This paper explores the pictorial qualities of Cipriano’s music in relation to the classical notion of *enárgeia* (one of the core categories of ancient and Renaissance rhetoric and poetics), and the early modern understanding of the relation between mental images and the arousal of emotion. *Enárgeia* is the property by which an object or concept is displayed to the mind’s eyes. Visual imagination was believed to preside over the natural link between strong mental images and strong emotions. These conceptual categories were not developed in relation to music. They originated in rather different contexts—rhetoric, poetics, natural philosophy; they had a strong visual orientation; and they underwent several variations and realignments over centuries. However, these were the categories that music theorists such as Zarlino, Bardi, or Galieli sought to recompose into a coherent theory of musical pathos, in an effort to integrate core principles bequeathed to them from antiquity. Using Cipriano’s setting of Fortunio Spira’s “Non è, lasso, martire” as a test case, I will argue that this aspect of Renaissance psychology can help us deepen our insight into the role that the theory of *imitazione delle parole* played in the musical culture of the sixteenth century.