

Fat City: Siting Bologna in the *Region of Complexity* and the Beginning of Baroque

Abstract: This paper considers the question: why was Bologna the place where a 'reform' of art occurred that resulted in the shift from Mannerist to Baroque style in the sixteenth century? The method of analysis of Bolognese culture and society is derived from the emerging field of Complexity Science which seeks to explain change in the physical world by examining movements within complex systems. Applying this theory to social structures, three different states are distinguished—chaos, complexity, and order. Using this method it is possible to see how unexpected occurrences fostered shifts in the political and social culture that in turn opened up a static, closed system to influences from beyond the borders of the city-state. Focusing on the influence of key figures of the period, significant movements are analyzed: in politics with the Papal Legate Cardinal Paleotti; in science with a new emphasis on observation of the natural world with Ulisse Aldrovandi; in popular culture with the poet of the street, Giulio Cesare Croce; and in the reactions against the well-established style of the Mannerists with the Carracci family of artists. Considering the far-reaching effects of these shifts, we expose the intellectual, social, and institutional connections that fueled new directions for art and culture. For what seems like a moment in history, Bologna provided a situation of complexity that was needed for these new directions to take hold. All too quickly the success of the Bolognese production became highly ordered and at the turn of the 17th century, the excitement of the new shifted to Rome.

Introduction

Bologna or Rome? Elizabeth Cropper posed this question to introduce her survey essay on the Baroque, and to highlight the reasons why any history of art of the period must begin with Bologna.¹ Much of this history depends on the Carracci family of artists who set up their Academy and developed their 'reforming' style in the city. Why

Bologna, though—why was *this* the place where such artists could flourish and make the breakthrough to a ‘new’ conception of representation?

Complexity Science and Artistic Cycles

In this paper, I study the question from the perspective of the science of complexity, on the hypothesis that this approach to explaining the physical world can also contribute to a broader understanding of social and cultural shifts which may reflect cyclic patterns of change. A relatively new area of scientific thought, complexity science posits the world as consisting of complex organic and holistic systems (from biological to social) moving from states of chaos to stability and back again to chaos. Furthermore, between these two states, theorists have identified a *region of complexity* described as “...a place where strange things happen....where information gets its foot in the door.”² A system in the *region of chaos* is less focused, such that slight changes in the environment can move the system in a new, unpredictable direction. In its opposite state, a system in the *region of order* is most focused—resistant to change, less open to new information. Moving from one to the other, approaching more ordered behavior, a system is at the ‘edge of chaos’ in a region of complex behavior. In this state, the system is open to outside forces, to sources of information and inspiration which can be adapted and reconfigured to arrive at a new form of order or a more focused result. These ideas have been explored in applications to a variety of areas, from cell biology to computer networks and the world of finance. In an on-going project, I and two colleagues from the sciences are applying this theory to a broad history of art encompassing the Gothic, Renaissance and Baroque periods, taking the pre- and Early

Renaissance as functioning in the region of complexity, the High Renaissance as exemplifying the more focused, stable region of order, and the Mannerist period as moving back through complexity toward chaos. We introduced specific terms useful for a discussion of cyclical patterns based on the two underlying fundamental processes in nature: self-organization and entropy.

Self-organization refers to the ability of living systems to move from disorder to order, apparently spontaneously. Entropy is the opposite: living (or non-living) systems tend to lose energy and run down, from order back to disorder or chaos. When a system is failing and entropy is dominant, new energy (or information) is required to move toward social focusing, to generate new order. We posed the question: why does one tendency or the other dominate at any given time; we developed a response based on a differentiation/centrality ratio.³ These are two variables whose ratio determines which of the two fundamental processes, self-organization or entropy, dominate in a specific system at a particular time. Differentiation denotes the *internal* variety (of, for example, artistic styles and techniques) connected and coordinated by an internal structure of the system. The differentiation structure varies: in the *region of chaos*, the structure is a near-random arrangement of connections; in the *region of complexity*, there are several sub-systems of small hubs, some coordinated, loosely connected to other clusters; in the *region of order*, there is one major hub that controls and coordinates most elements. While differentiation is the term we use for the internal situation of a system, centrality denotes the variety of information and pressures that are *external* to the system and that the system is open to, or that exert an influence on the structure of the internal system. When differentiation dominates, there is greater social focus, organization and

order, a resistance to external pressures. When centrality dominates, the opposite is the case. It is when the two are more balanced that we are in the *region of complexity*, a period of productive developments and opportunities for a given societal group. As self-organization increases (and there is a greater focus on one style or 'school' if we consider artistic developments), eventually a new kind of order is achieved, which becomes dominant and in its turn evokes resistance—an example of entropy in process. Applying these concepts to the broader history of art highlights the forces in society that played significant roles in the shifting (rise and fall) cycles of artistic styles.

Here I take a much more narrow focus to test the viability of this theory for specific cases: using Bologna as the model is it possible to trace the movement of the differentiation/centrality ratio accounting for the shifts in artistic production from late Mannerism to early Baroque? I consider the forces driving cultural development, the economic, political, social, religious and cultural situation of the city in the last 16th and early 17th centuries, examining the roles of influential individuals such as the Papal Legate Cardinal Gabriele Paleotti (1522-97), the scholar scientist Ulisse Aldrovandi (1522-1605), the poet-performer Giulio Cesare Croce (1550-1609), and the Carracci family of artists — Agostino Carracci(1557-1602), Annibale Caracci (1560-1609) and Ludovico Carracci(1555-1619). These men had in common the goal to acquire knowledge through careful observation of nature and daily life, and to apply this understanding to effect a reinvigoration of their respective fields. The significant context here is the functioning of the complex of structures in Bologna, and the stimulating quality of the relationships between these structures and those external to the City-State. Toward the end of this period, papal authority solidified, curtailing the political

independence of the State, economic and health problems limited travel and closed down accessibility, and artistic style was focused on followers of the Carracci who adapted and personalized their established style. After around thirty years of a relatively stable ratio of differentiation and centrality, Bologna experienced a disparity—a decline in centrality and rise in differentiation, and a resulting milieu that no longer encouraged experimentation.

Bologna in the 16th Century

Bologna in the period 1560 to 1620 was a city adjusting to the recent restoration of papal authority. The historical memory of the original independent medieval Comune with its structure allowing popular participation in government had persisted even through the dynastic Renaissance rule of the Bentivoglio family, ensuring that papal authority and control would require some time to take full effect (which it did eventually by adapting and adjusting the existing government institutions). Having taken power from within the city mainly through force and alliances with France, and ruling Bologna for sixty years as “cultured tyrants,” the Bentivoglio *signori* were not easily dislodged. Although in 1506 Pope Julius II entered the city at the head of the Papal troops, took control of the government, and sent the Bentivoglio into exile, thereafter they made a number of attempts to regain power until their final defeat in 1527. The result was a period of turmoil and anarchy in the city in the early decades of the century that took its toll on the Bolognese institutions—reflecting the larger scene of incursions into Italy by foreign troops, culminating with the Sack of Rome in 1527. Finally, relative peace began in 1530, marked by the momentous meeting of Pope Clement VII and Emperor

Charles V in Bologna, culminating with the crowning of the Habsburg Emperor by the Pope in the Bolognese Basilica of San Petronio. For the occasion, the city was crowded with international visitors, including artists responsible for designing and creating the elaborate, temporary settings for the processional way—decorations executed by artists well-versed in the mannerist style that was dominant in Rome and northern Italy and would spread throughout the Habsburg empire in this century.⁴

Art produced in these first three decades reflected, in stylistic changes, the political upheavals and uncertainties in the territory. Under the patronage of the Bentivoglio lords, the 'courtly' Renaissance paintings of artists such as Francesco Francia were close in style to Perugino and to Raphael's Florentine period—serenely balanced compositions of a limited number of figures placed in the foreground of a softly depicted landscape or interior. (His fresco paintings in the Chapel of St. Cecilia, depicting the saint's life, in the monastery of San Giacomo, 1505-06, are fine examples of his style.) This was a period of a balanced differentiation/centrality ratio, during which local artists were able to meet the desires of the aristocratic and religious patrons by working in the widely recognized Florentine style. However, with the destruction of the court and the imposition of papal rule from Rome, differentiation dropped and centrality dominated with local types of representation no longer suitable.

There followed a period of searching and experimentation on the part of artists in Bologna. The growing influence from Rome—information arriving in a number of ways—dominated. This is most obvious with the arrival in Bologna in late 1514-early 1515 of an altarpiece painted by Raphael in Rome, at the same time that he was working on the frescoes in the Vatican Stanze (such as the *Fire in the Borgo*) and other Roman

commissions. The *Saint Cecilia* altarpiece was painted in 1514 for a family chapel in the Bolognese church of San Giovanni in Monte Oliveto, where it could be seen publicly. This painting reflects the significant changes occurring in Raphael's style as he studied classical sculpture and architecture, along with the works of contemporary artists working in Rome at the time, including those of Michelangelo. It is an imposing work, with a greater monumentality and solidity in the individual figures of St. Cecilia and the four saints who stand around her, crowded in the foreground plane of the painting, each engrossed in his or her own thoughts and gestures. This was a different approach to representation than what was then the norm in Bologna, and was remarked upon and intently studied by patrons and artists alike. It marked the early phase of Mannerism that is also notable in the Vatican frescoes which were completed by Raphael's workshop after his death. Even before the Sack of Rome in 1527, when many of the artists in his workshop moved to other centers thereby spreading the new style, one of them, Giulio Romano, had begun working for the Gonzaga family in Mantua. There he supervised many projects including the building and decoration of the Palazzo del Te (completed in the early 1530s), a monument to Mannerist representation. (Romano also worked in Ferrara and is known to have visited Bologna in 1538.)⁵ Romano was one of the artists who brought to the Northern regions of Italy key elements of mannerism such as the serpentine figure—the S-curve that moves from the head down the body to the toes, already seen in Michelangelo's Sistine chapel ceiling—as well as the rejection of traditional symmetry and perspective construction of compositions. The mannerist method of placing small groups in the far background and large isolated figures so close to the picture plane that they are only partially visible at

the corner, makes it more of a challenge to 'read' and understand the scene that is depicted. Considering the terrible effects of the Sack of Rome and the transit of the foreign troops through the region wreaking destruction everywhere including Bologna, it is not so surprising to see the continuing changes in representation from that of the High Renaissance when stability and clarity were valued. The Mannerist Parmigianino (best known today for his often-reproduced *Madonna of the Long Neck*) moved to Bologna from Rome around 1528, where he had commissions for several religious works. One of these, his altarpiece for the main cathedral depicting Saint Rocco and the plague, treats the space as nightmarish and uncertain, and like Raphael's *St. Cecilia* altarpiece, was available to serve as discussion point and model. Parmigianino was directly involved in the decorations for the coronation of the Emperor in Bologna and influenced the development and transmission of this new 'modern' style to the courts of Europe. In effect, the event of this coronation is one of the most obvious examples of 'centrality' dominating 'differentiation,' putting the Bolognese artistic community into the *region of complexity* and encouraging experimentation in representation as artists struggled to master the new modernity.

Thus, although Bologna suffered from the expense of the spectacle and from damage inflicted by the imperial troops lodged there, one of the positive aspects of this unique occasion was the interaction experienced by the governing classes of Bologna with the attending dignitaries of the two courts, papal and imperial. The important Bolognese families housed these courtiers for several months, developing useful connections and relationships.⁶ The courtiers seem to have been impressed with their treatment, taking home glowing reports of Bolognese hospitality and festivities, thereby

encouraging a continuing stream of foreign visitors who frequently wrote about their experiences in the city. One of these was Andreas Schott from Antwerp, who visited Bologna later in the 16th century to include it in his guidebook, *Itineratio italico*. In Bologna, he wrote, “*c’è di tutto e tutto è buono*” (there are all sorts of things and everything is good—author’s translation)⁷ Schott described the city in some detail, commenting on its attractive aspects of high towers, lovely palaces and streets lined with broad porticoes. He supplied information on the number of silk mills (400) and on commercial enterprises in hemp and linen, in hams and sausages, soap, tobacco and perfumes, and also noted the significance of the canal and river system as a major means of transportation and connection with other centers such as Ferrara and Venice.⁸ Because of its location in the Apennine foothills and the broad Po valley, it was the major link between Rome and the northern territories in the Alps.⁹

In fact, Bologna was the most important of the local governments in the Papal States, first in terms of productive activity and second only to Rome in its population (ranging between around sixty to seventy thousand people in the period we are considering). The *contado* or countryside outside the city walls provided much of the food for the citizens which was a source of stability (except, of course, in times of crop failure). Bologna’s economic prosperity was based on two different types of productivity. One was the major textile industry, producing silk, wool and hemp in fibers and finished goods that were exported to the Italian states and Northern Europe in significant quantities. The second was the University or *Studio*, the most important in Italy and arguably in all of Europe at the time, which attracted foreign students and scholars to the city.¹⁰ In order for both the textile industry and the University to flourish,

Bologna had to maintain well-organized internal systems while encouraging an open attitude towards the outside world. That she appeared to be successful is reflected in the epithet by which the city was universally known: *Bologna grassa*—a place of abundance and riches where one would live and eat well. The phrase conjures up the image of a ‘fat city,’ secure in its sense of well-being (perhaps a bit arrogant), in the context of a culture that was deeply marked by the fear of hunger.¹¹

This designation was of long-standing, appearing first in thirteenth-century French chronicles reporting on competition for scholars and students between the faculties of Law at the Universities of Paris and Bologna. Thus, there was from the beginning a connection made between the University and the general state of the city, including not only the quality of the local ‘kitchen’ but also the ability of the community to network internationally on multiple levels. The scholar Massimo Montanari has identified and described this network as “...a complex system of material and intellectual relations, fed by the international dimension that characterized the life of the city from the end of the middle ages thanks to the presence of the *Studio*—the oldest European university.”¹² Significantly, he posits that cultural identities are stronger and deeper as they are more open to external forces and insert themselves into the circuits of exchange and contamination.¹³ To name Bologna *grassa*, then, is to call up an identity that is complicated in its references. At the best times, the structures of the city so designated, could be said to function in the *region of complexity*: uncertainties and challenges from without, successfully demanding response and exerting pressures for change within. Furthermore, the concept of a network of relationships, fits with the

function of the University—the institution which was considered the heart of the city and of its economy, and was thus instrumental for Bologna's success.

The turmoil and uncertainty of the early decades of the century destabilized the Bolognese institutions, threatening the loss of revenue on every hand. The *signori* of the Senate responsible for the state government frequently consulted with the papal representatives on University matters, especially concerning the recruitment of foreign scholars to the various faculties. In this they had the support of the Popes, who favored Bologna over the other universities of the Papal States, including even Rome.¹⁴ No doubt this was due to the desire to maintain Bologna's status in Europe as the largest and best, especially in law and science (including medicine), but also in philosophy and humanistic studies. This attitude is evident in the actions of the Medici Pope Pius IV. Elected in 1559, he appointed his nephew cardinal Carlo Borromeo as the Papal Legate in Bologna, a position of significant authority in the city. (The Legate was the papal voice in the territory; he was legislated to act in conjunction with the Bolognese Senate of forty representatives of the *first families*.) As part of the process to stabilize Bologna, Pius IV and Borromeo purposefully developed a plan of urban improvement for the city, beginning with a new building in the urban center near the cathedral for the University, the Palazzo dell' Archiginnasio, built in 1562-63.

For almost three centuries the *Studio* had been located wherever students and scholars of individual colleges met, in venues scattered across the city. Although, from an early date, the institution was taken under the supervision and governance of the Senate, student organizations were always strong and vocal about their demands for their programs and frequently demonstrated in the piazzas and streets of the city.

Locating the *Studio* classes and meetings in one building resulted in greater control through centralization and higher visibility for the institution at a time when there was fierce competition for excellent faculty and students, from other Universities such as Padua (which already had a single building), and from new schools set up by religious orders such as the Jesuits. It is noteworthy that, also at this time, the Council of Trent was completing its lengthy deliberations on the reform of the Roman church, including recommendations for closer supervision of scientific publications and artistic representation.¹⁵ In the face of these developments, it must have been a fine balancing act to ensure that the University of Bologna remained attractive for foreign scholars and students. In fact, it was one of the most welcoming for locals and 'foreigners,' Protestant and Catholic alike (unlike at Oxford or Heidelberg, for example, no oath or test of faith was required). This open policy was voiced specifically in the 1580s by the Bolognese Comune and Pope Gregory XIII, assuring the German nation that its privileges would be honored, in a bid to attract wealthy German students who preferred to study in Italy rather than at their own universities, which were not considered as good as Bologna's.¹⁶ These recruitment initiatives were important because although the University community represented a somewhat separate world within the city, it was a significant sector in terms of the economy. In the second half of the sixteenth century, faculty numbered about eighty to eighty-five and students around fifteen hundred.¹⁷ Students brought with them veritable households of servants, including cooks, and were at least in part attracted by the quality of life available in the city, to which they contributed financially and culturally. A drop in this population would have a serious effect on the well being of the city.

As a strong intellectual community, the University attracted scholars interested in active theoretical and experimental research in the major fields of the day. Its reputation was founded originally on the quality of instruction in civil and canon law, and this faculty continued to be significant in the University (the many scholars who received law degrees here included Nicolaus Copernicus and five popes¹⁸). However, it was the scholars in science and medicine who generated the most attention and excitement in the second half of the sixteenth century—rejecting tradition as a source of knowledge, they developed out of the Aristotelian tradition of natural philosophy new experimental methods emphasizing direct observation as *the* source of knowledge. For example, there was great importance attached to dissections of human cadavers, which were carried out regularly in sessions held in a room at the Archiginnasio, with seating specially built for the public (the famous Anatomy Theatre was built later, in the 17th century). This sort of direct experience led to new initiatives and discoveries such as those of Gaspare Tagliacozze, Chair of anatomy and professor of surgery at Bologna (1545-99), who was the first to develop and practice plastic surgery and to write an influential treatise on the subject (published in 1597).¹⁹

The emphasis on personal observation and the perceptions of the senses was especially telling in the work of a most interesting character of this period, a scholar who was active in intellectual and artistic circles beyond the university. This was Ulisse Aldrovandi, professor of natural history who in 1560 was appointed to the new and unique position of “professor of the natural philosophy of fossils, plants and animals,” which he held until 1600.²⁰ He developed an encyclopedic interest in plants and animals, and since he insisted on the necessity of verifying from actual specimens every

example he described, analyzed and preserved, he also built up a huge personal collection. It was his habit to search in the countryside—in nature—for objects of interest which he carefully examined, dissected and described for his *Historia naturale*. What he could not find locally or on his own travels, he requested from other naturalists, travelers, foreign courtiers and ambassadors, inviting them to visit his collection in Bologna. His museum and library, famous in his day, were open to scholars and artists for their research. As the *protomedico* of the College of Medicine, his concern about the quality of herbs grown locally for medicinal use, led him to establish a botanical garden, by permission of the Senate in 1568, in the courtyard of the Palazzo Pubblico, in the city centre. This garden, Giardino de' Semplici, was a very early example of the type and became internationally famous for its exotic flora, attracting a steady stream of visitors. Through the garden and his collecting, he established a far-flung network of people with whom he corresponded regularly. By the end of his life, Aldrovandi had filled almost four hundred volumes, including over 3000 drawings, documenting his research and observations.²¹

Given his interests and activities it is not surprising to note the variety of Aldrovandi's connections with the Bolognese artistic community. He appears to have visited the Carracci's Academy which did feature talks for the artists and where theoretical discussions about representation were encouraged, certainly by Agostino. Ludovico Carracci painted Aldrovandi's portrait and Agostino Carracci engraved it, including within the picture an elaborate *cartouche* frame with animals, birds and flowers. A number of artists visited Aldrovandi's library to draw from his manuscript illustrations of animals and plants, and he employed artists to produce the engraved

illustrations. He was consulted by his friend and supporter, Cardinal Gabriele Paleotti, on the draft of a treatise the Cardinal was writing on artistic representation in sacred and profane images, to which Aldrovandi responded with comments on the purpose of art as valuable for instruction as it reflected reality in nature.²² What is most significant about Aldrovandi's activities in terms of the hypothesis of a *region of complexity* is the way in which he remained open to the variety of structures of thought and organization of material acquisitions that flourished outside the Bolognese territory (Rome, Florence, the Lowlands, the New World), while connecting and interacting with the 'hubs' in his city: the University, artistic circles, scientists, the *signori*, and the papal authority or Legate. His activities form one of the many strands of this shifting web that made Bologna a city in ferment in the late 16th century.

In a period of reformation and renewal, when the Church's constraints on scholarship were reflected in the strictures of the Index and the Inquisition, the stance of the Papal Legate was critical for the Bolognese community. Fortunately for the territory, the man vested with this authority from 1566 to 1586 was Cardinal Gabriele Paleotti, a Bolognese who was an important player in the deliberations of the Council of Trent, and one of the few who took seriously the implications of its recommendations for reform and renewal. Paleotti was that rare administrator who considered the reality of everyday life in the city and who worked consistently according to the Tridentine ideals, developing numerous projects to make the Roman Church accountable and welcoming to all the people.²³ Given the situation of Bologna, he faced quite a challenge; however, as a native son of an old distinguished family he was well-connected and knew the existing institutions at first hand.

Noted as a cultured man educated in law and the arts, Paleotti himself taught in the law faculty for ten years before moving to Rome to take up a position in the Roman Curia in 1556. He rose through the ranks of the Curia, was appointed a judge and then served as a mediator at the Council of Trent in the sessions of its last three years. In 1565 he became a Cardinal, the following year Bishop at Bologna, and finally Papal Legate there. As Legate, Paleotti's program for reform and renewal was idealistic and far reaching, motivated by social concerns for all, especially the lower classes. His aim for the diocese was to integrate all parishes and priests through educational initiatives, synods, and his personal visits, discussions and sermons. He was open to speaking with anyone who desired an audience with him. All of this was highly unusual for the times, and his activities attracted the attention of Rome and of foreign states.²⁴ Along with his ecclesiastical responsibilities, the Legate also shared responsibility with the Senate for legal and political decisions, as well as for the University administration. In fact, Paleotti took special interest in the *Studio*—in its programs, and in the lives of the students and scholars. To ensure that the University would continue to attract fine scholar/researchers and good students, he made special efforts to guarantee their access to texts condemned by the Church and included on the Index of prohibited books. Ulisse Aldrovandi was one of the scholars who had in his library a number of such texts relating to his research in science and specifically natural history. In the face of Inquisitorial attacks, the Legate also defended the rights of scholars who were questioning the traditional teachings, to study, experiment and report on their findings in the quest to better understand nature. Protecting such scholarship was an impressive effort at a time when most members of the Church hierarchy were suspicious of any

ideas that seemed to flirt with heresy in their new approaches to and explanations of the physical world. To bring intellectual rigor to religious studies, Paleotti even proposed new areas for professorships in Theology, Scripture, and in Hebrew and Biblical Greek (new posts were in fact created in the first two areas, but he was not able to convince the Senate of the necessity for courses in the languages).²⁵

Paleotti's initiatives touched just about every aspect of daily life for most Bolognese citizens and visitors. By instituting education for children of all social classes, by emphasizing the dignity of each individual regardless of social standing (establishing, for example, homes for women suffering in bad marriages, for the poor and homeless), he inspired people to exert some control and direction over their lives. In the twenty years of his administration as Papal Legate, the organizations he founded were many and ranged from Brotherhoods performing works of charity, to a new segment of the judiciary designed to respond more quickly and realistically to common suits or complaints, student organizations, and a seminary to develop an educated community of priests. While many of these were based in the idea of a reinvigorated Christian Republic, their effect went beyond religious practice to political and social activism—in 1577 a group of citizen-workers were inspired to form a society to guarantee health insurance for their members, quite an advanced idea for the times. By 1580, Bologna was thriving with flourishing industries and a public life evident in the streets and piazzas. As several historians note, this had become a more complex, modern society, with the sorts of debates and conflicts among groups and social classes that differed from those of previous eras largely because of the direct involvement and individual responsibility encouraged by Paleotti's practices.²⁶

A number of documents of the period attest to the vigor of public life. First, there are the printed ‘flyers’ known as *bandi*, issued jointly by the Papal Legate and the Senate and posted around the city where people tended to gather. These sheets were the major means by which the government communicated with the people, to convey government decisions and information about legal responsibilities, expectations and limitations of public life: food, dress, ornament, and feast days; issues of public order, taxation, games, health, education, commerce and artisanal production—all are treated in the thousands of *bandi* that survive.²⁷ They also went beyond the local to inform the populace of events such as wars and catastrophes. To draw the public’s attention to the publication of a new *bando*, a ‘crier’ on horseback with a trumpeter leading the way, would stop at appropriate points such as the Palazzo Pubblico (with its useful balcony) where the contents of the *bando* would be loudly proclaimed and its posting announced. In this way, information affecting industries such as silk and hemp production could be circulated without delay to avoid loss of time or money. Examples of *bandi* issued in the early 1580s include Pope Gregory XIII’s reform of the calendar, a number of ‘conclusions’ of Bolognese scholars, and a series on how to treat foreigners. This last subject was of some importance to the city, and, among other things, emphasis was placed on what sorts of meals should be offered to visitors, the quality of the food that was essential, and similar recommendations. In fact, instruction on food preparation generally was one of the topics covered in numerous *bandi*.²⁸

A second type of publication, the *provvisione*, was more formal, with stronger legal implications. A series of these *provvisioni* attests to the surging prosperity of Bologna in the second half of the century in their communication of sumptuary

legislation defining limits on the costume and ornamentation of the Bolognese citizen. The new levels of wealth and status due to the success of the silk, paper and grain industries and the resulting growth of commerce, made possible many of Paleotti's reforms, such as organizations to help the poor and the sick. However, new individual affluence also led to greater demand for more elaborate diversions among the citizenry—banquets, dress and jewels were more lavish and luxurious, thereby conflicting with the very reform and renewal of Christian ideals that Paleotti was putting into place. One of these *provvisioni* takes the issue of 'pearls' as representative of the problem. The wealth required to purchase pearl jewelry implies the use of gold and silver ornaments as well, and of sumptuous fabrics. In 1572, a publication expressly "ordered, commanded and prohibited" anyone, male or female, to wear on clothes or in hair any gold, silver, or precious stones. Just in this period the ear ring became popular, and in this case the law set a maximum value of fifteen *scudi* for the value of such jewelry worn in public. The practice of having banquets in specific public areas of the city was bemoaned, since these led to excessive dress; restrictions on the type of foods served at such banquets are also set out in these publications.²⁹

Yet another type of information circulating in the city was the *Avviso* or notice dealing specifically with news from abroad—a type of early journalism. The sources for this news were located mainly in Rome and the Republic of Venice where ambassadors and travelers were fonts of information, facts, and rumors. People such as Paleotti paid to have the latest news sent directly to them by letter, but flyers were also posted with the latest information to reach Bologna "from all over the world," looking much like news bulletins. These were very popular, appealing to people's curiosity and fear, covering

subjects such as the Turkish assault on Malta and the eventual victory of the Christian fleet in the 1560s, and the extraordinary visit in 1585 of Japanese ‘princes’ to Europe, including Rome and Bologna—their costumes and habits were described in minute detail.³⁰ The *Avvisi* attracted a huge following among people of all classes, and were attacked in *Bandi* by a succession of Popes on the grounds that they were not signed and frequently contained false, often libelous, accounts. Despite the threats of punishment for everyone involved in the publications, they continued to appear in great numbers.³¹ The incongruity of some of the *Avvisi* was effectively parodied by the man who emerges as one of the most important writer/performers of the period, Giulio Cesare Croce. The title of one of his works gives a sense of his approach to the subject: *Avvisi venuti di qua, di la, di su e di giu da diverse parti del mondo dove da ragguaglio delle cose piu maravigliose che siano successe...portati da Bargalisse corriero del prencipe Cacapensieri* (Notices arrived from here, from there, from above, from below, from diverse parts of the world, in which information is given of those most marvelous things that have happened...brought by Bargalisse [slick-pants] courier of prince Cacapensieri [shitty-thoughts]—author’s translation).³² This descriptive title illustrates that Croce could certainly be heavy-handed in his burlesque. That this was one of a series of works he composed on the *Avvisi* reflects the fruitful resource they provided and the level of public attention they received. (It probably also supports the several Popes’ contentions that the ‘notices’ could be exaggerated in their wild rumors and uncorroborated accusations.) His *Avvisi* were just one type of Croce’s productions.

Giulio Cesare Croce was the *poet of the piazza*, an apparently self-taught entertainer who in 1568 moved to Bologna from one of the towns in the territory. His

careful observation of daily life and people in the city provided a wealth of material for his poetry, dialogues, or stories sung in rhyme. Along with a quick wit and parodic sensibility, Croce developed an intensely moral approach to his subject based on a notion of the dignity of all humans regardless of class, wealth, or social situation. His insistence on the authenticity of his observations of human nature included a rejection of the sort of artifice that was the staple of the current mannerist expression in literature and art. The tenor of his work is exemplified in this title of a *canzona* or song: *Lamento de' mietitori, I quali non potevano mietere il grano per la longa pioggia* (Lament of the grain harvesters, who could not harvest the grain because of the prolonged rainfall—author's translation). Croce presented the Bolognese with reflections of themselves: their behavior in the streets, at feasts and carnivals, but also in the small gestures of the everyday rituals of life. Rich and poor, street vendor or senator, scholar or housewife—everyone showed up someplace in his 'fables' about *everyman*. According to all accounts, Croce became a respected virtuoso who augmented his street performances with invitations to entertain banquet guests, creating new works for these occasions. (In fact, when he died in 1609, almost five hundred titles of works existed, though only around three hundred works were ever in print.)³³ Croce's focus on the people and the dignity and foibles of human nature ties in with the emphasis of the Legate Cardinal Paleotti on the development of institutions to benefit the Bolognese in need. Their work, so different in kind, highlights the multiple levels of society functioning in the city, from the noble and the wealthy, to the poor, the excluded and the criminal. Their approaches, paralleled by the emphasis on direct observation and experimentation of the university

scholars, signal a decisive shift in attitude that shredded the fabric of the tradition that had been the only guide for centuries.

In effect, Croce's career brings us directly into the streets of Bologna, described by travelers as impressive architecturally and often noisy and crowded with all sorts of people. The most noted physical characteristic of the street scene is the portico or arcade, unusual in that the city streets here were lined with these structures, as they still are, to a greater extent than other places. In the second half of the 16th century the growing wealth and population encouraged many new building projects, of which the first, as noted, was the University building, the Archiginnasio. Every new building or *palazzo* included *portici* or a system of arcades supporting the façade of the building and covering a broad sidewalk, such that pedestrians were always protected from the weather. Shops of all sorts, cafés and restaurants were located on the ground floor. The popular custom of an afternoon stroll or *passeggiata* meant that there was lots of activity in the arcades, as well as in the piazzas—the open areas especially of the Piazza Maggiore which engaged the Palazzo Pubblico (the home of the Papal Legate), the main church of San Petronio, and the Archiginnasio. Chronicles of the period tell of the colourful ceremonies held whenever important personages came to town, or on the occasions of games, jousts, weddings among the *signori*, and feast day celebrations.³⁴ One of the most popular annual events was the *fešta della porchetta*—the feast of the suckling pig—which involved constructions for theatrical productions in the main piazza and all sorts of related activities, including, of course, eating and drinking. Linked with these public occasions was the developing sense of ceremony and impressive appearance on the part of the nobility. As the real power of the *signori* declined in the

face of increasing papal authority and the financial superiority of the merchant class, these men placed greater emphasis on pomp and hereditary status. The excesses that were reached in the later 16th century are reflected in the *bandi* that proscribe banquets that are excessive in the elaborate presentation, and the amounts and varieties of foodstuffs. The *bandi* addressing concerns with ostentatious dress and jewels fits into this pattern.

The building program that began in the early 1560s with the University continued with institutions such as hospitals, numerous 'palaces' constructed for the emergent merchant class and for noble Bolognese families, as well as less elaborate housing for workers and the 'lesser populace.' As one writer imagines, "It was like a huge workshop where everyone was intent on transforming the face of the city. Streets were widened, old houses torn down, and austere, uncomfortable buildings were changed into modern residences, filled with comfort."³⁵ While the appearance of the city was changing with these buildings, certain aspects remained the same. From the medieval period Bologna had been a city of tall fortified towers that were structures erected as a sort of early-warning system typical of many Italian towns. Individual families included such a tower as part of their housing that would be used to keep watch for attacking armies or hordes (a tower's height was also a marker of the family's status). Most of these have disappeared: about a dozen still stand and two in central Bologna remain emblems of the city: torre degli Asinelli and the Garisenda (leaning surprisingly far to one side). However, in the sixteenth century hundreds of towers filled the city skyline and visitors to Bologna took special note of them, and of the arched porticoes lining the streets, and impressive vistas of facades in the Renaissance style. Toward the later decades of the

century, they also noted the artworks decorating the interiors of the *palazzi*, for the building campaigns and the new emphasis on family dignity and status among the *signori* produced opportunities not only for architects and masons—sculptors and painters were employed to beautify the new constructions as well as existing ones.

There were numerous commissions for decorative fresco cycles in the decades of the 1540s and 1550s, and not many local artists up to the task demanded by discerning patrons. As a result, patrons chose to import talent. In 1539 the famous Florentine mannerist Giorgio Vasari was invited to Bologna with his workshop to decorate the refectory of the convent of San Michele in Bosco (an important complex located in a Bolognese suburb). Vasari brought Bologna an elaboration of *Raphaelesque* Mannerism in his frescoes of monumental interiors peopled with figures gesturing in exaggerated poses with the occasional marginal playful animal grotesques. Every artist in Bologna was influenced by these frescoes in some way.³⁶ Just at this time, in 1540, there arrived in Bologna another altarpiece by a mannerist artist working in Rome who was especially influenced by Parmigianino, Francesco Salviati. The refined elegance of his *Marriage of St. Catherine* joined the growing collection of paintings and frescos that influenced the development of art in Bologna. Later in the decade, we have another instance of an influential visiting artist—Nicolo dell'Abate who in 1548 arrived in Bologna from nearby Modena, to work in the home of an aristocratic family, the Palazzo Poggi, where he produced paintings on courtly themes, elegant scenes of knights and ladies in concert, landscapes and classical stories. The figural compositions frequently place elegant figural groups in extremely limited spatial settings, and emphasize the precious jewels and fabrics that were later decried in the

public *Avvisi*. (Nicolo dell'Abate went on to France, to Fontainebleau where the most serious Mannerist works were being produced for the French king Francis I.) Such visiting artists and their workshops stayed a few years in Bologna while their works remained as an important resource for the locals, to be consulted much like an encyclopedia or dictionary.³⁷

Perhaps the most significant among the local artists who used these existing paintings as part of his own formation was Prospero Fontana. He began his training as a youth in a Bolognese workshop but moved on to work in other centers where established artists were developing the modern *maneria* (Genoa, Rome and Florence), always returning to Bologna where his family was established. Fontana developed strong and useful ties with the governing powers, especially the papal legates, and through the 1540s and 50s was called frequently to Rome, first to work with teams of artists, and later to direct major projects. In Bologna his work was in the most important buildings, religious and secular, because his mature mannerist style combined elements of the recognized models (Raphael, Parmigianino, Salviati) with the local penchant for optical realism, a style that appealed to the Bolognese aristocracy. Moreover, in the 1570s and 80s he shrewdly collaborated with Cardinal Paleotti to create a religious art that was a clear and persuasive 'book for the people.' His altarpiece for San Giacomo Maggiore, the *Charity of St. Alessio* of 1573, became the prototype in Bologna for this approach to religious representation—returning here to Raphael's late Roman mannerism with classical references, and maintaining his own love of optical realism in a work with a more coherent composition. Though Fontana's production served as an important early influence for the Carracci, he also functioned as a political strongman in

the local art world who fought against their new reforms that implicitly critiqued his and his colleagues' style of representation.³⁸

In terms of the differentiation/centrality ratio and art cycles, what we have seen in the decades of 1540 to 1570 is the high level of centrality and low level of differentiation operating in the artistic milieu of Bologna. The work of local artists was not of the quality that resulted in significant commissions. Those artists who recognized the challenges, traveled to other centers and returned sporadically to the city to undertake some commissions. While the system never reverted to chaos, it was only in the course of the 1570s and after a long period of experimentation, that a mature local Mannerism was evolved enough to meet the aristocratic and religious demands. It was just at this time that the Carracci began their own formation, when the artistic turmoil had settled just enough to allow them enough freedom to see other possibilities.

The Carracci and the Reform of Art

The Council of Trent in its final sessions supported the use of art in religious settings to educate the faithful on religious doctrine and provide material for meditation, but called for a new approach to religious representation that eliminated the profane content and unnatural exaggeration of forms and compositions that were prominent in contemporary mannerist art. At the same time, younger artists challenged the formulaic expression of much contemporary art which had begun to seem outmoded, and searched for new models. Much has been written about this attempt to 'reform' art, and about the specific reforming efforts of the Carracci family members who worked as artists in Bologna from around 1570. What interests us here is how the attitudes and

approaches of the two brothers and their cousin—Agostino, Annibale and Ludovico—may be understood to reflect, or to develop within, the Bolognese context of a city functioning in the *region of complexity*.

The Carracci were part of an enduring tradition of art education that included training in the workshop of a Master artist, and studying and copying the works of the past as well as those of the more modern masters. Theirs was not an artistic family—their fathers were brothers situated in the working class, one a butcher, the other a tailor. Thus, to begin their training they were apprenticed to respected masters of the current Mannerist style who had workshops in the city. As the oldest of the three, Ludovico set a model for his two cousins, beginning as assistant to Prospero Fontana, and studying the works of Bolognese painters such as Pellegrino Tibaldi. To complete his training through exposure to works of other artists he traveled in northern Italy in the 1570s to Florence, Parma, Mantua and Venice, making connections with mannerists such as Jacopo Tintoretto in Venice and Federigo Zuccaro in Florence. Back in Bologna in 1578, Ludovico applied for membership in the “most powerful artistic forum” of the city, the regulatory trade organization the *Corporazione dei pittori e bombasari* (*bombasari* were dealers in cotton and raw silk, thus connecting painters with the textile industry)—he was twenty-two and prepared to open his own workshop.³⁹ Four years later his election to a position of *consigliere* in the governing body of the company suggests a respected professional status in the community, his workshop apparently flourishing.

Agostino Carracci was first apprenticed to a jeweler, then to Fontana and one or two other Bolognese painters (Passarotti and D. Tibaldi are cited). However, his career

mainly developed as a master engraver, specializing in reproductive prints recording paintings of artists such as Veronese and Tintoretto. Through their publication his engravings brought knowledge of these works to a wide audience of artists and connoisseur/collectors. With Ludovico's encouragement, Agostino traveled in the 1580s to Rome, Venice, Milan, Parma and other Italian cities, meeting artists, copying paintings and creating engravings often on contract to artists and publishers. All the sources agree that Agostino had a wider range of interests than his colleagues, including literature, music, and particularly art theory and pedagogy, and especially enjoyed engaging in discussions with specialists on these topics.⁴⁰ Probably during the late 1580s Agostino read and commented on Giorgio Vasari's *Vite* (published in 1568), in which Vasari argued for the primacy of Florentine art and posited the work of Raphael and Michelangelo as supreme. In what are described as coarse critical marginal comments, Agostino attacked Vasari's unmitigated praise of Florentine mannerism and his neglect of Venetian and other North Italian schools in his focus on Michelangelo. His comments include a call to 'nature' as the primary source for excellent art (rather than mere copying of the masters), and a recognition of the significance of the individuality of each artist.⁴¹ Agostino's reaction to Vasari's patriotic *campanilismo* set out his and the other Carracci's determination to bring attention to the achievements of the North Italian schools of painting and to prove the equality of their own work with that of Raphael and Michelangelo—an example of internal-external dynamics.

The evidence of his engravings and of the published eulogy of the memorial service after his death, inform us of Agostino's connections with Bolognese Academies and academics. In the 16th century these societies were popular among the erudite who

were interested in studying and discussing literature, philosophy and science. The Academies held regular meetings, had official emblems and mottos, and often produced books relating to their discussions and discoveries. Agostino created engravings for several of these groups and was invited to join the most famous literary *Accademia de' Gelati* (unusually, for an artist). These interests placed him in opposition to his younger brother Annibale, who seemed to have little time for elaborate theoretical discussions. Nonetheless, Ludovico's workshop, which eventually included his two cousins along with other artists and assistants, became known as the *Accademia degli Incamminati* (the name perhaps signifying artists on the road to perfection) and eventually the *Accademia Carracci*. The term *Accademia* implies something more than the traditional workshop organization. Indeed, the Carracci set up a system of education that included a return to drawing from the human model, with an emphasis on natural poses and situations, and encouraged working directly from nature and everyday life. There also appear to have been lectures on anatomy and artistic theory, often by scholars connected with the university (Aldrovandi visited the Carracci academy regularly, according to Malvasia). The unique quality of this 'art academy' (clearly more than the type of traditional workshop that trained assistants for the master) attracted artists and interested scholars from beyond Bologna, and ensured a second generation of artists who developed the ideas of the Carracci into the 17th century such that they dominated painting in the Italian art world for decades.⁴²

Exposed to the 'culture of learning' in Bologna, to the activity of university scholars and of the literary academies, the Carracci integrated the academic with the technical, each contributing in his own area of expertise to this pedagogical enterprise

whose goal was to reform painting by returning it to a closer relationship with reality. Ludovico was the leader who through his own preparation moved on from an early provincial style towards a more natural, though still elegant, approach to representation. Agostino provided the theoretical framework and his personal connections with the 'studiosi', along with the valuable resource of his reproductive prints and his contributions as a painter. Through his work for artists and publishers in other cities, Agostino also brought news of the outside world and contemporary artistic production.⁴³ Annibale, considered by most scholars to have been the most talented and significant of the three Carracci, emphasized careful observation and drawing from everyday reality, a source as important for him as antique sculpture and the works of past and contemporary masters. The youngest of the three, it is likely that he began his training under Ludovico, also following his and Agostino's example taking study trips to cities such as Parma and Venice. Anecdotes of the time describe him as preferring the company of the workshop assistants and street people to the more noble signori and academics favoured by his brother Agostino. In this respect he is linked with Croce and similar contemporary poets and performers who, in making ordinary people and events their subject matter, gave a respectability and dignity to this type of commonplace subject that was usually ignored or considered absolutely unsuitable (lacking in expected decorum) as the focus for artistic and literary expression. Annibale left hundreds of drawings (from simple sketches to highly finished studies) of people from all walks of life, observed in everyday situations—artist-assistants eating lunch, mother washing her child, and every type of street person, beggar to worker, and itinerant street sellers of all sorts of products. These studies he gathered in a portfolio (implying their

value for him), to use as sources for paintings and for his students in the Carracci Academy to study. (The series of street workers was engraved in the mid-17th century and published as *Le arti di Bologna*.) His ability to capture the essence of individual appearance in the simplest sketch was noted at the time, a talent that, combined with his sense of humor and irony, led him to develop the technique of caricature.⁴⁴ These aspects of Annibale's production are evident in his early large scale painting *The Butcher Shop* (Oxford, Christ Church; c.1582-83). There are differing interpretations of this painting. One has it that he pictures himself with his brother and cousin at work in his uncle's shop, preparing and selling meat to a customer who is represented in a way that evokes mannerist figuration (a sort of dandified soldier). The opposition of naturalism and maniera could not be more clearly delineated. It is as if Annibale responds to Agostino's theorizing with a direct pictorial statement that could not be more shocking: artists are equated with butchers, directly handling raw materials of nature; the painting itself is evidence of how they transform the raw material into the illusion of reality that is painting to create 'art.' In other readings of this work, the conclusion is the same, but the figures are not considered to be portraits. Instead, they are seen as dignified figures working in a neat and clean environment, as opposed to the popular depictions of butchers and similar workers as grotesque, 'low' types.⁴⁵

Patrons did not always appreciate Annibale's direct and unequivocal approach, but many were interested in the avant-garde quality of the Carracci's painting. As the demand developed for decorations in the palazzi, and for altarpieces in the churches, the artists received commissions individually and as a group. Their first major joint commission was the request around 1580 of Count Filippo Fava (whose tailor may have

been Annibale and Agostino's father) who was redecorating his palace on the occasion of his wedding and engaged Ludovico and his cousins to paint several rooms. All the subjects were from classical antiquity: the Rape of Europa, the story of Jason, and the Aeneas cycle. It seems clear that all three artists were involved in the production, and while the paintings were generally well received, at first there was some negative reaction to Annibale's figures for the Jason frieze which were criticized as too sketchy, suggesting that his more naturalistic representations and painterly style perhaps were not yet understood.⁴⁶ These paintings reflect the artists' recognition of the Bolognese tradition (represented by the local mannerist artists such as Fontana) while moving beyond it to stabilize the monumental figures in illusionistic settings where they no longer seem to float (as in mannerist works) but are anchored firmly to earth. While all three artists actively engaged this effort to create a new kind of depiction, it was Annibale who moved the farthest and succeeded in forming the most powerful visual statements combining naturalism with a monumental classicism.

At the same time that the Carracci were discussing and developing their new approach to visual representation, the Papal Legate Gabriele Paleotti was engaging the same topic in a treatise he titled *Discorso intorno alle Imagini Sacre e Profane* (Discussion on sacred and profane images). As with all his projects for the diocese, Paleotti considered the responsibility of the individual in a Christian Republic, in this case applying the recommendations of the Council of Trent to artistic representation as a guide for artists. Of the five books he planned, only two were completed, but these he circulated for comments with an outline of the other three in late 1580. One of his readers was Ulisse Aldrovandi, who focused on the importance of truth to nature in art,

a not surprising response from the scientist/naturalist. Perhaps he was picking up on the point Paleotti stressed throughout, that visual representation should be intelligible to everyone. This basic point was linked with the purpose of sacred art, to evoke a religious experience in the viewer. We do not know if the Carracci were included among the people who read the treatise, though it certainly is possible, given their relationship with Aldrovandi, and the strong possibility that they also knew Paleotti well enough to be among his readers. In any case, it is clear that similar ideas and concerns were circulating in Bologna for discussion and experimentation.⁴⁷

During the decades of the 1580s and 90s, the Carracci produced numerous easel paintings and decorative fresco cycles, religious and secular scenes, landscapes and portraits. (The landscape paintings introduced another new category of subject matter that was important for the 17th century, and obviously relates to this new emphasis on close observation of reality.) Their fame grew and their patrons were many, including the Este in Ferrara, and the important and influential Farnese family in Parma and Rome. In 1594 Annibale and Agostino were called to Rome to work for the Farnese there. Annibale entered what was to be the last phase in his development, visualized in the impressive and influential *Galleria Farnese* frescoes (1597-1600). At this point, the Carracci Academy began a slow decline. In 1600, Agostino moved to Parma to the Farnese court, where he died two years later. Ludovico continued to work in Bologna and to direct the academy until his death in 1619. Several young artists who joined him in the late 16th century took up the ideals of the Carracci in personal styles that were less complex and certainly did not break new ground, but who were considered among the top artists in Italy at the time. The most significant among them

were Domenichino (Domenico Zampieri), Guido Reni and Guercino (Giovan Francesco Barbieri). They all worked in Rome for a period; Guercino and Reni eventually returned to Bologna, responding to the many commissions they received and sending the completed works off to their destinations around Italy and abroad.⁴⁸

Bologna began to decline in the 1580s and 90s for a number of reasons, including the strengthening of Papal authority in the State. Cardinal Paleotti endured a long illness in 1583-84, and in the following year left for Rome and other work. His reforming initiatives were not taken up by succeeding Legates. Unfavorable climatic conditions and outdated farming techniques caused poor harvests, which led to a series of famines, higher prices, increasing poverty and banditry, and eventually increased debts and financial failures of institutions and individuals. What had been a crowded city of around 72,000 in 1587 was much less populated by 1595, with about 58,900 people. Pandemics contributing to the population decline resulted in the isolation of the city when quarantines were imposed and travel was forbidden in order to limit the transport of illnesses. The textile industry also faced challenges over the export of raw materials. This began with the hemp industry, the workers favoring a protectionist position prohibiting exports in order to maintain a strong local production. However, the Pope ruled that some exports would be allowed, weakening the industry as local production diminished in quality and eventually moved out of the city. A similar process slowly destroyed the silk and wool industries.⁴⁹

Politically, the governing hierarchy became ever more rigid. The lower classes were excluded from participation, and in 1590 the Pope changed the number of seigniorial representatives in the Senate from 40 to 50, thereby sowing dissension

among the ruling families and increasing the power of Rome. Maintaining public order became a prime concern of the Legate and Senate. When Pope Clement VIII visited Bologna in 1598 he was greeted with much pomp and ceremony and the keys to the city, but in reality he was only passing through on his way to Ferrara, the city which actually engaged his attention at the time. Bologna lost papal attention until well into the second decade of the 17th century, returning only because of the presence of Guido Reni.⁵⁰

Under these circumstances, after the departure of Annibale Carracci for Rome (and his death in 1609), Bolognese artistic style remained relatively static. Ludovico Carracci, probably the most conservative of the three related artists, was a considerable presence until his death in 1619. More significant in terms of attracting important commissions were students or followers of the Carracci, especially Guido Reni and Guercino. Reni was considered by many to be the most important artist in Italy in the first decades of the 17th century. His great patron and protector was Pope Urban VIII, whom he met as Cardinal Maffeo Barberini, the papal Legate in Bologna in 1611 to 1614. As pope, Urban VIII was a master in the control of culture and the arts for political purposes, and he certainly used Reni for his own ends.⁵¹ However, Reni was not a reforming artist. He did not break new ground nor did he train a significant new generation of artists. Bologna was a place this talented artist could work in relative peace, with his patrons' protection and favor. For Reni, who died in 1642, and Guercino who became the most important artist working in Bologna after that until his own death in 1666, it was not a question of developing a new style or reforming art of the period. They each established personal styles that were influenced by the Carracci, by classical

art, and especially by the prevailing taste in Rome and among the international powerful elite. In fact, in Guercino's production we can see a dark, 'romantic' tendency that he modulated through classical references in order to follow contemporary taste and maintain a high level of patronage. Through the 17th century, local commissions diminished in tandem with Bologna's importance on the political and economic scene. It is fair to say that for much of the 17th century, differentiation dominated and artistic styles were stable, defined as Baroque (Italy, Flanders, the Netherlands, Spain and the German states) and Classical Baroque (mainly France). This suited the emerging nation states and ruling aristocrats. A new cycle of art styles began only later in the century as the political situations also evolved.

Lesser artists were effectively limited in any experimentation with new forms of religious visual expression by the ideological concerns of the Roman Church which, if anything, grew more intense outside major centers such as Rome, especially in the atmosphere of the wars of religion and the strengthening of Protestantism through the 17th century.⁵² In the third and fourth decades of the century, the influence of the Carracci melded with that of Caravaggio, developing Roman art into the full-blown Italian Baroque of painters such as Pietro da Cortona and sculptors such as Bernini.

Conclusion

Applying the differentiation/centrality ratio to the Bolognese situation we have described here, it is possible to see that there are many institutional 'hubs' functioning in response to stimulation from outside the city, as well as among themselves, providing a growth of resources in available skills and techniques. The political and social turmoil in

the early decades of the century was a period of near-chaos, within and outside of Bologna. After mid-century, we detect a *region of complexity*, with the demographic growth, new information and ideas kindling experiment and inspiring new forms in every area, from religious practice to literary expression and artistic production. In this relatively short period of a more open examination of reality and nature in all its aspects, there emerged new areas of research in science and philosophy, among other disciplines. In this climate, the artistic style of late Mannerism was identified as anti-natural and decadent. In this milieu, the young Carracci absorbed the traditions and the acknowledged master works, but were stimulated to react to the formulaic by returning to the natural as a primary source of inspiration. By 1600 the differentiation/centrality ratio was very low: stronger Papal authority and tighter government control; decaying business and institutional systems; reoccurring famines and ‘plagues’ with a drop in population—the result was the decline of outside influences and available local resources and varieties of skills and styles.

“Bologna or Rome?” As the Bolognese systems moved toward entropy in the early 17th century, the scene shifted to Rome and other centres that were, in turn, experiencing greater social focusing. Thus the move traced in art history from Early to High Baroque: the genesis of Baroque in *Bologna grassa* followed by its flourishing in the capitol and heart of the Papal States, and beyond. In this Bolognese model we see the driving forces of cultural change embedded in the shifting internal and external dynamics of social organization functioning in the *region of complexity*.

¹ E. Cropper, *La Réforme de l’art et la deuxième renaissance de Rome des Carraches au Bernin*, L’Art Italien de la Renaissance à 1905, P. Morel, ed. (Paris : Editio, 1998) : 89-293.

² R. Lewin, Complexity: life at the edge of chaos (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992; 2nd ed., 1999): 51.

³ Ibid. 9-12.

⁴ A. Pinelli, "La maniera: definizione di campo e modelli di lettura," Storia dell'arte italiana. Parte seconda. Dal Medioevo al Novecento, F. Zeri, ed. (Torino: Giulio Einaudi editore, 1981) : 121; B. Basile, ed., Bentivolorum Magnificentia. Principe e Cultura à Bologna nel rinascimento (Bologna: Bulzone Editore, 1984): 9-11.

⁵ E.H. Gombrich, *et al*, Giulio Romano (Milan : Electa, 1989) : 599-601 ; K. Oberhuber, Raphael (Paris: Editions du Regard, 1999): 211.

⁶ M. Fanti, "Bologna nell'età moderna (1506-1796)," Storia di Bologna,, A. Ferri & G. Roversi, eds. (Bologna : Edizioni Alfa, 1978) : 212-13.

⁷ « A Bologna c'è di tutto e tutto è buono. » G. Roversi, Viaggiatori Stranieri à Bologna. Impressioni d'Autore dal '500 al '900 (Bologna: Edizioni L'inchiostroblu, 1994) : 113.

⁸ Ibid. 69-70.

⁹ N. Miller, Renaissance Bologna. A Study in Architectural Form and Content (New York, Bern: Peter Lang, 1989): 6.

¹⁰ A. Guardi, Il cardinale Enrico Caetani e la legazione di Bologna (1586-87). (Roma, 1985) : 16.

¹¹ M. Montanari, « Come nasce un mito gastronomico. Bologna fra localismo e internazionalismo, » in M. Montanari, ed. Bologna Grassa : La costruzione di un mito (Bologna : CLUEB, 2004) : 9.

¹² Montanari, « Cucina in rete », op cit., 7-8.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ P.F. Grendler, The Universities of the Italian Renaissance (Baltimore & London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002):20.

¹⁵ M.T. Gnudi & J. P. Webster, The Life and Times of Gaspare Tagliacozze Surgeon of Bologna, 1545-1599 (New York: Herbert Reichner, 1950): 124.

¹⁶ Grendler, 192-94.

¹⁷ Grendler, 7, 18-19.

¹⁸ Grendler, 20.

¹⁹ Gnudi & Webster, 101; Chapters IX and XI.

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- ²⁰ Grendler, 310-11.
- ²¹ B. Antonino, ed., L'Herbier d'Ulisse Aldrovandi (Arles: Actes Sud/Motta, 2004): 8-25.
- ²² A.W. Boschloo, Annibale Carracci in Bologna. Visible Reality in Art after the Council of Trent (Staatsdrukkenuij's-Gravenhage, 1974): I, 113-16; Grendler, 310-11; Gnudi & Webster, 33-36. It is interesting to note that Aldrovandi's first published work, included in a collection on the antiquities of Rome, was *Le antichità de la Città di Roma* (Venice 1542). Cf. G. Montalenti, *Aldrovandi, Ulisse*, Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani, Vol. 2, pp. 118-24.
- ²³ P. Prodi, Il Cardinale Gabriele Paleotti (Roma: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 1959): II, 425-30; Boschloo, I, 110.
- ²⁴ Boschloo, 110. Grendler, 456.
- ²⁵ Ferri & Roversi, 226. Boschloo, 111-13. Grendler, 382-83.
- ²⁶ Alfeo Giacomelli, *Conservazione e innovazione nell'assistenza bolognese del Settecento*, Forma e Soggetti dell'intervento assistenziale in una città di antico regime, Atti del IV Colloquio (Bologna: Istituto per la storia di Bologna, 1986): Vol. II, 164-65. [163-266] and Ferri & Roversi, 226.
- ²⁷ P. Bellettini, R. Campioni, Z. Zanardi, eds. Una Città in Piazza. Comunicazione e Vita Quotidiana a Bologna tra Cinque e Seicento, exhibition catalogue (Bologna: Editrice Compositori, 2000): 6.
- ²⁸ Z. Zanardi, *La Comunicazione di Palazzo*, in Bellettini, *et al*, 26-32, and Montanari, 19.
- ²⁹ Bellettini, 180-81.
- ³⁰ G. Roversi, ed. Storia del Giornalismo in Emilia-Romagna e a Pesaro : dagli albori al primo Novecento. (Casalecchio di Reno BO : Grafis Edizioni, 1992): 55-59.
- ³¹ Roversi, 1992: 40-41.
- ³² Roversi, 1992: 60. Translation M. Lennon.
- ³³ Boschloo, 116. Strappini, 214-16. Bellettini, 6, 17.
- ³⁴ G.B. Marescalchi, Cronaca 1561-1573, I. Francica, ed. (Bologna: Studio Costa, 2002): 26-27.
- ³⁵ F. Raffaelli, Il Nettuno si Racconta (Bologna : Grafica Editoriale, 1989) : 10.
- ³⁶ V. Fortunati, *Sguardi sulla pittura a Bologna*, 305.

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- ³⁷ D. Benati, *Emilia e Romagna*, in M. Gregori, ed., Pittura murale in Italia Il Cinquecento (Torino: Gruppo Sanpaolo e Edizioni Bolis, 1997):104-26.
- ³⁸ V. Fortunati, *Prospero Fontana*, Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani, Vol 48, pp. 714-19.
- ³⁹ J.J. Chvostal, Rethinking the Reform: A Study of the Early Careers of Ludovico, Agostino and Annibale Carracci (Ann Arbor: UMI, 2003):77.
- ⁴⁰ C.C. Malvasia, Felsina pittrice (Bologna: Heirs of Domenico Barbieri, 1678; 2 vols.) is the source for much of our information on the Carracci, and is cited by all scholars. There has been some dispute over the reliability of Malvasia's account, but most recently the trend is to trust much of what he recorded.
- ⁴¹ Boschloo, 44. Boschloo also notes that another historian commented on Bologna as a favourable breeding ground for Agostino's rancorous criticisms.
- ⁴² Boschloo, I, 40, 49-51; II, 203-4, nt. 32. J. Anderson, *Speculations on the Carracci Academy in Bologna*, "Oxford Art Journal", No. 3 (1979): 15-20. G. Perini, *Ut picture poesis: l'Accademia dei Gelati e le arti figurative*, in D.S. Chambers & F. Quiviger, Italian Academies of the Sixteenth Century (London: Warburg Institute, 1995), 122.
- ⁴³ Chvostal, 3, 38-40. Boschloo, I, 68.
- ⁴⁴ Boschloo, I, 41-42.
- ⁴⁵ Zapperi (1990), 57-60.
- ⁴⁶ Chvostal, 149-50. Cropper, 109.
- ⁴⁷ P. Barocchi, Tratti d'Arte del Cinquecento fra Manierismo e Controriforma (Bari : Gius. Laterza & Figli, 1961) : II, 123-25 ; 511-17. Boschloo, I, 123-25.
- ⁴⁸ Cropper, 151-57. Bellettini, 45-47.
- ⁴⁹ G. Greco, Briganti ed Incanti nella Bologna Pontificia (Bologna: Patron Editore, 1999): 50-53. Guardi, 14-17, 26-29.
- ⁵⁰ Greco, 50-53.
- ⁵¹ A. Colantuono, Guido Reni's Abduction of Helen: the politics and rhetoric of painting in seventeenth-century Europe (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997): 4.
- ⁵² R. Zapperi, *La Corporation des Peintres et le Censure des Images a Bologne au Temps des Carrache*, Revue d'Histoire Moderne et Contemporaine, 38 (July-September 1991) : 387-400.

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