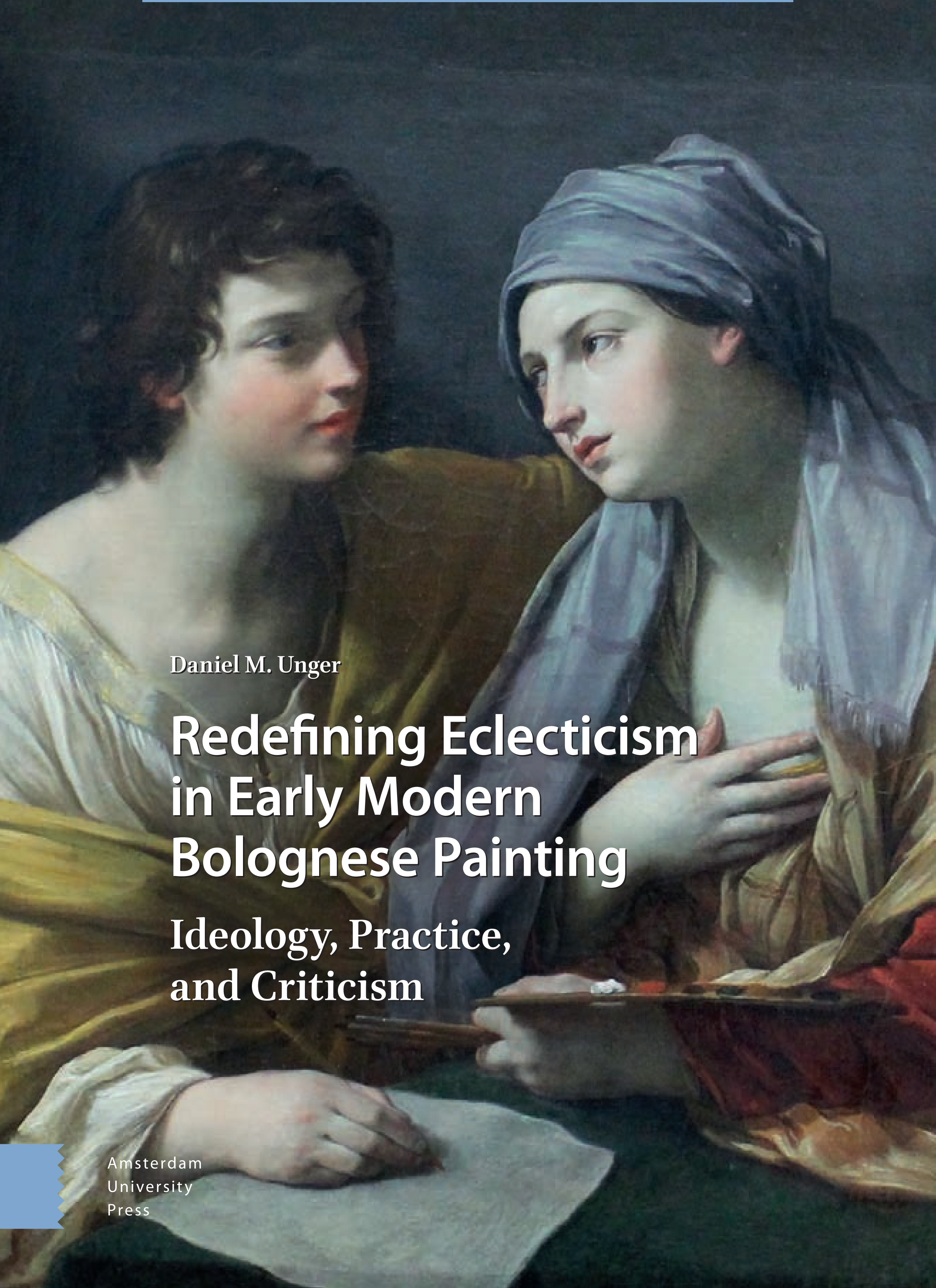

VISUAL AND MATERIAL CULTURE, 1300-1700

Daniel M. Unger

Redefining Eclecticism in Early Modern Bolognese Painting

Ideology, Practice, and Criticism

Amsterdam
University
Press

Redefining Eclecticism in Early Modern Bolognese Painting

VISUAL AND MATERIAL CULTURE, 1300–1700

A forum for innovative research on the role of images and objects in the late medieval and early modern periods, *Visual and Material Culture, 1300–1700* publishes monographs and essay collections that combine rigorous investigation with critical inquiry to present new narratives on a wide range of topics, from traditional arts to seemingly ordinary things. Recognizing the fluidity of images, objects, and ideas, this series fosters cross-cultural as well as multi-disciplinary exploration. We consider proposals from across the spectrum of analytic approaches and methodologies.

Series Editor
Dr. Allison Levy, an art historian, has written and/or edited three scholarly books, and she has been the recipient of numerous grants and awards, from the National Endowment for the Humanities, the American Association of University Women, the Getty Research Institute, the Dumbarton Oaks Research Library of Harvard University, the Whiting Foundation and the Bogliasco Foundation, among others. www.allisonlevy.com.

Redefining Eclecticism in Early Modern Bolognese Painting

Ideology, Practice, and Criticism

Daniel M. Unger

Amsterdam University Press

This book is published with the support of the Israel Science Foundation.

Cover illustration: Guido Reni, *Alliance between Disegno and Colore*, 1620/5, Louvre, Paris (Photo: © Author).

Cover design: Coördesign, Leiden
Lay-out: Newgen/Konvertus

ISBN 978 94 6298 601 5
e-ISBN 978 90 4853 725 9
DOI 10.5117/9789462986015
NUR 685

© D.M. Unger/ Amsterdam University Press B.V., Amsterdam 2019

All rights reserved. Without limiting the rights under copyright reserved above, no part of this book may be reproduced, stored in or introduced into a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means (electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise) without the written permission of both the copyright owner and the author of the book.

Every effort has been made to obtain permission to use all copyrighted illustrations reproduced in this book. Nonetheless, whosoever believes to have rights to this material is advised to contact the publisher.

For Dina

Contents

List of Plates and Figures 9
Preface 13
Introduction 17

1. Defining Eclecticism 33
    Assimilated Eclecticism – Vasari's Raphael 41
    Arbitrary Eclecticism 46
    Non-Assimilated Eclecticism – A Definition 48

2. Ideology 57
    Gabriele Paleotti's Discourse on Sacred Images 62
    A Pictorial Manifest: *Alliance between Disegno and Colore* 75
    Carlo Cesare Malvasia and the Assemblage of Styles 88

3. Practice 105
    The Terrestrial and Celestial Realms 106
    Portraits of Saints: St. Carlo Borromeo's Effigy 128
    Other Eclectic Paintings 141

4. Criticism 159
    Winckelmann's Introduction of Eclecticism into Artistic Discourse 160
    The Nineteenth-Century *juste milieu* 168
    The Dismissal of Eclecticism in the Twentieth Century 179

Conclusion 207
    The Eclectic Approach 207

Epilogue 209
    Eclecticism in a Roman Chapel 209

Index 225

List of Plates and Figures

Colour Plates

Plate 1. Ludovico Carracci, *St. Michael and St. George*, 1595, Santi Gregorio e Siro, Bologna (Photo: © Archivio Fotografico del Polo Museale dell'Emilia Romagna / Orselli).

Plate 2. Guercino, *Disegno and Colore*, 1656/7, Gemäldegalerie Alte Meister, Dresden (Photo: © bpk-Bildagentur).

Plate 3. Guido Reni, *Alliance between Disegno and Colore* (detail), 1620/5, Louvre, Paris (Photo: © Author).

Plate 4. Ludovico Carracci, *The Madonna Appearing to St. Hyacinth*, 1594, Louvre, Paris (Photo: © RMN-Grand Palais (musée du Louvre) / image RMN-GP).

Plate 5. Guercino, *St. Peter Standing before the Madonna*, 1647, Louvre, Paris (Photo: © RMN-Grand Palais (musée du Louvre) / Gérard Blot).

Plate 6. Guercino, *St. Gregory the Great with the Souls Suffering in Purgatory* (detail), 1647, San Paolo Maggiore, Bologna (Two Angels pulling Souls from Purgatory) (Photo: © Author).

Plate 7. Guido Reni, *Pietà dei Mendicanti*, 1613/16, Pinacoteca Nazionale, Bologna (Photo: © Archivio Fotografico del Polo Museale dell'Emilia Romagna / Quattrone).

Plate 8. Annibale Carracci, *Madonna and Child Enthroned with St. John the Baptist, St. John the Evangelist and St. Catherine of Alexandria*, 1593, Pinacoteca Nazionale, Bologna (Photo: © Author).

Black & White Figures

Figure 1. Parmigianino, *Vision of St. Jerome*, 1526/7, The National Gallery, London (Photo: © The National Gallery, London).

Figure 2. Giacopo Giovannini after Guido Reni, *The Farmers Presenting Gifts to St. Benedict*, engraving, 1694, in: Carlo Cesare Malvasia, *Il claustro di San Michele in Bosco di Bologna* (Photo: © Author).

Figure 3. Domenichino, *The Rebuke of Adam and Eve*, 1623/5, Musée de peinture et de sculpture, Grenoble (Photo: Ville de Grenoble / Musée de Grenoble – J. L. Lacroix).

Figure 4. Guido Reni, *Alliance between Disegno and Colore*, 1620/5, Louvre, Paris (Photo: © Author).

Figure 5. Guido Reni, *The Archangel St. Michael*, 1635, Santa Maria della Concezione, Rome (Photo: Public domain via Wikimedia Commons).

Figure 6. Guercino, *Abraham Casting out Hagar and Ishmael*, 1657/8, Pinacoteca di Brera, Milan (Photo: Pinacoteca di Brera, Milano – Ministero per i beni e le attività culturali).

Figure 7. Guercino, *Self-Portrait before a Painting of 'Amor Fedele'*, 1655, National Gallery of Art, Washington, D. C. (Photo: Patrons' Permanent Fund Accession No.2005.13.1).

Figure 8. Nicholas Poussin, *Self-Portrait*, 1650, Louvre, Paris (Photo: © RMN-Grand Palais (musée du Louvre) / Jean-Gilles Berizzi).

Figure 9. Annibale Carracci, *Jason Carried in a Coffin to Cheiron's Cave*, 1583/4, Palazzo Fava, Bologna (Photo: © Author).

Figure 10. Ludovico Carracci, *St. Jerome*, 1596/8, San Martino Maggiore, Bologna (Photo: © Archivio Fotografico del Polo Museale dell'Emilia Romagna / Fotofast).

Figure 11. Lorenzo Costa, *Ascension of the Madonna*, 1506, San Martino Maggiore, Bologna (Photo: © Author).

Figure 12. Guido Reni, *Madonna and Child with St. Mary Magdalene and St. Hyacinth*, Private Collection (Photo: © Archivio Fotografico del Polo Museale dell'Emilia Romagna / Matteuzzi).

Figure 13. Ludovico Carracci, *The Madonna of the Scalzi*, 1590/3, Pinacoteca Nazionale, Bologna (Photo: © Author).

Figure 14. Annibale Carracci, *Three Marys at the Tomb*, 1600, Hermitage, St. Petersburg (Photo: © The State Hermitage Museum. Photo by Pavel Demidov).

Figure 15. Annibale Carracci, *Pietà*, 1603, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna (Photo: Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna).

Figure 16. Guido Reni, *Assumption of the Virgin with the Twelve Apostles*, 1616/17, Sant'Ambrogio, Genoa (Photo: After D. Stephen Pepper, *Guido Reni: A Complete Catalogue of His Works*, New York: New York University Press, 1984).

Figure 17. Guido Reni, *Madonna and Child with Beato Filippo Neri*, 1614, Santa Maria in Vallicella (Chiesa Nuova), Rome (Photo: After *La regola e la fama: San Filippo Neri e l'Arte exh. cat.*, Milan: Electa, 1995).

Figure 18. Ludovico Carracci, *Holy Family with Saints and Donors*, 1591, Pinacoteca Civica, Cento (Photo: © Archivio Fotografico del Polo Museale dell'Emilia Romagna / Villani).

Figure 19. Guercino, *St. Gregory the Great with the Souls Suffering in Purgatory*, 1647, San Paolo Maggiore, Bologna (Photo: © Author).

Figure 20. Guercino, *St. Gregory the Great with the Souls Suffering in Purgatory* (detail), 1647, San Paolo Maggiore, Bologna (St. Gregory the Great) (Photo: © Author).

Figure 21. Ludovico Carracci, *Paradise*, 1616, San Paolo Maggiore, Bologna (Photo: © Archivio Fotografico del Polo Museale dell'Emilia Romagna / Liverani).
Figure 22. Guido Reni, *Pietà dei Mendicanti* (detail), 1613/16, Pinacoteca Nazionale, Bologna (St. Carlo Borromeo) (Photo: © Author).
Figure 23. Lorenzo Garbieri, *The Proclamation of the Barnabites' Rule*, 1611, San Paolo Maggiore, Bologna (Photo: © Author).
Figure 24. Guido Reni, *Pietà dei Mendicanti* (detail), 1613/16, Pinacoteca Nazionale, Bologna (St. Proculus) (Photo: © Author).
Figure 25. Agostino Carracci, *Last Communion of St. Jerome*, 1591/2, Pinacoteca Nazionale, Bologna (Photo: © Author).
Figure 26. Agostino Carracci, *Last Communion of St. Jerome* (detail), 1591/2, Pinacoteca Nazionale, Bologna (Photo: © Author).
Figure 27. Agostino Carracci, *Last Communion of St. Jerome* (detail), 1591/2, Pinacoteca Nazionale, Bologna (Photo: © Author).
Figure 28. Annibale Carracci, *Crucifixion with Saints Bernard di Siena, Francis, Petronius, John and Mourners*, 1583, Santa Maria della Carità, Bologna (Photo: © Author).
Figure 29. Annibale Carracci, *Baptism of Christ*, 1585, Santi Gregorio e Siro, Bologna (Photo: © Archivio Fotografico del Polo Museale dell'Emilia Romagna / Baldassarri).
Figure 30. Pontormo, *Deposition*, 1525/8, Cappella Capponi, Santa Felicita, Florence (Photo: Alinari, Fratelli).
Figure 31. Annibale Carracci, *Butcher's Shop*, 1582/3, Christ Church, Oxford (Photo: By permission of the Governing Body of Christ Church, Oxford).
Figure 32. Guido Reni, *Joseph and Potiphar's Wife*, *c.* 1630, J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles (Photo: © Author).
Figure 33. Guercino, *Joseph and Potiphar's Wife*, 1649, National Gallery of Art, Washington. (Photo: Patrons' Permanent Fund Accession No.1986.17.2).
Figure 34. Carlo Cignani, *Joseph and Potiphar's Wife*, *c.* 1670/80, Gemäldegalerie Alte Meister, Dresden (Photo © bpk-Bildagentur).
Figure 35. Johann Zoffany, *The Tribuna of the Uffizi*, 1772/8, Royal Collection, Windsor Castle (Photo: Royal Collection Trust / © Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II 2018).
Figure 36. Eustache Le Sueur, *Descent from the Cross*, 1651, Louvre, Paris (Photo: © RMN-Grand Palais (musée du Louvre) / Gérard Blot).
Figure 37. Paul Delaroche, *Hémicycle des Beaux-arts*, 1837/41, École des Beaux-Arts, Paris (Photo: © Beaux-Arts de Paris, Dist. RMN-Grand Palais / image Beaux-arts de Paris).
Figure 38. Guercino, *Elijah Fed by Ravens*, 1620, The National Gallery, London (Photo: © The National Gallery, London).

Figure 39. Guercino, *St. Francis*, 1645, San Giovanni in Monte, Bologna (Photo: © Archivio Fotografico del Polo Museale dell'Emilia Romagna / Villani).
Figure 40. Annibale Carracci, *Assumption of the Virgin*, 1600/1, Cappella Cerasi, Santa Maria del Popolo, Rome (Photo: © José Luiz Bernardes Ribeiro / via Wikimedia Commons).
Figure 41. Caravaggio, *Crucifixion of St. Peter*, 1604, Cappella Cerasi, Santa Maria del Popolo, Rome (Photo: After Sybille Ebert-Shifferer, *Caravaggio: The Artist and His Work*, Los Angeles: J. Paul Getty Museum, 2012).
Figure 42. Caravaggio, *Conversion of St. Paul*, 1604, Cappella Cerasi, Santa Maria del Popolo, Rome (Photo: After Sybille Ebert-Shifferer, *Caravaggio: The Artist and His Work*, Los Angeles: J. Paul Getty Museum, 2012).
Figure 43. Cappella Cerasi, Santa Maria del Popolo, pyramidal structure.
Figure 44. Caravaggio, *Conversion of St. Paul*, 1600/1, Odescalchi Collection, Rome (Photo: After Sybille Ebert-Shifferer, *Caravaggio: The Artist and His Work*, Los Angeles: J. Paul Getty Museum, 2012).

Preface

The intriguing stylistic diversity of Bolognese painting had a tremendous impact on the development of artistic creation in seventeenth-century Italy. The flourishing of different stylistic approaches in the Mannerist paintings of the previous generation evolved, in the work of the three Carracci and their Bolognese followers, into an eclectic approach characterized by the combination of two or more styles in a single work of art. These painters each sought to formulate an individual approach characterized by more than one signature style, which they combined in accordance with what they were asked to portray, in order to convey specific ideas or messages.

This study aims to redefine and re-evaluate Bolognese painting in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries in relation to the concept of eclecticism. From the early nineteenth century until quite recently, this concept was perceived as a synonym for bad art. A new appreciation of eclecticism emerged only in the last few decades, in postmodern theory and writing—most notably in the work of Robert Venturi and Denise Scott Brown, who blazed the way for a rehabilitation of this term and of its aesthetic value. As I will argue in this book, by re-establishing the viability of the term, one gains a new understanding of the unique nature of early modern Bolognese painting, which expanded the limits of artistic creation and challenged the constraints evident in Vasarian unity. Significantly, eclecticism also challenges the traditional perception of linear stylistic development in the course of a given painter's artistic evolution. It is this study's aim to show that by accepting diversity as a major component of artistic theory and practice, one may uncover new layers of meaning in Bolognese painting at the turn of the seventeenth century.

When I first began my research on artistic theory as embedded in seventeenth-century painting more than a decade ago, I was under the impression that modern scholars overestimated the role of theory in the artistic production of this period. My point of departure at that time was Donald Posner's perception of the Carracci's practicality, together with Denis Mahon's opinion on their experimentalism. Yet as my research evolved, I came to realize the importance of theory in seventeenth-century Bolognese artistic conduct. An understanding of the art of Ludovico Carracci, Annibale Carracci, Guido Reni, and Guercino—the main protagonists of this study—cannot be complete without an examination of the ideological sources and theoretical precedents underlying their diverse practices.

My first encounter with a description that considers stylistic diversity, or eclecticism, took place when I stumbled on Malvasia's description of the St. George altar-

Unger, Daniel M., *Redefining Eclecticism in Early Modern Bolognese Painting: Ideology, Practice, and Criticism*, Amsterdam University Press, 2019
DOI: 10.5117/9789462986015/PRE

piece in Santi Gregorio e Siro. Standing in front of the painting in Bologna, it took me a while to acknowledge what the seventeenth-century biographer of the city's painters actually meant. It was only after reading Malvasia's account that I realized this artwork's key importance for understanding the Carracci's reform. Malvasia's subtle stylistic differentiations between 'the saint, the maiden, and the angels in the upper section', were an outcome of a distinct visual experience that differs greatly from that of twenty-first century viewers. As will become evident in the following chapters, his meticulous observations and perceptive eye shed light on details that are lost on contemporary eyes overwhelmed by an endless flood of visual stimuli.

During the extended period that I spent gathering materials and formulating my thoughts on this subject, I had the good fortune to share my insights with many friends, colleagues, and students to whom I wish to express my deepest respect and gratitude for their advice, experience, and knowledge. Some read the entire manuscript at different stages, adding to it as well as confronting and challenging me, while always remaining supportive and enthusiastic. I am especially indebted in this regard to Nirit Ben-Aryeh Debby, Larry Silver, and Dror Wahrman, who deserve special thanks for the critical comments that made this study into a better book. Special acknowledgment is also due to Giles Knox, Alexander Nagel, and Merav Yerushalmi, who listened and expanded my understanding of various issues, and to Gal Ventura, who greatly expanded my knowledge of life, culture, and society in nineteenth-century France.

As a faculty member in the arts department at Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, I have benefited from my smart and supportive colleagues who contributed to this project throughout its evolution by discussing my material or reading different drafts of it. I am especially grateful to Nea Ehrlich, Haim Finkelstein, Ronit Milano, and Sara Offenberg. My heartfelt thanks also go to my students, and especially to Esthy Kravitz Lurie, who assisted me in this project. They did not allow themselves to be easily convinced by my arguments, and I am grateful for their thought-provoking input. I would also like to thank Roni Amir, William Barcham, Rebecca Bossi, Michelle Facos, Emma Gashinsky, Grace Harpster, Jonathon Hunt, Katrin Kogman-Appel, Ornat Lev-Er, Consuelo Lollobrigida, Haim Maor, Emilio Negro, Sheryl Reiss, Nicosetta Roio, Rachel Sarfati, Camille Serchuk, Roni Taharlev, Nicholas Terpstra, and the many other colleagues whom I met at various conferences, and who shared their thoughts on this topic. It is a privilege to have been able to profit from the contributions of so many insightful minds.

Special thanks are due to Erika Gaffney, my editor at AUP, and to Allison Levy, the series editor, who both encouraged me to finally write the book and who made its realization possible. Talya Halkin, my English editor, deserves special acknowledgment not only from me, but also from the book's future readers, for contributing to its coherence and clarity.

This book is dedicated to Dina, my companion in life who encouraged me more than anyone did to bring this project to fruition, and provided me with endless love, support, and courage while we were both rather busy with our Noga, Or, Leigh, Gal, and Alma. Finally, this list of acknowledgments would not be complete without mentioning my parents, Evelyne and Aryeh (Leon) Unger, who are my most loyal and erudite readers.

Daniel M. Unger, Jerusalem, 2018

Introduction

In a revealing passage regarding Ludovico Carracci's *St. Michael and St. George* altarpiece in the church of Santi Gregorio e Siro in Bologna (Plate 1), Count Carlo Cesare Malvasia describes the painting in the following words:

> Ludovico had a marvelous and unique ability to re-create the manner of whatever master he chose to imitate, and because he practiced so many styles, one sometimes despairs of being able to identify a work as being by his hand. To view the Saint George altarpiece in the church of San Gregorio, and to consider the three styles, each one so different from the other, seen in the saint, the maiden, and the angels in the upper section, is enough to drive one crazy.[1]

In this short passage, Malvasia, the seventeenth-century biographer of the Bolognese school of painting, demonstrates his enthusiasm toward one of Ludovico's Bolognese altarpieces by emphasizing the painter's skills as a master of stylistic variety. Carracci, as his biographer tells us, possessed an ability to create a single work of art that combined three different styles. According to Malvasia, this stylistic diversity is discernible in the two main protagonists in the lower section of the altarpiece, the maiden and the saint, as well as in the three distinct yet combined compositions in the upper section.

Count Carlo Cesare Malvasia (1616–1693), a native of Bologna and the scion of a respectable local family, wrote what is still acknowledged today as the most comprehensive and detailed account of the development of painting in Bologna between the fourteenth and seventeenth centuries. At first glance, his description may seem surprising to contemporary twenty-first-century viewers accustomed to an ongoing flood of media images. Such viewers might pass through the chapel without noticing anything special about it, and might find it difficult to detect the subtle stylistic variations noted by Malvasia. Yet attention to these variations, which Malvasia described as mind-blowing to the point of driving him mad (*impazzire*), provides a glimpse into

---

[1] 'Di qual maestro si è posto in testa di contrafar la maniera, mirabilmente l'ha fatto, ed in guisa, che in lui solo vedendosene tante, si dispera talvolta di potervisi ben riconoscere la sua, ed assicurarsene: Il considerarsi nel S. Giorgio nella Chiesa di S. Gregorio tre maniere tanto diverse, nel Santo, nella Donzella, e ne gli Angeli nella parte superiore, e che sì ben accordano insieme, è cosa che fà impazzire.' Malvasia, *Felsina Pittrice*, I, p. 484. For the English translation, see Summerscale, *Malvasia's Life of the Carracci*, p. 292. In the context of modern scholarship, Keith Christiansen wrote: 'So varied is Ludovico's work that at times he seems almost to be several artists.' See Christiansen, 'A Late Masterpiece by Ludovico Carracci', p. 22.

Unger, Daniel M., *Redefining Eclecticism in Early Modern Bolognese Painting: Ideology, Practice, and Criticism*, Amsterdam University Press, 2019
DOI: 10.5117/9789462986015/INTRO

seventeenth-century sensibilities that may shed new light on the visual experience of Malvasia's contemporaries. The relative dearth of images in the seventeenth century may have been one of the reasons that seventeenth-century art lovers were meticulous in their observations, as made evident in the passage by Malvasia.

In considering the subject of exposure to images and the relatively small number of artworks in early modern Bologna, it is interesting to note a comment made by Cardinal Gabriele Paleotti, first Bishop (1566–1582) and then Archbishop (1582–1586) of Bologna, almost one hundred years before Malvasia's time.[2] In order to be of service to the reformed Catholic Church, Paleotti devoted himself to instructing artists about what was suitable for the portrayal of religious themes and about what kinds of mistakes should be avoided. He argued that the popes who followed Gregory I all advocated for the use of sacred images. A church, he continued, should not resemble a synagogue or a mosque, where there are no images at all, nor should it resemble a bare-walled room in a private home.[3] This last point by Paleotti underscores the scarcity of images in early modern experience.

Ludovico Carracci's *St. Michael and St. George* altarpiece, in which Malvasia was amazed to discern no less than three different styles, is a good example of the type of eclectic paintings explored in this book. Commissioned by Cristoforo and Paride Grimaldi in 1595, this complex painting consists of four utterly different groups of figures positioned against a Titianseque landscape, whose illumination makes it difficult to determine whether the episode is taking place at dawn or at dusk.[4] This ambiguity echoes the indeterminate character of the entire composition, which depicts an unrealistic event: St. George, who appears on the left, presents the viewer with his accomplishment—the slaying of a mighty dragon, positioned across from him with a broken spear slashing its head. Just above the dragon, to the right, the painter depicted a female figure looking down toward the dragon as she flees.

In this lower section, which demarcates the terrestrial realm, a single unified moment represents the successful elimination of the Antichrist in the form of a dragon. Yet the upper section, which captures the celestial realm, consists of three consecutive scenes. The archangel Michael is seen banishing the rebellious angels from Heaven (Apoc. 12:7–9). At the centre of the composition, the Archangel is seen combating the representatives of Lucifer in the form of a dragon. This combat scene is flanked by two other scenes in which St. Michael is fighting the revolting angels, who appear in the form of human figures.[5] The scene at the centre of the upper section corresponds to that of St. George's slashed dragon, thus drawing a parallel between the celestial narrative and the terrestrial one. The upper section elaborates and anticipates the lower part (or vice versa), showing the fierce combat between the representatives of good and evil, or of virtue and vice.[6] The battle concludes with the triumph of the archangel above and of St. George below.

---

[2] Carofano, Negro and Roio, *Il Compendio della Nobelissima città di Bologna di Giuseppe Rosaccio*, p. 92. For Paleotti's position as Bishop of Bologna, see Prodi, *Il Cardinale Gabriele Paleotti*, I, p. 230. For the elevation of Bologna to the status of an archdiocese in 1582, see Prodi, *Il Cardinale Gabriele Paleotti*, II, p. 434.

[3] Paleotti, *Discorso*, p. 85. For the English translations, see *Discourse on Sacred and Profane Images*, p. 126.

[4] Paolo Masini, *Bologna Perlustrata*, p. 131. For the commission, see Fanti, *La chiesa dei Santi Gregorio e Siro in Bologna*, p. 284.

[5] For the scene portrayed, see Gandellini, *Notizie istoriche degl' intagliatori*, p. 319.

In the upper section, Ludovico used a brighter scale of colours than those applied in the dark lower section. The figure of the Archangel is classically oriented, with a scaled diffusion of light and a smooth, rounded body that stands out in contrast to the sharp *chiaroscuro* employed in the depiction of St. George. The saint is also depicted differently than the maiden, on a larger scale, so that he looms larger than his counterpart. Additionally, the dark figure of the saint stands out in contrast to the bright colours and diffuse light that characterize the maiden. The stylistic difference between the two terrestrial figures is evident, for example, in the rendering of their eyes. While those of St. George are almost invisible due to their dark contours, the right eye of the maiden is clearly visible. This contrast is further underscored by the drapery of both figures, with the coarse, patchy, colouristic style used for the saint's clothing differing from the delicate linear drapery of the maiden.

Earlier in his account of Ludovico, Malvasia expressed his opinion that the female figure was rendered in a manner superior to what Raphael could have achieved:

> Take for example the Saint George in the church of S. Gregorio, where on one side, the principal figure of the holy knight is presented in such an exaggerated swaying pose with the body's weight thrown on one hip that it almost goes beyond the bounds of a rational representation, while on the other side, the royal maiden, realizing with both fear and joy that her life has been restored to her through the death of the horrible dragon, is so modest in pose, so correct and appropriate in outline that Raphael himself could not have devised a more perfect and appealing figure.[7]

In this comparison, Malvasia is obviously conveying a highly personal view, yet his observation also pertains to Ludovico's mode of representation and attention to movement. St. George is rendered unnatural 'beyond the bounds of a rational representation', while the maiden is serene, realistically depicted, and modest. St.

---

[6] For this dichotomy and for a discussion of the dragon as a Christian symbol of negative forces in the Renaissance, see Didi-Huberman, *Saint George et le Dragon*, pp. 47–48; Maré, 'There is no Hero Without a Dragon', pp. 196–198; Khalifa-Gueta, 'Leonardo's Dragons', pp. 112–116.

[7] 'Per un di essi prendasi il S. Giorgio nella Chiesa di S. Gregorio, ove, come da una parte la principal figura, ch'è il Santo Cavaliere, sfiancheggia, e s'altera in modo, che sta per uscir suore del ragionevole, dall'altra la Real donzelletta, che lieta insieme, e timorosa contempla nella morte dell'orribil drago la riavuta sua vita, è di profili così modesti, corretti ed aggiustati, che la più perfetta, ed amorosa figura mai sovvenne all'istesso Rafaello.' Malvasia, *Felsina Pittrice*, I, p. 435. For the English translation, see Summerscale, *Malvasia's Life of the Carracci*, p. 211.

George's pose is full of vigour, while the maiden appears rather frozen, with only mild movement.

Malvasia's two comments reveal a form of perception that is at the core of this study. His first comment acknowledges that the altarpiece combines three different styles, while the second details what, from his perspective, constituted the distinction among these styles. These subtle observations concerning Ludovico's painting and its 'assemblage' (*componimento*) of styles reveal a sensibility towards a seventeenth-century phenomenon that has yet to be explicitly articulated, and which I would like to define as 'non-assimilated eclecticism': the intentional combination of different, consolidated styles in a single work of art. This type of eclecticism stands out in contrast to the more common form of assimilated eclecticism discernible, for example, in Vasari's description of Raphael's painting, in which different styles were studied and assimilated into a single homogenous style. This study focuses on the ideology, practice, and criticism of the non-assimilated eclecticism. It is concerned with a configuration of artistic style and meaning that was specific to Bolognese painting, and which developed at the end of the sixteenth century in the work of the Carracci and their followers.

It was Johann Joachim Winckelmann, in the second half of the eighteenth century, who first coined the term eclecticism in an artistic context, ascribing it to the Bolognese school of painting. Subsequently, this term had a tremendous impact on the reception of seventeenth-century Italian painting, influencing the development of scholarship on the Italian art of this period. The current study also explores the impact of this concept and its perception on shifting attitudes toward the Bolognese school of painting in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The concept of eclecticism stood at the core of modern scholarship concerning the Bolognese school of painting from the time that it was first applied to the Carracci by Winckelmann up until its rejection by Sir Denis Mahon almost two hundred years later, in 1947. The dramatic vacillation between the acceptance and rejection of the Carracci and of the painters considered to be their followers was, as this study will show, closely connected to changing attitudes toward eclecticism.

In examining late sixteenth and seventeenth-century eclecticism, I will thus focus not only on the considerations that motivated painters during this period to use several different styles within a single work of art, but also on the evolution of the term 'eclecticism' from a neutral definition to a pejoratively interpreted one, which caused scholars and admirers of the Bolognese school of painting to dismiss it altogether in order to restore the status of Bolognese seventeenth-century painting. Bolognese art was thus rehabilitated at the cost of losing important layers of meaning, which were abandoned in this process.

The aim of this book is to re-examine and redefine this particular type of non-assimilated eclecticism in early modern Italian painting, to assess its ideological purpose, and to elaborate on its usage as an iconographical tool. I propose that we address this concept neither as the name of an entire school of painting nor as an inferior stylistic model or method. What began at the end of the sixteenth century as a practical religious need at the time of the Catholic Reform (which called for distinguishing between the celestial and the terrestrial realms and between virtue and vice) evolved into a unique feature of Bolognese painting. The painterly display of distinct forms of stylistic virtuosity was thus used as an expressive vehicle for delivering ideas.

The use of more than one style in a single work of art as practiced by Ludovico and Annibale Carracci, as well as by other important seventeenth-century Bolognese painters such as Guido Reni and Giovanni Francesco Barbieri (better known as Guercino), was directly related to Gabriele Paleotti and to his famous 1582 *Discorso intorno alle imagini sacre et profane*. In this book on religious painting, Paleotti distinguished between the representation of nature and the representation of a truthful matter or idea that has no resonance in nature (such as dragons, angels, or hell). He used two distinct terms, *vero* and *verosimile*, which were both borrowed from Aristotle. The first term relates to nature and acknowledges its actuality, while the second relates to what is true while remaining an imitation or a heightened illusion of what is real. Soon after the book was first published, this ideological distinction was translated by the painters of his diocese into a combination of styles that each retained their unique features. What was considered true but not real, such as the celestial realm and angels, was to be represented differently from what was considered real, such as the terrestrial realm and its human inhabitants. It was this stylistic diversity that resulted in non-assimilated eclecticism.[8]

Stylistic diversity, or the intentional non-assimilation of styles, was also acknowledged by other seventeenth-century men of letters in addition to Malvasia, as well as by important patrons. Indeed, the entire chain of artistic creation and reception as found in seventeenth-century artistic practice and discourse adhered to the concept of eclecticism.

Eclecticism came to be considered as a merely stylistic device. It was defined, praised, and subsequently condemned and dismissed without a full and thorough examination of what it might signify. It is quite clear that modern scholarship preferred not to address the issue of eclecticism and its application in seventeenth-century painting, due to the negative connotation that the term had acquired. Its deprecation has prevented a straightforward examination and appreciation of the significance of eclecticism in Bolognese painting. This pejorative understanding and ambivalence are clearly expressed by Rudolph Wittkower (1965) and Christine Bolus-Reichert (2009). As Wittkower writes:

---

[8] With respect to Caravaggio's style, Dempsey distinguished between two aspects of his representation of reality. Caravaggio's real revolution, according to Dempsey, lay in his claim for expressing only what is real (*vero*). Dempsey interpreted Caravaggio's work as a form of subjective realism—that is, as an attempt to represent his protagonists according to what he himself experienced and saw. Dempsey, 'Caravaggio and the Two Naturalist Styles', pp. 92–94.

> In keeping with this [the acceptance of selective borrowing as central to artistic creativity by the majority of artists since the Renaissance] undeniable fact, the most common empirical procedure of art historians is concerned with tracing of influences and borrowings, and to that extent the method of selective borrowing is silently acknowledged as perfectly respectable. But when confronted with this very issue as an explicit theory, the same art historians paradoxically retract and stigmatize it as eclectic.[9]

According to Wittkower, we might either admire or excoriate the same works, depending on whether we interpret them as based on the traditional artistic methods of influence and imitation, or view them as based on a preconceived theory.

A more recent approach is represented by Christine Bolus-Reichert. While her main focus is nineteenth-century eclecticism in English literature, she devotes a chapter to the Carracci. As Bolus-Reichert writes,

> Defending eclecticism is notoriously difficult since there is no particular visual or literary style associated with it. Embracing eclecticism as a theory could destroy a reputation, since romantic art history turned the classical theory of selective imitation upside down. But practicing eclecticism has been unavoidable for writers, philosophers, and artists alike at least since the end of the eighteenth century.[10]

Despite the differences in their approaches, both scholars point to the difficulty of assessing the value of eclecticism and of defining this term, and both relate to its negative reputation and especially to the revolving methodological and theoretical attitudes towards the concept as both an artistic method and a theory.

With regard to Bolognese painting, Charles Dempsey suggests replacing the term eclecticism with a different one, and proposes the well-established concept of 'selected imitation'. As discussed by Wittkower, this idea has pertained since ancient times not only to the process of artistic creation, but also to the viewer's satisfaction in perceiving such works of art.[11] Dempsey describes Annibale as experimenting with different artistic languages, consolidating his own style while exercising his judgment to assemble artistic elements both from nature and from earlier works. In other words, Dempsey implies that Annibale was picking and choosing. He associates the Carracci's work with a theoretical model, according to which the artist used his own preconceived idea in order to decide what he should take from nature and what he should take from artists of previous generations, for the sake of producing the most perfect painting.[12] In doing so, the artist distilled the essence from different regional artistic languages for the purpose of creating a coherent and unified artistic language. 'It appears to me', Dempsey writes

---

[9] Wittkower, 'Imitation, Eclecticism, and Genius', p. 154.

[10] Bolus-Reichert, *The Age of Eclecticism*, p. 25. In her book, Bolus-Reichert explained Victorian eclecticism as it emerged in the nineteenth century in Britain and France. According to her, although the term had a negative implication throughout the century, it also had an important impact on the development of literary writing. In defining the term, the author refers to the Bolognese painters of the seventeenth century and especially the reception of the Carracci during the nineteenth century, and to the debate that took place in the mid-twentieth century. The approach toward the Carracci underlined the term. Eclecticism, according to Bolus-Reichert, was a central phenomenon for understanding the Victorian age, which she would further call the age of eclecticism.

[11] Wittkower, 'Imitation, Eclecticism, and Genius', pp. 144–145.

> that discussion of the question of imitation, under the misnomer of eclecticism, and the art of the Carracci has been greatly confused by failing to distinguish between the various necessary activities of an artist, especially as these were conceived by the Carracci themselves. On the one hand, it was the artist's job to imitate natural and artificial perfections, and then to observe their nature and principles, anatomizing art even as he anatomized and classified nature. On the other hand, it was also the artist's job to reassemble these things according to his own idea, regulated by judgment which had been freed by the attainment of perfection in imitation (Practice) and in observation (Theory).[13]

In the above-quoted passage, Dempsey acknowledges the connection between practice and theory that is most important for understanding Bolognese painting. His idea of selective or judicious imitation belongs to the vocabulary of eclecticism that emphasizes the stage of learning, absorbing, and even appropriating the styles of previous generations. It is this process of absorption that enabled painters to create the stylistic distinctions at the core of this study. From this perspective, the use of the concept 'imitation' is redundant. A painter does not have to imitate, emulate, borrow, or even be inspired by another artist in order to practice eclecticism, once he has developed a variety of styles. Imitation, in the context of non-assimilated eclecticism, should be referred to only in its most basic sense, as described by Paleotti:

> Painting is an imitative art, as everyone knows, and he paints well who imitates well; nor does anyone imitate well who does not imitate things as they were, or as it is reasonable that they were, especially when it comes to the status of persons because, of all the things that can be imitated, that is the most important.[14]

---

[12] See also Feigenbaum, *Ludovico Carracci*, p. li.

[13] Dempsey, *Annibale Carracci and the Beginnings of Baroque Style*, pp. 60–70. For the quote, see Dempsey, *Annibale Carracci and the Beginnings of Baroque Style*, p. 60.

[14] 'Imperò che la pittura come ogn'uno sa, è arte imitatrice, & quello dipinge bene che ben imita: ne mai imita bene, chi non imita le cose, o come furono, o come è ragionevole che fossero, massimamente quanto alla conditione della persona, che è la principale tra tutte le cose, che si possono imitare.' Paleotti, *Discorso*, p. 184; Paleotti, *Discourse on Sacred and Profane Images*, p. 228.

According to this passage, true art is based on reality. Paleotti judged painting according to the similarity between an object, or a person, and its depiction. The greater the similarity, the better the painting.

The ongoing dismissal of eclecticism as a definitive term in the context of Bolognese artistic creation builds on the fact that one cannot find a single instance in which the term was used in an artistic context prior to the eighteenth century. The term was regarded as a mere anachronism. The explicit absence of the word 'eclectic' in the seventeenth-century discourse on painting merits some clarification. During the early modern period, many terms were coined only after the emergence of a phenomenon. Maria H. Loh, for instance, relates to the well-known term 'originality', which, like eclecticism, is also an eighteenth-century invention. According to Loh, the term used to express originality in previous generations was *inventione*.[15] Paolo Pino, the Venetian art theorist, author, and painter, wrote that a painter used this device to interpret 'poems and histories on one's own', and to create his own translation of a scene. Pino's Fabio says in this context, 'Happy is he who does not steal another's labors!'[16] One should also mention Carlo Ginzburg's description of Mancini's *Considerazioni* as the first book of connoisseurship, which he calls the 'first attempt to establish connoisseurship, as it was to be called a century later'. Connoisseurship, according to Ginzburg, existed before the term was coined.[17] In a similar vein, Moshe Barasch attributed the craft of connoisseurship to Filippo Baldinucci, who attempted to distinguish between different 'hands' and to catalogue the drawings of individual painters. According to Barasch, Baldinucci's work preceded both the terminology and its theoretical articulation, which was first expressed in 1699 by Roger de Piles in his *Idea of the Perfect Painting*.[18] One example of a more general concept is the term 'Sociology', which was coined by Auguste Comte in the nineteenth century yet refers to a phenomenon that long preceded this definition.[19] The abundance of such cases should serve to reject any attempt to dismiss modern terms such as eclecticism as merely anachronistic.

When early modern eclecticism did receive attention in the second half of the twentieth century, it remained coloured by the problematic connotations and definitions of the previous century, and was associated with a restricted set of stylistic and theoretical precepts ascribed to the Carracci. In this respect, one should mention two examples that may shed light on the range of ways in which eclecticism was perceived in modern scholarship. In his 1988 book *Visual Fact over Verbal Fiction*, Carl

---

[15] Loh, 'New and Improved', p. 477.

[16] 'felice colui, che nŏ fuara l'altrvi fatiche.' See Pino, *Dialogo di pittura*, p. 16; Pardo, 'Paolo Pino's "Dialogo di Pittura"', p. 334.

[17] Ginzburg, 'Morelli, Freud and Sherlock Holmes', p. 17. See also Sohm, *Style in the Art Theory of Early Modern Italy*, p. 227, n. 68; Frigo, 'Can One Speak of Painting if One Cannot Hold a Brush? p. 419; Gage, *Painting as Medicine in Early Modern Rome*, p. 21.

[18] Barasch, *Modern Theories of Art 1*, pp. 47–48.

[19] See Brooks III, *The Eclectic Legacy*, p. 19.

Goldstein discusses the Carracci painters in relation to seventeenth-century artistic discourse. Although he does not explicitly address the concept of eclecticism, Goldstein's engagement with the complexity of their work touches upon this subject. He relates, on the one hand, to what modern scholars claim as proof of Annibale's intellectualism and imitation of nature (Dempsey's combination of practice and theory). Annibale's interest in theoretical matters is manifested, for example, in his notes on the margins of Vasari's *Vite* (the *postille*). In one place Annibale remarked that 'Vasari did not realize that the great artists of Antiquity derived their works from nature, and advises that artists simply study antique works, and not nature, which is a misconception, for nature must always be imitated'. At the same time, Goldstein focuses on a quote by Mancini, who described Annibale as 'a universal painter, of the sacred and the profane, the light-hearted and serious, a true painter because he was able to work, "di sua fantasia" without having a model in front of him'.[20] Although the eclectic potential of this duality is not developed in Goldstein's book, he does point to a method that involved both those aspects mentioned in the *postille* and the qualities mentioned by Mancini. As Goldstein describes them, the Carracci based themselves on an investigation of nature, the study of the antique, 'and pursuit of an ideal of the kind identified in the theory of Agucchi and Bellori'.[21]

Later in his book, Goldstein explains the process of imitation discernible in the Carracci paintings, again without explicitly mentioning the term 'eclecticism':

> The process of selection with which the Carracci have been associated involves far more, however, than the occasional—or frequent—copying of works by other artists. It involves, first, isolating a particular element or quality located in the work of one artist and, second, combining it with another from the work of a different artist.[22]

This description calls to mind the sixteenth-century methods described by writers such as Giovanni Paolo Lomazzo and Giovanni Battista Armenini (to be discussed below).

In her 1993 monograph on Ludovico Carracci, Gail Feigenbaum writes about Annibale's eclectic methodology as characteristic of the Carracci Academy, noting that he 'immersed himself in Correggio in the *Pietà*, in Barocci in the *Baptism*, and then in an investigation of Titian by rapid turns in other works in the course of the same years'. According to Feigenbaum, each painting was done in a different manner.

---

[20] Goldstein, *Visual Fact over Verbal Fiction*, pp. 34–35.

[21] Goldstein, *Visual Fact over Verbal Fiction*, p. 37.

[22] Goldstein, *Visual Fact over Verbal Fiction*, pp. 177–178. For the eclecticism that Goldstein is referring to, see also Gash, 'Hannibal Carrats', p. 244. For the Feigenbaum reference, see Feigenbaum, *Ludovico Carracci*, p. lii.

A deeper inquiry into the terms used in early modern discourse in relation to eclecticism has been undertaken by Maria H. Loh, who revitalizes eclecticism and accepts it as a doctrine practiced by *seicento* painters. In 2004, she maintained that although the word itself did not exist, the idea of eclecticism was described verbally by such terms as 'mixture' (*misto*), 'taste' (*gusto*), and 'pastiche' (*pasticcio*).[23] With regard to the term 'mixture', Loh writes: 'Misto, therefore, articulated a model of repetition based on judicious selection or eclecticism.'

Loh's findings raise the following question: Could there be a reason beyond that of stylistic preference for the combination of several distinct styles in a single work of art? Part of the answer to this question, as I would like to show, is to be found in Paleotti's discourse, which distinguishes between the representation of nature and the representation of a truthful matter or idea that has no resonance in nature. A second, related question is: What could have motivated the generators of eclecticism to practice it? The answer to this question is to be found both in the works of art themselves and in Malvasia's writings, as evident in the above-quoted statements from his *Felsina Pittrice*, where he identified Ludovico's ability to create a single work of art that combined three different styles.

Eclecticism, according to Loh, was both an aesthetic and a moral principle. This claim represents the first positive understanding of eclecticism in modern scholarship (since Denis Mahon called to dismiss it altogether), as an idea or a doctrine that existed in seventeenth-century artistic theory and practice. In this regard, Loh's reception of eclecticism is a valuable new voice, albeit a lone one. In other recent works of scholarship, eclecticism continues to be considered 'a dead issue', to cite Dempsey's 1977 verdict.[24] In a 2005 catalogue that centred on Annibale's *Venus, Adonis and Cupid*, curator Andrés Úbeda de los Cobos stated that: 'Today the accusation of "eclecticism" that once overshadowed the reputation of Annibale Carracci (1560–1609) and the Bolognese school is recognized to be empty of substance.'[25] It is this claim that the current study seeks to reinvestigate.

Bolognese eclecticism has its own history—a history in need of telling for the purpose of stripping away the prejudiced misconceptions that have attached themselves to it. This concept was at the centre of the modern debate on artistic quality, and constituted a fundamental concept in the art-historical writing of the early modern period. It is this attribution that bundled 'the Bolognese school of painting' painters including Annibale and Ludovico Carracci, Guido Reni, Domenichino, Francesco Albani, and Guercino, together with Alessandro Tiarini, Lorenzo Garbieri, and Bartolomeo Schidone (who also came to be known as 'the followers of the Carracci') under a single term as 'the eclectic school of painting', or simply, 'the eclectics'.[26]

---

[23] Loh, 'New and Improved', p. 484.

[24] Dempsey, *Annibale Carracci and the Beginnings of Baroque Style*, p. 54. See also Cropper, *The Domenichino Affair*, pp. 103–104.

[25] Úbeda de los Cobos, 'Venus, Adonis and Cupid', p. 19.

The use of more than one style in a single work of art, as found in the religious paintings of the Bolognese school, was meant to form a separation, or a barrier, between different realms—a demand first formulated by Paleotti. Yet not every painter in Bologna practiced this kind of non-assimilated combination of styles, and even those who did were not consistent in doing so. Although eclecticism defines many works of religious art, one can point to many other paintings in which this method was not used.

In his important study on notions of style in early modern Italy, Philip Sohm elaborates on the complexity of what was regarded as a 'style'. In its most basic sense, a style is about appearance and about how a painter wanted his viewers to look at a certain scene. At the same time, writes Sohm, it is a form of self-revelation or self-fashioning.[27] Modern conventions see stylistic evolution as a dynamic process that painters are expected to go through in the course of their careers, as they learn from their predecessors and are influenced by changing stylistic trends.[28] At the same time, a painter is also expected to develop more than one individual style of his own. This developmental trajectory is conventionally attributed to twentieth-century painters, such as Picasso, Kandinsky, Mondrian, and Kazimir Malevich, to mention only a few. Yet is this a modern phenomenon, or does the same process apply equally to the early modern period? Malvasia's discussion of Reni, for instance, delineates the progression of his ability to learn, study, absorb, and change styles not just as a continuous linear, chronological evolution, but also as an adaptation of styles he encountered in the course of his career. Reni, according to his biographer, acquired his first manner under the guidance of Denys Calvaert. After visiting the Carracci academy, he sought to emulate their stylistic achievements. According to Malvasia, Ludovico offered him a way to change his style:

---

26 For the joint grouping of these artists, one should mention Joshua Reynolds, the great English painter who in his *Discourses* of 1797 regarded these artists as coming 'from the school of the Carraccis'. See Reynolds, *Discourses*, p. 105. For the use of the term 'eclectics' to describe the Bolognese painters, see also Kugler, *Handbuch der Geschichte der Malerei*, p. 332; Heywood, *The Important Pictures of the Louvre*, p. 147; Friedlaender, 'Some Carracci Studies', p. 265; Blunt and Whinney, *The Nation's Pictures*, p. 34 and p. 59.

27 Sohm, *Style in the Art Theory of Early Modern Italy*, pp. 6–15. For the notion of style as perceived in the seventeenth century, see also Gombrich, 'Style', pp. 129–139; Sauerländer, 'From Stilus to Style', pp. 253–270; Williams, *Art, Theory, and Culture*, pp. 73–108. Reynolds defined style in painting as equivalent to writing. It is 'a power over materials, whether words or colours, by which conceptions or sentiments are conveyed'. Reynolds, *Discourses*, p. 32. See also Paul Barolsky's article on the artist's hand, in which he discerns the ability of sixteenth-century painters to create a painting without disclosing their own style, as if the artist's hands were concealed in gloves. Barolsky mentioned Vasari's story about the copy made by Andrea del Sarto of Raphael's famous portrait of Pope Leo X, and Giulio Romano's astonishment at not being able to recognize the forgery of his own hand. Romano admitted to assisting Raphael in creating the painting. See Barolsky, 'The Artist's Hand', p. 5 and p. 11.

28 Summers, 'Conventions in the History of Art', p. 107; Gombrich, 'Style', p. 132 and p. 135. See also Cropper, *The Domenichino Affair*, pp. 104–105. For the intertwined perception of styles as a signature and as a language, see Sauerländer, 'From Stilus to Style', pp. 255–258; Sohm, *Style in the Art Theory of Early Modern Italy*, pp. 67–72.

> Although Guido had drunk of this [Calvaert] manner with the milk of his early training, Ludovico went on to say, it would be easy to rid himself of it, since at his tender age it was more food than nutriment and could easily be evacuated. The purgative and emetic he, Ludovico, would administer to him rapidly through the study and observation of a good natural manner […] Following this plan, Guido began to give his works a certain Carraccesque ease and naturalness, and there are no words to tell how Denys scorned them and how he ranted.[29]

Malvasia stresses Reni's absorption of a second style. Later on in his account, he focuses on Reni's study of a third style, writing that a painting by Caravaggio reached the Lambertini collection in Bologna, and that Ludovico Carracci was quite critical about its reliance on nature without modifications or judgment. Guido heard Ludovico's criticism, yet 'set himself to the practice of this new manner. He refined it with great study and had the advantage and good fortune of being the first interpreter of this new style'.[30] Later on, while working in Rome for Cavalier d'Arpino, he practiced his Caravaggesque manner while simultaneously producing paintings that Caravaggio regarded as opposed to his own work:

> This was the case with the *Crucifixion of St. Peter* for the church of the Tre Fontane, outside of Rome. D'Arpino promised Cardinal Borghese that Guido would transform himself into Caravaggio and would paint the picture in Caravaggio's dark and driven manner, and he did so skilfully, as we can see […] But if Guido's presence displeased Annibale, how much more was it displeasing to Caravaggio, who greatly feared this new manner, which was completely the opposite of his and was equally well received.[31]

---

[29] 'ma benche bevuta da lui col latte de' primi ammaestramenti, facile però ad evacuarsi, per esser passata più in cibo, che in alimento alla sua ancor fresca età: Il purgante, & il vomitorio, esser' egli per ministrarglielo con ogni prontezza sullo studio, & osservazione di un buon naturale […] Seguitando dunque colà Guido, e cominciando a dare nell' opre in un certo naturale, e facilità Carraccesca, non si può dire quanto se ne sdegnasse, e quanti strilli ne desse Dionigi. Cancellargli con le deta il meglio, sgridandolo d'una maniera così trascurata, e rozza, non punto dissimile a quella infingarda de' Carracci, che mancavano d'ogni pulizia, e finitezza.' Malvasia, *Felsina Pittrice*, II, p. 6. For the English translation, see Malvasia, *The Life of Guido Reni*, pp. 38–39.

[30] 'Se ne pose alla pratica, la raffinò col gran studio, ed ebbe il vanto di essere il primo, e fortunato introduttore di questa nuova manìera.' Malvasia, *Felsina Pittrice*, II, p. 10. For the English translation, see Malvasia, *The Life of Guido Reni*, p. 44. The painting by Caravaggio in the Lambertini collection was the *Incredulity of St. Thomas*. See also Canato, *Caravaggio e i caravaggeschi in Emilia*, p. 121.

[31] 'come poi avvenne del S. Pietro Crocefisso alle trè Fontane fuor di Roma, promettendo egli al Card. Borghese, che sarebbesi Guido trasformato nel Caravaggio, e l'avrebbe fatto di quella maniera cacciata e scura, come bravamente eseguito si vede. […] Ma se non piacque ad Annibale, tanto più spiacque al Caravaggio, che temette assai di una nuova maniera, totalmente alla sua opposta, ed altrettanto, quanto la sua gradita.' Malvasia, *Felsina Pittrice*, II, p. 15. For the English translation, see Malvasia, *The Life of Guido Reni*, p. 50. See also Sohm, *Style in the Art Theory of Early Modern Italy*, p. 26.

According to Malvasia, Reni's use of different styles in the early seventeenth century was criticized by both Annibale Carracci and Caravaggio, the most prominent painters working in Rome at that time.

The definition of non-assimilated eclecticism, however, involves a different type of stylistic evolution—one that makes use of multiple styles simultaneously. The acceptance of this term might thus provide us with a new understanding of the stylistic changes that we find in the development of different painters. For example, if we consider Reni's Caravaggesque phase as learning a new style that he thought would be advantageous for him in the future, this concept might help us explain Caravaggesque elements in his late period. In exploring Guercino's development, which according to modern scholars, involved a shift from a naturalistic manner to a more refined classical manner, we will similarly be able to explain why his late style is so different from the early one by examining his study of the styles of Ludovico, Caravaggio, Lanfranco, and Reni at different junctions in his career. Yet if we accept that the different styles he developed had a purpose beyond that of mere change or deterministic evolution, and that he used his different styles in accordance with Paleotti's demand to create thematic or conceptual distinctions, we gain an important new tool for understanding the meaning of his paintings.

This study sets out to reconsider the validity of eclecticism in seventeenth-century artistic practice, to evaluate its artistic qualities, and to explain its underlying rationale. My analysis of early modern Bolognese paintings thus attends not only to stylistic considerations, but also to iconographic ones, showing how the idea or message of a given painting gains additional meaning once an eclectic approach is noticeable. A second aim of this study is to elaborate on the history of the term over the last 250 years, since it was first applied by Winckelmann in the eighteenth century until its dismissal almost 200 years later.

Chapter One traces different attitudes toward eclecticism and its conceptualization. As will be shown, Malvasia's interpretation of Ludovico's St. George altarpiece was based on a longstanding understanding of stylistic divisions that is present in the most famous early modern treatises that use different terms to address the concept of eclecticism. Although the concept itself is not mentioned in seventeenth-century artistic discourse, the ideas it defines are clearly articulated.

Chapter Two will explore the ideological context of non-assimilated eclecticism, which is made evident in Paleotti's book on religious painting. Both the writer and the painters discussed in this book belonged to the same cultural sphere, which was characterized by the resonance of very specific ideas. Paleotti's attitude towards iconography was given expression by means of stylistic tools. His separation between modes of representation was transformed into a differentiation in terms of design, colour, scale, composition, and movement. This chapter continues with an exploration of Guido Reni's visual elaboration on the dichotomy between *disegno* and *colore* as a pictorial manifestation of non-assimilated eclecticism. Guido's painting will then be compared with Guercino's more traditional conception of this same subject. Finally, an examination of Malvasia's biography of Ludovico Carracci will suggest some additional concerns addressed through the use of several styles in a single work of art.

Chapter Three is devoted to the implementation of eclecticism in artistic practice. It opens with an analysis of how the celestial and the terrestrial realms are represented in different styles within the same composition. This analysis will be followed by the examination of the differentiation between deferent types of saints—those whose facial features are known, and those early saints who left no traces of their likeness. This concern will be elaborated upon by attending closely to Reni's portrayal of the sixteenth-century St. Carlo Borromeo, in comparison to the portrayal of historically earlier saints. The third part of this chapter will focus on other non-assimilated eclectic paintings by this book's four protagonists: Ludovico Carracci, Annibale Carracci, Guido Reni, and Guercino.

Chapter Four will focus on the reception of the term 'eclecticism' in the eighteenth century, when Winckelmann coined it, on its waning acceptance in the nineteenth century, and on Denis Mahon's call to dismiss the term from art-historical discourse in order to do away with its negative and pejorative associations. This call was fully accepted by twentieth-century scholars.

The Epilogue will address an example of non-assimilated eclecticism in a Roman chapel, where a conscious attempt was made to integrate the works of two painters, Annibale Carracci and Caravaggio, into a single set of decorative works in the Cerasi Chapel. As this chapter will show, the combination of Annibale's and Caravaggio's different styles served to elucidate the narrative and meaning of the entire chapel.

Both the theory and the practice of eclecticism are evident in Paleotti's discourse, Malvasia's writings on the Bolognese painters, and, above all, in the actual works of art themselves. Moreover, despite the scepticism concerning this term, eclecticism is very much alive in the vast literature on Bolognese painting since Winckelmann, appearing consistently throughout the nineteenth century and up until the mid-twentieth century. The term eclecticism relates to unique aspects of the works created by the Bolognese painters, and distinguishes them from their predecessors. In doing so, it emphasizes the variety, virtuosity, openness, and creativity that have always been associated with the Carracci and their reform in painting.

This study aims to emphasize the importance of the non-assimilated type of eclecticism in early modern Bologna and to elaborate on its uses. In doing so, it seeks to rehabilitate the term in a manner that will allow us to cast a fresh gaze at the most challenging reform of painting that took place at the turn of the seventeenth century in Italy.

Although this book attends closely to art theory, it is neither about theories of aesthetics nor about what constitutes classical or academic art. Rather, it explores how the Bolognese painters responded to a single concern addressed in Paleotti's famous

Discorso intorno alle imagini sacre et profane. This concern centred on distinguishing between truth and nature—between what is believed to be true, especially in religious terms, and day-to-day reality and experience—and on the pictorial translation of these distinctions by stylistic tools. In doing so, I will focus on Ludovico, Annibale, Reni, and Guercino, whose religious works responded to Paleotti's discourse.