res 46 autumn 2004

Polemical objects

GUMENTATIVE, QUARRELSOME, LITIGIOUS, EX-JSTIBLE, BEL-DISPUTATIOUS, IRASCIBLE, ILL-SIVE, LOOKING QUICK-TEMPER-JUNKYARD DOG,

Res 46 Autumn 2004

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DOCUMENTS AND DISCUSSIONS

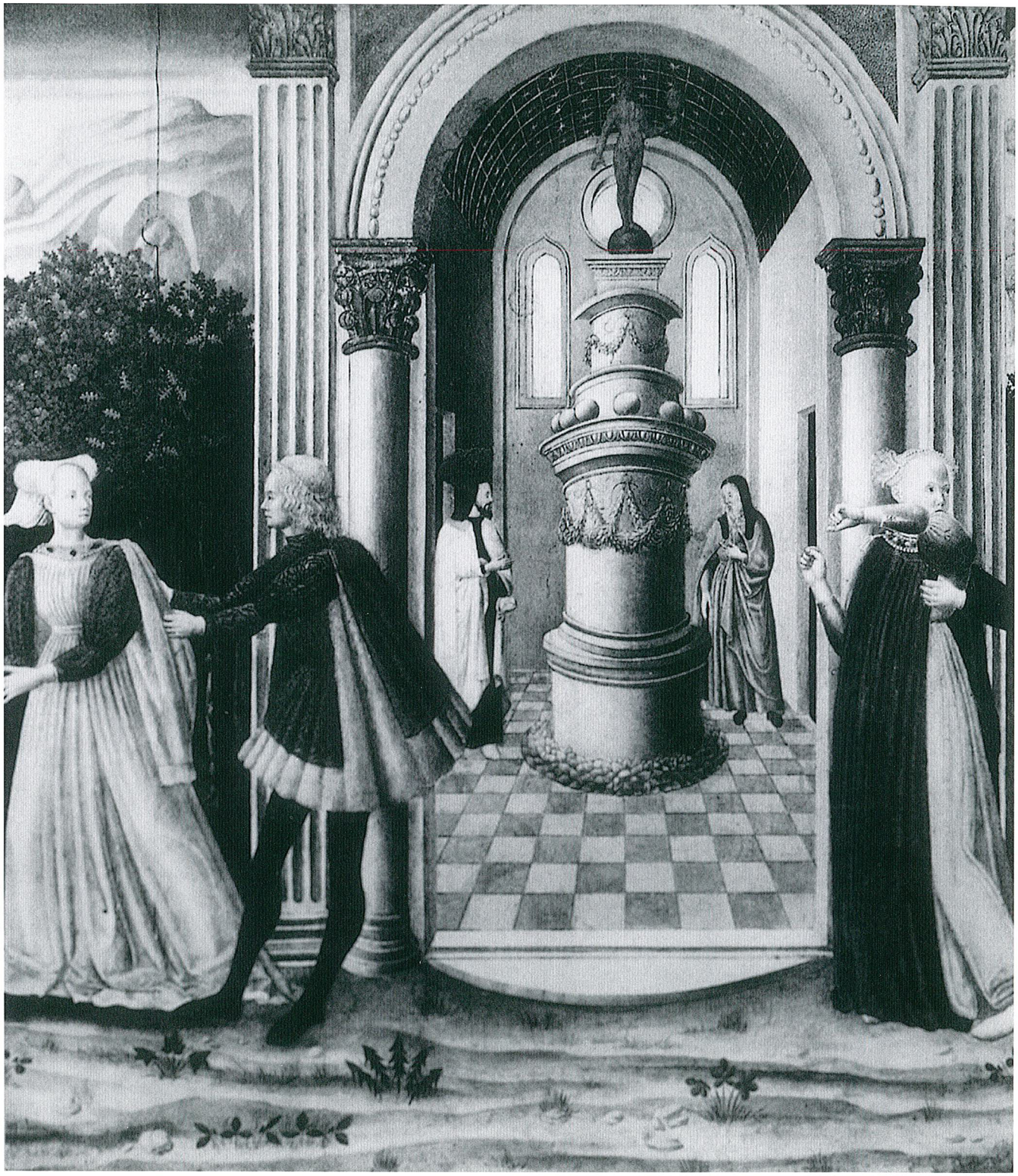

Figure 7. Maestro delle Storie di Elena, *The Abduction of Helen,* detail, Courtesy of The Walters Art Museum, Baltimore.

Beautiful Helen and her double in the *Galeria* by Cavalier Marino

VICTOR I. STOICHITA

The *Galeria* by Cavalier Marino (fig. 1) was published in 1619, at almost exactly the same time that the so-called picture gallery paintings (fig. 2) were being created and disseminated.[1] Starting with the allegories by Jan Brueghel and the artists in his studio, these developed into a distinct genre, the *cabinets d'amateur.* There are many parallels between the gallery that Marino describes in words and those that Brueghel painted in his allegories, including the predominance of painting: in Marino's text and the first painted picture galleries, sculpture is banished to a kind of appendix.[2] The frontispiece of the first known edition of the *Galeria,* printed under the supervision of the author and published in Venice in 1620 (fig. 1), is a bit misleading in this regard, giving the fleeting impression of a more or less balanced relationship between painting and sculpture.[3] The two art forms are personified as two female artists on the right and left side of the frontispiece, one completing a picture, the other a statue. Of course, through a typographical *argutezza*—a printing trick—Marino reveals the true relationship between both disciplines as they appear in his work:

LA
GALERIA
DEL
CAVALIER
MARINO
Distinta
IN PITTURE
& Sculture, etc.

The layout of the title page, with the conspicuous distinction between the uppercase *PITTURE* and the lowercase *sculture,* reflects the content of the work as a whole, which in fact contains poetic descriptions of 322 paintings and only 36 statues. The same ration *mutatis mutandis* can be observed in the picture gallery paintings.

In Jan Brueghel's work, for instance, painting dominates the foreground, with statues banished to a corridor-like annex. Sculpture is sometimes integrated more effectively in later galleries—such as that of Cornelis van der Geest, painted by Willem van Haecht in 1628 (fig. 2)—but the discrepancy between the number of paintings and sculptures continues to exist.[4] From time to time we encounter a skillfully created discourse between both art genres in the well-established tradition of *paragone.*[5] In any case, it is difficult to believe that the statue of *Venus pudica* was arranged beside van Eyck's painting of a bathing woman (famous at the time but now lost) by pure accident. We know from old sources that a convex mirror in van Eyck's painting made it possible to see the nude from the front and the rear.[6] One element that enhanced the effect of the *paragone,* sharpening it and making it more complex, was a statue to draw a visitor's attention.

It would be arduous now to attempt to identify the person responsible for this presentation. Was it the collector van der Geest himself, or perhaps the artist van Haecht, who—as it were—painted the paintings? What seems more important is the interplay created among the portrayed art objects, with the goal of achieving theoretical and aesthetic effects.

Marino anticipates some of these concerns when he explains his intentions in the foreword of the *Galeria*:

> *. . . è da sapere che l'intentione [sic] principale dell'Autore non è stata di comporre un Museo universale sopra tutte le materie, che possono essere rappresentante dalla Pittura, & dalla Scultura, ma di scherzare intorno ad alcune poche, secundo i motivi Poetici, che ala [sic] giornata gli sono venuti in fantasia.*[7]

1. See Speth-Holterhoff 1957; Winner 1957. See also von Frimmel 1896; Härting 1983, especially 143 ff.; Zaremba Filipezak 1987; Prado catalogue, Madrid 1992; Honig 1998, 170–212; and Stoichita (1993) 1997, 103–147.

2. Ackerman 1961, 326–336; and Albrecht-Bott 1976.

3. Concerning the entire thematic complex of the first edition see the "nota al testo e al commento" by Mario Pieri in Marino 1979, XLVII–LIV.

4. Wadsworth Atheneum catalogue, Hartford, Conn., 1949, No. 22; Speth-Holterhoff 1957, 98–104; Winner 1957, 35–40; Held 1957, 53–84; De Coo & van der Geest 1959, 196–199; de Poorter & van Haecht 1971, No. 16; Baudoin 1977, 283–301; Zaremba Filipezak 1987, 47 ff.; Stoichita 1998, 139–151.

5. For a fundamental discussion, see Larsson 1974 and Mendelsohn 1982; Lepper 1987, and Munich-Cologne catalogue 2002.

6. "[P]osteriores corporis partes per speculum pictum lateri oppositium ita espresit. Ut et terga quemadmodum pectus videas": Bartholomaei Facii de viris illustribus liber . . . (1456). Cf. Baxandall 1964, 90–107.

7. Marino 1979, 3.

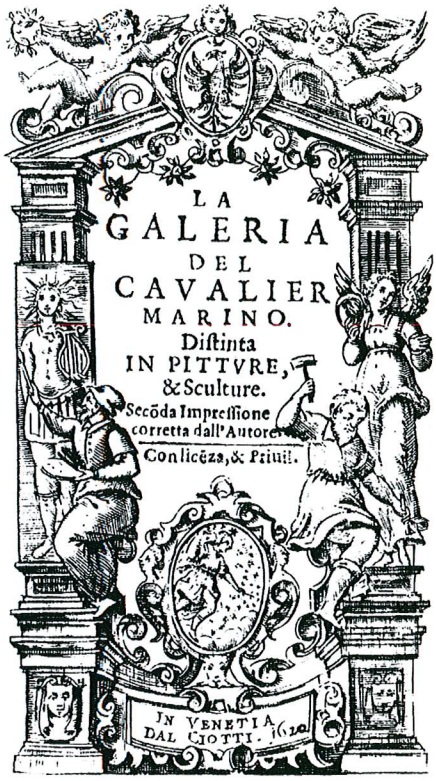

Figure 1. Frontispiece of the *Galeria* by Cavalier Marino, Venice 1620. Courtesy of the Art History Department of the University of Fribourg.

(. . . it should be noted that the author's principal intention was not to create a universal museum with all the objects that can be portrayed by painting and sculpture, but rather to play around with a few, reflecting the poetic motifs that occur to him [the author].)

One is encouraged by this preamble to take a renewed, ad hoc look at Marino's work in the hope of clarifying a few obscure aspects of his aesthetic along with their ramifications for art history. In what follows, I will analyze the three madrigals uttered by one of the imaginary statues in Marino's gallery. In view of the small number of sculptures commented on (36 all told), it is significant that the poet dedicates not one, but three poems to a statue of Helen of Troy. The first madrigal:

Deh chi mi torna in vita?
E perché com'or son, non fui di marmi
quando Paride mio venne a mirarmi?
Ché s'io tal era allora,
stata sarei, quanto al pregar constante, tanto al rapir pensante.
Ma tal qual sono ancora,
son (come fui già viva) anco scolpita
degna d'esser rapita.[8]

(Who will give me life again?
And why, as I now am, was I not of hard marble,
When dear Paris came to admire?
Had I been then
As I now am if only I had been
Steadfast against his pleading or pondering the abduction.
Such as now I'm seen,
Looking alive though carved in stone
But still worth the action.)

What strikes one initially is the elegance with which Marino casts his verses in two distinct stylistic registers. The first draws on the traditional form of the madrigal, in which "una espressione lapidaria di un pensiero ingegnoso o galante" (the succinct expression of an ingenious or gallant thought) is not only allowed but prescribed to the writer.[9] The second has its roots in the stylistic conventions of the traditional statuary laudation, the *elogia*. This had attracted renewed attention due to the new editions of *Imagines* by Philostratus and *Descriptiones* by Callistratus that had been published a short time earlier.[10] The motif of the breathing, talking simulacrum ("simulacro spirante e parlante"), which possibly stems directly from Callistratus, is a ubiquitous one, and even if it is not at all rare in the *ekphraseis picturales* by Philostratus and others, its obligatory inclusion in the statue eulogies emphasizes the three-dimensional character of the sculptures, i.e., their ability to occupy space as living beings. This fact was to have important ramifications.

In the third decade of the seventeenth century, Vincenzo Giustiniani presented his collection to a broader public, and the engravings that embellish both volumes of his *Galeria* (fig. 3) are characterized by complex life-giving effects discovered—and rightly stressed—by Elisabeth Cropper and Charles Dempsey.[11] On the frontispiece that François Chauveau designed in 1646 for the *Cabinet de. M. de Scudéry* (fig. 4), the visitors' poses as rendered by the artist suggest that the gallery is a room enlivened by discussion and art debate. They also emphasize that sculpture stimulates not only the eye but also the sense of touch.[12]

8. Marino 1979, 280.
9. Schulz-Buschhaus 1967.
10. Philostratus (Fairbanks) 1979, especially 377–423.
11. Cropper & Dempsey 1996, 32 ff. and 79–82. See also Preimesberger 2002, 99–109.
12. For an excellent summary of the problem, see Körner 2000, 165–196.

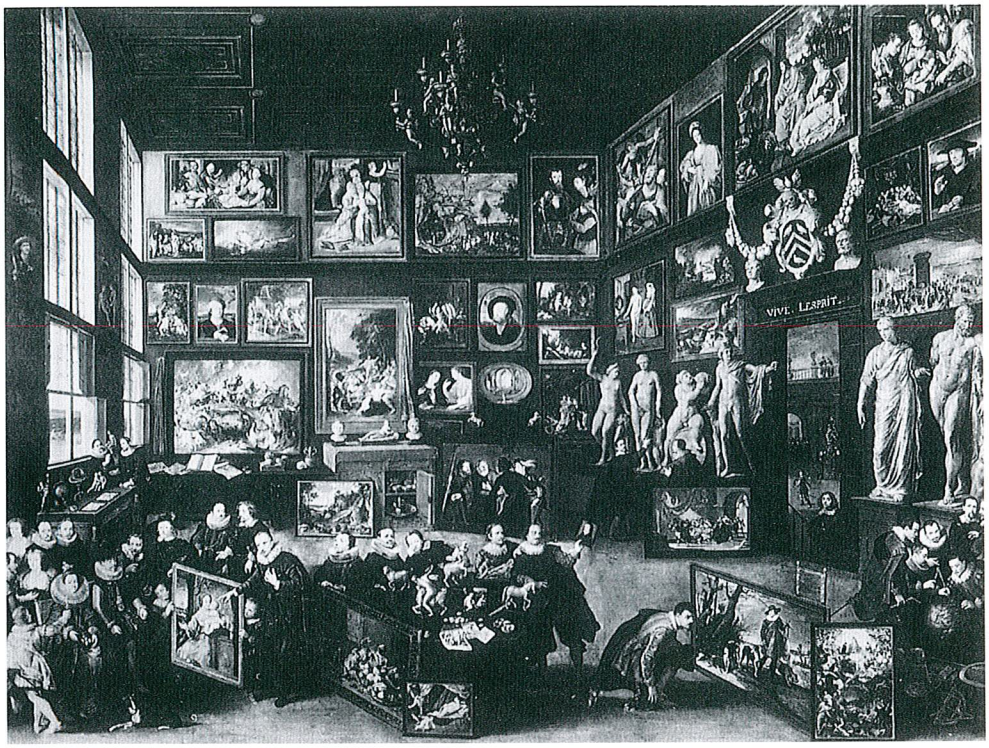

Figure 2. Willem van Haecht, *The Picture Gallery of van der Geest,* 1628, oil on wood, 100 x 130 cm, Courtesy of Rubenshuis, Antwerp © Collectiebeleid.

This attempt to breathe life into a statue by rhetorical and poetic means is the key to understanding the monologue held by the statue of Helen in Marino's *Galeria*. This madrigal is the least complex of the three in the series. Sculpture as an art form brings Helen back to life, and she now regrets not always having been made of marble, for then she would have been able to resist Paris's overtures. But even being made of marble would not have helped much since—as one learns in the last line—as a statue she still would have aroused desire and could possibly have been abducted. An erotic displacement of this sort could be interpreted as the symptom of a purely rhetorical pygmalionism;[13] however, the second madrigal clearly disproves it:

Son la famosa figlia
del sommo Giove e de la bella Leda
Or volga in me le ciglia
l'irato sposo, e veda
se lo scarpel de l'Arte, che m'intaglia,
nel pennel di Natura il pregio agguaglia.
Conceda pur, conceda
l'altra al troiano, e senza sangue e morte
una n'abbia l'amante, una il consorte.[14]

(I am the famous daughter
Of Jove the great and Leda the fair
Let my irate spouse
Turn his eyes on me and see
If the artist's chisel that carved me
Rivals in skill nature's generating brush.
Deliver, oh deliver
This other to the Trojan, avoid the blood, the deaths
Let lover have the one, and husband the other.)

What is astonishing here is not our encounter with a living, talking statue, but rather the content of her speech, which starts off with a dilemma and ends with a conceptual solution. The talking statue, created with the sculptor's chisel, is as "alive" as the true Helen, a work

13. Bossi 1999, 82-87. For the broader context, see Bettini 1992 and Hinz 1998.

14. Marino 1979, 281.

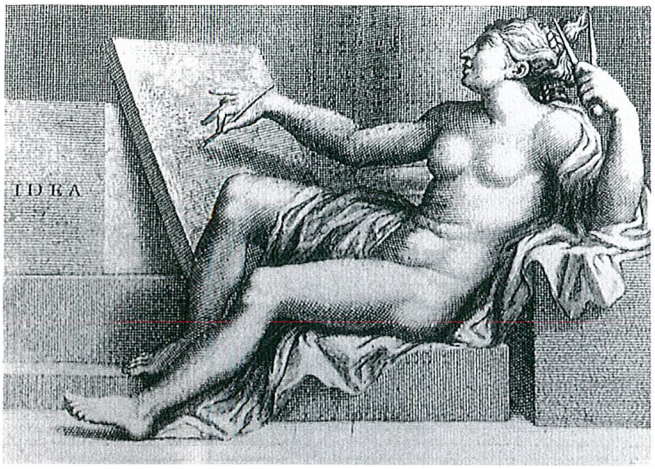

Figure 6. Charles Errard, *Idea,* 1672, copper engraving for Giovanni Pietro Bellori, *Le Vite . . . ,* Rome, 1672. Courtesy of the Art History Department of the University of Fribourg.

But Guido prided himself on painting the beautiful woman, not as she appeared to the eye, but rather as she appeared to him as an *idea*. Thus his abducted Helen was praised as the equivalent of Zeuxis's Helen of antiquity. But she was not as beautiful as they pretended, since she had flaws and blemishes. So it is assumed that she never sailed to Troy, but that a statue was abducted in her place, and the war was waged for ten years because of its beauty. It is also believed that in his poems Homer honored a woman who was not divine in order to flatter the Greeks and make his subject, the Trojan War, more famous.

The first part of this text poses no difficulty, merely containing an allusion to *selectio, combinatio,* and *superatio*. These theories, which fully conform with classical poetics, have their origins in the mythic paintings created by Zeuxis for the Crotoniates.[17] They run through Raphael's aesthetic of a *certa idea* and reach their apex—each in its own way—in Guido's paintings and Bellori's text.[18]

The second part of the passage, however, is peculiar, as Panofsky pointed out as early as 1924: "But it is positively delicious the way Homer's story of the origins of the Trojan War is contested with the remark that Helen, as a mere mortal, could not have been beautiful enough to be the cause of a ten-year war between nations. . . . [the claim is that] the war was not waged because of the imperfect beauty of a real woman but because of the perfect beauty of a statue, which Paris took to Troy. . . . but they [those living in ancient times] could hardly have dreamed that a time would come when this myth would be disputed because only a work of art, and never a real woman, seemed worthy of a ten-year conflict."[19]

As far as I can see, neither Panofsky nor those writing after him noticed that the motif of doubling Helen as a statue already appears in Marino's work. The co-existence is so striking, and the theme's presence in the two texts (far apart in time and purpose) so unusual, that a more in-depth study seems warranted. But first a look at Marino's third madrigal:

Gelido e freddo marmo
ne l'imagine viva
de l'Adultera Argiva
d'Asia e d'Europa il fiero incendio esprime.
Pensi ingegno sublime
se la bella ch'io dico
fu de l'impero antico,
dandosi in preda a la mortal rapina
o reina, o ruina![20]

(Frosty and cold marble
Expresses the terrible blaze of Asia and Europe
In the living image of
The Argive adulteress.
Consider, sublime spirit,
Whether the beautiful woman of whom I speak
Comes from the old empire,
Since she surrendered herself as a sacrifice to the fatal abduction,
O queen, O ruin!)

The style and *concetti* of this madrigal operate by special means. The synonyms in the line "gelido e freddo marmo" emphasize the materiality of the observed object and create a powerful double opposition: on the one hand through allusion to the paradox of this cold, marble image being alive; and on the other through reference to the burning of Troy, which the statue possibly caused. As in the first madrigal, this one contains a phrase—"il fiero incendio esprime"—that can be read on two different levels. On both interpretive

17. Cicero, *De inventione,* II, II, 1–3. Regarding this topic, see Sabbatino 1997 and Leclercle 1987.

18. See Raffaello (ed. Camesasca) 1994, 166. Regarding the philological problems linked to the question of the authenticity of the letter, see Shearman 1994, 69–97. On the transmission of the letter, cf. Winner 1992, 511–551; Bätschmann 1995, 279–311; and Cropper 2000, vol. I, 81–86.

19. Panofsky (1924) 1993, 63.

20. Marino 1979, 281.

levels the unleashing of the fire by the "gelido e freddo marmo" constitutes the *meraviglia* of the *concetto*. The conclusion is entirely different from that of the first two madrigals, characterized by a playful alliteration that employs the rule-breaking correspondence between *reina/ruina* and refuses to offer a solution to the dilemma.

Marino's intentions and the message conveyed by his three madrigals are more easily understood if we recall that the baroque poetics of *Facezie* could also be brought to bear on serious subject matter despite their subtle levity—their "leggiadria delle acutezze."[21] Emanuele Tesauro concerns himself with this topic in his 1673 *Filosofia Morale,* in which he makes direct reference to Marino's style. The section in which Tesauro analyzes the connection between *motti faceti* and *motti seriosi*—between jovial and the serious statements—is relevant:

> *se ne' Motti seriosi è più di sodezza; ne' Motti faceti è piu di acutezza: in quegli è più di giudicio; in questi è più d'ingegno, peroce quelli nascono dalla verità delle cose; questi si partoriscono della fecondità dell'inteletto; il qual riconosciendoli per propri parti, maggiormente ne gode.*[22]
>
> (If the *motti seriosi* are more subtle, then the motti faceti are wittier: in the first there is more power of judgment, in the second more intellect, for the first emerges from the truth of things, the second from the fertility of the creative mind. The pleasure is all the greater if one recognizes the corresponding portion of each.)

I believe I am not mistaken in assuming that the natural seeming *motti faceti* in the Helen madrigals cloak *motti seri*. The search for lastingness, for power of judgment and the truth of things (*sodezza, giudizio, vertià delle cose*) can only be successful for us if we leave the realm of baroque rhetoric and attempt to approach the matter from a different perspective. An examination of the history of the term "representation" (or "simulacrum") and of the iconographic history of the abduction of Helen provides such a perspective, illuminating a number of important aspects of the poetics of doubles. These two histories are so closely related that a brief study appears worthwhile.[23] Prior to this, though, a short methodic observation is in order concerning both the difficulty and the necessity of determining the point at which aesthetics, poetics, and iconography intersect. The findings will enable us to read the madrigals as *acuti* portrayals of a theme already codified in the iconographic tradition.

Various sources, including Plato's *Phaedrus* (243 A) and *Republic* (586 C), recount the story of the poet Stesichoros, who was struck blind by Helen for defamation of character and only given back his sight after recanting—the *Palinodia*. In the *Republic,* the reader is given to understand that Stesichoros saves himself through the fiction of an *eidolon,* a perfect double, who supposedly traveled with Paris/Alexander to Troy, while the real Helen remained true to Menelaus.[24]

Of course, this mention of Stesichoros's counter-myth does not resolve the difficulties of the discussion, the first and foremost being the extraordinary complexity of the term *eidolon*.[25] One looks in vain for this word in another version of the tale, told by Herodotus (II, 112–120), in which Helen is also portrayed as innocent. Even in Herodotus's version, Helen never makes it to Troy. She is fascinated by Paris, but then shipwrecked off the coast of Egypt by unfavorable winds. There, protected by King Proteus, she awaits the end of the war and her husband's arrival. The historian Herodotus, whose reliance on Stesichoros was never successfully established, does not speak of a double who fools her abductors and travels to Troy, but he does tell of Paris landing in Egypt with his female victim and countless treasures. Using both these versions of the Helen counter-myth, Euripides wrote a late, eponymous drama, focusing on the reunion between Menelaus and his wife seven years after the fall of Troy. A chaste Helen awaits him in Egypt, the Trojan War being triggered by a deceptive double created by Hera.[26]

> HELEN: Look!—what more clear assurance needest thou?
>
> MENELAUS: Like her thou art: this will I not deny.
>
> HELEN: Who then shall better teach thee than thine eyes?
>
> MENELAUS: As I stumble, another wife I have.
>
> HELEN: To Troy I went not: that a phantom (*eidolon*) was.

21. For a more detailed discussion, see Schulz-Buschhaus 1967, 218–222.

22. Schulz-Buschhaus 1967, 221.

23. See Stoichita 2003.

24. Vürtheim 1919; Devereux 1975, 179–182; Bassi 1993, 51–75; Austin 1994, especially 90–117; Baudy 2001, 31–57.

25. For a detailed discussion see Vernant 1965, 251–264; Vernant 1979, 105–137; Vernant 1983, 25–37; Vernant 1991, 223–230. See also Saïd 1990, 11–67.

26. Fusillo 1999. See also Kannicht 1969. For the topic in general, see Fusillo 1998, 31–58; Austin 1994; and Bettini & Brillante, 2002. On iconography see Ghali-Kahil 1955 and 1998, 498–563. There is an interesting commentary on the sources in Backès 1984 and Cassin 2000, especially 114–137. Cassin regards the tragicomedy by Euripides as a dramatization of the sophist eulogy by Gorgias: cf. Gorgias von Leontini (ed. Buchheim) 1989, 3–17 and 159–173.

Figure 8. *Historia Destructionis Troiae,* "The Abduction of Helen," Ms. 17805, fol. 43. Courtesy of the Biblioteca Nacional, Madrid.

MENELAUS: But who can fashion living phantom-forms?

HELEN: Aether, whereof thou hast a wife god-shapen.

MENELAUS: Shapen of what God? Passing strange thy tale!

HELEN: Hera, to baffle Paris with my wraith.

MENELAUS: How wast thou here then and in Troy withal?

HELEN: My name might be in many lands, not I.[27]

Aspects of this telling of the story can be seen in countless medieval and Renaissance depictions of the abduction of Helen, including the illustrations in *Roman de Troie* by Benoît de Saint-Maure and *Historia Destructionis Troiae* by Guido delle Colonne.

Almost all of the miniatures in the manuscripts of *Historia Descriptions Troiae*[28]—studied intensively by Hugo Buchtal—shift the scene of encounter to a temple visible on both sides of a statue of naked Venus. Through this portrayal, Venus becomes the tutelary goddess of adultery. This motif reappears in the paintings of the Quattrocento, e.g., in the work of the anonymous Venetian Maestro delle Storie de Elena (fig. 7).[29]

The statue theme—portraying Venus, not Helen—does not establish a paradigm of the perfect double, as is the case in the iconography of antiquity, but manifests itself in complex examples and parallels. One such example is the illustration to be found in the *Historia Destructionis Troiae* in the Biblioteca Nacional in Madrid (fig. 8). On the far right-hand side of the page, Helen is being led onto a waiting ship *manu militari.* The Venus statue, located in the middle of the page, seems to have come to life to resist one of the attackers, who intends to throw her over his shoulder and carry her onto the ship. In other words, the viewer is witness to a double abduction, the kidnapping of Helen on the one page and her idol on the other. The text says nothing about this dual tale, and one could possibly interpret it as the brainchild of a talented illustrator who was able to give the textual scene a bit more color and movement through these images.

It surely would be mistaken to ascribe to Cavalier Marino an iconographic education that acquainted him with the evolution of such a motif, and yet it is without doubt legitimate to assume that he was familiar with the significance of this motif and that of the "living" statue in the tradition of the counter-myths revolving around Helen; and that this tradition of counter-myths subtly runs through his madrigals.

It is significant in this context that the sixteenth-century representations of the abduction of Helen—in

27. Euripides 1988, 515–517 (v. 579–589).
28. Buchthal 1971.
29. King 1939, 55–72.

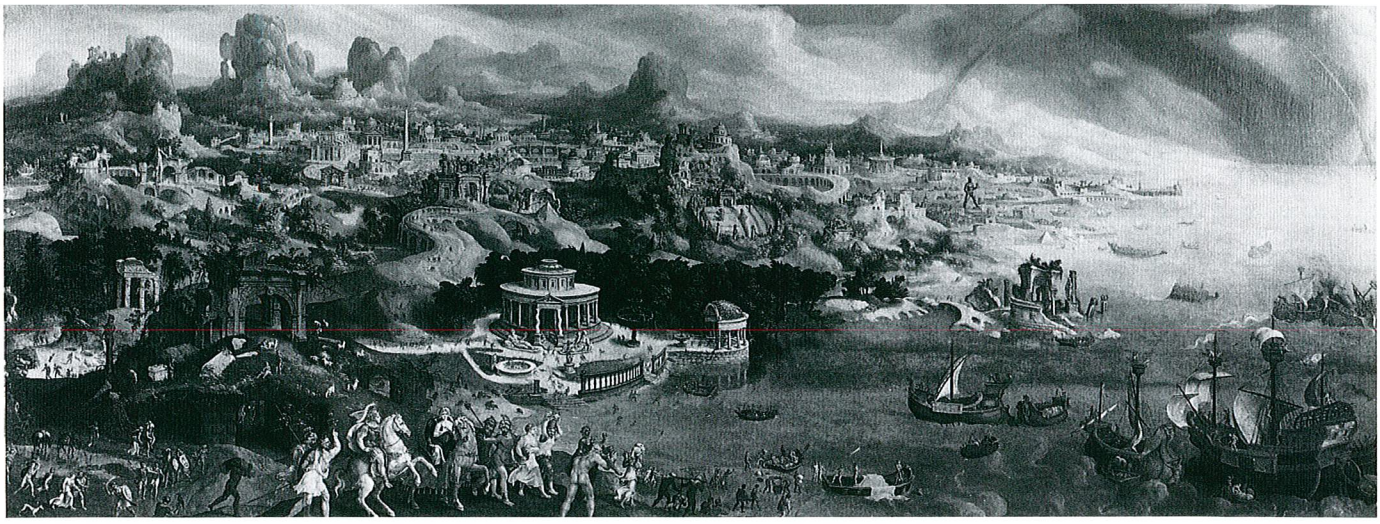

Figure 9. Maerten van Heemskerck, *Panoramic Fantasy with the Abduction of Helen,* 1535–1536, oil on canvas, 147.4 x 383.8 cm, Courtesy of The Walters Art Museum, Baltimore.

their iconography and, more importantly, rhetoric—contain some of the elements that crop up in the *Galeria*.

The most important example of this is the large painting *Panoramic Fantasy with the Abduction of Helen,* dated 1535, by Maerten Van Heemskerck (figs. 9, 10). It is not possible to analyze the extremely complex composition in detail here.[30] Suffice it to say that it has its origins in a more general paradigm, one that dominated the design of the wonder cabinets[31] of the same age and later led to the development of imaginative taxonomies such as Marino's *Galeria*. The focal point of the composition is the kidnapping scene. A procession is moving to the right, where ships lay at anchor in the harbor. These ships will bring the beautiful daughter of Zeus and Leda to Illium along with many treasures, including a large statue of gold-plated, polished bronze, visible in front of the rest. This position within the composition signals that it is a detail *di rilievo,* one that the viewer cannot understand as such but must move closer to grasp. In keeping with tradition, the statue portrays Venus, presented in a supine position with a golden apple in her hand. This staged *paragone* with the beautiful Helen is highly conspicuous. With the exception of the material of which the robbed statue is made—gold-plated bronze instead of marble—all its elements correspond to those in Marino's poetic descriptions. Instead of listing them here, though, I would like to undertake a more detailed study of the specific "language" in this dialogue between woman and statue, as created by the painter.

The first element of this dialogue exists on the level of an inner-narrative allusion: with the apple in her hand, the statue of Venus—at this point it would perhaps be more apt to call it an *agalma* or *simulacrum*—becomes an analeptic reference to the beauty contest that caused the Trojan War. Thus the statue of gold-plated bronze becomes a special kind of simulacrum, since in all its splendor it represents the most beautiful denizen of Mount Olympus, whereas Helen, for her part, is the loveliest inhabitant of earth. The one, of flesh and blood, and the other, of bronze, are connected through their beauty and drawn into a web of relations that the viewer is challenged to discover. Presumably, longing is the most important commonality that is addressed, suggested, concealed, or uncovered.

In the descriptions of Helen by Guido delle Colonne, which, as we have repeatedly ascertained, form the basis of Heemskerck's painting,[32] metaphors for the color white such as *frons lactea et niuosa* abound with those for shining light such as *crinium aureorum*

30. See also Veldmann 1977; Grosshans 1980, 116–119; Demus-Quatember 1983, 203–223; Rome-Brussels catalogue 1995, 216–218; Stritt 2000, 114–128.

31. Lugli 1998; Bredekamp 1993.

32. Veldmann 1977; Grosshans 1980, 119; Barkan 1999, 179–189.

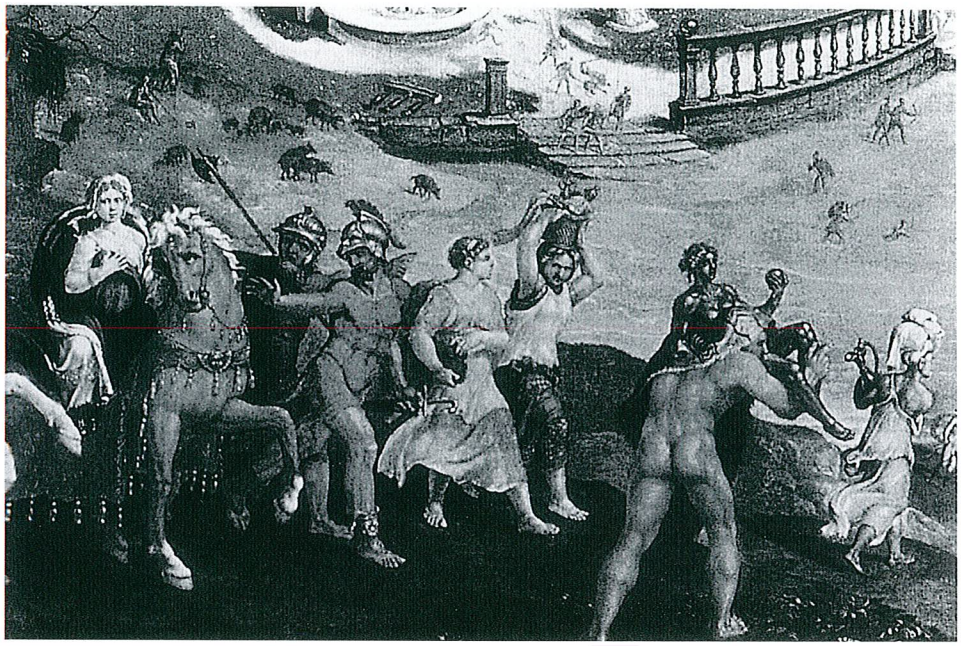

Figure 10. Maerten van Heemskerck, *Panoramic Fantasy with the Abduction of Helen,* detail. 1535–1536, oil on canvas, 147.4 x 383.8 cm, Courtesy of The Walters Art Museum, Baltimore.

cumulus. There is even one point at which bronze is mentioned, or one suspects it is meant because of its specific properties and its durability and hardness. This is in the section in which Guido moves from a description of the visible body to that of the *immaginabile,* i.e., Helen's naked body. At this very place the author evokes beautiful Helen's breasts, which—no surprise—resemble two bronze fruits: "duo poma surgencia aeris natura."[33] The new, bold metaphor is subsequently explained:

> *Et demum staturam eius eque proceritatis attendens prestanciori forma putat et concipit esse membra latencia, dum uere putet et patenter inspiciat in eius composicione persone naturam in aliquo nullatenus delirasse.*[34]
>
> (And finally, while observing her tall, harmonious build, he thought and understood that the parts of her body concealed therein were of a greater beauty; for this reason he thought and saw that nature had made no errors when forming her appearance.)

Heemskerck's rendering is highly ingenious. According to legend, the dispute centered on an apple, which was not of bronze but of gold. By giving the apple the materiality that is the nonspecified materiality of the statue in its entirety, the artist deals a shattering blow. The analeptic allusion—the primary function of this fruit—gives way to a second and perhaps more important function, namely a referential function based on the similarity between the apple and the breasts—a similarity that is, by the way, created with paramount skill. The fruit is presented by the artist and perceived by the viewer as a genuine trophy and also as a symbol that must be understood, i.e., interpreted in its complexity. In keeping with decorum and *convenientia,* Helen's breasts are half concealed. The artist initiates a subtle game by showing and at the same time concealing nudity—concealing it sufficiently so as to prevent the viewer from seeing the perfect form of her bosom; and showing it sufficiently for him to enjoy the poetic play with erotic comparisons.

Above all, it appears significant that all of this occurs in Heemskerck's work in the name of a *paragone* between Helen and Venus, which is realized by means of a transfer, through ingenious stylistic transformations. For in the game intimated by the painting, the immortal woman unveils that which the mortal leaves concealed.

I am not certain whether Marino ever knew of the painting himself, but I would prefer to assume he did

33. Guido von Columnis (ed. Griffin) 1936 f.38v (p. 71).
34. Guido von Columnis (ed. Griffin) 1936 f.39r (p. 73).

not. The question, posed in this manner, is misleading, since in my opinion what is more important than any direct knowledge is a preestablished iconographic formulation or, if you will, the existence of a similar stylistic matrix for the antitheses of iconography and painting that find figurative expression in Heemskerck's painting and perfect literary expression in Marino's text.

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Figure 1. Pierre Julien, *Nicolas Poussin* (1804). Marble. Louvre, Paris. (Photo: G. Blot/C. Jean, © Réunion des musées nationaux/Art Resource, N.Y.)

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Polemical objects

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