

The Metropolitan Museum of Art  
Bulletin/Spring 1991





# GUERCINO

William M. Griswold

The Metropolitan Museum of Art



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## DIRECTOR'S NOTE

This year marks the four hundredth anniversary of the birth of the Bolognese painter Giovanni Francesco Barbieri, better known as Guercino. This issue of the *Bulletin* was planned to celebrate that date and to present to our readers the two splendid paintings, eighteen drawings, and one etching that The Metropolitan Museum of Art possesses by this major artist.

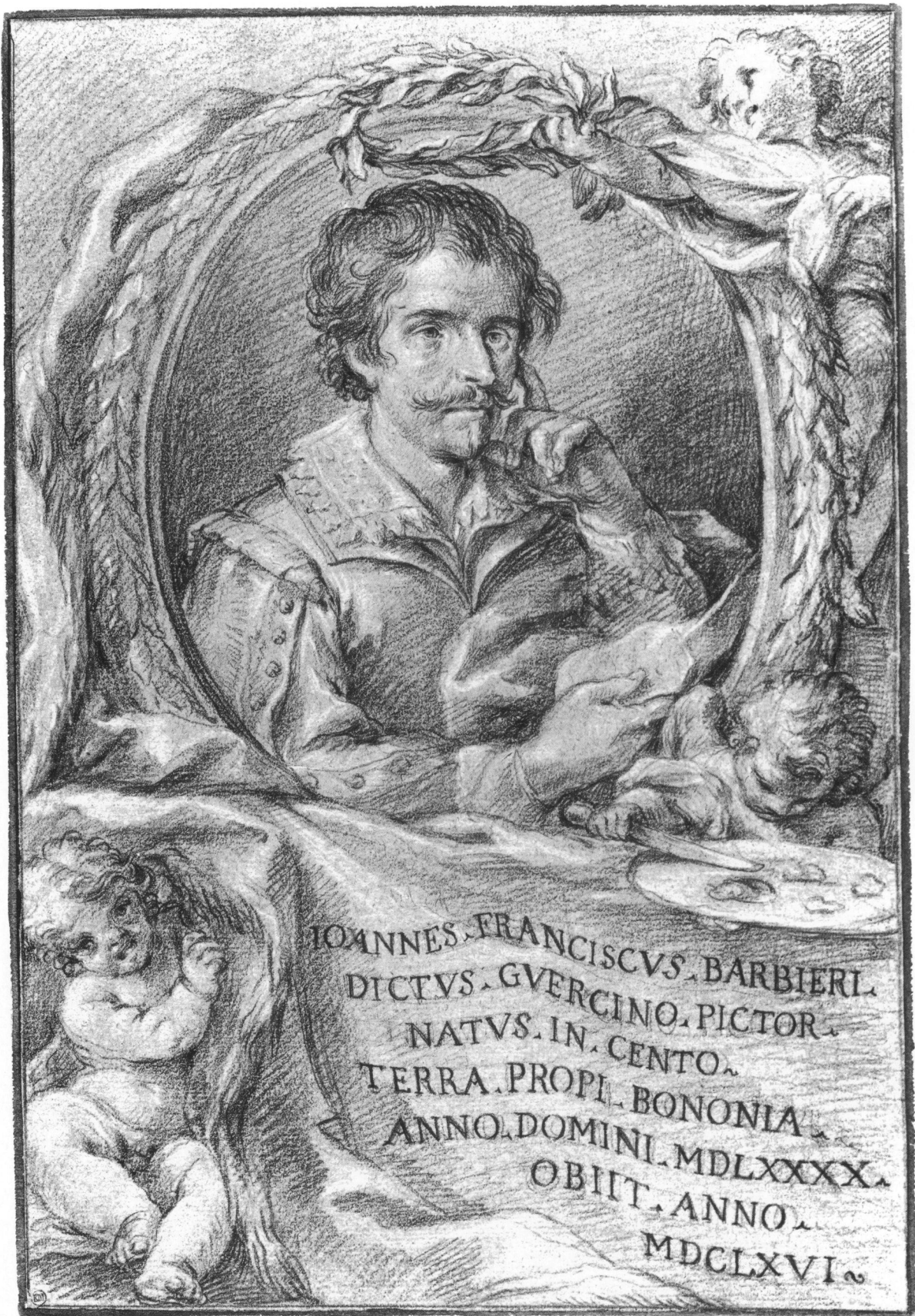
Guercino was a prodigious draughtsman who created composition and figure studies that are among the finest in the history of Italian drawings. Many of the artist's works on paper belonging to the Museum can be related to his paintings. The first to enter the collection, the pen sketch of a youth and young woman in a chariot included in a group of 670 drawings presented by Cornelius Vanderbilt over a hundred years ago, was probably made in preparation for Guercino's fresco of Rinaldo and Armida in the Palazzo Costaguti, Rome. One of the drawings purchased in 1908 by Roger Fry, a former curator of paintings and the Museum's agent in London from 1907 to 1910, is a vibrant study for the artist's early masterpiece, *Saint William Receiving the Monastic Habit*. In 1912 the Museum purchased a pen study for Guercino's *Cimmerian Sibyl*, as well as an independent sketch, the charming *Fireworks in a Piazza*, our only landscape by Guercino although he executed many during his lifetime. The majority of the Museum's Guercino drawings have been acquired by purchase or bequest since 1961, when the Department of Drawings was established under the curatorship of Jacob Bean. The most recent acquisition is the lively but puzzling *Diablerie*, purchased in 1990 with funds bequeathed by Harry G. Sperling.

Both paintings by Guercino in the Metropolitan Museum are gifts of Mr. and Mrs. Charles Wrightsman: the imposing and serene *Saint Aloysius Gonzaga*, a late work, came to us in 1973, and *Samson Captured by the Philistines*, a dramatic early composition, was presented in 1984. Guercino is thus represented in the Museum by works of outstanding quality in a variety of media and from every stage of his long and immensely productive career.

This *Bulletin*, in which all the works by Guercino in the Metropolitan Museum are illustrated, was written by William M. Griswold, assistant curator in the Department of Drawings.

PHILIPPE DE MONTEBELLO  
*Director*







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# G · U · E · R · C · I · N · O

In a letter of October 25, 1617, Ludovico Carracci enthusiastically recorded the arrival in Bologna of a young man from the nearby town of Cento. Ludovico wrote that “he was an excellent draughtsman and an outstanding colorist” whose talent astounded the best painters in the city. By the middle of the seventeenth century the artist in question—Giovanni Francesco Barbieri, called Guercino—was famous throughout Europe.

Carlo Cesare Malvasia’s *Felsina pittrice*, a history of Bolognese painting first published in 1678, is the richest early source of information about Guercino’s life and artistic accomplishments. According to Malvasia, “[Guercino] painted 106 altarpieces, and 144 pictures for various princes, including Popes Gregory [xv], Urban [viii], Innocent [x], and Alexander [vii], as well as for the emperor and empress, the kings of France, Spain, and England, the queen of France, the dukes and duchesses of Savoy, Tuscany, Modena, and Mantua, and other princes, cardinals, and ambassadors.” In 1625 Guercino was asked by King Charles I to come to England, and in 1639 he received a similar invitation from King Louis XIII of France. The artist declined both requests, preferring to remain in his native Emilia, where he maintained a busy workshop until his death in December 1666.

During Guercino’s lifetime Rome was the artistic capital of Europe, and it was there that the first quintessentially Baroque pictures were painted in about 1600 by Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio (1571–1610) and Annibale Carracci (1560–1609). Although the dramatic lighting and rustic figure types characteristic of early paintings by Guercino superficially resemble those in works by Caravaggio, the similarity between them is incidental. Guercino was, however, greatly influenced by the style of two talented followers of Annibale Carracci: Domenico Zampieri, called Domenichino (1581–1641), and Guido Reni (1575–1642). The classical restraint of paintings executed by Guercino toward the end of his life reflects the austere style of pictures by these artists. Painted in delicate, pastel hues, Guercino’s late works possess a solemn grandeur that sets them apart from the tumultuous compositions of his youth.

Guercino’s paintings have always been esteemed by collectors, and during the eighteenth century his work was particularly sought after in England. Indeed, more than half of the paintings and drawings by Guercino in the Metropolitan Museum have British provenances. One of his English admirers was the portraitist Sir Joshua Reynolds

1. Filippo Germisoni (1684–1743).  
*Portrait of Guercino*. The sheet is one of 225 drawn portraits and self-portraits of artists commissioned during the first quarter of the eighteenth century by Nicola Pio, author of a manuscript biography of painters, sculptors, and architects that is now in the Vatican Library. Executed some fifty years after Guercino’s death, Germisoni’s portrait was evidently inspired by an earlier sketch by Ottavio Leoni that is now in the Biblioteca Marucelliana at Florence. Black and red chalk, heightened with white. 13<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub> × 9<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub> in. (33.5 × 23.5 cm). Stockholm, Nationalmuseum



(1723–1792). A sketchbook by Reynolds in the Museum contains detailed notes about his Italian journey of 1750 to 1752, as well as pencil sketches after some of the works of art that Reynolds saw on his travels. Among the numerous paintings recorded in this sketchbook are no fewer than six by Guercino, including an “Est[h]er Fainting [and] King Ahasuerus” that Reynolds characterized as “on[e] of [Guercino’s] best.” A copy of this painting on page 106 of the sketchbook is typical of Reynolds’s schematic renderings of Guercino’s works (fig. 2). The painting, which represents the young Queen Esther swooning before the king of Persia after interceding with him on behalf of the Jews, dates from 1639 (fig. 3). Soon after it was finished, Cardinal Antonio Barberini presented it to his brother Pope Urban VIII, and the picture was still in the possession of the Barberini family when Reynolds saw it in Rome in the mid-eighteenth century; the painting now hangs in the University of Michigan Museum of Art at Ann Arbor.

Recent research has shed much new light upon Guercino’s prodigious artistic output. In *Studies in Seicento Art and Theory*—published in 1947 and unfortunately long out of print—and in catalogues of exhibitions such as the one held in the Palazzo dell’Archiginnasio at Bologna in 1968, Sir Denis Mahon has traced the development of the artist’s style and clarified innumerable issues concerning the chronology and attribution of Guercino’s paintings and drawings. The author wishes to acknowledge his profound debt to this fundamental contribution to the study of seventeenth-century Bolognese painting.

**G**iovanni Francesco Barbieri was born in early February 1591 outside Cento, a small agricultural town halfway between Ferrara and Bologna. Little is known about his childhood, but he acquired his nickname—*guercino* is the diminutive form of *guercio* (cross-eyed)—at an early age. According to Malvasia’s biography of Guercino in *Felsina pittrice*, this condition was the result of a bizarre accident: while in the care of an irresponsible nursemaid, Giovanni Francesco lost the ability to move his right eye when he was awakened by a loud noise. Whatever Malvasia’s credibility regarding the origin of Guercino’s strabismus, this optical defect is clearly visible in likenesses of the artist (fig. 1).

Guercino was essentially self-taught. Malvasia states that in 1607, at the age of sixteen, he was apprenticed to a local artist, Benedetto Gennari the elder, after which he studied briefly in Bologna with Paolo Zagnoni and with Giovanni Battista Cremonini, a fresco painter who—like Guercino—originally came from Cento. Before long, however, Guercino returned to his hometown and to the



2. Sir Joshua Reynolds (1723–1792). *Esther before Ahasuerus*, after Guercino. This drawing from a sketchbook used by Reynolds when he was in Italy records a painting by Guercino that he saw in the Palazzo Barberini, Rome (fig. 3). Graphite.  $7\frac{1}{2} \times 5$  in. (19.1 × 12.7 cm). Gift of William A. White, 1918 (18.121)

3. Guercino. *Esther before Ahasuerus*, 1639. Oil on canvas.  $62\frac{7}{8} \times 84\frac{1}{2}$  in. (159.7 × 214.6 cm). Ann Arbor, The University of Michigan Museum of Art







4. Guercino. *Tobias and the Angel*,  
ca. 1617. Oil on copper.  $13\frac{1}{4} \times 17\frac{1}{2}$  in.  
(33.7 × 44.5 cm). New York, Mr. and  
Mrs. Robert Manning

Gennari workshop, where he eventually became a senior partner.

Among Guercino's earliest surviving paintings are the frescoes he executed in private houses such as the Casa Pannini at Cento. The Casa Pannini frescoes were detached from the walls of the house during the nineteenth century, and many of them are now in the local Pinacoteca, a small museum that is singularly rich in works by Guercino. The frescoes, which were commissioned from Guercino in 1615 and painted in part by the master and in part by assistants, represent the stories of Ulysses and of Torquato Tasso's Rinaldo and Armida, in addition to mythological and allegorical figures, horses, hunting scenes, and landscapes. In composition a number of the Casa Pannini frescoes derive from engravings by the Florentine painter and printmaker Antonio Tempesta (1555–1630), but in style they are closer to works by artists from neighboring Ferrara.

The most important painter active in Ferrara at the beginning of the seventeenth century was Ippolito Scarsella, called Scarsellino

(ca. 1550–1620). Scarsellino was greatly influenced by earlier Ferrarese artists, particularly by Dosso Dossi (ca. 1490–1542), whose painterly style was in turn loosely based upon that of Titian. Both Scarsellino's sumptuous palette and his sensuous handling of paint are reflected in early works by Guercino.

The impact of Ferrarese painting is apparent in a small, early picture by Guercino in the collection of Mr. and Mrs. Robert Manning (fig. 4). This painting, which dates from about the same time as the Casa Pannini frescoes, is probably one of two landscapes attributed to Guercino in the 1686 inventory of the possessions of Prince Urbano Barberini. It is painted on copper, a support that the artist occasionally used for cabinet pictures of this type. The subject is taken from the apocryphal Old Testament book of Tobit: Tobias, son of the blind Tobit, undertook a journey to Media with his dog and the Archangel Raphael in order to collect money owed his father. "As they proceeded on their way they came at evening to the Tigris River and camped there. Then the young man went down to wash himself. A fish leaped up from the river and would have swallowed the young man; and the angel said to him, 'Catch the fish.' So the young man seized the fish and threw it up on the land" (Tobit 6:1–3). Tobias later used the heart and liver of the fish to exorcize the demon that possessed his wife, Sarah, and the gall to cure Tobit's blindness. In the painting by Guercino, Tobias stands knee-deep in the Tigris, his hands raised in fear and astonishment, while Raphael points to the fish and instructs him to capture it. The picture is freely painted in the glowing colors typical of Guercino's works from this period.

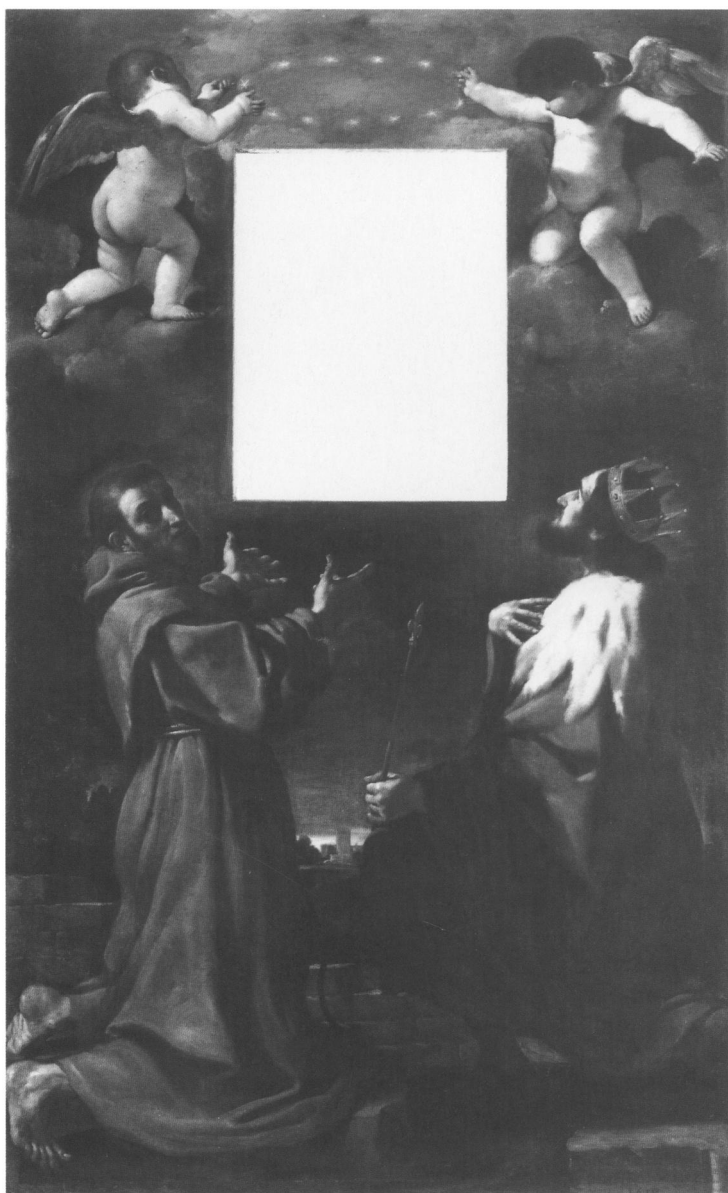
In 1987 the Metropolitan Museum acquired one of three known studies for an altarpiece painted by Guercino for the church of San Francesco at Brisighella, a small town near Faenza (figs. 5, 6). This spirited drawing must have been executed not long after the picture in the Manning collection, for the Brisighella altarpiece bears the date 1618. The painting represents Saints Francis of Assisi and Louis of France—the latter the eponymous saint of Ludovico Naldi, to whose memory the altarpiece was dedicated by his sons—kneeling beneath a rectangular opening designed to accommodate an earlier, now-lost devotional image of the Virgin and Child. Another preparatory drawing, in the Schloss Fachsenfeld Collection in the Staatsgalerie at Stuttgart, is closer to the altarpiece and was presumably executed somewhat later than the sheet in the Metropolitan Museum (fig. 7).

In style the altarpiece reflects Guercino's profound debt to works by Ludovico Carracci (1555–1619). Ludovico's *Virgin and Child with Saint Francis of Assisi, Saint Joseph, and Donors*, now in the Pinacoteca at Cento, was readily accessible to the young Guercino in the local Capuchin church for which it was painted (fig. 8). According to Malvasia, Guercino himself acknowledged the lessons that



he learned from this picture. The animated composition and free brushwork that distinguish the painting at Brisighella owe much to Ludovico's 1591 masterpiece.

In the late 1610s, after a brief sojourn in Venice, Guercino came to the attention of Cardinal Giacomo Serra, papal legate to Ferrara. Serra, who had previously been instrumental in obtaining for Rubens the commission for the high altar of the Chiesa Nuova at Rome, was created cardinal by Pope Paul v in 1611 and appointed cardinal legate in 1615. In 1619–20 Guercino executed at least five paintings for Cardinal Serra, who in 1620 granted him the title *Cavaliere*. For this powerful patron, Guercino painted the *Samson Captured by the Philistines* now in the Metropolitan Museum (fig. 9), as well as a *Saint Sebastian Succored by Irene* (Bologna,



5. Guercino. *Saints Francis of Assisi and Louis of France Venerating an Image of the Virgin*, 1618. Oil on canvas.  $99\frac{1}{4} \times 59\frac{7}{8}$  in. (252 × 152 cm). Brisighella (Faenza), San Francesco

*Opposite:*

6. Guercino. *Saints Francis of Assisi and Louis of France Venerating an Image of the Virgin*. Pen and brown ink, on beige paper.  $9\frac{1}{4} \times 6\frac{3}{8}$  in. (23.5 × 16.1 cm). Harry G. Sperling Fund, 1987 (1987.21)

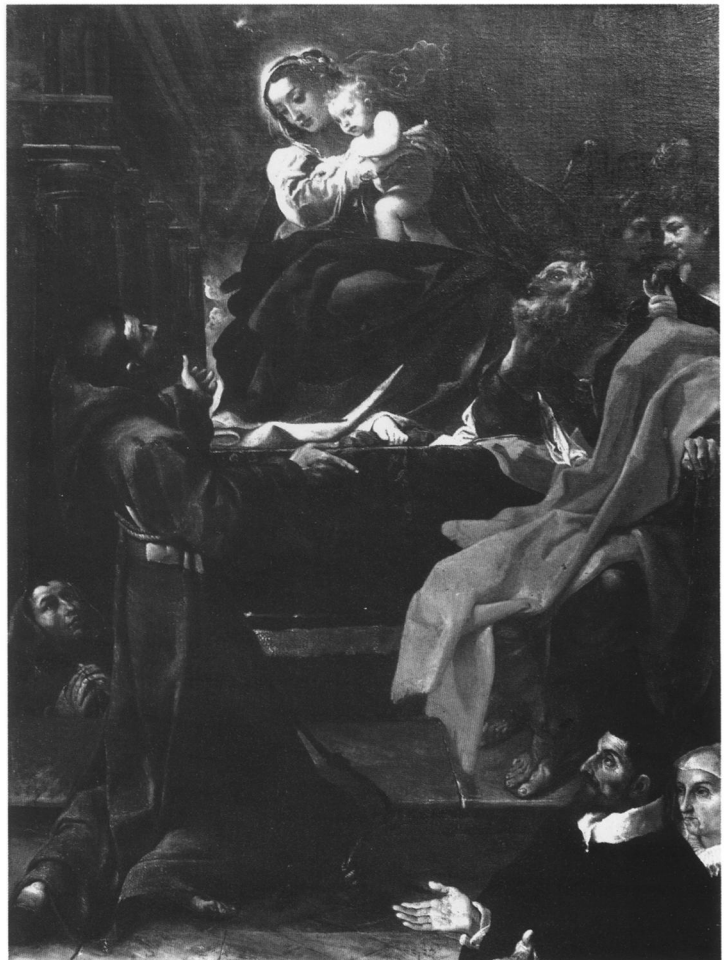








7. Guercino. *Saints Francis of Assisi and Louis of France Venerating an Image of the Virgin*. Pen and brown ink, brown wash.  $10\frac{3}{8} \times 7\frac{1}{4}$  in. ( $26.5 \times 18.5$  cm). Stuttgart, Staatsgalerie, Schloss Fachsenfeld Collection



8. Ludovico Carracci (1555–1619). *Virgin and Child with Saint Francis of Assisi, Saint Joseph, and Donors*, 1591. Oil on canvas.  $88\frac{5}{8} \times 65\frac{3}{8}$  in. ( $225 \times 166$  cm). Cento, Pinacoteca

Pinacoteca Nazionale), *The Return of the Prodigal Son* (Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum), an *Elijah Fed by Ravens*, and *Jacob Blessing the Sons of Joseph* (London, Sir Denis Mahon). It is likely that two other pictures—*The Raising of Lazarus* (Paris, Musée du Louvre; fig. 12) and *The Denial of Saint Peter* (Zurich, private collection)—were also painted for Serra during this period.

Guercino's *Samson Captured by the Philistines* was long considered a lost work. Mentioned by Malvasia, the painting was transported by Serra's heirs to Naples, where it disappeared before the end of the eighteenth century. It was eventually rediscovered in Beirut, having passed by descent to a member of the Sursock family of Lebanon. In 1977 the picture was purchased by Mr. and Mrs. Charles Wrightsman, and in 1984 they presented it to The Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Guercino has chosen the most violent and dramatic moment in the story, told in Judges 16:18–21. Samson is seen from behind, struggling with a group of Philistines who attempt to bind his hands. Delilah, the perfidious Philistine woman who ordered an accomplice to shear the seven locks of hair that had been the source of Samson's great physical strength, appears in the left foreground, while a second female figure flees to the right. Behind Delilah a bearded man prepares to blind Samson with a spear.

The crowded, unstable composition is typical of works executed by Guercino before 1621. Each figure contributes to the overall effect of agitation and movement. The audaciously contorted figure of Samson occupies the center; on either side the overlapping forms of the Philistines who overpower him appear to burst out of the rectangular frame, while the dramatic lighting further emphasizes the confusion of the scene.

The Teylers Museum at Haarlem possesses a superb pen-and-wash composition study for this painting (fig. 10). The drawing, which was acquired from Prince Livio Odescalchi in the late eighteenth century, may have belonged to Queen Christina of Sweden, who was a great admirer of Guercino and a passionate collector of works of art. When Queen Christina was in Bologna in 1655, she paid a visit to Guercino, and—although the artist was usually reluctant to part with his drawings—it is possible that he presented the Haarlem study to her on that occasion.

The friezelike composition of the drawing differs from the spatially complex arrangement of the figures in the painting. The Philistines are fewer in number in the study than in the finished work, and their movements are less agitated. Moreover, Samson is seen in profile, not from behind, and Delilah holds the shears and a lock of hair.

Aidan Weston-Lewis has recently identified another study for Guercino's painting in the Frits Lugt Collection at the Institut









9. Guercino. *Samson Captured by the Philistines*. Probably executed in 1619, this painting is one of at least five major works that were commissioned from Guercino by Cardinal Giacomo Serra, papal legate to Ferrara. Oil on canvas.  $74\frac{3}{8} \times 92\frac{1}{2}$  in. (189 × 235 cm). Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Charles Wrightsman, 1984 (1984.459.2)

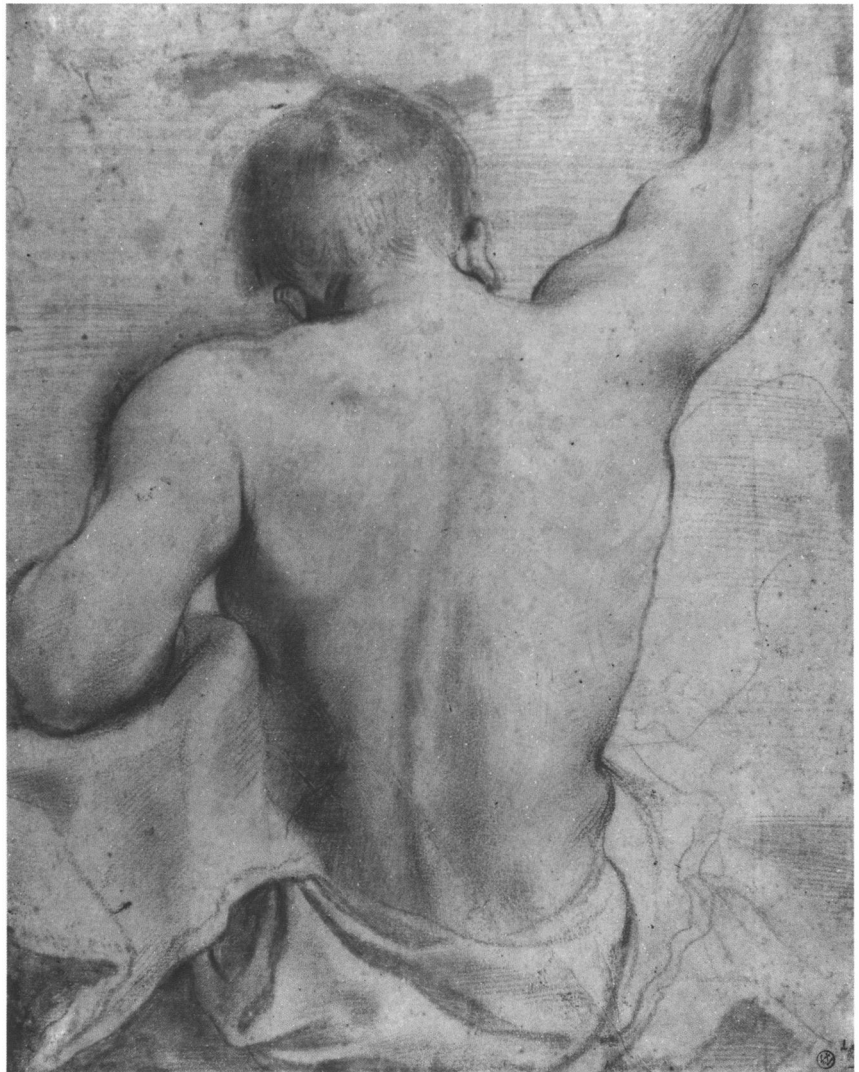


10. Guercino. *Samson Captured by the Philistines*. Pen and brown ink, brown wash.  $9\frac{3}{8} \times 16\frac{1}{4}$  in. (23.7 × 41.2 cm). Haarlem, Teylers Museum

Néerlandais, Paris (fig. 11). Previously thought to be the work of Annibale Carracci, it instead appears to be a drawing by Guercino for the figure of Samson. Unlike the sheet at Haarlem, this one was executed in red chalk, a technique that Guercino used primarily for sketches of individual figures or drapery. The few life studies of male nudes that may be attributed to Guercino date from the beginning of the artist's career. Presumably inspired by the example of the Carracci family, who seem to have been responsible for the revival of interest in life drawing that took place at the end of the sixteenth century, such works by Guercino cannot often be associated with specific paintings. The sheet in the Institut Néerlandais may have been made as an exercise in life drawing, and the figure only later incorporated—with significant modifications—into the painting commissioned by Cardinal Serra.

Malvasia neglects to mention *The Raising of Lazarus* in the Musée du Louvre (fig. 12) as one of the pictures that Guercino painted for Serra. However, the painting is almost exactly the same size and shape as *Samson Captured by the Philistines*, and the two pictures are identical in style. Roberto Longhi, who knew the *Samson* only through an old copy in the museum at Angoulême, was the first to suggest that the two works were in fact painted as pendants. There is no real iconographic connection between the two biblical subjects, but certain visual correspondences lend support to his theory. In

11. Guercino. *The Back of a Man Seated, Stripped to the Waist*. This sheet may be a study for the back of the figure of Samson in the painting in the Metropolitan Museum (fig. 9). Red chalk, stumped, heightened with white, on beige paper.  $13\frac{1}{4} \times 10\frac{5}{8}$  in. (33.5 × 27 cm). Paris, Institut Néerlandais, Fondation Custodia, Frits Lugt Collection



particular, the use of rope to bind the hands of the protagonists in both pictures signals a conspicuous departure from Guercino's textual sources. According to the Bible, Samson was fettered with chains, whereas Lazarus' "hands and feet [were] bound with bandages and his face wrapped with a cloth" (John 11:44).

The painting represents the moment when Christ, having awakened Lazarus from death, says to the Jews, "Unbind him, and let him go." Lazarus' sisters Martha (on the far left) and Mary (seated at the feet of Christ) are both present. In the lower right corner a youth covers his nose and mouth in response to the stench of decay specifically mentioned in the biblical account: "Lord, by this time there will be an odor: for he has been dead four days" (John 11:39).

The Metropolitan Museum owns a fine preparatory study for *The Raising of Lazarus* (fig. 13). This drawing, executed in pen





and brown ink with brown wash, has a good deal in common with the finished picture, although there are some notable differences. The figure of Christ occupies a position near the center of the drawn composition, but stands at the far right in the painting. In the sketch Lazarus has not yet completely emerged from the tomb, and Mary and Martha appear next to each other.

In 1620 Guercino was charged with the execution of a large altarpiece representing Saint William, duke of Aquitaine, receiving the monastic habit (fig. 14). Destined for a chapel belonging to Cristoforo Locatelli in the church of San Gregorio at Bologna, the picture was the most important commission with which the artist had thus far been entrusted. Guercino's *Saint William* was removed



*Opposite:*

12. Guercino. *The Raising of Lazarus*.  
This picture may have been painted in  
1619–20 for Cardinal Giacomo Serra,  
perhaps as a pendant to the *Samson  
Captured by the Philistines* in the  
Metropolitan Museum (fig. 9). Oil on  
canvas.  $78\frac{3}{8} \times 91\frac{3}{4}$  in. ( $199 \times 233$  cm).  
Paris, Musée du Louvre

13. Guercino. *The Raising of Lazarus*.  
Pen and brown ink, brown wash.  
 $7\frac{7}{8} \times 10\frac{5}{8}$  in. ( $20 \times 27$  cm). Purchase,  
Fosburgh Fund, Inc. Gift and Rogers  
Fund, 1968 (68.68)







from the church by the French in 1796 and exported to Paris. There it was shown at the Louvre before being returned to Italy after the defeat of Napoleon in 1815. The painting is now in the Pinacoteca Nazionale at Bologna.

Saint William (d. 812), a favorite at the court of Charlemagne, was instrumental in repulsing the Saracen forces that threatened the Holy Roman Empire. As duke of Aquitaine, he founded an abbey at Gellone, and in 806 he assumed the monastic habit. Guercino chose to depict William, still in armor, donning the white habit worn by reformed Benedictines. Saint Benedict of Aniane is seated before him, while overhead an angel indicates the event to the Virgin, who is shown seated on clouds with the Christ Child in her lap. Two saints—probably James and Joseph—appear at the upper left-hand corner.

Many preparatory drawings for Guercino's painting survive. This remarkable group of composition and figure studies offers insight into the artist's extensive use of drawings to explore alternative solutions to the representation of a given theme. One particularly fine sheet of studies for *Saint William Receiving the Monastic Habit*, drawn on both sides, is in the Metropolitan Museum (figs. 15, 16).

Typically for Guercino, the Museum's studies differ considerably from the finished picture. On both recto and verso William is shown in armor, kneeling before Benedict, who is seated on the right, instead of on the left as in the painting. A similarly free pen sketch in the Musée du Louvre was evidently drawn prior to the studies in the Metropolitan Museum (fig. 17). The Louvre drawing indicates that Guercino had previously experimented with the idea of representing William standing in front of Benedict and already wearing a habit. Guercino appears to have rejected this idea rather early on, perhaps because he felt that it left some ambiguity about the identity of the protagonist, for military trappings are a significant feature of the iconography of the youthful Saint William.

The sheet in the Metropolitan Museum also differs from the altarpiece in that Saint William holds a cross, while the habit that is so prominent in the painting is nowhere visible. Other preparatory drawings for Guercino's altarpiece demonstrate that the artist considered representing the removal of William's armor just before he put on monastic dress. A sheet of rapid pen studies in the collection of Sir Denis Mahon, London, was drawn somewhat later in the genesis of the composition (fig. 18). There, as in the finished picture, William faces left. The same process of correction and refinement seems to have continued throughout Guercino's work on the painting; Mahon argues that it was only after Guercino had begun the canvas that he modified the saint's pose to show him with his left arm raised.

As archbishop of Bologna, Alessandro Ludovisi, who became Pope Gregory xv in 1621, had commissioned from Guercino a *Resurrection*

14. Guercino. *Saint William Receiving the Monastic Habit*, 1621. Oil on canvas. 135<sup>7</sup>/<sub>8</sub> × 91 in. (345 × 231 cm). Bologna, Pinacoteca Nazionale





15. Guercino. *Youth Kneeling before a Prelate*. Pen and brown ink.  
9<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> × 7<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> in. (23.5 × 19.1 cm).  
Rogers Fund, 1908 (08.227.29 recto)





16. Guercino. *Youth Kneeling before a Prelate*. Pen and brown ink.  
9<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub> × 7<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> in. (23.5 × 19.1 cm).  
Rogers Fund, 1908 (08.227.29 verso)



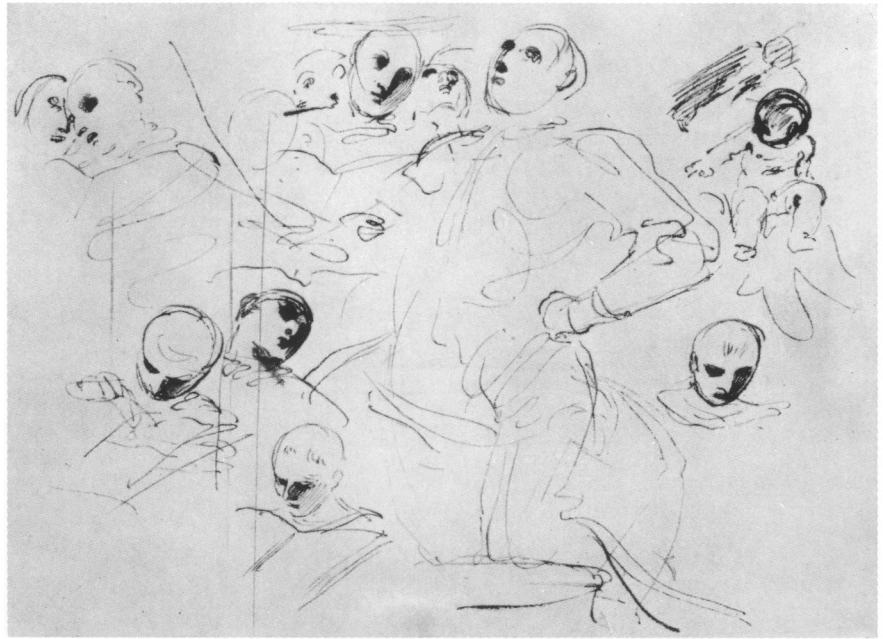


17. Guercino. *Saint William Receiving the Monastic Habit*. Pen and brown ink, brown wash.  $14\frac{3}{4} \times 9\frac{1}{2}$  in. ( $37.4 \times 24.1$  cm). Paris, Musée du Louvre, Département des Arts Graphiques

of *Tabitha* (Florence, Galleria Palatina), and he remained an important patron of Bolognese artists following his coronation. Just months after Gregory xv's election, both Guercino and his somewhat older contemporary Domenichino followed the new pope to Rome in expectation of receiving important commissions from the pontiff and members of his family.

At the time of his election Gregory xv was already sixty-seven years old. He promptly made his nephew Ludovico a cardinal and gave him great power at court. Within six months Ludovico acquired

18. Guercino. *Studies for Saint William Receiving the Monastic Habit*. Pen and brown ink.  $7\frac{5}{8} \times 10\frac{1}{2}$  in. (19.3 × 26.8 cm). London, Sir Denis Mahon



a *casino*, or summerhouse, near the Porta Pinciana, and a short time later he entrusted Guercino with its decoration.

The Casino Ludovisi (or dell'Aurora) is a two-storied structure with a large room on each floor. Agostino Tassi, a specialist in decorative painting, frescoed the illusionistic architectural framework within which Guercino painted (*a secco*, in tempera on dry plaster, rather than in true fresco) the allegorical compositions that occupy the ceilings of both rooms. The painting on the vault of the upstairs room represents Fame with her trumpet and an olive branch soaring above personifications of Honor—crowned with laurel and grasping a staff—and Virtue—armed with a sword and holding a globe. In the barrel vault of the room on the ground floor Guercino painted Aurora, goddess of dawn, scattering flowers as she drives a two-horse chariot across the sky (fig. 19). The Horae, who personify the hours of the day, precede her, while Aurora's aged husband, Tithonus, appears behind her in the lower left-hand corner of the composition. Allegorical figures of Day and Night occupy the lunettes at either end of the ceiling (see fig. 23).

Just seven years earlier, in 1614, the Bolognese artist Guido Reni had painted a similar subject on the ceiling of the *casino* of Cardinal Scipione Borghese's palace (now the Palazzo Rospigliosi) on the Quirinal Hill (fig. 20). The fresco by Reni represents Apollo seated in his chariot, surrounded by the Horae and preceded by Aurora. Reni treated the subject as a *quadro riportato*—that is, as if it were an easel painting attached to the ceiling. He avoided the use of dramatic foreshortening and adopted an essentially planar, friezelike composition.





19. Guercino. *Aurora*, 1621. Tempera on plaster. Rome, Casino Ludovisi



20. Guido Reni (1575–1642). *Aurora*, 1614. Fresco. Rome, Palazzo Rospigliosi, Casino dell'Aurora



Guercino's *Aurora* signals a bold departure from the classically composed ceiling by Guido Reni. The scene is represented in steep perspective: the figures are sharply foreshortened, the undersides of the horses are clearly visible, and the cypresses glimpsed through Tassi's architectural framework tower above the spectator. Dramatic in conception, the *Aurora* was the most important and influential of Guercino's early works.

A considerable number of preparatory drawings for this project survive (see figs. 21, 22, 24, 25). The Metropolitan Museum possesses a superb study for the figure of Tithonus, executed in red chalk on blue paper, that was identified by Walter Vitzthum prior to its acquisition by the Museum in 1970 (fig. 21). The drawing corresponds closely to the figure as executed and belongs to a category of relatively finished chalk studies that Guercino made throughout his career. On the reverse of the sheet is a quick sketch for the figure of Day, personified by a winged youth seated on clouds

21. Guercino. *Seated Old Man with Right Arm Upraised*. The drawing is a study for the figure of Tithonus in Guercino's *Aurora* (fig. 19). Red chalk, on blue paper.  $9\frac{1}{8} \times 12\frac{1}{2}$  in. (23.3  $\times$  31.7 cm). Rogers Fund, 1970 (1970.168 recto)







22. Guercino. *Seated Nude Youth*. This sketch on the verso of the Museum's drawing of Tithonus is a study for the allegorical figure of Day in a lunette at one end of Guercino's *Aurora*, painted on the ceiling of the ground-floor room in the Casino Ludovisi at Rome (fig. 23). Red chalk, on blue paper.  $9\frac{1}{8} \times 12\frac{1}{2}$  in. (23.3  $\times$  31.7 cm). Rogers Fund, 1970 (1970.168 verso)

and holding a candle (figs. 22, 23). The placement of the legs in the drawing is similar to that in the painting; however, the figure's right arm is in quite a different position, and his right hand may originally have been intended to hold the candle that appears in his left hand in the lunette.

At about the same time and in a similar style, Guercino painted a ceiling in the present Palazzo Costaguti at Rome (fig. 26). This picture was commissioned by Monsignor Costanzo Patrizi, who served as treasurer under Pope Gregory xv and who was no doubt familiar with Guercino's work for members of the Ludovisi family. The subject of the painting in the Palazzo Costaguti is taken from Torquato Tasso's *Gerusalemme liberata*: Armida, a beautiful sorceress, abducts the Christian knight Rinaldo in a chariot drawn by dragons. Like Guercino's work in the Casino Ludovisi, *The Abduction of Rinaldo* was executed in tempera instead of true fresco and is surrounded by illusionistic architecture painted by Agostino Tassi.



23. Guercino. *Day*, 1621. Tempera on plaster. Rome, Casino Ludovisi



24. Guercino. *Aurora in Her Chariot*. The drawing is a study for the figure that appears in the center of Guercino's *Aurora* (fig. 19). Pen and brown ink.  $7\frac{1}{2} \times 9\frac{1}{8}$  in. (19.1  $\times$  23.1 cm). Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Thomas Ashby Collection





25. Guercino. *Seated Woman Reading a Book*. This superb drawing is a study for the allegorical figure of Night in a lunette in the room on the ground floor of the Casino Ludovisi. Red chalk.  $9\frac{5}{8} \times 9\frac{1}{8}$  in. (24.4  $\times$  23.2 cm). Windsor Castle, Royal Library. (Reproduced by gracious permission of H.M. The Queen.)



26. Guercino. *The Abduction of Rinaldo*, ca. 1621. Tempera on plaster. Rome, Palazzo Costaguti



27. Guercino. *Youth in a Chariot with Attendant Young Woman*. The sheet may be a study for *The Abduction of Rinaldo* (fig. 26). Pen and brown ink, brown wash.  $6\frac{1}{2} \times 7\frac{3}{4}$  in. (16.6 × 19.8 cm). Gift of Cornelius Vanderbilt, 1880 (80.3.294)

At least one drawing is directly related to this project. Although the composition is in the reverse direction from that of the painting, there can be no doubt that a pen sketch in the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge (Inv. 2737), is a study for the ceiling at the Palazzo Costaguti. In the Cambridge drawing Armida looks over her shoulder at the sleeping Rinaldo. A pen drawing in the Metropolitan Museum is identical in style to the Fitzwilliam Museum sketch and is conceivably another study for *The Abduction of Rinaldo* (fig. 27). The pose and physical type of the young woman in this drawing are close to those of Armida in the one at Cambridge, but the youth by her side is clearly awake. If the sheet in the Metropolitan Museum is a study for Guercino's work in the Palazzo Costaguti, it is further evidence of the experimental function of the artist's many preparatory drawings.





28. Guercino. *The Burial and Reception into Heaven of Saint Petronilla*, 1623.  
Oil on canvas.  $283\frac{1}{2} \times 166\frac{1}{2}$  in.  
(720 × 423 cm). Rome, Pinacoteca  
Capitolina

Despite the audacity and self-assuredness of works such as the *Aurora*, Guercino was soon to abandon the intensely dramatic style of his youth in favor of one characterized by greater clarity, idealization, and repose. In late 1621 he was charged with the execution of a huge altarpiece for Saint Peter's, *The Burial and Reception into Heaven of Saint Petronilla*, now in the Pinacoteca Capitolina, Rome

(fig. 28). He must have regarded this important commission as an unprecedented opportunity to demonstrate his talent as a painter.

Saint Petronilla was an Early Christian virgin and martyr. At one time thought to have been the daughter of Saint Peter, Petronilla died after refusing to marry a Roman nobleman named Flaccus. Guercino's painting, which was removed from the altar during the eighteenth century and replaced by a copy in mosaic, represents the body of Saint Petronilla being lowered into an open grave. The saint reappears in the top half of the composition, where she is shown kneeling before the seated figure of Christ. Overhead a winged putto descends with a crown of martyrdom.

This vast altarpiece, which is more than twenty feet high and twelve feet wide, differs markedly in style from earlier works by Guercino. The emphasis on movement that characterizes pictures such as *Samson Captured by the Philistines* is here replaced by dignity and equilibrium. The solidly modeled figures are arranged close to the picture plane so that their poses are instantly intelligible. The physical types are more idealized than in earlier works by Guercino; the chiaroscuro is less emphatic, the colors are lighter, and the overall composition is less confused.

Sir Denis Mahon has suggested that Guercino's change of style was partly due to the critical success of works by Domenichino. Like Francesco Albani and Guido Reni, Domenichino studied with the Flemish expatriate Denys Calvaert before joining the Accademia degli Incamminati, which was then under the direction of Agostino and Ludovico Carracci. In 1602 he journeyed to Rome, where he worked with Annibale Carracci. Giovanni Battista Agucchi, who eventually became secretary of state to Pope Gregory xv, was a patron and close friend of Domenichino, as well as an ardent champion of the artist's rigorously classical style. Given Agucchi's admiration for works by Domenichino and his influential position at court, Agucchi's opinions in matters of taste may have contributed to Guercino's stylistic volte-face.

On July 8, 1623, Gregory xv suffered a stroke and died. A short time later Guercino returned to Cento. There he maintained a busy workshop for nearly two decades, producing pictures in the comparatively sober style heralded by *The Burial and Reception into Heaven of Saint Petronilla*.

Analogies with works such as the frescoes Guercino painted in 1626–27 in the cathedral at Piacenza suggest that an unusual, highly finished drawing of the Holy Family in the Pierpont Morgan Library may have been executed soon after Guercino's return to Cento (fig. 29). Drawn in black, red, blue, brown, and ocher chalk, this remarkable sheet bears the initials of the great eighteenth-century Venetian collector Anton Maria Zanetti; later it belonged to another famous *amateur*, Baron Dominique Vivant Denon. The







Opposite:

29. Guercino. *The Holy Family*.  
Black, red, blue, brown, and ocher chalk.  
14<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub> × 10<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> in. (35.8 × 26.8 cm).  
New York, The Pierpont Morgan Library

30. Guercino. *The Adoration of the  
Magi*. Although not directly related to  
any known painting by the artist, this  
composition study may be associated  
with works executed by Guercino in the  
1620s. Pen and brown ink, brown wash.  
10<sup>5</sup>/<sub>8</sub> × 13<sup>5</sup>/<sub>8</sub> in. (27.1 × 34.6 cm).  
Rogers Fund, 1908 (08.227.30)

use of colored chalk is exceptional in Guercino's oeuvre and suggests that the artist intended the sheet to be framed and displayed as a small painting.

From 1629 on, all financial transactions involving commissions executed by Guercino and his younger brother Paolo Antonio Barbieri (1603–1649) were systematically recorded in an account book now preserved in the Biblioteca Comunale dell'Archiginnasio at Bologna. This account book, the *Libro dei conti*, was begun by Paolo Antonio Barbieri and continued by Guercino himself after 1649. The survival of the *Libro dei conti* has ensured that Guercino's career is better documented than that of almost any other seventeenth-century Italian artist.

Guercino's prices remained fairly constant throughout his career; he charged clients one hundred ducats for each figure, fifty or sixty for each half-figure, and between twenty-five and thirty for a head.







31. Guercino. *The Cimmerian Sibyl*, 1638. Oil on canvas. 51<sup>1</sup>/<sub>8</sub> × 39 in. (130 × 99 cm). Reggio Emilia, Credito Emiliano

According to his account book, Guercino received a final payment of fifty-five ducats for a painting of the Cimmerian Sibyl on January 2, 1639. Malvasia states that in the same year Guercino executed an unspecified *Sibyl* for Ludovico Ratta of Bologna. It seems likely both sources refer to the same picture, the half-length *Cimmerian Sibyl* now the property of the Credito Emiliano in Reggio Emilia (fig. 31).

A fine preparatory study for this painting is in the Metropolitan Museum (fig. 32). Executed in pen and brown ink, the drawing represents a seated woman holding a scroll. In the painting the scroll bears an inscription in Latin that clarifies her identity. The sheet is characteristic of Guercino's drawings from this period: rapid, calligraphic pen strokes combined with dots, dashes, and parallel hatching lines describe the forms.



32. Guercino. *The Cimmerian Sibyl*.  
 Pen and brown ink.  $7\frac{3}{4} \times 5\frac{7}{8}$  in.  
 (19.7 × 15 cm). Rogers Fund, 1912  
 (12.56.11)



On August 18, 1642, Guido Reni died in Bologna at the age of sixty-seven. About a month later Guercino left Cento and moved to Bologna with his large workshop and many assistants. There he took Reni's place as Bologna's leading painter.

The classicizing tendencies apparent in works executed by Guercino after his return from Rome in 1623 are even more pronounced in paintings datable to his Bolognese period. Guercino's idealized figures assume comparatively static poses, and the agitation and excitement of early narrative compositions like the *Samson* he painted for Cardinal Serra give way to a more introspective spirituality. The meditative calm of late works by Guercino is enlivened by a wide range of colors, and the artist's characteristic palette of rich shades of blue, brown, and violet expands to include a gamut of pastel hues. Moreover, Guercino abandoned the thick, creamy impasto typical of pictures he executed in his youth in favor of a thinly painted surface similar to that of late works by Reni.

The Metropolitan Museum is fortunate to possess a superb late work by Guercino, the large altarpiece that he executed in Bologna for Ferrante III Gonzaga, duke of Guastalla, in 1650–51 (fig. 33). The painting represents Saint Aloysius Gonzaga, to whom Ferrante III was distantly related, standing before an altar and gazing at a crucifix held by an angel. Aloysius (in Italian, Aluigi) Gonzaga was born in 1568, the eldest son of Ferrante I, marquis of Castiglione delle Stiviere and a great-grandson of Ludovico III Gonzaga, who had been ruler of the powerful Marquisate (later Duchy) of Mantua in northern Italy. As a child, Aloysius was extremely pious, and at the age of ten he made a vow of perpetual chastity; two years later, in 1580, he received his First Communion from Carlo Borromeo, archbishop of Milan. In November 1585, when he was just seventeen years old, he renounced the Marquisate of Castiglione in favor of his brother Ridolfo and became a novice at the Jesuit house of Sant'Andrea in Rome.

Five years later Aloysius was miraculously given to understand that he would live for only a short time, and, on June 20, 1591, he died after contracting the plague while helping the sick during the pestilence that ravaged Rome in that year. His cult soon spread throughout Italy, and he was beatified by Pope Paul V in 1605 and canonized by Pope Benedict XIII in 1726. He is the patron saint of Catholic youth.

Guercino's *Libro dei conti* records three payments totaling 400 ducats for the *Saint Aloysius*. The first installment was paid by Quaranta Sampieri, acting as agent for Ferrante III, on March 26, 1650, while the other two payments are dated April 24 and April 27 of the following year. Upon its completion, the painting was placed above an altar dedicated to Aloysius Gonzaga in the right transept of the now-destroyed Theatine church of Santa Maria del Castello at

33. Guercino. *Saint Aloysius Gonzaga*, 1650–51. Oil on canvas. 140 × 104<sup>7/8</sup> in. (355.6 × 266.3 cm). Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Charles Wrightsman, 1973 (1973.311.3)





Guastalla. Shortly after the Napoleonic suppression of the Theatine order, Guercino's *Saint Aloysius* was appropriated by Médéric Louis Élie Moreau de Saint-Méry, administrator general of Parma, Piacenza, and Guastalla. When Moreau fell from favor with Emperor Napoleon in 1806, the picture was acquired first by his successor, Andache Junot, duke of Abrantes, and subsequently by the art dealer Samuel Woodburn, who bought it at Christie's in London in 1818. Not long afterward the painting once again turned up in Italy, where it was purchased in 1821 by John Grant of Kilgraston in Perthshire, Scotland. The picture remained with John Grant's family until 1957, when it was acquired by Mr. and Mrs. Charles Wrightsman, who presented it to the Metropolitan Museum in 1973.

The white surplice that Aloysius wears over the high-collared black habit of the Society of Jesus refers to his ordination as door-keeper, lector, exorcist, and acolyte—the four minor orders that he received in the early months of 1588. At his feet are a branch of white lilies, emblematic of chastity, and a gold coronet symbolizing the Marquisate of Castiglione, which Aloysius renounced in favor of his younger brother. A winged putto descends to crown the young man with a wreath of orange blossoms. In front of the altar an angel directs Aloysius' attention to a crucifix, while a heavenly choir sings overhead. The monumental architectural setting must be imaginary, but the town seen in the distance presumably represents Castiglione delle Stiviere, Aloysius' birthplace.

Curiously, no preparatory drawings for this altarpiece have been identified. The absence of preliminary sketches for the Museum's painting is particularly surprising given the importance of the commission. In a celebrated letter of February 15, 1650, Guercino declined to supply drawings to a patron, Don Antonio Ruffo of Messina, on the grounds that, for medical reasons, he was temporarily obliged to work out his compositions directly on canvas. However, Guercino's unwillingness to give up his drawings is fairly well documented, and it seems likely that he was simply being evasive.

Indeed, the Metropolitan Museum owns a pen-and-wash study of Endymion that may be related to a painting executed by Guercino at about the same time and, coincidentally, for the same Don Antonio Ruffo who had recently written to him to request drawings (fig. 34). According to Malvasia and to Guercino's account book, the artist painted a total of five pictures of Endymion. All but one of these paintings represented a half-length figure. However, on March 2, 1650, Guercino received 125 *scudi* from Don Ruffo's agent, Pietro Antonio Davia, for a full-length painting of this subject. Guercino's painting has been lost, and no contemporary copies are known, but it is plausible that the drawing of Endymion sleeping now in the Museum was executed in connection with Ruffo's picture.



34. Guercino. *Endymion Sleeping*.  
 Pen and brown ink, brown wash.  
 8<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub> × 9<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> in. (21.1 × 24.8 cm).  
 Rogers Fund, 1968 (68.171)

Mahon has convincingly associated another pen drawing in the Metropolitan Museum with an altarpiece executed by Guercino in 1652 and now in the Palazzo Rosso at Genoa (figs. 35, 36). This picture was painted for the duomo at Cento but apparently remained in Guercino's house in Bologna until it was sold by his heirs sometime before 1717. In the painting the Virgin and Child are enthroned upon a high pedestal. The infant Saint John the Baptist appears at the feet of the Virgin, while Saint John the Evangelist stands holding a book at the lower left and Saint Bartholomew kneels at the lower right.

The Museum's very free and summary drawing contains two sketches of a kneeling male figure and is probably a study for the Apostle Saint Bartholomew. Drawn on the reverse of a letter, both





sketches differ from the painting, in which the figure is shown in profile rather than turned slightly toward or slightly away from the spectator. Moreover, in the altarpiece Saint Bartholomew is represented holding a book in his left hand and the knife with which he was flayed in his right.

A study for this painting in the Schloss Fachsenfeld Collection in the Staatsgalerie at Stuttgart (fig. 37) corresponds closely to the drapery around the waist of the Evangelist in the altarpiece. The Schloss Fachsenfeld drawing is one of a group of unusually painstaking drapery studies that Guercino executed beginning in the late 1620s. Most of this group of highly finished red-chalk drawings

35. Guercino. *Two Studies of a Kneeling Male Figure*. This drawing, executed on the reverse of a letter, is a study for the figure of Saint Bartholomew in Guercino's altarpiece representing the Virgin and Child with Saints John the Baptist, John the Evangelist, and Bartholomew, now in the Palazzo Rosso at Genoa (fig. 36). Pen and brown ink. 7 × 6<sup>5</sup>/<sub>8</sub> in. (17.7 × 16.9 cm). Rogers Fund, 1963 (63.37)





36. Guercino. *The Virgin and Child with Saints John the Baptist, John the Evangelist, and Bartholomew*, 1652. Oil on canvas. 133<sup>7</sup>/<sub>8</sub> × 87 in. (340 × 221 cm). Genoa, Palazzo Rosso, Gallerie Comunali



37. Guercino. *Study of Drapery*. Red chalk. 11 × 7<sup>5</sup>/<sub>8</sub> in. (28 × 19.5 cm). Stuttgart, Staatsgalerie, Schloss Fachsenfeld Collection

remained with Guercino's descendants until the second half of the eighteenth century, when they were acquired by the Bolognese artist Francesco Giusti. In 1899 Baron Franz von Koenig-Fachsenfeld purchased a large part of Giusti's collection, including almost all of Guercino's known drawings of this type.

Mahon argues that Guercino first made such drawings in connection with the frescoes he executed in the mid-1620s in the dome of the cathedral at Piacenza. Unlike the *Aurora* and *Triumph of Fame* in the Casino Ludovisi, Guercino's work at Piacenza was painted in true fresco—that is, directly on wet plaster. Since fresh plaster absorbs watercolor, frescoes are extremely durable. However, fresco painters







*Opposite:*

38. Guercino. *Saint Cecilia Playing the Organ*. A virgin and martyr, Saint Cecilia is the patron saint of music and musicians. Red chalk.  $11\frac{3}{8} \times 7\frac{1}{2}$  in. (29 × 19.1 cm). Rogers Fund, 1971 (1971.221.1)



39. Guercino. *Boy, His Arms Upraised, Wearing a Plumed Hat*. Pen and brown ink.  $7\frac{5}{8} \times 4\frac{3}{8}$  in. (19.4 × 11.1 cm). Bequest of Walter C. Baker, 1971 (1972.118.258)

must work quickly and cannot easily make corrections or adjustments as they go along. Guercino evidently responded to this challenge by executing meticulous studies for details that on canvas he would have worked out at the last minute. The Schloss Fachsenfeld drawing suggests that Guercino continued to execute this type of drapery study even after he had given up painting large-scale frescoes like those at Piacenza.





40. Guercino. *Bust of a Man Facing Right*. This sketch, similar in feeling to the Museum's *Half-Figure of a Morose Man* (fig. 41), is stylistically related to other studies of heads datable to the 1630s. Pen and brown ink, brown wash.  $5\frac{3}{8} \times 6$  in. (13.7  $\times$  15.2 cm). Harris Brisbane Dick Fund, 1938 (38.179.4)

Guercino's numerous drawings of subjects inspired by everyday life reveal a keen interest in human behavior. A pen sketch of a boy chasing a butterfly, once in the collection of Walter C. Baker and now in the Metropolitan Museum, cannot be associated with any of Guercino's known paintings (fig. 39), but it is typical of the charming genre studies that he executed throughout his career. The poor condition of the sheet illustrates a problem that affects many of Guercino's pen-and-wash studies; the artist frequently used iron-gall ink, a medium made from naturally occurring gallnuts and iron sulfate. Iron-gall ink is highly acidic and may eventually cause the fibers of the paper to disintegrate.

Guercino drew many portraits, most of which contain some element of caricature. The Museum's *Half-Figure of a Morose Man* is an outstanding example (fig. 41). Guercino has in no way idealized the man's features and seems even to have taken pains to emphasize his homeliness and moody expression. The drawing underlines the





41. Guercino. *Half-Figure of a Morose Man*. Pen and brown ink.  
8<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub> × 3<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> in. (20.8 × 9.4 cm).  
Harry G. Sperling Fund, 1989  
(1989.222)





J.R.

Guercino.





43. Guercino. *Fireworks in a Piazza*.  
Pen and brown ink, brown wash.  
 $7\frac{1}{4} \times 10\frac{3}{8}$  in. (18.5 × 26.4 cm).  
Rogers Fund, 1912 (12.56.12)

fluid boundary between straightforward portrait drawings, which are more or less faithful to visual fact, and caricatures, distinguished by varying degrees of intentional exaggeration.

The majority of Guercino's caricatures are drawn in a spikier, more schematic style than that of the *Morose Man* and are similar in handling to a pen-and-ink *Diablerie* recently acquired by the Metropolitan Museum (fig. 42). This unusual and enigmatic sheet represents a particularly fanciful aspect of Guercino's artistic personality. Diableries and the occult were evidently much appreciated by the artist's contemporaries. Salvator Rosa (1615–1673), for example, executed a number of paintings of witches' Sabbaths, and similar themes were treated by other Italian painters of the seventeenth century.

In the upper left-hand corner of the Museum's drawing a crouching figure cries out in pain as flames below lick his tail. Near him sits a creature with a human body and the head of a dog; another canine monster is held fast in the crook of its arm. On a lower step a seated figure turns its back to the infernal spectacle, while another

*Opposite:*

42. Guercino. *A Diablerie*. Pen and brown ink.  $10\frac{3}{8} \times 7\frac{7}{8}$  in. (26.5 × 19.9 cm). Harry G. Sperling Fund, 1990 (1990.214)





44. Imitator of Guercino. *Landscape with Figures and a Farmhouse*. This sheet belongs to a group of pen-and-ink landscape studies that have been attributed to an eighteenth-century forger of Guercino's drawings. Pen and brown ink. 13<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> × 19 in. (33.7 × 48.4 cm). Rogers Fund, 1937 (37.165.99)



45. Guercino. *Saint Anthony of Padua*. Etching. 5<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> × 4<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub> in. (14.7 × 10.9 cm). Harris Brisbane Dick Fund, 1926 (26.70.3 [29])

one expires from the heat, the fumes, and despair. Beneath them two men and a dragon are immersed in flames. Inscriptions on the old mount indicate that the sheet has a long English provenance; during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries it belonged to two great artist-collectors, Arthur Pond and Jonathan Richardson, Sr., as well as to the distinguished connoisseur John Barnard, and to Uvedale Price, whose notable collection of drawings was dispersed at auction in 1854.

Like Annibale Carracci and Domenichino, Guercino executed numerous landscape drawings, mostly in pen and ink with little or no wash. The only landscape drawing by Guercino in the Metropolitan Museum (fig. 43) is somewhat unusual in that, instead of a pastoral scene, it represents a fireworks display in a town square that might have been inspired by the main piazza in Cento. The drawing is an early work, almost certainly executed prior to Guercino's departure for Rome, and might date from the same time as the Casa Pannini frescoes and the *Tobias and the Angel* in the Manning collection. Guercino's landscape drawings were widely imitated, and a number of them were engraved during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Motifs from these prints were later used by forgers to produce drawings that could be sold as original works by Guercino, with the result that fake landscapes attributed to him are abundant in public and private collections. A sheet in the Museum by an early forger of Guercino landscapes (fig. 44) provides an interesting comparison with authentic drawings such as the fireworks study.

Given the remarkable fluency with which Guercino drew, it is curious that he failed to pursue the closely allied art of printmaking. Many of his paintings were engraved by others, but Guercino himself made only two prints: a *Saint Anthony of Padua* and an *Infant Saint John the Baptist*. Both appear to have been executed late in the artist's career, perhaps about 1650.

In one of these etchings Saint Anthony holds an open book and a branch of lilies, symbolizing his purity (fig. 45). The inscription *alla Pace / Io: Iocomo Rossi form. Romae* indicates that the impression in the Metropolitan Museum was pulled after the original plate—now in the Calcografia Nazionale at Rome—was acquired by the late seventeenth-century Roman dealer and printmaker Giovanni Jacopo Rossi. Guercino's lack of experience as an etcher is evident in his *Saint Anthony*; the closely spaced lines that shade the side of the head were overbitten when the plate was immersed in acid, and the artist was obliged to rework this passage with a burin in order to achieve the correct distribution of light and dark.

The vogue for works by Guercino ensured that the artist continued to receive numerous commissions until his death in 1666. A late pen-and-wash drawing of the Virgin Immaculate standing on a crescent moon was purchased by the Museum in 1968 (fig. 46). This





46. Guercino. *The Virgin Immaculate*.  
The sheet is a study for Guercino's  
*Immaculate Conception* now in the  
Pinacoteca Civica at Ancona (fig. 47).  
Pen and brown ink, brown wash.  
10<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub> × 4<sup>7</sup>/<sub>8</sub> in. (26 × 12.3 cm).  
Rogers Fund, 1968 (68.172.2)



47. Guercino. *The Immaculate Conception*, 1656. Oil on canvas.  $88\frac{5}{8} \times 70\frac{1}{8}$  in. ( $225 \times 178$  cm). Ancona, Pinacoteca Civica

sheet is a study for an altarpiece Guercino painted in 1656 for Carlo Antonio Camerati (fig. 47). The painting, now in the Pinacoteca Civica at Ancona, represents the Virgin looking downward, her hands crossed instead of joined in prayer. Winged putti flank the central figure of the Virgin, while God the Father appears above her with both arms outstretched. The drawing is a splendid example





48. Guercino. *Half-Figure of a Nude Man Facing Right*. The decorative border was probably added during the eighteenth century by a former owner, Francesco Forni of Bologna. Pen and brown ink, brown wash.  $6\frac{3}{8} \times 7\frac{1}{4}$  in. (16.2 × 18.3 cm). Rogers Fund, 1970 (1970.40)

of Guercino's refined use of wash; with remarkable economy, he achieved greater luminosity in the preparatory study than in the altarpiece itself.

Guercino died on December 22, 1666, and was buried in the church of San Salvatore at Bologna. Although he left behind a large and competent workshop, Guercino had no pupils talented enough to emerge as independent artists. Instead, his Bolognese followers turned out pictures of modest quality whose principal distinction is a vague stylistic connection with works by the master.

Guercino never married, and his estate, which must have included about two thousand drawings, passed to his nephews Benedetto and

Cesare Gennari. The dispersal of this vast body of work took place gradually. An uncertain number of drawings were taken out of Italy by Benedetto Gennari, who was in Paris from 1672 to 1674 and who resided in London from 1674 until the English Revolution in 1688. The splendid group of Guercino drawings in the collection of the duke of Devonshire at Chatsworth was probably acquired at this time. However, the majority of Guercino's drawings remained with the Gennari family until the middle of the eighteenth century.

In 1763 several hundred drawings by Guercino and hundreds more by his pupils and followers were purchased from Cesare Gennari's nephew and heir, Carlo, by Richard Dalton, librarian to King George III; this enormous group of drawings is now in the Royal Library at Windsor Castle. A few years later Carlo Gennari sold another selection of drawings by Guercino to Francesco Forni of Bologna. This group, which must have been nearly as large as the one at Windsor, was acquired a short time afterward by the Honorable Edward Bouverie.

Drawings with this provenance may be identified either by characteristic inscriptions made up of various letters and numbers or by mounts with distinctive borders that were presumably added by Francesco Forni. These borders consist of combinations of ruled lines that form decorative geometric patterns. Two drawings by Guercino in the Metropolitan Museum preserve borders of this type. One is a pen sketch of a male nude facing right (fig. 48). Its considerably faded old mount is inscribed *12 S Fo.* in the same hand as other sheets with a similar Gennari provenance. Another drawing with a decorated border, the Museum's recently acquired *Half-Figure of a Morose Man* (fig. 41), was once the property of the first earl of Gainsborough, who in 1820 acquired the bulk of Edward Bouverie's huge collection of drawings by Guercino. The elaborate ruled border of this drawing constitutes a particularly stylish example of Francesco Forni's handiwork.

A prolific painter and indefatigable draughtsman, Guercino played an important part in the development of seventeenth-century Italian art. While the pictures Guercino painted late in life are distinguished by their classicism and coloristic refinement, his early works are infused with a freshness and vigor that were greatly admired by his contemporaries. Indeed, it is the *Aurora* of 1621—and not the works Guercino executed in Cento and Bologna after having become an established and successful artist—that heralds the exuberant High Baroque style of later seventeenth-century Roman painting.



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49. Guercino. *Standing Youth Holding a Bowl*. The drawing may represent Ganymede, cupbearer to the gods of Olympus. Nicholas Turner has pointed out that the paste stains visible at the margins of this sheet are typical of drawings that have been removed from mounts such as those in figures 41 and 48. Red chalk.  $10\frac{3}{8} \times 7\frac{1}{2}$  in. (26.5 × 18.9 cm). Rogers Fund, 1963 (63.75.2)

