

VISIBLE SPIRIT
THE ART OF
GIANLORENZO BERNINI

VOL. II

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Contents

XXVII	Bernini and Antiquity — The Baroque Paradox: A Poetical View	645
XVIII	Bernini's Portraits of No-Body	681
XIX	The <i>Roma Alessandrina</i> of Richard Krautheimer	748
XX	'Impresa quasi impossibile': The Making of Bernini's Bust of Francesco I d'Este	757
XXI	Bernini's Bust of the Medusa: An Awful Pun	789
XXII	Bernini's Bust of the Savior and the Problem of the Homeless in Seventeenth-Century Rome	849
XXIII	Bernini's Image of the Ideal Christian Monarch	917
XXIV	Bernini's Bumbling Barberini Bees	955
XXV	Bernini-Bozzetti: One More, One Less. A Berninesque Sculptor in Mid-Eighteenth Century France	1018
XXVI	Bernini's Death: Visions of Redemption	1046
XXVII	The Rome of Alexander VII: Bernini and the Reverse of the Medal	1087
XXVIII	The Young Bernini	1127

XXIX	'Bozzetto Style': The Renaissance Sculptor's Handiwork	1174
XXX	The Regal Gift: Bernini and his Portraits of Royal Subjects	1234
XXXI	<i>Urbanitas urbana</i> : The Pope, the Artist, and the Genius of the Place	1267
XXXII	The Baldacchino. Borromini vs Bernini: Did Borromini Forget Himself?	1336
	Bibliography	1385
	Index	1397

XXVI

Bernini's Death: Visions of Redemption*

ACCORDING to the biographies by Filippo Baldinucci and Bernini's son, Domenico, the artist as an old man, sensing the end approaching, took measures to prepare for death, which entailed creating three works of art. First and foremost was the death itself, or rather, Bernini's idea and method of preparing for it, as described by the biographers, which derived from a medieval tradition codified in a famous text, the *Ars moriendi*. The Art of Dying had been revived toward the end of the sixteenth century, notably by the Jesuits, who institutionalized the tradition in the Confraternity of a Good Death (*bona mors*). Bernini belonged to the confraternity for many years and practiced its devotions every day in the Gesù, the mother church of the order in Rome. The biographers also report that, besides following the prescribed devotions, Bernini made two works of visual art with a view to obtaining a good death. Differing in medium and subject matter, both works had the common theme of illustrating his mortal invocation of Christ's humanity, which he called 'sinner's clothing', as protection to ward off perdition.¹ Both works were intended to serve in Bernini's private, per-

* Details concerning many of the topics mentioned here will be found in the original essays on Bernini's death, Lavin 1972, 1973, 1978, and subsequent related publications, 1998, 2000a, 2000b.

¹ Bernini 1713, 170 f.:

Ed era sì viva in lui questa fiducia, che chiamava la Santissima Humanità di Christo, *Veste de'Peccatori*, e perciò tanto maggiormente confidava, non dover esso esser fulminato dalla Divina vendetta, quale dovendo prima di ferir lui, passar la veste, per non lacerare l'innocenza, l'averebbe perdonato al suo peccato. (This trust was so alive in him that he called the Most Holy Humanity of Christ 'Sinners' Clothing', whence he was the more confident

sonal devotions, and as public demonstrations of the eschatological efficacy of Christ's sacrifice.

The Sangue Di Cristo

The first was a spectacular composition known as the *Sangue di Cristo*, which Bernini designed and had executed in two forms, as an engraving by François Spierre (the French printmaker whom Bernini favored in his later years) (Fig. 1, Fig. 2), and as a large painting, which he kept before his bed until his death.² The genesis of the composition is movingly described in the biographies of the artist by Filippo Baldinucci and his son, Domenico Bernini.

Baldinucci:

He always kept fixed in his mind an intense awareness of death. He often had long discussions on this subject with Father Marchesi, his nephew who was an Oratorian priest at the Chiesa Nuova, known for his goodness and learning. So great and continual was the fervor with which he longed for the happiness of that last step, that for the sole intention of attaining it, he frequented for forty years continuously the devotions conducted toward this end by the fathers of the Society of Jesus in Rome. There, also, he partook of the Holy Eucharist twice a week.

He increased the alms which he had been accustomed to give from his earliest youth. He became absorbed at times in the thoughts and in the expression of the profound reverence and understanding that he always had of the efficacy of the Blood of Christ the Redeemer, in which, he was wont to say, he hoped to drown his sins. He made a drawing of this subject, which he then had engraved and printed. It shows the image of Christ Crucified, with streams of blood gushing from his hands and feet as if to form a sea, and the great Queen of Heaven who offers it to God

not to be struck by divine retribution which, having first to penetrate the garment before wounding him, would have pardoned his sin rather than tear its innocence.)

² At least five copies of the painted composition are known. The various versions, their histories and attributions have been discussed by Tedaldi 1996; Gaia Bindi in Bernardini and Fagiolo dell'Arco, eds., 1999, 443–6, and in Pittura 1999, 76 f.; Petrucci 2001, 81–4. See also n. 11 below.

the Father. He also had this pious concept painted on a great canvas which he wanted to have always facing his bed in life and in death.³

Domenico Bernini:

and he explained his thought by adding that 'the goodness of God being infinite, and infinite the merit of the precious Blood of his Son, it was an offense to these attributes to doubt Forgiveness.' To this effect he had copied for his devotion, in engraving and in paint, a marvelous design which shows Jesus Christ on the Cross with a Sea of Blood beneath, spilling torrents of it from his Most Holy Wounds; and here one sees the Most Blessed Virgin in the act of offering it to the Eternal Father, who appears above with open arms all softened by so piteous a spectacle. And he said, 'in this Sea his sins are drowned, which cannot be found by Divine justice except amongst the Blood of Jesus Christ, in the tints of which they will either have changed color or by its merits obtained mercy.' This trust was so alive in him that he called the Most Holy Humanity of Christ 'Sinners' Clothing', whence he was the more confident not to be struck by divine retribution which, having first to penetrate the garment before wounding him, would have pardoned his sin rather than tear its innocence.⁴

The engraved version, also relatively large, was clearly intended to give the composition a wider dissemination, in two forms: as an independent

³ Baldinucci 1948, 135 (transl. adapted from Baldinucci 1966, 68 f.):

Teneva egli sempre fisso un vivo pensiero della morte, intorno alla quale faceva bene spesso lunghi colloqui col padre Marchesi suo nipote sacerdote della Congregazione dell'Oratorio nella chiesa Nuova, uomo della bontà e dottrina, che è nota; e con tal desiderio aspirò sempre mai alla felicità di quell'estremo passo, che per questo solo fine di conseguirla durò quarant'anni continovi a frequentar la divozione, che a tale effetto fanno i padri della Compagnia di Gesù in Roma; dove pure due volte la settimana si cibava del sacramento eucaristico. Accresceva le limosine, esercizio stato suo familiarissimo fino dalla prima età. Si profondava talora nel pensiero e nel discorso d'un'altissima stima e concetto che egli ebbe sempre dell'efficacia del Sangue di Cristo Redentore, nel quale (come era solito dire) sperava di affogare i suoi peccati. A tale oggetto disengò di sua mano e poi fecesi stampare un'immagine di Cristo Crocifisso, dalle cui mani e piedi sgorgano rivi di sangue, che formano quasi un mare e la gran Regina del Cielo, che lo sta offerendo all'Eterno Padre. Questa pia meditazione fecesi anche dipingere in una gran tela, la quale volle sempre tenere in faccia al suo letto in vita e in morte.

⁴ Bernini 1713, 170 f.:

image to commemorate the canonization of the Virgin's namesake, Maria Maddalena de'Pazzi, in 1669; and, the format having been carefully scaled so as also to fold neatly into a handy octavo format, as the frontispiece of a devotional tract published the following year by the artist's beloved nephew and counselor in the 'art of dying', the Oratorian Father Francesco Marchese. A modern version of the *Ars moriendi*, titled *The Only Hope of the Sinner Consists in the Blood of Our Lord Jesus Christ*, Marchese's introduction urges the reader to contemplate the image, for the explication of which the text was composed.⁵ The inscriptions on the engraving, adapted from a passage in Paul's Epistle to the Hebrews, and from a quotation of Maria Maddalena's own words, together with the title of Marchese's book, epitomize the meaning and spiritual function of the image.⁶

è spiegava il suo sentimento con soggiungere, che La bontà di Dio essendo infinita, & infinto il merito del prezioso Sangue del suo Figliuolo, era un'offendere quest' attributi il dubitare della Misericordia. A tale effetto egli fece per sua divozione ritrarre in Stampa, & in Pittura un meraviglioso disegno, in cui rappresentasi Giesù Christo in Croce con un Mare di Sangue sotto di esso, che ne versa a torrenti dalle sue Santissime Piaghe, e qui si vede la Beatissima Vergine in atto di offerirlo al Padre Eterno, che comparisce di sopra colle braccia spase, tutto intenerito a sì compassionevole spettacolo: Et In questo Mare, egli diceva, ritrovarsi affogati i suoi peccati, che non altrimenti dalla Divina Giustitia rinvenir si potevano, che frà il Sangue di Giesù Christo, di cui tinti ò haverebbono mutato colore, ò per merito di esso ottenuta mercede. Ed era sì viva in lui questa fiducia, che chiamava la Santissima Humanità di Christo, Veste de'Peccatori,e perciò tanto maggiormente confidava, non dover esso esser fulminato dalla Divina vendetta, quale dovendo prima di ferir lui, passar la veste, per non lacerare l'innocenza, haverebbe perdonato al suo peccato.

⁵ Marchese 1670. In the introduction, the Precious Blood speaks to the reader:

Sangue di Giesù Crocefisso al Cuore di chi legge . . . Ah che l'huomo carnale non penetra le cose superne, e che da Dio prouengono: perciò à farle meglio capire, l'infinita carità del Signor Iddio hà ora con particolar prouedimento disposto, che da mano di divoto artefice sia delineata l'Imagine del Salvatore Crocefisso, grondante Sangue in tanta copia, che se ne formi un ampio mare, e che per mani della Beatissima Vergine Maria conforme al pio sentimento di S. Maddalene de Pazzi io sia del continuo offerto all'eterno Padre à favore de' peccatori, (per la cui esplicatione si è composto il presente libro) affinche con tali mezzi agli occhi dell'huomo carnale rappresentati, il tuo cuore sia più facilmente disposto à udire, e ad ubidire à suoi celesti ammaestramenti. Apri adunque l'orecchio del cuore, mentre fissi l'occhio alla diuota imagine, ò leggi questi fogli.

⁶ Heb. 9:14:

quanto magis sanguis Christi qui per Spiritum Sanctum semet ipsum obtulit immaculatum Deo emundabit conscientiam vestram ab operibus mortuis ad serviendum Deo viventi; (Douay: How much more shall the blood of Christ, who by the Holy Ghost offered himself unspotted unto God, cleanse our conscience from dead works, to serve the living God?)

hebr./9.14/ SANGVIS CHRISTI, QVI SEMETIPSVM OBTVLIT
IMMACVLATVM DEO, EMVNDABIT CONSCIENTIAM
NOSTRĂ

(The blood of Christ, who offered himself without spot to God, will
purge our conscience)

S. M. Magd./de Pazzis uit./p. 2. C. 6/ Vi offerisco il sangue dell'umana-
to Verbo, ò Padre Eterno: e se manca cosa alcuna, l'offerisco a voi, o
Maria, accioche lo presentiate all'aeterna Trinita.

(I offer to you, eternal Father, the blood of the incarnate word; and if
anything is wanting I offer it to you, Mary, that you may present it to
the eternal Trinity.)

Eq.^s Io. Lauren. Bernini inuen.

Franciscus Spier Sculp.

The general composition, conceived as a cloud-borne vision with the Virgin kneeling as advocate before the Crucifixion, follows the traditional mode of intercessory illustrations of the *Ars moriendi*, of which one of the primary injunctions was that the believer preparing for a 'good death' should contemplate 'holy images, especially the Crucified Christ and the Virgin' (Fig. 3).⁷ In such intercessory images, however, the Virgin normally alludes to her breast, since it is as his mother that she appeals to her son, who cannot refuse her request, while Christ alludes to his chest wound, since it is as sacrificial son that he transmits her appeal to God the father. None of these features is present in Bernini's composition, in which, moreover, the vision is conceived as appearing not *within* the picture to the moribund on his deathbed, but *through* the picture to the viewer. It is clear that while retaining essential elements of the *Ars moriendi* imagery, Bernini departed radically from the medieval tradition, which had focused on what might be called the external mechanism of intercession. Bernini focuses instead on the inner, sacramental medium of redemption, that is, the

For the passage from Part II, Chapter 6, of the biography by Vincenzo Puccini, see n. 26 below.

⁷ On the stained glass window at Wettingen, dated 1590, see Anderes and Hoegger 1989, 258 f.

Eucharist itself, corresponding to the mottoes inscribed below, and to the title of Father Marchese's book in which they are explained.

Bernini's composition incorporates three fundamental innovations that together express the essential conception embedded in these texts: the Eucharist as a reciprocal offering to and by the sinner, and the only means by which universal redemption may be achieved.

The Ocean

From the earliest Christian times metaphors expressing the generosity and ubiquity of the blood of Christ had frequently been cast in liquid terms. Father Marchese devotes a lengthy passage to expressing the universal efficacy of the Eucharist, through the metaphor of the Blood of Christ as an infinite sea that covers the world. He relates the concept to that of the Blood as a fountain and as a river, and cites a variety of sources, including the prophets Job (38: 11, 'and here shall thy proud waves be stayed?') and Micah (7: 19, 'and thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea'), St. John Chrysostom (Hom. 41 in Ioann., 'This Blood, poured out in abundance, has washed the whole world clean'), and Maria Maddalena de' Pazzi, who described the era of grace, in which the Incarnate Word sent the Blood of Christ into this small world, as the second flood, following that of Noah.⁸ Such metaphors might also be illustrated, as in Botticelli's famous Eucharistic depiction of the Crucifixion, where the blood becomes the river of baptism (Fig. 4).⁹ But Marchese's own explicit formulation and Bernini's portrayal of the blood cascading to form a limitless ocean, while indebted to these antecedents, were unprecedented.¹⁰

Blood and Water

The motivation is found in the second innovation that concerns us here: Christ's chest wound expresses two streams of liquid, instead of the usual one (see Fig. 2). This motif expressly illustrates a detail of Christ's death that is recounted exclusively in the gospel of St. John. John tells of the Roman

⁸ The texts referenced by Marchese are cited in full in Lavin 1972, 167 n. 26.

⁹ The composition by Botticelli, to which Vasari gave the title 'Triumph of the Faith', is interesting in our context because the liquid descends from the cross to form a cleansing river of baptism.

¹⁰ Pace Beltramme 1994.

soldier who, after Christ had given up the ghost, pierced the savior's side, whereupon blood and water suddenly poured forth.¹¹ Since Christ was already dead, the body should not have bled at all. John recognized the double wonder — the body did bleed, and not only blood but water, as well — and he took pains to record that he was himself eye witness to the miracle:

After this, Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the scripture might be fulfilled, saith, I thirst.

...

When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost.

...

But one of the soldiers with a spear opened his side, and immediately there came out blood and water.

And he that saw it, hath given testimony, and his testimony is true. And he knoweth that he saith true; that you also may believe.

For these things were done, that the scripture should be fulfilled. (John 19:28, 30, 34–36).¹²

The lance wound was thus quite distinct from those inflicted by the cru-

¹¹ Without considering the significance of the motif, Francesco Petrucci has made the important observation (in Petrucci 2001, 81–4, and in Tapié, 2003, cat. no 25) that the painted version of the *Sangue di Cristo* in a private collection in Genoa actually shows the spouts as blood and water separately, unlike other painted replicas in which they are both red (Bernardini and Fagiolo dell'Arco, eds., 1999, Figs. 223, 226). Petrucci argues cogently that this detail favors the Genoa picture, which measures 99 × 70 cm., as the 'large' original Bernini kept beside his bed, while the others are copies after the engraving. In the Eucharist itself, of course, the wine and water are *mixed*, and interesting in this context is a passage in Domenico's description of the composition, quoting the artist: '... (Bernini) said, 'in this Sea are drowned his sins, which cannot be found by Divine justice except amongst the Blood of Jesus Christ, in the tints of which they will either have changed color or by its merits obtained mercy.' (Et *In questo Mare*, egli diceva, *ritrovarsi affogati i suoi peccati, che non altrimenti dalla Divina Giustizia rinvenir si potevano, che frà il Sangue di Giesù Christo, di cui tinti ò haverebbono mutato colore, ò per merito di esso ottenuta mercede* (Bernini 1713, 170).

¹² 28 postea sciens Iesus quia iam omnia consummata sunt ut consummaretur scriptura dicit sitio

...

30 cum ergo accepisset Iesus acetum dixit consummatum est et inclinato capite tradidit spiritum

...

cifixion itself: it revealed Jesus's true nature and gave proof that his death assured the realization of the divine plan — that the scripture should be fulfilled. From the earliest Christian times the lance wound became the prototype for the mixture of water and wine in the Eucharist. The dual constituents were also taken to signify the beginning and the end of the sacraments, the water identified with baptism and the Church, the blood with the Eucharist and Christ. 'St. Cyril and Chrysostom say, that the water signifies baptism, which is the first beginning of the Church and the other sacraments, and the blood represents the Eucharist, which is the end and completion of the sacraments, to which they all refer as to their beginning and their end.' Particularly important was the idea that with the lance wound the Old Law was succeeded by the New and God's entire plan for salvation was actuated. And for the Fathers of the Church the effusion of blood and water signified that 'from the death and side of Christ as a second Adam sleeping on the cross, the Church was formed as Eve the spouse of Christ'.¹³

The chest wound is thus the source of the Eucharist *par excellence*, and this explains why the ocean is formed by blood falling from only three of Christ's wounds, those of the hands and feet. The combination of blood and water was an important factor in the association of the Eucharist with salvific liquids generally, a notable instance in our context being Rupert of Deutz's punning reference to the Red Sea, in his comment on the Good Friday liturgy in his treatise on the Divine Office. Explaining why neither blood nor water alone but both came from the side wound, and why the

34 sed unus militum lancea latus eius aperuit et continuo exivit sanguis et aqua

35 et qui vidit testimonium perhibuit et verum est eius testimonium et ille scit quia vera dicit ut et vos credatis

36 facta sunt enim haec ut scriptura impleatur os non comminuetis ex eo.

¹³ . . . ut significaretur ex morte et latere Chrisiti, quasi secundi Adae dormientis in cruce, Ecclesiam quasi Evam Christi sponsam formatam esse . . . ut ait Cyrillus e Chrysostomus, aqua significet baptismum, qui est principium Ecclesiae et Sacramentorum caeterorum; sanguis vero repraesentet Eucharistiam, quae omnium Sacramentorum finis est et complementum, ad quae duo quasi ad principium et finem, caetera Sacramenta omnia deducuntur. (Lapide 1866–8, XVI, 621; Lapid 1876–1908, VI, 249, 248).

The early interpretations are conveniently summarized by Malatesta 1977, and Meehan 1985. On the earliest crucifixions depicting the theme, see Kartsonis 1994, esp. 166 f. See also the important work by Heer 1966, who relates the Johannine tradition to the devotion of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, followed by O'Donnell, 1992. The first part of John 19:34, is quoted in the banderole in the upper part of the crossing pier niche with Bernini's sculpture of St. Longinus, in connection with which the text was discussed in a paper by Preimesberger, 1989.

two were merged, Rupert specifically likened their association in the Eucharist to the opening and closing of the Red Sea in the salvation of the Elect from their diabolic pursuer:

Through its merger, I say, with the life-giving, precious blood, the water received this meaning, that it really appears as similar to the Red Sea, through which the saved people traversed, while Pharaoh with his chariots and horsemen were drowned in it. For those who flee the Egyptians of this world, are transported cleansed into the true Promised Land, and completely swallows up the devil who pursues them, with his ephemeral deeds and splendors.¹⁴

While the blood and water were frequently shown as two adjacent streams, I have found no precedent for Bernini's absolutely distinct, gushing spouts, one to each hand of the Virgin — whose two breasts, it should be recalled, were traditionally understood as the Old and New Testaments, conjoined in her body.¹⁵

The Virgin as Advocate, Church, and Priest

Equally important is the fact that the streams from the chest wound descend not to the ocean but to Mary's hands, where they disappear. The role of the Virgin is the third great innovation in Bernini's composition. Mary is shown kneeling, arms and hands extended, palms turned up to receive the effusions which, commingled within her body to become the Eucharist, she offers up to the Trinity — exactly the process that takes place at every Mass.¹⁶ This quite unprecedented enactment entailed the amalgamation of

¹⁴ *Cur nec solus sanguinis nec sola aqua de latere eius exierit, vel cur aqua sanguini sociata sit.*

...

Societate, inquam, vivifici pretiosi sanguinis hoc accepit, ut comparetur vera similitudine Rubro mari, per quod salvatus populus transivit Pharaone submerso cum curribus et equitibus suis. Nam fugientes Aegyptum huius saeculi mundatos in veram repromissionis terram transmittit diabolumque persequentem penitus absorbet cum praeteritis actibus et pompis suis. (Rupert of Deutz 1999, III, 812–4)

¹⁵ I have tried to show that his tradition underlay the particular relation between the Virgin and the Christ child in Michelangelo's Medici Madonna (Lavin 2001).

¹⁶ All contemporary sources, including Bernini himself, identify the figure as the Virgin Mary (as duly noted by Bindi in Bernardini and Fagiolo dell'Arco, eds., 1999, 445); indeed,

three related but heretofore distinct interpretations of the Virgin's role in the work of salvation. As Mother of Christ Mary is the intercessor par excellence with her son, who can refuse her no request for mercy. In Rome this theme was associated above all with a particular class of images in which the Virgin lifts both hands upward in a gesture that suggests both an appeal and an offering to heaven. The type was familiar from the classic Byzantine Crucifixion composition in which the Virgin standing beneath the cross gestures in this way; isolated as a famous icon known as the *Madonna Avvocata*, any Roman viewer would recognize the allusion in Bernini's figure (Fig. 5).¹⁷ But never before Bernini had the Virgin's role, effected through the up-turned palms of her hands, been specifically Eucharistic in this context. In response to Maria Maddalena de'Pazzi's invocation, the Virgin has become not simply a mother and advocate but the unique conduit for humanity's unique hope of salvation. Upon her assumption, Mary's role as Christ's bride brought her the epithet *Regina Coeli*, and ultimately her identification with the institutional church, *Ecclesia*. The common epithet *Mater Ecclesia* alludes equally to the Church and to the Virgin as spouse, mother, and Queen.¹⁸ It was precisely in this capacity that the Virgin was identified with the Church as an institution and portrayed as participant in depictions of the Crucifixion in which the post-mortem issue of blood and water was explicitly identified as the Eucharist. A female personification of *Ecclesia* wearing a crown, was often shown in what might be called ecclesiological depictions of the Crucifixion collecting the effusions from the side wound in an emblematic chalice.¹⁹ In some cases, the institu-

only she can perform the task given to her by Maria Maddalena's invocation and in Bernini's composition. The figure no doubt also alludes to the Virgin's two namesakes: Mary Magdalene, who is often shown as the penitent kneeling at the foot of the cross (as noted by Brauer and Wittkower 1931, 168); and Maria Maddalena de'Pazzi herself. A member of the Discalced Carmelites, the order dedicated to the Virgin, the saint was famed for her frequent ecstatic visions like the one from which the caption of the *Sangue di Cristo* was quoted. The relevance of Maria Maddalena is amply discussed by Beltramme 1994, who follows Blunt 1978, in actually identifying the figure as the Florentine mystic.

¹⁷ *Marienlexikon* 1988–94, I, 41; II, 549–59. The icon and the great procession in which it had figured for centuries were part of the background for Bernini's projects for the tribune of S. Maria Maggiore and a hospice for the poor at the Lateran palace; see n. below and n. 43. As has been noted by Cardile 1984, 202, 208 nn. 50, 50, the gesture is related to the *manis expansis* of the Offertory of the Mass.

¹⁸ *Marienlexikon* 1988–94, II, 312–4.

¹⁹ The relationship between these images and the blood and water was noted by Mâle 1984, 193 f. (Tedaldi 1996, 90, and Bindi in Bernardini and Fagiolo dell'Arco, eds., 1999,

tional nature of the sacrament is emphasized, as when Ecclesia, on the dexter side of the cross, is contrasted with Synagoga on the sinister side.²⁰ In some cases, the Virgin and Ecclesia might appear together, thus identifying Mary as compassionate intercessor with the Church as the administrator of the sacraments (Fig. 6). In one notable instance Ecclesia gathers the blood and water in her chalice, while a personification of Charity inflicts the lance wound (Fig. 7). The third manifestation of the Virgin associates her with the actual function of the Church in the administration of the sacraments, that is, *Maria Sacerdos*, the Virgin as Priest.²¹ The concept of Mary-Ecclesia as equivalent to the consecrated male, priest, received its first, explicit formulation by the eighth century from the Pseudo-Epiphanius: 'equivalent to the priest and indeed the altar, she gives Christ our celestial bread in remission of our sins'.²² The principle is illustrated as a dramatic vision in a Flemish engraving of the early seventeenth century that Bernini must have known. Mary appears in this sacerdotal capacity, cloud-borne, kneeling before an altar and offering the chalice and wafer to God the Father and the Holy Spirit above (Fig. 8).²³ The subtle relationship between the intercessory Virgin and the priesthood with respect to the Eucharist is formulated in the inscription that accompanies the print: 'Mary as intermediary offers to God the Father what has been consecrated by the priests, that is, the virgin

445, refer to the Ecclesia type but not its relevance to the Joannine theme.) Blood and water issue from the side wound in the Crucifixion in Duccio's triptych at Hampton Court (Shearman 1983, 96); the ecclesiological reference is here expressed through the extraordinary combination of the Crucifixion with Mariological scenes in the wings. The blood and water motif also refers to the institutional sacrament in Bellini's *Blood of the Redeemer*, National Gallery, London; the double stream from the chest wound, to which Christ gestures, is captured in a chalice by a kneeling angel (Goffen 1989, ill. 57).

²⁰ See the examples illustrated in Seiferth 1970.

²¹ On this delicate and vexed subject see *Marienlexikon* 1988–94, V, 314–8. In 1916 the Holy Office forbade the use of images of Mary portraying her as a priest, and in 1927 they forbade the devotion to Mary Virgin Priest altogether.

²² *sacerdos pariter et altar quidem ferens, dedit nobis coelestem panem Christum in remissionem peccatorum* (cited after Marracci 1710, 607).

²³ Missaglia, *et al.*, 1954, Fig. 102, p. 111. I have been unable to trace this Madonna-Priestess image. The inscription below (faintly legible in the bad reproduction from an unspecified source used for Missaglia's book, preserved in an album in Ss. Andrea e Claudio dei Borgognoni in Rome) specifies that Mary offers to God her son's flesh and blood, consecrated by the priests: MARIA TANQUAM MEDIATRIX OFFERT DEO PATRI QUOD CONSECRATUM EST A SACERDOTIB' SCILICET [C]ARNEM VIRGINEAM ET SANGUINEM PRETIOSUM FILI EIUS DOMINI NOSTRI IESU CHRISTI.



SAN
DI GIES
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ratro dell' etern
rapprecatar los
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tro a quello all
deto facile, e
ro e sicuro. A
incunabili dell
che si disper si
fue enormi fo
pone le vicen
dia del Signor
glier il colpeuo
tiolo e petrina
molta l' impo
chezza, in con
puro, & immu
pre la virtù im

1. Bernini, *Sangue di Cristo*, engraving by F. Spierre, 473 x 290mm, from Marchese 1670. Biblioteca Vaticana, Rome.



2. Detail of 1, Virgin receiving and offering
Eucharistic Blood and Water.



3. *The Death of Moriens and the Intercession with the Trinity of Christ and the Virgin*, stained-glass votive window. Wettingen, Switzerland.



4. Sandro Botticelli, *Triumph of the Faith*, woodcut.



5. Madonna avvocata ("Madonna di S. Sisto") .
S. Maria del Rosario, Rome (photo: ICCD E55673).



6. Crucifixion, showing the Virgin as advocate and Ecclesia with the Chalice receiving the Water and Blood of the Sacrament, reliquary plaque, Musée de Cluny, Paris (Huchard, et al., 1996, 28, 43).



8. *Mary as Priest offering the Chalice of the Sacrament to the Trinity*, engraving. Brussels, Jumpers Collection (after Missaglia, et al., 1954, 102, p. 111).



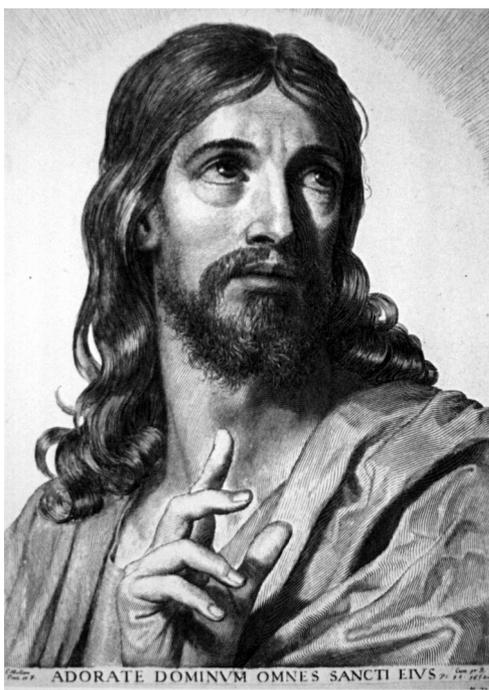
7. Christ Crucified by the Virtues, Ecclesia with the Chalice receiving Water and Blood, Psalter, MS 54, fol. 15v. Musée Municipal, Besançon (Haussherr, ed., 1977-9, II, 514).



9. Caravaggio, *Madonna del Rosario*. Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna.



10. Bernini, *The Last Supper*, detail. Santa Maria della Vittoria, Rome.



11. Claude Mellan, bust of the Savior, engraving.



12. Bernini, *Multiplication of the Loaves and Fishes*, engraving by François Spierre.



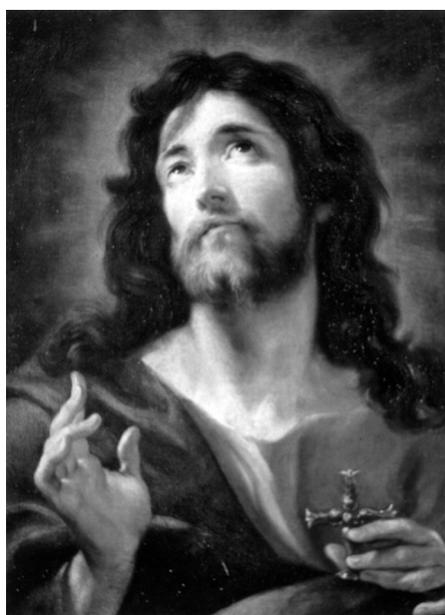
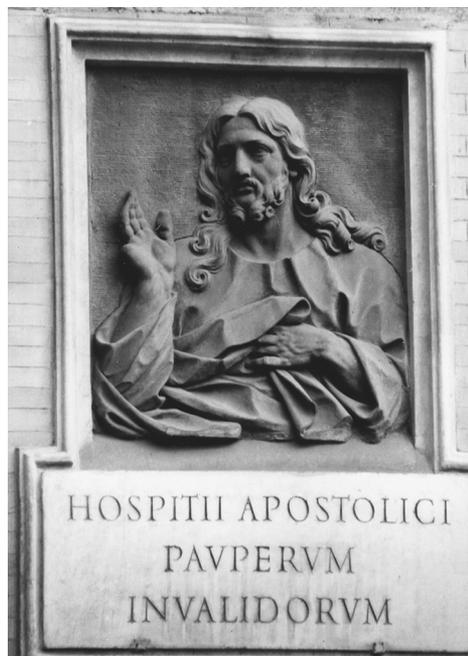
13. Giovanni Battista Gaulli, il Baciccio, *Christ and the Samaritan Woman*.
Galleria Spada, Rome.

1068



14. Bernini, bust of the Savior. San Sebastiano fuori le mura, Rome.

15. Relief of the Savior.
Palazzo di Montecitorio,
Rome.



16. Giovanni Battista Gaulli,
il Baciccio, *Salvator Mundi*.
Ducrot Collection, Rome.

flesh and blood of her son, our Lord Jesus Christ.' In this context it is significant that the closest antecedent I have found for the Virgin's gesture is that of the priest, St. Dominic, in Caravaggio's *Madonna of the Rosary*, where it carries essentially the same meaning: Dominic receives the Rosary from the Virgin, and offers her the devotion of the faithful (Fig. 9).

Bernini's Virgin fuses all these characters in a single persona and the symbolic chalice is replaced by Mary-Ecclesia's own hands, bathed in the humble and charitable sacrifice she shares as compassionate co-redemptress. Bernini's portrayal of the Madonna in this role was a direct visualization of the most famous of all accounts of the Virgin's role as Eucharistic conduit in the process of salvation, Bernard of Clairvaux's sermon on the Nativity of the Virgin, called *De aquaeductu*. The title itself makes the point, which is defined explicitly in the final paragraph, to which Marchese himself (p. 82) alludes:

But, my brother, whatsoever thou hast a mind to offer to the Lord be sure to entrust it to Mary, so that thy gift shall return to the Giver of all grace through the same channel by which thou didst obtain it. God of course had the power, if He so pleased, to communicate His grace without the interposition of this Aqueduct. But he wanted to provide us with a needful intermediary. For perhaps 'thy hands are full of blood' (Is. 1:15) or dirtied with bribes: perhaps thou hast not like the Prophet 'shaken them free from all gifts' (Is. 33:15). Consequently, unless thou wouldst have thy gift rejected, be careful to commit to Mary the little thou desirest to offer, that the Lord may receive it through her hands, so dear to Him and most 'worthy of all acceptation' (1 Tim. 1:15). For Mary's hands are the very whitest of lilies; and assuredly the Divine Lover of lilies will never complain of anything presented by His Mother's hands that is not found among the lilies. Amen.²⁴

²⁴ Bernard of Clairvaux 1950, III, 305.

Caeterum quidquid illud est, quod offerre paras, Mariae commendare memento, ut eodem alveo ad largitorem gratiae gratia redeat quo influxit. Neque enim impotens erat Deus, et sine hoc aquaeductu infundere gratiam, prout vellet; sed tibi vehiculum voluit providere. Forte enim manus tuae, aut sanguine plenae, aut infectae muneribus, quod non eas ab omni munere excussisti. Ideoque [alias, itaque] modicum istud quod offerre desideras, gratissimis illis et omni acceptione dignissimis Mariae manibus offerendum tradere cura, si non vis sustinere repulsam. Nimirum candidissima quaedam lilia sunt: nec causabitur ille liliorum amator inter lilia non inventum, quidquid illud sit quod inter Mariae manus invenerit. Amen. (Migne 1844–47, CLXXXIII, col. 448.)

The underlying principle was expressed in St. Bonaventure's treatise on the Incarnate Word, in terms that seem perfectly illustrated in the *Sanguie di Cristo*:

. . . one cannot reach the benefaction of this sacrament without the protection of the Virgin. And for this reason, as this holy body has been given to us through her, so it must be also be offered by her hands and received by her hands as the Sacrament, which she procured for us and which was born from her breast.²⁵

In the *Sanguie di Cristo*, Maria Maddalena's first appeal is to the father, then to the Virgin, and ultimately to the Trinity. Perhaps the most profound insight into the ultimate meaning of Bernini's image and Marchese's text is hidden, that is, to be found the conspicuous omission of the Holy Spirit from the Trinity evoked by the saint. The omission is certainly not inadvertent since the Holy Spirit is a central step in the heavenly ladder of the saint's offering as reported by her biographer, Vincenzo Puccini, referenced in the citation itself, by the saint herself in her *Colloqui*, and by Marchese himself in the text of his book.²⁶ This is indeed the Hidden God that inhabits every altar — many of which are actually inscribed with Isaiah's famous phrase, *Vere tu es Deus absconditus, Deus Israel salvator* (Truly, thou art a God who hidest thyself, O God of Israel, the Savior; Is. 45.15) —

See also Bernard's sermon on the Vigil of the Nativity of Christ: Cum ergo in prima sit remedium, in secunda adjutorium est; quia nihil nos Deus habere voluit, quod per Mariae manus non transiret. (For God did not wish for us to have anything that had not passed through the hands of Mary.) Migne 1844–47, CLXXXIII, col. 100

²⁵ Bonaventure 1934–64, V, 316:

. . . quia non nisi patrocinio beatæ Mariæ Virginis ad virtutem huius Sacramenti pervenitur. Et propeter hoc, sicut per eam hoc sacratissimum corpus nobis datum est, ita per manus eius debet offerri et per manus eius accipi sub Sacramento quod nobis praestitum est et natum ex eius utero. (*De verbo incarnato*, Sermo VI, par. 20, Bonaventure 1934–64, V, 316, cited by Crocetti 2001, 125.)

²⁶ T'offerisco adunque à te, ò Verbo; lo presento à te Spirito Santo, e se cosa alcuna ci manca, l'offerisco à te, o Maria, cho lo presenti all'eterna Trinità, per supplimèto di tutti i difetti, che fossero nell'anima mia, e ancora per sodisfaziojne di tutte la colpe, che fossero nel copro mio. (Puccini 1609, 241 f.)

Io t'offerò il Sanguie del tuo humanato Verbo, dico l'offerò a te Padre, l'offerò a te Verbo, e l'offerò a te Spirito Santo. Et se nulla ci mancassi, l'offerò a te Maria, che l'offerisca all'eterna Trinità per supplimento di tutti e' difetti che fussino nell'anima mia, e ancora per sodisfatone di tutti e' difetto che fussino nel'corpo mio. (De'Pazzi, 1960, 20.)

whose presence is effected by the sacrament of the Eucharist offered through the Church.

The Bust of the Saviour

A remarkable passage in Chantelou's diary of Bernini's visit to Paris in the summer of 1665 to redesign the Louvre for Louis XIV records a rare occasion of disagreement between Paul Fréart de Chantelou, the intelligent and cultivated connoisseur whom the king had appointed as Bernini's translator and companion, and the artist, with respect to the merits of the great French engraver Claude Mellan (1598–1688).²⁷ Having spent his early years in Rome (1624–36), where he had engraved Bernini's designs for a 1631 edition of the poetry of Urban VIII, Mellan was then living in Paris.²⁸ Bernini's personal interest in Mellan, his exact contemporary, is evident from the wish he expressed one day as his Paris visit drew to a close, to repeat a meeting the two artists had had when he first arrived. There then ensued an exchange in which Bernini wholeheartedly defended Mellan against the stylistic criticisms of Chantelou, who perspicaciously assessed, in negative terms, the austere, minimalist, purely linear mode of rendering

Vi offerisco, ò Padre eterno, il Sangue dell'umanità del vostro Verbo; l'offerisco à voi stesso, ò Diuin Verbo; l'offerisco anco à voi, ò Spirito Santo; e se manca à me cosa alcuna, l'offerisco à voi, ò Maria; accioche, lo presentiate alla Santissima Trinità. (Marchese 1670, 83)

Bernini's *Sangue di Cristo* composition was by no means unprecedented in his respect. The Holy Spirit as such is not represented in Filippino Lippi's *Intercession of Christ and the Virgin* in Munich (Lavin 1972, 165, Fig. 4), but is present by implication between the angel and Virgin of the Annunciation flanking the central presiding figure of God the Father; the Eucharist is alluded to in the body of Christ displayed in the predella below. Bernini also omitted the Holy spirit in his drawing of Christ and the Virgin appealing to God the Father, in Leipzig (Lavin 1972, 165, Fig. 3).

²⁷ Three basic, recent works on Mellan: Préaud 1988 ; Préaud and Brejon de Lavergnée 1988; Ficacci 1989. Mellan was also an ambitious, if elusive painter, concerning which see Préaud and Brejon de Lavergnée 1988, 17–20, and Ficacci 1989, 353–71. On Mellan's *Saint Face*, his famous pièce de resistance, I have contributed Lavin 2001b.

²⁸ On Mellan's beautiful renderings of Bernini's designs, see the fine discussions by Ficacci 1989, 282–5, with excellent reproductions.

form and luminosity that was Mellan's great achievement, and which Bernini appreciated in full.²⁹

On our way back he remarked to me that a certain engraver who had been to see him when he first arrived had never called again. I remembered that his name was Mellan. I said that he was not doing much at present; there were others better at his profession than he; I had never thought much of his work, for he was too preoccupied with a good line. He replied that he had seen some wonderful engraving by him, notably some of Signor Poussin's works, of which he mentioned one of *Eternal Wisdom*.³⁰ I told the Cavaliere that M. Poussin, like myself, considered his drawings poorly engraved, as he only tried to give a good line and never attempted to render light and shade nor the half-tones; this was all the easier as M. Poussin's works were extraordinarily finished, considering how shaky his hand was; M. Mellan only produced a sort of shell with no half-tones or shadows for fear of hiding the outline. The Cavaliere said that he thought it fine and well engraved. I said there were many in France who engraved better. I said I admired the engravings of Marcantonio, who had copied painting with such skill; the paintings of Rubens were being well engraved at the moment. He asked me whether

²⁹ Chantelou 1985, 280 f.

Nous en revenant, il m'a dit dans ton carrosse, qu'il n'avait point revu un certain graveur qui l'était venu voir dès le commencement. Je me suis souvenu que ce graveur est Melan. Je lui ai dit que présentement il travaille peu, y en ayant d'autres plus habiles dans cette profession, que sa gravure à moi ne m'avait jamais plu, qu'il ne songeait qu'à faire de beaux traits. Il m'a reparti que néanmoins il avait gravé merveilleusement bien, qu'il avait vu, entre autres de lui, deux ou trois pièces du signor Poussin qui lui semblaient admirables, principalement une *Sapience éternelle*. Je lui ai dit que M. Poussin, aussi bien que moi, avait trouvé ses dessins faiblement gravés, n'ayant songé qu'à ne faire qu'un trait à sa gravure, au lieu de penser à imiter les ombres et les lumières, et les demi-teintes, ce qui était fort aisé, pour ce que les dessins de M. Poussin étaient extraordinairement achevés, vu sa mauvaise main, qu'il n'avait donné à ces estampes que l'écorce sans demi-teintes et sans ombres au degré qu'il eût fallu, et cela peur de corrompre ses beaux traits. Le Cavalier a reparti que cela lui avait semblé bien gravé et beau. J'ai reparti que nous avions à présent ici des gens qui gravaient beaucoup mieux; que j'estimais la gravure qui était celle de Marc-Antoine, lequel avait si bien imité la peinture; que de ce temps-ci les estampes d'après Rubens avaient été bien gravées. Il m'a demandé s'il y avait quelqu'un ici qui gravait bien à l'eau-forte. Je lui ai dit que c'était une gravure réservée aux grands maîtres, qui quelquefois gravaient eux-mêmes leurs dessins; qu'Annibal Carrache en avait gravé quelques-uns, comme une *Samaritaine* et quelques *Vierges*. Il m'a dit qu'il en doutait fort. (Chantelou 1885, 221)

³⁰ See Preaud and Brejon de Lavergnée 1988, 146f. no. 189, ill. p. 149.

there was anyone competent at etching in this country. I said it was a form of engraving practiced only by the great masters who sometimes etched their own drawings. I knew Annibale Carracci had etched some of his works, among them the *Samaritan* and one or two of the *Virgin*. The Cavaliere said he doubted that. (October 10, 1665)

Three days later, Bernini actually did pay a visit to Mellan's house — a rare honor, like a visit from the king to Bernini himself.³¹

The authenticity and degree of Bernini's appreciation of Mellan is attested in two other respects. After Mellan left Rome to return to Paris in 1636 Bernini chose another exceptionally gifted Frenchman, François Spierre, as the engraver of his designs for the *Sangue di Cristo* and the frontispieces of the publications the sermons and biblical commentaries of his close friend Giovanni Paolo Oliva, General of the Jesuit order and Apostolic Preacher (preacher to the pope).³² Bernini greatly admired Spierre precisely because, as Filippo Baldinucci reports, he was adept in following Mellan's singular linear technique.

He joined the circle of the Cavalier Bernini, from whom, because he was greatly esteemed, he received commissions for many works, which he would generally execute in a single cut, in the manner of M. Mellan of Paris . . . Bernini . . . had such a great conception of him that he was heard to say, as a qualified professional, that he had no equal in his time.³³

Bernini's admiration for Mellan was based on more than the engraver's style and technical expertise, however. In the 1640's Bernini had created a particular interpretation of the image of Christ at the Last Supper (Fig. 10):³⁴ with locks flowing down to his shoulders, moustache and short, bi-

³¹ October 13, 1665; Chantelou 1985, 296, Chantelou 1885, 232.

³² The frontispieces are discussed in Bernardini and Fagiolo dell'Arco, eds., 1999, 415–18.

³³ Si congiunse a quegli del partito del Cavaliere Bernini, dal quale, siccome fu assai stimato, così ricevè ordini di far molti lavori, i quali poi fu solito condurre per lo più ad una taglia sola, second lo stile di Monsù Melano di Parigi . . . Bernini . . . ebbe sì gran concetto dello Spierre, che fu udito dire da qualificato cavaliere, non averne quel suo tempo un altro eguale. (Baldinucci 1974–5, V, 561.)

³⁴ For a perceptive survey of the typology of Christ in Bernini's work, see Martinelli 1996, 181–231.

furcated beard; wearing a tunic, with drapery thrown like a carapace over the left shoulder; gesturing with the right hand to bless the bread on the table before him, thus initiating the institution of the Eucharist, but also turning the palm against the Judas who recoils on the opposite side of the table at his left.

However he may have become aware of it, Mellan seems to have appropriated Bernini's concept for a work of his own, an engraved bust of Christ inscribed with the artist's name, the date, 1652, and with a phrase from the Psalms adjuring the Lord's saints to adore him: ADORATE DOMINVM OMNES SANCTI EIVS (O worship the LORD, all ye his saints) (Fig. 11).³⁵ The inscription and both texts to which it alludes, enjoin to the observer to adore Christ as do his saints, giving the image a specific eschatological implication that impels the observer from this world toward the next. The head and shoulders are turned diagonal to the picture plane to create a powerful movement directed outward and upward toward the right, culminating in the gesture of the blessing hand. Bernini's appreciation of Mellan takes on particular significance when it is realized that the engraver's version of the blessing Christ transforms the purely ritual nature of the Last Supper relief into a passionate expression of compassionate suffering, and an invocation of divine intervention on behalf of those who risk perdition on the sinister side of the Saviour.

Bernini's understanding of this meaning in Mellan's image explains in part his adaptation of its action for the figure of Christ in his portrayal of the *Multiplication of the Loaves and Fishes* engraved by Spierre for Oliva's commentaries on selected books of the bible, published in 1677 (Fig. 12).³⁶ The key to the meaning of the scene is given in the words from John 6:12 inscribed on the stone (the Cathedra Petri of the Prince of the apostles) on which Christ sits. Having fully nourished the multitude, Jesus instructs his disciples: COLLIGITE [quae superaverunt] FRAGMENTA NE PEREANT (Gather up the fragments [that remain], that nothing be lost.). The subject is therefore not strictly the miracle of the multiplication, but Christ

³⁵ Préaud 1988, 44, No. 17, ill. The text is an amalgam of verses from two psalms: Psalm 95:9: ADORATE DOMINUM in decore sanctuarii paveat a facie eius omnis terra (O worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness: fear before him, all the earth.) and Psalm 30:24: diligite Dominum OMNES SANCTI EIUS fideles servat Dominus et retribuet his qui satis operantur superbiam. (O love the LORD, all ye his saints: for the LORD preserveth the faithful, and plentifully rewardeth the proud doer.)

³⁶ Oliva 1677–79.

directing the apostles to their mission to save the souls of those who have not eaten of the precious food, lest they perish. Oliva's commentaries explaining the meaning of the selected biblical texts were exemplary fulfillments of that mission, as if in accord with Augustine's comment on John's account:

Wherefore nothing is without meaning; everything is significant, but requires one that understands: for even this number of the people fed, signified the people that were under the law . . . And what were those fragments, but things which the people were not able to eat? We understand them to be certain matters of more hidden meaning, which the multitude are not able to take in. What remains then, but that those matters of more hidden meaning, which the multitude cannot take in, be entrusted to men who are fit to teach others also, just as were the apostles?³⁷

It was no accident that Bernini's favorite painter in his late years, Giovanni Battista Gaulli, il Baciccio, in turn adopted the Christ figure from the engraving for his rendering of Christ's conversation with the Samaritan woman at the well (Fig. 13). Offering the woman the life-giving waters from his well that quench thirst forever, Christ points to the city of Samaria, where she takes his message and many of its people were converted. From the earliest Christian times the episode had been understood as referring to the Eucharist, and hence the meaning is essentially the same as that of the Feeding of the Five Thousand.³⁸

John 4: 13–14, 16, 28–30, 39–42:

13 Jesus answered and said unto her, Whosoever drinketh of this water

³⁷ The relationship of the frontispiece to Oliva's text was noted by Tedaldi in *Pittura* 1999, 141f. Augustine, *On the Gospel of St. John*, Treatise 24, 6 (Augustine 1888, 159).

Nihil igitur vacat, omnia innuunt, sed intellectorem requirunt: nam et iste numerus pasti populi, populum significabat sub Lege constitutum. . . . Quae sunt autem illa fragmenta, nisi quae populus non potuit manducare? Intelliguntur ergo quaedam secretiora intelligentiae, quae multitudo non potest capere. Quid ergo restat, nisi ut secretiora intelligentiae, quae non potest capere multitudo, illis credantur qui idonei sunt et alios docere, sicut erant Apostoli? (Migne 1844–77, Vol. 35, col. 1595).

³⁸ It is noteworthy that this commanding Christ-type appears again in Baciccio's depiction of Christ in the House of Simon at Burghley House (as noted by Silvia Bruno in Bernardini and Fagiolo dell'Arco, eds., 1999, 440 f.). The Eucharistic implication is the

shall thirst again: 14 But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life . . . 16 Jesus saith unto her, Go, call thy husband, and come hither . . . 28 The woman then left her waterpot, and went her way into the city, and saith to the men, 29 Come, see a man, which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ? 30 Then they went out . . . 39 And many of the Samaritans of that city believed on him for the saying of the woman, which testified, He told me all that ever I did. 40 So when the Samaritans were come unto him, they besought him that he would tarry with them: and he abode there two days. 41 And many more believed because of his own word; 42 And said unto the woman, Now we believe, not because of thy saying: for we have heard him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world.

During these years Baciccio was hard at work on the massive fresco decoration of the Gesù, largely under the tutelage of Bernini and the patronage of Oliva.

Everything we know about Bernini in general and about his preparations for death in particular suggest that he saw himself in exactly the same kind of missionary role as an artist that Oliva had as Jesuit preacher and scriptural exegete. Oliva himself said as much concerning Bernini's theological concern and acumen: 'discourse with the Cavaliere on spiritual matters was a professional challenge, like going to a thesis defense.'³⁹

It seems clear that the image of the 'other-directed' Christ focused on the Eucharist became emblematic of Bernini's sense of his mission, both private

same. Christ gestures protectively to the Magdalene who anoints his foot, in explicit anticipation of her act of devotion at the Lamentation:

And Jesus said, Let her alone; why trouble ye her? she hath wrought a good work on me. . . . She hath done what she could: she is come aforehand to anoint my body to the burying. (Mark 14:6,8).

This picture is in fact a pendant to Baciccio's *Three Maries at the Sepulcher* in the Fitzwilliam Museum. See Brigstocke and Somerville 1995, 72 f.; Weston-Lewis, ed., 1998, 260 f. (where the Burghley House painting is reproduced in reverse).

³⁹ E come che ei fu solito, molti, e molti anni prima di sua morte trattarsi spessissimo in continui discorsi con dotti, e singolari Religiosi, tanto s'infiammava in questi sentimenti, e tanto alto ascendeva la sottigliezza del suo ingegno, che ne stupivano queglii, come un'huomo, per altro dedito alle lettere, potesse molte volte non solo giungere alla penetrazione più intima di altissimi Misterii, mà motivarne dubbii, e renderne ragioni, come se sua vita con

and public. And as such, it played an important role in the genesis of the third work, his very last, that Bernini created in pursuit of a 'good death' in the tradition of the *Ars moriendi*: a marble bust of the Savior, begun the year before his death in 1680 (Fig. 14). The original of this famous, quasi-iconic image, known from preparatory studies and many replicas and variants, was long lost. The biographers report that Bernini left the sculpture to his friend Queen Christina of Sweden, as a token of their mutual esteem. It was noted in Queen Christina's palace by Nicodemus Tessin, Jr. on his visit to Rome in 1687–88. When Christina died in 1689 she left the bust to Pope Innocent XI Odescalchi (1676–89), and it is last recorded in a 1713 inventory of the Palazzo Odescalchi. The sculpture, including the Sicilian jasper base recorded in the inventory, recently came to light in the sacristy of the chapel of Pope Clement XI Albani (1700–21), in San Sebastiano fuori le mura.⁴⁰

An astonishingly innovative work, the Savior is portrayed in the heroic manner of ancient, deific portrait busts, rounded at the bottom, hollowed at the back, and raised on a base. The body is shown waist length with both arms included, but with the drapery so arranged as to dissimulate the amputation of the torso and 'hide' the left hand.⁴¹ Christ's body seems to continue beyond and within its physical limits. The massive figure was up-

dotta avesse nelle Scuole. Diceva il P. Gio. Paolo Oliva Generale della Compagnia di Gesù, che *Nel discorrere col Cavaliere di cose spirituali gli faceva di mestiere di un'attenzione tale, come se andar dovesse ad una Conclusione.* (Bernini 1713, 171.)

(He was wont for many, many years before his death often to discourse at length with learned and singular priests; he became so inflamed with these ideas and the subtlety of his thought ascended so high, they were amazed how a man who was not even a scholar could often not only penetrate the loftiest mysteries, but also propose questions and provide answers concerning them, as if he had spent his life in the Schools. Father Giovanni Paolo Oliva, General of the Company of Jesus, said that 'discourse with the Cavaliere on spiritual matters was a professional challenge, like going to a thesis defense'.)

⁴⁰ Cucco 2001, 119, where the connection with Bernini was overlooked; Fagiolo dell'Arco 2002, 71, where it is described as 'attributed' to Bernini.

⁴¹ Bernini's two-armed Christ may have a precedent in a bust of the Savior by Agnolo Poli, dated 1498, in the Museo Civico in Pistoia, which includes the arms in comparable gestures; but both arms are later restorations. (Morello and Gerhard Wolf, eds., 2000, 242 f.)

Bernini had employed such dissimulating drapery before, in the busts of Francesco I d'Este and Louis XIV; there, however, fluttering swaths had served as 'flying carpets' to carry aloft the cuirassed busts of the monarchs, whereas here the magical drapery is also Christ's own garment.

lifted at the base on the extended hands of two angels of gilt wood, kneeling on a high podium, also of gilt wood. Overall, the monument stood some three meters high, a miraculous, superhuman vision presented to the viewer by a pair of divine messengers.

Although profoundly indebted to Mellan's image, Bernini's Savior is more sublime than pathetic in conception. The torso is frontal and the right hand blesses, in the manner traditional with bust-length images of the Salvator Mundi, and the figure is comparatively exalted, even austere. On the other hand, there is no overt reference to the theme of world dominion, such as the globe surmounted by a cross frequently carried by the Salvator Mundi. Instead of Mellan's uni-directional, diagonal thrust, Christ's head is turned to the right and slightly upward, while the right arm reaches across the chest in a gesture that echoes Christ's action in the narrative reference to the Eucharist in the Oliva engraving. The result is a powerful *contrapposto* that is, to my knowledge, unprecedented in an isolated image of the Savior.

The thick, voluminous, enveloping drapery seems almost literally to materialize Bernini's luminous metaphor of Christ's humanity as the shielding garment that would assure the sinner's pardon. Christ's visage is a distant reflection of the inscrutable justice decreed by his father from on high. The beneficent, shielding gesture of the Savior's right hand abhors the sinister threat from his lower left. At the center, half-hidden under the drapery, Christ's left hand presses to his chest in allusion to the wound of Longinus, the wound of the Eucharist — the gesture he makes when he is shown appealing to his Father in depictions of intercession, and when he acts as executant of the divine will at the Last Judgment.⁴² It is clear that Bernini's chiasmic image is a deliberate conflation of the three traditionally distinct aspects of Christ's nature, savior, intercessor, and judge.

The ultimate principle of this triune salvific process is alluded to in the central gesture of the partially hidden left hand. Precisely analogous to the mysterious presence of the Holy Spirit, the central person in the Trinity, in the *Sangue di Cristo*, it refers to the quintessential paradox of the *Deus*

⁴² For an instance of the former see Filippino Lippi's *Intercession of Christ and the Virgin* mentioned in n. 26 above; for the latter, Michelangelo's Christ in the *Last Judgment*.

absconditus whom those who have eyes to see may recognize in the sacrament to which every altar is devoted.

Aftermath

Although there is no trace of Bernini's bust of the Savior after 1713 until it reappeared two years ago, it had a considerable legacy following his death.⁴³ Beginning a decade later it became the model for the next generation of sculptors who in the 1690s were charged with executing a series of reliefs based on Bernini's bust, which had been adopted as the insignium of a vast charitable enterprise instituted by the great reforming pope Innocent XII (Fig. 15). The Apostolic Hospice of the Invalid Poor was an extraordinary invention, intended to concentrate all the manifold philanthropies of Rome in one universal institution intended to gather together and provide for the physical and spiritual needs of all the city's homeless poor. The reliefs of the Saviour were placed on the facades of various buildings throughout the city to indicate to one and all that income from those properties was ascribed to the hospital by the donors, among them the pope himself. Inaugurated in 1692, the project was supposed to become self-supporting over time, but despite much effort and large investments it proved financially unsustainable. There were also objections in principle to the idea of depriving the indigent of his freedom, depriving the mendicant of his God-given right to invoke charity, and depriving the donor of his opportunity to disperse his charity as he wished. The Hospice failed within a few years. It was, however, the direct forerunner and inspiration for still larger poorhouses and social welfare programs that have continued, often struggling with the same problems, to the present day.

Bernini was linked in two ways to the Hospice enterprise, which had been promoted for decades by leading social reformers from the Oratorian order. The man who formulated the final project and became its administrator was none other than the artist's beloved nephew, Father Francesco Marchese. Marchese had had a distinguished intellectual and ecclesiastical career since the time of the *Sangue di Cristo*, becoming Apostolic Preacher to Innocent XI in 1676. Profoundly aware of its significance and pertinence to the institution's mission, Marchese was no doubt instrumental in the adoption of Bernini's image as the Hospice's emblem. The later institutions

⁴³ For what follows here see Lavin 1998 and 2001b.

inspired by the Hospice were still larger and more ambitious, but they were certainly not grander: Innocent XII designated to house the homeless no less than his own, then unoccupied, official residence as the bishop of Rome, the palace at the cathedral church of San Giovanni in Laterano. The choice was not only a demonstration of the pope's social concerns, it was also providential, iconographically speaking. Images of Christ preserved at the Lateran, reputed to be authentic, miraculous records of the Savior's features, were among the most renowned and venerated in all Christendom — so venerable that Bernini may have intended to evoke them in any case. But he was also linked to the hospice project directly at its very inception, having been charged as early as 1676 by Innocent XI to restore the Lateran palace to that purpose. For all these reasons, and considering the grandiose scale and triumphal presentation of the bust-monument, I suspect that Bernini from the outset had the Hospice in mind and the prospect of an eventual permanent installation in the Lateran palace — as the artist's own ultimate act of charity, in imitation of Christ.

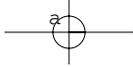
Domenico Bernini reports that his father left to Innocent XI a painting by Baciccio representing Bernini's sculpture of the Savior.⁴⁴ A splendid, recently rediscovered painting by Baciccio is closely related to Bernini's last work, although it is certainly not a copy of the sculpture (Fig. 16).⁴⁵ The composition amply displays Baciccio's remarkable talent and inventiveness within the framework established by his mentor,⁴⁶ and is remarkable in our context for two reasons. With the head and the benedictional gesture of the right hand turned toward the right, Baciccio clearly reprises, in reverse, the uni-directional action and emotional intensity of the image by Mellan that had inspired Bernini. At the same time, Baciccio adopts and transposes the essential meaning of Bernini's *contrapposto*. Christ looks up in an ecstatic appeal to his Father, as he often does expiring on the cross; with his left hand he becomes the *Salvator Mundi* displaying the cross as he mounts it

⁴⁴ Bernini 1713,176:

In Testamento lasciò al Papa un bellissimo Quadro di mano di Gio: Battista Gaulli rappresentante il Salvatore, sua ultima opera in Marmo.

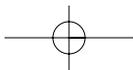
⁴⁵ On Baciccio's *Salvator Mundi*, see the entry by Cecilia Grilli in Fagiolo dell'Arco, *et al.*, eds., 1999, 208 f., no. 49 ('last years of the seventeenth century').

⁴⁶ This is also the attitude of Tedaldi 1996, who goes so far as to reverse the relationship, and Petrucci in Fagiolo dell'Arco, *et al.*, eds., 1999, 59–68.



1082

atop the globe. In adapting Bernini's creation, Baciccio has, in effect created a new theme, in which Christ appears as both intercessor pleading with his Father on behalf of humanity, and as savior of the world by virtue of his sacrifice.



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