Paris, it was first referenced in Walpole's collection by Dezallier d'Argenville in 1728.[296] In *Aedes Walpolianae*, Horace confirmed its provenance and praised it as 'a most perfect and Capital Picture of Guido.'[297] He further commended it in 1779 as the finest Reni in Walpole's collection: 'The affixing a higher value to the Pietro Cortona than to the octagon Guido is most absurd – I have often gazed on the latter and preferred it even to the Doctors [Reni's *The Dispute of the Fathers of the Church*].'[298] By 1736, the picture was moved from Arlington Street to Houghton, where it was displayed in the Green Velvet Drawing Room (later 'Carlo Maratt Room'), alongside paintings by Carlo Maratti, Pietro da Cortona, Murillo, Niccolò Berrettoni, Luca Giordano, Giuseppe Chiari, Jan van Huysum, and other works attributed to Reni, considered below.[299] By 1742, it was displayed on the West Wall of the Picture Gallery alongside other celebrated seventeenth-century pictures.[300] Reni's painting was positioned below Pietro da Cortona's *The Return*

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[294] Young, *Six Weeks Tour* (1769), 35-6.
[295] Malvasia, *Felsina Pittrice* (1841), Vol. 1, 95.
[296] Antoine-Joseph Dezallier d'Argenville, *Voiage D'Angleterre D'Hollande Et de Flandre fait en L'anne 1728*. National Art Library, London, MS 86 NN2, ff. 82-3. Cit. Moore, 'Aedes Walpolianae' (2002), 22.
[297] Walpole. *Aedes Walpolianae* (1767), 88-9.
[298] Horace Walpole to Rev. William Cole, 12 July 1779. Cit. Walpole, *Correspondence* (1937), Vol. 2, 169.
[299] Walpole, 'Catalogue.' Cit. Dukelskaya and Moore, *Capital Collection* (2002), Appendix 3, 445.
[300] East and West elevations of the Picture Gallery, Houghton Hall, showing a proposed picture hang, c. 1742. The Marquess of Cholmondeley. Cit. Dukelskaya and Moore, *Capital Collection* (2002), 420.

of Hagar (The Pushkin Museum of Fine Arts, Moscow) and between Poussin's *Moses Striking the Rock* (The State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg) and *The Continence of Scipio* (The Pushkin Museum of Fine Arts, Moscow), with Rembrandt's *Sacrifice of Isaac* and Salvator Rosa's *Democritus and Protagoras* (both The State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg) above.[301] The painting's prominent position alongside Poussin's significant *Moses Striking the Rock* indicates its perceived high status.

In the Picture Gallery, Walpole also displayed the most valuable and celebrated work in his collection: Reni's *The Dispute of the Fathers of the Church* (Fig. 15; The State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg). The picture had previously belonged to Marquis Cosimo de Angelis (dates unknown) in Rome and was purchased by Walpole in 1731 through the agency of George Knapton (1698–1778) for £700. Negotiations were complex, involving numerous individuals. The painting had been engraved by Jacob Frey (1681–1752) in 1722 but had been privately displayed and was thus largely unfamiliar in Reni's œuvre. Horace claimed that Pope Innocent XIII (1655–1724) tried to prevent its exportation, claiming that it was too valuable to leave Italy, yet, on discovering the high-profile nature of the buyer, consented to the sale.[302] Mattia Biffis clarifies that this episode instead involved Pope Clement XII (1652–1740) and Cardinal Nepote Neri Corsini (1685–1770).[303] Reni's painting was not just Walpole's costliest purchase but the most expensive painting ever brought to Britain and among the highest-priced works in eighteenth-century Europe. In 1774, Horace valued it at least £2,000, describing it as 'the first picture in England, and equal to any in Italy but Raphael's.'[304] In *Aedes Walpolianae*, he labelled it the 'first in the collection.'[305] Its value was recognised by Sir Joshua

[301] See also: East and West elevations of the Picture Gallery, Houghton Hall, showing a picture hang, with furniture, c. 1742. Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge. Plan of a picture hang in the Picture Gallery at Houghton Hall, f. 7, in 'An Inventory of Pictures at Houghton 1744.' Lytton Family Archive, on loan to Hertfordshire Record Office, Hertford, K1547. Both cit. Dukelskaya and Moore, *Capital Collection* (2002), 421, 424.
[302] Walpole, *Aedes Walpolianae* (1767), 79-80.
[303] Biffis, 'Negotiating an Art Deal' (2017), 4-5.
[304] Horace Walpole to Sir Horace Mann, 1 May 1774. Cit. Walpole, *Correspondence* (1967), Vol. 23, 570.
[305] Walpole, *Aedes Walpolianae* (1767), 76-7.

Reynolds (1723–1792), who offered to buy it for 2,000 guineas (£2,100) in 1778.[306] In 1779, it was valued at £3,500 by Benjamin West (1738–1820) and Giovanni Battista Cipriani (1727–1785) – five times its original cost – and sold to Catherine the Great along with the rest of Walpole's collection.[307] Its fame is further indicated by its use as a reference point for travellers visiting Reni's *Assumption of the Virgin* (Chiesa del Gesu e dei Santi Ambrogio e Andrea, Genoa).[308]

In 1736, the painting was displayed in Houghton's Marble Parlour, an impressive space which functioned as a dining room, alongside four Italian paintings by Salvator Rosa, Paris Bordone, Carlo Cignani, and Bonifazio de Pitati.[309] By 1742, it was moved to the Picture Gallery, where plans of *circa* 1742 and 1744 locate it above a chimney on the North Wall, near works by Frans Snyders, Claude Lorraine, Poussin, Leonardo da Vinci, Valerio Castelli, and Domenichino. Rubens's colossal *The Hunt of Meleager and Atalanta (The Caledonian Hunt)* (now Workshop of Rubens and Theodor van Thulden) dominated the centre of the wall while Salvator Rosa's *The Prodigal Son* (both The State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg) mirrored Reni's painting above a second fireplace.[310]

It is striking that Walpole, as a Protestant, was interested in a painting with such strong Catholic overtones. In *Aedes Walpolianae*, Horace carefully explained the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception and clarified its representation.[311] He further addressed the painting in the publication's 'Sermon', where he provided

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[306] George Walpole, 3rd Earl of Orford to James Christie, 30 October 1778. Cit. Walpole, *Correspondence* (1937), Vol. 2, 170.
[307] See Pears, *Discovery* (1991), 259, fn. 1, and Dukelskaya, 'Houghton Sale' (2002), 55-90.
[308] Gray, *Tour* (2011), 22; Smith, *Sketch of a Tour* (1793), Vol. 1, 234.
[309] Walpole, 'Catalogue.' Cit. Dukelskaya and Moore, *Capital Collection* (2002), Appendix 3, 445.
[310] North elevation of the Picture Gallery, Houghton Hall, showing a proposed picture hang, c. 1742. Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge. Plan of a picture hang in the Picture Gallery at Houghton Hall, f. 7, in 'An Inventory at Houghton 1744.' Lytton Family Archive, on loan to Hertfordshire Record Office, Hertford, K1547. Both cit. Dukelskaya and Moore, *Capital Collection* (2002), 422, 424.
[311] Walpole, *Aedes Walpolianae* (1767), 77-9.

justification for its high repute. Describing how God permitted humankind to represent the surrounding world, he stated:

> Indeed so great is the perfection to which He hath permitted us to arrive, that one is less amazed at the poor vulgar, who adore what seems to surpass the genius of human nature; and almost excuse the credulity of the populace, who see miracles made obvious to their senses by the hand of a Raphael or a Guido. Can we wonder at a poor illiterate creature's giving faith to any legend in the life of the Romish Virgin, who sees even the Doctors of the Church disputing with such energy on the marvellous circumstances ascribed to her by the Catholicks? He must be endowed with a courage, a strength of reasoning above the common standard, who can reject fables, when the sword enforces, and the pencil almost authenticates the belief of them.[312]

For Horace, and likely Walpole, the painting's worth lay in its quality as an artwork and value as a superlative example of Reni's œuvre. Horace considered it only unsuitable for the 'vulgar' and 'illiterate' who were susceptible to idolatry; these were clearly atypical visitors to Houghton.[313] He supported Catholic art elsewhere in *Aedes Walpolianae*, commenting that 'painting, in itself, is innocent… 'tis the misapplication that must constitute the sin.'[314] As Clare Haynes suggests, religious pictures could be 'worthy of Protestant connoisseurial attention because of the 'canonical' status of their artist'; in this way, their controversial qualities could be stripped away.[315] The high regard in which Walpole held Reni as an artist is manifest in the 'Introduction': 'In one point I think the Bolognese Painters excell'd every other Master; their Draperies are in a greater taste than even Raphael's. The largeness and simplicity of the folds in Guido's Dispute of the Doctors, is a pattern and standard for that sort of Painting.'[316]

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[312] Walpole, *Aedes Walpolianae* (1767), 103.
[313] See Haynes, *Pictures and Popery* (2006), 86.
[314] Walpole, *Aedes Walpolianae* (1767), 99-101.
[315] See Haynes, 'Art and anti-catholicism' (2005), 495.
[316] Walpole, *Aedes Walpolianae* (1767), xxxiv.

The final work by Reni in the Picture Gallery was *The Triumph of Job* (The State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg), now considered a reduced-scale seventeenth-century copy of an original in Santa Maria della Pietà, Bologna.[317] Its provenance is unclear; in the 1736 inventory, the subject was mistaken for 'The Israelites bringing Presents to Moses for the Tabernacle'. At this time, the painting was displayed in the Yellow Drawing Room, a space designated for family use, suggesting Walpole's personal affection for the picture. Also in the room were works by van Dyck, Luca Giordano, Pietro da Cortona, Titian, Adriaen van der Werff, and John Wooton.[318] By 1744, it was displayed prominently on the South Wall of the Picture Gallery, below Ferdinand Bol's *Portrait of an Old Woman with a Book* (The State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg) and Niccolò Berrettoni's *Marriage of St Catherine* (possibly *The Virgin and Child with SS Elisabeth, John the Baptist and Joseph*, Tsarskoye Selo State Museum, St Petersburg), close to works by Rubens, Giulio Romano, Paul Brill, and Pier Francesco Mola.[319]

A further painting conspicuously displayed at Houghton was Reni's *St Joseph holding the Christ Child* (present whereabouts unknown). This had previously belonged to the French diplomat Charles Jean-Baptiste Fleuriau, Comte de Morville (1686–1732). In the 1736 inventory, it was listed at Downing Street in the End Room Below, a significant space containing primarily seventeenth-century Italian paintings, particularly of the Carracci School.[320] Reni's painting was displayed opposite Poussin's masterpiece *Moses Striking the Rock* on a wall dominated by Agostini Carracci's *The Lamentation* (The State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg). Mirroring it on the other side of *The Lamentation* was another work by Carracci – *Virgin with the Child Asleep in her Arms* (present

[317] The connection was recognised in Gray, *Tour* (2011), 43, and Walpole, *Aedes Walpolianae* (1767), 86.
[318] Walpole, 'Catalogue.' Cit. Dukelskaya and Moore, *Capital Collection* (2002), Appendix 3, 446.
[319] Plan of a picture hang in the Picture Gallery at Houghton Hall, f. 7, in 'An Inventory of Pictures at Houghton 1744.' Lytton Family Archive, on loan to Hertfordshire Record Office, Hertford, K1547. Cit. Dukelskaya and Moore, *Capital Collection* (2002), 424.
[320] Walpole, 'Catalogue.' Cit. Dukelskaya and Moore, *Capital Collection* (2002), Appendix 3, 446.

whereabouts unknown).[321] It was also close to a *Female Nude (Donna Nuda)* by a follower of Leonardo da Vinci (The State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg), then considered a rare work by the master, and paintings by Viviano Codazzi and Marinus van Reymerswaele. From 1742, *St Joseph holding the Christ Child* was displayed in Houghton's Saloon, an important public-orientated space. Labelling it 'Simeon and the Child', Horace described it as 'a very fine Picture of *Guido.*'[322] It was positioned next to *The Holy Family with the Infant John the Baptist and St Elisabeth* by Simone Cantarini, called Pesarese (The Pushkin Museum of Fine Arts, Moscow) and an anonymous *The Virgin and Child with John the Baptist* (present whereabouts unknown). Underneath was van Dyck's *The Rest on the Flight into Egypt (The Virgin with Partridges)* (The State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg).[323] This was a religious grouping, each work featuring the nurture of Christ.

A further painting considered authentic during Walpole's lifetime was *The Archangel Gabriel* (The State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg). The figure represented is ambiguous, with Horace identifying 'a Woman' in 1736 and 'St. Catharine' in *Aedes Walpolianae*, while Vertue described a 'Head of a Saint wt a Lilly.'[324] The association with Gabriel was made by Aleksei Musin-Pushkin (1744–1783), Russian Ambassador in London.[325] In the 1736 inventory, the picture was located in Houghton's Green Velvet Drawing Room, displayed alongside Reni's *The Adoration of the Shepherds*.[326] It was later identified next to a fireplace with two other Italian works: Luca Giordano's *Presentation of the Virgin in the Temple*, now considered a copy, and Rosalba Carriera's *Apollo* (both The State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg). On the other side of the chimney were three corresponding works mirroring this first group: Raphael's *Head of a*

[321] Isaac Ware, Plan of the End Room Below ('Northwest Corner Room'), 10 Downing Street, 1736–42, in Horace Walpole's extra-illustrated manuscript of *Aedes Walpolianae*. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (23.26 f. 67r). Cit. Moore, 'Aedes Walpolianae' (2002), 24-6.
[322] Walpole, *Aedes Walpolianae* (1767), 55.
[323] See Dukelskaya and Moore, *Capital Collection* (2002), 426-27.
[324] Walpole, 'Catalogue.' Cit. Dukelskaya and Moore, *Capital Collection* (2002), Appendix 3, 445; Walpole, *Aedes Walpolianae* (1767), 60; Vertue, 'Notebooks VI' (1948–50), 179.
[325] SbRIO 17, 1876. Cit. Dukelskaya and Moore, *Capital Collection* (2002), 184.
[326] See above for Green Velvet Drawing Room.

Man (present whereabouts unknown), Giordano's *Birth of the Virgin* (present whereabouts unknown; now considered a copy), and Carriera's *Diana* (The State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg).[327] Through this association, Reni was elevated in status and endorsed as Raphael's equal.

The final two works were recognised as copies. The first, *Jupiter and Europa* (present whereabouts unknown) by Pietro da Pietri (1663–1716), was displayed in Houghton's Coffee Room alongside works by Herman Swanevelt, Michele Smini, and Jonathan Richardson.[328] This was an informal reception space off The Arcade.[329] The second, *St Andrew led to Martyrdom* (present whereabouts unknown), was recorded in the 1736 inventory in Orford House's Best Drawing Room. Horace described it as 'a copy from Guido, in the Vatican.'[330] Other artists displayed in the room include van Dyck, Frans Snyders, Holbein, Anthonis van Dashort Mor, Benvenuto Tisi, called Garofolo, and Melchior d'Hondecoeter. The selection of a known copy after Reni for such a grand room is significant.

Analysis of these paintings establishes that Walpole invested heavily in Reni, displaying his works prominently in his three principal properties. He chose representative paintings for his wide-ranging collection and clearly rated Reni highly. The most valuable picture was *The Dispute of the Fathers of the Church*, which Walpole went to great lengths to acquire and displayed conspicuously in Houghton's vaunted Picture Gallery alongside two other works by Reni. Further celebrated paintings were placed in other impressive locations, including Houghton's Saloon, Orford House's Best Drawing Room, and the End Room Below at Downing Street. It is striking that even minor works and copies were placed prominently, indicating that Walpole considered Reni vital for promoting his status as a collector. The paintings were typically displayed in pairings or thematic groupings which allowed Walpole to demonstrate his taste and

[327] See Dukelskaya and Moore, *Capital Collection* (2002), 425.
[328] Walpole, *Aedes Walpolianae* (1767), 43.
[329] Ilchester, *Lord Hervey* (1950), 71.
[330] Horace Walpole, 'Catalogue.' Cit. Dukelskaya and Moore, *Capital Collection* (2002), Appendix 3, 449.

erudition. Artists with whom Reni was associated include Leonardo da Vinci, Raphael, Rubens, and Poussin, cementing his status within the canon.

The collections of Brydges and Walpole represent the endeavours of two leading politicians in the early eighteenth century. Each used their wealth for magnificent building projects, establishing opulent power bases and forming formidable collections from scratch. In this way, they cemented their status and exhibited their taste, affluence, and cultural refinement. Keen to adopt the latest fashions, they employed leading architects and actively sought works by Reni, spending vast sums and displaying them prominently for public approbation. Never having travelled abroad, they formed their taste through the advice and example of others. This is in marked contrast to Thomas Coke, 1st Earl of Leicester, who formed his taste at a young age on a Grand Tour. Coke was Walpole's neighbour in Norfolk, where he too established a collection in a newly constructed mansion. Active slightly later and playing a lesser role in politics, Coke represents a different sort of collector.

Thomas Coke, 1st Earl of Leicester

Born in 1697, Coke was the son of Edward Coke (1676/78–1707) and Carey Newton (1680–1708). In 1707, he inherited considerable family holdings, including Holkham, Norfolk, and property in London and elsewhere. In 1712, he embarked upon an extended Grand Tour with his tutor, Dr Thomas Hobart (fl. 1712), remaining abroad until 1718 when he married Lady Margaret Tufton (1700–1775). In 1722, Coke became MP for Norfolk and in 1728 was elected Baron Lovel of Minster Lovel. In 1731–32, he served as Grand Master of English Freemasons and in 1733 was elected Postmaster-General. In 1744, he received the title Earl of Leicester.

The Grand Tour of 1712–18 was a tremendously influential experience for Coke. Over the six-year period, he visited France, Italy, Switzerland, Germany, Austria, and the Netherlands. During his time in Italy, Coke developed a passion for architecture, taking instruction under Giacomo Matiari (dates unknown) and

befriending Richard Boyle, 3rd Earl of Burlington, the great proponent of Palladian architecture. He also enlisted William Kent, who was undertaking artistic training in Rome, as his agent. In 1714, Coke addressed his growing interest in art in a letter to his grandfather, Sir John Newton, 3rd Baronet (c. 1651–1734): 'I am become since my stay at Rome a perfect virtuoso, & a great lover of pictures, even so far as to venture to incroach on the kindness of my guardians in having bought some few.'[331] Kent also described Coke as 'a lover of painting.'[332] Whilst abroad, Coke conceived the notion of constructing a new Palladian residence at Holkham. The family seat placed Coke conveniently close to Walpole at Houghton.[333] The two men were distant relatives and politically aligned, with Coke supporting Walpole and the latter facilitating his appointment as Knight of the Order of the Bath in 1725.

Unfortunately, despite inheriting a considerable fortune that only increased following his marriage, Coke made disastrous financial speculations and suffered in the South Sea Bubble. Whilst he initiated landscaping at Holkham in 1722, it was not until 1734 that construction of the house began. It was completed in 1764, five years after Coke's death. Holkham is an exemplary model of Palladian architecture with innovative classical features, including a Roman temple façade and Marble Hall entrance. Coke personally managed the project and many qualities are indebted to his appreciation for art and architecture. Kent, Burlington, Matthew Brettingham the Elder (1699–1789), and Colen Campbell (1676–1729) were involved in its design. Its distinction was recognised soon after its completion, its interior described as 'far preferable to any other we have ever seen' in the *Norfolk Tour* (1773): 'The fitting up of the whole house, in all particulars not mentioned, is in the most elegant taste.'[334]

From the outset, Holkham was intended to house Coke's collection of paintings, sculpture, and books. Whilst he acquired much of his art collection abroad, he

[331] Thomas Coke to Sir John Newton, May 1714. F/G2/2, 467. Cit. Hiskey, *Holkham* (2016), 69.
[332] William Kent to Burrell Massingberd, 24 November 1714. Cit. Blackett-Ord, 'Letters' (2001), 87.
[333] See Thomas Robinson to Charles Howard, 3rd Earl of Carlisle, 1731. Cit. Lees-Milne, *Earls of Creation* (1962), 246.
[334] Beatniffe, *Norfolk Tour* (1773), 16, 18.

also made several purchases in the 1750s with specific spaces in mind. Some of these late acquisitions were purchased abroad through the agency of Gavin Hamilton (1723–1798) and Matthew Brettingham the Younger (1725–1803), while others were procured on the British art market. Many did not arrive until after Coke's death. In his will, Coke left his estate to his wife and £2,000 a year to be spent on building and furnishing the Hall. Over six years, Margaret spent £2,795 on furnishing the rooms and integrating the collection.[335] The extent of her involvement was recognised in 1773 by Brettingham, who praised her zeal in bringing Holkham to 'the degree of splendour, in which it now appears.'[336] Consequently, whilst Coke was instrumental in procuring paintings by Reni and planned much of the display, it is impossible to analyse Holkham without considering Margaret's activity.[337]

Coke owned four paintings associated with Reni. Not much is known about *Cupid* or *A Saint's Head* (present whereabouts of both unknown).[338] In *New Description of Holkham* (1826), *Cupid* is located in the North State Closet, a largely insignificant room, alongside a landscape by Fra Bartolomeo.[339] However, both the *New Description* and *Norfolk Tour* locate *A Saint's Head* in the North State Dressing Room, an important public-orientated room with numerous Italian works, including religious paintings by Domenichino, Albani, Carlo Maratti, and Raphael.[340] Consequently, although Reni's painting was a minor work, it was incorporated into a prestigious display of renowned Italian masters. Furthermore, two significant works by Reni were purchased by Coke in the late 1750s. The first, *Joseph and Potiphar's Wife* (Fig. 16; Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge), had belonged to Cardinal Giovanni Carlo de'Medici of Florence (1611–1663), Senatore Cospi (dates unknown), and the Costaguti Collection, Rome. It was one of 18 paintings and 55 drawings acquired in Rome by Hamilton on Coke's behalf for 700 crowns (£175) in 1759.[341] In 1854, Gustav

[335] Cit. Hiskey, *Holkham* (2016), 235-36.
[336] Brettingham, *Holkham* (1773), iii-iv.
[337] Preliminary plans for the display can be found in Brettingham, *Holkham* (1761).
[338] Young, *Six Weeks Tour* (1769), 17.
[339] Anon., *Holkham* (1826), 70.
[340] Anon., *Holkham* (1826), 73; Beatniffe, *Norfolk Tour* (1773), 24.
[341] See Hiskey, *Houghton* (2016), 227.

Friedrich Waagen (1794–1868) claimed that Coke had paid '1500l.' for the picture.[342] It was installed as a focal point on the East Wall of the South Dining Room – an important public-orientated room which led off the Great Dining Room – alongside works by Rubens, Titian, Poussin, Pietro da Cortona, and Domenichino.[343] It was thus highly valued and prominently displayed among works by celebrated artists. However, its reception was not always positive, with Young describing it in 1769 as having 'none of this famous painter's bright and glowing manner. The colouring hard and disagreeable.'[344]

The second picture, *The Assumption of the Virgin* (Fig. 17; Holkham Hall, Norfolk), was described by Malvasia as produced for Senator-Count Alamanno Isolani (fl. 1616–1617).[345] Recorded in the collection of Odoardo Pepoli (1612–1680), it was acquired by Coke prior to 1759. In 1762, Margaret displayed it as an altarpiece on the East Wall of the Chapel, when payments were made for its frame.[346] This was a significant space, equal to the State Rooms in grandeur, and the last major room to be completed, construction having started after Coke's death. While it is likely that Coke was involved in the Chapel's design, the room bears the imprint of Margaret. In a plan published in 1761, Reni's painting was placed behind the Altar with two Corinthian columns on either side.[347] However, Margaret instead commissioned Giovanni Battista Cipriani to paint *St Anne* and *St Cecilia* (both Holkham Hall, Norfolk) to bound Reni's work on either side, separated by a Corinthian column and pilaster. Cipriani's pictures were designed according to precise measurements, with Reni's painting elongated to fit the designated space. The addition of Italian paintings meant that *The Assumption of the Virgin* was incorporated into a customary, continental ecclesiastic setting, similar to an Italian church.

[342] Waagen, *Treasures of Art* (1854), Vol. 3, 424.
[343] Anon., *Holkham* (1775), 6.
[344] Young, *Six Weeks Tour* (1769), 17.
[345] Malvasia, *Felsina Pittrice* (2019), Vol. 1, 198-99.
[346] Holkham Hall Archives, Norfolk, A/44 (bill ended 24 July 1762), 25. Cit. Boyington, 'Countess of Leicester' (2014), 62.
[347] Brettingham, *Plans of Holkham* (1761), Pl. 15.

The Assumption of the Virgin was a key dogma of the Catholic Church. Accordingly, this picture, as with *The Dispute of the Fathers of the Church*, had unequivocal Catholic overtones. It was also hung in an explicitly religious setting, as the centrepiece of an altar in a private family chapel. As Annabelle Church-Soulard relates, high levels of decoration in family chapels were typical in this period and were employed to signal wealth rather than for devotional purposes.[348] At Holkham, the chosen pictures epitomised classical idealism; this appears to be intentional, the style ameliorating their Catholic connotations. Church-Soulard argues that such a display could 'rehabilitate religious paintings and their potentially Papist connotations by promoting a return of the classical tradition that, during the fifteenth century, well before the Counter-Reformation, had re-emerged in Italy with the Renaissance.'[349] However, the Catholic associations were not unnoticed; Letitia, Lady Beauchamp-Proctor (d. 1798) reported in 1764 that although the Chapel was 'very elegantly fitted up,' its pictures looked 'so like the Roman Catholic superstition.'[350] Young was openly unimpressed, stating: 'Assumption: vile.'[351]

Holkham was built to commemorate Coke's experience on the Grand Tour, to serve as a monument to his fascination with art and architecture, and to house his ever-growing collection. As Walpole's neighbour, Coke wished Holkham to be worthy of comparison with Houghton. Works by Reni were chosen purposely by Coke, who was directly involved in Holkham's plan and design. An admirer of Palladianism and associate of Kent and Burlington, Coke wanted his house to epitomise proportion and harmony, incorporating high-quality paintings and statues which embodied classical idealism. Reni's works were considered appropriate in both style and eminence. Another mid-eighteenth-century collector who viewed Reni's paintings in a similar way was John Spencer, 1st Earl Spencer, who was particularly active in the period following Coke's death. Both Spencer and Coke inherited great fortunes and were passionate about art, forming their taste abroad. They each acquired major artworks which they

[348] Church-Soulard, 'Worship of God' (2010), 210.
[349] Church-Soulard, 'Worship of God' (2010), 218.
[350] Letitia, Lady Beauchamp-Proctor, 1764. Cit. Ketton-Cremer, *Norfolk Assembly* (1957), 191.
[351] Young, *Six Weeks Tour* (1769), 17.

displayed in newly constructed houses. Furthermore, neither acted alone; Spencer too had an intelligent and cultured wife who was actively involved in his collection's formation and display.

John Spencer, 1st Earl Spencer

Born in 1734, Spencer was the son of the Hon. John Spencer (1708–1746) and Georgiana Caroline Carteret (1716–1780). At eleven years old, he became heir to a great fortune and the bulk of the estate of his great-grandmother, Sarah Churchill, Duchess of Marlborough (1660–1744). The Duchess stipulated in her will that if her grandson or great-grandson accepted any civil or military position from the Crown, the legacy would pass to successive heirs. Spencer was thus prevented from participating fully in court life and parliament yet served as MP for Warwick from 1756. In 1761, he became Viscount and Baron Spencer of Althorp and, in 1765, was granted the title Earl Spencer. In 1755, Spencer married Margaret Georgiana Poyntz (1737–1814), the daughter of a diplomat and courtier. He rarely attended the House of Lords on account of his poor health, instead pursuing hobbies with Georgiana, including travel and collecting.

In 1746, Spencer inherited the family seat at Althorp, Northamptonshire, and several other prestigious residences. However, he lacked a suitably grand property in London. As head of an illustrious aristocratic family and one of the richest men of his generation, Spencer required a house to rival the greatest in the capital. In 1755, he acquired land overlooking Green Park and embarked upon a huge building project which lasted ten years. He employed Colonel George Gray (fl. 1755) as consultant and the architect John Vardy (fl. 1736–1763), a disciple of Kent, to construct a magnificent palatial mansion. In 1758, Vardy was replaced by James 'Athenian' Stuart (1713–1788), a pioneer of the Greek Revival style.[352] Spencer embraced the latest fashions in architecture, including Palladianism and Neoclassicism, to exhibit his taste, riches, and erudition. He regarded Spencer House as a temple to his love of classical art, writing in 1765: 'I have not lost the taste I acquired in Italy for vertu… my house

[352] See Friedman, *Spencer House* (1993) for the construction.

in Town is at least near being finished, and… as I have an aversion to China and Japan, I shall endeavour to finish it as much as possible with this sort of thing.'[353] The principal façade of Spencer House was made of Portland stone, signalling Spencer's wealth and suggesting associations with grand public architecture, such as Banqueting House, London. This level of splendour continued inside, with sumptuous decoration and exceptional furnishings. The house was completed in 1765 to great public acclaim. In 1769, Young remarked: 'I know not in England, a more beautiful piece of architecture. Nor is the fitting up and furniture of the rooms, inferior to the beauties of the outside.'[354]

In 1746, Spencer inherited a magnificent collection at Althorp, comprising over 400 paintings. Spencer transferred some of these pictures to London whilst also establishing a bespoke collection for his new residence, presenting dealers with exact measurements and using paintings as starting points for decorative schemes.[355] The extent to which the construction of Spencer House was related to art purchases is evident in the framing of paintings in the Great Room, carved to match door and window mouldings. Spencer desired a collection that would enrich his residence and cement his status as a sophisticated man of taste at the pinnacle of society. A member of the Royal Society of Arts and Society of Dilettanti, he was knowledgeable and passionate about art and befriended several leading collectors, artists, and connoisseurs.[356] Like his father, who left great debts upon his death, he was also an extravagant collector, frequently bidding highly at London auctions, including those of Henry Furnese (d. 1756) and Sir Luke Schaub (1690–1758) in 1758 and Sir William Hamilton (1730–1803) in 1761. He also made several trips to the Continent with Georgiana, typically spending part of each year abroad, which offered prime opportunities for acquiring art. The most fruitful was the Grand Tour of 1763–64 during which the couple visited the foremost cities of Italy and singled out several paintings by Reni for commendation, with Georgiana describing in Bologna 'the fellow to

[353] John Spencer, 1st Earl Spencer to Sir William Hamilton, 25 December 1765. British Library, London, Add. MS 75686, F117.
[354] Young, *Six Weeks Tour* (1769), 354.
[355] Friedman, *Spencer House* (1993), 19.
[356] Friedman, *Spencer House* (1993), 41.

our Liberality & Modesty, & a fine crucifiction by Guido & his Capital Picture of the St. Peter and St. Paul, which I believe is the best he ever did, the Colouring of this last, like the Correggio's at Parma, spoils one for every thing else.'[357]

Spencer inherited several paintings associated with Reni and later purchased another major work, with repeated attempts to obtain a second. The earliest known Reni in his collection is *The Virgin and Child* (Althorp, Northamptonshire), included in a list of pictures belonging to his father which were scheduled for mortgage in 1742.[358] An inventory compiled by George Knapton in 1746 offers an account of the location of paintings at Althorp along with valuations. Two works attributed to Reni were displayed in the Picture Closet: 'St Francis' (Althorp, Northamptonshire) and 'A Madonna' (present whereabouts unknown).[359] Seven copies after Reni were also listed: 'Susannah and the Elders' and 'The Flight into Egypt' (present whereabouts of both unknown) on the Great Staircase; 'Charity' (present whereabouts unknown) in The Bed Chamber and the Great Stairs; 'Lucretia' and 'Cleopatra' (present whereabouts of both unknown) in the Green Room; and 'The Magdalen ('St Mary')' (Althorp, Northamptonshire) in the Great Dining Room. Knapton also mentioned a copy of 'A Madonna's Head' (present whereabouts unknown) at Spencer's residence in Wimbledon.[360] In 1750, a further inventory was formed of Althorp, with some discrepancies, indicating Spencer's early intervention in the display. Three works attributed to Reni were included: 'St Catherine' (present whereabouts unknown) in the Great Parlour; the aforementioned 'Cleopatra' in the Little Parlour; and the aforementioned 'The Virgin and Child' in the Picture Closet, as well as a copy of 'The Holy Family' (present whereabouts unknown) on the Staircase.[361]

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[357] Georgiana, Countess Spencer to Caroline Howe, 29 October 1763. British Library, London, Add. MS 75610, F41.

[358] 'A list of pictures belonging to the Hon. John Spencer, scheduled for mortgage, 1742.' Althorp Archives, Northamptonshire. Cit. Garlick, 'Althorp' (1974–76), 93.

[359] George Knapton, 'Catalogue of the Pictures at Althorpe and Wimbledon belonging to the late Honble Mr Spencer, Nos. 268, 300. Cit. Garlick, 'Althorp' (1974–76), 101-02.

[360] Knapton, 'Catalogue,' Nos. 16, 27, 33, 206, 225, 371, 402. Cit. Garlick, 'Althorp' (1974–76), 94-105.

[361] 'A Catalogue of the Pictures of Althorp taken in the year 1750.' Cit. Garlick, 'Althorp' (1974–76), 106-16.

Two paintings are of particular interest: *The Virgin and Child* and *St Francis* (now considered School of Guido Reni). In 1770, they were included in Georgiana's list of 'Pictures in my Dressing Room in London.'[362] *St Francis* had last been referenced in Knapton's inventory of 1746, whilst *The Virgin and Child* was at Althorp until at least 1760, when it was admired by Horace Walpole as 'one of the most capital pictures I ever saw: I have a copy of it by Sasso Ferrati, but which gives little idea of the divine beauty of the Original: the Child's head has uncommon dignity and expression.'[363] Lady Spencer's Dressing Room was an important State Room at Spencer House, adjoining the Music Room and Great Room. It functioned as a private drawing room for entertaining guests and extension for the Great Room when large receptions were in attendance. Designed by Stuart, it featured classical references, including a ceiling derived from the Baths of Augustus, Rome, and a frieze inspired by the Erechtheum, Athens. In 1769, Young noted that it was 'fitted up with all possible taste' and 'the pictures are disposed with great elegance, and hung up by ribbons of gilt carving in the sweetest taste.'[364]

Georgiana's authorship of the list is illuminating, suggesting her profound interest in the collection and personal ownership of paintings in the room. Such pictures offered Georgiana an opportunity to demonstrate her individual taste and knowledge and served as a memorandum for conversation among friends. As Joseph Friedman indicates, Stuart often advised his clients on the arrangement of pictures and was likely involved in the display, establishing a layout to complement the space's proportions and classical appearance.[365] The chosen pictures were small-scale religious or mythological Italian, French, and Dutch works, some from Althorp, others acquired specifically for the space. Artists include: Poussin, Parmigianino, Titian, Carlo Dolci, Valerio Castelli, Leonardo da Vinci, Rubens, Federico Barocci, Albani, Salvator Rosa, Guercino, Carlo Maratti, David Teniers the Younger, and Louis Cousin, called Gentile.

[362] Georgiana, Countess Spencer, 'Pictures in my Dressing Room in London.' British Library, London, Althorp Papers F169. Cit. Friedman, *Spencer House* (1993), Appendix 3, 346-47.
[363] Cit. Toynbee, 'Walpole's Visits' (1927–28), 31.
[364] Young, *Six Weeks Tour* (1769), 357.
[365] Friedman, *Spencer House* (1993), 142.

Reni was the only artist represented twice and was displayed alongside two other members of the Carracci School, suggesting that his classicising style was particularly admired by Georgiana and considered appropriate for the room.

Whilst the works in the Dressing Room were associated almost exclusively with Georgiana, two further paintings can be linked to Spencer himself. The first is *Liberality and Modesty* (Fig. 18; Private Collection, United States), which had previously belonged to Alessandro Sacchetti (1589–1648) in Bologna and, according to Malvasia, included the hand of Giovanni Andrea Sirani (1610–1670).[366] In the early eighteenth century, it entered the collection of Sir Robert Furnese (1687–1733) and Henry Furnese at Gunnersbury House, Middlesex, where it was displayed alongside Andrea Sacchi's similar-sized 1641 *Marcantonio Pasqualini (1614–1691) Crowned by Apollo* (The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York). It was known through engravings produced by Thomas Beard (fl. 1728) in the 1710s–30s and Sir Robert Strange (1721–1792) in 1735. In 1739, Vertue described Reni's painting as 'a noble Large picture of Temperance & Innocence.'[367] At a similar time, Gray deemed it a copy 'valued at £700' while John Loveday of Caversham (1711–1789) described a 'capital painting' with 'two graceful Females, in the loveliest Attitudes.'[368] The fact that it was commented upon three times in Furnese's collection indicates its general early high repute in Britain as a large-scale, mythological painting by Reni.

At Furnese's auction in 1758, Spencer purchased the Reni and Sacchi for the unprecedented sum of £2,200.[369] For Horace, this was an 'extravagance,' particularly given the 'very dubious originality' of Reni's painting.[370] On entering Spencer's collection, the pictures were encased with frames identical to those used in the Great Room at Spencer House, suggesting that they were intended for the space. The Great Room was the most majestic apartment at Spencer House, serving as a venue for receptions and setting for paintings. The

[366] Malvasia, *Felsina Pittrice* (2019), Vol. 1, 128-29.
[367] Vertue, 'Notebooks IV' (1937–38), 164.
[368] Gray, *Tour* (2011), 52; Markham, *Loveday* (1984), 363-64, 507.
[369] Reitlinger, *Economics of Taste* (1982), Vol. 1, 8.
[370] Horace Walpole to Sir Horace Mann, 9 February 1758. Cit. Walpole, *Correspondence* (1960), Vol. 21, 172-73.

moulded ceiling decoration indicated the room's pleasures: conviviality, art, love, and beauty.[371] Some of the finest large-scale works were displayed here, including Guercino's *King David* (Private Collection, United Kingdom) and *The Samian Sibyl with a Putto* (National Gallery, London), acquired in 1768 through Gavin Hamilton, who was issued with precise measurements of the spaces on either side of the central doorcase.[372] According to Albert Edward John Spencer, 7th Earl Spencer (1892–1975), the Reni and Sacchi were too large for the Great Room and transferred to Wimbledon, which was redecorated in 1758 in a neo-classical style.[373] The pictures were noted at Wimbledon in the 1760s by Sir Thomas Phillipps (dates unknown) and in 1771 in a new edition of Colen Campbell's *Vitruvius Britannicus*.[374] In 1785, they were returned to Spencer House by George John Spencer, 2nd Earl Spencer (1758–1864), who removed doorcases on the North and South Walls of the Great Room for their display, indicating their importance to the wider family.

The final Reni associated with Spencer is *St Mary Magdalene* (Fig. 19; Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Antica, Palazzo Barberini, Rome). Produced for Cardinal Antonio Santacroce (1598–1641), it passed to Cardinal Antonio Barberini (1607–1661) in 1641.[375] As Sir Robert Strange noted in 1769, 'the reputation of the picture is universally well established over Europe.'[376] Its fame dates back to at least 1722, when the Richardsons described it as 'the famous Magdalen of Guido; the Finest in Rome.'[377] Surviving letters of 1764–68 demonstrate that Spencer made repeated attempts to acquire the painting, possibly wishing to salvage his failed attempt to furnish the Great Room with a painting by Reni by procuring another work of the correct size.[378] In January 1766, Gavin Hamilton

[371] Robinson, *Spencer House* (1996), 26.
[372] See Friedman, *Spencer House* (1993), 154.
[373] Anon., *Althorp* (1949). Also cit. Friedman, *Spencer House* (1993), 154.
[374] Sir Thomas Phillipps' MS 10254, National Gallery Archive, London, Vol. A.IV.8.22. Copy in 'Spencer' Collector File, Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles. John Woolfe and James Gandon, *Vitruvius Britannicus, or the British Architect* (London, 1767), Vol. 4. Cit. Friedman, *Spencer House* (1993), 154.
[375] Pepper, *Reni* (1988), 277, No. 135.
[376] Strange, *Descriptive Catalogue* (1769), 155.
[377] Richardson and Richardson, *Account in Italy* (1722), 163.
[378] Gavin Hamilton to John Spencer, 1st Earl Spencer, 29 January 1766; Gavin Hamilton to Georgiana, Countess Spencer, 4 May 1768. British Library, London, Add. MS 75686, F117. See

revealed that he was asked to acquire a painting by Reni of a particular 'size' and hinted at the significant sum Spencer was willing to spend:

> I find you are still desirous of the Barberini Magdalen, it is certainly a most capital picture considering the master, the subject & preservation, nevertheless I think the offer great, and should willingly try every means of getting some other good picture before I make them a second offer of the four thousand crowns [£1,000] & leave it for the last shift.[379]

Spencer's colossal efforts to acquire *St Mary Magdalene* reveal his particular admiration for Reni and the scale of his ambition as a collector. Reni's works, renowned for their grace and classical idealism, were deemed appropriate for Spencer House's decorative schemes and enabled Spencer to demonstrate his wealth, refinement, and good taste.

* * *

The collecting habits of Brydges, Walpole, Coke, and Spencer reveal Reni's lofty status in eighteenth-century Britain and the suitability of his paintings for fashionable, newly established collections. All four collectors were prominent in the early to middle period of the eighteenth century. Having come into new wealth, they were occupied with ambitious building schemes, constructing houses that adopted the latest fashions and architectural styles. These were self-aggrandising projects which enabled the owners to exhibit their wealth and consolidate their status as refined gentlemen and holders of taste who were aware of modern trends. Each of these figures established a collection from scratch and were personally involved in the selection of paintings. They were willing to spend huge amounts of money and time on procuring works, engaging in lengthy negotiations and bidding wars. Artists chosen for representation were fashionable and stylish with works of high quality and value, many associated

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also David Garrick to William Cavendish, 4th Duke of Devonshire, 25 June 1764, SBFP. Cit. Friedman, *Spencer House* (1993), 41.

[379] Gavin Hamilton to Georgiana, Countess Spencer, 21 January 1766. British Library, London, Add. MS 75686, F117. He also tried to acquire 'the famous picture of Guido at the Justiniani palace, wh. is exactly the size wanted.'

with a classical aesthetic. Reni was one of a small cohort of Italian painters deemed worthy of representation, alongside other members of the Carracci School, Pietro da Cortona, Poussin, Salvator Rosa, Carlo Maratti, Raphael, Titian, and Leonardo da Vinci. Of course, the nature of collecting is arbitrary; there is much luck involved, particularly within a competitive market. However, each actively sought and spent considerable sums on Reni's paintings, evidently considering them essential components of a well-rounded collection. They were likely influenced by the prestigious collectors of the seventeenth century who also placed emphasis on Reni. His pictures were displayed prominently in public-orientated spaces as well as intimate private rooms, suggesting the proprietor's personal affinity with the artist. They were also located in carefully planned groupings of celebrated masters, indicating Reni's perceived high status in the canon. The pursuits of Margaret and Georgiana further reveal the burgeoning activity of women as collectors, both involved in the display of art and possessing their own, peculiar interest in Reni.

Copies in Eighteenth-Century Britain

The commissioning and acquisition of copies was a widespread practice in eighteenth-century Britain, with replicas of canonical paintings forming essential components of decorative schemes. A certain group of paintings by Reni were particularly popular source material. This intriguing group constitutes an integral part of Reni's known œuvre in Britain and was critical for the development of his reputation. Diverse in material and dimension, such copies range from small handheld objects to life-size ceiling decorations. Produced and purchased for myriad reasons, they provide invaluable evidence of Reni's great repute in Britain and illuminate his most distinguished paintings.

The Appeal of Copies

From the sixteenth to the mid-nineteenth century, copying well-known paintings formed a key component of artistic training. In 1769, Sir Joshua Reynolds (1723–1792) gave a sense of the practice's standing in his First Discourse at the Royal Academy: 'The principal Advantage of an academy is, that, besides furnishing able men to direct the Student, it will be a repository for the great examples of the Art. These are the materials on which Genius is to work, and without which the strongest intellect may be fruitlessly or deviously employed.'[380] Renowned artists made copies throughout their careers as both a training tool and means of supplementing their income. Whilst some eighteenth-century figures, such as the artist Charles Lamotte (fl. 1730), argued that there is 'but one and single' original painting – 'all the Copies of it are generally faint and languid Imitations' – many collectors were interested in copies for various reasons.[381] In terms of quality, it was preferable to have a good copy of a famous picture by an admired artist than a mediocre original, as Jonathan Richardson

[380] Sir Joshua Reynolds, First Discourse, Royal Academy, 2 January 1769. Cit. Reynolds, *Discourses* (1997), 15.
[381] Lamotte, *Essay* (1730), 32.

the Elder (1667–1745) emphasised in 1719.[382] In 1809, Benjamin West (1738–1820) informed George Simon Harcourt, 2nd Earl Harcourt (1736–1809) that *The Madonna and Child* (present whereabouts unknown) at Nuneham Courtenay, Oxfordshire, was a copy after Reni. He reassured him, stating: 'It is copyed by his favourite schooler, *Simon de Pesara*, and is a good one, and next to having the original.'[383] Copies could be unique and valuable artworks in their own right, particularly if executed by sought-after artists.[384] Given the shortage of high-quality large originals by renowned masters on the market and difficulties of gaining export licences in Italy, copies were also helpful for aristocratic collectors as a means of filling large spaces. Conversely, for collectors of lesser means, copies allowed individuals to build attractive and tasteful collections affordably.

Copies also served as cost-effective souvenirs of the Grand Tour, with some painters in Rome trading solely in these pictures, exploiting the interests of British travellers. James Northcote (1746–1831) observed in 1778: 'those cursed antiquaries who are of late years established here [in Rome] have all the power in their own hands, and one or two miserable wretches who are sycophants to them make all the copies for the English nobility at very small prices.'[385] Copies also held value as replicas of original works in danger of destruction. Discussing Reni and Domenichino's frescoes of *St Andrew* (San Gregorio, Rome), the Richardsons referred readers to engravings of the works, suggesting that only by these 'some Judgment may be made of their merit.'[386] This was echoed in John Preston Neale's (1780–1847) *Views of the seats of noblemen and gentlemen* (1820), where copies of *St Andrew* at Castle Howard, North Yorkshire, were described as 'highly valuable, as the originals are in a state of rapid decay.'[387] Furthermore, copies offered collectors an opportunity to create bespoke and unique picture-hangs that worked thematically or aesthetically with disparate

[382] Richardson, 'Essay on Criticism' (1719), 178-79.
[383] Benjamin West to George Simon Harcourt, 2nd Earl Harcourt, 8 January 1809. Cit. 'Pictures at Nuneham,' in Harcourt, *Harcourt Papers* (1880), Vol. 3, 255.
[384] See Küster, 'Copies' (2012), 184.
[385] James Northcote to Samuel Northcote, 18 April 1778. Cit. Whitley, *Artists and Friends* (1928), Vol. 2, 309.
[386] Richardson and Richardson, *Account in Italy* (1722), 321.
[387] Neale, *Views of Seats* (1820), Vol. 5.

works of similar sizes. In this way, galleries established exemplary taste and served as educational tools or prompts for discussion. Copies further allowed collectors to display famous artworks, including iconic paintings and frescoes which otherwise could only be viewed *in situ* in Italy. Just as paintings could be identified as essential sights in travel literature, canonisation could also be illustrated in a visual format. Consequently, copies played a crucial role in collectors' self-promotion as paragons of taste and artistic knowledge, as well as in the development of British artistic talent.

It was in this environment that multiple copies after Reni entered British collections in their eighteenth century. Such pictures can be broadly divided into four categories: copies as vital constituents of grand interior decorative schemes; the numerous and varied copies of Reni's *Aurora* (Palazzo Pallavicini-Rospigliosi, Rome); copies acquired as typical additions to collections; and modern works which satirically incorporated paintings by Reni. In this chapter, each of these categories are addressed in turn.

Grand Interior Decorative Schemes

The first category concerns interior schemes comprised either solely or predominantly of copies. These tended to be in grand state apartments used for receiving guests yet also feature in private spaces. In certain cases, copies were obtained prior to decoration, with architectural plans built around them, while in other instances copies were purchased with designated spaces in mind. Schemes vary from small-scale pictures in dense hangs to colossal paintings dominating walls. There is also variety in the collectors themselves, who ranged from significant royal figures to members of the lower aristocracy. What links the schemes and distinguishes them is their near-exclusive use of copies rather than originals and inclusion of works after Reni.

Frederick, Prince of Wales

The first collector known to have incorporated copies after Reni in this way was Frederick, Prince of Wales (1707–1751). Frederick's endeavours in art were recognised by George Vertue (1684–1756): 'no Prince since King Charles the First took so much pleasure nor observations on works of art or artists.'[388] Frederick began collecting in the mid-1730s and was primarily interested in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Italian and Flemish paintings. By 1749, he had acquired at least three works attributed to Reni: *Cleopatra and the Asp* (Royal Collection Trust); *St Catherine* (present whereabouts unknown); and *Head of an Old Man* (possibly Royal Collection Trust). These were dispersed among three principal London residences: Leicester House, Carlton House, and Kew. In July 1749, Vertue recorded a set of copies by the French artist Joseph Goupy (1689–1769) 'in curious card frames and Glasses – consisting mostly of the most valuable pictures in Collection there that he has copied and Imitated' in the Dressing Room at Leicester House assigned to Frederick's wife, Princess Augusta (1717–1792).[389]

As Cabinet Painter to the Prince, Goupy played a critical role in developing the Prince's taste. From the 1720s, he specialised in gouache copies, focusing on Italian masters, Rubens, and van Dyck. He painted several copies after Reni for a range of patrons. These include: Henry Furnese's (d. 1756) *Liberality and Modesty* (Private Collection, United States), produced in 1737 and costing £52.10; *Aurora*; possibly *Apollo and Daphne* (present whereabouts unknown), produced *circa* 1739 and costing 20 guineas (£21); and possibly *Bacchus and Ariadne* (lost), dated *circa* 1738 and costing £50.[390] His choice of medium had several advantages over oil-based copies: the colour scheme of the original could be raised significantly, making the copy appropriate for light, neo-Palladian interiors, and works could be produced quickly and economically. Furthermore, Goupy could adjust his style to enhance original subject matter, making

[388] Vertue, 'Notebooks I' (1913–14), 14.
[389] Vertue, 'Notebooks III' (1933–34), 152.
[390] See Robertson and Dance, 'Goupy: Checklist' (1988), Nos. 55, 102, 103, 105. See also Rorschach, 'Frederick, Prince of Wales' (1989–90), Nos. 141, 143, 145, 157, 160.

distinctive copies suitable to the masters upon whom they were based.[391] This made him immensely popular in eighteenth-century Britain; in 1747, Vertue stated that Goupy was 'eminent in painting in Water Colours historys, in a free masterly manner. having Coppyd multitudes of famous paintings of most Eminent Masters.' He separately praised Goupy's copy of Reni's *The Toilet of Venus* (National Gallery, London) for being 'extraordinarily well done, equal to the original in beauty. & excellence.'[392]

One of Goupy's most committed patrons was the Prince's Treasurer, John Hedges (1688–1737). Hedges played a critical role in introducing Goupy to Frederick, ordering a copy of Reni's *The Toilet of Venus* for the Prince in 1735 for £52.10 after acquiring one in 1721 for the same price.[393] In a little-known poem entitled *Guido's Ghost* (1738), likely composed by Hedges, Goupy is described painting 'at his Ease In the Collection of *Furnese*, / Where *Guido's* Attitudes divine / With *Andrea Sacchi's Phoebus* shine.' The poem, dedicated to Goupy, envisages Hermes reviving Reni to pass judgement on Goupy's copies, frustrated by the reaction of critics who either had 'undistinguish'd Praise' or utter condemnation for Goupy's productions, finding 'In spight of all the Copyer's Skill / *Guido* remains uncopy'd still.' At the end, Reni gives Goupy permission to 'Copy whate'er my Skill brought forth, / And more than emulate my worth,' even wishing that he could pass off Goupy's works as his own: 'From me, then tell them, – shewing thy Design / 'Tis true it is not;– but I wish 'twere Mine.'[394] *Guido's Ghost* indicates the status of Goupy's copies in Britain and the great interest they attracted. It also evokes contemporary debate surrounding the very notion of copies, their similarities to originals, and their perceived status.

Goupy's copies in Princess Augusta's Dressing Room included works after Reni, Titian, Luca Giordano, van Dyck, Raphael, Annibale Carracci, Andrea Sacchi, Poussin, Salvator Rosa, Claude Lorraine, Filippo Lauri, Rubens, Pietro

[391] See Robertson and Dance, 'Goupy and Copy' (1988), 358, 363-64.
[392] Vertue, 'Notebooks III' (1933–34), 138, 19.
[393] Harris, 'Goupy and Handel' (2011), 53.
[394] Hedges, *Guido's Ghost* (1738), 3, 5, 6, 7.

da Cortona, and Gaspar Poussin. The copies after Reni comprised the above-mentioned *The Toilet of Venus* and *Aurora*.[395] There were also some original compositions by Goupy himself.[396] The set celebrated some of the finest works in the Royal Collection and other fashionable paintings in the canon, suggesting that it was intended as an ideal hang. The majority of works were framed and glazed by the Prince's frame-maker Paul Petit (1724–1757), forming a uniform set.[397] The Royal Collection already featured other sets of works, such as Andrea Mantegna's *Triumphs of Caesar* and Raphael's *The Acts of the Apostles* (both Royal Collection Trust). These entered the collection in the seventeenth century and helped to create impressive, symmetrical interiors. Goupy's set of copies was an appropriate addition to the collection, allowing for a harmonised display with copies of paintings deemed of the utmost taste.

Henry Hoare II

Contemporary with Frederick's activities, Henry Hoare II (1705–1785) created a grand display of copies at Stourhead, Wiltshire. The family seat was built in the 1720s for Henry Hoare I (1677–1725), who died the year of its completion. One of the first Palladian-style mansions in England, it was designed by Colen Campbell (1676–1729) in a fashionable style, replete with classical references. Hoare II was a banker in the family's business and prior to moving to Stourhead had residences in London and Wilbury House, near Salisbury. He began acquiring art in the 1720s and toured Italy in 1737/38–41, developing his collection. Upon inheriting Stourhead in 1741, he filled the house with paintings and designed several follies in the gardens. Through these activities he acquired the sobriquet 'Henry the Magnificent' and the house became renowned for its aesthetic appeal, with Maria Rishton (fl. 1773) noting in 1773 that it was 'the

[395] Vertue, 'Notebooks III' (1933–34), 152.
[396] See Robertson and Dance, 'Goupy: Checklist' (1988). See Rorschach, 'Frederick, Prince of Wales' (1989–90), Nos. 141-61. See Shawe-Taylor, *First Georgians* (2014), 229. See Neil Jaffares, *Dictionary of pastellists before 1800*. pastellists.com/Articles/GoupyJ.pdf. Accessed 13 December 2019.
[397] Rorschach, 'Frederick, Prince of Wales' (1989–90), 18.

best worth seeing of any seat I ever beheld – it had every advantage Art or Nature can Bestow.'[398]

In the Saloon, Hoare displayed a group of copies after renowned masters, including four after Reni: *The Toilet of Venus* and *Perseus and Andromeda* (both National Gallery, London) by Jeremiah Davison (c. 1695–1745) (Figs. 20-1; Stourhead, National Trust); *Salome with the Head of the Baptist* (Art Institute of Chicago) by Pompeo Batoni (1708–1787) (Fig. 22; Stourhead, National Trust); and an anonymous copy (Fig. 23; Victoria Art Gallery, Bath) of *The Abduction of Helen* (Musée du Louvre, Paris). The accompanying pictures comprised anonymous copies of: Guercino's *The Death of Dido* from Galleria Spada, Rome (Victoria Art Gallery, Bath); van Dyck's *The Three Eldest Children of King Charles I* in the Royal Collection (Montacute House, Somerset; on loan from Stourhead, National Trust); and Veronese's *Wisdom and Strength* in the Frick Collection, New York (Stourhead, National Trust). The single original work was Sébastien Bourdon's *Judgement of Midas* (present whereabouts unknown). The Saloon was originally intended as a chapel and was altered by Hoare with the specific intention of accommodating these pictures in a harmonious display.

The paintings were of quality and the identity of the copyists was a key aspect of their appeal. Davison was a successful Scottish portraitist who produced a portrait of Frederick, Prince of Wales (present whereabouts unknown) in 1730 and may have been allowed to copy directly from Reni's originals in Kensington Palace, London. Between 1728 and 1732, the ledgers of C. Hoare & Co reference a payment of £176 from Hoare to Davison – a significant sum which probably accounts for the copies.[399] The paintings were thus early purchases, made prior to the Grand Tour, and likely displayed at Wilbury House or in London before Stourhead. They indicate Hoare's long-standing interest in Reni and desire to feature him in his collection, even constructing a space at Stourhead for their display. The copyist of Reni's *Salome with the Head of the Baptist* was an artist

[398] Maria Rishton to Frances Burney, 13 April 1773. Cit. Ellis, *Frances Burney* (1889), Vol. 2, Appendix 1, 321-22.
[399] C. Hoare & Co. Customer Ledgers, Henry Hoare, LT/f. 29/318, 30/1, 33/113. Cit. Swynfen and Dodd, *Roman Splendour* (2014), 127.

of great international renown – Pompeo Batoni, whose reputation was so great in mid-eighteenth-century Britain that Father John Thorpe (1715–1792) described him as 'without dispute the first painter in Rome, and if Mr Menks [Anton Raphael Mengs] at Madrid be excepted, he is the most eminent in Europe.'[400] Renowned for his portraits of Grand Tourists, Batoni also produced multiple copies, including at least one other version of Reni's *Salome* (present whereabouts unknown), featured in Reynolds's posthumous sale of 1795.[401] Hoare was likely associated with Batoni through his friend William Hoare of Bath (1707–1792), an English painter who influenced Hoare's taste, writing to him in 1760 regarding his favourite painters and paintings.[402] Batoni's copy was a work of particular significance: an extremely desirable type of copy, executed by a celebrated contemporary artist after a master of great standing.

The attraction that these copies held for visitors can be seen in various travel accounts. In 1754, Dr Richard Pococke (1704–1765) stated: 'besides many fine originals, there are some very good copies, especially by Davison, I think his name was, of Frome.'[403] In the 1760s, Sir Thomas Phillips (dates unknown) described 'one large room furnish'd with good copies of celebrated pictures.'[404] Likewise, the writer of *Notes of a tour in Nottinghamshire, Derbyshire* (1766) evoked 'a small but good Collection of Painting – some admirable copies of the most capital Pictures in Europe, by the most eminent living Masters.'[405] In 1762, Horace Walpole (1717–1797) highlighted '8 very large pictures,' while in *Description of the House and Gardens at Stourhead* (1818), the Saloon was described as 'one of the best proportioned rooms we ever beheld; in which every component part bears its true proportions; door, chimney, ceiling, and even pictures, are all of such dimensions as the scale of the room would require.

[400] Father John Thorpe to Henry Arundell, 8th Baron Arundell of Wardour, 1763. Cit. Russell, 'Stourhead Batoni' (1975–76), 110.
[401] Sale Cat. Reynolds (1795), 4th Day, Lot 14, bought by 'Dermer' for 19 guineas (£19.19).
[402] William Hoare of Bath to Henry Hoare II, 5 June 1760. Wiltshire County Record Office, Stourhead Archives T(ST) 363.907. Cit. Woodbridge, *Landscape and Antiquity* (1970), 44.
[403] Cartwright, *Pococke* (1889), 43.
[404] Sir Thomas Phillipps' MS 10254, National Gallery Archive, London, Vol. A.IV.8.22. Copy in 'Hoare' Collector File, Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles.
[405] 'Notes of a tour in Nottinghamshire, Derbyshire, etc.' British Library, London, Add. MS 6767, f. 37. Cit. Harrison, 'Stourhead Gardens' (2017), 298.

Except the central painting on the right-hand of the room, all are Copies executed at Rome and elsewhere, by the most able Artists, purposely for the stations allotted to them.'[406] Finally, in *Catalogue of the Hoare Library at Stourhead* (1840), Hoare's grandson Sir Richard Colt Hoare (1758–1838) noted that the room was 'lengthened by my predecessor, Henry Hoare, Esq. who has evinced a superior degree of taste in its embellishments; for regard has been paid to *just proportions* in every appendage subordinate to the general proportions of length, breadth, and height, which are also true, being 45 by 30. The doors, chimney-pieces, cornice, and even paintings, are all proportionate, and accord with the size of the room. Except in one instance, the pictures are all copies, but selected with great taste as to their subjects, and executed by the best artists who resided in England and Rome.'[407]

The scale of the pictures in proportion to the room was clearly considered an admirable quality of the display. The works shared similar dimensions, despite being executed years apart by different artists, and were expressly intended to function as a harmonious set. Moreover, two of the pictures were associated with a renowned display at Palazzo Spada, Rome, where a copy (Galleria Spada, Rome) of Reni's *The Abduction of Helen* by Giacinto Campana (born c. 1600) was located alongside Guercino's *The Death of Dido*. Hoare likely intended the Saloon to emulate the Roman palace through the selection of paintings, thus enhancing the grandiose nature of the display and strengthening its Italian connection. There is also a thematic aspect to the hang, with five of the paintings featuring mythological or biblical women: Venus, Andromeda, Salome, Helen, and Dido. Furthermore, all of the artists copied can be considered quintessential proponents of the Roman 'Grand Manner' and thus representative of a particular type of aesthetic ideal which Hoare adopted elsewhere with works such as Carlo Maratti's 1690–99 *Marchese Niccolò Maria Pallavicini guided to the Temple of Virtù by Apollo with a Self-Portrait of the Artist* (Stourhead, National Trust). This was evidently a specially designed and personal hang, with carefully

[406] Cit. Toynbee, 'Walpole's Visits' (1927–28), XXVI; Anon., *Stourhead* (1818), 20.
[407] Hoare, *Hoare Library* (1840), 750.

selected works functioning together to indicate the artists whom Hoare most admired, stimulate discussion, and bolster the grandeur of the residence.

Hugh Smithson, 1st Duke of Northumberland

Shortly afterwards, at Northumberland House, London, a further interior scheme was established which became the grandest and most renowned in eighteenth-century Britain. The project was initiated by Hugh Smithson, 1st Duke of Northumberland (c. 1714–1786), who inherited the residence in 1750 through his wife Lady Elizabeth Seymour (1716–1776). Northumberland added a second wing to the east side of the house containing a grand Ballroom which also functioned as a Gallery. In 1752, he commissioned four artists to produce five copies of the most celebrated frescoes in Rome to adorn the room. The project attracted much attention, serving as an exemplary model of such a scheme.

Although Northumberland was personally involved in the concept of the display, he employed Sir Horace Mann (1706–1786), English Resident in Florence, as agent and further enlisted Matthew Brettingham the Younger (1725–1803) and Cardinal Alessandro Albani (1692–1779). In a letter to Horace Walpole, Mann indicated that his instructions were to select 'five of the principal paintings out of the Farnese gallery or Vatican, of Raphael, Guido or Carracci' and listed four of the five eventual paintings.[408] The works selected (all lost except one) were copies after: Raphael's *The School of Athens* (Palazzo Apostolico, Vatican City) by Anton Raphael Mengs (1728–1779) (Victoria & Albert Museum, London); Raphael's *The Marriage of Cupid and Psyche* and *The Council of the Gods* (both Villa Farnesina, Rome) by Pompeo Batoni; Annibale Carracci's *The Triumph of Bacchus and Ariadne* (Palazzo Farnese, Rome) by Placido Costanzi (1702–1759); and Reni's *Aurora* (Fig. 24) by Agostino Masucci (1691–1758). Costanzi and Masucci were well-established painters in Rome, while Mengs and Batoni enjoyed international success. The artists were paid different sums, with Masucci granted 1,100 ecus (approximately £250) and Batoni 1,500 zecchini

[408] Sir Horace Mann to Horace Walpole, 11 August 1752. Cit. Walpole, *Correspondence* (1960), Vol. 20, 328. On 12 August 1752, Cardinal Alessandro Albani sent a list of artists and subjects to Sir Horace Mann. Ö.S., Fasz. 152, unnumbered. Cit. Wood, 'Raphael Copies' (1999), 408-09.

(approximately £375) for each picture.[409] Each artist was paid a deposit, with Masucci advanced 200 ecus (about £45).[410] Writing to Mann, Walpole complained about the familiarity of the works selected: 'I am so tired with copies of the pictures he has chosen, that I would scarce hang up the originals.'[411] Mann himself seemed ambivalent: 'Pray don't imagine that I suggested it to him. I was only applied to, to get it executed, which cost me an infinite deal of trouble.'[412]

Northumberland's copies were life-size replicas of original works, intended to correspond as closely as possible, with Masucci conceivably using a voile to trace directly from Reni's fresco.[413] The paintings arrived piecemeal, the first shipped in September 1754, the others ready for shipment in February 1756.[414] In the Ballroom, the copies after Raphael filled the wall opposite the windows, with *The School of Athens* in the centre. As pendants on the two shorter walls were *Aurora* and *Marriage of Cupid and Psyche*. Just as there was a thematic aspect to the hang at Stourhead, here too the works shared several characteristics. Functioning as exemplary models of Italian fresco-painting, they offered viewers a unique opportunity to study works that could not be removed from their original sites in Rome and were prone to decay. Classical in style, they were mythological in subject, with the exception of *The School of Athens*, allowing viewers to test their knowledge of classical literature. With such canonical, large-scale paintings, the room conspicuously emulated the galleries of Roman palazzi.[415] There was also a specific theme at play, with the copies seen to illustrate the legacy of Raphael, demonstrating how the Carracci School were his natural successors who restored art to its former glory. This notion was espoused by Bellori and later promoted by William Aglionby (c. 1642–1705).

[409] Cardinal Alessandro Albani to Sir Horace Mann, 30 December 1752. National Archives, London, P.R.O. S.P. 105/309, f. 234v. Cit. Wood, 'Raphael Copies' (1999), 412.
[410] Cardinal Alessandro Albani to Sir Horace Mann, 13 January 1753. National Archives, London, P.R.O. S.P. 105/310, f. 11r. Cit. Wood, 'Raphael Copies' (1999), 412.
[411] Horace Walpole to Sir Horace Mann, 28 October 1752. Cit. Walpole, *Correspondence* (1960), Vol. 20, 340-41.
[412] Sir Horace Mann to Horace Walpole, 22 December 1752. Cit. Walpole, *Correspondence* (1960), Vol. 20, 352.
[413] See Wood, 'Raphael Copies' (1999), 411.
[414] Wood, 'Raphael Copies' (1999), 410-11.
[415] Aymonino and Guerci, 'Northumberland House' (2016), 345.

Northumberland's choice of works evoked this argument and encouraged viewers to compare Raphael with the Carracci School.[416]

In 1757, Northumberland's gallery opened to the public, drawing much attention. Walpole was somewhat critical of the 'sumptuous chamber,' arguing that it 'might have been in better taste.' He derided the copies' levels of similitude, stating: 'Meng's School of Athens pleased me; Pompeio's two are black and hard; Mazucci's Apollo, *fade* and without beauty; Costanza's piece is abominable.'[417] However, other reactions were mostly positive. Mann commented: 'The idea of my Lord Northumberland to have copies of such capital paintings that are daily decaying is greatly approved of by the connoisseurs in Italy.'[418] In *London and its environs described* (1761), Robert (1703–1764) and James Dodsley (1724–1797) found the room 'admirable in every respect' and 'furnished in an elegant manner.' Identifying 'five of the most admired paintings in Italy,' they claimed that the educational display served as an exemplary model for other collectors:

> We heartily wish his Lordship's taste in procuring them may incite those, who can afford it, to follow the example, and purchase copies of such paintings as are universally admired; for by these means not only private curiosity would be gratified, but the public taste also greatly approved if other aristocrats would follow the example of Lord Northumberland…[419]

The sense that Northumberland should be an example to others was echoed by John Gwynn (fl. 1766), who perhaps referenced the Duke in *London and Westminster Improved* (1766): 'one gentleman of rank, in particular, whose name cannot be mentioned with propriety, has appropriated a room in his house for the reception of English merit.'[420] Arthur Young (1741–1820), in *Six Weeks*

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[416] See Wood, 'Raphael Copies' (1999).
[417] Horace Walpole to Sir Horace Mann, 5 May 1757. Cit. Walpole, *Correspondence* (1961), Vol. 21, 88.
[418] Sir Horace Mann to Sir Charles Hanbury Williams, 28 September 1753. Cit. Walpole, *Correspondence* (1960), Vol. 20, 328.
[419] Dodsley, *London and Environs* (1761), Vol. 5, 54-8.
[420] Hargraves, *Candidates for Fame* (2005), 207.

Tour, through the Southern Counties of England and Wales (1769), praised the 'propriety of the idea' and taste of the 'admirable' works: 'the principal ornaments of this beautiful room are the paintings; in respect of which I cannot but greatly admire the taste of the noble owner, who, rather than furnish it with such originals as are to be procured at present, ordered copies of some capital ones of the greatest painters, by the first artists of this age.'[421] He singled out Masucci's copy: 'Sure never was grace, in all the divinity of its more pleasing attitudes, more elegantly caught than in this happy, this sweet idea, which is executed with as much spirit as it was conceived with elegance.'[422]

Northumberland's display is the most elaborate scheme involving copies in this period, achieving praise for its edifying value and the service it rendered the originals. A purpose-built space, it can be compared to the Chapel at Holkham, yet, while the latter featured an original work by Reni, flanked by Cipriani, this space consciously used copies to great effect. In the nineteenth century, the display continued to receive praise, with Gustav Friedrich Waagen (1794–1868) stating in *Treasures of Art in Great Britain* (1854): 'The idea of making this admirable selection of the most celebrated works, and having them copied by able artists, affords me a new proof that the English nobility possess not only money, but knowledge and taste to employ it in the most worthy manner.'[423]

Sir John Goodricke, 5th Baronet

Following Northumberland's project, a further decorative scheme was established at Ribston Hall, North Yorkshire, the home of Sir John Goodricke, 5th Baronet (1708–1789), a diplomat and politician. Goodricke inherited the residence in 1738 and was largely abroad from 1750 until 1773, struggling financially.[424] In 1773, he inherited a considerable fortune with the death of George Fox Lane, 2nd Lord Bingley (1697–1773), the husband of his wife's half-

[421] Young, *Six Weeks Tour* (1769), 349-50.
[422] Young, *Six Weeks Tour* (1769), 353.
[423] Waagen, *Treasures* (1854), Vol. 2, 112.
[424] See Jackson-Stops, 'Ribston Hall II' (1973), 1142.

sister. Goodricke returned to Yorkshire and began a programme of substantial alterations to Ribston Hall.

The architect for Goodricke's renovations was John Carr of York (1723–1807), whose most impressive contribution was the grand Harlequin Saloon, a vast state room adorned with neo-classical features, including a raised decorated plaster ceiling and two chimneypieces featuring Aphrodite and Cleopatra, Sacred and Profane Love. In the 1770s, Goodricke commissioned a series of copies (Ribston Hall, Knaresborough) from three artists active in Rome through the agency of Thomas Jenkins (1722–1798) for the room. These comprised: Reni's *The Virgin at Work, attended by Angels* (The State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg) by Pietro Angeletti (fl. 1758–1786); Reni's *The Abduction of Helen* and Guercino's *The Death of Dido* by Franciszek Smuglewicz (1745–1807); and Daniele da Volterra's *The Death of the Virgin* (a detail from *The Descent from the Cross*, Trinità dei Monti, Rome) by Ludvig Stern (1709–1778). Also included in the display were five smaller anonymous copies of: Reni's *Aurora* and *Bacchus and Ariadne* (lost); Guercino's *Aurora* (Villa Ludovisi, Rome); *Marriage of Helen and Paris* from an antique vase; and *Aldobrandini Wedding* (Baths of Titus, Rome). As at Stourhead, the display intentionally echoed that of Galleria Spada through the choice of *The Abduction of Helen* and *The Death of Dido*. These were placed on either side of a pedimented door, with *The Virgin at Work, attended by Angels* and *The Death of the Virgin* over each chimneypiece, and the five smaller works as overdoors.

In 1798, Ribston Hall was described in E. Hargrove's (dates unknown) *The History of the Castle, Town and Forest of Knaresborough*: 'All the apartments are well finished, and throughout the whole building elegance and utility are everywhere.' Hargrove described the copies in detail, giving a sense of their compositions.[425] For Hargrove, these were the most impressive and stimulating pictures in the house and thus garnered the most attention. The only other works mentioned were ancestral portraits in the Drawing Room and monuments in the Chapel. Harry Speight's (1855–1915) *Nidderdale and the garden of the Nidd: a*

[425] Hargrove, *Knaresborough* (1798), 242-43.

Yorkshire Rhineland (1894) confirms this view: 'The rooms of the house are lofty and well-lighted, and admirably fitted throughout. The saloon is a magnificent apartment in the Italian style, with large wall paintings copied from some of the Italian masters.'[426]

Arranged symmetrically with matching elaborate frames, the copies were uniform in size, intended to fit their demarcated spaces. Functioning as a set, they provided viewers with an opportunity to recall their knowledge of famous artworks in Rome. The multitude of copies after Reni suggests that Ribston Hall served as a sort of shrine to the artist. The pictures also offered the prospect of drawing close comparisons between different masters, with the two frescoes of *Aurora*, painted eight years apart, being prime examples. The association of *Aurora* and *Aldobrandini Wedding* was popular among British collectors in this period. Frieze-like and processional in format, they fitted well as overdoors in Palladian interiors. As Carla Mazzarelli suggests, they represented ancient and modern Rome.[427] Consequently, these copies not only functioned as a series of celebrated paintings by renowned masters in Rome but had a didactic role in advancing the understanding of Italian art. They further served as exemplary models of sights on the Grand Tour. Adding splendour to the room, they transferred value to their owner, marking him as a model of refinement and learning.

The four rooms considered above deliberately incorporated copies after Reni and are particularly striking and significant. They are not the only eighteenth-century displays of this kind in Britain; other examples include: the Staircase Hall at Burton Constable, Hull, which featured a series of copies commissioned in 1771 after paintings by Titian, Carlo Dolci, and Reni; and displays at Ballyscullion House, County Londonderry, which featured an 'idealised collection' of copies of famous pictures observed by Frederick Hervey, 4th Earl of Bristol and Bishop

[426] Speight, *Nidderdale* (1894), 188.
[427] Other collectors who paired *Aurora* with *Aldobrandini Wedding* include Patrick Home (1728–1808) and Francis Bassett (fl. 1779). For this coupling, see Mazzarelli, 'Old Masters' (2012), 512.

of Derry (1730–1803) on his travels.[428] At the same time, there are also countless examples of copies after Reni being incorporated more generally into collections. The most common work selected was *Aurora*, chosen for display at Leicester House, Northumberland House, and Ribston Hall.

Copies after *Aurora*

Reni's *Aurora* was painted in 1613–14 for Cardinal Scipio Borghese (1577–1633) as a ceiling fresco for the Casino of Palazzo Pallavicini-Rospigliosi, Rome. It depicts Aurora encircled by the Hours leading Apollo into a new day. The fresco was immensely popular among British travellers and its reproductions accumulated in great numbers. This is likely due its rectangular format and harmonious style, which made it eminently suitable for Palladian and neo-classical mansions, corresponding to the prevalent classical aesthetic. The design was so popular by 1730 that Edward Wright (fl. 1720–1722) described it as 'the famous Aurora of Guido, so well known by the copies and Prints of it that are in England.'[429] This sentiment was echoed in 1796 by John Owen (fl. 1791–1792), who labelled it an 'incomparable work,' 'so often engraved, that a transcript of its beauties – so far as frescoes can be copied into miniatures – is in the collection of everyone who is at all an amateur of the fine arts.'[430] Copies after *Aurora* were produced as large-scale decorative ceilings, small-scale paintings, and decorative artefacts.

Large-Scale Decorative Ceilings

Two works by Giuseppe Mattia Borgnis (1701–1761), both commissioned in the 1750s, exemplify the painted fresco model of *Aurora* as ceiling decoration. The first was produced for West Wycombe, Buckinghamshire, constructed in 1735–81 by Sir Francis Dashwood, 2nd Baronet (1708–1781), a lover of the arts who

[428] This display included copies after Reni's *Aurora* and *Fortuna with a Crown* (Private Collection, United States, then Accademia di San Luca, Rome). For Ballyscullion House, see Campion, 'Hervey' (2017), 33-5.
[429] Wright, *Some Observations* (1730), Vol. 1, 310.
[430] Owen, *Travels* (1796), Vol. 2, 43.

embarked on three Grand Tours and co-founded the Society of Dilettanti and Hell-Fire Club. Dashwood envisaged his Palladian villa as a house of pleasure which evoked memories of Italy and served as a site for convivial gatherings. He also intended it to function as a centre for the promotion of art and a space in which he could demonstrate his impeccable taste and art-historical knowledge. In 1751, Dashwood invited Borgnis to paint a series of ceiling decorations for the residence, comprising: Reni's *Aurora* in the East Portico (Figs. 25-6); Raphael's *Cupid and Psyche* (Villa Farnesina, Rome) in the Saloon; Raphael's *Banquet of the Gods* (Villa Farnesina, Rome) in the Portico Room (or Music Room); Annibale Carracci's *Bacchus and Ariadne* (Palazzo Farnese, Rome) in the Blue Drawing Room; and various pieces from Villa Farnesina and Palazzo Farnese above the Staircase. In 1820, Neale described the East Portico as 'a handsome Portico, the tympanum of which is painted in fresco, representing Apollo and the Muses.'[431] It was celebrated in *Report of the Commissioners on the Fine Arts* (1842) as a rare 'agreeable example of the union of fresco-painting with architecture' in England. Although 'exposed to the open air,' it was 'remarkably well preserved.'[432]

Four of Borgnis's frescoes at West Wycombe correspond to those selected for Northumberland House, which was decorated almost contemporaneously. This joint admiration confirms the renown of these works and their general acceptance into the canon. It also suggests that, like Northumberland, Dashwood was concerned with the Bellorian theory of the fall and rise of art in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Italy. However, the display differs from Northumberland House in several respects. At West Wycombe, copies were spread throughout the residence and presented as ceiling decorations, with *Aurora* painted outside in a temple-like classical setting. In this respect, it aligned closely to the original and created an immensely theatrical effect suitable for a Palladian pleasure house. Representing the most admired frescoes in Rome, Borgnis's ceilings served as reminders of Dashwood's commitment to the arts and passion for travel and classical elegance. Together with painted walls

[431] Neale, *Views of Seats* (1823), Vol. 6.
[432] Anon., 'Report of Commissioners' (1842), 202.

mimicking decorative stone and marble architectural features, they created an illusion of a Roman palazzo.

In 1758, Borgnis produced another version of *Aurora* for Thomas Duncombe II (1724–1779) at Rievaulx Terrace, North Yorkshire. This site, comprising a grass-covered walkway on a wooded ridge, was constructed in 1749–57 as a landscape for guests from nearby Duncombe Park. Overlooking the ruins of Rievaulx Abbey and the Ryedale Valley, it featured classical monuments on either end of a parade: one an Ionic Temple, based on Maison Carrée, Nîmes; the other a Tuscan Temple, similar to the rotunda at Duncombe Park. These offered beautiful settings for refreshments, the Ionic Temple serving as a Banqueting House. Both were ornately decorated with a strong classical aesthetic referencing Duncombe's Grand Tour of 1747. The Tuscan Temple featured plasterwork possibly by Giuseppe Cortese (fl. c. 1725–1778) and a painted roundel of a winged goddess attributed to Andrea Casali (1705–1784). The Ionic Temple was richly ornamented with frescoes by Borgnis of Reni's *Aurora* (Fig. 27) and Annibale Carracci's *The Love of the Gods* (Palazzo Farnese, Rome). Yet again, Reni was associated with Annibale Carracci and the frescoes were inserted into a grand, classical setting recalling Roman palazzi.

In 1770, Young described the Ionic Temple as 'a beautiful room of a pleasing proportion, 27 by 18, and elegantly ornamented' by '*Burnice*, who came from *Italy* to execute it.' *Aurora* was accomplished 'in a very agreeable manner, the graceful attitudes of the hours finely preserved, and the glowing brilliancy of the colouring pleasingly imitated.' The 'elegant little room in respect of proportion and ornament' was 'the most pleasing' Young had seen in any temple.[433] In *Description of the Paintings at Rievalx Bank Top* (1800), each of Borgnis's frescoes were described in turn.[434] A writer in *The Gentleman's Magazine* (1810) found the temple 'both within and without, marked by a chaste elegance. It consists of a single room, the ceiling and cones of which are ornamented with paintings by Burnice, an Italian artist; some original, the others from the most

[433] Young, *Six Months Tour* (1771), 87.
[434] Anon., *Rivalx* (1800), 10.

admired works of Guido, &c.'[435] In 1824, Neale likewise described 'the interior ornamented with paintings by *Burnice* on the ceilings and cornice; from this spot a varied and beautiful Landscape is beheld.'[436] The identity of the copyist was evidently critical to the reception of the work, as well as the harmonious and elegant qualities of the display.

Other painted ceilings of *Aurora* include: the Saloon at Wardour Castle, Wiltshire, by an associate of Mengs, possibly Batoni; the Portico at Roehampton, Surrey, by Giovanni Battista Cipriani (1727–1785); two works probably by Casali at Fonthill Abbey, Wiltshire, and Hovingham, North Yorkshire; and the Saloon at Moor Park, Hertfordshire, by Sir James Thornhill (1675/76–1734). Occasionally, *Aurora* also featured on ceilings in the form of a stucco relief. The clearest examples are at Buckland, Berkshire, and Shugborough Hall, Staffordshire. This last work was commissioned in 1764 by the Hon. Thomas Anson (c. 1695–1773), a co-founder of the Society of Dilettanti. In 1762, Anson inherited a fortune and initiated an extensive scheme of remodelling at Shugborough, utilising James 'Athenian' Stuart (1713–1788). Following multiple trips to the Continent, Anson intended to impart some of the glory of Rome into his local surroundings, with complementary architecture, paintings, and sculptures creating a classical aesthetic. Enthused by Francesco Vassalli's (1701–1771) stuccowork at Hagley, Worcestershire, Anson commissioned the artist to embellish his property, including a stucco relief of *Aurora* on the ceiling of the Great Room in the North Wing (Fig. 28). This grand state apartment served as a dining room and included Palladian features as well as four paintings of classical ruins by Nicolas Dall (1706–1776). Vassalli's production, in blue and white colouring and gilding, was described by Philip Yorke, 2nd Earl of Hardwicke (1720–1790) in 1763: 'Versalli's Stucco here is twice as good as his Performances at Hagley not to mention the Superiority of the Designs'; 'The Stucco Ceilings by Versalli (who lives in the neighbourhood) are the best I ever saw, particularly that in the Great Room, which is a copy of Guido's Aurora.'[437]

[435] Anon. 'Rivalx Monastery' (1810), 603.
[436] Neale, *Views of Seats* (1824), Vol. 1.
[437] Philip Yorke, 2nd Earl of Hardwicke, 1763. British Library, London, Add. MS. 35351, f. 406, 21, 28 August 1763. Cit. Beard, *Stucco* (1983), 185.

Diverse in material, size, format, and setting, the ceiling copies of *Aurora* highlight its strong appeal in signifying the taste, refinement, and education of its owners, and suitability for decorating a luxurious room or folly. Dramatic and elegant, with a striking processional format, the fresco effectively fitted ceiling spaces and was instantly recognisable, whether reproduced in full or in part, in paint or in stucco. A celebrated Roman fresco alongside those of Raphael and Annibale Carracci, it was eminently suitable for grand British residences, serving as a reminder of Italy. With its classical aesthetic, it offered an unparalleled opportunity for collectors to demonstrate their understanding of Italian art and awareness of current taste, with many proprietors electing to create a composite of renowned works from Rome, suggesting links between different masters and themes.

Small-Scale Paintings

The second type of copy of *Aurora* is that of the small-scale painting, often utilised as an overmantel or overdoor due to its rectangular shape and frieze-like composition. We have already seen examples at Ribston Hall and Burton Constable, yet there are other instances where the display was not part of such a formatted scheme. In 1713–18, William Kent (c. 1685–1748) produced a version for Sir John Chester, 4th Baronet (1666–1726) in Rome; in 1775, David Allan (1744–1796) produced one for Patrick Home (1728–1808); and in 1779, Friedrich Anders (fl. 1779) produced one for Francis Bassett (fl. 1779) (present whereabouts of all unknown).[438] These last two were produced using Jacob Frey's (1681–1752) 1722 engraving, with Home commenting in 1775 that 'no person whatever is allowed to copy it from ye original.'[439] They were also paired with *Aldobrandini Wedding*, an association seen at Ribston Hall. Bassett's copy was made with gouache, providing a further example of the vibrant type of work seen at Leicester House.

[438] Brindle, 'Kent' (2013), 137. Yarker and Hornsby, 'Buying Art' (2012), 77, 78-9

[439] Patrick Home to Thomas Chase, 3 June 1775. Cit. Yarker and Hornsby, 'Buying Art' (2012), 86, fn. 119.

Decorative Artefacts

The final group of copies after *Aurora* is that of furniture, stained glass, and handheld objects – an intriguing category, demonstrating the wide-spread appeal of Reni's fresco. In *circa* 1765, Henry Hoare II commissioned William Hoare of Bath to produce an oil painting on panel for a curved pine bench at Stourhead designed by Henry Flitcroft (1697–1769) (Fig. 29; Stourhead, National Trust). This is the only surviving piece of furniture from the Temple of Apollo, a folly in the garden. The seat was observed at Stourhead by Carlo Gastone della Torre di Rezzonico (1742–1796) in 1787–88: 'a bench seat with a wooden back, on which is painted Apollo, the Horae and Aurora, vaguely imitating the one by Guido.'[440] As John Harrison indicates, Reni's fresco was originally intended 'to be painted round the inside walls [of the temple] by Mr Hoare.'[441] When this plan was aborted, *Aurora* was instead painted on the bench. Reni's painting was only roughly translated; the picture was possibly used as a starting point or, as Harrison suggests, an alternative source may have been additionally employed, such as Poussin's (1594–1655) *A Dance to the Music of Time* (Wallace Collection, London).[442]

Another example of a piece of furniture featuring *Aurora* is a side table attributed to John Yenn (1750–1832), a pupil of Sir William Chambers (1723–1796) (Fig. 30; Victoria & Albert Museum, London). On its surface is a painted copy of *Aurora*, attributed to Cipriani, together with two painted medallions of Music and Architecture. In 1795, Yenn was working on Queen Charlotte's (1744–1818) Drawing Room at Windsor Castle; the table features the inventory stamp of George IV (1762–1830) and was likely designed for this space. It may have constituted part of Lots 109 and 110 ('a pair of gilt, semi-circular pier tables, with painted tops' and 'ditto') at the Phillips auction at Buckingham Palace on 11 August 1836.[443] The decoration is striking; this was an ornate object intended

[440] Bartolomeo Gamba, *Viaggio in Inghilterra di Carlo Gastone della Torre di Rezzonico comasco* (Venice, 1824), 21. Cit. Harrison, 'Stourhead Gardens' (2015), 135.
[441] See Joseph Smith to Henry Pelham-Clinton, 9th Earl of Lincoln, 1765. Cit. John Dixon Hunt and Peter Willis (eds.), *The Genius of the Place: The English Landscape Garden 1620–1820*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Mit Press, 1988), 272–73. Cit. Harrison, 'Stourhead Gardens' (2015), 135.
[442] Harrison, 'Stourhead Gardens' (2017), 233.
[443] See collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O79025/side-table-yenn-john. Accessed 24 November 2019.

for a grand space and the choice of subject would have been carefully considered. Reni's *Aurora* was evidently deemed suitably elegant in both design and taste.

An example of stained glass featuring *Aurora* was produced by James Pearson (c. 1740–1837) and his wife Eglington Margaret Pearson (fl. 1746–1823). The couple produced glass paintings after famous works by Old Masters, including Raphael, van Dyck, and Rembrandt, as well as contemporary artists, such as James Barry, Joseph Wright of Derby, and Sir Joshua Reynolds.[444] In London in 1793, they exhibited a copy (present whereabouts unknown) of Reni's *Aurora* which they had worked on collaboratively. In 1800, James Dallaway (1763–1834) described it as 'one of the most correct and beautiful' of their pictures. It was sold by auction in 1797 and, according to Dallaway, entered the collection of the Dukes of Norfolk at Arundel Castle, Sussex.[445]

In terms of handheld objects, a great number of eighteenth-century fans bear Reni's design. Utilitarian objects and social accessories, fans offered ladies an opportunity for creative expression and a prompt for discussion. Accessible and popular, they were made throughout Europe and the Far East. As the century progressed, subjects became increasingly varied, with reproductions of celebrated paintings especially prevalent. The most striking example of *Aurora* is a fan dated *circa* 1780 (Fig. 31; Royal Collection Trust) decorated by Giuseppe Trono (1739–1810), an Italian artist who specialised in miniature copies. It was given to Queen Victoria (1819–1901) by Anna Maria Russell, Duchess of Bedford (1783–1857), her Lady of the Bedchamber, and is believed to have previously belonged to Queen Charlotte, who owned approximately 400 fans and enjoyed painting them as a pastime. Indeed, an object bearing the description 'a fan with highly finished painting on ivory, from the Aurora of Guido, with pearl rivet' can be found in her posthumous sale of 1819.[446] Charlotte was aware of Reni's picture; the above-mentioned table was likely in her Drawing Room at Windsor Castle. The fan may have been acquired in Rome in the early 1790s by

[444] See Petzold, 'Stained Glass' (2000), 56.
[445] Dallaway, *Anecdotes* (1800), 452.
[446] See rct.uk/collection/25075/fan-depicting-aurora-and-apollo. Accessed 24 November 2019.

her son Augustus Frederick (1773–1843), whom Charlotte asked to send 'some Naples fan mounts.'[447] Reni's design filled the front, with decorations on the ivory mount below depicting Mars and Venus. The reverse featured a classically attired woman in a landscape being crowned by three putti. Other fans featuring *Aurora* include: an unmounted fan-leaf, dated 1775–95 (British Museum, London); a fan of *circa* 1740, reportedly given to Sir Robert Hughes (dates unknown) in Rome by Pope Clement XIV (1705–1774) (Victoria & Albert Museum, London); an unmounted fan-leaf of 1775–95 (British Museum, London); and a fan-mount (present whereabouts unknown) displayed in the Guard Room at Knole, Kent, in 1792.[448]

The above-cited objects demonstrate the appeal of Reni's design; a colossal ceiling fresco, it could be reproduced in delicate miniature without losing impact. Instantly recognisable, it appealed to both men and women and was incorporated onto objects used in both private and social occasions. In the nineteenth century, *Aurora* was featured on an even greater variety of handheld objects, including tankards, bracelets, and cameo jewellery.[449] The desire for such objects reveals the extent to which Reni's image became highly recognised and commercialised; indeed, it can even be seen to have become kitsch.

Other Copies

Aurora was clearly the most popular painting by Reni to be reproduced in Britain in the eighteenth century. However, other well-known paintings by Reni were widely copied and collected. In 1743, Horace Walpole received a copy of *Pallione del voto* (Pinacoteca Nazionale, Bologna) by Donato Creti (1671–1749) (present whereabouts unknown) from Sir Horace Mann, which he apparently

[447] Cit. Roberts, Sutcliffe, and Mayor, eds., *Unfolding Pictures (*2005), 78-9, No. 23.
[448] Anon., *Ambulator* (1792), 304.
[449] Late 19th-century Vienna porcelain tankard with hinged cover, Reeman Dansie, 31 July 2018, Lot 174. Oval mosaic and gold bracelet with closing hinges, Roman, c. 1870, Victoria & Albert Museum, London. Parure: necklace, two bracelets, earrings, and pin, Italian, mid-19th-century, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (Draper, *Cameo Appearances* (2008), 52-3, No. 115).

disliked.[450] A further common painting was *Salome holding the head of St John the Baptist* (Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Antica, Palazzo Corsini, Rome, Rome), which was copied by Benjamin West (Ferens Art Gallery, Hull) in 1763 for his American patrons Lieutenant Governor James Hamilton (c. 1710–1783) and Chief Justice William Allen (1704–1780) in Philadelphia. A tapestry copy of the painting was also displayed at the Foundling Museum, London, and featured in Emma Brownlow King's (1832–1905) 1858 *The Foundling Restored to its Mother* (The Foundling Museum, London). Another popular choice was *St Mary Magdalene* (Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Antica, Palazzo Barberini, Rome); a copy (Chiswick House, London) attributed to Carlo Maratti (1625–1713) entered the Burlington collection by 1761. However, possibly the most common work after *Aurora* was *St Michael* (Santa Maria della Concezione, Rome). As discussed earlier, a copy first entered Britain in 1637, when it was given to Charles I (1600–1649) as a gift. During the eighteenth century, a host of other copies were collected, including a glass painting by Mrs Pearson (Victoria & Albert Museum, London, lost), exhibited in 1786.[451] Two copies painted on canvas are of particular interest here.

The first was commissioned in 1713–18 by Burrell Massingberd (1682–1728), one of William Kent's principal patrons in Italy.[452] A collector of lesser means than many of those considered above, Massingberd relied upon copies for his collection. In April 1715, Kent revealed that he had spent some time studying *St Michael* to produce the 'best copy' possible.[453] Consequently, copies not only helped Massingberd form an impressive collection for the Old Hall at South Ormsby, Lincolnshire, but also furthered Kent's own practice. The second copy was acquired by the MP Thomas James Bulkeley, 7th Viscount Bulkeley (1752–1822). In 1774, Bulkeley embarked on a Grand Tour to Italy with his friend

[450] Moore, *Norfolk* (1985), 53. The copy was mentioned in a letter to Sir Horace Mann dated 2 May 1741 and was received in 1743.
[451] See Petzold, 'Stained Glass' (2000) 59, No. 28. Copies owned in the nineteenth century include works at Kingston History Centre, presented to the Kingston Corporation by Samuel Ranyard (d. 1887) in 1852, and University of Chester, given by Hugh Grosvenor, 1st Duke of Westminster (1825–1899) in 1883.
[452] William Kent to Burrell Massingberd, 24 November 1714. Cit. Blackett-Ord, 'Letters' (2001), 87.
[453] William Kent to Burrell Massingberd, 16 April 1715. Cit. Blackett-Ord, 'Letters' (2001), 88.

George Nugent-Temple-Grenville, 1st Marquess of Buckinghamshire (1753–1813). While abroad, he acquired a full-scale copy of *St Michael* which he presented to his alma mater, Jesus College, Oxford. In a 1790 description of Oxford Colleges, the painting was identified as an imitation of 'one of the finest works of that celebrated Master in Rome.'[454] An 1811 engraving (Fig. 32) by William Westall (1781–1850) shows the painting in its original position, recreated as an altarpiece in the East Window of the Chapel.[455] This is an intriguing example of a copy positioned in a location similar to the original, as an altarpiece in a religious setting. It is reminiscent of Borgnis's *Aurora*, which similarly recalled the display of Reni's original fresco.

Other copies after Reni from this period can be found at Kedleston Hall, Derbyshire. Built in the 1760s, Kedleston was a neo-classical showpiece designed by Robert Adam (1728–1792), with a Grand Hall and Saloon modelled on the Pantheon and a Roman villa courtyard. Nathaniel Curzon, 1st Lord Scarsdale (1726–1804), owned three copies by Reni: an anonymous *Andromeda Chained to the Rock* (Kedleston Hall, Derbyshire), after the painting in Palazzo Pallavicini-Rospigliosi, Rome; *Roman Charity* (possibly sold Christie's, New York, 6 June 2012, Lot 43) by Isabella Maria dal Pozzo (d. 1700); and *The Flight into Egypt* (Cartwright Hall Art Gallery, Bradford), possibly by Giuseppe Bartolomeo Chiari (1654–1727). The first was recorded at Kedleston in 1766, the latter two in 1769.[456] Curzon also owned two paintings attributed to Reni, both acquired in 1758: *Bacchus and Ariadne* (Los Angeles County Museum of Art); and *Cupid asleep approached by Venus in her Chariot*, now attributed to Orazio Riminaldi (1593–1630) (Kedleston Hall, National Trust). In 1771, Young acknowledged dal Pozzo and Chiari's hands but described *Andromeda Chained*

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[454] Gutch, *University of Oxford* (1790), Appendix to Jesus College, 316. *Christ Carrying the Cross* (Magdalen College, Oxford), then attributed to Reni and now Juan de Valdés Leal, was used as an altarpiece at Magdalen College Chapel, Oxford, while Pompeo Batoni's copy (St Peter's, Marsh Balden) of Reni's *Annunciation* was displayed at Corpus Christie College Chapel, Oxford.

[455] In 1853, it was replaced with stained glass and displayed in the Ante-chapel and later the South Wall.

[456] See nationaltrustcollections.org.uk/object/108863; nationaltrustcollections.org.uk/object/108857; nationaltrustcollections.org.uk/object/108838. Accessed 24 November 2019.

to the Rocks as if original.[457] This highlights the difficulties presented by copies, particularly when executed by anonymous copyists; for both owners and visitors, the line could be blurred.[458]

A further particularly intriguing group of copies were produced by the enamel painter Henry Bone (1755–1834). An album in the National Portrait Gallery, London, features Bone's preparatory drawings for such enamels. As Richard Ward suggests, his selection of Old Masters reflects popular taste at the time.[459] Eleven religious and mythological works by Reni are included, making him the most well-represented artist in the volume except for Titian, who was copied sixteen times.[460] In addition, three copies after Reni were exhibited by Bone at the Royal Academy, London, between 1781 and 1832, and three copies were sold at Christie's on 30 June 1832.[461] Furthermore, Bone's son, Henry Pierce Bone (1779–1855), exhibited one of his own enamels after Reni at the Royal Academy in 1849 which was also sold in his posthumous sale at Christie's on 13–4 March 1856.[462] At the Victoria & Albert Museum, London, there is also an enamel copy of Reni's *Beatrice Cenci* (Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Antica, Palazzo Barberini, Rome) produced by Bone's grandson Charles Richard Bone (b. 1809) in 1842.

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[457] Young, *Farmer's Tour* (1771), Vol. 1, 195, 197, 198.

[458] Other copies acquired in the eighteenth century include: Richard Boyle, 3rd Earl of Burlington and 4th Earl of Cork's (1694–1753) *Liberality and Modesty* (Private Collection, New York) acquired at Thomas Bowsen's (dates unknown) sale, 25–8 January 1742/43; and Sir Philip Yorke, 2nd Earl of Hardwicke's copy (present whereabouts unknown) of *Magdalen* (Palazzo Colonna, Rome) by Alexander Nasmyth (1758–1840), acquired through James Byres (1733–1817) in 1783. An example of a handheld object is an ivory box dated 1791 in British Museum, London, featuring an engraved gem by Nathaniel Marchant (1739–1816) representing Reni's *Fortuna with a purse* (Pinacoteca Vaticana, Rome).

[459] Walker, 'Bone's Drawings' (1999), 305.

[460] *Head of Christ Crowned with Thorns*, 1806 (Earl of Suffolk); *Susannah and the Elders*, 1809 (for Marquess of Lansdowne); *Lot & His Daughters*, 1810 (for Marquess of Lansdowne); *St Sebastian*, 1809 (Thomas Hope); *Assumption of the Virgin*, 1809 (Lady Northwick); *Mary Magdalene*, 1811 (Thomas Hope); *Head of Christ*, 1811 (Thomas Hope); *Madonna Dolorata*, 1812 (Moreland, Esq.); *David*, 1813 (Mr Poole); *Christ Crowned with Thorns*, 1813 (Mr Poole); *Betrayal of Christ*, 1815 (Earl Darnley; enamel copy in Victoria & Albert Museum, London). See Walker, 'Bone's Drawings' (1999), 357.

[461] *Christ* (exhibited 1806); *Madonna* (exhibited 1812, after Mr Morland's painting); *Christ on the Cross* (exhibited 1813, after Mr Poole's painting). *The Crucifixion*; *David*; *Head of the Virgin*. See Rogers, 'XIV. Henry Bone' (1880), 297-98, 301.

[462] *Head of the Virgin/Mater Dolorosa* (exhibited 1849, after Mr J. Neeld's picture). See Rogers, 'XIV. Henry Bone' (1880), 309, 313.

Satirical Copies

Alongside physical copies of Reni's pictures, one can also find his paintings and copies incorporated into modern British pictures, often in a satirical way. The artist William Hogarth (1697–1704) was greatly frustrated with the market for copies in Britain, which he felt dominated that of contemporary painting. In *St James's Evening Post* (1737), he complained that foreign picture jobbers 'depreciate every English work as hurtful to their trade of continually importing ship-loads of Christs, Holy Families, Madonnas, and other dismal dark subjects, neither entertaining nor ornamental, on which they scrawl the terrible cramp names of some Italian Masters, and fix on us poor Englishmen the character of universal dupes.'[463] In Hogarth's *The Marriage Settlement* (Fig. 33), the first scene of *Marriage à-la-Mode* (National Gallery, London), he depicted a bankrupt Earl and wealthy merchant directing their lawyers to draw up a marriage contract in the Earl's apartment. The Earl clutches his genealogical tree, dressed in expensive clothes and suffering from gout. On the wall is a multitude of Old Masters, including an imitation of Reni's *Judith and Holofernes* (Sedelmayer Collection, Geneva). These pictures serve as symbols of the extravagant lifestyle of the profligate 'Earl of Squanderfield' and demonstrate Hogarth's indignation at the taste for foreign masters. This was further expressed in *The Battle of the Pictures* (Paul Mellon Centre, London), an engraving which served as a ticket for an auction of Hogarth's paintings in February 1745 and featured copies of Old Masters attacking his pictures. Many of the copies are reminiscent of Reni's paintings, being subjects that he depicted: *Apollo flaying Marsyas*, *The Rape of Europa*, *St Francis*, and *The Repentant Magdalen*.

Thomas Rowlandson's (1756–1827) 1812 print *Italian Picture Dealers Humbuging My Lord Anglaise* (Fig. 34; British Museum, London) provides another potent example of the gullibility of collectors regarding copies. It depicts an English lord being defrauded in Italy, surrounded by copies and presented with a *St Mary Magdalene* apparently by Reni. Both Rowlandson and Hogarth

[463] William Hogarth, 'Brito-phil,' *St James's Evening Post* (7 June 1737). Cit. Hogarth, *Anecdotes* (1833), 40.

demonstrate the proliferation of copies after Old Masters on the market. Whilst some collectors actively sought copies, others were duped into buying them, thinking they were originals. Reni's tendency to be incorporated into images such as these suggests that not only were his copies prevalent on the market, but his own paintings had become ubiquitous, highly recognisable, and even canonical. This was a crucial moment for Reni's reception: his images were so familiar that he had become a point of satire.[464] For some, he had passed from the sublime to the ridiculous.

* * *

The lasting attraction of copies after Reni in the nineteenth century is manifest in William Hazlitt's (1778–1830) pithy comment at Stourhead in 1824: 'after the cabinet pictures of Fonthill even a good copy of a Guido is a luxury and a relief to the mind.'[465] For many nineteenth-century collectors, copies remained popular items, with both John Nash (1752–1835) and Austen Henry Layard (1817–1894) focusing on such works at their respective residences.[466] The activities of copyists at the National Gallery and exhibitions on Old Masters and their replicas – such as those held at Whitechapel Art Gallery, London, in 1907 and 1908 – further ensured that copies continued to circulate on the market into the twentieth century. Nevertheless, the status of these works remained the subject of debate, with John Ruskin (1819–1900) proclaiming in 1857 that he had 'a great horror of copies' and had 'never in [his] life seen a good copy of a good picture' from any artist.[467]

Copies after Reni were fundamental to the spread of his reputation in Britain. Desirable objects in their own right, their variety and volume meant that his pictures were highly visible, including paintings displayed in Italy. This is particularly the case when copies were displayed prominently in state rooms,

[464] Other satirical prints include: John Doyle's (1797–1868) *The Centaur Nessus carrying off Deianeira*, 1847, British Museum, London; and *Our Opening Day*, published in *Punch* (7 March 1874), based on Reni's *Aurora*.
[465] Cit. Gore, 'Stourhead I' (1964), 212.
[466] See: Boase, *English Art* (1959), 76; Summerson, *Nash* (1980), 133; Riva, 'Layard and Art Trade' (2018), 18-9.
[467] *Site Commission* (1857), 2467-468.

such as at Stourhead, Northumberland House, and Ribston Hall. Nevertheless, it was Reni's great renown and fame that also led British collectors to acquire such copies. The frequent association of *Aurora* with frescoes by Raphael and Annibale Carracci indicates that this work was highly regarded, and Reni considered a preeminent Italian master. Consequently, there is a self-fulfilling phenomenon at play here: Reni's status encouraged the production of copies, while the copies themselves further elevated his status. However, copies also had a detrimental impact on Reni's reputation in Britain. The sheer decorative quality of Reni's works, particularly *Aurora*, contributed to them becoming hackneyed clichés, highly commodified, instantly recognisable, and overly familiar. This led to a dilution of artistic respect for Reni.

Guido Reni's Reputation in Eighteenth-Century Britain

At the beginning of the eighteenth century, Reni was recognised as an exemplary artist in Britain. As the century progressed, this homogenised climate of opinion became diversified, with new and often contrary judgements arising. There were numerous literary developments in this period, with an increasingly varied group of individuals, including women, offering a nuanced history of artistic production and an advanced approach to art criticism. This included a more analytical and theoretical stance on the qualities of past artists. A strengthened rhetoric about art was formulated, leading to in-depth studies and lengthy discourses on painters and paintings. This led to improved familiarity with biographies, including that of Reni. Analysis and scrutiny of Reni's paintings and working methods rose significantly and interest in the artist reached its zenith. A critical reappraisal of Reni was an inevitable consequence of this fame, with particular focus on his distinctive qualities. Whilst some reiterated traditional adulation of the artist, confirming his status and renown, others developed novel and even hostile views, suggestive of a new standard of taste. By examining the reactions of writers, critics, artists, and travellers, one can track Reni's changing status in the eighteenth century. It is also possible to identify the paintings which had the greatest impact upon his public standing.

The Persistence of Reni's Reputation

The maintenance of Reni's high renown in the eighteenth century is apparent from his 'divine-like' status in much of the literature. This epithet, first used during Reni's lifetime, is most explicit in Robert Samber's (1682–c. 1745) *Roma Illustrata* (1722), a translation of François Raguenet's (c. 1660–1722) *Les Monuments de Rome* (1700). Reni is described as having 'an immortal Honour and Reputation' and a 'divine Pencil,' making him an 'incomparable Genius'

and 'God of Painting.'[468] In 1789, Hester Piozzi (1741–1821) likewise distinguished 'the demi-divine Caracci and their followers.'[469] Such acclaim is accompanied by recognition of the artist by merely his first name, as Thomas Martyn (1735–1825) emphasised in 1791.[470]

Lists and Compilations

One of the most prominent ways in which Reni's exalted reputation was maintained in Britain was through his frequent inclusion in 'dictionaries' of celebrated artists, published as both standalone texts and lists in larger works.[471] In this period, such lists promulgated and were presented as if representative of objective scholarly consensus. They constitute an attempt to categorise artists and distinguish the most excellent masters. This interest in plotting the progress of art was not just a British phenomenon; the French critic Roger de Piles (1635–1709) included a list of 56 artists with a comparison of their various degrees of perfection in *Cours de peinture par principles avec un balance de peintres* (1708), translated into English in 1743, while the Roman collector Padre Sebastiano Resta (1635–1714) organised his albums of *circa* 3,500 drawings chronologically, by school, and by master/pupil, presenting a systematic classification for drawings and proposed hierarchy of Italian art.[472] The presence of such lists in English texts continued this tradition and encouraged a codified hierarchy of art in Britain. Such publications often featured descriptions of artists, such as Matthew Pilkington's (1701–1774) *Gentleman's and Connoisseur's Dictionary* (1770), which offered advice for future buyers:

[468] Samber, *Roma Illustrata* (1722), 33, 195.
[469] Piozzi, *Observations and Reflections* (1789), Vol. 2, 78.
[470] Martyn, *Tour* (1791), 336.
[471] Smith, *Art of Painting* (1692), 18; Richardson, *Essay on Theory* (1715), 277; Graham, 'Short Account' (1695), 343-44; Anon., 'An Alphabetical INDEX of the Christian Names and Surnames of the ENGRAVERS and PAINTERS, with their Places of Abode, and when they flourished, &c.,' in *Sculptura historico-technica* (1770), 234; Anon., *Tablet of Memory* (1773), 99; Pilkington, *Concise Introduction* (1778); Pilkington, *Dictionary* (1770), 268-70; Burn, *Chronological Index* (1786), 92.
[472] See Wood, 'Padre Resta' (1996), Appendix 2.

'[Reni's] works have ever been deservedly admired through all Europe, and to this day increase in their value, and esteem.'[473]

A parallel to these lists is the publication of select engravings bound in single volumes. Charles Rogers (1711–1784) included a print after Reni and biography of the artist in *A Collection of Prints in Imitation of Drawings* (1778), while John Boydell (1720–1804) included five drawings and five engravings of Reni in *Exhibition of Drawings* (1787) and three prints in *A Collection of Fifty Etchings* (1787) from the Elector Palatine's collection in Dusseldorf.[474] The most instructive example is Gavin Hamilton's (1723–1798) *Schola Italica Picturae* (1773), comprising engravings of paintings by celebrated Italian artists which Hamilton either owned or dealt in, constituting an ideal collection. Three paintings by Reni are featured: *St Jerome*, *Lot and his Daughters*, and *St Mary Magdalene*.[475] The first (now National Gallery, London) belonged to Hamilton; the others (now National Gallery, London, and present whereabouts unknown) belonged to Prince Lancellotti (dates unknown) in Rome and William Beckford (1760–1844) in London. The choice of three works is striking – only Raphael and Michelangelo are featured as many times. Reni was clearly deemed an artist worthy of representation.

Another publication to incorporate Reni in this way is Sir Robert Strange's (1721–1792) *A Descriptive Catalogue of a Collection of Pictures* (1769), comprising Italian paintings which Strange offered for sale in 1773. These were again presented as an ideal collection, of educational value and good taste, and were accompanied by a series of drawings by Strange after celebrated works on the Continent. In the Introduction, Strange emphasised that 'Italy, without doubt, is the country which has produced the most celebrated painters' and only by studying these artists 'we can reasonably expect to form a true taste, and to defend ourselves against the destructive and capricious sorcery of fashion.' His collection, purchased in Italy, was formed 'upon a principle different from what

[473] Pilkington, *Dictionary* (1770), 269.
[474] Rogers, *Collection of Prints* (1778), Vol. 2, 63-74; Boydell, *Exhibition of Drawings* (1770), 14, 33, 90, 25, 101, 110, 131, 137, 177, 187; Boydell, *Fifty Etchings* (1787), 10, 11, 12.
[475] Hamilton, *Schola Italica Picturae* (1773), Pls. 34-6.

the generality of purchasers had hitherto followed,' selected from various schools, with 'specimens of the most remarkable painters who established, or did honour to these schools.'[476] Strange included five paintings by Reni: *The Offspring of Love* (Hunterian Art Gallery, Glasgow); *St Catherine* (Manchester City Art Gallery); *Cleopatra*; *St Michael*; and *The Virgin, with our Saviour asleep* (present whereabouts of last three unknown). In addition, there were five drawings by Strange after Reni: *Salome holding the head of St John the Baptist* (Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Antica, Palazzo Corsini, Rome); *The Magdalene attended by Angels* (Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Antica, Palazzo Barberini, Rome); *The Virgin with the Child, attended by an Angel* (then Palazzo Falconieri, Rome; present whereabouts unknown); *Cupid Sleeping* (then Sir Lawrence Dundas collection, Richmond; likely Private Collection, New York); and *Joseph and Potiphar's Wife* (then Palazzo Baronelli, Naples; Baronelli Collection, Naples). Strange described Reni as the 'painter of the Graces,' with whom 'few painters have been comparable.'[477] Each of Reni's works was accompanied by a brief description paying tribute to the qualities and grace of his touch. Both Hamilton and Strange presented Reni as an artist of significance whose works were necessary additions to worthy collections.

Travel Guides

Analysis of guidebooks reveals that Reni's paintings continued to be considered among the most famous artworks in Italy. Following the War of Austrian Succession (1740–48), Grand Tourism reached new heights in the mid-eighteenth century, with 'shoals of Englishmen' visiting Italy.[478] As a result, there was a rise in the number of guidebooks and personal accounts of travellers. Such texts illuminate the paintings by Reni considered most impressive in his œuvre. Among countless works mentioned, a select number were singled out as essential stops on the Grand Tour, several of which were also familiar through well-known prints. These include: *St Michael* (Santa Maria della Concezione,

[476] Strange, *Descriptive Catalogue* (1769), ii-iii, v.
[477] Strange, *Descriptive Catalogue* (1769), 52-3.
[478] Robert Adam. Cit. Coutu. *Then and Now* (2015), 4.

Rome);[479] *Aurora* (Palazzo Pallavicini-Rospigliosi, Rome);[480] *St Mary Magdalene* (Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Antica, Palazzo Barberini, Rome), for which an Englishman apparently offered 1,200 guineas (£1,260);[481] *St Peter and St Paul* (Palazzo Sampieri, Bologna; now Pinacoteca di Brera, Milan), which many English virtuosi apparently sought to acquire;[482] *Liberality and Modesty* (Palazzo Monti, Rome; present whereabouts unknown);[483] *The Madonna (*Palazzo Doria, Rome);[484] *The Trinity* (Santissima Trinità dei Pellegrini, Rome);[485] and *The Nativity* (Certosa di San Martino, Naples).[486] The frescoes of San Michele in Bosco, Bologna, were now too damaged to be admired properly.

A major influence in this period was the French engraver and critic Charles-Nicolas Cochin (1715–1790), whose *Voyage d'Italie* (1758) was based on his tour of 1749–51. The publication of this seminal text resulted in the Carracci School enjoying European-wide fame.[487] Reprinted repeatedly and translated into German in 1776, the work was well-known and well-regarded among British travellers, several of whom directly referenced it.[488] According to Cochin, the Carracci School led painting to its highest degree of perfection.[489]

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[479] Wright, *Some Observations* (1730), Vol. 1, 248; Keysler, *Travels* (1756), Vol. 2, 106; Northall, *Travels* (1766), 292; Sharp, *Letters from Italy* (1766), 57. Prints include those by Jacob Frey (1681–1752) (1734) and Raphael Morghen (1758–1833) (1787).

[480] Wright, *Some Observations* (1730), Vol. 1, 310; Breval, *Remarks* (1738), Vol. 1, 88; Henrietta Louisa, Countess of Pomfret to Frances, Countess of Hartford, 23 April 1741. Cit. Hartford and Pomfret, *Correspondence* (1805), 90; Keysler, *Travels* (1766), Vol. 1, 271; Weston, *Viaggiana* (1760), 65; Martyn, *Gentleman's Guide* (1787), 227; Piozzi, *Observation and Reflections* (1789), Vol. 1, 252. Prints include those by Jacob Frey (1722, 1727) and Raphael Morghen (1787).

[481] Wright, *Some Observations* (1730), Vol. 1, 291; Weston, *Viaggiana* (1760), 140; Miller, *Letters* (1776), 81; Smith, *Sketch* (1793), Vol. 2, 346. Prints include those by Sir Robert Strange (1773).

[482] Miller, *Letters* (1776), Vol. 2, 15; Corke and Orrery, *Letters* (1774), 65; Martyn, *Gentleman's Guide* (1787), 106; Smith, *Sketch* (1793), Vol. 2, 344-47. Prints include those by Angelica Kauffman (1741–1807) (1762–70s), Giuseppe Carlo Zucchi (1721–11805) and Angelica Kauffman (1776), and Gaetano Gandolfi (1734–1802) (1785).

[483] Miller, *Letters* (1776), Vol. 2, 20.

[484] Smith, *Sketch* (1793), Vol. 2, 228-29. Prints include one by Domenico Maria Fontana (1607–1661) (1630–60).

[485] Samber, *Roma Illustrata* (1722)*,* Preface. Prints include those by Nicolas Dorigny (1658–1746) (1710s–30s).

[486] Misson, *New Voyage* (1695), Vol. 1, 288.

[487] See Marshall, *Italy in English Literature* (1934), 71.

[488] For instance, Pilkington, *Dictionary* (1770), 567; Miller, *Letters* (1776), Vol. 1, 448-49; Vol. 2, 15-6.

[489] Cochin, *Voyage* (1758), Vol. 2, 182.

Recommending a multitude of Reni's works, he praised the artist for bringing together different parts of painting and argued that his principal pictures were greater in number and more complete than any other painter. Reni's paintings exemplified correct design, grace, and finesse; his heads were among the most beautiful imaginable, especially those of women and young men. Cochin further argued that few artists would not wish to possess Reni's talents, remembering the pleasure his works gave them.[490]

The Rise of Criticism

Over the course of the eighteenth century, literary references to Reni increased exponentially as he was marked as an artist of particular significance. A consequence of this great renown was a more qualified appreciation, with four contentious issues arising: Reni's approach towards ideal beauty; the nature of his 'manners'; his choice of religious subject matter; and his notorious gambling habit. In addition, it became increasingly difficult to attribute Reni's paintings, particularly with increasing numbers of copies entered British collections. In a review of Paul Whitehead's (1710–1774) *Poems and Miscellaneous Compositions* (1777) in *The Critical Review; or, Annals of Literature*, Reni and Michelangelo were singled out as having 'made as many inferior pencils, as they had hair in their brushes.'[491] In this section, the charges levelled against Reni most frequently in the eighteenth century are addressed in turn.

Ideal Beauty

In the eighteenth century, descriptions of Reni by Bellori and Malvasia began to be incorporated more broadly into English texts, leading to widespread recognition of the artist as a painter of supreme grace. John Dryden (1631–1700), in the Preface to *De Arte Graphica* (1695), included Bellori's story of Reni wishing he had the 'wings of an Angel' to ascend to heaven for his portrayal of

[490] Cochin, *Voyage* (1758), Vol. 2, 187-88.
[491] Anon., 'Review of *Poems*' (1777), 192.

St Michael.[492] Similarly, Malvasia's story of Reni and the colour grinder was retold by Jonathan Richardson the Elder (1667–1745) in *An Essay on the Theory of Painting* (1715), helping to foster respect for Reni as a gifted artist whose alchemy could turn a man with 'a brutal look like the devil' into a figure 'as handsome as an angel.'[493] Both stories recalled Bellori's 'Idea' that artists should correct nature by means of an 'Idea', producing works of high, exemplary beauty. Bellori elevated Reni in the hierarchy of art and Dryden and Richardson's stories helped to promulgate this conviction in Britain, asserting Reni's identity as an artist of idealising beauty.

The notion that Reni's works possessed unique qualities of beauty and grace was a recurrent theme in eighteenth-century literature. In *Essay on the Theory of Painting* (1715), Richardson remarked that 'Guido's character is Grace,' while in *Essay on the Whole Art of Criticism as it relates to Painting* (1719) he argued that 'some things, that is in the air of heads, had a delicacy in them peculiar to himself; and almost more than human.'[494] This view was echoed by the Venetian art critic and collector Count Francesco Algarotti (1712–1764), whose *Essay on Painting written in Italian* was published in Britain in 1764. Algarotti described Reni as 'the inventor of a certain and beautiful manner peculiar to himself, which shines especially in that sweetness and beauty he has contrived to give the faces of his women.'[495] A writer in *Sculptura historico-technica* (1770) also emphasised Reni's 'very beautiful and expressive Stile, peculiar to himself.'[496] In *Aedes Walpolianae* (1743), Horace Walpole (1717–1797) complained: 'You will perhaps see more paid for a Picture of Andrea del Sarto, whose Colouring was a mixture of mist and tawdry, whose Drawing hard and forc'd, than for the most graceful air of a Madonna that ever flowed from the pencil of Guido.'[497] The extent to which Reni became associated with his portrayal of the Madonna is evident from his use as a cliché in John Shebbeare's (1709–1788) *The*

[492] John Dryden, in Du Fresnoy, *De Arte Graphica* (1695), viii-ix.
[493] Richardson, 'Essay on Theory' (1773), 95-6. See Malvasia, *Felsina Pittrice* (2019), Vol. 1, 180-81.
[494] Richardson, *Essay on Theory* (1725), 206; Richardson, 'Essay on Criticism' (1719), 137.
[495] Algarotti, *Essay on Painting* (1764), 168.
[496] Anon., *Sculptura historico-technica* (1770), 11.
[497] Walpole, *Aedes Walpolianae* (1767), xi.

Marriage Act (1754), in which 'the whole person' of the heroine was described 'such as Guido would have chosen for a Madonna, having a native innocence in her Looks and Air.'[498] Jakub Lipski has further discussed how Reni's upturned faces were used to characterise figures, particularly Catholics, in eighteenth-century novels.[499] Laurence Sterne (1713–1768) compared a monk's features in *A Sentimental Journey through France and Italy* (1768) to 'one of those heads, which Guido has often painted – mild, pale – penetrating, free from all common-place ideas of fat contented ignorance looking downwards upon the earth – it look'd forwards; but look'd, as if it look'd at something beyond this world.'[500] Ann Radcliffe (1764–1823), in *The Italian* (1796–97), described a nun as having 'such meek, yet fervent love, such sublime enthusiasm as the heads of Guido sometimes display.'[501] For Michael Kitson, the attention paid to Reni's single- and two-figure portraits and portrayal of women can be associated with 'eighteenth-century conceptions of femininity, which held that the characteristics of women were sweetness, softness, and curves.'[502]

The multitude of references to Reni's idealising beauty suggests that it was considered a fundamental and exemplary aspect of his work for eighteenth-century audiences. In *Analysis of Beauty* (1753), William Hogarth (1697–1764) declared that Reni 'made beauty his chief aim,' although he felt that he was 'always at a loss about it.'[503] Strange confirmed the association in 1769, describing Reni as 'that incomparable artist, who is justly termed the Painter both of Grace and Sentiment.'[504] Indeed, 'Guido's Grace' became a leitmotif, with 'Guido's air' mentioned in John Gay's (1685–1732) 'The Painter who pleased nobody and Everybody' (1727) and Sterne's *Tristram Shandy* (1759–67), and 'Guido's grace' referenced in both James Cawthorn's (1719–1761) 'The Regulation of the Passions: The Source of Human Happiness. A Moral Essay' (1740s) and Hannah More's (1745–1833) *Sensibility: A Poetical Epistle to the*

[498] Shebbeare, *Marriage Act* (1754), 65-6.
[499] Lipski, *Painting the Novel* (2018), 118-35.
[500] Sterne, *Sentimental Journey* (2002), 7-8. Cit. Lipski, *Painting the Novel* (2018), 119.
[501] Radcliffe, *Italian* (2008), 86. Cit. Lipski, *Painting the Novel* (2018), 121.
[502] Kitson, 'British Artists' (1992), 442.
[503] Hogarth, *Analysis of Beauty* (1753), 121.
[504] Strange, *Descriptive Catalogue* (1769), 55.

Hon. Mrs. Boscawen (1785).[505] Another noteworthy reference is in John Cleland's (1709–1789) erotic fiction *Fanny Hill: The Memoirs of a Woman of Pleasure* (1748), where the 'small ruby line in sweet miniature' of a woman's genitalia is described as being such as not 'Guido's touch or colouring could ever attain to the life, or delicacy of.'[506] For several writers, this quality of sweet harmony was linked to Reni's own disposition. Graham described Reni as 'extremely handsome, and graceful in person' with a 'modest, gentile, and very obliging character.'[507] Algarotti argued that he 'imparted to his paintings that gaiety and splendour in which he lived,' using 'bright and open light.' In contrast, Caravaggio was a man 'of a sullen and savage dis-position' who used a 'gloomy and clouded sky.'[508]

Nevertheless, for Algarotti, a downside of Reni's harmonious outlook was a reliance upon equally agreeable subject matter.[509] The view that Reni was limited in subject matter was shared by de Piles. In *L'Abrégé de la vie des peintres* (1699), translated into English in 1706, he argued that Reni was best suited to the 'Devout and Pathetic.'[510] For others, however, there was an even greater problem, as Reni's tendency to portray graceful characters resulted in forced, unrealistic, and affected productions. Daniel Webb (1718/19–1798), in *An Inquiry into the Beauties of Painting* (1760), believed that Reni lacked 'warmth and expression,' while the German critic Johann Winckelmann (1717–1768), whose *Gedanken über die Nachahmung der griechischen Werke in der Malerei und Bildhauerkunst* (1755) was translated into English by Henry Fuseli (1741–1825) in 1765, complained that Reni became increasingly monotonous: 'Guido, Le Brun, and some other votaries of antiquity, repeated the same face in many of their works. A certain ideal beauty was become so familiar to them, as to slide into their figures even against will.'[511] The writer of 'On Beauty' in *The Weekly Miscellany* (1763) criticised Reni for being 'rather too lavish in bestowing this

[505] Gay, *Fables* (1727), LXIV; Sterne, *Tristram Shandy* (1978–84), Vol. 3, 214, Ch. 12; Cawthorn, *Poems* (1771), 84; More, *Sensibility* (1785).
[506] Cleland, *Fanny Hill* (1993), 42. See Gash, 'From Cleland to Byron' (2010), 187-88.
[507] Graham, 'Short Account' (1695), 343-44.
[508] Algarotti, *Essay on Painting* (1764), 111.
[509] Algarotti, *Essay on Painting* (1764), 111.
[510] Buckeridge, *Art of Painting* (1706), 230.
[511] Webb, *Inquiry* (1769), 84; Winckelmann, *Reflections* (1765), 101.

beauty on almost all his fine women; whereas nature has given it in so high a degree but to very few.'[512] William Hayley (1745–1820), in *An Essay on Painting: In two Epistles to Mr Romney* (1778), further remarked that Reni was 'exquisite in grace, though deficient in expression.'[513] Nonetheless, other writers rated Reni's ability to convey expressions highly, with Samber declaring that his Lucretia had 'the strongest and most beautiful Expression of the most lively Grief that ever was seen.'[514]

Reni's *St Michael* serves as a useful illustration of the debate surrounding his approach towards beauty. This composition was exceptionally well-known in Britain through engravings, copies, and frequent mention in texts. In 1793, James Edward Smith (1759–1828) confirmed its enduring appeal, asserting that Santa Maria della Concezione was 'visited by all travellers on account of Guido's St. Michael triumphing over Satan.'[515] In *The Art-Union* (1847), it was claimed that the painting was long held as one of the four 'Pitturi Cardinali' of Rome, alongside Raphael's *The Transfiguration* (Pinacoteca Vaticana, Vatican City), Domenichino's *The Last Communion of St Jerome* (Pinacoteca Vaticana, Vatican City), and Annibale Carracci's *St Gregory in Prayer* (destroyed).[516] A painting of renown, it attracted attention due to its grace, beauty, and harmony. For Samber, *St Michael* was the only picture in Reni's œuvre in which 'all the rare Talents of GUIDO appear to… shine with all their Magnificence.' Describing Reni's 'easy, grand, and noble, sweet and graceful manner,' he stated that the Archangel 'cannot possibly have an Air more divine without appearing a God.' Summarising its merits, he emphasised 'the Finesse of his Thoughts, the Nobleness of the Figures, the Grace and Dignity flowing thro; the whole: In Word, all those great and noble Parts of his Art which have acquired him an immortal Honour and Reputation.'[517] Thomas Gray (1716–1771), in his personal account of a tour of 1739–41, similarly considered it 'a most divine picture' with

[512] Anon., 'On Beauty' (1773), 593.
[513] William Hayley to George Romney. Cit. Hayley, *Essay on Painting* (1781), 72, Epistle 1, Note 22.
[514] Samber, *Roma Illustrata* (1722), 193.
[515] Smith, *Sketch* (1793), Vol. 1, 27.
[516] Anon., 'Ellesmere' (1847a), 11.
[517] Samber, *Roma Illustrata* (1722), 32-3.

'gay and harmonious colouring.' Defending the serenity of St Michael's expression, he associated the figure with John Milton's (1608–1674) description of the angel Zephon in *Paradise Lost* (1667): 'Severe in youthful beauty; but so angelical a beauty, such a head, as this master could only imagine.'[518] Strange also praised the painting in 1769, noting its 'delicate and harmonious' colouring: 'so perfectly did Guido possess the idea of beauty, that it is even predominant in the countenance of this angel, though agitated with passion and resentment.'[519] The writer of 'On Beauty' (1776) similarly declared that 'grace is better to be studied in Correggio's, Guido's, and Raphael's pictures, than in real life,' highlighting Reni's *St Michael* as an example of 'what it is that makes anger graceful in a set of features full of the greatest sweetness.'[520]

For others, however, the sweetness of the painting and expressions of the figures were highly problematic. In *Gedanken über die Nachahmung* (1755), Winckelmann explained how few connoisseurs were able 'to understand, and sincerely to admire, the grandeur of expression in the St. *Michael* of *Guido*.' Preferring Sebastiano Conca's Archangel, 'who's face glows with indignation and revenge,' they misunderstood the subtlety of Reni's Archangel, who, 'after having overthrown the fiend of God and man, hovers over him unruffled and undismayed.'[521] For Richardson, the devil was 'insipid' and the Archangel 'effeminate,' with a 'heavenly' but 'not altogether Proper' air.[522] In the 1756 translation of John George Keysler's (1693–1743) travel account, this critique was recalled: 'the arch-angel is finely done, though some think that his air of mildness and benignity would have been better adapted to a picture of the annunciation.'[523] Webb believed that the painting exemplified 'the theatrical grace of Guido,' St Michael having 'all the precision of a dancing master.'[524] Webb here used theatricality as a metaphor for 'artificiality' and his view was shared by Tobias Smollett (1721–1771), who comically asserted in 1766 that the

[518] Gray, *Tour* (2011), 82-3. See Milton, *Paradise Lost* (1667), Book 4, line 845.
[519] Strange, *Descriptive Catalogue* (1769), 56-7.
[520] Anon., 'On Beauty' (1776), 593.
[521] Winckelmann, *Reflections* (1765), 36-7.
[522] Richardson and Richardson, *Account in Italy* (1722), 302.
[523] Keysler, *Travels* (1756), Vol. 2, 117-18.
[524] Webb, *Inquiry* (1769), 14.

painting was beautiful yet affected, St Michael comparable to a 'French dancing-master.'[525] These references recall eighteenth-century criticism of dancing-masters in Britain for being foppish and frivolous, with 'borrowed grandeur and affected grace.'[526] While Smollett was 'extremely fond' of Reni, he found *St Michael* problematic, likening it to an another unsympathetic work in Palazzo Barberini, Rome, in which Reni's Virgin had the 'ridiculous affectation' of an Italian opera singer.[527] The same year, John Northall (1723?–1759) described St Michael as 'one of the finest painted figures in the world' but 'in the countenance is intrepidity, without fierceness; which is criticised upon, and called want of spirit.'[528] Piozzi conversely took issue with the characterisation of Satan; whilst Lanfranco's St Michael in Capodimonte, Naples, was 'less angelic,' his devil was 'less ordinary and vulgar.' For Piozzi, Reni's Satan resembled 'the common peeping satyr in a landscape,' lacking the intellectual vices of 'rage, revenge, and ambition.'[529] Hayley similarly criticised the devil, stating: 'Raphael, Guido, and West, are all deficient.'[530]

Analysis of the reception of *St Michael* reveals that attitudes towards Reni's approach to beauty are diverse, complex, and multifaceted. Paintings which attracted similar criticism include *St Peter and St Paul*, *The Barberini Magdalen*, and *The Virgin Sewing with Two Angels* (Palazzo del Quirinale, Rome).[531] Disapproval of Reni's approach to ideal beauty is the most damning and divisive of all charges in this period. For some, it was his greatest quality; for others, it resulted in figures with inappropriate expressions and unrealistic characterisation with a lack of narrative credibility. The line between admirable sweetness and excessive saccharinity was extremely narrow. An appraisal of

[525] Smollett, *Travels* (1766), Vol. 2, 118. For the theatre in art, see Perry, *Spectacular Flirtations* (2007) and 'Portraiture and Celebrity' (2010).
[526] Ward, 'Dancing-Master' (1722), 8. See Leppert, *Music and Image* (1988), Ch. 5, and Thorp, 'Borrowed Grandeur' (2011).
[527] Smollett, *Travels* (1766), Vol. 2, 118.
[528] Northall, *Travels* (1766), 292.
[529] Piozzi, *Observations and Reflections* (1789), Vol. 2, 80.
[530] William Hayley to George Romney. Cit. Hayley, *Essay on Painting* (1781), 95, Epistle 2, Note 56, Verse 523.
[531] Miller, *Letters* (1776), Vol. 2, 15-6; Vol. 3, 81; Smith, *Sketch* (1793), Vol. 2, 239-40.

subject matter suggests that Reni was most contentious in this respect when depicting religious characters and subjects involving dramatic action.

Reni's 'Manners'

The second challenge Reni presented concerns the stylistic qualities of his paintings, particularly in the second half of his career. Malvasia divided Reni's works into two distinct phases: a 'first manner', in which Reni responded to Caravaggio, and a 'second manner', which was more delicate and unique to Reni. Whilst Malvasia praised the 'second manner', he also observed a decline, which he related to Reni's gambling debts and advanced age. In the eighteenth century, this perceived decline was firmly established and the 'second manner' further divided into two separate 'manners', with works from the mid-1630s belonging to a 'third manner'. Drawing on Malvasia, Passeri, and Scanelli, Rogers praised Reni's 'Grandeur and celestial Ideas,' naming him 'the Father and Promoter of the Stile termed the "Modern," with which he enriched the Professors, charmed the Curious, and enamoured the World.'[532] With respect to Reni's 'first manner', he described its 'sudden Lights, and deep Shadows of Caravaggio,' yet, quoting Scanelli, found that it could often be carried to excess, and 'however studied, often became dark and disagreeable.' Praising Reni's 'second manner', he found it 'far more scientific, graceful, and sweet; highly finished, with clear and bright Colouring, gay and transparent, which has established him the Chief in the modern Stile of Painting, and justly obtained him the greatest applause.' Identifying a 'third manner', he criticised its 'great Negligence, not to say Weakness,' and deplored Reni's fondness for a 'greenish Tint, which Time has rendered still more green.'[533]

As with Reni's grace, his 'manners' attracted diverse reactions, demonstrating the complexity of these transitions in his practice. Some, like Rogers, preferred Reni's 'second manner', with Richardson in particular disapproving of Reni's short-lived engagement with Caravaggio, in which his 'native purity' was

[532] Rogers, *Collection of Prints* (1778), Vol. 2, 63
[533] Rogers, *Collection of Prints* (1778), Vol. 2, 67-8.

infested with 'black Tartareous cold infernal dregs.'[534] Samber defended Reni's 'second manner' when discussing *Lucretia* (Palazzo Balbi, Genoa). Describing the 'white and pale Colours of his latter Manner, made use of only by him,' he stated that Reni 'made his Pieces more beautiful, than the greatest Painters of his Time have done in theirs with the most beautiful Colours they could lay on.'[535] This was echoed by a writer in *The Edinburgh Magazine* (1758), who argued that Reni's 'second manner' was 'more vague and more showy' yet 'more suitable to his genius, and being extremely pleasing.' For him, 'it determined his reputation and fortune' and established the view that 'grace and beauty were at the finger ends of Guido.'[536] This opinion was shared by Strange, who argued that although the 'second manner' could be excessive, when Reni 'observed the medium… he is then not only superior to himself, but he equals even the greatest painters.'[537] Lady Anne Miller (1741–1781) further praised the 'second manner' when used appropriately. Commenting on *Winged Genius* (Palazzo di Conservatori, Rome), she stated that 'Guido has shewn a skill in his colouring which surpasses any thing given us by Nature, following here an original image formed in his imagination only.'[538] Similarly, she found *Liberality and Modesty* (Palazzo Monti, Bologna; present whereabouts unknown) to have 'a melioration in the colours that time only can give, and an artful blending of them, with that native grace that so distinguishes the women by this painter from all others.'[539]

For others, however, Reni's later works were challenging, particularly those of the final period. de Piles found that while there were 'several agreeable Pieces' in Reni's 'third manner', they were 'weaker than in his other Manners; for being by little and little accustom'd to this weakness, he neglected his *Carnations* or, perhaps endeavouring to make them more delicate, he gave them a certain *Grey Cast*, which often fell into a *Livid Colour*.'[540] George Turnbull (1698–1748), in *A Treatise on Ancient Painting* (1740), described the 'third manner' as 'very

[534] Richardson, 'Essay on Criticism' (1719), 215.
[535] Samber, *Roma Illustrata* (1722), 192-93.
[536] Anon., 'King of France' (1758), 381.
[537] Strange, *Descriptive Catalogue* (1769), 52-3.
[538] Miller, *Letters* (1776), Vol. 2, 400.
[539] Miller, *Letters* (1776), Vol. 2, 20-1.
[540] Buckeridge, *Art of Painting* (1706), 232.

negligent' as 'a Painter having studied Nature a long time, at last satisfies himself with the Habitude he hath formed of imitating it, without giving himself the Trouble of more Study, or of acquiring new ideas.'[541] Miller, despite often being complimentary, found Reni's later works to lack colour, such as *St Roch in Prison* (Palazzo Ducale, Modena) which was 'too grey, and in some places greenish.'[542] Similarly, in 1793, Smith complained that he could not 'pretend to admire' *The Virgin and Child* (Monte Cavallo, Rome) for the 'drawing of the child is good, but its colouring very bad, and the cloth conveys an indelicate idea.'[543] The issue of colouring is most often directly related to excessive sweetness, both qualities chiefly rendered by Reni in the latter half of his career.

Whilst the identification of distinct phases in Reni's practice has a long history, it was only in the eighteenth century that it was discussed in Britain as a key aspect of his legacy, likely as a result of the rising dissemination of texts by seventeenth-century Italian writers and the growth of art-historical understanding. Condemnation of Reni's second and third 'manners' is most potent when used in conjunction with criticisms of excessive sweetness and inappropriate rendering of expressions. As a consequence, these two aspects of Reni's practice should be seen as highly associative and dependent on the character of individual paintings. More broadly, Reni's 'manners' were capable of eliciting strong reactions and appealed to distinct and often highly personal tastes.

Religious Subject Matter

The third area of contention in this period relates to the Catholic subject matter of many of Reni's paintings. We have seen already seen Lady Beauchamp-Proctor's (fl. 1764) disapproval of the Chapel at Holkham and Horace Walpole's justification of Reni's *The Dispute of the Fathers of the Church* at Houghton as only appropriate for educated audiences who could not be easily led astray. In travel literature, the full extent of this concern is laid bare, particularly since

[541] Turnbull, *Treatise* (1740), 163-64.
[542] Miller, *Letters* (1776), Vol. 1, 438.
[543] Smith, *Sketch* (1793), Vol. 2, 239.

many of Reni's most sacred paintings were found in their original contexts in Italian Catholic churches – highly religious settings in which British travellers would necessarily be immersed.

The commentary of John Boyle, 5th Earl of Corke and Orrery (1707–1762) reveals some of the concerns regarding Catholic subject matter. Describing Hamilton's *Schola Italica Picturae* (1773), Boyle observed that while the pictures were of celebrated masters and generally considered of high merit, he could not 'entirely approve of the selection' since the religious works included 'some very improper *representations.*' He argued that 'where the artist intended to excite devotion in the mind of the spectator, the object exhibited hath often produced a contrary effect.'[544] For Gilbert Burnet (1643–1715), paintings in Italy would be 'charming things, if they were anywhere else than in *Churches*.' The most problematic subject was the Trinity, in which 'the Representation of *God the Father* is often diversified according to the caprice of the Painter.' Describing it as 'Indecent,' 'scandalous,' and 'odious,' Burnet considered it 'a strange horror' and 'as Extravagant as it is gross.'[545] Boyle was similarly concerned about the Trinity, stating that he was 'shocked at the presumption of the painter' in representing 'the form and figure of the SUPREME BEING, "whom no eye hath seen, or can see."'[546] Charles Lamotte (fl. 1730) was likewise concerned about such representations, finding Raphael's depiction of the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove to take 'a bold and dangerous Licence, meerly for the sake of Ornament and Embellishment… a Licence that plainly misrepresents Matter of Fact, and may mislead and deceive ignorant Men in Popish Countries.'[547] Samber expressed similar concerns when discussing Reni's *Trinity* (Fig. 35; Santissima Trinità dei Pellegrini, Rome). Recalling Burnet's aversion to the subject, Samber revealed that he 'purposely omitted the Description' of Reni's *Trinity* from his publication 'because [he] would offend no Body.' Whilst the

[544] Corke and Orrery, *Letters* (1774), 242.
[545] Burnet, *Three Letters* (1688), 107-08.
[546] Corke and Orrery, *Letters* (1774), 242.
[547] Lamotte, *Essay* (1730), 82.

subject was unproblematic for Catholics, 'with the Reformed it is look'd upon little less than a Species of Idolatry.'[548]

Protestant concern over representing the Trinity has a long history in Britain. In 1601, a campaign was launched to demolish the Cheapside Cross, erected in 1291–94 in the City of London. George Abbot (1562–1633), Vice-Chancellor of Oxford University, argued that imagery of God the Father and the Holy Spirit was 'unlawful in true Divinity.' Finding the Holy Spirit especially objectionable and 'one of the highest points of popery,' he argued that 'the cross is no sort to be set up again, as it was before with the dove.'[549] Despite this denunciation, the Cheapside Cross was restored and remodelled, before being attacked once more in 1642. Following intense debate, it was demolished by a Parliamentary Committee in 1643. Samber's decision to censor Reni's *Trinity* shows that he was aware of ongoing debate regarding the propriety of representing this subject in art. However, his employment of the rhetorical device *praeteritio* indicates that he still felt Reni's painting worthy of notice; indeed, he maintained that it was 'one of the finest pieces of Rome.' Despite his concern, the painting was recommended by various other travel writers, with Thomas Nugent (c. 1700–1772), Keysler, Northall, and Martyn each including it in their guidebooks, and Gray mentioning it in his journal.[550] Furthermore, various collectors in Britain owned Nicolas Dorigny's (1658–1746) 1702 engraving of the picture, including George Frideric Handel (1685–1759).[551]

The second instance of Reni's religious subjects presenting a potential problem for British travellers can be found in Piozzi's *Observations and reflections made in the course of a journey through France, Italy and Germany* (1789). Piozzi was concerned with the perceived superstition in which images of the Virgin were worshipped in religious processions in Italian cities. Expressing her unease with the custom, Piozzi was relieved that no such act of 'Roman superstition'

[548] Samber, *Roma Illustrata* (1722), Preface.
[549] Abbot, *Cheapside Crosse* (1641), 2-3.
[550] Nugent, *Grand Tour* (1749), Vol. 3, 240; Keysler, *Travels* (1756), Vol. 2, 211; Northall, *Travels* (1766), 286-87; Martyn, *Tour* (1791), 195; Gray, *Notes* (2011), 123.
[551] McGeary, *Handel* (2009), 540.

could be observed in Rome, even when 'a beautiful figure of the Madonna, dressed from a picture of Guido Reni' was carried in the streets of the city. After observing the procession, she was reassured that 'no impropriety could I discern, who watched with great attention.'[552] As we have seen, according to Malvasia, Reni's Catholicism involved a particularly strong devotion to the Virgin. Images of the Madonna were among the most abundant of Reni's subjects, with bust-length and half-length portraits and depictions of the Immaculate Conception, Assumption, and Annunciation recurring throughout his œuvre. Intended to incite an emotional response, these representations became highly recognisable visual motifs and tied Reni to Mariolatry and Catholicism itself, particularly aspects deemed to be a superstitious cult. Whilst Piozzi found the image safely observed and not worshipped in this case, her story indicates that fear regarding Mariolatry in the context of Reni's paintings was a reality for Protestant travellers. However, the propagation of Reni's religious images meant that they not only served as devotional objects but as admirable artworks in their own right, leading to an aestheticised commodification of Reni's paintings and acceptance of their religious content in a Protestant context.

Gambling

Further criticism of the eighteenth century was directed towards Reni's gambling habit, which dominated the latter years of his life and was detailed by Malvasia. In this period, Reni's identification with gambling was recognised by British audiences, with Graham the first English writer to reference it in 1715. In Graham's view, Reni's 'immoderate Love of *Gaming*' resulted in 'a languishing *Distemper*… which occasion'd his *Death.*'[553] Over the course of the century, such references grew in number with Reni the painter eventually becoming inseparable from Reni the gambler. Some, like Graham, focused on the personal impact of gambling upon Reni, with Hayley suggesting that 'a fatal passion for gaming involved him in continued scenes of distress.'[554] For others, Reni's habit

[552] Piozzi, *Observations and Reflections* (1789), Vol. 2, 208.
[553] Graham, 'Short Account' (1695), 343-44.
[554] William Hayley to George Romney. Cit. Hayley, *Essay on Painting* (1781), 72, Epistle 1, Note 22.

affected not only his personal circumstances but his artistic output.[555] Stephen Weston (1747–1830) found Reni's final works 'washy and gruelish,' executed in a manner 'adopted for expedition sake, at the time that he was pressed for the payment of his gaming debts.'[556] For Rogers, the habit reduced Reni to the level of a 'laborious jobber,' forcing him 'to finish his Pictures of most importance in any manner, and to paint Half-figures and single Heads.'[557]

With increasing numbers of Reni's works arriving in Britain, familiarity with paintings from the latter stages in his career and concern regarding the difficulties of attributing his works led to an increased focus on his gambling habit. Nevertheless, this did not affect Reni's broad characterisation as a genial man. Despite his 'Vice of Gaming,' de Piles found Reni 'a Man of good Morals,' who, 'cou'd he have Corrected that Fault, wou'd have been an Accomplish'd Person.'[558] However, a century later, Reni's association with gambling would become a major stimulus for apprehension about his morality.

* * *

The spread of information about Reni's life in eighteenth-century Britain allowed readers to foster a closer relationship with the artist and obtain a deeper level of engagement with his practice. The increased number of works by Reni imported into the country helped to bolster his high standing in the hierarchy of art. However, with such acclaim and expansion of knowledge, Reni became subject to a higher standard of taste and areas of censure began to emerge. The strongest of these concerned his approach towards ideal beauty. Its reflection of Reni's own disposition reveals the extent to which the character of an artist had a potent impact on their perception and memorialisation. This became all the more pronounced in the nineteenth century with the advent of Victorian morality. For de Piles, who critiqued Reni's excessive sweetness, decline in colouring, and 'vice' of gambling in *L'Abrégé de la vie des peintres* (1699), these were not

[555] Buckeridge, *Art of Painting* (1706), 229-30; Richardson, 'Essay on Criticism' (1719), 136-37; Anon., 'King of France' (1758), 381.
[556] Weston, *Viaggiana* (1760), 169.
[557] Rogers, *Collection of Prints* (1778), Vol. 2, 68-9.
[558] Buckeridge, *Art of Painting* (1706), 229-30.

enough to overcome his admiration for the artist. In conclusion, he argued: 'in whatever Manner or Time he painted his Pictures, his thoughts are so delicate, his Figures so noble, his Expressions so sweet, his Dresses so Rich, and every thing so graceful, that he was, and ever will be, universally admir'd.'[559] This seems to be the general consensus in eighteenth-century Britain; whilst writers were aware of problems in his works, the established view of Reni as a highly-regarded artist prevailed. It is in the next period that this changed.

[559] Buckeridge, *Art of Painting* (1706), 232.

Guido Reni and the Royal Academy

At the turn of the nineteenth century, institutional rejection of Reni in Britain emerged with a series of observations made by various Royal Academicians. Whilst the severity of criticism only became more potent over the next fifty years, the diverse reactions of numerous Presidents and Professors of the Royal Academy, London, reveal much about Reni's changing position within the canon and, more broadly, the shifting attitudes of the British art establishment towards past masters. According to the Constitution and Laws of the Academy, established on 10 December 1768, Professors' lectures were intended 'to instruct the students in the principles of composition; to form their taste in design and colouring; to strengthen their judgment; to point out to them the beauties and imperfections of celebrated works of art, and the particular excellences of great masters.'[560] They played a crucial role in the definition of 'taste' and were specifically intended as a means of sanctioning and censuring the works of past artists. The views expressed by such Professors were authoritative and their frequent appearance in print meant that their messages spread far beyond the Academy, reaching the general public at large.

Before addressing two charges levelled against Reni by members of the Academy, Reni's residual high status in eighteenth-century Britain is considered through a brief examination of the interests of two prominent Academicians: Sir Joshua Reynolds (1723–1792) and Benjamin West (1738–1820). Their regard for Reni in the early stages of their careers is here used to establish the high repute which Reni had enjoyed and the severe implications of his critical downfall.

[560] *Royal Academy* (1815), 17.

Sir Joshua Reynolds

Sir Joshua Reynolds held the position of first President of the Academy from its foundation until his death. From 1769 until 1790, he delivered fifteen Discourses to the Academy, annually until 1772 and thereafter biennially. Intended to aid students, these were highly influential and widely published, the first seven in 1778 and all fifteen in 1797. As a result, Reynolds was a dominant figure in the British art world. His interest in Reni can be first dated to his trip to Italy in 1750–52. In his sketchbooks, he chose to copy a wide range of artists, suggesting that he did not approach his studies with preconceived notions of hierarchical status or genre. He made numerous approbatory remarks about Reni and his qualities as an artist, observing in San Gregorio dei Mendicanti, Bologna, that 'there is a certain softness in Guido that is wonderfully pleasing.'[561] He also made drawings after Reni, such as *Massacre of the Innocents* and Saint Procolo from *Pietà dei Mendicanti* (both Pinacoteca Nazionale, Bologna).[562]

However, one particular copy, not in the sketchbooks, indicates that Reynolds's interest in Reni went far beyond the ordinary. During his time abroad, Reynolds painted very few copies after full paintings. Only two are widely acknowledged: a small-scale copy (Hillsborough Castle, Hillsborough) of Raphael's *The School of Athens* (Palazzo Apostolico, Rome) and a full-scale copy (Fig. 36; Royal Collection Trust) of Reni's *St Michael* (Santa Maria della Concezione, Rome).[563] Produced in 1750, the latter was a significant work as the only full-scale copy painted by Reynolds. Writing to James Barry (1741–1806), Professor of Painting in 1782–99, Reynolds intimated that copying was not a useful exercise for aspiring artists abroad: 'endeavouring to produce something of your own… will be a more advantageous method of study than copying the St. Cecilia in the Borghese, or the Herodias of Guido, which may be copied to eternity without

[561] Sir Joshua Reynolds, 'His Notes on Pictures at Rome and Bologna.' Cit. Leslie and Taylor, *Reynolds* (1865), Vol. 1, 473-74.
[562] Sir Joshua Reynolds, *Sketchbook*. Sir John Soane's Museum, London, ff. 62v, 60v. Cit. Perini, 'Reynolds' (1988), 162, 163.
[563] In 1751, Reynolds also produced *Parody of Raphael's 'School of Athens'* (National Gallery of Ireland, Dublin).

contributing one jot towards making a man a more able painter.'[564] Nevertheless, Reynolds not only copied Reni's picture in full but kept his version on the ceiling of his studio for the remainder of his life.[565] Presented to George IV (1762–1830) by his niece Mary Palmer, Marchioness of Thormond (1750–1820), it was later placed in the Chapel at Hampton Court. It serves as a powerful marker of Reni's influence on Reynolds.

In addition, Reynolds acquired several of Reni's productions for his collection. These include: 'Three Heads', 'Head of St Joseph', 'Self-Portrait', 'An Angel's Head', 'Herod's Cruelty' (a duplicate of *Massacre of the Innocents*), 'Ecce Homo', 'The Nativity', 'St Teresia', and 'Europa with Cupids' (present whereabouts of all unknown), included in his posthumous sale of 11–4 March 1795 at Christie's.[566] Reynolds also acquired Reni's *St John the Baptist* (Private Collection) in Paris in 1768.[567] Most significantly, in 1778, Reynolds unsuccessfully attempted to acquire Sir Robert Walpole, 1st Earl of Orford's (1676–1745) *The Dispute of the Fathers of the Church* (The State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg) for 2,000 guineas (£2,100). Recognising its importance to Britain, he promised in vain that it would remain in his possession.[568] There are also instances of Reynolds utilising specific aspects of Reni's paintings as stimuli for his own productions. Examples include: *David Garrick between Tragedy and Comedy* (Waddesdon Manor, Buckinghamshire), which Michael Kitson associates with Reni's *Lot and his Daughters* (National Gallery, London) and Annibale Carracci's *Hercules at the Crossroads* (Museo di Capodimonte, Naples*);*[569] and *St John the Baptist in the Wilderness* (Wallace Collection, London), which recalls Reynolds's version of Reni's *St John the Baptist* and

[564] Sir Joshua Reynolds to James Barry, 1782–99. Cit. Barry, *Works* (1809), Vol. 1, 85.
[565] See Northcote, *Reynolds* (1818), Vol. 2, 305.
[566] Sale Cat. Reynolds (1795) Day 1, Lot 3; Day 2, Lots 50, 68; Day 3, Lots 21, 96; Day 4, Lots 10, 67, 83, 89. See: Editorial, 'Reynolds's Collection I' (1945), 132-34; Editorial, 'Reynolds's Collection II' (1945), 210-17; Editorial, 'Reynolds's Collection III' (1945), 262-71+273.
[567] See Davis and Hallett, *Reynolds* (2015), 152, fn. 4.
[568] George Walpole to James Christie, 30 October 1778. Cit. Moore, *Houghton Hall* (1996–97), 154, No. 73.
[569] Kitson, 'British Artists' (1992), 443.

Reni's painting at Dulwich Picture Gallery, London.[570] Such pictures demonstrate Reni's appeal for Reynolds as a prompt for his own artistic practice.

Benjamin West

Reynolds's successor at the Academy was Benjamin West, an American artist who settled in Britain and served as President in 1792–1805 and 1806–20. West also encountered Reni during his travels on the Continent as a young man in the 1760s. He sketched a copy (Fig. 37; Royal Academy of Art, London) of Reni's *The Rape of Deïanira* (Musée du Louvre, Paris) and later wrote a letter to Johann Heinrich Ramberg (1763–1840), dated 1787–88, providing instructions for artists travelling abroad. Given that Ramberg's 'disposition in the art of painting' inclined towards 'grace and Eligence,' West suggested that he study 'the works of Correggio, Raphael, and Guido, as they are the Masters that have most excelled in particular' and 'coppy something from each of those Painters.' He advocated in particular *Salome holding the head of St John the Baptist* (Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Antica, Palazzo Corsini, Rome) and *St Peter and St Paul* (Pinacoteca di Brera, Milan).[571]

West was clearly partial to Reni, and his approval can be noted in a Discourse read to the Academy in 1792, in which West described the most renowned students of the Carracci School. His use of the terms 'graces' and 'softness' in relation to Reni suggests that he considered these his most important attributes.[572] As with Reynolds, West's assertions on the value of art and artists were highly influential and his approval of Reni is particularly significant. In 1804, William Buchanan (1777–1864) commented that 'Doctor West,' whom he perceived as a 'quack,' could 'make some folks believe that white is black, and au contraire, Black, White.'[573] His authority in assigning attributions to Reni is exemplified by the way in which George Simon Harcourt, 2nd Earl Harcourt

[570] See Davis and Hallett, *Reynolds* (2015), 150-53, No. 10.
[571] Forster-Hahn, 'Sources' (1967), 381-82.
[572] Benjamin West, Discourse, Royal Academy, 10 December 1792. In West, *Discourse* (1793), 13-4.
[573] William Buchanan, 8 May 1804. Cit. Haskell, *Rediscoveries* (1980), 50.

(1736–1809) sought his opinion on *The Madonna and Child* (present whereabouts unknown) at Nuneham Courtenay, Oxfordshire in 1809.[574]

In addition, West owned one of Reni's most renowned works in Britain at the turn of the century: *Ecce Homo* (Fig. 38; National Gallery, London), now considered a copy. Previously in the collections of Gonzaga and Fouquet, the painting entered West's collection by 1787 and was engraved by William Sharp (1749–1824) in 1792. In 1816, it was exhibited at the British Institution, London, before being sold to Samuel Rogers (1763–1855) in West's posthumous sale of 1820. In the catalogue, it was stated: 'This charming specimen was considered by the late President, and his predecessor Sir Joshua Reynolds, to be the most exquisite production in art.'[575] Furthermore, as with Reynolds, Reni's influence can be seen in West's own artistic productions. Helmut Von Erffa suggests that Reni's *Perseus and Andromeda* (Palazzo Pallavicini-Rospigliosi, Rome) served as a model for West's 1784 drawing *The Call of Isaiah* (Courtauld Institute of Art, London), while Kitson suggests that Reni's depiction of smooth flesh influenced *The Death of Hyacinthus* (Swarthmore College, Pennsylvania).[576]

Reni was clearly extremely influential for prominent artists and critics in Britain in the late eighteenth century. Reynolds and West personally studied Reni's paintings on the Continent, recording their observations in text and image, and brought this knowledge back to Britain, acquiring his works for their collections. Moreover, they took inspiration from Reni for their own productions, borrowing his compositional devices and painterly qualities. However, this artistic respect for Reni diluted at the turn of the century. In lectures delivered by Presidents and Professors from the 1790s to the 1830s, two specific charges were levelled against Reni. The first recalls eighteenth-century judgements regarding Reni's approach to ideal beauty. The second is specific to this period and concerns the 'eclecticism' of the Carracci School. Both challenged aspects of Reni's works which had previously been highly celebrated. By the nineteenth century, these

[574] Benjamin West to George Simon Harcourt, 2nd Earl Harcourt, 8 January 1809. Cit. 'Pictures at Nuneham,' in Harcourt, *Harcourt Papers* (1880), Vol. 3, 255.
[575] Sale Cat. West (1820), Day 2, Lot 83.
[576] Von Erffa, 'West' (1969), 31; Kitson, 'British Artists' (1992), 445.

qualities would not only be deeply questioned but re-evaluated in the most pejorative terms.

Ideal Beauty

The first criticism relates to the idealistic beauty of Reni's works and their perceived qualities of sweetness and grace. These were properties that had been largely celebrated, with Barry remarking in the 1760s: 'One sees from Guido's pictures, that he was entirely taken up with the sweetness, beauty, and elegant air of his figures.'[577] Barry greatly admired Reni; he based the composition of *Philoctetes in the Island of Lemnos* (Pinacoteca Nazionale, Bologna) on Reni's *Hercules on the Pyre* (Musée du Louvre, Paris) and drew on *St Michael* for *The Fall of Satan* (British Museum, London), his design for St Paul's Cathedral, London.[578] In 1767, he declared: 'you will not wonder at my preferring the antique to all things, next Raffael and Michael Angelo, Guido for some things, Le Sueur, Poussin, Le Brun, and Domenichino; these are the artists my heart warms towards, and I have ranged them, I think, just in the order I love them.'[579] In *The Artist* (1810), the Royal Academician James Northcote (1746–1831) similarly praised the 'exquisite feminine mildness, beauty, or patient piety, expressed by Guido or Domenichino' and commented that he was 'captivated with the sweetness and air of Guido.'[580]

Reni's approach to ideal beauty is intrinsically linked to Bellori's 'Idea' that artists should not just imitate nature but improve upon it. The endurance of Bellori's thesis into eighteenth-century Britain is evident from Reynolds's Third Discourse (1770) in which he argued that 'a mere copier of nature can never produce anything great.' Rather, he should 'improve' his imitations 'by the grandeur of his ideas; instead of seeking praise, by deceiving the superficial

[577] James Barry, 'Observations on Different Works of Art in France and Italy.' In Barry, *Works* (1809), Vol. 2, 13.
[578] See: Myrone, *Bodybuilding* (2005), 85-6; Haynes, 'Shadow of Idol' (2012), 77.
[579] James Barry to Dr Sleigh, November 1767. In Barry, *Works* (1809), Vol. 1, 141.
[580] Northcote, 'No. VII. Slighted Beauty' (1810), 84; Northcote, 'No. XVII. Slighted Beauty' (1810), 355-56.

sense of the spectator, he must strive for fame, by captivating the imagination.' Referring to ancient art and recalling Bellori's account of the production of Reni's *St Michael*, Reynolds declared: 'The artist is supposed to have ascended the celestial regions, to furnish his mind with this perfect idea of beauty.' In summary: 'This idea of the perfect state of nature, which the artist calls the ideal beauty, is the great leading principle by which works of genius are conducted.'[581]

Nevertheless, for Reynolds, ideal beauty should not be invented but based upon the close observation of nature: 'this great ideal perfection and beauty are not to be sought in the heavens, but upon earth.' Instead of forming a false ideal from one's imagination, 'the whole beauty and grandeur of the art consists… in being able to get above all singular forms, local customs, particularities, and details of every kind.' As everything on earth is 'particular and uncommon,' even 'the most beautiful forms have something about them like weakness, minuteness, or imperfection.' Artists should note these details and make 'an abstract idea of their forms more perfect than any one original.' In this way, they '[correct] nature by herself, her imperfect state by her more perfect.'[582] This view is related to Reynolds's concept of 'central form' and belief that 'the works, whether of poets, painters, moralists, or historians, which are built upon general nature, live forever.'[583]

Reynolds found Reni's approach in this respect troublesome. Rather than producing ideal beauty through the study of nature, Reni strayed too far, correcting nature too perfectly. His figures did not convey emotion and he failed to transmit true narratives. In his Fourth Discourse (1771), Reynolds emphasised that emotions should be general, not particular, and appropriate for subject and situation.[584] In his Fifth Discourse (1772), he expressed concern about

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[581] Sir Joshua Reynolds, Third Discourse, Royal Academy, 14 December 1770. Cit. Reynolds, *Discourses* (1997), 41-2, 44-5.
[582] Sir Joshua Reynolds, Third Discourse, Royal Academy, 14 December 1770. Cit. Reynolds, *Discourses* (1997), 44.
[583] Sir Joshua Reynolds, Fourth Discourse, Royal Academy, 10 December 1771. Cit. Reynolds, *Discourses* (1997), 73. For Reynolds's 'central form', see Barrell, *Political Theory* (1986), 69-99.
[584] Sir Joshua Reynolds, Fourth Discourse, Royal Academy, 10 December 1771. Cit. Reynolds, *Discourses* (1997), 60-1.

reconciling emotion with ideal beauty, declaring: 'If you mean to preserve the most perfect beauty in its most perfect state, you cannot express the passions, which produce (all of them) distortion and deformity, more or less, in the most beautiful faces.'[585] For Malvasia, this was not a problem for Reni, especially in his earlier works. Describing Reni's *Crucifixion* (Pinacoteca Nazionale, Bologna), he stated: 'the sorrow of the afflicted Virgin Mother and the beloved disciple who, far from being disfigured have their beauty increased in their grieving, along with the emotion of the Magdalene, would stir pity and compassion even in a tiger's heart.'[586] However, for Reynolds, Reni's desire to retain ideal beauty resulted in unconvincing emotion and a lack of effective story-telling. He argued:

> Guido, from want of choice in adapting his subject to his ideas and his powers, or in attempting to preserve beauty where it could not be preserved has in this respect succeeded very ill. His figures are often engaged in subjects that required great expression: yet his "Judith and Holofernes," the "Daughter of Herodias with the Baptist's Head," the "Andromeda," and even the "Mothers of the Innocents," have little more expression than his "Venus attired by the Graces."[587]

As a result, Reni's figures were unrealistic and insufficiently expressive. In 1800, the writer James Dallaway (1763–1834) echoed this sentiment, claiming that Correggio was 'the true painter of beauty, grace, sweetness, and sensibility' while Reni 'frequently painted angels, sometimes too theatrically, in the opinion of those, who have formed their taste on the simplicity of the antique.'[588] At the same time, Reynolds's argument was expanded upon at the Academy by Henry Fuseli (1741–1825), Professor of Painting in 1799–1805 and 1810–25. In his Second Lecture (1801), Fuseli condemned Reni for his 'studied grace of theatres,' which marked his ability to portray human characters effectively:

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[585] Sir Joshua Reynolds, Fifth Discourse, Royal Academy, 10 December 1772. Cit. Reynolds, *Discourses* (1997), 78.
[586] Malvasia, *Felsina Pittrice* (2019), Vol. 1, 70-3.
[587] Sir Joshua Reynolds, Fifth Discourse, Royal Academy, 10 December 1772. Cit. Reynolds, *Discourses* (1997), 78.
[588] Dallaway, *Anecdotes* (1800), 493.

> Grace attracted Guido, but it was the studied grace of theatres: his female forms are abstracts of antique beauty, attended by languishing attitudes, arrayed by voluptuous fashions. His male forms, transcripts of models, such as are found in a genial climate, are sometimes highly characteristic of dignified manhood or apostolic fervour, like his Peter and Paul, formerly in the Zampieri at Bologna: sometimes stately, courteous, insipid, like his Paris attending Helen, more with the air of an ambassador, by proxy, than carrying her off with a lover's fervour.[589]

Fuseli's view was profoundly influential in swaying public opinion against Reni, being one of the most visible condemnations of the artist. Reproduced in the printed compilation of his lectures, it was also incorporated into Fuseli's amendments to Matthew Pilkington's (1701–1774) *A Dictionary of Painters* (1805) and reprinted in the flourishing art press.[590]

This notion of theatrical grace was central to the Third Lecture (1807) of John Opie (1761–1807), Fuseli's successor at the Academy in 1805–07. Here, Opie noted how Reni's 'first manner' imitated the style of Caravaggio and heavily criticised the 'second manner', stating that 'though a better vehicle for mannered beauty and theatric grace,' it was 'as far removed by its flimsiness from true taste, as was that of Caravaggio by its outrageous strength.'[591] The criticism was also acknowledged by Thomas Phillips (1770–1845), Professor of Painting in 1825–32, in his Third Lecture (1827). However, Phillips had a different view, arguing that Reni's 'graces… form no small portion of that pleasure and gratification' offered by painting. Whilst his 'figures have frequently the air of the dancing-school, or of the theatre, where affectation often supersedes propriety,' they were rendered so engaging by the 'excellent and elegant forms of drapery' and 'free and perfect dexterity of hand' that 'they command our attention and control for a time our senses.' Reni's colouring could be 'cold and

[589] Henry Fuseli, Second Lecture, Royal Academy, 23 March 1801. Cit. Knowles, *Fuseli* (1831), Vol. 2, 111-13.
[590] Henry Fuseli, in Pilkington, *Dictionary of Painters* (1810), 423. This was repeated in *La Belle Assemblée; or Court and Fashionable Magazine* (April 1808), 153-54. The Lecture in full was reprinted in *Arnold's Library of the Fine Arts* 1, no. 6 (April 1833): 26-49.
[591] John Opie, Third Lecture, Royal Academy, 2 March 1807. Cit. Opie, 'Lectures' (1832), 121-22.

inharmonious' but 'great pathos is occasionally found in his expressions.' Phillips highlighted in particular the 'appropriate expression' of Reni's Madonnas which are 'by no one, unless it be Lionardo da Vinci, rendered with more affecting influence than by Guido.'[592]

Phillips's argument touches on the second aspect of the charge levelled against Reni's depiction of beauty, that of 'affectation'. This term became ubiquitous in the nineteenth century and was often applied to Reni's use of colouring. In his Second Lecture (1801), Fuseli declared that Reni's 'colour varies with his style, sometimes bland and harmonious, sometimes vigorous and stern, sometimes flat and insipid.'[593] In his Ninth Lecture (1802), he criticised three members of the Carracci School for their inability to apply colour: 'Guido was too gay and affected; Guercino too cutting and vulgar; Albano too airy and insubstantial.'[594] However, 'affectation' could also be directed towards Reni's approach to beauty. In Opie's First Lecture (1807), he described 'the manner and affectation of Guido,' arguing that Reni understood the term 'beauty' in 'too confined a sense' so that he 'thought that he was of course to paint on every occasion, the handsomest woman possible; and taking accordingly, in his opinion, the most beautiful antique statue for his model [the Niobe], he constantly repeated in his works the same face, without variation of expression or character, whatever was the subject, situation, or action represented; whether a Venus or a milkmaid, the Assumption of the Virgin, the Death of Cleopatra, or Judith cutting off the head of Holofernes.'[595]

A reported conversation between the essayist and critic William Hazlitt (1778–1830) and Northcote in 1830 indicates the growing prevalence of this derogatory term, which Northcote considered unjust. Northcote greatly admired Reni, having been 'captivated with the sweetness and air of Guido' on his continental tour in the 1770s.[596] Here, he stated:

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[592] Thomas Phillips, Third Lecture, Royal Academy, 1827. In Phillips, *Lectures* (1833), 132.
[593] Henry Fuseli, Second Lecture, Royal Academy, 23 March 1801. Cit. Knowles, *Fuseli* (1831), Vol. 2, 113.
[594] Henry Fuseli, Ninth Lecture, Royal Academy, 1802. Cit. Knowles, *Fuseli* (1831), Vol. 2, 361.
[595] John Opie, First Lecture, Royal Academy, 16 February 1807. Cit. Opie, 'Lectures' (1832), 5.
[596] Northcote, 'Slighted Beauty' (1809), 356.

> A young painter asked me the other day whether I thought that Guido was not chargeable with affectation? I told him that I thought not, or in a very trifling degree. I could not deny that Guido sometimes bordered on it and reminded me of it; or that there was that which in any body else might be really so, but that in him it seemed only an extreme natural gentility. He puts his figures into attitudes that are a little too courtly and studied, but he probably could not help it.

Hazlitt likewise supported Reni, finding that his affectation was 'rather the excess of a quality or feeling in his mind, than the aiming to supply the defect of one.'[597] This debate reveals much about the divisive nature of Reni's approach towards ideal beauty and indicates the attention which Reni attracted and complex and varied responses that he elicited.

Eclecticism

The second charge is new in this period and expressed singularly by the Academicians. As Malvasia reported, as a member of the Carracci School, Reni was encouraged to select the best qualities of past artworks for incorporation into his own individual style. In the nineteenth century, this artistic practice was labelled 'eclectic' and judged under a new standard of taste. Early British references to the practice are typically praiseworthy. In his Sixth Discourse (1774), Reynolds differentiated between borrowing from the ancients, whose works were a 'magazine of common property,' and modern artists, whose works were more 'the property of their authors.' When borrowing from previous masters, he argued that artists should 'enter into a competition with his original, and endeavour to improve what he is appropriating to his own work.' For Reynolds, 'such imitation is so far from having anything in it of the servility of plagiarism, that it is a perpetual exercise of the mind, a continual invention.' Echoing Agostino Carracci's sonnet, referenced earlier, he suggested distinct areas of focus for artists, including Veronese's 'luxuriant style' and Titian's

[597] Hazlitt, *Conversations with Northcote* (1830), 181.

'capricious compositions.'[598] In his Second Discourse (1769), he warned artists against 'copying the touches' of great masters, encouraging them to 'copy only their conceptions.' He argued: 'Instead of treading in their footsteps, endeavour only to keep the same road. Labour to invent on their general principles and way of thinking. Possess yourself with their spirit.'[599] He thus distinguished between absorbing artists' ideas and literally copying their paintings.

Reynolds himself borrowed extensively from Old Masters and thus had a somewhat eclectic approach of his own.[600] He drew inspiration not only from Bolognese artists such as Reni but other Italian artists, including Veronese, whose *The Dream of St Helen* (National Gallery, London) served as a starting point for *Mrs Mary Robinson ('Perdita')* (Wallace Collection, London), and Northern artists such as van Dyck, whose *Virgin and Child* (Royal Collection Trust) served as an inspiration for *Mrs Susanna Hoare and Child* (Wallace Collection, London).[601] He also greatly admired Michelangelo, whom he honoured in his Fifteenth Discourse (1790): 'I should desire that the last words which I should pronounce in this Academy, and from this place, might be the name of – MICHAEL ANGELO.'[602] Reynolds was not the only Academician to praise the Carracci School's practice in this way. In *Letter to the Dilettanti Society* (1799), Barry described 'the manly plan of art pursued by the Carracches, and their schools of Bologna, in uniting the perfections of all the other schools, of which there remains a masterly, elegant record, in a beautiful little poem of Agostino.'[603] In 1783, Barry himself had been praised for an eclectic approach towards painting by Edward Augustus Stratford, 2nd Earl of Aldeborough (1736–1801).[604] In a similar fashion, Dallaway praised the

[598] Sir Joshua Reynolds, Sixth Discourse, Royal Academy, 10 December 1774. Cit. Reynolds, *Discourses* (1997), 107-08.
[599] Sir Joshua Reynolds, Second Discourse, Royal Academy, 11 December 1769. Cit. Reynolds, *Discourses* (1997), 30.
[600] For Reynolds's borrowings, see Davis, 'Interacting with Masters' (2015), and Prochino, 'Reynolds and Bolognese Art' (1992).
[601] See Davis and Hallett, *Reynolds* (2015), 156-63, 186-89, Nos. 11, 12, 19.
[602] Sir Joshua Reynolds, Fifteenth Discourse, Royal Academy, 10 December 1790. Cit. Reynolds, *Discourses* (1997), 282.
[603] Barry, *Letter to Dilettanti Society* (1799), 61.
[604] Edward Augustus Stratford, 2nd Earl of Aldeborough to James Barry, 26 May 1783. In Barry, *Works* (1809), Vol. 1, 272.

Carracci School's method in 1800, finding that they 'acquired a composition of what is excellent and beautiful from the other schools, by a learned selection.'[605]

In contrast, Fuseli's stance is decidedly critical. Sir Denis Mahon credits Fuseli with being the first to associate 'eclecticism' with the Carracci School in English and 'the first to wax sarcastic' about the absurdity of Agostino Carracci's sonnet.[606] The style of 'imitators' had previously been applied to Bolognese art by the German art historian Johann Joachim Winckelmann (1717–1768) in *Abhandlung von der Faehigkeit der Empfindung des Schoenen in der Kunst, und dem Unterrichte in derselben* (1763) and *Geschichte der Kunst des Alterthums* (1764).[607] Winckelmann admired Reni for his grace and praised the Carracci School for 'reopening eyes' when art fell into 'a great barbarism' following Raphael and Michelangelo.[608] However, he condemned eclecticism, using the Greek 'eklektikos', arguing that it 'cramps the spirit' and 'the imitator has always remained inferior to the imitated.' For Winckelmann, 'just as *eklektikoi* are regarded only as copyists from philosophers of particular schools of thought and have produced little or nothing original, so in art, if one chose the same path, nothing whole, distinctive, or harmonious was to be expected.' Considering imitators timid and lacking in originality, he concluded: 'the good is often lost in the artificial, because one always wants something better.'[609] Fuseli was familiar with Winckelmann; his first published work was a translation of *Gedanken über die Nachahmung der griechischen Werke in der Malerei und Bildhauerkunst* (1755).[610] He deemed eclecticism a fundamentally negative quality in the Carracci School's practice.[611] Over the course of the nineteenth century, eclecticism would become critical as a form of censure against Reni and his compatriots and Fuseli's argument was paramount in turning the tide of public opinion.

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[605] Dallaway, *Anecdotes* (1800), 489.
[606] Mahon, *Studies* (1971), 216.
[607] Winckelmann, *Abhandlung* (1763), 26; Winckelmann, *History* (2006), 244.
[608] Winckelmann, *History* (2006), 234, 321-22.
[609] Winckelmann, *History* (2006), 238.
[610] Fuseli, *Reflections* (1765).
[611] See Neville, 'Winckelmann's Eclecticism' (2018).

In his Second Lecture (1801), Fuseli deemed the practice of the Carracci School – 'that eclectic school' – a failure, resulting in the irreconcilable union of different styles: 'as the mechanic part was their only object, they did not perceive that the projected union was incompatible with the leading principle of each master.'[612] For Fuseli, the mixture of different qualities led to incoherence and a dilution of strengths. His condemnation of the Carracci School in this respect, together with his employment of the term 'eclectic', heralded a new era in the critique of Bolognese painting in Britain. The term would soon be used to insinuate that the Carracci School were mediocre imitators of great artists who aimed for ideal perfection by utilising the skills of others, themselves lacking individual genius, spontaneity, and inspiration. Fuseli's association with this charge was widely recognised. In his Third Lecture (1807), Opie referred to Fuseli's disapproval of eclecticism as 'absurd, visionary, and impracticable' and claimed that 'such eminent critics… have failed to convince me that the attempt to reconcile them was ill-judged, and tended, directly or indirectly, to mediocrity and the extinction of character.[613] In 1823, the writer Isaac d'Israeli (1766–1848) stated: 'The curious reader of taste may refer to Mr. Fuseli's Second Lecture for a *diatribe* against what he calls 'the Eclectic School.'"[614]

By 1827, the critique became prevalent, with different factions forming. Phillips stated in his Third Lecture (1827): 'The principle upon which the Caracci proceeded, was an attempt to combine the excellences of the three great schools we have contemplated: a principle which has been productive of much diversity of opinion among men of powerful talent.' He himself considered the practice unsuccessful, the Carracci School producing 'an artificial, and not a natural combination of their chosen qualities; to answer some given purpose, perhaps, too subtle for fine painting, and adverse to the union they proposed to themselves to form.'[615] However, in his Ninth Lecture (1829), Phillips was more circumspect, finding the attempt not contemptible, only the execution. If

[612] Henry Fuseli, Second Lecture, Royal Academy, 23 March 1801. Cit. Knowles, *Fuseli* (1831), Vol. 2, 107.
[613] John Opie, Third Lecture, Royal Academy, 2 March 1807. Cit. Opie, 'Lectures' (1832), 42.
[614] D'Israeli, *Curiosities* (1823), Vol. 1, 44. See Mahon, *Studies* (1947), 217.
[615] Thomas Phillips, Third Lecture, Royal Academy, 1827. In Phillips, *Lectures* (1833), 125-27.

successful, he felt that 'the union of the beauty of those natural truths, on the representation of which those different schools are founded' would be 'a manifest extension of the power and the excellence of art.'[616]

That eclecticism was viewed negatively in this period is striking since artistic borrowings and visual echoes were such a prominent feature of British eighteenth-century artistic practice. It is possible that Fuseli, in criticising the practice, was trying to step away from a Reynoldsian aesthetic. Furthermore, this sort of criticism did not occur in isolation; it was related to Romanticism's broader burgeoning interest in originality, artistic genius, and emotion in painting, deemed to be exemplified by Michelangelo.[617] This was encouraged by Edward Young's (c. 1683–1765) *Conjectures on Original Composition* (1759), epitomised in the art of Fuseli, and extolled by Northcote in 1807: 'A true criterion of talent is alone to be formed from the novelty, the originality, which is to be found in any work of art.'[618]

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The late eighteenth and early nineteenth century heralded changes in art criticism which significantly altered Reni's reputation. The Academicians evidently had a considerable role to play in this. Whilst there remained many favourable reviews of Reni, criticism of the artist and the Carracci school began to accumulate. This was multifaceted in nature and generated significant attention, drawing on existing critiques from the eighteenth century and gaining momentum as the century progressed. The use of derogatory terms such as 'affectation' and 'eclecticism' in relation to Reni became increasingly prevalent, significantly altering the familiar attributes for which he was once celebrated. This seismic shift in the perception of Reni has been vastly underestimated; in particular, the role of Fuseli has been downplayed. However, Reni's reputation was sullied but not blackened at this time. For several Academicians, Reni remained a highly

[616] Thomas Philipps, Ninth Lecture, Royal Academy, 1829. In Phillips, *Lectures* (1833), 407-08.
[617] See Monk, *Sublime* (1960), 188-93, 235-36.
[618] Johann Kaspar Lavater to Johann Gottfried Herder, 4 and 16 February 1774: 'the most original genius I know.' Cit. Myrone, *Fuseli* (2001), 22. Northcote, 'On Originality' (1807), 2-4.

respected artist. This was rather a period of transformation, with a strong divergence of opinion beginning to form.

The Reception of Guido Reni in Britain 1789–1840

‘The last century, ugly and uninteresting as it may look to our present more fastidious eyes, was essentially a time of recovery. Great affectation and odious taste there was to be sure’

Lady Elizabeth Eastlake, 1854.[619]

At the turn of the nineteenth century, Reni’s works were variously praised and denigrated by a wide range of individuals. Over the course of the century, criticism increased as Reni became not only maligned but actively reviled for qualities which had been previously exalted. This was encouraged by increased opportunities to engage with his works in Britain and on the Continent. Whilst Reni largely remained a popular artist between 1789 and 1840, it is possible to glimpse telling signs that an extreme fall from grace was imminent.

The Art Market

The outbreak of the French Revolution (1789–99) heralded a period of great instability in the European art market, with countless paintings removed from Italy to France, the first convoy arriving in 1798. The resultant insecurity felt by Italian property-holders led to a change in supply that was advantageous for astute British collectors and dealers who gained unparalleled opportunities to acquire previously unattainable paintings at affordable prices. The most important influx of paintings into Britain, comprising over 500 works, came from the collection of Philippe II, Duke of Orléans (1674–1723). The French and Italian pictures, constituting 295 works, were purchased in 1798 by a syndicate of collectors: Francis Egerton, 3rd Duke of Bridgewater (1736–1803); George Granville Leveson-Gower, later 1st Duke of Sutherland (1758–1833); and Frederick Howard, 5th Earl of Carlisle (1748–1825). In 1798, they were

[619] Lady Elizbeth Eastlake, 1854. Cit. Steegman, *Consort of Taste* (1950), 202.

exhibited in London; whilst some were retained by the syndicate, the remainder were sold in auctions of 1798, 1800, and 1802.

The impact of the Orléans sale cannot be underestimated. In 1800, James Dallaway (1763–1834) declared: 'Every true virtuoso will rejoice in this event, which will reconcile him to the loss of the Houghton collection, and place this nation high amongst the patrons of the arts.'[620] This sentiment was shared by William Hazlitt (1778–1830), who recalled in 1821: 'it was there I formed my taste, such as it is; so that I am irreclaimably of the old school in painting… We had all heard of the names of Titian, Raphael, Guido, Domenichino, the Caracci – but to see them face to face, to be in the same room with their deathless productions, was like breaking some mighty spell – was almost an effect of necromancy!'[621] The Scottish dealer William Buchanan (1777–1864) likewise proclaimed: 'the interest which this famous collection had excited was great beyond any thing which had preceded it… The whole pictures of the Bolognese school were engaged in an incalculably short time.'[622] The Orléans collection contained 16 paintings by Reni – 13 listed in the catalogue and three left unsold. Whilst paintings by Annibale Carracci, Poussin, Raphael, and Titian each achieved over £1,000, Reni's paintings were still highly desirable. Among the most valuable were: *St Mary Magdalene* (National Gallery, London), sold to Henry Hope (1735–1811) for £400; *The Infant Christ sleeping on the Cross* (The Art Museum, Princeton), sold to Bridgewater for £300; and *The Sibyl* (Spencer Museum of Art, University of Kansas), sold to George Hibbert (1757–1837) for £350. The variety of purchasers, including aristocrats and middle-class businessmen, demonstrates the breadth of Reni's appeal.

Sales such as Orléans demonstrate the great quantity of Italian Old Masters entering Britain at the turn of the century. As Francis Haskell suggests, their availability had a 'retrograde' impact on English taste, encouraging collectors to adhere to the established preferences of the previous century.[623] However, with

[620] Dallaway, *Anecdotes* (1800), 517-18.
[621] William Hazlitt, 'On the Pleasures of Painting.' In Hazlitt, *Table Talk* (1821), Vol. 1, 26-7.
[622] Buchanan, *Memoirs* (1824), Vol. 1, 20.
[623] Haskell, *Rediscoveries* (1980), 44.

the onset of the Napoleonic Wars in 1803, such prospects of buying and selling art swiftly reduced. By this time, many reputable Italian paintings had already been relinquished and the high costs of war hindered collecting. From 1805 to 1815, the market for Old Masters was uncertain and precarious. As collectors focused upon celebrated artists, the market abounded in false attributions and copies.[624] This led to a deterioration in the market which is manifest in letters written between Buchanan and the Scottish painter and dealer James Irvine (1757–1831). Both men had strong personal taste and worked in partnership in 1799–1814, importing paintings into Britain in a large-scale operation. Their correspondence provides unique insight into the activities of dealers and nature of speculation on the market in the early nineteenth century, including paintings by Reni which were perceived to have resale value.

William Buchanan and James Irvine

In 1802, Irvine hinted at a shift in the Italian market, stating, 'the time is now past when all would have sold but could find no buyers.'[625] In 1803 and 1805, Buchanan similarly commented that 'the taste for buying pictures [was] blowing over' in Britain and 'never was there a worse time than the present for a Speculation of the kind in this Country.'[626] He further complained, 'this country is so glutted with pictures now, and there are so very few purchasers, that things only which will make a noise are now looked at – and these find their way into the old Collections by pushing out others to make room for themselves.'[627] Buchanan and Irvine frequently identified paintings and painters appropriate for speculation, revealing much about perceived taste in Britain at this time. Gavin Hamilton (1723–1798) was a precursor for this type of assessment, identifying the four most sought-after artists in England in 1791 as Reni, Poussin, Salvator Rosa, and Claude Lorraine.[628] A similar taste prevailed a decade later, even when

[624] See Pomeroy, 'Arbiters of Taste' (2002), 264.
[625] James Irvine to William Buchanan, 21 September 1802. Cit. Buchanan, *Memoirs* (1824), Vol. 2, 100.
[626] William Buchanan to James Irvine, 6 August 1803, 11 August 1805. Cit. Brigstocke, *Buchanan* (1982), 102, 363.
[627] William Buchanan to James Irvine, 30 April 1805. Cit. Brigstocke, *Buchanan* (1982), 396.
[628] Gavin Hamilton to Giovanni Maria Sasso, 5 August 1791. Biblioteca del Seminario

the market had dipped. In 1803, Buchanan identified the 'flowing and mellow-toned pictures' of Reni, Titian, van Dyck, and the Carracci, as well as paintings with 'bravura of light' such as Rubens's landscapes and Reni's *Lot and his Daughters* (National Gallery, London).[629] A few days later, he similarly identified Reni, Titian, Rubens, van Dyck, the Carracci, Leonardo da Vinci, Domenichino, Murillo, and Albani.[630] Irvine, who formed a list the same year, disregarded Reni, finding that taste lay 'more in the Landscapes of Claude, the Poussins, Titian, Rubens, and Salvator Rosa, than in Historical Compositions.'[631] Buchanan again recommended Reni's 'fine coloured pictures' in 1805, together with works by Claude Lorraine, Titian, Rubens, van Dyck, Domenichino, Annibale Carracci, Velazquez, Murillo, Poussin, Gaspar Poussin, and Salvator Rosa.[632]

Nevertheless, the mere identity of an artist did not secure a sale in Britain; Buchanan also stressed the importance of quality and rarity: 'The English now seem to be governed entirely by the Vanity of possessing Capital works of Art of a few favourite Masters, and the pictures of these Masters at their best time – pictures too which have made a noise in the world or were well known in the Collections to which they belonged.'[633] In 1805, Buchanan argued that pictures should be of an artist's 'best time and manner and the subject unobjectionable.' With respect to Reni, 'when Guidos and Annibal Carracis are really fine, they are sure Cards, but if only of a secondary rank they become very unsafe objects to speculate on.'[634] Size, subject matter, and colouring were also crucial in ascertaining value: 'very large and dark pictures for this Country never will do.'[635] Gloomy and 'disagreeable subjects' were unpopular while religious and

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Patriarcale, Venice, 1144.14.70. Cit. Cassidy, *Hamilton* (2011), Vol. 2, 151.

[629] William Buchanan to James Irvine, 3 June 1803. Cit. Brigstocke, *Buchanan* (1982), 78.

[630] William Buchanan to James Irvine, 6 June 1803. Cit. Brigstocke, *Buchanan* (1982), 82.

[631] James Irvine to William Buchanan, 23 July 1803. Cit. Brigstocke, 'Irvine' (2012), 255.

[632] William Buchanan to James Irvine, 30 April 1805. Cit. Brigstocke, *Buchanan* (1982), 394. See also William Buchanan to James Irvine, 18 October 1805. Cit. Brigstocke, *Buchanan* (1982), 437.

[633] William Buchanan to James Irvine, 6 June 1803. Cit. Brigstocke, *Buchanan* (1982), 82.

[634] William Buchanan to James Irvine, 30 April 1805. Cit. Brigstocke, *Buchanan* (1982), 393-94.

[635] William Buchanan to James Irvine, 31 May 1805. Cit. Brigstocke, *Buchanan* (1982), 403.

mythological works, such as 'Young St. Johns, Virgins and Childs – Venus and Cupids, and pleasing Compositions,' were preferable.[636]

For Irvine, Reni's paintings were challenging, particularly those of his 'first manner'. In 1803, he described a sketch of *The Trinity* (Santissima Trinità dei Pellegrini, Rome) as 'finely executed, but perhaps you may object to the subject and the sombre colour. But where are better to be got, when Guido, and such as Guido, are in question?'[637] In a further letter, he revealed substantial concerns about Reni, arguing: 'many of his finest works are not remarkable for striking effect, which is all they look for or understand in England.' He associated Reni with '*sleight of hand*' and declared: 'Guido may astonish for a while, but does not go deep; but Raphael is like a philosopher, who will not mislead the judgment in order to gain general applause, but contents himself with addressing the hearts of the few who have feeling to relish him.'[638] In 1804, Irvine offered 3,000 crowns (£750) for a Reni which he later gave up as 'though fine, is too high, and rather black and gloomy, that is, has too much of the chiaro-scuro, and wants colour.'[639] Buchanan was generally more positive, although he too had concerns. In 1804, he stated: 'Some of Guido's finest pictures indeed are painted in a very slight manner and that manner I do not dislike myself where elegance makes up for finishing – but I have observed that the English people in general, indeed I may almost say all, are partial to pictures which are strongly impasted when of the Italian School.'[640] In general, he felt that Reni's best works remained in Italy: 'very few Collections in England possess very fine Guidos.'[641]

Two important works to enter Britain through Buchanan and Irvine are Reni's *Lot and His Daughters* and *Susannah and the Elders* (Figs. 39-40; both National

[636] William Buchanan to James Irvine, 6 June 1803. Cit. Brigstocke, *Buchanan* (1982), 82-3.
[637] James Irvine to William Buchanan, 30 April 1803. Cit. Buchanan, *Memoirs* (1824), Vol. 2, 128-31.
[638] James Irvine to William Buchanan, 25 June 1803. Cit. Buchanan, *Memoirs* (1824), Vol. 2, 141-42.
[639] James Irvine to William Buchanan, 30 June 1804. Cit. Buchanan, *Memoirs* (1824), Vol. 2, 154.
[640] William Buchanan to James Irvine, 25 February 1804. Cit. Brigstocke, *Buchanan* (1982), 150.
[641] William Buchanan to James Irvine, 8 May 1804. Cit. Brigstocke, *Buchanan* (1982), 307.

Gallery, London).[642] In 1801, Irvine described them as 'pictures that merit particular attention' in Palazzo Lancelotti, Rome. *Lot and his Daughters* was valued at 4,000 crowns (£1,000) and *Susannah and the Elders* at 5,000 crowns (£1,250). Irvine hoped to obtain them for 'little more than half the estimation,' believing that 'in England the two Guidos ought to fetch about £1500 each, if not more, should they turn out well on a close inspection.'[643] By November 1802, the pictures were purchased for Arthur Champernowne (1767–1819) and arrived in Britain in 1803.[644] Irvine indicated that Sir Richard Worsley, 7th Baronet (1751–1805) had also offered £2,000 for *Lot and his Daughters.*[645] In August 1803, Champernowne exchanged *Lot and his Daughters* for Rubens's *Rainbow Landscape* (National Gallery, London), belonging to Buchanan. However, he soon bought back Reni's picture. In 1805–06, he offered Reni's pictures at Henry Tresham's Gallery, London, complaining afterwards that 'there was not a farthing offered for them.'[646] Their provenance is then unclear.

In 1806, Champernowne indicated that he was asked to exhibit *Lot and his Daughters* at the British Institution, London.[647] However, there is some indication that by then the pictures belonged to William Petty, 1st Marquess of Lansdowne (1735–1805).[648] Certainly, by 1812, both were in the possession of Andrew James Cochrane-Johnson (1767–1833), under whose ownership *Lot and his Daughters* appeared in the British Gallery of Pictures (1812), where it was praised as 'admirable,' 'a specimen of the feeling and taste of Guido, and of the

[642] *Lot and his Daughters* was included in Hamilton, *Schola Italica Picturae* (1773), Pl. 36.
[643] James Irvine to Alexander Gordon, 28 March 1801. Cit. Buchanan, *Memoirs* (1824), Vol. 2, 86-7.
[644] Cit. Brigstocke, 'Irvine' (2012), 463. See Brigstocke, *Buchanan* (1982), 50.
[645] James Irvine to George Cumberland, 13 August 1803. Cit. Brigstocke, 'Irvine' (2012), 254.
[646] Arthur Champernowne to James Irvine, postmarked 22 July 1805. Cit. Brigstocke, 'Irvine' (2012), 419.
[647] Arthur Champernowne to James Irvine, 13 August 1806. Cit. Brigstocke, 'Irvine' (2012), 426.
[648] A *Lot and his Daughters* appears in the Marquess of Lansdowne's sale, Coxe, 19 March 1806, Lot 9 as 'Italian', sold for £2.15. In 1809, Henry Bone produced a drawing of *Susannah and the Elders* for an enamel copy for the Marquess of Lansdowne, as well as *Lot & His Daughters* in 1810. The Lansdowne provenance for *Lot and his Daughters* is listed in British Gallery of Pictures (1812) and Penrice's sale, Christie's, 6 July 1844. Buchanan indicated to National Gallery Trustees that *Susannah and the Elders* belonged to the Marquess of Lansdowne (National Gallery Archive, London, NG1, Vol. 1, 264: Board Minutes, 4 August 1845).

perfection to which he carried the executive departments of his art.'[649] In 1812, the pictures were offered at Hermon's, where they were bought in, *Lot and his Daughters* (Lot 24) for £913.10 and *Susannah and the Elders* (Lot 26) for £1,071. They were again described superlatively as 'ever esteemed in Rome as the finest efforts of his pencil,' the former a 'very grand chef d'œuvre.'[650] By 1813, they belonged to Thomas Penrice (1757–1816) of Great Yarmouth, Norfolk.[651] In 1829, John Chambers (1780–1839) identified them in Penrice's Dining Room, noting that a duplicate of *Susannah and the Elders* was sold to 'Mr. Willett' for 4,000 guineas (£4,200). Penrice had apparently spent 1,000 guineas (£1,050) on the pair and exchanged *Lot and his Daughters* for a picture worth 1,500 guineas (£1,575).[652] The works subsequently passed to Penrice's son and were offered for sale in 1844. As we shall see, the National Gallery's decision to acquire the paintings was a critical moment for Reni's reputation in Britain.

Following the Napoleonic Wars, the market for Italian Old Masters in Britain remained unpredictable, deteriorating in the 1830s. Such trouble was indicated by the auctioneer George Stanley (fl. 1835) in 1835: 'all has been stale, flat, and unprofitable this season, more so than ordinary.'[653] This was due to several socio-economic factors, including deflation, the Corn Laws (1815–46), the Great Reform Act (1832), and the growth of the Chartist movement from 1836.[654] Moreover, collectors, increasingly from a broad social milieu, sought alternative genres of art. In 1859, Austen Henry Layard (1817–1894) argued for a representative National Gallery in Britain. Noting the rise of interests beyond the Carracci School, he declared: 'Within the last 25 years how great has been the change in the estimation of pictures!'[655] Three aspects of this shift are considered here.

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[649] *British Gallery* (1812), 5, No. 17.
[650] Sale Cat. Johnstone (1812), Lots 24, 23.
[651] In 1818, William Young Ottley (1771–1836) and Peltro William Tomkins (1759–1840) published an engraving of *Lot and his Daughters* dated 1 November 1813 which establishes a *terminus ante quem* for the Penrice ownership.
[652] Chambers, *Norfolk* (1829), 305.
[653] George Stanley, 1835. Cit. Armstrong-Totten, 'Smith' (2013), 87.
[654] See Reitlinger, *Economics of Taste* (1982), Vol. 1, xiv, 108-10.
[655] Austen Henry Layard, 1859. Cit. Steegman, *Consort of Taste* (1950), 240.

The Northern School

In mid-eighteenth-century Britain, there emerged a renewed appreciation for the Northern School; in Johann Zoffany's (1733–1810) 1769 *Sir Lawrence Dundas (1710–1781) and His Grandson in the Pillar Room at 19 Arlington Street* (Aske Hall, The Marquess of Zetland), the collector is shown surrounded by such paintings.[656] By the early nineteenth century, this taste became widespread, as Buchanan explained in 1824: 'These were much more easily to be acquired, and came more frequently before the eyes of the public than works of the Italian masters.'[657] In 1827, Buchanan further complained that the National Gallery Committee had 'very little knowledge of the Italian Masters' since 'their taste has all been corrupted by the fashion of the present day in this Country which runs altogether, for the high finished pictures of the Flemish and Dutch Schools.' For Buchanan, 'this is no doubt a most corrupt and perverted taste, but in this Country every thing is swayed by the Court and the fashion of the Times, and the finest things of the Italian School have been displaced in many Collections, to make way for a Rubens, a Teniers, an Ostade, a Vanderveldt. – And from this cause England is losing many of her finest pictures.'[658]

George IV (1762–1830) was a major influence on the growing popularity of the Northern School, acquiring over 100 works by 1813.[659] In 1826 and 1827, his collection was exhibited at the British Institution and viewed by a wide audience.[660] Buchanan complained about the King's influence, stating: 'There is no controuling of public taste while it takes a particular sway; time, and circumstances only, will correct it – the efforts of a few humble individuals are altogether useless when opposed to those who surround the Throne.'[661]

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[656] Dundas also owned pictures by Reni: *Head of St Peter* and *Cupid Sleeping* (present whereabouts of both unknown) were sold at his posthumous sale, Greenwood, 29–31 May 1794, 2nd Day, Lot 30, 3rd Day, Lot 30. The latter is described in the catalogue as 'the acknowledged chef d'œuvre of this excellent master.' See Sale Cat. Dundas (1794).

[657] Buchanan, *Memoirs* (1824), Vol. 1, 22.

[658] William Buchanan to Monsieur G. de Gillis, 9 July 1827. National Gallery Archive. Copy in 'William Buchanan' Collector File, Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles.

[659] See Heard and Jones, *George IV* (2019).

[660] See Sarsfield Taylor, *Fine Arts* (1841), Vol. 2, 230-31, 233.

[661] William Buchanan to Monsieur de Gillis, 30 August 1827. National Gallery Archive. Copy in 'William Buchanan' Collector File, Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles.

Conversely, in 1835, Gustav Friedrich Waagen (1794–1868) praised George for his 'great predilection,' suggesting that his 'choice collection of the rarest and most excellent pictures of this kind in England' should be incorporated into the National Gallery.[662]

'Early Masters'

A parallel burgeoning interest in this period was 'Early Masters', Renaissance painting predating Raphael. At first, this was confined to select individuals, including Charles Greville (1749–1809), William Young Ottley (1771–1836), Walter Davenport Bromley (1787–1863), and Thomas Gambier Parry (1816–1888). However, such interest swiftly broadened, reaching its apex in the 1840s with the influence of John Ruskin (1819–1900) and Alexander William, Lord Lindsay, later 25th Earl of Crawford (1812–1880). It was also encouraged by the sale of Cardinal Joseph Fesch's (1763–1839) collection in 1844 and the British Institution's Early Renaissance exhibition in 1848. In an 1828 review of Luigi Lanzi's (1732–1810) *Storia Pittorica dell'Italia* (1792; 1796), British artists were encouraged to discover, study, and copy 'Early Masters' since 'there is much both of absolute beauty and of technical excellence in those early productions.'[663] Furthermore, as eighteenth-century art connoisseurship was replaced by art-historical scholarship, collectors assembled artworks as historical specimens rather than objects of particular note or beauty.[664] Ottley, for instance, procured a drawing of almost every significant Italian artist from the fifteenth to the eighteenth century.[665]

In 1859, Joseph Beavington Atkinson (1822–1886) acknowledged the sense of nostalgia 'Early Masters' inculcated following the Industrial Revolution. His text centres on the Arundel Society, founded in 1848 to promote 'Early Masters' and provide cheap reproductions for the general public.[666] Describing how the

[662] Waagen, *Works* (1838), Vol. 2, 348, 377.
[663] Anon., 'Art IV. – History of Painting' (1828), 66, 72.
[664] See Laing, 'Seguier' (1998), 107.
[665] See Allan Gere, 'Ottley' (1953).
[666] See Cooper, 'Popularization' (1978).

Society transported its members to an earlier time, Atkinson declared: 'In the noise and conflict of city life, in the midst of an art and an epoch wholly material and mechanical, it is salutary and refreshing to be taken back to men and times with whom we have so little in common.'[667]

Contemporary Art

The third interest which developed at this time was that of contemporary British painting. This was particularly popular among the newly enfranchised and empowered middle classes who saw such works as safe and accessible investments. Such men did not embark on the Grand Tour, inherit collections, or follow the traditional taste of the establishment, but formed new collections from scratch, relying on their own judgment and an emergent group of dealers. Newly wealthy after the Napoleonic Wars and with opportunities to acquire art after the Reform Bill (1832), such men formed collections swiftly and affordably.[668] Requiring pictures that were familiar, pleasing, and genuine – much in line with Buchanan and Irvine's specifications – they also desired works of a suitable scale for their rooms, and thus sought smaller pictures than the grand historical paintings of eighteenth-century collectors.[669] In 1866, Richard (1804–1888) and Samuel Redgrave (1802–1876) observed: 'pictures to suit the English taste must be pictures to live by; pictures to hang on the walls of that home in which the Englishman spends more of his time than do the men of other nations, and loves to see cheerful and decorative. His rooms are comparatively small, and he cannot spare much wall space for a single picture.'[670]

By the 1830s, middle-class patrons were key figures in the market; their role in promoting contemporary art was hailed in 1881 by the critic and Pre-Raphaelite Frederic George Stephens (1827–1907): 'The so-called middle-class of England has been that which has done the most for English art. While its social superiors

[667] Atkinson, 'Arundel Society' (1859), 309.
[668] See Sachko-Macleod, 'Victorian Middle-Class Taste' (1987), 328-49, and Editorial, 'Middle-Class Collector,' (1905), 173-74.
[669] Sachko-Macleod, 'Victorian Middle-Class Taste' (1987), 329.
[670] Redgrave and Redgrave, *Century of British Painters* (1866), Vol. 2, 214. Cit. Sachko Macleod, 'Victorian Middle-Class Taste' (1987), 334-35.

'praised' Pietro Perugino, neglected Turner, let Wilson starve, and gave as much for a Gaspar Poussin as for a Raphael, the merchant princes bought of Turner, William Hunt, Holman Hunt, and Rossetti.'[671] They were encouraged by the leading periodical of the age: *The Art-Union* (*The Art-Journal* from 1848), founded in 1839 by Samuel Carter Hall (1800–1889). In 1843, this taste became widespread with the publication of Ruskin's *Modern Painters*, a text explored later.

Collectors

The combination of a flat market and the rise of alternative art-historical interests contributed to a difficult period for buying and selling traditionally esteemed Italian Old Masters. However, paintings by Reni continued to circulate. In 1896, Charles Locke Eastlake (1836–1906) remarked that 'in the last century it is probable that no picture gallery of note would have been considered complete which did not include some examples of his brush.'[672] In the 1822 catalogue for the collection of John Crichton-Stuart, 2nd Marquess of Bute (1793–1848) at Luton Hoo, Bedfordshire, Reni's continued great standing was indicated. Discussing Reni's *Venus and Cupid* (present whereabouts unknown), displayed prominently in the Saloon, the writer stated: 'All the excellencies of painting were united in his superior genius: the tender, the pathetic, the devote were those in which he excelled – the heads of his figures are accounted not inferior to Raphael – his Draperies are elegant without stiffness or affectation, his colouring is astonishing, clear and pure and he is ranked among the first and best artists of any age.'[673] In this section, four socially diverse collectors who acquired works by Reni are considered.[674]

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[671] Stephens, 'English Painters' (1871), 38.

[672] Eastlake, *National Gallery* (1896), 98.

[673] Luton-Hoo Catalogue Raisonne, L'usage del Amateur, 1822. Copied from an MS in the possession of the Marquess of Bute at Mount Stuart House, 1949. Copy in 'Marquess of Bute' Collector File, Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles.

[674] Other collectors who acquired works by Reni include: William Beckford (1760–1844), who offered *Lucretia* (present whereabouts unknown) at Christie's, 27 February 1802; Dawson Turner (1775–1858), who included Reni's *Virgin with the Infant Christ and St John* (present whereabouts unknown) in Turner, *Outlines* (1840), 35-6; and John Bligh, 4th Earl of Darnley (1767–1831) – in Neale, *Views of Seats* (1819), Vol.2, sixteen pictures associated with Reni were

Walsh Porter

Walsh Porter (d. 1809) was an art dealer who served as advisor to George IV when he was Prince of Wales. Porter frequently travelled overseas and spent vast sums on paintings. Until 1805, he kept his collection at his home in Argyll Street, London, described by James Northcote (1746–1831) as 'the mansion of crimson and gold.'[675] In 1805, he purchased and remodelled Craven Cottage, Fulham. Utilising the *cottage orné* style of architecture, Porter created a theatrical dwelling, each room designed in a different fashion, one a lion's den, another a robber's cave.[676] On 22–3 March 1803, Porter sold 103 pictures for £8,553 at Christie's in 'unquestionably the great picture sale' of the year.[677] Two minor works (Lots 16 and 23) were Giovanni Francesco Romanelli's (1610–1662) copy of Reni's *The Rape of Deïanira* (Musée du Louvre, Paris), sold for £8.80 to 'Judwine', and Reni's *The Death of Cleopatra* (present whereabouts of both unknown), bought in for £24.40.

After Porter's death, much of his remaining collection was auctioned at Christie's on 14 April 1810. This included two distinguished works by Reni (Lots 14 and 39), both of which had been previously offered on 12 March 1810 (Lots 6 and 15). The first, *St Apollonia bound to a Column* (present whereabouts unknown), was described as 'highly finished, and brilliantly coloured in a silvery tone, and… of Guido's finest time.'[678] At the Orléans sale (1798), it was sold for 350 guineas (£367.10) to 'Troward'. At Porter's sale, it was sold for 346 guineas (£363.6) to 'Parson' and later belonged to George Watson-Taylor (1771–1841) of Erlestoke Park, Wiltshire. At Watson-Taylor's sale in 1823, it was sold for 420 guineas (£441) to Count Semyon Romanovich Worontsow (1744–1832).[679] The second painting, *St Jerome and an Angel* (Fig. 41; Detroit Institute of Art, Michigan), was described as 'a very grand chef d'œuvre of Guido: the handling

listed at Darnley's residence at Cobham Hall, Kent. His *Salome with the Head of John the Baptist* (Art Institute of Chicago) was engraved by Jacob Frey (1681–1752) in 1745. His *Self-Portrait* is now in Collezione Lodi, Campione d'Italia.

[675] Cit. Pyne, 'Wilkie and Friends' (1841), 444.

[676] Thorne, *Handbook* (1876), Vol. 1, 223.

[677] Roberts, *Memorials of Christie's* (1897), Vol. 1, 66.

[678] Sale Cat. Porter (1810), Lot 14.

[679] The painting was sold at Christie's, New York, 28 January 2015.

is particularly bold and masterly, the lights clear – the colouring of a fine silvery tone.'[680] It had been previously displayed at Palazzo Balbi, Genoa, before being imported into Britain by the Scottish artist and dealer Andrew Wilson (c. 1775–1848) in 1804. At Porter's sale, it was sold to 'Goddard' for £640.10, later belonging to Edmund Higginson (fl. 1834) of Saltmarshe, Herefordshire, and John Rushout, 2nd Baron Northwick (1770–1859) of Thirlestane House, Cheltenham.

Porter was a notable collector with connections to the highest echelons of society. In 1810, the diarist Joseph Farington (1747–1821) dismissed his taste, reporting that the artist and dealer Sir Francis Bourgeois (1753–1811) had claimed: 'Porter had not the least real knowledge of pictures.'[681] However, in 1804, Buchanan praised Porter as 'probably more than an echo of general taste and opinion than any other person I could at present hit on.'[682] In 1824, he indicated that Porter had intended his collection to pass to George IV as the foundation for a National Gallery.[683] As such, his works by Reni demonstrate the high regard in which he held the artist.

Sir Thomas Baring

Sir Thomas Baring (1772–1848) was a member of the wool-merchant family of Stratton Park, Hampshire, and Barings Bank. This dynasty was so renowned by 1818 that Armand-Emmanuel du Plessis (1766–1822), Prime Minister of France, remarked: 'There are six great powers in Europe: England, France, Prussia, Austria, Russia and the Baring Brothers.'[684] Baring's father Francis (1740–1810) was renowned for his interest in contemporary British painting and the Northern School. In both his profession and predilections, Francis epitomised the new type of collector that emerged in this period. However, after Francis's death, Baring readjusted the collection to align more closely with his own traditional taste. In

[680] Sale Cat. Porter (1810), Lot 39.
[681] Farington, *Diary* (1923), 26, 12–6 March 1810.
[682] William Buchanan to James Irvine, 18 December 1804. Cit. Brigstocke, *Buchanan* (1982), 354.
[683] Buchanan, *Memoirs* (1824), Vol. 2, 116.
[684] Cit. Wheatley, *Round about Piccadilly* (1870), 32.

1810, he sold 86 Northern School paintings to George IV, replacing them with Italian and Spanish works.

On 6 February 1815, Baring acquired Reni's *Ecce Homo* (Fig. 42; The Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge) for 400 guineas (£420) at the sale of Prince Lucien Bonaparte's (1775–1840) collection at New Gallery, London. The catalogue grandly stated: 'Nothing can be more expressive and beautiful than the manner in which Guido has, with his usual grace and elegance, painted this very touching subject. The fine character of his heads, seldom inferior to those of Raffaelle, has been strongly exemplified in this most beautiful and perfect picture, which is in the purest state of preservation, and painted at Guido's best time.'[685] In his will, Baring stipulated that his collection be sold by auction, yet before the sale on 2–3 June 1848, his son Thomas (1799–1873) negotiated to keep this picture and several other works. It passed by descent until it was sold to Sigismund Goetze (1866–1939) in 1919. Baring's purchase of *Ecce Homo* is an intriguing example of how a collector could revert to traditional taste and spend a significant sum on Reni, even if his family was looking forward to new trends.

Samuel Rogers

A discriminating collector who was aware of the tides of fashion and renowned for his support of new genres was the banker and poet Samuel Rogers (1763–1855).[686] Rogers toured Italy in 1814 and 1820. As Trustee of the National Gallery and committee member for the design of the Houses of Parliament and management of the British Museum, Rogers significantly influenced English taste. In 1877, the poet Bryan Waller Proctor (1787–1874) declared that he had never known 'any residence so tastefully fitted up and decorated' as Rogers's home at St James's Place, London.[687] The painter Charles Robert Leslie (1794–1859) likewise commented that Rogers 'deserves to hold the highest place among men of taste.' He noted how his collection 'was entirely formed of

[685] Sale Cat. Buonaparte (1815), Lot 27.
[686] See Weeks, 'Rogers' (1947).
[687] Waller Procter, *Autobiographical Fragment* (1877), 148.

himself' (rather than under the direction of dealers) and argued: 'The proof of his superior judgement to that of any contemporary collector of art and *vertû* is to be found in the fact that there was nothing in his house that was not valuable.[688] In 1865, John Timbs (1801–1875) recalled the variety of Rogers's collection, noting how 'paintings by Titian, Guido, Rubens, Claude, Raphael, and English artists, covered the walls. Every school, Italian and Spanish, had the representative.'[689]

Following Rogers's death, the majority of his collection was sold at Christie's on 28 April 1856. Of 224 pictures, nearly a third (67) were of the modern British school. The sale included a school copy of Reni's *Lucretia* (Lot 542) and a set of etchings by Reni and the Carracci (Lot 1545) (present whereabouts of both unknown). The most valuable Reni, *Ecce Homo*, was left in Rogers's will to the National Gallery, along with Titian's *Noli me Tangere* and Giorgione's *Man in Armour*. Rogers had acquired *Ecce Homo* for 700 guineas (£735) at Benjamin West's (1738–1820) sale on 23–4 June 1820. His affection for the picture is evident from the account of a writer in *The Leisure Hour* (1876) who recalled visiting Rogers's house as a youth and noted 'the pride with which the master of the mansion instructed him in some of the beauties of Guido's "Ecce Homo," which now, by the bequest of Rogers, enriches the National Gallery, and then hung on the left wall of the breakfast-room overlooking the Park.'[690] That Rogers, revered for his impeccable taste, singled out a work by Reni in this way indicates the artist's status at this time. The painting's later reception at the National Gallery is examined shortly.

Robert Holford

The final collector considered here is the wealthy MP Robert Holford (1808–1892). In 1839, Holford inherited the family estate of Westonbirt, Gloucestershire, and immediately acquired high-quality pictures for the residence. Holford soon amassed a large collection which he displayed at both

[688] Leslie, *Autobiographical Recollections* (1860), 155-56.
[689] Timbs, *Romance of London* (1865), Vol. 2, 421.
[690] Anon., 'Lord Macaulay' (1876), 430.

Westonbirt and Dorchester House, London, built in 1851–53. In 1854, Waagen praised Holford's collection as 'a satisfactory example of how much may be done where great wealth is combined with excellent powers of judgment.' Noting Holford's great 'catholicity of taste,' Waagen indicated that the collection contained over 100 pictures, 'including first-rate specimens of the different Italian schools, a series of chef d'œuvre of the Dutch and Flemish schools, and many excellent works of the Spanish, German, and English schools.'[691]

One of Holford's first purchases was Reni's *The Virgin and Child with the Infant St John* (North Carolina Museum of Art, Raleigh), acquired in 1839 from the dealer Samuel Woodburn (1783–1853), who had purchased it in Rome from Vincenzo Camuccini (1771–1844).[692] At an unknown date, Holford also acquired Reni's *St James the Elder* and a copy of *The Trinity* at Santissima Trinità dei Pellegrini, Rome (present whereabouts of both unknown). The latter is a distinctly Catholic work, imported into Britain in 1804 by Irvine, who criticised its sombre colour and subject matter.[693] In 1804, Buchanan suggested that the subject was 'not a very prevailing taste' in Britain and proposed Lady Lucas (fl. 1804) and Lord Suffolk (fl. 1804) as possible buyers, both 'fond of pictures of that kind' and the former 'extremely partial to Guido.'[694] Holford's ownership of *The Trinity* is thus striking and exposes him as an unusual type of collector.

These four individuals exemplify the great diversity in wealth, social outlook, and activity of collectors in the early nineteenth century. Each took an active role in developing their collections and placed great weight on owning a work by Reni, spending significant sums on his paintings. They acquired diverse works, including distinctly Catholic subjects. Consequently, despite the challenges of the time and in contrast to the foregoing generalisations, Reni evidently remained a prestigious and sought-after artist. A canonical painter, many still

[691] Waagen, *Treasures* (1854), Vol. 2, 193.
[692] Sotheby's, New York, 3 July 1991, Lot 90.
[693] James Irvine to William Buchanan, 30 April 1803. Cit. Buchanan, *Memoirs* (1824), Vol. 2, 130.
[694] William Buchanan to James Irvine, 13 March 1804. Cit. Brigstocke, *Buchanan* (1982), 180-81.

bought his works believing that a 'complete' collection should represent him. The view that the middle classes had a select and highly individual new taste can thus be refuted; the reception of Reni does not fit this model. Taste was not homogeneous in this period and differing opinions persisted.

Galleries

In the early nineteenth century, newly founded galleries became crucial players in the development of taste. These superseded the printed 'galleries' of previous periods, although they continued to be published.[695] The pictures chosen for representation in these institutions should be viewed differently to those selected by collectors; they were often marked as distinguished works, suitable for public reflection and approbation. In this section, Reni's paintings at two popular institutions are considered.[696] For many, these were Reni's most visible and familiar paintings.

Dulwich Picture Gallery

Dulwich Picture Gallery was founded in London in 1811 and opened in 1814. At its formation, it contained 453 pictures bequeathed by Sir Francis Bourgeois. The bulk of Bourgeois's collection was amassed in 1790–95, when he and the dealer Noel Desenfans (1744–1807) were commissioned to acquire paintings for Stanisław II Augustus (1732–1798), King of Poland. They focused on high-quality, fashionable, renowned masters. Accordingly, their emphasis on seventeenth-century painting is indicative of established taste at the turn of the century. After Poland's partition in 1795, Desenfans and Bourgeois retained the

[695] Reni's *St John* (belonging to Robert Grosvenor, 2nd Earl of Grosvenor (1767–1845)) was included in Forster, *British Gallery of Engravings* (1807), No. 32. Reni's *St Roch in Prison* and *The Flight of Helen* were included in Anon., *Historic Gallery* (1812), Vol. 2, Vol. 3. Reni's *Lot and his Daughters* (belonging to the Marquess of Lansdowne) was included in Tresham, Ottley, and Tomkins, *British Gallery* (1818).

[696] Reni's *Christ appearing to the Virgin* was acquired in the Orléans sale for 500 guineas (£525) and bequeathed by Richard, VII Viscount Fitzwilliam of Merrion (1745–1816) to The Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, in 1816. However, it was not attributed to Reni but Agostino Carracci and later Ludovico Carracci.

paintings and Desenfans held two mostly unsuccessful sales in 1801 and 1802. After Desenfans's death, Bourgeois added to the collection before leaving it to Dulwich College on the condition that it 'go down to Posterity for the benefit of the Public.'[697]

Seven works associated with Reni form part of Bourgeois's bequest, of which two are now considered autograph. The first, *St Sebastian* (Fig. 43), was purchased for Stanisław and described in Desenfans's 1802 sale (Lot 186) as originating from Palazzo Barberini, Rome.[698] However, as Brendan Cassidy indicates, the Barberini inventories do not reference a work of this subject by Reni. The painting may instead have derived from Francesco Pulini (fl. 1795) in Rome, in whose collection Gavin Hamilton saw a *St Sebastian* by Reni in 1795.[699] The picture did not sell in 1802 and was included in a list of works to be insured at Desenfans's residence in Charlotte Street, London, in 1804, valued at £500.[700] The second work, *St John the Baptist in the Wilderness* (Fig. 44), was not acquired for Stanisław but observed by Irvine in 1804 in Palazzo Balbi, Genoa, with Porter's *St Jerome and an Angel*. Writing to Buchanan, Irvine stated: 'The St. John and St. Jerome of Guido are almost the only pictures that are untouched, and worth about 700 guineas [£735] each.'[701] The picture was imported into Britain in 1804–07 by Andrew Wilson and acquired by Desenfans for 1,000 guineas (£1,050).[702] These pictures were marked as important works at Dulwich, placed in prominent positions at the end of the enfilade in the fifth room. Of the five other works associated with Reni, two were also purchased for Stanisław and included in the 1802 sale: *Mater Dolorosa* (Lot 35), now considered a copy, and *Europa and the Bull* (Lot 169), now attributed to Reni's

[697] Lancelot Baugh Allen, 1822. Cit. Waterfield, 'Bourgeois' (1989), 47.
[698] Desenfans, *Descriptive Catalogue* (1802), 18.
[699] Gavin Hamilton to Giovanni Maria Sasso, 28 March 1795. Biblioteca del Seminario Patriarcale, Venice, 1144.14.57. Cit. Cassidy, *Hamilton* (2011), Vol. 2, 256-57, fn. 3.
[700] 'To be insured at the Fire Insurance office the following pictures, the property of Noel [Joseph] Desenfans, esq., at his houses, nos. 38 & 39 Charlotte Street, Portland Place, London, July 6th, 1804, & supposed to be painted by the following masters and valued as under.' Cit. Warner, *Catalogue of Dulwich* (1881), 224, 226.
[701] James Irvine to William Buchanan, 12 May 1804. Cit. Buchanan, *Memoirs* (1824), Vol. 2, 151.
[702] Sparkes, *Dulwich* (1876), 75.

workshop. The final three pictures are: *Head of St Jerome*; *Lucretia*, a copy; and *St Jerome in Penitence*, now attributed to Emilian School.

In *Annals of the Fine Arts* (1816), the Royal Academician Benjamin Robert Haydon (1786–1846) included all of Reni's works among the most interesting paintings at Dulwich, only denoting *Europa and the Bull* 'a doubtful picture.'[703] He praised *St John the Baptist in the Wilderness* and *St Sebastian*, the former as 'one of the finest specimens of the master in England,' displaying 'an excellence of painting that is seldom surpassed,' and the latter as 'one of the most striking pieces of the Art, in the whole Collection.'[704] In *London Magazine* (1822), Hazlitt also described some of Reni's pictures, considering *St John the Baptist in the Wilderness* an 'extraordinary picture, but very unlike this painter's usual manner. The colour is as if the flesh had been stained all over with brick-dust.' There was 'a wildness about it which accords well with the subject, and the figure of St. John is full of grace and gusto.' He considered *St Sebastian* a 'much finer' picture, 'both as to execution and expression. The face is imbued with passion.'[705] In 1824, the journalist Peter George Patmore (1785–1855) also commented on *St Sebastian* in *British Galleries of Art*. Denoting it a 'very fine picture,' he nevertheless criticised Sebastian's 'marbly' flesh and lack of tragic expression.[706]

In the 1830s, two prominent German art historians and curators visited Dulwich and commented on the collection: Johann David Passavant (1787–1861) and Waagen.[707] Their records of tours around Britain were immensely popular; Passavant's *Kunstreise durch England und Belgie* (1833) was translated into English by Lady Elizabeth Eastlake (1809–1893) in 1836, while Waagen's *Kunstwerke und Künstler in England und Paris* (1837) was translated by Eastlake in 1838, with updated versions in 1854 and 1857. While Passavant denoted Dulwich a 'magnificent collection,' Waagen considered it 'overrated,'

[703] Haydon, 'Art. X. Dulwich' (1816), 393.
[704] Haydon, 'Art. X. Dulwich' (1816), 399-400.
[705] Hazlitt, 'Dulwich Gallery' (1823), 19.
[706] Patmore, *British Galleries* (1824), 215.
[707] See Waterfield and Illies, 'Waagen' (1995), 47-59.

with poor attributions and an unfortunate catalogue.[708] Both referred solely to *St Sebastian* among Reni's works, confirming its particular attraction at this time. For Passavant, it was 'powerfully expressed' and one of the 'finest pictures' in the collection.[709] Waagen praised its 'masterly' impasto and identified Guercino's influence 'in the deep brown-greenish shadows, and the endeavour of the powerful effect.'[710] Whether they doubted the attribution of Reni's other paintings or merely found them inconsequential is unclear. Carlo Pepoli (1796–1881), a Bolognese politician and journalist based in London in 1839–48, provided further information in *The court magazine* (1840). He was impressed with the 'truly glorious collection.' Describing Reni as a 'great master,' Pepoli considered all of his works authentic except *Mater Dolorosa*, a copy by Francesco Gessi (1588–1649) of the painting in Palazzo Ercolani, Bologna.[711] Again highlighting *St Sebastian*, Pepoli declared: 'We should pronounce [it] second to no work from the pencil of Guido, with one exception only, the picture on the same subject, in the Gallery at Bologna. As displaying a perfect knowledge of the human frame, beautiful feeling, and an admirable touch, with great excellence of colouring – this work alone would entitle its author to be called a sublime artist.'[712]

Dulwich is a powerful example of a collection of paintings predominantly intended to be displayed together. Designed to please and educate the public, they were considered exemplars of fashionable masters, many worthy of a royal collection. Reni was well-represented and whilst criticism did exist, he was frequently praised by visitors. *St Sebastian* appears to have been his most popular painting at this time.

[708] Passavant, *Tour* (1836), Vol. 2, 61; Waagen, *Works* (1838), Vol. 2, 379.
[709] Passavant, *Tour* (1836), Vol. 1, 66.
[710] Waagen, *Works* (1838), Vol. 2, 379.
[711] Pepoli, 'Dulwich Gallery' (1840), 221.
[712] Pepoli, 'Dulwich Gallery' (1840), 232.

National Gallery

In 1823, Sir George Beaumont (1753–1827) promised sixteen pictures to the nation if the British Government acquired the banker John Julius Angerstein's (1735–1823) collection of 38 paintings and provided a purpose-built gallery for their display.[713] In 1824, the National Gallery was formed, displayed in Angerstein's former residence in Pall Mall, London. In 1838, a new building designed by William Wilkins (1778–1839) was opened in nearby Trafalgar Square. Further pictures were added through gifts, bequests, and acquisitions made by Trustees. Mostly aristocrats from the landed gentry, these traditionalists tended to follow the established taste of their ancestors, favouring seventeenth-century Old Masters.

Reni's *St Jerome* (Fig. 45) entered the collection in 1831 through the bequest of 33 paintings by the painter and dealer Reverend William Holwell Carr (1758–1830).[714] Little is known of its acquisition but it had previously belonged to Gavin Hamilton in Rome, who included it in *Schola Italica Picturae* (1773).[715] Holwell Carr's interest in art was instilled following a tour to Italy in 1781 and manifested in his roles as founding member of the British Institution and Athenaeum Club and Fellow of the Royal Society. Hazlitt remarked that Holwell Carr's taste, which concentrated on established Italian Old Masters, was perceived as passé among fashionable collectors: a 'quaint and daring [exception] to the established rule' and a 'species of leze majesté in the Fine Arts, as great an eccentricity and want of fashionable etiquette.'[716]

In 1836, two Renis were among six pictures presented to the Gallery by William IV (1765–1837).[717] In conveying their gratitude for the donation, the Trustees acknowledged William's aim 'of gratifying the public taste, and of promising the

[713] Parliamentary Debate on the British Museum, 1 July 1823. Cit. Constable, 'National Gallery' (1924), 158.
[714] Holwell Carr also owned Reni's *St Peter* (Palazzo Barberini, Rome), exhibited British Institution, 1816.
[715] Hamilton, *Schola Italica Picturae* (1773), Pl. 35.
[716] Hazlitt, *Criticisms* (1844), 169-70.
[717] The other paintings included a portrait by Sir Joshua Reynolds and three portraits by Sir Thomas Laurence.

cultivation of the fine arts.'[718] *The Toilet of Venu*s (now attributed to Reni and Studio) had previously belonged to Charles I (1600–1649) and was returned to the Royal Collection in 1723 when purchased by George I (1660–1727) from 'Laws', along with Reni's *Perseus and Andromeda* (Fig 46; now considered a copy).[719] It was engraved in 1759 by Sir Robert Strange (1721–1792). In 1824, Patmore identified Reni's paintings as 'two splendid works' in the Drawing Room at Windsor Castle. He considered *The Toilet of Venus* 'among the finest [he had] ever seen' and Andromeda 'admirable, as a single figure.'[720] In a reported conversation with Hazlitt, Northcote defended *The Toilet of Venus* against a charge of impropriety: 'the very beauty, elegance, and grace keep down instead of exciting improper ideas.' Together with *Perseus and Andromeda*, 'there is no possible offence to be taken at them, nothing to shock the most timid or innocent, because there was no particle of grossness in the painter's mind.'[721] However, the paintings' condition was a subject of concern. In *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* (1839), it was observed that they were 'cracked all over' and 'if they were once genuine, [they] have been so badly damaged, that is difficult to ascertain the original painting.'[722]

In 1836, a Select Committee was established to extend knowledge of art and design in Britain. It was suggested that artists represented in national collections should be 'Early Masters', their paintings 'of a purer and more elevated style than the eminent works of the Carracci.'[723] This constitutes one of the earliest arguments in favour of reconfiguring the national collection away from seventeenth-century Bolognese art, which became increasingly common in coming years. Waagen was a major influence on the Committee and both he and Passavant commented on the Gallery in their tours of Britain. Among Reni's pictures, Passavant solely mentioned *The Toilet of Venus*, 'a large picture, well known by Strange's famous engraving.'[724] Waagen did not reference Reni but

[718] National Gallery Archive, London, NG1, Vol. 1, 66-9: Board Minutes, 29 March 1836.
[719] Vertue, 'Notebooks II' (1931–32), 88; Vertue, 'Notebooks III' (1933–34), 19.
[720] Patmore, *British Galleries* (1824), 109-11.
[721] Hazlitt, *Conversations with Northcote* (1830), 180-81.
[722] Anon., 'Picture Exhibitions' (1839), 470.
[723] 'Select Committee' (1837), 127.
[724] Passavant, *Tour* (1836), Vol. 1, 41.

acknowledged Holwell Carr's 'important addition,' which included 'admirable works of the school of the Carracci.' Commenting generally on the Carracci School, he identified 'some that do great honour to that school,' although they never equalled 'Early Masters' in 'beauty, purity, and naïveté.'[725] In 1839 and 1840, Pepoli wrote two reviews of the Gallery for *The court magazine.* In the first, he praised the 'beau ideal' of Reni, a 'great painter' and 'earnest [admirer] and true [priest] of beauty' along with Raphael, Leonardo da Vinci, and Correggio.[726] In the second, he stated that he derived 'much pleasure' from *Perseus and Andromeda* but found *The Toilet of Venus* 'a little injured.'[727] A Bolognese native, Pepoli made repeated pleas for further works by Reni to be added: 'many and more varied specimens might be found of the productions of this great man, who strove to express every rational truth by the absolutely Beautiful.'[728] Regarding the broader Carracci School, he questioned, 'is this school well represented in the National Gallery? We cannot certainly reply in the affirmative.'[729]

Shortly afterwards, the Trustees declined George Henry Hooper (fl. 1840) of Stanmore's offer of Reni's *St Sebastian* (present whereabouts unknown).[730] However, on 9 May 1840, they purchased *St Mary Magdalene* (Fig. 47) at the sale of the West Indies merchant Sir Simon Haughton Clarke (1764–1832).[731] The picture had arrived in Britain in 1798 in the Orléans sale, where it was purchased by Henry Hope for 400 guineas (£420). In Hope's sale (9 June 1816), it was sold to Bernard Pinney (fl. 1816) for £220.10, before entering Clark's collection in *circa* 1818. In 1822, it was engraved by William Sharp (1749–1824). The Trustees had agreed to bid for three pictures at Clarke's sale: *St Mary Magdalene*, for 500 guineas (£525), and Murillo's *The Good Shepherd* and *The Young St John*, for 2,500 guineas (£2,625) each.[732] They secured *St Mary*

[725] Waagen, *Works* (1838), Vol. 1, 185, 207.
[726] Pepoli, 'National Gallery II' (1839), 513, 518.
[727] Pepoli, 'National Gallery' (1840), 49.
[728] Pepoli, 'National Gallery' (1840), 42-3.
[729] Pepoli, 'National Gallery' (1840), 48.
[730] National Gallery Archive, London, NG1: Board Minutes, 14 April 1840.
[731] Clark also owned Reni's *The Entombment of Our Saviour*, from Grenada Cathedral (present whereabouts unknown), exhibited British Institution, 1818.
[732] National Gallery Archive, London, NG1, Vol. 1, 154: Board Minutes, 9 May 1840.

Magdalene for 410 guineas (£430.10) and were granted *The Good Shepherd* for 2,000 guineas (£2,100).

At the House of Commons on 24 July 1840, the MP Robert Gordon (1786–1864) responded to criticism of the Gallery's activity at Clark's sale by arguing that the paintings had been acquired 'on the recommendation of the trustees.' Sir Robert Peel (1788–1850), Leader of the House of Commons, found the activity 'to the public advantage' and the works 'of very great excellence,' suggesting that if the Reni were offered at auction again 'it would obtain double the price they gave for it.'[733] However, in *The Athenaeum*, it was argued that the Gallery had enough Renis and should instead aim for a representative collection: 'we must make no more purchases, with the little money allowed, of additional Murillos and Guidos of the same stamp as those we already have.'[734] In *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, the Gallery's idleness in developing the collection was further condemned: 'Surely pictures worthy [of] the collection of Sir Robert Peel and Lord Ashburton, might have been considered fit for the National Gallery. Why, then are not purchases made? "Oh! but they are made," it will be said; "see our new Murillo and Guido." Well, we see them and reckon them nothing. The trustees are doing nothing.'[735] The writer labelled *St Mary Magdalene* 'a clever, free, and flashy study… somewhat in his flimsy and washy style, weak in colour.' Arguing that it was 'all of the artist, not of nature,' he compared it to Rogers' *Ecce Homo*, a 'weak, washy, inexpressive head' that was 'puffed to so wonderful a reputation.'[736]

In the first sixteen years of the National Gallery's existence, four pictures by Reni entered the collection: one purchased, two presented, and one bequeathed. During these years, 49 works (45 by foreign masters) were purchased, 53 (30 by foreign masters) presented, and 73 (65 by foreign masters) bequeathed.[737] Although there were positive reactions to Reni's paintings, they were generally

[733] Hansard Commons Debate, 24 July 1840, Vol. 55, cc. 968-70. api.parliament.uk/historic-hansard/commons/1840/jul/24/supply-national-gallery. Accessed 17 February 2018.
[734] Anon., 'Engravings from National Gallery' (1840), 577.
[735] Anon., 'National Gallery – Exhibitions' (1840), 481.
[736] Anon., 'National Gallery – Exhibitions' (1840), 482-83.
[737] See Wornum, *National Gallery* (1847), 209-14.

not considered highlights or specimens of distinct excellence in his œuvre. Nevertheless, the Trustees' response to William IV's donation and zeal in acquiring *St Mary Magdalene* reveals that, for the decision-makers at least, Reni remained a praiseworthy artist. Whilst *St Mary Magdalene* attracted some negative attention in the press, it would not be until the 1840s that Reni would be at the forefront of public debate surrounding the Gallery.

Exhibitions

Alongside galleries, loan exhibitions provided unparalleled opportunities for viewing art in this period, particularly those held at the British Institution, London.[738] From 1816, the Institution hosted annual exhibitions of Old Masters, celebrating British collections and allowing students to copy eminent paintings. As Haskell suggests, they were intended to present a definitive canon and offer a sense of improvement and enjoyment.[739] The attention paid to Reni by the organisers of the first exhibition is evident from his identification as a highlight in an advertisement in *The Examiner* (1816).[740] The architect Robert Smirke (1780–1867) is attributed as the author of an anonymous satirical *Catalogue raisonné* to accompany the exhibition, providing a comical commentary of all six works attributed to Reni. As Luisa Calé suggests, the catalogue, penned within Royal Academy circles, is indicative of 'the position of modern painters against the aristocrats and connoisseurs associated with the British Institution.'[741] It thus has a more negative view of Reni than that propounded by the exhibition's organisers. Smirke negatively compared Holwell Carr's *St Peter* (Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Antica, Palazzo Barberini, Rome), Dulwich's *St John the Baptist in the Wilderness*, and John Graves's (fl. 1816) *St Jerome with the Angel* (present whereabouts unknown) to Plato's 'cock without features.'[742] Of

[738] Other exhibitions featuring Reni include: British Gallery, 1812; Liverpool Royal Institution, from 1823; Royal Institution of Edinburgh, from 1826; and Exeter Hall, 1833. For the foundation of the British Institution, see Redgrave and Redgrave, *Century of Painters* (1866), 138-39.
[739] Haskell, *Rediscoveries* (1980), 157. See: Passavant, *Tour* (1836), Vol. 1, 59; Anon., 'National Gallery – Exhibitions' (1840), 486.
[740] Anon., 'British Institution' (1816), 317.
[741] Calè, 'Gallery' (2015).
[742] Smirke, *Catalogue Raisonné* (1816), Pt. 1, 9, 43, 45.

Baring's *Ecce Homo*, he protested, 'if this was the state of Christ prior to his crucifixion, the Jews might have spared themselves all trouble… he could not have more than a pint of blood in him.'[743] However, notably, he praised West's *Ecce Homo* as a 'most perfect specimen of the master,' complaining that it was displayed less prominently than 'trash' such as Carlo Dolci's *Christ bearing the Cross* (present whereabouts unknown) and including it among the exhibition's 'better works' alongside paintings by Titian, Claude Lorraine, and Poussin.[744]

Six of Reni's paintings were exhibited in 1818. In *The Examiner*, George Watson-Taylor's (1771–1841) *The Immaculate Conception* (The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York) was lauded for its unrivalled 'sublime character of the heads… devout expression, and… simple grace of the figure.' Comparing Murillo's painting of the same subject, he argued: 'we feel the difference between beauty human and celestial,' Murillo's 'mortal,' Reni's 'divine.'[745] Three Renis were exhibited in 1821 and described by a reviewer in *The Literary Gazette* as 'the most affecting of Guido's.'[746] Dr Sommerville's (fl. 1821) *Cardinal Roberto Ubaldini* (Los Angeles County Museum of Art) was highlighted in *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* as 'an uncommonly fine portrait… which rivals the best works in the Gallery.'[747] Whilst only one Reni was exhibited in 1824 – William Palmer's (fl. 1824) *The Virgin and Child* (present whereabouts unknown) – it was counted among six highlights in *La Belle Assemblée*.[748]

However, this degree of reverence dissipated in the 1830s as criticism of Reni accumulated and opprobrium became increasingly common. In 1831, William Wells's (1818–1889) *The Coronation of the Virgin* (Fig. 48; National Gallery, London) was exhibited. In *Library of the fine arts*, it was argued that there was some 'affectation' and a 'greater formality than is altogether pleasing.' The

[743] Smirke, *Catalogue Raisonné* (1816), Pt. 1, 30.
[744] Smirke, *Catalogue Raisonné* (1816), Pt. 1, 46; Pt. 2, 39.
[745] Philotechnes, 'British Institution' (1818), 366.
[746] Anon., 'British Institution' (1821), 330.
[747] A Connoisseur, 'British Gallery' (1821), 343.
[748] Anon., 'British Institution' (1824), 275. Other artists included Benjamin West, Murillo, Raphael, Rembrandt, and Canaletto.

composition lacked 'unity and repose' and the attitude of the Virgin was 'full of that particular kind of studied gracefulness for which Guido is so celebrated; but the countenance although sufficiently expressive of humility and devotion is not particularly dignified.'[749] This response mirrors criticism seen in the eighteenth century. However, despite such censure, Reni featured consistently in every exhibition featuring Italian painting in this period, except 1817 (when few Italian Old Masters were included), 1820, 1838, and 1840.[750] Moreover, several exhibitions included numerous works by Reni; six in 1816 and 1818; five in 1837; four in 1836 and 1839; and three in 1821, 1828, and 1834. Several works featured in more than one exhibition, suggesting their particular significance in Reni's œuvre: *Ecce Homo* (West and Rogers); *St Mary Magdalene* (Clark and the National Gallery); and *The Virgin and Child with the Infant St John* (Holford). Consequently, as with the National Gallery, Reni evidently remained an artist of interest for the organisers of the exhibitions at least.

Travel

A further opportunity to explore Reni's œuvre was through sightseeing on the Continent. At the turn of the century, British travel was gravely affected by warfare; not only were there dangers for prospective tourists, but the very nature of the Grand Tour was altered by the displacement of art from Italy. However, this hiatus was brief and, after Waterloo (1815), individuals once more journeyed to the Continent. In contrast to the eighteenth century, travel was not the preserve of the aristocracy but available to a broad range of individuals, including the newly enfranchised middle classes. Enhanced transport meant that new areas, such as the Ottoman Empire, became centres of activity. Furthermore, the 1793 opening of Musée du Louvre, Paris, meant that, after 1815 (and during the Peace of Amiens in 1802), one did not need to travel far to see celebrated paintings.[751]

[749] Anon., 'British Institution' *(*1831), 81.

[750] Reni was not exhibited in 1813, 1814, 1815, 1820, 1825, 1830, and 1833 as these did not include past Italian Old Masters. In 1826, Sir Joshua Reynolds' (1723–1792) copy (Royal Collection Trust) of Reni's *St Michael* (Santa Maria della Concezione, Rome) was included in George IV's exhibition at Carlton House, London.

[751] Stephen H. Cheeke estimates 5,000 British visitors to the Louvre following the Peace of Amiens. See Cheeke, 'Hazlitt and Louvre' (2007), 113.

Nevertheless, Italy remained a site of especial interest, particularly in 1819–28.[752] In 1817, Lord Byron (1788–1824) complained that Rome was 'pestilent with English' and full of a 'tribe of wretches.'[753] By 1830, Heinrich Heine (1797–1856) protested: 'one can no longer imagine a lemon tree without an English woman sniffing at it.'[754] There was also diversification in travel writers, with women and middle classes increasingly penning guides for socially diverse readers. As Rosemary Sweet suggests, this resulted in varied responses to traditional sights and praise tempered with criticism.[755] An example is Reni's *Aurora* (Palazzo Pallavicini-Rospigliosi, Rome), which had previously enjoyed universal praise. In 1805, Peter Beckford (1740–1811) complained that the wind was incorrect, yet warned, 'with caution should we criticise what is generally admired' and 'the sublime with some defect, is preferable to mediocrity that is free from fault.'[756] In 1820, Jane Waldie (1793–1826) suggested that 'some fault might, perhaps, be found with the false attitude in which the foremost of the Hours that surround the car of day is represented,' but again remarked, 'who will dare to arraign aught in a form so bewitching?'[757]

In general, Reni continued to be highly recommended and the Carracci School described as painters of particular renown. Many travellers were most acquainted with Reni's 'second manner', some expressing surprise upon seeing his first at Bologna.[758] In 1820, James Augustus Galiffe (1776–1853) claimed: 'Whenever I think of paintings, the name of Guido Reni is the first that occurs to me.' Whilst he did not rank Reni as highly as Raphael, he 'love[d] and admire[d] him as the deepest of elegiac painters, who has surpassed all others in the expression of noble, decent, and religious grief.'[759] In 1821, Sydney, Lady Morgan (1781?–1859) acknowledged Bologna's 'immortal school which

[752] See Brand, *Italy and English Romantics* (1957), 23.
[753] Lord Byron to Thomas Moore, 25 March 1817. Cit. Byron, *Letters and Journals* (1831), Vol. 2, 62.
[754] Heinrich Heine, 1830. Cit. Andrew, 'Grand Tour' (2008), 42.
[755] Sweet, 'Changing View of Rome' (2010), 156-57.
[756] Beckford, *Familiar Letters* (1805), Vol. 2, 234-35.
[757] Waldie, *Sketches* (1820), Vol. 2, 336.
[758] Miss Berry, 'Journal,' 10 June 1821. In Berry, *Journals and Correspondence* (1866), Vol. 3, 303.
Condor, *Italy* (1831), 266.
[759] Galiffe, *Italy* (1820), Vol. 1, 276-77.

produced her Caracci, her Guido, and her Domenichino.'[760] In 1819, Percy Shelley (1792–1822) argued that if Rome were extinguished, 'the ruins and the sculpture, would remain, and Raffael and Guido be alone regretted.'[761]

A certain group of Reni's paintings were singled out as essential sights for tourists: *Aurora*;[762] *St Michael* (Santa Maria della Concezione, Rome);[763] *St Peter and St Paul* (Fig. 49; Pinacoteca di Brera, Milan);[764] and *Massacre of the Innocents* (Fig. 50; Pinacoteca Nazionale, Bologna).[765] There was a slight reconstitution since the previous century. *St Peter and St Paul* was only visible for a short period at Palazzo Sampieri, Bologna, before being sold in 1811.[766] The extreme level of adulation that it provoked is evident in Joseph Forsyth's (1763–1815) declaration: 'so excellent is art here, that it disappears, and gives up the work to sentiment.'[767] In 1817, Byron described *Massacre of the Innocents* 'as beautiful as Thought.'[768] Mariana Starke's (1761/62–1838) use of exclamation marks to classify paintings is also extremely revealing. In *Letters from Italy* (1800), she awarded fourteen pictures by Reni the honour, while over forty were lauded in *Travels on the Continent* (1820). Of these, *St Michael*, *Aurora*, *St Peter and St Paul*, and *The Crucifixion* (Palazzo Pallavicini-Rospigliosi, Rome) were bestowed the highest rank of four or five.[769]

[760] Morgan, *Italy* (1821), Vol. 2, 58-9.
[761] Percy Shelley to Thomas Love Peacock, 6 April 1819. Cit. Symonds, *Shelley* (1878), 687.
[762] Starke, *Letters* (1800), Vol. 2, 35; Tappen, *Professional Observations* (1806), 196; Lemaistre, *Travels* (1806), Vol. 1, 386; Galiffe, *Italy* (1820), Vol. 1, 286; Waldie, *Rome* (1820), Vol. 3, 84; Miss Berry, 'Journal,' 1823. In Berry, *Journals and Correspondence* (1866), Vol. 3, 333; Byron, *Don Juan* (1823), 135, Canto XIV, XL.
[763] Starke, *Letters* (1800), Vol. 2, 11; Waldie, *Rome* (1820), Vol. 2, 329.
[764] Walker, *Ideas* (1790), 189; Martyn, *Tour* (1791), 111; Starke, *Letters* (1800), Vol. 2, 191; Beckford, *Familiar Letters* (1805), Vol. 1, 114; Lemaistre, *Travels* (1806), Vol. 1, 302; Forsyth, *Remarks* (1813), 356; Coxe, *Picture of Italy* (1815), 140.
[765] Galiffe, *Italy* (1820), Vol. 1, 177.
[766] Coxe, *Picture of Italy* (1815), 140.
[767] Forsyth, *Remarks* (1813), 356-57.
[768] Lord Byron to John Cam Hobhouse, 22 April 1817. British Library, London, Add. MS 42093. Cit. Marchand, *So late into the night* (1976), 216.
[769] Starke, *Letters* (1800), Vol. 2, 11, 35, 37, 191. Starke, *Travels* (1820), 341, 345-46.

Beatrice Cenci

A further painting elevated in this period was a portrait of a woman, traditionally identified as Beatrice Cenci (1577–1599) (Fig. 51; Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Antica, Palazzo Barberini, Rome). First recorded at Palazzo Colonna, Rome, in 1783, it was moved to Palazzo Barberini, Rome, by 1823. Beatrice was a young Roman noblewoman who, raped by her father, took murderous revenge and was executed despite many protestations. In 1599, Baldassare Paolucci (fl. 1599) commented: 'The death of a young girl, who was of very beautiful presence and of most beautiful life, has moved all Rome to compassion.'[770] Reni was believed to have seen Beatrice either in prison or on her way to the scaffold. The romanticism attached to this story is evident from two nineteenth-century paintings: John Stuart Callcott's (born c. 1841) *The last moments of Beatrice Cenci. The Introduction of Guido Reni to the cell,* exhibited at the British Institution (1864), and Achille Leonardi's (c. 1800–1870) 1866 *The Imprisonment of Beatrice Cenci* (present whereabouts of both unknown). Whilst the portrait is no longer attributed to Reni, it forms a crucial part of his historical œuvre and was one of the most celebrated paintings in Rome. In his novella *Les Cenci* (1837), Stendhal (1783–1842) declared: 'Almost invariably, foreigners coming to Rome ask to be taken, at the outset of their tour of inspection, to the Barberini gallery; they are attracted, the women especially, by the portraits of Beatrice Cenci and her stepmother.'[771] Widely referenced in fiction and poetry, the painting was further made accessible through reproductions.[772]

The earliest English reference to *Beatrice Cenci* found in this investigation is Mary Berry's (1763–1852) diary recording a trip to Palazzo Colonna in 1784: 'the famous portrait of the Cenci, in the dress in which (they say) she was executed; it is by Guido, but is not in his manner; the real painter is probably

[770] Baldassare Paolucci to Cardinal d'Este, 14 August 1599. Cit. Langdon, *Caravaggio* (1999), 161.
[771] Stendhal, 'Cenci' (1926), 173.
[772] Engravings at the British Museum include: Luigi Cunego (1757–1823) (1785); Giovita Garavaglia (1790–1835) (1818–35); William Brett (fl. 1824–1830) (1827); Samuel Cousins (1801–1887) (1835), produced after a copy belonging to Rev. Heneage Finch (d. 1865); and Eugenio Damele (fl. 1842) (1840–90). Copies include those at North Lincolnshire Museum Service, Blackburn Museum and Art Gallery, and Stourhead, National Trust.

unknown. The expression of the face is most beautiful, and the history makes it affecting. I never saw one of all its numerous copies that gave at all the tone, expression, or grace of the countenance.'[773] This description is striking; firstly, Berry did not accept the attribution, and secondly, she suggested that the portrait was already well-known at this point. The second to mention the portrait was Thomas Watkins (dates unknown) in his guidebook of 1792. Recalling the Cenci story, he mistakenly claimed that in the Borghese collection was 'the portrait of the ill-fated Beatrice, done during her confinement by Guido, and I think I never saw a countenance less guilty or more beautiful.'[774] In 1805, Beckford simply described 'an interesting picture to those who are acquainted with the history of that unfortunate female.'[775] These brief references are followed by Percy Shelley's play *The Cenci* (1819), written in Rome.[776] In 1819, Shelley indicated to the poet Thomas Love Peacock (1785–1866) that he had a copy of the portrait, 'the most beautiful creature you can conceive.'[777] He also informed the painter Amelia Curran (1775–1847) that he desired to have a 'good engraving' made of it.[778] Shelley's play functions as a moral commentary on vengeance, centring on the dichotomy between Beatrice's guilt and innocence. In the Preface, Shelley described the portrait as 'admirable' and suggested that 'it was taken by Guido during her confinement in prison.' He considered it 'most interesting as a just representation of one of the loveliest specimens of the workmanship of Nature.' In particular, he praised Beatrice's complex expression and 'simple and profound' nature: 'In the whole mien there is a simplicity and dignity which united with her exquisite loveliness and deep sorrow are inexpressibly pathetic.'[779]

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[773] Miss Berry, 'Journal,' 1784. In Berry, *Journals and Correspondence* (1866), Vol. 1, 116-17. The earliest known mention of the story is in Joseph Trapp's (dates unknown) translation of Johann Wilhelm Archenholtz's (1741–1812) travels in *A Picture of Italy* (London: Printed for G.G.J. and J. Robinson, 1791). See Marshall, *Italy in English Literature* (1934), 214.
[774] Watkins, *Travels* (1792), 355-56.
[775] Beckford, *Familiar Letters* (1805), Vol. 2, 235.
[776] Mary Shelley also described the painting in her journal, 12 April 1819. Cit. Shelley, *Journal* (1947), 120.
[777] Percy Shelley to Thomas Love Peacock, July 1819. Cit. Shelley, *Letters* (1909), Vol. 2, 700.
[778] Percy Shelley to Amelia Curran, 5 August 1819. Cit. Shelley, *Letters* (1909), Vol. 2, 704.
[779] Shelley, *Cenci* (1886), Preface, 6-7.

The Cenci significantly raised the painting's profile, as the art historian Anna Jameson (1794–1860) attested in 1826: 'The frightful story of the Cenci is too well known in England since the publication of Shelley's Tragedy.'[780] In 1820, Henry Matthews (1789–1828) described Beatrice's 'charming countenance; – full of sweetness, innocence, and resignation.'[781] The same year, Starke awarded the picture an exclamation mark.[782] Charlotte Waldie (1788–1859) praised it as 'the only painting in this suite of rooms that had power to interest me.' She was again captivated by the complex 'sweet and expressive face,' finding it 'inexpressibly touching': 'weak, though it be, I own that I have wept over the feeling, the speaking, the angelically lovely countenance of her who stabbed her father.'[783] Galiffe similarly described Beatrice as 'uncommonly beautiful, without the slightest expression of ferocity or guilt' and claimed that Reni drew a 'hasty sketch' as she walked to the scaffold.[784] Finally, Jameson noted the portrait's 'innumerable copies and prints' and declared that she was 'more struck' than she could express. Attracted by the girl's complex expression, she found a 'deep pathos' consistent with 'the circumstances under which the picture is traditionally said to have been painted – that is, in the interval, between her torture and her execution.'[785]

Beatrice Cenci was attractive not just as a painting but as an aide-mémoire for a scandalous parricide. Both the portrait and its source material appealed to British nineteenth-century sentimentality and moral discourses on punishment, guilt, and revenge.[786] The pathos of the story was emphasised through weight given to Beatrice's youth, innocence, and suffering. Not only was she identified as a tragic heroine, but the painting was interpreted as the embodiment of purity and beauty, qualities historically associated with Reni's production. The celebrity the painting gained from its inclusion in works by Shelley and Stendhal, together

[780] Jameson, *Diary* (1826), 315.
[781] Matthews, *Diary* (1820), 101.
[782] Starke, *Travels* (1820), 361.
[783] Waldie, *Rome* (1820), Vol. 3, 18-20.
[784] Galiffe, *Italy* (1820), Vol. 1, 279.
[785] Jameson, *Diary* (1826), 153-54.
[786] See Altholz, 'Warfare' (1976), 62-5.

with the proliferation of its copies and prints, reflected onto Reni's reputation. This is despite the fact that, ironically, Reni had not painted *Beatrice Cenci*.

This analysis of works on the Continent indicates the endurance of Reni's appeal for travellers. However, just because his works were endorsed as tourist attractions does not mean that he himself was still admired; Reni's historical acclaim meant that he could have been recommended out of a sense of tradition and duty. It is thus necessary to consider Reni's broader reputation. For some, Reni remained a respected artist of great renown. For others, he became increasingly contentious. We have already observed the start of this transformation in the eighteenth century; in these years, disapproval became more commonplace.

Reni's Critical Reputation

In the eighteenth century, four aspects of Reni's practice attracted particular attention. In this period, references to Reni's 'manners' are fleeting, suggesting that they no longer featured strongly in criticisms of the artist. With the revival of evangelism and emancipation of Catholics in nineteenth-century Britain, Reni's religious subject matter did indeed become increasingly contentious. In 1805, Cornelia Knight (1757–1837) found the subject of Reni's *The Trinity* (Santissima Trinità, Marino) 'undoubtedly too awful for representation.'[787] Jane Waldie similarly considered his representation of God the Father sacrilegious, 'producing so unholy an effect, that a lady of our party very innocently demanded, what Pope this was?'[788] In addition, in 1838, the politician William Ewart Gladstone (1809–1898) criticised a *Magdalene* attributed to Reni for its 'tyranny of design over expression, of what is theatrical over what is spiritual.'[789] However, such references to religious content dominated in later years. At the turn of the century, Reni's 'eclecticism' drew attention among Royal Academicians. The most amusing instance of the spread of this criticism is in

[787] Knight, *Description of Latium* (1805), 142.
[788] Waldie, *Sketches* (1820), Vol. 3, 306.
[789] William Ewart Gladstone, 1838. Cit. Pointon, 'Gladstone' (1975), 82.

Arnold's Magazine of the Fine Arts (1833). Referencing the sonnet attributed to Agostino Carracci, 'G.W.' joked: ''Tis a pity that Agostino Caracci was not born late enough to assist Mrs. Glass in the compilation of her cookery book! … Seriously, can any thing evince a more shallow idea of the feelings that should govern a painter, than this patchwork recipe?'[790] However, such criticism was not yet fully embedded in wider literature. In this section, the highly contentious criticisms of Reni's approach towards ideal beauty and his disreputable gambling habit are considered.

Ideal Beauty

In 1796, the writings of the artist Anton Raphael Mengs (1728–1779) were published in English for the first time. For Mengs, beauty was the finest aim in art and Reni's works, 'composed of beauty, grace, richness, and ease,' merited 'the name of beautiful.'[791] This opinion was shared by many British individuals.[792] In Reverend John Thomas James's (1786–1828) *The Italian Schools of Painting* (1820), the 'first scientifically organised treatise' on Italian art, it was argued that 'Guido indeed delights us, because his forms and colours are so extremely beautiful, that he seems to have presented to us, as it were, beauty in the abstract; and so will any one delight us, that comes so near to perfection in any walk or branch as he did.'[793] James was concerned about excessive beauty, particularly 'the want of expression of sentiment' in 'historical painting.'[794] Strikingly, he found Reni unproblematic: 'There is no painter whose pencil has ever embodied forms of beauty with a taste so truly poetical. His children, and even men, in his portraits, acquire a marvellous freshness and lightness by the magic of his pencil; while his women seem creatures of no earthly mould, but as if he had stolen them from the seventh heaven.'[795]

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[790] G.W., 'On Patronage' (1833), 391.
[791] Mengs, *Works* (1796), Vol. 2, 141, 78, 38.
[792] Bromley, *Philosophical and Critical History* (1795), Vol. 2, 469; Anon., *Historic Gallery* (1812), Vol. 2; Matthews, *Diary* (1820), 104; Galiffe, *Italy* (1820), Vol. 1, 276-77; Jameson, *Visits and Sketches* (1834), Vol. 1, 22; Hazlitt, *Notes of a Journey* (1826), 37, 44.
[793] Hale, *England and Italian Renaissance* (1996), 117.
[794] James, *Italian Schools* (1820), 35-6.
[795] James, *Italian Schools* (1820), 221.

However, Reni's approach to beauty was still deemed by others a grave shortcoming, resulting in narrative failure and unpleasant qualities of saccharinity, sentimentality, and insipidity. In 1794, Sir Uvedale Price (1747–1829) complained that 'the works even of this great master, shew us how unavoidably an attention to mere beauty, and flow of outline, will lead towards sameness and insipidity.'[796] Charlotte Waldie, commenting on Reni's *Perseus and Andromeda* (Palazzo Pallavicini-Rospigliosi, Rome), found the heroine incongruous: 'It is seldom Guido erred from want of expression, but she is surely too calm, and too placid, for such a situation.' Nevertheless, 'she is Beauty's self; and it is a painting that irresistibly forces admiration.'[797] Whilst Patmore acknowledged that 'perhaps the beautiful Madonnas of Guido have more of the "ideal" in them than any thing else in Art,' he found Reni 'absolutely incapable of conceiving of the female face and form under any other than a graceful and attractive aspect. His imagination could not or would not entertain the idea of it, except as something sweet, seraphic, bland, divine. To give it a tragic expression was in some sort to vulgarise, at all events to unidealise it.'[798] Jane Waldie derided 'the melting Madonnas of Guido' while Jameson found their 'very sweet Guido-like style' 'all but heavenly': 'they are tender, dignified, lovely: – but when compared with Raffaelle's, they seem more touched with earthly feeling, and have less of the pure ideal: they are, if I may so express myself, too *sentimental*: sentiment is, in truth, the distinguishing characteristic of Guido's style.'[799]

Hazlitt provides some of the most interesting and conflicting commentary on this aspect of Reni's practice. In 'On a landscape by Nicholas Poussin', he condemned 'Guido's endless cloying sweetness.'[800] However, in *Notes of a Journey through France and Italy* (1826), he argued that 'no other painter has expressed the female character so well, so truly, so entirely in its fragile, lovely essence': 'People talk of the insipidity of Guido. 'Oh! let me drink long,

[796] Price, *Essay* (1794), 79.
[797] Waldie, *Rome* (1820), Vol. 3, 95.
[798] Patmore, *British Galleries* (1824), 108, 240.
[799] Waldie, *Sketches* (1820), Vol. 1, 263; Jameson, *Diary* (1826), 340.
[800] William Hazlitt, 'On a Landscape of Nicolas Poussin.' In Hazlitt, *Table Talk* (1821), Vol. 2, 14.

repeated, relishing draughts of such insipidity. If delicacy, beauty, and grace are insipidity, I too profess myself an idolizer of insipidity.'[801] In *Conversations with James Northcote* (1830), Hazlitt confessed to 'a sneaking contempt' for Reni as 'insipid and monotonous, from seeing the same everlasting repetitions of Cleopatras and Madonnas.' Nevertheless, he 'returned a convert to his merits,' finding 'elegance and beauty' wherever he looked.[802] In 'On a Portrait of an English Lady, by Van Dyck' he introduced Reni as the '"gentleest" of painters,' yet claimed that his idealistic approach resulted in 'effeminacy' and an enslavement to 'different modifications' of beauty: 'He could paint beauty combined with pleasure, or sweetness, or grief, or devotion; but unless it were the groundwork and the primary condition of his performance, he became insipid, ridiculous, and extravagant.' Reni thus had to be careful when choosing subjects: 'the delicacy of his tact in general prevented him from attempting subjects uncongenial with it.' Whilst Reni was 'a little monotonous and tame' and lacked distinction between heroes and heroines and angels and women, Hazlitt did not find this overly problematic: 'If it be said that he repeated himself too often, and has painted too many Magdalens and Madonnas, I can only say in answer, "Would he had painted twice as many!"'[803] Hazlitt thus exemplifies the contradictory responses that Reni could elicit, even in a single viewer. His commentary, both positive and negative, reveals the complexity and dominance of criticism regarding Reni's approach towards ideal beauty in this period.

Gambling

In eighteenth-century Britain, gambling was typically associated with the conspicuous consumption of the elite and often glamorised as a luxury pastime. Over the ensuing years, the activity proliferated and was opened to broader ranks of society.[804] Fears of the ruination it could cause escalated; a pamphlet of 1784 urged the public 'to lay the ax to the root of GAMBLING!'[805] Nineteenth-

[801] Hazlitt, *Notes of a Journey* (1826), 288-89.
[802] Hazlitt, *Conversations with Northcote* (1830), 181.
[803] William Hazlitt, 'On a Portrait of an English Lady, by Vandyck.' In Hazlitt, *Criticisms* (1844), 149-53.
[804] Pitt, 'Gamblers' (2012), 19, 119.
[805] *Hints for a reform, particularly in the gambling clubs. By a Member of Parliament* (London:

century novels perpetuated such fears by presenting gambling as a destructive habit, often associated with immoral and irresponsible characters.[806] Concerns increased with the foundation of the popular gaming house Crockford's in London in 1828 and the formation of a Select Committee to investigate the detrimental impact of gaming on society in 1844. The attention given to Reni's gambling in the nineteenth century is related to the activity's perceived level of threat.

In 1817, Forsyth lamented, 'what pity that [Reni's] passion for play should have forced him to precipitate his happiest conceptions, and placed a great man and his works under the control of bankers!'[807] Jameson similarly felt that gambling 'plunged [Reni] into difficulties, and tinged his mind with bitterness and melancholy.' She described his late Madonnas as having 'a look of melancholy, and disconsolate resignation, which is extremely affecting.'[808] For the writer of *The Historic Gallery of Portraits and Paintings* (1812), the habit resulted in Reni's 'talents' becoming 'impaired.'[809] Such criticism is most eloquently expressed in Northcote's *The Dream of a Painter* (1807, published 1813). For John Hale, the text epitomises 'average intelligent taste' in early nineteenth-century Britain.[810] It recounts the dream of a man who met a 'Genius of the Fine Arts' in the Vatican and was presented with a parade of artists. Reni is described as 'a character contrasted to that of Correggio, one less pitiable, though scarcely less unfortunate or less excellent – one who dallied with good fortune, and brought his hardships on himself. This favourite of the Graces, in his latter days, wasted both his genius and his life.' Reni's character and painterly qualities are vividly evoked:

> … we saw come forward a beautiful youth like an Adonis, whose steps kept time with the music; all his actions were graceful in the highest degree, yet only just free from affectation. He was welcomed, and even

R. Baldwin, 1784), 10. Cit. Crump, 'Perils of Play' (2002).
[806] See Flavin, *Gambling* (2003).
[807] Forsyth, *Remarks* (1813), 233.
[808] Jameson, *Diary* (1826), 340.
[809] Anon., *Historic Gallery* (1812), Vol. 2.
[810] Hale, *England and Italian Renaissance* (1996), 112.

> courted, by three captivating graces, who now appeared in the perfection of their heavenly beauties, and seemed to vie with each other which should be most his favourite… Then followed, to close his retinue, a melancholy set of wretched gamblers and sharpers, who with tattered garments, wild eyes, and haggard visages, shook each his dice-box in frantic despair.

The Genius declared: 'Behold the splendid genius of Guido Reni disgraced by the base and vicious crew who finish his career. Unfortunate being! to throw away the heavenly riches with which he had been blessed, by wasting his time and venturing his fortunes with miscreants like these!' The sight of Reni's companions caused 'agitation' for Northcote's narrator and the Genius encouraged him to consider Reni a 'useful' example for regulating his conduct.[811] Northcote's *Dream* is mirrored by Hazlitt's 'Of Persons One would wish to have seen' (1826), in which artists glide from their portraits, each with an attribute or emblematic figure. Reni was 'accompanied by his own Aurora, who took a dice-box from him.'[812] Such texts reveal the growing recognition of Reni's gambling as an intrinsic and pitiable aspect of his character.

* * *

The early nineteenth century remained a transformative period for Reni's reputation in Britain. In certain ways, respect was maintained, with newly promoted paintings attracting attention on the Continent and others displayed in galleries and exhibitions. For many collectors, Reni remained worthy of representation. However, criticism of Reni and the Carracci School continued to accumulate. Derogatory terms such as 'affectation' and 'insipidity' significantly altered the perception of familiar attributes for which he was once exalted. The variety of opinions held by increasingly diverse figures reveals the instability of Reni's reputation at this time; the two Royal Academicians, Northcote and Fuseli, epitomise these opposing outlooks. Criticism gained momentum as the

[811] James Northcote, 'The Dream of a Painter.' In Northcote, *Memoirs of Reynolds* (1817), 11-2.

[812] William Hazlitt, 'Of Persons one would wish to have seen,' *The New Monthly Magazine* (January 1826). Cit. 'Hazlitt on Lamb,' in Lamb, *Charles Lamb* (1921), 13-4.

century progressed; whilst in 1815, Louis Simond (1767–1831), a French traveller in Britain, could remark, 'one feels safe in praising Guido,' by 1824, Patmore observed, 'it would probably be admitted on all hands that it betrays an effeminacy of taste to prefer Guido to Titian.'[813] In the 1840s and 50s, this divide widened as Reni became subject to significant reappraisal.

[813] Simond, *Journal of a Tour* (1810), Vol. 2, 118; Patmore, *British Galleries* (1824), 62.

The Reception of Guido Reni in Britain 1841–61

'The old Bolognese – Francia and his school – are always charming; but the Carracci and all their tribe are not calculated to interest the English of the present day, when affectation and mere mechanical facility are out of fashion'
Lady Eastlake, 1855.[814]

Between 1841 and 1861, the cultivation of taste was a significant talking point in Britain.[815] This was a watershed for Reni's reputation, eliciting a reversal of fortune from which it would never fully recover. There was a major shift in public opinion, with an increasing divide between those of the established taste and those with interests in new, alternative genres. Reni became increasingly maligned and the inflammatory writings of John Ruskin (1819–1900) and John Morris Moore (1811–1885) led to rejection of his artistic prowess and condemnation of his paintings as brutal, insincere, and repugnant. Nevertheless, there was a multitude of voices in this period and highly contradictory views can still be found. In this chapter, Reni's reputation in these crucial years is explored, with particular emphasis on the National Gallery and Manchester Art Treasures Exhibition of 1857.

The Art Market and Collectors

In this period, two genres of art promoted in the early nineteenth century dominated the market. In 1847, the artist and art historian Ralph Wornum (1812–1877) acknowledged the rise of 'Early Masters', stating: 'Few conversant in such matters prefer the works of the artists of the seventeenth century to those of the fifteenth and sixteenth, though they are generally infinitely superior to the earlier

[814] Lady Elizabeth Eastlake, 13 October 1855. Cit. Eastlake, *Journals and Correspondence* (1895), 76.
[815] See Eagles, 'Arts and Taste' (1853), 92, and Landrow, 'Great Talking' (1976).

works in execution.'[816] In 1848, the British Institution held the first exhibition on 'Primitive' art, which provided a major opportunity for the public to see paintings by 'Early Masters'. Essays in periodicals, such as those by Anna Jameson (1794–1860) for *The Penny Magazine*, and organisations such as the Arundel Society also helped to develop familiarity with such pictures. Fundamental texts on 'Early Masters' include: Alexis-François Rio's (1797–1874) *De La Poésie Chrétiénne* (1836), translated into English in 1854; Sir Francis Palgrave's (1788–1861) *Handbook for Travellers in Northern Italy* (1842); Alexander William, Lord Lindsay, later 25th Earl of Crawford's (1812–1880) *Sketches of the History of Christian Art* (1847); and Jameson's *Sacred and Legendary Art* (1848). Such taste was also encouraged by Queen Victoria (1819–1901) and Prince Albert (1819–1861), who almost exclusively collected 'Early Masters'. Further support was offered by the Royal Academician Sir Charles Lock Eastlake (1793–1865) and his wife Lady Elizabeth Eastlake (1809–1893), who declared in 1855: 'I am fairly bitten with all the true pre-Raphaelites… and I shall be truly proud if we succeed both in rescuing some examples, and in introducing them into England, where already there are a chosen few who adore them.'[817]

Nevertheless, not all reactions towards 'Early Masters' were positive. In 1847, a writer in *The Art-Journal* expressed concern regarding the National Gallery's possible acquisition of Samuel Woodburn's (1783–1853) collection, stating: 'We do not need antiquities and curiosities of the early Italian painters: they would only infect our school with a retrograding mania of disfiguring art.'[818] In 1859, a writer in *The Quarterly Review* argued that a 'violent' reaction, leading to the dominance of 'the vilest daubs of what is called early or Gothic art' over the Carracci School, threatened 'to lead taste and painters into an opposite extreme, no less vicious and hurtful to true art.'[819] He associated 'Early Masters' with German Archaism and the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, founded in 1848

[816] Wornum, *Epochs of Painting* (1847), 59.
[817] Lady Elizabeth Eastlake, 13 October 1855. Cit. Eastlake, *Journals and Correspondence* (1895), 76.
[818] Anon., 'Reported Sale' (1847), 142.
[819] Anon., 'Art. III. – Site Commission' (1859), 353.

with the aim to have genuine ideas, study Nature attentively, sympathise with what is direct, serious, and heartfelt in art, and produce good pictures and statues.[820] These artists greatly admired 'Early Masters' and were supported by Ruskin, who championed other contemporary British artists, such as Turner, in *Modern Painters* (1843–57).[821] Further backing for contemporary art was provided by Samuel Carter Hall (1800–1899), who promoted young artists in *The Art-Union* (later *The Art-Journal*) and warned of the unreliability of Old Masters, publishing importation details from custom-house reports.[822] These factors contributed to a decline in the market for seventeenth-century Old Masters, as collectors spurned their works for those of 'Early Masters' and more reliable and fashionable living artists.

However, despite these developments, Reni's pictures remained in circulation. The undertakings of three prominent individuals illustrate the strength of this sustained interest in the artist. All three are members of the aristocracy, indicating the primary audience for Reni at this time.

William Bankes

William John Bankes (1786–1855) was a fashionable aristocratic collector and avid traveller who formed a collection following a tour to the Continent, Egypt, and the Middle East in 1812–20. After inheriting Kingston Lacy, Dorset, in 1834, he commenced an ambitious remodelling programme, employing Charles Barry (1796–1860) to develop lavish interiors recalling Italian palazzi. However, in 1841, he was caught in 'an act of indecently exposing himself to a soldier of the Foot Guards in Green Park.'[823] Fleeing the country, he settled in Venice and advised on Kingston Lacy from afar. Bankes's sustained interest in Reni is clear from two archival documents featuring notes drawn from Malvasia, his reference

[820] See Latham, *Haunted Texts* (2003), 11-2.
[821] See John Ruskin, *Modern Painters*, Vol. 1, Preface. Cit. Ruskin, *Works* (1907), Vol. 3, 3.
[822] See Anon. 'Carter Hall' (1882), 106.
[823] Leback Sitwell, Bush, and Berry, 'Separation of Night from Day' (2006), 102.

to a painting from Palazzo Monaldi, Siena, intended for the Drawing Room at Kingston Lacy, and a list of the 1840s which included Reni's 'Jesus Praying'.[824]

In 1599, Reni painted *The Separation of Night from Day* (Fig. 52; Kingston Lacy, Dorset) for the Grand Salon of Palazzo Zani, Bologna, where it remained until 1840. Bankes purchased the fresco after its transfer to canvas 'in 1840 or 1841 for £600,' a significant sum.[825] Its subsequent history is unclear. Bankes meticulously planned Kingston Lacy's display, producing schemes sensitive to the original contexts of paintings. Reni's fresco was likely intended for the ceiling of the Dining Room but was found to be too large.[826] Writing to his sister in 1854, Bankes indicated that the ceiling should be left untouched and the canvas stowed in the stables so that 'when we are both gone, those who come after us can apply them if they will.'[827] In Murray's *Handbook for Residents and Travellers in Wiltshire, Dorset, and Somersetshire* (1859), there is no reference to the picture, confirming this account.[828] By the 1869 edition, the painting was located in the Dining Room, where it was also identified in 1882 as 'very badly placed on an upright wall near the eye.'[829] By 1899, it was transferred onto the Library ceiling, mirroring its original display in Bologna.[830] Daphne Bankes (1898–1967) explained: 'the Guido Reni was panelled in by my father [Bankes's great-nephew], he discovered it put away in an attic somewhere here.'[831]

The Separation of Night from Day is a rare example of an early ceiling fresco by Reni in Britain. The choice of work demonstrates Bankes's extended knowledge of Reni and ambition as a collector. Its intended display is intriguing, revealing its perceived importance as a large-scale, high-quality fresco.

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[824] Dorset History Centre, Dorchester, Bankes Archives, D-BKL/H/J/3/6/8, D-BKL/H/J/3/6/8; D-BKL/H/J/2/1/15; D-BKL/H/J/3/31.
[825] William Bankes, flyleaf of Graticola di Bologna, *In Parte Quarto – Tomo II* (1841). Cit. Leback Sitwell, Bush, and Berry, 'Separation of Night from Day' (2006), 103.
[826] See Leback Sitwell, Bush, and Berry, 'Separation of Night from Day' (2006), 103, 105.
[827] William Bankes to Anne Falmouth, 5 May 1854. Dorset History Centre, Dorchester. Cit. Sebba, *Exiled Collector* (2009), 268.
[828] Anon., *Handbook* (1859).
[829] Anon., *Handbook (*1869), 175; Anon., *Handbook* (1882), 187.
[830] Anon., *Handbook* (1899), 476.
[831] Daphne Bankes. Cit. Leback Sitwell, Bush and Berry, 'Separation of Night from Day' (2006), 103.

Algernon Percy, 4th Duke of Northumberland

In 1847, Algernon Percy, 4th Duke of Northumberland (1792–1865), succeeded to the dukedom and commenced a substantial remodelling project at his family seat, Alnwick Castle, Northumberland. Hiring Anthony Salvin (1799–1881) in 1854, Northumberland transformed the Gothic mansion into a medieval fortress, replete with a contrasting Italianate interior for which he imported craftsmen, architects, plasterers, and painters. Director of the British Institution and fellow of the Royal Society, Society of Antiquaries, and Royal Institution, Northumberland was a keen collector. In 1850, one of his agents compiled a list of Vincenzo Camuccini's (1771–1844) paintings in Rome with valuations.[832] In 1856, Northumberland purchased Camuccini's collection, including paintings by Reni, Raphael, Guercino, Claude Lorraine, and Bellini.

Reni's *The Crucifixion* (Alnwick Castle, Northumberland) was one of Camuccini's most important pictures; painted in 1624–25 for Cardinal Berlinghiero Gessi (1563–1639), it was located in Santa Maria della Vittoria, Rome, before being sold in 1801 to Pietro Camuccini (1761–1833). At Alnwick, it was displayed prominently in the Drawing Room with other notable Italian paintings.[833] It formed part of a coherent set of pictures purchased specifically for the house. Northumberland's decision to acquire Camuccini's collection is one of the last instances of an Englishman making bulk purchases of this kind abroad. Pictures were selected not just for their individual merit but for their correspondence to the aspirational aesthetic of an Italian palazzo. Northumberland's approach mirrors that of Bankes and his choice of Italian Old Masters indicates their enduring importance for aristocratic collectors. As Anne French suggests, whilst Northumberland was a pioneering traveller, in art he clung to the entrenched approach to collecting of his ancestors and eighteenth-century aristocrats.[834]

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[832] Alnwick Castle Archives, Northumberland Add. MSS (1973), f. 76A. Cit. Penny, 'Raphael' (1992), 78.
[833] Anon., *Handbook* (1864), 204-05; Hartshorne, *Guide* (1865), 63.
[834] French, *Art Treasures* (2009), 253-54.

Alexander William, Lord Lindsay and 25th Earl of Crawford

The final collector considered here is Lord Lindsay, who travelled widely, visiting the Continent in 1828, 1829–30, 1839, 1840, and 1841–42. These trips were of crucial importance in his development as an art historian. An admirer of 'Early Masters', Lindsay published a comprehensive three-volume text on religious painting: *Sketches of the History of Christian Art* (1847). He was also a prolific collector of books, prints, and paintings. Lindsay's studious approach towards collecting is evident from a letter of 1849 in which he announced his intention to form a gallery 'illustrative of the progress of Painting from the earliest times till now.' Such pictures would 'preoccupy the mind of successive generations of a family with wholesome, pure and elevating tastes' and 'prepare them for that expatriation and progress in the life to come.'[835] From 1842 to the mid-1870s, Lindsay acquired high-quality works representative of that ambition.

Lindsay's attitude towards Reni is striking. As a young traveller, he disliked the Carracci School, complaining in 1842: 'I am sick, sick of Bologna. I have swallowed such a quantity of Caraccis, Guidos etc. for the last two or three days that I feel as if I sd never get over it – I am poisoned… I have tried them fairly and found them wanting.' Lindsay recalled some of the conventional criticism of the Carracci School, claiming that they lacked 'religious feeling,' nature was copied '*too* truthfully,' and 'the want of genuine intellectual dignity is attempted to be supplied by broad draperies and the unlimited application of the schoolboy's maxim 'Attitudes everything.'' In summary: 'an universal poverty of ideas, an utter want not merely of poetry, and invention but of simplicity, and earnest feeling, d— the Carracci.'[836] Regarding Reni's *The Immaculate Conception* (San Biagio, Forlì), the Virgin was 'very graceful, but her beauty is merely human – I sd rather say *material*: Guido never attains that almost celestial beauty of expression which ravishes one in the older masters.' Likewise, Reni's Madonnas and Saints had 'no intellect.'[837]

[835] Lord Lindsay to James Lindsay, 22 April 1849. Cit. Brigstocke, 'Lindsay as Collector' (1982), 298, 301.
[836] Lord Lindsay to Anne Lindsay, 16 May 1842. Cit. Brigstocke, 'Lindsay: Travel' (2003), 209.
[837] Lord Lindsay to Anne Lindsay, 22 May 1842. Cit. Brigstocke, 'Lindsay: Travel' (2003), 212.

Nevertheless, Lindsay collected Bolognese paintings, including works attributed to Annibale and Ludovico Carracci, Domenichino, Guercino, and Reni. In 1858, Lindsay's wife Margaret [Min] went to Edinburgh to examine Reni's *The Flight into Egypt* (Fig. 53; Bradford Museums and Galleries) belonging to 'Mr Bruce', a picture cleaner. She described the painting and its alleged provenance from Palazzo Colonna, Rome, to Lindsay who checked these against William Buchanan's (1777–1864) *Memoirs of Painting* (1824). He was happy to purchase the painting, although Min had already committed to it for £250.[838] Lindsay's approach to collecting is different to that of Bankes and Northumberland; embellishing a residence was not his primary motive. Rather, he was a scholarly collector, focusing on representation and catholicity. His and his wife's choice of a work by Reni indicates how the artist's historic importance in the canon was still acknowledged, even by collectors who found his works uninspiring.

The National Gallery

Alongside these individual collectors, institutions also acquired works by Reni in this period. In 1843, Sir Charles Lock Eastlake became Keeper of the National Gallery, later serving as Trustee in 1848–50 and Director in 1855–65. Under his management, the collection doubled, with five new works by Reni. This is despite Jameson's criticism in 1842 that the Gallery was unbalanced, with overrepresentation of Correggio, Claude Lorraine, Poussin, Gaspar Poussin, and the Carracci School and 'poor' representation of 'Early Masters'.[839] Reni's pictures, added under Eastlake's tenure, attracted much attention; responses both reflected and altered Reni's wider reputation. In this section, particular attention is drawn to commentary in the press and Select Committee of 1853.

In 1805, Reni's *Christ embracing St John the Baptist* (Fig. 54) was acquired by James Irvine (1757–1831) from Vincenzo Camuccini. Whilst Buchanan

[838] Lady Lindsay to Lord Lindsay, 12 March 1858, 17 March 1858; Lord Lindsay to Lady Lindsay, 15 March 1858. Cit. Barker, *Bibliotheca Lindesiana* (1978), 147.
[839] Jameson, *Handbook* (1842), 10.

considered the subject appropriate for English audiences, indeed 'all the rage,' he included it in a list of works he doubted were 'fit for this Country.'[840] By 1824, it belonged to the banker Jeremiah Harman (1763–1844), at whose sale at Christie's on 18 May 1844 it was purchased by the Trustees for £409.10. A writer in *The Athenaeum* was horrified at this 'very discreditable' purchase, finding the painting incorrectly attributed, poorly conceived, and contrary to refined taste:

> Upon what principle this offensive thing was purchased baffles conjecture. If meant as a foil to set off the beautiful and magnificent works around it, we think ugliness and meanness might have been procured at a lower price than 390 guineas [£409.10]! – Or perhaps some private purchaser has presented the public with it, anonymously, being ashamed of his bargain? … There is not a well-drawn muscle, a well-coloured feature, a well-handled trait, within the whole frame of the new *acquisition*: there is not a well-depicted expression – both characters are burlesqued – Christ being a young *girl*, and St. John the Baptist a squalid stripling… So awkward, so thumb-fingered was the designer's hand – beyond doubt not Guido's, however feeble or careless his may sometimes appear.[841]

The artist George Foggo (1793–1869) was equally condemnatory in his 1845 catalogue: 'Two very poor heads. That of Christ is like an unintellectual woman, and the eyes and mouth are ill drawn. The St. John may be something better, but is quite tame and common.'[842] Morris Moore expressed even stronger censure; writing in *The Times* (1846) under the pseudonym Verax, he associated it with paintings by Gerrit Dou and Michiel Coxcie that 'reflect no credit on the meanest amateur, and serve only to mark the utter incapacity and extravagance of those who selected them, qualities still further evinced by the fact that several of these works had been previously offered to private persons at much lower prices.'[843] 'Cultor', writing in *The Art-Journal* (1848), cited Reni's painting as an example

[840] William Buchanan to James Irvine, 30 April 1805. Cit. Brigstocke, *Buchanan* (1982), 394.
[841] Anon., 'Gossip' (1844), 501.
[842] Foggo, *National Gallery* (1845), 58.
[843] Morris Moore, 'National Gallery Purchases' (1846), 5.

of the Trustees' extortionate spending on artists already represented.[844] Waagen, annotating Wornum's catalogue in 1854, labelled it 'unworthy school.'[845] The politician and collector William Coningham (1815–1884), writing in *The Musical World* (1856), condemned it as 'a disgrace to the National Gallery, and spurious.'[846] The painting is still attributed to Reni by the National Gallery.

The next works acquired were *Lot and his Daughters* and *Susannah and the Elders*. The former was purchased at John Penrice's (1787–1844) sale at Christie's on 6 July 1844 for £1,680 together with Rubens's *The Judgement of Paris* for £4,200. *Susannah and the Elders* was bought in for 900 guineas (£945) but acquired by the Gallery in August 1845 for £1,260, reduced from £1,500.[847] The Trustees considered it 'a very desirable addition to the Gallery at twelve hundred guineas [£1,260]' on the basis of its 'intrinsic merit… the historical evidence of its genuineness, and its peculiar value to the Gallery in conjunction with the companion picture already purchased.'[848] The Treasury insisted that three individuals judge its 'merit and value' before they agreed to its acquisition.[849] Foggo considered *Lot and his Daughters* 'a vulgar subject boldly but coarsely treated.' He described Lot as 'large, stupid, unfeeling, strong, and roughly painted' and noted a 'want of refinement in the expressions.'[850] By contrast, a writer in *The Athenaeum* (1844) rated *Lot and his Daughters* 'the finest, if but the second-highest priced picture here; a graceful, a grandiose, an attractive, though quite unmeretricious picture.' He considered it a better purchase than 'the wretchedest thing ever called a Guido' – *Christ embracing St John the Baptist* – and argued: 'Were Bolognese productions (we mean of the Carracci school) oftener like the present specimen, they would less irritate us to cry out amidst their insipid eclecticism and academic conventionalities.' In general, 'it may be said that the National Collection wanted neither another Rubens nor Guido, but such fine specimens once lost, would have been *quasi*

[844] Cultor, 'National Gallery' (1848), 206.
[845] Wornum, *National Gallery* (1854), 94.
[846] Coningham, 'National Gallery' (1856), 227.
[847] National Gallery Archive, London, NG1, Vol. 1, 281: Board Minutes, 4 August 1845. William Buchanan to National Gallery, 29 August 1845. National Gallery Archive, London, NG5/61/8.
[848] National Gallery Archive, London, NG1, Vol. 1, 281: Board Minutes, 4 August 1845.
[849] National Gallery Archive, London, NG1, Vol. 1, 284-86: Board Minutes, 2 February 1846.
[850] Foggo, *National Gallery* (1845), 59.

irrecoverable; each was bid for like a dish of food in a famine.' However, he considered *Susannah and the Elders* 'second-rate.' Whilst it had 'considerable merit,' he criticised Susannah's 'servant-maid modesty, alarmed rather than shocked at the too-sudden approach of her salacious admirers; a saucy-lipped amazement at their naughtiness, rather than the shuddering innocence.'[851]

For Ruskin, these acquisitions were egregious and reflected terribly upon the Gallery. In 1844, he complained to Reverend Henry George Liddell (1787–1872): 'It puts me into a desperate rage when I hear of Eastlake's buying Guidos for the National Gallery.' Arguing that Titian, Veronese, and Bellini should be acquired instead, he implored Liddell, 'I hope you do all you can to put a stop to this buying of Guidos and Rubenses. Rubens may teach us much of mere art, but there is plenty of him in the country, and for Guido there is not even this excuse.'[852] He further protested to his parents: 'Two thousand pounds would put glass round the whole of the campo santo, & preserve all that remains of the frescoes, and our government give 2500 for a rascally Guido not worth sixpence.'[853] After *Susannah and the Elders* was purchased, he gloomily asserted to Joseph Severn (1793–1879) that Eastlake 'takes to teach our British public a love of the right thing, going and buying a disgusting, rubbishy, good-for-nothing, bad-for-everything Rubens… and two brutal Guidos, when we haven't got a Perugino to bless ourselves with.'[854]

Ruskin also expressed these damning comments publicly. In *Modern Painters* (1846), he described *Susannah and the Elders* as 'devoid alike of art and decency.'[855] In *The Times* (1847), he railed against the 'unjustifiable' principles of selection governing the Gallery's acquisitions. Insisting that 'Early Masters' were underrepresented, he complained:

[851] Anon., 'Penrice Sale' (1844), 650-51.
[852] John Ruskin to Rev. Henry George Liddell, 12 October 1844. Cit. Ruskin, *Works* (1903), Vol. 3, 670.
[853] John Ruskin to parents, 14 May 1845. Cit. Shapiro, *Ruskin* (1972), 63.
[854] John Ruskin to Joseph Severn, 21 September 1845. Cit. Ruskin, *Works* (1903), Vol. 4, 394.
[855] John Ruskin, *Modern Painters*, Vol. 2. Cit. Ruskin, *Works* (1903), Vol. 4, 197.

> Sir, if the canvasses of Guido lately introduced into the gallery, had been works of the best of those pupils, which they are not – if they had been good works of even that bad master, which they are not – if they had been genuine or untouched works, even though feeble, which they are not – if, though false and retouched remnants of a feeble and fallen school, they had been endurably decent or clementarily instructive, some conceivable excuse might perhaps have been by ingenuity forged, and by impudence uttered, for their introduction into a gallery where we previously possessed two good Guidos and no Perugino (for the attribution to him of the wretched panel which now bears his name is a mere insult), no Angelico, no Fra Bartolomeo, no Albertinelli, no Ghirlandajo, no Verrocchio, no Lorenzo di Ciedi (what shall I more say, for the time would fail me?) – but now, Sir, what vestige of apology remains for the cumbering our walls with pictures that have no single virtue, no colour, no drawing, no character, no history, no thought?[856]

Coningham further described *Susannah and the Elders* as 'a common-place work of a degenerate school, and of doubtful origin; totally unfit for study. It has the further demerit of being one of many repetitions.'[857] In *The Art-Journal* (1856), Arthur Vincent Turner (fl. 1856) similarly claimed that the 'inferior pictures' inappropriately occupied wall-space, *Susannah and the Elders* 'a school picture, and a work eminently calculated to injure the student of art; criticism would be quite thrown away upon such a production.'[858]

The next work added was *The Coronation of the Virgin*. This attracted less attention, bequeathed in 1847 by William Wells (1768–1847) of Redleaf, Kent, rather than purchased with public money. Wells had acquired the painting from Sir Thomas Lawrence (1769–1830) for 1,200 guineas (£1,260).[859] In 1848, a writer in *The Athenaeum* claimed that it 'cannot be considered a very great acquisition' to a Gallery 'already containing several works from the same hand

[856] Ruskin, 'To The Times' (1847), 5.
[857] Coningham, 'National Gallery' (1856), 227.
[858] Vincent Turner, 'To the Art-Journal' (1856), 93.
[859] Dibdin, 'Wells' (1848), 87.

and some of mark.' He considered it a 'failure,' illustrative of the 'incongruity and indefiniteness' of eclectic art: 'it has just that absence of distinctive character and originality to be expected in productions where a combination is essayed of qualities that are not very compatible with one another school.'[860] The final work, *Ecce Homo*, was bequeathed in 1855 by Samuel Rogers (1763–1855). Strikingly, it attracted little attention in the press. As we have seen, the painting had been exalted and the absence of comment is telling, suggesting that it no longer ranked highly and was not considered a notable addition. It is no longer attributed to Reni and considered a copy.

In 1851, Wornum reiterated in *The Art-Journal* that Reni was overrepresented, suggesting that copies would be 'a far greater service to Art and to education than the mere adding of Guidos to Guidos, Rembrandts to Rembrandts, Poussins to Poussins, or Rubenses to Rubenses; and it would be cheaper, too.'[861] Such criticism came to a head in 1853, when a Select Committee was appointed to investigate the Gallery's management. Coningham marked *Susannah and the Elders* an 'objectionable purchase' which 'ought not to have been purchased.' As for *Christ embracing St John the Baptist*, he considered it 'a disgrace to the gallery.' He found both paintings deeply problematic, the former as an 'inferior picture of the artist' and the latter as a work not even attributable to Reni.[862] Morris Moore was even more negative, arguing that *Christ embracing St John the Baptist* 'should not have been purchased at any price; nay, it ought not to have been accepted, even as a gift. Neither ought the two other Guido pictures of "Lot and his Daughters" and "Susanna and the Elders," to have been purchased at any price.' He found 'not one redeeming virtue' in *Christ embracing St John the Baptist* and *Susannah and the Elders*, arguing that the former 'ought to be turned out of the National Gallery' and the latter 'does not possess one single quality that could either instruct the student, or assist in elevating public taste. It is a model of what to avoid in art; the gallery would be better without it.' Moreover, Morris Moore's aversion to Reni was not limited to these paintings. Questioning the attribution of *Christ embracing St John the*

[860] Anon., 'Gossip' (1848), 298.
[861] Wornum, 'Select Committee' (1851), 39.
[862] *Select Committee* (1853), 492.

Baptist, he argued that even if it were authentic, that would be 'no argument in its favour': 'Only works of a fine style can elevate public taste. The picture is of a very bad style, whether as to form, design, composition, or colouring. It cannot, therefore, elevate public taste.' Indeed, he believed that Reni was simply not 'calculated to elevate the public taste':

> Guido is not a master to be held up as a model in any respect. In a gallery professing to represent the entire range of art, Guido's works must necessarily find a place; but I do not believe it would be of any great injury if we had no Guidos at all in the gallery.

Morris Moore concluded: 'So far from my looking upon Guido as a second, or even third-rate painter, I consider him as scarcely a thirtieth-rate painter,' his style indicative of 'a degenerate period of art.'[863] Ruskin echoed this sentiment at the National Gallery Site Commission in 1857: 'my working men would not be allowed to look at a Bolognese Picture.'[864]

Reactions to the Gallery's activities reveal much about the transitory nature of Reni's reputation at this time and the difficulties of attributing his works. The high-profile nature of venom against the paintings placed disapproval of Reni at the forefront of art criticism. Censure falls under two categories: firstly, the works were of insufficient quality to warrant inclusion; and secondly, Reni was overrepresented. The successive nature of the purchases and their high expenditure were also objectionable. The public and aggressive nature of the criticism is striking – this was an all-encompassing attack on Reni and his position within the canon. The consequences of such vitriolic criticism were significant; after *Ecce Homo* was bequeathed in 1855, the Gallery did not add another Reni until 1957.

[863] *Select Committee* (1853), 683.
[864] *Site Commission* (1857), 95.

Exhibitions

A further event which attracted attention in this period was the Manchester Art Treasures Exhibition of 1857. A form of social improvement, it served as a 'pleasant' means of acquiring instruction in art by enabling all classes to engage with high-quality objects, carefully selected to be of educational and moral value.[865] Encompassing 16,000 exhibits (including 1,079 paintings by 'Ancient Masters') from private collections, the Exhibition attracted over 1.3 million visitors and was widely discussed in the press. Pictures were organised chronologically and by school in a pioneering effort to convey the historical development of art. Early Italian and German paintings were hung in Saloon A, while later pictures were displayed in Saloons B, C, and H. This included twelve Renis, the most notable being Queen Victoria's *Cleopatra and the Asp* (344) (Fig. 55; Royal Collection Trust). These were primarily displayed with Bolognese and Venetian works in Saloon B. The Exhibition also included 689 paintings by 'Modern Masters' and 386 British portraits, as well as other objects, including watercolours, porcelain, and armour. The Exhibition's educational aspect was clear: it provided an unrivalled opportunity to compare works in close proximity, including mostly unfamiliar 'Early Masters'. Visitors frequently pitted these artists against those of the traditional canon. Such differences in opinion are evident in two press reviews.

A writer in *Blackwood's Magazine* endorsed eclecticism, particularly in an Exhibition encouraging the study of past art. In Bolognese and Venetian painting, he identified a 'new element' of 'popularity,' which had been absent from 'Early Masters' whose works demanded 'student-knowledge' and constituted a violation of 'art and nature.' In contrast, the 'plan of the Carracci was a happy one, whereby the thought of the poet was to gain the fascination of the theoretician.' Technical skill provided 'power of elocution' and their paintings were 'elevating,' observing 'all the conditions essential to art-effect and expression.' Such artists produced 'art which adds to nature, yet the art itself is nature.' Whilst this reads as a defence of Bolognese painting, he found certain

[865] Baines, *National Exhibition Leeds* (1868), 12.

aspects problematic: they lacked ambition and Reni's *Cleopatras* could be 'refined, cold, and languishing.' Nevertheless, he disputed the argument that 'the influence of the Carracci school in this country was too great… and ought to be diminished.' He hoped that the Exhibition would 'disabuse the public mind of much false specious teaching.' Indeed, 'so long as the history of art, in a collection like the present, can point out such victorious results as these, the clamour raised against academies, and the established rules of art, by presumptuous naturalism, receives its silent yet sufficient refutation.'[866]

A writer in *The National Review* conversely considered the 'imitation of any school… an unmixed evil.' He disagreed that the Carracci School was popular, finding the word 'peculiarly applicable to pre-Raphaelite art.' In this early period, art was 'the great means by which all thought intended to reach the people found expression.' By contrast, the Carracci School attracted attention only among connoisseurs, princes, and cardinals – 'those able to appreciate technical merits.' Their pictures lacked energy and the 'spirit of child-like faith which alike inspired the early painter and those who knelt before his pictures.' Accounting for the nineteenth-century popularity of 'Early Masters', he cited 'the revival and spread of a more spiritual and deeper appreciation and criticism.' Rather than finding eclecticism edifying, he argued that it resulted in 'art for art's sake,' containing 'within itself the germs of destruction.' Comparing the 'downward' tendency [human inspiration] of the Carracci School to the 'upward' tendency [divine inspiration] of 'Early Masters', he stated: 'This upward-tending influence was the spirit of faith, sincerity, and humility; this downward-using power was the spirit of self-sufficiency, pride, and display.' Imitation of Bolognese art, which favoured technical ability over spirituality, would lead to degradation and vulgarisation.[867]

Whilst these writers had opposing views, they were both aware of the charge that the day of the Carracci was over in Britain. A reviewer in *The Quarterly Review* made a similar point: 'A few years ago the Eclectic School was the fashion of

[866] Anon., 'Manchester Exhibition' (1857), 758-69.
[867] Anon., 'Art. VIII – Manchester Exhibition' (1857), 206-10.

the day, and enormous prices were given for the works of its masters… [it] has now somewhat gone out of favour, and the early Italian and Flemish schools are in demand.' He considered this not an issue of popularity but concern regarding over-supply and forgery.[868]

Other reviewers of the Exhibition reflect a similar divergence in opinion regarding the virtues of seventeenth-century Italian painting. Henry Ottley (1811–1878), in *The Art-Treasures Examiner*, dismissed eclecticism as 'unmeaning and impracticable,' resulting in the amalgamation of incongruous qualities 'indulged in to excess.'[869] He criticised Reni's 'unmistakeable mannerism,' the 'monotony' of his idealism, his 'broad mode of treatment, which he too often carried to excess,' and the disagreeable 'grey, greenish tint' of his colouring which was far from 'the truth of nature.'[870] A writer in the *Catalogue* argued that seventeenth-century Italian artists 'lost sight of the first objects of their calling, namely devotion and truth to nature,' instead seeking 'merely to parade their Art and display their mechanical skill which had been almost forced upon them.' Criticising 'simpering Madonnas, gaudy colours and saints looking out,' he identified 'a want of earnestness and the merest forms of acting.' Nevertheless, he exempted paintings by the Carracci School – although 'cold and classical… they were not executed without a close reference to nature.'[871] A reviewer in *London Quarterly Review* described the Carracci School as 'the most popular and the lowest of all the schools of Italy' and once more criticised their technical approach as the 'mere parade of mechanical skill': 'original vigour is diminished and overborne by the study of bad models and degraded type, and by a too literal adherence to academic precepts. Nothing new is struck out; we are wearied by constant re-modifications of the same things.' He again exempted Reni and Domenichino, who offered 'some true touches of tenderness.'[872] In his *Handbook*, the art critic George Scharf (1820–1895) was ambivalent; although the Carracci School 'failed' in restoring art to the glory of

[868] Anon., 'Art. VI. – Catalogue of Art Treasures' (1857), 183-84.
[869] Ottley, 'Bolognese School' (1857), 280.
[870] Ottley, 'Bolognese School' (1857), 283.
[871] Anon., *Catalogue of Art Treasures* (1857), 11.
[872] Anon., 'Art. IV. – Catalogue of Art Treasures' (1857), 87.

Raphael, they 'succeeded in setting art for a while upon a surer basis.' He complained that the Exhibition contained none of Reni's 'chef d'œuvres' yet praised his *Assumption of the Virgin* (312), *Salome* (361), and *David and Abigail* (338), the latter displaying 'his colour, forms, and compositions to the greatest advantage.'[873]

This discrepancy in views is also manifest in the perceived highlights of the Exhibition. For connoisseurs who favoured 'Early Masters', the main attraction was Botticelli's *Mystical Nativity* (National Gallery, London) (1034), loaned by William Fuller Maitland (1813–1876). However, the most popular painting among the general public was Annibale Carracci's *The Dead Christ Mourned ('The Three Maries')* (Fig. 56; National Gallery, London) (310), loaned by George Howard, 7th Earl of Carlisle (1802–1864).[874] Various writers commented on the 'crowd' that surrounded Carracci's painting, with Ottley noting that it attracted 'a large share of the public attention.'[875] In *The Quarterly Review*, a writer deemed it merely 'one of the best of a school whose cold, unmeaning productions surround it' and doubted whether it would instruct or elevate public taste.[876] This was mirrored by a writer in *The Athenaeum*, who claimed that 'cold propriety, and exactness seem the great aim of the artist.'[877] Scharf was astonished by its popularity, describing it 'a matter of wonder.' Whilst he acknowledged its pleasing and emotional qualities, he found the colouring 'disagreeable.'[878] He considered it 'proof of the gregariousness of large assemblies and the readiness with which the general mass of people follow that which a few bold mouths praise.'[879] There is a hint of intellectual snobbery here, with the suggestion that the painting was only pleasing to uneducated audiences.

For the same visitors who favoured *The Three Maries,* 'Early Masters' were challenging. William Blanchard Jerrold (1826–1884) noted how later

[873] Scharf, *Handbook (*1857), 43-4.
[874] See Haskell, *Rediscoveries* (1980), 158-59.
[875] Anon., 'Manchester Exhibition' (1857), 767-78; Anon., 'Art. IV. – Catalogue of Art Treasures' (1857), 87; Ottley, 'Bolognese School' (1857), 283.
[876] Anon., 'Art. IV. – Catalogue of Art Treasures' (1857), 193.
[877] Anon., 'Gems of Manchester' (1858), 375.
[878] Scharf, *Handbook (*1857), 43.
[879] Scharf, 'On Manchester' (1857–58), 284.

productions 'appeal to the untutored in art, and charm them – if not precisely as they charm the learned connoisseur. But Giotto, unexplained, is passed by.'[880] He advised that 'little notice need be taken' of the Carracci School, besides 'the sweet and tender canvasses of Guido Reni.'[881] The American author Nathaniel Hawthorne (1804–1864), who served as United States consul in Liverpool in 1853–57, made no mention of paintings by 'Early Masters' in his account of the exhibition.[882] The perceived difficulty of appreciating 'Early Masters' was acknowledged in *A Peep at the Pictures*, a penny guide for the working classes:

> A man who looks at them for the first time, if he do not feel inclined to laugh and pass them by, may, at any rate, wonder why they are here, and what they mean… We must not be shocked at these things now, although they seem strange to us… Looking at the early pictures, then, in a spirit of calm and loving enquiry, we may learn much from them.

Echoing *The National Review*, the writer argued that 'Early Masters' produced works of 'real religious feeling,' operating at a time when the church was an instrument of education. By contrast, Bolognese artists worked 'in a spirit of rivalry and imitation… their pictures want the earnestness, simplicity, and truth which spring up only beneath the brush of a man whose hands are the ministers of a faithful and unselfish heart, desiring not its own glory, but the glorification of God by work.'[883] Waagen repeated this sentiment, remarking that 'Early Masters' were 'characterised by a deep religious sentiment' and required close study 'in order that their beauties may be fully understood.'[884]

The Manchester Exhibition serves as a paradigm for Reni's changing reputation at this time. The growing marginalisation of Bolognese art was acknowledged and endorsed by many reviewers. Familiar charges were raised, such as eclecticism and affectation. At the same time, new criticisms can be identified: Bolognese paintings were religiously insincere, overly technical, cold, and

[880] Jerrold, *Jerrold's Guide* (1857), 6.
[881] Jerrold, *Jerrold's Guide* (1857), 14.
[882] Hawthorne, *English Notebooks* (1941).
[883] Anon., *Peep at Pictures* (1857), 1, 9.
[884] Waagen, *Walk* (1857), 1.

lacking in emotional and spiritual depth. Nevertheless, there was a disjoint between the self-professed cognoscenti and the general public, particularly when newly-promoted 'Early Masters' were largely unfamiliar and challenging.

Travel

In the early nineteenth century, the number of guidebooks for Italy fell from around nine a year in 1818–28 to around four from 1829 into the 1840s. This was accompanied by a general decline in interest in Italian culture, which by 1850 had become a 'hackneyed topic.'[885] Whilst technological advancements improved the ease of travel from the 1840s, Italy became less attractive than newly explored areas, such as the Rhine route into Germany. Furthermore, several broader issues made Italy less appealing for tourists, including political unrest on the peninsula, concern regarding its morals and religious structures, and the second European cholera epidemic of the 1830s.[886]

Nevertheless, in the guidebooks produced, Reni's reputation was largely maintained. Celebrated paintings, such as *Aurora* (Palazzo Pallavicini-Rospigliosi, Rome) and *St Michael* (Santa Maria della Concezione, Rome), continued to be promoted, even when their flaws were acknowledged.[887] Hawthorne declared that *Aurora* was as fresh and brilliant as if painted with morning sunshine.[888] He was similarly impressed by *St Michael*: 'no other painter… seems to achieve things so magically and inscrutably as [Reni] sometimes does. Perhaps it requires a finer taste than mine to appreciate him; and yet I do appreciate him so far as to see that his Michael, for instance, is perfectly beautiful.'[889] Furthermore, many of Reni's lesser-known works were also recommended. In Murray's *Handbook for Travellers in Central Italy*

[885] Brand, *Italy and English Romantics* (1957), 23.
[886] Brand, *Italy and English Romantics* (1957), 23-5.
[887] Spalding, *Italy* (1841), Vol. 2, 400-01; Anon., *Handbook Central Italy* (1867), 364, 451; Kemble Butler, *Year of Consolation* (1847), Vol. 2, 19; Whiteside, *Italy* (1848), Vol. 2, 123-24; Geale, *Notes* (1848), 100-01; Stillman Hillard, *Six Months* (1854), Vol. 1, 384-85.
[888] Hawthorne, 'First Impressions IV' (1871), 359.
[889] Hawthorne, 'First Impressions V' (1871), 509. See also Hawthorne, *Marble Faun* (2008), 108.

(1843), Reni's pictures were listed in 58 locations, including Siena, Perugia, Frascati, and Marino.[890] Even Palgrave's *Handbook for Travellers in Northern Italy* (1842), commonly cited as the first guidebook to focus on 'Early Masters', referenced at least three works attributed to Reni, even though its focus was on cities with which Reni was not normally associated.[891] A common trope was that Reni's œuvre could only be fully appreciated in Italy. Frances Milton Trollope (1779–1863), in *A Visit to Italy* (1843), complained: 'How terribly little we have in England… that does him *full* justice,' a sentiment echoed in Murray's *Handbook* (1843).[892]

One particularly notable admirer of Reni was Florence Nightingale (1820–1910), who visited Italy frequently as a young woman. She was captivated by Reni, writing: 'I could be more homey myself with Guido than with any other painter – even Raphael himself.'[893] Her favourite picture was Reni's *Crucifixion* (Santa Maria della Vittoria, Rome), a studio copy of Northumberland's painting, which aligned with her Catholic sympathies. She made a 'long pilgrimage' to her 'friend,' proclaiming: 'I have found my picture, kiss me, my Guido.'[894] Reni's religious works appealed most to Nightingale, including: *St Michael* – 'a blessed prefiguration of what is to come for each and all of us';[895] *The Eternal Father and A Concert of Angels* (San Gregorio, Rome) – which made a 'dwelling place' in her imagination, there being 'something so extraordinarily ethereal in the Almighty Form';[896] *The Virgin Sewing with Two Angels* (Palazzo del

[890] Anon., *Handbook Central Italy* (1843), 185-87, 226-27, 490, 495.
[891] Anon., *Handbook Northern Italy* (1842), 27, 34, 528.
[892] Trollope, *Visit to Italy* (1842), Vol. 2, 277; Anon., *Handbook Central Italy* (1843), 30.
[893] Florence Nightingale to Mrs Nightingale, 11 January 1848. Wellcome Collection, London, Claydon copy, MS 9016/36, Keele #30. Cit. Nightingale, *Works* (2004), 197.
[894] Florence Nightingale to Parthenope Nightingale, 19 November 1847. Wellcome Collection, London, Claydon copy, MS 9016/16, Keele #12. Cit. Nightingale, *Works* (2004), 110. See also Florence Nightingale to Miss/Mrs Nightingale, 14 November 1847. Wellcome Collection, London, Claydon copy, MS 9016/9, 11, Keele #9. Cit. Nightingale, *Works* (2004), 99.
[895] Florence Nightingale to Parthenope Nightingale, 19 November 1847. Wellcome Collection, London, Claydon copy, MS 9016/16, Keele #12. Cit. Nightingale, *Works* (2004), 111.
[896] Florence Nightingale to ?, 12 December 1847. Wellcome Collection, London, MS 9016/24, copy Add. MSS 45791, ff. 258-59, Keele #20. Cit. Nightingale, *Works* (2004), 146-47. Florence Nightingale to Miss Nightingale, 17 February 1848. Wellcome Collection, London, Claydon copy, MS 9016/56, Keele #46. Cit. Nightingale, *Works* (2004), 266.

Quirinale, Rome) – 'divine' and 'Guido's very, very best';[897] *The Trinity* (Santissima Trinità dei Pellegrini, Rome);[898] and three *Ecce Homos* (Gemäldegalerie Alte Meister, Dresden).[899] She described Reni as the 'lyric representer' of Christianity and had a profoundly spiritual response to his paintings.[900] She also admired Reni's technical qualities, including the 'sunset colouring' of *St Michael* and his sense of 'luxuriance' and 'power and grace.'[901] In this respect, she contrasts distinctly with critics at the Manchester Exhibition.

Beatrice Cenci

In this period, *Beatrice Cenci* (Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Antica, Palazzo Barberini, Rome) became even more renowned among British audiences following the publication of two English texts. The first is James Whiteside's (1804–1876) *Italy in the Nineteenth Century* (1848), which established the painting as 'the most celebrated portrait in Rome, and perhaps in the world.'[902] Whiteside used a translation of a Florentine tract attributed to Agostino Ademollo (1799–1841) to suggest that Shelley was mistaken in characterising Beatrice as a murderess; rather, she was an innocent victim.[903] He described the portrait as 'haunting', stating that it 'seems ever after to hover over the memory

[897] Florence Nightingale to Mrs Nightingale, 12 November 1847. Wellcome Collection, London, Claydon copy, MS 9016/10, Keele #8. Cit. Nightingale, *Works* (2004), 94. Florence Nightingale to Miss Nightingale, 23 January 1848. Wellcome Collection, London, Claydon copy, MS 9016/43, Keele #35. Cit. Nightingale, *Works* (2004), 214.
[898] Florence Nightingale to Miss Nightingale, 26 January 1848. Wellcome Collection, London, Claydon copy, MS 9016/46, Keele #85. Cit. Nightingale, *Works* (2004), 232.
[899] Florence Nightingale to ?, 6 July 1850. Diary, Claydon House Bundle 122. Cit. Nightingale, *Works* (2004), 457-58. In 1877, Nightingale sent a doctor who attended a dying footman a photograph of Reni's *Ecce Homo* 'in memory of the lad' (Florence Nightingale to C.B.N. Dunn, 7 October 1877. Boston University, 2/2/6. Cit. Nightingale, *Works* (2004), 768).
[900] Florence Nightingale to Mrs Nightingale, 29 November 1847. Wellcome Collection, London, Claydon copy, MS 9016/18, Keele #14. Cit. Nightingale, *Works* (2004), 123.
[901] Florence Nightingale to Miss Nightingale, 23 January 1848. Wellcome Collection, London, Claydon copy, MS 9016/43, Keele #35. Cit. Nightingale, *Works* (2004), 214. Florence Nightingale to family, 25 June 1850. British Library, London, Add. MSS 45790, ff. 75-89. Cit. Nightingale, *Works* (2004), 437. Florence Nightingale to ?, 9 December 1847. Wellcome Collection, London, Claydon copy, MS 9016/21, Keele #17. Cit. Nightingale, *Works* (2004), 137.
[902] Whiteside, *Italy* (1848), Vol. 2, 319.
[903] Whiteside, *Italy* (1848), Vol. 2, 126-28.

with an interest the most harrowing and mysterious.'[904] The second publication is Charles Alex Scott's (dates unknown) 1858 translation of Francesco Domenico Guerazzi's (1804–1873) *Beatrice Cenci: Storia del secolo XVI* (1854). This provided an authoritative account of Beatrice's life, again characterising her as an innocent 'angel of martyrdom.'[905] Both works were widely reviewed and played a crucial role in the picture's enduring canonisation by further mythologising its protagonist.

The only negative review of *Beatrice Cenci* found in this period is in Fanny Kemble Butler's (1809–1893) *A Year of Consolation* (1847), where it is described as neither 'a very beautiful painting or the portrait of a very beautiful woman.' Questioning her 'vague and almost foolish' expression, Kemble Butler found the girl 'almost without character or expression of any sort but that of sweetness and suffering.' Most pertinently, she hinted that 'learned' viewers disputed its attribution and subject, concerns that would dominate in later years.[906] This aside, viewers tended to be full of ardent admiration for *Beatrice Cenci*, recognising its prestigious status. For Nightingale, 'you cannot imagine how it makes one's heart swell… Guido does not call upon you to observe her youth or her beauty or her intellect. *There* is a creature whom you are to pity – that is all – and you should go away with an iron hand grasping at your heart that such sorrow should be upon earth.'[907] On her father's death, she chose a copy of it from the family's collection.[908] In Murray's *Handbook* (1843), *Beatrice Cenci* was listed as 'one of the most celebrated pictures in Rome,' attracting 'peculiar interest' due to its production.[909] Mary Shelley (1797–1851), in *Rambles in Germany and Italy* (1844), compared it to Raphael's *La Fornarina* in the same collection, arguing that 'the innocent, tearful face of the young and lovely girl, whose look expresses the self-pity which must have swelled in her heart… put to shame the dark eyes and pencilled brows of her, whose passion was devoid of

[904] Whiteside, *Italy* (1848), Vol. 2, 160.
[905] Cit. Anon., 'Review of *Beatrice Cenci*' (1858), 267.
[906] Kemble Butler, *Year of Consolation* (1847), Vol. 1, 173-75.
[907] Florence Nightingale to Parthenope Nightingale, 17 December 1847. Wellcome Collection, London, MS 9016/24, copy ADD MSS 75791, ff. 258-69, Keele #20. Cit. Nightingale, *Works* (2004), 158.
[908] Claydon House bundle 111. Cit. Nightingale, *Works* (2004), 340.
[909] Anon., *Handbook Central Italy* (1843), 438.

tenderness.'[910] For Charles Dickens (1812–1870), in *Pictures from Italy* (1846), Beatrice's complex expression, together with the painting's execution, were responsible for its high status. Effusive in his praise, he described it as 'almost impossible to be forgotten… Through the transcendent sweetness and beauty of the face, there is something shining out, that haunts me.'[911] In *Dublin University Magazine* (1848), Reni was further described as a 'wonderful magician' whose portrait elicited 'a rush of feelings, conflicting, undeniable – pity, indignation, horror, almost sickness… Be unmoved if you can!'[912]

Finally, in Hawthorne's novel *The Marble Faun* (1860), *Beatrice Cenci* was described as 'the very saddest picture ever painted or conceived.'[913] In 1858, Hawthorne had argued: 'its spell is indefinable, and the painter has wrought it in a way more like magic than anything else… It is the most profoundly wrought picture in the world; no artist did it, nor could do it again.'[914] As it was impossible to copy the painting directly, he described his character Hilda observing it every day, letting it 'sink into her heart,' and noted its endless poor imitations as paintings, crayon sketches, cameos, engravings, and lithographs.[915] Such accounts demonstrate the celebrity of this painting, its powerful emotive qualities, and the way in which it functioned as a blank canvas for the imagination.

Travel in Britain

In Britain, both Jameson and Waagen focused attention on Reni in their handbooks to the country. Cognisant of existing criticism, they nevertheless promoted him as a skilful artist. Jameson, in *Companion to the Most Celebrated Private Galleries* (1844), cited Reni's *The Immaculate Conception* (The

[910] Shelley, *Rambles* (1844), Vol. 2, 223-24.
[911] Dickens, *Pictures from Italy* (1846), 211-12.
[912] Anon., 'Recent Tourists' (1848), 414.
[913] See Meyers, *Painting and Novel* (1975), 6-18. It was also described in Herman Melville's (1819–1891) *Pierre; or, The Ambiguities* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1852), 479, as 'the sweetest, most touching, but most awful of feminine heads.'
[914] Hawthorne, 'First Impressions IV' (1871), 359.
[915] Hawthorne, *Marble Faun* (2008), 51-5.

Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York) in Bridgewater Gallery, London, as 'a perfect example of those beauties by which he is usually characterised – elegance in the forms, grace and sentiment in the heads and expression, and pearly delicacy of tone. It is of his best time, also, for in his later pictures his grace became mannered, and his delicacy faded into coldness and insipidity.'[916] Waagen, in *Treasures of Art in Great Britain* (1854), stated: 'By means of his invention, his elegance of his forms, the grace of his movements, and the excellent keeping and lightness of his execution, he exercised, more than any other master of this school, the greatest influence over the painters of the succeeding generation.'[917] Further works were recommended in Murray's *Handbook to London* (1851) and 'Visits to Private Galleries' in *The Art-Union*.[918]

Reni's *St Sebastian* in Dulwich Picture Gallery was subject to particular attention at this time. As Richard Kaye suggests, representations of St Sebastian were at the forefront of a cultural debate in nineteenth-century Britain on the 'appropriate role of a Christian hero.'[919] The imagery elicited extreme responses as well as aesthetic and religious discomfort, as St Sebastian became identified as an erotically charged hero, with particular homoerotic associations.[920] In his novel *Alton Locke: Tailor and Poet. An Autobiography* (1850), Charles Kingsley (1819–1875) featured a lengthy account of his protagonist standing 'entranced' before Reni's painting at Dulwich, stating: 'the very defects of the picture, its exaggeration, its theatricality, were especially calculated to catch the eye of a boy awakening out of the narrow dulness of Puritanism':

> I have understood how the idolatry of painted saints could arise in the minds even of the most educated, who were not disciplined by that

[916] Jameson, *Companion* (1844), 85.
[917] Waagen, *Treasures* (1854), Vol. 1, 338.
[918] Anon., *Handbook: London* (1851), 13, 15, 17, 25, 165, 169. Anon., 'Hope' (1846), 97; Anon., 'Westminster' (1846), 205, 206; Anon., 'Sutherland' (1846), 237, 238; Anon., 'Northwick' (1846a), 252, 255, 256; Anon., 'Northwick' (1846b), 273-74; Anon., 'Ellesmere' (1847a), 11; Anon., 'Ellesmere' (1847b), 49, 51; Anon., 'Rogers' (1847), 85; Anon., 'Ashburton' (1847), 125; Anon., 'Munro' (1847), 254; Anon., 'Lansdowne' (1847a), 330; Anon., 'Lansdowne' (1847b), 359.
[919] Kaye, 'Determined Raptures' (1999), 269.
[920] Kaye, 'Determined Raptures' (1999), 270-71.

> stern regard for fact which is – or ought to be – the strength of Englishmen. I have understood the heart of that Italian girl, whom some such picture of St. Sebastian, perhaps this very one, excited, as the Venus of Praxiteles the Grecian boy, to hopeless love, madness, and death… My heart swelled within me, my eyes seemed bursting from my head with the intensity of my gaze, and great tears, I knew not why, rolled slowly down my face.[921]

For Kaye, *St Sebastian* functions here as a symbol of 'social, political, and sexual emancipation for the working-class tradesman and versifier.' The saint was an 'idealised male figure' for Locke, who grew up without a father, and a 'figure of Puritan renunciation *and* sensual satiation.' There is also a strong homoerotic quality with Locke's submission to feminine identification.[922] This emotional response to *St Sebastian*'s spiritual and aesthetic qualities recalls Walpole's comment in *Aedes Walpolianae* (1747) that Reni's religious works were dangerously powerful for the uneducated. As with Nightingale, Locke's response reveals that Reni's paintings, particularly those of religious bent, could still stimulate a powerful response in certain viewers. This contrasts starkly with the critique of several reviewers of the Manchester Exhibition, who felt that the Carracci School's paintings were cold, lacking in religious sincerity and divine inspiration.

Reni's Critical Reputation

The 1840s and 50s marked a significant period in the growth of art-historical understanding in Britain. The development of cheap reproducible images meant that Old Masters became increasingly familiar to a wide public. This was also achieved through myriad magazines, which were frequently illustrated. Some dealt exclusively with art, such as *The Art-Union*, whilst others had a broader remit. Many were aimed at the working classes, such as *The Penny Magazine*

[921] Kingsley, *Alton Locke* (1850), Vol. 1, 99-100.
[922] Kaye, 'Determined Raptures' (1999), 271-72, 284-87.

(1832–45) and *Sharpe's London Magazine* (from 1847). Such publications led to widespread critique of Reni, with a socially diverse audience invested in art.

In 1846, Samuel Carter Hall featured an article on Reni in *Sharpe's London Magazine*. Reworking material such as John Gould's (dates unknown) *A Dictionary of Painters, Sculptors, Architects, and Engravers* (1810), he defended Reni against contemporary criticism, stating:

> … some good judges have declared that Guido's paintings are not always so true to nature as those of Domenichino; but in delicacy of idea, elegance of design, freedom of pencil, and general effect, Guido has rarely been surpassed. Tender, pathetic, and devout subjects were those in which he particularly excelled. His heads are remarkable for grace, and an engaging propriety of expression, worthy of the pencil of Raphael himself. The form and air of his figures are extremely beautiful, whilst the general arrangement of his objects, and his astonishingly clear and pure colouring, deserve the highest praise.[923]

Thomas Roscoe's (1791–1871) 1847 translation of Luigi Lanzi's (1732–1810) *Storia Pittorica dell'Italia* (1792/96) ensured that this authoritative text in support of Reni was available to British audiences. Here, Reni was celebrated for his 'charm of style' and 'superhuman beauty.'[924] Further biographical details were provided in James R. Hobbes's (dates unknown) *The Picture Collector's Manual* (1849), in which Reni was praised for 'an exquisite touch, singular facility of execution, great suavity of colour, a general accordance of the sweetest harmony.'[925] Additionally, in *Painting and Celebrated Painters* (1854), Lady Jervis White Jervis (dates unknown) argued: 'As the last great artist of a celebrated school, and the last of the great Italian painters who combined the study of the classic with the Christian ideal, Guido deserves our particular regard.' In religious painting, 'he was often worthy of the best days of Christian art.'[926]

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[923] Hall, 'Biographical Sketches' (1846), 159.
[924] Lanzi, *History of Painting* (1847), Vol. 1, 459.
[925] Hobbes, *Picture Collector's Manual* (1849), 186-87.
[926] Jervis White Jervis, *Painting and Painters* (1854), 330.

Nevertheless, one can also identify the same criticisms of Reni that had been expressed by figures such as Fuseli. Charles Knight (1791–1873), in *The Penny Magazine* (1841), noted that Reni, whose 'labours rather please us for their grace and elegance of contour, than for vigorous conception or powerful execution,' belonged to the 'second class of painters.' Regarding Dulwich's *St Sebastian*, Knight argued: 'The criticism of Mr. Fuseli is peculiarly apt, though the work under notice must form an exception to it.'[927] In this period, criticisms of Reni combined to present a cold, repetitive, and superficial artist, 'more remarkable for elegance and sentiment, than for depth of feeling or purpose.'[928] In this section, prevalent charges are addressed in turn.

Idealism and Realism

From the eighteenth century, Reni's approach to ideal beauty was criticised for qualities of affectation and a lack of expressive power. Such criticisms persisted in this period, along with a new focus on religious insincerity. Furthermore, Reni's approach to depicting the natural world was subject to increased scepticism, likely due to the rise of realism.[929] In this post-romantic age, realism came to the forefront of cultural output in Britain. Its cornerstones were truthfulness and morality, values celebrated by Pre-Raphaelites, who opposed the 'triviality and vulgarity' of the academic art establishment.[930] Whilst some of their works are evocative of romantic idealism, their photographic qualities mark a different approach to that of Reni.[931] For Ruskin, 'Pre-Raphael-itism has but one principle, that of absolute, uncompromising truth in all that it does, obtained by working everything, down to the most minute detail, from nature, and from nature only.'[932] When first exhibited, their innovative style was often attacked in the press. In 1850, after John Everett Millais (1829–1896) submitted

[927] Knight, 'Dulwich College' (1841), 217-18.
[928] Jameson, *Companion* (1844), 251.
[929] For the rise of realism, see Levine, 'Victorian Realism' (2012), 86-8.
[930] Cit. Wood, *Pre-Raphaelites* (2000), 10. Lewes, 'Lady Novelists,' (1852), 130.
[931] William Holman Hunt (1827–1910) strongly disliked Reni. *The Toilet of Venus* (National Gallery, London) 'offended [him] by its empty pretension.' His criticism of Reni was considered 'flat blasphemy' at the Royal Academy. See Holman Hunt, *Pre-Raphaelitism* (1905), Vol. 1, 18-20, 52-3.
[932] John Ruskin, 'Pre-Raphaelitism' (1854). Cit. Ruskin, *Works* (1904), Vol. 12, 157.

the realistically peopled *Christ in the House of His Parents* (Tate Britain, London) to the Royal Academy, the writer and journalist Angus Reach (1821–1856) mocked Pre-Raphaelites as 'practitioners of "Early Christian Art"… who – setting aside the medieval schools of Italy, the Raffaeles, Guidos and Titians, and all such small-beer daubers – devote their energies to the reproduction of saints squeezed out perfectly flat.'[933] Dickens was equally derogatory, describing Christ as 'a hideous, wry-necked, blubbering, red-headed boy, in a bed gown' and Mary as a 'woman so hideous in her ugliness that… she would stand out from the rest of the company as a Monster, in the vilest cabaret in France, or the lowest gin shop in England.'[934]

However, others viewed this realistic approach more positively. For Ruskin and the philosopher and critic George Henry Lewes (1817–1878), idealism presented a warped version of nature and truth. Its inauthenticity meant that it was incompatible with the moral imperative of realism: engendering sympathy for ordinary men in communities.[935] Ruskin considered nature fundamental source material for artists; they should 'go to nature in all singleness of heart, and walk with her laboriously and trustingly, having no other thoughts but how best to penetrate her meaning, and remembering her instruction.'[936] Nature should not be merely imitated, but presented imaginatively 'in some peculiar, rare, and beautiful way.'[937] Reni's paintings were the antithesis of realism's call for the faithful representation of nature and ran counter to its focus on individuals, variety, ordinariness, and personal experience. For Ruskin, idealism was only successful with 'the most constant, patient, and humble rendering of actual models.'[938] He argued that there was 'no entirely sincere or great art in the seventeenth century'; Bolognese artists were 'art-weeds' grown from Venetian masters.[939] The Carracci School presented one-dimensional, inauthentic characters, epitomising artists who 'looked not at their models with intellectual

[933] Reach, 'Town Talk' (1850), 306.
[934] Wood, *Pre-Raphaelites* (2000), 17.
[935] See Andres, *Pre-Raphaelite Art* (2005), 10-1.
[936] Ruskin, *Modern Painters* (1843), Vol. 1. Cit. Ruskin, *Works* (1903), Vol. 4, 624.
[937] Ruskin, *Modern Painters* (1843), Vol. 1. Cit. Ruskin, *Works* (1903), Vol. 4, 157.
[938] Ruskin, *Modern Painters* (1846), Vol. 2. Cit. Ruskin, *Works* (1903), Vol. 4, 187.
[939] Ruskin, *Modern Painters* (1856), Vol. 3. Cit. Ruskin, *Works* (1904), Vol. 5, 400.

or loving penetration, but took the outside of them, or perhaps took the evil and left the good.'[940] Reni's approach to the religious 'proprieties of art' was problematic; he made St Margaret 'merely a pretty lady.'[941] There was a 'marked sensuality and impurity' in his beauty and a 'coarseness, mindlessness, and eclecticism.'[942] This concern with individuality was also expressed by Wornum in *The Epochs of Painting Characterized* (1847), in which he repurposed the story of Reni and the colour grinder, previously used to illustrate Reni's ability to derive beauty from any model, to suggest that 'the individual was of so little consequence to him, that his women are said to have been painted from an old colour-grinder.'[943]

Ruskin's writing was hugely influential; Leo Tolstoy (1828–1910) designated him 'one of those rare men who think with their hearts, and so he thought and said not only what he himself had seen and felt, but what everyone will think and say in the future.'[944] In 1890, Oscar Wilde (1854–1900) denoted his 'mighty and majestic prose' a 'work of art,' while, in 1900, Robert F. Horton (1855–1904) questioned, 'is it too much to say that thousands in this generation owe all their interior understanding of great art to Ruskin?'[945] In 1919, George Sampson (1873–1950) further argued that Ruskin 'really did make people look at pictures and try to like Fra Angelico better than Guido Reni.'[946] A writer greatly influenced by Ruskin was the novelist George Eliot (1819–1880).[947] Reviewing Ruskin's *Modern Painters*, she stated: 'The truth of infinite value that he teaches is *realism* – the doctrine that all truth and beauty are to be attained by a humble and faithful study of nature, and not by substituting vague forms, bred by imagination on the mists of feeling, in place of definite, substantial reality.'[948] In her novel *Adam Bede* (1859), Eliot declared that her intention as a writer was 'to give a faithful account of men and things as they have mirrored themselves in

[940] Ruskin, *Modern Painters* (1846), Vol. 2. Cit. Ruskin, *Works* (1903), Vol. 4, 189.
[941] John Ruskin, 'Notes on the Gallery of Turin.' Cit. Ruskin, *Works* (1905), Vol. 7, 324.
[942] Ruskin, *Modern Painters* (1846), Vol. 2. Cit. Ruskin, *Works* (1903), Vol. 4, 212, 254.
[943] Wornum, *Epochs of Painting* (1847), 385.
[944] Leo Tolstoy. Cit. Leon, *Tolstoy* (1944), 214.
[945] Wilde, 'Critic as Artist' (1986), 873; Horton, 'Ruskin' (1900), 290.
[946] Sampson, 'Ruskin' (1919), 155-56.
[947] See Mansell, 'Ruskin and Eliot's "Realism"' (1965), and Levine, 'Eliot and Realism' (2019).
[948] Eliot, 'Art and Belles Lettres' (1856), 626.

[her] mind.' Fellow-mortals 'must be accepted as they are'; they should not be corrected or idealised: 'I turn without shrinking from cloud-borne angels, from prophets, sibyls, and heroic warriors, to an old woman bending over her flower-pot, or eating her solitary dinner.' In contrast to Reni's idealising beauty, Eliot felt that there was another beauty 'which lies in no secret of proportion, but in the secret of deep human sympathy.'[949] This sympathy for 'fellow-mortals' could generate social change, fulfilling the moral objective of realism.

Eliot considered the expression of true, genuine emotion a crucial component of great art. Her allegiance to realism is the source of her intense dislike of Reni. Recalling a visit to Gemäldegalerie Alte Meister, Dresden, in 1858, she remarked: 'Guido is superlatively odious in his Christs, in agonised or ecstatic attitudes, much about the level of the accomplished London beggar.'[950] This contrasts with Nightingale's praise and is reminiscent of Eliot's appraisal of Dickens in *Westminster Review* (1856), in which she criticised the 'frequently false psychology' in 'his preternaturally virtuous poor children and artisans, his melodramatic boatmen and courtesans.'[951] Whilst Reni's *St Sebastian* at Pinacoteca Capitolina, Rome, was 'exceptionally beautiful among the many detestable things of his in this gallery,' the version at Dulwich was 'no exception to the usual "petty prettiness" of Guido's conceptions.'[952] In Bologna, she declared: 'I confirmed myself in my utter dislike of the Bolognese school – the Carracci, and Domenichino et id genus omne.'[953] This personal aversion was transmitted into her fiction: in *Middlemarch* (1872), Reni was mocked as a hackneyed caricature, an auctioneer sardonically describing him as 'the celebrated *Guydo*, the greatest painter in the world, the chief of the Old Masters.'[954]

[949] Eliot, *Adam Bede* (1997), 153-54.
[950] George Eliot, 'Recollections of our Journey from Munich to Dresden,' 27 October 1858. Cit. Eliot, *Journals* (1998), 326.
[951] Eliot, 'German Life' (1856), 55.
[952] George Eliot, **'**Recollections of Italy,' 1860. Cit. Eliot, *Journals* (1998), 348. George Eliot, 'Journal, 1859.' Cit. Walters Cross, *Eliot's Life* (2010), Vol. 2, 108.
[953] George Eliot, **'**Recollections of Italy,' 1860. Cit. Eliot, *Journals* (1998), 360.
[954] Eliot, *Middlemarch* (2012), 668.

Ruskin and Eliot's reactions towards Reni are indicative of a broader transformation in attitudes towards idealism in the mid-nineteenth century. Their views were influential and significantly contributed towards the fall of Reni's reputation. However, again, their judgements were not comprehensively adopted. Hobbes believed that Reni 'possessed an extraordinary faculty of being enabled to express great sadness or terror without detriment to the beauty of the countenance; his heads are accorded little inferior to Raffaelle, either in correctness of design, or propriety of expression.'[955] Trollope likewise praised Reni's Virgin in *The Immaculate Conception* (San Biagio, Forlì) for how 'youth, innocence, simplicity, and beauty are wrought together into a piece of mimic life, that looks much fitter for heaven than for earth.'[956]

Eclecticism

The second charge is that of eclecticism, associated with a lack of spontaneity and genius. In 1841, Franz Kugler's (1808–1858) influential *Handbuch der Geschicate der Malerei* (1837) was translated by Lady Eastlake with notes by her husband. Commenting on Kugler's observation that 'among the productions of the Bolognese painters, we rarely find works which bear the stamp of a spontaneous and really satisfactory feeling,' Sir Charles Lock Eastlake remarked that this opinion may 'perhaps now be consonant to that of the majority of critics':

> The change in more recent times, with regard to the homage paid [the Carracci School] has however been owing to a change of principle. It has been felt that, in the attempt to combine the excellencies, however great, of various minds, the chief recommendation of human productions, viz. the evidence of individual character, the moral physiognomy, which in its sincerity and passion atones for so many defects, is of necessity wanting: this is one reason why the Germans dwell so much on the unaffected efforts of the early painters, and is indeed a key to many apparently partial judgements of the author. The

[955] Hobbes, *Picture Collector's Manual* (1849), 187.
[956] Trollope, *Visit to Italy* (1842), Vol. 2, 165.

> principle to which the taste of the present age leans would include all Art which is remarkable for spontaneous feeling and singleness of aim; and if critics differ, it is only in the predilection for peculiar qualities, for peculiar kinds of originality.[957]

Jameson quoted Eastlake in *Companion* (1844) and accounted for eclecticism by drawing attention to the religious context of the age. Referencing Leopold von Ranke's (1795–1866) *Die Römischen Päpiste, Ihre Kirche und Ihr Staat im Sechzehnten und Siebzehnten Jahrhundert* (1834–36), translated into English in 1847, she argued that from the sixteenth century, 'the church reconquered her spiritual influence over painting, but in doing so, imparted to it "an ecclesiastical and sacerdotal, rather than a religious character."' For Jameson, this explained how the Carracci School was 'not a mere factitious combination of anomalous ingredients; it was stamped with a character of its own, and presents to us the true reflection of the religion and literature of that age.'[958] Nevertheless, elsewhere, she expressed concern regarding eclecticism, remarking: 'the result of this system, even in the palmy days of the Bologna school, has been an inferior style of art. Great technical excellence, but a want of singleness and individuality of feeling, a want of spiritual elevation; and while their productions are often delicate, graceful, majestic, they seldom appeal to the higher faculties of the soul.'[959] Jervis White Jervis similarly noted how eclecticism produced 'the highest kind of academical excellence, but failed in furnishing 'the quality essential to supremacy in art – invention.' It was thus 'not likely to create the highest class of painters.'[960]

In a lecture published in *The Two Paths* (1859), Ruskin claimed that eclecticism was based 'not upon an endeavour to unite the various characters of nature (which it is possible to do), but the various narrownesses of taste, which it is impossible to do.' In summary:

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[957] Sir Charles Lock Eastlake, in Kugler, *Hand-book* (1841), 393-94.
[958] Jameson, *Companion* (1844), 89-90. See Ranke, *History of Popes* (1847), Vol. 1, 375-77.
[959] Jameson, *Companion* (1844), 97-8.
[960] Jervis White Jervis, *Painting and Painters* (1854), 298.

> The eclectic schools endeavoured to unite these opposite partialities and weaknesses. They trained themselves under masters of exaggeration, and tried to unite opposite exaggerations. That was impossible. They did not see that the only possible eclecticism had been already accomplished;– the eclecticism of temperance, which, by the restraint of force, gains higher force; and by the self-denial of delight, gains higher delight.[961]

For this reason, Ruskin included Reni in his 'School of Errors and Vices' alongside Raphael (in his last manner), the Carracci, Carlo Dolci, Correggio, Murillo, Caravaggio, and landscapists including Claude Lorraine and Poussin.[962] Whiteside agreed, claiming that eclecticism was 'not likely to be lasting' because 'it was not natural, not imaginative, but confessedly imitating the excellencies of other masters.' At 'a particular period' in the hands of 'clever men' it might attain 'great success,' but 'it is not difficult to suppose that it would ere long sink into insignificance and decay.'[963] A similar opinion was expressed by a writer in *The Quarterly Review* (1854): 'though no present collector of the Italian schools would consider himself complete without them, yet it may be said that their day is over in the country' – 'the causes for this change lie in their very eclecticism; they will ever come in and go out with the ebb and flow of deep artistic feeling.'[964]

Nevertheless, once again, there were divergent views. William Spalding (1809–1859), in *Italy and the Italian Islands* (1841), found that while 'invention was greatly endangered by maxims' such as eclecticism, 'a few of the greater artists in the Bolognese school are strongly original.'[965] Likewise, Roscoe's translation of Lanzi included the view that 'Domenichino, Guido, Guercino, and others of the Carracci school, distinguished themselves by their novelty and originality of manner.'[966]

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[961] John Ruskin, 'The Unity of Art,' Manchester, 22 February 1859, in *The Two Paths*. Cit. Ruskin, *Works* (1905), Vol. 16, 298-99.
[962] John Ruskin to parents, 10 [11] July 1845. Cit. Shapiro, *Ruskin* (1972), 144.
[963] Whiteside, *Italy* (1848), Vol. 1, 69.
[964] Anon., 'Art VI. – Treasures' (1854), 496.
[965] Spalding, *Italy* (1841), Vol. 2, 396.
[966] Lanzi, *History of Painting* (1847), Vol. 2, 441.

Subject Matter

A further criticism in this period was the view that Reni's subject matter was inappropriate and even unpleasant, particularly his religious paintings. Jameson, in *Sacred and Legendary Art* (1848), cited the entire Carracci School: 'This merely heathen grave and merely human sentiment, is the general tendency of the whole school; and no beauty of form or colour can, to the feeling and religious mind, redeem such gross violations of propriety.'[967] With respect to Reni's depiction of the Magdalen, she complained:

> … his saintly penitents, with all their exceeding loveliness, appear to me utterly devoid of that beauty which has been called "the beauty of holiness;" the reproachful grandeur of the Niobe is diluted into voluptuous feebleness; the tearful faces, with the loose golden hair and uplifted eyes, of which he has given us at least ten repetitions, however charming as art, are unsatisfactory as religious representations.[968]

Jameson also found Reni's *St Michael* troublesome. Although the Archangel was 'singularly beautiful' – there was 'something divine' in the head – Satan was a 'degraded prosaic human ruffian… stupid and base.'[969] Waagen further cited Reni's *Sibyl*; examining a version (Spencer Museum of Art, University of Lawrence, Kansas) in Samuel Jones-Loyd, 1st Baron Overstone's (1796–1883) collection, he exclaimed: 'What an immense difference between Michael Angelo's conception of the ancient Sibyl as a noble prophetess, and the pretty amiable young girl before us!'[970]

A specific aspect of this criticism concerned Reni's unnecessary focus on suffering. This demonstrates the contradictory nature of views in this period – for some, Reni was not realistic enough, for others, he was too realistic. This concern derives from a climate of heightened morality in mid-nineteenth-century Britain, an age of intense Protestantism in which the Word was circulated

[967] Jameson, *Sacred and Legendary Art* (1848), Vol. 1, 47-8.
[968] Jameson, *Sacred and Legendary Art* (1848), Vol. 1, 351.
[969] Jameson, *Sacred and Legendary Art* (1848), Vol. 1, 73.
[970] Waagen, *Galleries and Cabinets* (1857), 142.

through the press, bibles were chained to railway stations, and missionaries were dispersed throughout the British Empire. With this focus on biblical values, the virtues of sober living, hard work, education, and utility became vital concerns. A sense of piety and propriety was manifested in euphemisms for body parts and segregation of authors in libraries. Literature, including Shakespeare, was censored, with lewd or unsavoury references removed. Nudity became a taboo, with fig-leaves added to statuary and reactions against paintings of fleshy figures.[971] This climate of sensitivity and prudishness provides the cultural backdrop to criticisms of Reni.

Kemble Butler exemplifies this view in her description of Reni's *Ecce Homo* (Fig. 57; Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Antica, Palazzo Corsini, Rome). A friend told her that it had 'impressed her more than any picture she had ever seen.' However, Kemble Butler had a 'repugnance to pictures of this subject' and found 'nothing in the habitually sickly colouring and feeble expression of Guido's painting to counteract the intolerable effect of horror and disgust always produced upon me by representations of the physical agony of Christ.'[972] Whilst she considered it less 'meretricious' than Guercino's version, the term is used elsewhere regarding Reni. In *Bentley's Miscellany* (1851), a writer criticised Reni's *The Immaculate Conception* (The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York), stating: 'I remember the Christian purity and simplicity of the Madonnas of Raffaelle, and find the Madonna of Guido, and all her attendant seraphs, conventional and meretricious.'[973] The archaic connotations of 'meretricious' pertaining to prostitutes may possibly be intended here, with the implication that Reni's Virgin was unsuitable and unseemly.

This type of argument was not confined to British authors; Ranke complained that, among Bolognese artists, 'the horrible… is expressed with needless frequency, and without the slightest mitigation.' A notable example was Reni's *Massacre of the Innocents* (Pinacoteca Nazionale, Bologna), depicted in 'all its

[971] Reitlinger, *Economics of Taste* (1982), Vol. 1, 132. See Parrish, 'Changing Tastes' (2015), 4-5.
[972] Kemble Butler, *Year of Consolation* (1847), Vol. 2, 272-74.
[973] Anon., 'Ellesmere's Collection' (1851), 80.

atrocity, – the women with their mouths all open pouring forth shriek on shriek – the savage executioners whose hands are dyed with the blood of their victims!'[974] For Whiteside, the Carracci School was affected by 'the religious enthusiasm of the age' and 'their conceptions were sometimes fantastic and incongruous… they seemed to relish depicting the horrible without any attempt to soften its repulsive despot.' He also highlighted *Massacre of the Innocents* – 'in its naked atrocity and terror; the women have all their mouths open screaming, while the savage soldiers are in the act of butchering the defenceless infants.'[975] Of course, some earlier writers had found this picture problematic; in 1818, Percy Shelley (1792–1822) described it as 'very horrible.'[976] Nonetheless, the extreme praise it had previously attracted – 'a master-piece of poetical feeling,' 'there is in this sublime composition so much to melt and to horrify, that it is often left and often returned to' – is almost completely replaced with discomfort regarding subject matter.[977]

Gambling

A further feature to attract attention was the declining quality of Reni's output towards the end of his career, associated with his gambling habit. This is directly tied to the period's heightened morality and concern regarding the perceived character of artists. At this stage in his career, Ruskin associated the aesthetic quality of artistic output with moral righteousness; only later he 'found out' that 'to be a first rate painter – you mustn't be pious, but rather a little wicked, and entirely a man of the world.'[978] In Kugler's *Hand-book*, it is stated: 'In the latter part of his life Guido often painted with careless haste; he had given himself up to play, and sought to retrieve his immense losses by raising money as rapidly and easily as he could. At this time chiefly were painted the numerous Madonnas, Cleopatras, Sibyls, etc., which are to be found in every gallery.' Eastlake observed that this was only true of 'the inferior repetitions of these

[974] Ranke, *History of Popes* (1847), Vol. 1, 377.
[975] Whiteside, *Italy* (1848), 69-70.
[976] Percy Shelley to Thomas Love Peacock, 9 November 1818. Cit. Shelley, *Letters* (1909), Vol. 2, 638.
[977] Galiffe, *Italy* (1820), Vol. 1, 77-80; Morgan, *Italy* (1821), 35.
[978] John Ruskin to Charles Eliot Norton. Cit. Sargent, 'Ruskin as Critic' (1919), 391-92.

subjects, for some of this class are among Guido's most careful and pleasing productions.'[979] Further criticism can be found in Roscoe's translation of Lanzi and texts by Spalding, Hobbes, and Jervis White Jervis.[980] Strong moral censure can be found in *The Art-Union* (1842), in which Reni's mind was described as 'corrupted' as he 'exhausted his fine imagination' and 'prostituted his great genius.' In the end, he 'fell into dishonour and degradation, and at last died in poverty and squalid wretchedness!'[981]

In this period, critique of Reni became intense and visceral. Enhanced art-historical understanding meant that he became more susceptible to criticism than earlier in the century. The growth of interest in new genres led his paintings to be cast aside, considered ill-suited for public reflection. Furthermore, the sensitivity and morality of the age meant that they were deemed inappropriate and even unpleasant, resulting in widespread rejection in the strongest terms.

* * *

In 1851, the poet Elizabeth Barrett Browning (1806–1861) recounted her journey from Italy to France, commenting that the 'Lombard school generally was delightful after Bologna & those soul-less Carracci.' With some surprise, she remarked: 'I have even given up Guido, & Guercino too, since knowing more of them.'[982] Barrett Browning had previously admired the 'lustral & supernatural' effects of 'the seraphic Guido.'[983] By 1851, this appreciation had diluted and she turned to alternative artists. Barrett Browning was not alone in 'giving up' Reni at this time. The 1840s and 50s were a watershed for Italian seventeenth-century artists. Influential figures openly rejected Reni in widely disseminated texts and the idea that he had fallen from favour was publicly voiced. Reactions to the National Gallery and Manchester Exhibition mark a

[979] Kugler, *Hand-book* (1841), Vol. 1, 403, with comments by Sir Charles Lock Eastlake.
[980] Lanzi, *History of Painting* (1847), Vol. 3, 96; Spalding, *Italy* (1841), Vol. 2, 400; Hall, 'Biographical Sketches' (1846), 159; Hobbes, *Picture Collector's Manual* (1849), Vol. 1, 186; Jervis White Jervis, *Painting and Painters* (1854), 329-30.
[981] Anon., 'Subject of Ancient Grounds' (1842), 254.
[982] Elizabeth Barratt Browning to John Kenyon, 8 July [1851]. Cit. Kelley, Lewis, and Hagan, *Brownings' Correspondence* (2010), Vol. 17, 66-70.
[983] Elizabeth Barratt Browning to Mary Russell Mitford, 8 November 1841. Cit. Kelley, Lewis, and Hagan, *Brownings' Correspondence* (2010), Vol. 5, 163-65.

turning point for Reni's reputation. Prominent and virulent, they not only reflect changing attitudes towards Reni but played a significant role in downgrading his reputation.

Nevertheless, the opinions of the majority could not be changed overnight. As Francis Haskell suggests, taste in this period was fluid and receptive; it was not based on 'a policy of systematic exclusion' but was 'more open than it ever had been, or would be again until more than a hundred years later.'[984] The complexity of Reni's transient status is evident in the removal of *The Toilet of Venus* and *Perseus and Andromeda* from the National Gallery in 1861. At this time, Eastlake observed: 'I do not like the presence of those large Guidos at all.'[985] They were added to a list of 'superfluous paintings' which 'may be withdrawn from the National Gallery without impairing the efficiency thereof.'[986] By 1862, they were transferred to the National Galleries of Ireland and Scotland, marking a significant moment in the newly instigated institutional rejection of Reni. Nonetheless, the vestiges of Reni's surviving reputation are evident in both pictures being the first choices of their respective new directors.[987]

[984] Haskell, *Rediscoveries* (1980), 129-30.
[985] Sir Charles Lock Eastlake to Ralph Wornum, 18 March 1861. National Gallery Archive, London, NG5/347/1.
[986] National Gallery Archive, London, NG1, Vol. 4, 261: Board Minutes, 22 July 1861.
[987] National Gallery Archive, London, NG1, Vol. 4, 290: Board Minutes, 30 June 1862. See Parrish, 'Changing Tastes' (2015), 24-5.

The Reception of Guido Reni in Britain 1862–1903

> 'Very little of [the Carracci School's art] bears examination now. We regard it with listlessness or loathing. We turn from it without regret. We cannot, or do not, wish to keep it in our memory'
>
> John Addington Symonds, 1886.[988]

Critique of the 1840s and 50s certainly fuelled doubts in Britain over Reni's status in the canon. From the 1860s until the early twentieth century, this downward trajectory continued as Reni became increasingly controversial. However, whilst in some quarters there was a targeted dismantling of Reni's reputation, it was not fully destroyed at this time. Indeed, several expressed concern that criticism had become extreme, even suggesting that Reni might become fashionable once more. In this chapter, Reni's diminishing reputation in these years is examined, with particular attention drawn to the poet and literary critic John Addington Symonds (1840–1893), whose vitriol against the Carracci School surpassed that of even Ruskin.

The Art Market

The second half of the nineteenth century was a tumultuous time for Old Masters in Britain. According to Thomas M. Bayer and John R. Page, the market for contemporary art in the 1860s–80s was up to three times the size for Old Masters.[989] Gerald Reitlinger identifies this period as the peak of the 'Golden Age of the Living Painter.'[990] Other causes for a decline in the Old Master market include: heightened pessimism regarding forgeries and poorly-cleaned pictures; the diverse interests of industrial collectors; inflated prices due to growing interest in paintings as investments; and the ramifications of the Long

[988] Symonds, *Catholic Reaction II* (1887), 345.
[989] Bayer and Page, *Art Market* (2015), 102-03.
[990] Reitlinger, *Economics of Taste* (1982), Vol. 1, 175-206.

Depression of 1873–96.[991] However, towards the end of the century, contemporary art became undermined by 'new aesthetic theories introduced by native English and continental artist[s]' and 'the demise of the reproductive engraving industry and its chief marketing tool, the sensation picture exhibition.'[992] Conversely, the market for Old Masters revived, due to the initiation of Royal Academy loan exhibitions in 1870, growing numbers of dealers, and a change in legal and tax codes that prompted wealthy landowners to sell their collections.[993] By 1900, Old Masters again dominated the market, achieving unprecedented prices.[994]

Despite these obstacles, Reni's paintings continued to circulate, with two works of particular note sold for high prices at either end of this period. The first, *St James the Greater* (Fig. 58; The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston) was originally in the collection of King Louis-Philippe I of France (1773–1850) and entered the possession of the eccentric recluse Charles Scarisbrick (1801–1860) in the 1850s. At this time, Scarisbrick was engaged in the remodelling of his family seat Scarisbrick Hall, Lancashire. It is unclear how Reni's painting entered Scarisbrick's possession, but it evidently appealed to him as a Catholic collector. After his death, the picture was sold to 'Graves' at Christie's on 13 May 1861 (Lot 241) for the significant sum of 1,250 guineas (£1,312.10). In the catalogue, it was described as a 'superlatively beautiful work' and 'one of the master's very finest time.'[995] The buyer's willingness to spend this sum is extremely telling and was recognised at the time; in *London Society* (1866), a writer argued that it provided 'sufficient proof that the taste for this class of art has not materially declined.'[996]

[991] Reitlinger, *Economics of Taste* (1982), Vol. 1, 109-10. See Editorial, 'Middle-Class Collector' (1905), 173. For concern regarding forgeries and copies, see Roberts, 'Pictures and Prices' (1894), 292. For concern regarding Reni's paintings, see Thompson, *Handbook* (1877), 80.
[992] Bayer and Page, *Art Market* (2015), 179, 200.
[993] Bayer and Page, *Art Market* (2015), 201; Helmreich, 'Traversing Objects' (2012), 139.
[994] Pezzini, '(Inter)national Art' (2019), 139.
[995] Sale Cat. Anon. (1988), Lot 13.
[996] Anon., 'Art in Auction' (1866), 261.

The second picture is *Venus and Cupid ('Il Diamante')* (Fig. 59; Toledo Museum of Art, Ohio), painted for a goldsmith who paid with a diamond.[997] Later in the collections of Count Poletti of Pozzuoli (dates unknown), Giuseppe Longhi (1766–1831), and Angelo Boucheron (c. 1780–1859) in Turin, it was acquired early in the nineteenth century by William Buchanan (1777–1864). By 1854, it entered the collection of Sir Andrew Fountaine IV (1808–1873) at Narford Hall, Norfolk. Fountaine was a descendent of the renowned eighteenth-century collector Sir Andrew Fountaine (1676–1753) who intriguingly owned a self-portrait by Reni, likely given to him by Cosimo III de' Medici, Grand Duke of Tuscany (1642–1723).[998] In 1880, *Il Diamante* was exhibited at the Royal Academy and on 7 July 1894 was offered in the Fountaine sale at Christie's (Lot 62) where it was bought in for 1,000 guineas (£1,050). Both *St James* and *Il Diamante* were high-quality autograph works and provide compelling evidence for a sustained interest in Reni, despite many adverse conditions of the period.

Nevertheless, Reni's pictures generally no longer attracted the same attention they once had. In 1894, the artist, collector, and curator Sir John Charles Robinson (1824–1913) stated: 'strange indeed and startling are the reversals and surprises which the auctioneer's hammer reveals to the anxious owner. The cherished Guido, Claude, or Salvator of the sounding name… is usually knocked down for an old song; whilst some little-considered family portrait… by Romney or Sir Joshua, brings compensation in the form of unexpected thousands to the astonished proprietor.'[999] This impression of Reni being viewed as passé in comparison to eighteenth-century British portraitists is mirrored in Thomas Hardy's (1840-1928) novel *Jude the Obscure* (1894–95) which concerns a religious stonemason who dreams of becoming a scholar. Walking through the galleries of Wardour Castle, Wiltshire, with his love interest Sue Bridehead, Jude stopped 'by preference in front of the devotional pictures by Del Sarto, Guido Reni, Spagnoletto, Sassoferrato, Carlo Dolci, and others' while 'Sue paused patiently beside him, and stole critical looks into his face as, regarding the Virgins, Holy Families, and Saints, it grew reverent and abstracted.' Finally,

[997] Malvasia, *Felsina Pittrice* (2019), Vol. 1, 100-01.
[998] Christie's, London, 10 July 1992, Lot 61.
[999] Robinson, 'Connoisseurship and Collecting' (1894), 525.

'when she had thoroughly estimated him at this, she would move on and wait for him before a Lely or Reynolds.'[1000] Dennis Taylor describes how Sue's interest in 'fashionable worldly portrait paintings [is] contrasted with the religious paintings which Jude likes.'[1001] His preferred paintings mirror his character: overtly devotional, old-fashioned, and staid.

The National Gallery

The position adopted by the National Gallery in the late nineteenth century was one primarily of institutional rejection. As the century drew to a close, the Gallery's hang was reconfigured. In earlier years, Reni's paintings had been prominently displayed, with *St Jerome* placed in a dominant position in the main room.[1002] In 1878, Henry Blackburn (1830–1897) observed seventeenth-century Bolognese pictures displayed with Venetian and Tuscan works in Room 10.[1003] However, by 1888, Italian Seicento paintings were relegated to Room 13, 'a kind of ghetto removed from the rest of the Italian schools,' with Reni predominantly in one corner.[1004] A similar decision was made by the Directors of Musée du Louvre, Paris, who withdrew Italian seventeenth-century pictures from display in the Long Gallery in the 1880s. The art historian Sir Claude Phillips (1846–1924) noted that it had become the 'fashion' on the Continent to condemn the Carracci School, with the term 'un Bolonais' a 'most contemptuous form of insult.'[1005] The rejection of artists at the Louvre led the French art historian Louis Dimier (1865–1943) to attempt to restore them to public awareness, writing an article in *Les Arts* (1911) entitled 'Le Louvre Invisible.'[1006] The response to the National Gallery's segregation is equally revealing. In 1888, the journalist Edward Tyas Cook (1857–1919) argued that Room 13's pictures were 'representative of the decay of the various schools which we have already

[1000] Hardy, *Jude the Obscure* (1998), 137.
[1001] Dennis Taylor, in Hardy, *Jude the Obscure* (1998), 436, fn. 4. For Jude and Sue's religious views, see Hardy, *Jude the Obscure* (1998), 166.
[1002] See, for instance, Frederick Mackenzie, *The National Gallery when at Mr J.J. Angerstein's House, Pall Mall*, 1824–34, watercolour, Victoria & Albert Museum, London.
[1003] Blackburn, *National Gallery* (1878), 14-23.
[1004] Kitson, 'Mahon' (1997), 10.
[1005] Phillips, 'Longford Castle' (1897), 144.
[1006] Dimier, 'Le Louvre Invisibile' (1912).

surveyed' and exhibited 'not, as is the case in many continental galleries, side by side with works of the golden age of Italian art, but hung together in a room devoted to its decadence.'[1007] In 1908, the journalist Alice Corkran (1856–1916) revelled in the 'the decay of the Italian school,' proclaiming: 'I shall not keep you long over this room. All the paintings are painful to look at.'[1008] It was not until 1911 that the display was rearranged, with Reni's works moved alongside 'the seriousness and dignity of Ferrarese art.'[1009]

Furthermore, rejection of Reni and the Carracci School is manifest in the myriad catalogues of the Gallery of this period. In his guide, Cook largely drew from Symonds and Ruskin, citing eclecticism as the cause for the 'decadence' of seventeenth-century Italian painting and dismissively suggesting that Bolognese works were produced 'by men not eminently gifted for the arts.'[1010] Reni's *Ecce Homo* epitomised 'how much more they dwell on the physical pain and horror, how much less on the spiritual beauty, than Correggio did.'[1011] Describing *Susannah and the Elders*, he quoted from Symonds regarding 'the half-effeminate, half-spiritual character' of some of Reni's works. Recalling Symonds's view that this 'effeminate eccentricity amounted to insanity' in Reni's later life, Cook exclaimed: 'How different from the honourable terms on which the earlier masters worked! How easy to understand the number of bad Guidos in the world!' He further referenced Ruskin in condemning *Lot and his Daughters* and *Susannah and the Elders* as 'two of the nation's conspicuously bad bargains.'[1012] In an article in *The Contemporary Review* (1889), he also proclaimed: 'The onslaught made by Mr. Ruskin in "Modern Painters" on the later Italian schools has often been accused of exaggeration; but it is not always remembered what provocation he had in the taste which he set himself to chastise.'[1013]

[1007] Cook, *National Gallery* (1888), Vol. 2, 305.
[1008] Corkran, *National Gallery* (1908), 107, 109.
[1009] Anon., 'New Wing' (1911), 257.
[1010] Cook, *National Gallery* (1888), Vol. 2, 305-07.
[1011] Cook, *National Gallery* (1888), Vol. 2, 329.
[1012] Cook, *National Gallery* (1888), Vol. 2, 321-22, 324.
[1013] Cook, 'Prices at National Gallery' (1889), 723.

Henry Attwell (dates unknown), in his catalogue of 1888, was similarly condemnatory of Bolognese painting. He again cited eclecticism as the cause for the 'decadence' of the Carracci School and deplored the decline in Reni's 'third manner' which resulted in 'a distasteful sentimentality.' Although Reni's execution was 'in many regards excellent, and his best pictures are not without grace and harmony,' he argued that 'his ideal was ignoble' and believed that *Ecce Homo* was more widely-known than it merited: 'The admiration won by such painters as Guido has been chiefly excited by their faults rather than by their excellences. It will be long before theatrical effects cease to prove attractive artistic qualities.'[1014] Similar arguments were set forward in *Half Holidays at the National Gallery* (1890), in which it was suggested that the 'decadence' of seventeenth-century Bolognese painting related to 'art of this later period' not being 'spontaneous.' Their motives were not 'wholly religious' compared to 'Early 'Masters'.[1015] The frequent use of the term 'decadence' in relation to Reni is explored later.

Particularly strong censure can be found in the 1896 catalogue of Charles Locke Eastlake (1836–1906), nephew of Sir Charles Lock Eastlake (1793–1865) and Keeper of the National Gallery in 1878–98. Eastlake conceded that some of Reni's paintings had attractive qualities and he occupied 'conspicuous rank' for his 'prolific powers of design, his facile execution and his keen sense of physical beauty.' However, he considered the lack of individualism, the 'one quality essential to true genius,' to be a crucial flaw of eclecticism. He further criticised its 'cold shade of Academicism.'[1016] Regarding Reni's *The Coronation of the Virgin*, he argued that 'in comparison with religious art of earlier days, certain details of Guido's design appear garish and scenic.' With respect to *Lot and his Daughters*, it was now 'judged by a very different standard of taste from that which prevailed in the last century.' Lot was 'deficient in interest' and the women's features were 'of a strictly academical type' with 'untrue' and 'unworthy' colouring. Nevertheless, he did not consider the picture any worse than one would expect from this school. Referencing Ruskin, he argued: 'A well

[1014] Attwell, *Italian Masters* (1888), 104-05.
[1015] Anon., *Half Holidays* (1902), 10.
[1016] Eastlake, *National Gallery* (1896), 95, 97.

known modern critic has singled this example of Guido for special contumely, but after making some allowance for the restorer's hand, its demerits are only those which belong to most works of this class and period.'[1017]

Catalogues to the National Gallery reveal how the institution served as a primary environment for critiques of Reni to be played out, with the arguments of Symonds and Ruskin becoming central to common thinking. Nevertheless, for certain visitors to the Gallery, Reni's works continued to hold attraction. A striking piece of evidence is the record of the most copied paintings at the Gallery from 1856 to 1893.[1018] Despite the segregation of Reni's paintings during these years and poor response to them in print, they were immensely popular among copyists. Numbers vary annually, yet Reni's *Ecce Homo* features in 25 lists, *Christ embracing St John the Baptist* in 19, *St Mary Magdalene* in seven, and *The Coronation of the Virgin* in three. *Ecce Homo* and *Christ embracing St John the Baptist* – two of Reni's religious paintings – are thus amongst the most copied paintings in the second half of the century, appearing more frequently than most 'Early Masters'. This was commented upon in the press with some incredulity. In *The Architect* (1864), it was stated: 'it is remarkable that the only masters of the different Italian schools whose works have been selected were Guido and Sassoferrato, the *Madonna in Prayer* by the latter being copied eight times, and Guido's *Youthful Christ and St. John* four times. Rubens's *Chapeau de Paille*, and Vandyck's *Gevartius*, appear to be the favourites, each being copied nine times.'[1019] Similarly, in *Saturday Review of Politics, Literature, Science and Art* (1881), it was emphasised that 'the commercial element is an important one in determining the choice of subjects for reproduction.' Arguing that 'there is a certain market for the sale of copies taken from the works of popular masters,' the writer found this the only way to explain 'the preference for a painter like Greuze by the students of the National Gallery' as well as 'Murillo's "Peasant Boy," Guido Reni's "Youthful Christ

[1017] Eastlake, *National Gallery* (1896), 99.
[1018] 'Pictures most frequently Copied during the Year,' compiled from National Gallery Annual Reports (1857–93). National Gallery Archive, London. See Parrish, 'Changing Tastes' (2015), 26.
[1019] Anon., 'National Gallery' (1874), 197.

and St. John," and Sassoferrato's "Madonna in Prayer."' All of these works 'belong manifestly to a class of art that is found attractive for other than purely artistic reasons.'[1020]

Public Architecture

Just as there were mixed reactions at the National Gallery, something similar can be found in public architecture. In 1872, the Albert Memorial was opened by Queen Victoria (1819–1901) in London. Commemorating the death of Prince Albert (1819–1861), the monument featured a statue of the late Prince holding a catalogue of the 1851 Great Exhibition which he had helped to organise. Encircling the base and reflecting Albert's love of the arts, the Frieze of Parnassus featured individual sculptures of renowned creative figures from history, including artists, musicians, poets, sculptors, and architects. Reni's absence from a group of 41 painters is telling and hints at the type of formal repudiation which can be found at this time. Indeed, as Hilary Fraser suggests, the Albert Memorial can be considered a 'monument to mid-Victorian taste,' the figures illustrative of popular artists of the day.[1021] Whilst Albert did indeed favour 'Early Masters' over seventeenth-century artists, the exclusion of Reni is particularly notable given that other seventeenth-century Bolognese painters were incorporated, including Annibale and Ludovico Carracci, suggesting that he was singularly excluded. Francis Haskell considers the absence of contemporary criticism of the selection of painters likely to hail from 'a desire not to disturb a *status quo* that appeared to be as satisfactory as could be achieved.'[1022] It thus appears that Reni's absence was either not a great surprise or not worthy of complaint.

However, another structure built towards the end of this period paints a different image of Reni's reputation. In 1903, Reni's *Aurora* (Palazzo Pallavicini-Rospigliosi, Rome) was chosen for the decoration of an open-air theatre

[1020] Anon., 'National Gallery' (1881), 432.
[1021] Fraser, *Victorians and Italy* (1992), 45.
[1022] Haskell, *Rediscoveries* (1980), 19.

(destroyed) in Port Sunlight, near Birkenhead, a model village established in 1888. The theatre, described in *Building News* (1903) as a 'unique institution, the first of its kind in the United Kingdom,' seated 3,000 people and held theatrical performances, concerts, athletic displays, and public meetings. The pediment on the proscenium was 'filled with a bas-relief in terra-cotta, modelled by Mr. E.O. Griffith, the subject being the "Aurora," and the design an adaptation of Guido Reni's fresco in Rome.'[1023] The uniqueness of the structure and nature of its design was acknowledged in 1903 in *The Manchester Guardian*, while an image was published in *The Illustrated London News*.[1024] Reni's *Aurora*, a highly decorative painting, was an appropriate choice for a building used primarily in the summer. Nevertheless, its selection is striking. The building may not have been as culturally or visually significant as the Albert Memorial, yet its decoration indicates that at the end of this period, Reni could still be viewed as an appropriate and worthy artist for the ornamentation of a public space. This is perhaps particularly the case in regional locations where traditional views of Reni's high reputation were more likely to be maintained.

Exhibitions

A further way in which this uncertainty regarding Reni's status was manifested was through display in exhibitions. A particularly notable event was the National Exhibition of Works of Art in Leeds in 1868. Similar to the Manchester Exhibition, the Leeds Exhibition offered a rare opportunity for the general public to see high-quality artworks usually sequestered in private collections. Thirteen paintings attributed to Reni are listed in the Catalogue, including John Spencer, 5th Earl Spencer's (1835–1910) *Liberality and Modesty* (Private Collection, United States) (197). This picture, as we have seen, had a long history in Britain dating back to the eighteenth century. It was the only work by Reni at the Exhibition to receive significant attention in the press. A writer in *The Art-Journal* described it as 'Lord Spencer's great Guido… finely engraved by Strange, and… one of the painter's good works,' whilst a writer in *The*

[1023] Anon., 'Building News' (1903), 452.
[1024] Anon., 'Open-Air Theatre' (1903), 10.

Athenaeum listed it as a primary example of 'the later Italian schools.'[1025] However, strikingly, in *Baines' Handbook to the Exhibition*, there is no reference to this painting; the only work by Reni acknowledged was a study of *Aurora* (present whereabouts unknown) lent by Salusbury Kynaston Mainwaring (1844–1895), described as 'a picture to be delighted in… though it is somewhat difficult to see here.'[1026] This lack of attention to Reni at the Leeds Exhibition is noteworthy. Even when his works were mentioned, responses to them were perfunctory and attention was evidently directed elsewhere. Furthermore, there were various derogatory comments on Reni in the reviews. A writer in *The Athenaeum*, describing *The Infant Christ and St John* (114) (present whereabouts unknown), attributed to Reni but later assigned to Bernardo Luini, stated that its landscape was associated with 'a school very different from those of Domenichino and Guido, neither of whom could have reached that thought of beauty which the children show.'[1027] This comment exemplifies the indifference shown towards Reni at the Exhibition; he simply did not attract the attention he had garnered even at Manchester in 1857.

A similar situation can be found at the Royal Academy, which, from 1870, hosted annual winter loan exhibitions featuring Old Masters. The significance of these exhibitions is clear; regular and ever-changing, they played a crucial role in renewing the taste for Old Masters in the latter decades of the century.[1028] Whilst works by Reni were selected on a fairly regular basis, they were not heavily featured. This was increasingly the case towards the end of the century: five works were exhibited in 1871, one in 1872, one in 1878, two in 1879, one in 1880, one in 1881, one in 1886, and one in 1887. Strikingly, none were presented from 1888 to 1900. The annual exhibition of 1903 reveals much about the complexity of Reni's status in this period. For this exhibition, Ivor Bertie Guest, 1st Baron Wimborne, 2nd Baronet (1835–1914) loaned Reni's *Cardinal Roberto Ubaldini* (destroyed) (46) from Canford Manor, Dorset. The portrait had arrived in Britain in the second half of the nineteenth century and is similar

[1025] Anon., 'Leeds National Exhibition' (1868), 96; Anon., 'Leeds Exhibition' (1868a), 730.
[1026] Baines, *National Exhibition* (1868), 23.
[1027] Anon., 'Leeds Exhibition' (1868b), 766. See also Anon., 'Leeds Exhibition (1868a), 729.
[1028] Helmreich, 'Traversing Objects' (2012), 139.

to the painting in Dr Sommerville's collection that had been exhibited at the British Institution in 1821 (Fig. 60; Los Angeles County Museum of Art).[1029] At Burlington House, the painting was displayed prominently in the Banqueting Gallery, suggesting its perceived high status among the organisers of the exhibition. Enid Guest, Lady Layard (1843–1912) highlighted it in her journal, while a writer in *The Athenaeum* was pleased that Claude Phillips, in an unidentified review, had been 'bold' enough to praise the picture.[1030] He himself deemed it an 'excellent work by an artist whose past reputation may have been in excess of his merits, but who certainly does not deserve the contemptuous indifference of the present day.' Whilst Reni's manner was 'unsympathetic,' he considered him a 'genuine artist' with technical skill, particularly in colour and design. Although the portrait was 'certainly not an intensely inspired work,' the hands were 'admirable,' it had an 'admirably designed composition,' and 'the colour, though cold and almost repellent at first sight, is seen on a closer acquaintance to be perfectly understood and everywhere intentional.' In summary: 'Such a portrait as this can never please those who demand that a picture carry them away at the first shock; it requires some time to penetrate its uncongenial reserve, but when once done it reveals a purposefulness in design, a deliberation and understanding, which repay the effort.' Regardless, it could 'hardly stand comparison' with van Dyck's *Cardinal Rivarole* (Salisbury House, Iowa) (50) in the same room.[1031]

Elsewhere, reactions were more negative. In *The Observer*, a reviewer declared that Reni's portrait 'hardly deserves the place of honour it holds at the top of the great room.'[1032] In *The Manchester Guardian*, it was compared unfavourably to Reynolds' *Countess of Powis* (Powis Castle, National Trust) (30): 'Reynolds has lived his picture – not, as Guido, merely thought it out and painted it.'[1033] A reviewer in *The Art Journal* similarly described it as a 'frigidly capable

[1029] In 1983, Ellis K. Waterhouse compared the two paintings and offered the 'considered view' that the LACMA painting was 'the original' whilst the Guinness painting was 'a very good studio work.' Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles, Special Collections, 870204-9-1, 138.
[1030] Enid Guest, Lady Layard, 19 January 1903. pops.baylor.edu/layard/xml.php?fn=19030119.xml. Accessed 27 November 2019.
[1031] Anon., 'Old Masters' (1903), 121.
[1032] Anon., 'Art. Old Masters' (1903), 6.
[1033] Anon., 'Burlington House' (1903), 12.

portrait.'[1034] In *The Magazine of Art*, the reviewer was even more derogatory, considering it 'hard and ugly, almost repellent as a picture; but, unattractive as it is in respect of nearly every charm that should render a picture pleasing, it is a fine technical performance.'[1035] F.J.M., writing in *The Speaker*, further described it as 'characteristic' of 'the accomplishment and all the unattractiveness of the Italian Eclectic School; the drawing of subject and background is immaculate, the grace, bearded face even carries with it some suggestion of character, but the picture lacks depth painfully and in all the careful colouring there is not a trace of artistry.' Still, he conceded that it was appropriate for Reni to be represented, since 'Guido was one of the most talented of a generation gone astray.'[1036] As with *Liberality and Modesty*, *Cardinal Roberto Ubaldini* was a secular work and, as a portrait, an atypical picture in Reni's œuvre, particularly in Britain. For this reason, it may have been valued differently to Reni's religious paintings, highlighting the difficulty of drawing generalised conclusions from individual pictures.

Travel

In the second half of the century, *Handbooks for Travellers* by the German publisher Karl Baedeker (1801–1859) became immensely popular travel guides in Britain, playing a major role in the transmission of German artistic attitudes in the country. Their cultural significance is manifested in E.M. Forster's (1879–1970) *A Room with a View* (1908) in which Chapter Two is entitled 'In Santa Croce with No Baedeker.'[1037] Whilst there were numerous criticisms of the 'unsatisfactory' Bolognese School in Baedeker's *Handbooks*, the guides are generally measured in their approach. In the *Handbook* to Northern Italy, it was argued that it would be 'unfair to depreciate the undoubted talent and skill of these late masters.' Indeed, 'gems of art… were not unfrequently produced during the 17th century.' Reni was further identified as 'the most talented master' of the Eclectic School and two of his paintings at Accademia di Belle Arte,

[1034] Anon., 'Winter Exhibition' (1903), 85.
[1035] Anon., 'Old and other Masters' (1903), 186.
[1036] F.J.M., 'Old Masters' (1903), 393.
[1037] Forster, *Room with a View* (2012), 20.

Bologna, were ranked 'on a level with the finest works of the 16th cent. in point of composition.'[1038] Many other paintings were also recommended, including the 'beautiful' 'gems of art' *Aurora* and *Pallione del Voto* (Pinacoteca Nazionale, Bologna).[1039] Consequently, Baedeker's guidebooks constitute a balanced approach to the works of Reni and his contemporaries, demonstrating that reactions were not always unequivocally negative.[1040]

An even more positive approach can be found in Augustus J.C. Hare's (1834–1903) *Cities of Northern and Central Italy* (1876), which recommended several of Reni's most celebrated works, with favourable commentary selected from other authors.[1041] Similarly, Kate Thompson's (1856–1934) *A Handbook to the Public Picture Galleries of Europe* (1877) was largely full of praise for Reni, enumerating his pictures and describing him as 'the most gifted and independent painter of this time and school… whose works exhibit much delicacy of execution, and a certain type or ideal of beauty founded on a study of the antique.'[1042] Such positivity is even more evident in press commentary, with writers in *Golden Hours* (1879) and *St. James's Magazine* (1881) both complimentary of Reni, the former stating, 'one may gaze long' at *Aurora* 'and not be tired,' and the latter describing *Samson Victorious over the Philistines* and *Massacre of the Innocents* (both Pinacoteca Nazionale, Bologna) as 'matchless creations.'[1043] In 1873–87, Frederic George Stephens (1827–1907) ran a series on 'The Private Collections of England' in *The Athenaeum*, offering the general public a critical overview of paintings in British private collections. Stephens expressed positive views of Reni in the very same articles in which he disparaged him, demonstrating that not every aspect of his work was denigrated, even by typically unsympathetic writers.[1044]

[1038] Baedeker, *Handbook: Northern Italy* (1879), 297-98, lix, Nos. 134, 136.
[1039] Baedeker, *Handbook: Central Italy* (1867), lxxviii.
[1040] See Parrish, 'Changing Tastes' (2015), 28-9.
[1041] Hare, *Cities* (1876), Vol. 2, 248-49, 268-70, 274.
[1042] Thompson, *Handbook* (1877), 78-80.
[1043] Author of Moravian Life, 'Blessing' (1879), 643-44; C.G., 'Bologna' (1881), 427.
[1044] Stephens, 'Wentworth Woodhouse' (1880), 247; Stephens, 'Duncombe Park' (1880), 313; Stephens, 'Nostel Priory' (1880), 375.

However, a particularly visceral reaction to Reni can be found in Eastlake's guidebooks to European galleries, published in 1883–88. Eastlake only mentioned one painting by Reni in Pinacoteca di Brera, Milan, in contrast to the three recommended in Baedeker's *Handbook*.[1045] Criticising Reni's previously lauded *St Peter and St Paul* for its subject being 'sacrificed to a display of technical skill,' Eastlake broadly dismissed seventeenth-century Italian art: 'the increased ambitiousness of its aim, and the progress of its technical dexterity, seem only to have resulted in the decline of its purity and taste.'[1046] This recalls the reaction of certain reviewers of the Manchester Exhibition. Eastlake's strongest censure concerned Reni's *The Flaying of Marsyas* (Fig. 61; Alte Pinakothek, Munich), which 'would be absurd if it were not revolting. It is difficult to conceive what can have induced the choice of such a subject, but its mode of treatment will appear to persons of educated taste still more incomprehensible… this is perhaps the most monstrous production of Guido's brush, when under the influence of classic inspiration that the world has ever seen.'[1047] In addition to an overly technical approach, Reni's choice of subject matter combined with colouring to make his pictures truly contemptible. Eastlake described *The Assumption of the Virgin* (Alte Pinakothek, Munich) as having 'a truly dreadful combination of colours, which, after making allowance for possible restoration, it is impossible to contemplate with patience.'[1048] Likewise, he found the colouring in *Christ delivering the Keys to St Peter* (Musée du Louvre, Paris) 'simply detestable.'[1049] The extreme condemnatory approach towards Reni adopted in guides such as these played a major role in destabilising the reputation of hitherto celebrated paintings in Reni's œuvre.

Beatrice Cenci

In addition to these damning remarks, a change in status of one of Reni's most renowned paintings – *Beatrice Cenci* (Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Antica, Palazzo

[1045] Baedeker, *Handbook: Northern Italy* (1879), 125-26.
[1046] Eastlake, *Brera Gallery* (1883), 112, 117.
[1047] Eastlake, *Pinakothek Munich* (1883), 173.
[1048] Eastlake, *Pinakothek Munich* (1883), 172.
[1049] Eastlake, *Louvre* (1883), 192.

Barberini, Rome) – had a significant bearing on Reni's reputation. Early in this period, the picture was still highly regarded, with Frances Power Cobbe (1822–1904) in 1864 describing its 'ineffable beauty… touching ten thousand hearts by its mute appeal.'[1050] Interest in the painting was manifest not just in guidebooks; in 1865, Charles Richard Weld (1813–1869) described a conversation with a Roman copyist who had made over 500 copies of the 'marvellous picture' for tourists.[1051] Furthermore, in 1864, John Stuart Callcott (born c. 1841) offered *The Last Moments of Beatrice Cenci. The Introduction of Guido Reni to the cell* (present whereabouts unknown) at the British Institution, London, for 80 guineas (£84), demonstrating how the story of not only Beatrice's death but the painting's conception attracted attention. However, this all changed when the Italian writer Antonio Bertolotti (1834–1893) published *Francesco Cenci e la sua famiglia. Notizie e documenti* (1877). Profoundly altering the mythology surrounding the character of Beatrice Cenci and the portrait of her, Bertolotti argued that the young girl was an unattractive criminal rather than a beautiful victim, more worthy of pity than exaltation. He did not believe that the painting portrayed Beatrice, observing that inventories of Palazzo Barberini compiled in 1604, five years after her execution, and 1623 included no mention of a work of this description. He also did not believe that the portrait was painted by Reni, noting that he was not recorded in Rome until 1608. Rather, for Bertolotti, the painting was most likely identifiable with 'Madonna in Egyptian Dress' attributed to Veronese in the 1604 inventory.[1052]

Bertolotti's text had a considerable impact in Britain, as is clear from ample commentary in the press.[1053] For some, Bertolotti's argument was convincing, with a writer in *Westminster Review* (1878) stating, 'rarely has a story been more completely annihilated.'[1054] Edward St. John Brenon (b. 1847) likewise declared in 1885: 'it has been proved, beyond dispute, that Guido Reni never could have

[1050] Cobbe, *Italics* (1864), 403.
[1051] Weld, *Last Winter* (1865), 383, 396.
[1052] See Duffy, 'Francesco Cenci' (1878), 432-34.
[1053] See: Duffy, 'Francesco Cenci' (1878), 432-34; Anon., 'Variorum Notes' (1878), 666-67; Anon., 'History and Biography' (1878), 232-44; Anon., 'Art II. – Francesco Cenci' (1879), 30-58; Trollope, 'Cenci Portrait' (1881), 384-88; St. John Brenon, 'Beatrice Cenci' (1885), 16-33.
[1054] Anon., 'History and Biography' (1878), 241.

painted it or any portrait of Beatrice Cenci.'[1055] Symonds further proclaimed in 1886: 'That the picture ascribed to Guido Reni in the Barberini palace is not a portrait of Beatrice in prison, appears sufficiently proved'[1056] For others, even if the portrait did not depict Beatrice Cenci, it could not be disassociated from Reni's œuvre. A writer in *The Edinburgh Review* (1879) considered Bertolotti 'ruthless' and compared the girl to a turbaned figure in Reni's *St Andrew being led to Martyrdom* (San Gregorio, Rome). Thomas Adolphus Trollope (1810–1892) declared in 1881: 'No! The Barberini picture is by the hand of Guido as surely as any work ever painted by him.' He suggested that it represented one of Reni's favourite models, also pointing to the figure in *St Andrew being led to Martyrdom* and an Hour in *Aurora*.[1057]

In 1891, a writer in *The Quarterly Review* suggested that the consequence of the association of the Barberini painting with Beatrice Cenci was to transform a normal girl into an infamous heroine.[1058] Similarly, the association of Reni with *Beatrice Cenci* turned an ordinary picture into something extraordinary. In 1887, Austen Henry Layard (1817–1894) included a revision of the picture's status in his amendments to Kugler's *Handbook of Painting*, stating that it had been supposed on 'insufficient grounds' to be the portrait of Beatrice Cenci and 'its reputation is founded less upon its merit than upon the interest it has excited from the fate of the unhappy woman it is believed to represent, and from the innumerable copies that have been made of it.'[1059] Whilst the painting still attracted some attention at the end of the century, the severing of its relationship with the Cenci legend robbed it of its status, particularly among scholarly writers.[1060] This profoundly affected Reni's broader reputation, making his œuvre appear diminished, complicated, and risky, and forever lessening his appeal for learned tourists on the Continent.

[1055] St. John Brenon, 'Beatrice Cenci' (1885), 17.
[1056] Symonds, *Catholic Reaction I* (1887), 351.
[1057] Anon., 'Art II. – Francesco Cenci' (1879), 33-4; Trollope, 'Cenci Portrait' (1881), 386, 387-88.
[1058] Anon., 'Art. IX' (1891), 241.
[1059] Layard, *Handbook* (1887), 663-64.
[1060] For its continued appeal, see Anon., 'German Reviews' (1898), 388.

Reni's Critical Reputation

In this period, the same qualities of Reni's works which had been praised and denigrated in earlier periods continued to attract attention. These included: Reni's approach to ideal beauty; his use of colouring; his lack of originality resulting from eclecticism; moral and critical censure of his gambling habit; and a reaction against his choice of subject matter. A new idea also emerged that Reni was a victim of his time. In this section, those charges which garnered the most attention are addressed, together with commentary on the arguments of Symonds, one of Reni's greatest critics.

Eclecticism

In 1874, the Scottish artist and poet William Bell Scott (1811–1890) described eclecticism as a 'recipe for making Pictures' and 'the weakest side of the [Carracci] school.' For Scott, talent superseded genius, and there was 'a level of excellence that does not move us.'[1061] Such criticism became a stereotype by the end of the century, as is evident from Walter Frewen Lord's (1861–1927) complaint in 1902: 'we may say that Guido was an uninspired expert; and that Turner could not draw the figure; but we may not criticise Mr. Thackeray.'[1062] Such comments epitomise a common view from the mid-nineteenth century that in addition to a lack of originality, eclecticism resulted in excessive focus on academicism and technical skill and a scientific rather than emotional approach towards painting. The Carracci School was frequently pitted against 'Early Masters' in this respect. A reviewer of Sir Joseph Archer Crowe (1825–1896) and Giovanni Battista Cavalcaselle's (1819–1897) A *New History of Painting in Italy* (1864) in *The Edinburgh Review* (1865) summarised: 'the real technical power of the Bolognese school is not sufficient to outweigh their inferiority to the earlier masters in true feeling, simple poetic conception of their subjects, and straightforward simplicity in telling their story.' The 'principles which led them

[1061] Scott, *Italian Masters* (1874), 16, 19.
[1062] Lord, 'Apostle of Mediocrity' (1902), 396.

astray' were 'the delusion of eclecticism, and the thirst for academical style in exaggerated form.'[1063]

A further example of this type of criticism can be found in Baedeker's *Handbook* to Northern Italy. In the Introduction, Baedeker described how the Carracci School breathed 'a close academic atmosphere, they no longer labour like their predecessors in an independent and healthy sphere, and their productions are therefore devoid of absorbing and permanent interest.'[1064] This can be compared to various comments made by Stephens in *The Athenaeum* in 1880. Describing Reni's *Cupid* (Private Collection, New York) at Wentworth Woodhouse, South Yorkshire, as a 'masterpiece of eclecticism,' Stephens complained: 'But alas for eclecticism! This is but a charming painting of a boy sleeping – not the fiery-hearted Cupid of the great masters of the Renaissance.'[1065] Regarding Reni's *David and Abigail* (Chrysler Museum, Norfolk) at Duncombe Park, North Yorkshire, even in the figure of David, 'where a spark of genius gleams, the science of the painter is obvious in the bluish steel of the armour.' The picture was 'painted in the most completely scientific mood of the artist, and with perfect success in all respects, except the power to move us by the energy of his conception or charm us with the beauty of his women… this is a highly scientific painting, drawn with exact care, honourably modelled, gracefully disposed, but frigid.'[1066] In 1901, Edward Pinnington (1846–1921) adopted a similar stance when detailing paintings in the National Gallery of Scotland. Bypassing Reni's *Ecce Homo*, he declared: 'Religious art must either be great or nothing; it must either inspire devotion or indifference; there is no room in it for mediocrity.'[1067]

Despite such commentary, Reni's pictures were also found to be technically flawed – even works which had been highly celebrated. We have already observed the paradox that Reni was simultaneously overly technical and technically deficient earlier in the century. The most compelling example here

[1063] Anon., 'Art. III. – New History of Painting' (1865), 79.
[1064] Baedeker, *Handbook: Northern Italy* (1879), lix. See also Baedeker, *Handbook: Central Italy* (1867), lxxvii-iii.
[1065] Stephens, 'Wentworth Woodhouse' (1880), 247.
[1066] Stephens, 'Duncombe Park' (1880), 313.
[1067] Pinnington, 'National Gallery of Scotland' (1901), 536.

is Herbert Spencer's (1820–1903) *A Tour of Italy* (1868) in which the philosopher and sociologist questioned why the applause given to Old Masters was '*absolute* instead of *relative*; and the grossest absurdities in them are habitually passed over without remark.' As an example, Spencer chose Reni's *Aurora*, traditionally extolled as the artist's masterpiece. Acknowledging its beauty, Spencer objected to the movements of the Hours, depiction of drapery, and source of light. Ultimately condemning the painting for its errors, he declared: 'we have absurdity piled upon absurdity. And further, we have them in place of the splendid effects which might have been produced had Nature not been gratuitously contradicted.'[1068] Attwell similarly criticised *Aurora* in 1888, questioning the unity and balance of the composition and the ethereal beauty of the Hours.[1069] A further example can be found in Stephens's description of Reni's *St Catherine of Alexandria* (present whereabouts unknown) at Duncombe Park: 'the perspective of the face en bloc is absurdly wrong, but not more so than in that picture in the National Gallery which resembles this in many respects.'[1070] Likewise, in 1883, Eastlake criticised the 'clumsy modelling' of the woman's left arm in *Christ and the Woman of Samaria* (Musée du Louvre, Paris), arguing that it 'would have exposed a less famous painter to severe criticism.'[1071]

Reni's eclecticism evidently remained a potent critique in this period. However, censure of the artist is contradictory in nature; he was found to be both overly technical, focusing on skill rather than emotion, as well as technically flawed, making mistakes which were 'absurd' and 'clumsy'. This highlights the inconsistency of criticism and specificity of faults to individual paintings.

Gambling

Related to criticism of Reni's technical qualities was the continued disapproval of his later works for being of poor quality, associated with his gambling habits.

[1068] Herbert Spencer, 'A Tour in Italy. 1868. Aet. 47.' In Spencer, *Autobiography* (1904), Vol. 2, 191-92.
[1069] Attwell, *Italian Masters* (1888), 103-04.
[1070] Stephens, 'Duncombe Park' (1880), 313.
[1071] Eastlake, *Louvre* (1883), 191.

Scott, in his biography of Reni, stated: 'The demon of play was his great temptation, to which he sacrificed time, money, and even his art,' resulting in his manner becoming 'less perfect' as 'he did not take equal delight in his work.'[1072] Ralph N. James (dates unknown) agreed that 'there is consequently an immense difference in the quality of [his] works.'[1073] The Editor of *The Magazine of Art* (1897) likewise remarked: 'In the choice of no master is more care needful than in the case of Guido Reni.'[1074] As earlier in the century, criticism concerned not just the aesthetic aspects of Reni's works but his very character. In *The Practical Teacher* (1902), the National Gallery's *Ecce Homo* was described as 'a striking contradiction of the doctrine laid down by Ruskin in his lecture on "Relation of Art to Morals," that the soul of the painter is shown in his works; for although the picture is full of deep religious feeling, the artist was a dissolute gambler.'[1075] The association with gambling may also have led to a wider assassination of Reni's character; in *Macmillan's Magazine* (1904), a 'popular' story was recalled in which Reni killed his model when painting *The Crucifixion* in a 'frenzy to see and seize the death-struggle.'[1076] It is unclear where this dramatic anecdote originated yet it demonstrates a growing concern with Reni's moral character. Criticism of Reni the artist went hand-in-hand with criticism of Reni the man, something also seen in nineteenth-century critical responses to Caravaggio.[1077]

Subject Matter

The belief that Reni's subject matter was inappropriate and unpleasant, a charge introduced in the 1840s and 50s, also became increasingly dominant in this period. We have already seen examples in Eastlake's guidebooks. The censure is associated predominantly with Reni's religious paintings, particularly those

[1072] Scott, *Italian Masters* (1874), 32-4.
[1073] James, *Painters* (1896), Vol. 1, 500.
[1074] The Editor, 'Wallace Collection' (1897), 91.
[1075] Anon., 'General Information' (1902), 251.
[1076] Anon., 'Rome' (1904), 51.
[1077] For instance, Ruskin also included Caravaggio in his 'School of Errors and Vices' and described him as a 'ruffian.' John Ruskin to parents, 10 [11] July 1845. Cit. Shapiro, *Ruskin* (1972), 144. John Ruskin, 'Review of Lord Lindsay's *Sketches of the History of Christian Art,*' *Quarterly Review* (June 1847). Cit. Ruskin, *Works* (1903), Vol. 1, 147, fn. 1.

featuring 'murderous subjects.'[1078] *Massacre of the Innocents* again attracted particular attention. A writer in *Chambers's Journal* (1882) described it as 'a fearful example of all that religious art should not be,' while for Symonds, writing in 1886, it 'fails by falling between two aims – the aim to secure dramatic effect, and the aim to treat a terrible subject with harmonious repose.'[1079] The art dealer Charles Dowdeswell (1856?–1921) similarly labelled the painting an 'artistic mistake,' in which 'six, shrieking, wide-open mouths are painted with a ludicrous result.'[1080] Nonetheless, for Anna Jameson (1794–1860) in *The History of Our Lord* (1864), *Massacre of the Innocents* was for grace and expression 'the finest of all his productions.'[1081] Similar support can be found in Scott's *Pictures by Italian Masters Greater and Lesser* (1874). Whilst he disapproved of the Carracci School's eclecticism, Scott provided a substantial list of Reni's best works and, quoting from the Swiss art historian Jacob Burckhardt (1818–1897), declared that *Massacre of the Innocents* was 'treated with due moderation, not in the manner of an execution, or with beastly ferocity, the violent expression of the cries being suppressed, and in which, by the fine well-built composition and nobly modelled forms, the fearful is raised into the domain of tragedy.'[1082] Consequently, once more, this charge was not universally adopted. Criticism, when it did occur, became visceral and zealous, reaching almost comically theatrical levels of fervour. However, there remained individuals – even critics of Reni – who defended his works, finding them deeply emotional and 'pathetic rather than horrible.'[1083] This confirms the inconsistency of Reni's critical reception in this period.

'A Victim of his Time'

Associated with this criticism, a new judgement emerged that Reni was a victim of his time. Kugler had hinted at this in *Handbuch der Kunstgeschichte* (translated in 1841): 'In a freer period of Art [Reni] would probably have

[1078] Scott, *Italian Masters* (1874), 32.
[1079] Anon., 'Bologna' (1882), 174; Symonds, *Catholic Reaction II* (1887), 358.
[1080] Dowdeswell, 'Schopenhauer' (1889), 54.
[1081] Jameson, *History of Our Lord* (1864), Vol. 1, 270.
[1082] Scott, *Italian Masters* (1874), 32-4.
[1083] Jameson, *History of Our Lord* (1864), Vol. 1, 270.

attained the highest excellence, but it is precisely in his works that the restraint of his age is most apparent.'[1084] In this period, the argument became explicit, with Reni found to epitomise the negative aspects of his age. In 1874, Scott described 'the celebrated Guido' as 'an admirable artist with ease and excellence; one who might indeed, in other circumstances, have been another Raphael.'[1085] Stephens was more negative, suggesting that Reni's *Cupid* (Private Collection, New York) at Wentworth Woodhouse was 'all that the artistic attainment of the time of the painter, acting on a conscientious and conservative, but cold and unsympathising, temperament, could effect.'[1086] A writer in *Chambers's Magazine* (1882) was even more explicit, labelling Reni 'the veritable victim of his time, and of the decadent taste which characterised it' and lamenting that 'his century conquered him. He was not great enough to master and direct it, as his colossal predecessors in Art had done.'[1087] The term 'decadence' was increasingly employed in this period to characterise seventeenth-century Italian art. Further examples include Cook and Attwell in their catalogues to the National Gallery, the latter citing the cause of 'decadence' as 'the increased demand for decorative pictures by the wealthy' and the subsequent need for 'rapid production of large pictures.'[1088] There appears to be a link between artistic decadence, typified by Reni's paintings, and a kind of moral or spiritual decadence, exemplified by the age in which he lived.

The argument that Reni's works were representative of his time was directed most specifically towards his religious paintings. We have already seen how Reni's choice of Catholic subject matter was found problematic as far back as the eighteenth century. In various responses to the Manchester Exhibition, he was compared unfavourably to 'Early Masters' in terms of religious sincerity. In this period, such criticism persisted, as Reni's works were held to exemplify problems in art following the Counter-Reformation. For Eastlake, Reni's approach towards religious subjects was highly inappropriate, involving the

[1084] Kugler, *Hand-book* (1841), Vol. 1, 400.
[1085] Scott, *Italian Masters* (1874), 6.
[1086] Stephens, 'Wentworth Woodhouse' (1880), 247.
[1087] Anon., 'Bologna' (1882), 174.
[1088] Cook, *National Gallery* (1888), Vol. 2, 305; Attwell, *Italian Masters* (1888), 97.

insertion of ordinary humans into a holy context. He found Reni's *Magdalen* (Musée du Louvre, Paris) another instance of 'a work by Guido which at one time was commonly accepted as an appropriate treatment of a religious subject, the fact being that beyond the introduction of a crucifix there is nothing in the picture which merits its title.' He similarly found fault with the Louvre's *St Sebastian*: 'whatever pictorial skill there may be in this work, it presents to the practical critic nothing but a naked man with an arrow sticking in his side… it is singularly unfortunate in the treatment of a religious subject.'[1089]

A specific problem with Reni's religious paintings concerned their relation to Jesuitism. The Society of Jesus had a significant presence in seventeenth-century Bologna, particularly following the canonisation of Ignatius of Loyola (1491–1556) and Francis Xavier (1506–1552) in 1622 and their election as city patrons after the plague of 1630.[1090] Reni produced several works for Jesuit churches and depicted the saints in *Pallione del Voto*, which from 1632 was annually paraded from Palazzo Pubblico to San Domenico in Bologna. In 1773, the Society was suppressed by Pope Clement XIV (1705–1774) and only fully restored in Britain in 1829. In nineteenth-century Britain, its return prompted strong reactions both within and outside the Catholic community, as Jesuits became a source of mistrust and suspicion, deemed subversive for their perceived political scheming, elusiveness, and cunning. Paradoxically, the enfranchisement of Catholics in the nineteenth century provoked anti-Catholic sentiment, which became evident in art as elsewhere. Such antipathy towards Jesuits has been explored in British fiction by John Woolfe, who studied the 'Jesuit villain' of Isaac D'Israeli, John Frederick Smith, Charles Kingsley, William Johnson, and Wilkie Collins.[1091] However, anti-Jesuitism also occurred in the context of art, particularly from 1844 when Burckhardt formulated the term 'Jesuitenstile' [Jesuit style] in a proposal for *Brockhaus*, recently translated and discussed by Evonne Levy.[1092] Whilst it is now a matter of debate whether Jesuitical art

[1089] Eastlake, *Louvre* (1883), 192-94.
[1090] See Puglisi, 'Reni's *Pallione del Voto*' (1995), 409.
[1091] Woolfe, 'Jesuit as Villain' (2012), 308-20.
[1092] Jacob Burckhardt, 'Jesuitenstil,' *Allgemeine deutsche Real-Encyklopädie für die gebildeten Stände. Conversations-Lexikon*, 9th ed. (1846), 7, s.v. Cit. and trans. Levy, *Propaganda and Jesuit Baroque* (2004), 30. See also Levy, *Baroque and Formalism* (2015), 39.

existed as a standalone category, it was identified as such by nineteenth-century figures.[1093] Burckhardt reacted violently against Jesuitical art, describing its 'insincerity,' 'pomp,' 'degeneracy,' 'very bad paintings,' and 'sacrifice' of true emotion for 'raw effect.'[1094] In this respect, antipathy to Jesuitical art bears striking resemblance to the type of criticism levelled against Reni from the early nineteenth century.

Even before two of Burckhardt's texts were translated into English in the 1870s, his writings were recognised in Britain.[1095] Furthermore, in other literature, similar pointed attacks on Jesuits' influence on seventeenth-century Italian art and architecture can be found. In Baedeker's *Handbooks* to Northern and Central Italy, for instance, it was stated: 'the churches of the Jesuits… unquestionably produce a most imposing effect; but the historical enquirer will not easily be dazzled by their meretricious magnificence. He will perceive the absence of organic forms and the impropriety of combining totally different styles, and he will steel himself against the gorgeous, but monotonous attractions of the paintings, and the other works of the same period. The bright Renaissance is extinct, simple pleasure in the natural and human is obliterated.'[1096] In 1885, Richard Heath (fl. 1885) explicitly associated Jesuitical art with Reni: 'The baneful effects of imitation in religion now appeared in art. Guido Reni, one of the most important of the painters of the Carracci school, led the way in that downward road which ended in modern Jesuit art.'[1097]

Symonds was most visceral in condemning the Carracci School's perceived association with Jesuitism; for him, it was the source of their downfall. Symonds was familiar with Burckhardt, acknowledging his influence in his seminal seven-

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[1093] See: Levy, *Propaganda and Jesuit Baroque* (2004), 15; Haskell, *Patrons and Painters* (1971), 93; Wittkower, 'Problems' (1972), 1-14.
[1094] Jacob Burckhardt, 'Jesuitenstil.' Cit. and trans. Levy, *Baroque and Formalism* (2015), 39.
[1095] See Orestano, 'La Ricezione di Burckhardt' (2011), 157-61. Burckhardt's *Der Cicerone: Eine Anleitung zum Genuss der Kunstwerke Italiens* (Basel: Schweighauser, 1855) was translated into English in 1873 and *Die Cultur der Renaissance in Italien: Ein Versuch* (Basel: Schweighauser, 1860) in 1878. Burckhardt's criticism of Reni is recalled in Scott, *Italian Masters* (1874), 32-3, and Hare, *Cities* (1876), Vol. 2, 268.
[1096] Baedeker, *Handbook: Northern Italy* (1879), lix. See also Baedeker, *Handbook: Central Italy* (1867), lxxviii.
[1097] Heath, 'Poussin' (1885), 150-54.

volume *Renaissance in Italy* (1875–86).[1098] In 'The Fine Arts', Symonds disclosed his distaste for the Carracci School's religious works: 'while they pretend to quicken compassion for martyrs in their agony, [they] pander to a bestial blood-lust lurking in the darkest chambers of the soul.' He associated this with the 'new religious sentiment' of the Counter-Reformation, which was 'emasculated and ecstatic' and 'expressed in company with crude naturalism and crude sensualism by Bolognese and Neapolitan painters.'[1099] Symonds declared that 'piety… turns from these aesthetic triumphs as from something alien to itself' and in *Italian Byways* (1883) described Reni's 'hectic piety.'[1100] Similarly, in 1899, a writer in *The Bookman* described Reni as living in a 'degenerate time' with a 'polluted piety.'[1101] Comments such as these demonstrate the strength of this type of criticism: not only did it constitute disapproval of subject matter, style, and sentiment, but it implicated Reni's very character.

This type of anti-Jesuitical commentary marks a new approach towards Reni, one which belongs exclusively to this period. For some, it was not merely Reni's choice of Catholic subjects, including the Trinity, Virgin, and saints, that was problematic, but the very style in which he painted. Appearing meretricious and false, Reni's paintings tapped into deep-seated fears regarding Jesuitism and were considered inimical to true religious belief. Their cloying excess and religious insincerity were contrasted with the moral purity of 'Early Masters' and Pre-Raphaelites. However, just as earlier in the century, for others, Reni's religious paintings remained highly spiritual works. At the National Gallery, copyists' frequent choice of Reni's *Ecce Homo* and *Christ embracing St John the Baptist* exemplifies the survival of taste for devotional Catholic pictures in Protestant culture. Oscar Wilde's (1854–1900) strong emotional response to Reni's religious works exemplifies the power such paintings could still hold for certain viewers. A member of the Aesthetic Movement (1860–1900), Wilde was a strong influence in Britain, proposing ideas such as art serving as a vehicle

[1098] Symonds acknowledged that he was 'especially indebted' to Burckhardt. Both the theme and structure of his text was inspired by Burckhardt's *Die Cultur der Renaissance in Italien: Ein Versuch* (Basel: Schweighauser, 1860). See Symonds, *Revival of Learning* (1898), vi.
[1099] Symonds, *Fine Arts* (1877), 25, 187.
[1100] Symonds, *Fine Arts* (1877), 25; Symonds, *Italian Byways* (1883), 141.
[1101] Anon., 'Velasquez and Poussin' (1899), 88.

through which to perceive the world and a shift from art imitating nature to life imitating art.[1102] The Aesthetic Movement can be seen as an attempt to depart from the Industrial Age by focusing on the elevation of taste, cult of beauty, and 'Art for Art's sake'. Towards the end of the century, it was associated with a French influence and viewed as epitomising 'decadence', with connotations of degeneration, artificiality, luxuriousness, and sexual transgression. As we have seen, 'decadence' was a term also applied to Reni and the Carracci School and so Wilde's admiration of Reni might appear apt.

In 'The Tomb of Keats' (1877), Wilde described his emotional response to seeing the tomb of John Keats (1795–1821) in the Protestant Cemetery in Rome:

> As I stood beside the mean grave of this divine boy, I thought of him as of a Priest of Beauty slain before his time; and the vision of Guido's St. Sebastian came before my eyes as I saw him at Genoa, a lovely brown boy, with crisp, clustering hair and red lips, bound by his evil enemies to a tree, and, though pierced by arrows, raising his eyes with divine, impassioned gaze towards the Eternal Beauty of the opening heavens.

This is followed by a poem entitled 'Heu Miserande Puer' which contains the lines: 'The youngest of the martyrs here is lain, / Fair as Sebastian and as foully slain.'[1103] Writing to Richard Monckton Milnes, Lord Houghton (1809–1885) in 1877, Wilde stated: 'Someway standing by his grave I felt that he *too* was a Martyr, and worthy to be in the city of Martyrs. I thought of him as a Priest of Beauty slain before his time, a lovely Sebastian, killed by the arrows of a lying and unjust tongue.'[1104] Wilde had a strong connection to St Sebastian, adopting him as his personal saint and choosing 'Sebastian Melmouth' as his pseudonym after leaving prison in 1897.[1105] Interested in Catholicism, he had a 'delight in the *forms* of Catholicism rather than its content.'[1106] The religious aspects of Reni's painting may have attracted Wilde yet there is also a homoerotic quality

[1102] See Hancock, 'Wilde' (2013).
[1103] Wilde, 'Tomb of Keats' (1877), 477-78.
[1104] Oscar Wilde to Richard Monckton Milnes, Lord Houghton, c. 16 June 1877. Cit. Wilde, *Letters* (1962), 41-2.
[1105] Kaye, 'Determined Raptures' (1999), 275.
[1106] Ellman, *Wilde* (1988), 34.

in his writing which recalls the reaction of Charles Kingsley's (1819–1875) Alton Locke. Wilde's reference to Reni's *St Sebastian* at Palazzo Rosso, Genoa, suggests that he considered Reni's representation the archetypal image of the saint and an epitome of male youthful beauty. Wilde's description demonstrates the persistence and broad appeal of this powerful devotional image, particularly as represented by Reni. It can also be considered a small-scale rehabilitation of Reni as Wilde potentially reacted against the dull priggishness of his Victorian critics.

Furthermore, there is a wider context for Wilde's admiration of Reni's *St Sebastian*. Richard Kaye has discussed how late nineteenth-century viewers recognised a 'decadence' in St Sebastian, stemming from 'the martyr's exquisite embodiment of that which defied the natural.' The saint gave 'new impetus to a developing late-Victorian conception of decadence – as a feminizing cultural force, as an unbridled "Mediterranean" distortion, as a palpable attack on an impenetrable male body.' Reni's representations of St Sebastian became 'the very *summa* of sado-masochistic implication for late-Victorian writers' and emblematic for homosexual males.[1107] The appeal of Reni's saint in this respect is conveyed in 'Two Sonnets, for a Picture of Saint Sebastian the Martyr in the Capitoline Gallery in Rome,' published in *The Artist and Journal of Home Culture* (1891) by Frederick Rolfe, Baron Corvo (1860–1913). A homosexual writer, artist, and photographer, Rolfe can also be associated with the Aesthetic Movement. He converted to Catholicism in 1886 and here described Reni's *St Sebastian* (Pinacoteca Capitolina, Rome) in a strongly homoerotic aesthetic manner: 'His gracious form all stripped of earthly guise / Naked, but brave as a young lion can be.'[1108] These verses were judged so scandalous after their publication that the journal's editor, Charles Kains Jackson (1857–1933), was dismissed from his post.[1109] However, it is important not to overstate the association between Reni and the Aesthetic Movement. Symonds, too, was a homosexual man affiliated with the movement who had an emotional aesthetic

[1107] Kaye, 'Determined Raptures' (1999), 270-71, 296.
[1108] Rolfe, 'Two Sonnets' (1891), 163.
[1109] Kaye, 'Determined Raptures' (1999), 296.

response to art and regarded himself as 'a born Bohemian.'[1110] Nonetheless, he considered Correggio's *St Sebastian* 'in the bloom of almost boyish beauty' one of several unsuitable 'so-called sacred subjects' in which saints did not embody 'exemplary conduct.'[1111] Furthermore, he found Reni's paintings deeply problematic and, in certain respects, odious.

John Addington Symonds

In 1886, Symonds provided the lengthiest and most intriguing explanation of the downfall of the Carracci School in nineteenth-century Britain. In the seventh volume of *Renaissance in Italy*, 'The Catholic Reaction' (Part II), Symonds evaluated the 'difficulty of properly appreciating the Bolognese Eclectics.'[1112] He was clearly influenced by Ruskin, stating: 'More passionate words could hardly be chosen to express the disgust inspired in minds attuned to earlier Italian art by these once worshipped paintings' and 'Mr. Ruskin's obvious injustice, intemperance, and ostentatious emphasis will serve to point the change of opinion which has passed over England since Sir Joshua Reynolds wrote.'[1113] Here, Symonds presented the most revealing and illuminating attack on the Carracci School since Ruskin's diatribe in the 1840s. In 1888, both Cook and Attwell quoted from Symonds's text in their National Gallery catalogues, the former using it in equal measure to Ruskin. This demonstrates the hold it had on public opinion, even if it was described in *The Dublin Review* (1887) as 'wearisome and irritating.'[1114]

For Symonds, there were various reasons why 'the Eclectics [were] at present pining in the shade of neglect.'[1115] The first was eclecticism, which he compared to 'Medea operating on decrepit Aeson.' He described Bolognese painters as having 'something vulgar in their imagination, prosaic in their feeling, leaden in

[1110] John Addington Symonds to Henry Graham Dakyns, 19 July 1890. Cit. Grosskurth, *Symonds* (1975), 280.
[1111] Symonds, *Sketches* (1874), 276.
[1112] Symonds, *Catholic Reaction II* (1887), 375.
[1113] Symonds, *Catholic Reaction II* (1887), 359.
[1114] Anon., 'Notice of Books – Symonds' (1887), 443.
[1115] Symonds, *Catholic Reaction II* (1887), 381.

their frigid touch on legend.' This resulted in 'incompatible' and 'valueless' art, lacking inspiration and charm and possessing 'commonplace' types: 'hard mechanic figures, excellently drawn, correctly posed, but with no touch of poetry.'[1116] Similarly to Wornum in 1847, Symonds used the story of Reni and the colour grinder to illustrate his lack of concern with individuality; in Reni's indifference to his model, he had 'a radically false conception of the way to combine studies of nature with studies of art.'[1117] For Symonds, it could be 'laid down, as a general truth, that while immature or awkward workmanship is compatible with aesthetic excellence, technical dexterity, however skilfully applied, has never done anything for a soulless painter.'[1118] The Carracci School's 'ambition' 'doomed their style to the sterility of hybrids' and, in their 'contempt for what is simple and natural in details,' they lacked 'attractiveness and suggestion.' Furthermore, in portraying the idealised rather than the particular, their art was 'stripped, that is to say, of what in these things is specific and vital,' resulting in a 'failure to delight or satisfy.'[1119]

Symonds's second point concerned the idea of Reni being a victim of his age. Emphasising Reni's eccentricities, including his celibacy, modesty, dread of women and witches, and devotion to the Virgin, Symonds argued that in Reni's later life this 'eccentricity… amounted to insanity, and at last he gave himself wholly up to the demon of the gaming-table.' Symonds attributed these unusual aspects of Reni's character to the time in which he lived: 'it helps us to understand the eccentric compound of sentiment, sensuality, piety, and uneasy morality which distinguished the age, and which is continually perplexing the student of its art.'[1120] However, it was not only Reni's character that Symonds explained by way of his era, but also the problematic aspects of his paintings. Continuing his anti-Jesuitical argument of 1877, Symonds stated that the Carracci were 'in vital sympathy with the critical and analytical spirit of their age' and 'breathed the breath of the religion *à la mode*, of fashionable

[1116] Symonds, *Catholic Reaction II* (1887), 344-45, 352-53.
[1117] Symonds, *Catholic Reaction II* (1887), 354.
[1118] Symonds, *Catholic Reaction II* (1887), 373.
[1119] Symonds, *Catholic Reaction II* (1887), 378-79.
[1120] Symonds, *Catholic Reaction II* (1887), 354-57.

sensuousness and prevalent sympathy.' As they worked during 'the first fervour of the Catholic Revival,' their art was 'fairly representative of the religious temper and the profane culture of the Italians in the period influenced by the Council of Trent.'[1121] Writing of Domenichino in particular, Symonds argued that he was misled by 'the prevalent religious temper of his age' as 'Jesuitry had saturated the Italian mind.' In his *Martyrdom of St Agnes* (Pinacoteca Nazionale, Bologna), Domenichino obeyed the rules of Ignatius of Loyola's *Exercita Spiritualia* (1522–24):

> That he belonged to a school which was essentially vulgar in its choice of type, to a city never distinguished for delicacy of taste, and to a generation which was rapidly losing the sense of artistic reserve, suffices to explain the crude brutality of the conceptions which he formed of tragic episodes. The same may be said about all those horrible pictures of tortures, martyrdoms, and acts of violence which were produced by the dozen in Italy at this epoch. We turn from them with loathing. They inspire neither terror nor pity. Only the sickness of the shambles… The evil element may be rationally deduced from false dramatic instinct and perverted habits of brooding sensuously on our Lord's Passion, in minds deprived of the right feeling for artistic beauty.[1122]

This clearly mirrors the frequent disapproval of Reni's choice of subject matter and perceived focus on suffering and horror. It also highlights the paradox of Reni being simultaneously criticised for his approach towards ideal beauty. Using language akin to that of Eastlake, Symonds described what the Carracci School had added to religious expression as 'repellent' and identified the Christian temperament of seventeenth-century Italy as 'hysterical, dogmatic, hypocritical, and sacerdotal':

> Extravagantly ideal Magdalens and Maries, extravagantly realistic in martyrdoms and torments, extravagantly harsh in dogmatic mysteries and the ecclesiastical parade of power, extravagantly soft in sentimental

[1121] Symonds, *Catholic Reaction II* (1887), 345-47.
[1122] Symonds, *Catholic Reaction II* (1887), 362.

> tenderness and tearful piety, this new religious element, the element of the Inquisition, the Tridentine Council, and the Jesuits, contradicts the true gospel of Christ. The painting which embodies it belongs to a spirit at strife with what was vital and progressive in the modern world. It is therefore naturally abhorrent to us now; nor can it be appreciated except by those who yearn for the triumph of ultramontane principles.[1123]

Criticism of Reni was evidently intimately bound up with apparent deep anti-Catholic sentiment. For Symonds, the qualities of eclecticism and religious temperament were critical to the Carracci School's downfall in Britain. He considered 'originality, strength, beauty, and inspiration' enduring qualities in art and thus desired 'what is simple, natural, and honest' – the antithesis of seventeenth-century Bolognese art.[1124] He argued that critics were now unanimous in their 'dislike for Italian art after the date of Raphael's third manner' and admiration for the 'sincere and beautiful' 'Early Masters' 'to [whom] our forefathers were unintelligibly irresponsive.'[1125] In accounting for this revolution in taste, Symonds credited 'the spirit of the Romantic movement,' something also touched upon by Baedeker, and the rise of science, which broke down adherence to the 'academical canons of perfection.'[1126]

In conclusion, Symonds declared: 'We dislike [the Carracci School's] religious sentiments. We repudiate their false and unimaginative ideality. We recognise their touch on antique mythology to be cold and lifeless.' He made the 'modest prediction' that 'nothing short of the substitution of Catholicism for science and of Jesuitry for truth in the European mind will work a general revolution in their favour.'[1127] Symonds's degree of influence cannot be underestimated; in *The Times* (1892), it was argued: 'With the single exception of Mr. Ruskin, no writer has so firmly established his reputation as a writer in this field of aesthetics.'[1128] Symonds's argument constitutes one of the most authoritative expressions of

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[1123] Symonds, *Catholic Reaction II* (1887), 376-78.
[1124] Symonds, *Catholic Reaction II* (1887), 375-76.
[1125] Symonds, *Catholic Reaction II* (1887), 369.
[1126] Symonds, *Catholic Reaction II* (1887), 381. See Baedeker, *Handbook: Central Italy* (1867), lxxviii.
[1127] Symonds, *Catholic Reaction II* (1887), 381-82.
[1128] Cit. Markgraf, 'Symonds' (1975), 79.

censure against Reni in the nineteenth century and played a powerful role in the destruction of his reputation.

A Self-Aware Shift in Taste

In this period, another feature in the commentary on Reni is a conscious awareness of his change in fortune. Such remarks are peppered throughout the literature. Reviewing an edition of *The New Testament* in *The Athenaeum* (1864), a writer described paintings by Reni and Federico Barocci as of 'questionable taste' and 'well known, if they are not highly esteemed, by critics of the present day.'[1129] By the end of the century, this was articulated more clearly, with reasons proffered for this change in opinion. For a writer in *The Edinburgh Review* (1892), these included: a greater knowledge of paintings through increased travel and research; a refinement of taste; and a distrust of the authority of tradition. Such changes accounted for the fact that 'the Bolognese school and the painters of the seventeenth century… have lost the pre-eminence they so long enjoyed, while the attention of artist and art-critic is concentrated on the brilliant galaxy of painters who flourished between 1450 and 1550, the golden age of painting.'[1130] Unsurprisingly, the popularity of 'Early Masters' was associated with Reni's downfall.

One can also find allusions to the injustice of Reni's diminished standing and a conviction that the tables would turn. This is associated with the view that the Carracci School's downfall was inevitable since they had been raised to exaggerated heights. The journalist and playwright Tom Taylor (1817–1880) provides a characteristic example in his amendments to Charles Robert Leslie's (1794–1859) *The Life and Times of Sir Joshua Reynolds* (1865): 'The fashionable judgment of our day is probably as unfair to the later Bolognese painters in the way of depreciating, as that of Reynolds' time was in exaggerating, their merits.' For Taylor, 'Early Masters' also risked being as 'extravagantly over-praised and over-studied' as they had been 'unjustly

[1129] Anon., 'New Testament' (1864), 664.
[1130] Anon., 'Art II. – Morelli, National Gallery' (1892), 329-30.

overlooked and undervalued.'[1131] Clearly, these extreme positions were often polarised. Taylor's comments were repeated verbatim in *The Edinburgh Review* (1865), indicating the growing popularity of this view.[1132] Writing in *The Portfolio* (1891), Claude Phillips further described the 'unmeasured contempt' in which the Carracci School were held in nineteenth-century England and France as 'cheap and unreasoning scorn,' 'nothing short of ridiculous.'[1133] In 1897, he remarked that while they would never 'wholly regain their once-exalted position… it is the merest folly to condemn the school and its most eminent professors wholesale.'[1134] In 1902, he exclaimed 'how lamentable a descent!' in reference to Reni.[1135]

A writer in *The Magazine of Art* (1892), describing the National Gallery's *Christ embracing St John the Baptist*, also exemplifies this view:

> Guido Reni has always been unfortunate in that he has rarely occupied the position that was exactly proper to him. He has always been over- or under-estimated, and no less in recent years than in his own days. Now fêted, now slighted in his lifetime, he soon rose after his death to a position in the public esteem considerably above his merits, and it is upon record that Sir Joshua Reynolds adopted a tone almost apologetic in placing him at his proper level – in dethroning him from the perch beside, or even above, Raphael. It is hardly to be imagined that the connoisseurs ever joined with the great public in their excessive worship of the master, but that Reni's artistic apotheosis was a century's phenomenon is as unquestionable as that he has suffered in these latter years from the reaction – from undeserved neglect, and, we might almost say, from contumely.[1136]

Robinson similarly commented in 1894: 'Now we worship early Italian art, and we detract from and decry the idols of our former cult. Needless to say, as in all

[1131] Leslie and Taylor, *Reynolds* (1865), Vol. 1, 469.
[1132] Anon., 'Art. III. – New History of Painting' (1865), 77.
[1133] Phillips, 'Guercino' (1891), 154.
[1134] Phillips, 'Longford Castle' (1897), 144.
[1135] Phillips, 'Quality of Emotion' (1902), 354.
[1136] Anon., 'Christ and St. John' (1892), 300.

revolutions, this change has been carried to excess, and a reaction will most likely ere long follow.'[1137] A further example can be found in *The Athenaeum* (1899)*:* 'It is the modern fashion to undervalue the Bolognese master, but we should not be surprised if an age which left Frank Hals so long out in the cold did not turn right round, and "go in" for Guido and his sound academicism, his eclecticism, and, at least, his lifelike power of designing.'[1138]

Furthermore, as has been suggested, many ranked Reni among the best of his period and school. The picture restorer Frederick Peter Seguier (1837–1902) argued in 1870: 'If not the grandest and most powerful painter of the Bolognese School, Guido has a fair claim to be called the sweetest and most refined follower of the Carracci.'[1139] Similarly, for Scott, Reni was 'the most noteworthy embodiment of artistic cultivation' in the seventeenth century and the artist who came closest to the heights of the previous century.[1140] Even Symonds made a similar point: 'Guido was the most genially endowed [of the Carracci School]. He alone derived a true spark from the previous age of inspiration. He wearies us indeed with his effeminacy, and with the reiteration of a physical type sentimentalised from the head and bust of Niobe. But thoughts of real originality and grace not seldom visited his meditations; and he alone deserved the name of colorist among the painters I have as yet ascribed to the Bolognese school.'[1141]

Consequently, whilst there was a great deal of criticism of Reni in this period, such antagonism was not universal and was recognised by many as extreme and unwarranted. In many ways, Reni continued to be acknowledged not just as the best of a poor generation but as a talented artist with skill, when used appropriately. There is also a sense in which the cyclical nature of taste was recognised, with commentators opining that Reni would soon be considered fashionable again. In 1902, the art historian Robert Witt (1872–1952) reflected on the 'extraordinary changes' to the art market of the past century. Highlighting

[1137] Robinson, 'Connoisseurship and Collecting' (1894), 532.
[1138] Anon., 'National Gallery' (1899), 327.
[1139] Seguier, *Dictionary* (1870), 165.
[1140] Scott, *Italian Masters* (1874), 31.
[1141] Symonds, *Catholic Reaction II* (1887), 357-58.

'human fickleness in mattes of taste,' he suggested: 'The artist-heroes of one age will be treated with scant respect by the picture-lovers of the next.'[1142] By way of example, he noted: 'Our forefathers, over-persuaded by Reynolds's magniloquence and the grandiose taste of their day, exalted Guido Reni, the Carracci, and the whole host of decadent imitators of the great Masters to the place of honour in private and public gallery alike.'[1143] Here, again, emerges the idea that different generations have different preferences and there exists a cycle of taste.[1144]

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In 1889, Cook declared: 'As for Guido Reni, there are many works by him which his worst detractors allow to be beautiful; but there are others which his best friends cannot deny to be odious.'[1145] During the second half of the nineteenth century, Reni's status certainly diminished. Criticism became extreme and even outlandish and comical, with Cook describing the National Gallery's *Christ embracing St John the Baptist* as featuring 'a namby-pamby, goody-goody face – characteristic of the artist's narrow creed.'[1146] Symonds's damning view, together with the enduring influence of Ruskin and Fuseli, played a crucial role in diminishing Reni's reputation. This is combined with the National Gallery's segregation of seventeenth-century Italian works and Reni's lack of representation and attention at loan exhibitions. Evidently, many considered Reni's paintings of lesser quality than other Italian works. However, he was not alone in receiving admonishment; the Carracci School and seventeenth-century Italian masters in general suffered as contemporary art and 'Early Masters' attracted attention. Furthermore, Reni's neglect in this period has been overstated and oversimplified. He was not fully abandoned and there continued to be several influential proponents of his works. As we have seen at the Manchester Exhibition, it was possible for the general public to express opinions

[1142] Witt, 'Concerning Value' (1902), 603.
[1143] Witt, 'Concerning Value' (1902), 607-08.
[1144] See also: Anon., 'National Gallery' (1911), 338-39; Anon., 'Italian Renaissance' (1911), 215.
[1145] Cook, 'Prices' (1889), 723.
[1146] Cook, *National Gallery* (1888), 332.

at odds with those recommended to them in writing. Furthermore, the same artist could attract praise and denigration from a single reviewer. Whilst it might appear that Reni's reputation was irreparably destroyed in the nineteenth century, this is simply not the case. Moreover, there is evidence that a new 'cycle of taste' was about to begin and Reni's reputation could recover.

Coda: Guido Reni in the Twentieth Century

'The young people, les Jeunes, are discovering Guido Reni. I, who had the good fortune to know him long ago, find myself, on the contrary, in the less stimulating condition of never having forgotten him at all'
Bernard Berenson, 1954.[1147]

This thesis has focused on the formative centuries in which Reni's reputation was established and contested in Britain. The year 1903 has been chosen as an endpoint since by then primary concerns had been fully developed and defined. Nevertheless, the study of Reni did not end at the beginning of the twentieth century and the following short Coda takes stock of what has happened more recently.

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In the 1880s, a revival of interest in Italian Baroque art and architecture in Germany and Austria led to greater acknowledgement of seventeenth-century artists, including Reni, and the publication of fundamental texts such as Heinrich Wölfllin's (1864–1945) *Renaissance und Barock* (1888). In the early twentieth century, this interest expanded and became more widespread, with Rudolf Wittkower (1901–1971) describing the period between the two World Wars as 'the era during which Baroque studies acquired respectable academic status.'[1148] Further impetus was provided by exhibitions, many of which included works by Reni, including: *La Mostra della Pittura Italiana del Seicento e del Settecento*, Palazzo Pitti, Florence, 1922; *Exhibition of Italian Art 1200–1900*, Royal Academy of Arts, London, 1930; and *Exhibition of 17th Century Art in Europe*, Royal Academy of Arts, London, 1938. In parallel, key texts were produced from a wide range of critical and methodological viewpoints, including works

[1147] Bernard Berenson, 'Guido Reni,' *Corriere della Sera* (26 November 1954). Cit. Emiliani, Schaefer, and Raimondi, *Reni* (1988), 351.
[1148] Wittkower, *Art and Architecture* (1965), 12.

by Roberto Longhi, Roger Fry, Sacheverell Sitwell, Arthur McComb, and Ellis Waterhouse, as well as later post-war figures such as Wittkower, Francis Haskell, and Charles Dempsey.[1149] Whilst some remained wedded to existing stylistic criticism, others engaged in investigations of sources, analyses of subject matter, and examinations of collecting habits.

Nevertheless, despite this renewed attention, Reni remained challenging for the broader public and his reputation continued to be precarious in Britain. Audiences tended to be still influenced by the sceptical views of Henry Fuseli, John Ruskin, and John Addington Symonds, formed in the previous century. In the catalogue to the Royal Academy's 1930 exhibition on Italian Art, which included two paintings and one drawing by Reni, Robert Witt, an informed collector, suggested that it was 'time to throw a more sympathetic glance upon the indisputable skill of the Academies of the Bolognese Eclectics.'[1150] The choice of the word 'eclectic' was indicative of some later and intense debate. Nevertheless, Charles Holmes, a museum director and popular writer on art, argued: 'The later [i.e. seventeenth-century] Italians do not show to conspicuous advantage, the Venetians excepted.'[1151] The critic and poet Horace Shipp likewise suggested that the exhibition 'conveys a false impression, in that the masters of the decline are represented by such good works that we incline to think Guido Reni always painted such masterpieces as the 'Atalanta' [Museo Nazionale di Capodimonte, Naples] and the lovely 'Portrait of his Mother' [Pinacoteca Nazionale, Bologna].' Although the period was 'enjoying a vogue of current favour,' he felt that 'the selection committee has been too kind to the masters of this school.'[1152] The same year, Trenchard Cox, at the beginning of a long career in British museums, referred to Reni's 'oppressive sentimentality' in his catalogue to the National Gallery and McComb described a 'sentimental cloying piety' in Reni's works and 'a considerable talent… spoiled by love of

[1149] Longhi wrote articles on Caravaggio and his circle in *L'Arte* (1913–16) and curated *Mostra del Caravaggio e dei Caravaggeschi*, Palazzo Reale, Milan, 1921; Fry, 'Baroque' (1921); Fry, 'Seicento' (1926); Sitwell, *Southern Baroque Art* (1924); McComb, *Baroque Painters* (1934); Waterhouse, *Baroque Painting* (1937); Wittkower, *Art and Architecture* (1965 [1958]); Haskell, *Patrons and Painters* (1971 [1963]); Dempsey, *Annibale Carracci* (1977).
[1150] Witt, *Italian Art* (1930), xiv. The exhibition included one painting and one drawing by Reni.
[1151] Holmes, 'Italian Exhibition' (1930), 71.
[1152] Shipp, 'Italian Art' (1930), 235-36.

money and popularity.'[1153] These statements demonstrate the resilience of the critical bias examined in previous chapters.

In the mid-twentieth century, attempts were made to reintroduce Reni into the canon. The 'prime mover' in the English-speaking world behind this rehabilitation of the Carracci School was the art historian, Sir Denis Mahon (1910–2011).[1154] In 1937, Mahon declared: 'In spite of the attention paid to Seicento painting during the past twenty years by German and Italian scholars, in England it is still something of the neglected Cinderella of Italian art, perhaps not so much from the point of view of appreciation as from that of art-history.'[1155] Reflecting on his life-long attachment to the Carracci School in 1987, he stated: 'The seventeenth century in Italy is my taste. I'm very fond of these characters, and I know quite a lot about them. They all became old friends.' For Mahon, 'there was a considerable task of rehabilitation to be done, and it had to be done by writing.'[1156] Throughout the 1930s, Mahon and Otto Kurz, who had completed a thesis on Reni under Julius Schlosser in Vienna (1931), toured Italy in search of paintings, and, in 1937, published two texts on Bolognese art: Mahon's 'Notes on the Young Guercino' and Kurz's 'Guido Reni' – a 'fundamental article' constituting the first comprehensive modern study of the artist.[1157] This reflected a demarcation of interests between the two, with Mahon turning his attention primarily to Guercino. Mahon's approach to art criticism involved visual comparison of paintings, interpretation of written sources, and analysis of art theory and taste.[1158] Looking back on the fiftieth anniversary of the publication of Mahon's *Studies in Seicento Art and Theory* (1947), a work which addressed Guercino's change in style, Michael Kitson judged that it had constituted the 'single most important influence… in winning over the institutions of art history in Britain to the acceptance of Italian 17th-

[1153] Cox, *National Gallery* (1930), 237; McComb, *Baroque Painters* (1934), 30. See Parrish, 'Changing Tastes' (2015), 34-5.
[1154] Kitson, 'Mahon' (1997), 8.
[1155] Mahon, 'Young Guercino' (1937), 112.
[1156] Shenker, 'Mahon' (1987), 122-23.
[1157] Levey, *National Gallery* (1971), 185, in reference to Kurz, 'Reni' (1937). See Parrish, 'Changing Tastes' (2015), 35.
[1158] Briganti, 'Mahon Collection' (1953), 5.

century painting as a major school of art.'[1159] Mahon also collected Bolognese paintings as 'a holding operation for England for in due course they will want these things.'[1160] Although he focused on Guercino, he obtained important works by Reni, and his prophecy came true when these were allocated after his death to the National Gallery, London, Pinacoteca Nazionale, Bologna, and National Gallery of Ireland, Dublin.[1161]

In 1954, the 'epoch-making' *Mostra di Guido Reni* was held at Palazzo dell'Archiginnasio, Bologna, which attracted 80,000 visitors and sold 10,000 catalogues.[1162] Its superintendent was Cesare Gnudi while Mahon, Kurz, Longhi, and Hermann Voss were involved in its organisation. This was the first of a series of biennial exhibitions on Bolognese painting held in Bologna which attracted an international audience. They were intended to reclaim a tradition of Italian beauty and foster a common art for the whole nation following years of fascism and the Second World War. For Kitson, they 'finally set the seal on the rehabilitation of Seicento painting, making it popular with art historians and the general public alike.'[1163] The *Mostra*'s aims were articulated in the catalogue: it did not intend to be polemical, to introduce a new and unfamiliar taste to an audience already repelled by Reni, to limit itself, or to dispute the modern prejudice. Rather, it aspired to restore the historic reality of Reni's art and place his paintings in the context of seventeenth-century art theory, including Bellori's 'Idea'.[1164] Mahon informed Luigi Salerno that two new pictures by Reni, including 'a rather exciting discovery,' were on display.[1165] Previously unknown works were exhibited and many were cleaned, with Gnudi remarking to Mahon: 'Ecco un nuovo artista!'[1166] Benedict Nicolson declared: 'The exhibition has come as a revelation. The whole edifice of hostility has crumbled overnight.' He

[1159] Kitson, 'Mahon' (1997), 16.
[1160] Plumptre, 'Modern Maecenas' (1997), 11.
[1161] *Rape of Europa* (National Gallery, London); *St Francis consoled by an Angel Musician* and *A Sibyl* (both Pinacoteca Nazionale, Bologna); *Cleopatra* (National Gallery of Ireland, Dublin).
[1162] Nicolson, 'Reni' (1958), 40; Emiliani, 'Interview' (2011).
[1163] Kitson, 'Mahon' (1997), 18.
[1164] Cavalli, *Mostra* (1954), 13, 15. See Parrish, 'Changing Tastes' (2015), 36.
[1165] Denis Mahon to Luigi Salerno, 24 July 1954. Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles, Special Collections, 2000:M:26.
[1166] Mahon, 'New Book' (1986), 214: 'Look, a new artist!'

highlighted Reni's precarious position in the canon, suggesting 'all those who enjoy having their prejudices shaken should make determined efforts to see it.'[1167] Denys Sutton considered it 'splendid,' insisting that 'Reni must be met… on his own ground' without past prejudice.[1168]

As Trustee of the National Gallery from 1957, Mahon also encouraged a renewed respect for Bolognese art in Britain at an institutional level, alerting the Gallery to the sale of Reni's *The Adoration of the Shepherds* (Fig. 62) from the Prince of Liechtenstein's collection in 1957.[1169] This painting, procured for £12,700, constituted the Gallery's first acquisition of a Reni in a century. The Trustees were attracted by the 'opportunity, almost certainly unique, of acquiring a great Baroque altarpiece and thus filling one of the most conspicuous gaps in the collection.'[1170] Nicolson labelled the painting 'a truly important addition' to the Gallery.[1171] Several further additions were made by other British institutions at this time, including three paintings by Reni at Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery, Manchester Art Gallery, and the National Gallery of Scotland.[1172] Two exhibitions, held at the Royal Academy in 1960 and Thomas Agnew and Sons in 1973, also promoted the artist by focusing upon British connoisseurs' relationships with Italian art, displaying Mahon's collection amongst others.[1173] In his catalogue to the Agnew exhibition, Clovis Whitfield argued that the critical reassessment and cleaning of Bolognese paintings meant that 'it is no longer necessary to argue against the fallacy of the Eclectic interpretation.'[1174]

Later in the twentieth century, further developments continued to enhance Reni's reputation. With the modernisation, professionalisation, and academicism of art history, Reni's reputation became less associated with taste and fashion; his

[1167] Nicolson, 'Rediscovery of Reni' (1954), 301-02.
[1168] Sutton, 'Rediscovery of Reni' (1954), 897. See Parrish, 'Changing Tastes' (2015), 36.
[1169] National Gallery, Archive, London, NG1, Vol. 13, 332: Board Minutes, 14 March 1957.
[1170] National Gallery Archive, London, NG14/170/1.
[1171] Nicolson, 'Reni' (1958), 40.
[1172] Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery: *Portrait of a Woman* (1961); Manchester Art Gallery: *St Catherine* (1974); National Gallery of Scotland: *Moses with Pharaoh's Crown* (1979).
[1173] Anon., *Italian Art and Britain* (1960); Whitfield, *England and the Seicento* (1973).
[1174] Whitfield, *England and the Seicento* (1973), Introduction. See Parrish, 'Changing Tastes' (2015), 37.

works were viewed increasingly in the context of the chronological development of art. Larger changes in methodology resulted in distinct attitudes towards Reni's artistic production and contrasting approaches towards 'rehabilitating' the artist. The changing response of scholars towards Reni is exemplified by Waterhouse's opposing views of Reni's *St Michael* (Santa Maria della Concezione, Rome) at different stages of his career. In a notebook of 1935, he mocked the painting as 'idiotic,' while in 1975, he stated: 'I looked more seriously than often at the Guido S. Michael – the canvas is in far from good state but the colour is not corrupted. This draws its great reputation. The figure has the beautiful position of a fine ballet step and the blue and rose colour are of great refinement. It really is very fine.'[1175] In 1984, Stephen Pepper published the first major monograph on Reni, raising awareness of the artist and legitimising a new critical approach to his work.[1176] In 1988, the major retrospective *Guido Reni, 1575–1642* was held in Los Angeles, Bologna, and Fort Worth, with the aim to acquaint the public with 'a painter unjustly neglected for a century.'[1177] In the 1990s, the National Gallery tackled the neglect of the Bolognese School in Britain with two exhibitions of Mahon's collection.[1178] Despite the pioneering work of Mahon on Seicento sources, and Pepper's attempt to reconstruct Reni's œuvre (an attempt that met a fair share of criticism), their approaches were rooted in traditional connoisseurship and the view that there was a pecking order – or canon – of artistic value.

Pepper's complete catalogue was published in 1984 and the following decade saw decisive and sometimes acrimonious changes in art-historical methodology. Reni and the Seicento were not left untouched; one powerful example stands out. In 1997, Richard E. Spear published *The 'Divine' Guido: Religion, Sex, Money and Art in the World of Guido Reni*, described by Matt Landrus as 'the first extensive twentieth-century analysis of Reni's personality and environment.'[1179]

[1175] Ellis K. Waterhouse, 13 March 1935, 4 August 1975. Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles, Special Collections, 870204-3-5, 171; 870204-8-5, 227.
[1176] Pepper, *Reni* (1984).
[1177] Emiliani, Schaefer, and Raimondi, *Reni* (1988), ix.
[1178] *Guercino in Britain: Paintings from British Collections* (1991); *Discovering the Italian Baroque: The Denis Mahon Collection* (1997). See Parrish, 'Changing Tastes' (2015), 38-9.
[1179] Landrus, 'Review of *'Divine' Guido*' (1998), 445.

Spear's work on Domenichino in his early career fitted within a critical framework familiar to Mahon and Pepper, but his book on Reni marked an intellectual change in direction which he elucidated in the Introduction. While many academics of his generation turned to Karl Marx, Spear turned to Sigmund Freud. Adopting a contextual approach and using a mixture of traditional and postmodern art-historical methodology, as well as psychoanalytical, philosophical, and literary theory, Spear provided a psycho-sexual reading of Reni's personality. His ambitious modern interpretation contrasts strongly with the connoisseurial approach of Mahon and Pepper and his presentation of 'this canonical artist in an 'uncanonical form' played a major role in 'provoking a new discourse' on Reni.[1180]

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It can be seen that Reni's status underwent a great transformation in the twentieth century; he was critically reassessed, contextualised, and once more received institutional support. However, his reputation remained ambiguous and continued to fluctuate. The *Mostra*, whilst hugely successful, brought together Reni's most celebrated paintings and thus presented the artist in a particularly favourable light. In Britain, it was difficult for the full breadth of Reni's œuvre to be acknowledged. Everywhere, the sheer number of copies and studio versions of Reni's works meant that attribution remained a challenge. His status remained questionable and he continued to attract criticism among certain viewers. In the 1994 *Companion Guide* to the National Gallery, it was stated that 'the Bolognese Reni, like the Florentine Dolci, is one of the great Italian artists of the seventeenth century whom twentieth-century viewers find difficult to like. He seems to us alien and contradictory.'[1181] The extent to which this mirrors views expressed in nineteenth-century guides to the Gallery is striking, suggesting that historic criticisms of Reni continued to hold sway. Indeed, for many, Reni remains controversial to this day.

[1180] Langdon, 'Review of *'Divine' Guido*' (2000), 115, 116.
[1181] Langmuir, *National Gallery* (1994), 232.

Conclusion

‘A painter who can earn such praise – and such opprobrium – deserves attention’

Howard Hibbard, 1969.[1182]

This thesis has investigated an extreme revolution in taste in European art: fluctuations in British attitudes towards the seventeenth-century Bolognese artist Guido Reni from the seventeenth to the nineteenth century. It has been demonstrated that Reni’s high status in Britain was first established within his own lifetime. A number of prominent collectors actively sought his works, including George Villiers, 1st Duke of Buckingham and the 2nd and 3rd Marquesses of Hamilton, as well as Charles I and Henrietta Maria, the latter of whom commissioned a painting for her Bedchamber at Queen’s House, Greenwich. The activities of these collectors, as well as the encomia of travellers and art writers, played a crucial role in spreading Reni’s reputation in Britain. In the eighteenth century, this upward trajectory continued, with Reni’s paintings recognised as essential components of collections. A diverse group of individuals, including the aristocratic collectors James Brydges, 1st Duke of Chandos, Sir Robert Walpole, 1st Earl of Orford, Thomas Coke, 1st Earl of Leicester, and John Spencer, 1st Earl Spencer, were willing to spend huge sums on Reni’s paintings, displaying them in both prominent and intimate spaces within their newly constructed houses. Copies of Reni’s paintings, particularly his most renowned works, such as *Aurora* (Palazzo Pallavicini-Rospigliosi, Rome), were also highly coveted, serving not just as affordable additions to collections but as valued features of interior decorative schemes, souvenirs of the Grand Tour, conversation pieces, and illustrations of art-historical theory.

The transition in Reni’s status from an exalted to a derided artist is traditionally held to have occurred in the 1840s and 50s following the National Gallery’s high-profile acquisition of several works by the artist. It is most commonly attributed to a catalogue of reproaches made by the influential art critic John

[1182] Hibbard, ‘Reni’s Immaculate Conception’ (1969), 19.

Ruskin, who violently deplored the purchases, favouring the works of 'Early Masters' and contemporary artists. In this thesis, it has been demonstrated that rejection of Reni in Britain actually occurred much earlier than previously acknowledged. It is undeniable that Ruskin's condemnation of Reni and the Carracci School was acutely vitriolic and immensely influential. However, he was just one in a succession of critics stretching back over half a century to level charges against Reni. Whilst Reni's reputation was extraordinarily high in eighteenth-century Britain, criticism did exist even in this period. Disapproval primarily concerned his approach to ideal beauty, the distinct nature of his 'manners', and the impact of his gambling habit on his artistic production. Derogatory terms such as 'affectation', 'insipidity', and 'effeminacy' can be found in relation to his works.

Such censure became dominant at the turn of the nineteenth century. The impact of broader changes at this time, such as developments in travel, the emergence of middle-class collectors, and rising interests in alternative genres of art and romantic notions of originality and genius, contributed to widespread rejection of Reni. Furthermore, visceral condemnation of the artist was expressed by various Presidents and Professors of the Royal Academy, whose pronouncements – especially those of Henry Fuseli – have hitherto been vastly underestimated. Not only did they expand upon the prevailing critique of the eighteenth century, but they laid a new charge against Reni and the broader Carracci School, condemning their 'eclectic' approach to art and citing a lack of spontaneous genius in Reni and a failure to transmit a coherent narrative. Their diverse reactions reveal much about Reni's changing status within the canon at this time and, more broadly, the shifting attitudes of the British art establishment towards the works of past masters.

In the middle of the nineteenth century, condemnation of Reni became ever more common and extreme. His idealistic approach continued to be criticised, while other issues, such as the religious sincerity of his paintings and the appropriateness of his focus on technical skill, also attracted attention. His moral conduct and identity as a Catholic artist were further criticised, indicating that his very character, as well as his artistic output, was found problematic. This

continued in the second half of the century, when vitriol against Reni became almost comical in its intensity. However, the situation is not as clear-cut as it might seem. In previous accounts of Reni's reception in Britain, it has been implied that his reputation was destroyed in the middle of the nineteenth century, only to be restored by Sir Denis Mahon in the twentieth century. This view is simplistic. Throughout the nineteenth century, one can find champions of Reni and a great number of individuals who continued to collect his works. There was a notable divide between new collectors and critics, who favoured 'Early Masters', Northern artists, and contemporary painters, and aristocratic collectors, the general public, and directors of galleries and exhibitions, who were more prone to follow the established taste of the previous century. Traces of Reni's reputation endured even at the end of the nineteenth century, indicating the strength of his historic position within the canon in earlier periods. There was also a suggestion that he was due another reversal of fortune, with some expressing dismay at the strength of animosity against him.

As well as exploring the fluctuating reputation of one artist, this thesis has revealed much about wider collecting habits in Britain, indicating how art is intertwined with the religion, morals, and cultural values of a society. It thus provides insight into various attitudes in Britain at different times, as well as elucidating the evolution of style and development of native art in the country. This thesis has accounted for shifts in Reni's status and reputation in Britain, providing insight into the vagaries of taste, the ephemerality of reputation, and the instability of the canon. Examination of Reni's reputation also sheds light on the validity of the canon, indicating how it is formed, by whom it is determined, and how it is manifested. The thesis has further clarified the identity of 'tastemakers', indicating that, while connoisseurs, travel writers, artists, and royal and aristocratic collectors were remarkably influential figures in the seventeenth and eighteenth century, by the middle of the nineteenth century, middle-class collectors, editors of periodicals and penny guides, and journalists also played a major role in influencing taste. As art became increasingly accessible, artistic taste became correspondingly diversified. Reni serves as a particularly tangible example of an artist who raises questions about how taste is formed and how changes in the market are manifested. His reputation did not

merely alter over time; he elicited extreme reactions, including adoration, respect, hostility, and vilification.[1183] Concerns about Reni tap into broader considerations about how beauty should be depicted, how technical an artist should be, and how religious sincerity should be conveyed.

Reni's legacy in the twentieth century has been briefly explored in this thesis; further consideration of his reputation in the twentieth and twenty-first century would be profitable. Reni remains a difficult artist for the general public to classify and much of his œuvre is the subject of contemporary debate. Various works have been recently cleaned and rehabilitated, while attributions made by dominant figures such as Mahon and Stephen Pepper in the late twentieth century have since been questioned. There remains scholarly debate on the authenticity of many works. Investigation of Reni's growing reputation among American collectors of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century would also be beneficial. There was much institutional interest in seventeenth-century Bolognese art in the United States in the twentieth century, which has implications for Reni's modern reputation. It also remains to be seen how the reception of Reni in Britain during the period examined in this thesis compares to other European countries, such as Germany, France, and Italy. Furthermore, the fortune of Reni in comparison to other members of the Carracci School should be explored in more detail, as well as other Italian Baroque artists, including Caravaggio, Carlo Dolci, Carlo Maratti, and Artemisia Gentileschi. Whilst a number of diverse collectors have been considered, a great many more acquired Reni's paintings and copies, particularly collectors of lesser means. There are also collectors who specialised in collecting Reni's drawings and prints; analysis of these additional aspects of collecting would provide useful avenues for further research.

In the 1630s, Reni became determined to ensure that his paintings would not only survive but would not deteriorate. Consequently, he painted on silk rather than linen, in the belief that it would last longer, and developed a light ground, anticipating that 'while the paintings of others would lose a great deal over the

[1183] See Parrish, 'Changing Tastes' (2015), 40.

years, his pictures would gain as the white lead would yellow, and they would take on a certain patina reducing all the pigment to a true and good natural colour.'[1184] This is a marked characteristic of his late 'manner', the category of his production most criticised in subsequent periods. Reni's concern with his own legacy was abundantly borne out in the events of the nineteenth century. Not only did the physical quality of his works decline, but attempts were made to erase his paintings from modern memory. In 1986, Mahon announced that he had 'reached the conviction some 50 years ago that Reni, whose contribution at that time had become completely obscured by an impenetrable curtain of indifference and ignorance, was one of the greatest of seventeenth-century artists.'[1185] This analysis of Reni's reception in Britain demonstrates the ramifications of judging past works of art by subsequent standards and exposes the complex and challenging nature of Reni as an artist.[1186]

[1184] Malvasia, *Felsina Pittrice* (2019), Vol. 1, 128-29, 184-85.
[1185] Mahon, *New Book* (1986), 213.
[1186] See Parrish, 'Changing Tastes' (2015), 42-3.

Illustrations

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