

# Guido Reni's Painting of the Immaculate Conception

HOWARD HIBBARD *Professor of Art History, Columbia University*

**G**UIDO RENI is hardly among the Italian painters most popular with today's art lovers. Yet Reni was once so esteemed that a sensitive contemporary biographer, G. B. Passeri, could write that he was "the noblest, most majestic painter who ever lived – not only in my own opinion, but by common consent." Reni's name was long a household word – even the author of *Fanny Hill* invoked Guido as a synonym for extreme delicacy and refinement of color, and Stendhal found a painting by Reni to have "*absolument la sensibilité à la Mozart.*" But times were changing and Reni fared poorly with writers whose judgment was charged with Protestant morality. For Ruskin he was prominent in the "School of Errors and Vices," and not long ago Bernard Berenson wrote, "Our grandfathers were thrilled by Guido Reni's ecstatic visages, whose silly emptiness now rouses our laughter." A painter who can earn such praise – and such opprobrium – deserves attention. The Metropolitan Museum's painting presses the issue to the utmost: Reni's large Immaculate Conception (Figure 1) is precisely the kind of image that his admirers loved and his detractors loathed. It is also a documented work of historical importance and high quality.

Guido Reni, who was born in Bologna in 1575 and died there in 1642, was first apprenticed to Denis Calvaert, an excellent Flemish mannerist who had settled in Bologna. By the time he was twenty, Reni had moved to the more modern studio of the Carracci, and he was doubtless the most gifted of their pupils. About 1599, shortly after leaving the Carracci studio, he painted his first Assumption of the Virgin (Figure 2), which has all the qualities of the Carracci grand manner. Its power of design makes it clear that in his early twenties Reni already rivaled his teachers. Soon after painting this picture he went to Rome, where he changed his style rapidly, influenced by Caravaggio but also attracted by antique works and their High Renaissance counterparts. Reni prospered; from 1608 until 1614 he was the leading painter in Rome, executing a brilliant series of fresco decorations in the Vatican, the Quirinal, and Sta. Maria Maggiore. His Roman career was crowned by the linear poetry of his famous

1. *The Immaculate Conception*, by Guido Reni (1575-1642), Italian. 1627. Oil on canvas, 105 x 72½ inches. Victor Wilbour Memorial Fund, 59.32





2. *The Assumption of the Virgin*, by Guido Reni. About 1599. Oil on canvas. Pieve di Cento, Sta. Maria Maggiore, Bologna. Photograph: A. Villani, Bologna

Aurora painted on the vault of a dining loggia in Cardinal Borghese's garden on the Quirinal hill (Figure 3),

which alone  
Is worth a tour to Rome, although  
no more a  
Remnant were there of the old world's  
sole throne.

Byron, *Don Juan*, xiv:40

And yet, although Reni was widely acclaimed the best painter in Italy, he was not content. Rome had strengthened, deepened, and varied his style, but he seems not to have relished the challenges and competition of life in the art capital of the world. He hated fresco painting, the medium of his great Roman decorations. Other, psychologically complex reasons may also have influenced his retreat from Rome: his neurotic and even psychotic tendencies are well documented by his biographer, Carlo Cesare Malvasia. Reni left late in 1614 to return home and, quite literally, to mother; and Bologna remained his home until his death.

A large Assumption in Genoa (Figure 4), painted in 1616-1617, shows how thoroughly Bolognese Reni again became once he was back. It is a mature and powerful variant of his early, pre-Roman Assumption in Pieve di Cento (Figure 2). The ample figures are less mannered and the composition is if anything spatially simpler than the earlier picture. In both pictures the clouds recede as they rise around the Virgin and change color from gray to gold, a symbol of her transition from earth to heaven.

In the decade between 1617 and 1627 – the years between the Genoa Assumption and the Museum's Immaculate Conception – Reni stopped painting in fresco and increasingly avoided the demands of complex, large-scale composition. In the years around 1620 he painted a number of canvases rich in emotional variety: *The Rape of Dejanira* (Figure 5) for the Duke of Mantua, and religious pictures for several patrons. These works show a virile style influenced by the great Venetians that may owe something to his competition with the vigorous young Guercino. (In the end, however, it was Guercino who succumbed to Reni, as the visitor to the Museum can see

in Guercino's splendid late work hanging on the wall opposite Reni's painting.) But in the mid-1620s Reni's art underwent a decisive change of direction. He began to concentrate on single figures – Judith, Lucretia, the Magdalen – shown just before or after a climactic event. His ostensible models were Niobids and other antiquities he had studied in Rome.

Among Reni's preferred subjects during these years were the Virgin of the Assumption and of the Immaculate Conception, which he rendered as variants on a single theme. Around 1623, apparently without much transitional experimentation, Reni isolated the Virgin on the clouds from the larger group in the traditional interpretation of the Assumption (Figure 4). The first of a series of similar paintings is the Immaculate Conception in Forlì (Figure 6). It is based on a picture by Denis Calvaert, Reni's first master (Figure 7). The formula was repeated with variations in the Assumption that was set up on the high altar in the parish church of Castelfranco Emilia, just outside Bologna, in May of 1627 (Figure 11).

The Metropolitan's Immaculate Conception is a refined version of the picture in Forlì. It is beyond reasonable doubt the painting or-

dered by the Spanish ambassador to Rome for the Infanta of Spain and executed during the latter part of 1627, while Reni was temporarily in Rome to paint an altarpiece for St. Peter's. According to a circumstantial account in Malvasia's *Felsina pittrice*, the ambassador continually pestered Reni for a picture, but Reni would not be hurried. When he finished the ambassador's picture and applied for payment, he was told to wait, whereupon Reni sent the work to Bologna in a fit of pique that was not altogether unusual. This hasty action probably threatened to cause an international incident since relations between Spain and the papacy were already strained. Cardinal Francesco Barberini, nephew of Pope Urban VIII, had to send for the painting and have it carried back. Malvasia's story is confirmed by records in the Barberini archives that document a payment of fourteen scudi in December 1627 to two porters for carrying "*il Quadro della Concezz[io]ne di Guido Reni*" (the picture of the [Immaculate] Conception by Guido Reni) from Bologna to Rome. Presumably the picture was then sent to Spain, where it seems to have aroused little comment; a later account indicates that it was in

3. *Aurora*, by Guido Reni.  
1613-1614. Fresco. Palazzo  
Rospigliosi-Pallavicini, Casino  
dell'Aurora, Rome. Photograph:  
Brogi – Art Reference Bureau





4. *The Assumption of the Virgin*, by Guido Reni. Finished 1617. Oil on canvas. S. Ambrogio, Genoa. Photograph: A. Villani, Bologna

5. *The Rape of Dejanira*, by Guido Reni. Finished 1621. Oil on canvas. Louvre, Paris. Photograph: A. Villani, Bologna

the Cathedral of Seville, but old guidebooks do not list it. Early in the nineteenth century the picture is reported to have made its way from Spain to France and thence to an English private collection. Lord Francis Egerton, later Earl of Ellesmere, acquired the Immaculate Conception in the 1830s, and it adorned Bridgewater House for over one hundred years until the Ellesmere sale in 1946. Contrary to persistent rumor, the picture is in decent condition. Its somewhat wrinkled surface was caused by the high heat of a fire set by bombs that hit Bridgewater House during the last war. This unfortunate but relatively minor defect is not noticeable when the picture is viewed from an appropriate distance.

It would be hard to decide which aspect of Reni's Immaculate Conception – style or content – is more remote from the modern viewer. In any successful work of art the two are, of course, united. Since modern writers tend to discuss Reni's paintings almost exclusively from a stylistic point of view, however, I shall begin with a note about the subject and meaning of the Museum's painting.





6. *The Immaculate Conception*, by Guido Reni. About 1623. Oil on canvas. S. Biagio, Forlì. Photograph: Anderson – Art Reference Bureau

7. *The Assumption of the Virgin*, by Denis Calvaert (about 1540-1619), Flemish. Possibly about 1571. Oil on canvas. Pinacoteca, Bologna. Photograph: Alinari – Art Reference Bureau



Whatever else Reni may have been trying to do, he was certainly attempting to paint a picture of the Virgin that would satisfy his own vision of heaven. Reni was devout, and his faith centered on the Virgin. We hear of a miraculous cure performed on Reni by a painting of the Madonna; and Reni's Assumption in Castelfranco (Figure 11) was the agent of a miracle on the day of its unveiling. All of this is very far from most of our experiences today. To get an idea of the man and the frame of mind in which he painted we cannot do better than to quote Malvasia, who knew and admired him for qualities that would now call for psychiatric treatment:

When he was a little boy, for seven years straight he heard knocking at his door every night of the Christmas season, and . . . for several years he awoke each night to see above his bed a kind of light the size of an egg. . . . He was most devoted to Our Lady the Virgin Mary and in his youth went every Saturday to worship her image on the Monte della Guardia and every evening infallibly, as long as he lived, worshiped in Santa Maria della Vita. For this reason

many believed – I don't know if with overzealous thought – that since he too was a virgin that she had deigned to appear to him. Certainly no painter of any century knew how to show her so utterly beautiful and modest; and it is unbelievable that anyone ever will again.

Mary's Immaculate Conception became church dogma only in 1854, but the idea goes back to the Middle Ages. Its popularity derives from Mary's traditional role as mediator between God and man. Mirella Levi D'Ancona wrote in her pioneering book on the iconography of the Immaculate Conception that Mary

embodied the idea of feminine beauty, purity and love and was considered as a complement to the work of the Lord in the salvation of mankind. The first sin had been committed with the help of a woman, and only another woman who had known no sin could be chosen by the Lord to become His Mother and give birth to the instrument of salvation, Christ. The devotion to the Virgin Immaculate is a sublimation of femininity in its two aspects of maidenly purity and motherly love. Every woman may have either of these qualities, but Mary alone of all women embodied both together.

It took centuries – as may perhaps be imagined – for theologians to settle the controversy over how, and in what sense, Mary was Immaculate, that is, free from original sin at her conception, as opposed to her sinless conception of Christ. Abelard had identified Mary with the loved one in the Song of Songs: "Thou art all beautiful, my love, and there is no spot in thee," but belief in Mary's Immaculate Conception, with its delicate combination of popular credulity and theological nicety, was not favored by the learned doctors of Rome. Although popular demand had finally forced grudging papal acknowledgment of the existence of a philosophical problem late in the fifteenth century, the subject might never have had much vogue in art had not the Protestant Reformation made Mariolatry an issue and the "Immacolata" a point of pride. The idea of the Immaculate Conception was par-

ticularly popular in Spain, where it had been the subject of an enormous controversy in the second decade of the seventeenth century. Various Spanish factions pressured the pope to rule on the status of the concept, but no definitive judgment was laid down, despite a noticeable preference for the wording "The Conception of the Immaculate Virgin" over "The Immaculate Conception of the Virgin." Nevertheless, under Urban VIII Barberini (1623-1644) there was some evidence of papal indulgence for the view that Mary had been immaculately conceived: the Barberini subsidized the new Capuchin church dedicated to "Santa Maria della Concezione" and Urban VIII even laid the cornerstone late in 1626. After this date Roman artists increasingly painted the subject: Lanfranco, Poussin, and others produced versions late in the 1620s.

Back in the mid-sixteenth century, early in the Counter Reformation, artists were still not sure how to depict the Immaculate Conception. Giorgio Vasari gives us an explicit account of his own troubles in 1540, when he first painted the subject (Figure 8). It was no easy matter, he wrote, and, after seeking the advice of learned men he finally painted it in this way:

In the middle of the picture I put the tree of original sin and at its roots, as the first sinners against God's commandments, I showed Adam and Eve, nude and bound. Then I showed Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Aaron, Joshua, David, and succeeding kings – all tied by both hands with the exception of Samuel and St. John the Baptist, who are tied by only one hand since they were sanctified in the womb. Wound around the trunk I showed the old serpent, and since he is half human, his hands are tied behind his back. Above, the glorious Virgin rests one foot on his head, the other on a moon; she is clothed with the sun and crowned with twelve stars. The Virgin is held in air by a glory of nude angels, illuminated by the rays coming from her. The rays pass through the leaves of the tree and give light to the captives, seeming to loose their bonds by their virtue and grace. In the sky at the top of the picture are two putti holding banners on which is written:

*Quos Euae culpa damnavit, Mariae gratia solvit* [Those whom the sin of Eve damned, Mary's Grace saved]. . . . It did not satisfy me.

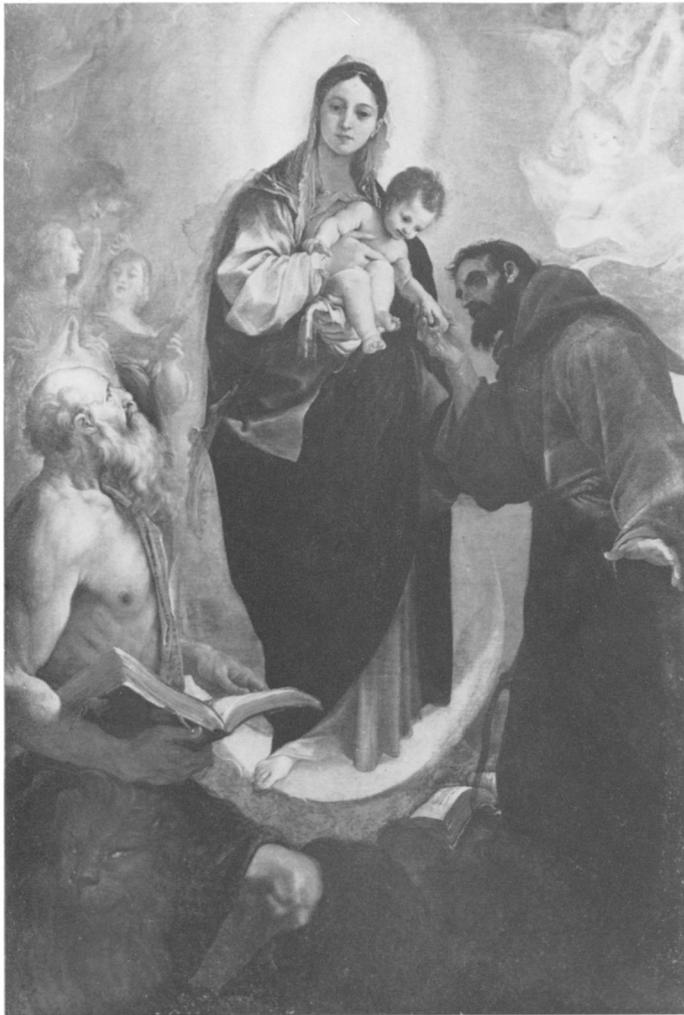
Such a picture, so explicit in its theological complexity but so confusing as an image, was not apt to attract the faithful. During the next half century painters simplified and refined the iconography, and the subject began to take on an important role in Counter-Reformation art (see Figure 10). Mary's representation as the Immacolata became stabilized as the great wonder in heaven revealed to St. John on Patmos: "A woman robed with the sun, beneath her feet the moon, and on her head a crown of twelve stars." The identification with Mary was inevitable since John goes on to say that "She gave birth to a male child, who is destined to rule all nations." These attributes became standard for the Immaculate Virgin, and the Madonna was often shown Immaculate even when seen in a vision of a different sort (Figure 9).

In its formal representation the Immaculate Conception became the counterpart of the Assumption: one shows Mary before her life on earth, the other after it. This accounts for the similarity in iconography between Reni's *Assunta* and his *Immacolatas*. Even the same scriptural allusions served for both – on the frame below Reni's *Assunta* in Castelfranco Emilia is inscribed a passage from Judith: *Tu honorificentia populi nostri*; these words are repeated during the mass for December 8, the feast of the Immaculate Conception: "Thou art the glory of Jerusalem, thou art the joy of Israel, thou art the honor of our people. . . . Thou art all fair, Mary, and there is in thee no stain." Reni's iconic solution became a standard for later artists to follow. He reduced both the Assumption and the Immaculate Conception to a minimum of external references and symbols, refining the worship of Mary to its essentials.

In the Museum's painting Mary stands on the crescent moon, hands pressed together and eyes raised in adoration. (The upward gaze, a constant in Reni's religious works, derives from Raphael's *St. Cecilia*, a picture Reni had copied as a young man and which was then,



8. *The Immaculate Conception*, by Giorgio Vasari (1511-1574), Italian. 1540. Oil on panel. SS. Apostoli, Florence. Photograph: Alinari – Art Reference Bureau



9. *Madonna Appearing to Sts. Jerome and Francis* (“*Madonna degli Scalzi*”), by Ludovico Carracci (1555-1619), Italian. Oil on canvas. Pinacoteca, Bologna. Photograph: A. Villani, Bologna

as now, in Bologna.) Mary is flanked by two angels whose bodies form the sides of a large triangle extending up to her head. This general scheme is closer to Calvaert’s (Figure 7) than is any of Reni’s other versions. The Museum’s painting also bears a resemblance to other works of the Counter-Reformation period, such as Scipione Pulzone’s *Immacolata* (Figure 10). Reni may have known this pietistic and hieratic composition, but his paintings of the same subject were animated with a seicento humanity that cheers even the Metropolitan’s relatively chilly picture. In Reni’s work, Mary is crowned by the customary diadem of twelve stars; behind her, the bright light of paradise creates a mandorla around which angel heads seem to take shape like

cloud pictures – again derived from Raphael. In the painting in Forlì (Figure 6), Mary is closely surrounded by the clouds and angels, but in the Castelfranco Assumption (Figure 11) the space around Mary was widened to make room for her expansive gesture. This more extensive space is kept in the New York painting even though the gesture is changed.

The deep golden light that plays so large a role in all these paintings by Reni seems to be an equivalent to the traditional gold ground of medieval religious panels. It emphasizes the other medievalizing qualities of the Metropolitan’s picture: its lack of depth, its formal, symbolic composition, its insistence on threes and twelves.

Like the arias of an opera (an art that was rapidly developing at just this time), Reni’s new use of color beginning in the mid-1620s was embroidery – the enrichment of a theme. Abandoning the Venetian warmth of his pictures done a few years earlier (Figure 5, for example), he adopted an increasingly blond tonality, using colors that are bright and clear on the larger forms, delicate in subordinate areas, sometimes elusively changing. The Virgin traditionally wears intense blue and red: here her deep blue mantle falls over a pinkish-violet robe. During these years Reni began to push the close harmony and differentiation of related hues farther than any contemporary painter was willing to go, as can be seen in the light blue of the girdle against the Virgin’s robe and in the pale drapery of the angel at the left, where shadows become the lightest of violets and the flesh reflects greenish tones. This cool and fragile harmony of blues, yellows, and greens is set off violently by the hot gold of the glowing empyrean behind. The uniquely subtle color contrasts in the drapery are accompanied by a treatment of flesh that becomes brittle and even porcelaneous in its delicately precise finish, without either the human warmth and accessibility of Reni’s earlier figures or the softly transparent, broader handling of his latest works. The Museum’s painting is perhaps the apogee of this peculiarly remote phase in Reni’s quest for visionary perfection.

Reni’s tendency to stabilize and then elab-

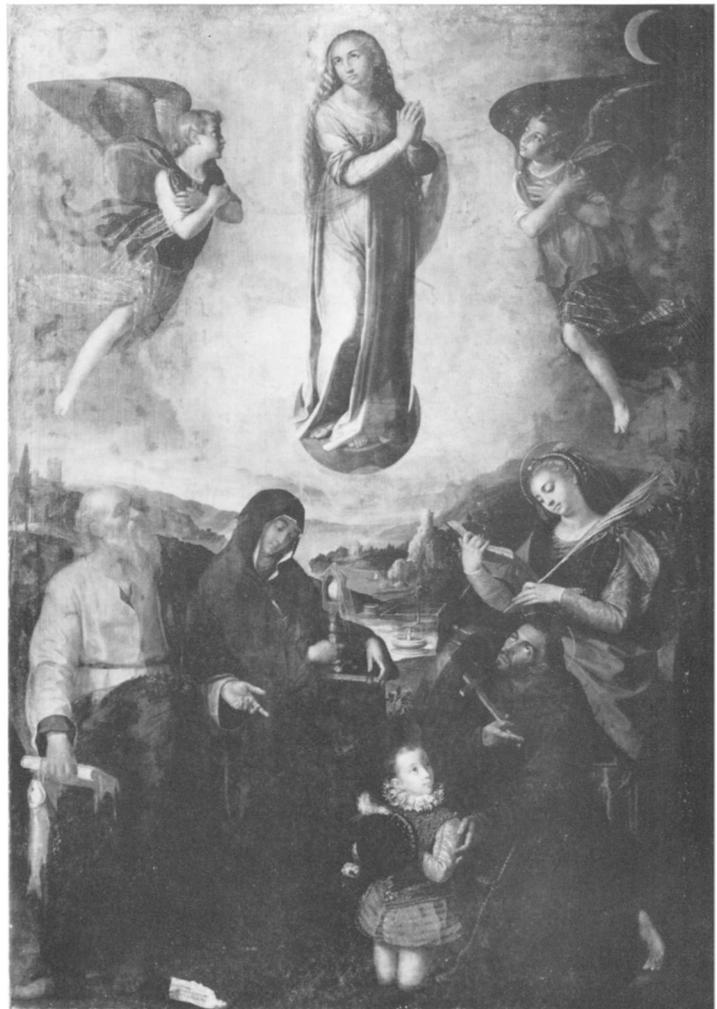
orate iconographic themes is continued in two final Assumptions. One of these (Figure 12), sold by Reni in 1637, is a free version of the Castelfranco picture. Although painted by an assistant or pupil, it must have been designed by Reni, since the drapery foreshadows his ultimate interpretation, which is now in Munich (Figure 13). Finished in 1642, this picture is apparently the last to have been sent from Reni's studio before his death. It closes the series begun almost forty-five years earlier with the altar in Pieve di Cento (Figure 2). In the Munich picture Mary emerges like a Venus from her cowrie shell of blue drapery. The gracious, boneless angels pay homage to Reni's master Ludovico Carracci, but the mellifluous fall of drapery is his own. Painted on silk, an innovation that Reni hoped would give his pictures added permanence, this great *cantilena* is shaped by the loosely brushed outlines of his late manner. Lacking the exquisitely diaphanous coloration of the Metropolitan's *Immacolata*, without interest in textures, it combines the blond tonality and the clear impact of the Metropolitan's painting with a freedom of movement that was noticeably missing in the archaizing pictures of 1627.

As we look back on Reni's career, he seems to have been destined to develop a personal and idiosyncratic style that could not have been pursued in the official environment of Rome. His brief return there in 1627, during which he produced our *Immacolata*, must have confirmed his sense of estrangement from the Roman scene. At the very moment of the birth of Roman baroque painting Reni was undergoing his most profound stylistic crisis, which he met by reviving a heraldic and relatively linear style. If we compare his *Rape of Dejanira* of 1621 with the Metropolitan's picture (Figures 5 and 1), we see the amazing change of direction in his art, which took him from a commanding position in the neo-Venetian tendency to a style that seems almost its antithesis. The same contrast can also be found between the *Immacolata* and the freely brushed, complex, recessional, and asymmetrical art of Nicholas Poussin and Andrea Sacchi (see Figure 14), who were working in

Rome in this very period. While these younger men were enlivening painting through the invigorating study of Annibale Carracci, the Venetians, and antiquity, Reni turned to the rigid compositions of Scipione Pulzone and the feminine grace of Calvaert. Reni's introverted attention to the purification of his art produced the increasingly blond tonality that may have exerted an influence on painters of the 1630s in Rome; Reni himself must have been out of sympathy with Roman painting in those years. After painting our *Immaculate Conception* he destroyed what little he had begun of his altarpiece in St. Peter's, re-funded his advance, and went back to Bologna – apparently for good.

But it would be misleading to leave the

10. *The Immaculate Conception with Saints and Donor*, by Scipione Pulzone (before 1550-1598), Italian. Before 1584. Oil on canvas. Capuchin church, Ronciglione. Photograph: Gabinetto Fotografico Nazionale, Rome





11. *The Assumption of the Virgin*, by Guido Reni. Finished 1627. Oil on canvas. Parish church, Castelfranco Emilia. Photograph: U. Orlandini, Modena

matter there and say that Reni left the mainstream and reverted to an earlier style. Pictures such as ours are extraordinarily eloquent above an altar, with far greater immediacy and mesmerizing power than the machines of Reni's previous period. In this *Immacolata*, Mary's mouth, like those of the angels, is partially open, as if voicing a prayer or supplication. The revelation of human warmth and frailty – the humanization of the divine – is a characteristic of seventeenth-century art and Reni was one of the innovators. Reni's life-size figures stand in a shallow space that helps to induce an empathetic response at once human and religious. Gianlorenzo Bernini, the presiding genius of the Roman baroque, admired Reni's figures and even appropriated them for his own use. (There was a lively give-and-take between painters and sculptors of the period; Bernini's sculpture has always been considered primarily pictorial, but among the

painters only Reni regularly produced figures that can be thought of as painted statuary.) The Metropolitan's picture may even show an influence in the other direction: Mary's silhouette is more agitated and irregular than that of the immediately previous Assumption (compare Figures 1 and 11). The change may derive from Bernini's statue of St. Bibiana, which had been set up in the church of that name during the previous year (Figure 15). Nevertheless, the differences between their styles are considerable: Reni's later art is iconographically traditional and even iconic; Bernini's became increasingly novel and dynamic. Before Bernini's mature works, the viewer responds with an overwhelming personal identification with a religious event, whereas Reni's later works evoke no such reaction. Reni's figures, never sensual, became increasingly flaccid, impersonal, and removed from reality by their grace and unnatural color.

OPPOSITE

12. *The Assumption of the Virgin*, from Guido Reni's studio. Finished 1637. Oil on canvas. Musée des Beaux Arts, Lyons. Photograph: J. Camponogara, Lyons



13. *The Assumption of the Virgin*, by Guido Reni. Finished 1642. Oil on silk. Alte Pinacothek, Munich. Photograph: Gabinetto Fotografico Nazionale, Rome

The historian, noting a surge in the 1620s toward what we now identify as “the baroque,” may be tempted to call any other tendency “classical” or “classicizing,” but this is not a good label for the later Reni. Even the archbaroque painter Pietro da Cortona was far more concerned with archaeology than Reni had ever been. The contrast between Reni’s *Immacolata* (Figure 1) and a sculpture by a vital artist using truly antique inspiration (Figure 17) makes the point. An intermediate position, parallel with Reni’s, was taken by Reni’s younger compatriot, Alessandro Algardi. Algardi’s first major work in Rome, a *Mary Magdalen* (Figure 16), shows the extent of his submission to Bernini at a time when his own ideal was still very close to that of Reni’s *Immacolata*; the resemblance of the heads (Figures 16 and 1) is particularly close.

Looking around the gallery in which the

Museum’s *Immaculate Conception* is hung, we are struck by the relative emptiness of Reni’s large picture, which a number of art lovers may tend to equate with vapidness. Even in the Bolognese galleries his pictures look depopulated. Only Reni brought *amor vacui* to such a pitch, and his paintings are for just that reason highly potent images with great carrying power. The Museum’s picture is painted in what was called by contemporary biographers Reni’s “second manner”; although individual works in this style were highly prized it was generally agreed that Reni’s earlier style was better. The critics preferred paintings that seemed to develop the stylistic heritage of the Carracci and found it hard to understand Reni’s lonely search for ineffable loveliness. Their opinions have been echoed ever since—and we may admit that most of the blood has been squeezed from Reni’s art in this unearthly phase. From the

14. *The Miracle of St. Gregory the Great*, by Andrea Sacchi (1599-1661), Italian. 1625-1627. Oil on canvas. Pinacoteca, Vatican City. Photograph: Anderson – Art Reference Bureau



beginning, Reni's paintings had been suffused with a grace and elegance that was the despair of his rivals. Unlike Annibale Carracci, who had made a conscious and successful stylistic break with the mannerist style (such as Calvaert's painting in Figure 7), Reni never lost his feeling for the poetry of the maniera. While he had accommodated himself brilliantly to the demands made upon him in Rome, he returned with obvious relief to a less adventure-some artistic milieu and ultimately produced pictures like the Metropolitan's that are his own versions of an older tradition. When we discuss Reni's career from this point of view, it becomes clear that his later style is the purest expression of his individual genius, the logical result of his personal stylistic predilections.

Reni's growing concern with the abstract aspects of art and of religious representation made him more universal than many of his Roman contemporaries, but the timelessness of his compositions raises an aesthetic question that must be faced. Reni's reputation fell faster and farther than that of any other artist, at least in part because of the perennial suitability of his devotional pictures for reproduction and worship. His pietistic images were loved for their almost hieratic display of the figure in an easily understood composition. They were easy to reproduce, endlessly copied, and ultimately found their place as the typical religious chromo. Perhaps no artist has suffered so long or so unfairly for the crudities of his imitators. Even today one occasionally discovers a Harnett-like still life nailed to a wall, made up of a calendar, odd notes, and a Reni Madonna reproduced in color. Such broad devotional appeal illuminates one side of his greatness, but this dangerous virtue should not blind us to the artistic character of Reni's paintings. The essence of his mature genius is a uniquely refined handling, a rarified coloration, an almost rococo tonality found only in the originals that cannot be even minimally invested in the endless copies and variations that retain everything but the quality of Reni's art.



15. *St. Bibiana*, by Gianlorenzo Bernini (1598-1680), Italian. 1624-1626. Marble. *Sta. Bibiana, Rome. Photograph: Anderson - Art Reference Bureau*
16. *St. Mary Magdalen*, by Alessandro Algardi (1598-1654), Italian. About 1628. Stucco. *S. Silvestro al Quirinale, Rome. Photograph: Gabinetto Fotografico Nazionale, Rome*
17. *St. Susanna*, by Francesco Duquesnoy (1597-1643), Belgian. 1630-1633. Marble. *Madonna di Loreto, Rome. Photograph: Anderson - Art Reference Bureau*

The essential introduction to the art of this period is Rudolf Wittkower, *Art and Architecture in Italy, 1600-1750* (Baltimore, 1965). The basic work on Reni is C. Gnudi and G. C. Cavalli, *Guido Reni* (Florence, 1955), but it is far from complete. I have taken some literary references to Reni from O. Kurz, *Bolognese Drawings . . . at Windsor Castle* (London, 1955). The same author's article, "Guido Reni" in *Jahrbuch der kunsthistorischen Sammlungen in Wien*, 11 (1937), pp. 189 ff., opened modern criticism and is still indispensable. I am also indebted to Denis Mahon for a number of articles, particularly "Poussin au carrefour des années trente" in *Nicolas Poussin* (Colloques Internationaux), I (Paris, 1960), pp. 238-263; and *Apollo*, 82 (1965), pp. 386-390. The biography of Reni in C. C. Malvasia, *Felsina pittrice . . .*, II (Bologna, 1678), is the great contemporary source of information. Interesting translations of passages referring to Reni's peculiarities are found in R. and M. Wittkower, *Born Under Saturn* (London, 1963).

I am deeply grateful to Marilyn A. Lavin for informing me about her discovery of important documents in the Barberini archive related to the affairs of Reni. These papers are in the Vatican Library (Armadio 42, *Cardinal Francesco Barberini, Mastro di Casa Bartolomeo Passerini-1627-1631*, fol. 38a, December 1627: "Alle dui facchini che han' portato da Bologna a Roma sopra le spalle il Quadro della Concezz[i]one di Guido Reni como per sua fede ¶ 14-m[one]ta come si vede per ric[e]vuta, e cid di parola del S[igno]r Filomar[in]o." Armadio 86, *Cardinal Francesco Barberini, Libro Mastro A*,

1623-1629, fol. CLXXXIX, 31 December 1627: "¶ 14 per portatura d'un quadro di Guido Reni fatto portare da facchini da Bologna, come per le liste. . .").

W. Buchanan in *Memoirs of Painting . . .*, I (London, 1824), refers to an Assumption by Reni that is apparently the Metropolitan's Immacolata. The Immacolata was published by G. Fiocco in *Arte antica e moderna*, I (1958), pp. 388 ff. (with color reproduction), and has been excellently catalogued for the Museum by Federico Zeri, whose manuscript I was graciously allowed to consult together with reports from the Conservation Department. The Witt Library, Courtauld Institute of Art, London, has a photograph of the painting before restoration. I am grateful to Otto Kurz and Denis Mahon for information about the picture, and I was privileged to examine it and discuss its condition and authenticity with Mr. Mahon in the Metropolitan Museum.

For the subject of the Immaculate Conception, M. Levi D'Ancona, *The Iconography of the Immaculate Conception in the Middle Ages and Early Renaissance* ([New York], 1957), may be supplemented by E. Mâle, *L'Art religieux après le Concile de Trente* (Paris, 1932). See also A. B. Jameson, *Legends of the Madonna* (London, 1864), and Edward D. O'Connor, ed., *The Dogma of the Immaculate Conception* (Notre Dame, Indiana, 1958).

For Pulzone, see F. Zeri, *Pittura e controriforma* (Turin, 1957).

For Calvaert, see S. Bergmans, *Denis Calvaert* (Académie Royale de Belgique. Classe des Beaux-Arts, Mémoires, IV, 2), (Brussels, 1934)

**J**UST AS THIS ISSUE of the *Bulletin* was going to press, the Museum's Board of Trustees and staff received with great sadness the news of the death of Robert Lehman. Mr. Lehman was one of the Museum's most active and interested Trustees. Elected to that post in 1941, he was the Board's Vice-President from 1948 to 1968 and Chairman of the Board from 1967 until his death. Because of his generous contributions, Mr. Lehman was elected a Benefactor in 1949. His many significant gifts include paintings by Cranach, Tintoretto, and Vuillard. As a member of the Purchasing Committee and as Visiting Trustee to the Department of European Paintings, Mr. Lehman was valued as a true connoisseur and advisor. Concerned as well with the administrative aspects of the Museum, Mr. Lehman served on the Finance Committee and the Executive Committee.

In a statement issued at the time of his death, Arthur A. Houghton, Jr., President, and Thomas P. F. Hoving, Director, said that Mr. Lehman was "one of the finest Trustees in the Museum's history, exemplifying enthusiasm and interest in the affairs of this institution and keen sensitivity and zest in what was perhaps his favorite activity in life, the collecting of great works of art."