







POETRY AND PAINTING IN THE 17TH CENTURY

GIOVAN BATTISTA MARINO AND THE MARVELOUS PASSION

19.11.2024 — 09.02.2025

Curated by
Emilio Russo, Patrizia Tosini and Andrea Zezza

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Rome, November 18, 2024. With the exhibition scheduled from November 19, 2024, to February 9, 2025, *Poetry and Painting in the 17th Century. Giovan Battista Marino and the Marvelous Passion* - recipient of the Medal of the President of the Republic - the Galleria Borghese explores, through an original project, the connections between poetry and painting, sacred and profane, literature, art, and power in the early 17th century.

Following the path offered by the texts of **Giovan Battista Marino** (1569-1625), the exhibition traces a journey through great Renaissance and Baroque art works, from **Titian** to **Tintoretto**, from **Correggio** to the **Carracci**, from **Rubens** to **Poussin**, celebrating the greatest Italian poet of the 17th century and his 'marvelous' passion for painting.

Curated by **Emilio Russo, Patrizia Tosini, and Andrea Zezza**, the exhibition focuses on the golden age of the Baroque in painting and literature, a period during which the relationship between the two arts may have found its most profound expression in the life and works of the poet.

Best known for his poem *Adone* (1623), centered on the love story between Adonis and Venus, Giovan Battista Marino is also the author of *La Galeria* (1619), a collection of 624 poetic compositions dedicated to an equal number of works of art, divided between Paintings and Sculptures, Fables and Histories. This collection was crafted by **playing with reflection** and the continuous expressive challenge between poetic texts and works of art, real or imaginary.

The life and literary production of Giovan Battista Marino are closely tied to the masters and masterpieces of early 17th-century figurative art, with whom he came into contact in the intellectual circles and most important courts of the time: that of Matteo di Capua in Naples, of Pope Clement VIII Aldobrandini in Rome, of Giovan Carlo Doria and Giovan Vincenzo Imperiali in Genoa, and of Carlo Emanuele I in Turin. In these environments, surrounded by rich collections, the poet **established direct relationships with artists** such as Cavalier d'Arpino, Bernardo Castello, Caravaggio, Agostino Carracci, Ludovico Cigoli, and Palma il Giovane.

In 1615, persecuted by the **Inquisition**, Giovan Battista Marino was forced to leave Italy, finding refuge in Paris at the court of Louis XIII and Maria de' Medici, where he remained until 1623. There, he met **Nicolas Poussin**, for whom he wrote a kind of letter of introduction that the artist would take with him upon his arrival in Rome. With this symbolic journey, the final phase of the poet's life becomes linked to the pivotal Roman sojourn of the great French painter.

With its unique collection of masterpieces started by Cardinal Scipione Borghese in the early decades of the 17th century, the care of the works, and the distinctly Baroque scenographic display, **Galleria Borghese** represents the ideal **context** to revisit the figure of Giovan Battista Marino as a poet and his relationship with the figurative arts, and how, in the 17th century, the latter began to mutually influence literary production.



Divided into five sections, the exhibition path opens with several great masterpieces by Correggio, Titian, and Tintoretto, collected in the section titled *Poetry and Painting in the 17th Century. Introduction to Giovan Battista Marino*, which introduces the viewer to the relationship between poetic tradition and figurative tradition already present during the 16th century. This relationship becomes the lens through which to observe Baroque art, of which Giovan Battista Marino, with his interests and transversal connections, was an exemplary representative.

In the section *La Galeria and Giovan Battista Marino's Dialogue with Artists*, dedicated to the collection *La Galeria*, the exhibition retraces Giovan Battista Marino's relationship with the great art of the Renaissance and Baroque through a close comparison between paintings, sculptures, and their literary transpositions. Here, masterpieces by Luca Cambiaso, Titian, Palma the young, Peter Paul Rubens, Cavalier d'Arpino, Alessandro Turchi, and Pietro Bernini are displayed, all artists in some way connected to the life and writings of Giovan Battista Marino.

In the section on *The Massacre of the Innocents*, named after one of the poet's greatest works, another theme addressed by Giovan Battista Marino is explored, starting from the figurative tradition. The work was published posthumously only in 1632, but at the beginning of the century, the biblical theme had also regained popularity in painting, thanks to large-scale works created by, among others, Guido Reni, Giovanni Battista Paggi, Nicolas Poussin, and Pietro Testa, who grappled with the representation of a horror which is also capable of evoking wonder.

The section titled *Adonis between Sacred and Profane* collects works related to the myth of Adonis—a beautiful youth loved by Venus, destined for a tragic end—who is the protagonist of the homonymous poem by Marino, which can be considered the symbolic work of 17th-century Italian literature, a triumph of poetry that blends sacred and profane elements, constructed as tableaux or arrangements of poetic pictures. This section features masterpieces by Palma the young, Scarsellino, and Poussin related to the myth, works that range from the most sensual outcomes, characteristic of the love story between Adonis and the goddess, to the more tragic aspects concerning his death and the lamentation of Venus, which also subtly reference sacred representations.

The final section of the exhibition, *Farewell: The Apotheosis of Giovan Battista Marino and the Discovery of Nicolas Poussin*, pays tribute to the most significant legacy of Giovan Battista Marino's artistic passion: the insight into the greatness of the young Nicolas Poussin. The meeting between the two at the court of Maria de' Medici in Paris is the premise for Poussin's journey to Rome and the subsequent creation of several works such as *The Lamentation over the Dying Adonis*, *The Parnassus*, and *The Inspiration of the Poet*, all clearly linked to the celebration of Marino's poetry.

With *Poetry and Painting in the 17th Century: Giovan Battista Marino and the Marvelous Passion*, Galleria Borghese invites the public to explore the fascinating intertwining of words and images that captivated Giovan Battista Marino, leading to the rediscovery of the seminal legacy of a scholar who was able to weave together the beauty of poetry and the allure of the figurative arts.

The exhibition also offers the opportunity to rediscover the newly restored spaces of the Pinacoteca after a year of work financed thanks to the National Recovery and Resilience Plan (NRRP) Italia Domani. With these funds, Galleria Borghese has carried out renovation works and developed projects to improve the cultural accessibility of the museum and its collection. The updating of lighting, upholstery and windows has contributed both to a more effective conservation of the works and to energy efficiency. A visit has also been aesthetically renewed, with new colours on the walls of the Pinacoteca, inspired by the shades of the masterpieces they house.



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BIOGRAPHY GIOVAN BATTISTA MARINO (1569-1625)

Marino was born in Naples in 1569. Little is known about his youth but we know that he dedicated himself to poetry early on and that, in around 1593, he joined the court of Matteo of Capua, prince of Conca. There, he was able to admire Matteo's impressive art collection, full of works attributed to Raphael, Correggio and Titian.

Towards the end of the century, the first signals of an unusual character emerged. He was incarcerated twice - first in 1598, then in 1600 - for accusations which remain somewhat mysterious. In 1600, he managed to flee to Rome, where he quickly secured protection from the family of Melchiorre Crescenzi, the Cleric of pope Clement VIII Aldobrandini. It would prove to be a formative chapter in the poet's life, because it allowed Marino to immerse himself in the literary scene and the aristocratic world, especially the one in Rome. He mingled with cardinals, poets and painters, among whom were Caravaggio and the Cavalier d'Arpino.

In 1602 he published *Rime* in Venice, reaching significant success, to such an extent that he was invited to work for Pietro Aldobrandini, the cardinal nephew of Clement VII. However, after Clement VII's death this position became less favourable. Marino was forced to move to Ravenna with the Aldobrandini. He quickly sought another court position and, in 1608-1609, he grew close to the Duke Carlo Emmanuele I of Savoy, and the court of Turin.

When he reached Turin, the success he had obtained sparked a rivalry with the poet Gasparo Murtola. Their conflict started with an exchange of insulting sonnets but Murtola, sensing defeat, decided to get rid of Marino by shooting him in the street. The attack failed. Murtola was arrested and Marino remained the master of the poetic field. However, at that very moment, a case was opened up against Marino by the inquisition in Rome, accusing him of composing 'obscene and sinful poetry'.

In testament to his restless nature, Marino was arrested again in April of 1611, this time by Carlo Emanuele's order for reasons which remain unknown. He remained in prison for another year and, in a telling detail, all of his manuscripts were confiscated. In 1614, once he was freed, he published another collection of poetry, the *Lira*, and a long, prose piece, *Dicerie sacre*. This last work, dedicated to the pope, was intended to soften the threat of the inquisition but his efforts did not succeed and Marino was repeatedly called to Rome to be interrogated.

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Fearing his arrest, Marino moved to Paris in 1615, to the court of Maria de' Medici and swiftly earned a privileged position there too. He lived in Paris for eight years, publishing several works (most notably the *Gallery* in 1619 - a collection of 624 poems, each one thought to be a poetic exercise relating to a work of art). In 1623, towards the end of his stay in France, two key events occurred: the *Adone*, Marino's masterpiece, was published, and Marino met the young Nicolas Poussin, who received Marino's admiration and his support to come to Rome.

In 1623 he decided to return to Rome. However, once he arrived he found himself in an unfortunate position. The new pope Urban VIII Barberini, did not temper the legal action against Marino, which was still active in the holy office. Therefore, Marino was first forced into house arrest, followed by the humiliation of a public retraction in the church of Santa Maria under Minerva.

In 1624, distribution of the *Adone* was suspended by the inquisition. Marino decided to leave Rome and go to Naples, where he planned to organise a large house-museum where he would gather his books and all the artworks he had collected over the years. However, towards the end of the year, he fell ill and eventually died on the 26th of March 1625. Before he died, Marino decided to burn all the manuscripts of his profane works. A witness reported that "he commanded in his will that all his manuscripts should be set on fire, not only the satirical and lascivious ones, but all which were not sacred".



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CURATORS' BIOGRAPHIES

EMILIO RUSSO

Emilio Russo is Professor of Italian literature at Sapienza University in Rome. He has dedicated his scholarship primarily to authors located between the Renaissance and Baroque periods - including Ariosto, Tasso and Marino – and to nineteenth century Italian authors, Leopardi and Nievo. His publications include: the monograph *Marino* (2008); the 2013 commentary of *Adone* by Giovan Battista Marino, la *Guida alla lettura della "Gerusalemme liberata"* di Tasso (2014), the monograph *Ridere del mondo. La lezione di Leopardi* (2017) and the 2022 commentary of Leopardi's *Pensieri*.

PATRIZIA TOSINI

Patrizia Tosini is Professor of History of Modern Art at the University of Roma Tre. Her scholarship focuses on the figurative art of the Counter-reformation, particularly painting and drawing in Rome between the sixth and seventeenth centuries; the relationship between poetry and figurative art in the early seventeenth century; and the noble Capitoline families and their artistic patronage. Her primary publications include the monographs *Girolamo Muziano. Dalla Maniera alla Natura* (2008), *Immagini ritrovate. La decorazione di villa Peretti Montalto tra Cinque e Seicento* (2015), and the edited volumes *Intrecci Virtuosi. Letterati, artisti e accademie tra Cinque e Seicento* (2017), *Tra Campidoglio e Curia. L'ospedale del SS. Salvatore ad Sancta Sanctorum tra Medioevo ed età moderna* (2017), *Chapels of the Cinquecento and Seicento in the Churches of Rome* (2020), *Marino e l'arte tra Cinque e Seicento* (2021); *Lo stucco nell'età della Maniera: cantieri, maestranze e modelli* (2022) and *L'Europa della porpora. Arte e politica dei Principi della Chiesa (1564-1605)* (being published). She edited the new edition of *Vite de' pittori, scultori et architetti* by Giovanni Baglione (2023) with Barbara Agosti. She was also a curator, along with N. Navone and L. Tedeschi, on the exhibition «*Le invenzioni di tante opere. Domenico Fontana e i suoi cantieri*» at Pinacoteca Züst in Rancate (Switzerland) in 2023.

ANDREA ZEZZA

Andrea Zezza is Professor of History of Modern Art at the University of Campania Luigi Vanvitelli. His work has primarily focused on Renaissance art in Southern Italy and on art literature from the 16th to the 18th century. In recent years, he has become closely involved with Technical Art History, helping to set up a joint diagnostic laboratory between the Capodimonte Museum, the University and CNR. His main publications include the volume *Arti e lettere a Napoli tra Cinque e Seicento: studi su Matteo di Capua principe di Conca*, Roma 2020 the four-volume annotated edition of *Vite de' pittori scultori e architetti napoletani [Napoli 1742-1745]*, (2003-2014 e 2nd ed. 2017), and *Marco Pino. L'opera completa* (2003). He has recently curated the exhibitions *Otro Renacimiento. Artista españoles en Nápoles a Comienzos del Cinquecento*, with Riccardo Naldi, Madrid, Museo del Prado, Madrid (October 2022- January 2023) e *Raffaello a Capodimonte*, with Angela Cerasuolo, Museo e Real Bosco di Capodimonte, Napoli, (June-November 2021).

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INFORMATION

**Poetry and Painting in the 17th Century
Giovan Battista Marino
and the Marvelous Passion.**

Press preview
November 18th, 2024
9.30 am – 12.30 pm

Opening
November 18th, 2024
6 pm – 9 pm

Open to visitors
November 19th 2024 –
February 9th 2025

GALLERIA BORGHESSE

Piazzale Scipione Borghese, 5
00197 Rome, Italy

Opening days and hours
From Tuesday to Sunday:
from 9 am to 7 pm
(No entry after 5.45 pm)
Closed every Mondays
The visits lasts 2 hours
and admission is every hour

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Reduced 18-25 years old € 2.00
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for all kinds of ticket € 2.00

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EXHIBITION ROUTE

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CAVALIER MARINO AT THE GALLERIA BORGHESE

Giovan Battista Marino (1569-1625) was one of the most important poets of the 17th century, known for his great work *Adone* (1623) and for the *Galeria* (1619), a collection of hundreds of poems composed in relation to just as many works of art. He bore witness to the greatest art collections of his age, sparking a lifelong admiration which he carried through Italy and France, before returning to Rome in 1623, at the height of his fame. It was a dramatic return, however, due to the accusations of heresy which forced the poet into the humiliation of a public retraction and exile to Naples, where he died in 1625. In this eventful life, Marino crossed paths with the leading artistic protagonists of his age, forming relationships with many artists from whom he collected drawings and paintings. The aim of this exhibition is to use the lens of Marino's verses to reveal the relationship between art and literature in the early 17th century, the very moment that Baroque literature was born.

The exhibition also endeavours to relate Marino's ideal collection with the one Cardinal Scipione Borghese (1577-1633) began to assemble. The poet and the cardinal – both art lovers and among the most influential people of their age – collected and commissioned paintings from all over Italy, despite the distance between them due to their enormous social difference. Nonetheless, the two did not have a good relationship. Marino tried many times to endear himself to the powerful cardinal, but Borghese, unable to tolerate the erotic nature of Marino's poems, remained one of his key adversaries and one of those primarily responsible for the Inquisition's accusations which would lead to his condemnation in 1623. As presented in this exhibition, the enmity between the cardinal and the poet dissolves in the name of their mutual passion for the splendour of works of art—described, celebrated, and collected.

I. POETRY AND PAINTING IN THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY: AN INTRODUCTION TO GIOVAN BATTISTA MARINO

"A thousand portraits have been made of me in Rome": Giovan Battista Marino wrote this in 1623, when he returned to the city after a triumphant stay in Paris. Indeed, excellent artists made many portraits of the poet, such as the now-lost works by Caravaggio, Simon Vouet and Guido Reni. Amongst the surviving portraits, Frans Pourbus' splendid depiction stands out: he presents the poet as proud, with a book in his hand, a symbol of his success and poetic genius, the very thing that earned him his knighthood.

Just one year after the poet's death, the Florentine Francesco Furini would paint his 'manifesto' on the partnership between the sister-arts of Poetry and Painting, a concept that informed all of Marino's works. In truth, however, thanks to the great masters of Renaissance Italy – Leonardo, Raphael, Michelangelo, Correggio and Titian – sixteenth-century Painting triumphed over Poetry—"a victory that was given eloquent testimony by the efforts of poets' sensual descriptions that were intended to compete with the [painters'] brushes" (Praz). The 'favole' (mythological subjects) depicted by Raphael, Correggio, Titian, and later Luca Cambiaso and Jacopo Tintoretto, drawn from the myths described in canonical texts from antiquity, sealed in the Seicento the fate of these painted 'poems' which, as you will see in the following sections, consistently nourished Marino's poetic efforts and drove his appetite as a collector.



II. THE *GALERIA* AND MARINO'S DIALOGUE WITH ARTISTS

The *Galeria* – a collection of poetry wherein each poem corresponds to a real or imaginary artwork – was published in 1619, after a long gestation, by the Venetian publisher Giovan Battista Ciotti. This celebrated work by Marino assembles 624 poems – mostly madrigals and sonnets – divided into *Pitture* (*Paintings*) and *Sculture* (*Sculptures*), to reconstruct an ideal 17th-century gallery in a reflective game which poses a continuous expressive challenge.

At first, Marino imagined the work would be illustrated “with the most beautiful engraved drawings” for which he commissioned sketches of “antique fables” from his artist-friends. However, he had to give up this plan. The section on *Paintings* includes mythological and religious works (*Favole* and *Istorie*) *Ritratti* (*Portraits*), and *Capricci* (imaginary scenes). *Sculpture* includes *Rilievi*, *Modelli*, *Medaglie* (*Relief*, *Models*, *Medals*) and another section on *Capricci*. In 1614, the poet describes the project, saying: “Here you have the *Galeria*, just like a *Pinacoteca* (picture gallery) – as Petronius described – a place where, as in Antiquity, paintings are kept ... where *Istorie* are both sacred and profane, and are explained with various poetic fantasies and the praises of the most illustrious masters ... where the *Favole* are those most famous tales, taken from the Greek and Latin poets.”

The works displayed in this section, accompanied by Marino's timely verses, aim to reflect the themes and compositions of those artworks that the poet admired in the great contemporary collections he visited and then celebrated in the *Galeria*. The selection intends to reconstruct the figurative imagery that caught Marino's eye and duly nourished his poetic verses.

II. MARINO AND CARAVAGGIO

According to Giovan Pietro Bellori's account, Marino and Caravaggio would have been “very close friends.” However, we only have limited, and sometimes unreliable, information about their relationship. Nevertheless, the poet certainly expressed generous praise for the artist in various works, with tributes written and published long after the painter's death. In fact, there are two texts dedicated to Caravaggio in the *Galeria*: a sonnet praising his portrait of Marino (*Ritratti*, XV, 11), and a madrigal for the famous tondo of the head of Medusa, now in the Uffizi (*Pitture*, 48). Caravaggio is also remembered in the poem *Il Tempio* from 1614, and again in *Adone*, where Marino pays tribute to him in four verses, an exceptional case when compared to the fleeting mention he gives to other painters. Therefore, his admiration appears to have been sincere although their acquaintance must have been brief, since it started in Clement VIII Aldobrandini's Rome – between 1600-1605 – at the beginning of the poet's career and the end of the artist's Roman period. It was perhaps during these years that Marino managed to obtain the *Susanna* “by Caravaggio's hand” in his collection, which he recalls in a letter (*Letters* 1620). To this day, neither the *Susanna* nor the portrait of Marino have been traced.

II. *FAVOLE* AND *ISTORIE*

The *Galeria*, the magnificent collection of 624 poems that Marino dedicated to works of art, opens with two sections. They are perfectly complementary and yet conflicting in their ideals and tone, reflecting the most important strands in 16th- and 17th-century visual narratives. On one side, Marino collects the *Favole*, derived from Ovidian mythological heritage, and from the other he composes the *Istorie*, inspired by stories from sacred scriptures and the lives of saints. These are two sections with different origins. The *Favole* are often connected to the collection of drawings that the poet accumulated over the years. The sheets displayed here offer eloquent examples from this collection. The *Istorie*, however, form a literary evocation of the works that Marino observed in the great art collections he visited over the course of his travelling career, like a list of the masterpieces that most impressed him for their style, but also for their rendering of the subject. In the first section of the *Galeria*, both strands that fed Marino's fantasy – the sacred and the profane – invite the reader into an imaginary museum created by its verses. It even evokes the excitement provoked by an encounter with a work of art, by recording a reaction of surprise, sometimes confusion, or even pleasure mixed with discomfort. It is

poetry that intentionally resists a developing narrative in order to restore the present moment and, in doing so, comes close to the communicative immediacy of the visual medium.

III. THE *STRAGE DE GL'INNOCENTI*

Beyond the Profane Marino lies the Sacred, capable of devoting splendid verses to religious themes, as is clearly evident in his *Strage de gl'Innocenti* (*Massacre of the Innocents*). This octave poem narrates an episode from the Gospel of St. Matthew, recounting Herod's order to kill all the Jewish children born in Galilee. In a letter to Bernardo Castello, Marino requested drawings from the artist, hoping to produce an edition of his poem in which his verses would be accompanied by images. The illustrated project never materialized, however. It was only after 1623 that the poet considered publishing his work, when he organised public readings of the text in the Campidoglio, arousing the admiration of his contemporaries. Nevertheless, the poem remained unpublished until 1632, seven years after Marino's death, when it was met with great success.

To describe the massacre – which Marino envisioned in comparison with a painting by the Cavalier d'Arpino – the poet relied on the rich figurative tradition of the 16th and 17th centuries, from Raphael's model printed by Marcantonio Raimondi, to Giovan Battista Paggi and Guido Reni's masterpieces. He also drew from other literary models, particularly the *Umanità di Cristo* by Pietro Aretino. Raimondi's print and Paggi's pictorial fragment represent the sources that fed Marino's imagination, emblematic of the aesthetic principles which combine horror with delight. The works of Testa and Poussin attest to the vitality of this subject in 17th-century art, a fate which the publication of Marino's masterpiece certainly contributed to.

IV. *ADONE* BETWEEN THE SACRED AND PROFANE

The creation of Marino's *Adone* spanned his whole career, becoming, over the years, the very centrepiece of his oeuvre. The myth, told in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, describes Venus' love for a young man (Adonis), its sexual fulfilment and its tragic ending when Adonis is killed by a wild boar, driven by Mars' jealousy. A wealth of literature was devoted to this theme over the course of the 17th century, and the story of Adonis inspired some pictorial masterpieces by the likes of Titian, Veronese and Tintoretto.

Marino began composing *Adone* during his youth in Naples and continued to work on it for many years. Though initially fairly compact, the poem expanded significantly after 1615, comprising 20 cantos and over 40,000 verses. After its publication in Paris in 1623, *Adone* became the model of excellence in Baroque poetry: a work filled with figurative imagery that reflected Marino's great passion for art. The paintings in this section present the myth in relation to the poem: on one side, the lovers are shown through works by Cambiaso and Palma the Younger; on the other, paintings by Scarsellino, Turchi, Laurent de Hyre, and Poussin represent Venus' lament over Adonis' dying body, in a manner that evokes the Virgin weeping over Christ's deposition. Marino's whole poem plays on the mixing of the sacred and profane, a risky decision which led to the *Adone*'s condemnation and its banishment to the *Indice dei libri proibiti* (Index of forbidden books).

V. THE APOTHEOSIS OF MARINO AND THE DISCOVERY OF NICOLAS POUSSIN

The discovery of Nicolas Poussin's talents is the poet's most evident contribution to the history of art. Marino met Poussin in Paris in 1622 and "invited him to paint in his house" where "he remained mostly sick in bed and enjoyed making drawings depicting his [Marino's] own poetry, especially of *Adone*" (Bellori). He asked the young painter to follow him to Rome in 1623. However, after their arrival, the poet, who was being pursued by the Inquisition, sought refuge in Naples, where he would die soon after.

Poussin's friendship with Marino determined the poetic colour of his creations. *The Death of Chione* is a testament to Poussin's interest in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* and his fascination for Rome and its ancient and modern culture. The *Lament over Adonis' Body* from Caen evokes the multi-levelled meanings and emotions in Marino's verses dedicated to the hero's death, which he described in lyrical and sensual tones. By contrast, *Lamentation over the Body of Christ* reveals the analogy Poussin, like Marino, draws between the resurrection of Adonis and that of Christ. According to Erwin Panofsky, *Parnassus* portrays an idealised Marino being received by Apollo, along with his two most demanding works: *Adone* and the *Strage de gl'Innocenti*. This reading is dubious, but the painting reflects the consolidation between figurative imagery and the 17th-century poetic tradition. The *Realm of Flora* is Poussin's most intensely 'Marinist' work: using Ovidian myth, the painting offers a meditation on the seasons, love, birth and death.

Poetry *and* Painting in the 17th Century

Giovan Battista Marino
and the “Marvelous” Passion



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Foreword

Lina Bolzoni

Marino's poem, the *Adone*, published in Paris in 1623, has the extraordinary property of combining opposites: it is an epic poem of peace, as brilliantly worded with an oxymoron by Jean Chapelain in his letter in French accompanying the composition.¹ In the X canto, entitled *Le meraviglie* (*The Wonders*), Adonis ascends to the sky together with Venus guided by Mercury and, upon reaching the celestial sphere of the moon, he asks the god questions regarding the lunar spots. In his reply Mercury includes a prophecy on Columbus's travels and on the discoveries Galileo will make thanks to his "*ammirabile strumento*" (*admirable tool*) (X, 42, 3) thus disclosing new spaces for human knowledge:

Opening the bosom of the deep Ocean,
But not without peril and war,
The Ligurian argonaut in the nether world
Will discover new skies and new lands.
You, today's Tiphys of the sky and not of the sea,
With no danger will observe how much the sky expands
And how much it contains, revealing to all people
New unseen stars and new things.²

Marino refers here to the traditional idea of Columbus's voyage as being the conclusion of a tradition linked to Tiphys, the mythical inventor of the Argonauts' ship. But the moment the poet punctually adopts the prophetic language in which that interpretation had found nourishment ("*scoprirà novo cielo e nova terra*" "[he] will discover new skies and new land"), he reverses its meaning, eliminating those "imperial" aspects, celebratory of political and religious conquests, which were so common they even surface in the last version of *Orlando Furioso* (canto XV, 21–36). As had already been the case in a number of beautiful and pugnaciously argumentative pages of Giordano Bruno's *La cena de le Ceneri* (*The Ash Wednesday Supper*), the astronomical discoveries were indeed read as the culmination of a tradition of journeys and geographical discoveries, but also as a reversal of a violent and blood-shedding logic, a reversal that the myth of Medea, associated with that of the Argonauts, had already prefigured.³ For both Bruno and Marino, the superiority of the "modern" navigators of knowledge was connected to peace (its "celestial" nature being proof and emblem of said superiority). If Bruno on the one hand considered himself with his discovery of the infinite worlds, as part of this new breed of travellers, and drew from this discovery premonitions of a possible "mutation" of the world, Marino on the other hand celebrated the astronomer's discovery of the new celestial spheres with words combining echoes of the *Sidereus nuncius*⁴ with a fascination for Galileo's new tool, the new telescope "machine", explicitly adding the erotic tones of an amorous encounter:

The invention of the telescope, unknown in this age,
Will be your accomplishment Galileo.
A tool that draws a very distant object closer to the eye
while also making it much larger.
You, the only observer of all her ways
And of all her hidden parts,
Like a contemporary Endymion
Will have the chance to see her
nude, with no veil covering her.⁵

Adone, as we said, is an epic poem of peace and Galileo, who observes the unveiled moon up close, is the peaceful explorer seduced by the erotic dimension of knowledge.

A painter, Lodovico Cardi, known as Cigoli, who had bonds of friendship with both Marino and Galileo, in 1612 celebrated the discovery of lunar spots in the dome of the Pauline Chapel in Santa Maria Maggiore by painting the Virgin crowned with the twelve stars of the lunar landscape as seen through Galileo's telescope. This is only one example of how Marino may serve as a guide in the multifaceted weave of poets and artists connecting the world of culture and art with the great evolutions that affected the worldview and international relations between the 16th and 17th centuries.

Therefore it is only right for Marino to have been chosen as cornerstone for the exhibition curated by Emilio Russo, Patrizia Tosini, and Andrea Zezza opening on 12 November 2024 at Galleria Borghese. In Naples, Rome, Genoa, Turin and Paris, Marino had the chance to see the great art collections of princes, kings, popes and cardinals and, captivated by that world, he dreamt of creating his own personal collection, which he tried to set up in his final years. Marino also had an extensive network of connections with artists – artists who, as we can see in this exhibition, were in turn fascinated by Marino's poetry, the myths he rewrote, the characters he recreated, and his complex relationship with spirituality. In Paris for example, Marino came across the art of Rubens and was positively impressed by the young Poussin; in Italy, he was friends with, among others, Cavalier d'Arpino, Bernardo Castello, and Agostino Carracci; Caravaggio made his portrait. As we can read in the presentation, the location that has been chosen for this exhibition – the Galleria Borghese – is laden with meaning:

On the one hand, it allows us to see the connections between Marino's view of art, his figurative preferences, with the collection that had been actually put together by Scipione Borghese in the first decades of the 17th century: this allows us to consider Marino's real or imaginary "galleries" against the backdrop of Galleria Borghese, read as an outstanding testimony of a collection spanning past and present. On the other hand, the show ideally brings two opposing factions closer together, if it is true that, between 1610 and 1615, Pope Paul V Borghese (1605–1621) and Cardinal Scipione were Marino's greatest opponents, intolerant of his daring attitude and the lascivious nature of his works.

Our contemporary point of view allows us to piece together a picture that was in some respects torn. And we can do so in Rome, the city that was always dear to Marino's heart, as Patrizia Tosini reminds us, explaining the reasons for some of our poet's "visual enamourings" and idiosyncrasies. We know that Marino arrived in Rome in 1600, for the Jubilee of Pope Clement VIII. That was for the poet an extraordinary occasion to access the many artistic sites open in the city, while also witnessing the dynamic dialogue unfolding between art and power (as for instance observing the leading role played by Cavalier d'Arpino at the court of Cardinal Pietro Aldobrandini), an interaction that captured Marino's imagination and that he tried to reproduce on a literary level.

But with artists Marino also enjoyed an even more intimate and personal relationship – one involving his poetry and the, at times allusive at times competitive, refined manner he had of engaging with their images. "I wouldn't say that I take delight [in painting], rather that I'm mad for it", Marino wrote in a letter,⁶ as Andrea Zezza recalls. The most poignant example, at once emblematic and problematic, of this "madness" of his is the *Galeria*, a project that, as Carlo Caruso explains, Marino developed over the years, gradually turning it into an "infinite variation" that became the hallmark of his writing while also intertwining with a variety of different models: from a collection of portraits of illustrious men, accompanied by their respective eulogies, in the wake of Paolo Giovio, it transitioned into a project of an illustrated edition of short epigrammatic poems, in the wake of the 1590 illustrated edition of the *Gerusalemme liberata* (*Jerusalem Delivered*), with engravings from drawings by Bernardo Castello, only to evolve into the complex structure of the 1619 publication, with 624 poems divided in the *Pitture* (*Paintings*) and *Sculpture* (*Sculptures*) sections collocated in the different parts of the book, just as works of

art would be displayed in different areas of a gallery. The *Greek Anthology* ekphrastic epigram tradition is thus revitalised and recreated in the light of a contemporary artistic experience, of art collecting, and of the overlapping of physical and mental places, pages, and edifices, which the propagation of the art of memory had contributed to create.⁷ Besides the titles of poetry collections describing books as edifices we can also recall the splendid lines by Galileo: “When I step into the *Furioso*, before me I see an open cabinet, a tribune, a royal gallery, adorned with one hundred ancient statues by the most famous sculptors, with countless complete stories, the best ones, of illustrious painters”.⁸ Galleries and poems can overlap even in the readers-viewers’ experience.

Marino, writes Caruso, competes with an artwork in the sense that he wants to recreate the excitement elicited by the encounter with that image, that “range of contrasting yet miraculously simultaneous sensations” – poetry is understood as a way to refashion a perception close to the immediacy of visual communication.

A gallery of poetic texts: this exhibition and the catalogue that accompanies it, while reaping the fruits of a productive and recent season of studies, help us reflect on the complexity of the relationship between poetry and art, between word and image, and on the very notions of art collection and gallery. Andrea Zezza gives us a rich overview of this topic and so does Beatrice Tomei, whose contribution is entitled *Collecting Images, Works and Texts. Marino: Poet and Art Lover* ending with the concept of “academic collecting”, which to be defined must also take into account the various courtly figures acting as mediators between patrons and artists; further research must also expand and consider, for example, correspondence, as well as the poetry contests and debates that were taking place in the Academies at the time.

The essay by Emilio Russo invites us to appreciate the hidden mutual connections between Marino’s different works, and the profound dialogue with images that characterise them, in order to identify the subterranean links that unite, in their long and complex gestation, the *Adone* and the *Strage de gl’Innocenti* on the one hand, and the *Galeria* on the other. “It is as if the texts in the *Galeria*, printed in 1619”, we read, “were to work as an anticipation, an announcement, or a simple echo of the vaster projects of the two poems that Marino had been working on for many years, adding the indubitable fascination of the triangulation with major figurative works by some of the greatest artists of his time. A play of mirrors and references in pure Marinian style”. Russo thus shows us that the artworks celebrated in the *Galeria* evoke characters and myths echoed in the *Adone*. Literary memory and figurative memory work together, in a “blend and fusion of disparate materials, between libraries and galleries”, giving rise to a text in which the fragments, the pictures, clearly have the upper hand over the narrative, creating “a literary work built as if it were an art collection”. To confirm his reading, the critic quotes a passage from a letter by Tommaso Stigliani, a great opponent of Marino’s, who therefore, we can consider a reliable source. Stigliani writes that Marino,

adds that in composing it [the *Adone*] he had no intention of providing delight with it as a whole, but with its parts, requiring that it be read not uninterruptedly from start to finish, but in excerpts taken here and there [...] just like the Vatican palace, that despite not being a whole single edifice, but an aggregation of residences and apartments, surpasses that of the Farnesi, which is a complete building, in the magnificence of its rooms, its wealth, its abundance, and its luxury; so the *Adone*, despite not having well-proportioned parts, due to the excellence of its parts and their abundance, surpasses other better-structured poems.⁹

Once again, but this time from the author’s point of view, we have the poem-edifice comparison that we found in the passage in which Galileo expresses his admiration for the *Orlando Furioso*. It is a comparison that, as we said, leads us to recover the time-honoured connection between poetic spaces, physical spaces, and mental spaces. It is a comparison, we can observe, that can help us find our bearings in the different areas of the exhibition, with their fascinating images and their network of connections they are testament to and that we have long forgotten.

1. Marino 1623, ed. 2013, I, pp. 99–136.
2. Ibid., I, p. 977 (X, 45).
3. Bruno 1584, ed. 2000, p. 27 and following; see Battistini 1992.
4. See the description of the lunar surface of the moon: Marino 1623, ed. 2013, I, pp. 974–975 (X, 39–40).
5. Ibid., I, p. 976 (X, 43).
6. Marino ed. 1966, 154, pp. 286–287.
7. Bolzoni L. 1995, pp. 198–202 and pp. 210–216.
8. Galilei c.1587–1592, ed. 1970, p. 503.
9. Stigliani 1627, pp. 117–118.



Marino between Love and Death.

The *Adone* and the *Strage de gl'Innocenti*

Emilio Russo

Over the course of his not particularly long literary career (it lasted about thirty years, although we know very little about his early period in Naples¹), Marino consistently and skilfully used a specific strategy for the advance promotion of his work, announcing it, presenting it as near publication and describing its features in preview. In doing so, he created expectation among common readers, princes and, most importantly, fellow writers and he also laid claim to his own superiority in literary society in terms of innovation and success, condemning his rivals to be consumed with rage.² Within this practice, two works that are actually at opposite poles, the one on Adonis and the one on the Massacre of the Innocents, run parallel and are often even paired in the poet's announcements. The mere contiguousness of a sacred work and a profane one already says much about the ambiguous and unorthodox nature of the Marinian muse, which was not, for that matter, ascribable to any specific credo if not his unshakable belief in his own literary excellence.³

Moreover, the *Adone* and the *Strage* were the two works that spent the longest time on Marino's writing desk. He worked on the *Strage* for at least twenty years and it was not published until after he died, in a series of uncoordinated editions in the early 1630s.⁴ Whereas it took the poet nearly thirty years to complete the *Adone*, which had already been announced in admiring tones at the end of the sixteenth century in a letter written by Camillo Pellegrino, when the poet was still an emerging figure in the court of Matteo di Capua in Naples:

I have heard wondrous things about the poem treating Adonis that Marino is working on, and amidst all that the world can so expect from his fertile brilliance, one can also expect the impossible things from which the credible marvel of the poets is born.⁵

A 'poem about Adonis' that we can imagine was steeped in the late-sixteenth-century Neapolitan style and thus thick with concettism.⁶ This initial version of the *Adone* remained among the poet's works-in-progress and travelled with him to Rome during his adventurous move in 1600, the first of many escapes from the rigidity and threats of the political and religious authorities.⁷

The poem resurfaces a few years later, in 1605, but Marino was already in a new chapter of his career, by this point recognised as the leader of a movement, rewarded by the undisputed success of the *Rime* of 1602 and positioned at the top of the Roman hierarchies, at the court of the cardinal-nephew of Clement VIII, Pietro Aldobrandini.⁸ While many were awaiting the epic's school-leaving exam, which had been announced publicly on many occasions and privately

in the form of a *Gerusalemme distrutta* equal to Tasso, Marino was preparing and sending a package of five long poems to Venice, including both the *Adone* and the *Strage de gl'Innocenti*. We have information about it, including a shadowy threat from the inquisitors, from a letter that is already familiar to specialists, but we would do well to reread it closely, at least the parts in which he talks about the two poems, since it is in many respects a key text. The following is how Marino described the project for an edition of the *Adone* in April 1605:

The *Adone*, which is divided into three books. The first contains the story of the goddess and the young man falling in love; and here there could be a depiction of Adonis sleeping in a field, with his quiver hanging from a tree and his dogs at his feet, and the goddess standing above him, gazing at him fondly. The second recounts their carnal love and enjoyment of each other; and here there would be a depiction of Venus and Adonis, amusing themselves in a small wood, embracing, or listening to the birds who come to squabble before them. The last tells of the unfortunate young man's hunt and his death, and the goddess weeping over her beloved's body.⁹

And this is his description of the *Strage*:

Followed by the *Strage degl'Innocenti*, divided in two books. In the first, one could depict Cruelty, holding a torch in one hand and a whip of serpents in the other, wearing a garment decorated with vipers, coming to prod Herod while he lies asleep at night; or when Herod, having woken up, convenes the council of his princes, and tells them the reason for his suspicions, sitting on a throne, which one depicts with an umbrella over his head and with six steps with twelve lions on the sides, two for each step. The second book contains the massacre and the killing of the poor children, which can be illustrated in the usual way.¹⁰

Fig. 1 Bernardo Castello, *Erminia Among the Shepherds*, c. 1602. Paris, Musée du Louvre, Département des Arts graphiques, inv. 9434, recto.



Following a formula also used for the other texts presented in the letter (*Il Polifemo cieco*, *Il pescatore*, *I Sospiri d'Ergasto*, all more or less vaguely described),¹¹ Marino talks about the *Adone* and the *Strage* in relation to images, writing from the perspective of art. This was of course because the letter was addressed to the Ligurian painter Bernardo Castello,¹² a fundamental interlocutor for the poet in the early years of the seventeenth century, and useful to him for the development of ties with the art world in Genoa and beyond.¹³ But it was also because Marino aspired to replicate the grand precedent set by *Jerusalem Delivered*, which, published in 1590, followed by a second edition in 1604, was illustrated with engravings after images by Castello (fig. 1).¹⁴ It had been a highly successful model that, significantly, Marino planned to follow not with the publication of an epic poem but rather a group of poems on a quite varied range of subjects. What is important here, in any case, is that *Adone* and *Strage* were constructed in relation to images that were part of a shared figurative heritage (note that the final instruction in the passage on the *Strage* reads: *which can be painted in the usual way*), heritage that Marino also follows like a trail in the narrative formulation of the works. At this point, the narrative structure of the two poems was sleight (three books for the *Adone*, two for the *Strage*), but it was heading for an astonishing expansion, especially in the case of the *Adone*.¹⁵

With this common juncture and shared background now established, almost symbolically, and hopes for publication in Venice now faded, the paths of the two works remained submerged for about ten years, until 1614, when they were announced, only slightly changed, in the *Lettera Claretti* (Claretti Letter), a complex piece of prose presenting Marino's many works in progress which the poet published as the opening for *Lira* III and had signed by Count Onorato Claretti, an official of Charles Emmanuel I of Savoy,¹⁶ but it was unquestionably written by Marino himself.¹⁷ The *Adone* had been expanded in these years to four books:

The *Adone*, which is just under a thousand stanzas, and it pleased him to rave about this in the early years of his youth. It is divided into four books, that is Carnal Love, Amusements, Parting and Death.¹⁸

What counts here is not so much the indication that it was a poem from his youth (*si compiacque egli ne' primi anni della sua gioventù*), even composed during his early years in Naples, nor the use of the term 'rave' (*vaneggiare*), as if it were a poetic exercise marked by a kind of sensual lightness, but, as Pozzi observed, the addition of a canto devoted to the *Parting* of Venus from Adonis, which presages the death of the young man.¹⁹ This was a decisive move since it opened the perfect threefold structure of the long poem to a series of possible additions, expansions and interpositions. As for the *Strage*, we read in the immediately preceding section:

Gl'Innocenti in four books, and each book around 200 stanzas. The first has the origin of Herod's suspicions. The second the council of his Satraps. The third the carrying out of the massacre. The fourth the arrival of the souls in Limbo.²⁰

The books of the *Strage* had now passed from two to four, with the addition of a conclusion that envisages the arrival of the souls in Limbo, and the length is similar to that of the *Adone*, close to a thousand stanzas. In the two passages of the *Lettera Claretti*, there are, as is clear, fewer of the kind of references to the artistic aspect that dominated the letter to Bernardo Castello, and this even though exceptional prominence is given in the *Lettera Claretti* to a project that Marino had been working on since the end of the first decade of the century and that would be entirely artistic, the *Galeria*.²¹

Despite these dry descriptions, with their antithetical guiding principles insofar as themes, and although they remained on hold, Marino kept his projects for the *Adone* and the *Strage* open in 1614 and in the years that followed in France, during which time they preserved their artistic roots and were mirrored in the formidable project combining art and poetry that the poet was constructing in the form of the *Galeria*. It might not be an accident that the *Galeria* opens with Venus (the opening text is for a *Venus Undressing for Mars* by Palma the Younger, immediately followed by a text for a *Venus Sitting on a Shell* by Bernardo Castello)²² and then the love story of Venus and Adonis (celebrating works by artists like Palma the Younger, Morazzone, Francesco Vanni).²³ Just as it might not be accidental that, in the religious section of the *Histories*, a short but decisive poem (the madrigal *Che fai, Guido, che fai?*) on Herod's Massacre of the Innocents was moved between Giovan Battista Paggi and Guido Reni (fig. 2), drawing on two of the most important masterpieces depicting the theme from those years.²⁴ In the play of overlapping phases created by Marino through the composition and management of his writings, the texts on the myth of Adonis and the ones on the Biblical episode of the Massacre appeared in the *Galeria* before the works on those themes that Marino had announced long before. And it is as if the text in the *Galeria*, published in 1619, were meant to function as an anticipation, announcement or simply reference to the bigger projects for the two poems that Marino had had in store for many years by then, adding the unquestionable allure of a triangulation with extremely high profile works by some of the greatest artists of the time.²⁵ A game of reflections and revivals, in pure Marinian style.



Fig. 2 Guido Reni, *Massacre of the Innocents*, 1611. Bologna, Pinacoteca Nazionale.

There is a further element, both more complex and more intriguing, to be added to this implicit relationship between the *Galeria* and the *Adone*. Alongside the activity of Marino the writer there was also that of Marino the collector, following trajectories that can only be kept separate in the abstract.²⁶ The dynamic mainly concerns the *Adone*, since Marino's insistent requests for works of art from Italy are all relative to secular subjects and never, based on the documents we know thus far, religious ones. And Marino's desiderata often concerned the myth of Adonis, as in the following letter, noted many times by specialists:

Now I would like to ask you for another service, and it is that I would like three small paintings on canvas, that is one by Malombra and two by Palma, to put in my studio among many others by great masters that I had made in the same size. ... In the one by Palma there needs to be an *Adonis killed by the wild boar or dying and Venus mourning him, with a few cupids all around*. In the other there needs to be a Mars, who is having his armour removed by a nymph to go lie with Venus, who is waiting for him, nude, in bed. He painted this same invention in another painting that I have by this Palma, but larger, which is at present in the possession of the most illustrious lord Giovan Carlo Doria, who asked me for it, and I gave it to him. Now I want the same figures in the same poses but smaller and closer together according to the size of the picture, as you will see below.²⁷

Fulco dated the letter to October 1619,²⁸ and it is likely that the scene of Venus kneeling over the body of the dying Adonis,²⁹ one of the most incisive in terms of literature and art, had already been written at that time and inserted into Canto XVIII of the poem (figs 3–4).³⁰

The request for the first 'small painting' was, therefore, made in the interest of expanding Marino's collection, which was organised and standardised even in terms of measurements ('to put in my studio among many others by great masters that I had made in the same size'), in an implicit dialogue with the storyline of his most important work. His other request for a painting by Palma concerns a scene with Venus and Mars and evokes his relationship with a top-ranking collector and lord, Giovan Carlo Doria, to whom the first part of the *Galeria* had been dedicated in the previous months.³¹

There is a similar letter, in all probability written in September 1620, addressed to Lorenzo Scoto in Turin, that includes a request for intermediation with the French painter Louis Brandin:

[...] aforementioned favour and please do not forget it, that is to ask Brandin to make me three small paintings in the size I am enclosing here. I would like one to be Mercury and Apollo, when the one was giving the other a lyre, and the caduceus of the same design as the one he did for the count of Rovigliasco. The other, Venus, when she is having the three Graces do her hair in front of a mirror, like the one he made for Count Gioia, if it is not to be so big nor so wide. *The last, Venus in mourning, when the cupids are beating the wild boar before her*, like the little drawing he made for me.³²

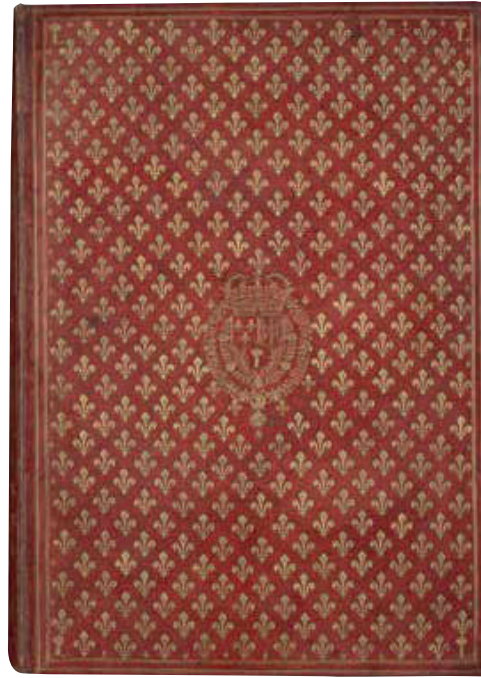


Fig. 3 Iacopo Negretti, known as Palma il Giovane, *Venus and Adonis*, c. 1620. Minneapolis, Minneapolis Institute of Art, inv. 2009.82.2.

Fig. 4 Lilled cover of *Adone* (Adonis) by Giovan Battista Marino, 1623. Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France.

This passage is crucial for many reasons: the specification of the size of the paintings ('the size I am enclosing here'), which indicates the desire or need to create a series that was standardised including in terms of dimensions;³³ the reference to other works by Brandin that Marino must have seen years before in Italy³⁴ and, lastly, the transition, on the subject of Adonis (the toilet of Venus and, in particular, the trial of the wild boar after the young man's death, in the second part of Canto XVIII),³⁵ from the *little drawing* to the painting, following the two distinct collections of drawings and paintings.³⁶ However, during these last years in France, the *Adone* had by this point taken on sizeable proportions, expanding and thus swallowing up a portion of the secondary projects, becoming in a certain way a sophisticated review of Ovidian mythology.³⁷ And it is due to this new nature of the poem, which is about peace but most importantly celebrates the classical myth and its allure,³⁸ that a number of the celebrated works in the *Galeria* can be linked to the octets of the *Adone*. A few examples will suffice: from the myth of Narcissus, treated in the *Galeria* in connection with paintings by Francesco Vanni and again Bernardo Castello³⁹ and then in full in Canto V of the *Adone*, to the myth of Cupid and Psyche, which was celebrated in the *Galeria* through a painting by Pietro Malombra and then, drawing on the precedent set by Apuleius and the story's vernacularisation by Ercole Udine, came to occupy the entirety of the poem's Canto IV.⁴⁰ Or the sensual myth, suitable for sumptuous expansion, of Paris, which Marino had included in the *Galeria* in relation to a work by Cornelis Cort, and for which he could have known works by Turchi or made by Rubens while in Italy,⁴¹ later reserving Canto II for the tale, in part based on a recent French libretto (the *Jugement de Paris* by Jean Puget de la Serre) printed in Paris in 1616.⁴² Or the section on the myth of Polyphemus, Acis and Galatea, presented in Canto XIX,⁴³ in connection with numerous works, from the drawing of *Galatea* by Cavaliere D'Arpino to the *Polyphemus with Galatea* by Annibale Carracci,⁴⁴ and reviving the old project described in the letter to Castello in 1605.

All episodes that were fuelled by Marino's unstoppable, truly wondrous, passion for art⁴⁵ and in which the versification seems to draw simultaneously from an immense literary memory and a formidable artistic memory. The result, at least for the areas we know best, is a thickening of elements in the impasto of the verse that ends up rendering Marino's writing vertiginous and, in broad swaths, inscrutable. And, consequentially, rendering the expressions

Fig. 5 Louis Brandin (attr.),
The Judgement of Paris, early
 17th century. Paris, Musée du
 Louvre, Département des Arts
 graphiques, inv. 1535, recto.



at times flat and one-dimensional, while still meritorious of research and the identification of their models, a challenge that exegetes have always taken up, faced with Marino's famous assertion about the unpredictability of his own sources:

Ensuring that these pilferers do not troll the sea where I fish and trade, nor will they ever catch me with my prey unless I myself reveal it to them.⁴⁶

A haughtiness, that of Marino, that was founded on the mixing and fusion of disparate materials drawn from libraries and galleries.⁴⁷ And this was the case not only for the lengthy episodes but also on the smaller scale of just a few octets, like the celebrated example of an octet in Canto VI of the *Adone*:

VI 179
 Or, dov'altri donzelli in varie guise
 de' primieri elementi apprendean l'arte,

il malvagio scolar giunto s'assise
 ne la più degna ed onorata parte;
 quindi poi sorto, a recitar si mise
 la lezion su le vergate carte
 e, quasi pur con indice o puntale,
 la tabella scorrea con l'aureo strale.⁴⁸

(Now while other boys were learning in various ways the art of the first rudiments, the wicked pupil, after arriving late, sat in the most worthy and honored seat; and rising from his place, he set about reciting the lesson on the lined cards and pointing to the tables with his golden arrow, as if with his finger or a rod).

The description of the education Eros received from Mercury closes on the detail of the *malvagio scolar* (devilish student) who follows the reading with an *aureo strale* (golden dart). It would seem to be a minor detail, if it weren't that it reappeared in another letter written from France, as part of a request for a painting by the young Raffaello Vanni through the intermediation of Giovan Battista Ciotti:

He may choose the subject as he likes from among the following. If he enjoys making lots of figures, he could do Minerva when she goes to visit the Muses on Parnassus. If he likes to make few of them, he may do Mercury when he steals Apollo's herds and Battus the shepherd who discovers the theft. Or Mercury teaching Cupid to read, with Cupid standing in front of him absorbing the lesson, running over the page with the tip of an arrow, and Venus to the side, gazing at him and laughing.⁴⁹

Another interweaving, although the chronology is difficult to determine in this case, of the paths of poetry and (attempted) collecting.

In my view we can, however, take another step and imagine that, in the case of the *Adone*, Marino used the figurative model not just for the preparation of the individual tesserae but also for their layout within a loosely narrative sequence (Father Pozzi spoke of 'anarrative')⁵⁰ in which the myths were put next to each other like in a collection.⁵¹ And the fact that Marino did not place particular importance on the narrative aspect is demonstrated not only by the structure of the *Adone*, but also by a series of statements, starting with the author's own recommendation of a non-continuous reading of the poem, preferring a fragmentary one, in order to grasp not so much the development as the facture of the individual components. This was all reported by Tommaso Stigliani, Marino's most obstinate enemy, who described it as follows:

[Marino] next adds that in writing it, it was not his intention to delight in the whole, but in the parts, wanting it to be read not in a line from beginning to end, but in passages here and there. He gives two examples in confirmation of the latter. *The first is that just as viewers are delighted by a book of printed drawings in which there is no figure but separate parts (that is, eyes, ears, arms, legs and similar), made by painters to teach young people to draw, so the parts of said poem, reading them separately, and without paying attention to dependence, could be no less a delight than would be the whole if well united, and will serve beginners as a model for composing.* The second example is that, just as the Vatican Palace, not being one whole building but a collection of residences and apartments, is greater than the Farnese Palace, which is a complete building, for the magnificence of the rooms, and for its richness, and for its abundance, and for its comforts, so the *Adone*, not having a good proportion of parts, is greater than other poems that are better interwoven for the excellence of [those its parts] and for its abundance.⁵²

This passage is fundamental in many ways, including for its double reference to the art world (the 'book of printed drawings' and even the 'Vatican palace') as terms of comparison suited to the great poem about Adonis. Beyond the attempts to identify messages placed in moral order or even elegant, two-pronged structures, the *Adone* offers itself to the reader as a fine collection of fragments of the Marinian 'manner'.⁵³ What seems to be at work is not, therefore, a principle of consistency between the episodes or a cogent logical/causal connection, but rather a principle of pairing and accumulation that creates room for itself alongside, and often even in contrast to, the thin story of the loves of Venus and Adonis. A world constructed like a collection, in which the relationship with the artistic sphere becomes something that goes beyond the caprice of invention and the creativity of the individual image, permeating the structure, through paired tableaux, of the longest poem in Italian literature.

This is very clear in the mythological cantos, which make up the vast majority of the poem. Setting aside Cantos III, VIII, XVIII, in a certain sense the original foundation of the poem about falling in love, love and death, we have Cantos I and II, then IV through VII, IX and XVII through XX, whereas in other parts of the poem, the mythological material is put aside to give Marino an opportunity to celebrate, for example, the glories of the Savoy in the War of Montferrat (Canto X) or the French beauties who brought fame to the court of Marie de Médicis.⁵⁴ And it would be a different discourse for Cantos XII through XIV, the romance-like digression that might still be the poem's most mysterious, as well as Canto XV, with the game of chess, and Canto XVI, with the beauty competition. Shows of bravura outside the mythological axis, but perhaps not with artistic roots, that need be identified through interdisciplinary research, concurrent with the necessary exploration of what remains of Marino's library.⁵⁵

An in some way similar discussion of, however, more limited scope is also required for future research on the religious poem, starting necessarily from its eventful publishing history.⁵⁶ The *Strage de gl'Innocenti* was back on the horizon of Marino's plans at a late stage, and in correspondence with the first misfortunes of the *Adone* in Italy. Having returned to Italy upon invitation from and with the reassurances of the Ludovisi pope Gregory XV,⁵⁷ Marino found himself instead facing the papacy of Urban VIII (elected in August 1623) and quickly sensed that the winds had changed.⁵⁸ It is no accident that the first known letter written from Rome, in the Guglielminetti edition of the correspondence, mentions a public reading of the *Strage*:

The lord conservators of Rome have invited me to lunch this morning in their apartment in the Campidoglio, but I did not want to accept the invitation without Your Excellency [...] After lunch, I will read a canto from the *Strage degl'innocenti*.⁵⁹

This would not be an isolated episode, and one might, indeed I would say one must, imagine Marino busy shifting the attention of the Roman hierarchies to the tragic epic of the *Strage*, at a time when misgivings about the *Adone* were accumulating and obstacles were looming on the horizon. Already in France, but also already in view of his return to Italy, Marino had inverted the judgements of friends and associates, showing a preference for the religious poem:

I am about to publish the *Massacre of the Innocents*, in my view one of the best compositions that has ever issued from my pen and without comparison more perfect than the *Adonis*, a poem which I do not hold in as high esteem as does the world.⁶⁰

The aim, especially after his return to Rome, was to temper the lewdness with the lavish description of the *Strage*. It is difficult to say, at the present state of knowledge, whether, as Father Pozzi argued, the octets of the *Strage* were a product from long before,⁶¹ largely a wreck from a different period, or whether, as seems more plausible, Marino resumed work on the poem that

he had been dragging with him for years in those frenzied, bitter weeks in 1623, shortly before the humiliation of a forced abjuration in the church of Santa Maria sopra Minerva.⁶² What is certain is that the public readings did not lead to a edition overseen by the author and instead left a complex legacy of three posthumous editions that are not even homogeneous in terms of text and internal structure:

Naples, Beltrano, 1632 (two books)

Rome, Mascardi, 1633 (six cantos)

Venice, Scaglia, 1633 (four books).⁶³

This is how the work is structured, with the story unfolding over the four cantos of the Venetian edition, in the division that was most often used in the seventeenth-century reprints and also used by Pozzi for the modern edition.⁶⁴ After the introductory octets, the action starts with a council of demons during which Lucifer plots a conspiracy against God involving the extermination of the Jews. Cruelty is sent to Herod and appears to him as his dead brother, Giusippo (Canto I). Enraged, Herod convenes the Council of the Satraps, which decrees the massacre of the little boys. Piety, invoked by Rachel, appeals to God in vain to avert it, while an Angel searches for a vision in the house of Sleep to send to Joseph to warn him of the threat and bring about the Exodus from Egypt (Canto II). A long description of the massacre follows (Canto III), closing with the song of David after the entry of the Innocents into Limbo (Canto IV). As is clear, after opening with the infernal council, on the model of *Jerusalem Delivered*, IV, Marino was indulging in descriptive digressions in Cantos I and II (with long descriptions of Rachel, Piety and even God, and an extended account of the Council of the Satraps), before the eruption of the massacre, in which that *horror/delight* combination at the root of the whole poem was at work.⁶⁵

In the *Strage de gl'Innocenti* as a whole, however, the artistic component announced in the letter to Castello, and undoubtedly increased by admiration of works by Paggi and Guido Reni, but certainly others as well from the long, complex tradition that went back to Raphael and Marcantonio Raimondi,⁶⁶ remained a linchpin of Marino's writing, which was in turn paired – in a gamble worthy of the Cavalier – with Pietro Aretino's *Umanità di Cristo*, which, like all his works, had been in the Index of Forbidden Books for a few decades.⁶⁷ An overlapping that, once again, renders Marino's work a complex dossier that needs to be analysed using interdisciplinary paths of research that are waiting to be marked out in a new, detailed commentary. Rereading the opening octet of Canto III, in which just before beginning to describe the massacre he evokes the painting of Cavaliere D'Arpino, confirms Marino's use of a specific poetics:

Deh perché la mia lingua e lo mio stile
non punge al par de le crudeli spade,
perché potesse in ogni cor gentile
mille piaghe stampar d'alta pietade?
O perché la mia penna oscura e vile,
ch'a ritrar tanti orror vien meno e cade
del gran martirio ebreo l'istoria amara
Arpin dal tuo pennello non impara?
(*Strage*, III, 1)

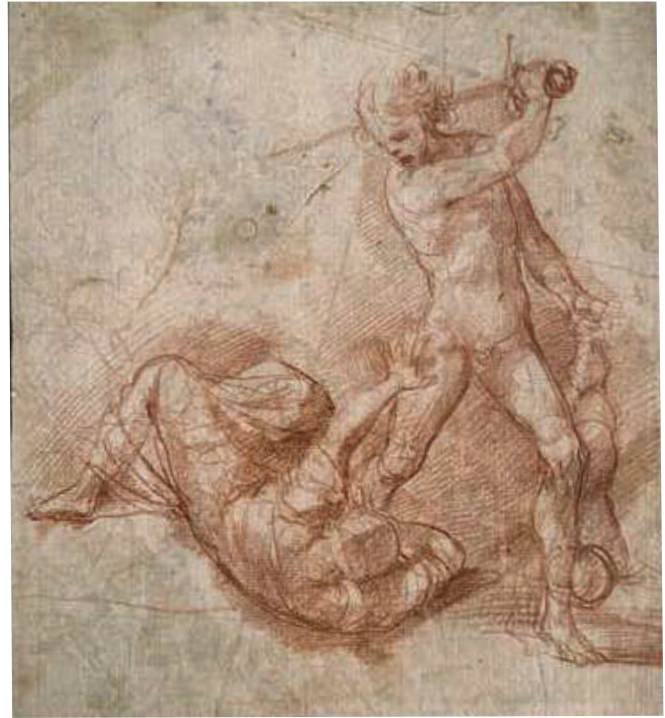


Fig. 6 Cavalier D'Arpino, *Massacre of the Innocents*, early 17th Century. Oxford, Christ Church Gallery, INV. 0394.

Fig. 7 Nicolas Poussin, *The Triumph of Ovid*, 1624–1625. Rome, Gallerie Nazionale di Arte Antica, Palazzo Barberini.



Not so much a description as an homage that once again remains without a precise reference. In any case, what is prominently displayed is the declaration of a horizon, at once both implicit and left undefined,⁶⁸ that remains in force, for Arpino's work as for those of many other artists (fig. 6), across the entire long section describing the massacre, which was also fed by Aretino's concealed model. And so, for example, in the scene of the five infants murdered right in front of their mother, *Strage*, III, 70–71, we find lavish octets, among the most beautiful in the Marinian corpus, that presuppose works of art and then project towards other works of art, starting with the versions of the *Massacre* formulated in those same years by Nicolas Poussin.

And, while awaiting new research on the story of the two masterpieces, for which the times seem to be ripe, this downstream revival seems to be the most profoundly Marinian line, unfurling silently but easily perceivable starting with the editions of the *Adone* and the *Strage*: besides the 1623 Parisian princeps of the poem of the century, there are the masterpieces on the Adonis (or broadly Marinian) theme from Poussin's early period in Rome,⁶⁹ from *Venus and Adonis* to the *Triumph of Ovid* (fig. 7);⁷⁰ beyond the various editions of the poem on the Innocents from the early 1630s there is also the broad revival of the artistic tradition of the Massacre, Poussin, of course, but then also Battistello Caracciolo, Massimo Stanzione and Pietro Testa.⁷¹ The seeds of Marinian poetry, so contrasting and almost violently ripped from the literary soil by the censure by the Holy Office and the curtain of prudence that fell over his main works, instead took root and were fertile in the world of art. A transplant that, we can imagine, would have flattered, and even inflamed, the Cavalier's imagination.

1 For the modern biographical reconstructions (which draw on and integrate the old biographies by Baiacca 1625 and Chiaro 1632 and the late nineteenth-century one by Borzelli 1898), see: Martini 2008; Russo 2008a, pp. 17–44.

2 On this aspect of Marino's poetics, see *ibid.*, pp. 317–39.

3 Also see Carminati 2008.

4 For an initial picture, see the edition edited by Giovanni Pozzi in 1960, with a solution in terms of text and commentary that was later revised and updated in light of new research.

5 “Ho inteso far le meraviglie del poema d'Adone, che il Signor Marino ha per le mani, e tutto che dal suo felice ingegno il mondo si possa permettere assai, se ne sperano etiandio le cose impossibili dalle quali nasce il credibile meraviglioso dei poeti.” The letter was published in Borzelli 1898, pp. 209–10. For the milieu of Matteo di Capua, essential for Marino's early period in Naples, see Zezza 2021; *Arti e lettere a Napoli* 2020 (in particular Zezza 2020a, pp. 41ff).

6 For this early phase of the development of the *Adone*, see Russo 2008a, pp. 251–254; Russo 2010; and the introduction to the *Adone* in Marino 1623, ed. 2013, pp. 5–29.

7 For a reconstruction of Marino's biographical arc based on new documents that have come to light, in particular in relation to the minutes of the Holy Office, see Carminati 2008, a volume rich in essential documentation. Also see, likewise edited by Carminati, Baiacca 1625, ed. 2011.

8 For an overview of the milieu of the court of Pietro Aldobrandini, see: Robertson 2008; Testa 2009; Robertson 2015, in particular pp. 57–121; Testa 2021.

9 “L'Adone, il quale è diviso in tre libri. Il primo contiene l'origine dell'innamoramento fra la dea e 'l giovane; e qui potrebbe entrare una figura d'Adone addormentato in un prato, con la faretra appesa ad un'arbore e i cani a' piedi, e la dea che gli sta sopra in atto di vagheggiarlo. Nel secondo si raccontano gli amori e i godimenti dell'uno e dell'altro; e vi sarebbe a proposi-

to la figura di Venere e di Adone, che stanno trastullandosi in un boschetto abbracciati insieme, ovvero in atto di stare ascoltando gli uccelli, che vengono a mover lite innanzi a loro. Nell'ultimo si narra la caccia dell'infelice giovane e la sua morte, col pianto che fa la dea sopra il corpo dell'amato” (Marino ed. 1966, no. 35).

10 “Séguita la Strage degl'Innocenti, divisa in due libri. Nel primo si potrà rappresentare la Crudeltà, con una face in una mano e nell'altra una sferza di serpi, e vestita tutta d'un abito fregiato di vipere, la qual viene a stuzzicare Erode mentre che dorme di notte; ovvero quando lo stesso Erode risvegliatosi fa convocare il consiglio de' suoi prencipi, ed espon loro la cagione de' suoi sospetti, assiso nel trono, che si describe con una umbrella sopra il capo e con sei scalini con dodici leoni dai lati, due per ciascun gradile. Il secondo libro contiene la strage e la uccisione de' miseri bambini, *la quale si potrà dipingere conforme al solito*” *Ibid.* (italics mine, in the text and in the notes, unless otherwise indicated).

11 For a summary of the available information about these projects, see Russo 2008a, pp. 72–5.

12 For Castello, see Erbentraut 1989. For his relationship with the world of men of letters, and especially Chiabrera, see Stagno 2008, Lukehart 2012, Orlando 2022; Fusconi 1978 also remains useful.

13 For the relationship between Marino and Castello, including in relation to Chiabrera, see Carminati 2016. On Marino and the Genoa art world, see especially Farina 2002, which concentrates on Giovan Carlo Doria.

14 The Tasso 1590 edition. For various fundamental aspects, see Erbentraut 1989, pp. 227–29. For a later edition printed in 1613, Marino was asked to provide some octaves on various topics to introduce the songs, with Castello serving as intermediary. The poet flatly refused, for the following reasons: “While I am not such that can promise of myself anything good, I do have, however, *certain expectations for my work*, and I would also

like to correspond to the world's idea of it. Such that if that world were to see, after so many years and so many opinions, hoping for some noteworthy explosion, the mountains give birth in the end to a rat, by which I mean four pieces on the *Jerusalem*, it would reasonably have material not only for a scandal but also for laughter. We are permitted in confidence to cast off the restraints of modesty and overdo it in haughtiness. *God gave me (thanks to him) such intellect that I feel equal to composing a poem as excellent as the one written by Tasso*” (Marino ed. 1966, 77). For an overall picture of the subject, including editions and original works, see Martini 2013.

15 For the expansion of the *Adone*, I would like to mention Giovanni Pozzi's brilliant discussion of the subject in the *Guida alla lettura* that accompanies the edition (Marino 1623, ed. 1988, II, pp. 103–21). Also see Russo 2010, which is especially focused on the Parisian period.

16 On Claretti, see the reconstruction in Russo 2005b; Carminati 2012.

17 For the reconstruction of the *Lettera Claretti*, which underwent important changes during the Ciotti printing in 1614, see the presentation and edition in Russo 2005a, pp. 101–137. The citations that follow, with the relative paragraphing, were taken from this edition.

18 “L'Adone, il quale è poco meno di mille stanze, et in questo si compiacque egli ne' primi anni della sua gioventù alquanto di vaneggiare. È distribuito in quattro libri, cioè Amori, Trastulli, Dipartita e Morte” (*Lettera Claretti*, 43).

19 See Pozzi's notes in Marino 1623, ed. 1988, II, pp. 107ff.

20 “Gl'Innocenti in quattro libri, e ciascun libro dintorno ha dugento stanze. Il primo ha l'origine del sospetto di Erode. Il secondo il consiglio de' suoi Satrapi. Il terzo l'esecuzione della strage. Il quarto l'arrivo di quell'anime al Limbo” (*Lettera Claretti*, 42).

21 For the history of the *Galeria*, see the updated overview in Caruso 2021, as well as Caruso's essay in this catalogue.

22 For the first poem, see the comments in Caruso 2002, the notes in Russo 2021 and most importantly the meticulous reconstruction of the relationship between Marino and Palma in Tomei 2024.

23 The texts in this section of the *Galeria*, the first, titled *Stories*, and those of religious nature, in the section titled *Histories*, are at the time of writing in press as part of the first volume of a new, and highly anticipated, critical edition with commentary of the *Galeria*. The edition is coordinated by Carlo Caruso, with commentary by Caruso, Lorenzo Sacchini and Beatrice Tomei and a critical text by Marco Landi.

24 The bibliography is vast, especially for Reni's masterpiece, for which see, at least, *Guido Reni e l'Europa* 1988; Iseppi, Tomei 2022, pp. 83–107, 182–88; and for Paggi, at least, Galassi 2000. For Marino's text, which is linked in the autograph manuscript in Turin to Paggi's work (Landi 2017) and was then switched to Reni in the 1619 edition of the *Galeria*, see Caruso 2009b and, for a new critical and philological theory, Tomei 2022.

25 On these matters and on a few textual links between *Galeria* and *Adone*, see Russo 2021.

26 This was the interpretative direction proposed by Fulco in the studies published starting in the 1970s, and later collected in Fulco 2001. These studies have had a profound influence on recent research. For a series of posthumous additions, drawn from Fulco's unpublished research, see: Fulco 2010; Fulco 2011. In addition to a few previous texts (such as Berti Toesca 1952; Ackerman 1961; Cropper 1991; Cropper 1992), also see the observations in Russo 2016 and Russo 2018 but most importantly Tomei 2024.

27 "Ora io vi voglio pregare d'un altro servizio, ed è ch'io desidero tre quadretti in tela, cioè un dal signor Malombra e due dal signor Palma, per mettergli nel mio studio fra molti altri d'eccezionali maestri, ch'io n'ho fatti fare della medesima misura. [...] Nell'uno del signor Palma ha da essere Adone morto

dal cinghiale o moribondo e Venere che lo piagne, con qualche amorino attorno. Nell'altro ha da essere Marte, che si fa spogliar l'armatura da una ninfa per andarsi a corcar con Venere, la quale ignuda l'aspetta in letto. Questa medesima invenzione fu da lui dipinta in un altro quadro, ch'io ebbi da esso signor Palma, ma grande, il quale al presente è in potere dell'illustrissimo signor Giovan Carlo Doria, che mel dimandò ed io glielo donai. Ora desidero le medesime figure nella medesima attitudine ma più piccole e situate più strettamente secondo la capacità del quadro, come vedrete di sotto" (Marino ed. 1966, no. 133). On this letter and on the works by Palma the Younger traceable to it, see Russo 2021, pp. 114–116 and especially Mason Rinaldi 1984, pp. 88–91; Mason Rinaldi 1990, p. 186.

28 For the dating of this and other information from letters written during the French period, I have referred to the table in Fulco 2001, pp. 204–205. Clizia Carminati, has been working for years on a new critical edition, with commentary, of the correspondence, with verification of the individual dates. See the preparatory work in Carminati 2012.

29 See the wide-ranging study in Caruso 2013; for the artistic rendering of the death of Adonis in relation to Marino, see Mandarano 2010a.

30 See the observations in Marino 1623, ed. 2013, vol. 2, pp. 1937–41.

31 See: Farina 2002; as set out in Russo 2021, pp. 105–120; summarised in Tomei 2024, pp. 123–27.

32 "[...] servizio segnalato e non mancarmi, cioè pregare monsù Brandin a farmi tre quadretti della misura ch'io vi mando qui inclusa: in uno desidero Mercurio ed Apollo, quando si donavano l'un l'altro la lira, ed il caduceo di quel medesimo disegno appunto ch'egli fece al signor conte di Rovigliasco; nell'altro Venere, quando si fa accendere la testa inanzi allo specchio dalle tre Grazie, come quello che fece al signor conte Gioia, se ben non ha da esser sì grande né così largo per traverso" (Marino ed.

1966, no. 155).

33 In this regard, also see the evidence highlighted in Carminati 2021.

34 On Brandin, see Thuillier 1980; Serooskerken 2002; Failla 2009; in relation to this letter, see Russo 2021, pp. 117–18.

35 For the episode of Canto XVIII: Cabani 2005a; Cherchi 2009.

36 For the two collections, see the overview in Tomei 2024.

37 In a letter dated by Fulco to the end of 1616, Marino had announced: "The *Adone* is on the cusp of being printed, and finally it is such that it is almost greater than the *Furioso*, divided into twenty-four cantos. My friends like it and are forcing me to publish it. *I don't know how it will come off, but it's in short a restored building or (better put) a patched up skirt*" (Marino ed. 1966, 121). Also see the other letter discovered by Clizia Carminati, also relative to the poetics of aggregation at work in the poem: Carminati 2013b. On the relationship between Marino and Ovid: Russo 2008a, pp. 332–39, with earlier bibliography.

38 Fundamental in this vein: Fulco 2001, pp. 83–117; Fulco 2011; also see Frare 2010.

39 For Francesco Vanni, information about secular works is actually lacking; see: *Francesco Vanni* 2013; Tomei 2024, *ad indicem*.

40 See Besomi 1989.

41 For Turchi, see Scaglietti Kelscian 2019, nos 18, 23, 55, 95 of the catalogue, but we can also add, among the artists documented to have been quite close to Marino, a drawing now in the Louvre, previously attributed to Cavaliere D'Arpino and more recently assigned to Brandin: Serooskerken 2002 (fig. 5).

42 On Canto II, see my observations in Marino 1623, ed. 2013, vol. 1, pp. 225–304.

43 For the theory about the merging of the old poem about Polyphemus into the penultimate canto of the poem, see Russo 2010; and Cabani 2005b.

44 See Bolzoni M.S. 2013, pp. 364 and 387.

45 One of the many attestations in

the correspondence is renowned in this regard: "While I am no prince, I still cannot curb certain great and generous thoughts, which exceed my fortune. But be what it may, what little I have is enough for me to create a few honest capriccios, maxims of the sort that pertain to painting, which I do not merely delight in; I am mad about them" (Marino ed. 1966, 154).

46 "Assicurinsi nondimeno cotesi latroncelli che nel mare dove io pesco et dove io traffico essi non vengono a navigare, né mi sapranno ritrovar addosso la preda s'io stesso non la rivelo" (Marino 1620b, lett. IV, p. 52).

47 See: Giunta 2018; Russo 2021.

48 Translation by Thomas E. Mussio in Marino 1623, ed. 2021.

49 "Il soggetto potrà scegliere a suo beneplacito tra i seguenti. Se si diletta di far molte figure, potrà far Minerva quando va a visitar le Muse in Parnaso. Se ama di farne poche, faccia Mercurio quando ruba gli armenti ad Apollo e Batto pastore che discopre il furto; ovvero il medesimo Mercurio in atto d'insegnare a leggere ad Amore, il quale Amore gli stia innanzi a prender la lezione, scorrendo la carta con la punta dello strale, e Venere in disparte che lo stia rimirando e ridendo" (Marino ed. 1966, no. 158); see Russo 2021, pp. 118–19, for more extensive discussion of this request.

50 See Pozzi 1986–87.

51 A few possible interpretations in this sense were proposed in the chapter on the *Adone* in Russo 2008a; and again, in Russo 2010.

52 "Appresso [Marino] soggiugne che egli nel comporlo non ha avuto intenzione di diletter col tutto, ma con le parti, pretendendo che quello si leggesse non filatamente dal principio alla fine, ma a squarci in qua e in là. Della qual seconda ragione egli arreca per conferma due esempi. *Il primo è che sí come ai riguardanti diletta molto un libro di disegni stampati, nel qual non sia figura veruna, ma separati membri (cioè occhi, orecchie, braccia, gambe e simili), fatte da' pittori per insegnare a' giovani di disegnare, così esse parti del detto poema, leggendosi divisamente,*

e senza badare a dipendenza, potrebb'ero dilettere non meno che farebbe il tutto se fusse bene unito, e serviranno a' principianti per tipo di comporre. Il secondo essemplio è che sì come il palazzo Vaticano, con tutto che non sia uno intero edificio, ma uno aggregato d'abitazioni e d'appartamenti, supera per la magnificenza delle stanze, e per la ricchezza, e per la copia, e per gli agi, quello de' Farnesi, che è uno edificio compiuto; così l'Adone con tutto che non abbia buon proporzione di parti, supera per l'eccellenza di quelle e per l'abbondanza gli altri poemi che son meglio intrecciati". The text is excerpted from Stigliani 1627, pp. 117–18; a new edition of Stigliani's *Occhiale*, edited by Federica Chiesa, is currently in press. On this letter, see the observations in Lazzarini 2011.

53 For Marino's use of the term *maniera* (manner), see, at least, various passages in the *Lettera Claretti* and the relative observations in Russo 2005a, pp. 138–84.

54 See *Maria de' Medici* 2005.

55 For the inventories of Marino's library, see Fulco 2010, pp. 111–76; for artistic elements in the poem, see the model examples of research in Tomei 2021b; Tomei 2022.

56 In the meantime, see Arbizzoni 2009.

57 See the information collected in Russo 2005a, pp. 201–08; there is a quite useful overview in Volpi 2022.

58 See the detailed picture provided in Carminati 2008, pp. 180–201; on the opposition between Marino and Urban VIII, there are a few interpretations in Russo 2023.

59 "Sono invitato per dimattina a pranzo da' signori conservatori di Roma nel loro appartamento in Campidoglio, ma non ho voluto accettar l'invito senza V.S. [...] Dopo pranzo io leggerò un canto della *Strage degli'innocenti*" (Marino ed. 1966, no. 189, written to Antonio Bruni in all probability in summer 1623).

60 "Tengo in procinto la *Strage degli'innocenti*, a mio gusto una delle migliori composizioni che mi sieno uscite della penna e senza comparazione più perfetta dell'Adone, il qual poema presso di me non è in

tanta stima quanta ne fa il mondo" (Ibid., 160, dated March 1621, sent to Giovan Battista Ciotti. Also see ibid., 146, also to Giovan Battista Ciotti, datable to August 1620, a letter in which he considers the possibility of publishing the *Strage* at the same time as the *Adone*).

61 See the introduction by Giovanni Pozzi in *Dicerie sacre* (Marino 1614b, ed. 1960, pp. 445–63).

62 See Carminati 2008, pp. 184–90.

63 For the Neapolitan princeps, we need to point out the contribution of Marino's nephew, Francesco Chiaro, which he declared himself in a note to the reader: 'Here you are, kind readers, the poem of the *Stragge degli innocenti* by Cavalier Marino, my uncle. I will begin that although it is his since he was the author who conceived it and brought it to the state in which you see it here, it could also be called mine for the all the toil and anguish withstood to bring it forth to the world.' I am leaving out the editions printed in Bologna, Turin and Milan, all also in 1633, which confirm lively interest in Marino's posthumous work.

64 On the basis of, most importantly, the letter to Bruni cited above ('I will send Your Lordship other cantos under separate cover'), as well as analysis of the narrative divisions, Pozzi adopted the division into four books for his edition, in line with what was described on the *Lettera Claretti* (in which, however, as we have seen, Marino spoke of books numbering 200 stanzas each).

65 See Caruso 2009b.

66 See Stimato 2011; Cieri Via 2017.

67 On this revival, see Pozzi's commentary on the edition of *Dicerie sacre* (Marino 1614b, ed. 1960, *passim*). On the relationship between Marino and Aretino and Marino and the relative artistic horizons, it might be useful to refer to Sacchi 2006; *Pietro Aretino e l'arte* 2019; *Pietro pictore Arretino* 2019.

68 There is also another mention of Cavaliere D'Arpino in *Strage*, 3.59. The two references would seem to be most easily datable to the beginning of the century, when both Marino and Arpino were at

the court of the Aldobrandini: but this is a matter to be more closely examined elsewhere.

69 See *Poussin et Rome* 1996 (in particular the essay by Françoise Graziani on a 'Marinian' Poussin); Unglaub 2006; Mérot 2022; for the dating of the famous drawings by Poussin on Ovidian themes, traditionally known as the 'Marino drawings', to a time before they met, see: Rosenberg, Prat 1994, pp. 6–31; Costello 1955; Simon 1978; Pericolo 2001; but especially Mickaël Szanto in this catalogue.

70 See Pericolo 2003.

71 See Cropper 1992; Schütze 1992; on Poussin, see especially the theory advanced in Caruso 2006.

Rome, Galleria Borghese, 19 November 2024-9
February 2025

Poetry and Painting in the 17th Century

Giovan Battista Marino and the "Marvelous" Passion

A cura di Emilio Russo, Patrizia Tosini, Andrea Zezza
con Beatrice Tomei

After the season of the great Renaissance painters, the prestige of the figurative arts grew as never before in history. During the 16th century, the artist went from being a common craftsman to holding a *status* equal to that of the greatest intellectuals of his time. The inseparable relationship between poetry and painting was consolidated in the 17th century, and became close, reciprocal, even competitive when artists and men of letters confronted each other with the same themes in the arena of the arts. In this framework, the poetry of Giovan Battista Marino (1569-1625) plays a fundamental role, whose compositions live on continuous exchanges with contemporary painting and sculpture. His poetic production is rich in visual suggestions, derived as much from direct contact with the art collections he visited during his itinerant life as from the memory of the images of the great artists of the past, starting with *La Galeria* (1620), which projects onto the walls of an imaginary gallery the names of the artists and works of art that marked the poet's courtly experience, while not neglecting the numerous figurative relationships of the *Adonis* (1623) and the *Strage de gl'innocenti* (1632). The catalogue is also enriched by an anthology of Marino's texts in dialogue with the works on display, as well as numerous colour plates.

TAGS: *Giovan Battista Marino; Baroque; Galleria Borghese; Poussin; Titian; Rubens; La Galeria; Cavalier d'Arpino; Arts e Literature*

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Via dei Villini 10, Roma
www.officialibreria.net



2024, 296 pp., 116 ill. a colori
Cartonato in plancia, 23x28 cm
Cataloghi di mostre
€ 39,00
ISBN: 9788833673004

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