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Bernini's Death

Irving Lavin

A remarkable picture of Bernini's death emerges from the biographies by Filippo Baldinucci and the artist's son, Domenico. They mention two works of art in this connection. One is Bernini's *Sangue di Cristo* composition engraved by François Spierre, which can be dated to the year 1670 (Fig. 1). The Crucified Christ is shown with the Virgin, God the Father and a host of angels, suspended above a sea formed by the blood pouring from His wounds. Two texts referring to the blood of Christ are inscribed at the bottom of the print, one from Paul's Epistle to the Hebrews, "The blood of Christ, who offered himself without spot to God, will purge our conscience," the other from St. Maria Maddalena de' Pazzi, "I offer you, eternal Father, the blood of the incarnate word; and if anything is wanting in me I offer it to you, Mary, that you may present it to the eternal Trinity." The second work is a bust of the Savior, the last sculpture by Bernini's hand. He began it in his eightieth year, in 1679, and willed it to his friend and patron, Queen Christina of Sweden (cf. Figs. 9–14). It was more than life-size (103cm high) and represented Christ with His right hand slightly raised, as if in the act of blessing. Bernini evidently attached particular importance to "this divine simulacrum," which he called his "favorite" and to which he devoted "all the forces of his Christian piety and of art itself"; in the *Savior* he "summed up and concentrated all his art." Although technically weak, it demonstrated for him the triumph of "disegno" over the physical depredations of old age. Both works were regarded by contemporaries as extraordinary achievements, even for Bernini, and fitting capstones to the artist's extraordinary career.

No less impressive than these creations, however, was the manner of Bernini's passing – not the fatal illness as such, normal for an octogenarian, but the way in which he approached his own end. His attitude toward dying, his thoughts and actions in preparation for it, which only culminated during his final weeks, led Baldinucci to remark that Bernini's death seemed truly like his life. This may be simply a biographer's banal protestation of his hero's Christian piety. Yet the aptness of Baldinucci's comments



2 *The Death of Moriens*, woodcut from *Dell'arte del ben morire*, Naples, 1591. New York Public Library

about Bernini's life and art in other contexts suggests that he perceived something more in his subject's demise.

The purpose of the present essay is to demonstrate that Baldinucci's perception was indeed correct. Bernini's death was in more than the usual sense like his life; it was, in fact, a kind of artwork, diligently prepared and carefully executed to achieve the desired effect. The *Sangue di Cristo* and the bust of the Savior were not simply pious works by an old man of genius and faith, but were intended to illustrate specific aspects of Bernini's art of dying. His preparations for death and the works he made in anticipation of it may thus be understood as intimately related and mutually illuminating parts of his artistic legacy.

Since various details of Baldinucci's and Domenico Bernini's descriptions will be referred to subsequently they are printed here together, in translation:¹

¹ The translation from F. Baldinucci, *Vita del Cavaliere Gio. Lorenzo Bernini*, Florence, 1682, ed. S. S. Ludovici, Milan, 1948, 132, 134–37, is taken with slight modifications from that of C. Enggass, *The Life of Bernini by Filippo Baldinucci*, University Park, Pa., and London, 1966, 66f. 68–72; the translation from D. Bernini, *Vita del Cav. Giovan. Lorenzo Bernino*, Rome, 1713, 167, 169–77, is my own. See also S. Frascetti, *Il Bernini*, Milan, 1900, 422ff., who summarizes Bernini's testament and an inventory of his possessions. Some further notices are in V. Martinelli, "Novità berniniane. 3. Le sculture per gli Altieri," *Commentari*, x, 1959, 224ff. The Bernini family tomb slab in Santa Maria Maggiore (of later date since the arms bear a crown of nobility), and what is evidently the artist's sword of knighthood, found in the tomb in 1931, are reproduced in C. D'Onofrio, *Roma vista da Roma*, Rome, 1967, figs. 69, 135.

We may add the following: "Venerdì 15 di Novembre il Cavaliere Bernino fù soprafatto da morbo apoplectico, e perciò fù subito communi-

cato, e si mandò a prendere la Benedizione dal sommo Pontefice: dicono essere nell'età di ottantatre anni"; "Il Cavaliere Bernino tuttavia vive, ma à giorni, ò siano hore." "Giovedì 28 di Novembre passò all'altra vita il medesimo Cavalier Bernino e fù poi esposto solennemente nella Basilica Liberiana, nella quale Monsig.r suo figlio è Canonico, essendo stato esposto con 60 torcie. Dicono ascendere il suo avere à seicento, e più mila scudi" (Rome, Archivio di Stato, Carte Cartari Febeo, busta 87, fols. 273v, 267v f.); "Qui è anco passato all'altra vita di Indispos.ne di febre il sr. Cav.re Gio. Lorenzo Bernino famoso scultore, et Architetto sepolto nella Basilica di S. Maria Mag.re con superbo funerale, et ha lasciato Herede con Institutione di Primog.ra il Sig.r Paolo Bernino suo figliolo, e grossi legati à Mons.r Bernino, et altri suoi figli e fig. le e varij Busti, e statue sue alla M.tà della Reg.a di Suetia, et al S.r Card.l Altieri oltre li leg.i Pij ascendenti le sue facolta a sopra 300^m scudi" (Rome, Bibl. Corsini, *Avvisi*, vol. 1755, 38. C. 2, fol. 123r, November 30, 1680).



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1 Gianlorenzo Bernini, *Sanguis Christi*, engraving by F. Spierre, 473 × 290mm, frontispiece of F. Marchese, *Unica speranza del peccatore*, Rome, 1670. Vatican Library

Filippo Baldinucci

Bernini was already in the eightieth year of his life. For some time past he had been turning his most intense thoughts to attaining eternal repose rather than to increasing his earthly glory. Also, deep within his heart was the desire to offer, before closing his eyes to this life, some sign of gratitude to Her Majesty the Queen of Sweden, his most special patron. In order, therefore, to penetrate more deeply into the first concept and to prepare himself better for the second, he set to work with the greatest intensity to create in marble a half-length figure, larger than life-size of Our Savior Jesus Christ.

This is the work that he said was his favorite² and it was the last given the world by his hand. He meant it as a gift for the monarch, but in this intention he was unsuccessful. The Queen's opinion of, and esteem for, the statue was so great that, not finding herself in circumstances in which it was possible to give a comparable gift in exchange, she chose to reject it rather than fail in the slightest degree to equal the royal magnificence of her intention. Bernini, therefore, as we will relate in the proper place, had to leave it to her in his will. In this divine simulacrum he put all the forces of his Christian piety and of art itself. In it he proved the truth of his familiar axiom, that the artist with a truly strong foundation in design need fear no diminution of vitality and tenderness, or other good qualities in his technique when he reaches old age; for thanks to this sureness in design, he is able to make up fully for those defects of the spirits, which tend to petrify under the weight of years. This, he said, he had observed in other artists. . . .

And while the city of Rome was preparing to acclaim him on the propitious outcome of the restoration and strengthening of the palace [the Palazzo della Cancelleria], Bernini had already begun to lose sleep, and his strength and spirits were at such a low ebb that within a brief time he was brought to the end of his days.

But before speaking of his last illness and death, which to our eyes truly seemed like his life, we should here mention that, although it may be that up until his fortieth year, the age at which he married, Cavalier Bernini had some youthful romantic entanglements without, however, creating any impediment to his studies of the arts or prejudicing in any way that which the world calls prudence, we may truthfully say that his marriage not only put an end to this way of living, but that from that hour he began to behave more like a cleric than a layman. So spiritual was his way of life that, according to what was reported to me by those who know, he might often have been worthy of the admiration of the most perfect monastics. 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 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.

His time then came; I do not know whether I should say expected because of his great loss of strength or because of his yearning for the eternal repose that he had so long desired. He was ill of a slow fever followed at the end by an attack of apoplexy which

Domenico Bernini

But by now near death and at the decrepit age of eighty, the Cavaliere wished to illustrate his life and bring to a close his practice of the profession he had conducted so well till then, by creating a work with which a man would be happy to end his days. This was the image of our Savior in half figure, but larger than life-size, with the right hand slightly raised in the act of blessing. In it he summarized and condensed all his art; and although the weakness of his wrist did not correspond to the boldness of the idea, yet he succeeded in proving what he used to say, that "an artist excellent in design should not fear any want of vivacity or tenderness on reaching the age of decrepitude, because ability in design is so effective that it alone can make up for the defect of the spirits, which languish in old age." He destined this work for the very meritorious Queen of Sweden who, being unable to compensate its value, chose rather to refuse it than descend from her royal beneficence. But she was constrained to accept it two years later, when the Cavaliere left it to her as a legacy. . . .

Before beginning our narration it is well to turn back the discourse somewhat, and demonstrate how singular the goodness of life was in the Cavaliere Bernini, and with what union of Christian maxims he rendered notable the many beautiful gifts of his soul. He was a man of elevated spirit who always aspired to the great, not resting even at the great if he did not reach the greatest; this same nature carried him to such a sublimity of ideas in matters of devotion that, not content with the ordinary routes, he applied himself to those which are, so to speak, the shortcut to reach heaven. Whence he said that "in rendering account of his operations he would have to deal with a Lord who, infinite and superlative in his attributes, would not be concerned with half-pennies, as they say"; 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. 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." Nor did he nurture these noble thoughts in his soul without fruit, but he continually practiced virtue with solid works. For the space of forty years he frequented every Friday the devotion of the good death in the Church of the Gesù, where he often received Holy Communion at least once a week. For the same long space of time, each day after finishing his labors he visited that Church, where the Holy Sacrament was exposed, and left copious alms for the poor. Besides giving many dowries to poor unmarried girls during the year, he always contributed one on Assumption Day, and obligated his children to six more in his will. To gain merit by avoiding gratitude he even distributed copious alms through one of his servants, with the obligation

² Bernini's use of the term "beniamino" may have been a play on the meaning of the Hebrew name "of the right hand."

took his life. Throughout it all he was very patient and resigned to the Divine Will. Nor did he as a rule converse about anything but his trust in it. His words were so striking that those in attendance, among whom Cardinal Azzolino did not disdain to find himself often, marveled greatly at the concepts that divine love suggested to him. Among these the following is worthy of remembrance. He urgently implored Cardinal Azzolino to supplicate Her Majesty the Queen to make an act of love to God on his behalf. He thought, as he said, that that great lady had a special language which God understood, while God used a language with her that she alone could understand.

The thought of that final step which was always present in his life had suggested to Bernini many years before his death the idea of asking Father Marchesi to assist him at his deathbed in all that he had to recall at that time. And since he feared that in the final extremity he might not be able to use his voice, which did in fact happen, he wished to be able to communicate with Father Marchesi by certain gestures and external motions which he had worked out to express the innermost feelings of his heart. It was a marvelous thing that, although Bernini could speak only brokenly during his illness as a result of the inflammation in his head, and that later, as a consequence of the new attack, he lost almost all power of speech, Father Marchesi always understood him. He gave such suitable replies to his proposals that they sufficed to lead him with admirable calm to his end.

Bernini's last breath was drawing near when he made a sign to Mattia de' Rossi and Giovan Battista Contini, his architectural assistants. Speaking as well as he was able, he said jokingly, while pointing to a precision instrument adapted to pulling heavy weights, that he was surprised that their invention would not serve to draw the catarrh from his throat. When his confessor asked about his soul's state of calm and whether he was fearful, he replied, "Father, I must render account to a Lord who in His goodness, does not count in half-pennies." Later because of the apoplexy his right arm and whole right side were paralyzed and he said, "It is good that this arm which has so wearied itself in life should rest a bit before death."

Meanwhile, Rome wept at her great loss. Bernini's house was filled by a continual flow of men of high rank and people of every station seeking news and wishing to visit him at the end. Her Majesty the Queen of Sweden, many cardinals, and ambassadors of princes came or sent messages at least twice a day. Finally, His Holiness sent his benediction, after which, at the beginning of the twenty-eighth day of the month of November of the year 1680, at about midnight, after fifteen days of illness, Bernini went to that other life. He was eighty-two years old less nine days.

In his will Bernini left His Holiness the Pope a large painting of Christ by his own hand. To Her Majesty the Queen of Sweden he left the beautiful marble image of the Savior, the last work by his hand, of which we have spoken; to the Most Eminent Cardinal Altieri, a marble bust-length portrait of Clement; to the Most Eminent Cardinal Azzolino, his most kind protector, a similar bust of Innocent X, his supporter. Not having anything else in marble he left Cardinal Rospigliosi a painting by his own hand. He most strictly enjoined that his beautiful statue of Truth be left in his own house. It is the only work by his chisel that remains the property of his children.

It would take too long to tell of the sorrow that such a loss brought to all Rome. I will only say that Her Majesty the Queen, whose sublime intellect knew through long experience the subtle gifts of so great a man, paid extraordinary tribute to him. It seemed to her that with Bernini's death the world had lost the only begotten child of virtue in our century. On the day of Bernini's death the Pope sent a noble gift to that Queen by means of his privy chamberlain. The Queen asked the chamberlain what was being said in Rome concerning the estate left by Bernini. When she learned that it was worth about four hundred thousand scudi, she said, "I would be ashamed if he had served me and had left so little."

The pomp with which the body of our artist was borne to the church of Santa Maria Maggiore where his family had their burial place, corresponded to the dignity of the deceased and the capa-

not to reveal the benefactor. Although the practice of philanthropy was, so to speak, born and raised with him, yet in the last years of his life he took it so much to heart that, not considering himself sufficiently able to find the poor, he gave charge, and funds, to many religious to pass on the aid. And because he loved secrecy in such works, we may judge that he made many more of them than we have notice of. From some notices he kept in a volume of household finances we learn that, having three months before his death placed two thousand scudi in a prayer-stool, only two hundred were later found there; he ordered his children also to use these in a pious work, with clear indication that what remained was to make a similar exit. In a letter written from Paris he orders his son, the Monsignore, to double the amount of alms he had left instructions to give "because God is a Lord who will not be won over with courtesy." Often during the year he took his family to some hospital, where he wanted his small children to follow his example in comforting the sick, presenting them with various confections he kept ready for the purpose. It was an amazing thing for a man employed in so many important occupations devoutly to hear Mass every morning, to visit the Holy Sacrament every day, to recite every evening on his knees the Crown and Office of the Madonna, and the seven Penitential Psalms, a custom he constantly maintained until his death. When he then saw himself approaching death he thought of and discussed nothing else than this passing; not with bitterness and horror, as is usual with the aged, but with incomparable constancy of spirit and using his memory in preparation for doing it well. To this end he had continuous conferences with Father Francesco Marchese, priest of the Oratorio of San Filippo Neri in the Chiesa Nuova at Rome, son of his sister Beatrice Bernini, a person venerable for the goodness of his life and noteworthy for his doctrine, of whom the Cavalier availed himself to assist at his death. And he said, "that step was difficult for everyone because everyone took it for the first time"; hence he often imagined himself to die, in order by this exercise to habituate and dispose himself to the real struggle. In this state he wanted Father Marchese to suggest to him all those acts usually proposed to the moribund, and doing them he arrived, as if in preparation, at that great point. Assuming also that, as is usual, words would fail him at the extremity of life, and he would suffer the anguish of one who cannot make himself understood, they worked out a special way in which he could be understood without speaking. With such precautions, with his soul completely reinforced, he finally reached the proof.

We have already said how debilitated and strained he was left from undertaking the restoration of the Palazzo della Cancelleria. Whence he finally fell ill with a slow fever, to which was added at the end an attack of apoplexy that took his life. Through the whole course of the illness, which lasted fifteen days, he wanted a sort of altar set up at the foot of his bed, on which he had displayed the picture of the Blood of Jesus Christ. What were the colloquies he held now with Father Marchese, now with other religious who stood by, concerning the efficacy of the most precious Blood and the confidence he had in it, can rather be conjectured than reported. For none of those present could help bursting into tears on hearing with what firmness of sentiments he then spoke, of whom neither the burden of age and sickness, nor powerful enemies, had been able to obfuscate that clarity of intellect which always maintained itself equal and great in him to the last breath of his life. Realizing that he could no longer move his right arm because of the aforementioned attack of apoplexy, he said, "it is only right that even before death that arm rest a little which worked so much in life." To Cardinal Azzolino, who honored him with several visits in those days, he said one evening that "he should implore in his name Her Majesty the Queen to do an act of love of God for him, because he believed that that great Lady had a special language with God to be well understood, while God had used with her a language which she alone was capable of understanding." The Cardinal did his bidding, and received from the Queen the following note.

"I beg you to tell the Cavaliere Bernini for me that I promise to use all my powers to do what he desires of me, on condition that he promises to pray God for me and for you, to concede us the grace

bilities and love of his children, who ordered a most noble funeral and distributed both candles and alms on a grand scale. The talents and pens of the learned were exhausted in the composition of eulogies, sonnets, lyric poems, erudite verses in Latin, and the most ingenious vernacular poetry was written in praise of Bernini and publicly exhibited. All the Roman nobility and the ultramontane nobility then in the city gathered together. There was, in short, a crowd so numerous that it was necessary to postpone somewhat the time for the interment of the body. Bernini was buried in a lead coffin in the previously mentioned tomb, with a record of his name and person.

of His perfect love, so that one day we may all be together with the joy of love, and enjoy God forever. And tell him that I have already served him to the best of my ability, and that I will continue."

Meanwhile his house was a continuous flux and reflux of the most conspicuous personages of Rome; they came or sent word, with sentiment no less distinguished from the common convention, than was distinct and particular in each of them his esteem and regret to lose so great a man. Finally speech failed him, and because he felt exceedingly pressed by the catarrh, he made a sign to the Cavaliere Mattia de Rossi and to Giovanni Battista Contini, who, together with Giulio Cartari and all his pupils stayed always by his bed, as if amazed that they could not recall a method of drawing the catarrh from his breast; and with his left hand he strained to represent to them an instrument designed to lift exceptional weights. As he had agreed with Father Marchese before taking ill on the method of making himself understood without speaking, it astonished everyone how well he made himself understood with only the movement of his left hand and eyes – a clear sign of that great vivacity of spirits, which did not yield even though life withdrew. Two hours before passing he gave the benediction to all his children, of whom, as has been said, he left four boys and five girls. Finally, having received the blessing of the Pope, who sent it through one of his chamberlains, early on the twenty-eighth day of November of the year 1680, the eighty-second of his life, he expired. The great man died as he had lived leaving it doubtful whether his life was more admirable in deeds or his death more commendable in devotion.

In his testament he left the Pope a most beautiful picture by Giovanni Battista Gaulli representing the Savior, his last work in marble; to the Queen, the *Savior* itself by his hand; to Cardinal Altieri, the portrait of Clement X; to Cardinal Azzolino that of Innocent X; and to Cardinal Giacomo Rospigliosi a picture also by his hand, having nothing else at home in marble other than the *Truth*, which he left in perpetuity to his descendants.

Mourning for the loss of this man was universal in the city of Rome, which recognized its majesty greatly enhanced by his indefatigable labors; and as was his life so also was his death the subject of many ingenious compositions at the Academies. The following day, when the Pope sent a gift to the Queen, she asked the chamberlain, "What was being said concerning the legacy of the Cavaliere Bernini?" And having received the reply, "About four hundred thousand scudi," she added, "I would be ashamed if he had served me and left so little."

His body was exposed with pomp in the Basilica of Santa Maria Maggiore, with a funeral, distribution of wax, and charities to the poor; attendance was so great that the burial was postponed till the following day. He had already prepared the tomb for himself and his family in that church, and he was placed in it in a lead box, with an inscription giving his name and the day of his death.

Two major themes stand out in the biographer's accounts, the devotions concerned with death sponsored by the Jesuits, and the ministrations of the artist's nephew, the Oratorian priest Francesco Marchese. We shall first consider these factors in relation to Bernini's death and the *Sangue di Cristo* composition, and then discuss the bust of the Savior.

1. The *Ars Moriendi* and the *Sangue di Cristo*

Bernini and the Jesuit "Ars Moriendi"

The idea of preparing for death received the widest possible currency in the late fifteenth century through the *Ars Moriendi*. This was one of the most popular publications of the period, reprinted throughout Europe in dozens of editions, translations and adaptations.³ It was specifically an instruction manual in the "art" ("crafte" or "cunnyng," as it was often rendered in English) of dying well, that is, the method of achieving salvation during the final hours of life. In its extended version, the only one used in Italy, the work is divided into six parts.⁴ The first is a commendation of death in which the reader is urged, when the time comes, to give up willingly and gladly, without any grudging or contradiction. Part 2, the real core of the work, is devoted to the wily temptations used by the devil in his ultimate struggle with God for the soul of the dying man, and the countering responses offered by *moriens's* guardian angel. The essential character of the book, which was determined by its divulgatory purpose, lies in the relation between the text and the pictures in this and the following section. The five temptations (against Faith, to Despair, Impatience, Vainglory and Avarice) and the responses to them, are each described and illustrated in a woodcut, in which *moriens* is shown on his deathbed alternately beset by devils and rescued by angels. Part 3 is devoted to the Interrogations, a series of questions posed to the dying man which, answered rightly, will help to assure his salvation. This section is accompanied by an eleventh woodcut showing the death scene, with the soul of the deceased received by his guardian angel (Fig. 2).⁵ Text and illustrations thus proceed *pari passu*, and are independent of yet complementary to one another. Part 4 contains an Instruction to the dying man, which is that he should take Christ's death on the Cross as his model. Part 5 gives instructions to those present, such as not to deceive *moriens* with false assurances of his recovery, or to give precedence to medical over spiritual aid in their ministrations. The dying man must also have before him holy images, especially the Crucified Christ and the Virgin. Chapter 6 provides prayers to be said by a faithful friend.

It is evident that Bernini's death was in many respects a literal enactment of the *Ars Moriendi*. His prodigal charities, which displayed his ultimate disdain for the things of this world; his patient, indeed willing acceptance of the inevitable; the very scene of the end conjured up by the biographers' accounts – including the pious image by his bed and

the colloquies with Father Marchese – all seem to fulfill the recommendations of the *Ars Moriendi*. The imagery of the *Sangue di Cristo* composition, the Crucifixion with the Virgin Mary and the angels, especially the guardian angel, recalls that of the early illustrations. Even the use of a special sign language to communicate without speech belongs in this context, since its purpose no doubt was to enable Bernini to respond to the crucial interrogations.⁶

To find an echo of the *Ars Moriendi* in the late seventeenth century is in itself remarkable since the impetus of the original work in Italy was by then long spent, although it was never forgotten. But no less significant are the differences in Bernini's death from that envisaged in the *Ars Moriendi*: style in the Art of Dying Well had changed considerably. Some of these differences were personal to Bernini, while others reflect more general developments in the *Ars Moriendi* tradition.

Apart from editions of the *Ars Moriendi* itself, a number of Italian works of the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, for which it served more or less directly as the model, give a measure of its immediate influence.⁷ Such, for example, are the *De modo bene moriendi* written about 1480 by Pietro Barozzi, Bishop of Padua and chancellor of the university there, published in Venice in 1531, and the *Dottrina del ben morire* by one Pietro di Lucca, published at Venice in 1515.⁸ The intimate connection between text and pictures that characterized the original *Ars Moriendi* determined the very structure of its most famous emulation in Italy, the sermon preached in Florence by Savonarola on All Souls' Day in 1496, published afterwards with the title *Predica dell'arte del ben morire*.⁹ The sermon develops around three images, illustrated as woodcuts in the published editions, which Savonarola exhorted his listeners to have painted for themselves. The first of these is a reminder of the Last Judgment, a grandiose composition representing Heaven and Hell, which the still-healthy listener was urged to keep in his room and look at frequently, while he thought of death and said to himself, "I might die today." The second picture shows the man sick in bed, with death as a skeleton knocking at his door. The third scene shows the man now on the point of death, with the skeleton seated at the foot of his bed.

A common tendency may be discerned in these treatises. Savonarola is concerned not only with death as such and the immediate preparations for it, but also with the healthy

³ In general, cf. A. Tenenti, *Il senso della morte e l'amore della vita nel Rinascimento*, Turin, 1957, 80ff. In particular, M. C. O'Connor, *The Art of Dying Well*, New York, 1942, with an exhaustive list of manuscripts and editions; R. Rudolf, *Ars Moriendi*, Cologne, 1957. For a recent discussion of the early illustrations, see H. Zerner, "L'art au morier," *Revue de l'art*, XI, 1971, 7–30.

⁴ O'Connor, *Art of Dying Well*, 157, n. 313.

⁵ Reproduced from *Dell'arte del ben morire... Opera... rivista... e... corretta... da Tomaso Costo...*, Naples, 1591; the latest illustrated Italian edition I have found is *L'arte del ben morire*, Rome, 1596.

⁶ Also known as "Anselm's questions" (cf. J. P. Migne, *Patrologiae cursus completus*, Paris, 1844ff., *Serius latina*, CLVIII, cols. 685ff.), the interroga-

tions had been a standard part of the ritual of death until they were omitted in the official *Ritual Romanum* of 1614; but they continued to be popular (e.g., V. Auruccio, *Rituario per quelli, che havendo cura d'anime...*, Rome, 1615, 49ff., reprinted 1619, 1624, 1625), and O'Connor, *Art of Dying Well*, 31ff., esp. 35, records a number of instances of their use into the 19th century.

⁷ For what follows, see *ibid.*, 172ff., and Tenenti, *Senso della morte*, 112ff., 330ff.

⁸ On Barozzi, cf. *Dizionario biografico degli italiani*, Rome, 1960ff., VI, 510ff.

⁹ M. Ferrara, *Savonarola*, 2 vols., Florence, 1952, II, 66ff. For the text, cf. *Girolamo Savonarola. Prediche sopra Ruth e Michea*, 2 vols., ed. V. Romano, Rome, 1962, II, 362ff.

man, to whom his first image is directed. The same concern is evident in the works of Pietro Barozzi and Pietro di Lucca. Thus the Art of Dying was extended into a life-long process, and contemplation of death and preparation for it became in themselves a kind of art of living well. In the course of the sixteenth century the literature devoted to the art of dying diminished, and ultimately almost disappeared.¹⁰ In the early seventeenth century, however, there was a great revival of interest in the theme, which centered at Rome in the Jesuit order.¹¹ Two factors were particularly significant in this revival, both of which incorporate the tendency to extend the preparations for death back from the deathbed to include the individual's whole life.

One was the publication in 1620 of the *De arte bene moriendi* by Roberto Bellarmino, the great theologian for whose tomb in the Gesù, the mother church of the Jesuits, Bernini carved the portrait two years later.¹² Bellarmino's treatise is divided almost equally into two parts, of which only the second is devoted to the preparations for death at the time it comes near. Here he follows the *Ars Moriendi* tradition closely, including the temptations of the Devil (where he cites Pietro Barozzi among his sources), and the ministrations of the faithful friend. Part I, on the other hand, deals with remote preparations for death, which include practice of the theological and moral virtues, and the sacraments beginning with Baptism and ending with Extreme Unction. Bellarmino devotes most of the book to these central acts of faith, and places particular emphasis on the Eucharist, "the greatest of the sacraments, in which is contained not only copious grace but also the very author of grace." In contrast to Savonarola's exhortation to the constant contemplation of death, the keynote for Bellarmino is provided by his title to the opening chapter, "He who would die well, should live well."

The second major factor in the *Ars Moriendi* revival, a direct outgrowth of Bellarmino's concern with the subject, was the foundation of the Confraternity of the Bona Mors at the Gesù.¹³ The congregation differed from earlier such organizations devoted to death in that it was not conceived primarily to carry out an act of mercy, that of burying the

dead, but to institute a program of devotions and exercises through which its members might assure themselves the benefits of a good death. The essence of its spiritual program is evident from the organization's full name, "Congregazione del Nostro Signore Gesù Cristo moribondo sopra la Croce e della Santissima Vergine Maria sua Madre Addolorata, detta della Buona Morte." The congregation was founded in 1648 by Vincenzo Caraffa, who was then *praepositus generalis* of the Society of Jesus, of which the principal activity was regular Friday devotions to the Crucified Christ and His wounds, to the Sorrows of the Virgin, and to the Eucharist. A great altarpiece, now lost, showing the Crucified Christ and the Mater Dolorosa was painted for the congregation and unveiled before the High Altar of the church each Friday.¹⁴ The Bona Mors was a phenomenal success, and by the end of the century branches had been established throughout Europe.

From Bellarmino's treatise and the foundation of the Bona Mors a continuous tradition was established at the Gesù, in which Bernini directly participated. In 1649 the first moderator of the congregation, Giovanni Battista Manni, published a volume describing its Friday devotions, and subsequently brought out several illustrated works concerned with death.¹⁵ The confraternity's second moderator during Bernini's lifetime was one Giuseppe Fozi. In 1669, in connection with the canonization of Maria Maddalena de' Pazzi in that year, Fozi put into print a life of the saint that had been left in manuscript by one of her early biographers, the Jesuit Virgilio Cepari.¹⁶ Since Bernini, as his son reports, attended the devotions of the Bona Mors for forty years, he must have participated from its very inception. In the true spirit of the revived *Ars Moriendi*, preparation for death became for him a life-long process. The basic imagery of his *Sangue di Cristo* composition was clearly inspired by the congregation's invocation of the Crucifixion and the sorrowing Virgin, and its particular devotion to the Eucharist. Bernini himself explained that he made the work as a personal votive offering for the benefit of the world at large;¹⁷ this may well have been in fulfillment of the members' obligation to assist others to obtain a good death.

¹⁰ Tenenti, *Senso della morte*, 321.

¹¹ For the vast Jesuit literature on death, see the listings in A. De Backer and C. Sommervogel, *Bibliothèque de la Compagnie de Jésus*, 12 vols., Brussels, 1890-1960, x, cols. 510-19; also E. Mâle, *L'art religieux après le concile de Trente*, Paris, 1932, 206ff.; J. De Guibert, *La spiritualité de la Compagnie de Jésus*, Rome, 1953, 384ff.

¹² R. Bellarmino, *Opera Omnia*, 12 vols., Paris, 1870-74, viii, 551ff.

¹³ A thorough history of the organization has yet to be written. Cf. A. L'Hoire, *La congrégation de Notre-Seigneur Jésus-Christ mourant en Croix et de la Très Sainte Vierge, Sa Mère participant à ses douleurs dite de la Bonne Mort*, Paris, etc., 1904; G. B. Piazza, *Opere pie di Roma*, Rome, 1679, 684ff.; P. Pecchiai, *Il Gesù di Roma*, Rome, 1952, 314.

¹⁴ Piazza, *Opere pie*, 685f., and Manni, *Breve ragguaglio*, 100f. (cited in the following note).

¹⁵ A list of moderators is in the Archive of the Gesù: *Catalogus Moderatorum Primariae Congregationis sub invocatione D. N. G. C. in Cruce moribundi ac Beatissima Mariae Virginis ejus Genetricis Dolorosae vulgo Bonae Mortis ab ejus Fundatione anno 1648 ad annum 1911*.

¹⁶ G. B. Manni, *Breve ragguaglio e pratica istruzione degli esercitii di pietà cristiana che si fanno nel Giesu di Roma ogni venerdì mattina, e sera, per la divotione della Buona Morte da ottenersi per li meriti della Passione, & agonia di Cristo in Croce: e de' dolori della sua Madre Santiss. sotto la Croce*, Rome, 1649; *idem*, *Varii, e veri ritratti della morte disegnati in immagini, ed espressi in essemplj*

al peccatore duro di cuore, Venice, 1669; *idem*, *La morte disarmata, e le sue amarezze raddolcite con due pratiche, per due atti importantissime, l'una del ben morire, e l'altra d'ajutare i moribondi*, Venice, 1669.

Cf. De Backer and Sommervogel, *Bibl. de la Compagnie*, v, cols. 500, 502. Manni was later closely involved in the negotiations for the decorations of the Gesù (see n.32 below); Pecchiai, *Il Gesù*, 113ff.

¹⁶ *Vita della Serafica Verg. S. Maria Madelena de' Pazzi Fiorentina . . . Scritta dal Padre Virgilio Cepari della Compagnia di Giesu. Et hora con l'aggiunta cavata da' Processi formati per la sua Beatificazione e Canonizzazione del Padre Giuseppe Fozi . . .*, Rome, 1669. Cf. De Backer and Sommervogel, *Bibl. de la Compagnie*, ii, 957, iii, 914. Among Fozi's other works is one on priestly assistance to the dying, *Il sacerdote savio, e zelante assistente a' moribondi*, Rome, 1683.

¹⁷ "1671. Il Sig. Cavalier Bernino dice che havendo in vita sua fatti tanti disegni per Pontefici, Rè, è Principi, uole sigillare con farne uno à gloria dell'offerta che si fa al Padre Eterno del pretiosissimo Sangue di Christo; stanto in questo pensiero gli è parso, che si possi pregare la gloriosissima Vergine, a fare lei per noi, à Padre Thèologhi, et altri spirituali. Il pensiero gli è parso bellissimo, è molto utile per tutti; stante questo hà fatto il presente disegno, et in sua presenza l'hà fatto intagliare per poterne dare à molti, è mandarne per il mondo a gloria del Sangue di Christo"; a dispatch to the court of Modena, first published by F. Imparato, "Documenti relativi al Bernini e a suoi contemporanei," *Archivio storico dell'arte*, iii, 1890, 142f., then by Frascchetti, *Bernini*, 420, n. 2.



3 Gianlorenzo Bernini, *The Intercession of Christ and the Virgin*, drawing, 229 × 205mm. Leipzig, Museum der bildenden Künste, Graphische Sammlung (from Brauer and Wittkower, *Zeichnungen des Gianlorenzo Bernini*, pl. 128)



4 Filippino Lippi, *The Intercession of Christ and the Virgin*. Munich, Alte Pinakothek

Giuseppe Fozi, in preparing the biography of Maria Maddalena de' Pazzi, must certainly have become familiar with the passage, cited on the *Sangue di Cristo* engraving, in which she invokes the Holy Blood and the intercession of Christ and the Virgin; he must have noted its striking correspondence to the dedication and devotions of the Bona Mors, and he may have originally brought it to Bernini's attention.

Father Francesco Marchese

The son of Bernini's older sister, Beatrice, was born in 1623. He became a priest of the Oratorio, the order founded by St. Philip Neri with its headquarters in the building by Borromini adjoining Santa Maria in Vallicella. Father Marchese is described as very learned, a fervid and assiduous executor of the rules and obligations of the order, to which he added his own severe application to studies sacred and profane.¹⁸ He is best known as a zealous opponent of the Quietist leader Miguel de Molinos, whose downfall he was

instrumental in bringing about during Molinos's trial by the Inquisition in the 1680's; an important manuscript volume of the materials he gathered against Molinos still exists in the Vallicella library.¹⁹ Apart from four other works which he left unpublished at his death in 1697, the standard bibliography of Oratorian authors lists no fewer than twenty-one books by Marchese, which bear a strongly individual stamp and display a remarkable development. They are mainly of two kinds, biographies of saints and devotional works. While they do indeed show a formidable knowledge of sacred and profane history and literature, they are neither scholarly reconstructions of the past, nor abstract theological speculations. Of the three works Marchese published before 1670 (the significance of which date will emerge presently), the first was a vast compilation in three volumes of prayers to the Virgin gathered from an incredible variety of sources and so organized as to provide devotions for every day of the year;²⁰ the second was a book of meditations on the Stigmata, and the third a life of the

¹⁸ Marchese di Villarosa, *Memorie degli scrittori filippini o siano della Congregazione dell' Oratorio di S. Filippo Neri*, Naples, 1837, 168–70; pt. 2, Naples, 1842, 70. C. Gasbarri, *L'oratorio romano dal cinquecento al novecento*, Rome, 1962, 177ff.

¹⁹ Cf. L. von Pastor, *The History of the Popes*, 40 vols., St. Louis, Mo., 1938–52, xxxii, 447ff.; Marchese's role in the process against Molinos is described at length in P. Dudon, *Le quietiste espagnol Michel Molinos*

(1678–96), Paris, 1921, *passim*; also M. Petrocchi, *Il Quietismo italiano del seicento*, Rome, 1942, 66, n. 32, 102, 193ff.

²⁰ *Diario sacro dove s'insegnano varie pratiche di divotione per honorare ogni giorno la Beatissima Vergine raccolte dall' historie de' santi, e beati correnti in ciascun giorno dell' anno e dalle vite d'altri servi di Dio . . .*, 3 vols., Rome, 1655–58.



5 *The Death of Moriens and Intercession of Christ and the Virgin*, stained-glass votive window. Wettingen, Switzerland (photo: Die Kunstdenkmäler des Kantons Aargau)



6 Sandro Botticelli, *Triumph of the Faith*, woodcut (from Ferrara, Savonarola, II, pl. III)

Spanish mystic, St. Pietro d'Alcantara.²¹ They are thus eminently practical and edifying works, and focus primarily on the mystical nature of piety. This was characterized by Marchese not in quietistic terms of passive contemplation, but as a process of active, passionate devotion. This gifted nephew, at once learned and intensely concerned with the welfare of the human spirit, must have provided an ideal counterpoint for Bernini's own reflections on death and salvation – the “faithful friend” of the *Ars Moriendi*. Although Marchese was the man of letters, their conversations must have been truly reciprocal: witness Giovanni Paolo Oliva's remark that talking to Bernini on spiritual matters was like discoursing with a professional.

In 1670 Father Marchese published two books which have as their central theme the efficacy of the sacrifice of Christ to save the sinner who repents before he dies. The

message of one is stated in its title, *Unica speranza del peccatore che consiste nel sangue del N. S. Giesù Cristo*. The other book, entitled *Ultimo colpo al cuore del peccatore*, is conceived as the final call to the hard of heart to accept the gift of grace offered by the Crucifixion. A third work by Marchese, published posthumously, belongs explicitly to the genre of the *Ars Moriendi*; the *Preparamento a ben morire* is a spiritual guide to salvation through penitence, devotion to the Eucharist, invocation of the Virgin, the saints and angels, and through prayer.²²

Many of the most striking aspects of Bernini's death are elucidated in the writings of Father Marchese. The *Unica speranza*, an octavo volume of two hundred pages, was actually written to accompany the *Sangue di Cristo* print; Marchese states this in the preface, where he describes the design and urges him who desires salvation either to fix his

²¹ *Il divoto delle sacre stimmate di S. Francesco*, Rome, 1664; *Vita del B. Pietro d'Alcantara*, Rome, 1667.

²² *Unica speranza del peccatore che consiste nel sangue del N. S. Giesù Cristo spiegata con alcune verità, con le quali s'insegna all'anima un modo facile d'appli-*

care a se il frutto del medesimo sangue. . ., Rome, 1670; *Ultimo colpo al cuore del peccatore*, Rome, 1670; *Preparamento a ben morire opera postuma del Vener. Servo di Dio Francesco Marchesi preposto della Congregazione dell'Oratorio di Roma . . .*, Rome, 1697.

eye upon the image, or to read the text.²³ The print in turn served as the frontispiece to Marchese's book.²⁴ The *Sangue di Cristo* and the *Unica speranza* were thus conceived together as complementary parts, text and illustration, of a modern *Ars Moriendi*. It is in the light of this specifically propagatory function that the original format of Bernini's work, a drawing intended to be engraved, may be understood.

The text of the *Unica speranza* helps clarify the meaning of Bernini's image, both in itself and as part of a sequence of ideas leading to salvation. The substance of the work lies in "fifteen truths" formulated by Father Marchese.²⁵ The first three describe the unhappy condition of the sinner in the world and in the hereafter. The fourth truth is that the sole remedy for the sinner's ills is the Precious Blood of Christ, and the fifth is that the Savior ardently desires the sinner's participation in His Blood. Here a lengthy passage is devoted to expressing the universal efficacy of the Eucharist, through the metaphor of the Blood of Christ as an infinite sea that covers the world. Marchese relates the concept to that of the Blood as a fountain and as a river; he cites a

²³ "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 particolare prouedimento disposto, che da mano di diuoto 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."

²⁴ Copies with the engraving are in the Vatican Library and the British Museum. The print has heretofore been known only separately (Bernini also distributed it so; cf. n. 17 above), and its connection with Marchese's book was unsuspected. The composition has been variously related to Molinos's *Guia espiritual* and Father Oliva's sermons (W. Weibel, *Jesuitismus und Barockskulptur in Rom*, Strassburg, 1909, 10ff.; Lanckorońska, *Decoracja*, 71, n. 110 [cited in n. 32 below]; R. Kuhn, "Gian Paolo Oliva und Gian Lorenzo Bernini," *Römische Quartalschrift*, LXIV, 1969, 229ff.).

²⁵ I quote here the "fifteen truths," which constitute chapter headings in the book: "1. Lo stato del Peccatore in questo secolo è molto infelice, e prima per la perdita de' beni naturali. 2. Lo stato del Peccatore in questo mondo è assai più infelice per la perdita de' beni spirituali. 3. Lo stato del Peccatore nell'altro secolo sarà infelicissimo, e irreparabile. 4. L'Unico rimedio a'sopradetti mali è il Sangue pretiosissimo di Giesù Christo, il quale ne hà ottenuta la remissione di tutte le colpe. 5. Il Salvatore ardentemente brama di farne partecipi del suo Sangue. 6. Il frutto del Sangue di Christo con gran facilità si comunica all'anime mediante i Santissimi Sacramenti. 7. L'huomo con grandissima facilità può riceuer il frutto del Sangue di Christo, e ottenere il perdono delle colpe, e prima col Sacramento della Penitenza. 8. E facilissima cosa partecipare della uirtù del Sàgue di Giesù Christo mediante il Sacramento dell' Eucharistia. 9. Il tesoro del Sangue di Christo facilmente si ottiene coll'acquisto dell'Indulgenze. 10. Non sono le operationi nostre buone, ne le penètze, ma il Sangue di Giesù Christo, che sodisfà alle nostre colpe. 11. Il Sangue del Redentore conferisce somma quiete all'anima nelle sue imperfettioni. 12. Dalle mani della Madonna Santissima s'offerisce, e si dispensa il tesoro del Sangue di Christo. 13. Chi uiue diuoto del Sangue di Christo spera di far una buona morte. 14. E difficilissimo, e quasi impossibile ottenere il frutto del Sangue di Christo da chi del continuo non l'apprezza. 15. Il Sangue del Redentore infiamma il cuore del Peccatore ad abbracciare le verità conosciute."

²⁶ I quote the entire passage: "Doue sono ora quelle anime timorose, e diffidenti d' ottenere dal Signore il perdono delle loro colpe? Considerino, che il Sangue del Salvatore è paragonato ad vn fonte, il quale non è racchiuso, e occulto; ma à tutti è esposto; di cui ragionò in ispirito il

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.²⁶ The succeeding truths assert that the Blood of Christ is communicated easily through the Holy Sacraments, especially Penitence and the Eucharist. The treasure of the Blood can also be obtained with the assistance of indulgences, but neither good works nor penances actually erase sins, only the Blood itself. The twelfth truth is specifically related to Bernini's composition, and states that the treasure of the Blood is offered and dispensed through the hands of the Virgin; it is here that the passage from Maria Maddalena de' Pazzi, which in abbreviated form provided the subtitle to the *Sangue di Cristo* engraving, is cited in full from the source, Part II, Chapter 6 of Vincenzo Puccini's life of the saint: "I offer you, Eternal Father, the

Profeta Zaccaria. *In illa die erit fons patens Domui Iacob, & habitantibus Ierusalem in ablutionem peccatorum.* [I.e., Zac. 13:1 *In die illa erit fons patens domui David et habitantibus Ierusalem in ablutionem peccatoris et menstruatæ.*] Il Sangue sagratissimo del Verbo Diuino è vn fonte, che si spande in abbondanza per tutta la Casa del vero Giacobbe, cioè per la Santa Chiesa: e questo principalmente serue à mondar l'anima dalle macchie di tutti gli errori. Anzi che rassembra vn gran fiume, che uscito del proprio letto, corre liberamente per le vie, e giunge ad inondar le case, e da' luoghi sotterranei ascende infin' alle stanze, oue dimoriamo. Tale appunto ci si rappresenta l'immenso fiume del Sàgue Diuinitissimo del Redentore: esce tal'hora da' confini della sua ordinaria, e sufficiente gratia, e con modi speciali d' impulsi interni penetra l' interiore del cuore, dentro al quale brama entrare per lauarlo, e purificarlo da ogni macchia di colpa; e doue troua resistenza, colla forza possente della sua gratia, *foramina parat ubi ipse uult* [Gilbert of Holland, *Serm. 43 in Cant.*; Cf. Migne, *Patr. lat.*, CLXXXIV, col. 228], si fa apertura in quel cuore à se chiuso; e indurato nell' empietà, à fine d' inondarlo coll' affluenza della sua infinita misericordia.

"Ma dissi poco: non solo il Sangue di Christo è vn fonte perenne, è vn vasto fiume; ma forma vn mare profondissimo, e senza termine; anzi forma vn mare assai più vasto & ampio dell' Oceano: perche à questo sono prescritti i confini dall' Autore della natura. *Hic confringes tumentes fluctus tuos*: ma il Sangue di Giesù Christo inonda, e ricopre tutta la faccia della terra, ne è ristretto da alcun lido e confine; impercioche la sua immensa misericordia, che dispensa senza misura questo Sangue Diuino, non ha verun termine, ò dimensione. Quindi è, che Santa Maria Madalena de Pazzi hebbe à dire, che due volte il Signor Iddio haueua mandato al Mondo il diluuio: il primo fù à tempo di Noè nell' inondatione uniuersale della terra, e l' altro era stato negli anni della pienezza della gratia [Mandò (sono le sue parole) ancora in questo picciol Mondo il Verbo vmanato il diluuio; e che diluuio è questo? vna soprabbondante gratia, e l' infusione del Sangue] [*Opere*, ed. L. M. Brancaccio, Naples, 1643, 15], del quale disse parimente S Gio: Crisostomo: *hic sanguis effusus uniuersum abluuit Orbem terrarum.* [*Hom. in Ioan. 46*; Cf. Migne, *Patr.*, *Series graeca*, LIX, col. 261] Adunque nell'ampio seno di questo mare, anzi di questo diluuio, che si dilata sopra tutta la terra, si offerisce opportuna occasione à qualsiuoglia peccatore di gittare l' immenso peso de' suoi innumerabili errori: ne della prontissima volontà del Signore in cancellarli può punto dubitare, hauendo egli stesso fatto scriuere al suo Profeta Michea. *Deponet iniquitates nostras, & projiciet in profundum maris omnia peccata vestra*" (*Unica speranza*, 32ff.).

The ocean metaphor also occurs in the *Ultimo colpo*: "... il Sangue, che se n'è formato vn pelago, e vn Oceano immenso, che ricopre tutta la faccia della Terra. Or' io con questo gran diluuio di sangue dourei assorbire, e soffocare tutti voi altri huomini temerarij . . ." (page 26); "Animo, ò Peccatore, alza la mente illustrata dalla fede, e contempla vn'ampio mare formato dal Sangue del Redentore, che è assai più vasto, e immenso di quello, che sia l'Oceano" (page 29). See also in the text below.



7 Cherubino Alberti, *Triumph of the Cross*. Rome, Santa Maria sopra Minerva (photo: GFN)

Blood of the humanity of your Word; I offer it to you yourself, Divine Word; I also offer it to you, Holy Spirit; and if anything is wanting in me, I offer it to you, Mary, that you may present it to the Most Holy Trinity.”²⁷ Marchese’s thirteenth truth establishes the relevance of the others to death, which is that he who lives devoted to the Blood of Christ may hope to die well.

Other aspects of Bernini’s death find a context in Father Marchese’s *Ultimo colpo*. In particular, echoes may be heard here of those aphoristic statements of doctrine and belief which Domenico Bernini calls his father’s “shortcut” to heaven. For example, in the *Ultimo colpo* Marchese thus expresses the notion that it is an insult to God’s magnanimity to doubt His forgiveness: “It would be a manifest injury to the sovereign Goodness to doubt obtaining from it the remission of our sins, while such efficient means of reaching it are offered to us.” Marchese uses the fiscal metaphor of God as a beneficent capitalist in His dealings with the sinner, in a long passage in the same work, which concludes, “Who would not wish to deal with such a liberal merchant, who sells his very rich goods at so low a price?” The idea of sins

being drowned or tinted to another color in the sea of Blood also occurs in the *Ultimo colpo*: “Therefore, make therein this happy shipwreck of yourself, and of all sins, precisely in the way that a drop of water thrown into a river is immediately absorbed by it and transmuted into it. Do you not see that the benign aura of Divine goodness often lifts its amorous odes toward you from the breast of this bloody sea, to drown you in itself, and then, having become all white, to raise you up as high as the Throne of God, where it illuminates you?”²⁸

Above all, the extraordinary thought of preparing for death by practicing dying must have been a matter of special study by Bernini and his nephew. In the *Preparamento a ben morire* Father Marchese devotes no less than four chapters to exercises of this kind.²⁹ For one of the most important of them he follows the ancient *Ars Moriendi* tradition which recommended contemplation of the Crucifixion and the Virgin at the time of death. Marchese urges the reader, “turned in his heart and with his eyes toward a Crucifix, to take great confidence in the immense value of the Blood of the Savior shed for his love, and to offer it by

²⁷ “Vi offerisco, ò Padre eterno, il Sangue dell’vmanità del vostro Verbo; l’offerisco à voi stesso, ò Diuin Verbo; l’offerisco anco à voi ò Santo Spirito: e se manca à me cosa alcuna, l’offerisco à voi, ò Maria; accioche lo presentiate alla Santissima Trinità” (*Unica speranza*, 83).

The original text read as follows: “T’offerisco adunque il sangue del tuo vmanato Verbo; lo presento à te ò Padre Eterno. L’offerisco à te, ò Verbo; lo presento à te Spirito Santo, e se cosa alcuna ci manca, l’offerisco à te, ò Maria, che lo presenti all’eterna Trinità, per supplimento di tutti i difetti, che fossero nell’ anima mia, e ancora per soddisfazione di tutte le colpe, che fossero nel corpo mio” (V. Puccini, *Vita della Madre suor Maria Maddalena de’ Pazzi fiorentina*, Florence, 1609, 241ff.).

²⁸ “Si farebbe adunque manifesta ingiuria alla sourana Bontà, diffidare d’ottenere da essa la remissione delle nostre colpe, mentre ci si offeriscono mezzi tanto efficaci à conseguirla.” “Chi non volesse negoziare con si liberal

mercante, che à si basso prezzo vende le sue ricchissime merci?”; “Adunque fà iui questo felice naufragio di te stessa e di tutte le colpe, in quella guisa appunto che vna goccia d’acqua gettata in vn fiume, resta da esso incontanète assorbita, e in quello trasmutata. Non vedi, che l’aura benigna della Diuina carità solleua bene spesso verso di te dal seno di questo sanguinoso mare l’òde sue amorse, per annegarti in se. e poi diuenuta tutta candida innalzarti tanto in alto, quato e alto il Trono di Dio, oue ti sublima?” (Cf. *Ultimo colpo*, 33, 32, 29f.).

²⁹ Chapters 11–14, titled: “Assuefarsi à morir prima del passaggio dell’anima da questo all’altro Mondo.” “Farsi ora presente quello, che è futuro; e si stima lontano.” “Figurarsi alle volte di morire.” “Ponderar bene lo stato dell’Anima nell’altro Mondo” (*Preparamento a ben morire*, 99–137).



8 *The Death of Moriens*, engraving by R. de Hooghe from D. de la Vigne, *Spiegel van een salighe Doodt*, Antwerp, 1673 (?). New York Public Library

the hands of the Blessed Virgin Mary, our most clement advocate, to the Divine Trinity – as was often done by Santa Maria Maddalena de' Pazzi in satisfaction of the grave debt contracted by her with eternal justice."³⁰ It is here, one

³⁰ "Rivolto nel cuore, e con gli occhi ad un Crocefisso prenda confidenza grande nel valore immenso del Sangue del Salvatore per suo amore sparso, e per le mani della Beatissima Vergine MARIA nostra clementissima Auvocata l'offerisca alla Divinissima Trinità; sicome spesso soleva fare Santa Maria Madalena de Pazzis, in sodisfattione del gravissimo debito da lei contratto con l'eterna giustizia" (*ibid.*, 121).

³¹ A drawing of the composition in the Tylers Stichting, Haarlem, bears an old adscription to Bernini, and the license of the papal censor. It is probably by Baciccio according to H. Brauer and R. Wittkower, (*Die Zeichnungen des Gianlorenzo Bernini*, Berlin, 1931, 155, n. 4); J. van Regteren Altena supported the attribution to Bernini (*Cristina Queen of Sweden*, exh. cat., Stockholm, 1966, 464, No. 1146; cf. *Le dessin italien dans les collections hollandais*, exh. cat., Paris-Rotterdam-Haarlem, 1962, 101f., No. 166); B. Canestro Chioyenda reaffirms Baciccio's authorship ("Ancora del Bernini, del Gaulli e della regina Cristina," *Commentari*, xx, 1969, 223ff.).

On the various painted versions of the composition, see L. Grassi, *Bernini pittore*, Rome, 1945, 49f., figs. 81–82; V. Martinelli, "Le pitture del Bernini," *Commentari*, I, 1950, 103; Canestro Chioyenda, "Ancora del Bernini."

³² Brauer and Wittkower, *Zeichnungen*, 166f., pl. 128, regarded the Leipzig sketch as a study for the *Sangue di Cristo* (cf. R. Wittkower, *Gian Lorenzo Bernini. The Sculptor of the Roman Baroque*, 2nd ed., London, 1966, 257). The precedence of the Leipzig drawing is doubtful, however, and it may have been made for another purpose: it was evidently the point of

may suppose, that the *Sangue di Cristo* was to serve its primary purpose, as it did for Bernini himself when he subsequently had the composition painted and placed before his own deathbed.

The Genesis of the "Sangue di Cristo" Composition

The essential point of the *Sangue di Cristo* is that Salvation is achieved through the sacrifice of Christ, which His mother offers to the Father.³¹ The genesis of this deceptively simple concept may best be approached through a drawing in Leipzig which perhaps represents a prior stage in Bernini's thinking, and which in any case follows a closely related tradition (Fig. 3).³² Christ is shown seated with His back to the spectator on a bank of clouds, arms extended around a cross; the hands are opened, palms up, in a gesture of offering to the Father, who appears above with arms outstretched. The Virgin kneels facing Christ at the right, head inclined, her hands pressing her breast. Panofsky, who first published the drawing, showed that the composition refers to a late medieval devotional formula, derived from the *Speculum humanae salvationis* (Fig. 4).³³ This illustrates the intercessional roles in the process of salvation of Christ, who offers His sacrifice to the judging Father, and of the Virgin, who offers her motherhood.

What requires emphasis here is the fact that this theme was central to the ideology of death in general, and to the *Ars Moriendi* in particular. It appears, notably, in the interrogations, where *moriens* is advised, should God wish to judge him, to reply thus: "Lord, I will place the death of your son and our Lord Jesus Christ between me and your damnation to the torments; I have no wish to contend with you.' And if He should say that you deserve eternal death, say thus, 'I place the death of the same Jesus Christ between you and my demerits, and I offer the merit of His most worthy passion for the merit I should have and, woe is me, do not yet have.' And add, 'I also put the death of Our

departure for the dome fresco of the Gesù, executed 1672–75 by Baciccio with advice from Bernini (cf. K. Lanckorońska, *Decoracja kościoła "Il Gesù" na tle rozwoju baroku w rzymie*, Lwów, 1936, 19ff., 51f.; F. Haskell, *Patrons and Painters*, New York, 1963, 82; R. Enggass, *The Painting of Baciccio*, University Park, Pa., 1964, 32ff., 135f.).

Presuming a direct connection between the Leipzig sketch and the *Sangue di Cristo*, Lanckorońska was led to the conclusion that certain Baciccio drawings related to the latter, in Düsseldorf and Berlin, were studies for an alternate version of the Gesù dome. B. Canestro Chioyenda suggested, instead, that the Baciccio drawings were preparatory for the mosaic in the dome of the vestibule of the Baptismal Chapel in Saint Peter's, a commission Baciccio received and began but never completed ("Cristina di Svezia, il Gaulli e il libro di appunti di Nicodemo Tessin d. y. [1687–1688]," *Commentari*, xvii, 1966, 177); it appears that this hypothesis is substantially correct, since the composition envisaged in the drawings is reflected in the mosaic subsequently executed by Francesco Trevisani (cf. F. R. DiFederico, "Documentation for Francesco Trevisani's Decoration for the Vestibule of the Baptismal Chapel in Saint Peter's," *Storia dell'Arte*, vi, 1970, 155ff.).

³³ "Imago Pietatis," in *Festschrift für Max J. Friedländer zum 60. Geburtstage*, Leipzig, 1927, 294. Cf. J. Lutz and P. Perdizet, *Speculum humanae salvationis*, Mulhouse, 1907–09, 293ff., pls. 137f.; D. Koeplin, s. v. "Interzession," in *Lexikon der christlichen Ikonographie*, Rome, etc., 1963ff., II, cols. 346ff. A further example is a panel ascribed to Bartolomeo di Giovanni in the Museum of Fine Arts, Montreal (A. Neumeier, *Der Blick aus dem Bilde*, Berlin, 1964, fig. 16).

Lord Jesus Christ between me and your wrath.'"³⁴ The thought and phraseology of these passages seem to reverberate in that from Maria Maddalena de' Pazzi cited on the engraving, and in Bernini's idea, recorded by his son, of the humanity of Christ as the protective "Veste de' Peccatori."

In the *Ars Moriendi* itself the invocation had been illustrated paratactically, as it were, by the presence of the Crucifixion with the grieving Virgin at the deathbed (cf. Fig. 2); the full dedication of the Bona Mors confraternity also juxtaposed the Crucifixion and the Mater Dolorosa with death. The *Speculum humanae salvationis* and the *Ars Moriendi* thus represent two complementary but distinct conceptions; the one focuses upon the process of intercession through which salvation is attained, the other upon the sacrificial act which the dying man invokes.

In the *Sangue di Cristo* engraving these ideas are merged. Bernini was not the first to combine them. Indeed, striking evidence that he intended the merger is provided by the fact that a similar line of thought produced what is in some respects the nearest antecedent for his design. This occurs in a stained-glass votive window in the cloister of the Cistercian monastery at Wettingen, Switzerland, dated 1590 (Fig. 5).³⁵ *Moriens* is shown below giving up the ghost, while the interceding Virgin, Christ Crucified, God the Father and the Dove are represented above as a cloud-borne apparition. The chief difference between this and ordinary intercessional scenes is that, as in the *Ars Moriendi*, Christ is shown on the Cross; as in the *Speculum* tradition, however, He points with one hand to the chest wound. The key to such a depiction evidently lies in the donor: since the historical Crucifixion is invoked by him, he is the subject of the scene; and since the symbolic intercession is enacted for him, he is also the object.

This is the context to which the *Sangue di Cristo* belongs, and its fundamental innovation was the superimposition of the Eucharist as the dominant theme. Though always present in the ritual of death in the form of the viaticum, we have seen that the Eucharist had been given new emphasis in Bellarmino's *De arte bene moriendi*; special devotions to and exposition of the Sacrament had followed upon prayers to the Crucified Christ and the Mater Dolorosa in the Friday services of the Bona Mors congregation; for Father Marchese

the Eucharist was the *sine qua non* of the dying man's aspiration. In the *Sangue di Cristo* it is, literally and figuratively, the solution in which the act of sacrifice and the process of intercession are fused. The result was, in effect, a new, synoptic presentation of the scheme of salvation, and it entailed a variety of changes in the old formulations. One important invention concerned the Virgin. Kneeling beneath the Crucifixion, she no longer presses her breast, but extends her hands to receive and offer the Blood to God the Father. Shown thus, the figure is a conflation of the interceding Virgin with the personification of Ecclesia, often represented standing beneath the Crucifixion holding a chalice to collect the Blood, in allusion to the sacrificial liturgy of the Mass. From a theological point of view the conflation was wholly justifiable, since Mary intercedes as Mater Domini while as Mater Ecclesia she expresses the intermediary role of the Church. By having her kneel, and giving her a gesture of offering as well as receiving the Blood, Bernini was able to make the Virgin intercede through the Eucharist – in conformity with the pious sentiment of Maria Maddalena de' Pazzi, as Father Marchese says in the preface to *Unica speranza*.³⁶

The most dramatic new feature of the design, however, was the introduction of the Sea of Blood metaphor to portray the universality of redemption. The metaphor had ancient roots: witness Father Marchese's own citations and that from Paul's Epistle to the Hebrews which provided the main caption for the engraving. The liquidity and universality of the Eucharist had often been linked, as through the imagery of the Fountain of Life and the river of blood, to which Marchese refers.³⁷ An example of the latter whose visionary character anticipates Bernini is a woodcut design by Botticelli, to which Vasari gives the title *Triumph of the Faith* (Fig. 6).³⁸ This depicts an actual vision described by Savonarola in one of his sermons; the Crucifixion is shown in a circular landscape signifying the world, and the Blood pours down from the Cross to form a river in which converts to the faith cleanse themselves of sin. An analogous theme is that of Christ in the Wine Press, which, in the frontispiece to a Protestant bible of 1641 is accompanied by the passage from Hebrews cited on the *Sangue di Cristo* engraving.³⁹ Yet, none of these texts explicitly identifies the Eucharist as an

³⁴ "Se Iddio ti volesse giudicare, di così, Signore, io metterò la morte del tuo figliuolo, e Signor nostro Giesu Cristo fra me, e' il giudizio tuo ai tormenti: con teo non voglio contendere. E se egli dicesse, che tu hai meritato la morte eterna; dirai così: Io metto la morte dello stesso Giesu Cristo infra te, e i miei demeriti; & il merito della sua dignissima passione offerisco per lo merito, che io douerei hauere, e, misero à me, non ho ancora. E soggiunga, Io pongo medesimamente la morte del nostro Signor Giesu Cristo fra me, e l'ira tua" (*Dell'arte del ben morire*, Naples, 1591, 28).

³⁵ Lutz and Perdrizet, *Speculum*, 294.

³⁶ On Ecclesia with the chalice, cf. C. Schiller, *Ikonographie der christlichen Kunst*, 2 vols., Gütersloh, 1966–68, II, 117ff. As a floating figure the Virgin also recalls the flying angels that often receive the Blood in chalices in Crucifixion scenes. The Virgin and angels occasionally have upturned hands, but as a gesture of dismay, not in connection with the Blood.

The notion of the Virgin offering the sacrifice is related to that of her priesthood; in a Flemish engraving of the early 17th century she is shown kneeling, cloud-borne, before an altar, and offering the chalice to God the Father and the Holy Spirit above (G. Missaglia, et al., *La madonna e l'eucaristia*, Rome, 1954, fig. 102).

The emphasis placed in the *Sangue di Cristo* and by Father Marchese on the transmission of the offering through the Virgin's hands, is based on St. Bernard: "È Sentimento assai comune de' Santi Padri, e singolarmente di S. Bernardo non dispensarsi a' fedeli alcuna gratia dal Signor' Iddio, che non passi per le mani della Beatissima Vergine nostra signora" (*Unica speranza*, 82); compare St. Bernard's "... si quid spei in nobis est, si quid gratiae, si quid salutis, ab ea noverimus redundare, quae ascendit deliciis affluens," and "Forte enim manus tuae, aut sanguine plenae, aut infectae muneribus, quod non eas ab omni munere excussisti. Ideoque modicum istud quod offerre desideras, gratissimis illis et omni acceptione dignissimis Mariae manibus offerendum tradere cura, si non vis sustinere repulsam" ("De aquaeductu," Migne, *Patr. lat.*, CLXXXIII, cols. 441, 448).

³⁷ Panofsky also saw the relationship of the *Sangue di Cristo* composition to the Fons Vitae and the Christ in the Wine Press (see below); "Imago Pietatis," 284. For the relation to the Fons Vitae, see recently M. Wadell, *Fons Pietatis. Eine ikonographische Studie*, Göteborg, 1969, 84f.

³⁸ The woodcut was first identified with that mentioned in Vasari by Ferrara, *Savonarola*, II, 59ff.

³⁹ Illustrated in Schiller, *Ikonographie*, II, fig. 812.

ocean, and the idea had not to my knowledge been depicted before. As evident from the very title of Marchese's *Unica speranza*, it was the desire to convey the eschatological aspect of the Sacrament, again to relate death and salvation, that motivated the extension of the metaphor to a universal deluge.⁴⁰

A final innovation in the engraving is that the Crucifixion forms the central focus of the composition and is shown on a diagonal axis viewed from below, floating in mid-air. The perspective treatment has been related to the diagonally oriented crosses that had become popular in narrative scenes of the Crucifixion, probably on the basis of Northern depictions of the three crosses on Mount Calvary.⁴¹ The device helps to create the impression that the observer is an incidental bystander, hence specifically a witness of the event. But Bernini seems to have been influenced by other, visionary themes. The arrangement, with God the Father above, recalls depictions of the Trinity in which the Crucifixion appears aloft, often in sharp perspective. Though Bernini omits the Dove, a reference to the Trinity is implicit from the text of Maria Maddalena de' Pazzi quoted on the print, in which the sinner's ultimate appeal is to the Trinity. The idea of a monumental cross suspended in foreshortening was familiar from sacramental images illustrating the Exaltation or Triumph of the Cross. An example Bernini certainly knew was the fresco by Cherubino Alberti in the Aldobrandini chapel, dedicated to the Sacrament, in Santa Maria sopra Minerva, where the Cross is borne by angels through a circular opening painted in the vault (Fig. 7).⁴²

In the case of Alberti's fresco the foreshortening is calculated for the spectator approaching the chapel from the

front. The angle of vision in Bernini's engraving bears an uncanny resemblance to that from which *moriens* sees the Crucifixion in the *Ars Moriendi* illustrations (Figs. 2, 8).⁴³ One cannot repress the suspicion that the whole image was conceived to be seen exactly as Bernini saw it, at the foot of his own deathbed. Whereas the artists of the *Ars Moriendi* represented the death scene, Bernini isolated the vision and made the viewer its witness.

2. The Bust of the Savior

The second work mentioned by the biographers, the bust of the Savior, has been lost since the early eighteenth century.⁴⁴ 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 it to Pope Innocent XI Odescalchi, and thereafter it was listed in a 1713 inventory of the Palazzo Odescalchi.⁴⁵ Nothing more is known concerning its history.⁴⁶ A "belle copie" of the sculpture was commissioned by Bernini's friend and would-be biographer Pierre Cureau de la Chambre, Abbé of Saint-Barthélemy in Paris, where it was brought soon after the artist's death.⁴⁷ There is no further record of the copy; the Church of Saint-Barthélemy was destroyed in the French Revolution.⁴⁸ Until now the only dependable indication of the bust's appearance has been a preparatory drawing by Bernini in the Corsini collection in Rome (Fig. 9). The drawing suffices to show that it differed markedly from ordinary

⁴⁰ Compare a panel of the early 15th century by Giovanni di Paolo, in which blood from the feet of the Man of Sorrows appears to flow on the ground to a group of the Saved in a scene of the Last Judgment (cf. C. Eisler, "The Golden Christ of Cortona and the Man of Sorrows in Italy," *Art Bulletin*, LI, 1969, 115, 233, fig. 18).

⁴¹ Van Regteren Altena, *Le dessin italien* (cited n. 31 above) refers to Crucifixions by G. B. Castiglione in this connection.

⁴² For this fresco, datable 1609–11, see L. Venturi, *Storia dell'arte italiana*, 11 vols., Milan, 1901–07, IX, pt. 5, fig. 539; F. Württemberg, "Die manieristische Deckenmalerei in Mittelitalien," *Römisches Jahrbuch für Kunstgeschichte*, IV, 1940, 112ff. See also the examples by Pietro da Cortona in the sacristy of the Chiesa Nuova, and by Lanfranco in the Cappella della Pietà in Saint Peter's (G. Briganti, *Pietro da Cortona*, Florence, 1962, 205, No. 50).

⁴³ The striking parallel illustrated in Fig. 8 is from David de la Vigne, *Spiegel van een salighe Doodt*, with engravings by R. de Hooghe, probably published at Antwerp in 1673 (cf. J. Landwehr, *Romeyn de Hooghe as Book Illustrator*, Amsterdam, 1970, 79). De Hooghe's imagery is also closely analogous to that of the chapel of St. Anne and the Beata Ludovica Albertoni in San Francesco a Ripa, which Bernini designed at this same period; there the altar painting appears as a devotional picture beside Ludovica's deathbed.

Other scenes of visions of the Crucifixion should be compared as well; e.g., Pietro Liberi, *Santi Giovanni e Paolo*, Venice, before 1660 (F. Zava Boccazzi, *La basilica dei Santi Giovanni e Paolo in Venezia*, Padua, 1965, fig. 113), Luca Giordano, *Santa Maria del Pianto*, Naples, 1660–61 (O. Ferrari and G. Scavizzi, *Luca Giordano*, Naples, 1966, fig. 94).

⁴⁴ What is known of its history will be found in Wittkower, *Bernini*, 265, and B. Canestro Chioyenda, "Cristina di Svezia" (cited in n. 32 above), 172ff.

⁴⁵ The descriptions in Tessin and the 1713 inventory are as follows: "Im zimber inwendig vor der andern Antechambre, stehet dass halbe grosse Christbildt von Marmor, welches Cav. Bernini im Testament Ihr Majesteten verlassen hat; unter ist die plinthe darvon von zweijen

grossen knienden vergulden Engel artig sousteniret, die eine grosse plinthe unter sich wieder haben" (O. Sirén, *Nicodemus Tessin d.y.s Studieresor*, Stockholm, 1914, 184).

"Un busto di Marmo, che rappresenta il Salvatore con una mano, e panneggiamento scolpito dal Bernini; alto palmi di passetto 4 e due terzi, il suo piedistallo è di diaspro di Sicilia, alto palmo uno et un quarto, largo di sotto due palmi et un quarto, qual busto vien sostenuto con ambi le mani da due angioi, che sono in ginocchio sopra un gran piede il tutto di legno dorato, quali assieme col zoccolo son alti palmi nove di passetto" (Brauer and Wittkower, *Zeichnungen*, 179, n. 1).

Cf. also an *Avviso* of April 23, 1689, in which the base is said to be of porphyry (E. Rossi, "Roma ignorata" *Roma*, XX, 1942, 215).

⁴⁶ On the Odescalchi collections, see H. H. Brummer, "Two works by Giulio Cartari," *Konsthistorisk Tidskrift*, xxxvi, 1967, 106f.

Wittkower suggested (*Bernini*, 265) that the *Savior* may have been taken to Spain in 1724, when a large number of Odescalchi sculptures was bought by Philip V. But it does not appear in the list of works, ancient and modern, included in the sale (Rome, Archivio Odescalchi, V.B.1, fasc. 20; cf. Brummer, "Two works," 123, n. 12); in fact, it was among the objects entailed in a *fidecommisso* by Livio Odescalchi (died 1713), none of which was sold (Arch. Odescalchi, XI.B.F.4, fasc. 139, "Mobili sottoposti dal Test.re D. Livio primo Odescalcho alle leggi di Maggiorasco . . .," fol 15r).

⁴⁷ "Il n'a rien fait depuis qu'un Ouvrage de devotion dont on verra bien-tost une belle Copie à saint Barthelemy. C'est un Buste d'un Christ à my-corps avec deux mains [italics mine] donnant la benediction, par où il a fini sa vie. Il l'a laissé à la Reine Christine de Suede, qui dit fort obligeamment à sa Famille, quand on le luy presenta, que le Cavalier le luy avoit offert plusieurs fois de son vivant, mais qu'elle l'avoit toujours refusé, parce qu'elle n'avoit pas dix-mille escus pour l'en récompenser" ("Éloge de M. la Cavalier Bernin par M. l'Abbé de la Chambre de l'Academie Françoisé," *Journal des Sçavans*, February 24, 1681, 61).

⁴⁸ The copy was in Saint-Barthélemy in 1686, but is not mentioned in later descriptions of the church, which was pulled down in 1792 (Canestro Chioyenda, "Cristina di Svezia," 172).



9 Gianlorenzo Bernini, *Study for the Bust of the Savior*, drawing, 171 × 254mm. Rome, Gabinetto Nazionale delle Stampe

representations of its kind: the drapery engulfs the body, rendering the torso indistinguishable; the head and raised arm move in opposite directions.⁴⁹

In the Chrysler Museum at Norfolk, Virginia, is a marble bust of Christ which corresponds so closely to the descriptions in the sources and the Corsini drawing that it must be either Cureau's copy or the original (Figs. 10–14).⁵⁰ In the course of studying the piece my own opinion has shifted from the former to the latter attribution. Initially the work seems perverse, not to say repellent. The proportions are curiously awkward; the massive body, long neck and tapered head lack the classical balance and harmony with which Bernini usually conceived the human body. The strained and rather withdrawn pose is a reversal of Bernini's predilection for open and fluid movement. The surfaces

of the face and drapery are generalized and abstract, compared with the tremulous warmth and intimacy and fine differentiation of textures that ordinarily distinguish his autograph works. The handling of the back, rough-hewn in the body, left unfinished at the head, shows a degree of neglect almost unprecedented in his busts – hardly evidence of the particular care he is reported to have lavished on the *Savior*.

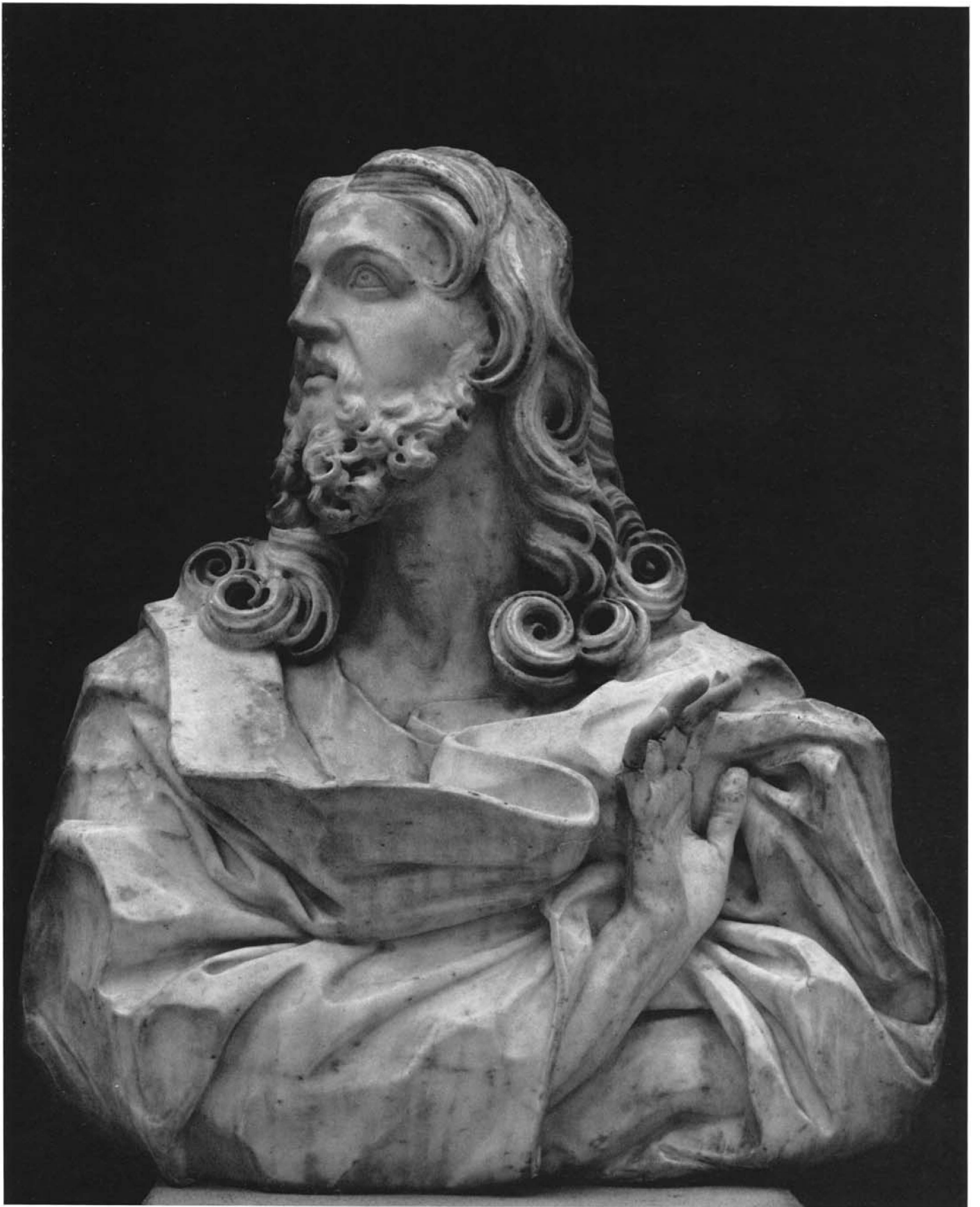
These seemingly negative factors may actually speak in favor of the Norfolk sculpture, given the subject and the special circumstances under which the *Savior* was created. According to Baldinucci, Bernini himself described the work as “wanting in vivacity and tenderness and other good qualities of technique,” owing to his advanced age. It was, in fact, his right, working arm that ultimately gave way.

⁴⁹ I am not convinced (see Brauer and Wittkower, *Zeichnungen*, 179) that the head at the right in this drawing is by a later hand; certainly it is not copied after the final work, as is shown by the differences from the Norfolk marble. An anonymous drawing at Chatsworth (Wittkower, *Bernini*, 265) seems unrelated to Bernini's *Savior*.

⁵⁰ Unpublished. I am indebted to Robert Wallace, author of *The World of Bernini, 1598–1680* (*Time-Life Library of Art*), New York, 1970, for bringing this work to my attention. Height 93cm; width 92cm. The three last fingers of the right hand have been broken and reattached; otherwise the condition is excellent.

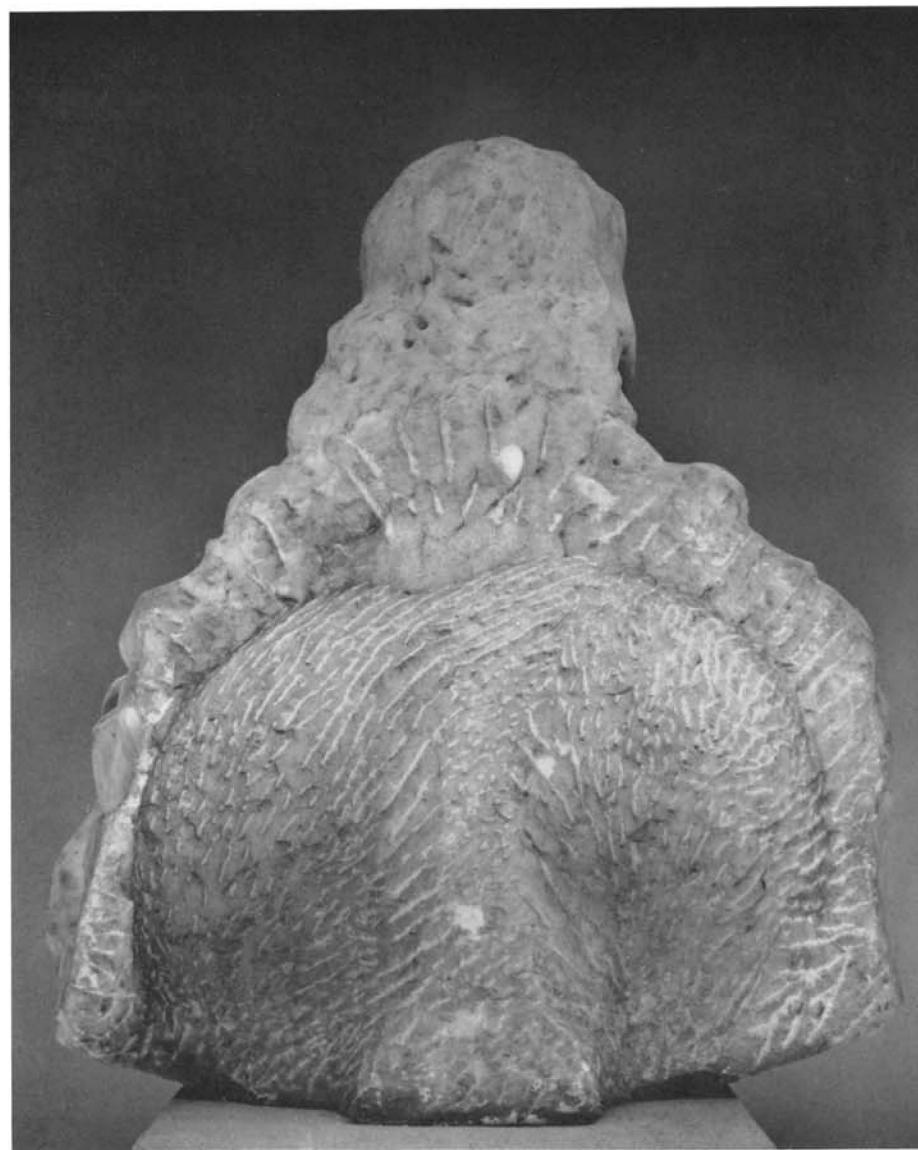
Mr. Chrysler has given me, *in litteris*, the following account of its provenance. Purchased in Paris in 1952 from the Vicomte Jacques de

Canson (died 1958). De Canson, who knew of Bernini's gift to Queen Christina, reported that the sculpture had never left Italy before entering his possession; he had received it from a pope (unnamed), to whom it had been given before his election by Baron Giorgio Franchetti (died 1922), founder of the Galleria Franchetti at the Ca d'Oro in Venice. My efforts to verify this account have been almost fruitless. De Canson's daughter, Mme Jean Deschamps of Evry, remembers the piece vaguely, and confirms that her father was received in private audiences by Pius XI and XII. Giorgio Franchetti's son, Baron Luigi Franchetti of Rome, has no knowledge of the sculpture but recalls that his uncle Edoardo Franchetti had contacts with De Canson concerning works of art. The Vatican secretariat of state was unable to help without more precise information.



10 Gianlorenzo Bernini, *Bust of the Savior*. Norfolk, Va., Chrysler Museum (photo: R. Thornton, Providence, R.I.)





11, 12, 13, 14 Gianlorenzo Bernini, details of the *Bust of the Savior*. Norfolk, Va., Chrysler Museum (photos: R. Thornton, Providence, R.I.)

One can readily imagine that Bernini determined to husband his remaining energies, and concentrate on finishing the front. A no less important consideration than the artist's physical state is the ambiguous character of the image itself. A degree of austerity and abstraction was inherent in the *Salvator Mundi* theme. We shall see that Bernini deliberately referred to this traditional iconic type, in order to reinterpret it and achieve a new fusion of Christ's heroic and human qualities. Strongly affirmative, in my estimation, are passages like the subtly modelled hands and arm and the loosely curling locks of hair, laced with running drill holes, which are wholly in keeping with Bernini's late style and match his most brilliant technical effects. The very unevenness of quality is more readily understood as the work of a decrepit genius rather than a copyist, especially an able one, who would tend to transform the model uniformly according to his lights.

Original or copy, the Norfolk sculpture serves to clarify and in some respects correct the impression of the *Savior* given by the Corsini drawing, the differences being due either to the angle of vision in the latter or, more likely, I suspect, to a development in Bernini's ideas between the drawing and the final execution. The head is not only turned sideways, but upward as well. The right arm is not extended forward, but held close to the torso; nor is the gesture a conventional one of blessing, but the hand is raised vertically and the palm is turned slightly outward. Thus, the qualification implicit in Domenico Bernini's description of the gesture, "alquanto sollevata, come in atto di benedire," becomes significant. Finally, the marble makes quite plain what is barely discernible in the drawing and was observed only by the Abbé de la Chambre, namely, that Bernini in fact included both hands; the wrist and upper part of the left hand are visible under the right arm, lying against the breast.

The bust was completed by a monumental pedestal, which is described by Tessin and in the 1713 inventory (cf. Fig. 15). Under the bust was a base of Sicilian jasper 28cm high and 50cm wide at the bottom. This was in turn held in both hands by two angels who knelt on a large socle; angels and socle together, which were of gilded wood, measured 198cm high. Overall the work stood about 300

cm, or ten feet high. There is no proof that the pedestal was made during Bernini's lifetime, but there can be no doubt that it was his invention. The general effect must have been similar to that seen in a late drawing by Bernini for a sacrament altar, in which angels kneel on the mensa and hold aloft by the base a monstrance containing the Eucharist (Fig. 16).⁵¹

The bust of the Savior belongs typologically to the tradition of independent, bust-length sculptured portraits and images of holy personages that emerged in Italy around the middle of the fifteenth century.⁵² Within this context the *Savior* is related to a class of busts in which both arms are included; the bust appears "complete" and has a specific histrionic content. Though common for reliefs and sculptures in niches or attached to architecture, the type is rather rare among independent busts. A few antique examples are known;⁵³ it was used from the Middle Ages on for reliquaries, and was revived for ordinary busts by Verrocchio in the quattrocento.⁵⁴ Characteristically such independent busts in the Early Renaissance were cut through horizontally at the waist or above, worked fully in the round, and displayed without a base, or on a low plinth. When in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries the imperial Roman bust form was revived – shaped at the bottom, hollowed at the back and set on a tall, narrow base – the two-armed type failed to conform. So far as I know, Bernini's *Savior* is the first monumental marble bust since antiquity that is hollowed at the back, stands free on a pedestal, and includes both arms.⁵⁵ It combines, in an unprecedented way for a Christian image, the living and dramatic quality of a narrative figure with the commemorative and idolous quality of a classical bust monument.

The *Savior* is equally unprecedented in the treatment of the bust form itself. The crossed arms that conceal the lower torso and the arrangement of the drapery that envelops the body make the bust seem virtually self-sufficient, that is, not arbitrarily severed. Visually speaking, it is practically impossible to say whether we are confronted by the upper half of a whole human being, or a whole being in half-human shape. Furthermore, there was an obvious reciprocity between the bust and its pedestal: the jasper base served as an abstract support for a material weight, the bust as

⁵¹ Brauer and Wittkower, *Zeichnungen*, 172, pl. 131a. Needless to say, the weight of the bust can hardly have rested on the wooden angels' hands; presumably there was some additional, invisible support.

⁵² Cf. I. Lavin, "On the Sources and Meaning of the Renaissance Portrait Bust," *Art Quarterly*, xxxiii, 1970, 207ff.

Among the earliest such "portrait" busts of holy personages, it seems, is the *St. Lawrence* in the Old Sacristy of San Lorenzo, Florence, often attributed to Donatello in the older literature (H. W. Janson, *The Sculpture of Donatello*, Princeton, 1963, 236f.; M. Lisner, "Die Büste des Heiligen Laurentius in der alten Sacristei von S. Lorenzo," *Zeitschrift für Kunstwissenschaft*, xii, 1958, 51ff.; C. Seymour, Jr., *Sculpture in Italy, 1400 to 1500*, Harmondsworth, 1966, 240, n. 21, 246, n. 9).

⁵³ Apart from the famous *Commodus* in the Palazzo dei Conservatori, I am aware of the following ancient examples: the so-called *Matidia* in the Uffizi (G. A. Mansuelli, *Galleria degli Uffizi. Le sculture*, 2 vols., Rome, 1958, II, 84, No. 86), a bust of a lady in the British Museum (A. H. Smith, *A Catalogue of Sculpture in the Department of Greek and Roman Antiquities of the British Museum*, 3 vols., London, 1892–1904, III, 190f., No. 190), and another in the Berlin Museum (C. Blümel, *Staatliche Museen zu Berlin. Römische Bildnisse*, Berlin, 1933, 48f., No. R 117).

But see also the related material concerning "half statues" discussed in

A. Frantz, H. A. Thompson and J. Travlos, "The 'Temple of Apollo Pythios' on Sikinos," *American Journal of Archaeology*, LXXIII, 1969, 410ff.

⁵⁴ For bust reliquaries of this kind, see E. Kovács, *Kopfreliquiare des Mittelalters*, Budapest, 1964, pls. 10, 11, 22, 36, 42; P. Toesca, *Storia dell'arte italiana. II. Il trecento*, Turin, 1951, 899f.; J. Braun, "Büstenreliquiar," in *Reallexikon der deutschen Kunstgeschichte*, Stuttgart, 1937ff., III, cols. 274ff., figs. 8–10.

The Verrocchio referred to is of course the *Lady with Flowers* in the Bargello (for which see now G. Passavant, *Verrocchio*, London, 1969, 33f., 180f.).

⁵⁵ A possible antecedent is Algardi's bust of Paolo Emilio Zacchia in Florence, but its base is not original (A. Nava Cellini, "Per l'integrazione e lo svolgimento della ritrattistica di Alessandro Algardi," *Paragone*, 1964, No. 177, 23) and I suspect it was meant to be displayed without one, perhaps in a niche.

At the beginning of his career, in the portrait of Antonio Coppola in San Giovanni dei Fiorentini (1612), Bernini had revived the ancient type of bust with one arm showing and set on a base (I. Lavin, "Five New Youthful Sculptures by Gianlorenzo Bernini and a Revised Chronology of His Early Works," *Art Bulletin*, I, 1968, 223ff.).

such; the angels served as figured supports for a metaphorical weight, the image of Christ.

In the sections that follow we shall explore the background for Bernini's treatment of the bust and its pedestal, and seek to define the religious significance of the work.

The Portrait Bust as Apotheosis

The idea of a reciprocal and explicitly meaningful relationship between the bust and its support was revived toward the middle of the sixteenth century as part of a general tendency to charge the portrait with significance beyond that of simply commemorating the individual represented.⁵⁶ The cope of Guglielmo della Porta's *Paul III* in Naples (1546–47) is adorned with an elaborate cycle of allegorical and Old Testament scenes by which the Pope is "invested" as the patriarchal harbinger of heaven-sent peace and wisdom; the strapwork base intended for the bust is inhabited by two reclining male nudes, a shell and a floral garland.⁵⁷ The precise meaning of the base is not certain; presumably it alludes to the underworld and eternity. In any case the bust and base surely complement one another, although there is no overt expression of a dynamic relationship between weight and support.

This appears in the work of Leone Leoni, who used the idea to convey the imperialist program of the Hapsburg dynasty. Leoni's bronze *Charles V* in the Prado (1553–55; Fig. 17) is conceived as a victor's trophy held aloft by two allegorical figures and the imperial eagle – both devices based on ancient Roman precedents.⁵⁸ The torso itself is part of the message; its edges coincide with the actual edges of an armored corselet, hence nothing is "cut off." This

treatment represents an ingenious solution to the problem that had confronted the Renaissance sculptor when the ideally shaped and supported classical bust form was revived, namely, how to allude to the whole person of the sitter, an effect achieved automatically by the arbitrary truncation of the Renaissance type.⁵⁹ Leoni's empty cuirass is a visual pun, which suggests that the bust not only "contains" the sitter, whom the viewer inevitably imagines *in toto*, but is also a self-contained object, a commemorative monument in its own right.⁶⁰

Other devices had been introduced by Benvenuto Cellini to suggest a whole, living person. In his cuirassed *Cosimo I* (1545–47), Cellini, for the first time, gave an asymmetrical movement to the arms, and almost completely disguised the cut-off (Fig. 18).⁶¹ At the right the amputation of the arm coincides with the end of the epaulette; at the left the drapery, which appears folded under itself rather than cut, hides the truncation as it moves across to the knot at the center. Only the sheer, curving slice of the torso at the right reminds the observer that the bust is an artificial, abstract thing, rather than the upper part of a human being.

Bernini seems to take up Cellini's thought in his portrait of Francesco I d'Este of 1650–51 (Fig. 19). Here the severed edges of the body are completely hidden by the drapery, which acquires a "miraculous" dual existence – forming part of the sitter's clothing, and enveloping the bust itself.⁶² The image may thus be read alternatively as the upper part of a whole person, or as a bust wrapped in a cloth of honor. The supporting function is also fulfilled ambiguously: understood literally, the weight is borne by the conventional, abstract base; understood figuratively, it is sustained by an

⁵⁶ Precedents among busts of the quattrocento type are those with figured plinths by Francesco Laurana (see now, G. L. Hersey, *Alfonso II and the Artistic Renewal of Naples 1485–1495*, New Haven-London, 1969, 37ff.).

⁵⁷ See the exemplary study by W. Gramberg, "Die Hamburger Bronzebüste Paul III. Farnese von Guglielmo della Porta," *Festschrift für Erich Meyer zum 60. Geburtstag*, Hamburg, 1959, 160–72, where it is shown that the bases of this and a simplified workshop version, also in Naples, were exchanged.

Reclining allegories of Ocean and Earth had appeared beneath the medallion portraits of the deceased on Roman sarcophagi, a type that Michelangelo had earlier adapted in the Medici Chapel (C. De Tolnay, *The Medici Chapel*, Princeton, 1948, 66, 166).

⁵⁸ E. Plon, *Leone Leoni sculpteur de Charles-Quint et Pompeo Leoni sculpteur de Philippe II*, Paris, 1887, 289ff.; H. Keutner, *Sculpture Renaissance to Rococo*, London, 1969, 308, No. 50, suggests that the allegories may represent Mars and Minerva. L. O. Larsson, *Adrian de Vries*, Vienna, 1967, 36ff., has recently studied Leoni's bust in connection with the portrait of Rudolph II made by de Vries in 1603 as a pendant to a version of the *Charles V* in Vienna.

In fact, I know of no direct prototype for Leoni's conception (the Conservatori *Commodus*, to which it has been compared, was discovered in the 19th century). Rather, Leoni evidently combined elements from three different antique traditions: the bust carried on the wings of an eagle (of which an example in the Capitoline had been known since the 15th century; cf. *ibid.*; also G. Pozzi and L. A. Ciapponi, *Francesco Colonna. Hypnerotomachia Poliphili*, 2 vols., Padua, 1964, I, 94, 108ff.; A. Roes, "L'aigle psychopompe de l'époque impériale," in *Mélanges Charles Picard*, II, *Revue archéologique*, 1948, 881–91; H. Jucker, "Auf den Schwingen des Göttervogels," *Jahrbuch des bernischen historischen Museums in Bern*, xxxix–xl, 1956–60, 266–88); the *imago clipeata* held by standing or flying victories, putti, etc. (cf. recently, R. Winkes, "Clipeata imago. Studien zu einer römischen Bildnisform," [Ph.D. diss., Bonn, 1969, 88ff.]); and the cuirass trophy with defeated enemies, often a male and a female, seated back-to-back underneath (G. C. Picard, *Les Trophées romains*, Paris, 1957 [Bibliothèque des écoles françaises d'Athènes et de Rome,

Fasc. 187]; A. J. Janssen, *Het antieke trophaion*, Brussels, 1957 [Koninklijke Vlaamse academie voor wetenschappen letteren en schone Kunsten van België, Klasse der Letteren, Verhandelingen, No. 27]). An arrangement comparable to Leoni's occurs on the cuirass of a pseudo-antique bust (head ancient) in Venice, perhaps by Vittoria (G. Traversari, *Museo archeologico di Venezia. I ritratti*, Rome, 1968, No. 32).

Leoni's idea also seems to me inconceivable without the inspiration, stylistic and otherwise, of Bambaia's great panoply of trophies in the tomb of Gaston de Foix, formerly in Santa Marta in Milan (Venturi, *Storia*, x, 1, figs. 523ff.; cf. J. Pope-Hennessy, *Catalogue of Italian Sculpture in the Victoria and Albert Museum*, 3 vols., London, 1964, II, 542f.).

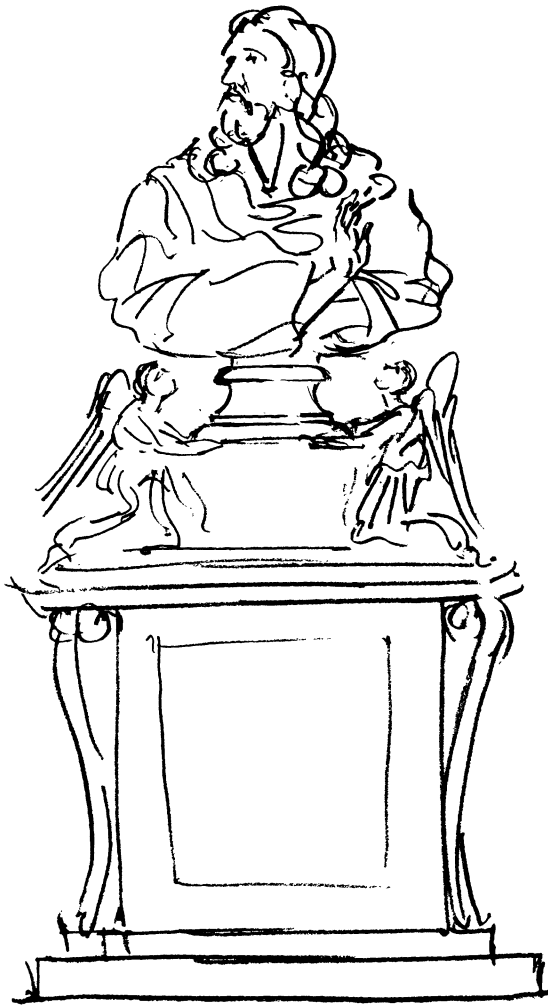
⁵⁹ See the observations in my article cited above, n. 52.

⁶⁰ Early precedents for the cuirass bust may be the problematic portrait of Alfonso I of Naples in Vienna (*Katalog der Sammlung für Plastik und Kunstgewerbe. II Teil*, Vienna, 1966, 9f., No. 193; cf. *Kunsthistorisches Museum Wien. Meisterwerke*, Vienna, 1955, pl. 68), and that of Francesco Gonzaga by Gian Cristoforo Romano in Mantua (Venturi, *Storia*, vi, fig. 778). A conceit analogous to Leoni's allusion to the empty corselet occurs in Francesco Segala's portrait of Girolamo Micheli (died 1557) in the Santo in Padua, where the bust appears to rest on an armor stand (Venturi, *Storia*, x, 3, fig. 144).

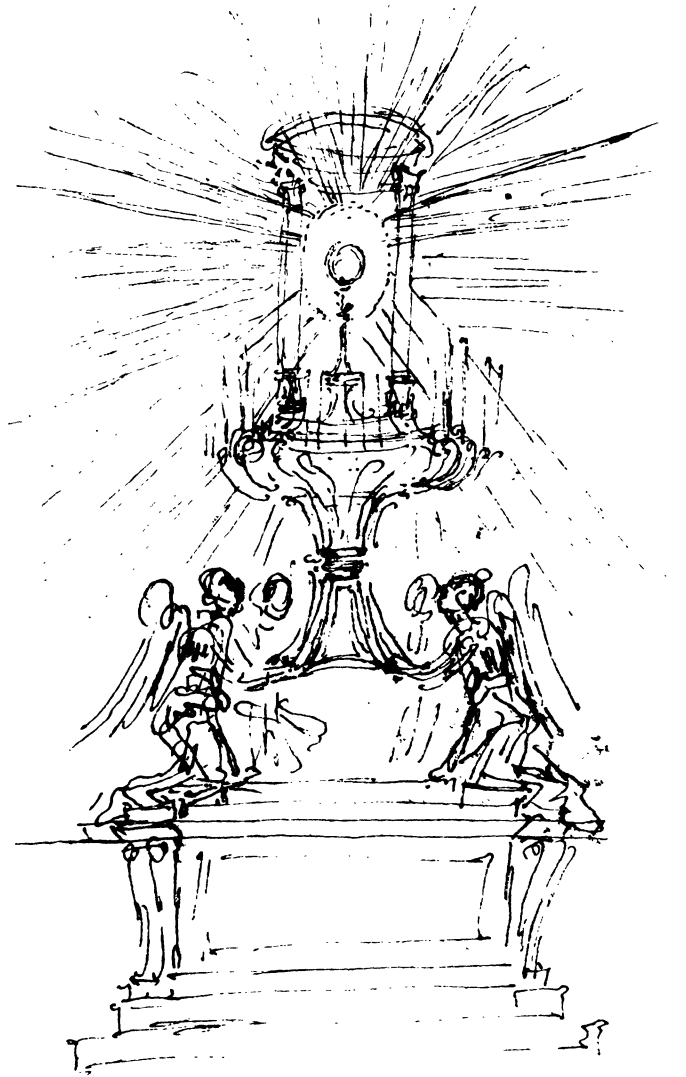
It should be emphasized that the *Charles V* also owes a considerable debt to the tradition of reliquary busts (as suggested by J. Pope-Hennessy, *The Portrait in the Renaissance*, London–New York, 1966, 177).

⁶¹ On moving arms, cf. Lavin, "Five New Youthful Sculptures," 241ff., and *idem.*, "Duquesnoy's 'Nano di Créqui' and Two Busts by Francesco Mochi," *Art Bulletin*, LII, 1970, 140f. On the Medicean symbolism of the armor of Cellini's bust, see now K. W. Forster, "Metaphors of Rule. Political Ideology and History in the Portraits of Cosimo I de' Medici," *Mitteilungen des kunsthistorischen Institutes in Florenz*, xv, 1971, 76ff.

⁶² On this device, cf. Lavin, "Duquesnoy's 'Nano di Créqui,'" 141, n. 66; it occurs in the bust of Michelangelo Buonarroti, Jr. made in Rome in 1630 by Giuliano Finelli, Bernini's first assistant. A likely prototype is Cellini's *Bindo Altoviti*, which was in Rome until the 19th century (E. Camesasca, *Tutta l'opera del Cellini*, Milan, 1962, pls. 66–67).



15 Reconstruction of Bernini's *Bust of the Savior* (drawing by Paul Suttman)



16 Gianlorenzo Bernini, *Study for a Monstrance*, drawing, 237 × 163mm. Leipzig, Museum der bildenden Künste, Graphische Sammlung

unseen force that discharges upward through the drapery at the right.

In the portrait of Louis XIV (Fig. 20), made during his stay in Paris in 1665, Bernini developed these devices further, and combined them with the idea of a bust-base

monument that had lay virtually dormant since Leone Leoni.⁶³ The work must be imagined with the pedestal Bernini proposed for it, described in Chantelou's diary of the artist's visit.⁶⁴ It was to be mounted on an enameled copper globe of the world, which in turn rested on a drapery of

⁶³ Apart from the *Rudolph II* of Adrian de Vries (above, n. 58) we may mention Bastiano Torrigiani's busts of Gregory XIII and XIV, where the torsos end at the bottom in symbolic winged motives (cf. Gramberg, "Hamburger Bronzestue," 171f.). Prospero Clementi's bust of Ercole II d'Este at Modena stood on a pedestal with an allegorical relief of Patience (Venturi, *Storia*, x, 2, fig. 475; cf. *idem*, *La R. Galleria estense in Modena*, Modena, 1882, 105f., fig. 47).

⁶⁴ "Après qu'ils ont été sortis, le Cavalier m'a tiré à part et m'a montré un dessin qu'il a fait d'un piédestal pour poser le buste, et ce piédestal est un globe du monde avec un mot qui dit: *Picciola basa*. Il m'a demandé mon sentiment de cette pensée. Je lui ai dit que je la trouvais grande et noble, donnant à juger pour l'avenir de grandes choses du Roi. Il a ajouté qu'outre le grand qu'elle porte avec elle, il en tirait un autre avantage: c'est que cette boule par sa globulente empêcherait qu'on ne touchât le buste, comme on a coutume de faire en France, quand on voit quelque chose de nouveau. Je lui ai dit que sa pensée se rapporte encore heureusement à la devise du Roi, dont le corps est un soleil avec le mot: *Nec*

pluribus impar, et que ce piédestal est le plus grand qu'on pouvait imaginer, mais qu'il fallait qu'il y mit son nom, pour dire que c'est lui qui l'a inventé et l'a fait, afin qu'on ne pense pas que ce soit le Roi, qui parle et qui trouve que le monde est une trop petite base pour lui. Il a ajouté que ce piédestal ferait un bel effet, l'azur de la mer se distinguant du reste du globe, qui sera de cuivre doré. . .

L'on a parlé ensuite du piédestal de son buste. Il a dit à ce sujet à l'abbé Buti, que le mot de *picciola basa*, lui semblait cadrer mieux que celui de: *sed parva*, que l'abbé avait trouvé, lequel a soutenu que le mot de *basa* exprimait trop; qu'aux devises il faut laisser à penser. Le Cavalier a repliqué que *basa* pour un monde donnait assez à penser. Il a ajouté qu'il y faudrait dessous une espèce de tapis de même matière que le globe, et qu'il fût émaillé et orné de trophées de guerre et de vertus, à l'élevation d'un ou deux pouces, débordant plus que le globe pour empêcher encore davantage, qu'on ne pût approcher du buste, et qu'il faudrait couvrir le tout d'un petite courtine de taffetas et le nettoyer de la poussière avec un soufflet" (P. F. de Chantelou, *Journal du voyage du Cavalier Bernin en France*, ed. L. Lalanne, Paris, 1885, 150, 156).



17 Leone Leoni, *Bust of Charles V*. Madrid, Museo del Prado (photo: Mas)



18 Benvenuto Cellini, *Bust of Cosimo I*. Florence, Museo Nazionale del Bargello (photo: Alinari)



19 Gianlorenzo Bernini, *Bust of Francesco I d'Este*. Modena, Museo Estense (photo: Alinari)



20 Gianlorenzo Bernini, *Bust of Louis XIV*. Musée de Versailles (photo: Alinari)

copper emblazoned with trophies and virtues; the whole was to be placed on a kind of platform.⁶⁵ The globe was to bear the inscription "Picciola basa" as a punning reference to its physical size, geographical form and supporting function (cf. Fig. 21).⁶⁶

In the *Louis XIV*, the bust, as such, is scarcely perceptible behind the screen of drapery; only at the left elbow is the viewer free to decide whether the arm is cut off or continues across the chest, in a vital contrapposto movement unprecedented in bust portraiture.⁶⁷ Conversely, the drapery is now scarcely perceived as clothing, but rather as a kind of magic carpet on which the image rides.⁶⁸ Since the ambiguity between person and thing is now virtually complete, the base plays a new and crucial role. The edge of drapery at the lower right curls up, revealing the expanding curve of

the support. Instead of a severed body on a base, as in the traditional bust, one imagines a transition between human and abstract form, as in the traditional herm – the one explicitly commemorative ancient portrait type. This implied but hidden fusion of reality and idea is the visual equivalent of the metaphorical apotheosis expressed by the superimposition of the floating bust above the global pedestal.

The globe had often served as the base for imperial portrait busts in antiquity, in reference to the monarch's apotheosis.⁶⁹ I know of only one instance, however, in which the globe and military spoils are combined, the former resting on the latter. This was a splendid and once famous monument of the Emperor Claudius, excavated in the Via Appia near Rome in the 1640's (Fig. 22).⁷⁰ It was displayed on an elaborately carved pedestal in the Palazzo

⁶⁵ How the bust was to be mounted on the globe is clear from another passage: "Le cavalier durant cela était auprès du scarpelin qui travaillait au pied du buste. Il lui a demandé de quelle qualité était son marbre. Il lui a répondu: *Cotto*. 'Il est donc, ça dit le Cavalier, de même que celui du buste'" (M. Roland Bossard of the Musée de Versailles kindly informs me that the base is in fact made of a separate piece of the same marble as the bust). "... Je lui ai demandé, voyant l'assiette de ce pied de buste carrée, comment elle se pourrait adapter au globe de la base. Il m'a répondu qu'on creuserait cette assiette à la proportion de la globulence" (*ibid.*, 166).

Concerning the platform on which the whole was to rest: "Le douzième, j'ai trouvé le Cavalier dessinant son buste pour y faire le piédestal, qu'il a projeté en forme de globe. Il le pose comme sur une espèce d'estrade" (*ibid.*, 228).

⁶⁶ The engraving reproduced in Figure 21 (Paris, Bibl. Nat., Cab. des Estampes, cote AA 4 Gantrel), which seems to reflect Bernini's idea for the *Louis XIV*, was brought to my attention by Mr. Peter Fusco; cf. A. Dayot, *Louis XIV*, Paris, 1909, ill. page 80. It bears the inscriptions "P. Sevin in." (i.e., Pierre Paul Sevin, 1650–1710), "Gantrel f." (Etienne Gantrel, 1646–1706), "Ste. Gantrel ex C. F. R." The bust shown (in reverse) is one at Versailles attributed to Coysevox, ca. 1675 (No. 2195, C. Maumené and L. D'Harcourt, "Iconographie des rois de France. Second partie," *Archives de l'art français*, Nouvelle période, xiv, 1932, 62; cf. E. Bourgeois, *Le grand siècle*, Paris, 1896, frontispiece).

⁶⁷ A likely source for the pose was the portrait attributed to Titian of Pier Luigi Farnese, now in Naples, which was in the Palazzo Farnese in Rome until 1662 (R. Pallucchini, *Tiziano*, Florence, 1969, 286, pl. 313); cf. also the *Julius Caesar* of Titian's series of the emperors in the Palazzo Ducale at Mantua (*ibid.*, 341f., No. 608; E. Verheyen, "Jacopo Strada's Mantuan Drawings of 1567–1568," *Art Bulletin*, XLIX, 1967, 62–67). The composition was taken up by Bronzino for his portrait of Cosimo I (A. Emiliani, *Il Bronzino*, Busto Arsizio, 1960, pl. 90) and, in reverse, by Giulio Romano for his portrait of Alexander the Great (F. Hartt, *Giulio Romano*, New Haven, 1958, 218, fig. 466; be it recalled that the armor Bernini used for the bust was said to have been designed by Giulio Romano, and given to Francis I by a Gonzaga duke; Chantelou, *Journal* 49, 151).

On Alexander see further, n. 71 below.

⁶⁸ To my knowledge, the only one who seems to have remarked on this effect of the drapery, albeit negatively, was Charles Perrault: "... l'écharpe, à laquelle on donne tant de louages, n'est pas bien entendue. Comme elle enveloppe le bout du bras du Roi, ce ne peut être qu'une écharpe qu'on a mise sur le buste du Roi, et non pas l'écharpe qui étoit sur le corps du Roi quand on a fait son buste, parce que cette écharpe alors n'environnoit pas son bras de la manière qu'elle l'environne" (P. Bonnefon, ed., *Mémoires de ma vie par Charles Perrault. Voyage à Bordeaux [1669] par Charles Perrault*, Paris, 1909, 63).

The idea recalls the curtains on which portraits of the deceased on ancient sarcophagi are often borne aloft (F. De Ruyt, "Études de symbolisme funéraire. A propos d'un nouveau sarcophage romain aux Musées Royaux d'Art et d'Histoire, à Bruxelles," *Bulletin de l'Institut historique belge de Rome*, xvii, 1936, 160–64; W. Lameere, "Un symbole pythagoricien dans l'art funéraire de Rome," *Bulletin de correspondance hellénique*, LXIII, 1939, 43–85), and medieval depictions of the soul carried heavenward on swaths of drapery (H. s'Jacob, *Idealism and Realism. A Study of Sepulchral Symbolism*, Leiden, 1954, 121ff. E. Panofsky, *Tomb Sculpture*, New York, [1964], 93). Bernini first revived this motif in his

memorial of Alessandro Valtrini in San Lorenzo in Damaso (Wittkower, *Bernini*, 210, No. 43; dated 1639 by the inscription), and adapted it frequently thereafter in a variety of ways.

⁶⁹ On this motif, whose connection with the *Louis XIV* seems not to have been observed, see the literature concerning the Conservatori *Commodus* cited by H. von Heintze, in W. Helbig, *Führer durch die öffentlichen Sammlungen klassischer Altertümer in Rom*, 4th ed., Tübingen, 1963ff., II, 306ff., especially S. A. Strong, "A Bronze Bust of a Julio-Claudian Prince (?Caligula) in the Museum of Colchester; With a Note on the Symbolism of the Globe in Imperial Portraiture," *Journal of Roman Studies*, vi, 1916, 27–46; H. Jucker, *Das Bildnis im Blätterkelch*, Olten, 1961, esp. 154, n. 11; T. Hölscher, *Victoria Romana*, Mainz, 1967, 10, 25, 44, 47. A spheroid object, probably a fruit but easily to be taken for a globe, also appears under busts of private individuals on sarcophagi (De Ruyt, "Études de symbolisme," 154–59). Monumental examples Bernini might have known in Rome are the porphyry columns with projecting imperial busts on globes, now in the Louvre (R. Delbrueck, *Antike Porphyruerke*, Berlin-Leipzig, 1932, 52ff.). The motif was revived from ancient coins by Leone Leoni in a medal of Charles V (cf. Larsson, *Adrian de Vries*, fig. 93). See also the bust of Cybele in Mantegna's *Triumph of Scipio* in the National Gallery, London.

In connection with the *Louis XIV*, Keutner, *Sculpture*, 325, No. 170, refers to a medal bearing the date 1661 which shows the King as the Sun God seated on a globe; however, the medal was made in 1687 (cf. *La médaille au temps de Louis XIV*, exh. cat., Paris, 1970, 181, No. 259). On the other hand, something analogous to Bernini's conception had appeared in a medal of 1664 illustrating the King's motto *Nec Pluribus Impar*, where the radiant face of the sun rises over a terrestrial globe (*ibid.*, 89, No. 123, ill. page 90); this is the device referred to by Chantelou (n. 64 above), and the same juxtaposition is made in the engraving by Sevin and Gantrel (Fig. 21; cf. n. 66 above), where in the center the sun appears above the bust resting on the globe and the impresa is illustrated in the upper left corner.

⁷⁰ A. Blanco, *Museo del Prado. Catalogo de la escultura. I. Esculturas clasicas*, Madrid, 1957, 115f., No. 225–E, pl. LXVI. Blanco reports that a copy of the bust, by V. Salvatierra (1790–1836), is in the depot of the Prado; my inquiries after it have been in vain. The engraving of the ancient portions of the monument reproduced here in Figure 22, which reverses the original, is from B. de Montfaucon, *L'antiquité expliquée*, 5 vols., Paris, 1719, v, pl. cxxix.

There has been some confusion concerning the dates involved, arising apparently from errors in R. Lanciani, "La villa castrimenesiense di Q. Voconio Pollione," *Bullettino della commissione archeologica comunale di Roma*, xii, 1884, 196. Pietro Santi Bartoli (1637–1700) recorded that the work, to which he refers as "la famosa deificazione di Claudio," was found "ne' tempi, che il card. Francesco Barberini si trasferì in Francia," and that a cardinal Colonna brought it as a gift when he transferred to the court of Spain (*Memorie*, first published in *Roma antica*, Rome, 1741, 351; reprinted in C. D. Fea, *Miscellanea filologica critica e antiquaria*, 2 vols., Rome, 1790–1836, I, cclxvif.). Lanciani interpolated the date 1654 for the discovery, probably a misprint for 1645; Antonio Barberini fled to France late in the latter year, Francesco fled in January, 1646 and stayed until 1648. Lanciani also slipped in calling the Colonna cardinal "Ascanio" (died 1608); in fact it was Girolamo (died 1666), who went to Spain in 1664 for the wedding of Margarita Teresa and Leopold I (A. Ciaconius, *Vitae et res gestae pontificum romanorum et S.R.E. Cardinalium*, 4 vols., Rome, 1677, IV, col. 568).

Colonna in Rome until the year before Bernini's trip to Paris, when it was taken to Spain. The bust has since disappeared, but the base and pedestal added by the Colonna, which together stand six feet high (184cm), are still to be seen in the Prado (Fig. 23). The *Colonna Claudius* showed the Emperor wearing the aegis, looking to the side and slightly upward, with a radiate crown on his head; the bust was supported on the outspread wings of the Jovian eagle, which held the globe and the thunderbolt in its claws, and rested in turn on a wide pile of military spoils. Bernini must have remembered this extraordinary work when he designed the *Louis XIV*. The pose is transformed from one of divine inspiration into one of personal vigor and nobility. The role of the crown is played by the wig, which recalls the "leonine mane" of Alexander the Great. The symbolic protection of the aegis and the levitational force of the eagle are embodied in the shielding, air-borne drapery. The globe, instead of symbolizing the heavens, Jove's realm, actually represents the earth.⁷¹ Whereas Claudius was literally divinized through metaphorical identification with the celestial ruler, Louis XIV is metaphorically apotheosized by being literally identified as the terrestrial ruler *par excellence*.

With the bust of the Savior Bernini carried these ideas from the secular to the religious sphere.

The "Divine Simulacrum"

In a formal sense the contrapposto relationship between the head and right arm of the *Savior* may be viewed as a development from the composition of the *Louis XIV*. But the pose was motivated by more than formal considerations. The *Savior* belongs thematically to the class of isolated, bust-length depictions of Christ that include both arms. Such images may be roughly divided into two groups, the

Salvator Mundi and the Imago Pietatis, according to whether Christ's triumph or His human sacrifice is stressed.⁷² Usually the Salvator Mundi shows the figure alive and clothed, the left hand holding a globe, symbol of the universality of redemption, the right hand raised in blessing, and the gaze fixed upon the observer in a frontal stare.⁷³ In the Man of Sorrows Christ is shown dead, the body is nude, the head droops obliquely to the side, and the arms are folded across each other on the breast.⁷⁴ It seems clear that Bernini sought to amalgamate the two traditional embodiments of the deity. In that the figure is clothed and the right hand suggests a blessing, it evokes the Salvator Mundi; the averted head and crossed arms allude to the Man of Sorrows. In expressive terms the result is an almost ineffable combination of heroic suffering and inspired benignity.

Bernini's figure further recalls an intermediate type which has been termed the "rhetorical" Man of Sorrows.⁷⁵ Christ is shown alive, the nude body exposed but draped in a mantle, the head bent downward to the side and the glance oblique; one hand calls attention to the chest wound, the other is raised in a gesture of pathetic exclamation. While Bernini must have had this type in mind also, his *Savior* differs from it in two fundamental respects: the position of the head and eyes, and the gesture of the right hand. The upward glance had become familiar in bust-length depictions of Christ, for example, in variants of the Salvator Mundi based on the inspired figure in Federico Barocci's *Last Supper* in Urbino, and in pictures of the agonized *Ecce Homo* crowned with thorns, by Guido Reni and Guercino.⁷⁶ But in these the head, though sometimes tilted, is not turned to the side, and the eyes look directly aloft. Conversely, busts of Christ often showed the head in three quarters, but the face and glance were not directed upward.⁷⁷ The

⁷¹ On the sideward turn and upward tilt of the head, see H. P. L'Orange, *Apotheosis in Ancient Portraiture*, Oslo, 1947, Chap. 2, 19ff., "Heavenward-Gazing Alexander."

Concerning the resemblance to Alexander, it is remarkable that Vasari in speaking of Giulio Romano's portrait of Alexander (see n. 67 above), and a coin collector who saw Bernini's *Louis XIV* in progress, both refer to medals of Alexander ("Le doyen de Saint-Germain est aussi venu, et lui qui est curieux de médailles a trouvé que le buste a beaucoup de l'air d'Alexandre et tournait de côté come l'on voit aux médailles d'Alexandre," Chantelou, *Journal*, 183, also 178). So far as I can see, portraits of Alexander on ancient coins and medals are always in profile (one exception, much disputed, appeared in 1902, cf. M. Bieber, *Alexander the Great in Greek and Roman Art*, Chicago, 1964, 79f., fig. 114). One possible explanation is that Giulio was using a profile type of the *helmeted Alexander* (K. Kraft, "Der gehelmte Alexander der Grosse," *Jahrbuch für Numismatik und Geldgeschichte*, xv, 1965, 7-32), whereas Bernini's visitor recalled one of the facing types, such as Helios (*le Roi Soleil*), that were minted in the time of Alexander (cf. A. Baldwin, "Facing Heads on Greek Coins," *American Journal of Numismatics*, XLIII, 1908-09, 113-31). On the other hand, another passage in Chantelou shows that "medals" might also include gems (*Journal*, 235), and a number of these with facing heads have been identified as Alexander (K. Gebauer, "Alexanderbildnis und Alexandertypus," *Mitteilungen des deutschen archäologischen Instituts. Athenische Abteilung*, LXIII-LXIV, 1938-39, 30f., also 25). In any case, the turning, tilting head of Alexander became ubiquitous as the "Dying Alexander" (E. Schwarzenberg, "From the *Alessandro morente* to the *Alexandre Richelieu*," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, xxxii, 1969, 398-405).

Bernini was certainly thinking of Alexander when portraying the King (cf. R. Wittkower, *Bernini's Bust of Louis XIV*, London, 1951, 13f.), and it is possible that the whole image - upward and sideward glance, as well as terrestrial globe below - echoed the famous passage in Plutarch

describing Lysippus's portrait of Alexander and quoting its inscription: "When Lysippus first modelled a portrait of Alexander with his face turned upward toward the sky, just as Alexander himself was accustomed to gaze, turning his neck gently to one side, someone inscribed, not inappropriately, the following epigram: "The bronze statue seems to proclaim, looking at Zeus: I place the earth under my sway; you O Zeus, keep Olympos" (J. J. Pollitt, *The Art of Greece 1400-31 B. C., Sources and Documents*, Englewood Cliffs, N. J., 1965, 145). Perhaps this passage was in the mind of the observer who commented that the world-pedestal enhanced the resemblance to Alexander (Chantelou, *Journal*, 178).

⁷² In general, cf. S. Ringbom, *Icon to Narrative (Acta Academiae Aboensis, Ser. A., Humaniora, xxxi, No. 2)*, Åbo, 1965, 52ff.

⁷³ On the theme, cf. C. Gottlieb, "The Mystical Window in Paintings of the Salvator Mundi," *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, LVI, 1960, 313-32; L. H. Heydenreich, "Leonardo's 'Salvator Mundi,'" *Raccolta vinciana*, xx, 1964, 83-109; Ringbom, *Icon to Narrative*, 69f., 171ff.

⁷⁴ The fundamental study is still that of Panofsky, "Imago Pietatis," who regarded this as the original form of the Man of Sorrows; for subsequent bibliography, see Eisler, "The Golden Christ of Cortona," 111, n. 24.

⁷⁵ Panofsky, "Imago Pietatis," 289f.

⁷⁶ For illustrations, cf. J. Burns, *The Face of Christ in Art*, New York, 1907, ills. opp. pages 104, 108, 112.

⁷⁷ See the examples in U. Schlegel, "Eine neuerworbene Christusbüste des Ludovico Begarelli," *Berliner Museen. Berichte*, xi, 1961, 44ff. Also a marble by Puget at Marseille, dated 1662-63 by K. Herding, *Pierre Puget*, Berlin, 1970, 152f., No. 20, but which may in fact postdate Bernini's *Saviour* (G. Walton, "The Sculptures of Pierre Puget," Ph.D. diss., New York University, 1967, 241f.); a fine bronze cast was recently acquired by the Berlin Museum (U. Schlegel, "Alessandro Algardi's Christusbüste," *Berliner Museen. Berichte*, xxi, 1971, 23ff., with attribution to Algardi).

Savior's gesture, with the arm held close to and across the body and the hand raised vertically, is also *sui generis*. It is as suggestive of intervention and rejection as of benediction or exclamation, and carries a clear eschatological implication. In sum, Christ acts as though He were interposing Himself between a threat coming from His upper right and directed toward His lower left, the side of damnation, which He abhors.

It will have become apparent that essentially the same idea expressed in Bernini's *Savior* underlay the devotional pictures of intercession derived from the *Speculum humanae salvationis* (Fig. 4). There Christ was represented with one hand indicating the chest wound, the other directed in sympathy toward the spectator; the head and eyes turned to the side and imploringly up toward God the Father. The "rhetorical" Man of Sorrows was itself rooted in this tradition, which had already played a seminal part in the development of the *Sanguine di Cristo* composition. Bernini's *Savior*, who communicates with God, alludes to His own death, and conveys protection to the observer, seems to act in response to the dying man's invocation in the *Ars Moriendi* interrogations, "I also put the death of Our Lord Jesus Christ between me and your wrath."

Like the *Sanguine di Cristo* the *Savior* constitutes in effect a new subject, motivated once again by the desire to relate previously separate traditions to the idea of death. The bust incorporates the act of intercession in which Christ the sacrifice and Christ the redeemer are united. Hence the deeper meaning of the pedestal becomes clear. The abstract base, traditional for portraits, bears Christ's mortal aspect. In general terms the kneeling and supporting angels echo the ancient *imago clipeata*, where the medallion framing a hallowed image was often lifted by winged genii; Christ and God the Father had frequently been carried by angels; angels grasp the drapery in many depictions of the Man of Sorrows; in reliquary busts the body might appear angel-borne.⁷⁸ But there was no real precedent for the bust held aloft by its base.⁷⁹ Most of all, Bernini's arrangement recalls, as we have seen, his own design for an altar of the Holy Sacrament (Fig. 16): the kneeling angels elevate the image as if it were the tabernacle of the Host. Thus, both the figure and the pedestal – the former through its expressive pose and invisible truncation, the latter through its abstract and angelic supports – conveyed the dual nature of Christ and His work of atonement. At once suffering and exultant as a portrait, the *Savior* is at once human and divine as a bust.

The work belongs to still another tradition, which might be defined as that of the sculptor's last will and testament. The sixteenth century had produced several notable instances in which sculptors gave direct expression to their own hopes for redemption, the Pietà groups by Michelangelo and Baccio Bandinelli, and Crucifixes by Benvenuto Cellini

⁷⁸ For examples of the latter, see Toesca, *Il trecento*, 900, fig. 746, and J. Montagu, "Un dono del Cardinale Francesco Barberini al Re di Spagna," *Arte illustrata*, IV, 1971, 50, fig. 8.

⁷⁹ The concept has an analogue in Bernini's adaptation of the framed image carried by symbolic figures, which played a new and important



21 *Louis XIV*, engraving by E. Gantrel after a design by P. P. Sevin. Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale

and Giambologna. The shift from the dead to the living Christ is symptomatic: Bernini's primary concern is not with Christ as the prototype of pathetic self-sacrifice, but with His quintessential role as mediator in the process of salvation. It is also symptomatic that, in contrast to these overtly narrative works, Bernini chose the bust to express his thought; he created a kind of icon-portrait monument because it enabled him to evoke more completely than any other form the mystery of Christ, half god, half man. It is symptomatic, finally, that these works were intended for the artists' own tombs (and might even contain autobiographical elements: Michelangelo's and Bandinelli's include self-portraits, Cellini's alludes to a vision he had had in prison),

role in his work; his use of this motif in altarpieces has been the subject of an excellent study in an unpublished dissertation by R. Jürgens, "Die Entwicklung des Barockalters in Rom," Hamburg, 1956, 160ff. (typescript in the Biblioteca Hertziana, Rome).



22 The *Colonna Claudius*, engraving (from B. de Montfaucon, *L'antiquité expliquée*, Paris, 1719, v, pl. cxxix)



23 Antique base and 17th-century pedestal of the *Colonna Claudius*. Madrid, Museo del Prado (photo: Mas)

whereas Bernini intended the *Savior* to be given away, and his sepulcher was marked only by an inscription with his name and the date of his death.

The *Sangue di Cristo* engraving and the bust of the Savior are related beyond the obvious fact of their common concern with salvation. The one concentrates upon Christ as the victim, the other upon Christ as the savior; the one is predominantly public and universal, the other is predominantly private and personal. Both make radical changes in the traditions from which they are derived, and the changes

were inspired mainly by the desire to relate those traditions to death. They are related to death not simply as pious votives but as part of a concerted plan, conceived and executed by Bernini over a period of forty years, to achieve salvation by preparing for death. The idea for such a program and many of its elements stem from the heritage of *The Art of Dying*, but the focus has shifted. In place of the temptations to sin and heresy, the accent is on the central mystery of the Eucharist as the key to redemption. This new emphasis was present from the beginning of the *Ars Moriendi* revival, in Bellarmino's treatise and in the devotions of the Bona Mors confraternity. It became to Father Marchese and Bernini the only hope. The good death was

no longer largely a dialectical victory over the devil but an extreme act of faith, performed successfully after acquiring the necessary skills.

Panofsky defined the unprecedented role of the personification Death in Bernini's funerary monuments as that of "a 'witness to life' . . . a power which delimits and shapes the indefinite and places in perspective what otherwise could not be perceived as a whole."⁸⁰ The observation might be extended to Bernini himself: his enactment of death, his vision of redemption and his portrayal of the Redeemer concluded a life-long process of objectification in which what had been obscure or but faintly perceived became conscious and deliberate.⁸¹

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⁸⁰ E. Panofsky, "Mors Vitae Testimonium. The Positive Aspect of Death in Renaissance and Baroque Iconography," in *Studien zur toskanischen Kunst. Festschrift für Ludwig Heinrich Heydenreich*, Munich, 1964, 231.

⁸¹ The opening invocation of Bernini's testament, though conventional in such documents, contains a variety of thoughts and phrases that are of interest in the light of what has been said in this essay; I transcribe it here, along with some of the relevant provisions:

"A gloria della SS.^{ma} Trinità, e della gloriosa sempre Vergina Maria, e di tutti li Santi miei Protettori; Essendo la morte quel punto tremendo, d'onde dipende un'Eternità, ò di bene, ò di pene, quindi è che conforme l'huomo deue in ogn'hora pensare à ben uiuere per ben morire, così è inescusabile errore il uolere trasportare in quell'ultimo passo l'aggiustamento delle cose humane, quando l'anima deue con gran timore prepararsi all'inappellabile rendimento de conti alla Diuina Giustitia. Da ciò mosso io infrascritto testatore al presente sano per la Dio gratia di mente, di senso, et intelletto hò pensato di fare il presente mio testamento scritto de uerbo ad uerbum d'ordine mio, e poi da me più uolte letto, e maturamente considerato

Primieramente raccomandando l'anima mia alla SS.^{ma} Trinità, dalla cui infinita Bontà, conforme hò riceuto abbondanza di gratie, così la supplico di quella maggiore, senza la quale nulla uale il mondo tutto, cioè il perdono de miei peccati, e per consequenza la salute dell'anima mia, mi raccomandando inoltre all'intercessione della gloriosissima Vergine Madre Maria, dell'Angelo mio Custode, e di tutti li Santi miei Auocati, e particolarmente di S. Giuseppe . . .

Lascio à titolo di semplice Cappellania ad nutum amouibile, che dall'infrascritti miei heredi à gloria del pretiosissimo Sangue del Nostro Redentore Giesù Christo si faccia celebrare una messa quotidiana in perpetuo suffragio, prima dell'anima mia, e poi delli miei parenti, e finalmente di quell'anima del Purgatorio, la liberatione della quale sarà di maggior gloria di Dio

In oltre à gloria della Beatis.^{ma} Vergina Madre Maria lascio ch'ogni anno in perpetuo nel giorno dell'Assunta si diano dall'infrascritti miei heredi scudi uenticinque m. ^{ts} per dote ad una pouera zitella honesta, . . . Item lascio al Padre Don Francesco Marchesi Prete della Chiesa Noua mio Nipote scudi cento moneta per una sol uolta pregandolo à raccordarsi dell'anima mia nelle sue orationi, e diuini offitij . . ."

(Rome, Archivio di Stato, Not. A. C. [Mazzesclus], Busta, 4245, November 28, 1680, fols. 278r-v, 281).

It came to my attention after completing this article that Hans Kauffmann, with characteristic insight, speaks of Bernini as having been deeply concerned with the *Ars Morienti* (*Giovanni Lorenzo Bernini. Die figürliche Kompositionen*, Berlin, 1970, 334f.).

Appendix

Filippo Baldinucci

Correua già il Bernino l'ottantesimo anno di sua vita e fin da alcun tempo avanti aveva egli più al conseguimento degli eterni riposi, che all'accrescimento della gloria mondana voltato i suoi più intensi pensieri e forte premeuagli il cuore un desiderio di offrire, prima di chiuder gli occhi a questa luce, alcun segno di gratitudine alla maestà della gran regina di Svezia, stata sua singolarissima protettrice; onde per meglio internarsi ne' primi sentimenti e disporsi ad effettuare i secondi, si pose con grande studio ad effigiare in marmo in mezza figura maggiore del naturale il nostro Salvator Gesù Cristo, opera, che siccome fu detta da lui il suo beniamino, così anche fu l'ultima, che desse al mondo la sua mano, e destinolla in dono a quella maestà, ma tal pensiero però gli venne fallito, perché tanto fu il concetto e la stima, che della statua fece la maestà sua che non trovandosi in congiuntura di poter per allora proporzionatamente contraccambiare il dono, elesse anzi di ricusarlo che di mancare un punto alla reale magnificenza dell'animo suo; onde il Bernino gliela ebbe poi a lasciare per testamento, come noi a suo luogo diremo. In questo divino simulacro pose egli tutti gli sforzi della sua cristiana pietà e dell'arte medesima, e fece conoscere in esso quanto fusse vero un suo familiare assioma, cioè, che l'artefice, che ha grandissimo fondamento nel disegno, al giugner dell'età decrepita, non dee temere di alcuno scemamento di vivacità e tenerezza e dell'altre buone qualità dell'operar suo, mercecché una tal sicurezza nel disegno possa assai bene supplire al difetto degli spiriti, i quali coll'aggravar dell'età si raffreddano, ciò che egli diceua aver osservato in altri artefici . . .

E così mentre dalla città di Roma si apprestavano applausi al suo valore per lo prospero riuscimento della restaurazione e assicuramento del palazzo, egli avendo già incominciato a perdere il sonno, diede in sì fatta debolezza di forze e di spiriti, che in breve si condusse al termine de' giorni suoi. Ma prima di parlare dell'ultima sua infermità e della morte, la quale veramente apparve agli occhi nostri qual fu la vita, è da portarsi in questo luogo, che quantunque il cavalier Bernino fino al quarantesimo anno di sua età, che fu quello, nel quale egli si accasò, fusse vissuto allacciato in qualche affetto giovenile, senza però trarne tale impaccio, che agli studi dell'arte e a quella, che il mondo chiama prudenza, alcun pregiudizio recar potesse, potiamo dire con verità, che non solo il suo matrimonio ponesse fine a quel modo di vivere, ma che egli, fin da quell'ora, incominciasse a dipartirsi anzi da religioso, che da secolare e con tali sentimento di spirito, secondo ciò, che a me è stato riferito da chi bene il sa, ch'e' poté sovente esser d'ammirazione ai più perfetti claustrali. Teneua 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 diuozione, che a tale effetto fanno i padri della Compagnia di Gesù in Roma; dove pure due volte la settimana si cibava del sacramento eucaristico. Accreueua 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) speraua 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.

Venuto dunque il tempo, non so s'io dica da lui a cagione del grande scapito di forze aspettato, o per l'anelanza dell'eterno riposo desiderato, egli infermò d'una lenta febbre, alla quale sopravvenne in ultimo un accidente di apoplezia, che fu quello che

lo privò di vita. Stavasene egli tra tanto paziente e rassengato nel divino volere, né altri discorsi faceva per ordinario, che di confidenza, a segno tale che gli astanti, fra' quali non isdegnò di trovarsi assai frequentemente l'eminentissimo cardinal Azzolino forte si maravigliavano de' concetti, che l'amore gli suggeriva e fra questi il seguente è degnessimo di memoria. Pregò egli instantemente quel porporato, che per sua parte supplicasse la maestà della regina a fare un atto d'amore di Dio per se stesso, stimando (come egli diceva) che quella gran signora avesse un linguaggio particolare con Dio da esser bene intesa, mentre Iddio avea con lei usato un linguaggio, che essa sola era stata capace d'intenderlo.

Il continovo pensare, ch'ei fece in vita a quel passaggio, gli aveva suggerito molti anni prima del suo morire un pensiero, e fu di rappresentare al nominato padre Marchesi, il quale egli desiderava, che gli fusse assistente, tutto ciò, che egli gli doveva ricordare in quel tempo, e perché egli dubitò, ch'e' potesse avvenire ciò che veramente accadde, di non potere in quell'estremo usar la voce, volle ch'ei fusse informato dei gesti e moti esterni ch'egli aveva stabilito di fare per espressione dell'interno del suo cuore; e fu cosa mirabile, che non avendo egli nella malattia, a cagione della flussione del capo, potuto parlare se non balbettando ed avendo poi per lo nuovo accidente perduta quasi del tutto la parola, il padre Marchesi l'intendesse sempre così ed alle sue proposte desse così adequate risposte, che bastarono per condurlo con ammirabil quiete al suo fine. Avvicinavasi egli all'ultimo respiro, quando fatto cenno a Mattia de' Rossi e Giovan Battista Contini, stati suoi discepoli nell'architettura quasi scherzando disse loro nel miglior modo, che gli fu possibile, molto maravigliarsi, che non sovvenisse loro invenzione per trarre altrui il catarro dalla gola, e intanto additava colla mano un instrumento matematico attissimo a tirar pesi eccedenti. L'interrogò il suo confessore sopra lo stato di quiete dell'anima sua, e se egli si sentiva scrupoli; rispose: «Padre mio, io ho da render conto ad un Signore, che per sua sola bontà non la guarda in mezzi baiocchi». Si accorse poi d'aver il destro braccio impedito insieme con tutta quella parte a cagione dell'apoplezia e disse: «Bene era dovere, che questo braccio si ripossasse alquanto prima della mia morte, avendo egli tanto fatigato in vita». Intanto piangeasi in Roma la gran perdita e la sua casa era occupata da un flusso e reflusso di personaggi d'alto affare e gente d'ogni sorte per intender novelle e visitarlo in quello stato. Vennero, e mandarono due volte il giorno almeno la maestà della regina di Svezia, più eminentissimi cardinali, e gli ambasciatori de' principi. E finalmente la Santità di Nostro Signore gli mandò la sua benedizione; dopo la quale, all'entrare del giorno 28 del mese di novembre dell'anno 1680, circa alla mezza notte, dopo quindici giorni d'infermità, egli fece da questa all'altra vita passaggio nell'età sua di 82 anni meno nove giorni.

Lasciò per suo testamento alla santità del papa, un gran quadro di un Cristo di sua mano ed alla maestà della regina di Svezia il bel simulacro del Salvatore in marmo, ultima opera delle sue mani, della quale sopra abbiám parlato. All'eminentissimo Altieri una testa di marmo con busto ritratto di Clemente X, all'eminentissimo Azzolino, stato suo protettore cordialissimo, una simile di papa Innocenzo X suo promotore e non avendo altra cosa di marmo, lasciò al cardinal Rospigliosi un quadro pure di sua propria mano. E con fidecommissio strettissimo lasciò in casa propria la bella statua della Verità, che è l'unica opera di scarpello, che è restata in potere de' suoi figliuoli.

Cosa troppo lunga sarebbe il parlare del dolore, che apportò una tal perdita a tutta Roma; dirò solo, che la maestà della regina, al di cui intelletto sublimissimo poterono per lunga consuetudine esser note le finezze dei talenti di sì grand'uomo, ne diede straordinari segni, parendole che fusse stato tolto con lui al mondo l'unico parto, che aveva prodotto la virtù nel nostro secolo. Lo stesso giorno della morte del Bernino mandò il papa per mano di un camerier segreto un nobile regalo a quella maestà, al quale domandò la regina, che si dicesse per Roma dello stato lasciato dal cavalier Bernino, e sentito che di quattrocentomila scudi incirca: «Mi vergognerei» diss'ella «s'egli avesse servito me, ed avesse lasciato sì poco».

La pompa, colla quale fu il corpo del nostro artefice portato alla chiesa di S. Maria Maggiore, ove è la sepoltura di sua casa, cor-

rispose alla dignità del soggetto ed alle facultà ed amore de' figliuoli, che gli ordinarono un nobilissimo funerale con distribuzione di cere e limosine alla grande. Si stancarono gl'ingegni e le penne de' letterati di comporre elogi, sonetti, canzoni, ed altri eruditi versi latini, e volgari spiritosissimi, che in lode di lui si videro pubblicamente esposti. Concorse tutta la nobiltà di Roma e con essa tutti gli ultramontani, che allora si trovavano in quella città ed in somma un popolo sì numeroso, che fu necessario l'indugiare alquanto di tempo a dar sepoltura al corpo, il che poi fu fatto nella nominata sua sepoltura, in cassa di piombo, con lasciarvi memoria del nome e persona di lui.

Domenico Bernini

Mà prossimo omai il Cavaliere alla morte, & in età decrepita di ottant'anni volle illustrar sua vita, e chiuder l'atto di sua fin' a quell'ora tanto ben condotta Professione, con rappresentare una opera, che felice è quell'Huomo, che termina con essa i suoi giorni. Questa fù l'Immagine del nostro Salvatore in mezza figura, mà più grande del naturale, colla man destra alquanto sollevata, come in atto di benedire. In essa compendiò, e ristinse tutta la sua Arte, e benche la debolezza del polso non corrispondesse alla gagliardia dell'Idea, tuttavia gli venne fatto di comprovare ciò, che prima ei dir soleva, che *Un'Artefice eccellente nel Disegno dubitar non deve al giunger dell'età decrepita di alcuna mancanza di vivacità, e tenerezza, perche è di tanta efficacia la pratica del Disegno, che questo solo può supplire al difetto degli spiriti, che nella vecchiaja languiscono*. Destinò quest'Opera alla sua tanto benemerita Regina di Svezia, che elesse più tosto rifiutarla, che coll'impossibilità di contraccambiarne il valore, degenerare dalla sua Regia beneficenza; Mà fù poi costretta di accettarla indi a due anni, quando dal Cavaliere le fù lasciata in testamento . . .

Avanti dunque di entrare nella narrazione delle cose proposte, convien retrarre alquanto indietro il discorso, e dimostrare, quanto singolare nel Cavaliere Bernino fosse la bontà della vita, e con quanta unione di massime Christiane rendesse riguardevoli le belle, e molte doti del suo animo. Conciosiacosache com'egli era un'Huomo d'ingegno elevato, che sempre al grande aspirava, e nel grande istesso non si quietava, se non giungeva al massimo, questa medesima sua naturalezza lo portò ad una sublimità tale d'Idee in materia di divozione, che non contento delle comuni, a quelle si appigliò, che sono per così dire la scortatoja per giungere al Cielo. Ond'ei diceva, che *Nel rendimento di conto delle sue operazioni haveva da trattare con Signore, che Infinito e Massimo ne' suoi attributi, non havrebbe guardato, come si suol dire, a' mezzi bajocchi, é 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 maraviglioso 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 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*. Ed era sì viva in lui questa fiducia, che chiamata 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, havrebbe perdonato al suo peccato. E come che ei fù 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 quegli, 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 condotta havesse nelle Scuole. Diceva il P. Gio. Paolo Oliva Generale della Compagnia di Giesù, che *Nel discorrere col*

Cavaliere di cose spirituali gli faceva di mestiere di un'attenzione tale, come se andar dovesse ad una Conclusione. Nè senza frutto nutriva ei nell'animo questi nobilissimi pensieri, mà con opere fondate era in un continuo esercizio di Virtù. Per lo spazio di quarant'anni frequentò ogni Venerdì la divozione della buona morte nella Chiesa del Giesù, in cui bene spesso riceveva la Santissima Comunione almeno una volta la settimana. Per il medesimo lungo spazio di tempo ogni giorno, terminati i suoi lavori, visitava quella Chiesa, ove si ritrivava esposto il Santissimo Sacramento, e vi lasciava elemosine copiose per i poveri. Oltre a molti doti, che dava frà l'anno a povere Zitelle, una sempre ne contribuiva nel giorno della Santissima Assunta, & a sei di esse volle ancora obbligare nel suo Testamento i Figliuoli; Anzi bene spesso per ricever merito dalla fuga dell'applauso, consegnava copiose elemosine ad un suo Familiare con obbligo di non rivelarne il benefattore, E benchè l'uso dell'elemosina fosse con lui, per così dire, nato, e cresciuto, tuttavia negli ultimi anni di sua vita gli fù cotanto a cuore, che non stimandosi esso sufficiente a rinvenire i poveri, a molti Religiosi diede l'incumbenza, & il denaro, per somministrarne ad essi l'aiuto. E perchè ei in somiglianti opere amava la segretezza, molte più sono quelle, che possiam giudicare, ch'ei facesse, che a nostra notizia siano pervenute. Da alcune Note, ch'egli di mano sua stendeva in un libretto appartenente agl'interessi di Casa, si hà, che havendo posti tre mesi avanti sua morte due mille scudi d'oro dentro un'inginocchiatore, non ve ne furono poi trovati che ducento, e questi ordinò a' suoi figliuoli, che gl'impiegassero ancora, come seguì, in un tale Opera pia, con indizio manifesto, che i rimanenti simil'esito sortissero. Et in una lettera scritta da Parigi ordina a Monsignor suo figliuolo, che oltre alle Elemosine, che gli lasciò in nota da farsi, ne facesse al doppio, *Perche Iddio è un Signore, che non si lascia vincere di cortesia.* Soleva poi molte volte frà l'anno condurre la sua famiglia in qualche Hospedale, e quivi voleva, che i suoi piccoli figliuoli ad esempio di lui porgessero ristoro agli ammalati, con presentar loro diverse confezioni, che a tale effetto teneva preparate. Ed era cosa di stupore, come un' Uomo impiegato in tante, e sì riguardevoli occupazioni, ogni mattina udisse divotamente la Messa, ogni giorno visitasse il Santissimo Sacramento, & ogni sera recitasse la Corona della Madonna Santissima, & in ginocchi l'Uffizio di lei, e li sette Salmi Penitenziali, costume ch'egli tenne costantissimo sino alla morte. Quando poi si vidde a lei più prossimo, ad altro che a questo passaggio non pensava, e di altro non ragionava, e ciò, non con displicenza, & horrore, cosa solita de' vecchj, mà con costanza di animo impareggiabile, e con servirsi della sua memoria per preparazione a ben farla. A tale effetto aveva continue conferenze col P. Francesco Marchese Prete dell'Oratorio di S. Filippo Neri nella Chiesa Nuova di Roma, figlio di Beatrice Bernini sua sorella, Soggetto Venerabile per bontà di vita, e riguardevole per dottrina, di cui si prevale il Cavaliere, acciò assister dovesse alla sua morte: E perchè ei diceva, che *Quel passo a tutti era difficile, perchè a tutti giungeva nuovo,* perciò si figurava spesse volte di morire, per poter con questo finto esercizio assuefarsi, e disporsi al combattimento del vero. Et in questo stato voleva, che il P. Marchese gli suggerisse tutti quegli atti soliti a proporsi, a chi stà in passaggio, & egli col farli si veniva, come preparando, a quel gran punto. Supponendo poi, che gli dovesse, conforme è solito, mancar la parola in quel estremità di vita, e poi ridursi nell'angustie che pruova, chi non puol'esser inteso, concertò con lui un modo particolare, con cui anche senza parlare in quell'ora potesse essere inteso. Con sì fatte diligenze, con animo del tutto confermato giunse finalmente al cimento.

Habbiamo di sopra già detto, quanto debilitato rimanesse di forze, & agitato ancora nel rimanente del Corpo per l'intrapresa ristaurazione del Palazzo della Cancelleria. Onde infermò finalmente di lenta febre, a cui sopravvenne in ultimo un'accidente di apoplezia, che lo tolse di vita. In tutto il corso del male, che durò quindici giorni, volle, che a piedi del letto si alzasse come un'Altare, & in esso fece esporre il Quadro rappresentante il Sangue di Giesù Christo: E quali fossero i suoi colloquii, ch'ei faceva hora col P. Marchese, hora con altri Religiosi, che assistevano, sopra l'efficacia di quel preziosissimo Sangue, e la fiducia, ch'ei vi aveva,

possono più tosto congetturarsi, che riferirsi. Poiche non vi era alcuno degli Astanti, a cui non iscurissero le lagrime in udire, con quanta sodezza di sentimenti parlasse allora quell'Uomo, a cui nè l'età nè'l male, gravi ambedue, e potenti nemici, avevano potuto offuscargli quella chiarezza d'intelletto, che sempre in lui si mantenne uguale, e grande fin'all'ultimo respiro di sua vita. Accortosi, che non poteva più muovere il braccio destro per l'accidente accennato di apoplezia, *E ben ragione,* disse, *che anche avanti la morte riposi alquanto quella mano, che in vita hà tanto lavorato.* Al Cardinal Azzolini, che volle più volte honorarlo della sua presenza in que' giorni, disse una sera, che *Pregasse in suo nome la Maestà della Regina a far un'atto di a nor di Dio per lui, perchè ei credeva, che quella gran Signora avesse un linguaggio particolare con il Signore Dio per essere bene intesa, mentre Iddio haveva con lei usato un linguaggio, che essa sola era stata capace d'intenderlo.* Fece la parte il Cardinale, e ricevè dalla Regina il seguente Viglietto:

Io vi prego di dire al Sig. Cavalier Bernino da mia parte, che gli prometto di fare tutti i miei sforzi per far quel che desidera da me, a condizione, ch'egli mi prometta di pregar Dio per me, e per voi, a concederci la grazia di un perfetto amor suo, affinché Noi possiam trovarci un giorno tutti insieme con la gioja d'amore, e goder Dio in eterno. E ditegli, che io già l'hò servito al meglio che hò potuto, e che continuerò.

In tanto la sua Casa era un continuo flusso, e riflusso de' più cospicui Personaggi di Roma, che ò venivano, ò mandavano con attestazione altrettanto distinta dall'uso comune di convenienza, quanto distinta, e particolare era in ciascuno la stima, & il rammarico di perdere un sì grand'Uomo. Mancògli finalmente la parolà, e perchè si sentiva fuor di modo angustiato dal catarro, accennò al Cavalier Mattia de Rossi, e a Gio: Battista Contini, che unitamente con Giulio Cartarè tutti suoi Allievi si ritrovarono sempre presenti al suo letto, quasi maravigliandosi, come ad essi sovenir modo non potesse di cavargli il catarro dal petto, e colla sinistra mano sforzavasi di rappresentargli un'Istromento attissimo a tirar pesi eccedenti. Come, ch'ei avanti la sua malattia aveva concertato il modo col P. Marchese di essere inteso senza parlare, stupore in tutti fù, come ben da lui si facesse intendere col moto solo della sinistra mano, e degli occhj: Segno manifesto di quella gran vivacità di sentimenti, quali nè pure allora mostravan di cedere, benchè mancasse la vita. Due hore avanti di passare diede la benedizione a tutti li suoi figliuoli, che lasciò in numero, come si disse, di quattro Maschi, e cinque Femmine, e finalmente ricevuta quella del Pontefice, che per un suo Cameriere mandògli, nell'entrare del ventottesimo giorno di Novembre, dell'anno 1680, & ottantesimo secondo di sua vita, spirò: E morì da quel grand' Uomo ch'ei visse, lasciando in dubbio, se più ammirabile nelle operazioni fosse stata la sua vita, ò commendabile nella divozione la sua morte.

In Testamento lasciò al Papa un bellissimo Quadro di mano di Gio: Battista Gaulli rappresentante il Salvatore, sua ultima opera in Marmo, alla Regina il Salvatore medesimo di sua mano, al Cardinal'Altieri il Ritratto di Clemente X., al Cardinal'Azzolini quello d'Innocenzo X., & al Cardinal Giacomo Rospigliosi un Quadro pure di sua mano, non havendo in Casa altra cosa di marmo, oltre alla Verità, che lasciò con perpetuo fidecommissso alla sua Discendenza.

Fù universale il cordoglio per la perdita di quest'Uomo nella Città di Roma, che si riconosceva di tanta Maestà accresciuta dalle sue indefesse fatiche, e siccome la sua vita, così ancora la morte fù Soggetto all'Accademie di molti ingegnosi componimenti. Il seguente giorno coll'occasione, che mandò il Papa a regalar la Regina, richiese questa al Cameriere di Sua Santità, *Che si dicesse dello stato lasciato del Cavalier Bernino?* e rispostogli, che *Di quattrocento mila scudi in circa,* essa soggiunse, *Io mi vergognarei, s'egli avesse servito mè, & avesse lasciato così poco.*

Il suo corpo con pompa fù esposto nella Basilica di S. Maria Maggiore, con funerale, distribuzione di cera, & elemosine a Poveri: E fù tanto il concorso della gente, che convenne differirne per il seguente giorno la sepoltura. Haveva già egli preparata questa a sè, & a i suoi nella medesima Chiesa, onde in essa fù posto dentro Cassa di piombo, con iscrizione dinotate il nome, & il giorno della sua morte.