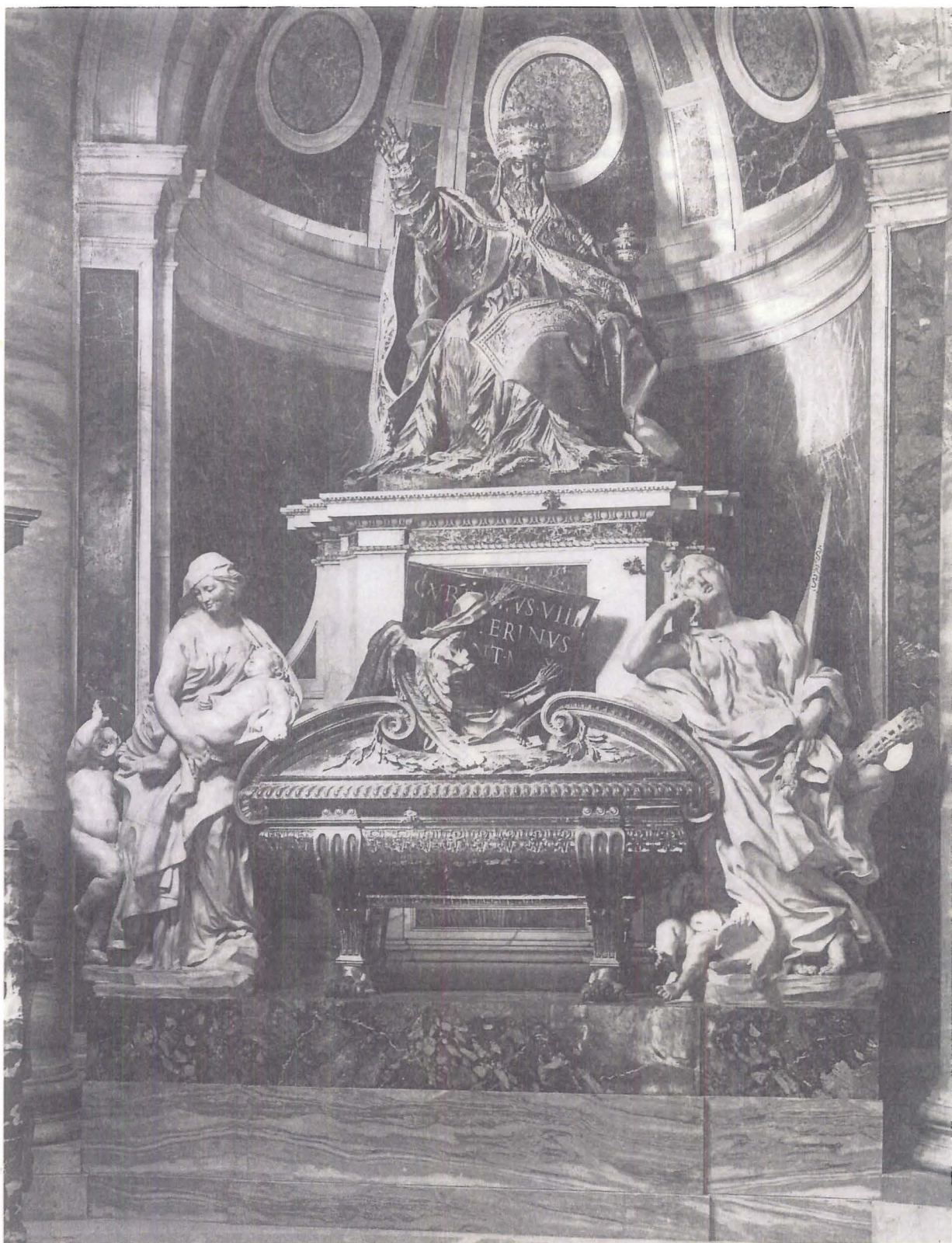


# BAROCKE INSZENIERUNG

*Herausgegeben von Joseph Imorde, Fritz Neumeyer und Tristan Weddigen*



*Zurich, 1999*



Bernini, Tomb of Urban VIII. Rome, St. Peter's (photo: Anderson 215)



Irving Lavin

**BERNINI'S BUMBLING BARBERINI BEES**

*Misericors Dominus, et justus, et Deus noster miseretur*  
(Gracious is the Lord, and righteous; yea, our God is merciful, Ps. 116:5)\*

\* Theme-text for a catechism of John Paul II on divine charity and justice and the relationship between them; audience of July 7, 1999 (L'Osservatore Romano, CXXXIX, No. 154, July 8, 1999, 4). The judicial branch of the Italian government is still called Ministero di Grazia e Giustizia. 1 Wilkinson 1971. Coincidentally appeared the monographic essay on the tomb by Kauffmann 1970, 109–35, which incorporates a great and invaluable mass of material on every aspect of the monument, but fails to grasp the fundamental distinction observed by Wilkinson. The same is true of the recent study by Schütze 1994, devoted essentially to the « imperialisti » ambitions of Urban VIII.

This paper is partly in the nature of an extended, and I hope expansive, footnote to an extraordinarily important and strangely neglected essay on Bernini's tomb of Urban VIII published in 1971 by Catherine Wilkinson (fig. 1).<sup>1</sup> Her brief article focused specifically on the iconography of the figures of Charity and Justice, but Wilkinson's interpretation has important implications for our understanding of Bernini's art generally. She demonstrated, in effect, that the two figures do not represent, as had always been taken for granted, the traditional moral allegories of Charity and Justice, thus illustrating the relatively simple, not to say superficial, and often sycophantic character of Bernini's art as it was commonly conceived. Taking up the doctrinal formulations of the Council of Trent and as well as other supporting texts, Wilkinson made it clear that Bernini's figures are intellectually sophisticated, indeed profound evocations, not of the

moral virtues, but of the divine virtues of Charity and Justice.<sup>2</sup> The virtues are therefore not qualities of Urban VIII personally, but attributes of his office as the Vicar of Christ on earth. Interestingly, Wilkinson overlooked what is perhaps the most striking testimony to her interpretation: a painting by Baglione in which Divine Wisdom, crowned by the dove of the Holy Spirit, reaches down from heaven with golden chains to link to herself and to each other her earthly representatives, Charity and Justice (fig. 3).<sup>3</sup> Bernini's allegories therefore cannot be understood as mourners for the departed pope. Among the least valuable implications of Wilkinson's work, for example, is that it obviated the embarrassing need to construe Charity's maternal benevolence as an expression of grief (fig. 3)!<sup>4</sup>

The initial key to the significance of the allegories is that Bernini did not accompany the pope by the cardinal moral virtues normally

2 Wilkinson's point of departure was an observation to this effect by Panofsky 1964, 94; see n. 35 below.

3 Cited by Kauffmann 1970, 109f. The inscriptions on the painting read as follows: *Qui manet in caritate in deo manet et deus in eo; Diligite iustitiam qui iudicatis terram.* (He who abides in charity abides in God, and God abides in him; let him who judges the earth delight in justice.)

4 «... the allegories, touched by the sense of bereavement at the death of so good a pope, are moved to tears and Justice, in a swoon of grief, barely manages to hold the sword that is no longer guided by Urban's rule.» (Fehl 1986, 181). Baldinucci (1948, 87) also interprets the allegories as mourners, but recognizes Charity's compassionate expression: « *Pietoso sguardo.* » « *mostri di compitare al suo pianto.* »



2 Giovanni Baglione, *Allegory of Charity and Justice*. London, Hampton Court



3 Bernini, *Tomb of Urban VIII*, detail. Rome, St. Peter's (photo: Saskia 8001 M 03)

associated with the earthly ruler, whose loss they properly mourn. Instead, he combined one of the cardinal virtues, Justice, with the chief theological virtue, Charity. This combination was common enough, but in the context of papal portraiture it specifically denoted the role of the papacy in the execution of God's wish that man be justified, that is, made just, and so redeemed from original sin. God achieves this result through the sacrifice of his only son, and the exercise of the chief attributes of his perfection, the divine virtues of Charity and Justice. The two virtues are equal and interdependent, the one operating through the other in the interest of mankind. The allegories, therefore, far from lamenting the pope's demise, illustrate the roles of God's virtues in achieving the beneficent result implicit in the pope's salvific gesture.<sup>5</sup>

In the case of Charity Bernini makes his point by creating a binary complementary moral and psychological contrast—«contrapposto,» Bernini would have called it—between the extremes of the soul's route to salvation.<sup>6</sup> One child (fig. 3), having absorbed the milk of God's forgiving goodness sleeps blissfully until the end of time. The other soul (fig. 4) bawls at the top of his lungs: he is the repentant sinner reaching desperately for redemption, so utterly consumed by recrimination as to be unaware of

Charity's compassionate response to his excruciating Jeremiad. Wilkinson cites a remarkably close precedent for Bernini's concept in a painting by Lanfranco illustrating the action of the Virgin interceding with her son to save a repentant soul (fig. 6).<sup>7</sup> To a degree, the composition, and perhaps also the concept, seems to echo the figure of Charity Bernini's father, Pietro, had carved years before in Naples (fig. 7).<sup>8</sup> The point of the subject, however, is explicitly represented in a painting by Guercino, famous in its day, as evidenced by an engraving in which the accompanying inscription treats the subject of Charity as a *memento mori* reminding the viewer that his own redemption is in direct proportion to his participation in God's love (fig. 8).<sup>9</sup>

Charity is a vigorously dynamic and earthly figure who contacts the papal tomb primarily by resting her sleeping charge against the sarcophagus—an image that insistently recalls the themes of the Pietà and entombment of Christ, whose sacrifice was the prototype of all acts of charity.<sup>10</sup> In sharp contrast, the passive figure of Justice stands, or more accurately leans against the tomb, in a pose that redolent of languor and passivity (fig. 9). Whereas Charity has fewer accouterments than usual (two babies rather than three), Justice has more: the book, and fasces in

<sup>5</sup> On the pope's gesture see below.

<sup>6</sup> On Bernini's notion of *contrapposto*, see Lavin 1980, 9f., and compare his busts of the *Damned and Blessed Souls*, Lavin 1993, 101–38.

<sup>7</sup> Bernini 1982, 37f.

<sup>8</sup> On Pietro Bernini's *Charity* see Alasio, ed., 1987, 84–8.

<sup>9</sup> *Aspice, sum Charitas, Christi me dilige cultor, / Quantus amor fuerit, praemia tanta feret.* On the painting, in the Dayton Art Institute, see *Fifty Treasures*, 1969, 92, 141.

<sup>10</sup> Kauffmann 1970, 122, notes the analogy with the *Pietà*.



<sup>4</sup> Bernini, *Tomb of Urban VIII*, detail. Rome, St. Peter's (photo: Lehmann-Brockhaus)



<sup>5</sup> Bernini, *Tomb of Urban VIII*, detail. Rome, St. Peter's (photo: Saskia 8001 M 14)



addition to the canonical sword and balance. The attributes obviously relate to the quintessential forms of justice: legal, commutative and distributive, derived ultimately from Aristotle, developed by the scholastics, and formulated definitively at the Council of Trent.<sup>11</sup> Three points concern us here. The crossleg pose of the figure and the inclusion of the fasces have a common theme with respect to the sword and balance, which evoke the impartial and retributive nature of justice.<sup>12</sup> Crossed legs were a frequent attribute of figures representative of unhurried meditation and contemplation, and in this case the motif expresses one of the fundamental attributes of God's justice, that it is slow and deliberate.<sup>13</sup> Vincenzo Cartari explains the fact that Saturn was often represented with his feet tied together as indicating that «Divine Goodness does not run quickly or noisily to castigate error, but belatedly and slowly, so that the sinner is unaware before he feels the pain.»<sup>14</sup> Under the heading precisely of Divine Justice Cesare Ripa describes the fasces with the ax, carried by the lictors before the consuls and the Tribune of the People, as signifying that in the execution of justice overzealous castigation is unwarranted, and that justice should never be precipitous but have time to mature judgment while unbinding the rods that cover the ax.<sup>15</sup> The crossleg pose and the fasces occur together

in a painting of Justice attributed to Battista Dofsi (fig. 10).

The second observation I want to make about Justice concerns the weapon she holds. The particular sting of Urban's justice, which we will discuss presently, is felt in the magnificent colony of bees that decorates the pommel (fig. 11). Valeriano in his Hieroglyphics explains the double-edged sword as alluding to the two aspects of punishment, corporeal and spiritual.<sup>16</sup> In this case the point is made with a particular embellishment in the form of damascening that decorates the two faces of the blade in mirror images (fig. 12). The design is evidently indecipherable as words, but I suspect it may allude to Islam and the conversion of the infidel.<sup>17</sup> This ideal of Christian justice, which included publication of the bible in Arabic, was a guiding principle of the Propaganda Fide, the great missionary institution that was one of the major preoccupations of Urban's reign.<sup>18</sup>

My third point concerns the most commonly misunderstood feature of the allegory, that is, what might be called her mood, her head resting on her hand, her head and eyes turned upward, her lips parted as if in response to some message received from on high. In truth, there is nothing tearful or morbid about her expression,

16 «... perché' è afai noto, che il coltello è indito della severità, e del castigo, non è da lasciar' indietro, che nelle sacre lettere spesso si fa menzione del coltello di due tagli. Ieroglyphico di questo è, che nel giudizio può punire l'animo, & il corpo ad un tratto, ovvero che punisce col supplizio della pena presente, e col timore dell'avenire.» Valeriano 1625, 566  
Valeriano is here surely alluding to the passage in Hebrews 4:12: «For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.» Augustine compares the two-edged sword to the Old and New Testaments: «And scripture says that the word of god is a two-edged sword because of its double edge, the two testaments.» De Civ. Dei XX, 21, 2; McCracken and Green 1957-72, 384-5 See Frommhold 1925, 51.  
17 Southern 1962, Daniel 1980, Kedar 1984.  
18 Pastor 1923-53, XXIX, 212-6.

11 Commutative: individual to individual—the sword; distributive: society to the individual—fasces; legal: individual to society—book; the balance = equality of all justice.

12 Ripa s.v. Giustizia: «Le bilancie significano, che la Giustizia divina dà regalia à tutte le attioni, & la spada le pene de' delinquenti.» (1603, 188) «Il mostrare la severità, il rigore della giustizia per una spada ignuda... è stato trovato da moderni, i quali per dar qualche cenno all'equità vi aggiunsero ancor la bilancia.» Valeriano 1625, 565.

13 On the crossed legs see Kauffmann 1970, 124ff., who seems to have overlooked the fundamental study by Tikkanen 1912, 123-50.

14 Cartari 1626, 30 «... la divina bontà non corre in fretta, né con romore a castigare chi erra, ma va tarda, & lenta, & così tacitamente, che non prima se ne avvede il peccatore, che senta la pena.» An ancient representation of Justice with a figure leaning on a spear signified «la lentezza, per la quale le cause si mandano in lungo più del dovere, perché... significa tardanza.» Valeriano 1625, 566.

15 Ripa 1603, 188: «Il fascio di verghe con la scure, era portato anticamente in Rome da littori inanzi a' Consoli, & al Tribuno della Plebe, per mostrar che nõ si deve rimanere di castigare, ove richiede la Giustizia, ne di deve esser precipitoso: ma dar tempo à maturare il giudizio nel sciorre delle verghe.» On the fasces as an attribute of Justice see the discussion by Kiesel 1984, 107f.



6 Giovanni Lanfranco, *Salvation of a Soul*. Naples, Galleria Nazionale (photo: SAGN 13929)



7 Pietro Bernini, *Charity*. Naples, Monte di Pietà (SAGN 5820)



which is rather one of dreamy absorption tinged with a kind of melancholic lethargy. The very fact that her elbow rests on the book of law—Urban was first and foremost a jurist and his rise within the church hierarchy rested on that basis—indicates that her action has to do with justice, not mourning.<sup>19</sup> To be sure, all writers emphasize that divine chastisement is inflicted only reluctantly, and with dismay,<sup>20</sup> and hints of fear-someness and withdrawal are expressed by the putti, one of whom hides anxiously with the scales, while the other turns away with the fasces (Figs. 13, 14). The allegory herself, however, has a quite different attitude. The head-on-hand motif is one of the most consistent postures of the thinker, the contemplator, the meditator, and the turn of her head and glance makes it clear, not only that she is slow to act but that what she contemplates is the heavenly source of divine justice. Bernini seems to have based this aspect of his figure on just such a prototype, Domenichino's equally dilatory allegory of Prudence at San Carlo ai Catinari (fig. 16). Ripa emphasizes that the eyes of Divine Justice must regard the things of this world as beneath her, keeping her attention always fixed on the pure and the true.<sup>21</sup>

The two groups together thus offer a veritable concert of psychological and moral states, the allegories themselves acting in a counterpoint perhaps deliberately analogous to the saintly figures in the crossing piers beneath the dome, Veronica, Andrew, Longinus and Helen (fig. 15); carried out under Bernini's supervision during the same period as Urban's tomb, they represent the principal passion relics possessed by the basilica. The two female saints—one active, one passive—are earthbound and outward directed, while the two men (one active, one passive) appear upward directed and inspired from heaven.<sup>22</sup>

This theme, that is, the divine origin and earthward dispensation of God's grace in the form of Charity and Justice, carries deep into the motivation and ultimate significance of the monument, which is in fact the first papal tomb incorporating these two virtues together and in isolation. Rarely, they appeared together independently, as in the painting by Baglione. They were commonly included in cycles of the virtues, and in Domenichino's series at San Carlo, the attributes of Justice include both the sword and the fasces (fig. 17).<sup>23</sup> Most importantly, there was a certain tradition for pairing the allegories in relation to papal portraits, since from the Middle Ages on these virtues played fundamental roles in the theoretical dis-

<sup>19</sup> On Urban's legal training and early career see Pastor 1923–53, XXVIII, 28–29.  
<sup>20</sup> Wilkinson 1971, 58f., notes that Divine Justice grieves for the sinner and suffers the same pain it inflicts.

<sup>21</sup> For both these observations, see Kauffmann 1970, 124, who also draws the analogy with the upturned glances of Bernini's *Anima beata* and S. Bibiana.

<sup>22</sup> On what might be called the «psycho-theology» of the crossing figures see Lavin 1968, 24–39.

<sup>23</sup> Following Ripa, Male 1932, 391, identified Justice's companion as *Benignità*; Spear 1982, 276.



<sup>8</sup> After Guercino, *Charity*, engraving by Giovanni Battista Pasqualini



<sup>9</sup> Bernini, *Tomb of Urban VIII*, detail. Rome, St. Peter's (photo: Stoedtner 210382)



24 This tradition was admirably outlined by Quednau 1979, 251–4.

25 The relation to the Sala di Costantino Urban I was first noted by Kaufmann 1970, 110; Quednau 1979, 251f.; Scott 1991, 161; Schütze 1994, 266 n. 160

26 «Egli dice haver preso il nome di Urbano per due cause, la prima per amar egli molto questa città, che s'appella Urbs per autonomia, la seconda perchè conoscendo egli la sua natura tirar alquanto al rigido le fusse continuo ricordo di dover temperarla.» (Pastor 1923–53, XXVIII, 25, n. 1) «... dal qual nome ha voluto egli insignirsi, come ha detto, per venerare la memoria degli antichi Urbani predecessori suoi, che pieni di santo zelo, ed alieni agli interessi del mondo, tentarono imprese gloriose.» (Barozzi and Berchet 1877–8, I, 225) On the naming of the pope see also Hergemöller 1980, 198f. No doubt Barberini was also aware that Urban I, who played a central role in the life of St. Cecilia, used the most familiar of all bee clichés to describe the Roman martyr's works in the service of Christ: «... Lord Jesus Christ, sower of chaste counsel, accept the fruit of the seeds that you sowed in Cecilia! Lord Jesus Christ, good shepherd, Cecilia your handmaid has served you like a busy bee: the spouse whom she received as a fierce lion, she has sent to you as a gentle lamb!» (Voragine 1995, II, 319) «... Caecilia famula tua quasi apis tibi argumentosa deservit; nam sponsum, quem quasi leonem ferocem accepit, ad te quasi agnum mansuetissimum destinavit.» (Voragine 1850, 772

10 Battista Dofsi, Justice. Dresden, Gemäldegalerie

cussions of the extent and limitations of papal rule—the so-called «plenitudo potestatis.»<sup>24</sup> This last context was clearly a factor in Bernini's conception. One direct source was the image of Pope Urban I flanked by Justice and Charity in the series of grandiose papal portraits by Giulio Romano in the Sala di Costantino, which document the awesome continuity of the church of Rome since its establishment by the first Christian emperor (fig. 18).<sup>25</sup> This onomastic reference may reflect three reasons contemporary sources report for Urban's choice of his name: because of his affection for the city; because he wished to emulate the great achievements of his namesakes; and because, realizing that he tended to be rather rigid («alquanto ... rigidetto») by nature, the name would be a continuous reminder to be temperate.<sup>26</sup> On the «urbanity» of the pope's rule we shall have more to say presently. Underlying the first two



motivations may be a particular understanding of the role played by the image of Urban I in the Sala di Costantino cycle: as the first pope to identify himself literally with the capitol of the empire, he would have been the embodiment *par excellence* of the virtues associated with the church's dominion.<sup>27</sup> The allusion is no doubt also to Urban II, promoter of the first crusade, who is mentioned specifically in another source and may have been a model for Urban VIII's zealous support for foreign missions and the Propaganda Fide.<sup>28</sup> Interestingly, the same allegories reappear in the frame of an engraved portrait of Urban VII, by Cherubino Alberti (fig. 19).<sup>29</sup> The point is that this combination of virtues, while perhaps appropriate to a specific individual, was also emblematic of the vicarious role of all the successors of Peter as magistrates of the church.

The sense of continuity is expressed in the basic conception of the tomb, which is a kind of epitome of the two papal monuments previously erected in new St. Peter's, those of Paul III (figs. 20) and Gregory XIII (fig. 21).<sup>30</sup> The parallel and continuity between them is established by the use of corresponding materials, and by the echoing pyramidal composition of the bronze figure of the pope seated on a pedestal, before and beside which are placed white marble pairs of allegories. The levitating gesture of Urban VIII, moreover, which repeats that of St. Peter himself in the Sala di Costantino (fig. 22), seems deliberately to intermediate between the palm-down pacification of Paul III and the triumphal exclamation of Gregory XIII.<sup>31</sup> Bernini's allegories leaning against the sarcophagus seem also to link the reclining and isolated standing figures on the two earlier monuments, while relating the tomb to its psychological and spatial environment in a new way. These papal monuments have a close parallel in an engraved political allegory that is rooted in the Petrarchan tradition of allegorical triumphs, and that in turn anticipates many of the features of Bernini's conception. The composition was designed by Joseph Heintz, court painter to the emperor Rudolph II, and engraved by Lucas Kilian in Venice in 1603, to celebrate the appointment of Heintz's brother Daniel as architect of the city of Bern (fig. 23).<sup>32</sup> Seated atop a two-stepped structure the triumphant figure of Justice brandishes her sword and holds her scales aloft, looking heavenward. She is flanked below by standing figures of Truth

27 Curiously, Quednau 1979, 250, was able to offer no specific reason for the inclusion of Urban I in the Sala di Costantino series or for his association with the virtues of Justice and Charity.

28 Pastor 1923–53, XXVIII, 25, n. 1, citing Negri 1922, 174.

29 Cited by Kaufmann 1970, 110; see Buffa, ed., 1982, No. 96, 1271–11. The same frame served for a series of portraits, including Gregory XI, Leo XI and Paul V, the latter two signed by Alexander Mair (Zimmer 1988, 312, No. F52, Zjima 1979, 142f., Nos. 72, 72A.

30 These were the only papal tombs erected in new St. Peter's before Urban VIII's (Bargolte 1989, 305). For particulars on the tomb of Paul III see Gramberg 1984. On the original tomb of Gregory XIII, which was replaced in the eighteenth century, Krüger 1986. The fundamental study of the decoration of new St. Peter's before the addition of the nave under Paul V is that by Siebenhüner 1962. On the relations between the three tombs see Pope-Hennessy 1970, 114f.; Kaufmann 1970, 110, 114, 119, 128; Schütze 1994, 257, 260, 264f., 266.

31 The relationship to St. Peter in Sala di Costantino was noted by Kaufmann 1970, 132. On Paul III «in atto di pacificatore» see Thoenes 1990, 135.

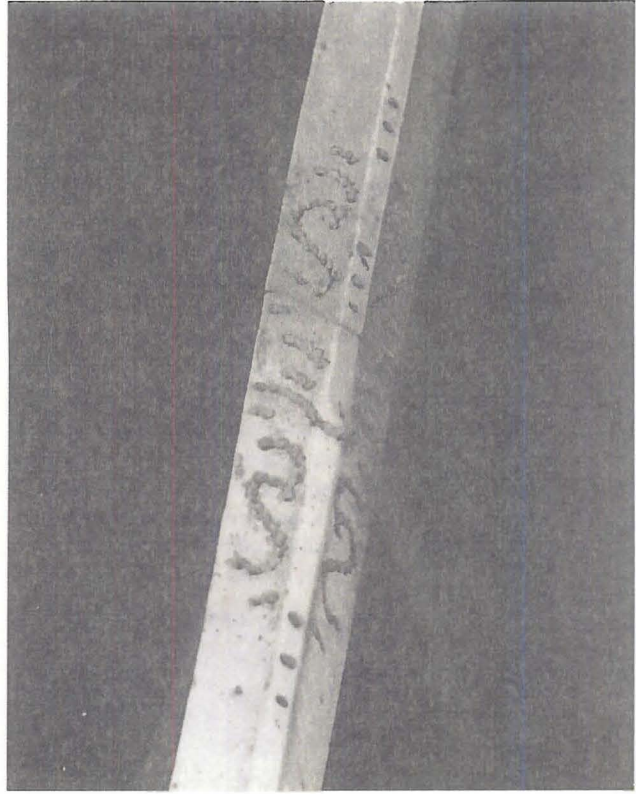
32 The relationship of the Urban VIII tomb to the engraving was observed and discussed by Larjon 1971; see also Prag 1988, 415f., No. 302, Zimmer 1988, 146f., No. A75





11 Bernini, Tomb of Urban VIII, detail. Rome, St. Peter's (photo: ARFSP)

12 Bernini, Tomb of Urban VIII, detail. Rome, St. Peter's (photo: ARFSP)



13 Bernini, Tomb of Urban VIII, detail. Rome, St. Peter's (photo: Saskia 8001 M 04)

14 Bernini, Tomb of Urban VIII, detail. Rome, St. Peter's (photo: Lehmann-Brockhaus)







15 (a) Francesco Machi, *St. Veronica*;  
(b) Bernini, *St. Longinus*;



15 (c) François Duquesnoy, *St. Andrew*;  
(d) Andrea Bolgi, *St. Helena*.  
Rome, *St. Peter's* (photos:  
Anderson 20590, 20598,  
20588, 20591)



and Charity, who rest their arms on the pedestal. Truth looks up to the sun (one of Urban VIII's emblems) and Charity holds one child while looking down toward the other who reaches up toward her; between them at their feet on the lower level cringes the chained figure of Avarice. Apart from the theme of the allegory, its relevance for Bernini lay in the unity and coherence of the composition, and the psychological counterpoint enacted by the figures.

The earlier papal monuments had included four allegories each, alluding to the terrestrial and celestial virtues of the popes: Paul III—Justice, Prudence, Peace and Abundance; Gregory XIII—Charity, Peace, Faith, Hope. (The monument to Paul III was first erected freestanding in a side aisle with the allegories placed at the front and back; when it was moved and reinstalled in a niche in one of the crossing piers, Justice and Prudence were placed at the base while the other two were set on the pediment above). Bernini may be said to have abstracted and combined the two chief virtues of the earlier tombs, Justice and Charity. The significance of this choice must be understood in the light of a project to integrate the choir and crossing of St. Peter's in one grandiose and comprehensive program. At the center the tomb of St. Peter was crowned with a new baldachin that expressed Christ's triumph in its very design; and the papal altar was surrounded

in the crossing piers with relics and images of saints evoking Christ's passion, the whole embodying the process of sacrifice and salvation.

It must have seemed positively providential that the Farnese tomb, having been transferred to one of the crossing piers, was, so to speak, «in the way» of this vast program.<sup>33</sup> The idea of moving it to the apse (1628–9) to form a pair with the tomb of Urban gave the opportunity to demonstrate the significance of papal succession through the location of the two monuments, as well as their design. Placed in the lateral niches the pair flanked the tomb of St. Peter himself at the center of the crossing. This arrangement formed a coherent group of memorials that served to illustrate the millennial papal succession and hegemony initiated under St. Peter and established under Constantine.<sup>34</sup> Moreover, the choice of Justice and Charity created in relation to Paul III's Justice and Prudence an inescapable *contrapposto* in meaning, as well as form: the cardinal virtues traditionally associated with earthly dominion, the wise ruler, *vis-a-vis* the divine virtues proper to the pope as a spiritual leader, the just judge.<sup>35</sup> A final correlation and contrast is evident in the treatment of what is, literally and figuratively, the central theme of both tombs, that is, death itself. In both cases the caducity of earthly existence is expressed by wing-borne inscriptions with the names of the deceased (fig. 24),

<sup>33</sup> It has been suggested that Urban chose to pair his tomb with that of Paul III because the Farnese pope served as a model for his own nepotistic ambitions (Scott 1991, 6). My view is that the primary motive was the demonstration of papal continuity and the complementarity of papal terrestrial and spiritual dominion.

<sup>34</sup> On this theme of papal succession in the arrangement of the tombs see Bargolte 1989, 313–5, followed by Schütze 1994, 265f., who notes that the reference would have been made explicit by a depiction of Christ Giving the Keys to St. Peter (repeating the subject of the medieval decoration in the apse of the old basilica) that was planned for the altar in the center of the apse, between the two tombs.

<sup>35</sup> Panofsky 1964, 94, noted the substitution in relation to the Paul III tomb of the theological virtue, Charity, for the moral virtue Prudence; but he failed to realize that this change implied a corresponding shift in meaning for Justice.



16 Domenichino, Prudence with Time. Rome, S. Carlo ai Catinari (photo: Alinari 29983)

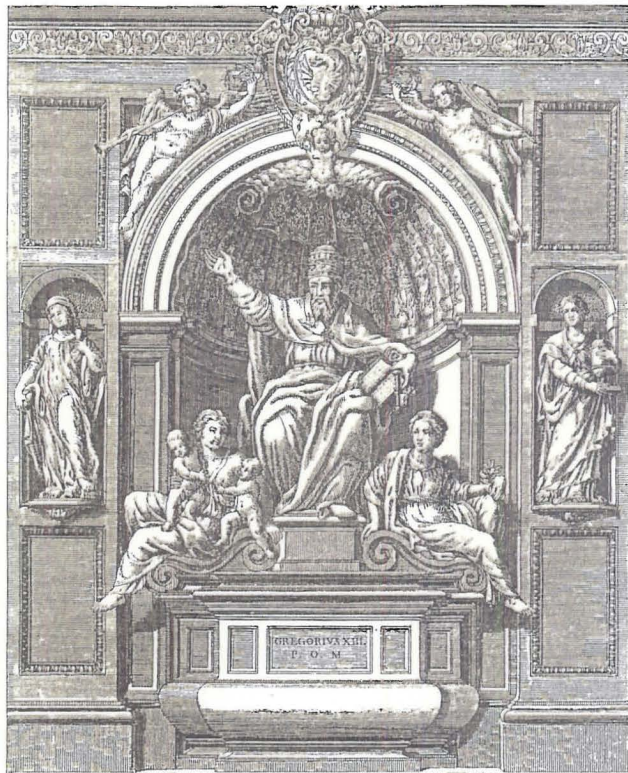


17 Domenichino, Justice with Benignity. Rome, S. Carlo ai Catinari (photo: Alinari 29984)





18 Giulio Romano, Urban I. Rome, Palazzo Vaticano, Sala di Costantino (photo: Anderson 3833)  
19 Cherubino Alberti, Urban VII, engraving



20 Guglielmo della Porta, Tomb of Paul III. Rome, St. Peter's (photo Anderson 210)  
21 Prospero Antichi, Tomb of Gregory XIII. Rome, St. Peter's (after Chacon 1677, IV, 32)



except that Bernini assimilated this motif, and the figure of *Historia* represented on the front of Paul III's cope (fig. 25), to the traditional winged personification of Death, which now becomes also the fateful recorder of life.<sup>36</sup>

However, the choice of Justice and Charity alone for the tomb of Urban—unprecedented, I repeat, in papal funerary iconography—suggests that this combination of virtues, in their divine nature, had special meaning in the case of Urban VIII. (I want to emphasize here parenthetically, that the tomb of Urban was an astonishing, even revolutionary departure from the grandiose, self-expository monuments covered with great visual biographies, erected by his recent predecessors, Sixtus V and Paul V at Santa Maria Maggiore.<sup>37</sup>) The complementary and necessary attributes of Charity and Justice were a constant feature in the ideology of the good magistrate from antiquity on, discussed and eulogized in innumerable ways in innumerable texts. One of the leitmotifs of this theme made it particularly relevant to Urban VIII because it was based on the equally ancient tradition that the social organization of the bee, three of which animals constituted the coat of arms of Urban VIII, represented the ideal state: a hierarchical monarchy where every individual had its assigned place which it never transgressed, and where every individual made its contribution to the commonwealth, wholeheartedly, and in utter harmony with its fellows.<sup>38</sup> Two specific

characteristics of the bee were especially relevant to the ideology of the good ruler, the fact that the bee could inflict pain its stinger, and was thus feared by its enemies, but also produced sweet honey and was thus loved by its friends.<sup>39</sup> The other important characteristic was that the ruling bee itself—often thought to be a king rather than a queen; larger, more important and constantly surrounded and guarded by his subjects—had no stinger.<sup>40</sup> On both these counts, the ideal state of the bee was based on and derived from the ideal admixture of charity and justice inherent in its nature. In general terms, the bee became one of the important emblems of the ideal ruler, as when Alciati depicted Princely Clemency as a hive to which bees are attracted because the ruler treats his subjects with justice and clemency, or as an enthroned seated ruler to whom the bees fly in good will (figs. 26, 27).<sup>41</sup> *Pungat et ungat* is the motto of another emblem of the *Principe Perfetto*, illustrated by a swarm of bees following its leader (fig. 28).<sup>42</sup> In another case, the swarm following the king illustrates the passage on the stingless king bee from Seneca's discourse on Clemency to indicate that, in Pliny's words, majesty alone

36 Gramberg 1984, 323f., identifies the subject of Della Porta's relief as *Historia*, although the shield and helmet reflect the images of Victory on which it depends (Eitinger 1950); Pope-Hennessy 1970, 400, calls it Victory. The relation to Bernini's figure of Death was first noted by Kauffmann 1970, 119.

37 Wittkower 1981, 21, also emphasizes Bernini's break with the preceding papal tombs, and his return to the models of Paul III and Michelangelo's Medici tombs.

38 A helpful survey of bee symbolism in Jesuit emblem literature is provided by Dimler 1992; on the bee colony as a model society see pp. 231f., 234. One of the most important bee topon, directly relevant to the Barberini papacy, was the equivalence of the beehive to the «Unity of the Holy Church», developed in the seminal thirteenth century treatise on bees by Thomas of Cantimpré (Misch 1974, 69–103; Hafsig 1995, 52–71, esp. 56).

39 Giulio Romano, *St. Peter*, Rome, Rome, Palazzo Vaticano, Sala di Costantino (photo: Anderson 3836)



39 Piccini 1729, 501, quotes a text on psalm 50 by Urban himself, which I have been unable to trace, on exactly this point: *Apes & si inferunt punctiōnis dolorem, amantur tamen, quia mellis dulcedinem administrant. Sic & persecutores meos Domine, amare volo, & punctiōnes, quas mihi amaris comatibus inferunt, tribulatio spirita tolerare, at mellita jucunditas subsequantur.*

40 The missing stinger of the ruling bee is emphasized by the ancient writers as a mark of the bee's ideal monarchy: the king bee's «greater mark of distinction, however, lies in this: bees are most easily provoked, and, for the size of their bodies, excellent fighters, and where they wound they leave their stings; but the king himself has no sting. Nature did not wish him to be cruel or to seek a revenge that would be so costly.» (Seneca, *De Clementia I. vii. 3*, Basore 1958–64, I, 140f.) «... there is no agreement among the authorities... whether the king bee has no sting and is armed only with the grandeur of his office (maiestate tantum armatus), or whether nature has indeed bestowed one upon him but has merely denied him the use of it. It is a well established fact that the ruler does not use a sting. The commons surround him with a marvelous obedience.» (Pliny, *Hist. Nat. XI. xviii. 53*, Ruckham et al. 1938–62, III, 465)

41 «Principis clementia! Vesparum quod nulla unquam rex ipicula figet, / Quodq. alyis duplo corpore maior erit, / Arguet imperium clemens moderatq. regna, / Sanctaq. iudicibus credita iura bonis.» Alciati 1621, CXLIX, p. 632 «Clementia del Principe / Che del le vespe il Rè mai non ferisca, / col pungiglione, alcuno; o, che non l'habbia; / E, che, de l'altre vespe, al doppio, tenga / maggiore il corpo; aditterà l'impero costante, e fermo, e i moderati regni; / E le leggi santissime, commesse / A' giudicanti di sivera mente.» (Alciati 1626, 220f.; Daly et al. 1985, II, No. 149) Wasps and bees are interchangeable in this literature, and the commentaries in the editions cited specifically correct wasps to bees in this case.

42 Mendo 1661, 160; see Dimler 1992, 232f., for Mendo's sources.

39 Joseph Heintz, engraved by Luca Kilian, *Triumph of Justice*, engraving



43 See n. 40 above. Pietrasanta 1634, 34 (see Dimler 1992, 234f.; Ferro 1623, 67), attributes the device to Ferdinand I of Florence, where it appears as a king bee surrounded by concentric circles of workers, on the base of Giambologna's equestrian monument of the duke (Watson 1983, 183 n. 27; Torrili 1984, 18, ill. p. 21, 50). Scipione Bargagli was the inventor (Erben 1996, 323f.). Maffeo Barberini came from Florence (see p. 67 below), and it is tempting to think he brought this Medicean Jovian-apian theme with him.

44 See the important observations in Judson and van de Velde 1978, 284f., 359.

45 As pointed out by Julius Held 1982, 177f., 182f.; see Davis 1989, 45f., 47 n. 12. On Bernini's composition see Ficacci, ed., 1989, 279–83. The story concerning the infant Pindar was related by Pausanias (Descr. IX, 23, 2) in connection with but not in reference to the poet's tomb.

46 *Uomo a sedere sopra un leone, che habbia il freno in bocca, & regga con una mano detto freno, & con l'altra punta esso leone con uno stimolo.* Ripa 1603, 113. Ripa refers to Valeriano (1556, 14 n.). *Veluti etiam hominem insidentem leoni nunquam videtur, quem is stimulo regat, quod esse animi regem omnino videtur significare.*

24 Guglielmo della Porta, Tomb of Paul III (detail), Rome, St. Peter's (photo: BH 18641)

(*maiestate tantum*), not cruelty, suffices for the ideal ruler (fig. 29).<sup>43</sup>

Although it has not been properly understood heretofore, the same fundamental thought underlies the famous illustrations by Bernini and Rubens for editions of Urban's poetry (figs. 30, 31). Both portray the ideal of overwhelming strength united with the gentleness of poetry. Bernini showed David as defender of his flock strangling the lion (I Samuel 17:34–5) but with his harp nearby. Rubens showed Samson killing the lion, from whose body bees issued forth («... and out of the strong came forth sweetness,» Judges 14:5–6, 8, 14); this biblical episode is mentioned in a poem addressed to Urban's brother Antonio, a Capuchin monk, which alludes to the spirit's rise to heaven from the corrupt body.<sup>44</sup> Rubens here also identifies Urban's poetry with the mellifluousness of bees. The bees issuing specifically from the lion's mouth, including a formation of three, draw an obvious parallel between Urban, celebrated as a poet in the «Greek» style, and Pindar, whose poetry was said to have been instilled by honey that bees had dropped upon him as a child.<sup>45</sup> But the basic image and the conceit derive from a broader concept, that is, self-control, *Domínio di se stesso*, the most noble form of Force, represented by Ripa as a man straddling and bridling a lion (fig. 32).<sup>46</sup> Ripa's image had been taken up as a counterpart to Strength by Domenichino (fig. 33).<sup>47</sup> This ideal of self-restraint was classical in origin, associated above all with Alexander the Great, whose greatness was augmented by his self-control, which proved his greatness as much as any victory: «... great-minded as he was and still greater owing to his control of himself, and of a greatness proved by this action as much as by any other victory: because he conquered himself ...»<sup>48</sup> The idea was



clearly taken as apposite for Urban, whose very name, as we have seen, incorporated the ideal of rigor tempered by charity. All these metaphors, the stingsless king bee, the poetic victory over the ferocious lion, the rule by majesty alone, the dominion of urbanity, were applied to the pope in the literary celebrations of his election.<sup>49</sup> Indeed, I suspect that the tradition of the bee as the embodiment of the Godly coincidence of opposites, clemency and justice, may have been the most important factor in the choice of those allegories for the tomb. In any case, these associations of the bee must have made the election of Maffeo Barberini to the papacy seem like a heaven-sent materialization of those same divine virtues that were the quintessential attributes of the vicar of Christ on earth.

This point may be thought of, and certainly was thought of by contemporaries, as literally true. One more bee-fact is necessary to understand why. Because of the attributes we have discussed, and for many other reasons, as well—for example, the perfect geometry of its hive and the perfect efficiency of its anatomy—the bee was regarded as endowed with a supernatural intelligence. Whence it became a symbol of Divine Wisdom, whose primary aim was to make man perfect in his own image. The idea is both classical and biblical: «Led by such tokens and such instances, some have taught that bees have received a share of the divine intelligence, and a draught of heavenly ether; for God, they say,



47 It seems clear, incidentally, that Bernini also understood and borrowed from Domenichino the underlying principle of pairing contradictory notions—Prudence/Time, Justice/Charity, Force/Self-restraint. The only exception is the pendant with the complementary virtues of Temperance with Discretion and Virginity, where the emblems allude specifically to Carlo Borromeo, the patron saint of the church (Male 1932, 392f.). Significantly, the saint is referred to in the inscription in the cupola as

«... qui ... in tempore vacuandae factus est reconciliatio.»

48 «... magnus animo, minor imperio sui nec minor hoc facto quam victoria alia, quia ipse se vincit ...» Pliny, Nat. Hist., XXXV, xxxvi, 86–7, Rackham et al.

1938–62, IX, 324 f. The ruler's sacrifice of his personal ambition to the welfare of his people, was directly linked to the virtue of Charity by Fabri: 1588, 156:

«Princeps, charitatis ardore exit de terra sua, ad sui propriam voluntatem obsequat ad populorum regimen, & tranquillitatem assumptus.» This principal of dominion over the self later formed the basis of Bernini's conception of the ideal ruler, embodied in his portraits of Francesco I d'Este and Louis XIV, concerning which see Lavin 1993, 170f., 182–5, and my forthcoming «Bernini's Image of the Ideal Christian Monarch.»

49 *Qual tra le fere rugge Vinte il leon, / Tal tu con dolce canto / Le tue, e de' tuoi nati vittorie, e' l'vanto, / Ago non l'arme, no; la maciosta / Fronte sola al tuo impero alletta, e lega / E i duci tuoi e' il popolo men grande. / Se cotale arme hai pure, o sempre accosa / Fra l'oro tuo a gli occhi altrui si nega; / Spiro o dolce timore, sange non spande.* (from the «Canzone in lode del re delle api» in Bracci 1623, 48)

*Breve spatio penso, com'egli intende / Con dolce Urbanità regger la terra, / L'ira ammorzar, che gli egrî petti accende, / E vincer con amor l'odio, e la guerra, / E così diviso il nome prende / D'Urbanò, e' l'grido fuor s'apre, e dispersa. / E dall'Oceano all'Indico Oceano, / Urbanò il mondo, e' l'ciel risuona Urbanò.* (Bracciolini 1628, 483)

25 Guglielmo della Porta, Tomb of Paul III (detail), Rome, St. Peter's (photo: BH unnumbered)



us d'ausant, esse quodam prae-  
 quara multa concessi civitatis exilatuzi-  
 Lus, honore dignum indicatis. Hoc igitur  
 honore delato, plus nubi delecto alferri  
 puto, quam d'omato ac multo iroga-  
 tis. Notat vir ille quibus acribus fieri pos-  
 si gratias agat populorum, nisi maluisset  
 multos esse quos planibilib. De Claudio  
 Caris feru reum sic adaptasse Maresi-  
 ab epistolis, & Pallantem à rationibus, ve-  
 cor non solum amplissimis praeiijis, verè

cliam quætoris prætoribus; ornamentis  
 decreto senatus oratoris libenter passus gra-  
 Adhuc tantum rapere & acquirere perm-  
 si, ut illi quærent de si fci exigitate, qui-  
 dam non absurdè dixerit, abundantiarum  
 sicum, si à duobus liberis in eonfortium  
 reciperetur. Hos Plinius fatetur & Crasso  
 fuisse ditiores. Hem, ille spongia expri-  
 munda erant. At nunc Principis expri-  
 mar elegantiam.

Principis clementia.

EMBLEMA CXLIX.



VESPARUM quod nulla unquam rex spicula figet,  
 Quodque alijs duplo corpore maior erit.  
 Arguet imperium clemens, moderataq; regna,  
 Sanctaq; iudicibus credit a iura bonis.

26 Clemency of the Prince. Alciati 1621, Emblemata CXLIX



Vesparum quod nulla unquam Rex spicula figet:  
 Quodque alijs duplo corpore maior erit.  
 Arguet imperium clemens, moderataq; regna,  
 Sanctaq; iudicibus credit a iura bonis.

Das IX.

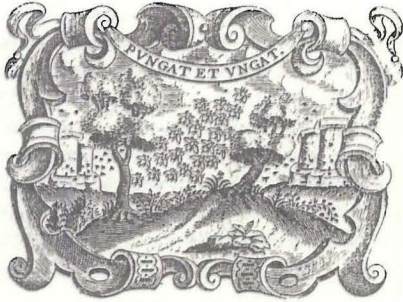
Fürstliche Gnad.

Das der Wespen König nimmec  
 Mit sem Angel stich vnd das er  
 In seinem Leib zweymal ist groß  
 Dann die andern Wespen genoff  
 Zeigt au ein gnedig Regiment  
 Vnd stilles Reich darinn man lende  
 All Handel vnd sachen nach rechte  
 Wie es vertramt ist dem Richter schlecht.

EMBLE-

27 Clemency of the Prince. Alciati 1567, Emblemata 149

160 PRINCIPE PERFECTO.



DOCUMENTO XXXIII.

Sea el Principe justiciero, pero juntamente se manifieste piadoso.

**N** I ha de ser todo rigor, ni todo piedad  
 el Principe; sean simbolo suyo las  
 auejas, [1] cuya Republica es la más  
 semejante à la humana en el gouerno,  
 y en tener Rey, que las rige. Forman  
 la miel con dulzura, [2] y en ocasiones  
 con su aguijon castigan feueramente. A si se conferua la  
 Corona, castigando y endulzando. Auiso, que dio el Sa-  
 bio Rey Don Alonso [3]. \* Ca como quier que la iusti-  
 cia es muy buena cosa en si, è de que debe el Rey  
 siempre vlar, con todo esto facerse muy cruel, quando  
 à las vegadas no es templada con la misericordia. \* [4]  
 El Rey Don Enrique Quarto vsd de vna ganada, por  
 embio, 10 fol. 141.

28 Pungat et ungat. Mendo 1661, 160

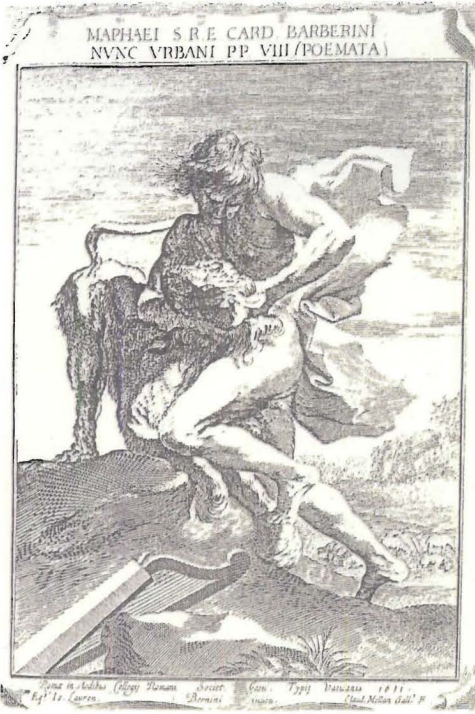
34 DE SYMBOLIS HEROICIS



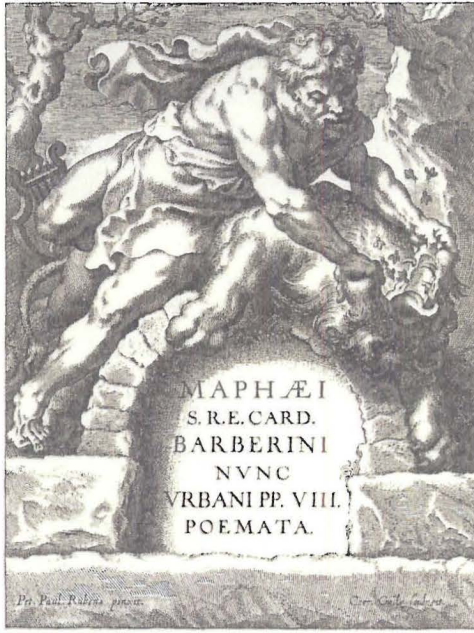
FERDINANDVS MEDICEVS, FRANCISCI fra-  
 ter, atque item Hetruriaz Magnus Dux, vii erat  
 simul Praefectus Altr Nobilium cataphractorum in  
 ciuitate Senensi, & vt propofuerat solà dignitate e-  
 praesse; regem apum cum choro & satellitio pin-  
 xit, & lemma Symboli hoc fuit: MAIESTATE TAN-  
 TVM. Solus enim rex, inter apes, est sine aculeo:  
 quia noluit, inquit Seneca, illum natura, nec sanum effi-  
 nec plionem magno constituram petere; telumque detre-  
 xit, ac iram eius inermem reliquit.

Vici-

29 Maiestate tantum. Pietrantsa 1634, 34



30 Bernini, David Killing the Lion, engraving. Barberini 1631, title page



ANTVERPIÆ, EX OFFICINA PLANTINIANA BALTHASARIS MORETI. M. DC. XXXIV.

31 Rubens, Samson Killing the Lion, engraving. Barberini 1634, title page



pervades all things ...; yea, unto him all beings thereafter return, and, when unmade, are restored; no place is there for death, but, still quick, they fly unto the ranks of the stars, and mount to the heavens aloft» (Virgil, *Georgics*, IV, 219–27);<sup>50</sup> «For my spirit is sweet above honey: and my inheritance above honey and honeycomb» (Ecclesiasticus 24:27).<sup>51</sup>

To be sure, all popes are elected by the action of Divine Providence, operating through the ballots of the College of Cardinals. But at the election of Maffeo Barberini, the action of Divine Providence—the descent of the Holy Spirit, one might well assert—was made physically manifest by the sudden appearance through an open window of the Conclave of nothing less than a swarm of bees! The event is alluded to in a tapestry illustrating Urban's election, where a conspicuously open window is shown conspicuously in the background (fig. 34). The wonder is repeated in Pietro da Cortona's frescoed vault in the great salon of the Palazzo Barberini (fig. 35), where the invading squadron is framed by a wreath of laurel (the second major Barberini emblem, concerning which we will have more to say presently) and surmounted by the papal arms.<sup>52</sup> A contemporary account of the decoration actually describes the scene as Divine Providence commanding Immortality to crown with its starry diadem the arms of the new pope, whose election had made him «King of the Bees.»<sup>53</sup> The story of the election, and Cortona's reference to it had yet a deeper significance, however, since Urban's victory was confirmed only after a recount was taken, at his insistence, when it was discovered that a ballot was missing from the scrutiny that had elected him.<sup>54</sup> This is the primary scene represented in the election tapestry, where allegorical figures of Modesty and Magnanimity fly into the conclave to celebrate the virtues Urban displayed in his own election.<sup>55</sup> His coronation and assurance of immortality, presaged by the miracle of the bees, were thus occasioned by his exemplary demonstration of virtue in its most heroic form, self-restraint. The pope's biographer commented: «It was a truly memorable deed that will render his name forever most glorified because, seeing himself at one point pope and then not pope, with great courage and with such a magnanimous heart he decided to let the welfare of the universal Church prevail over his own desire for the supreme principate. Wherefore amongst his other signal faculties and

spiritual qualities are the constancy, magnanimity, and generosity he demonstrated in his heroic act, it will be sufficient to render his name immortal and celebrate to the world the manner in which he assumed the papacy.»<sup>56</sup> It might thus well be said that the age of the Baroque was ushered in by a supreme act of ephemerality—the sudden descent upon Rome, the church and mankind, of an unmistakably heaven-sent swarm of bumbling Barberini bees, conveying to the chosen one the divine virtues of Clemency and Justice proper to his newly acquired office.

With that swarm began the veritable invasion (plague, as some would have it by the time Urban's reign ended) of bees, the number of which populating Rome and the papal states one was later estimated at more than ten thousand.<sup>57</sup> In my estimation, however, what distinguished the Barberini bees was not their number—many popes had been great builders and art patrons, and many puns and other games had been played with their coats of arms. But none had acquired the active, literally volatile presence of the Barberini bees. Perhaps one should rather say transience, for to my mind and in our context, at least, the Barberini bees embody the notion of ephemerality in their period more profoundly and more pungently than any other sign. They fly against the blue sky in the church of the virgin at the altar of heaven (fig. 36); and in the early medieval apse mosaic in the basilica of Ss. Cosmas and Damian in the heart of the Roman forum, where a Barberini restoration gave new life to the image of Urban's predecessor, the sainted Pope Felix IV (*Felicitas*=*Happiness*), they fructify the garden of paradise (fig. 37).<sup>58</sup>

This same quality informs the famous bees that have alighted on Urban's tomb, having now



56 «Attione in zero memorabile, che renderà per sempre gloriosissimo il suo nome, perché vistosi in un punto Papa, e non papa seffe con tanta intrepidezza, e con sì magnanimo cuore far prevalere il bene della Chiesa universale alla cupidità propria del supremo principato: onde fra l'altre sue segnalate prerogative, e doti dell'animo, la costanza, la magnanimità e la generosità che egli mostrò in quest'atto eroico basterà per rendere immortale la fama di lui, e celebre al mondo la maniera, con la quale fu assunto al Pontificato.» Scott 1991 185f.

57 Scott 1982, 300 n. 32.

58 The window at S. Maria in Araceli, a modern restoration (see Fraschetti 1900, 100, Campitelli, ed., 1997, 279), is described by Baldinucci 1682, 147: «colori di azzurro il finestrone invecchiato e in esso figurò le tre api, quasi volando per aria, e sopra collocò il regno.» The figure St. Felix at Ss. Cosmas and Damian was restored by Urban VIII's nephew, Cardinal Francesco Barberini, during the pontificate of Alexander VII (1655–67); see Matthiae 1967, 135.

34 After Fabio Cristofani, *Ballot for the Election of Urban VIII*, tapestry, Rome, Musei Vaticani (photo: ICCD E39259)

50 Rushton Fairclough 1950, I, 210–3.

51 Cited after Scott 1982, 300f.

52 The subject of Urban's election has been admirably explored in these connections by Scott 1991, 180–6, who scrupulously acknowledges (185 n. 28) my calling his attention to the miracle of the bees and its relevance to the Cortona fresco. On the tapestry, see Scott 1991, 189f., who also cites, pp. 185, 216, the explanation of the ceiling allegory by Mattia Rosichino (1640): «... dimostra l'Immortalità d'efeguire i comandamenti, muovendosi con la corona di stelle ad incoronare l'insegna di Urbano Ottavo Sommo Pontefice; questa è circondata da due rami di lauro, che insieme arrendendosi, fanno la simiglianza di uno scudo ...» On the significance of the laurel as a Barberini emblem, see below.

53 On Urban as King of the Bees, see n. 48 above and Scott 1995, 219.

54 For the story of the recount of the scrutiny, see Scott 1991, 183; 55 Scott 1991, 190.



presumably passed through a window of the basilica, to participate in the commemoration of St. Peter's departed successor and their beloved ruler—just as they had done twenty years before at Urban's election. In fact, the three large bees that allude to the coat of arms are really the leaders—king-size bees, one might say (figs. 38, 39)—of a swarm that populates the monument; the others are much smaller, worker bees—indeed, they are true to scale (figs. 40, 41, 42).<sup>59</sup> Transforming the papal coat of arms into a swarm of insects bumbling over the papal tomb was, surely, an act of unparalleled imagination and wit, which also served to transform the mood of melancholy and despair usually associated with funeral iconography into a moment of surprise and even of joy.<sup>60</sup> The essential idea was not new, however. Stinging swarms had been associated with, and attached to tombs in two closely related and complementary instances, both of which I think were seminal inspirations for Bernini's conceit.<sup>61</sup> The Greek Anthology includes a description of the tomb of Archilochus, «who first made the Muse bitter dipping her in vipers' gall, staining mild Helicon with blood . . . Pass quietly by, O wayfarer, lest haply thou arouse the wasps that are settled on his tomb.»<sup>62</sup> Archilochus was the founding father of Greek lyric poetry, famous for having composed the song of victory used by the victors at Olympia, and for inventing the epode and many other verse forms; but he was also famous for his bitter satires, which wounded his enemies even unto death.<sup>63</sup> It was thus a kind of poetic justice that at his own death his barbs should return as a reminder of his malicious verses, in the form of a swarm of wasps carved on his tomb. The idea was visualized in Alciati's famous emblem book (fig. 43), and given Urban's fame as a poet himself—he wrote a great deal in exactly the kind of epodic verse associated with Archilochus—there can be no doubt of his, and Bernini's, familiarity with the tradition.<sup>64</sup> The second instance of apiary sepulchral imagery concerned the emperor Domitian, whose cruelty, especially toward Christians, was celebrated and immortalized by the avenging attack on his tomb of swarms of wasps and bees (fig. 44):

Once Nero's name, the world did quake  
to heare,  
And Rome did tremble, at Domitian's sight:  
But now the Tyrant, cause of all this feare,

Is laid full low, upon whose toombe do light,  
To take revenge, the Bee, and summer Flie,  
Who not escap't sometime his crueltie.<sup>65</sup>

It is remarkable indeed, and must have seemed providential to the pope and to Bernini, that these two associations between stinging insects and tombs should both apply aptly to Urban, the first as poet, the second as pope; providential also in that simply by reversing the sense of the malevolent tradition, the image of the bee-infested tomb could be transformed. Instead of swarming to avenge ancient, pagan evil, the apiarian chorus (one can practically hear the buzzing of the busy bees) is attracted to its ruler, as in Alciati's emblems of Princely Clemency (figs. 26 and 27). The bees celebrate the triumph of Christian virtue realized poetically in Urban's verses, devoted not to destructive diatribe but to pious inspiration; and institutionally in Urban's reign, devoted not to tyranny and martyrdom but to the charity and justice of the of rule of Christ vested in the pope. Considered in this light the seemingly casual, bumbling placement of the three big Barberini bees becomes charged with meaning. They all face upward and seem to rise in an ascending march past the skeletal figure of death, as if in response to the resurrecting command of the pope—appropriated, as Kauffmann first noticed, from the gesture of St. Peter himself in the Sala di Costantino series (fig. 22)—enthroned on his seat of wisdom, itself ornamented with bees.<sup>66</sup> It is astonishing but true that the lowermost bee, on the rim of the sarcophagus basin, has no stinger—it is not broken off, it never had one (fig. 38),<sup>67</sup> O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?! (1 Cor. 15:55) The other two (fig. 39), as if resurrected, are whole again and proceed in their rise to the very border between death, commemoration, and life.<sup>68</sup>

The hyperbolic flattery usually attributed to Bernini is belied not only by the theological nature of the allegories, but also by the inordinate importance attributed to death itself, by virtue of the inclusion of the Michelangelesque sarcophagus, and especially the central role played by the figure of the Reaper in the drama of the tomb.<sup>69</sup> Like the bees, Death seems to rise from the sarcophagus, a conceit derived, I think, from the tomb of a great Flemish cardinal of the sixteenth century, well known through contemporary engravings of monuments of famous persons (fig. 45).<sup>70</sup> In the tomb of Cardinal Erard de la Marck, however, Death performs his

59 The bees of the tomb were discussed by Howard Davis 1989, who first noticed the little «real» insects, and interpreted by him as alluding to the sweet «odor of sanctity» sometimes exuded by the corpses of those destined for heaven. (No such phenomenon was reported at the death of Urban). Davis noted four small bees, one on each foot of the sarcophagus, overlooking the one on the laurel wreath on the lid, which was observed by Fehl 1982, 353f.

60 Fehl 1987, 202, also noted this element of wit and joy elicited by the Barberini bees.

61 The tombs of Archilochus and Domitian are mentioned in a different context by Clements 1960, 73.

62 Paton 1925–43, II, 42ff.

63 On Archilochus see Burnett 1983 part I.

64 *Maledicentia. Archilochi tumulo insculptas de marmore oespas/ Effe ferunt, linguae certa sigilla malae.* (Slander. On the marble tomb of Archilochus wasps were carved, / they say, fixed signs of an evil tongue (Daly, et al. 1985, I, Emblem 51.) See Henkel and Schöne 1967, col. 928.

65 Peacham 1612, 144. I am indebted to Alan R. Young for his help in tracking down Peacham's manuscript and printed emblems.

66 Kauffmann 1970, 132.

67 Davis 1989, 47, thought the stinger might have been broken off.

68 Kauffmann 1970, 127 and n. 117, associated these bees with resurrection; on spontaneous generation, see Fraser 1931, 10–12.

69 Wittkower 1981, 22, also notes Bernini's emphasis on the sepulchral idea, in contrast to the commemorative and ceremonial monuments of his predecessors.

70 On the de la Marck tomb see Lavin 1990, 34, and the references given there.





La fiamma nella mano, alquanto bassa, onde vn fanciullo n'accenda una candelà, è il lume del sapere, comunicato all'intelletto più debole, & men capace, inuolto ancora nelle cose sensibili, & materiali, & accomodandoli alla bassezza, mostra al fanciullo la buona via della verità, rimouendolo dal precipitio dell'errore, che sta nelle tenebre oscure della commune ignoranza del volgo, fra la quale è sol beato colui, che tanto può vedere, che basti per non inciampare caminando. Et ragioneuolmente la Doctrina si allomiglia alla fiamma, perche insegna la strada all'anima, la viuifica, & non perde la sua luce, in accendere altro fuoco.

DOT-

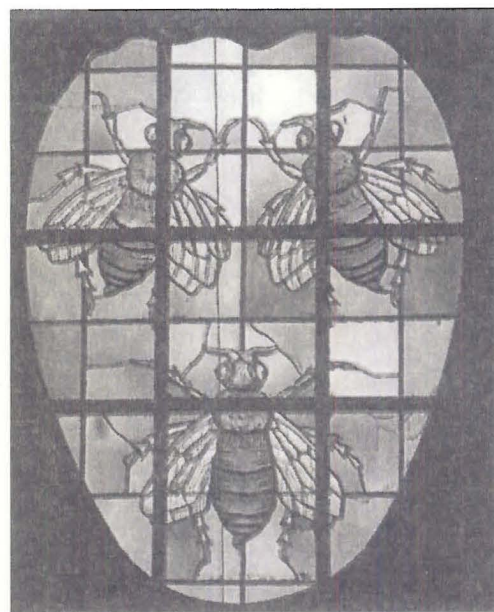
32 *Dominion over the Self*, woodcut. Ripa 1603, 111



33 *Domenichino, Forse with Dominion over the Self*. Rome S. Carlo ai Catinari (photo: Alinari 29985)



35 *Pietro da Cortona, Divine Providence*, detail, Rome, Palazzo Barberini (photo: Alinari 28565)

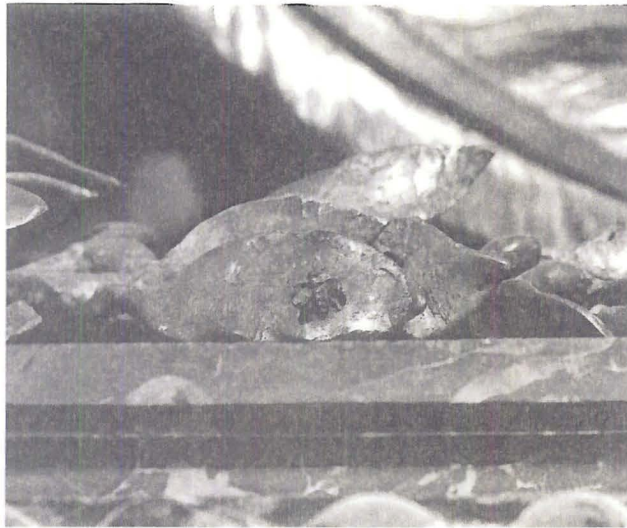


36 *Bernini, Barberini Bees*, stained glass. Rome, S. Maria in Aracoeli (photo: SIP Rete di Roma 1993/94, front cover)

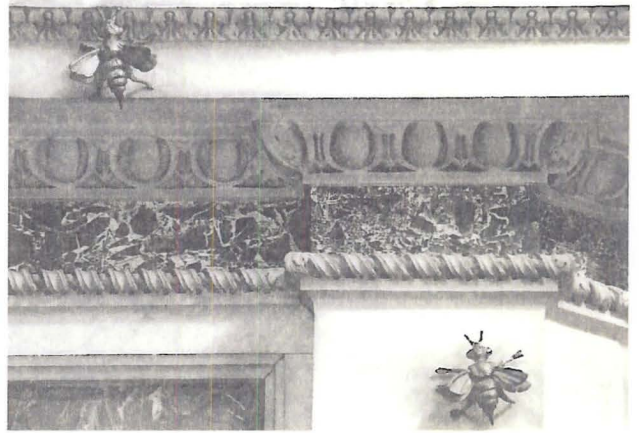


37 *Barberini Bees*, Rome, Ss. Cosmas and Damian, Basilica n. d., back cover

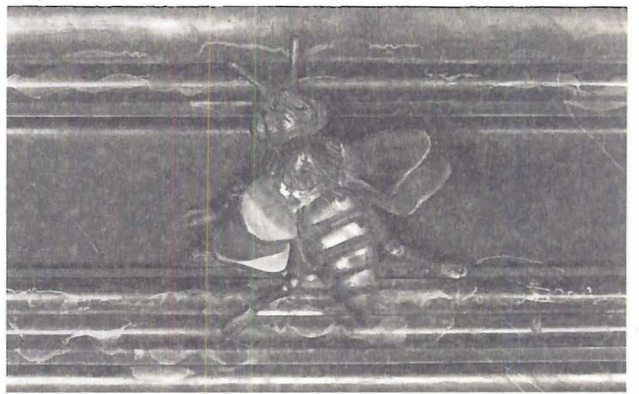




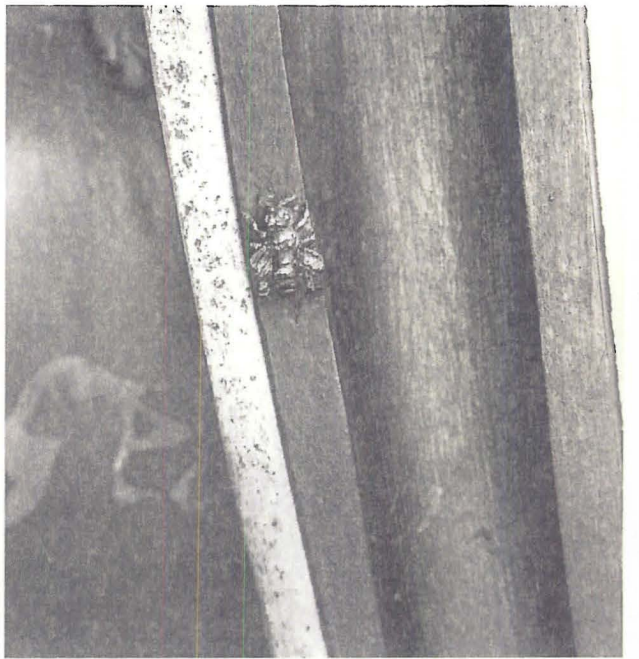
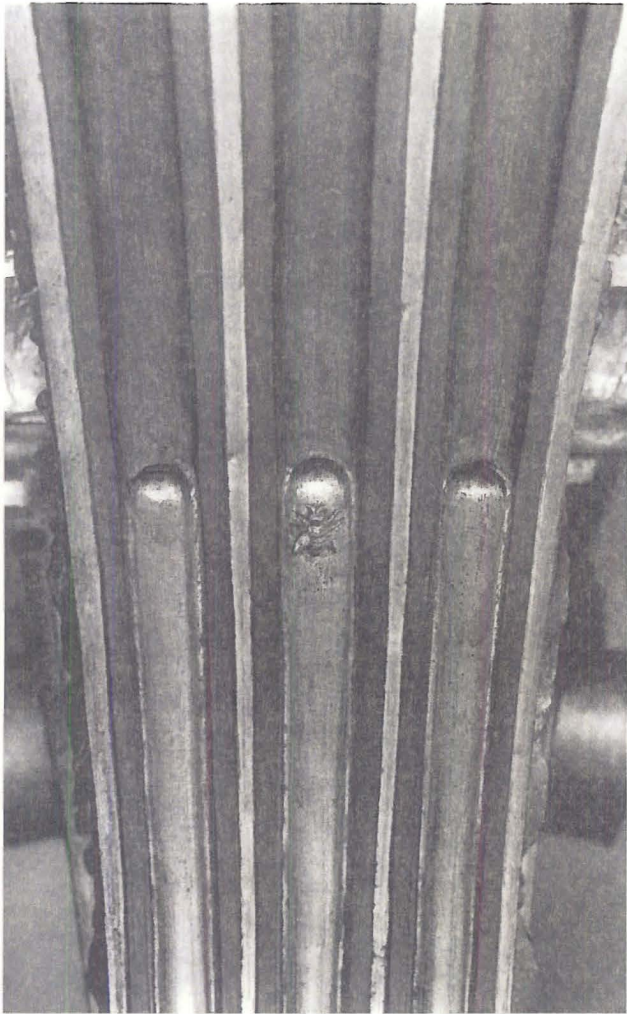
42 (above), 40 (below)



39 (above), 38 (below)



41 (below)



38-42 Bernini, Tomb of Urban VIII, details. Rome, St. Peter's



role as *memento mori* in a traditional way, brandishing an hourglass, whereas Bernini's figure writes, or rather finishes writing the name and title of Urban VIII in the black book of death (fig. 48). The bookish Death seems to recall that along with his literary interests the pope was an avid historian and bibliophile.<sup>71</sup> However, a more specific reference is suggested by a rarely noted, and to my mind never properly understood peculiarity of the motif, the name of Urban's predecessor partially visible on a preceding page. Often assumed to refer to Urban's immediate predecessor Gregory XV, the letters are clearly legible as CL above and AL below, that is, Clement VIII Aldobrandini. And, as if to avoid any possibility of misunderstanding, exactly the right number of pages, corresponding to the number of intervening popes, namely three, are shown between that with Urban's name and that with Clement's.<sup>72</sup> (Clement VIII, Leo XI, Paul V, Gregory XV, Urban VIII) It is not hard to understand why the reference to Gregory was avoided: that pope's nephew, Cardinal Ludovisi, had been a bitter enemy since the time of the conclave. On the other hand, Urban had been a great favorite of Clement VIII, who had furthered his early career in many ways.<sup>73</sup> However, I think there was another, more specific reason, which may even have been the inspiration for the motif of the record book itself. One of the important acts of Clement was to have established in Castel Sant'Angelo (originally the tomb of the Emperor Hadrian), the guardian fortrefs of the papacy, an archive for the historical records of the church, the so-called Biblioteca Clementina.<sup>74</sup> In praise of the project, Barberini wrote a poem, dedicated to Clement, which was included in all the editions of his collected verse. The poem, which is dedicated to Clement and titled *De tabulario pontificio in arce Hadriana*, involves an elaborate conceit specifically linking the records kept through the Pope's generosity to the permanence of his fame.<sup>75</sup> Urban himself, apart from his famous literary and bibliophilic interests, was also a great archivist, establishing along with several ecclesiastical repositories, a central archive of the notarial records of the city.<sup>76</sup> Hans Kauffmann, recalling the figure on Paul III's cope, aptly described the figure of death writing in a book as a kind of allegory of History (fig. 46).<sup>77</sup> Here, however Death has the specific task of record keeper—archivist, one might well say—displaying at once

the ephemerality of earthly things, bees as well as popes, but also the permanence of heavenly things, notably the church as embodied in the person of its temporary temporal and spiritual head. Therein lies the ultimate, and supremely paradoxical, significance of Bernini's tomb of Urban VIII—and, I would say, of ephemerality in Baroque art generally. The very figure representing the triumph of transience, winged Death, is at the same time also the guarantor of permanence, indeed of immortality, through the achievements and fame of Urban, and through the divine virtues vested by God in the institution of the church and the papacy.

Bernini left two unmistakable clues to the supernaturally inspired truth of this message. Four of the small, «real» bees appear on the legs of the sarcophagus, while a fifth has landed on a leaf of the laurel wreath that decorates the sarcophagus lid, near the tip of Death's wing (fig. 42).<sup>78</sup> Laurel was, of course, the preeminent symbol of poetry and the victorious immortality it confers;<sup>79</sup> and one of the best known and most consistent of the ideas attached to bees—based on Virgil's notion, quoted earlier, that the bee did not die but flew to heaven to join the stars—was that they symbolized immortality.<sup>80</sup> The two Barberini emblems coincided in the principle Barberini family impresa, which depicted a flight of bees landing on the branches of a laurel tree, with the legend *Hic domus* (fig. 47).<sup>81</sup> The meaning and history of this device are critical to an understanding of the message of the tomb. The conceit is based on a climactic passage in the Aeneid when the hero, having at last reached Latium after his peregrinations from Troy, realized that he had reached his final destination, there to establish the religion of his fathers and the hegemony of Rome, from the wondrous descent of a large swarm of bees upon a laurel tree sacred to Apollo. Heeding the signs, he declared «Hic domus, haec patria est» (here is our home, here our country).<sup>82</sup> Maffeo invented the impresa to celebrate the transfer of the Barberini family from Florence to Rome, and his own call to a higher destiny, before he became pope.

The bee-infested laurel was thus a truly uncanny forecast of the apian intervention of Divine Providence in Urban's election. On the pope's tomb the little bee, the very emblem of bumbling transience, almost invisible perched on its botanical equivalent, by its humble immortality clips the wings of death itself and tri-

71 See *Paſtor* 1923–55, XXIX, 433–50.

72 Schiavo 1971, first noted that the reference was to Clement, rather than Gregory; Schiavo recalled the disagreements with Gregory and Urban's debt to Clement, and also noted that Clement had dedicated the new high altar at St. Peter's, while Urban had consecrated the new basilica itself. For the correct identification, see also Fehl 1982, 354 (adding a letter in each line, however) and 1987, 194.

73 *Paſtor* 1923–53, XXIII, passim; Fehl 1987, 194, who also calls attention to Urban's several poems honoring Clement.

74 *Paſtor* 1923–53, XXIV, 447f.; see D'Onofrio 1971, 202, 223, figs. 172–3, 178, 180; L'Angelo 1987–8, I, 171–5.

75 A CLEMENTEM VIII. DE TABULARIO PONTIFICIO IN ARCE HADRIANA. Hoc nos scripta loco / dubios contemnere casus / Pofumus, a Clementis, / munere septa tuo. / Pro quo, sancte pater, / nostris tua gloria chartis / Viuet, dum nobis vita / superstes erit. / Quid loquimur, / si firmus obex nos protegit arcis, / Et tua se propria fama / tuetur ope? (Barberini 1642, 153; *Paſtor* 1923–53, XXIV, 454)

76 *Paſtor* 1923–53, XXIX, 453f.

77 See n. 36 above.

78 See n. 59 above.

79 On the manifold associations of laurel, see the rich collection of material provided by Cox-Rearick 1984, concerning the emblems of the Medici family in Florence. The immortality of the laurel was based on the notion, also extolled by Virgil, that the evergreen plant was immune to lightning and able to regenerate from a branch. On laurel as symbol of victory see Terenzi 1958–64, II, col. 233.

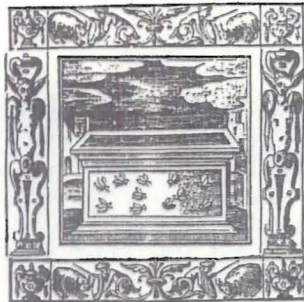
80 On the immortality of the bee in reference to the tomb of Urban, see Kauffmann 1970, 127, and Schütze 1994, 252, who emphasizes their «monarchic» symbolism in this context.

81 The device is discussed at length by Ferro 1623, II, 73–8, whose book is dedicated to Maffeo Barberini as cardinal. The importance of the emblem for Barberini imagery was emphasized by Scott 1991, 107–10, 115, 185, and Schütze 1994, 249–52.

82 Aeneid VII, 122. Rushton Fairclough, 1950, II, 10.



Maledicentia. EMBLEMA LI.



ARCHILOCHI tumulo insculptus de marmore vespas esse ferunt, lingua certa sigilla male.

COMMENTARI II.

I. STATVATA tumulus marmoreus. Et alibi: Er agens verba Lycamben. Quibus in bono. Infamem sperem in tumulo laque lambu. Tristia Lycambas sanguine tela dabit. Pollicitum in Plutius. Et ait serm. glis in iram. Ore Lycambadas robis. occidit anam Archilochu. Hinc procebi, Archilochia edda. pro comanellio & mardactibus. Archilochi paria, pro maledicis. Archilochum tera. Archilochum calare pro eo, quod ubi maledicentia dicitur. Et ait epigram. Archilochus pro Emblema hoc disumpsum videtur. j. Epigram. Græcor. 2498

43 Malediction, Tomb of Archilochus, engraving. Alciati 1621, Emblema LI



WE E doe adore by nature, Princes good, And gladly as our Parents, them obey, But loath the "Monkies, that delight in blood," And think their People feat them for a prey: To whom the Lord, doth in his Judgment fend, A loathed life, or else a fearefull end. Once NERO'S name, the world did quake to heare, And ROME did tremble, at D O M I T I A N ' S fight: But now the Tyrant, cause of all this feare, Is laid full low, vpon whose toombe do light, To take revenge, the Bee, and hummer " Flie. Who not escap't sometime his crueltie.

\* I. co reges et Vitis cetera, proceps impia super populum pauperum: P. 15. Nihil tam feruēdū est, cui non sit periculum, etiam ab invicē. Car. 16. 7. \* Ovis enim Mafca necare dicitur: hinc illud: Ne Mafca quidē cum Imperatore.

Spone pios Reges reuocemur ante Tyrones, Vellet existim cum vada togat stantibus. Ante super mitem, dūone et sine cadere. Maledicentia. P. 15. 1. 1. 1. 1. 1. De Tyranno I O B. Iniquis, finem ait terrois semper esse in auribus illius. — foliolo libunt. Auro superbi; quam iurat nuda manu Captiue fontem. Ad generum Cereris sine cade et sanguine pacis Defendunt Reges, et flica morte Tyranni. X 2.

44 Et minimi vindictam, tomb of Domitian. Peacham 1612, 144

Di Cesare Ripa.

HISTORIA.



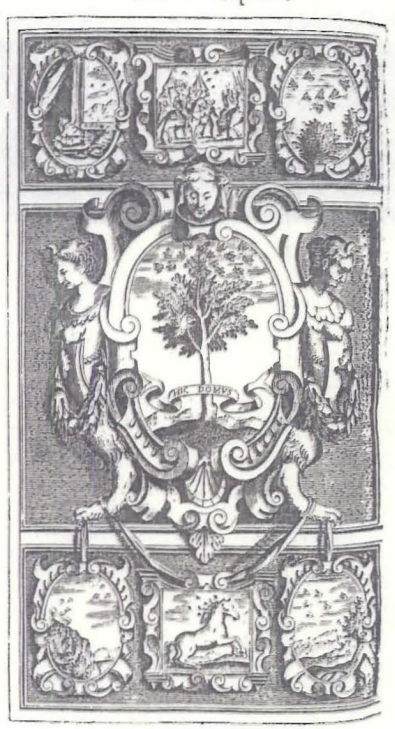
Tiene posato il piede sopra il quadrato, perché l'Historia di ue star fem pre fida, né lassarsi corrompere, à fuggirete da alcuna banda con la bugia per interesse, che perciò si veste di bianco. Gli si mette à canto il Saturno, perché l'istoria è detta da Marco Tullio, testimonia de i tempi, mestrà della vita, luce della memoria, & spirito dell'azioni.

HISTORIA.

Si potrà dipingere vna donna, che volgendo il viso guardi dietro alle spalle, & che per terra, doue ella guarda, vi siano alcuni fasci di scritture meze auoltate, tenghi vna penna in mano, & faia vestita di verde, essendo detto vestimento costello tutto di quei fiori, i quali si chiamano sempitruui, & dall'altra parte vi si dipingerà vn fiume toro, si come era quello chiamato Meandro, nella Phreigia, il quale si raggiuaua in se stesso.

46 Allegory of Victory. Ripa 1611, 235

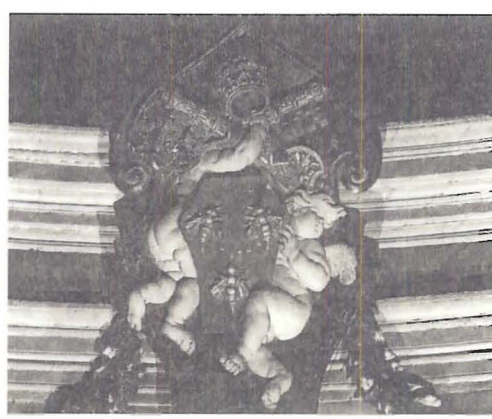
Teatro d'Imprese,



47 Hic domus, Barberini impresa. Ferro 1623, II, 72



48 Bernini, Tomb of Urban VIII, detail. Rome, St. Peter's (photo: Stoedtner 210381)



49 Bernini, Tomb of Urban VIII, detail. Rome, St. Peter's (ARFSP B 3772)



umphs over the very emblem of earthly caducity. At the same time, the lyrical delicacy of the motif reinforces a hint of nostalgia implicit in another emblematic association of the laurel and bee, the Virgilian Golden Age evoked rhapsodically by contemporaries in relation to the Barberini papacy.<sup>83</sup> «That tree of knowledge, of triumph, of poetry, of empire, of immortality, of chastity; and similarly the bee of eloquence, poetry, continence, clemency, diligence, artifice, long and prosperous life, eternal felicity, peace, and union.»<sup>84</sup>

The primary witness to the meaning of the tomb is to be found where it should be, in the coat of arms of the Barberini pope, attached to the face of the arch at the apex of the niche (fig. 49). Here an extraordinary—indeed, as far as I know unique—operation is performed by two heaven-sent messengers. The Barberini escutcheon, instead of arriving, as in the ceiling of the Palazzo Barberini (fig. 35), is detached from the papal tiara and keys and carried aloft.<sup>85</sup> The image is a living demonstration of the fleeting earthly presence and spiritual sublimation of an individual mortal who briefly occupied the center of an eternally abiding creation of the will of God.

In the end, however, perhaps the sharpest insight into the significance of Bernini's bum-

bling Barberini bees and the spirit in which they were conceived was provided by Bernini himself. His words are quoted by his biographers in recounting an incident that took place at the unveiling of the tomb of Urban, in the presence of the pope's ferociously inimical successor, Innocent X, who had driven the Barberini family into exile: «One cannot refrain at this point from recalling a cutting reply the Cavaliere gave in demonstration of his firm allegiance to Urban, to a person of high station who was not sympathetic to the Barberini family. He had represented here and there on the sarcophagus of the tomb a number of bees, for no other purpose than to allude wittily to Urban's arms. The person noticed, and in the presence of others said to the Cavaliere with a smile, *Sir, you have wished by placing the bees here and there to portray the dispersion of the Barberini family* (the members had then withdrawn to France), to which without a moment's hesitation Bernini replied, *But you, Sir, may well know that dispersed bees at the sound of a bell return to congregate*, referring to the great bell on the Capitoline that sounds at the death of every pope. Bernini's reply brought him great applause from those who reflected on the risk he took at that time to remain constant to the memory of his benefactor.»<sup>86</sup>

<sup>86</sup> *Né tralasciar si deve in questo luogo di far ricordanza di un'acutissima risposta, che in testimoni-*

*anza della sua inalterabile fede verso Urbano diede il Cavaliere ad un Personaggio di alta condizione, per altro poco affezionato a Casa Barberini. Haveva egli figurate su l'urna del Sepolcro in qua, e in là alcune Api, che vagamente alludevano all'Arme di Urbano: Osservollo il Personaggio accennato, e presenti altre persone rivoltosi al Cavaliere, sorridendo disse, Signor Cavaliere, V. S. ha voluto colla situazione di queste Api in qua, e in là mostrare la dispersione di Casa Barberini (erano allora le persone di quella Casa disgustate col Pontefice, e ritirate in Francia) al che senza fraposizione di tempo rispose il Bernino, V. S. però può ben sapere, che le Api disperse ad un suon di Campanaccio si tornano a congregate, intendendo della gran Campana di Campidoglio, che suona doppo la morte di ciascun Papa. Per la qual risposta meritò il Cavaliere l'applauso dovuto, da chi seppe riflettere, con quanto suo pericolo in quelle congiunture di tempi si mantenesse costante alla memoria del suo Benefattore. (Bernini 1713, 73f.) Fu quest'opera stupenda incominciata due anni avanti la morte di Urbano e scoperta circa a 30 mesi dopo che egli fu andato al cielo e ciò fu alla presenz del suo successore Innocenzio. Né io voglio lasciare di portare in questo luogo un'acuta risposta che diede il Bernino a personaggio di alta condizione, poco amico di casa Barberina, che stava guardando, presenti altre persone. Aveva il Bernino per una certa bizzaria, e non ad altro fine figurate in qua e in là sopra la deposito alcune api, alludenti all'arme di quel papa; osservolle il personaggio e disse: «Signor cavaliere, V. S., ha voluto con la situazione di queste api in qua e in là mostrare la dispersione di casa Barberina» (erano le persone di quella casa ritirate in Francia), e così rispose il Bernino: «V. S. però può ben sapere, che le api disperse ad un suono di campanaccio si tornano a congregate», intendendo della campana grande di Campidoglio che suona dopo la morte de' papi. (Baldinucci 1948, 88)*

<sup>83</sup> See the citations in Schüter 1994, 248 n. 100.

<sup>84</sup> *Quello albero di scienza, di trionfo, di poesia, d'Imperio, d'immortalità, di castità; & parimente l'Ape d'eloquenza, poesia, continenza, clemenza, diligenza, artificio, vita prospera, e lunga, felicità eterna, pace, & unione.» Ferro 1623, II, 77.*

<sup>85</sup> What I would call the «*stemma riportato*» motif (for which see Campbell 1977, 124f., who uses the term «*stemma in arrivo*», Scott 1991, 107) is a variant of the ancient emblem of celestial apotheosis, the *imago clipeata* (for which see Lavin 1980, 69f.). On the coat of arms on the Urban tomb, see also Fehl 1987, 202. Bernini's use of the motif is strikingly different from that of Algardi, discussed by Montagu 1985, 49, 244 n. 45.



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## Illustrations

Alinari

ARFSP: Archivio della Reverenda Fabbrica di S. Pietro

BH: Bibliotheca Hertziana

ICCD: Istituto Centrale per il Catalogo e la Documentazione, Rome

SAGN: Soprintendenza alle gallerie, Naples