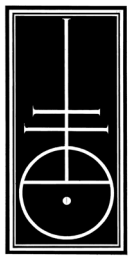
Visible Spirit

The Art of Gianlorenzo Bernini

Vol. I

Irving Lavin



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High and Low Before Their Time: Bernini and the Art of Social Satire*

MODERNISM nowadays is so closely identified with formalism that a new social awareness, which was a fundamental aspect of the modernist movement since the late nineteenth century, is often forgotten. This new social concern, in turn, engendered a new appreciation of popular culture, and of unsophisticated culture generally in all its manifestations. The thoroughness of modernism's rejection of traditional cultural values, and the intimacy of the association modernism established between that rejection and social reform, were unprecedented since the coming of Christianity. The association, however had a long prehistory to which the modern movement was deeply indebted, but which we tend to overlook. We tend, instead, to think of the development of culture in Darwinian terms, as a progressive evolution leading inexorably if not necessarily to improvement then at least to increased sophistication and facility. The exceptions to this principle are just that, exceptions — cases in which, owing to special circumstances, a primitive cultural state is preserved acci-

* An earlier version of this essay appeared in Lavin *et al.* (1981) pp. 25–54. Since the original publication, Professor Dieter Wuttke of Bamberg has kindly brought to my attention an important article by Arndt (1970), in which several of the points dealt with here are anticipated. In particular Arndt suggests (p. 272) a similar interpretation of the sketch by Dürer discussed below. On later appreciation of children's drawings, see Georgel (1980). Also, my colleague John Elliott acquainted me with a remarkable sketch in which Philip IV of Spain and his minister Olivares are crudely portrayed as Don Quixote and Sancho Panza; but the drawing is not independent and is clearly much later than the manuscript, dated 1641, to which it was added along with a postscript (on this point I am indebted to Sandra Sider of the Hispanic Society of America). See Elliott (1964, Pl. 19 opposite p. 344).

dentally, as in certain 'remote' corners of the globe; or perseveres incidentally within the domain of high culture in certain extra-, preter-, or non-cultural contexts, as in the art of the untutored (popular and folk, including graffiti), of children, of the insane.[1]

Without presuming to challenge the biological theory of evolution as such, my view of the matter in art-historical terms is quite different. I would argue that man has what might be described as an 'unartistic' heritage that persists, whether recognized or not, alongside and notwithstanding all developments to the contrary. 'High' and 'low,' the sophisticated and the naive, are always present as cultural alternatives — in all societies, even 'primitive' ones — exerting opposite and equal thrusts in the history of human awareness and self-revelation. They may appear to exist, develop, and function independently, but in fact they are perennial alter egos, which at times interact directly. High and low art, like Beauty and the Beast, go hand in hand.

A striking and surprising case in point is offered by a series of mosaic pavements found in a great and lavishly decorated house at Olynthus in Greece, dating from the early fourth century B.C.[2] Here the figural compositions with concentric borders display all the order and discipline we normally associate with Greek thought (Fig. 1). Traces of this rationality are discernible in certain of the floors where large geometric motifs are placed in the center above finely lettered augural inscriptions, such as 'Good Fortune' or 'Lady Luck,' while various crudely drawn apotropaic symbols — circles, spirals, swastikas, zigzags — appear here and there in the background (Fig. 2). Finally, the entire composition may be dissolved in an amorphous chaos from which the magical signs shine forth mysteriously helter-skelter like stars in the firmament — the random arrangement is as

[1] Insofar as the notion of 'high/low' includes that of primitivism, there is a substantial bibliography, beginning with the classic work of Lovejoy and Boas (1935); more recent literature on primitivism in art will be found in *Encyclopedia* (1959–87, vol. 11, columns 704–17), to which should be added Gombrich ([1960], 1985), and, for the modern period, Rubin, ed., 1985. Further discussion of some aspects of the problem will be found in an essay on Picasso's lithographic series *The Bull,* in a volume of my essays to be published by the University of California Press (1991). If one includes related domains, such as popular art, the art of children and the insane — what I have elsewhere called 'art without history' — the subject of their relations to sophisticated art has yet to receive a general treatment. The development of interest in the art of the insane, in particular has now been studied in an exemplary fashion by MacGregor (1989).

[2] On the Olynthus mosaics, see Salzmann (1982, pp. 100 ff).

deliberate and significant as the signs themselves (Fig. 3). The entire gamut of expressive form and meaningful thought seems here encapsulated, at the very apogee of the classical period in Greece, when the great tradition of European high art was inaugurated. The Olynthus mosaics reveal the common ground — man's sense of the supernatural — that lies between the extremes of high and low to which we give terms like 'mythology' and 'superstition.'

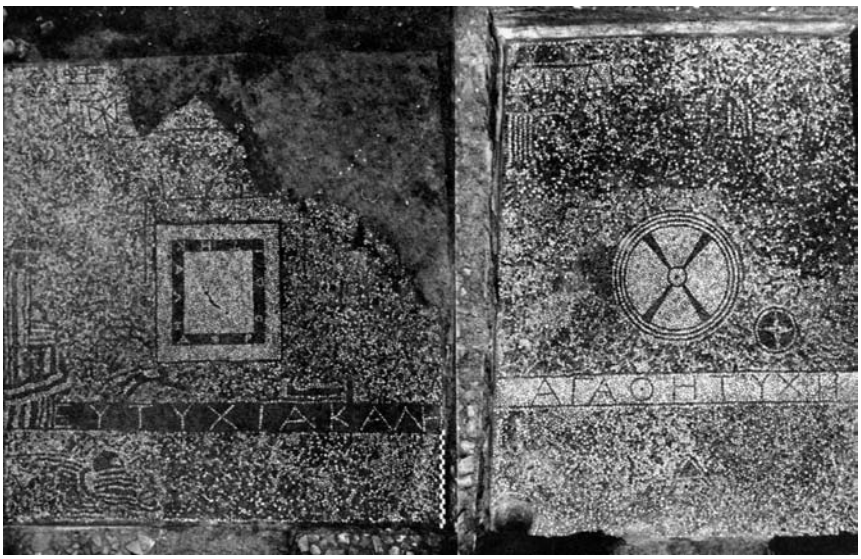
The subsequent development of Greco-Roman art also abounds in various kinds and phases of radical retrospectivity — Neo-Attic, Archaistic, Egyptianizing — in which the naturalistic ideals of classical style were thoroughly expunged. Virtuoso performances by artists of exquisite taste and refined technique recaptured the awkward grace and innocent charm of a distant and venerable past. The retrospective mode might even be adopted in direct apposition to the classical style, as in the reliefs of a late-fourth-century altar from Epidaurus, where the archaistic design of the figure on the side contrasts with the contemporary forms of those on the front (Figs. 4 and 5).[3]

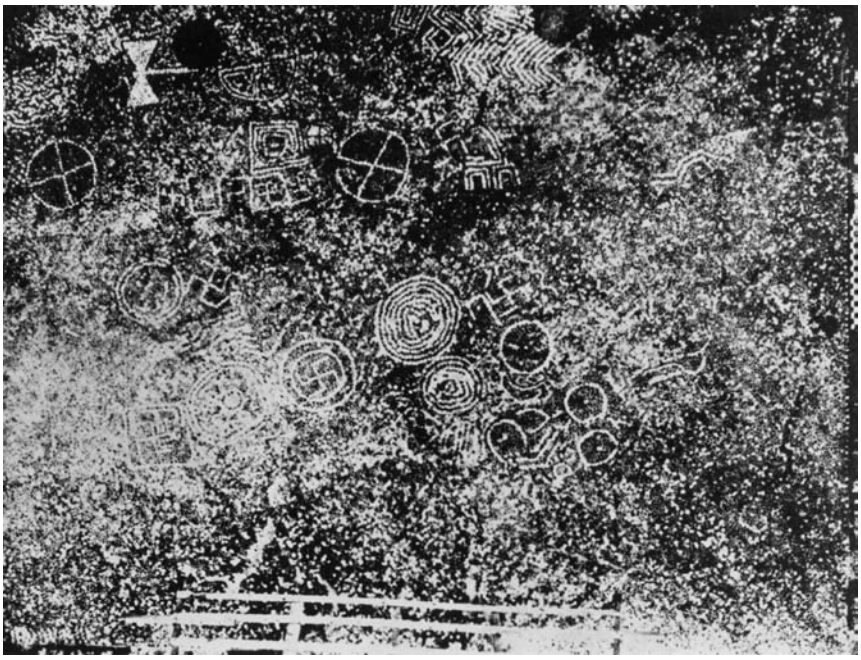
A conspicuous and historically crucial instance of such a coincidence of artistic opposites occurred at the end of classical antiquity, in the arch in Rome dedicated in A.D. 315 to celebrate the emperor Constantine's victory over his rival, Maxentius. Parts of earlier monuments celebrating the emperors Trajan, Hadrian, and Marcus Aurelius were incorporated in the sculptural decorations of the arch, along with contemporary reliefs portraying the actions of Constantine himself (Fig. 6). The rondels display all the nobility and grace of the classical tradition, while the friezes below seem rigid, rough, and ungainly, culturally impoverished. It used to be thought that the arch was a monument of decadence, a mere pastiche in which Constantine's craftsmen salvaged what they could of the high style art of their predecessors, using their own inadequate handiwork only when necessary. In fact, there is ample evidence to show that the juxtaposition was deliberate, intended to create a complementary contrast that would illustrate Constantine's intention to incorporate the grandeur of the Empire at the height of its power with the humble spirituality of the new Christian ideal of dominion. The latter mode may be understood partly in contemporary terms, as an elevation to the highest level of imperial patronage of 'vulgar' forms, whether native to the indigenous populace of Rome or

[3] Cited in Hadzi (1982, p. 312).

1. Olynthus, Villa of Good Fortune, pebble mosaic with representation of Achilles, Thetis and Nereids [from Robinson (1934), pl. xxx].

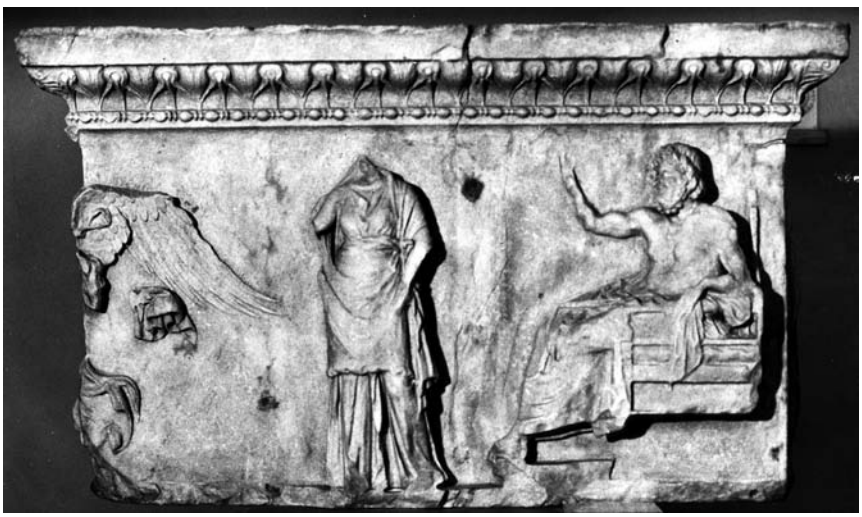
2. Olynthus, Villa of Good Fortune, pebble mosaic with inscription and symbols (double axe, swastika, wheel of fortune) [from Robinson (1934), p. 504, fig. 2].





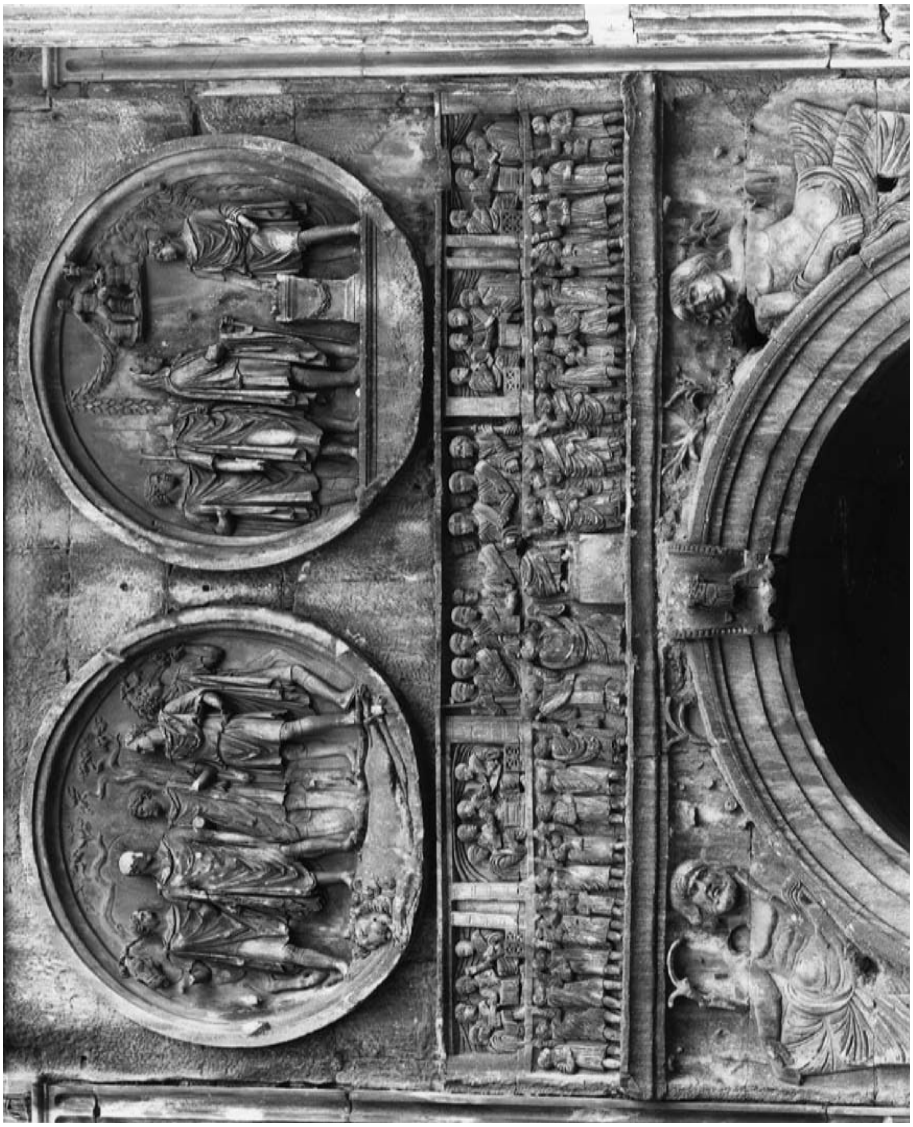
3. Olynthus, House A xi 9, pebble mosaic with many symbols, including swastika and double axe [from Robinson (1934), pl. xxxi].

4. Front view of an altar from Epidaurus. Athens, National Archaeological Museum.



7. Two fighting figures, relief signed by Frotoardus. South portal, La Celle-Bruère (photo: courtesy M. Schmitt).

5. Side view of an altar from Epidaurus. Athens, National Archaeological Museum.



6. Arch of Constantine, medallions and frieze on north side. Rome (photo: Alinari 12325).

imported from the provinces.[4] It has been suggested, however that the vulgar style, which was destined to play a seminal role in the development of medieval art, was also a conscious evocation of Rome's remote, archaic past, when simplicity, austerity, and self-sacrifice had first laid the foundation of a new world order.[5]

An analogous phenomenon has been observed in the context of medieval art itself at the height of the Romanesque period. Many churches of the eleventh and twelfth centuries, including some of the most illustrious, display more or less isolated reliefs executed in a crude, 'infantile' manner and illustrating grotesque or uncouth subjects (Fig. 7).[6] Although they were formerly dismissed as reused 'debris' from a much earlier pre-Romanesque period, recent study has shown that such works are in fact contemporary with, often part of the very fabric of the buildings they adorn. They might even proudly display the inscribed signature of the sculptor and the bold suggestion has been made that the same artist may also have been responsible for the more familiar and more sophisticated parts of the decoration. Such stylistic and thematic interjections must be meaningful, especially since they inevitably recall the real spolia, bits and pieces of ancient monuments, with which many medieval churches are replete. These deliberately retrieved fragments, often discordantly incorporated into the new masonry, bore physical witness to the supersession of paganism by Christianity. Perhaps the substandard Romanesque reliefs express a similar idea in contemporary terms.

The particular subject of this paper may thus quite properly be viewed as one episode in the general history of the phenomenon of cultural extremes that sometimes touch. The episode, however is an important one in the development of European culture because, despite the many antecedents, something new happened in the Renaissance. The classical ideals of naturalism and high culture were not only retrieved, they were also revived, refined, regularized, and embedded in a theoretical framework. This philosophical, mathematical, even theological structure, which culminated toward the end of the sixteenth century in a treatise by Gian Paolo Lomazzo with the significant title *L'idea del tempio della pittura* (1590),

[4] See the exemplary discussion of the arch in Kitzinger (1977, pp. 7 ff).

[5] This last is the luminous suggestion of Tronzo (1986). For the parameters of this idea in terms of classical literary style, see Gombrich (1966[1]).

[6] On these works see Schmitt (1980); the fundamental importance of Schmitt's study for our understanding of medieval art has yet to be fully grasped.

served not only to explain and justify the classical values themselves; it also raised their practitioners to the level of liberal, and therefore noble artists. The classical ideals, albeit in many variations, were thus enshrined in a code of visual behavior as it were, that had every bit the force of — indeed, it was often directly linked to — a code of personal behavior in social terms. To this unprecedented idea of a pure, high art, elevated to the apex of an explicit theoretical and social scale of values, there was an equal and opposite reaction, on the same terms. One of the products of this reaction was the creation of caricature, an art form that we still today think of as peculiarly modern.

Bernini's caricature of Pope Innocent Xl (Fig. 8) is one of the few traces of the artist's handiwork that have come down to us from the very last years of his life. Bernini was seventy-eight and had only four years to live when Benedetto Odescalchi was elected pope, at the age of sixty-five, in 1676. As a work of art, the drawing is slight enough — a few tremulous, if devastating, pen lines sketched in a moment of diversion on a wisp of paper measuring barely four and a half by seven inches.[7] Despite its modest pretensions — in part actually because of them, as we shall see — the work represents a monumental watershed in the history of art: it is the first true caricature that has come down to us of so exalted a personage as a pope. Signifying as it does that no one is beyond ridicule, it marks a critical step in the development, perhaps the beginning, of what can properly be called the art of social satire, a new form of visual expression in which the noblest traditions of European art and society are called into question. The forces here unleashed would ultimately, in the modern period, challenge the notion of tradition itself.

By and large, before Bernini there were two chief methods of ridiculing people in a work of art. The artist might poke fun at a particular individual, independently of any setting or ideological context, if the victim occupied a relatively modest station in life. Such, evidently, were the informal little comic sketches of friends and relatives by Agostino and Annibale Carracci, described in the sources but now lost. These *ritrattini carichi*, or 'charged portraits,' as the Carracci called them, were certainly among the

[7] For a description and bibliography, see Lavin *et al.* (1981, catalogue number 99, pp. 336–37). Traces of further drawing appear at the upper right. Bernini evidently cut off a portion of a larger sheet in order to make the caricature, which he may have drawn for his personal satisfaction and kept for himself. Twenty-five caricatures are mentioned in a 1706 inventory of Bernini's household; Fraschetti (1900, p. 247).

primary inspirations of Bernini's caricatures (Fig. 9). Alternatively, the victim might be grand, and he would be represented in a context that reflected his position in society. The artists of the Reformation, for example, had made almost a specialty of satirizing the popes as representatives of a hated institution and its vices (Fig. 10). In the former case the individuality of the victim was important, but *he* was not; in the latter case the opposite was true.[8]

The differences between Bernini's drawing and these antecedents have to do, on the one hand, with the form of the work — a particular kind of drawing that we immediately recognize and refer to as a caricature — and, on the other with its content — the peculiar appearance and character of a specific individual who might even be the Supreme Pontiff of the Roman Catholic Church. I shall offer my remarks under those general headings.[9]

Much of what I shall have to say was already said, at least implicitly, in the accounts of Bernini's caricatures given by his early biographers, who were well aware of the significance of his achievement in this domain. Filippo Baldinucci reports that Bernini's 'boldness of touch' (*franchezza di tocco*) in drawing was

> truly miraculous; and I could not say who in his time was his equal

[8] For a general account of social criticism in postmedieval art, see Shikes (1969). A fine analysis of the nature of the Carraccis' *ritrattini carichi*, with the attribution to Annibale of the drawing reproduced here, will be found in Posner (1971, pp. 65–70, Fig. 59; and *cf.* Fig. 60, certainly cut from a larger sheet), but see also Bohlin (1979, pp. 48, 67, nn. 83 f); so far as can be determined, Annibale's drawings displayed neither the social content nor the distinctive draftsmanship of Bernini's caricatures, nor is it clear that they were autonomous sheets. On the papal satires of the Reformation, see Grisar and Heege (1921–23); Koepplin and Falk (1974–76, vol. 2, pp. 498–522).

[9] For caricature generally and for bibliography see *Encyclopedia* (1959–87, vol. 3, columns 734–35). For a useful recent survey of caricature since the Renaissance, see *Caricature* (1971). On the development in Italy the fundamental treatment is that of Juynboll (1934); important observations will be found in a chapter by E. Kris and E. H. Gombrich in Kris (1952, pp. 189–203), and in Gombrich (1972, pp. 330 ff). The pages on Bernini's caricatures in Brauer and Wittkower (1931, pp. 180–84), remain unsurpassed; but see also Boeck (1949), Harris (1975, p. 158), and Harris (1977, p. xviii, numbers 40, 41). The latter has questioned whether the caricatures in the Vatican Library and the Gabinetto Nazionale delle Stampe in Rome, attributed to Bernini by Brauer and Wittkower, are autographs or close copies; however, the issue does not affect the general argument presented here. Caricature drawings attributed to Bernini other than those noted by Brauer and Wittkower and by Harris (1977) will be found in Cooke (1955); Sotheby (1963, Lot 18); Stampfle and Bean (1967, vol.2, pp. 54 f).

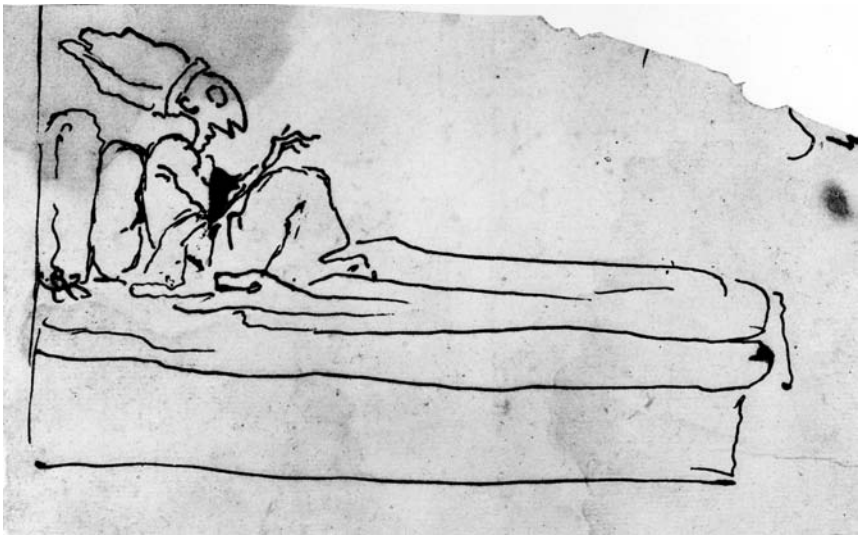
> in this ability. An effect of this boldness was his singular work in the kind of drawing we call caricature, or exaggerated sketches, wittily malicious deformations of people's appearance, which do not destroy their resemblance or dignity, though often they were great princes who enjoyed the joke with him, even regarding their own faces, and showed the drawings to others of equal rank.[10]

Domenico Bernini, the artist's son, gives the following formulation:

> at that time [under Urban VIII] and afterwards he worked singularly in the kind of drawing commonly referred to as caricature. This was a singular effect of his spirit, in which as a joke he deformed some natural defect in people's appearance, without destroying the resemblance, recording them on paper as they were in substance, although in part obviously altered. The invention was rarely practiced by other artists, it being no easy matter to derive beauty from the deformed, symmetry from the ill-proportioned. He made many such drawings, and he mostly took pleasure in exaggerating the features of princes and important personages, since they in turn enjoyed recognizing themselves and others, admiring the great inventiveness of the artist and enjoying the game.[11]

[10] In Bernini's drawings, 'Si scorge simmetria maravigliosa, maestà grande, e una tal franchezza di tocco, che è propriamente un miracolo; ed io non saprei dire chi mai nel suo tempo gli fusse stato equale in tal facoltà. Effetto di questa franchezza è stato l'aver egli operato singolarmente in quella sorte di disegno, che noi diciamo caricatura o di colpi caricati, deformando per ischerzo a mal modo l'effigie altrui, senza togliere loro la somiglianza, e la maestà, se talvolta eran principi grandi, come bene spesso accadeva per lo gusto, che avevano tali personaggi di sollazzarsi con lui in si fatto trattenimento, anche intorno a'propri volti, dando poi a vedere i disegni ad altri di non minore affare.' Baldinucci ([1682] 1948, p. 140).

[11] 'Ne devesi passar sotto silenzio l'havere ei in quel tempo & appresso ancora, singolarmente operate in quella sorte di Disegno, che communemente chiamasi col nome di *Caricatura*. Fù queste un'effetto singolare del suo spirito, poichè in essi veniva a deformare, come per ischerzo, l'altrui effigie in quelle parti però, dove la natura haveva in qualche mode difettato, e senza toglier lore la somiglianza, li rendeva su le Carte similissimi, e quali in sostanza essi erano, benche se ne scorgesse notabilmente alterata, e caricata una parte; Invenzione rare volte pratticata da altri Artefici, non essendo giuoco da tutti, ricavare il bello dal deforme, e dalla sproporzione la simetria. Ne fece egli dunque parecchi, e per lo più si dilettava di caricare l'effigie de' Principi, e Personaggi grandi, per lo gusto, che essi poi ne ricevevono in rimirarsi que' medesimi, pur d'essi, e non essi, ammirando eglino in un tempo l'Ingegno grande dell'Artefice, e solazzandosi con si fatto trattenimento.' Bernini (1713, p. 28).



8. Bernini, caricature of Pope Innocent XI, drawing. Leipzig, Museum der bildenden Künste.

10. Lucas Cranach, *Pope Leo X as Antichrist* [after *Passional* (1885), ill. 19].

9. Attributed to Annibale Carracci, drawing. Windsor Castle, Royal Library, No. 1928.

11. Leonardo, grotesque heads, drawing. Windsor Castle,
Royal Library, No. 12495r.

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Hoc ſchemate galli naſus incauus, cum concaua circulari frontis ſuperficie exprimitur, cum humano ad eiuſmodi formam effigiato, inſita deſcribendo.

Incauus naſus ante frontem, rotundus, & ſupereminens rotundum.

Vt ſe habet antiqua tranſlatio Ariſtotelis in Phyſiognomonicis; Qui naſum concauum habent, ante frontem rotundum, & ſupereminentem rotundum, luxurioſi ſunt, & ad gallos referuntur. Nos, cum eiuſmodi naſum ignoraremus, tum Ariſtotelici textus corruptione, tum interpretis tranſlatione, gallos conſuluimus, atque diligenti eorum inſpectione, ita textũ & ſenſum verbis accommodauimus, habet enim gallinaceus gallus ante frontem in confinio valleculam quandam, vel incauum quoddam, & pars ea naſi ante frontem rotunda, & inde frons à naſo ad capillorum radicem, velut circuli circumferentia eſt. Vt verba textus tranſlata dicant: Qui ante naſum habet incauum, & partes, quæ ante frontem rotundas, circumferentiam vero ſupra aſſurgentem, &c. hoc ego etiam puerarios indicarem: abutuntur enim Venere galli

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gallinacei, perdices, & coturnices; quæ fere ſimilem naſum habent. Cum enim feminæ ouis incubant, mares dimicant pugnamque inter ſe conferunt, quos cœlibes vocant; qui victus in pugna fuerit, victoris Venerem patitur, nec niſi à ſuo victore ſubigitur, ex Ariſtotele: & multos amicos cognoui eiuſmodi naſo præditos, huic enormi luxuriæ generi obnoxios. Fingunt Poëtæ Iouem aquilæ forma Ganymedem rapuiſſe, ſubtali figmento id fortaſſe innuentes. Ælianus etiam ichneumonem huic turpitudini obnoxium dixit. Tali naſo Satyri & Sileni ab antiquis effigiati ſunt, & tali naſo etiam Socrates ipſe præditus fuit: nam Xenophon Socratem Silenis ſimilem fuiſſe, & preſſis naribus, ſcribit.

Latus in medio naſus.

Naſus in medio latus, declinans ad ſummitatem, demonſtrat mendacem & verboſum. Ariſtoteles ad Alexandrum.

Si bouis naſum inſpexerimus, & hominem ſimilem effigiauerimus, non ab hac quæ hic cernitur figura, longe aberit, ita aſſabre in imo craſſis deducitur.

H 3

12. Physiognomical types, Della Porta (1586) [1650], pp. 116f.

The explicit definition of caricature given in these passages — a comic exaggeration of the natural defects of the sitter's features — focuses on what might be called the mimetic nature of the genre. It is essential that an individual, preferably of high rank, be represented, and that with all the distortion he remain individually identifiable. The formal qualities are expressed implicitly: the drawings were independent works of art, conceived as ends in themselves and appreciated as such; they were also true or pure portraits, in that they depicted a single individual, isolated from any setting or narrative context; and they were graphically distinctive, in that they were drawn in a singular manner (reflecting Bernini's *franchezza di tocco*), specifically adapted to their purpose.[12]

On all these counts Bernini's drawings are sharply distinguished from the tradition most often cited in the prehistory of caricature, physiognomics. The scientific or pseudoscientific investigation of ideal types as they relate to moral and psychological categories originated in antiquity and enjoyed a great florescence in the Renaissance. Leonardo's studies of grotesque heads as expressions of the aesthetic notion of perfect or beautiful ugliness (Fig. 11) are one familiar case in point. Another major aspect of the tradition was the comparison of human and animal features, on the theory that the analogies revealed common psychological qualities: human facial traits were assimilated to those of various animal species to bring out the supposed characterological resemblances. The first comprehensive tract on the subject was published in 1586 by Giambattista della Porta (Fig. 12).[13] Bernini was certainly aware of the physiognomical tradition, both the association between exaggeration and character analysis and the link between human and animal types. Yet, such studies never portrayed specific individuals, they were never drawn in any special style of their own, and they were never sufficient unto themselves as works of art.

It is well known that in the course of the sixteenth century drawing had achieved the status of an independent art — that is, serving neither as an exercise, nor a documentary record, nor a preparatory design — in a limited variety of forms. One was what may be called the presentation drawing, which the artist prepared expressly for a given person or occasion. Michelangelo's drawings for his friend Tommaso Cavalieri are among the

[12] For the foregoing, see Lavin (1970, p. 144 n. 75).

[13] Della Porta ([1586] 1650, pp. 116 f). For general bibliography on physiognomics, see *Encyclopedia* (1959–68, vol. 3, columns 380 f).

earliest such works that have come down to us (Fig. 13).[14] Another category, especially relevant in our context, was the portrait drawing, which by Bernini's time had also become a distinct genre. In the early seventeenth century there was a specialist in this field in Rome, Ottavio Leoni; he portrayed many notables of the period, including Bernini himself (Fig. 14), who also made 'regular' portrait drawings of this sort (*cf.* Fig. 17).[15] (In Bernini's case the complementarity and contrast between the two independent graphic forms extend even to the identifying inscriptions: on the caricatures, a coarse scrawl with the name and professional qualification in the vulgar language; on the formal portrait, a humanistic Latin epigraph in calligraphic minuscules, but not the noble majuscules of classical epigraphy.) A common characteristic of these early autonomous drawings is that they were highly finished, and the draftsman tended to invent or adopt special devices which distinguish them from other kinds of drawings:[16] Michelangelo's famous stippling and rubbing is one example, Leoni's mixture of colored chalks is another. These works are carefully executed, rich in detail, and complex in technique. The artist, in one way or another created an independent form midway between a sketch and a painting or sculpture. We shall explore the peculiar graphic qualities of Bernini's caricatures presently. For the moment it is important to note that they incorporate two interrelated innovations with respect to this prior history of drawing as an end in itself. Bernini's are the first such independent drawings in which the technique is purely graphic, i.e., the medium is exclusively pen and ink, the forms being outlined without internal modeling; and in them the rapidity, freshness, and spontaneity usually associated with the informal sketch become an essential feature of the final work of art.[17]

Within the specific context of the autonomous portrait drawing, Bernini's caricatures also stand apart. The prevalent convention in this

[14] *Cf.* Wilde (1978, pp. 147 ff).

[15] For portrait drawing generally see Meder (1978, pp. 335 ff.); for drawings by Leoni, see Kruft (1969).

[16] It is interesting that in both cases contemporaries were already aware of the distinctive techniques used in these drawings; for Michelangelo, see Vasari ([1550, 1568] 1962, vol. 1, pp. 118, 121 f; vol. 4, pp. 1,898 ff); for the colored chalks and pencils of Leoni and Bernini, see Baglione ([1642] 1935, p. 321) and Stampfle and Bean (1967, pp. 52 f).

[17] There was one class of sixteenth-century works, incidentally in which the loose sketch might become a sort of presentation drawing, namely the German autograph album (*album amicorum* or *Stammbuch*); see, for example, Thöne (1940, pp. 55f, Figs. 17–19) and *Drawings* (1964, p. 23, numbers 33, 35).

genre, and indeed in that of the painted portrait generally since the early Renaissance, was to show the sitter in three-quarter views, whereas Bernini's caricatures are invariably either full-face or profile (Figs. 15 and 16). The effect seems deliberately archaic, but his preference may also be seen in the light of another equally striking fact: among Bernini's own portrait drawings (other than caricatures) those that are independent are three-quarter views (Fig. 17), while those that can be identified as studies for sculptured portraits are in strict profile (Fig. 18).[18] We know that the very first studies he made from life for the famous bust of Louis XIV were two drawings, one full-face, the other in profile.[19] Bernini, of course, astonished his contemporaries by also making many sketches of the sitter moving and talking, and

[18] For Bernini's portrait drawings generally see Brauer and Wittkower (1931, pp. 11, 15, 29 f, 156 f) and Harris (1977, *passim*.). It happens that the two preserved and certainly authentic profile drawings by Bernini represent sitters of whom he also made sculptured portraits, i.e., Scipione Borghese (Fig. 18) and Pope Clement X [see Lavin *et al.* (1981, catalogue number 83, pp. 294–99, 375)]. Conversely there are no recorded portrait sculptures of the sitters of whom Bernini made drawings in three-quarter view. It is interesting in this context to compare the triple views provided to Bernini by painters for four sculptured busts to be executed *in absentia* — by Van Dyck for portraits of Charles I and Henrietta Maria, by Philippe de Champaigne for Richelieu, and by Sustermans and Boulanger for Francesco I of Modena; *cf.* Wittkower (1966, pp. 207 f, 209 f, 224):

	VIEW			
Subject	*Right profile*	*Full-face*	*Three-quarter-to - left profile*	*Left profile*
Charles I	x	x	x	
Henrietta Maria	x	x		x
Richelieu	x		x	x
Francesco I	x	x		x

All four include the right profile, all but the third the full face, and all but the first the left profile; only the first and third show the head turned three quarters (to the left). 'Portraits,' otherwise unspecified, were also sent from Paris to Bernini in Rome for the equestrian statue of Louis XIV; see Wittkower (1961, p. 525, number 47).

[19] The first studies for the bust are mentioned in Chantelou's diary June 23, 1665: 'Le Cavalier a dessiné d'après le Roi une tête deface, une de profil' (Chantelou, p. 37); *cf.* a letter of 26 June from Paris by Bernini's assistant Mattia de' Rossi, 'doppo che hebbe fenito il retratto in faccia, lo fece in profile,' Mirot (1904, p. 218n), and the remark of Domenico Bernini (1713, p, 133), 'Onde a S. Germano fè ritorno per retrarre in disegno la Regia effigie, e due formònne, una di profilo, l'altro in faccia.' Charles Perrault in his *Mémoires* of 1669 also mentions Bernini's profile sketches of the king: '[Bernini] se contenta de dessiner en pastel deux ou trois profils du visage du Roi' (Perrault, p. 61).

these must have been extremely various.[20] In actually preparing the sculpture, however the full-face and profile were evidently primary, perhaps because the sculptor began by tracing them on the sides and front of the block.[21] We shall see that other factors were involved as well, but it seems clear that in this respect Bernini's caricatures transfer to the final work conventions proper to a preliminary stage.

Bernini's caricatures have a distinct graphic style that marks them as caricatures quite apart from what they represent. They consist, as we have noted, entirely of outlines, from which hatching, shading, and modeling have been eliminated in favor of an extreme, even exaggerated simplicity, The lines are also often patently inept, suggesting either bold, muscle-bound attacks on the paper or a tremulous hesitancy. In other words, Bernini adopted (or rather created) a kind of lowbrow or everyman's graphic mode in which traditional methods of sophisticated draftsmanship are travestied just as are the sitters themselves.[22]

If one speculates on possible antecedents of Bernini's caricature technique, two art forms — if they can be called that — immediately spring to mind, in which the inept and untutored form part of the timeless and anonymous heritage of human creativity: children's drawings and graffiti. It is not altogether far-fetched to imagine that Bernini might have taken such things seriously, as it were, in making his comic drawings, for he would certainly not have been the first to do so. Albrecht Dürer drew a deliberately crude and childish sketch of a woman with scraggly hair and prominent nose in a letter he wrote from Venice in 1506 to his friend Willibald Pirckheimer (Fig. 19). The drawing illustrates a famous passage in which Dürer describes the Italians' favorable reaction to his *Rosenkranz Madonna*. He reports that the new picture had silenced all the painters who admired

[20] For the references to this aspect of Bernini's procedure, see Brauer and Wittkower (1931, p. 29), and Wittkower (1951).

[21] Interesting in this context are Michelangelo's frontal and profile sketches for the marble block of one of the Medici Chapel river gods; see De Tolnay (1943–60, vol. 3, plate 131). Cellini (1971, p. 789), speaks of Michelangelo's method of drawing the principal view on the block and commencing carving on that side.

[22] It is significant that Bernini employed a comparable technique when he portrayed nature in what might be called a 'primitive' or formless state, as in the sketches for fireworks [Lavin *et al.* (1981, catalogue numbers 56–58, pp. 219–27)] or a project for a fountain with a great display of gushing water [Brauer and Wittkower (1931, Pl. 101a); *cf.* Harris (1977, p. xxi, number 70)].

13. Michaelangelo, *Fall of Phaeton*, drawing. Windsor Castle, Royal Library, No. 119.

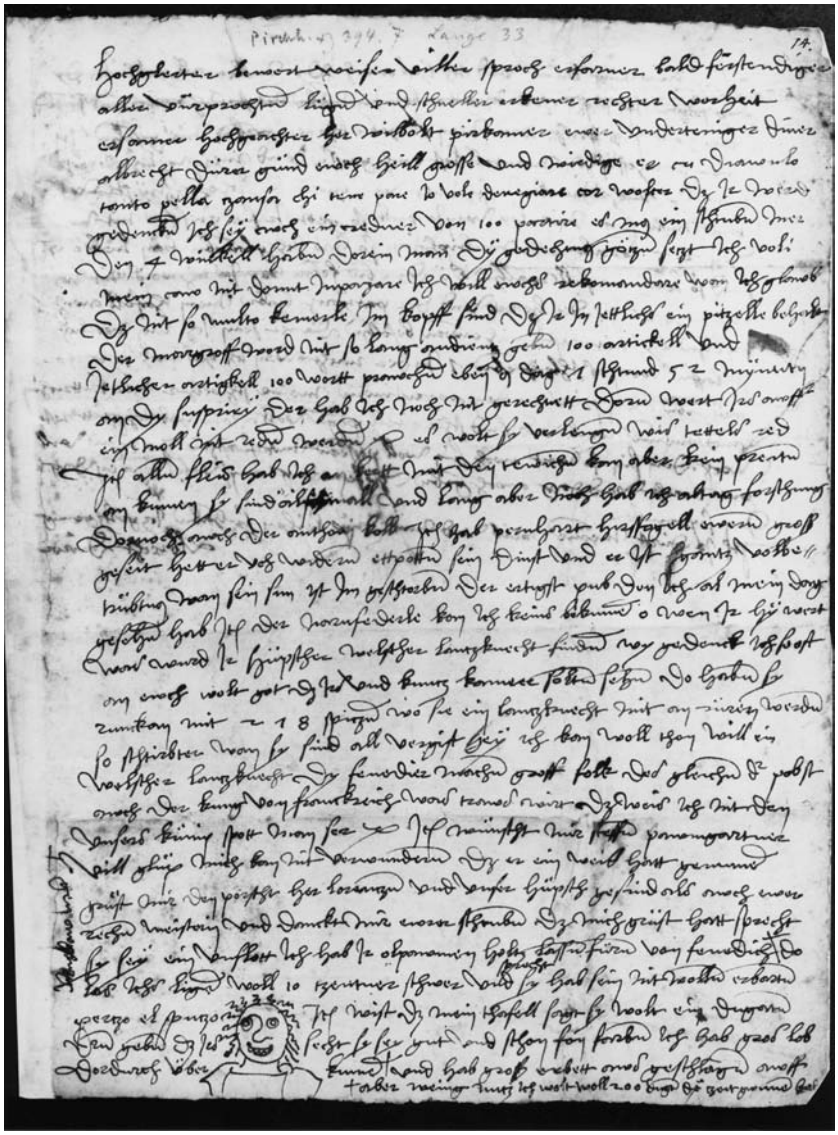
14. Ottavio Leoni, portrait of Gianlorenzo Bernini, drawing.
Florence, Biblioteca Marucelliana, Vol. H, fol. 15.

15. Bernini, caricature of Cardinal Scipione Borghese, drawing. Biblioteca Vaticana, MS Chigi P. VI. 4, fol. 15.

16. Bernini, caricatures of Don Virginio Orsini (copy) and a military captain, drawing. Rome, Gabinetto Nazionale delle Stampe, Fondo Corsini 127521 (579).

17. Bernini, portrait of Sisinio Poli, drawing. New York,
The Pierpont Morgan Library, No. IV, 74.

18. Bernini, portrait of Scipione Borghese, drawing. New York, The Pierpont Morgan Library, No. IV, 176.



19. Albrecht Dürer, letter to Willibald Pirckheimer.
Nuremberg, Stadtbibliothek, Pirckh. 394,7.

his graphic work but said he could not handle colors.[23] The clumsy-looking sketch is thus an ironic response to his critics, as if to say, 'Here is my Madonna, reduced to the form these fools can appreciate.'

Something similar appears in certain manuscripts of Dürer's friend and admirer Erasmus of Rotterdam (Fig. 20). Here and there he introduced sketches — one might almost call them doodles, except they are much too self-conscious — that include repeated portrayals of himself with exaggerated features, in what Panofsky described as the sharply observant, humorous spirit that animated his *Praise of Folly*.[24] It might be added that the crude style of the drawings also matches the ironic exaltation of ignorance that is the fundamental theme of *Praise of Folly*. Although Erasmus was an amateur it should not be assumed that the sketches are simply inept. He did know better for he had practiced painting in his youth, and he had a discriminating art-historical eye that even encompassed what he called a 'rustic' style, which he associated with early medieval art.[25] On the back of a Leonardesque drawing from this same period, a deliberate graphic antithesis occurs in which a wildly expressive head is redrawn as a witty, schoolboyish persiflage (Fig. 21).

A child's drawing plays a leading role in a portrait by the mid-sixteenth-century Veronese painter Giovanni Francesco Caroto (Fig. 22).[26] Perhaps the drawing is the work of the young man who shows it to the spectator. He seems rather too old, however and a much more correctly drawn eye

[23] *Cf.* Rupprich (1956–69, vol. 1, pp. 54 f). The passage (my own translation) reads as follows:

'Know that my picture says it would give a ducat for you to see it; it is good and beautifully coloured. I have earned great praise for it, but little profit. I could well have earned 200 ducats in the time and have refused much work, so that I may come home. I have also silenced all the painters who said I was good at engraving, but that in painting I did not know how to handle colors. Now they all say they have never seen more beautiful colors.' Dürer made the drawing immediately before he wrote this passage, which surrounds the figure. Lange and Fuhse (1893, p. 35, n. 1) noted long ago that the sketch must refer to this, rather than the preceding portion of the letter

[24] Panofsky (1969, p. 203). On Erasmus's self-mocking sketches, see Heckscher (1967, pp. 135 f, n. 23) and the bibliography cited there.

[25] Erasmus speaks of marveling and laughing at the extreme crudity of artists a century or two earlier ('admiraberis et ridebis nimiam artificum rusticitatem'); see Panofsky (1969, pp. 200, 202 f), who also discusses Erasmus's early interest in and practice of painting and drawing.

[26] Franco Fiorio (1971, pp. 47 f, 100); for suggestive analysis of the painting, see Almgren (1971, pp. 71–73).

(the eye of the painter?) appears at the lower right of the sheet.[27] The suggestive smile and glance with which the youth confronts the viewer certainly convey a deeper sense of the ironic contrast between the drawing and the painting itself.[28]

Graffiti have a particular relevance to our context because while their stylistic naïveté may be constant, the sorts of things they represent are not. Historically speaking, portrait graffiti are far rarer than one might suppose. Considering the role of 'proper' portraiture in classical times, it is certainly significant that ancient draftsmen also inscribed many comic graffiti portraying real individuals — often identified by name — on the walls of Roman buildings at Pompeii and Rome (Fig. 23).[29] I feel sure Bernini was aware of such drawings, if only because we know he was acutely aware of the wall as a graphic field. It was his habit, he said, to stroll about the gallery of his house while excogitating his first ideas for a project, tracing them upon the wall with charcoal.[30] Two extant wall compositions by him, though not preliminary sketches, are in fact drawings (Fig. 24).[31]

The term 'graffito,' of course, refers etymologically to the technique of incised drawing. The beginning of its modern association with popular

[27] On the eye of Painting, see Posner (1967, pp. 201 f).

[28] What may be a deliberately crude head appears among the test drawings and scratches on the back of one of Annibale Carracci's engraved plates; Posner (1971, p. 70, Fig. 68); and Bohlin (1979, p. 437).

[29] Both ancient graffiti and *grylloi* (discussed below) are often considered in the literature on comic art, e.g., Champfleury (1865, pp. 57–65, 186–203), but I am not aware that they have hitherto been treated seriously as specific progenitors of the modern caricature. For ancient graffiti generally see *Enciclopedia* (1958–66, vol.3, pp. 995 f). For a recent survey of the figural graffiti at Pompeii, see Cèbe (1966, pp. 375 f); for those on the Palatine in Rome, see Väänänen (1966, 1970).

[30] 'Il m'a dit qu'à Rome il en avait une [a gallery] dans sa maison, laquelle est presque toute pareille; que c'est là qu'il fait, en se promenant, la plupart de ses compositions; qu'il marquait sut la muraille, avec du charbon, les idèes des choses à mesure qu'elles Iui venaient dans I'esprit' (Chantelou, p. 19). The idea recalls the ancient tales of the invention of painting by tracing shadows cast on the wall; see Kris and Kurz (1979, p. 74 and n. 10).

[31] I refer to the well-known *Saint Joseph Holding the Christ Child* at Ariccia [Brauer and Wittkower (1931, pp. 154–56, Pl. 115)], and a (much restored) portrait of Urban VIII in black and red chalk, in the Villa La Maddelena of Cardinal Giori, Bernini's friend and patron, at Muccia near Camerino (Fig. 24). The attribution of the latter work, reproduced here for the first time, I believe, stems from an inventory of 1712; Brauer and Wittkower (1931, p. 151); *cf.* Feliciangeli (1917, pp. 9 f). I am indebted to Professors Italo Faldi and Oreste Ferrari for their assistance in obtaining photographs. *Cf.* also a portrait drawing in black and red chalk in the Chigi palace at Formello; Martinelli (1950, p. 182, Fig. 193).

satirical representations can be traced to the Renaissance, notably to Vasari's time when sgraffito was used for a kind of mural decoration that often included grotesque and chimeric forms with amusing distortions and transformations of nature, based on classical models (Fig. 25).[32]

It is also in the Renaissance that we begin to find allusions to popular mural art by sophisticated artists. Michelangelo, who was full of references, serious as well as ironic, to the relations among various kinds of art, was a key figure in this development. By way of illustrating Michelangelo's prodigious visual memory, Vasari tells an anecdote that also sheds light on this neglected aspect of the master's stylistic sensibility. On an occasion during his youth, when Michelangelo was dining with some of his colleagues, they held an informal contest to see who could 'best' draw a figure without design — as awkward, Vasari says, as the doll-like creatures (*fantocci*) made by the ignorant who deface the walls of buildings. Michelangelo won the game by reproducing, as if it were still before him, such a scrawl (*gofferia*), which he had seen long before. Vasari's comment — that this was a difficult achievement for one of discriminating taste and steeped in design — shows that he was well aware of the underlying significance of such an interplay between high and low style.[33] Juxtapositions of this kind may actually be seen among the spectacular series of charcoal sketches attributed to Michelangelo and his assistants, discovered a few years ago on the walls of chambers adjacent to and beneath the Medici Chapel in Florence (Fig. 26).[34]

[32] The association between *sgraffiti* and *grotteschi* is clear from Vasari's description and account of their invention; see Vasari ([1550, 1568] 1966 ff, vol. 1, *Testo*, pp. 142–45, *Commento*, p. 212, vol. 4, *Testo*, pp. 517–23); *cf.* Maclehose and Brown (1960, pp. 243–45, 298–303). On *sgraffiti* and *grotteschi*, see Thiem (1964) and Dacos (1969).

[33] 'E stato Michelagnolo di una tenace e profonda memoria, che nel vedere le cose altrui una sol volta l'ha ritenute si fattamente e servitosene in una maniera che nessuno se n'è mai quasi accorto; nè ha mai fatto cosa nessuna delle sue che riscontri l'una con l'altra, perchè si ricordava di tutto quello che aveva fatto. Nella sua gioventù, sendo con gli amici sua pittori, giucorno una cena a chi faceva una figura che non avessi niente di disegno, che fussi goffa, simile a que' fantocci che fanno coloro che non sanno e imbrattano le mura. Qui si valse della memoria; perché, ricordatosi aver visto in un muro una di queste gofferie, la fece come se l'avessi avuta dinanzi du tutto punto, e superò tutti que'pittori: cosa dificile in uno uomo tanto pieno di disegno, avvezzo a cose scelte, che no potessi uscir netto.' Vasari ([1550, 1558] 1962, vol. I, p. 124; see also vol. 4, pp. 2,074 f).

[34] Dal Poggetto (1979, p. 267, no. 71, and p. 272, nos. 154, 156). A remarkable precedent for these drawings are those attributed to Mino da Fiesole, discovered on a wall in his house in Florence; see Sciolla (1970, p. 113 with bibliography).

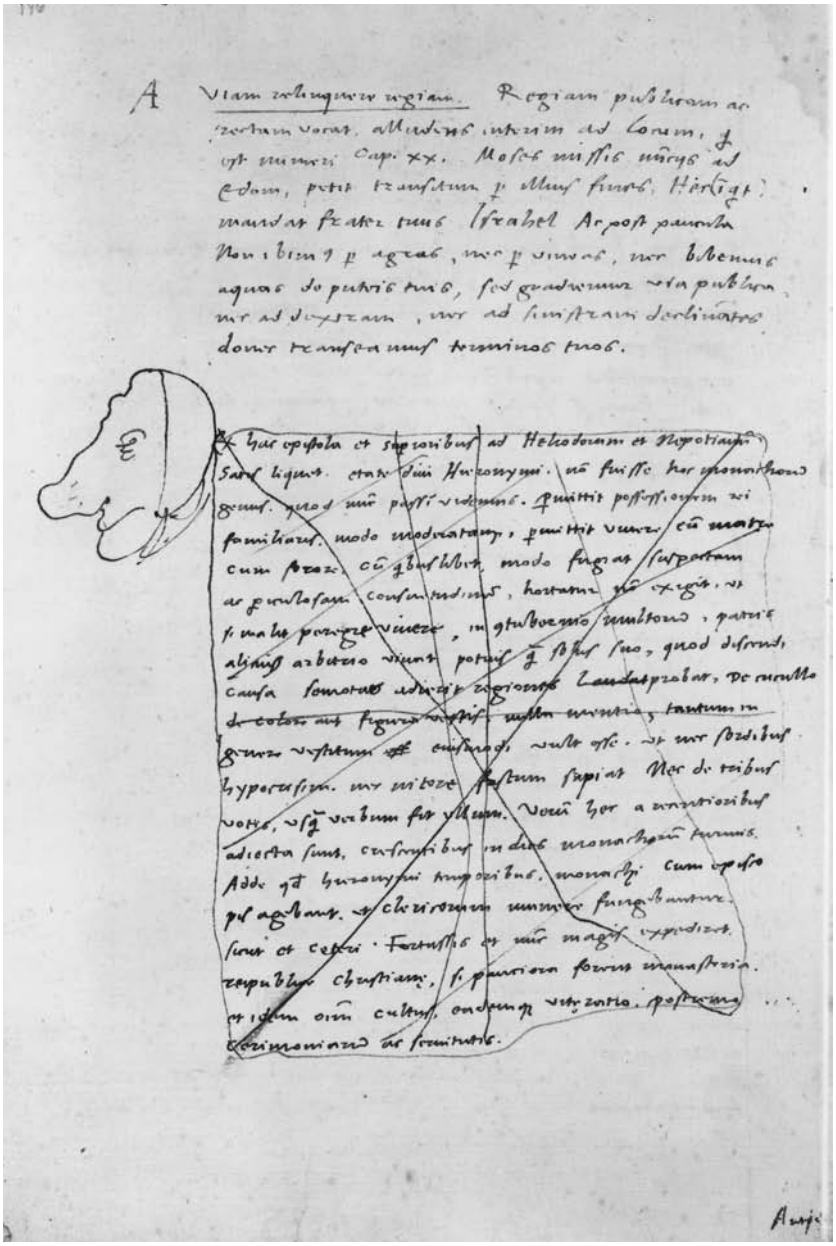
An even more remarkable instance — and, as it happens, almost exactly contemporary with the Dürer letter — involves one of Michelangelo's early sonnets (Fig. 27). The poem parodies Michelangelo's own work on the Sistine ceiling, its gist being that the agonizing physical conditions of the work impair his judgment (*giudizio*), that is, the noblest part of art, so that he is not a true painter and he begs indulgence:

My belly's pushed by force beneath my chin.
……
My brush, above my face continually,
Makes it a splendid floor by dripping down.
……
And I am bending like a Syrian bow.
And judgment, hence, must grow,
Borne in mind, peculiar and untrue;
You cannot shoot well when the gun's askew.
John, come to the rescue
Of my dead painting now, and of my honor;
I'm not in a good place, and I'm no painter.[35]

In the margin of the manuscript page he drew a sketch depicting his twisted body as the bow, his right arm holding the brush as the arrow, and a figure on the ceiling as the target. Of particular interest in our context is the strik-

[35] c'a forza 'I ventre appicca sotto 'I mento.
……
e 'I pennel sopra 'I vise tuttavia
mel fa, gocciando, un ricco pavimento.
……
e tendomi come arco soriano.
Però fallace e strano
surge il iudizio che la mente porta,
chè mal si tra' per cerbottana torta.
La mia pittura morta
difendi orma', Giovanni, e 'I mio onore
non sendo in loco ben, nè io pittore.

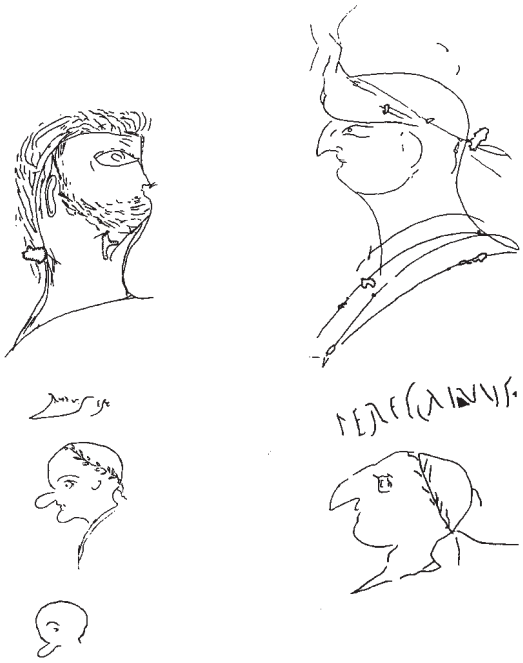
Girardi (1960, pp. 4f); trans. from Gilbert and Linscott (1963, pp. 5 f). The sheet has most recently been dated 1511–12 by De Tolnay (1975–80, vol. I, p. 126), who also notes the disjunction between the two parts of the drawing.



20. Erasmus, manuscript page. Basel, Universitäts-Bibliothek, MS C.VI. a.68, p. 146.

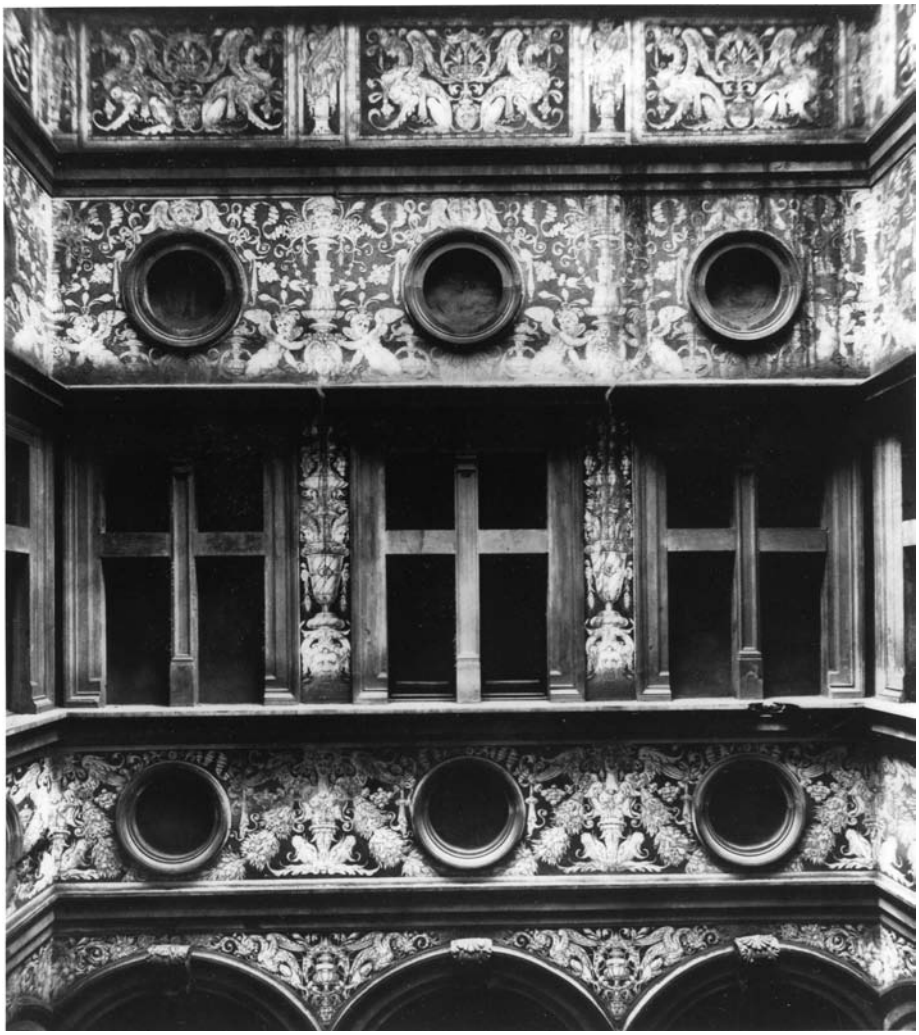
21. Leonardo (?), sketches of heads, drawing. Royal Library, Windsor Castle, No. 12673v.

22. Giovanni Francesco Caroto, *Boy with Drawing.* Verona, Museo del Castelvecchio.

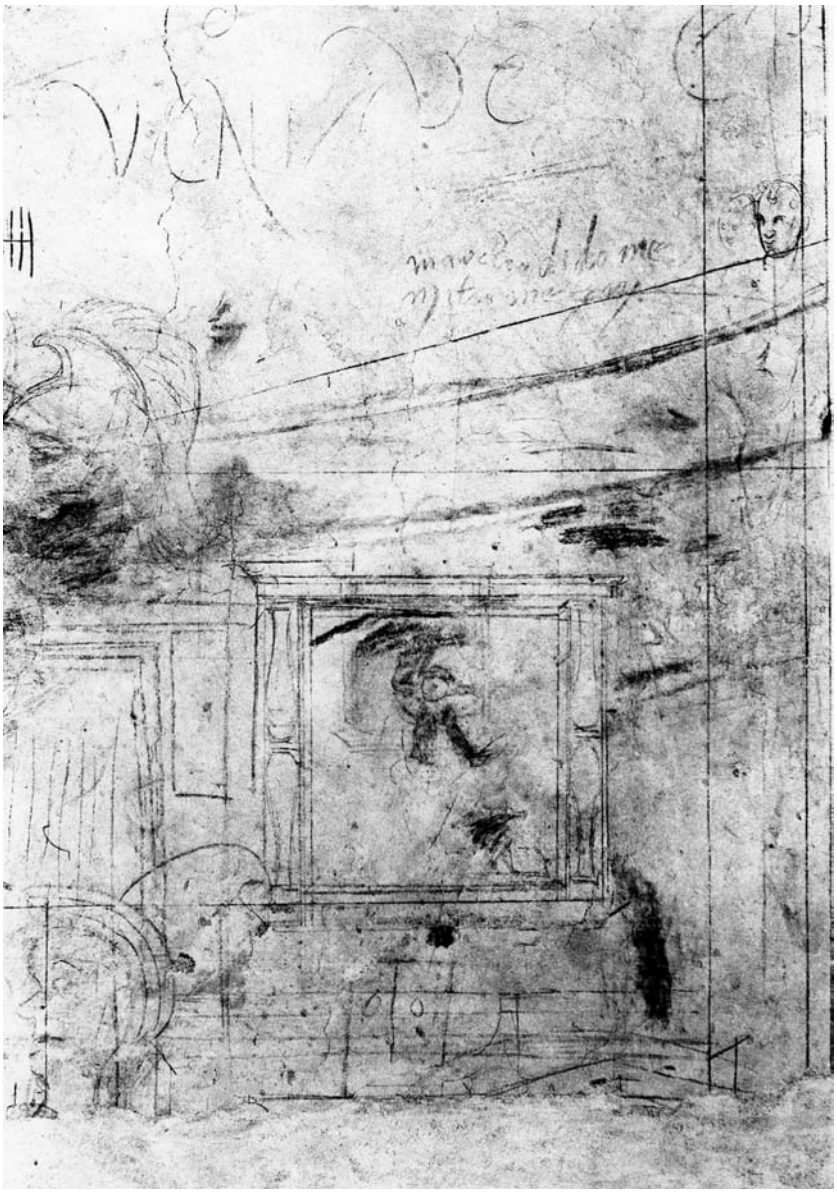


23. Ancient graffiti on the walls of buildings at Rome and Pompeii [after Väänänen (1970), pp. 121, 213; Cèbe (1966), pl. XIX, 3, 6].

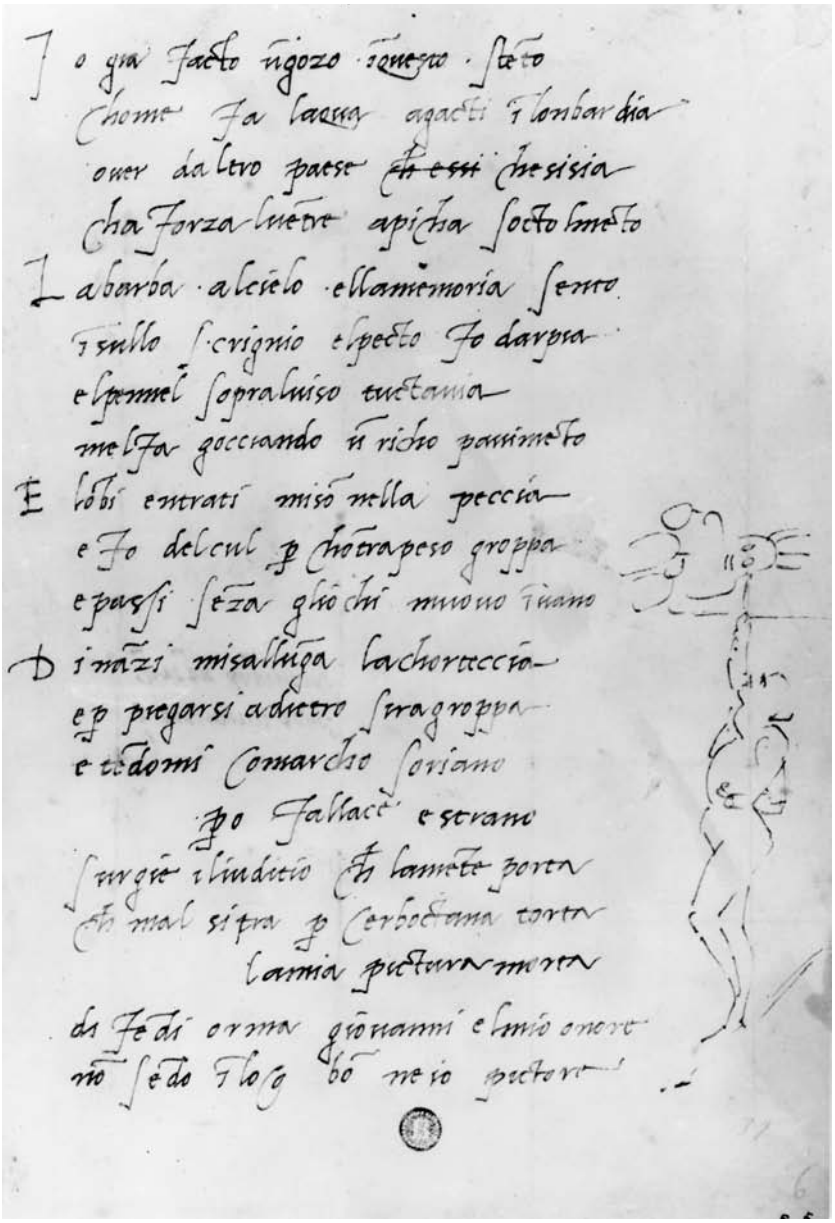
24. Bernini (much restored), drawing of Urban VIII. Muccia, Villa della Maddalena (photo courtesy of Oreste Ferrari).



25. Sgraffito decorations. Florence, Palazzo Bartolini-Salimbeni, courtyard [after Thiem (1964), pl. 101].



26. Michelangelo and assistants, wall drawings. Florence, San Lorenzo, New Sacristy [after Dal Poggetto (1978), Pl. V].



27. Michelangelo, sonnet on the Sistine Ceiling. Floence, Archivio Buonarotti, Vol. XIII, fol. 111.

ing contrast in style between the two parts of the sketch: the figure of the artist is contorted but elegantly drawn in a normal way; that on the ceiling is grotesquely deformed and drawn with amateurish, even childlike crudity, Michelangelo transforms the Sistine ceiling itself into a kind of graffito, deliberately adopting a subnormal mode to satirize high art — in this case his own. If as I suspect, the grotesque figure on the vault alludes to God the Father (Fig. 28), Michelangelo's thought may reach further still: the graffito style would express the artist's sense of inadequacy in portraying the Supreme Creator and unworthiness in the traditional analogy between the artist's creation and God's.[36]

Two further examples bring us to Bernini's own time. In a view of the interior of a church in Utrecht by the great Dutch architectural painter Pieter Saenredam, a graffito of four men wearing curious armor and riding a horse appears conspicuously on a pier at the lower right (Figs. 29 and 30).[37] The drawing represents a well-known episode from a medieval French romance, which had a wide popular appeal. Although the meaning of the subject in the context of Saenredam's picture is unclear the style of the drawing may have been intended not only to suggest the hand of an untrained graffito artist generally; it may also be a deliberate archaism to evoke the medieval origin of the story and, incidentally, of the building itself. Perhaps the boy standing nearby and about to draw on the wall refers ironically to Saenredam himself; perhaps the companion group, a boy seated with a schoolchild's box at his side and teaching a dog to sit up, refers to the mastery of art achieved by instruction and practice. In any event, the drawing must have had a special significance for Saenredam, since he added his own signature and the date immediately below.[38]

[36] On the analogy *cf.* Lavin (1980, p. 156).

[37] A similarly crude drawing in white of a woman appears on the adjacent face of the pier.

[38] The inscription, in white except for the artist's signature, which is in black, reads: 'de buer Kerck binnen utrecht / aldus geschildert int iaer 1644 / van / Pieter Saenredam' ('the Buur church in Utrecht thus painted in the year 1644 by Pieter Saenredam'). *Cf.* Maclaren (1960, pp. 379–81); *Catalogue* (1961, pp. 185 f). For assistance in identifying the object at the seated boy's side, I am indebted to Dr. Jean Fraikin, Curator of the Musée de la Vie Wallone at Liège, who cites the following bibliography on children's school boxes: Dewez (1956, pp. 362–71); *L'Art* (1970, pp. 372 ff). Crude drawings — two women (one of them virtually identical with the one mentioned above), a tree, and a bird — also appear on a pier at the right, surrounding an inscription with the artist's signature and the date 1641, in one

Our final example is from Rome, in the form of a drawing by Pieter van Laer nicknamed 'il Bamboccio.' He was the physically deformed leader of a notorious group of Flemish artists in Rome in the seventeenth century called *i bamboccianti* (the 'painters of dolls'), a contemporary term that refers derisively to the awkward figures and lowlife subject matter of their paintings. The members of the group formed a loose-knit organization, the Bentvueghel, and were notorious for their unruly lifestyle, which made a mockery of the noble Renaissance ideal of the gentleman artist. The drawing (Fig. 31) shows the interior of a tavern filled with carousing patrons; the back wall is covered with all manner of crude and grotesque designs, including a caricature-like head shown in profile.[39] Many works by the bamboccianti are reflections on the nature of art, both in theory and practice, and Van Laer's drawing is surely also an ironic exaltation of the kind of satirical and popular art held in contempt by the grand and often grandiloquent humanist tradition. We are invited to contemplate this irony by the figures who draw attention to the word 'Bamboo[ts]' scrawled beneath a doll-like figure, seen from behind, and the profile head — the latter certainly a self-portrait of Van Laer The subtlety of the conceit may be inferred from the fact that *bamboccio*, like its synonym *fantoccio* used by Vasari in the anecdote about Michelangelo, was specifically applied to the crude mural drawings of the inept.[40]

One point emerges clearly from our consideration of the prehistory of Bernini's deliberate and explicit exploitation of aesthetic vulgarity. The artists who displayed this unexpected sensibility generally did so in order to make some statement about the nature of art or of their profession. The statements were, in the end, deeply personal and had to do with the relation between ordinary or common creativity and what is usually called art.

of Saenredam's views of the Mariakerk at Utrecht; Catalogue (1961, pp. 212 f). On this painting see Schwartz (1966–67), who notes the association between such drawings and the artist's signature (p. 91, n. 43). Saenredam's sensitivity to and deliberate manipulation of stylistic differences are evident in the relationship between Gothic and Roman architecture in his paintings, for which see now the thoughtful article by Connell (1980).

[39] For this drawing, see Janeck (1968, pp. 122 f). The figure shown from the back on the wall recurs among other graffiti in a painting attributed to Van Laer in Munich; Janeck (1968, pp. 137 f); see also Kren (1980, p. 68).

[40] *Cf.* Malvasia (1841, vol. 2, p. 67), with regard to the youthful wall scribblings of the painter Mastelletta. For this reference I am indebted to David Levine, whose Princeton dissertation on the *bamboccianti* (1984) deals with their art-theoretical paintings and the Berlin drawing.

No doubt there is an art-theoretical, or even art-philosophical element in Bernini's attitude, as well, but with him the emphasis shifts. His everyman's style is not a vehicle for comment about art or being an artist, but about people, or rather being a person. His visual lampoons are strictly *ad hominem*, and it is for this reason, I think, that in the case of Bernini one can speak for the first time of caricature drawing not only as art, but as an art of social satire.

With respect to the context of Bernini's caricatures outside the visual arts, it is important to note that we can date the beginning of his production as a caricaturist fairly precisely It must have coincided with the earliest datable example that has come down to us, the famous drawing of Cardinal Scipione Borghese, nephew of Pope Paul V and Bernini's greatest early patron (see Fig. 15). A *terminus ante quem* is provided by Scipione's death at age fifty-seven on October 2, 1633, but most likely the sketch was made during the sittings for the even more famous pair of marble portrait busts of the cardinal that are known to have been executed in the summer of 1632 (Fig. 32).[41] It can scarcely be coincidental, moreover that probably in November of the same year Lelio Guidiccioni, one of Rome's literary lights and a close friend and admirer of Bernini, acquired an important album of drawings of genre figures, now lost, by Annibale Carracci.[42]

What especially suggests that Bernini started making caricatures at this time is the fact that he then also developed a passionate interest in the comic theater. Beginning in February 1633, and very frequently thereafter at carnival time, he would produce a comedy of his own invention, often in an improvised theater in his own house, with himself his family, and his studio assistants as the performers.[43] His plays were extremely successful, and we have many references to them in the early biographies and contemporary sources, which report that the audiences included some of the highest members of Roman society. The significance of this parallel with the theater is not simply that Bernini's interest in caricature and comedy coincided, for it is evident from what we learn about his plays that their relationship to their predecessors was analogous to that of his caricatures to theirs.

[41] The precise dating of the Borghese busts emerges from a letter of the following year written by Lelio Guidiccioni [*cf.* D'Onofrio (1967, pp. 381–86)]. I plan to discuss the letter at greater length in another context.

[42] On this and the following point, see Lavin (1970, p. 144, n. 75).

[43] On Bernini and the theater see Lavin (1980, pp. 145–57).

Bernini's comedies stemmed largely from the popular tradition of the commedia del l'arte, in which troupes of professional actors assumed stock character roles and performed largely conventional plots. The comic effect depended heavily on the contrast of social strata achieved through the interplay of representative types, portrayed through stereotyped costumes, gestures, and dialects. The actors were so versed in their craft, and its conventions were so ingrained, that the plays were recorded only in the form of brief plot summaries. The recitations were thus extemporaneous, but bound to a tradition of virtuosity born of familiarity and repetition.

By way of contrast, I shall quote first Domenico Bernini's account of Bernini's plays, and then just one contemporary description.[44] Domenico says:

> The beauty and wonder [of his comedies] consisted for the greatest and best part in the facetious and satiric jokes, and in the scenic inventions: the former were so meaningful [*significanti*], spirited and close to the truth [*fondati sul vero*], that many experts attributed the plays to Plautus or Terence or other writers, whom the cavalier had never read, but did them all by sheer force of wit. A most remarkable thing is that each night the theater was filled with the highest nobility of Rome, ecclesiastic as well as secular and those who were targets of his jibes not only took no offense but, considering their truth and honesty, almost took pride in being subjected to Bernini's acute and ingenious remarks. These then circulated throughout Rome and often the same evening reached even the ears of the pope, who seeing Bernini the next day took pleasure in having him repeat them. Bernini not only labored to compose them, but also took great pains to see that the actors, who were mostly members of his entourage and not experienced in the theater; would give natural and lively performances. In so doing, he served as everyone's teacher and the result was that they performed like long-time professionals in the art.[45]

To savor the description that follows, which dates from February 1634, it must be understood that Cardinal Gaspare Borgia was the Spanish

[44] A convenient, but not complete, collection of early sources on Bernini's theatrical activities will be found in D'Onofrio (1963, pp. 91–110).

[45] Bernini (1713, pp. 54 f).

28. Michelangelo, *Creation of the Sun and Moon* (detail).
Vatican, Sistine Chapel (photo: Alinari 7509A).

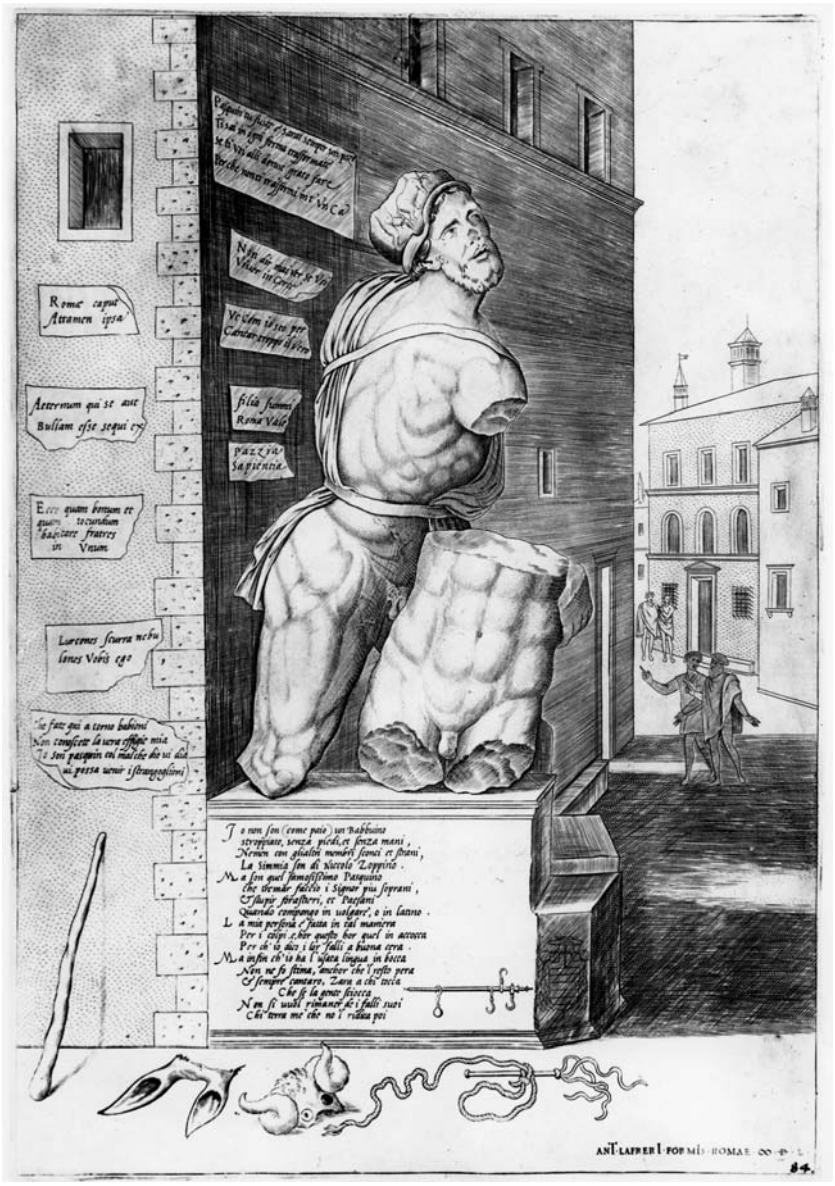
29. Pieter Saenredam, *Interior of the Buurkerck, Utrecht*.
London, National Gallery.

30. Pieter Saenredam, *Interior of the Buurkerck, Utrecht* (detail). London, National Gallery.

31. Pieter van Laer, *Artists' Tavern in Rome.* Berlin, Staatliche Museen Preussischer Kulturbesitz.

32. Bernini, bust of Cardinal Scipione Borghese.
Rome, Borghese Gallery (photo: GFN E33480).

33. *Pasquino*. Rome (photo: Alinari 7080).



34. Antonio Lafreri, *Pasquino*, engraving.
Yale University Library.

ambassador to the Holy See, that his coat of arms included a striding bull, and that he was notoriously overbearing and tactless in pursuing his country's interests at the court of Urban VIII, who was strongly pro-French.[46]

> Borgia is absolutely furious because, to everyone's delight, Bernini in his comedy introduced a bull being beaten on the stage; he is quite aware it referred to him since he was a bull in arms and was called that by the pope. Borgia was also upset because elsewhere in the comedy a Spaniard argues with a servant who, having been told by a Frenchman not to let himself be bullied, beats up the Spaniard to the amusement of all. Borgia, who understands without gloss the recondite meanings of the actions and words, considers the king and the whole Spanish nation offended by the pope himself, who knows perfectly well all the scenes of the comedy before they are performed. Borgia is also angry about other jibes, though these are the worst, and heaven protect Bernini from a bitter penance in the future, for Borgia is not one easily to forget offenses.[47]

It is clear that Bernini's plays broke with the commedia del l'arte conventions in various ways, of which three are especially important here. One is that Bernini introduced all sorts of illusionistic tricks — houses collapse, the theater threatens to catch fire, the audience is almost inundated — tricks that not only added a kind of visual scenographic interest that had been confined mainly to court spectacles, but also communicated with the spectator directly and in a way that seemed, at least at first glance, quite uncontrived. Furthermore, Bernini's comedies were not enacted extemporaneously by professional actors but by amateurs who had been carefully instructed and mercilessly rehearsed and who recited parts that — as we know from the manuscript of one of his plays that has come down to us — might be completely written out, as in the regular theater. His productions combined the technique of raw talent with the conception of high art. Finally, Bernini introduced topical allusions to current events and real people; with unexampled boldness, he poked fun at some of the highest members of Roman society, who might even be present in the audience. Bernini's

[46] On Borgia, see Pastor (1894–1953, vol. 28, pp. 281–94), for example.

[47] Letter to the duke of Modena from his agent in Rome, 23 February 1634 [Fraschetti (1900, pp. 261 f, n. 4; see also the description of comedies in 1638, pp. 264 f, and 1646, pp. 268–70)].

comedies thus included what can only be described as 'living caricatures,' witty distortions of the political allegiance or moral character of individuals, who remain readily identifiable. In general, his plays may be said to have involved a dual breach of decorum, treating low comedy performed by amateurs as if it were legitimate theater; and treating exalted personages as if they were ordinary people.

Although Bernini may be said to have introduced an element of social satire to the stage, there was one literary tradition in Rome to which it was, so to speak, endemic. This was the so-called pasquinade, or satire in verse or prose, which poked fun, often in very bitter terms, at the religious and civic authorities for their personal foibles or for whatever of the city's current ills could be attributed to their greed or ineptitude. The diatribes were occasionally gathered together and published, so that the pasquinade became a veritable genre of popular literary satire. It was the custom to write a pasquinade in Latin or Italian on a scrap of paper and attach it to one of several more or less fragmentary ancient statues that were to be seen about town. These 'talking statues,' as they were sometimes called, became the loudspeaker through which the vox populi expressed its wit and discontent. The genre derives its name from the most infamous of the sculptures (Fig. 33), nicknamed Pasquino — according to one version of the legend, after a clever and malicious hunchbacked tailor who lived nearby in the Piazza Orsini, considered the heart of Rome, and who started the custom early in the sixteenth century.[48] It is no accident, of course, that the speaking statues of Rome were all antiques. From biblical times the issue of idolatry was focused chiefly on sculpture, the three-dimensionality of which gave it special status in the hierarchy of representation. The early Christians regarded pagan statuary as literally the work of the devil and endowed with demonic powers, notably the power of speech. Indeed, Pasquino's irreverent and malicious comments were often downright diabolic.

As a literary genre the pasquinade might well be described as something like a verbal graffito in that, by contrast with the high art of satire, it tended to be more topical in content and more informal in style and, though well-known writers such as Pietro Aretino often joined in the sport, it was char-

[48] The bibliography on Pasquino and the pasquinade is vast. For a recent survey see Silenzi (1968). The best orientation within the literary context remains that of Cian (1945, vol. 2, pp. 81–107, 321–37). On the sculpture, see now Haskell and Penny (1981, pp. 291–96). For a valuable study of the 'high' and 'low' traditions of satire with respect to Bernini's rival, Salvator Rosa, see Roworth (1977).

acteristically anonymous. Indeed, this popular and rather underprivileged element lies at the very heart of the tradition, for there is a remarkable and surely not accidental consonance between the character of Pasquino the tailor; a lowly artisan and man of the people, grotesquely deformed yet pungently articulate, and the character of the sculpture itself — pathetically worn and mutilated, yet also pathetically expressive. The fundamental irony of the group's brutish appearance and caustic eloquence was perfectly explicit: in the eloquent engraving of the group signed and dated 1550 by Antonio Lafreri (Fig. 34), Pasquino says of himself:

> I am not, though I seem so, a mutilated Baboon, without feet and hands . . . but rather that famous Pasquino who terrifies the most powerful . . . when I compose in Italian or Latin. I owe my physique to the blows of those whose faults I faithfully recount.[49]

If the pasquinade is something like a verbal graffito, Bernini's caricatures can be thought of as visual pasquinades, almost literally so if one considers Bernini's very special relationship to the statue itself. The group is mentioned in the biographies as well as in Chantelou's diary, always with the same point illustrated by an anecdote: Asked by a cardinal which was his favorite ancient statue, Bernini named the *Pasquino*, of which he said that 'mutilated and ruined as it is, the remnant of beauty it embodies is percep-

[49] From the inscription on the base:

Io non son (come paio) un Babbuino
    stroppiato, senz piedi, et senza mani,
……
Ma son quel famosissimo Pasquino
    Che tremar faccio i Signor piu soprani,
……
    Quando compongo in volgare, o in latino.
La mia persona è fatta in tal maniera
    Per i colpi ch'hor questo her quel m'accocca
Per ch'io dice i lot falli a buena cera.

Our transcription is based on a corrected but unsigned and undated version of the print in a copy of Lafreri in the Marquand Library, Princeton University: Fig. 34 is reproduced from Lafreri (1575), Beinecke Library, Yale University.

tible only to those knowledgeable in design.'[50] Indeed, he regarded it as a work of Phidias or Praxiteles. The cardinal thought his leg was being pulled and was infuriated. Bernini was said to have been the first to place the highest value on the *Pasquino* as a work of art.[51] The appreciation of antique fragments was by now nothing new, so that whether true or not, the claim — and likewise the cardinal's anger — only makes sense in view of the satirical tradition with which the Pasquino was primarily associated; Bernini

[50] It is especially interesting that Bernini distinguished between complete and incomplete statues, and among the latter noted the subtle differences between the Belvedere torso and the Pasquino, ranking the Pasquino highest of all. The passages referred to are:

M. le nonce, changeant de matière, a demandé au Cavalier laquelle des figures antiques il estimait devantage. Il a dit que c'était le Pasquin, et qu'un cardinal lui ayant un jour fait la même demande, il lui avait répondu la même chose, ce qu'il avait pris pour une raillerie qu'il faisait de lui et s'en était faché; qu'il fallait bien qu'il n'eut pas lu ce qu'on en avait écrit, et que le *Pasquin* était une ftgure de Phidias où de Praxitèle et représentait le serviteur d'Alexandre, le soutenant quand il reçut un coup de flèche au siège de Tyr; qu'à la vérité, mutilée et ruinée comme est cette figure, le reste de beauté qui y est n'est connu que des savants dans le dessin. (Chantelou, pp. 25 f.)

Diceva che il Laocoonte e il Pasquino nell'antico avevano in sè tutto il buono dell'arte, perché vi si scorgeva imitato tutto il più perfetto della natura, senza affettazione dell'arte. Che le più belle statue che fussero in Roma eran quelle di Belvedere e fra quelle dico fra le intere, il Laocoonte per l'espressione dell'affetto, ed in particolare per l'intelligenza che si scorge in quella gamba, la quale per esserve già arrivato il veleno, apparisce intirizzita; diceva però, che il Torso ed il Pasquino gli parevano di più perfetta maniera del Laocoonte stesso, ma che questo era intero e gli altri no. Fra il Pasquino ed il Torso esser la differenza quasi impercettibile, né potersi ravvisare se non da uomo grande e più tosto migliore essere il Pasquino. Fu il prime il Bernino che mettesse questa statua in altissimo credito in Roma e raccontasi che essendogli una volta state domandato da un oltramontano qual fusse la più bella statua di quella città e respondendo che il Pasquino, il forestiero che si credette burlato fu per venir con lui a cimento. [Baldinucci ([1682] 1948, p. 146).]

Con uguale attenzione pose il suo studio ancora in ammirar le parti di quei due celebri Torsi di Hercole, e di Pasquino, quegli riconosciuto per suo Maestro dal Buonarota, questi dal Bernino, che fù il primo, che ponesse in alto concetto in Roma questa nobilissima Statua; Anzi avvenne, che richiesto una volta da un Nobile forastiere Oltramontano, *Quale fosse la Statua più riguardevole in Roma?* e rispostogli, Che *il Pasquino*, quello diè sù le furie, stimandosi burlato, e poco mancò, che non ne venisse a cimento con lui; E di questi due Torsi era solito dire, che contenevano in se tutto il più perfetto della Natura senza affettazione dell'Arte. [Bernini (1713, pp. 13 f).]

[51] The *Pasquino* had long been esteemed, *cf.* Haskell and Penny(1981, p. 292), but I have not found precedent for Bernini's placing it foremost.

even said that one must disregard what had been written about the sculpture. No less remarkable is the reason he gave for his esteem — that the work contains 'the highest perfection of nature *without the affectation of art*' [italics mine].

The drawing of Innocent Xl is unique among the preserved caricatures by Bernini because it is the only one datable to the very end of his life, and because it represents the most exalted personage of all. The skeletal figure with gargantuan nose and cavernous eyes is immediately recognizable (*cf.* Figs. 8 and 35).[52] What makes the characterization so trenchant, however; is not only the treatment of the pope's physical features, but also the fact that he is shown incongruously wearing the regalia of the bishop of Rome and bestowing his blessing while reclining in bed, propped up by huge pillows. The pope is thus ridiculed on two levels at once, both of which reflect aspects of his personality and conduct that were notorious.[53] This remarkable man was by far the most irascible and ascetic individual to occupy the papal throne since the heyday of the Counter Reformation a century before. He was utterly indifferent to the amenities of life himself and lived in monastic austerity, He was indefatigable in his efforts to purify the Church of its abuses, the boldest and best known of which was his war on nepotism. He rigorously excluded his family from Church affairs and sought to ensure that his successors would do likewise. He was equally staunch in his defense of the Church against heretics and against attempts to curtail the prerogatives of the Holy See. His financial contributions to the war against the Turks, made possible by a fiscal policy of absolute parsimony, were a major factor in the victory at Vienna in 1683 that saved Europe from the infidel. The process of sanctification was initiated soon after his death and is still in progress; he was beatified in 1953.

Although his virtues may indeed have been heroic, Innocent Xl was not without his faults. He demanded the same kind of austerity from his subjects that he practiced himself. Public entertainments were banned, and with edict after edict he sought to rule the lives of his people down to the pettiest details of personal dress and conduct. He suffered the consequences of his disagreeableness, which won him the epithet The Big No Pope (*Papa Mingone*, from the word *minga*, meaning 'no' in his native Lombard

[52] A photograph of Innocent's death mask will be found in Lippi (1889, frontispiece).

[53] For Innocent generally and bibliography see *Bibliotheca* (1961–69, vol. 7, columns 848–56); for most of what follows, see Pastor (1894–1953, vol. 32, pp. 13–37, 153–67).

dialect). A notice of 1679 reports that several people were jailed for circulating a manifesto with the punning and alliterative title, *Roma assassinata dalla Santità* ('Rome Assassinated by Sanctity' — *santità* in Italian means both 'holiness' and 'His Holiness').[54]

In addition, Innocent Xl was a sick man, plagued by gout and gallstones.[55] These sufferings — real and imagined, for he was certainly a hypochondriac — must have exacerbated the harshness of an inherently acerbic personality. His ailments often conspired with a natural tendency to reclusiveness to keep the pope confined to his room and to his bed. For days, weeks, months on end he would remain closeted, refusing to see anyone and procrastinating in matters of state — conduct that elicited a brilliant pasquinade, reported in July 1677:

> Saturday night there was attached to Pasquino a beautiful placard with a painted poppy [*papavero* in Italian — the opium flower] and the following legend [like a medicinal prescription] beneath: *Papa Vero = Per dormire* [true Pope = to sleep]; next morning it provided a field day for the wags, including the whole court, which is fed up with the current delays and cannot bear such irresolution.[56]

On rare occasions during these periods, when the pope's condition improved or in matters of special importance, visitors might be admitted to his chamber; where he received them in bed. Bernini's drawing captures the irony of this spectacle of the Supreme Roman Pontiff conducting the most dignified affairs of state in most undignified circumstances.

[54] 'E poi stato mandato in Galera quel libraro francese Bernardoni che faceva venir libri centro cardinale e ministri della chiesa sendo anco stati carcerati alcuni copisti per essersi veduto un Manifesto intitolato; Roma assassinata dalla santità.' Unpublished *avviso di Roma*, July 8,1679, Vatican Library MS Barb. lat. 6838, fol. 154v. For collections of pasquinades on Innocent Xl, see Lafon (1876, p. 287); Pastor (1894–1953, vol. 32, p. 30, n. 8); Besso (1904, p. 308); Romano (1932, pp. 72–74); Silenzi (1933, pp. 251 f) [reprinted in Silenzi (1968), pp. 278 f]; Cian (1945, vol. 2, pp. 260 f, 516, n. 228–30).

[55] On the pope's health, see Pastor (1894–1953, vol. 32, pp. 515–19); Michaud (1882–83, vol. 1, pp. 158 f).

[56] 'Sabbato à nette fu fatto a Pasquino un bellissimo Cartello con un Papauero dipinto, e sotto la presente Inscrittione = *Papa Vero = Per dormire,* il che la mattina non pochi motivi di discorso diede à gli otiosi, nel cui numero vi si comprende la corte tutta, la quale attediata dalle lunchezze correnti non può soffrire tante irresolutioni.' Unpublished *avviso di Roma*, July 5, 1677, Vatican Library MS Barb. lat. 6384, fol. 200.

35. Bernini, profile of Innocent XI, drawing. Rome, Gabinetto Nazionale delle Stampe, Fondo Corsini 127535 (578).

37. Bernini, *Ludovica Albertoni.* Rome, S. Francisco a Ripa (photo: postcard).

36. R. de Hooghe, *The Death of Moriens*, engraving [De la Vigne (1673?) pl. 39].

38. Tomb of Erard de la Marck, engraving. Formerly Liège, Cathedral [Boissard (1597–1602), part IV, tome II, title page].

39. Medal of Innocent XI with Pius V on reverse.
London, British Museum (photo: Warburg Institute, 1403/98).

40. Medal of Pius V, 1571.
London, British Museum (photo: Warburg Institute, 703/49).

The character of the portrait itself has no less significant implications than its appurtenances. In a quite remarkable way, as we know from many descriptions and other depictions, the pope's appearance matched his personality, He was exceedingly tall and gaunt, with a huge aquiline nose and protruding chin. These features are glossed over in many 'straight' portraits of Innocent, but we have a drawing, perhaps by Bernini himself, in which his crabbed and rather chilling aspect appears unmitigated (Fig. 35). The profile of the pope, also wearing the bishop's miter; may have been in preparation for a sculptured portrait, and the caricature may have originated in one of Bernini's sessions sketching the man in action — repeating the process we suggested in connection with the Scipione Borghese portraits done nearly fifty years earlier.[57]

Bernini certainly had reason enough to take an unsympathetic view of the pope, whose indifference, if not actual hostility, to art was notorious. It was Innocent who in January 1679 refused to permit the execution of the final block of the portico in front of Saint Peter's, thus dooming to incompletion the greatest architectural project of Bernini's life. It was he who prudishly forced the artist to cover the bosom of the figure of Truth on the tomb of Alexander VII. It was Innocent who ordered an inquiry into the stability of the dome of Saint Peter's where cracks had appeared, which some of Bernini's critics falsely attributed to his work on the supporting piers many years before.[58]

It would be a mistake, however; to think of the drawing simply as an exercise of Bernini's spleen upon Innocent's character and appearance. The basic design and the specific deformations it embodies are rife with reminiscences and allusions that augment its meaning. The reclining figure performing an official act recalls those most peculiar and regal ceremonies Bernini must have become aware of on his visit to the court of Louis XIV in 1665, the *lit de justice* and the *lever* and *coucher du roi*, in which the Sun King received homage as he rose in the morning and retired in the

[57] The drawing, in red chalk, conforms in type to Bernini's studies for sculptured portraits (see above, p. 21), and its plastic modeling led Brauer and Wittkower (1931, p. 157) to consider it a copy after a lost original; I suspect it is original, overworked by another hand. No sculptured portrait of Innocent by Bernini is recorded, unless he made the model for a bronze, datable 1678, by a certain Travani, once in S. Maria in Montesanto, Rome; see Martinelli (1956, p. 47, n. 95).

[58] On the foregoing, see Pastor (1894–1953, vol. 32, p. 35); Wittkower (1981, p. 260).

evening.[59] The image also reflects the tradition of the reclining effigy on tomb monuments and the reclining Moriens in the innumerable illustrated versions of the *Ars Moriendi* ('The Art of Dying Well') (Fig. 36); the latter genre had an important role in the devotions of the Confraternity of the Bona Mors at the Gesù, in which Bernini and the pope himself, when he was cardinal, participated regularly.[60] Bernini had only recently adapted this convention for his portrayal of Blessed Lodovica Albertoni in a state of ecstatic expiration in her burial chapel in San Francesco a Ripa in Rome (Fig. 37). He may even have recalled a sixteenth-century Flemish tomb, an engraving of which there are other reasons to suppose he knew, where a beckoning skeleton replaced the figure of the deceased (Fig. 38).[61] The somewhat lugubrious irony of this conflation of regal pomp and funereal decrepitude was surely deliberate.

So, too, were aspects of the rendering of the pope's physiognomy and gesture. Innocent followed like a chill wind after the florid exuberance of the long, Baroque summer of the Church Triumphant. He was, as we have noted, a veritable throwback to the rigorous pietism of the Counter Reformation, and quite consciously so, for he took as the model for all his actions the most austere pontiff of that whole period, Pius V (1566–1572), who had also been unrelenting in his zeal to cleanse the Church of its vices, including nepotism, and protect it from its enemies (the Turks were defeated in the momentous naval battle at Lepanto during his reign).[62] He had been beatified in 1672, shortly before Innocent XI took office, and was canonized in 1712. It happened that Innocent also bore a striking physical resemblance to Pius, whose desiccated and otherworldly features seem perfectly to embody the spiritual fervor of his time. Innocent actually had him-

[59] See the classic study by Kantorowicz (1963, pp. 162–77).

[60] For Bernini and the *Ars Moriendi*, see Lavin (1972, pp. 159–71); on Innocent and the Bona Mors, see Pastor (1894–1953, vol. 32, p. 14).

[61] For this tomb, *cf.* Lavin (1980, p. 136, n. 10) and Lavin *et al.* (1981, catalogue numbers 2–5, n. 13).

[62] For Pius V see *Bibliotheca* (1961–69, vol. 10, columns 883–901). Innocent's emulation of Pius is attested in the sources, e.g., a letter to Paris from the French agent in Rome, May 11, 1678: 'On travaille icy en bon lieu pour inspirer le dessein au pape de proffiter de sa fortune en imitant seulement Pie V que Saintété paroit s'estre proposée pour le modèle de ses actions.' Paris, Ministère des affaires étrangères, Correspondance de Rome, vol. 256, fol. 141 (modern foliation), quoted in part by Michaud (1882–83, vol. 1, pp. 152 f); *cf.* Pastor (1894–1953, vol. 32, pp. 184, 518, 523).

self depicted as a kind of reincarnation of his saintly idol on a very unusual medal where portraits of the two men appear on the two faces (Fig. 39).[63] Bernini must have had the analogy in mind when drawing the caricature: the emaciated figure with spidery hand raised in blessing distinctly recalls a particular medallic image issued by Pius himself, which is one of the most penetrating of all the portrayals of the great reformer (Fig. 40).[64] In this way Bernini assimilated both Innocent and his prototype into a composite image of the pontifical arch zealot.

In some respects the drawing of Innocent reaches beyond the limits of portraiture; the exaggeration is so extreme that the figure scarcely resembles a human being at all, but rather some monstrous insect, with pillows for wings and bishop's miter for antennae, masquerading as a person. Again, I doubt that the analogy is fortuitous. To be sure, insects in general were not a very important part of the physiognomical tradition discussed earlier; but one insect in particular; or at least the name of it, played a considerable role in the history of comic monstrosities in Western art — namely, the cricket. In a famous passage Pliny says that the Greek artist Antiphilos established a new genre of painting by a comic portrayal of a man called Gryllos in a ridiculous costume, from which, Pliny says, all such pictures are called *grylloi*.[65] Although the exact meaning of the passage is in dispute, it is generally agreed that Pliny must be referring to amusing depictions of cavorting dwarfs and hybrid and humanoid creatures, of which numerous examples are known. No doubt this interpretation dates from the Renaissance and is based in part on the happenstance that the word, when spelled with a lambda in Greek, means 'pig,' and with two l's in Latin means 'cricket.'[66]

[63] *Cf. Trésor* (1834–58, vol.6, p. 38 and Pl. xxxvi, number 8); Patrignani (1953, p. 78, number 2). There are also plaques on which the two popes' portraits are paired, and Innocent struck a medal and coins to celebrate the victory at Vienna with the same inscription used by Pius on a medal celebrating the victory at Lepante; *cf.* Hiesinger and Percy (1980, pp. 130 f); Venuti (1744, pp. 125 f., number VII, p. 299, number XXVIII); Serafini (1964–65, vol. 2, pp. 298 f).

[64] Venuti (1744, p. 125, numbers V, VI).

[65] 'Idem iocosis nomine Gryllum deridiculi habitus pinxit, unde id genus picturae grylli vocantur.' Jex-Blake and Sellers (1975, pp. 146 f). For the ancient genre, see *Enciclopedia* (1958–66, vol. 3, pp. 1,065 f).

[66] On the modern use of the term, see the basic contributions in the journal *Proef* (1974) by Miedema, Bruyn, and Ruurs (kindly called to my attention by David Levine); *cf.* Alpers (1975–76, p. 119 and n. 15); Miedema (1977, p. 211, n. 29). See further Wind (1974, pp. 28 f) and the references given in the next footnote.

As early as the mid-sixteenth century the works of Hieronymus Bosch, which contain all manner of mixed human and animal forms, were called *grylloi* (Fig. 41); so, too, were Arcimboldo's polymorphous transmutations of traditional frontal and profile portrait types.[67] Bernini's caricature of Innocent looks like nothing so much as a great cricket, and I have no doubt that this novel assimilation of insect and human likenesses was made in deliberate reference to, and emulation of, the new art of comic portraiture invented by the ancient master.

I suspect, moreover; that the analogy reached beyond physical appearances to a moral and psychological level as well, through another remarkable wordplay of the sort that always fascinated Bernini. In Italian *grillo* would refer not only to the classical prototype of the comic portrait, but also to the character or personality of the insect itself. Owing to the creature's peculiar life-style, the word *grillo* has a meaning roughly equivalent to 'whim' or 'caprice' in English. The term appears frequently in the art literature of the period in reference to the artist's inventiveness or even his personal stylistic idiosyncrasies.[68] More generally, to 'have a cricket in one's head' (*avere un grillo in testa*) is to 'have a bee in one's bonnet' — an expression that seems to suit Innocent Xl as if it were tailored for him. In Bernini's sketch, the pope's appearance and character merged with the invention of comic portraiture in a grandiose pun linking antiquity to the present under the aspect of satire.

The chain turns full circle, as it were, when two additional links are added that pertain to the *Pasquino*. In the early sixteenth century there had been a one-eyed barber named Grillo who had written pasquinades that were actually called *grilli*, which he was said to have had in his head. The frontispiece of a volume of the poems he attached to the *Pasquino* shows him chasing after crickets in the field (Fig. 42).[69] Perhaps Grillo's memory was still alive in Bernini's time. In any case, Bernini seems not to have been the only one to apply an image of this sort to Innocent. One is tempted to imagine that his drawing may have inspired the following verses from a

[67] For Bosch, see the remarks by Felipe de Guevara, trans. in De Tolnay (1966, p. 401); *cf.* Gombrich (1966[2], pp. 113, 115, n. 30); Posner (1971, pp. 69, 164, n. 94). For Arcimbeldo, see Kaufmann (1975, pp. 280–82). The word was also applied by Lomazzo ([1584] 1973–74, p. 367) and Tesauro ([1670] 1968, p. 85) to the kind of grotesque decorations discussed above.

[68] See the passages noted in the index to Lomazzo ([1584] 1973–74, p. 672, s.v. 'Grillo').

[69] Silenzi (1933, pp. 17, illustrated opposite p. 100, 339 f, 343).

vicious pasquinade occasioned by the pope's death in 1689:

> I've not found in the annals of ancient things
> A worst beast, who beneath hypocrisy clings
> And tinges in others' blood his beak and wings.[70]

I have so far discussed rather specific aspects of the form, sources, and significance of Bernini's caricatures. Insofar as they are documents of social comment, however, certain more general features of the context in which they were produced must also be considered. With hindsight it seems inevitable that the true caricature should have emerged in Rome and nowhere else.[71] Rome was then, as it still is, unlike any other major European city in that, from the point of view of commerce and industry, it was insignificant; its only reasons for being were administrative and symbolic. It was the capital of a great state, which, though of diminished political and military importance, retained a spiritual force that made it a focal point of international relations, secular as well as ecclesiastical. There was nothing in Rome to match the growth of the bourgeoisie in the urban centers of the north, but in the bosom of the Church men could, and very often did, rise from the humblest circumstances to the heights of power and wealth. As the headquarters of the Catholic hierarchy. and especially of the religious orders, the city was filled with people who, like Bernini, had broken through the barriers of traditional class hierarchy. Social irony was almost a natural by-product of this extraordinary environment, wherein moral pretense and cosmopolitan reality were extremes that touched.

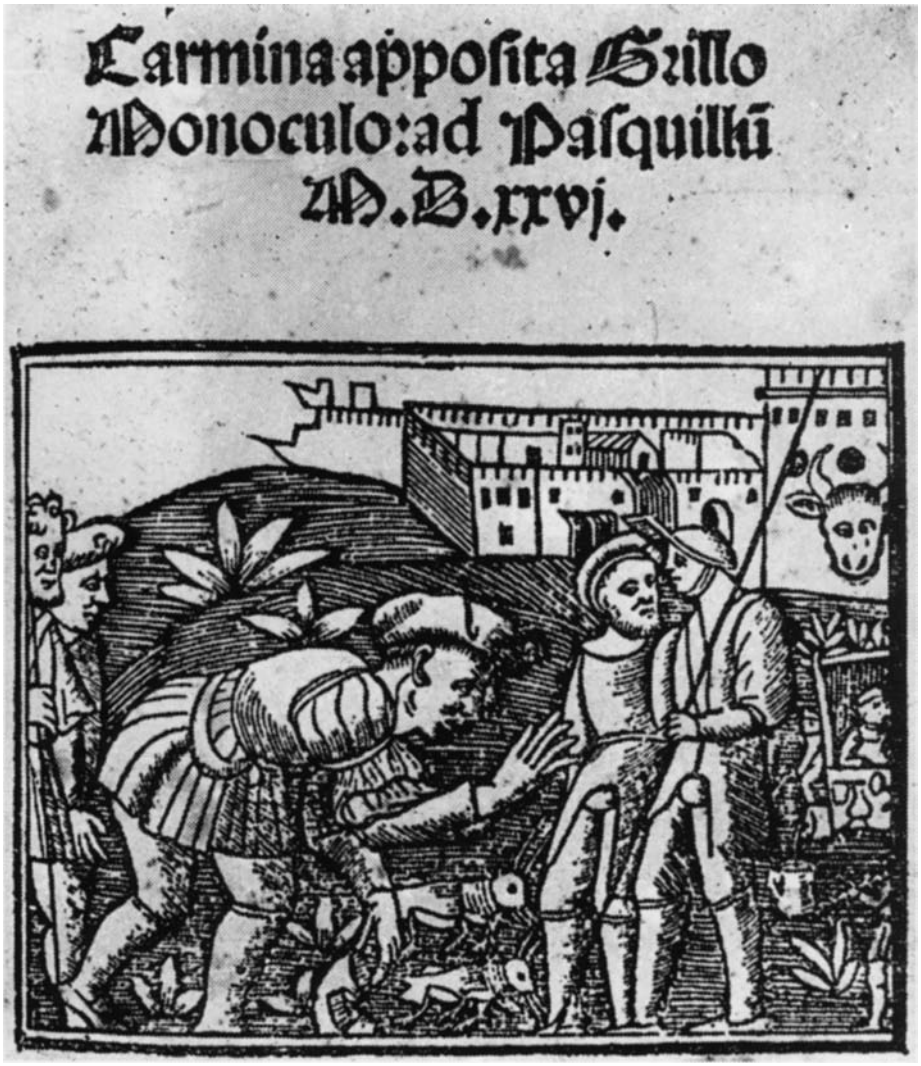
The birth of caricature was also related to the rise in status for which artists had been struggling since the Renaissance, and of which Bernini was in some respects the epitome. A major theme of the biographies by Baldinucci (written at the behest of Bernini's close friend, Queen Christina of Sweden) and by his son Domenico was precisely his acceptance by the great people of his day, even at a certain risk to themselves. This could

[70] Io non retrovo ancor nei vecchi annali
Bestia peggior, che sotto hipocrasia
Col sangue altrui tingesse e 'l becco e l'ali

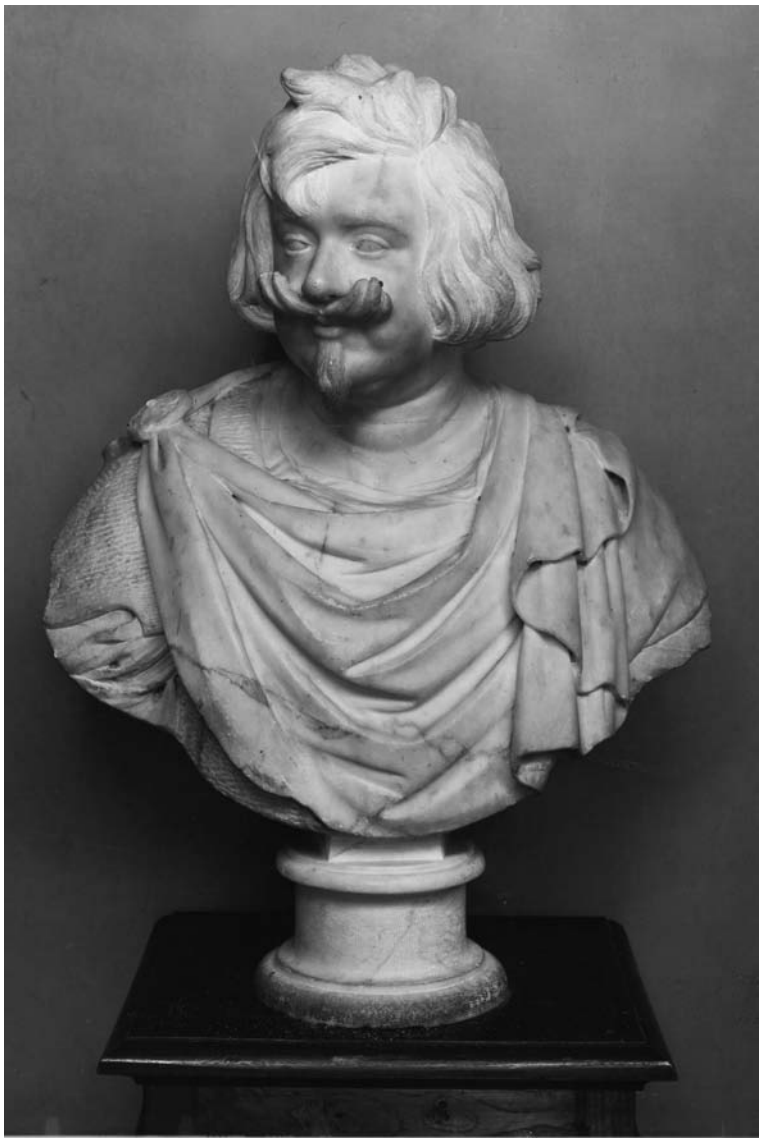
Silenzi (1968, p. 279).

[71] There is no comprehensive social history of Rome at this period. For a recent general survey with useful bibliographical indications, see Petrocchi (1975).

41. Hieronymus Bosch (shop of Hieronymus Cock), drollery, engraving.
New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art.



42. *Carmina apposita Grillo Monoculo: ad Pasquillû*, 1526, title page [after Silenzi (1933), ill. opp. p. 100].



43. Copy after a model by Bernini, bust of the Duke of Bracciano, Bracciano Castle (photo: GFN E34349).

easily be dismissed as mere propaganda, but I think their wonderment at Bernini's social achievement was genuine. The point is vividly illustrated in the matter of caricature by a satirical poem published in 1648 by the duke of Bracciano, one of the leading figures of the day, of whom Bernini did a bust, preserved in a marble copy, that some critics have regarded as a sort of formal caricature (Fig. 43).[72] The duke describes a merry gathering at his villa at Bracciano of the cream of Roman nobility, at which he and Bernini, whom he lists among the guests as 'animator of marbles,' joined in making comic drawings of the participants.[73] In 1665, during his visit to Paris to design the Louvre, Bernini introduced the concept and example of his persiflages to Louis XIV and his court, who were greatly amused.[74]

Bernini's career, in fact, would indeed be difficult to match by that of any other artist — not Velásquez, whose aspiration to nobility was a central factor in his life; not Rubens, whose position in the world was inseparable

[72] On the portrait, see Wittkower (1966, p. 204 ff). A document recently published by Rubsamen (1980, p. 45, number 72), makes it clear that this bust is a copy after a (lost) model by Bernini, as had been suggested by Martinelli.

[73] Fra questi v'è Paol' Emilio Orsino,
Il Duca Sforza & ambi i Mignanelli
Animator di marmi euui il Bernino,
……
Hor mentre battagliauano costoro,
Bernine, & io sopra un buffetto à parte
Presemo à caricare alcun di lore.
……

Orsini (1648, pp. 63, 65); first published by Muñoz (1919, pp. 369 f).

[74] Caricatures are mentioned in two sharp and revealing passages in the diary of Bernini's visit kept by Chantelou (1885, pp. 106, 151; interestingly enough, Chantelou uses the phrase attributed to the Carracci, 'charged portraits'). During an audience with the king '. . . le Cavalier a dit en riant: "Ces messieurs'ci ont le Roi à leur gré toute la journée et ne veulent pas me le laisser seulement une demiheure; je suis tenté d'en faire de quelqu'un le portrait chargé." Personne n'entendait cela; j'ai dit au Roi que c'étaient des portraits que l'on faisait ressembler dans le laid et le ridicule. L'Abbé Butti a pris la parole et a dit que le Cavalier était admirable dans ces sortes de portraits, qu'iI faudrait en faire voir quelqu'un à Sa Majesté, et comme l'on a parlé de quelqu'un de femme, le Cavalier a dit que *Non bisognava caricar le donne che da notte*.' Subsequently Butti was himself the victim '. . . quelqu'un parlant d'un portrait chargé, le Cavalier a dit qu'iI avait fait celui de l'abbé Butti, lequel il a cherché pour le faire voir à Sa Majesté, et, ne l'ayant pas trouvé, il a demandé du crayon et du papier et l'a refait en trois coups devant le Roi qui a pris plaisir à le voir, comme a fait aussi Monsieur et les autres, tant ceux qui étaient entrés que ceux qui étaient à la porte.'

from his activity as a diplomat. Bernini never lost touch with the humble craft origins of his profession. He became early on a member of the marble workers' guild, to which he remained very attached and contributed generously later in life;[75] and although much indebted to the humanist tradition, he laid no claim to recondite learning or theoretical speculation. His freedom of wit and satire and his ability to consort on equal terms with the high and mighty were based solely on the quality of his mind and art. In this sense he fulfilled the Renaissance ideal, while helping to create a new role for the artist in society.

In the end, however, the caricatures must be thought of as a deeply personal expression of Bernini's creative genius, for two reasons in particular. One is that — and this is true of his comedies as well — although he circulated them among his friends, there is no evidence he ever intended to publish his drawings in the form of prints. We owe the caricature as an instrument of social reform in this sense to eighteenth-century England. Bernini's little lampoons sprang from a deep well within, however, and were far from mere trifles to him. Both points emerge from the last document I shall quote, a charming letter Bernini wrote to a friend named Bonaventura ('Good Fortune' in Italian) accompanying two such sketches, now lost:

> As a cavalier I swear I'll never send you any more drawings because having these two portraits you can say you have all that bumbler Bernini can do. But since I doubt your dim wit can recognize them I'll tell you the longer one is Don Giberti and the shorter one is Bona Ventura. Believe me, you've had Good Fortune, because I've never had greater satisfaction than in these two caricatures, and I've made them with my heart. When I visit you I'll see if you appreciate them.
>
> Rome, 15 March 1652.
>
> Your True Friend
>
> G. L. Bern.

[75] See Lavin (1968, pp. 236f).

This is, incidentally, the first time the word 'caricature' is used as we use it today, as the name for a certain class of drawings.[76]

[76] . . . mio sig—re

Da chavaliere vi giuro di non mandarvi più disegni perchè avendo voi questi dui ritratti potete dire d'avere tutto quel che può fare quel baldino di bernino, ma perchè dubito che il Vostro corto ingegno non sapia conoscerli per non vi fare arrossire vi dico che quel più lungo è Don Ghiberti e quel più basso è Bona Ventura. Credetemi che a voi e toccato aver la buona Ventura perchè mai mi sono piu sodistatto che in queste due caricature e lo fatte di cuore. Quando vedrò costi vedrò se ne tenete conto. Roma li 15 Marzo 1652.

Vero Amico
G. L. Bern.

Ozzola (1906, p. 205); *cf.* Lavin (1970, p. 144 n. 75). Ozzela guessed from the letter itself that the addressee might have been named Bonaventura. I have no doubt that the fortunate recipient was, in fact, the Bolognese painter and Franciscan friar Bonaventura Bisi. Bisi was a friend and correspondent of Guercino, who also made a caricature of him, datable 1657–59, with an inscription punning on his last name (*cf.* Galleni, 1975).

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