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an art anthology

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IRVING LAVIN (†) WITH
MARILYN ARONBERG LAVIN

The 'Palestrina Pieta':
Gatherings on the History
of 'a Statue Begun by Michelangelo'

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Leonardo da Vinci, «Virgin of the Rocks», c. 1483–1493,
oil on panel (transferred to canvas), 199.9 × 120 cm, Paris,
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Contents
no. 82 (XLI), 2020

- 9 **Pietro C. Marani**
L'assalto a un bastione disegnato da Leonardo nel giardino di Charles d'Amboise
- 25 **Joseph F. Gregory**
Reframing an Icon: Leonardo's *Paris Virgin of the Rocks* and the Economy of Salvation
- 75 **Hana Šedinová**
Vis nominis, vis textus, vis imaginis.
Gli esseri marini denominati in base agli animali terrestri nelle opere di Tommaso di Cantimpré e di Paulerinus
- 105 **Jakub Adamski**
Double-Nave Friar Churches in Prussia and the Questions of Asymmetry and Irregularity in the Medieval Architecture of the Mendicant Orders
- 131 **Thomas Martin**
Filarete's *Odysseus and Iros*: Its Meaning and Albertian Source
- 153 **Antoni Ziemba**
'Write here whatever you want': Empty Banderols in Northern European Art of the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries
- 187 **James R. Jewitt**
Dosso Dossi's *Jupiter Painting Butterflies*: Artistic Rivalry and Imitation in Renaissance Ferrara
- 211 **Peter Humfrey**
Venetian Painted Ceilings of the Renaissance and the Direction of Light
- 227 **Eugene J. Johnson**
The Villa Giulia as a Performance Space
- 249 **Irving Lavin (†) with Marilyn Aronberg Lavin**
The 'Palestrina Pietà':
Gatherings on the History of 'a Statue Begun by Michelangelo'
- 267 **Aneta Georgievska-Shine**
'A nymph, a goddess, or a fairy queen':
Van Dyck and the Poetics of Conversion in *Rinaldo and Armida*
- 287 **Arnaud Manas**
La fresque de François Perrier de la galerie de l'hôtel de La Vrillière : une nouvelle interprétation
- 305 **Pierre Rosenberg**
Défense et illustration des catalogues raisonnés : l'exemple de Poussin
- 313 **Summaries**
- 318 **Information about the authors**

Irving Lavin (t) with
Marilyn Aronberg Lavin

The 'Palestrina Pieta'
Gatherings on the History
of 'a Statue Begun by
Michelangelo'

The purpose of this note [Fig. 1] is to present and comment briefly on a remarkable Post-Script to a letter composed by Cardinal Maffeo Barberini [Fig. 2] on 12 October 1618, and addressed to the cardinal's brother, Don Carlo [Fig. 3], who was then in Florence. The post-script reads:

Mi disse una volta S.^e Caval.^e Passignani che al S.^e Michelangelo Buonarr^o restava qui verso il Palazzo d'Aless.^o una statua cominciata già da Michelangelo, et che ne Sarebbe fatto fuori, Se si può haver p. buon mercato sotto mano col mezzo del med.^{mo} Passig.^o la piglierei p.che il fig.^o del Bernino che la ha già riuscita la perfezionerebbe.¹

[The Cavaliere Passignano (Domenico Cresti, 1559-1638) once told me that Michelangelo Buonarroti (the Younger, 1568-1646 [Fig. 4], grand-nephew of the sculptor, a life-long friend of Maffeo Barberini)² still possessed here (in Rome), toward the Palazzo d'Alessandrino, a statue begun by Michelangelo, and that he might be parted from it. If it can be obtained cheaply through Passignano, I would take it because the son of (Pietro) Bernini, who is having great success, would bring it to perfection.]³

The passage is of extraordinary interest from a number of points of view.⁴ To begin with, it is the earliest documentary witness to the precocious success of the young Gianlorenzo,



1. Michelangelo Buonarroti
(frequently attributed to),
«The Palestrina Pietà»,
c. 1550, Carrara marble,
H. 253 cm, Florence,
Galleria dell'Accademia



2. Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio, «Portrait of Maffeo Barberini at the Age of c. Twenty-nine», 1596–1597, oil on canvas, 121 × 95 cm, Florence, the Corsini Collection

which was later to become almost legendary.⁵ The remark was more than apt since less than a year before Maffeo himself had bought two statues by Gianlorenzo, the under-life-size *Saint Sebastian* and the *Seated Putto Breaking the Mouth of a Dragon*.⁶ Moreover, he knew the young man was helping to produce sculpture for the family's mortuary chapel in Sant'Andrea della Valle because Pietro Bernini in his contract had mentioned his son by name ('di mia mano et di mano di Gio: Lorenzo mio fig. lo') meaning that they were working side by side (see Fig. 19). The contract was signed on 7 February 1618.⁷

The Post-Script also reveals the hitherto unknown fact that there was in Rome in 1618 an unnamed, unfinished sculpture by Michelangelo owned by the artist's grand-nephew. While the designation, 'verso Palazzo d'Alessandrino' is somewhat vague, it would hardly have been used if it had been referring to Michelangelo's Florentine Pietà which was then still on the Bandini property up on the Quirinal Hill.⁸ The allusion is to what is now



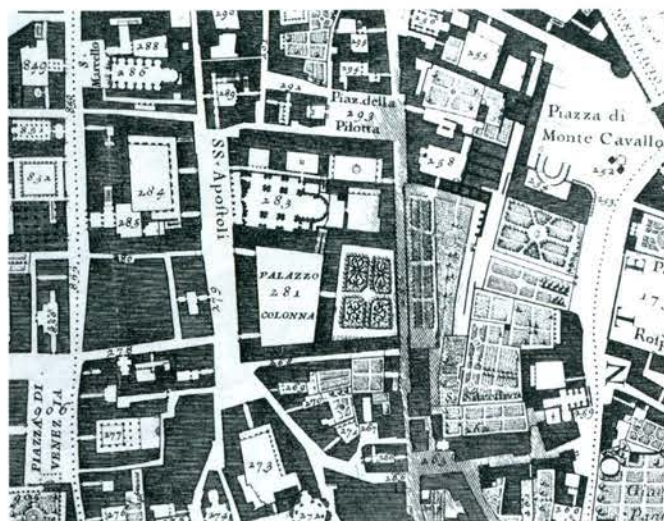
3. Francesco Mochi, «Posthumous Portrait of Don Carlo Barberini», c. 1630, Carrara marble, 84 × 80 × 36 cm, Rome, Museo di Roma

the Palazzo Provinciale, situated in the valley below the Quirinal [Fig. 5] near the Piazza Venezia. The building was constructed toward the end of the sixteenth century, and now forms the south-eastern side of the Piazza SS. Apostoli.⁹ Also, both Maffeo and Carlo knew Passignano well; the painter had spent the previous decade in Rome working on the decorations of their family chapel.¹⁰ Passignano was also a reputable art dealer and it is unlikely that he erred in ascribing the ownership to Buonarroti Jr.

On the other hand one could ask: what caused Maffeo to believe that Gianlorenzo could achieve what the great Michelangelo did not? He must have been aware of the young sculptor's obsession with the master's Pietàs, the fact of which indeed is documented in a number of ways. Perhaps the most telling is from Bernini himself, though made many years later. His opinion was quoted when in 1674 the question arose as to whether the Florentine Pietà merited being installed in the Medici Chapel at San Lorenzo in Florence:



4. Giuliano Finelli, «Portrait of Michelangelo Buonarroti, Junior», c. 1630, Carrara marble, H. 87 cm (life-size), Florence, Casa Buonarroti

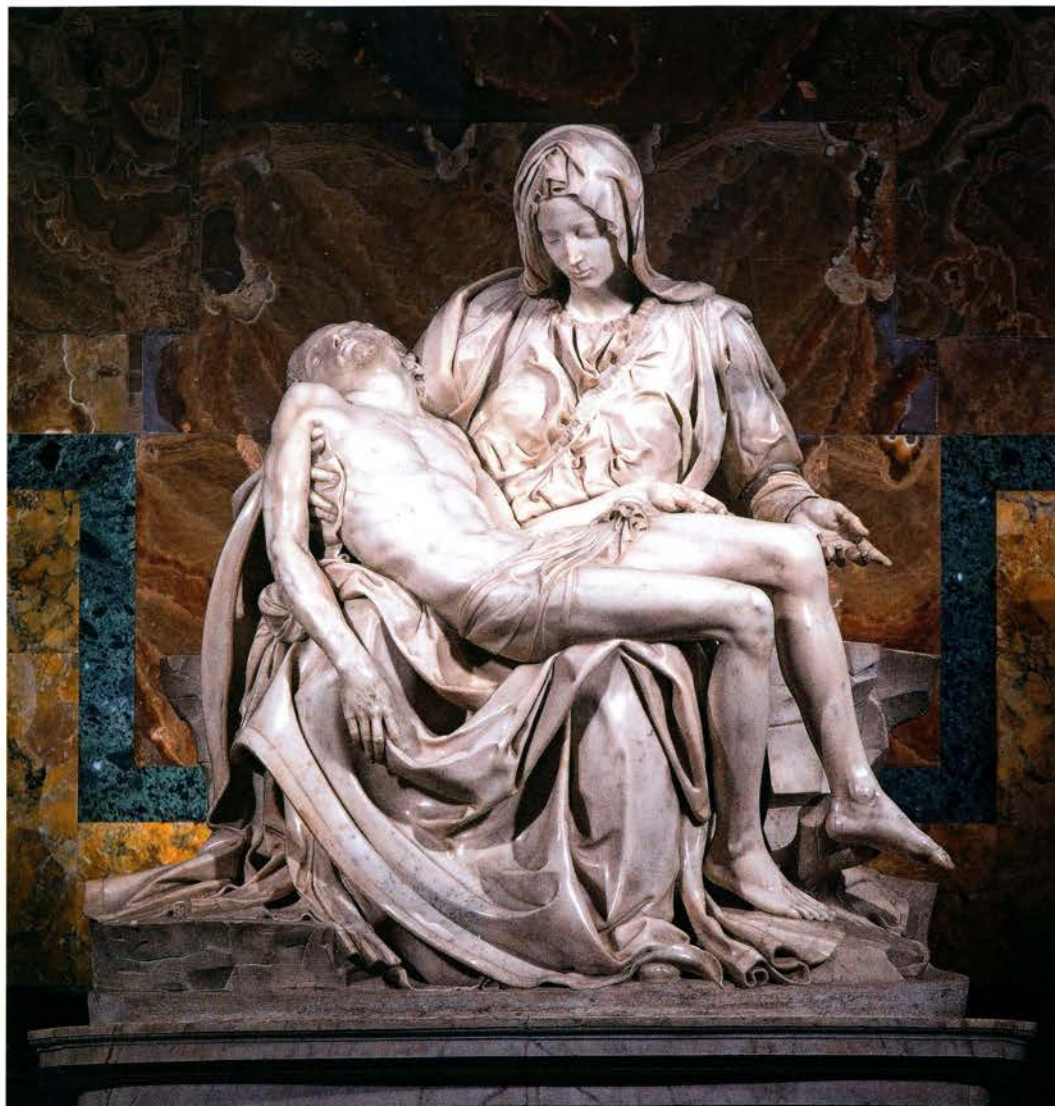


5. Map of Rome showing the SS. Apostoli (detail of: Giambattista Nolli, *La Nuova Topografia di Roma*, 1748)



6. Gianlorenzo Bernini, «Saint Sebastian», 1617, Carrara marble, H. 98.8 cm (under life-size), Madrid, Thyssen Bornemisza Museum (Carmen Cervera Collection)

7. Michelangelo Buonarroti,
«Saint Peter's Pietà»,
1498–1499, Carrara marble,
174 × 195 cm,
Vatican City, St Peter's.
Photo: Author's Archive



Ma quello che ha detto il Bernino a me, so ch'è verissimo, et è questo: che il Cristo ch'è quasi finito tutto, è una maraviglia inestimabile, non solo per se, ma per averlo fatto Michelangelo dopo d'aver passato l'età di 70 anni; e ch'egli uomo fatto, e conseguentemente maestro, perchè cominciò ad esserlo da giovanotto, vi aveva studiato sù mesi e mesi continui.¹¹

[But what Bernini had said to me, which I know is altogether true, and it is this: that the Christ which is all but finished, is an inestimable miracle, not only in itself, but for Michelangelo having made it when he was over 70 years old, and, (he went on) that having become a man (having reached the age of majority), and

consequently maestro, because he became one as a teenager, he had studied (the sculpture) for months and months on end.]

Bernini was not only expressing his current admiration for the Pietà but was also describing how enduring his passion was, even from the time of his youthful admission to the marble worker's guild, that is, in the period around 1617–1618.¹²

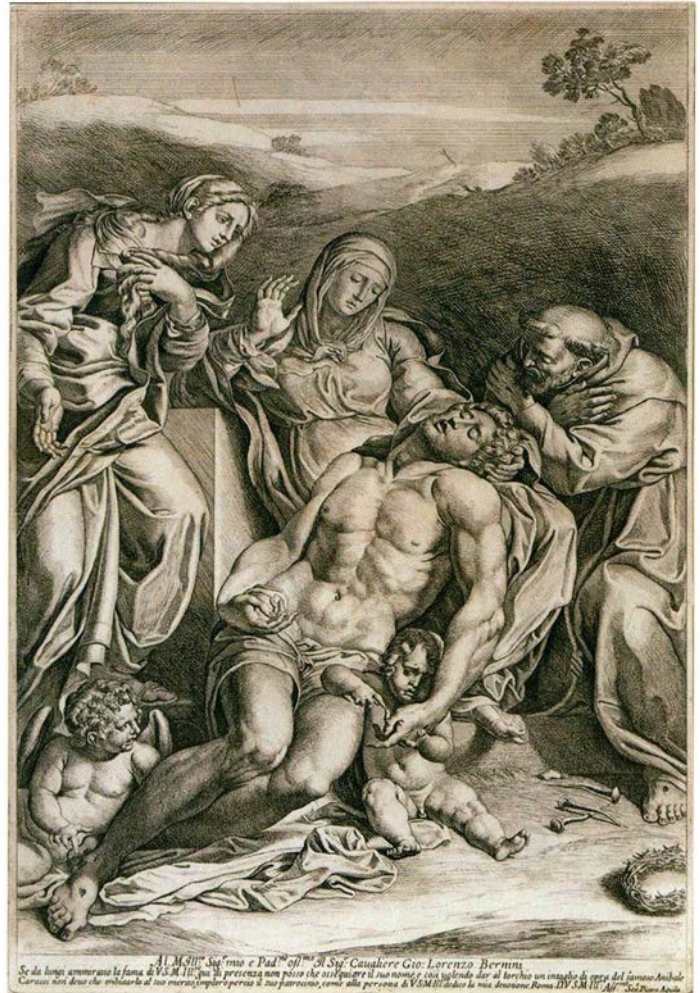
Late 1617 is the time of Gianlorenzo's completion of the *Saint Sebastian* [Fig. 6] in which the fruits of his early Michelangelo studies are evident.¹³ The structure of the head and facial type are derived from the head of Christ in the St Peter's Pietà [Fig. 7]. The legs and torso reveal careful study of the Christ of



8. Michelangelo Buonarroti,
«The Florentine Pietà»,
1547-1555, Carrara marble,
H. 226 cm, Florence,
Museo dell'Opera del Duomo



9. Michelangelo Buonarroti, «Pieta», 1538-1544 (drawing made for Vittoria Colonna), black chalk on cardboard, 28.9 x 18.9 cm, Boston, Isabella Stuart Gardner Museum



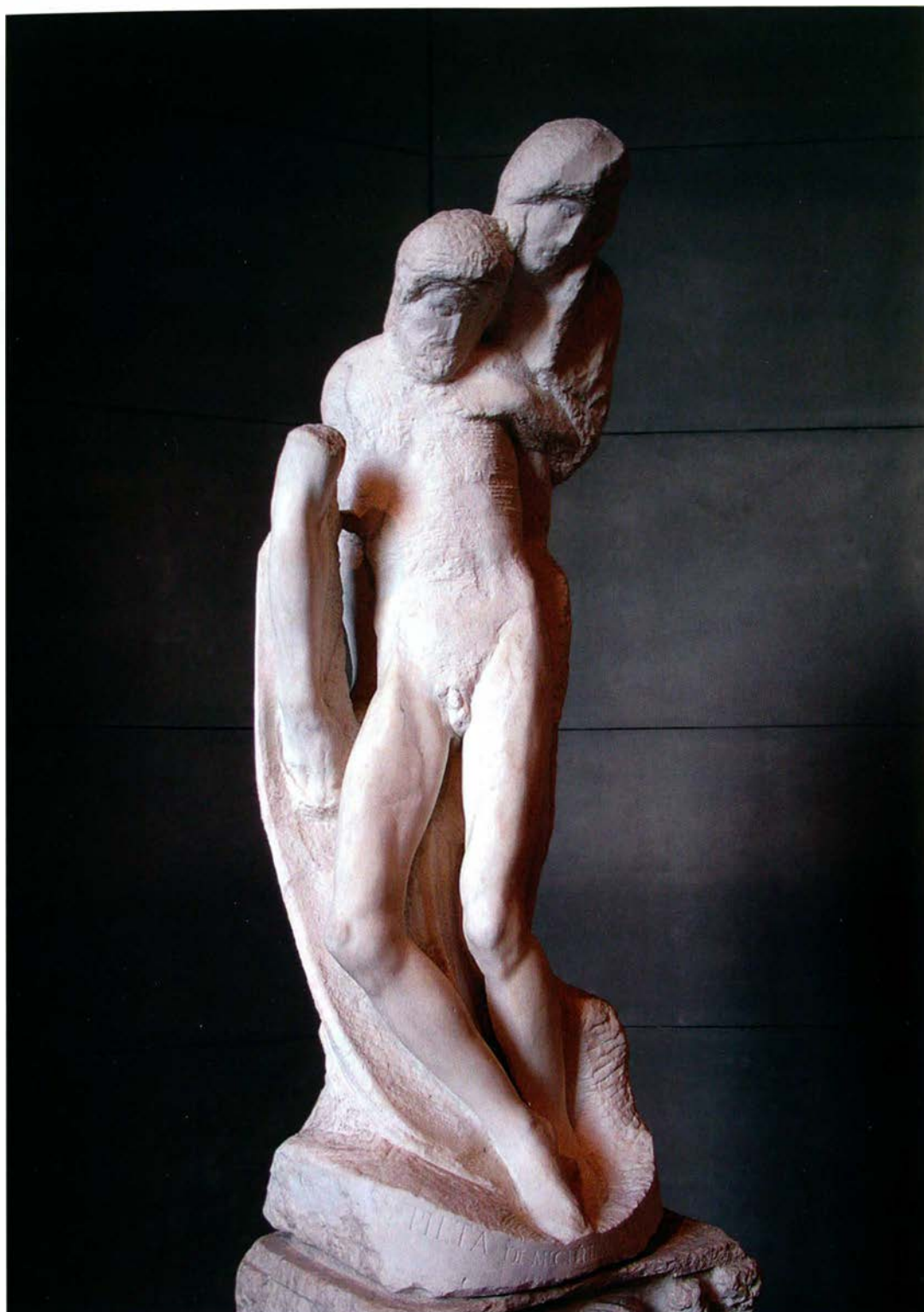
10. Pietro Aquila, after Annibale Carracci, «Pieta with Saints», c 1674, engraving and etching, 36.5 x 50 cm, New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Drawings and Print Department, no. 51.501.3552

the Florentine Pieta [Fig. 8].¹⁴ The right arm is close to that of Michelangelo's often-copied Pieta for Vittoria Colonna [Figs 9 and 10].¹⁵ But most of all, the general composition of the figure, including legs, torso, and head, recalls the Christ of the Palestrina Pieta. It is tempting to imagine the *Saint Sebastian* as a kind of prospectus that might have led to the extraordinary idea of having the young Bernini complete an unfinished work by Michelangelo.

At this point we must consider the actual candidates brought to mind by the Post-Script: the Florentine Pieta, the Rondanini Pieta, and the Palestrina Pieta.¹⁶ The Pieta now in the Museo dell'Opera del Duomo, Florence, can be traced without

significant interruption from Michelangelo's own studio in Rome to its present location.¹⁷ It was sold to Francesco Bandini in 1564 and it remained in the Bandini garden on the Quirinal Hill until, after several moves around Rome, in 1674 when it was shipped to Florence.¹⁸ At the time of Maffeo Barberini's letter the statue was still where Bernini undoubtedly studied it, in the garden which at that point belonged to Cardinal Ottavio Bandini, Francesco's grandson.¹⁹

There can be no doubt that the Rondanini Pieta [Fig. 11] is identical with the one, mentioned in the sources, on which Michelangelo was working in the last days of his life. However, there is no definite trace of it subsequently until modern times,



11. Michelangelo Buonarroti,
«The Rondanini Pieta»,
c. 1564, Carrara marble,
H. 195 cm, Milan,
Castello Sforzesco,
Museum of the Rondanini
Pieta (Ospedale
Spagnolo), since 1956

when it appeared in the Palazzo Rondanini, in the Salaria area of Rome.²⁰ In any case, the Rondanini Pietà seems ruled out by its condition. Too little remains for anyone, even an ambitious young genius like Bernini, to have thought seriously of 'finishing' it.

Thus, of the possibilities, the Florentine and Rondanini Pietàs can be eliminated from consideration with near certainty.²¹

I believe that by far the most logical hypothesis is that the sculpture in question was the Palestrina Pietà. Under consideration, it seems unreasonable to think that Michelangelo the Younger would claim for his grand uncle a work by the hand of another sculptor. As the document says explicitly, the statue was 'cominc^{ta} già da Michelangelo', by implication, it says the artist started the statue but left it unfinished [Fig. 12].²² Whether other hands put it into its current state remains unknown.

Meanwhile, the question becomes whether Maffeo was successful in his bargaining and, if so, where are the records of the transaction? Maffeo had been collecting art all of his adult life, and when he became cardinal and moved from Florence to Rome (1606) he not only brought his collections with him but he also continued avidly to collect. In Rome, he and his brother Carlo lived in the Palazzo ai Giubbonari (also called the 'Casa Grande' near the Campo dei Fiori) which he enlarged by buying up neighborhood shops to make room for his objects (and his books). When later he was elected pope (6 August 1623), worldly possessions became inappropriate. Inventories were drawn up and the collections were willed to his brother. Over the decade of the 1620s, Carlo passed quantities of Maffeo's paintings, sculptures, and other precious things to his sons, Francesco (age 26), Antonio (age 20), who became cardinals, and the middle son Taddeo who married and took public office. These young gentlemen began their own lengthy amassing of art, keeping account of their holdings in meticulously detailed inventories, often recording the source and even monetary value of individual objects. For example, it is stated that Maffeo's *Putto Breaking the Mouth of a Dragon* and the *Saint Sebastian* left Don Carlo's house and entered Card. Francesco's collection on 28 July 1628.²³ In fact, later inventories show that Francesco retained these sculptures, both attributed to Gianlorenzo in the documents, to the end of his life (1679), even as they were moved to the newly purchased Palazzo Sforza (1625), to the Anticaglia of the not yet complete Palazzo Barberini alle Quattro Fontane²⁴, and finally to the Palazzo della Cancelleria, when in 1632 Francesco became Vice-Chancellor of the Church.²⁵ Had his uncle Maffeo purchased the Palestrina Pietà and had it passed to any of these men, one might have hoped to find its traces among their many inventories. But to no avail.

So now let us return to our point of departure in 1618 when the sculpture in question was described as being 'verso Palazzo d'Alessandrino'. Our analysis of the *Saint Sebastian* shows that the young Bernini was familiar with the un-named statue, which



12. «The Palestrina Pietà» (as in Fig. 1), side view (archival photo)

in this locale would have been as available for study, as was the Florentine Pietà up the hill. Now, for a moment let us assume that Maffeo bought the sculpture.²⁶ Where was he going to take it? The statue was huge, bigger by many 'palmi' than the other two Pietàs.²⁷ It was not something one would move on a whim. I suggest that it took ten years for the putative new owner to decide where to have it sent. The date of 1628 now becomes crucial: Urban had been on the papal throne for seven years. Gianlorenzo Bernini had been Architect of St Peter's for just as long. Documents show that quantities of art, paintings



13. Map of Rome with location of Bernini's studio (detail of: Giambattista Nolli, *La Nuova Topografia di Roma*, 1748)

and sculpture formerly owned by the pope and willed to Carlo, were being moved through the streets of Rome from the Palazzo ai' Giubbonari to the new Palazzo Barberini.²⁸ And now we have not an inventory entry but documents of the pope himself.

23 January 1628: Misura, è stima del casone di legno fatto avanti la casa del Sig.^{re} Cavalier Bernino, quale si è fatto attorno al sasso, del quale ne v'è fatto la statue della Pietà p. servizio di N.S. è fatto da m.ro Battista Pozzo capo m.ro muratore à tutta sua robba mis.¹⁰ è stimato da Noi sotto scritti è p.^a... – sc. 94-75.²⁹

[Measurement and estimate for the wooden shed (to be) made in front of Cav. Bernini's house, which is to be built around the stone, from which the statue of the Pietà is made, in the service of Nostro Signore, done by maestro Battista Pozzo, head master mason for all his materials, measured and estimated by us, the undersigned, is (for the) price of *scudi* 94.75]

The shed is finished six months later and payment is made:

20 June 1628: à M.ro Batt. Pozzo muratore Δ 94 b. 75 per il costo e manifattura del Cusino (casone?) di tavole a S. Maria Maggiore per la statua della Pietà che fa il Caval. Bernini.³⁰

[To Maestro Batt. Pozzo mason Δ 94 b. 75 for the price and fabrication of the wooden shed at Sta Maria Maggiore for the statue of the Pietà the Cav. Bernini is making.]

Bernini's studio was at Santa Maria Maggiore (on the Via Liberiana, near the Piazza Esquilino) which had been the location of the Bernini household since his father bought the property in 1607 [Fig. 13]. The size of the payment, almost ninety-five *scudi*, indicates that the piece of stone to be housed in the shed was so large there was no room for it in the studio itself. As there are no traces in the sources that Bernini ever made a Pietà, it is more than tempting to suppose that the enormous sasso to be housed was in fact the Palestrina Pietà. If this is true, however, Bernini (too) renounced the completion of the project before any significant progress was made, and there is no basis for distinguishing his hand in the work as we know it. Meanwhile, it is possible that the piece, with nowhere to go, again remained *in situ*, this time in the shed attached to Bernini's studio.

A silence on the subject now falls and continues until long after the pope's death in 1644. Under a cloud of financial fraud, the Barberini family *en masse* fled to the royal court in Paris. Only after the scandal had died down and partial peace was made with the new pope, Innocent X, did members of the family begin their piece-meal return to Rome. Taddeo, the richest and most powerful of the brothers, died in exile (1647) and when his brother Cardinal Francesco returned to Rome in 1648 one of his first tasks was to legalize Taddeo's will (written in Paris) and sort out his vast inheritance. The procedure involved skill in bargaining at the very highest Vatican level. To reinstate the family and allow retention of their properties, Innocent demanded that the first son, Carlo, give up his primogeniture privileges and enter the church. Carlo made a counter offer, demanding that he retain his secular office as Prefect of Rome and that if he entered the Church he be made cardinal immediately. This move meant that the second son, Maffeo Junior (1631–1685) would marry a female member of the current pope's family (his 12 year-old-grand-niece Olympia Giustiniani), and would become the Prince of Palestrina [Fig. 14]. By 1653 the political arrangements were accomplished and Maffeo Junior moved back to Rome. Five years later he was engaged in refurbishing the palace at Palestrina, a Barberini property 40 miles southeast of Rome.³¹ The project also included a thank-offering to Santa Rosalia (for stopping the plague, 1656) in the form of a church in her honor adjacent to the palace. The central-plan building, designed by the architect Francesco Contini, included a funeral chapel behind the sacristy



14. Unknown painter, «Portrait of Maffeo Barberini Junior, Prince of Palestrina, in Parade Armor», after 1658 – before 1685. Photo: after image reproduced on ArtNet, marked 'October 15, 2013, Auction Closed' (still on the market?)



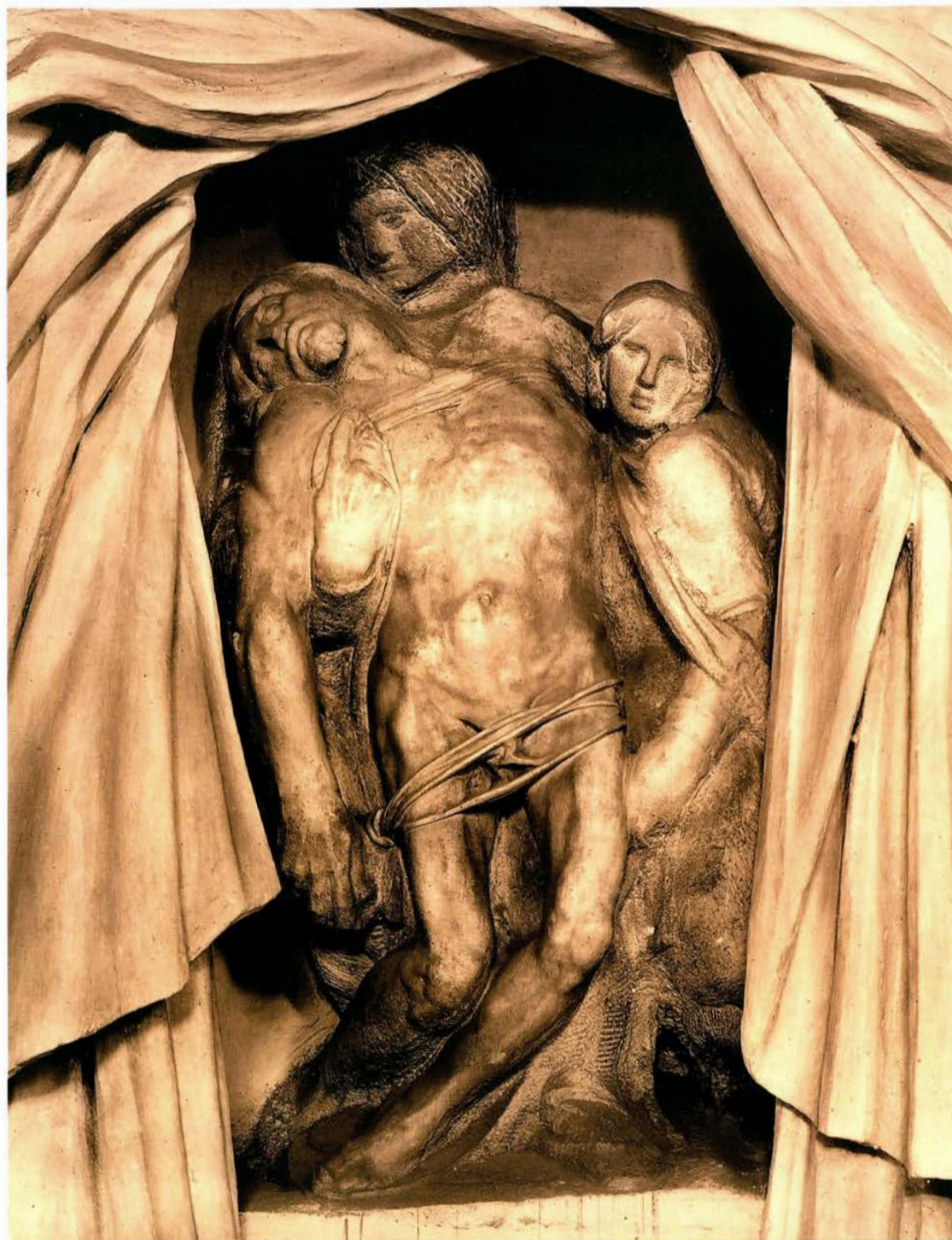
15. Andrea Sacchi, «Portrait of Cardinal Francesco Barberini», 1635/40, oil on canvas, 129 × 95.5 cm, Cologne, Wallraf-Richartz-Museum. Photo: akq-images

intended for illustrious members of the family.³² Construction is documented from February of 1658 and all of the next year.³³ The consecration took place on 7 November 1660.

It was during this period finally, that an unnamed Pietà reappears in Barberini documents. As Jennifer Montagu informed us many years ago, Cardinal Francesco [Fig. 15], who, in spite of the pretensions of Maffeo Junior, was the titular head of the family, in 1670, paid his sculptor Giuseppe Giorgetti for 'un panno che casca di qua e di la dalla Pietà'.³⁴ She ingeniously recognized that the *panno* must have been made of stucco and the Pietà must have been the 'Palestrina Pietà'. She found verification in a publication by Ettore Sestieri (1969) where an early-twentieth-century photograph of the Pietà was illustrated [Fig. 16]. It showed the statue in a niche surrounded by massive

tabernacle-like drapery folds.³⁵ Francesco's support of this activity thus finally confirms that the Pietà, the one we call 'Palestrina', had long since been Barberini property. The document goes on to give the handsome payment as 45 *scudi* and 45 *baiocchi* to cover 23 days of work by various *stuccatori* and *garzoni*. From the size of the statue and complexity of the drape, I speculate that the work was carried out *in situ*, that is, in the architectural niche where the Pietà had already been secured. Who paid for the Pietà's transport, how it was moved, and precisely when it arrived are facts that are yet to be discovered.³⁶

In this arrangement, the Pietà remained unnoticed in the private family chapel for a century. Then, in 1756, the Bishop Leonardo Ceconi in his *Storia di Palestrina*, Chapter VIII, described the statue, and speculated on its origin for the first time.³⁷



16. «The Palestrina Pietà» in Palestrina, Santa Rosalia, with stucco tabernacle designed by Giuseppe Giorgetti, 1670.
Photo: Alinari Archivi, Firenze



17. Photograph of removal of the «Palestrina Pietà» from the niche in Santa Rosalia, 1938. Photo: © Archivio Centrale dello Stato, Rome

Following his revelation, almost all of the literature that followed, through the nineteenth and first half of the twentieth centuries, with varying speculations, dealt with what became and still remains the contested issue of attribution. In 1969, Ettore Sestieri summed up this bibliography and made his own quite amazing contribution. He offered the idea that, as he said Maffeo Barberini had always wanted a Michelangelo for his collection, his sculptor Gianlorenzo Bernini, on the basis of his own statue of *Saint Sebastian*, began the Pietà but left it for his assistant, Niccolò Menghini to bring it to its present state.³⁸

The stucco mantle remained intact until 1938 when Principessa Maria Barberini, fallen on hard times, sold the statue to Benito Mussolini who used it as a true Michelangelo for his own political purposes. The drape was destroyed to facilitate removal of statue [Figs 17 and 18] which was then officially transported back to Rome.³⁹



18. Interior of funeral chapel, Santa Rosalia, Palestrina. Photo: P. Kulpa

MEANWHILE: Much to my surprise, as it also would have been to Irving, juxtaposing this series of early records, and adding to the list two previously unknown documents he had cited in 1999⁴⁰, brought forward the answer to the perennial Bernini question of: when did Gianlorenzo matriculate in the marble workers guild? When did he become a legal *maestro*, named as *scultore*, and finally permitted to receive payments directly in his own name? The chronology is the following:

1617, Dec. 29 – Maffeo buys the *St Sebastian* and the *Putto Breaking the Mouth of a Dragon*, both attributed to Gianlorenzo in later inventories. Payment is made to Pietro Bernini; Gianlorenzo was 19 years old.

1618, Feb. 7 – Little more than a month later, Pietro mentions 'Gian: Lorenzo, mio figl.o' by name, as working in the Barberini Chapel (see Fig. 19).



19. Gianlorenzo Bernini, «Putto Overdoor», 1618, Carrara marble, life size, Rome, Sant'Andrea della Valle, Barberini Chapel, right doorway

1618, Oct. 12 – Card. Maffeo mentions the 'son of Bernini' as having a great success in Rome, and suggesting he could finish a statue started by Michelangelo he is thinking of buying.

1618, Dec. 5 – Gianlorenzo receives partial payment of 100 *scudi* for a statue of St Sebastian destined for a niche in the *teatro* in the Aldobrandini villa in Frascati. The check is made out to 'Gio: Lorenzo Bernini scultore'.⁴¹

1619, Jan. 8 – 'Gio. Lorenzo, scultore' receives the second and final payment of 150 *scudi* for the *St Sebastian*, which for that price (250 *scudi*) must have been very large indeed. This figure was not sent to Frascati but kept by Aldobrandini in Rome and is now lost.⁴²

1619, April 26 – Gianlorenzo, again called *scultore*, is paid directly for the marble bust of Camilla Barbadori, mother of Maffeo Barberini [Fig. 20]. Beyond this date Gianlorenzo continues to be paid directly as an independent artist.⁴³



20. Gianlorenzo Bernini, «Portrait of Camilla Barbadori», 1619, Carrara marble, H. 60 cm (life size), Copenhagen, Statens Museum for Kunst

From this list it become apparent the Gianlorenzo Bernini matriculated as a professional sculptor sometime in the days between 12 October and 5 December 1618 (two days before his twentieth birthday). The usual age for matriculation seems to have been between 20 and 25 years of age.⁴⁴ Thus Bernini's story, told much later in life, about being relatively young when he was enrolled in the guild was absolutely true.

Irving announced his plan to write a paper on this subject in 'Five New Youthful Sculptures by Gianlorenzo Bernini and a Revised Chronology of His Early Works', *Art Bulletin*, 50, no. 3, 1968, pp. 223–248, esp. p. 236 n. 92. He quoted the main document reviewed here, and offered several salient points in his argument. He continued to rethink this material, repeating and revising these points in several venues: 'Bernini giovane', in *Bernini dai Borghese ai Barberini. La cultura a Roma intorno agli anni venti* (Atti del convegno, Rome, 17–19 February 1999), ed. by O. Bonfait and A. Coliva, Rome, 2004, pp. 134–148; in *Studi sul Barocco romano. Scritti in onore di Maurizio Fagiolo dell'Arco*, Milan, 2004, pp. 39–56; and a revised English version: 'The Young Bernini', in his *Visible Spirit: The Art of Gianlorenzo Bernini*, vol. 2, London, 2009, pp. 1127–1173. (All on-line: <<https://albert.ias.edu/handle/20.500.12111/6523>>).

After his death (3 Feb. 2019), as I continued to organize his archive I found enough more material to realize that he had had a major study in mind, with plans to analyze an array of comparative visual material, sources, and reflections. It is possible, in the end, he might have voiced his opinion on the authenticity problem. I have in no way tried to second guess him.

The essay I present here (the title is mine), which is taken from an original draft of uncertain date, focuses on the physical peregrinations of the Palestrina Pietà. I have updated most of the references, developed some of the arguments, and added observations of my own on the basis of my work in the Barberini archives.

MAL (2019–2020)

- ¹ Rome, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Ms. Barb. Lat. 10078, Letters from Maffeo to Carlo Barberini, 1618–1622, fol. 75^v; quoted in Lavin, 'Five New Youthful Sculptures', p. 236 n. 92.
- ² M. G. Masera, *Michelangelo Buonarroti il Giovane*, Turin, 1941; this author, p. 14, n. 6, mentions the letters of Michelangelo Buonarroti the Younger and Maffeo Barberini and other members of the Barberini household. See now J. Cole, 'Cultural Clientelism and Brokerage Networks in Early Modern Florence and Rome: New Correspondence between the Barberini and Michelangelo Buonarroti the Younger', *Renaissance Quarterly*, 60, 2007, pp. 729–788, esp. 732–776; for the most part the letters concern literature and music.
- ³ I have found no further reference to the transaction. The correspondence of Maffeo with Carlo breaks off shortly after the letter of October 1618, and only a handful of letters remain from the period thereafter until Maffeo became pope (1623). Buonarroti the Younger, himself paid Finelli for the bust, see I. Lavin, with M. A. Lavin, 'Duquesnoy's "Nano di Crèqui" and Two Busts by Francesco Mochi', *Art Bulletin*, 52, no. 2, 1970, pp. 132–149, esp. p. 141 n. 66. In deference to his long relationship with the Barberini, he had a symbolic bee carved under the left collar of the shirt.
- ⁴ C. D'Onofrio, 'Un dialogo-recita di Gian Lorenzo Bernini e Lelio Guidicioni', *Palatino*, 10, 1966, p. 129, who discovered the letter independently, alludes to it as referring to the Rondanini Pietà.
- ⁵ There is very little information about Gianlorenzo's boyhood; although he is known to have been born in Naples, even his baptismal record has not been found; cf. S. Fraschetti, *Il Bernini*, Milan, 1900, p. 2, n. 1; his birthdate, 7 December 1598, is given by his biographers Filippo Baldinucci, *Vita di Gian Lorenzo Bernini* (1682), ed. by S. Samek Ludovici, Milan, 1948, and Domenico Bernini, *Vita del cavalier Gio. Lorenzo Bernino, descritta da Domenico Bernino suo figlio* (1713), Perugia, 1999.

- ⁶ Maffeo paid 20 *scudi* for the *Putto* on 1 December 1617, and 50 *scudi* for the *Saint Sebastian* on the 29th of the same month. Payments were distributed to Pietro Bernini, who managed the work of his then under-aged son; see the next note. These documents were published in *Bernini Scultore: La Nascita del Barocco in Case Borghese*, ed. by A. Coliva and S. Schütze, Rome, 1998, pp. 83–84.
- ⁷ The quotation from Pietro's contract is reproduced in full in Lavin, 'Five New Youthful Sculptures', p. 236. Work on the chapel in Sant'Andrea della Valle had begun more than a decade earlier; see S. Schütze, *Kardinal Maffeo Barberini, später Papst Urban VIII. und die Entstehung des Römischen Hochbarock*, Munich, 2007, pp. 31–146.
- ⁸ On the location of the Bandini *vigna* in the area between Sant'Andrea al Quirinale and S. Vitale, cf. R. Lanciani, *Storia degli Scavi di Roma*, Rome, 1898, vol. I, pp. 1902ff., vol. III, pp. 180f.; *idem*, *Forma urbis romae*, Milan, n.d., pl. 16; J. A. F. Orbaan, *Documenti sul Barocco in Roma*, Rome, 1920, p. 141, n. 3. See also J. Wasserman et al., *Michelangelo's Florence Pietà*, Princeton, 2003, esp. F. T. Camiz, 'The Pietà in Rome', pp. 99–108.
- ⁹ L. Cällari, *I palazzi di Roma*, Rome, 1944, pp. 359ff.; cf. Orbaan, *Documenti*, index, p. 626.
- ¹⁰ Passignano, like the Barberini themselves, was a Florentine, and maintained close contact with his native city. J. L. Nissman, 'Domenico Cresti (Il Passignano), 1559–1638, a Tuscan painter in Florence and Rome', 2 vols., PhD diss., Columbia University, 1979 (Ann Arbor, MI, University Microfilms International). See also note 7 above, Schütze, *Kardinal Maffeo Barberini*.
- ¹¹ From a letter of 17 November 1674, written to Cardinal Leopoldo de' Medici in Florence by Paolo Falconieri, his Roman agent. For the whole letter, see C. Mallarmé, *L'ultima tragedia di Michelangelo*, Rome, 1929, p. 80.
- ¹² See the dated list at the end of this essay.
- ¹³ Cf. R. Wittkower, *Gian Lorenzo Bernini* (2nd edn), London, 1966, no. 4, p. 174.
- ¹⁴ Wittkower, *Bernini*, *loc. cit.*, for the similarity of the legs.
- ¹⁵ C. De Tolnay, *Michelangelo*, 5 vols, Princeton, 1947ff., vol. V, figs. 159, 340ff. The best version of this motive is the drawing in the Isabella Gardner Museum in Boston. Incidentally, another source for the Sebastian, namely Annibale Carracci's *Pietà* for San Francesco a Ripa, now in the Louvre, was suggested by D. Posner, 'Domenichino and Lanfranco: The Early Development of Baroque Painting in Rome', in *Essays in Honor of Walter Friedländer, Marsyas*, Suppl. vol. 2, New York, 1965, p. 144 n. 44. I may add that years later the painting was engraved by the Sicilian engraver Pietro Aquila, with a dedication to the Cav. Bernini; see Fig. 10.
- ¹⁶ In 1652, two unfinished Pietàs by Michelangelo are mentioned in Rome (G. D. Ottonelli and P. Berrettini, *Trattato della pittura e scultura: uso et abuso loro* [1652], ed. by V. Casale, Treviso, 1973, p. 210, quoted by E. Steinmann and R. Wittkower, *Michelangelo Bibliographie 1510–1926* (1st edn), Leipzig, 1927; re-printed edn, by R. Freyhan, 1967, vol. I, no. 1425, p. 272). One, obviously the Florentine Pietà, was said to be in the garden that had belonged to Cardinal Bandini. The other Pietà is described as having been found buried in a ground floor room, and now visible 'in una Officina di Roma'. The latter passage has been associated alternatively with both the Rondanini and Palestrina Pietàs. The phraseology that follows, 'E queste due Bozze, oltre l'altre, che si veggono

tralasciate [...] suggests that the authors knew still other unfinished works by Michelangelo in Rome.

Another theoretical possibility is the unfinished first version of the Christ in S. Maria sopra Minerva which was in Rome when last heard of, in 1556; but it was the property of one of the patrons, Metello Vari, to whom Michelangelo had given it years before. Cf. De Tolnay, *Michelangelo*, vol. III, p. 177. Interestingly enough, in a situation similar to ours, in 1607 Michelangelo the Younger's brother, Cavaliere Francesco Buonarroti was urged by Passignano to consider buying this very statue (which he did not do for reasons of price and condition). See I. Baldiga, 'The First Version of Michelangelo's Christ for S. Maria sopra Minerva', *Burlington Magazine*, 142, no. 1173, 2000, pp. 40–45, esp. 741–742; and S. Danesi-Squarzina, 'The Bassano "Christ the Redeemer" in the Giustiniani Collection', *Burlington Magazine*, 142, no. 1173, 2000, pp. 746–751.

17 The sculpture's history is sketched by De Tolnay, *Michelangelo*, vol. V, pp. 149f.; and radically redefined by the discoveries by Franca Camiz, in Wasserman, *Michelangelo's Florence Pietà*, Camiz, loc.cit.

18 See above, Falconieri's letter (and note 11), for the discussion of where in San Lorenzo to place the statue.

19 Cf. Orbaan, *Documenti*, 1920, pp. 60, 79, 141, 203, 224, 252. Cardinal Bandini died in 1629, and the property passed to Cardinal Luigi Capponi (d. 1659); cf. *ibid.*, p. 141 n. 3.

20 De Tolnay, *Michelangelo*, vol. V, pp. 154f.; M. T. Fiorio, *The Pietà Rondanini*, Milan, 2005.

21 S. Pierguidi, "Il nome del grandissimo figlio aveva evidentemente assorbito il nome del grande padre". Considerazioni intorno al giovane Bernini', *Bollettino d'arte*, 145, 2008, pp. 103–114, esp. p. 108, entered the fray with this short article in which he too identified the unnamed sculpture as the Rondanini Pietà.

22 It could be said that, among other considerations, the depth of the fragment (see n. 37) proved too shallow to allow for completion of the figure of Mary. The statue is 253 cm high, 123 cm wide, but only 76 cm thick.

23 Document published by Frascchetti, *Bernini*, p. 139 n. 1, and O. Pollak, *Die Kunsttätigkeit unter Urban VIII*. Vienna, 1927–1931, vol. I, no. 960, p. 334.

24 In one of his not-infrequent discoveries, in the Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Florence, Irving came upon a packet of documents that showed Michelangelo Buonarroti the Younger's previously unknown contribution to the designing of the Palazzo Barberini. He turned these documents over to Patricia Waddy, who was then a student working on her dissertation at the Institute of Fine Arts, NYU. Waddy soon after published the material in two venues: 'Michelangelo Buonarroti the Younger, *Sprezzatura*, and Palazzo Barberini', *Architettura*, 5, no. 5, 1975, pp. 101–122, and 'The Design and Designers of Palazzo Barberini', *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, 35, no. 3, 1976, pp. 151–184 [MAL].

25 The collections were not yet set up definitively since three days later (31 July), a payment is made to workmen for carrying the *Saint Sebastian* 'from room to room'. See M. A. Lavin, *Seventeenth-Century Barberini Documents and Inventories of Art*, New York, 1975 (and on-line), p. 48, Doc. 373. Other entries concerning the *Saint Sebastian* and the *Putto*, are found on pp. 79, 118, 134, and 467.

26 It is perhaps not incidental that on 19 June 1627 Card. Francesco deposited 393 *scudi* and 17.6 *baiocchi* in gold coin with his accountant for

payment in Florence, the price of two 'tavolini di pietre dure' to be shipped by sea bought from Michelangelo Buonarroti Juniore; M. A. Lavin, *Barberini Inventories*, p. 45, Doc. 360 a.

27 253 cm or 9.7 *palmi*; the Florentine Pietà is 226 cm or 8.7 *palmi* and the Rondanini Pietà is 195 cm or 7.5 *palmi*.

28 E.g. 'dodici statue cioe Petti e Busti da Casa di d'Ecc.mo D. Carlo', in 25 trips, at 2 *giuli* a trip', were moved to the Palazzo alle Quattro Fontane; M. A. Lavin *Barberini Inventories*, p. 48, Doc. 373 1.

At the same time, Card. Francesco evinced further interest in Michelangelo's Pietàs as witnessed by his commission for a relief of the subject in the chapel of Saint Gregory in S. Croce in Gerusalemme. The documents show that it was made between June 1628 and July 1629 by Arcangelo Gonnelli: M. A. Lavin, *Barberini Inventories*, pp. 19–20, Docs Barberini 157–158. Gonnelli worked in the shop of Bernini as a restorer, and his Pietà reflects both Michelangelo's Pietàs and Bernini's *Saint Sebastian*. See also R. Besozzi, *La Storia della Basilica di Santa Croce in Gerusalemme*, Rome, 1750, p. 65.

29 Rome, Archivio di Stato, Archivio Camerale, vol. I, Giustificazioni di tesoria, 1628, busta no. 61, fasc. 13. The appraisal was found by H. Hibbard, and is referred to by Wittkower, *Bernini*, p. 268, no. 18.

30 Rome, Archivio di Stato, Archivio Camerale, Libro della Depositeria generale, Cam. Dep. 1628, p. 146. This payment was quoted long ago by Pollak, *Die Kunsttätigkeit*, vol. I, no. 575, p. 174. Now that it is put into its proper context, a search of the Papal archives could be launched for payments for the actual transportation, by wagon or, more probably, sled (*slitta*) that would have pulled the statue up to the Esquiline Hill. See below, note 36 on difficulty moving stone statues.

31 The locale was built on the ancient city of Praeneste which survived as a medieval commune on the slopes of Monte Ginestro. In 1298 it became a fief of the Colonna family, and in 1627, it became part of Anna Colonna's dowry when she married Taddeo Barberini. Two years later Taddeo officially purchased the property, and he became the Prince of Palestrina.

32 See *Palestrina: la città e il tempio*, ed. by G. Celada, C. Gentilini, C. Martinelli, Santarcangelo di Romagna, 2009; and *La chiesa di Santa Rosalia. La cappella dei principi Barberini a Palestrina*, ed. by R. Iacono, Palestrina, 2015. Taddeo and Cardinal Antonio are buried there with cenotaphs flanking the altar of the church proper and sarcophagi in the funeral chapel.

33 M. A. Lavin, *Barberini Inventories*, pp. 45–46, Doc. 364, nos 3, 435, 610, 613; 433; 434, 625 paying for masonry work, 9000 pounds of lead, bricks, and a chiaroscuro altar painting by Gio. Batta Laurenzi. Payments are also for the tower clock, and finally the organ.

34 J. Montagu, 'Antonio and Giuseppe Giorgetti: Sculptors to Cardinal Francesco Barberini', *Art Bulletin*, 52, 1970, pp. 278–298. She did not reproduce the document, but gave its location as: BVAB Giustificazione No. 10592; the payment of 45.45 *scudi* was made by *mandato* 1669–1672, No. 882, of 1 August 1670.

35 See below, note 38.

36 It is bitter-sweet that Montagu says in her note 79: 'The relevance of this and other documents concerning the transport of the Pietà to the vexed question of its history and authorship will be studied by Professor Irving Lavin'. We get some idea of the problems involved in moving heavy stone work from the description of the enormous and prolonged difficulties in shipping Michelangelo's Florentine Pietà from the Bandini

garden in Rome to the church of San Lorenzo in Florence. The transport was partly over-land and partly by boat. See Camiz in Wasserman, *Michelangelo's Florence Pietà*, pp. 106–108, 163. It was estimated that the Florentine Pietà weighs c. 14,000 *libbre* (roughly a ton). The Palestrina Pietà is bigger and therefore weighs even more.

³⁷ And so the discussion began: cf. L. Cecconi, *Storia di Palestrina città del Prisco Lazio*, Ascoli, 1756, p. 111; quoted by Steinmann and Wittkower, *Michelangelo Bibliographie*, vol. I, no. 436, p. 81. Speculation about the stone evolved over time: ranging from 'carved from the living rock'; then, because it is fashioned from an ancient architectural fragment, said to come from the local Roman temple ruins; later identified as marble from the ruins of Rome.

³⁸ E. Sestieri, 'La Pietà di Palestrina e la Sua Attribuzione', *Commentari: Rivista di critica e storia dell'arte*, 20, fas. 2, pp. 75–92. P. A. Petrini (*Memorie Prenestine disposte in forma di Annali*, Rome, 1795, p. 259), had been the first to make an attribution to Gianlorenzo Bernini or Nicolò Menghini. Five years before Sestieri's publication, J. Pope-Hennessy, 'The Palestrina Pietà', in *Stil und Überlieferung in der Kunst des Abendlandes* (Akten des 21. Internationalen Kongresses für Kunstgeschichte in Bonn 1964), vol. II, Berlin, 1967, pp. 105–114, had revived the Menghini idea. Montagu's Giorgetti article came out one year after Sestieri's.

³⁹ The statue was first shown in Rome in a major Fascist exhibition. This subject has been thoroughly studied by Pierette Marie Kulpa and published in a preliminary notice: 'Esposizioni e Progetto della Pietà di Palestrina: La Storia Enigmatica di una Statua Non Finita', in *Edizioni Articolo Nove*, 2015, pp. 27–31, and then in a splendid, remarkably revealing article: 'The Fascistization of Michelangelo Buonarroti and the Libertà Espressiva of the Pietà of Palestrina', *I Tatti Studies in the Italian Renaissance*, 20, no. 2, 2017, pp. 415–445. See Kulpa's n. 2, for information

on the decision for placement and transportation to the statue's final location, the Galleria dell'Accademia in Florence.

⁴⁰ These payments were from the Aldobrandini Cardinal, who was furnishing his vast gardens in Frascati. Irving's first citation of these documents was in a conference held at the Villa Medici, Rome, in February, 1999 and later published in *Bernini dai Borghese ai Barberini*, ed. by Bonfait and Coliva, cited above. Very soon after, a series of parallel documents were found and published with similar arguments and phrasing by L. Testa, 'Documenti inediti sullo scomparso "San Sebastiano" Aldobrandini del giovane Gian Lorenzo Bernini', *Bollettino d'arte*, 86, 2001, pp. 131–135. See next note.

⁴¹ 'a di detto [5 xbre 1618] paga.ti a Gio: Lorenzo Bernini scultore sc. 100 m.a et sono a buon c.to duno S.to Bast.o di Marmo che ha fatto p. s.vitio di Casa n'ra—sc 100'; Rome, Archivio Doria Pamphilj; Fondo Aldobrandini (see Vignodelli Rubricchi [Renato], 'Il "Fondo Aldobrandini" nell'archivio Doria Landi Pamphilj', *Archivio della società romana di storia patria*, no. XCI, 1969); Busta 19, Reg. de' Mandati, Card. Pietro Aldobrandini 'H' 1618–1620; fol. 39^r.

⁴² The niche in Frascati was filled with another statue of San Sebastiano by Ippolito Buzio, also lost. See Lavin, 'Bernini Giovane'.

⁴³ The next occurrence, for example, is on October 14, 1619, for the Aeneas and Anchises; cf. I. Faldi, 'Note sulle sculture Borghesiane del Bernini', *Bollettino d'Arte*, 38, 1953, p. 145, n. 4, and 'Nuove note sul Bernini', *ibid.*, p. 314, Doc. I.

⁴⁴ Cf. A. M. Bessone Aureli, *I marmorari romani*, Milan, 1935, p. 196; Fraschetti, *Bernini*, pp. 102, 418. On admission to the guilds, cf. A. Martini, *Arti mestieri e fede nella Roma dei Papi*, Bologna, 1965, p. 49.