CHAPTER 19

PAINTING

INTRODUCTION

THE history of Italian eighteenth-century painting is, above all, the history of Venetian painting. Better known than almost any period and school discussed in this book, the names of Sebastiano Ricci and Piazzetta, Canaletto and Guardi, not to mention the greatest genius, Giambattista Tiepolo, immediately evoke lively associations. A fairly thorough treatment of this school alone would have gone far beyond the space at my disposal; nor could I have added to the researches of such pioneers as G. Fiocco, R. Pallucchini, and others, to whose works the reader must be referred for further guidance. The history of painting of the period is so rich in talents also outside Venice – a few of the first and many of the second rank – that any attempt at doing them justice within the compass of this book was from the start condemned to fail. As I have pointed out in the Foreword, I have therefore chosen to discuss eighteenth-century painting most cursorily. This course, moreover, seemed justified because it was at that time that France and England assumed a leading position; apart from Venetian painting and a few events in other centres, the Italian contribution ceases to be a major factor in the intra-European development.

As far as the history of painting is concerned, the seventeenth century was by and large a 'dark' century. Roughly between 1660 and 1680 a change came about and a trend towards the lightening of the palette began, culminating in Tiepolo and the Rococo masters of the Venetian school. While Venice accomplished the transition to Rococo painting through a luminosity derived from a new scale of airy, transparent colours, through new patterns of undulating or zigzag compositions which are often precariously 'anchored' along the lower edge of the picture, through elegant and elongated types of figures calling to mind the Mannerist *figura serpentinata*, through the gallant or voluptuous or arcadian or even flippant interpretation of their subjects – while all this happened in Venice during the 1720s and 30s, the leading Roman and Bolognese masters continued to practise their feeble Late Baroque far into the eighteenth century. They believed themselves to be the legatees of the great Italian tradition and looked with scorn upon its perversion. How deeply this was felt may be gathered from the anti-Rococo cry raised in 1733 by Antonio Balestra (1666–1740). Himself trained by Maratti, but practising mainly in Venice, he wrote from a position of eminence: 'All the present evil derives from the pernicious habit, generally accepted, of working from the imagination without having first learned how to draw after good models and compose in accordance with the good maxims. No longer does one see young artists studying the antique; on the contrary, we have come to a point where such study is derided as useless and obnoxious.'[1]

In Rome and Bologna, however, some artists began to realize that they had followed much too long the well-trodden path of the 'good maxims' which were, in fact, the worn-out formulae of the Late Baroque. Few dared to revolt (G. M. Crespi), others sought salvation in a return to the great models of the past, doing precisely what Balestra had despaired of. Their proto-Neo-classicism, first noticeable in Rome from about 1715 on, was far from a clear-cut decision. Nor was the break with the Baroque tradition brought about by the new and broader wave of proto-Neo-classicism which began in the 1740s. Epitomized in the figure of Anton Raphael Mengs, this Late Baroque classicism found an echo throughout the peninsula and even in Venice, where the late manner of artists like Piazzetta, Amigoni, and Pittoni seems to reflect some contact with the all-Italian movement. In the end, disastrous results followed in the wake of the academic, rationalistic, and classicizing reform. Not only did it kill the Baroque tradition, but the perennial tradition of Italian painting itself.

The champions of proto-Neo-classicism and Neo-classicism in Italy were primarily concerned with the restoration of the theory and practice of the grand manner, which had outlived its day. The present as well as the future lay, however, with those masters whom Balestra had attacked, those who tried more or less successfully to discard the ballast of the grand historical style. It was they who committed the capital sin against the letter and the spirit of the great tradition in that they destroyed clear contours and plastic form, and implicitly the customary concept of finish. Naturally, they looked back to their own tradition: the old contrast between Venice and Rome, between colour and design, also adumbrates the events of the eighteenth century. They crowned the work of the Seicento masters *di tocco*, for they painted with short, rapid, and often nervous brush-strokes and obliterated the clear borderline between sketch and execution. It seems a foregone conclusion that this development, which helped Italian painting secure a last spell of international importance, took place in Venice rather than in the centres where the fetishes of plastic form and of the classical tradition could never be discarded.

Naples and Rome

In the seventeenth century Naples had emerged as an art centre of primary importance. It was also in Naples that the most vital contribution was made to the future course of grand decorative painting. Briefly, the new type of fresco-painting derived from a fusion of Venetian colourism with Pietro da Cortona's grand manner, which on its part owed much of its vitality to Venice (p. 166 ff.). This synthesis of Rome and Venice was accomplished by the prodigious Luca Giordano (1634–1705),[2] who must be regarded as the quintessence of the new epoch although most of his work belongs to the seventeenth century. The prototype of the itinerant artist, he travelled up and down Italy, worked in Rome, Florence, Venice, and Bergamo, and for ten years was court painter in Madrid (1692–1702). The speed with which he produced his grand improvisations was proverbial ('Luca Fa Presto'). Perhaps the first *virtuoso* in the eighteenth-century sense, he considered the whole past an open book to be used for his own purposes. He studied Dürer as well as Lucas van Leyden, Rubens as well as Rembrandt, Ribera as well as Veronese,

Titian as well as Raphael, and was capable of painting in any manner he chose. But he never copied, a fact noticed by his contemporaries (Solimena). He played with all traditions rather than being tied to one, and his personal manner is always unmistakable. Whatever he did, his light touch and the brio and verve of his performance carry conviction, while his unproblematical and joyous interpretation of subjects anticipates the spirit of the eighteenth century. Clearly, the purpose of painting for him was delight (Plate 180). In Rome and Venice his influence became extraordinarily strong, and on the international stage the effect of his art can hardly be overestimated. He immensely attracted his Neapolitan successors by his typically southern grandiloquent manner and telling rhetoric, qualities which one associates with the next fifty years of grand decorative painting in his native city.[3]

Luca's heir-apparent was Francesco Solimena (1657–1747),[4] who headed the Neapolitan school unchallenged during the first half of the eighteenth century. Next to Luca Giordano and Cortona, Lanfranco and Preti exercised the most formative influence upon his work. From the latter stem the brownish shadows of his figures – as much a mark of his style as the vivid modulation, the flickering patterning of the picture plane, and, in his later work, the somewhat pompous elegance of his figures. Although carefully constructed, many of his multi-figured compositions make the impression of an inextricable mêlée, in line with the general tendencies of the Late Baroque (Plate 181).[5] But if one takes the trouble of surveying figure by figure, their studied poses and academic manner is evident, and it is easy to distinguish conventional and even canonical figures and groups deriving from such acknowledged classical authorities as Annibale Carracci, Domenichino, and even Raphael.[6] In studying the architecture and sculpture of the period we have found a similar discursive approach to the past. This rationalistic tendency was nourished in Solimena's own Academy, which became the centre of Neapolitan artistic life. Numberless painters were here educated, foremost among them Francesco de Mura (1696–1784), Corrado Giaquinto (1703–65), and Giuseppe Bonito (1707–89).[7] The latter, who ended his career as Director of the Neapolitan Academy, is now remembered less for his rather dreary academic grand manner than for his popular genre pieces (p. 323).

Solimena worked in Naples all his life, and yet became one of the most influential European painters; after Maratti's death and before the rise of Tiepolo's star he had no peer. His reputation secured large commissions abroad for his pupils. De Mura did his best work as court painter in Turin (Palazzo Reale, 1741–3). Giaquinto spent many years in Rome (1723–53), and succeeded Amigoni as court painter in Madrid (1753–61) where he was also appointed Director of the Academy of San Fernando; he left Madrid upon the arrival of Mengs.[8] Giaquinto was a more subtle artist than the often frigid de Mura.[9] Although both used typically eighteenth-century light and transparent colours, only Giaquinto carried Neapolitan painting over into a Rococo phase, and some of his work is stylistically and qualitatively a close parallel to Boucher's in France (Plate 182B).[10]

When he settled in Rome, Giaquinto joined the studio of an older Neapolitan painter and pupil of Solimena, Sebastiano Conca (1679–1764),[10a] who, after Maratti's and Luti's deaths, held a position of unequalled eminence. His ceiling fresco with the *Crowning of*

St Cecilia in S. Cecilia, painted in 1725 (Plate 182A), gives the measure of his achievement and allows an assessment of the situation in Rome after the first quarter of the eighteenth century. This work is clearly in the tradition of Maratti's fresco in the Palazzo Altieri (Plate 128), but not without a difference: here the balanced symmetrical composition belies the Baroque paraphernalia, an indication of the growing academic mentality. Of course, gone for ever are the intensity and spirituality, the hot breath and vigour, the chiaroscuro and mysticism of the Late Baroque moment represented by Gaulli (Plate 125) – what remains is the competent handling of well-worn formulae.

This had been the position for some time past: monumental painting in Rome was in the hands of facile successors. Giovanni Odazzi (1663–1731) and Lodovico Mazzanti (d. after 1760) – who also worked at Perugia, Viterbo, and Naples – continued Gaulli's manner, sapped of its strength, far into the eighteenth century.[11] But the day belonged to versions of Maratti's Late Baroque classicism. The reader will recall that the ascendancy of Maratti dates from the mid 1670s, which corresponds fairly precisely with Guidi's in sculpture and Carlo Fontana's in architecture. At about this moment artists of the second and third rank changed their manner to fall in with the new fashion. Painters such as Giuseppe Ghezzi (1634–1721), the father of the better-known Pier Leone, Lodovico Gimignani (1643–97),[12] the son of Giacinto, and the rather banal Luigi Garzi (1638–1721) may here be mentioned; and more considerable masters like Niccolò Berrettoni (1637–82) and even Guglielmo Cortese (1627–79), who had begun as a Cortona pupil[13] and Gaulli follower, embraced the new manner. The oldest of Maratti's pupils was the Palermitan Giacinto Calandrucci (1646–1707),[14] the most faithful Giuseppe Chiari (1654–1727),[15] the most original Giuseppe Passeri (1654–1714), the biographer's nephew; but only the distinguished Benedetto Luti from Florence (1666–1724), a figure of international reputation, renowned also as collector and teacher, accomplished the transformation of the Marattesque into an elegant and sweet eighteenth-century style. Maratti's manner was carried over even into the second half of the eighteenth century by artists like Agostino Masucci (1692–1768) and the more considerable Francesco Mancini[16] (*c.* 1700–58) and his pupil Stefano Pozzi (1708–68).

The general verdict on the course of Maratti's succession must be that it ended in a pleasant but purely conventional art, a soft and feeble formalism without a hope of regeneration. It is only to be expected that with the victory of Maratti's international Late Baroque, the old contrast of artistic ideals embodied in the names of Sacchi and Cortona was a thing of the past. In a more limited sense, however, and much less distinctly than in contemporary architecture, one may discover an antithesis between the Marattesque manner and a brief Rococo phase on the one hand and a classicizing Rococo trend on the other. But the camps are not clearly divided. Benedetto Luti's work is a case in point. Next to his monumental Roman manner, Francesco Trevisani (1656–1746),[16a] who never forgot his Venetian upbringing under Antonio Zanchi, produced cabinet pictures in a true Rococo style. Rivalling Sebastiano Conca's popularity, Trevisani's 'sweet Madonnas and porcelainly children' (Waterhouse) found a ready market all over Europe. But none of the Romans came closer to a French version of the Rococo than Michele Rocca (1670/5–after 1751).[17]

If the Rococo phase forms, as it were, the anti-conventional 'left wing' of Marattesque classicism, a new 'right wing' began to emerge for which that insipid manner was too Baroque and formalistic. It was mainly three artists who made heroic attempts at leading Roman painting back to a sounder foundation: Marco Benefial (1684–1764), half French, pupil of the Bolognese Bonaventura Lamberti, by an intense study of nature and by returning to the classical foundations of Raphael and Annibale Carracci (his remarkable *Transfiguration*,[18] Plate 183A, shows to what extent he succeeded); the Frenchman Pierre Subleyras (1699–1749), who spent the last twenty years of his life in Rome, by introducing in his work a noble simplicity and precision of design and expression together with a limited but carefully considered light scale of tone values; and, finally, Pompeo Batoni (1708–87), by steering more decisively towards the newly rising ideal of the antique (Plate 183B).[19] In a varying degree, all three artists take up special positions on the borderline between Rococo and Neo-classicism. These masters, and even Batoni in pictures farthest on the road to Neo-classicism, stuck tenaciously to Late Baroque formulae of composition. Nor is the lyric, languid, and often sentimental range of expressions really divorced from contemporary painting.[20]

It is well known that the more radical turn towards a Neo-classical mode of painting was taken by the romanized Bohemian, Anton Raphael Mengs (1728–79). A mediocre talent, but enthusiastically supported by Winckelmann, the intellectual father of Neo-classicism, he was hailed by the whole of Europe as the re-discoverer of a lost truth. The work and ideas of this moralist and rationalist, who saw salvation in a denial of Baroque and Rococo painterly traditions and pleaded for an unconditional return to principles of design, cannot here be discussed. Suffice it to say that the Baroque allegorical method as well as the preciosity of Rococo art linger on in Mengs's art, while elements of his style (such as the choice of clear and bright local colours) maybe traced back to some of his older contemporaries. Mengs himself had started under Benefial, yet was not impervious to the qualities of Solimena's Baroque. In the last analysis he is as much an end as a beginning.

He set the seal on that characteristically Roman classic-idealistic trend, the tenets of which were constantly shaped and coloured by the ever-changing 'Baroque' antithesis. Reference to the three sets of names: Carracci – Caravaggio; Sacchi – Cortona; Maratti – Gaulli, summarizes the course of events in three consecutive generations. In the struggle of artistic convictions and sentiments the fronts remained fluid. As the theory hardened (Bellori) in the second half of the seventeenth century, the practice began to fall out of step (Maratti). Late Baroque classicism was on the whole the weak shadow of a great past. If Mengs saddled the classic-idealistic horse again, he lacked the genius and strength for a bold ride. Measured against his greater forerunners, and even Maratti, he appears a dry pedant; measured against the work of a fully-fledged Neo-classicist of real talent like Jacques-Louis David, he seems sweet, inert, sentimental, Baroque, and not without the affectation of much of the art produced on his doorstep.

The classic-idealistic theory, revived by Winckelmann in its most rigorous form, once again conquered the world from Rome, but no longer did it have the power to revitalize monumental painting on the soil which had seen its greatest triumphs in the wake of Raphael and Michelangelo.[21]

Florence and Bologna

Until well after the middle of the seventeenth century Florentine painting was provincial but had a distinct character of its own. This changed later in the century. If the reasons for the loss of identity cannot be wholly accounted for, one may at least point out four different events which determined the further course of painting in Florence: Cortona's work in the Palazzo Pitti (1640–7); Luca Giordano's frescoes, executed between 1682 and 1683, in the dome of the Corsini Chapel (Chiesa del Carmine), in the Biblioteca Riccardiana, and in the long gallery of the Palazzo Riccardi – the latter a grand allegorical pageant glorifying the reign of the Medici dynasty with dazzling *élan* and strikingly fresh and vivid colours (Plate 180B); the visit in 1706–7 of Sebastiano Ricci, whose frescoes in the Palazzo Marucelli-Fenzi (Plate 188) gave Florentines their first sensational experience of modern Venetian art; and, finally, the influence of Maratti's style as well as of Bolognese classicism, particularly through the work of the leading master, Carlo Cignani. The pattern then is clear enough; there developed in Florence two different trends, both rather international in character, the one anti-classical, accepting the Cortonesque Baroque or its thinned-out Ciro Ferri version and, in turn, Luca Giordano and Ricci; the other classical, following Marattesque or Bolognese precepts.

The classical trend is most fully represented by the precise and frigid Anton Domenico Gabbiani (1652–1726), the painter dear to the heart of Grand Duke Cosimo III and the Florentine nobility, whose palaces abound in his work.[22] While Gabbiani was primarily a Maratti follower, Giovan Camillo Sagrestani (1660–1731)[23] came from Cignani, whose slick modelling he maintained; this made him as well as his pupil Matteo Bonechi (*c.* 1672–1726)[24] an easy prey to French Rococo influence. In the next generation Giovanni Domenico Ferretti (1692–1768), a profuse decorative talent, carried on this tradition. Once again he was mainly formed by the Bolognese Cignani and Marcantonio Franceschini and to a certain extent remained tied to their Late Baroque classicism.[25]

On the other side of the fence were the *Cortoneschi*, who have been mentioned in a previous chapter (p. 381). The real rebel against the worn-out academic conventions and an artist in a class of his own was Alessandro Gherardini (1655–1726),[26] who in his transparent frescoes in S. Maria degli Angeli, Florence (1709; Plate 184A), combined the lessons learned from Giordano and Sebastiano Ricci. To what extent he mastered the new artistic language may also be seen in his principal work, the frescoes in S. Maria degli Angeli (now Università Popolare), Pistoia (after 1711), which – as M. Marangoni pointed out many years ago – might almost have been painted by a contemporary Venetian master. Gherardini's worthy pupil, Sebastiano Galeotti (1676–1746?), also formed his style on Cortona, Giordano, and Ricci. He spent more than the last three decades of his life as a most successful fresco-painter in Liguria, Lombardy, and Piedmont, practising his truly international art.[27]

If Florence had no longer an organic school of painting with a physiognomy of its own, she could boast at least of competent painters, though some of the more enterprising ones, such as Luti, Batoni, and Galeotti, sought their fortunes permanently outside

their native town. The situation at Bologna was vastly different.[28] The tradition of the Carracci 'Academy' had an extraordinary power of survival, and through all vicissitudes Bolognese classicism, even in a provincial and sometimes debased, feeble, and flabby form, continued to be a power which for good or evil made itself felt in many other centres. Not only Florentines but also Romans and Venetians were convinced that it was only in Bologna that an artist could procure a solid training in the perennial principles of good design. Carlo Cignani (1628–1719), Albani's pupil, was the celebrated guardian of this tradition and the head of an immensely active studio.[29] The late Reni and a renewed study of Correggio contributed to form his fluid and polished style, which contemporaries admired. N. Pevsner[30] indicated to what extent this versatile classicism falls in with Late Baroque principles. From Cignani comes, above all, Bologna's greatest decorative talent of the Late Baroque, Marcantonio Franceschini (1648–1729),[31] the Bolognese Maratti, whose manner was widely diffused through his works in Rome, Genoa, Piedmont, Spain, and Germany. His great cycle of frescoes in the church of Corpus Domini, Bologna (1687–94), illustrates most fully this facet of Bolognese painting. Next to him, Gian Gioseffo dal Sole (1654–1719),[32] 'il Guido moderno', was a much sought after, dexterous practitioner of this rather sentimental kind of Late Baroque classicism.

A new situation arose in the next generation which reacted in two contrary ways to the facile conventions of the academicians. One group, led by Donato Creti (1671–1749),[33] Pasinelli's pupil, who at some time in his career tended towards a Rococo manner (frescoes, Palazzo Pepoli, Bologna, 1708), sought salvation in a sophisticated archaism. The Bolognese counterpart to Benefial's manner in Rome, this proto-Neo-classicism with distinct Mannerist overtones is perfectly illustrated by the small picture on Plate 184B[34] which recalls works by such masters as Primaticcio. To a lesser extent some minor artists, Aurelio Milani (1675–1749),[35] Francesco Monti (1685–1768),[36] and Ercole Graziani (1688–1765),[37] fell in with Creti's radicalism.

The other reaction came from Giuseppe Maria Crespi, called lo Spagnuolo (1665–1747), the only real genius of the late Bolognese school. Rejecting the teachings of his masters Canuti and Cignani,[38] he found instruction to his taste in the study of Lodovico Carracci, Mastelletta, and, above all, the early Guercino. Moreover, it has been shown[39] that he must have had direct contacts with Sebastiano Mazzoni (p. 226), echoes of whose intense chiaroscuro and freedom of touch appear in Crespi's early work. But Crespi went a decisive step beyond his models. He swept away the last vestiges of academic formalism and opened up an immediacy of approach to his subject-matter without parallel at this moment. Linked to the popular trend, which had had a home in Bologna since the days of the Carracci (p. 40), he applied his new vision equally to religious imagery (Plate 185), to contemporary scenes, portraiture, and genre (Plate 197A). Everything he touched is permeated with a depth of sincere feeling, a sensibility and tenderness which is as far from the ecstasy of the 'quietists' as it is from the preciosity and affectation of the academicians. Like his younger contemporary Magnasco, he is an outsider; like Magnasco, he never abandoned his chiaroscuro and remained essentially a Seicento master; but diametrically opposed to him, he chose as his theme the purely human rather than the grotesque and demoniacal. And yet both attitudes seem to have the same root.

characteristic of the Baroque age: the will to freedom, which opens the way as much to Crespi's unconditional humanism as to Magnasco's chaotic abandonment.[40]

Canuti had died in 1684, Cignani had gone to Forlì in 1686, and Pasinelli died in 1700. There remained Crespi and, next to him, Giovan Antonio Burrini (1656–1727),[41] who had studied with both Canuti and Pasinelli and became Bologna's representative of an extrovert Late Baroque style; Zanotti called him 'il nostro Cortona e il nostro Giordano'. Although Crespi opened a school in 1700, few names of his Bolognese succession are worth recording, apart from his rather trivial son, Luigi Crespi (1709–79), famed as the writer of the lives of contemporary Bolognese artists,[42] and the Paduan Antonio Gionima (1697–1732).[43] All the greater was his influence on Venetian painters; Piazzetta as well as Bencovich owed much to him.

Official painting of the Baroque era at Bologna drew to a close with such able decorators as Vittorio Maria Bigari (1692–1776),[44] whose delightful scenographic cabinet pictures in the Pinacoteca, Bologna, show him at his best, and with the brothers Ubaldo (1728–81) and Gaetano (1734–1802) Gandolfi and the lesser Domenico Pedrini (1728–1800), artists who brought about the blending of the academic Bolognese tradition with the light and freedom of Tiepolo's manner. The Gandolfi were capable of large and skilfully arranged compositions with a strong Rococo flavour. But if one measures their work against that of the great Venetians, it appears no more than the flotsam of a once proud native tradition. After two hundred years of changing fortunes Bolognese painting had run its course.

Before we leave Bologna, however, a word must be added about *quadratura* painting, which had its home in Bologna from the late sixteenth century on, and remained vigorous to the end of the eighteenth century. Scenographic painting and allied practices continued to be Bologna's most important artistic export. Truly Late Baroque, the brothers Enrico (1640–1702)[45] and Anton Maria (1654–1732) Haffner, both pupils of Canuti, amplified and diversified Colonna's and Mitelli's more architectural *quadratura* style; they form the link with the imaginative scenographers of the eighteenth century. Anton Maria worked mainly in Genoa in collaboration with G.A. Carlone, Domenico Piola, Gregorio de Ferrari, and others. Enrico assisted his teacher till the latter's death in 1684; thereafter he collaborated with Giovan Antonio Burrini (Chiesa dei Celestini, Bologna) and, above all, with Marcantonio Franceschini, for whom he painted, among others, the Corpus Domini *quadratura*. The tradition was kept alive by Marcantonio Chiarini (1652–1730) and his pupil Pietro Paltronieri, il Mirandolesi (1673–1741), who worked in Venice and also for Pittoni; by Mauro Aldrovandini (1649–80), his nephew Tommaso (1653–1736), Cignani's pupil, and his son Pompeo (1677–1739?), whose pupil Stefano Orlandi (1681–1760) collaborated with Bigari, Francesco Monti and others and, together with Gioseffo Orsoni (1691–1755), won laurels as a stage designer at Lucca and Turin; by Tiepolo's faithful associate, Girolamo Mengozzi-Colonna from Ferrara (*c.* 1688–*c.* 1772), his pupils Gianfrancesco Costa (1711–72) and Francesco Chiaruttini (1748–96), and many others.[46]

This long list goes to show that the greatest dynasty of *quadraturisti*, the Galli, called Bibiena after their place of origin, arose in a congenial artistic climate. Equally distin-

guished as designers and organizers of festivals, 'the most sumptuous that Europe ever witnessed' (Lanzi), as stage designers and inventors, as draughtsmen of extraordinary scenographic fantasies (Plate 198A), as painters and theatre architects, four members of the family should be singled out, the brothers Ferdinando (1657–1743) and Francesco (1659–1739), and Ferdinando's sons, Giuseppe (1696–1757) and Antonio (1700–74). Ferdinando spent twenty-eight years in the service of Ranuccio Farnese at Parma as 'primario pittore e architetto' and in the same capacity transferred to the imperial court at Vienna in 1708. While Ferdinando was probably the most profuse genius of the family, Francesco gave Europe its finest theatres, establishing a tradition which has not yet seen its end. All the courts of Europe sought the services of the Bibiena, and Ferdinando's sons held offices at the courts of Vienna, Dresden, Berlin, and that of the Elector Palatine.[47]

The free play of the imagination as seen in the drawings of the Bibiena, and the classical tradition on which the Bolognese school thrived, seem to be incompatible with each other. And yet Ferdinando and Francesco Bibiena came from Cignani's school. The explanation lies in that the Bolognese always regarded *quadratura* – the basis of the art of the Bibiena – as a science concerned with the accurate rendering of the laws of vision. As such, *quadratura* had first been the handmaid of the grand manner. But later a paradoxical situation arose. By the mid seventeenth century, with Colonna and Mitelli, *quadratura* had reached the status of an art in its own right. In the course of the eighteenth century it was the *quadratura* artists, culminating in the Bibiena family, who held all the trumps of a truly international art, while the Bolognese grand manner was increasingly reduced to a provincial shadow existence.

Northern Italy outside Venice

Throughout the eighteenth century the smaller cities of northern Italy had flourishing schools of painters: Verona above all which, from the Middle Ages on, was always an important artistic centre, and Bergamo and Brescia,[48] where local traditions, however, yielded more and more to the overbearing Venetian influence. Apart from the Bergamasque Fra Galgario and the 'Bresciano' Ceruti – artists who will be discussed later – these provincial schools need not detain us. Nor do the big centres Milan, Genoa, and Turin require much attention.

Piedmont had to rely almost entirely on artists from abroad in order to carry out the considerable undertakings which, owing to the accumulation of power and wealth under the House of Savoy, were waiting for painters. At the end of the seventeenth century it was mainly Daniel Seiter (1649–1705),[49] born in Vienna but trained in Venice under J. C. Loth, and the Genoese Bartolomeo Guidobono (1654–1709) who held for many years positions of eminence. Although later the Florentine Sebastiano Galeotti and the fashionable Charles André Vanloo from Nice (1705–65), Luti's pupil in Rome, had large commissions[50] and firmly established the international Late Baroque in Turin, it was really Neapolitan and Venetian artists who had the major share – an interesting constellation, for the two most vigorous Italian schools vied here for supremacy. The Neapolitans Conca,

Giaquinto, and de Mura followed calls to Turin, and Solimena sent many canvases.[51] Yet the palm went to the Venetians; Sebastiano and Marco Ricci, Nicola Grassi, and Giambattista Pittoni accepted commissions, and Giambattista Crosato (1685–1758) and Giuseppe Nogari (1699–1763) spent years of their lives there. Crosato,[52] above all, with his charming and ample frescoes in the Castle at Stupinigi, the Villa Regina, the Palazzo Reale, and a number of Turin churches helped to transform Piedmont into an artistic province of Venice. The second-rate Mattia Bortoloni (p. 317) found a rewarding occupation in the Sanctuary at Vicoforte di Mondovì where he painted, not without skill, the enormous dome (1745–50), a commission which illness seems to have prevented Galeotti from executing. The foremost representative of what may euphemistically be called the local school was the court-painter Claudio Francesco Beaumont (1694–1766), of French extraction, trained in Rome under Trevisani; his facile Rococo manner, a not unattractive international court style, can best be studied in the Palazzo Reale.[53] The most successful practitioner of the next generation was Vittorio Amedeo Cignaroli (1730–1800),[54] a member of the well-known Verona family of artists, a slight talent, mainly renowned for his landscapes in the manner of Zuccarelli.

Genoese grand decorative painting still flourished throughout the first quarter of the eighteenth century (p. 229); thereafter it was on the decline and handled by successors of minor calibre.[55] Milan's painters perpetuated the international Baroque.[56] But two artists must be singled out: the Genoese Alessandro Magnasco (1667, not 77,–1749), called Lissandrino, and the Mantuan Giuseppe Bazzani (1690–1769). Both are solitary figures, tense, strange, mystic, ecstatic, grotesque, and out of touch with the triumphal course the Venetian school was taking from the second decade onwards; both delight in deformities; both are masters of the rapid, nervous brush-stroke and of magic light-effects.

Magnasco went early to Milan, where he worked under Filippo Abbiati (1640–1715). Interrupted only by a stay in Florence (*c.* 1709–11), he remained in Milan until 1735, when he finally settled in his native Genoa. The formation of his style is not easily accounted for. In any case, Morazzone's Early Baroque mysticism must have attracted him as much as Callot's over-sensitive Late Mannerist etchings and Rosa's tempestuous romantic landscapes. Magnasco's phantasmagorias (Plate 186), that strange diabolical world which seems the product of a morbid imagination – the fearsome woods, the tribunals and tortures, the cruel martyrdoms and macabre scenes peopled with ghostlike monks – open up problems of interpretation. For Lanzi all these were *bizarrie*; even if one cannot agree with the distinguished author, the question remains unsolved how much religious fanaticism, how much quietism or criticism or farce went into the making of his pictures. The reason for this uncertainty of interpretation lies in the peculiar unreality of his figures. Magnasco's personal idiom was inimitable, but his impromptu way of painting, the sketchy character of his canvases, the anguished, rapid brush-stroke – all this, crowning the pursuits of a distinct group of Seicento artists (p. 223), had a most invigorating effect on the development of painting in the new century, and the Venetians from Sebastiano and Marco Ricci to Guardi learned their lesson from him.[57]

Bazzani,[58] too, must have studied his work, but, characteristic of the new virtuoso type of artist, he is not easily summed up by a formula. His work vacillates between

influences from Rubens, Van Dyck, and Fetti, the temperate climate of Balestra's art, Dorigny's classicism, and Watteau's and Lancret's Rococo grace; and many of his canvases call to mind the eccentric world of Francesco Maffei and of his own contemporary Bencovich (Plate 187A). Apart from a few minor imitators, Bazzani's manner had no sequel in Italy,[59] though it did appeal to Austrian Baroque painters.[60]

Venice

Politically and economically Venice had long been on the decline. After her sea and mercantile power had dwindled, she became in the eighteenth century the meeting-place of European pleasure-hunters, and, indeed, there was no city in Europe which equalled her in picturesque beauty, stately grandeur, luxury, and vice. To be sure, the foreigners brought wealth to Venice, equal or perhaps greater wealth than the industry of her inhabitants had acquired by commerce in previous centuries. It is also true that with the shift of patronage from the Venetian nobility to the rich foreigners – English, Spanish, French, German, and Russian – Venetian art became international in a new sense; for (to give only a few instances), with Sebastiano and Marco Ricci, Pellegrini, Amigoni, and Canaletto in London, with Tiepolo in Würzburg and Madrid, with Rosalba Carriera in Paris and Vienna, with Bernardo Bellotto at the courts of Dresden and Warsaw, with lesser masters like Bartolomeo Nazari at the court of the Emperor Charles VII and Fontebasso and J. B. Lampi at that of St Petersburg, the Venetians appeared as their own ambassadors. But how it happened that on the social quicksand of Venice there arose the most dynamic school of painters will for ever remain a mystery.

We know now that the rise was not so sudden as it seemed not so many years ago. But in spite of the revival of the great native tradition in the second half of the seventeenth century, it was only at the beginning of the next that Venice far outdistanced Rome, Naples, Bologna, and Genoa: her European triumph dates from the second decade of the eighteenth century.[61]

Sebastiano Ricci and Piazzetta

This change of fortune is connected with the name of Sebastiano Ricci (1659–1734), who began as a pupil of Sebastiano Mazzoni, and then went to Bologna where he imbibed the teachings of the Bolognese school under Giovanni Gioseffo dal Sole; finally he studied at Parma and Rome. Thus he had the varied experience typical of the Late Baroque artist; at the age of twenty-five he had run through the whole gamut of possibilities: from the free brush-stroke of Mazzoni and the polished classicism of the Bolognese to Correggio, Annibale Carracci, and the great decorative fresco painters in Rome. His first frescoes, in the dome of S. Bernardino dei Morti in Milan (1695–8), reflect the study of Cortona and Correggio. He returned to Venice in 1700 and worked there for twelve years, interrupted, however, by long journeys to Vienna (1701–3), Bergamo (1704), and Florence (1706–7). There in the frescoes of the Palazzo Marucelli he

achieved full maturity (Plate 188): the luminous brilliant art of the eighteenth century prepared in the work in S. Marziale, Venice (1705), is born. Ricci's new homogeneous style was the result of an intelligent rediscovery of Veronese and the study of Luca Giordano. *The Virgin enthroned with Nine Saints* in S. Giorgio Maggiore, Venice (1708), is the *chef d'œuvre* of this neo-Cinquecentesque manner, enriched, however, by a quick and nervous eighteenth-century brush-stroke. In the second decade, which saw Sebastiano in London (1712–16)[62] and Paris (1716), his brush-stroke becomes more agitated, under the influence, it has been claimed, of Magnasco's work. And this, together with a renewed study of Veronese after his return to Venice, made him, in the third decade, change to the scintillating, colourful works, painted with a light nervous touch, which belong to the Venetian Rococo. Ricci is the typical extrovert eighteenth-century virtuoso, and as such his brilliance may appear somewhat superficial. Roberto Longhi talked about 'his paintings smacking of an able reportage of all European motives'.[63] But it needed precisely Ricci's easy and versatile talent to steer Venetian art back to a new understanding of the great past and forward towards the synthesis achieved in Tiepolo's heroic style.

Ricci's antipode, an artist of equal or even greater talent, was Giovanni Battista Piazzetta (1683–1754), whose training, life-story, and convictions as an artist were the antithesis to everything concerning his older colleague: instead of the itinerant artist, a man of steady habits; instead of the brilliant virtuoso, a slow and patient worker; instead of decorative superficiality, a new depth and intensity of expression; instead of the light and vibrant palette, recourse to chiaroscuro and plastic form; instead of new conquests to the end, a slow decline of creative powers during the last years.

After beginning in Antonio Molinari's studio, Piazzetta also made the journey to Bologna, but in order to finish his education under Giuseppe Maria Crespi. Back in Venice before 1711, he never left his native city again. His *tenebroso* art appears formed in the *St James led to his Martyrdom* (S. Stae, Venice, 1717) and reaches a climax in the *Virgin appearing to St Philip Neri* (S. Maria della Fava, 1725–7; Plate 189), a composition of terse zigzag lines, built up of plastic bodies intense with mystic supplication and dramatized by a poignant chromatic scale of contrasting warm and cold reddish and brown tones. At the same moment he painted his only great decorative work, the ceiling (on canvas) with the *Glory of St Dominic* in SS. Giovanni e Paolo, twirling in a great sweep from the borders towards the luminous centre. In the 1730s his chiaroscuro lightened under the influence of Lys and Strozzi, and a pastoral mood replaced the previous tension. This is particularly true of a group of pictures around 1740, of which the *Fortune Teller* (1740, Accademia, Venice)[64] is one of the most splendid examples. At that moment he was nearest a Rococo phase.

But this was also the period when great numbers of students began to assemble in his atelier. His house became a kind of private academy, and in 1750, at the foundation of the Venetian Academy, Piazzetta appeared to be the obvious choice as its first Director. To this late period belong works increasingly executed with the help of pupils, in which a rhetorical shallowness is supported by an *outré* chiaroscuro.

From the mid twenties on Piazzetta showed a growing interest in paintings of heads

and half-figures; they were an enormous success with the public but at the same time contained the looming danger of academic petrifaction. This is also true of the many finished drawings with which Piazzetta flooded the market. In any case, his interest in the design of heads, plastically but luminously modelled in black chalk, reveals a master who upheld the tradition of *disegno* – and implicitly of the classical tradition – in a world that was mainly concerned with the painterly loosening of form. Despite his rich, typically Settecentesque, chromatic orchestration, the finest nuances of white, the light dabbing on to the canvas of his pinks and emerald greens, Piazzetta's attempt to persevere in an essentially Seicentesque *tenebroso* manner was bound to fail. But his dynamic reform of sound principles had a salutary effect, and even the young Tiepolo profited more from him than from anyone else.

With the antithesis Sebastiano Ricci–Piazzetta, the Venetian stage in the first decades of the eighteenth century was set for every artist to decide between the former's luminous decorative manner and the latter's rich chromatic chiaroscuro. Some artists wavered, such as Francesco Polazzo (*c.* 1683–1753),[65] who began as a Ricci follower but later switched his allegiance to Piazzetta. By and large, Tiepolo's development goes the opposite way. But among the great number of Piazzetta's pupils and followers there was, characteristically, none of major format, whereas mediocrities abound.[66] Only a few independent artists knew how to assimilate Piazzetta's manner more successfully. Giulia Lama[67] should here be mentioned and, above all, Federico Bencovich, who was probably born in Dalmatia about 1677 (d. Gorizia, 1756).[68]

His first works (Palazzo Foschi, Forlì, 1707) show the influence of his Bolognese teacher, Carlo Cignani, whose academic manner he soon abandoned for that of Giuseppe Maria Crespi. Thus Bencovich's chiaroscuro has the same pedigree as Piazzetta's, to whom he felt naturally drawn during his Venetian period. Also influenced by the powerful art of Paolo Pagani,[69] Bencovich created a manner of his own, dramatic, strange, forceful, agonized, a manner which impressed the young Tiepolo as much as the Viennese in whose city he spent many years from 1733 on (Plate 190).[69a]

Sebastiano Ricci also found a large following among minor masters. But it was not they, Gaspare Diziani (1689–1767), Francesco Migliori (1684–1734), Gaetano Zompini (1700–78), and the more interesting Francesco Fontebasso (1709–69),[70] on whom the victory of the 'light trend' depended: this was due to a group of more considerable artists and, of course, to Tiepolo.

Pellegrini, Amigoni, Pittoni, Balestra

The first three names stand for a festive Rococo art of considerable charm. Antonio Pellegrini (1675–1741),[71] trained by the Milanese Paolo Pagani, found his bright palette through the study of Ricci and the late Luca Giordano. His light-hearted Rococo frescoes, painted with a fluid brush, were done in England (1708–13, Kimbolton Castle, Castle Howard, etc.), in Bensberg Castle near Düsseldorf (1713–14), in Paris (1720, frescoes destroyed), in the Castle at Mannheim (1736–7), and elsewhere. No less an international success was the more frivolous Jacopo Amigoni (1682–1752).[72] Born in Naples,

he must have arrived in Venice already experienced in Solimena's manner, but once again Giordano and Ricci exercised the most important formative influence upon him. In 1717 he was called to the Bavarian court where he painted his fresco cycles in Nymphenburg, Ottobeuren, and Schleissheim. He lived in England between 1730 and 1739, but only his frescoes in Moor Park near London survive. His last years from 1747 on he spent as court painter in Madrid. His later manner degenerated into a languid and melodramatic classicizing Rococo, a trend paralleled in the works of other artists not only in Italy but also in France and England.[73]

Although he does not seem to have left Venice, Giovanni Battista Pittoni (1687–1767) has an important share with Pellegrini and Amigoni in the international success of the Venetian Rococo. Beginning under his uncle, the weak Francesco Pittoni, he first formed his style in opposition to that of the Piazzetta–Bencovich circle. In the 1720s and 30s he produced with a nervous brush light and vibrant Rococo pictures, which reveal his attachment to Sebastiano Ricci and Tiepolo. A sophisticated colourist, he shows in his works a fragrant elegance and an arcadian mood distinctly close in feeling to the French Rococo.[74] Later, a further lightening of his palette goes hand in hand with tamer compositions, not uninfluenced by the general trend towards Neo-classicism.[75] In Pittoni's early work there are also suggestions of Roman Late Baroque influence, and these are due, as R. Pallucchini has shown, to his contact with Antonio Balestra (1666–1740),[76] a native of Verona.

Balestra, first trained in Venice under Antonio Bellucci, spent several years in Maratti's school in Rome (*c.* 1691–4), and later divided his time about equally between Venice and Verona. Without ever deserting Maratti's Late Baroque classicism, he found, like Ricci decisive stimuli in the art of Veronese and the late Giordano. His new formula of an equilibrium between the form-preserving academic Roman tradition and Venetian tonality prevented him from making concessions to Rococo art (Plate 191A). He found a large following, mainly among provincial painters; as a distinguished *caposcuola* Balestra determined the further course of the Veronese school and influenced not a few lesser Venetian artists.[77] His principal successors at Verona were his pupils Pietro Rotari (p. 413) and Giambettino Cignaroli (1706–70),[78] the latter a typical representative of the classicizing Rococo with false sentimental and moralizing overtones *à la* Greuze (Plate 191B), and therefore the darling of the bourgeois art-loving public of the time.[78a] Cignaroli's art is the North Italian counterpart to the trend represented by Benefial and Batoni in Rome. In Venice, Pietro Longhi began under Balestra but soon deserted him, while Giuseppe Nogari,[79] Mattia Bortoloni[80] (1695–1750), Angelo Trevisani[81] (1669–1753), and, as I have mentioned, the young Pittoni moved in his orbit.

Giambattista Tiepolo (1696–1770)

All the pictorial events in Venice during the early years of the eighteenth century look in retrospect like a preparation for the coming of the great genius, Giambattista Tiepolo.[82] From his first work, painted at the age of nineteen (Ospedaletto, Venice), his ascendancy over his older colleagues seemed a foregone conclusion. His career was meteoric; soon

he had risen to the position of peerless eminence which he maintained for half a century. From the start his output was prodigious. He began under the retardataire Gregorio Lazzarini but was immediately attracted by Piazzetta's *tenebroso* and the dramatic and bizarre art of Bencovich. These attachments are discernible in his first monumental work, the *Madonna del Carmelo*, painted *c.* 1721 (now Brera, Milan). Piazzettesque reminiscences linger on in one of his first frescoes, the *Glory of St Teresa* in the Chiesa degli Scalzi, Venice (*c.* 1725). In 1726 he began his first important fresco cycle outside Venice, in the Cathedral and the Archiepiscopal Palace at Udine, the masterpiece of his early period and a landmark on the way to his new airy and translucent art. After Udine, his work often took him outside Venice: in 1731 and again in 1740 to Milan where he painted first the ceilings in the Palazzi Archinto (destroyed during the war) and Casati-Dugna and, at the later visit, that in the Palazzo Clerici.[83] In 1732 and 1733 followed the frescoes in the Colleoni Chapel in Bergamo and between 1737 and 1739 the great ceiling with *St Dominic instituting the Rosary* in the Chiesa dei Gesuati, Venice. The next decade led him from triumph to triumph: the great canvases of the Scuola dei Carmini (1740–7); one of his grandest frescoes, the *Madonna di Loreto* on the vault of the Chiesa degli Scalzi (1743–4, destroyed during the first war);[84] and, *c.* 1744–5, the superb central saloon of the Palazzo Labia with the story of Cleopatra – these are some of the highlights of this period.

A new chapter in his career started at the beginning of the next decade, when he was commissioned to decorate the Kaisersaal and the Grand Staircase of the new Residenz at Würzburg, the capital of Franconia (December 1750–November 1753).[85] This immense task, the greatest test yet of his inexhaustible creative resources, was followed after his return to Venice by the *Triumph of Faith* on the ceiling of the Chiesa della Pietà (1754–5) and the decoration of a number of villas in the Veneto, among them the charming series of frescoes in the Villa Valmarana near Vicenza (1757). Works like the frescoes in the two rooms of the Palazzo Rezzonico, Venice (1758), the *Assumption* fresco in the Chiesa della Purità at Udine, painted in the course of one month in 1759, the *Triumph of Hercules* in the Palazzo Canossa at Verona (1761), and the *Apotheosis of the Pisani Family* in the great hall of the Villa Pisani at Stra (1761–2) occupied him during his last Italian years. In the summer of 1762, following an invitation from King Charles III, he arrived in Madrid, and it was there that he spent the last eight years of his life executing the enormous *Apotheosis of Spain* in the Throne Room of the Palace as well as two lesser ceilings,[86] and carrying out a multitude of private commissions. It was at the threshold of death that the aged painter had to face his first major defeat. At the instigation of the powerful Padre Joaquim de Electa, the King's Confessor, who was a supporter of Mengs, Tiepolo's seven canvases painted for the church of S. Pascal at Aranjuez were removed and replaced by works of his rival.

This survey indicates that Tiepolo was in the first place a painter in the grand manner, and it is in this capacity that he should be judged. In order to pinpoint his historical position, I have chosen to discuss one of his more modest fresco cycles, that of the Villa Valmarana, painted at the height of his career.[87] The programme in the five frescoed rooms is wholly in the tradition of grand history painting, illustrating scenes from Homer (prob-

ably in Valerius Maximus's version) and Virgil, from Ariosto and Tasso. Plate 192 shows the long wall of the hall with the *Sacrifice of Iphigenia*: in the centre the high priest, ready to thrust a butcher's knife into Iphigenia's body, and a servant with a platter to receive the sacrificial blood. But the killing does not take place; led by little cupids the deer dispatched by the goddess Diana – appeased and moved by the girl's innocence – arrives post-haste on a cloud in order to take Iphigenia's place, and the high priest as well as the crowd turn astonished in the direction of the unexpected sight. Only Agamemnon, Iphigenia's father, hiding his face in his cloak,[88] is still unaware of the miracle.

The scene takes place under a portico, the painted frontal columns of which seem to carry the actual cornice. With every means at his disposal Tiepolo produced the illusion that the perspective space of the fresco is a continuation of real space.[89] The illusionist extension of space is carried over to the opposite wall, where the portico architecture is repeated as setting for Greek warriors watching the events across the room. Moreover, the cloud with the deer seems to float far inside the beholder's space. On one side of the ceiling the goddess herself turns with commanding gesture towards the sacrifice, on the other side the wind-gods begin to blow again, and they blow in the direction of the Greek fleet, lying at anchor behind the portico of the opposite wall. Thus a web of relationships is created across the room and from the ceiling to both walls, and the beholder's space is made to form an integral part of the painted story. With remarkable logic, it is also the imaginary light shining from the painted sky that determines the distribution of light and shade in the frescoes.

Similar illusionist effects are operative in the Palazzo Labia, where Antony and Cleopatra seem to step down the painted staircase as if to join the crowds in the hall. Although the same degree of illusion could rarely be applied, Tiepolo revelled in illusionist devices such as the motif of the drawn curtains in the Kaisersaal of the Würzburg Residenz. It is evident that he takes his place in the monumental Renaissance–Baroque tradition, and if he revived the kind of illusionism familiar from Veronese and his school, he needed for his stronger effects the support of Bolognese *quadratura*; it is well known that he often employed his faithful *quadraturista*, Mengozzi-Colonna.[90] Behind the illusionist totality at which he aimed lies the accumulated experience of monumental Baroque art – not only the theory and practice of the *quadraturisti*, but in various ways also that of Cortona and Bernini, who had found new concepts for breaking down the boundary between real and imaginary space.

Nobody has ever been misled by the fictitious reality of the painted world. But just as in the theatre, the Baroque spectator craved for the maximum of illusion and was prepared to surrender to it. In contrast, however, to seventeenth-century illusionism, Tiepolo's emphatically rhetorical grand manner is sophisticated and hyperbolical in a typically eighteenth-century sense. Although he uses every means of illusion to conjure up a fictitious world, he seems himself to smile at the seriousness of the attempt. In the hall of the Villa Valmarana and in front of many of his secular works John Gay's epigram comes to mind: 'Life is a jest and all things show it . . .'.

The Villa Valmarana frescoes also reveal the extent to which Tiepolo abides by the classical compositional patterns of monumental painting. One finds a distinct emphasis

on triangles and basic diagonals and, while this may not be so obvious in multi-figured works, a close study shows that even in these each figure is clearly defined by a network of significant compositional relationships.[91] In the last analysis the figures themselves belong to the perennial repertory of the Italian grand manner; the links with Veronese are particularly strong, but even Raphael may be sensed.

I have stressed Tiepolo's traditionalism so much because he is in every sense the last link in a long chain. He himself was well aware of the full extent of the tradition. Veronese and Titian, Raphael and Michelangelo, even Dürer, Rembrandt, and Rubens and, of course, the whole development of Italian Baroque painting were familiar to him, and he did not hesitate to use from the past whatever seemed suitable. True to the new approach first encountered in Luca Giordano, he carried the weight of this massive heritage lightly and displayed his unrivalled virtuosity with unbelievable ease. Without the least sign of inhibition he turned the accumulated experience of 250 years to his own advantage; but since he was so sure of himself, every one of his works is an unimpaired entity, strong and immensely vigorous. The virile and heroic quality of his art is apparent even where he comes closest to French Rococo painting. The spirit of shepherds' idylls was not for him; whatever he touched had the epic breadth of the grand manner.

But Tiepolo was not simply the last great practitioner of history painting in the classical tradition – his particular glory and one of the reasons for his European success lies in his revolutionary palette. His early work was still relatively dark, with striking chiaroscuro effects and lights flickering over the surface. It was at this time that Rembrandt had a strong hold on him. The Udine frescoes of 1726–7 mark the decisive change: light unifies the work and penetrates into every corner. For the two other great magicians of light, Caravaggio and Rembrandt, light had always a symbolic quality and needed darkness as its complement. Tiepolo's light, by contrast, is the light of day, which resulted in the transparency and rich tonal values of all shadows. He created this light by using a silvery tone which reflects from figures as well as objects. It is this light that must be regarded as the crowning achievement of Tiepolo's art and, in a sense, of the inherent tendencies of Venetian painting. Contrary, however, to the warm palette of the older Venetian masters, Tiepolo's palette had to be cool in order to produce his daylight effect. As a result, his most brilliant accomplishment is his frescoes rather than his easel-paintings, so that his works in galleries, splendid as they may be, will never convey a full impression of his genius. This has to be emphasized, since we tend nowadays to prefer the intimate oil study, the rapid sketch in pen and wash, or the spirited etched capriccio to the rhetoric of the grand manner (Plate 194, A and B). All these are, of course, of the highest quality, but, true to tradition, to Tiepolo these were trifles to be indulged in as a pastime (unless they were preparatory studies for monumental works).[92]

Fresco-painting is the technique ideally suited to the grand manner with its requirement for monumentality, and, except in Venice, the masterpieces of Italian painting were therefore executed in this technique. It is like an act of historical propriety that the last giant of the grand manner was a Venetian and chose the fresco as his principal medium. Yet in one important respect Tiepolo broke away from customary procedure. Instead of the finish which one associates with fresco technique, he used a rapid and

vigorous stroke, so that in reproductions details of his frescoes often look almost like sketches (Plate 193A). It is precisely this inimitable brush-stroke that endows his frescoes with their intensity, exuberance, and freshness.

In the guest-house of the Villa Valmarana a few rooms are decorated with idyllic and topical subjects. The change of programme corresponds to a change of style for which Gian Domenico Tiepolo was responsible. Giambattista's heroic, epic, and mythological scenes are expressed in the language and grammar of the grand manner, while Gian Domenico's masquerades and village scenes are inconsistent with the compositional patterns of the classical tradition; the idealization of figures, too, is replaced by an anti-conventional and realistic idiom (Plate 193B). This change marks a change of generation. Gian Domenico, born in 1727, died as late as 1804: he buried the grand manner right under his father's vigilant eye.

Five years after the Villa Valmarana frescoes Tiepolo settled in Madrid. Shortly before him, Mengs had come to take up his appointment as painter to the king. When Tiepolo died, Goya was twenty-four years old – a fascinating constellation where Tiepolo as well as Mengs could only be the losers: the last great pillar of the Baroque tradition and the most celebrated exponent of academic art had to yield to the prophetic genius who gave rise to the art of the new century.[93]

The Genres

In the first chapter will be found some remarks about the so-called 'secularization' of painting in the seventeenth century and the growth of various specialities. As the century advanced, the specialists of landscape painting in its various facets, of battle- and animal-pieces, popular scenes and genre, of fruit, flower, fish, and other forms of still-life, and finally of portraiture grew considerably in numbers.[94] This answered a need, because these artists catered to a rapidly growing middle-class with new ideas of domestic comfort. Nevertheless the Italian position remained vastly different from that of a Protestant bourgeois civilization such as Holland's, where the process of specialization had begun a hundred years earlier. In Italy the nobility of monumental painting was never seriously challenged, and it is for this reason that, with the exception of portraiture, artists of rank rarely made the concession of delving into the 'lower' genres; only outsiders like Crespi were equally at home in religious imagery and the *petite manière* of domestic scenes. It is for the same reason that for the modern observer some of the most exciting and refreshing paintings of the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries came from the 'unprincipled' specialists. Yet, although much of their work may have a greater appeal than the large history-paintings of the Bolognese or Roman schools, compared with the endless number of practitioners, the real innovators, masters with a vision of their own, are few. It is mainly with these that I shall deal in the following pages, while many worthy artists of minor stature must be left unmentioned.

Portraiture

Almost all the great Late Baroque artists were excellent portrait painters – from Maratti to Batoni and Mengs, from Luca Giordano to Solimena, from Crespi to Tiepolo. It is an interesting aspect that their portraits were, as a rule, painted without theoretical encumbrances and therefore often speak to us more directly and more forcefully than their grand manner. Among the specialists in portraiture, two masters of rank may be singled out, Giuseppe Ghislandi, called Fra Vittore del Galgario (1655–1743), and Alessandro Longhi (1733–1813). Fra Galgario, born in Bergamo, studied in Venice under the portrait painter Sebastiano Bombelli (1635–1716), thus laying the foundation for his magnificent blending of Venetian colourism with the native tradition of Moroni's portraiture. From the latter he learned the secret of straightforward characterization of the sitter. It is his ability of unvarnished representation of character, to which he knew how to subordinate the pose, the often pompous or elegant contemporary dress, and the chromatic key, that makes him the most distinguished portrait painter of the Late Baroque period (Plate 195).

Alessandro Longhi, whose activity began a decade after Fra Galgario's long career had ended, represents to a certain extent the opposite pole in portrait painting.[95] Trained under his father Pietro and under Giuseppe Nogari (1699–1763), a specialist in rather facile character studies, he became the acknowledged master of Venetian state portraiture – of doges, senators, and magistrates – rendered with an infallible sense for tonal nuances; but in his portraits it is the stately robe rather than the character that makes the man. His gallery of Venetian dignitaries, continued without much change of style till after 1800, shows how little Venetian Rococo culture yielded to the temper of a new age.

On a lesser level portraiture flourished during the period, particularly in Venice and the *terra ferma*. Rosalba Carriera's (1675–1758) charming Rococo pastels come to mind; in her time these made her one of the most celebrated artists in Europe. Her visits to Paris (1721) and Vienna (1730) were phenomenal successes; in Venice all the nobles of Europe flocked to her studio. But her work, mellow, fragrant, and sweet, typically female and a perfect scion of the elegant Rococo civilization of Venice, is interesting (in spite of a recent tendency to boost it)[96] as an episode in the history of taste rather than for its intrinsic quality.

The Popular and Bourgeois Genre

In recent years much stir has been made by the masters whom Roberto Longhi called 'pittori della realtà'[97] – the masters who take 'life as it really is' as their subject and paint it with unconventional freedom and directness. But as Longhi himself made abundantly clear, this happy phrase has meaning only in a metaphorical sense. The Milan Exhibition of 1953 showed that an almost abstract Lombard quality unites the portraits of Carlo Ceresa, the still-lifes of Baschenis, and the popular genre of Ceruti, a 'magic immobility' (Longhi), a sophisticated convention far removed from a 'naive' approach to reality.

Giacomo Ceruti, called 'il Pitocchetto', also a history and portrait painter, remains, in spite of intense study,[98] something of an enigma. Active mainly in the second quarter of the eighteenth century, he left us a depressing gallery of beggars and idiots, of vagabonds, cripples, and dumb folk painted sparingly in a dark key, but with such descriptive candour that the spectre of Surrealism is not far from our minds (Plate 196A). The popular genre as such had fairly wide currency then, so that Ceruti's fascination with the forgotten and lost of humanity was not altogether unique.

Linked by many strands with the Flemish and Dutch masters, imported by them directly and indirectly into Italy, the lower genre appears during the seventeenth century in many guises: as animal pictures and rustic scenes in Genoa, as Bambocciate in Rome, as market scenes and low-class gatherings in Naples, or simply as semi-burlesque types in Annibale Carracci's *Arti di Bologna*. Yet it was only from the turn of the seventeenth to the eighteenth century on that the common man, the anonymous crowd, their doings, behaviour, and psychology attracted many painters, among them Giuseppe Maria Crespi (Plate 197A), Magnasco, and Piazzetta.

But the artists who regarded this genre as their special and sometimes only province form a group apart. Gaspare Traversi in Naples,[99] setting out from Caravaggesque sources, painted (between 1732 and 1769) episodes from the life of the middle classes with considerable temperament, psychological insight, and a lively sense for the farcical and grotesque. Concentrating entirely on the mute communication of figures often irrationally arranged on the canvas (Plate 196B), his work strikes a truer note than the more polite genre scenes of his contemporary Giuseppe Bonito (p. 306), who transferred something of the respectability of academic art into this sphere. Rome had in Antonio Amorosi (*c.* 1660–after 1736) a painter who conceived popular genre-scenes on a rather monumental scale. A revival of a certain amount of Caravaggism together with the reserve and intensity of his figures are the reason why many of his pictures went and still go under the names of Spanish artists, even of that of Velasquez. Amorosi, along with his contemporary Pier Leone Ghezzi[100] (1674–1755), was the pupil of the latter's father, Giuseppe Ghezzi (1634–1721). Pier Leone, whose frescoes and altarpieces are now all but forgotten, survives as the witty caricaturist of hundreds of contemporary Roman notables[101] – drawn, however, in a stereotyped manner – rather than as the painter of genre scenes. Giuseppe Gambarini[102] (1680–1725) in Bologna, who always reveals his Bolognese academic background, tends in some of his pictures towards the idyllic Rococo genre. But it was mainly in Lombardy and the Venetian hinterland that the lower and bourgeois genre, even before Ceruti, had its home with such minor practitioners as Pietro Bellotto (1625, not 27,–1700), a pupil of Forabosco and painter of meticulously observed heads of old people; Bernardo Keil[103] ('Monsù Bernardo', 1624–87), Rembrandt's pupil, working in Italy from 1651 on; Pasquale Rossi[104] called Pasqualino (1641–1725) from Vicenza, who practised mainly in Rome and may have influenced Amorosi; Antonio Cifrondi (1657–1730), Franceschini's pupil at Bologna, whose paintings are definitely related to the *Arti di Bologna* etchings; and Giacomo Francesco Cipper[105] called il Todeschini, probably a Tirolese working in the first half of the eighteenth century in a manner reminiscent of Ceruti's. These painters delight in illustrating homely

or gaudy and grotesque scenes, and the beholder is entertained by the narrative. All this is different in the case of Ceruti, where it is the scrupulous 'portrayal' of misery that has our attention.

Now Annibale Carracci's *Arti di Bologna*[106] were what may be called the incunabula of 'pure representation' of low-class types, and this tradition was kept alive in Giuseppe Maria Mitelli's (1634–1718) engravings. It would seem that Ceruti's art developed against this background[107] and that his paintings, therefore, represent types rather than portraits and contain literary connotations of which the modern beholder is unaware.

This observation leads to the major problems of the entire class of genre painting. Not 'real life', but traditions of old – visual as well as literary recollections – inform the incongruously farcical as well as the imaginary idyllic genre. Upon closer inspection it appears that the choice of subjects was limited. A standardized set was endlessly repeated, such as the Schoolmistress, the Sewing School, the Musical Party, the mendicant Friar, the old Drunkard, and so forth. In not a few cases the roots lie far back in the allegorical representations of the Middle Ages (e.g. the Schoolmistress as personification of Grammar, one of the Liberal Arts), in others the pattern derives from religious imagery or history painting (e.g. the Sewing School from Reni's fresco of the Virgin sewing). Moreover, it has rightly been pointed out[108] that by and large in Italy this class of painting lacks spontaneity, that the derivation from, and connexion with, the great formal tradition can often be sensed, and that Italians concentrate on the human figure rather than on the ambience. In contrast to the painters of northern countries, many of the Italian genre painters also practised the grand manner, or tried and, disappointed, deserted it. In addition, it can probably be shown that there was a lively exchange between Naples, Rome, and Lombardy with Bologna taking up a key position; that, in other words, the painters here named and many others knew of each others' work. What would seem an impromptu reaction against the formalism of the grand manner and the established conventions of decorum, springing up in a number of centres, was in fact an art with its own formal and iconographical conventions – a kind of academic routine of 'low art', far from any improvisation.

It is only when one turns to Pietro Longhi (1702–85) that one is faced with conversation pieces in the modern, eighteenth-century sense. At the opposite pole to Ceruti's restricted formula for the rendering of low-class types, Longhi, the most versatile Italian practitioner of the pleasant and unproblematical bourgeois genre, is more interested in catching the flavour of the scene enacted than in the characters of the actors (Plate 197B). While working at Bologna under Crespi, he came into contact with Gambarini's rather polished paintings of well-mannered peasants and washerwomen, an interpretation of everyday life that struck allied chords. Back in Venice, he became the recorder of the life and entertainments of polite society, always painted in the small cabinet format. But compared with the magic of a Watteau, the charm of a Lancret, the intimacy of a Chardin, or the biting wit of a Hogarth, the limitations of his talent are obvious.

Longhi's flair for showing the public their own lives in a somewhat beautifying mirror won him enthusiastic admirers.[109] Everywhere in Europe the bourgeois society of the second half of the century craved for a descriptive, anecdotal art, and, next to Longhi,

minor artists in Venice like Francesco Maggiotto and Antonio Diziani catered for this taste in various ways. It was perhaps a timely decision when Giambattista Tiepolo left for Spain in 1762.[110]

Landscape, Vedute, Ruins

During the seventeenth century the important events in the history of Italian landscape painting took place on Roman soil. It was there that the Venetian landscape of the sixteenth century was transformed by Annibale Carracci into the classically constructed humanist landscape which led on to the development of Claude's and Poussin's ideal and heroic landscape style; it was there that through Brill and Elsheimer the 'realistic' northern landscape got a firm foothold, was italianized by Agostino Tassi, and disseminated further by scores of northern artists who had settled in Rome; it was there, finally, that Salvator created the 'romantic' landscape which determined to a large extent the further history of Italian landscape painting.

For the following period it is necessary to differentiate, at least theoretically, between the landscapists proper and the masters of *vedute*, i.e. of topographical views. *Vedute*, which do not become important till the second half of the seventeenth century, are in fact a late offshoot, often combining landscape elements with the work of the trained architectural designer as well as the *quadraturista* or scene painter. At the time one distinguished between the *vedute esatte*, precise renderings of topographical situations, and the *vedute ideate* or *di fantasia*, imaginary views, which offered the possibility of indulging in dreamlike flights into the past and, above all, of rendering romantic and nostalgic pictures of ruins.[111] In Rome the arcadian and pastoral classical landscape remained in vogue, practised mainly by the exceedingly successful italianized Fleming Jan Frans van Bloemen, called Orizzonte (1662–1749),[112] and by Andrea Locatelli (1695–*c.* 1741),[113] whose elegant and tidy work shows a typically eighteenth-century luminosity and transparency. Neapolitan landscapists such as Gennaro Greco,[114] called Mascacotta (1663–1714), Pietro Cappelli, a Roman (d. 1727), Leonardo Coccorante (1700–50), and even the late Carlo Bonavia (or Bonaria, active 1750–88), stem mainly from Rosa and often emphasize the bizarre and fantastic.[115] Compared with these attractive but minor specialists, Rome had at least one great master who raised both the *veduta esatta* and *ideata* to the level of a great art.

Gian Paolo Pannini,[116] born at Piacenza in 1691/2, first formed by impressions of the Bibiena and other scenographic artists, in 1711 joined the studio of the celebrated Benedetto Luti in Rome. His frescoes in the Villa Patrizi (1718–25, destroyed) established him firmly as a master in his own right. Patronized by Cardinal Polignac and married to a Frenchwoman, his relations with France became close and his influence on French artists increasingly important. During the last thirty years of his life (he died in Rome in 1765) he was primarily engaged on topographical views of Rome, real and imaginary (Plate 199A), and one cannot doubt that he received vital impulses from the precise art of Giovanni Ghisolfi (1623–83),[117] whose *vedute ideate* show the characteristically Roman scenic arrangement of ruins. The boldness of Pannini's views, the sureness with which he placed his

architecture on the canvas – clear signs of the trained *quadraturista* – the handling and placing of his elegant figures, the atmosphere pervading his pictures, the crystalline clarity of his colours, the precision of his draughtsmanship – all these elements combine into an art *sui generis*, which had as much influence on the majestic visions of a Piranesi as on the arcadian world created by Hubert Robert.

Earlier than most of Pannini's *vedute*, but influenced by them at the end of his career, are the often somewhat dry topographical renderings of the city by the Dutchman Gaspar van Wittel,[118] called Vanvitelli, who was born at Amersfoort in 1653, made Italy his home in 1672, and worked mainly in Naples and Rome where he died in 1736. Deriving from the northern microcosmic tradition of a Berkheyde, in Italy he soon developed a sense for well-composed panoramic views without ever abandoning the principle of factual correctness.

With Vanvitelli and Pannini and later with the magnificent engraved work of the Venetian Giambattista Piranesi (p. 236), Rome maintained a position of eminence in the special field of topographical and imaginary *vedute*.[119] Nonetheless, Venice also asserted her ascendancy in landscape painting and the allied genres. Marco Ricci (1676–1730),[120] Sebastiano's nephew and collaborator (Plate 187B), must be regarded as the initiator of the new Venetian landscape style, which through him became an immediate international success. He worked in Turin, Rome, Florence, and Milan, and visited London twice between 1708 and 1716, the second time (1712–16) in the company of his uncle. From 1717 on he made Venice his home. With his knowledge of intra-Italian developments Marco combined quick reactions and a spirit of real artistic adventure. Thus, in the first three decades of the eighteenth century his manner underwent many changes: the early 'scenographic' views derive from Carlevarijs, the dark, tempestuous landscapes betray the study of Salvator and Micco Spadaro, the more arcadian ones that of Claude; in the second decade his landscapes show some of the magic and nervous tension of Magnasco; later his interest in classical ruins grows; at the same time his vision broadens, his palette lightens, and the landscapes take on an eighteenth-century luminous and atmospheric character (Plate 187B). At this late moment he appears as a master of the *vedute ideate*, fantastic visions of crumbled antiquity, even before Pannini had developed his own style in this genre.

Giuseppe Zais (1709–84) formed his rustic style as a landscapist upon the art of Marco Ricci before he came into contact with the Tuscan Francesco Zuccarelli (1702–88), who settled in Venice about 1732 and soon found himself in the leading position vacated by Marco Ricci's death. Trained in Florence by Paolo Anesi and in Rome possibly by Locatelli, Zuccarelli had little of Marco's bravura although he strove to emulate the latter's atmospheric luminosity. But Tuscan that he was, his festive idylls and arcadian elysiums under their large blue skies – more in line of descent from Claude than from Marco – always retain a non-Venetian colouristic coolness. His sweet and amiable art secured him international success. He worked in Paris and London, where he became a foundation member of the Royal Academy (1768), and his influence on the history of English landscape painting is well known.

The most gifted follower of Marco Ricci, but probably Canaletto's pupil, was Mi-

chele Marieschi (1710–43);[1 1] with a quick brush he painted imaginary views of Venice, landscapes with ruins, and capriccios in which something of the scenographic tradition is retained. It has long been known that his work, usually in strong chiaroscuro and glittering with the warm and brilliant light of the Venetian lagoon, had a formative influence on the greater Francesco Guardi.

To the extent that all these landscapists were also *vedutisti*, it was primarily the *veduta di fantasia* that interested them. But parallel with the *veduta esatta* by Vanvitelli and Pannini runs a development at Venice: if Luca Carlevarijs from Udine (1663–1730) was the Venetian Vanvitelli, Antonio Canale, called Canaletto (1697–1768), was the Venetian Pannini. Carlevarijs,[122] also renowned as an engraver, approached his subject with the eye and knowledge of the trained *quadraturista*. The scenic effect of his views of the Piazza S. Marco and the Canal Grande with their studied emphasis on perspective, the crowds, gondolas and accessories filling his pictures, his interest in the narrative or the festive event (e.g. the *Reception of the Fourth Earl of Manchester as Ambassador at Venice*, 1707, City Art Gallery, Birmingham) – all this shows how different his art is from that of his Roman counterpart. Yet like Vanvitelli he was mainly a 'chronicler', concerned with the factual rather than the poetical aspect of the scene recorded. It was precisely this, the poetical quality, the responsiveness to the mood of Venice, to her light and atmosphere, that Canaletto knew how to render. He began as a theatrical designer under his father. After an early visit to Rome (1719), he worked first with Carlevarijs, and his choice of views and motifs reveals it even at a much later date.

Canaletto's characteristic style was formed as early as 1725 (four pictures for Stefano Conti at Lucca, now Montreal, private collection).[123] Although he slowly turned from an early *tenebroso* manner to a brightly and warmly lit atmospheric interpretation of his *vedute*, in keeping with the general eighteenth-century trend, he remained faithful to a fluid and smooth paint; and it is this that helps to convey the impression of a dispassionate festive dignity and beatitude (Plate 199B). No eighteenth-century painter was more to the taste of the British, and owing to the patronage of the remarkable Consul Smith at Venice there was soon a steady flow of Canalettos to England, followed up between 1746 and 1755 by three visits of the artist to London.[124]

A high-class imitator of Canaletto's manner was his pupil Giuseppe Moretti;[125] but only Bernardo Bellotto (1720–80), Canaletto's nephew, was capable of a personal interpretation of the older artist's work. He left Venice at the age of twenty and, after working in Rome, Turin, Milan, and Verona, sought his fortune north of the Alps. Between 1747 and 1756 he was court painter in Dresden, later he went to Vienna and Munich, and the last thirteen years of his life he spent as court painter in Warsaw, poetically ennobling cities and buildings under northern skies by the mathematical precision of his vision and the terse application of a small range of cold 'moonlight' colours.[126]

Often allied with the name of Canaletto, but in fact taking up a diametrically opposite position, Francesco Guardi (1712–93) must be given the palm among the *vedutisti*. His modest life-story remains almost as anonymous as that of a medieval artist. Although in 1719 his sister was married to Tiepolo, it is only after patient research that a minimum of facts has become known about him. He never attracted the attention of foreign visi-

tors, and not till he was seventy-two was he admitted to the Venetian Academy. Until 1760 his personality was submerged in the family studio headed by his brother Gianantonio (1699, not 98,–1760).[127] In this studio Francesco plodded along like an artisan of old and never relinquished antiquated practices. As a man of over thirty he seems also to have worked in Marieschi's studio and when over forty in that of Canaletto. Moreover, he did not hesitate to repeat himself nor to use other artists' works – next to Canaletto's, compositions by Sebastiano Ricci, Fetti, Piazzetta, Strozzi, Crespi – and one of his most ravishing paintings, the *Gala Concert* of 1782 (Munich, Alte Pinakothek), was cribbed from a dry engraving by Antonio Baratti after a design by Giovanni Battista Canal. Finally, much of his output was the work of collaboration in the studio, where every kind of commission was accepted, from religious pictures[128] to history paintings, battle-pieces, and even frescoes (1750s, Cà Rezzonico, Venice). Only in his later years and, above all, after the death of the elder brother does he seem to have concentrated on the painting of *vedute*, for which he is now mainly famed.

It was his collaboration with Gianantonio that opened up a major problem of criticism. Until fairly recently it was believed that Francesco was the real and only genius in the studio. Now, however, the scales have been reversed and Gianantonio seems to emerge as an equally great figure.[129] If he – as seems likely – and not Francesco was the master of the paintings for the organ in the Chiesa dell'Angelo Raffaele (after 1753; Plate 200A), then, indeed, the palm must go to him. In spite of such re-valuation of far-reaching importance and in spite of the seeming shortcomings of Francesco's practices, his work speaks an unmistakable language.

While Canaletto stands in the old tradition of fluid and even application of paint, a tradition which was ultimately concerned with the preservation of form, Guardi stems from the 'modern' masters of the loaded brush, the masters *di tocco*, and the ancestry of his art goes back through Marieschi and Marco Ricci to Magnasco, and further to Maffei, Fetti, and Lys. While Canaletto is primarily concerned with the skilful manipulation of architectural prospects and therefore remains inside the great Italian tradition of firm compositional structure, Guardi drifts more and more towards so free and personal an interpretation of the material world (Plate 200B) that its structure appears accidental rather than essential to his dreamlike visions. While Canaletto objectifies even the poetry of Venice, Guardi subjectifies even factual recordings. While the former, in a word, is still a child of the Renaissance tradition in so far as the thing painted is an intrinsic part of the painter's performance, the latter steps outside that tradition in so far as the thing painted seems to have no more than extrinsic value.

But whether it was Gianantonio or Francesco who crowned the pursuits of the masters of the free brush-stroke, it is in their work that solid form is dissolved and dematerialized to an extent undreamed of by any precursor (Plate 200A). Between them, the two brothers opened the way to the 'pure' painters *di tocco* of the next century, the Impressionists, who like them thought that form was fleeting and conditioned by the atmosphere that surrounds it.

Thus two masters essentially of the *petite manière* had broken through the vicious circle of Renaissance ideology and vindicated the development of a free painterly ex-

pression which had started with the late Titian, with Tintoretto and Jacopo Bassano, had constantly invigorated Italian Baroque painting at all levels, and had contributed even more to the course painting took in the Low Countries and Spain.

On this note the book might well have ended, were it not for a strange paradox. Francesco Guardi's art has often been compared with the music of Mozart. Despite his modernity, Guardi was a man of his century and, more specifically, a man of the Rococo. He continued creating his spirited capriccios and limpid visions of Venice long after the spectre of a new heroic age had broken in on Europe. When he died in the fourth year of the French Revolution, few may have known or cared that the reactionary backwater of Venice, the meeting place of the ghostlike society of the past, had harboured a great revolutionary of the brush.