

VISIBLE SPIRIT  
THE ART OF  
GIANLORENZO BERNINI

VOL. II

IRVING LAVIN



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## XXXII

### **The Baldacchino Borromini vs Bernini: Did Borromini Forget Himself?\***

**W**HEN I started my life as an art historian half a century ago, there raged two major international debates about rival claimants in wars of attribution, Masaccio vs Masolino, and Jan vs Hubert van Eyck. Those classic, intra-disciplinary conflicts, now largely forgotten, have been replaced in our time by the rivalry between Borromini and Bernini, which embodies not only distinctions between artistic personalities, but also territorial and cultural wars, between North Italy and Rome, between architecture and sculpture.

My purpose today is two fold. First, I intend to end this war once and for all, at least to my satisfaction, and at least in its first engagement, that is, the baldachin of St. Peter's (Fig. 1). And second, I want to offer some observations about the origin and significance of one of the Baldacchino's most important innovations.

#### **Some contrasting opinions:**

Heinrich Thelen 1967b, 63, imagined "artistic discussions" between Borromini and Bernini that resulted in crucial elements of the Baldacchino's design.<sup>1</sup> (So far as I am aware, Thelen was the first ever

\* First presented at a symposium: Sankt Peter in Rome 1506–2006, Bonn, Germany, 22– 25 February 2006.

<sup>1</sup> "Die genial hingeworfene Federskizze von Bernini (Abb. 35, our Fig. 15), die nach einer solchen Einbeziehung in den Architekturzusammenhang sucht (i.e. the conjunction of the baldachin canopy with the architectural cornice) und dabei zugleich — wenn auch nur vorübergehend — sogar die motivische Verbindung des Baldachinhimmels mit den

to attribute a significant role to Borromini in the Baldacchino's design, universally ascribed to Bernini theretofore.)

Jennifer Montagu 1971, 490f., doubts "the case for what is the major theme of [Thelen's] book, the vital, one might say the dominant role of Borromini in the creation of Bernini's tabernacle." (Also notes that the claims of Borromini's nephew Bernardo Castelli-Borromini are biased and cannot be trusted.)

George Bauer 1996, 146 n. 4, supports my (1968) "vigorous defense of the originality of Bernini's work."

Tod A. Marder 1998, 38:

"... it is doubtful that Borromini could lay claim to the formal rather than the technical inventions of the superstructure that give the Baldacchino its character. He certainly claimed none for himself in his notations for Martinelli's guidebook."

Sabine Burbaum 1999, 69, 71:

"The finally decisive idea . . . must have arisen after the technical discussions with Borromini about the necessary modifications of the design."

"Borromini appears to have been primarily responsible for the architectural design of the baldachin, whereas Bernini concentrated on the sculptural decoration. The final form of the crown must have arisen in the dialogue between architect and sculptor, in the repeated discussion about the project and its effect and the resulting corrections."<sup>2</sup>

Engelfiguren löst, scheint in der Tat während einer künstlerischen Diskussion mit Borromini entstanden zu sein."

<sup>2</sup> "Die schliesslich entscheidende Idee, die zwangsläufig auf die neue Höhendimensionierung und die Umdeutung in Gebälkstücke folgen musste, ist schliesslich in der Federskizze Berninis aus dem Barberini-Archiv (Abb. 15, our Fig. 15) fassbar. Das von Thelen als für Bernini typisches Gesprächsnotat identifizierte Blatt muss nach den technischen Diskussionen mit Borromini um die notwendigen Modifizierungen des Entwurfs entstanden sein."

"... erscheint Borromini massgeblich für die architektonische Durchbildung des Monuments verantwortlich, wohingegen Bernini sich auf die plastische Dekoration konzentriert zu haben scheint. Die endgültige Form der Berkrönung dürfte im Dialog zwischen Architekt und Bildhauer, in der wiederholten Diskussion um das Projekt und seine Wirkung und den daraus resultierenden Korrekturen entstanden sein."

The work on St. Peter's, especially during the reign of Urban VIII, is one of the best documented projects in the entire history of art. The minute financial records kept by the papal paymasters and accountants are preserved virtually in tact, and have been meticulously researched and published posthumously by the brilliant Polish scholar Oskar Pollak (1893–1915), a childhood friend and correspondent of Franz Kafka, who perished as a combatant in the Austrian army in World War I.<sup>3</sup> How is it possible to have such widely divergent opinions in the face of such ample and unambiguous documentation? I shall try to respond by reviewing, super-summarily, what might be called the hard evidence — that is, contemporary evidence — in its three forms: payments for work done, drawings that testify to the contributions of both artists, and references to the subject in literary sources. In spite of the acrimonious debates it is interesting that the evidence has never been collected and focused upon in quite this way.

The importance of the issue is obvious to all students of the period since the baldachin, while absolutely saturated with references to tradition, also breaks with tradition in fundamental ways and inaugurates a new epoch in the history of art. The break took place early in 1624 when the newly elected Urban VIII appointed a young interloper, Bernini, aged 26 and with very little experience in architecture, to carry out the first, most urgent, and most important project of his reign, the completion of a permanent marker for the high altar. It is essential to recognize that this drastic move signifies not only the pope's determination finally to get the job done, after many earlier efforts had failed, but a fundamentally new conception of how it was to be done. The new vision was implicit in that veritable clarion call of the early Baroque issued by Urban at the time, when he was said to have proclaimed in reference to Bernini that his reign would bring forth a new Michelangelo.<sup>4</sup> Clearly Urban thought of himself as inaugurating a new era, with a new concept and a new design at the very heart of the church, meaning not only the basilica of St. Peter but the institution itself. The pope's reference to

<sup>3</sup> Pollak 1931, II. See Brod 1960, esp. 54–9.

<sup>4</sup> E come quegli che fin dal tempo che dalla santità di Paolo V eragli questo nobile ingegno stato dato in custodia, aveva incominciato a prevederne cose grandi; egli aveva concepita in se stesso una virtuosa ambizione, che Roma nel suo pontificato e per sua industria giungesse a produrre un altro Michelangelo, tanto più, perché già eragli sovvenuto l'alto concetto dell'altar maggiore di S. Pietro, nel luogo che diciamo la Confessione (Baldinucci 1948, 80f.)

Michelangelo is normally taken as one of the empty hyperbolic tropes that signaled the new era of Baroque rhetoric.<sup>5</sup>

But the allusion may be understood in a more specific and significant way if one considers, first, the repercussions of the fateful decision taken early in the reign of Paul V to add a nave to the central plan building initiated a century before under Bramante and completed by Michelangelo (Figs. 2, 3). An uneasy marriage of convenience was perpetrated between two traditional church types: the central plan, commemorative and devotional mortuary sanctuary, and the longitudinal basilica that served the ritual and celebratory function of the church. At St. Peter's the marriage was notoriously awkward and inconvenient, and it produced what can best be described as a chimera, to use a term that will reappear in this discussion.<sup>6</sup> The second point to recall is that as a young cardinal Maffeo Barberini (elevated 1606; member of the Congregation that governed the basilica at least from 1608) had been vehemently opposed to the construction of the nave, and it is no accident that Bernini's biographer Filippo Baldinucci quotes Urban's proclamation precisely as the introduction to his discussion of the Baldacchino. In this context, the appointment of Bernini as a new Michelangelo was a verbal confirmation that Urban was intent from the outset to recreate, in the spirit of his great High Renaissance predecessors, an image of the unified, universal church centered on the tomb of the apostles, while affirming the Counterreformatory image of the church as the ultimate goal of the Christian's spiritual pilgrimage.<sup>7</sup> Everything he accomplished at St. Peter's during his long reign can be understood, must be understood, I believe, in the light of this conflationary goal. And so it was

<sup>5</sup> From the time that His Holiness Paul V had entrusted him with this noble genius, Urban VIII had foreseen great things of Bernini. The Pope had conceived the lofty ambition that in his pontificate Rome would produce another Michelangelo. His ambition grew even stronger, as he already had in mind the magnificent idea for the high altar of St. Peter's in the area which we call the confession. (Baldinucci 1966, 15) D'Onofrio 1967, 172–87, Soussoff 1989.

<sup>6</sup> For a discussion of Urban's enterprise in light of the practical and liturgical problems attendant upon the central plan and the final hybrid design of St. Peter's, some of them never resolved, see Lavin 1968, 2005, greatly expanded in Lavin, forthcoming.

<sup>7</sup> On Maffeo Barberini's initial opposition to the nave see Pastor 1923–53, XXVI, 387f., Hibbard 1971, 69f. On the reaffirmation of the centrality of the high altar of St. Peter's and its repercussions in the furnishings of the basilica, especially the crossing, see the references in n. 6 above. The point was also emphasized by Pastor 1923–53, XXVI, 459, 466.

from the outset with the project for the Baldacchino, which also created, in its way, a chimeric marriage between two distinct and traditionally mutually exclusive forms of symbolic markers of sacral distinction, one commemorative, monumental, and stationary — the architectural ciborium (Fig. 4); the other ritual, ephemeral, and mobile — the processional canopy carried on staves (Fig. 5).<sup>8</sup> The link between them was provided by a third, intermediate type in which an architectural, often columnar, substructure was surmounted by a lightweight, open, often ribbed, superstructure; this was the case with the original Constantinian “pergola” installed at St. Peter’s, which Bernini’s Baldacchino was surely meant to recall (Fig. 6). Given its hybrid nature, there is no proper term for Bernini’s work, an art historical hapax legomenon; I have capitalized the Italian word to acknowledge its traditional name, but distinguish it from the traditional baldachin, indeed, from any of its prototypes.

In Bernini’s imagination considerations of scale, visibility, stability, and homage to both commemorative and ceremonial traditions ultimately required that these prototypes be conflated, a process that inevitably affected many elements of the design. I shall focus here on only one element of the final design, albeit the most important and controversial, that is, the relationship between the lambrequin with hanging lappets proper to a ceremonial baldachin, and the columns proper to the commemorative ciborium or pergola (Fig. 7). The evidence is ample to show that if the genetic hybrid was to be achieved (and, as with the conflation of central with longitudinal plan in St. Peter’s itself, some thought the very idea anathema), this relationship was the crux of the matter. I do not use the word crux idly, since the conjunction was belabored throughout the long agony of the Baldacchino’s gestation. It is important to bear in mind that what became the final solution was not reached only at the end, as is often assumed, but was repeatedly considered from the very beginning. In fact, several of the altar tabernacles in the nave of Old St. Peter’s included traditional entablatures decorated along the lower edges with lappets or scalloped ornaments. Particularly suggestive in our context was the tabernacle of the Sacrament installed in the early sixteenth century by Antonio da

<sup>8</sup> The high altar of St. Peter’s is covered with a temporary baldachin supported by standing angels on one version of the print showing the beatification of Elizabeth of Portugal, while Bernini’s first project for the baldacchino appears in a second version. Bernini designed the elaborate installations for the ceremony, which took place on May 22, 1625. See Lavin 1968, 10f.

Sangallo the Younger for Pope Pius III (Fig. 8).<sup>9</sup> The entire monument was displayed beneath a tasseled canopy hung from the entablature of the nave colonnade, and the entablature of the tabernacle itself, fringed along the bottom, was supported by two of the famous spiral columns decorated with vine scrolls symbolic of the Eucharist, said to have been retrieved from the Temple of Jerusalem by Constantine the Great and installed over the tomb of the apostles in the choir of the original basilica.<sup>10</sup> Inside Sangallo's tabernacle the altar was again covered by a lambrequin — no doubt reminiscent of the canopies carried over the pope as he displayed the Sacrament in the traditional *Corpus Domini* procession.<sup>11</sup> Under Bernini, the architrave and frieze were replaced by rows of tasseled lappets, and the resulting lambrequin-cum-cornice became a leitmotif and bone of contention in the subsequent development of the Baldacchino: first it was in (Figs. 9, 10), then it was out (Fig. 11), then it was in again (Fig. 12), then it was out again (Figs. 13, 14), and finally it was in again at last (Fig. 15). Essential to any possible solution was a dual problem of formal syntax: one of support, since a lambrequin, which counters no weight, is formally and mechanically incompatible with the lateral thrusts of a superstructure; and one of conjunction, since columns can formally and mechanically be braced only by an entablature. Hence the crucial role of the angels, who, as God's minions, always do the heavy lifting.

### PAYMENTS

The documents make it clear that Borromini was busily employed at St. Peter's throughout the reign of Urban VIII under Bernini's direction, on a great variety of projects: he is mentioned no less than thirty-seven times in Pollak's index, working as stone mason, marble and wood carver, wax modeler, and as a draughtsman. But never as architect. Only two sets of payments to him concern the baldachin, very distinctly separate both in time and in character. Between January 30, 1627, and April 4, 1628, Borromini

<sup>9</sup> We owe this important observation to Zampa 1995–7, 167–74, esp. p. 173, and I am grateful to Jack Freiberg for calling Zampa's work to my attention. Other examples may be seen in the reproductions in Rice 1997, figs. 16, 17, 18, 22, 26.

<sup>10</sup> The hanging canopy is visible in Rice 1997, fig. 16. On the spiral columns, see Lavin 1968, 14–16.

<sup>11</sup> On the eucharistic significance of Bernini's Baldacchino and that of the *Corpus Domini* procession at St. Peter's, see Lavin 1968, and 2005, 45–55; Lavin, forthcoming.

was paid for work as a mason (*scarpellino*) and carver on the foundations of the columns, on the altar stairs, and on the models of the pedestals of the bronze columns.<sup>12</sup>

There follows a gap of three years, until he was paid between April 12, 1631, and January 22, 1633, for work on the crown of the baldachin, designing and carrying out the beaten copper ornaments that cover the superstructure; that is, large scale drawings and carvings in wax and drawings on copper for the carpenters and copper workers (*beaters*): “large drawings for all the arches (*centine*), plants (*piante*), cornices (*cornici*), foliage (*fogliami*), and other carvings (*intagli*) that go inside the ribs (*costole*) and moldings (*cimase*), and for tracing them on the copper, so that the carpenters and those who beat the copper cannot err.”<sup>13</sup>

### DRAWINGS

Borromini’s drawings of the Baldacchino are also neatly divided into two completely contrasting groups. The earlier group consists of three amazing perspective views of the baldachin, intended no doubt to serve in judging the scale and proportions of the monument, and its relation to the surrounding architecture (Figs. 16–18). They were made during the design phase of the crown, including full-scale models, and while they show details that appear in the final work there is nothing to suggest that Borromini was trying out new ideas of his own in these contextual renderings. On the other hand, experimentation is precisely what takes place in a series of sketches by Bernini in which he studies a variety designs for the crown intended to diminish its weight, raise its center of gravity, and ensure the stability of the structure (Figs. 13, 14).<sup>14</sup> A crucial step further is then taken in the fulminating sketch by Bernini that returns to the cornice-lappets solution with the undulating curvature of the ribs and the angels standing on the columns (Fig. 15) The second Borromini group consists of three very large wash drawings — no less exceptional in Borromini’s oeuvre than the spatial perspectives of the baldachin — for details of the ornaments (Figs. 19–21). These elaborate and delicately finished sheets, surely the same or similar

<sup>12</sup> Pollak 1931, II, 342 top, Nos. 1122–5.

<sup>13</sup> Pollak 1931, II, 373f., Nos. 1274–87.

<sup>14</sup> Static considerations were raised with respect to the version with the raised canopy and surmounting figure of the Risen Christ. (Lavin 1968, 12, 23).

to those referred to in the documents, were clearly made as demonstration models, perhaps even to be copied as templates for transfer to the sheets of copper that the workmen were then to hammer into conformity with the molds.

Above all, the evidence of the drawings is consistent with the evidence of the documents, that Borromini was completely extraneous to the design process of the Baldacchino. The evidence of the documents and of the drawings is also consistent with the testimony of Borromini's nephew, Bernardo Castelli-Borromini, that Borromini's talent for making highly accomplished drawings was what first motivated Maderno to employ his young relative and protégé: "he attended to drawing with great diligence and perfection, and realizing this his relative Carlo Maderno gave him work and had him make finished drawings for him."<sup>15</sup> Unlike many, indeed the majority of Borromini's drawings, none of those for the Baldacchino show the slightest graphic suggestion of trial, error or experimentation.

## SOURCES

### **The testimony of Bernini himself:**

We have seen that Urban recruited Bernini not simply because he admired his work, but because he had a concrete idea of what the high altar of St. Peter's should signify, visually and conceptually, in the spirit and under the aegis of Michelangelo. Bernini himself recognized and acknowledged Urban's role in the earliest expression we have of Bernini's view of the genesis of the baldachin design. The idea is attributed to Bernini himself by Lelio Guidiccioni in a literary dialogue between Guidiccioni and Bernini, datable to Sept., 1633, "Whose thought do you think the altar was," Bernini asks. "Yours," Guidiccioni replies; "think again," returns Bernini, "and say it was His Holiness's." "Then you are also the object of his praise, which is the origin of yours."<sup>16</sup> The pope's own biographer made the point in no

<sup>15</sup> *attendeva a disegnare con grandissima diligenza e polizia et accorgendosi di ciò Carlo maderni suo parente per uia di donna, li daua da fare e da tirare disegni in polito per lui* (Burbaum 1999, 278).

<sup>16</sup> G.L.B. Di chi pensate, che sia il pensiero dell'Altar Vaticano, tale qual sia divenuta l'opera? L. G. Vostro hò sempre pensato. G.L. A pensarla meglio, dite di S. S.tà L. G. Dunque voi sete pure obietto di lode sua; la quale è origine della vostra . . . (D'Onofrio 1966, 133f.).

uncertain terms, “The artist was Bernini, who acquired great applause and fame, but the thought and idea was of Urban himself.”<sup>17</sup> While it is tempting again to dismiss this point as typical Baroque flattery, or to seize upon it as a means of deflating Bernini’s reputation for arrogance, I think it should be taken seriously, not as an indication of Urban’s literal role as a designer, but in the basic view of the monument as the focal point of a newly coherent and unified architectural and ideological concept of St. Peter’s. This was indeed the principle Bernini followed through the entire process of designing the crossing of St. Peter’s and I have no doubt that it was indeed a sympathetic response to the pope’s own ideology and ambitions.

Bernini’s biographers, Baldinucci and the artist’s son Domenico, make it clear that Bernini’s own concern was not with the design of the Baldacchino, but with the problem of determining its scale and proportions in the vastness of St. Peter’s. We know from Borromini’s perspective drawings and especially from the documents, which record a whole series of models ranging up to full scale that were actually erected *in situ*, that an unprecedented effort was expended to study the problem.<sup>18</sup> Yet, in the end, despite all this advance planning, Bernini avowed that the baldachin had succeeded well, “by chance.”<sup>19</sup> The observation was an ironic inversion of

<sup>17</sup> Andrea Nicoletti: “L’artefice fu il Cavalier Gio. Lorenzo Bernino che in tal lavoro acquistossi grande applauso e maggior fama, ma il pensiero e l’idea fu di Urbano stesso” (cited after D’Onofrio 1979, 244).

<sup>18</sup> The history of the execution of the Baldacchino, with special emphasis on the use of models, is the subject of an important essay by Bauer 1996.

<sup>19</sup> Baldinucci 1948, 83:

Soleva dire il cavaliere che quest’opera era riuscita bene a caso, volendo inferire che l’arte stessa non poteva mai sotto una sì gran cupola ed in ispazio sì vasto, e fra moli di eccedente grandezza dare una misura e proporzione che bene adequasse, ove l’ingegno e la mente dell’artefice, tale quale essa misura doveva essere, senz’altra regola concepire non sapesse.

Baldinucci 1966, 17 (modified IL):

Bernini used to say it was by chance that this work came out so well, implying that under such a great dome and in such a vast space and among such massive piers, artistic skill alone could never determine a suitable dimension and proportion, where the artist’s genius and mind could not conceive how the scale should be, without any other rule.

Bernini 1713, 38f.:

Ondel’occhio solamente può esserne degno Giudice, che con riguardare unitamente

Michelangelo's famous dictum that the true artist must have the "giudizio dell'occhio":<sup>20</sup> since there was no precedent for the scale of the project at St. Peter's, the just measurement and proportion of the Baldacchino could not be found by artistic skill alone; so that if the artist's ingenuity and intelligence did not find the solution, it must have been found by chance. I suspect that the repetition and insistence upon this overarching act of creative judgment may refer specifically to the selection process that guided the laborious study mechanism, including the models and drawings such as those by Borromini, through which Bernini's evolving design concepts were envisioned. Borromini's drawings of the Baldacchino, which portray the project in its spatial and architectural setting, are absolutely unique in his oeuvre: for him, a building was an isolated, self-contained ideal.

Borromini's drawings of the Baldacchino *in situ* are, on the contrary, brilliant reflections of Bernini's revolutionary concern for what he called the "i contrapposti." Bernini employed this old term in a radically new, contextual way — in reference not to oppositional but to complementary and mutually dependent contrasts.<sup>21</sup> "Things do not appear only as they are, but as they seem in relation to things nearby, which change their appearance. A building will appear larger if it is juxtaposed with others that are small," etc. While Borromini's elaborate perspective renderings have no parallel in the corpus of Bernini drawings, many of Bernini's informal sketches show him studying visibility, viewpoints, and relationships, not in terms of mathematical proportions but as he envisioned them to be seen by the viewer.<sup>22</sup> Moreover, unlike his predecessors at St. Peter's, Bernini did not

il Sito, la Mole, la Vastità del Vano, che empie senza ingombrarlo, la Vaghezza de' Rilievi, la Ricchezza della Materia, e tutto ciò che essa / 39 é, e la proporzione che fuor di essa nel Tutto s'accorda, rimane appagato, e sodisfatto, mà in tal modo, che tramandandone la specie nell'imaginativa, fà di mestiere, che l'intelletto affermi per verità, ciò che diceva per sua modestia il Cavaliere, Quest'Opera essere riuscita bene a caso, volendo con raro temperamento dimostrare di haverla più tosto per buona, che fatta.

(The eye alone can be a worthy judge, and, being satisfied, the intellect confirms as true what the Cavaliere said in modesty, that his work succeeded by chance, meaning that he achieved it intuitively, rather than deliberately.)

<sup>20</sup> On the *giudizio dell'occhio*, see especially Summers 1981, 368–79.

<sup>21</sup> On Bernini's concept of *i contrapposti*, see Lavin 1980, 9–11.

<sup>22</sup> Brauer and Wittkower 1931, pls. 56a, 57, 62b, 63ab, 69c, 74ab, 94a, 96.

conceive of the Baldacchino ideologically as an isolated monument, but the focal point of a veritable solar system of memorabilia that came to include not only the four reliquary piers of the crossing but also two papal tombs, of Paul III and Urban VIII himself, flanking the Chair of St. Peter in the apse; all centered on the gilded and radiant altar cover and marker for the tomb of the apostles — more durable than bronze, as if to preempt Horace's famous epitome of classical literary achievement.<sup>23</sup> More than any other aspect of the design, successful as if “by chance,” Bernini was proud of this contextual significance of the baldachin.

### Virgilio Spada

One of the primary documents in the Borromini-Bernini-Baldacchino story was composed in 1657 by Borromini's great friend and patron Virgilio Spada, in a futile effort to have him reinstated as the architect of the Oratorio of San Filippo Neri. The relevant passage is as follows:

(Cardinal) Barberini told me a few days ago that the Palazzo Barberini . . . was in large part the design of Borromini, and Borromini himself told me the same thing, which at first I did not believe, but in the end I did believe. And even though they greatly disgusted each other, and their love turned to great (mortal) hatred, though for reasons other than architecture, Bernini himself said to me many years ago before the altar of St. Peter's, that Borromini alone understood this profession, but that he was never satisfied, and that he wanted to enclose one thing inside another, and that inside another, with never an end.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>23</sup> For thoughts on the Baldacchino in its context at St. Peter's, see Lavin 2005, and more recently, with much additional material, Lavin, forthcoming.

<sup>24</sup> The texts of Virgilio Spada and Bernardo Castelli-Borromini are conveniently printed in Burbaum 1999, 227–85, whence the passages quoted here are excerpted. Burbaum 1999, 283:

L'Emminentissimo Barberino mi disse pochi giorni sono che la fabrica Barberina alle 4 Fontane fù in gran parte (gestrichen: opera sua) disegno del Borromino, e me l'haveva detto anche l'istesso Borromini mà (cancelled: non l'havevo creduto) gli l'havevo finito di credere.

. . . E con tutto che si disgustassero grandemente insieme, cioè il Bernino e Borromino, e che l'amore si convertisse in grandissimo odio (cancelled: mortale), per altre caggioni però che d'architettura, nondimeno il medesimo Cavaliere

Apart from giving credit to Borromini where it was due, and incidentally offering a profound insight into Borromini's mode of thought and architectural style, Bernini's statement as reported by Spada does not assert, imply, or justify the assumption that Borromini had anything to do with the design of the Baldacchino. In point of fact, Bernini's statement is a typically ingenious, candid, subtle, and pertinent critique of the intricate convolutions of Borromini's own designs, in pertinent contrast to what Bernini and Spada were looking at when Bernini made the comment: the baldachin in its setting comprises a remarkable series of series of concentric, concave — not convoluted — curves from the canopy through the entablature of the finial that supports the cross, to the concave frontispieces of the reliquary niches (Figs. 22, 7, 23, 24). Although largely unappreciated, this concerto grosso of concentric rings is crucial, not only visually but conceptually, to the significance of Bernini's whole enterprise in the crossing of St. Peter's: in a sense, it echos Urban VIII's fundamental purpose, to reclaim Michelangelo and reaffirm the centrality of the tomb and high altar.

### **Bernardo Castelli-Borromini**

In 1685 Borromini's nephew, Bernardo Castelli-Borromini, composed (a biography of his uncle in response to a questionnaire from Filippo Baldinucci who was then preparing his famous compendium of artists' lives. Castelli-Borromini vituperates mercilessly against Bernini, reciting in venomous detail his arrogance, foibles, and unscrupulous exploitation of others, especially his beloved uncle. Truly a painful and bitter thing to read, and much of the tone and information, innuendo as well as fact, must have come from Borromini himself. Castelli-Borromini is careful to mention various works of carving Borromini did at St. Peter's under Urban VIII: the cherubs of marble flanking the entrance gates, the cherub at the apex of the above the gates, the cherub at the apex of the arch of the Attila relief by Algardi, the design and invention of the wrought iron gates to the Sacrament chapel, and he includes the story of Palazzo Barberini reported earlier by Virgilio Spada.<sup>25</sup> Castelli-Borromini is at great pains to describe how Bernini,

Bernino per verità disse a me molti anni sono avanti l'altare di S. Pietro che il solo Borromino intendeva questa professione, ma che non si contentava mai, e che voleva dentro una cosa cavare un'altra, e nell'altra l'altra senza finire mai.

<sup>25</sup> On these works at St. Peter's see Fagiolo, 1967.

“innocent” of the architectural profession, left all the architectural work at St. Peter’s to Borromini, while taking all the credit (and stipends) to himself — until Borromini, disgusted by this treatment, abandoned Bernini with the famous remark: “it does not displease me that he took the money, but it displeases me that he enjoys the honor of my labors.”<sup>26</sup>

It is indeed a passionate and pathetic lament. But this very fact makes it all the more significant that no mention is made of any specific work of architecture at St. Peter’s under Urban VIII, and in particular that not the faintest claim is made for any role by Borromini in the design of the Baldacchino. And if ever there was a time and place to reclaim Borromini’s contribution, surely it was this opportunity to see it published in a biography

<sup>26</sup> Burbaum 1999, 278f.

e per dire qualchi cossa delli lauori di marmo che lauorò il Boromino nel principio e nel mezzo del pontificato di urbano fra li altri lauori sono di sua mano quelli Carubini di marmo spiritosi e uiuaci che sono dalle parti delle porticelle con pannini e fistoncini – et anche il carubino sopra in mezzo al arco sopra dette porticelle per di dentro intorno a sant pietro et anche é di sua mano quel carubino che è nel mezzo del arco sopra il basso rilieuo del attila flagellum dei –fu suo Disegno e suo inuentione la Cancellata di ferro dauanti alla capello del Santissimo in detta chiesa di Sant pietro –et il palazzo delli barberini fu tutto fatto con suo disegno et ordine(.) morì poi il maderni e papa urbano in luogho del maderni deputò il Signor. Gio. lorenzo Bernino – famoso Scultore – e questa deputatione del bernino per architetto di sant pietro fu perchè il papa quando era Cardinale era statto più uolte a uedere a lauorare di scoltura il Bernino nella sua Casa a Santa maria maggiore et per quella conosienza lo deputò per Architetto di sant pietro(;) il quale, trouandosi di hauer hauto quella carica e conosiendosi di ciò inabile per essere egli scultore – e sapendo che il boromino haueua fatto per il maderni la fabrica à Sant pietro – et anche per il mede(si)mo haueua maneggiato e seguitato il Palazzo delli Barberini – lo pregò che in tale occasione non l(‘)abandonasse promettendogli che hauerebbe riconosciuto con una degna ricompensa le molte sue fatiche(;) così il Boromino si lasiò uincere delle sue preg(h)iere – e seguitò. e promise (il *Boromino*) che hauerebbe continuato a tirare auanti le fabiche già incominciate per detto ponteficato come che già egli era informato del tutto – et il Bernini atendeua alla sua scoltura(;) et per l(‘)architettura lassiaua fare tutte le fatiche al boromino(.) et il bernino faceua la figura di architetto di s. pietro e del Papa, et infatti il bernino in quel tempo in tal professione era inocentissimo(.) tirati che furono del Boromino, a bon termine le fabriche di quel pontificato(.) il Bernino tirò li stipendij e salarij tanto della fabrica di sant Pietro Come del Palazzo Barberino et anche li denari delle misure – e mai diede cosa alcuna per le fatiche di tanti anni al boromini – ma solamente bone parole e grande promisione(.) e uedendosi il boromino deluso e deriso lasiò et abandonò il Bernino – con questo detto(:) non mi dispiacie che abbia auto li denarij, ma mi dispiacie che gode l(‘)onor delle mie fatiche.

by an eminent writer! How is it possible that Castelli-Borromini failed to mention Borromini's contribution to the signature monument of the new era? Did Borromini forget to tell his nephew about it? Did Castelli-Borromini forget to pass it on to Baldinucci?

### **Borromini — Fioravante Martinelli**

In 1660–3 Fioravante Martinelli, a learned friend and admirer of Borromini's, was composing a new guide to the monuments of Rome, the manuscript of which is preserved in the Biblioteca Casanatense in Rome. The text is carefully written in pen with ample margins, as if Martinelli intended from the beginning that it should be gone over and commented upon by Borromini, which did in fact happen. Borromini served his friend in his usual meticulous and thorough way, writing in the margins with this usual pencil, no less than ninety-two corrections, additions, and suggestions, which Martinelli then copied more or less accurately and completely in ink, leaving Borromini's comments scarcely but definitely discernible. Fourteen of Borromini's comments concern himself and/or Bernini: he was by no means shy in specifying his own contributions to the architecture of Rome in cases where he found Martinelli's attributions wanting or imprecise, and in diminishing Bernini's role, sometimes quite subtly (see Appendix).<sup>27</sup> But two instances in particular shed light on his relation to Bernini in our context. One is that the protestations of both Virgilio Spada and Bernardo Castelli-Borromini to the contrary notwithstanding, Borromini in his comment on the Palazzo Barberini makes no claim to authorship, remarking only that it was the work "di molti, e spetialmente" del Bernini.<sup>28</sup> This is noteworthy to say the least, considering the assertions of both Virgilio Spada and Bernardo Castelli-Borromini. The second instance stands out among all of Borromini's emendations in that it is by far the longest, the most developed, and the most substantial. Indeed, Borromini's wording is not abbreviated in the unusual way of an incidental remark, but elaborately developed in full, grammatical sentences, as if he expected Martinelli simply

<sup>27</sup> Borromini's corrections concerning Bernini and himself, as transcribed by D'Onofrio 1969, are gathered in the Appendix, following D'Onofrio's page numbers: pp. 11, 13, 14, 15bis, 57, 67, 69, 80, 105, 158, 189, 220, 232, 282.

<sup>28</sup> Hibbard 1971, 228, D'Onofrio 1969, 231f.

to replace his own words with those of Borromini, *verbatim*, which in fact Martinelli did, except for one notable omission (Fig. 25). Along the left and bottom margins, in pencil faintly visible beneath Martinelli's inked copy, Borromini wrote:

It was the thought of Paul V to cover with a baldachin the high altar of St. Peter's with a richness proportional to the opening made at the Confession and sepulcher of the same. Whence Carlo Maderno presented him with a design of twisted columns; but the baldachin did not touch the columns or their cornice. Thereafter, Paul died and the work remained on the design until the pontificate of Urbano VIII, who told the said Carlo to be content that Bernini would make the said work. The Cavalier Celio, perhaps not completely informed, printed that it was the invention of most holy wisdom (that is, of the pope) carried out by the said Bernini. Vincenzo Berti in a manuscript in the possession of Mons. Landucci, sacristan of our father Alexander VII and for his eminent virtues most worthy of a higher post, has written that it was a design of Ciampelli, cousin of the said Bernini, which I am not sure is true; but rather that he did not agree with Bernini about the decorations and other things; and he said that baldachins are not supported on columns, but on staves; [not transcribed by Martinelli or D'Onofrio: and that the baldachin ought not run together with the cornice of the columns] and in any case he wanted to show that the angels carry it; and he added that it was a chimera.<sup>29</sup>

<sup>29</sup> The passage was transcribed by Thelen in his corpus of early Borromini drawings, 1967a, I, 98f.; Lavin 1968, 11f. n. 53, 47 no. 2; D'Onofrio 1969, 158 (incomplete; see Appendix):

Fù pensiero di Paolo V coprire con baldacchino l'altar maggiore di S. Pietro con ricchezza proportionata all'apertura fatta alla confessione e sepolcro di d.o Onde Carlo Maderno gli presentò un disegno con colonne à vite; ma il baldacchino non toccava le colonne, ne il lor cornicione: sopragionse la morte di Paulo, e restò l'op.a sul disegno sin al ponteficato di Urbano VIII. il quale disse al d.o Carlo si contentasse, che il Bernino facesse d.a opera. Il Cavalier Celio, forse non ben informato del tutto, stampò essere inventione di Santiss.o giuditio (cioè del Papa) messo in opera dal d.o Bernino. Vincenzo Berti manoscritto appresso Mons.r Landucci Sacrista di N'ro Sig.re Alessandro VII e p le sue eminenti virtudi dignissimo di grado superiore, ha scritto, esser disegno del Ciampelli cognato del d.o Bernini, il che non sò se sia vero; ma si bene non concorrea con d.o Bernini circa l'abbigliam.ti et altro; e diceva, che li Baldacchini non si sostengono con le

Borromini's comment is in some respects cryptic and open to interpretation, but one thing is certain: it is deliberate, painstaking, accurate, and absolutely honest, as was everything Borromini ever did. In fact, it was this deliberative, painstaking, laborious, not to say belabored, quality of Borromini's mind and work that drove Bernini — always quick, facile, impulsive, and elegant in everything he did — absolutely crazy, I am sure. Borromini obviously devoted exceptional care to his comment in this case, even to giving notice when he was uncertain about a point. I find it impossible to believe that Borromini, especially if he was as deeply involved in the design process as some have claimed, did not know who was responsible: either he was being disingenuous or, by his own confession, he was not fully informed and in fact was not sure. Three points are striking. Firstly, Borromini makes it clear that Maderno took an important, otherwise unheralded, step toward the final solution by bringing together the baldachin and ciborium traditions, without linking them. Borromini's remark does allow for something like Bernini's first project, where the canopy does not touch the columns or their cornices; that, however, would make Maderno responsible for the angels, the objections to which Borromini emphasizes as much as he does Bernini's insistence that they be retained. Borromini evidently referred to Maderno in order to ensure that his mentor be remembered for having suggested bringing the types together, without committing the grave, solecistic breach of architectural grammar by fusing them. The fact that Borromini disapproved of the angels might explain why he did not explain how the canopy was supported in Maderno's project. Secondly, in this light Thelen's suggestion that Borromini withheld his own contribution in order not to diminish that of Maderno, seems gratuitous, to say the least.<sup>30</sup> Virgilio Spada and Bernardo Castelli-Borromini certainly had no such motive for their silence on the fundamental point of Borromini's contribution. Even Fioravante Martinelli, in his original remarks on the

colonne, ma con l'haste, [not copied by Martinelli or transcribed by D'Onofrio: et che il baldacchino non ricora assieme con la cornice dele colone,] et in ogni modo voleva mostrare che lo reggono li Angeli: e soggiungeva che era una chimera.

<sup>30</sup> "Seine eigenen, unbestreitbar vorhandenen Verdienste an der endgültigen Gestaltung der Tabernakelarchitektur übergeht Borromini in dieser um 1661/62 verfassten Randbemerkung geflissentlich, weil es ihm ausschliesslich darauf ankommt, die grundlegende Bedeutung der künstlerischen Leistung Madernos, die unter Berninis ruhm begraben worden war, mit wenigen Worten gebührend ins Licht rücken zu können." (Thelen 1967b, 10)

Baldacchino attributed the design to Bernini; and while he took care to qualify the credit by introducing other names, he made no claim for his friend Borromini, to whom he would submit the manuscript for review.<sup>31</sup> Equally gratuitous was Thelen's omission from his book-length study of the high altar and Baldacchino of the criticism duly reported by Borromini that "the baldachin ought not run together with the cornice of the columns."<sup>32</sup> The omission misleadingly permits, even encourages in the context of the discussion, the assumption that this feature was among Borromini's own unheralded and supposedly self-abnegated contributions to the design. On the contrary, Borromini obviously repeated the objections to the Baldacchino because he too disapproved of Bernini's hybrid, indeed chimeric design, including the angels. Finally, there is the ultimate question in this, the most conspicuous of all the Martinelli corrections, when Borromini was involved as a modeler, as a carver, and indeed as a draftsman, where he names no less than three real or imagined designers of the baldachin — Maderno, the pope, Agostino Ciampelli — and while not hesitating to stake his claim as creative designer in other entries in Martinelli's text: why is there no mention of Francesco Borromini here? Did Borromini forget himself?

My own candidate for Bernini's silent helper with the Baldacchino is his younger brother Luigi (1612–81), whom Gian Lorenzo's biographers extol for his talents as a sculptor and architect, and especially for his genius — equal if not greater than his brother's — in all things mechanical and mathematical. From recent archival discoveries we now know that his rich library, no doubt partly inherited from Gian Lorenzo, comprised many technical titles; and that in 1627 the brothers' father Pietro Bernini borrowed from the library of Santa Prassede two mathematical works, no doubt for Luigi's benefit.<sup>33</sup> Luigi was also nearly as precocious as his brother, whom he was assisting as early as 1626; from 1630 he is documented as a major participant in the work at St. Peter's, including on the Baldacchino, where he was appointed superintendent of the works in 1634, even countersigning with his brother

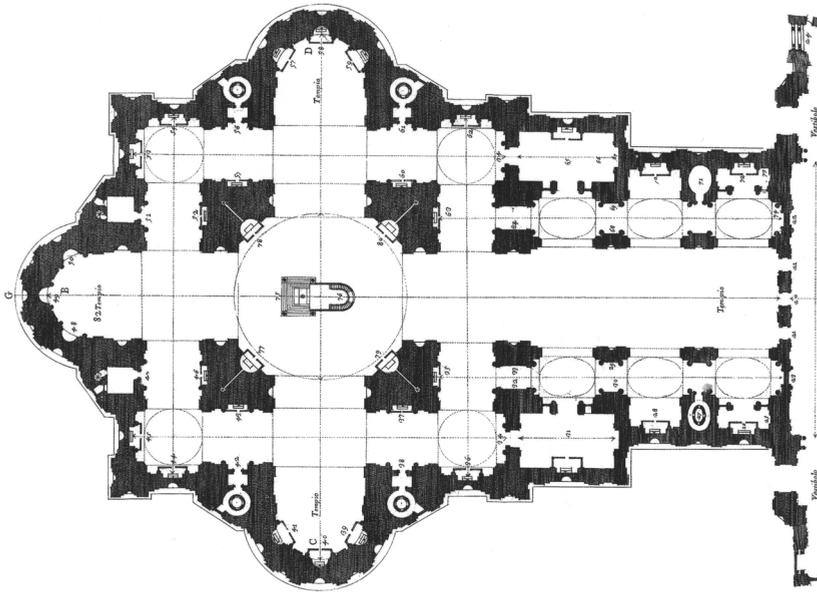
<sup>31</sup> Martinelli's original, brief comment is transcribed at p. 158 in the Appendix below, in the center column next to Borromini's replacement.

<sup>32</sup> The passage is transcribed in Thelen's catalogue of Borromini drawings, but it is nowhere cited in his monograph on the Baldacchino (1967b).

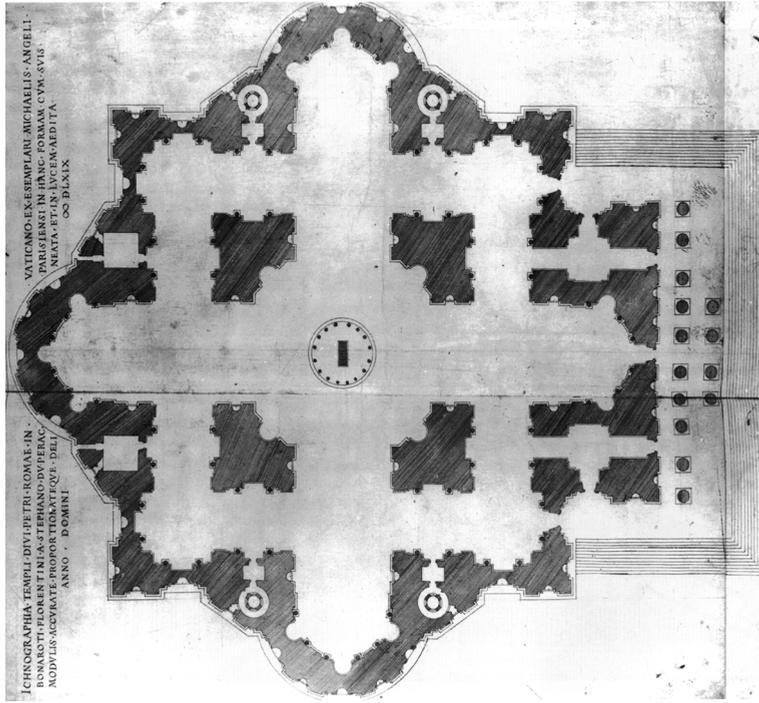
<sup>33</sup> The inventory of Luigi's books, no doubt partly inherited from Gian Lorenzo, was an important discovery of McPhee 2000, with further bibliography on Luigi. Pietro Bernini borrowed a translation of Euclid and Oberto Cantone, *L'uso pratico dell'aritmetica e geometria*, Naples, 1609; see Dooley 2002, 54.



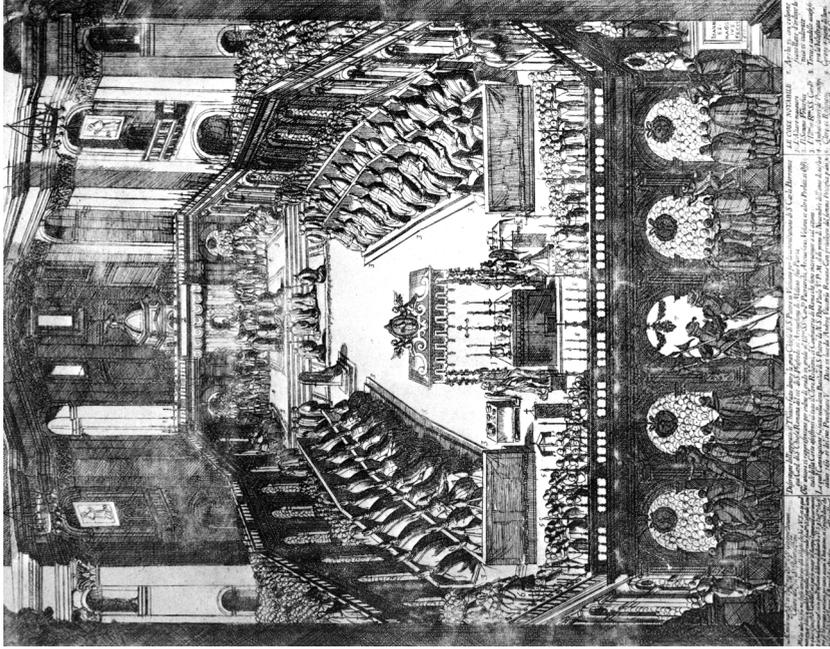
1. View of Baldacchino and choir. Saint Peter's Rome.



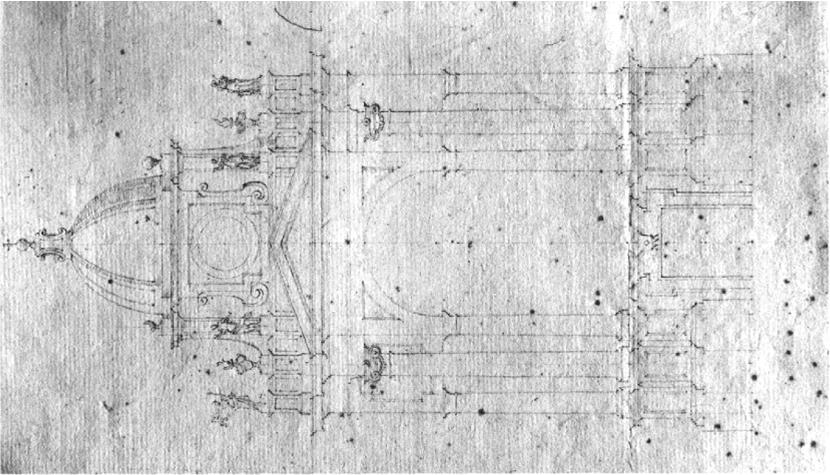
3. Carlo Fontana, Plan of Saint Peter's, engraving, detail.



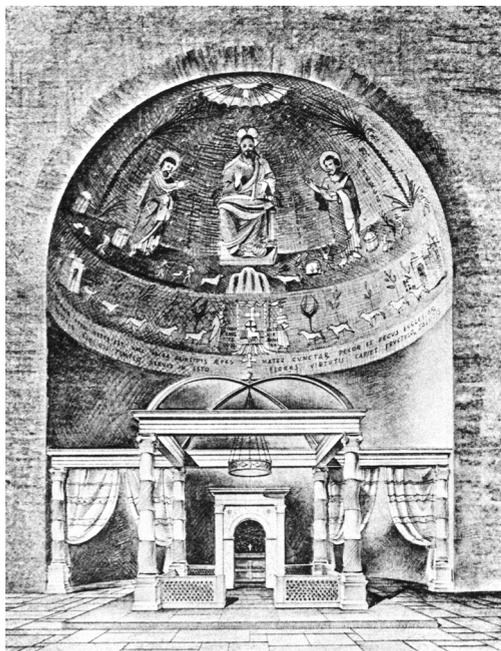
2. Etienne Dupérac after Michelangelo, Plan of New St. Peter's.



5. Giovanni Maggi, *Canonization of Carlo Borromeo*, 1610, engraving. Coll. Stampe, Vatican Library, Rome.



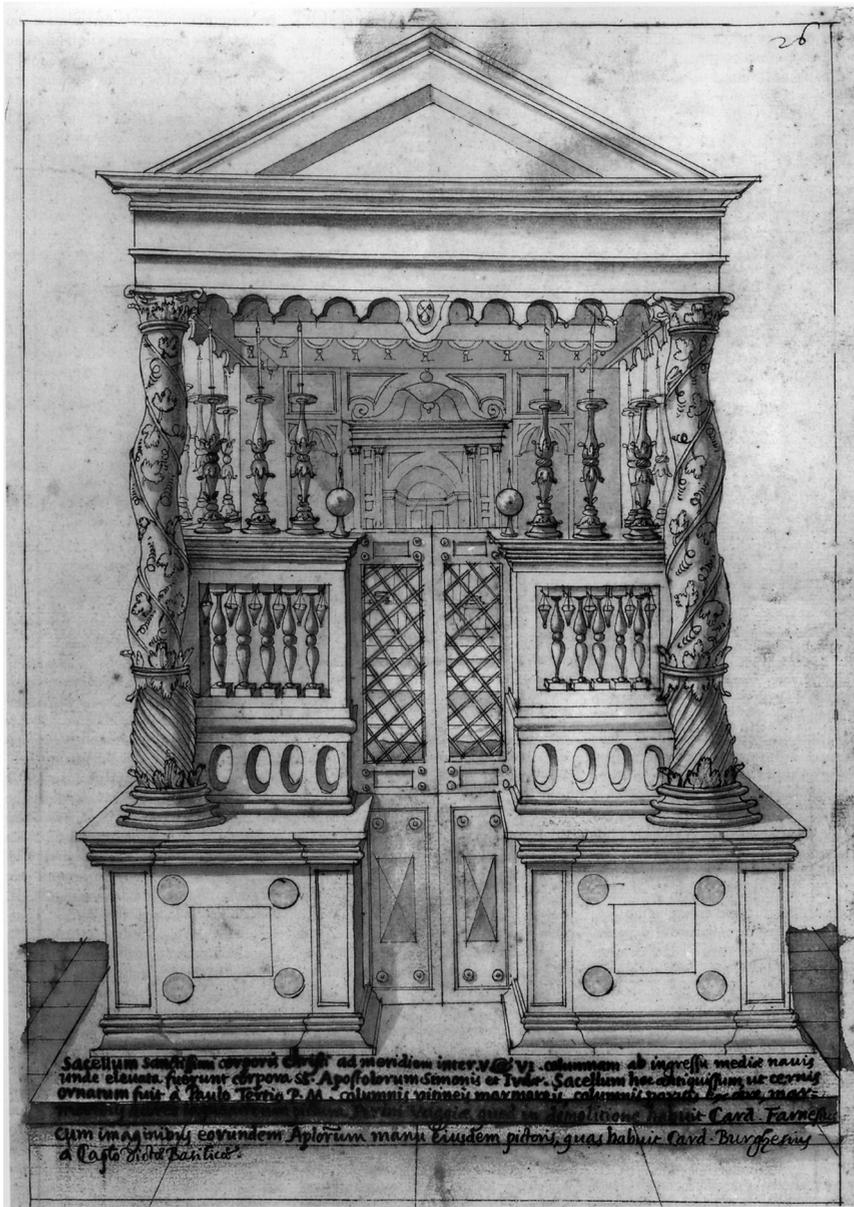
4. Borromini, *Project for ciborium in crossing of Saint Peter's*, drawing. It. AZ., Rom., 1443 (254 x 160mm), Albertina, Vienna.



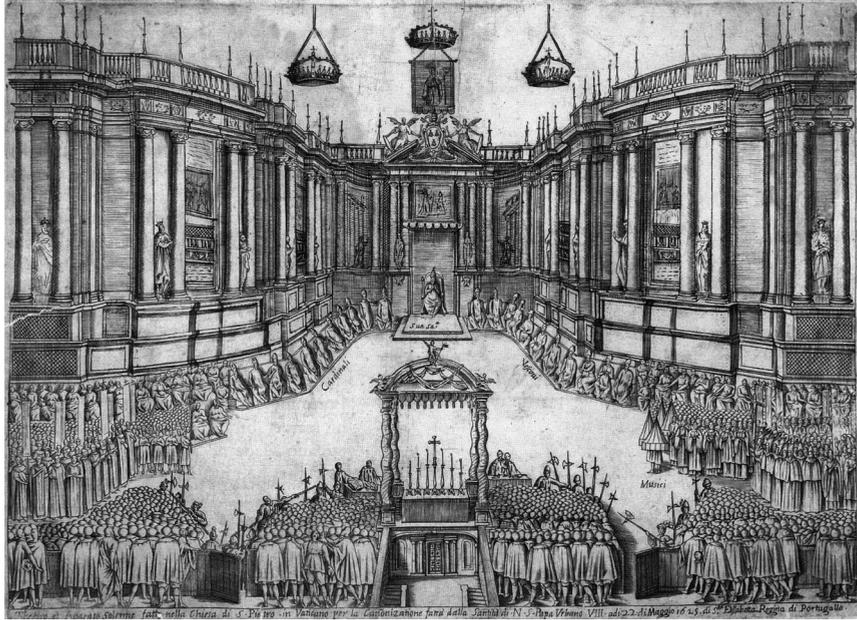
6. Constantinian Presbytery, Old St. Peter's, reconstruction drawing.

7. Saint Peter's, crown of the baldachin.

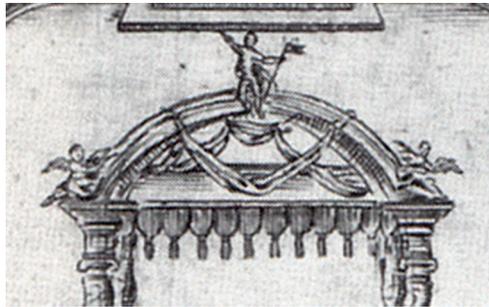




8. Altar of the Holy Sacrament, Old St. Peter's, drawing. Archivio del Capitolo di San Pietro, MS A 64 ter, fol. 22r, Vatican Library, Rome.



9. *Canonization of Elizabeth of Portugal, 1625* (decorations by Bernini), engraving. Coll. Stampe, Vatican Library, Rome.



10. *Canonization of Elizabeth of Portugal, 1625* (decorations by Bernini), engraving. detail. Coll. Stampe, Vatican Library, Rome.

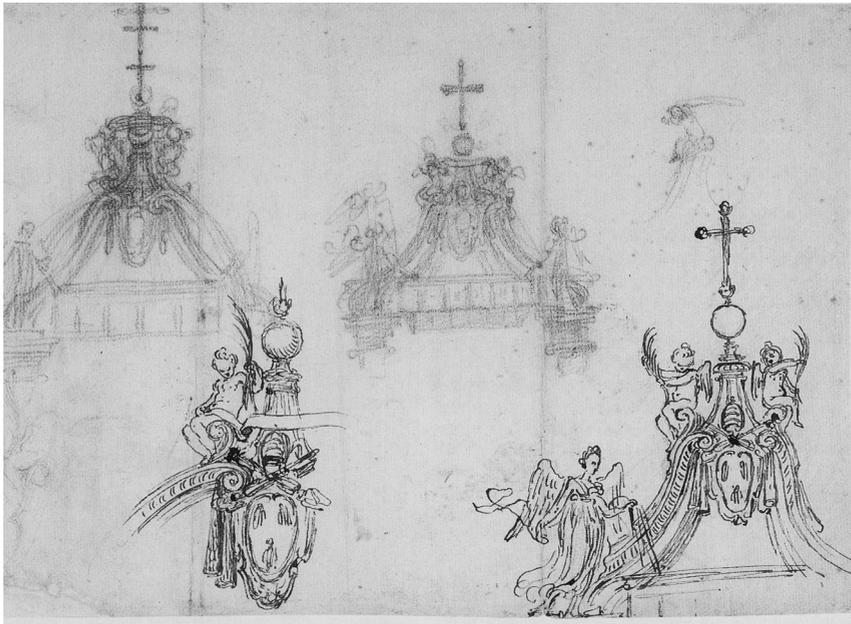


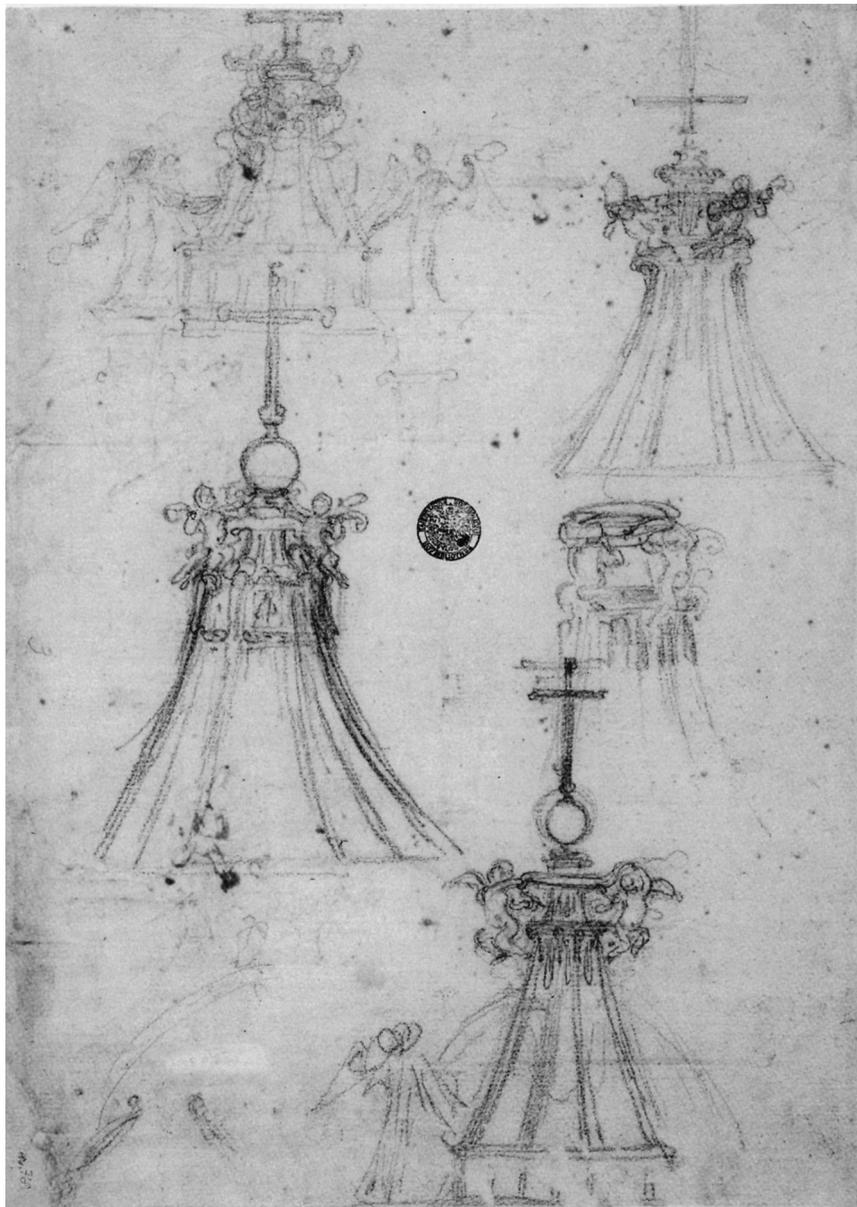
11. Urban VIII, 1626. Medagliere,  
Vatican Library, Rome.



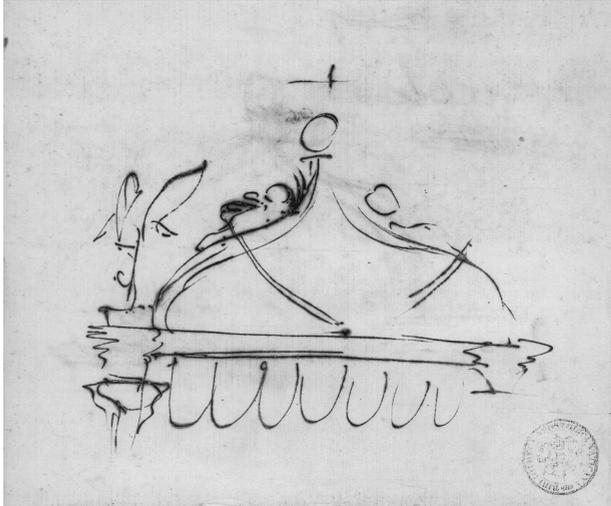
12. Medal commemorating the  
canonization of Andrea Corsini, 1629.  
Cabinet des Médailles, Bibliothèque  
Nationale, Paris.

13. Bernini, Studies for the crown of the Baldacchino,  
drawing. It. AZ, Rom 769r, Albertina, Vienna.



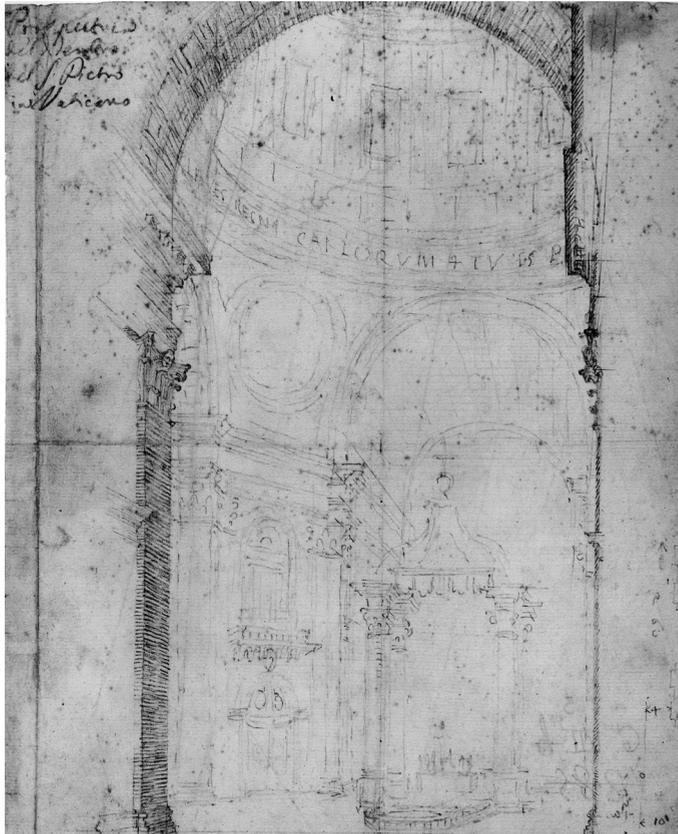


14. Bernini, Studies for the crown of the Baldacchino, drawing, It. AZ., Rom 769v, Albertina, Vienna.



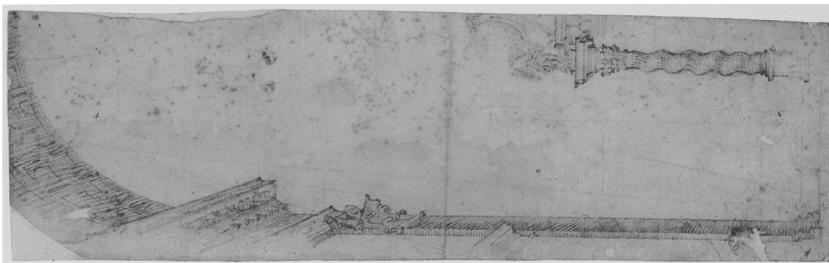
15. Bernini, Study for the crown of the Baldacchino, drawing. MS Barb. Lat., 9900, fol. 2, Vatican Library, Rome.

16. Borromini, Perspective study of the Baldacchino in situ, drawing. It. AZ., Rom, 763, Albertina, Vienna.

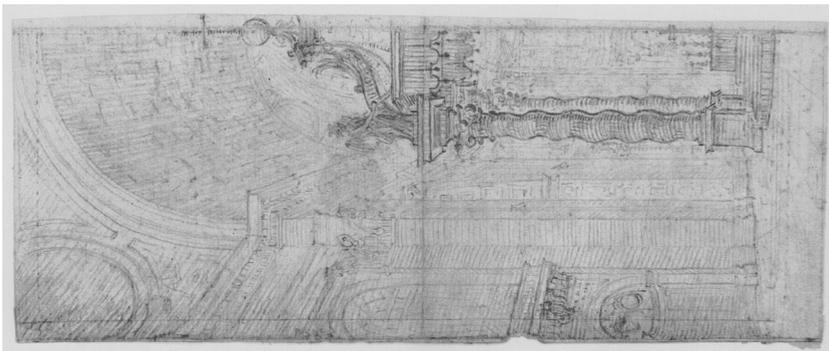




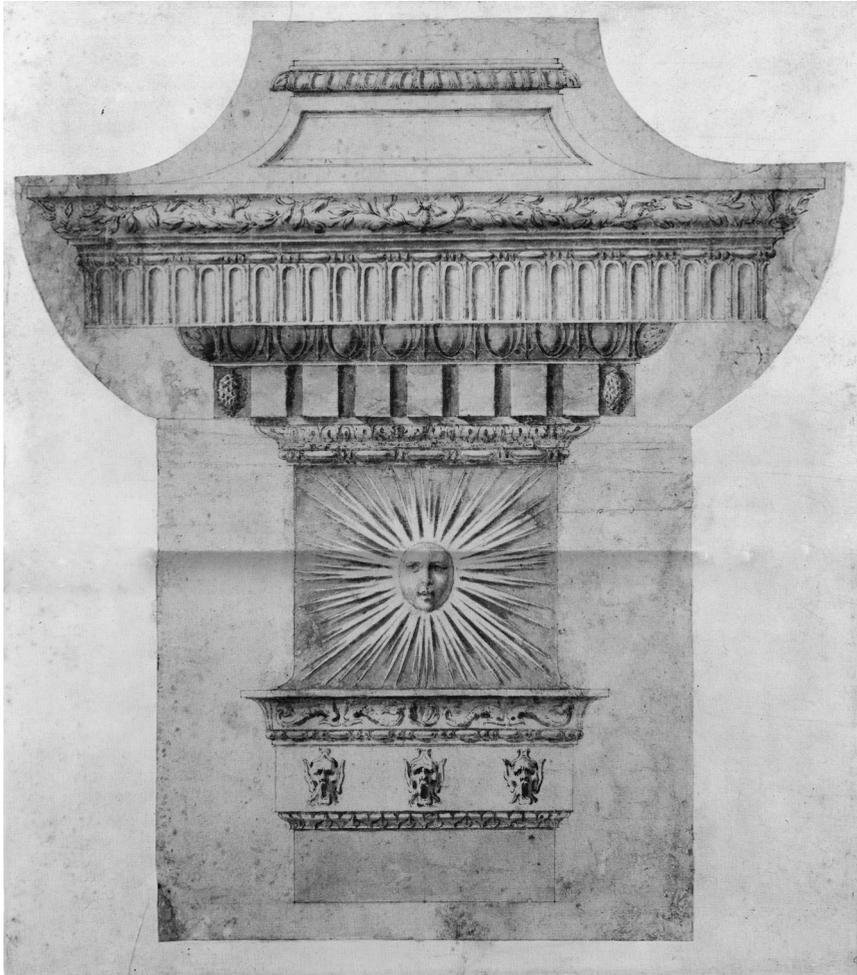
19. Borromini, Design for the upper part and entablature of the columns of the Baldacchino, drawing, RL5635, Royal Library, Windsor Castle.



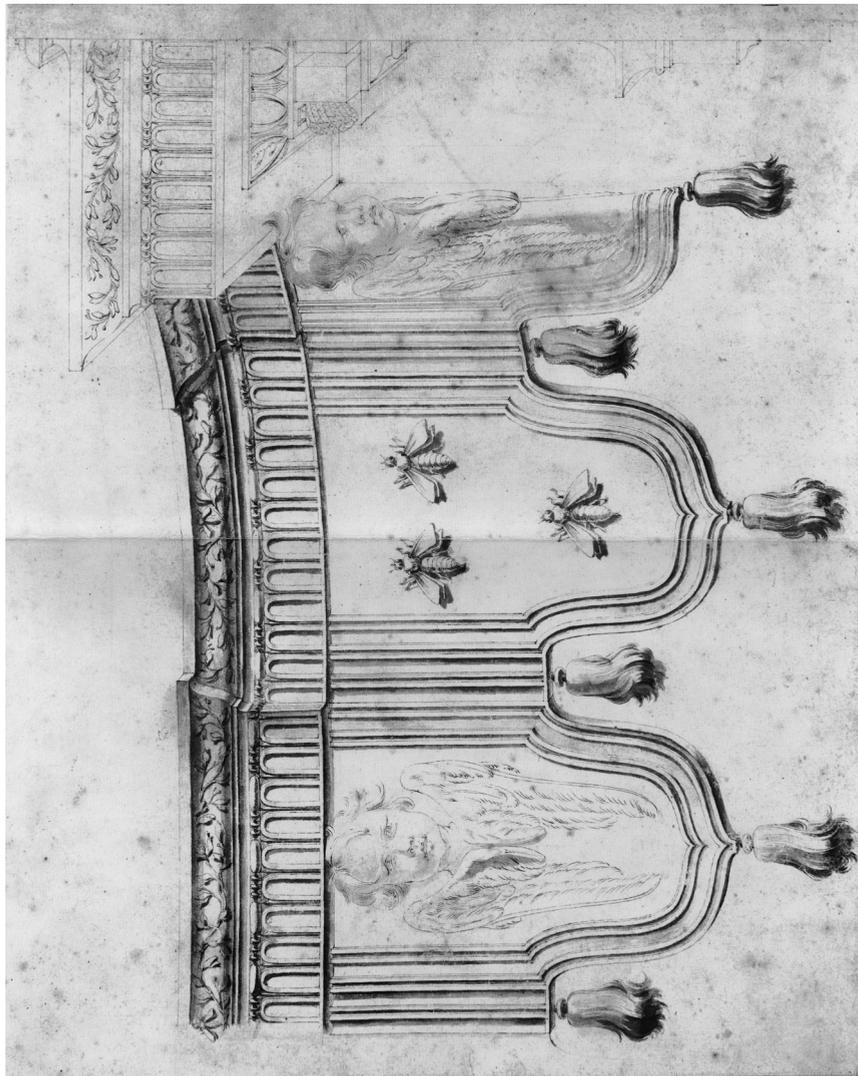
18. Borromini, Perspective study of the Baldacchino in situ, drawing. It. AZ., Rom, 764, Albertina, Vienna.



17. Borromini, Perspective study of the Baldacchino in situ, drawing. It. AZ., Rom, 762, Albertina, Vienna.



20. Borromini, Design for the entablature over the columns of the Baldacchino, drawing, RL5636, Royal Library, Windsor Castle.



21. Borromini, Design  
for the cornice-lappets  
entablature, drawing.  
RL5637, Royal Library,  
Windsor Castle.



23. Reliquary niche of St. Veronica, Saint Peter's, Rome.

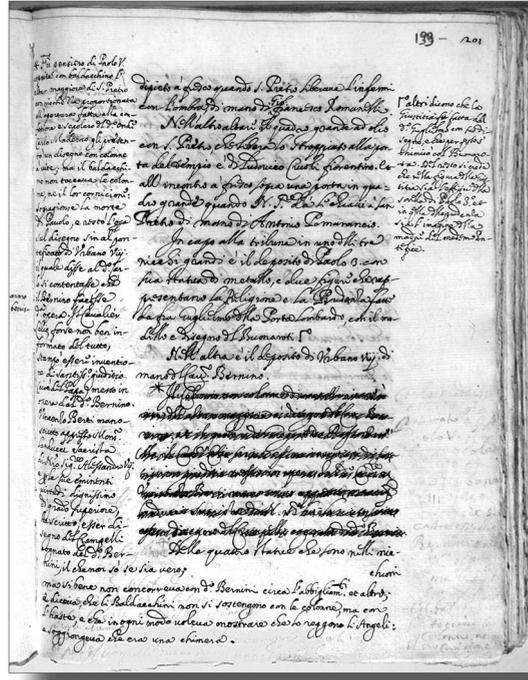


22. View of baldachin and dome, Saint Peter's, Rome.



24. View of the crossing. St. Peter's, Rome .

25. Page 201 of Fioravante Martinelli's unpublished guidebook *Roma ornata dall' architettura, pittura e scoltura*. Martinelli's original comment on the Baldacchino cancelled in the center column; Borromini's penciled emendation faintly visible in the left and lower margins, beneath Martinelli's inked copy. MS 4984, Biblioteca Casanatense, Rome.



26. Bernini Presenting the Design for the Reliquary Niches to Pope Urban VIII, vault of southwest grotto chapel (dedicated to St. Veronica). Saint Peter's, Rome .





27. Bernini, Portrait of a youth, here identified as Luigi Bernini, drawing. RL5543, Royal Library, Windsor Castle.

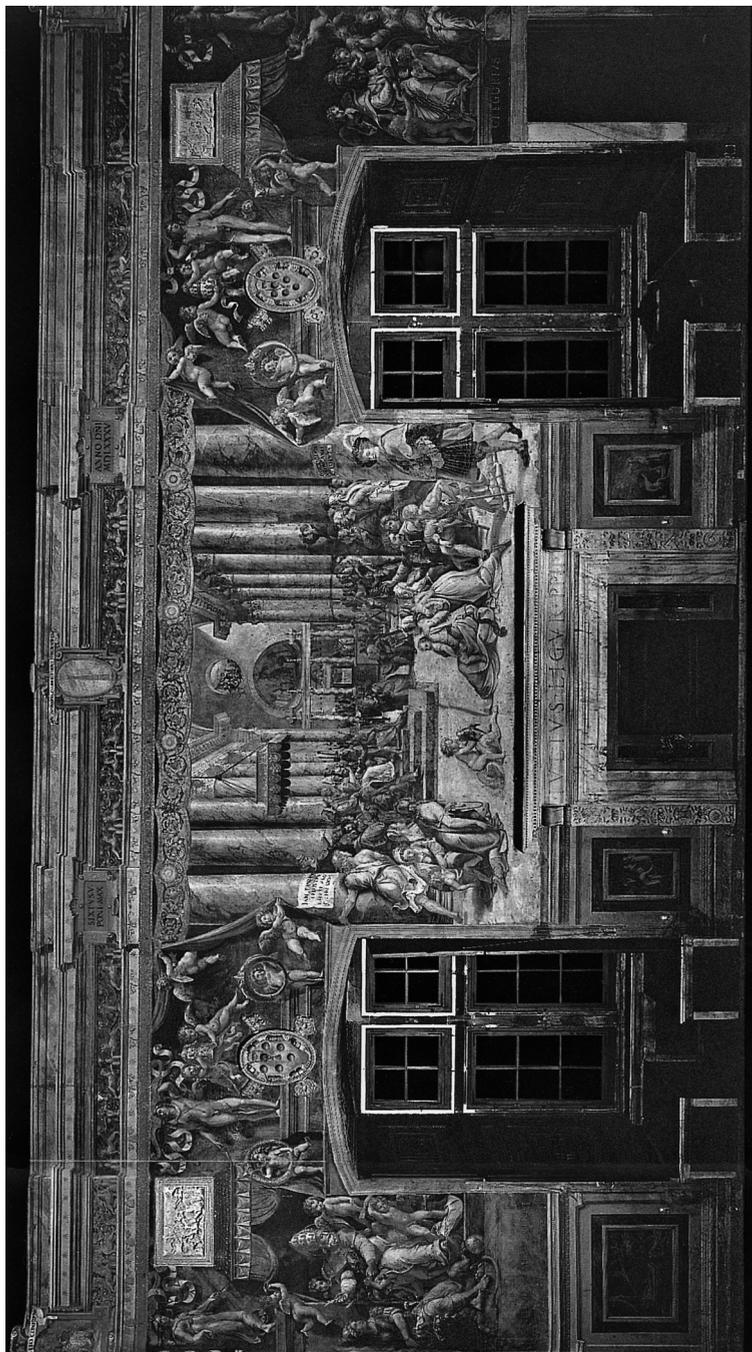
28. Giulio Romano and workshop, *Donation of Constantine* (detail showing reconstruction of the Constantinian presbytery based on elements then still extant). East wall, Sala di Costantino, Vatican Palace, Rome.



29. Giulio Romano and workshop, Pope Gregory the Great.  
East wall, Sala di Costantino, Vatican Palace, Rome.



30. Giulio Romano and workshop, Pope Gregory the Great,  
detail. East wall,  
Sala di Costantino,  
Vatican Palace,  
Rome.



31. Giulio Romano and workshop. East wall, Sala di Costantino, Vatican Palace, Rome.



32. Giulio Romano and workshop, Pope Sylvester I. East wall,  
Sala di Costantino, Vatican Palace, Rome.



33. Giulio Romano and workshop, Meeting of Constantine the Great and Pope Sylvester, relief. East wall, Sala di Costantino, Vatican Palace, Rome.

34. Giulio Romano and workshop, Gregory the Great celebrating Mass, relief. East wall, Sala di Costantino, Vatican Palace, Rome.





35. Bernini, Angel bearing laurel wreaths, crown of the Baldacchino.  
St. Peter's, Rome.

authorizations for payments to Borromini. Luigi's contributions were acknowledged in a fresco in one of the grotto chapels beneath the crossing piers high altar, where, so I believe, he is shown accompanying his brother who presents a design of the upper niche to Urban VIII (Figs. 26, 27).

### **The Gentle Yoke of Urban VIII**

When I first sought to comprehend Borromini's devilishly tortured and ingenious remark, that Maderno had proposed a baldachin that did not touch the columns or their cornices, I suggested that he might have envisaged a canopy suspended from above. There were many precedents for this arrangement, notably the baldachin over the enthroned Pope Sylvester I in the scene of the Donation of Constantine in the great ceremonial hall in the Vatican, the Sala di Costantino, decorated in the early sixteenth century by Raphael's follower Giulio Romano and his workshop (Fig. 28); appropriately, the choir that appears in the background includes the marble columns the emperor brought from Jerusalem, which Bernini ultimately installed in the upper niches of the crossing piers.<sup>34</sup> I now believe, thanks to a perspicacious observation by George Bauer, that we can offer an alternative — and by no means contradictory — explanation. Bauer noted that a salient feature of Bernini's second project for the Baldacchino had been foreshadowed in the fresco adjacent to Donation scene, representing the isolated figure of Gregory the Great enthroned (Figs. 29, 30). In fact the motif appears in two, and only two, of the series of enthroned popes in the Sala di Costantino, namely, those depicting Gregory and Sylvester, who flanks the scene of the Donation scene on the opposite side (Figs. 31, 32). In both cases, the flaring canopy over the pope's throne is suspended from thongs attached to rings held by allegorical figures who stand on flanking architectural platforms. Terracotta narrative relief panels with scenes related to the lives of the two popes are inserted in the wall above the canopies. The relief above Sylvester illustrates an equestrian meeting of the pope and the emperor, shown scarcely clad and still sporting pagan asses' ears (in the foreground below, Jupiter Capitolinus lies fallen clutching his imperial eagle); Constantine is cured of leprosy with a blessing gesture by the pope, while their powers are united in the standard

<sup>34</sup> Left window wall: Sylvester: Quednau 1979, figs. 39, 41; Center: Donation of Constantine; Right: Gregory, Quednau 1979, figs. 40, 42; Bauer 1996, figs. 5–6, Hess 1967, fig. 7; Perry 1977, fig. 19.

of the victorious cross displayed between them (Fig. 33).<sup>35</sup> Bauer noted that the reference to Pope Gregory was appropriate in the context of Urban VIII's project since one of the important acts of Gregory's reign was that he had decreed that masses be celebrated over the body of St. Peter ("Hic fecit ut super corpus beati Petri missas celebrarentur").<sup>36</sup> This event was illustrated in a relief inserted in the wall above, where the confession at the tomb is shown below the altar, and four of the famous spiral columns are displayed in a row, as they appear before the apse in the frescoed reconstruction of the Constantinian building (Fig. 34).<sup>37</sup> When the completed Baldacchino was inaugurated on 29 June 1633 (the Feast of Sts. Peter and Paul), it was indeed a reenactment of Gregory's original inauguration of a new Christian veneration of the papacy and the church.<sup>38</sup> However, the frescoes were relevant to Urban in another, no less important, and more personal way, in relation to the basic theme of the Donation of Constantine, which purported to record the first Christian emperor's gift of vast territories to the papacy and hence the foundation of the earthly hegemony of the Church. Although long since discredited as a medieval forgery, the Donation was still deeply significant of the papacy's call for acknowledgement by secular powers of its claim to temporal dominion. This was the underlying theme of the decoration of the Sala di Costantino itself, commissioned and carried out under the Medici popes Leo X and Clement VII. The meaning is made clear by Medici emblems and inscriptions that accompany the frescoes: the banderoles that flutter behind, intertwined with a yoke and inscribed with the famous Medici motto, *SVAVE*, i.e., the gentle yoke of Medici rule; and the diamond ring, symbol of perpetuity. Taken together the two parts fulfill the overarching conceit of Medicean rule: *Annulus nectit iugum suave* (the ring unites, the yoke is easy).<sup>39</sup> Here the allegories sustain the papal canopy through the tie-ring with one hand, while holding aloft the yoke with the other.<sup>40</sup>

<sup>35</sup> Quednau 1979, 287. Quednau discussed the reliefs in greater detail in *Raffaello* 1984, 244f.

<sup>36</sup> Bauer 1996, 158f.

<sup>37</sup> Quednau 1979, 303f.

<sup>38</sup> Pollak 1931, II, 421.

<sup>39</sup> Moroni 1840–61, XXXVIII, 45; Shearman 1972, 87; Perry 1977, 683–6; Cox-Rearick 1984, 36–8.

<sup>40</sup> Matthew 11:

29 tollite iugum meum super vos et discite a me quia mitis sum et humilis corde

The essence of this reference to the Medicean “power behind the throne” was carried over into Bernini’s design, where heavenly angels replace the “secular” allegories, and the garlands of Barberini laurel leaves, symbolic of a new era of eternal springtime, replace the Medici tie-rings and yoke (Fig. 35). Bernini’s insistence on retaining the angels through the sequence of design changes — of which Borromini evidently disapproved since he quoted the vociferous criticism, and which modern scholars have attributed simply to Bernini’s prejudice in favor of sculpture over architecture — may best be explained by this reference to the divine election and beneficent authority of the pope. These were, in fact, the fundamental themes of Urban’s conception of his office: his election was signaled by divine intervention; at his coronation he invoked the all-powerful Archangel Michael as patron of his papacy; and his choice of his name announced the gentility of his rule.<sup>41</sup> The angels sustain the Baldacchino effortlessly through delicate garlands of laurel that are not attached but mysteriously disappear between the ribs and the canopy. This is important work, after all. The Baldacchino is, after all, a kind of miracle.

*et invenietis requiem animabus vestris*

30 *iugum enim meum suave est et onus meum leve est*

(29 Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.

30 For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.)

<sup>41</sup> On the ideology and coherence of Urban VIII’s auto-definition, see Lavin 2007.

## Appendix

Cesare D'Onofrio, *Roma nel seicento. "Roma ornata dall'architettura, pittura e scoltura" di Fioravante Martinelli*, Florence, 1969

Marginal emendations to passages in Martinelli's text suggested by Borromini concerning Bernini and himself.

Page	Martinelli text	Borromini emedation
11	<p><i>S. AGOSTINO ...</i></p> <p>L'altar maggiore col ricco e pretioso ciborio, o tabernacolo del Santissimo fu fatto fare dal P. Girolamo Ghetti romano, Generale dell'Ordine nel 1627 con disegno di un amico di Santi Ghetti, il quale hebbe la cura dell'opera, et in esso sono due Angeli scolpiti da Giuliano Finelli Carrarino per il* Cav. Bernino.</p>	<p>* <b>"il tabernacolo fatto con disegno di un amico di (Santi Ghetti) ..."</b>: il Martinelli aveva scritto: "con architettura e assistenza di Santi Ghetti, et in esso sono due Angeli scolpiti dal Cav. <b>Bernino</b>". Quest'ultima frase è corretta dal Borromini: <b>"da Giuliano Finelli Carrarino per il C.r Bernino"</b>.</p>
14	<p><i>S. ANASTASIA ...</i></p> <p>L'altar maggiore è architettura di Honorio Lunghi: ma l'ornamento della tribuna con colonnato è disegno del Cav. Borromino fatto d'ordine del Card. Carpegna all'houra titolare*. Il disegno della facciata col resarcimento della chiesa è di Luigi Arigucci fatto fare da Urbano VIII.</p>	<p>* <b>"Iornamento della tribuna con colonnato è disegno del Cav. Borromini fatto d'ordine del Em.mo Sig.r Card. Carpegna Protettore"</b>.</p>

15	<p><i>S. ANDREA DELLE FRATTE ...</i></p> <p>Il campanile è disegno, et* invenzione del Cav. Borromino, il quale havendo nella cima d'esso posta per suo finimento e per trofeo della beneficenza del fondatore la sua arme in piedi congiunta con leggiadro modo a quella de Frati Minimi si è dichiarato autore di situare in isola simil armi: et al presente si comincia a fabricare la cuppola con architettura del medemo Cav. Borromino*.</p>	<p>* <b>“et al presente . . . Borromino”.</b></p> <p>* <b>“detto »; « ma era da Milano”.</b></p>
57	<p><i>GIESÙ ADORATO DA MAGI</i></p> <p>Questo tempietto della Congregatione de propaganda fide è stato fabricato dal Card. Antonio Barberino, chiamato di S. Onofrio con architettura del Cav. Bernino; e minacciando rovina oltre ad altre osservazioni fatte dalla Santità di Nostro Signore Alessandro VII è stato di suo ordine fatto l'altro artificiofissimo con disegno del Cav. Borromino*.</p>	<p>* e minacciando . . . ecc., sembra suggerimento del Borromini.</p>
69	<p><i>S. GIOVANNI NEL LATERANO ...</i></p> <p>Il cornicione che ricinge il detto tempio del Battisterio con il suo fregio è stato fatto fare dalla Santità di Nostro Signore Alessandro VII con disegno del Cav. Borromino*.</p>	<p>* <b>“Il cornicione . . . Borromino”.</b></p>
105	<p><i>S. MARIA MAGGIORE ...</i></p> <p>L'incoronazione del Papa di sopra è di Pietro padre del Cav. Bernino* ; à man destra è d'Ippolito Butio Milanese, à man sinistra di Gio. Antonio Valsoldino. Li termini sono scarpellati dal detto Pietro.</p>	<p>* <b>“è di Pietro Bernino scultore (?)”;</b> suggerimento non accettato dal Martinelli.</p>

158	<p><i>S. PIETRO VATICANO ...</i></p> <p>Il Ciborio con colonne di metallo istorte a vite dell'altar maggiore è disegno del Cav. Bernino, et il getto è di Gregorio de Rossi Rom.º. Ma il Cav.re Celio scrive essere inventione di santissimo giuditio messo in opera dal d.º Cav.re. Vincenzo Berti manoscritto appresso monsig.<sup>re</sup> Landucci sacrista di N. S.<sup>re</sup> ha lasciato scritto esser disegno del Ciampelli cognato di d.º Bernino.</p>	<p><i>S. PIETRO VATICANO ...</i></p> <p><b>Fù pensiero di Paolo V coprire con baldacchino l'altar maggiore di S. Pietro con ricchezza proportionata all'apertura fatta alla confessione e sepolcro di d.º Onde Carlo Maderno gli presentò un disegno con colonne à vite; ma il baldacchino non toccava le colonne, ne il lor cornicione: sopragionse la morte di Paulo, e restò l'op.<sup>a</sup> sul disegno sin al ponteficato di Urbano VIII. il quale disse al d.º Carlo si contentasse, che il Bernino facesse d.<sup>a</sup> opera. Il Cavalier Celio, forse non ben informato del tutto, stampò essere inventione di Santiss.º giuditio (cioè del Papa) messo in opera dal d.º Bernino. Vincenzo Berti manoscritto appresso Mons.<sup>r</sup> Landucci Sacrista di N'ro Sig.<sup>re</sup> Alessandro VII e p le sue eminenti virtudi dignissimo di grado superiore, ha scritto, esser disegno del Ciampelli cognato del d.º Bernini, il che non sò se sia vero; ma si bene non concorrea con d.º Bernini circa l'abbigliam.<sup>ti</sup> et altro; e diceva, che li Baldacchini non si sostengono con le colonne, ma con l'hasta, [omitted by D'Onofrio: et che il baldacchino non ricora assieme con la cornice dele colone] et in ogni modo voleva mostrare che lo reggono li Angeli: e soggiungeva che era una chimera.</b></p>
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218	<p><i>PARTE SECONDA – COLLEGII ... DELLA FABRICA DELLO STUDIO ROMANO APPRESSO LA CHIESA DI S. GIACOMO DE SPAGNOLI ...</i></p> <p>In segno della nobiltà della fabrica di questo Studio sono state gettate medaglie d'oro, d'argento, e di metallo d'ordine del Papa, con l'impronta della sua imagine, e nel rovescio la faccia del teatro con l'alzata della cappella, col suo tempietto e finimento superiore, e delli portici laterali disegnata dal medesimo Cav. Borromino, al quale i virtuosi della sua professione devono restar molt'obligati per haver insegnato di fabricare edifitij reali senza demolire le sue parti nobili; e di nobilitare picciolissimi SEE NEXT</p>	
220	<p>siti con fabriche sontuose, magnifiche, e copiose d'ordine e di ornamenti come hà fatto nel primo insegnamento à S. Giovanni in Laterano, et nel 2° in S. Carlo alle quattro fontane; nella cappella della Sapienza; e nell'altra, che hora v`a facendo al Collegio de Propaganda fide oltre al tempietto sotterraneo nella chiesa di S. Giovanni de fiorentini con l'altare maggiore sopra*.</p>	* <b>“et il tempietto . . . sopra”.</b>
231f	<p><i>PALAZZI ... De Barberini</i> à capo delle case raggiustato con architettura di molti, e spetialmente del Cav. Bernino*. Vi sono pitture di Raffaello, del Correggio, di Andrea del Sarto, di Giulio Romano, del Parmigianino, e d'altri.</p>	* <b>“et altri”.</b>

282	<p><i>FONTANE ... IN PIAZZA NAVONA</i> ...</p> <p>Il detto Innocenzo X con suo chirografo diede la fontana di mezzo al Cav. Borromino, quale condusse l'acqua, e scoprì il pensiero di condurvi la guglia, et ornarla con un piedestallo à guscio nel quale fossero scarpellati quattro historie di basso rilievo, e con quattro fiumi più celebri del mondo*, e con altri ornamenti al P. Vergilio Spada, qual poi fu data al Cav. Bernino ad istanza della Signora Donna Olimpia Pamfilia, e con suo disegno è stata aggiustata nella forma che si vede.</p>	<p>* Il Martinelli aveva scritto: « et ornarla con le quattro parti del mondo figurate in quattro fiumi »; tale frase fu cancellata e sostituita a margine con l'altra: « con un piedestallo . . . mondo »; per tale importante modifica tuttavia non si vede affatto la matita del Borromini, il quale certamente la suggerì a voce.</p>
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