

A. Michelangelo in Rome in the Pontifical Chapel painted Our Lord, Jesus Christ, His Mother, St. John, St. Peter, and the Heavenly Host. These are all represented in the nude—even the Virgin Mary—and in different poses with little reverence.

Q. Do you not know that in painting the Last Judgment in which no garments or similar things are presumed, it was not necessary to paint garments, and that in those figures there is nothing that is not spiritual? There are neither buffoons, dogs, weapons, or similar buffoonery. And does it seem because of this or some other example that you did right to have painted this picture in the way you did and do you want to maintain that it is good and decent?

A. Illustrious Lords, I do not want to defend it, but I thought I was doing right. I did not consider so many things and I did not intend to confuse anyone, the more so as those figures of buffoons are outside of the place in a picture where Our Lord is represented.

After these things had been said, the judges announced that the above named Paolo would be obliged to improve and change his painting within a period of three months from the day of this admonition and that according to the opinion and decision of the Holy Tribunal all the corrections should be made at the expense of the painter and that if he did not correct the picture he would be liable to the penalties imposed by the Holy Tribunal. Thus they decreed in the best manner possible.

THE CARRACCI

[Annibale Carracci (1560–1609) was the most talented of the famous Bologna family of artists. After preliminary studies in Bologna, he went to Venice where he joined his brother, Agostino (1558–1602), and studied the Venetian painters. On their return to Bologna, they founded with their cousin Lodovico (1556–1619) the *Accademia degli Incamminati* (1582), which became the most popular

studio in Bologna. The course of instruction included some theoretical studies as well as painting and drawing. As a reaction to Mannerism and as a result of their study in Venice they establish an eclecticism whose elements are given in Agostino's Sonnet. For ten years, Annibale, assisted by his brother, worked in Bologna, engaged principally with the decoration of two palaces. In 1595 they went to Rome where Annibale secured the commission to decorate the gallery of the new Palazzo Farnese. Annibale's decorative scheme became the model for a century of decorators, and equally influential was his treatment of figures in landscape, originating the classical landscape developed later by Poussin. In 1600 Agostino returned to Bologna where he died two years later. Receiving only the ridiculous sum of five hundred lire for the decoration of the Farnese Gallery, Annibale left (1603–1604) the service of the Cardinal and did little work until his death in 1609.]

LETTER FROM ANNIBALE CARRACCI TO LODOVICO¹

MAGNIFICENT COUSIN! Parma, April 18, 1580

This letter is to bring you my greetings and to inform Your Excellency of my arrival in Parma at about the seventeenth hour yesterday. I stopped at the Sign of the Rooster, where I intend to stay at little expense, much pleasure, and free from obligations and constraint. I did not come here to stand on ceremony, but to enjoy my freedom to study and to sketch; therefore, for the love of God, I pray Your Excellency to excuse me.

I must inform Your Excellency that Corporal Andrea came to see me yesterday evening and showed me much

¹ The letter is translated from the text given in C. C. Malvasia, *Felsina pittrice. Vite dei pittori bolognesi*, Bologna, 1841, I, p. 268. It is also given in Bottari-Ticozzi, *Raccolta*, I, p. 118. The footnotes are by the translator. The authenticity of this letter has been questioned. W. Friedländer holds the opinion it is authentic; see *Art Bulletin*, xxiv, 1942, p. 192.

See also: A. McComb, *The Baroque Painters of Italy*, Cambridge, 1934, pp. 9–20 (which contains a valuable bibliography); and Pevsner, *Academies*, pp. 75–79.

courtesy and politeness. He asked whether I had any letters to give anyone; or a letter for him from Your Excellency, since you had written commending me to him. He intended to take me away from this place immediately, as he said it was not suitable for persons like us. He wished to take me to his home; this he said would not inconvenience him at all, as he had prepared the same room which you occupied once, so that it would not cause him the slightest inconvenience. He talked so much about it that I did not know what to say except to thank him repeatedly and deny that I had a letter because I wished my freedom. To make a long story short, with great difficulty I finally freed myself, but if Master Giacomo—that is the name of the innkeeper—had not greatly helped me I should not have been able to escape from him. I beg Your Excellency not to take this amiss and excuse me to him as you think best, for when he left he appeared to be somewhat annoyed. Then I could not wait any longer and went immediately to see the great cupola² you had praised to me so many times. Indeed I remained speechless on seeing such a mighty work. Every detail is so well contrived; the foreshortening, when you look up, is done with great precision. But everything is done in good taste and with such grace and with coloring that the figures seem to be real flesh. By Heaven, neither Tibaldi³ nor Nicolino,⁴ nor, I dare say, Raphael himself ever created anything equal to it!

I do not know how many things I have seen this morning except the altarpiece showing St. Jerome and St. Catherine,⁵ and the painting of the Madonna with the Bowl on the Flight into Egypt.⁶ By Heaven, I would not want to exchange any of them for the *St. Cecelial*⁷ Say

² The great cupola of the Duomo decorated by Correggio with frescoes depicting the Assumption of the Virgin.

³ Pellegrino de' Tibaldi (1532-1596).

⁴ Niccolò dell' Abbate to whom Agostino directed his sonnet.

⁵ This picture by Correggio is known as the *Madonna and St. Jerome* or *The Day*. The figure of Mary Magdalen is mistaken for a St. Catherine. The picture is in the Royal Gallery, Parma.

⁶ This picture by Correggio is known as the *Madonna della Scodella*. It is in the Royal Gallery, Parma.

⁷ He refers to the picture by Raphael in Bologna.

yourself if the grace of St. Catherine who bows her head with such charm over the foot of that beautiful Christ Child is not more beautiful than Mary Magdalen? And that beautiful old man, St. Jerome, has he not more grandeur and also more tenderness than has the *St. Paul* of Raphael, which at first seemed a miracle to me and now seems a completely wooden thing, hard and sharp? Moreover, can one not say so much that even your Parmegianino⁸ has to put up with these remarks, for I know now that he has attempted to imitate the grace in the pictures of this great man, but he is still far from having obtained it. The *putti* of Correggio breathe, live and laugh with such grace and truth that one must laugh and be gay with them.

I am writing my brother that it is absolutely necessary for him to come here, where he will see things which he never would have believed possible. For the love of God, urge him to dispatch quickly those two tasks in order to come here at once. I shall assure him that we shall live together in peace. There will be no quarrelling between us. I shall let him say anything he wants and shall busy myself with sketching. Also I do not fear that he will not do the same and abandon talking and sophistry, all of which is a waste of time. I have also told him that I shall try to be at his service, and when I have come to be known somewhat I shall inquire and look for opportunities.

Since the hour is late and the daylight has disappeared in writing to him and my father, I shall wait until the next mail to tell you of things in more detail. I kiss Your Excellency's hand.

AGOSTINO CARRACCI'S SONNET
IN PRAISE OF NICCOLÒ BOLOGNESE⁹

Whoever a goodly painter seeks to be
Should take the Romans' drawing to his aid,
Movement from the Venetians, and their shade,
And worthy coloring from Lombardy,

⁸ Parmegianino (Francesco Mazzola) (1503-1540).

⁹ Translated from the text as given in Malvasia, *op. cit.*, p. 129, by Creighton Gilbert, with the following note: "From the