



the ceiling-centerpiece of which was to be a painting of the Choice of Hercules, and second, far more ambitious, the decoration of the vault of the great salon in the palace, on the theme of the Loves of the Gods. Annibale was assisted in this latter project by his brother Agostino as well as by younger painters trained in the Carracci academy, Domenico Zampieri (known as Domenichino) and Giovanni Battista Tiepolo, both soon to become major figures in the Roman world. Both were deeply influenced not only by their artistic education in Bologna but also by their intimate exposure to Annibale's now classicizing style, which became the basis of what amounted to a new school of painting that won more than its share of important commissions in churches and palaces over the succeeding decades. (Other masters in that school were Francesco Albani and the prodigiously gifted Guido Reni.) In the present book I shall have nothing to say about this vast and formidable body of work, but the fourth chapter will be devoted to a younger painter with strong Bolognese roots, Giovanni Francesco

Barbieri, known as Guercino (for his squint), specifically to twenty-plus remarkably brilliant and original paintings he produced during two years that I think of as nothing less than his *anni mirabiles*, 1619-20.

The first three chapters, in contrast, will focus on developments associated with the impact of Caravaggio (though Guercino will also make a brief appearance toward the end of Chapter One). In fact almost all the painters I shall be discussing have been characterized as "Caravaggisti," a term that on the one hand correctly testifies to their indebtedness to his example but on the other fails to acknowledge their own considerable originality.² The painters I mainly have in mind are Bartolomeo Manfredi, the Frenchmen Valentin de Boulogne, Nicolas Régnier, Nicolas Tournier, and Simon Vouet, the Spaniard Jusepe de Ribera, and another Italian, a figure of some mystery, Cecco del Caravaggio, who has recently been identified as Francesco Boneri (or Buoneri), and the period of time that interests me comprises the twenty years following Caravaggio's death in 1610. The ear-





works by Manfredi, a key figure, date from 1607, those by Valentin, whose biography remains obscure, from some time after 1615. In recent years it has become clear, largely thanks to the researches of Gianni Papi, that the young Ri-

bera was a significant force within the group, and that as early as 1612 he was making paintings of great power and originality (more on this below). By the late 1620s, however, the constellation of artists working under Caravag-



gio's inspiration became scattered: Manfredi died at forty in 1622, Cecco's movements are scarcely known but there is no trace of him in Rome after 1620, Ribera left Rome for Naples in 1616, Vouet returned to his native France in 1627, and Régnier removed himself to Venice in 1626. Only Valentin remained, his sudden death in 1632 putting a full stop at the end of an era. (One of Caravaggio's earliest followers, Orazio Gentileschi, not part of the above constellation, left Rome definitively in 1621.) Partly owing to the dissolution of the group, the influence of Caravaggio became eclipsed by the end of the 1620s. More precisely, the 1630s saw two major developments in Rome itself: first, the maturing of the art of Nicolas Poussin, who would later be quoted as

saying that Caravaggio had come into the world "to do a painting" and whose *Death of Germanicus* (1626) and works of the late 1620s and early 1630s offered a very different paradigm for serious accomplishment;³ and second, the arrival of the full-blown Baroque in the spectacularly illusionistic decorative projects of Pietro da Cortona, whose *Allegory of Divine Providence and Barberini* in the Palazzo Barberini was officially unveiled in 1633 (work on it had begun in 1633). It is also true that a Caravaggesque impulse continued elsewhere in Europe, particularly in Utrecht, home to three native-born painters: Gerard van Honthorst, Hendrik ter Bruggen and Dirck Baburen, all of whom had come under Caravaggio's



and that of other Caravaggesque painters) in Rome during the second decade of the century; for that matter, the style of Caravaggio continued almost unabated in Naples, where he had stayed and painted on two occasions during the years of flight following the murder of Ranuccio Tomassini in 1606. (The force of Caravaggio's example would have been reinforced by that of Ribera, who spent most of his career in Naples after leaving Rome.) And although no one ordinarily thinks of the greatest of Flemish painters, Peter Paul Rubens, as Caravaggesque, the fact remains that during his stay in Rome (1601-03 and again later in the first decade) he did familiarize himself with Caravaggio's example to the extent of painting a somewhat free copy of the latter's *Boy with Tomatoes* (ca. 1612-14), he also recommended that his patron, the Duke of Mantua, purchase the *Death of the Young Boy* after its rejection by the Carmelite friars at Sta. Maria

della Scala and played a role in an Antwerp church's acquisition of the *Madonna of the Rosary* (1605-6?), another work by the master that had become available. Moreover, in Chapter One I shall suggest that one of Rubens's most impressive canvases of the first decades of the century, the *Death of Seneca* (1612-13) in Munich, invites contextualization alongside single-figure paintings by Manfredi, Valentin, Ribera, and the others. Intriguingly, too, another painter of indisputable greatness, Diego Velázquez, visited Italy in 1629-30, and although not a great deal is known about what he saw there, it is surely he would surely have encountered key examples of Caravaggio's painting, with consequences for his subsequent art that remain an open question.⁴ But by then Ribera's paintings and prints, brought to Spain from Naples largely thanks to vice-regal patronage as well as by dealers and others, had become a force in Madrid and elsewhere.





moment" of immersion is temporally indefinite, and is to be inferred by the viewer; put slightly differently, it requires looking past the signs of instantaneousness to an underlying structure that implies a more open-ended temporality. (In the case of the London picture, the structure is that of a mirror-reversed self-portrait with the

"depicted" canvas at right angles to the actual one and situated just off-picture to the right. In the *Moment of Caravaggio I* show that some such dispositif was at work in a surprising number of 16th- and 17th-century self-portraits.)

Another basic structural polarity in Caravaggio's art is between absorption -- the depiction of figures engrossed

