BERNINI'S BUST OF THE SAVIOR
AND THE PROBLEM OF THE HOMELESS IN SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY ROME

IN

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XXII

Bernini's Bust of the Savior and the Problem of the Homeless in Seventeenth-century Rome*

IN preparing for death Bernini followed a long and glorious tradition in which artists since the Renaissance strove to outdo themselves (and their predecessors) by creating *tours de force* of their craft as ultimate testaments to their ability and devotion.[1] While he followed his tradition, Bernini reinterpreted it in a fundamental way, as if in fulfillment of his famous dictum that in his art he had succeeded in breaking the rules, without ever violating them.[2] For although he amassed great wealth and international prestige during a long and almost uniformly successful career, unlike many artists of his means and stature — and notably his great prototype Michelangelo — he planned no tomb or other monument for himself[3] It emerges now more clearly than ever that if Bernini's expiatory creations were self justificatory in origin, they were not self-centered in destination; they were directed not inward but outward, in a spirit of what today might be called 'social consciousness.'

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* This paper is in the nature of a sequel to my study of Bernini's Art of Dying and the works he created in pursuit of the 'good death' (Lavin 1972, 1973, 1978). These essays have been published together in Italian, Lavin 1998b.

[1] I have outlined this tradition for Italian sculptors of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, in Lavin 1978–9, and 1998. The Italian Renaissance artist's tomb generally has been studied by Schutz-Rautenberg 1978.

[2] For a discussion of this principle and its implications for Bernini's conception of his art, see Lavin 1980, 6 ff.

[3] See p.239 above.

Homo sapiens has been defined as the only animal that knows it is going to die. This paradox of a living creature's self-conscious awareness of and preoccupation with its own death was a prominent theme in European culture from antiquity on. The process of intellectualization of this fatal aspect of human nature culminated toward the end of the middle ages in a coherent and logically conceived system, a veritable theory of dying. The technique was entitled, significantly, *Ars moriendi, The Art* ('crafte' or 'cunnynge,' as it was often called in early English) of *Dying*. To achieve a 'good death' (*bona mors*) the first prerequisite was precisely that the individual acknowledge his knowledge of his own demise and face death deliberately —meditate upon it, remind himself constantly that 'I might die today,' recall his past life, examine his conscience, affirm his faith in God's ultimate judgment, and practice the cardinal virtues, Faith, Hope and, the highest of all, Charity. In this last respect, especially, the model to be followed for a good death was Christ, whose sacrifice on the cross was the supreme act of charity. Many such pious medieval traditions were revived in the zealous religious spirit of the Counter Reformation, the *Ars moriendi* among them. In this context, it should come as no surprise — although it did to me when I became aware of it — that unmistakable echoes of the medieval *Ars moriendi* may be discerned in the extensive accounts of Bernini's last illness and death in the early biographies of the artist.

What emerges from these descriptions is that Bernini not only practiced the art of dying in the technical sense, he actually conceived of his own death as a kind of artwork, which he prepared and calculated to the last detail, with the same kind of care and devotion he lavished on the buildings, sculptures and theatrical productions for which he was famous. In point of fact, Bernini's death involved three great creative acts. One was the death itself, or rather the procedures he followed in preparing for the end, which were those of the *Ars moriendi*. The recipe for attaining salvation called for frequent colloquies with a spiritual advisor, in Bernini's case his nephew, Francesco Marchese, a priest of the order of the Oratory. The dying man, Moriens, is also instructed to contemplate constantly holy images, especially the crucified Christ and the Virgin, and to invoke Christ's sacrifice in appealing to the vengeful Father for redemption. To fulfill these injunctions Bernini made two other art works more conventional in kind but no less remarkable in form. All three together constitute Bernini's art of dying.

His last work in sculpture was the bust of the Savior, which he gave to his close friend Queen Christina of Sweden; it is mentioned in the collec-

tion of her heir in an inventory of 1713. Known previously from a prepara-
tory drawing (Fig. 1), the original was lost until it reappeared some years
ago in the collection of Walter P. Chrysler, Jr., and it is now to be seen in
the Chrysler Museum at Norfolk, Va. (Fig. 2). We also have a drawing by
Bernini for the elaborate pedestal (Fig. 3), which corresponds to the
description given in the sources. The bust rested on a base that was held in
the draped hands of two angels who knelt on a high platform. It is impor-
tant to bear in mind that the bust is heroic in scale, well over three feet high,
and on the pedestal it was placed at human-proportional height; the whole
image was more than ten feet tall. Held aloft by the angels, the bust was per-
ceived as a superhuman vision, a miraculous apparition presented to the
viewer by a pair of divine messengers. It is no accident that the nearest anal-
ogy for this mode of presentation is a design by Bernini for the display of
the Holy Eucharist (Fig. 4).

The bust itself is also extraordinary in a number of ways. So far as I can
discover, it is the first monumental sculpture of this kind since antiquity in
which both hands are included, a milestone in the history of the bust as an
independent art form. The drapery is treated in an unprecedented way,
wrinkled and folded so that no cut edges appear at the bottom. The drap-
ery functions like a proscenium, creating the illusion that the figure is not
amputated but appears complete in the mind's eye. Jesus does not act as he
normally does in bust-length portraits of the two-handed type, that is, in a
rigid pose staring at the spectator with right hand extended in blessing and
holding in his left a cross-surmounted orb as the emblem of his universal
dominion (Fig. 5).[4] Bernini's Christ is not the usual austere, autonomous,
triumphant Savior. Instead, in a complex, dynamic action he looks up
imploringly to his right, indicating his chest wound with his left hand; he
reaches across his chest with his right hand, which he turns palm outward
to ward off the evil he abhors at his lower left. What Bernini did was amal-
gamate this tradition of the two-armed, bust-length Savior with two quite
different, interrelated themes in which Christ alludes to his place in God's
scheme by pointing to the chest wound with his left hand. In the Last
Judgment Christ often raises the blessed to heaven at his upper right, the
auspicious side, and condemns the sinner to hell at his sinister lower left

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[4] The example illustrated here follows a famous lost composition by Leonardo, for which
see Heydenreich 1988, 101–12.

(Fig. 6). The second tradition comprises intercessory themes that illustrate Christ's plea with his wrathful Father on behalf of mankind (Fig. 7).[5] Evidently, Bernini created his unprecedented image of the Savior to illustrate Christ's role as judge in the process of salvation, and as protector in the artist's personal Art of Dying. The Art of Dying specifically enjoins the moribund to affirm his belief in the just retribution of the Father and his trust in the infinite mercy of the Son. These proclamations of faith and hope are the ultimate act of charity toward God, which the good Christian offers in death in exchange for Christ's ultimate act of charity toward mankind on the cross. Indeed, the dying man was instructed to offer the following prayer to God: 'I put the death of our Lord Jesus Christ between me and your wrath.' What is important here is that Christ's charity serves as the model for human charity as well.

Bernini's third work of eschatological art made in connection with his own death was an equally powerful graphic image that came to be known as the *Sangue di Cristo*, the Blood of Christ. He kept a painted version before his sickbed, and also had it engraved for wider distribution (Fig. 8).[6] Christ is shown crucified, with blood gushing from his wounds; the Virgin, identified as always with the church, kneels below him washing her hands in his blood while God the Father flies up above with outstretched arms presenting the dramatic event to the spectator like some great, cosmic impresario. This design, too, is deeply indebted to the *Ars moriendi*, which suggested that moriens from his deathbed contemplate an image of the Crucifixion while imploring Christ and the Virgin to intercede on his behalf. The subject was illustrated, as in a sixteenth century stained glass window in Switzerland (Fig. 9), by a portrayal of the dying man expiring on his deathbed while in the clouds above appear the crucified Christ looking up toward God the Father and pointing toward his chest wound, and the Virgin who kneels on a cloud and appeals for mercy. Although the elements of Bernini's design are traditional, the fundamental conception is radically new. He eliminated moriens but retained the view at an angle from below. As a result, the image is perceived as a miraculous apparition to the spectator, who thus replaces the man on his deathbed. The angle and elevation

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[5] Ronen 1988; Marshall 1994, 527. The formula is based on the tradition of the *Speculum humanae salvationis*, for which see Lavin 1972, 169.

[6] On the painted and engraved versions of the composition, see now the catalogue entries in Contardi *et al.*, eds., 1988, 267–70.

here perform the same visionary function as the form of the torso of the bust of the Savior and the supporting angels of the pedestal.

The *Sangue di Cristo* composition is an independent vision, the full meaning of which we shall see presently. The print is also monumental in scale (10″ x 18″), considering that, folded into quarters, it retained a physical connection with the Art of Dying as the frontispiece to a small book published by Bernini's nephew, the same Father Francesco Marchese the biographers describe as the artist's close companion and counselor in death. Born in 1623, the son of Bernini's older sister, Marchese was a remarkable man, active, learned and devout. He is best known as a dedicated opponent of the Quietist leader Miguel de Molinos, whose downfall he helped bring about during Molinos's trial by the Inquisition in the 1680s. By the time he died in 1697 Marchese had published twenty-one books, including a four-volume history of heresies, a treatise on the Peace of the Pyrenees and its political implications, as well as many hagiographies and devotional works.[7] Marchese wrote several tracts in the tradition of the *Ars moriendi*, one of which, published in 1670, was illustrated by the *Sangue di Cristo* engraving. In the preface to this work Father Marchese urges those who seek salvation either to contemplate the image or read the text. Entitled 'The Only Hope of the Sinner Consists in the Blood of Our Father Jesus Christ' (*Unica speranza del peccatore consiste nel sangue di N S. Giesù Cristo*), it is a modernized, mystical *Ars moriendi* focused on a single theme, the blood of Christ, which is conceived as the universal key to salvation. The text explains Bernini's spectacular vision of the crucified Christ suspended in the air, his blood pouring down through the Virgin's upturned hands to form a limitless ocean in which all sins will be washed away. Christ's sacrifice is the second universal flood, after that of Noah, in which the sins of the old dispensation are cleansed to reveal the immaculateness of the new; the blood of Christ inundates the world with salvation. The intercessory role of the Virgin who offers her son's sacrifice is explained by a passage from the writings of the great Florentine mystic, Maria Maddalena dei Pazzi; echoing the *Ars moriendi*'s invocation of Christ's sacrifice as protection against the wrath of the Lord, this prayer is cited in the text and as the subtitle to the engraving: 'I offer you, Eternal Father, the blood of the incarnate word . . . and if any-

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[7] The fullest account of Francesco Marchese is that by Lattanzi in Contardi *et al.*, eds., 1988, 272–83. For the relevance of Marchese's tract on the Peace of the Pyrenees to Bernini's work for Louis XIV, see Lavin 1993, 182, and 1999, 460–7.

thing is wanting in me I offer it to you, Mary, that you may present it to the eternal Trinity.'

Two points are especially important here. First, it is clear that the bust of the Savior and the *Sangue di Cristo* were conceived as parallel visions illustrating complementary aspects of Bernini's Art of Dying, one emphasizing the terrible process of judgment in which Christ intervenes, the other the promise of infinite grace offered through the church by Christ's sacrifice. The second point is that both images transform the traditional *Ars moriendi* in a fundamental way. Almost by definition, the *Ars moriendi* was a private enterprise, specifically intended for the individual conscience. With Bernini the individual is merged, sublimated might be a better word, into the corporate body of all mankind. The personal acts of Christian charity that were the essence of the *Ars moriendi* are universalized.

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The implications of this conceptual transformation had very practical counterparts through which the *Sangue di Cristo* and the bust of the Savior were related, as it now appears, in extraordinary and wholly unexpected ways, not only to each other but also to Rome and its people. The relationship involved two of the signal projects of architectural, religious and social reform in the history of the city, with which Bernini was closely associated. In the case of the *Sangue di Cristo* a hint of this wider relevance is provided by a curious contemporary report linking the creation of the composition to one of the great architectural projects of Bernini's career, and one of the notorious failures: the reconstruction of the tribune of the basilica of Santa Maria Maggiore, the mother church of all Marian devotions, reputed to have been designed by the Virgin herself in a miraculous appearance. The basilica had long posed a problem of architectural decorum because of its doubly anomalous disposition: the apse was in the west, the opposite of normal liturgical orientation, while the principal, entrance façade faced east, away from the urban center of the city. Ceremonial events involving processions and other devotional approaches from Rome might even use the back door, as it were (Fig. 10). The problem became acute in the early seventeenth century after the two great modern reliquary and funerary chapels had been built by Sixtus V and Paul V, flanking the medieval apse (Fig. 11). The challenge of transforming the apsidal end into a proper monumental entrance to the church was taken up in 1669 by Pope Clement IX

(1667–69), who commissioned Bernini to design a 'maestosa facciata' that would also include tombs for the pope and his predecessor, Alexander VII (1655–67).

Bernini's design in its final form is known from several verbal descriptions, from a drawing, commemorative medals, and an engraving published early in the eighteenth century (Figs. 12, 13).[8] His proposal was astonishing in many respects: he would have dismantled the medieval tribune, rebuilt the apse farther west, presumably to provide space for the tomb, and surrounded it by a magnificent colonnade raised on a much higher flight of stairs than heretofore. In effect, the portico provided a covered, annular platform raised above the city, joining the entrances to the side aisles. The sources make it abundantly clear that the project ultimately came to grief partly for financial reasons: the costs greatly exceeded the estimates and it was intimated that the 'manipulator' Bernini should be held accountable; and partly because there was strong opposition to the idea of replacing the medieval apse with its venerable mosaics, exactly the same kind of objection that had been raised against Borromini's renovation of St. John's of the Lateran, the Cathedral of Rome, undertaken by Innocent X (1644–55) twenty-five years before.[9] We first hear of the idea of redoing the tribune of S. Maria Maggiore toward the end of 1667, and a good deal of work was done during the remaining year of Clement IX's life (1667–December 9, 1669) and early in the reign of Clement X (1670–76).[10] Bernini was in fact dismissed in May 1670, to be replaced three years later by Carlo Rainaldi, who executed the outer sheathing of the medieval apse we know today (Fig. 14).[11]

But already on September 13, 1669, it was reported that Bernini was to be replaced by Rainaldi, and the report adds the provocative observation

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[8] For a general survey of S. Maria Maggiore and its history, see Pietrangeli 1988. The vicissitudes of the project have been dealt with by Borsi 1980, 138–9, 340; Anselmi 1992–3; Zollikofer 1994, 1420. The medals are discussed in Witman 1983, 125 f. There is no record of Bernini's ideas for the tombs, if ever they took shape.

[9] November 2, 1669: 'Havendo inteso N. Signore l'antifona, che di già si siano spesi 60 mila scudi ne soli fondamenti della nuova Tribuna a Santa Maria Maggiore non fu poco non prorompesse la Santità S. in escandescenze contro il Bernini che s'offerse da principio darla finita per 100 mila, sí per vedersi deluso da questo reggiratore'; Mercati 1944, 21, n. 11. See also the documents cited by Fraschetti 1900, 380 n. 3, 381 n. 1.

[10] For the earliest reference to the project, see Barozzi and Berchet 1877–8, II, 329 (*cf.* 315 for the date); cited by Pastor 1923–53, XXXI, 336 f, n. 5.

[11] For the date, see Fraschetti 1900, 382 n. 1.

1.. Gianlorenzo Bernini, *Study for the Bust of the Savior*, drawing. Rome, Gabinetto Nazionale delle Stampe.

3. Gianlorenzo Bernini, Study for the upper part of the pedestal of the *Bust of the Savior*, drawing. Leipzig, Museum der bildenden Kunste, Graphische Sammlung.
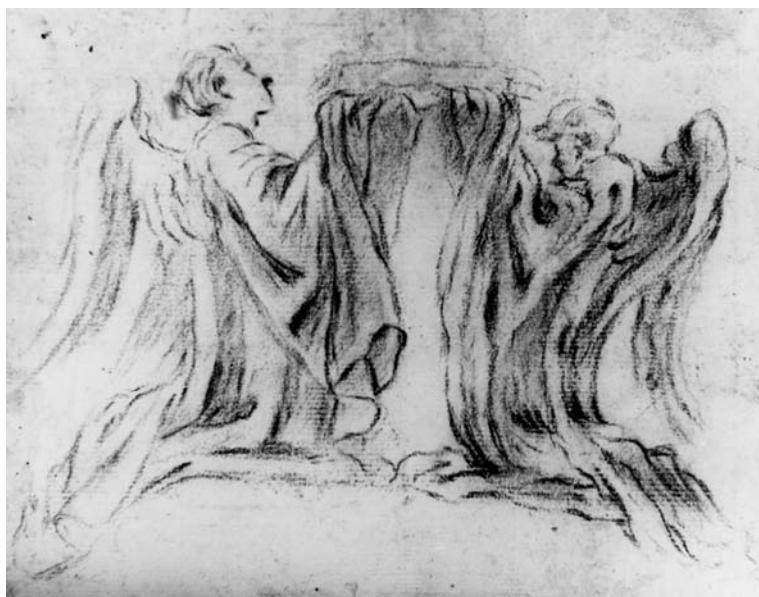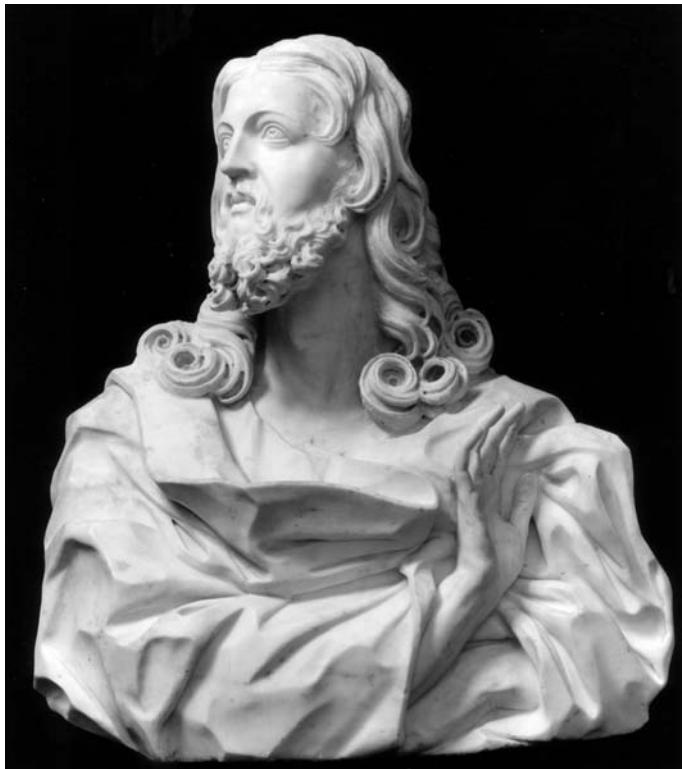
2. Gianlorenzo Bernini.
Bust of the Savior.
Norfolk, Va., Chrysler Museum
(photo: R. Thornton.
Providence. R.I.).

4. Gianlorenzo Bernini, *Study for a Monstrance*, drawing.
Leipzig, Museum der bildenden
Kunste, Graphische Sammlung.

5. Attributed to Giampetrino, *Salvator Mundi*.
Detroit Institute of Arts, Detroit.

6. Michelangelo,
The Last Judgement,
detail of Christ.
The Sistine Chapel,
Vatican City
(photo: Alinari 7578).

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

8. Gianlorenzo Bemini, *Sangue di Cristo*, engraving by F. Spierre,
473 x 290mm, frontispiece of F. Marchese, *Unica speranza dell peccatore.*
Rome, 1670, Vatican Library.
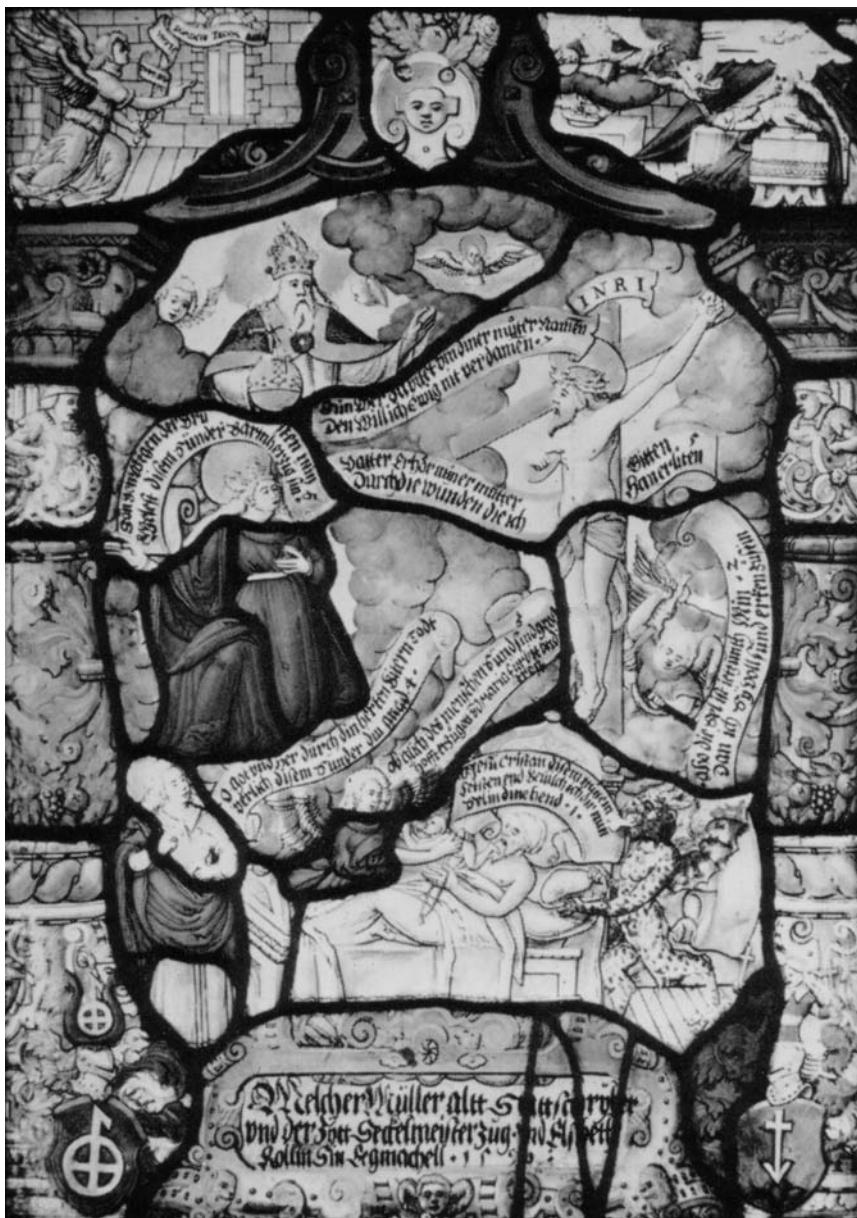
9. *The Death of Moriens* and *Intercession of Christ and the Virgin*,
stained-glass votive window. Wettingen. Switzerland
(photo: Die Kunstdenkmaler des Kantons Aargau).
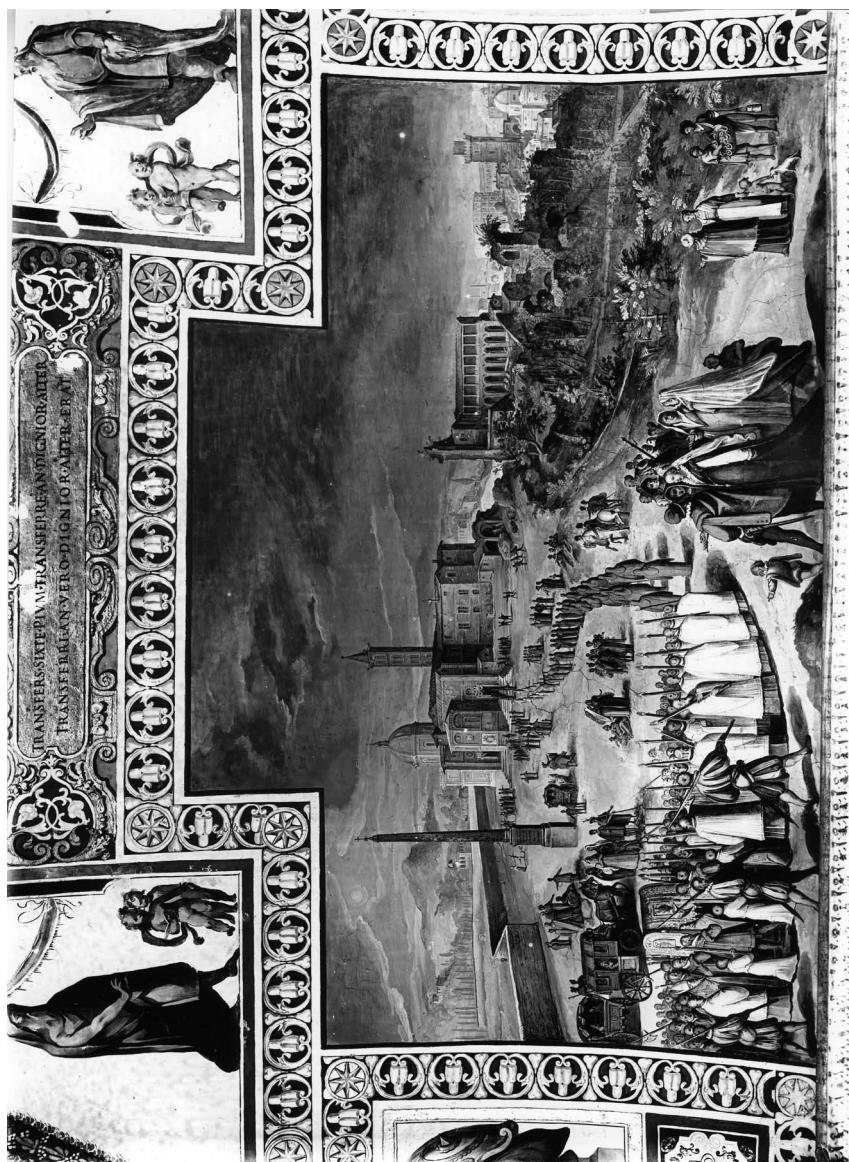
10. *Transport of the body of St. Pius V to S. Maria Maggiore.* Biblioteca Vaticana, Vatican City (photo: Musei Vaticani 111.6.11).
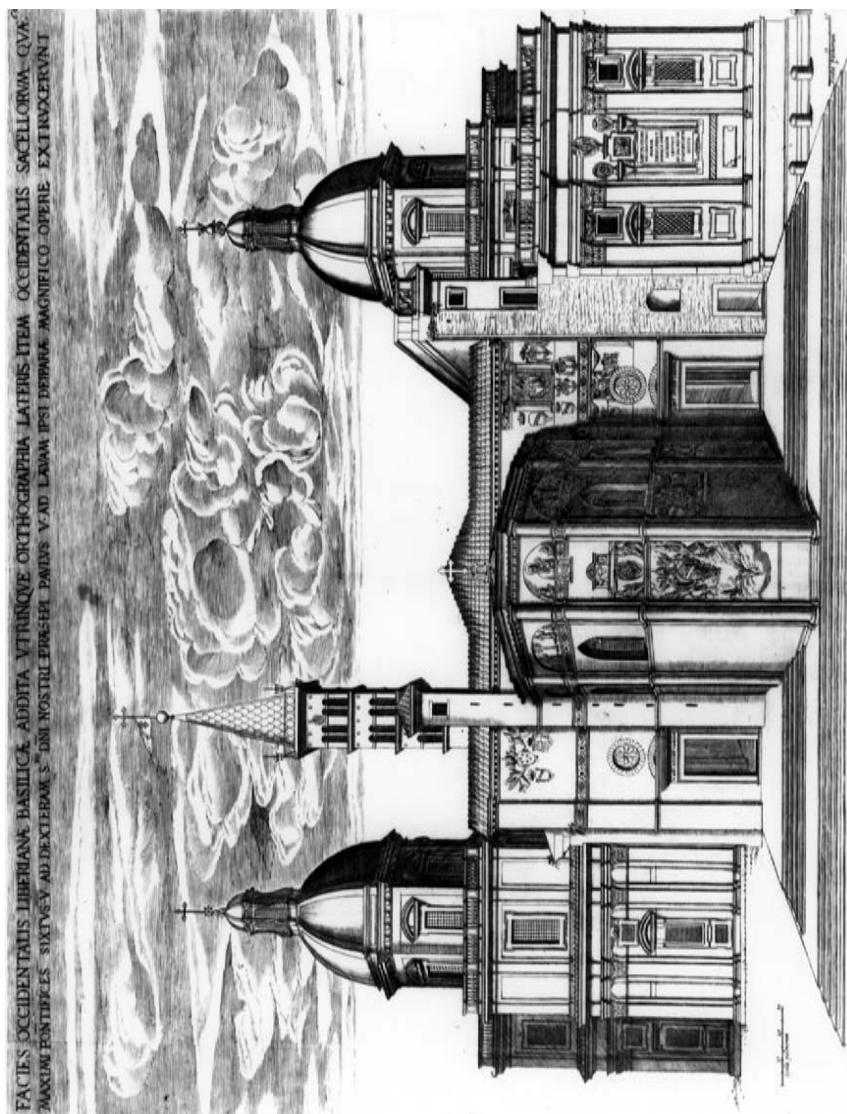
11. Medieval apse of
S. Maria Maggiore
(after De Angelis
1621, ill. following
p. 66).
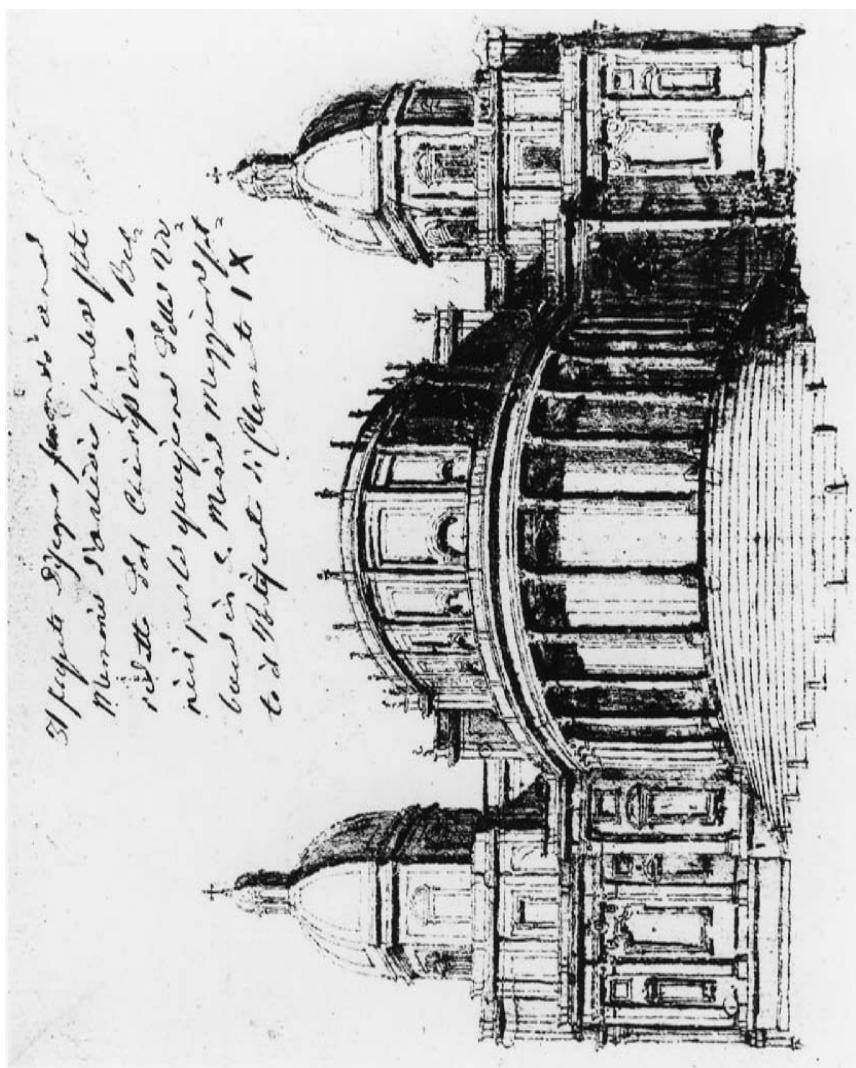
12. Workshop of Bernini, project for the apse of S. Maria Maggiore, drawing. Formerly in the Archive of the Chapter of S. Maria Maggiore (after Brauer and Wittkower 193 1 , pl. 182).
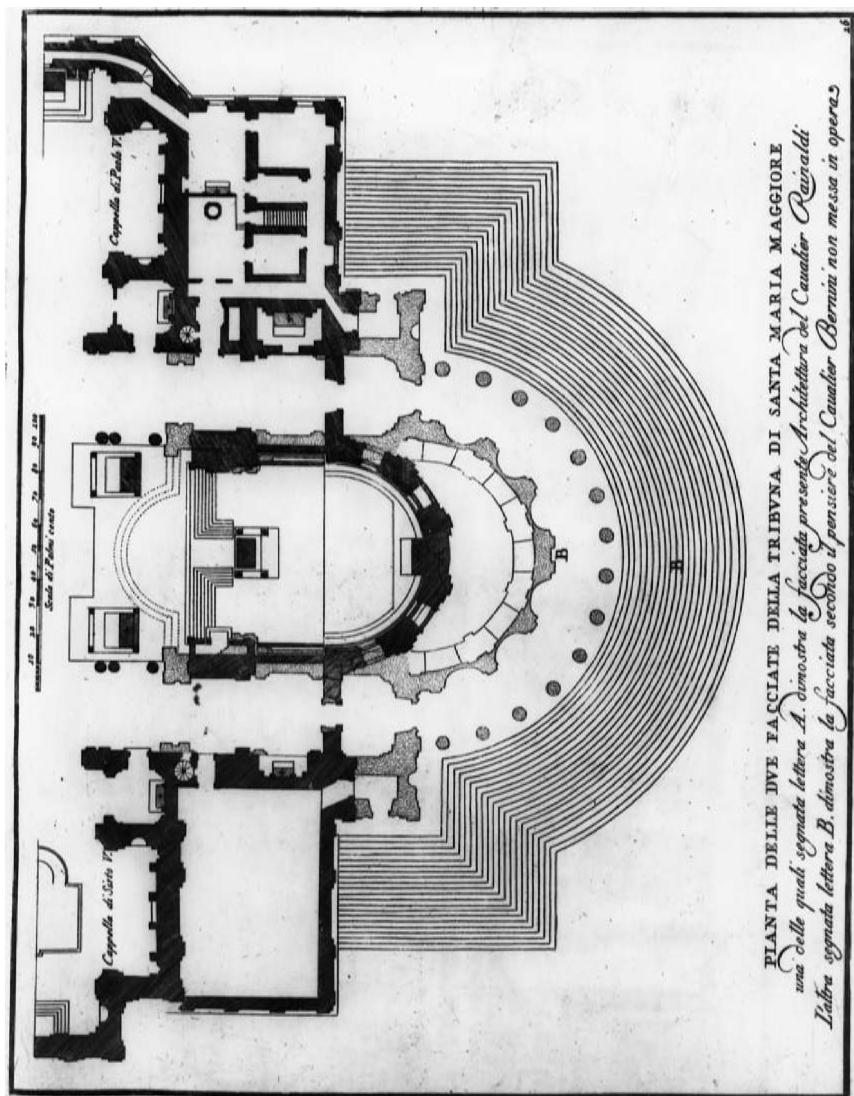
13. Apse of S. Maria
Maggiore showing
Bernini's project (light
shading) and as exe-
cuted by Carlo
Rainaldi
(after De Rossi
170211, 111, l. 16).

14. Carlo Rainaldi, apse of S. Maria Maggiore showing obelisk erected by Sixtus V (photo: Anderson 126).

15. *Salus populi romani,* Cappella Paolina. Rome, S. Maria Maggiore
(photo: Alinari 17346).

16. Cappella Paolina, high altar. Rome, S. Maria Maggiore
(photo: ICCD C9587).

17. Francesco Borromini, nave of S. Giovanni in Laterano (photo: postcard).

18. Medieval facade of S. Maria Maggiore, showing column of the Virgin erected
by Paul V, engraving by Israel Silvestre (after Silvestre [1641461, pl. 5).

Patriarchalis Ecclefia S.ˠ Mariæ Maioris.   S MARIA MAGGIORE.   L'Eglife Patriarchale de faincte Marie Maiour.
vna ex ijs quæ Romæ vifitantur .   Ifraël quobet .   l'vne des ftations de Rome .
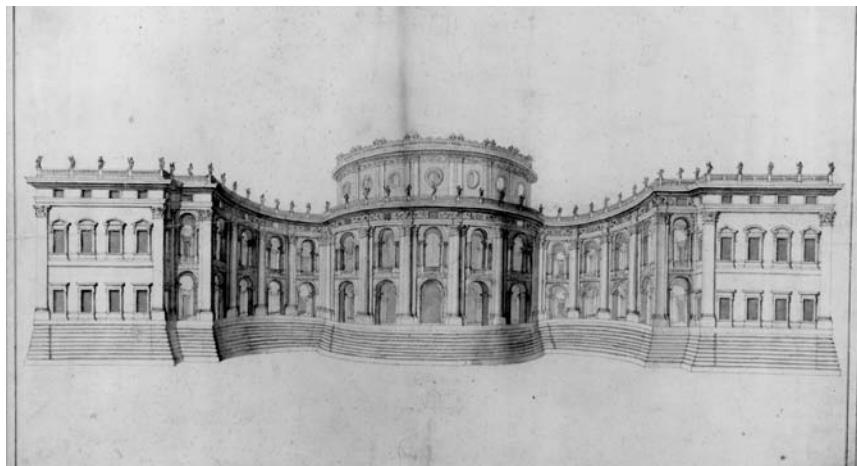
19. Gianlorenzo Bernini, project for the east facade of the Louvre, drawing.
Paris, Musée du Louvre (photo: SPRMN P8027).

20. Anonymous, Piazza S. Pietro, Corpus Domini procession of Innocent X.
Rome, Museo di Roma (photo: ICCD E38783).

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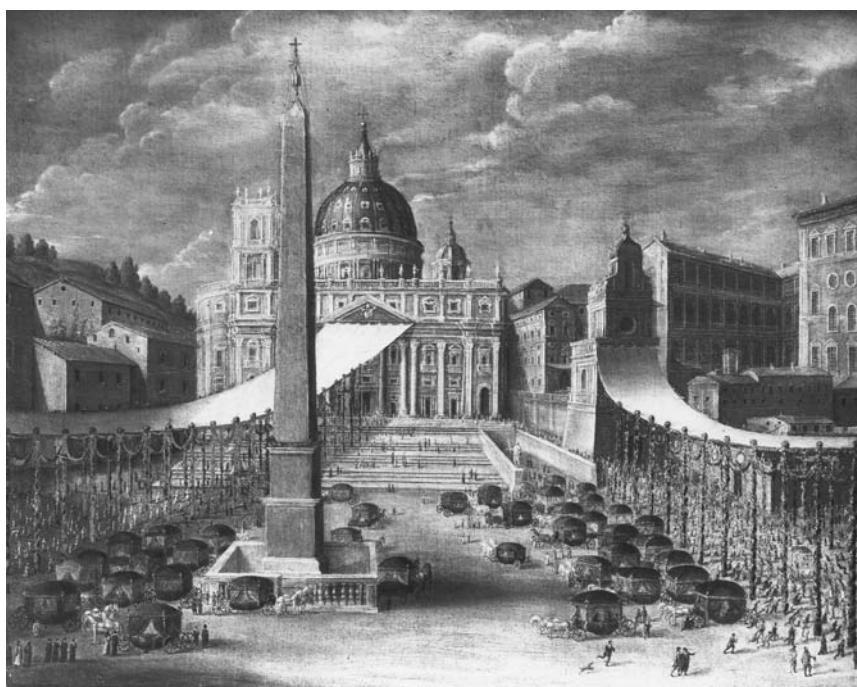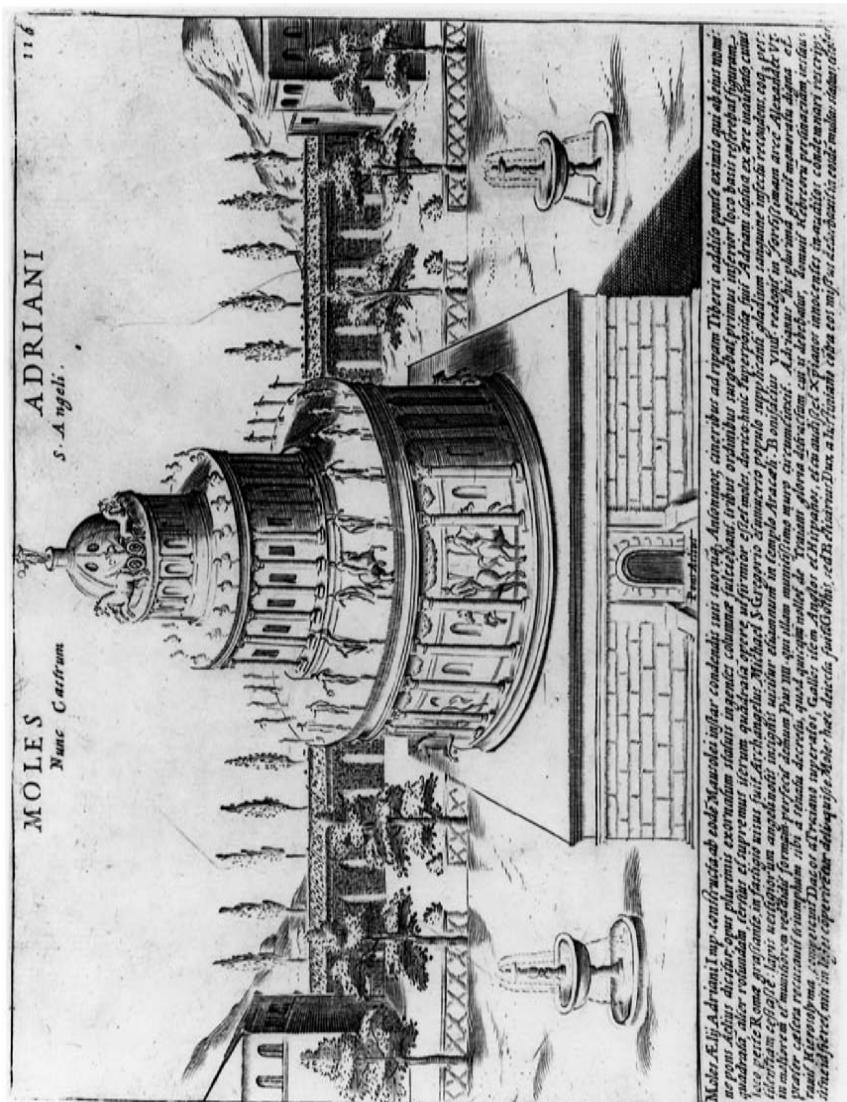
21. Reconstruction
of the tomb of
Hadrian (after
Lauro 1642, pl.
116).
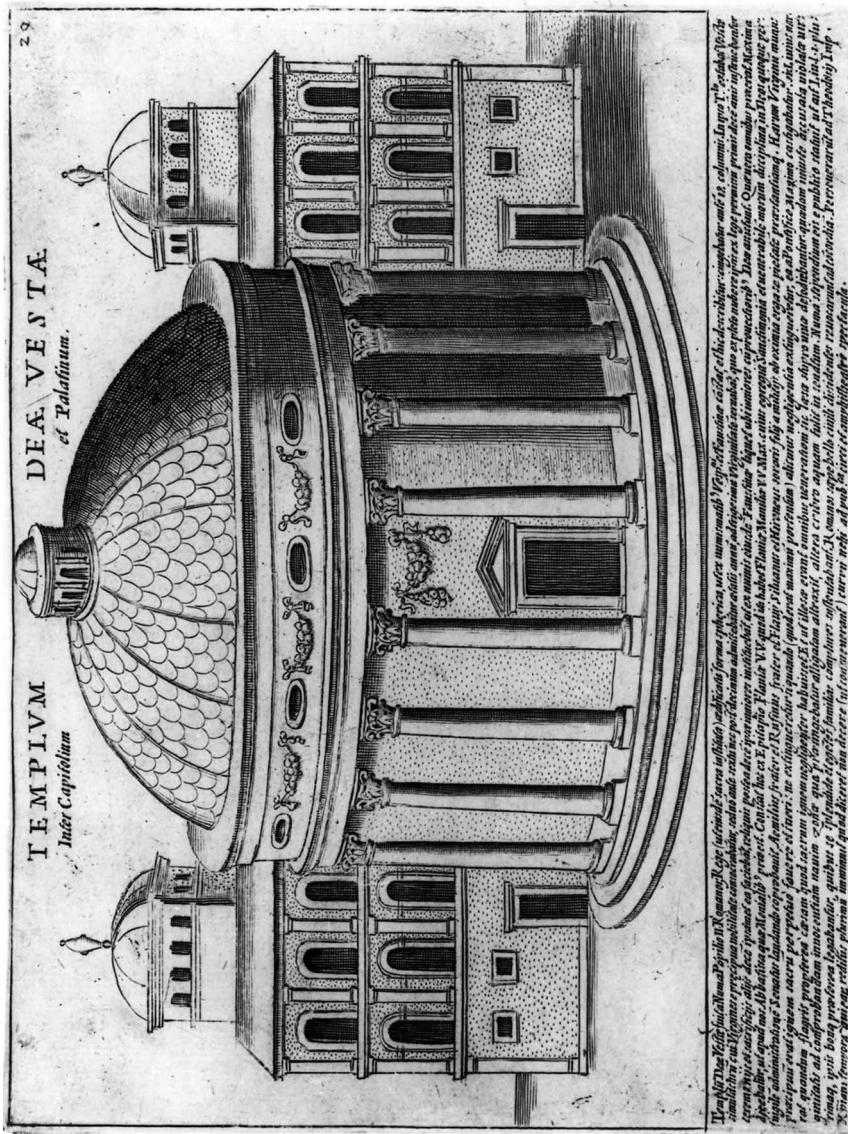
22. Reconstruction
of the temple of
Vesta
(after Lauro
1642, pl. 39).

23. Pietro da Cortona, facade of S. Maria delta Pace. Rome
(photo: Brogi 18600).

24. Fresco of Christ and saints with inserted image of the Madonna and Child.
Rome, Temple of Vesta (S. Maria del Sole)
(photo: Deutsches Archaeologisches Institut, Rome, 63.15161.

that Bernini, confronted with this prospect, made the *Sangue di Cristo* composition in order to demonstrate his 'incomparable virtue' (impareggiabile nella sua virttí).[12] The connection between the engraving and the architectural project would seem at first glance gratuitous, and yet it offers the key to an understanding of an important aspect of both works. *Virtú* can mean something like prowess, and since Bernini was then 71 years old he may have felt it necessary to demonstrate that his professional capacity was undiminished. But *virtú* also has an ethical significance, and in this sense the print is relevant to the S. Maria Maggiore project in a deeper, thematic way. The nature of this relationship can only be fully grasped through an exploration of what was evidently a deliberate effort by Bernini to synthesize a wide range of visual and ideological references, modern as well as ancient, Christian as well as classical, into a kind of epitome of the city's architectural and religious life.

The concept begins to emerge when one recalls that the great popularity of S. Maria Maggiore is due largely to its being the center of what can only be described as the cult of the Assumption of the Virgin, celebrated there each August 15 for at least 1000 years. Throughout the middle ages, the event was celebrated by an immensely popular procession in which a miraculous image of the Savior (*cf.* Fig. 40) was carried from the Lateran through the city to S. Maria Maggiore, where it was met by an equally miraculous image of the Madonna whose status as the virtual embodiment of the people of the city came to be denoted by the sobriquet *Salus populi romani* (Fig. 15).[13] The icon forms the centerpiece of the altar display in Paul V's chapel that opens off the south aisle of the church just inside the western entrance to that aisle (Fig. 16). Placed side by side, the two icons — both of which were *acheropita*, 'not made by hand' — became the protagonists of a reenactment of the marriage of Christ and the Church and the assumption of the Virgin, when she joined him, her son and her spouse, on the throne of heaven. By the mid-sixteenth century the procession, which took place by torchlight throughout the night of the 14th, had become the occasion for unruly behavior and in 1566 it was abolished by

[12] Vedendosi il cavaliere Bernini scartato dall'opera che al presente s'erge della scalinata nella basilica Liberiana ed in sua vece subentrato il cavaliere Rainaldi si è posto ad intagliare in rame componendovi sopra una figura di un Christo con una gloria che poscia improntandolo in carta darà a vedere essere impareggiabile nella sua virtú' (Claretta 1885, 520).

[13] Recent studies of the icons and the procession are: Ingersoll 1985, 224–52, Tronzo, ed., 1989, Wolf 1990.

the reforming Pope Pius V. However, Alexander VII determined to revive the celebration — a completely overlooked but, as I believe, critically important fact.[14] Although Alexander died before carrying out his purpose, the design Bernini proposed to Alexander's successor seems to reflect the idea of reinstating the procession. The idea to replace the tribune with an annular portico conjoining the side aisles may have been intended to create a counterpart to a comparable project by Borromini for the interior of the Lateran tribune, which was later taken up again *in the next century* by Piranesi.[15] Bernini's intention was to use for his portico the remainder of the hallowed ancient columns of rare green marble (verde antico) that had formed the original side aisles of the Constantinian basilica of the Lateran, some of which Borromini had appropriated for the niches containing statues of the apostles and symbolizing the twelve gates of the Heavenly Jerusalem (Fig. 17); others had been transferred to Siena by Alexander VII for his family chapel dedicated to the Virgin in the cathedral.[16] Incorporating the series of hallowed columns, Bernini's colonnade would

[14] The idea of renewing the procession is reported in Benedetto Millino's monograph on the Sancta Sanctorum, dedicated to Alexander VII, which he wrote partly to 'rinouar la memoria quasi estinta della solennelissima festa, che si faceua in questa città, portandosi ogni anno processionalmente l'Imagine suddeta del Saluatore, nel giorno dell'Assunta, alla Basilica di S. Maria Maggiore; processione, sicome la piú famosa, e la piú antica di quante ne habbia vedite Roma: *cosí, quando si rinouasse, si potrebbe sperare nel Popolo Romano accrescimento grande di pia liberalità e di deuotione, versa essa santa Imagine*' (italics mine; Millino 1656, unpaginated dedication). Millino says that he had written the tract a decade earlier, when it had met with the pope's approval. Alexander's intention, thwarted by his death, is reported by Soresino 1675, 88: 'Praefatam autem processionem annualem ex nostra Basilica ad Sancta Sanctorum in peruigilio Assumptionis gloriosissimae Deipare Virginis Mariae, Alexander VII. summus Pontifex restituere decreuerat, vt Benadictus Millinus decebat, maxime supplicibus exhortationibus eiusdem, sed ipsius Romani Pontificis obitus est in causa, quod res ad exitum perducta non sit.' On this episode see Dell'Addolorata 1919, 288 f.

[15] See Wilton-Ely and Connors, in *Piranesi*, 1992, 21, 103 f.

[16] On the reused Constantinian columns, see Krautheimer 1977, 45. The plan to transfer the remaining columns to Santa Maria Maggiore, strongly opposed by the canons of the Lateran, is reporrted by Fraschetti 1900, 379 f, n. 3: '. . . Per ordine della Santità Sua i. Cerioli suo ministro di Casa è andato a vedere a San Giovanni in Laterano le bellissime Colonne di Verde antico per servirsene nella suddetta fabrica, il che sarà di Sparmio di alcune migliaia di scudi, con gran disgusto però del Capitolo di detta Basilica che non vorrebe privarsene, e cosí si va facendo studio di ritrovare altri marmi, e Colonne per sparmiare le grosse spese, a sollecitudine del Lavoro' (September 7, 1669). on the symbolism of Borromini's Lateran, see Fagiolo 1971.

have performed an architectural 'wedding' that conjoined the Marian basilica to the Lateran by a ring of precious stones.

It might be said in the first instance simply that the colonnaded portico provided a modern equivalent facing the city of the medieval narthex at the front of the church (Fig. 18). At the same time, however, screening the semi-dome of the apse behind a horizontal balustrade with statues contributed to the effect of a festive and truly regal — 'majestic' was the contemporary word— facade. This was surely Bernini's reason for interpolating here the famous early project he had worked out a few years before for the façade of Louis XIV's Louvre. The design featured a ring of attached columns that supported a balustrade with sculptures suggestive of a regal crown (Fig. 19);[17] at S. Maria Maggiore, the motif becomes a 'diadem' for the Queen of Heaven. The colonnade also could not fail to recall, in form as no doubt in function, the other great work Bernini had conceived under Alexander, the colonnaded porticos before St. Peter's. The pope himself described the porticos as a 'crown' for that 'royal edifice' — where they provided a worthy canopy for the city's other great religious procession, that of the Corpus Domini (Fig. 20).[18] At S. Maria Maggiore, one can readily imagine the Madonna icon similarly paraded, from the Cappella Paolina to the nearby side aisle portal and through the colonnade to the center of the apse, where it would be met by its counterpart from the Lateran; the images would then proceed together through the other half of the portico into the church for the remainder of the ceremony. The two monumental, curving porticoes at St. Peter's and S. Maria Maggiore would thus have complemented each other, visually as well as ceremonially, across the papal city.

[17] Architectural crowns, both secular and religious, were common in ephemeral works, and Carlo Rainaldi had actually surmounted the three pavillions of his louvre project with royal crown motifs. See Fagiolo dell'Arco 1997, 78 (Rainaldi), and *passim*.

[18] The pope's observation is quoted by Krautheimer 1985, 72. The 'editio princeps' of the motif, which I have discussed as a 'royal' theme in connection with Bernini's Louvre projects (Lavin 1993, 187, 191), were Michelangelo's palaces on the Campidoglio. The relevance for the conception of the St Peter's colonnades of the papal Corpus Domini procession, for which long temporary canopies were erected before the colonnades were built, has been noted, but not fully appreciated; I hope to return to this theme on another occasion. See Pastor 1923–53, XXXI, 296; Kitao 1974, 131 n. 254 f; and Fagiolo 1982, 119; Fagiolo and Madonna, eds., 1985, 138–40; Krautheimer 1985, 65.

In a sense, the project at S. Maria Maggiore might also be said to have fulfilled the veritable 'program' of colonnades carried out or planned under Alexander VII throughout the city, which included a vast network of treelined avenues; see Krautheimer 1985, 109 ff, 120, 190.

The form of Bernini's project has two other, quintessentially Roman connotations that must be taken into account. He evidently merged two heretofore distinct but complementary classical traditions of architectural signification, with which Alexander VII had also been concerned. Both involved circular or semicircular peripteral colonnades associated with particular ideals of permanence, universality and perfection. It has been pointed out that aspects of the design — the semicircular ring of columns, the crown of statues — recall contemporary reconstructions of the grandest and most famous of Roman tombs, that of the emperor Hadrian, which became the medieval stronghold of the popes, Castel Sant'Angelo;[19] the illustration given by Giacomo Lauro, whose repertory of ancient monuments Bernini exploited on other occasions at this period, seems particularly relevant (Fig. 21).[20] An evocation of the imperial mausoleum *par excellence* was appropriate to a project at S. Maria Maggiore intended to add the tombs of two more popes to those already commemorated there. The idea was wholly in keeping with the attitude of Alexander VII, for whom Bernini had converted the ancient Aelian bridge leading across the Tiber to the Castel Sant'Angelo into a kind of *via* crucis with statues of angels carrying the instruments of the Passion.

The annular colonnade was also a common formula for ancient temples, doubtless known to Bernini as a type of the Temple of Peace, and of structures sacred to virgin deities.[21] In the early seventeenth century one of the most familiar Roman structures of this type, the Temple of Vesta beside the Tiber, was rededicated to the Madonna del Sole, in reference to a miraculously radiant image of the Virgin and Child reportedly found in the river.[22] In Lauro's compendium the temple is portrayed against a structure with pavilions at either end, in a manner that anticipates the façade by Pietro da Cortona of the church Alexander VII commissioned and dedicated to

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[19] The relationship to the ancient imperial tombs (including that of Augustus, which was preceded by two obelisks) was suggested by Fagiolo dell'Arco 1967, 242, and developed in an excellent thesis at the University of Rome by Anselmi 1992–3. on the bridge, see Weil 1974; D'Onofrio 1981.

[20] On the importance of Lauro's work see Del Pesco 1984; Lavin 1993, 157–60, 180.

[21] On the circular, colonnaded Temple of Peace, see Ost 1971, 269–79. There was, of course, a long-standing tradition of centrally planned churches dedicated to the Virgin (Krautheimer 1950, Wittkower 1975, 137–40, Sinding-Larsen 1965, 220–7).

[22] See Rakob and Heilmeyer 1973, 14 f, and the bibliography cited there, esp. Cecchelli 1938–51, I, 129–67.

peace, S. Maria della Pace (Figs. 22, 23).[23] Even more striking is the antici-
pation of the arrangement Bernini envisaged at S. Maria Maggiore, with the
colonnaded apse between the domed Sistine and Pauline chapels. Two fac-
tors in particular made the reference singularly appropriate at Maria
Maggiore. The type of the image of the Madonna and Child in the Tiber
temple clearly reflected that of the Salus Populi Romani and its discovery
must have reflected and greatly reinforced the city's millenial popular devo-
tion to the Virgin and that image (Fig. 24). The association of the Virgin
with peace came through the birth of her son; the Prince of Peace, and
Bernini's architectural evocation of Peace and the Virgin in the apse corre-
sponded on precisely these terms to the famous Egyptian obelisk that Sixtus
V had raised before the apse of the church (1587), where it would have
become the focal point of Bernini's design (cf. Fig. 14). Sixtus had trans-
ferred the obelisk, rededicated to the victorious Christ, from the other great
circular, imperial tomb in Rome, the mausoleum of Augustus, under whose
peace, as one of the inscriptions on the pedestal proclaims, the Prince of
Peace was born.[24] This grandiose conversion of antiquity expressed at the
western end of the church facing the city in turn had its correspondent
before the eastern entrance façade in the colossal column, reputedly the
largest in Rome, erected there in 1615 by Paul V (Fig. 18). Paul had
removed the column from another building, thought to have been the
ancient Temple of Peace, and dedicated it to the Immaculate Virgin on the
feast of the Assumption.[25] Approaching the church from the city, the routes
to Christ and the Virgin, triumph and peace, thus converged at S. Maria
Maggiore, and would have culminated in Bernini's apse.

It has long been known that, beside the *Salus Populi Romani*, one par-
ticular class of Madonna images was associated with the feast of the
Assumption; this is the type of intercessory Virgin who lifts both hands
upward in a gesture that suggests both an appeal and an offering to heaven.
The type was familiar from the classic Byzantine Crucifixion type in which
the Virgin standing beneath the cross gestures in this way (Fig. 25). The
motif had been isolated in an icon formula known as the Madonna

[23] The analogy between Bernini's apse and S. Maria della Pace has also been noted by
Marder 1990, 123. Gijsbers 1996, 319–23, notes the relationship in this tradition between
Cortona's portico (1657–8) and that of Bernini's S. Andrea al Quirinale (begun 1648).

[24] On Sixtus's obelisk see D'Onofrio 1965, 154–9.

[25] On the Basilica of Constantine/Temple of Peace and the Marian column, See Ost
1971, 269–79; Wolf 1991–2, 314–8.

Avvocata that was common in Rome, notably in an image at which the icon of the Savior traditionally stopped along its way in the procession from the Lateran to S. Maria Maggiore (Fig. 26).[26] Perhaps for this reason it was followed toward the end of the thirteenth century by Jacopo Torriti for the figure of the Virgin in his mosaic of the coronation in the apse of S. Maria Maggiore itself (Fig. 27). Adopting the same gesture for the kneeling, cloud-borne Virgin in his *Sangue di Cristo* composition, Bernini recalled the imagery of S. Maria Maggiore and the famous procession, and linked it to the *Ars moriendi* tradition. The *tertium quid* in this relationship is Maria Maddalena dei Pazzi's invocation of the Blood of Christ offered by the Virgin on behalf of mankind. It might well be relevant that the words quoted on the engraving were spoken on the occasion of the saint's vision in which Christ took her as his spouse, as he had her namesake, his mother, on the day of her assumption.[27] This reference to Maria Maddalena dei Pazzi might be said to complete the sense of the *Sangue di Cristo* engraving, which was evidently a public appeal for clemency in tacit allusion to the personal and public crisis of the S. Maria Maggiore tribune; Bernini's design invokes the saint, whom Clement IX had canonized only a few months before, in April of 1669, who in turn invokes the universal *charity* of Christ's sacrifice and implores the intercession of the Virgin.[28]

The idea of reviving the procession of the Assumption with its conjunction of miraculous images, the canonization of Maria Maddalena dei Pazzi,

[26] On the Madonna Avvocata-Deesis see Tronzo 1989, 173 f, 180 ff also Belting, in Tronzo, ed., 1989, esp. 30 ff, and Wolf 1990, 161 ff.

[27] The marriage vision is described by Puccini 1609, 238 f.

[28] D'Onofrio 1973, 48, also relates Bernini's print to the canonization. Following a suggestion of Blunt 1978, Beltramme 1994 identifies the kneeling figure in the composition as Maria Maddalena dei Pazzi, rather than the Virgin. Apart from other considerations, Blunt and Beltramme simply disregard the fact that all contemporary sources, including Bernini himself, his own son, his nephew, and Baldinucci, refer to the figure as Mary (see the dispatch quoting Bernini cited in Lavin 1972, 164 n. 17, and the biographies and Marchese's introduction quoted in Lavin 1972, 160, 167 n. 23). However, one point, not mentioned by Beltramme or Blunt, leads me to suspect that Bernini may have intended to conflate the two Marys: the figure is shown barefoot, repeating the motif of Bernini's portrayal of St. Teresa; both saints were Discalced Carmelites. As Blunt noted, an allusion may also have been intended to the biblical Mary Madgalene, who is often shown at the foot of the cross gathering Christ's blood. In any case, neither the identification of the figure nor the evident indebtedness of the concept and Father Marchese's text to the writings of the saint, mitigates the importance of *intercession* and the *Ars moriendi* tradition to the design, content, and function of the image, including Bernini's own use of it at his deathbed.

the tribulated project for rebuilding the apse of S. Maria Maggiore, the creation of the *Sangue di Cristo* composition, and the publication of Father Marchesel's book, are like interlocking pieces of a vast historical jigsaw puzzle of which Bernini's 'incomparable virtue' forms the centerpiece.

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A few years ago, while preparing a catalogue of the collections of the museum of the city of Rome, the Museo di Roma, a young curator found in the basement repository two relief sculptures that she recognized as closely related to Bernini's bust of the Savior Figs. 28, 29).[29] The reliefs were clearly complementary and each bore the inscription *Hospitii Apostolici Pauperum Invalidorum* (Of the Apostolic Hospice of the Invalid Poor). The reliefs were recorded in an earlier inventory of the museum as having been removed from the old land customs, as distinct from marine customs, building in Rome. The old Dogana della Terra is a famous structure that today houses the Rome stock exchange. Originally built in the second century A.D. as the temple of the Emperor Hadrian, it survived into modern times and in the year 1695 the great reforming pope Innocent XII (1691–1700), as one of his many benefactions for Rome, converted it into the customs house for overland imports. The reliefs appear in early depictions of the building, and the places where they were attached to the walls flanking the entrance are still visible (Figs. 30, 31). When the customs building was converted into the stock exchange in the 1880s the reliefs were removed, stored in the basement of the Museo di Roma, and forgotten. Two similar reliefs were already known (Figs. 32, 33) and upon full investigation a total of seven reliefs, all dependent on Bernini's bust, were recovered from buildings, some still extant, others demolished, in various parts of the city (Figs. 34, 35, 36). Some bear the same inscription as the two from the customs house, and all can be identified with the Apostolic Hospice of the Invalid Poor. The archives of the Hospice still exist and its documents revealed that all the reliefs were executed by several different artists in one campaign in 1694–95, fifteen years after Bernini's death in 1680. The newly discovered relationship between Bernini's bust of the Savior and the group of reliefs that pertained to the Apostolic Hospice for the Poor makes

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[29] The story is told in the splendid study and catalogue entries by Di Gioia in Contardi *et al.*, eds., 1988, 285–344.

it possible to reconstruct one of the most remarkable episodes in the modern artistic and social history of Rome, and, I venture to say, of Europe generally.

It has been a familiar fact since Michel Foucault wrote his famous chapter on the 'Le grand renfermement' (the great incarceration) in his *Folie et déraison* of 1961, that the seventeenth century witnessed a great increase in the number and kinds of institutions devoted to the care of socially undesirable people. Whether there was an actual increase in the destitute population, or a greater awareness of its existence, or both, the chronicles of the period are filled with laments about the terrible conditions in the cities and bitter complaints about the fact that citizens cannot walk the streets without being accosted by poor people begging or trying to steal. One cannot even go to church because the doors are blocked by men, women and children in dirty rags, many more or less horribly and more or less authentically disabled, seeking to exploit the compassionate Christian's obligation of charity. Such conditions were not only annoying and dangerous in the criminal sense, and an impediment to religion, they were also dangerous in the political sense because they fomented civic unrest. Efforts to counter these developments proliferated from the latter part of the sixteenth century and the seventeenth century witnessed a veritable flood of Counter-reformatory charitable enterprises that sought to deal with the poor, along with other kinds of unfortunate or unwelcome social deviants such as criminals and the mentally and physically incapacitated, by getting them off the streets and providing for them properly. In many cities throughout Europe there were created for the first time general hospices, which were often attached to prisons and often included the insane and other undesirables. They might be called hospitals, but not in the modern sense since the treatment of illness was only an incidental function, if it existed at all. A crucial element of all these measures was that the beneficiaries were reduced to a state of urban non-existence, as it were. They were *required* to leave the streets and enter the hospices where they would be provided for with all due charity. They would be washed, fed, given clothing and decent accommodation, and put to work in some gainful employment. But if they refused or evaded the provision, they were condemned. Hence, it became legally forbidden to beg in the streets or public places, on pain of corporal punishment, imprisonment, or even banishment from the city. In Rome, these developments culminated in 1692 when Innocent XII announced a great, new, and imaginative war on poverty. Elected by the party known as the

Zealous (*Zelanti*), Innocent was a passionate reformer. He is remembered mainly for having decreed an end to the millennial papal prerogative of nepotism, but he was responsible for many other improvements as well. In the fall of 1692 he issued a dramatic edict requiring that all the poor of Rome, including their families, report to a central place where they would be interviewed and given clothing, and whence they would then proceed to their new home. There all their needs would be provided for and they would participate in a highly structured regime of daily activities that included training and work in useful trades, and religious instruction and devotions of all sorts. Family members who could not physically transport themselves to the hospice, were allowed to remain in their own homes, if they had them, where they would receive comparable care and give comparable service and devotions to the limit of their abilities. The edict was carried out on Sunday, November 30, 1692, with a great procession of the poor to their new quarters.

Much of the program enacted in Rome was based on similar programs in other cities, notably Amsterdam, Paris, Lyon, Florence and Genoa. But in some important respects Rome was special and different. To begin with, the idea of ministering to the poor developed from a quite different context in Rome than elsewhere. The initial driving force in Rome was not the perennial urban social problem presented by the indigent. Rather, it was related to the spectacular development during the Counterreformatory period of the Holy Year celebrations.[30] The first hospices in Rome were created in order to provide for the many needy pilgrims who came during Holy Years to pay their devotions at the sacred sites of the city. In Rome, the movement was connected in a very specific way with Christian charity.

Innocent XII's program, moreover, devoted much more attention than did others to instruction, both sacred and artisanal; and religious devotions and productive labor were conceived as benefits, not punishments for the poor.[31] The program was thus not simply a remedy for social ill but had a specific spiritual and ethical content, as well.

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[30] The seminal importance of the jubilee pilgrimages in the development of charities for the poor in Italy, and especially Rome, has been recognized by Pullan 1978, 1001–5, and Simoncelli 1973–4, 123. On the poorhouses of Genoa, Palermo and Naples, see Guerra, *et al.* 1995. Marder 1980, 43 f., noted the importance of social programs in the architectural projects of late seventeenth-century Rome, including the Lateran hospice.

[31] On this point see Contardi in Contardi *et al.*, eds., 1988, 23.

Thirdly, the Roman program embraced all the poor, including the wives and children of family men, who might be cared for at home if the move to the hospice was impracticable. The hospice was also exclusively for the poor, who were not combined with criminals and the insane.[32] The program might well be described as a universal Christian charity.

Fourthly, Rome was extraordinary by virtue of the building that was given over to the hospice (Fig. 37). It was an enormous palace built by Pope Sixtus V at the end of the sixteenth century adjoining the church of St. John's in the Lateran, which is the cathedral of the city and thus the Episcopal seat of the successor to St. Peter as Bishop of the diocese of Rome. Sixtus had built the Lateran palace as his summer residence, but it remained vacant and abandoned after his successor built another, more convenient retreat. Rome was thus confronted with the wondrous spectacle of the poorest of the poor occupying one of the greatest, noblest and most luxurious palaces in the world (Fig. 38). In a sense, the measure was a prophetic piece of urban renewal, like the re-use of old railway stations and industrial buildings for civic purposes in our time. But there was a deeper significance, as well. The Catholic church is traditionally conceived as devoted to poverty, and when Innocent was criticized for this extravagant folly, his reply was that he was only giving to the poor, whom he called 'my true nephews,' what was properly theirs — in this case, the palace of the popes, no less.[33]

The fifth great difference of the Roman program from its predecessors was organizational, or rather administrative. It was meant to be permanent, and toward this end it was supposed to be financially self-sustaining. The funding was to come from several kinds of sources, beginning with a major endowment from the papal treasury itself. In addition, gifts by individuals to other welfare institutions were forbidden; private benefactions were henceforth channeled to the Apostolic Hospice. All Christian charity was thus devoted to this single, new, global enterprise. In addition, the employment of the inmates was conceived in a new way. In other cases the sequestered poor were put to work for the state, or, in effect, leased to private entrepreneurs, who thus exploited the cheap labor. Here, instead, the goods and labor were sold and the profits were used to support the hospice itself. And finally, income from taxes and rents was assigned to the hospice — for example, a tax on playing cards; taxes on goods imported into the city, levied at the land and sea customs houses; and rental income on a

[32] Contardi in Contardi *et al.*, eds., 1988, 24.
[33] Contardi in Contardi *et al.*, eds., 1988, 19.

number of buildings that were given to the hospice by the pope or other donors. The sculptured reliefs were made as signs for one and all to see that the buildings they adorned belonged to the hospice at the Lateran and were dedicated to its mission of charity in imitation of Christ.[34] And of course, with the suppression of the other, private charities, it was unique as a public institution having its insignia, the descendants of Bernini's bust of the Savior, displayed throughout the city. It is important to observe that all the derivatives from Bernini's Savior follow the conception of the work recorded in Bernini's preparatory drawing (*cf.* Fig. 1), rather than the final version, in two essential ways: Christ looks forward, not up, and the gesture of the right hand is benedictory, not protective. The differences embody a different expressive emphasis: not judgment and intercession, but charity, pure and simple; and a different function: not the personal appeal of *Ars moriendi* eschatology, but the social context of public welfare.[35] At its height the hospice housed some 1600 people and provided for some 250 families in their homes.

I am convinced that the unique character of this institution could only have been defined in Rome under the papacy, with its unique, cosmopolitan fusion of church and state, religious and civic consciousness, moral ideals and practical necessities. Indeed, to think of Innocent XII's project simply as charity misses a crucial point. It seems to me that the Lateran hospice signals the development of a new social as well as political awareness in Europe. It is often said that the modern notion of statehood as a coherent political and, indeed, moral entity developed under the aegis of the absolute

[34] Di Gioia (in Contardi *et al.*, eds., 1988, 326) notes that the reliefs were placed only on the income-producing buildings, not where the poor were actually housed. The buildings related to the hospice are discussed in Contardi *et al.*, eds., 1988, 103–201. The idea of identifying the buildings in this way was surely based on the Confraternity of the Savior's use of its emblem (see p.239 above).

[35] Di Gioia (in Contardi *et al.*, eds., 1988, 325 ff) comments perceptively on these differences and, following my suggestion concerning the bust at Sées (Lavin 1973), also concludes that the copies reflect the stage recorded in the Corsini drawing. If my hypothesis is correct, that Bernini sent the drawing to Paris for his friend Cureau de la Chambre to have copied in marble, then a comparable work must have been available in Rome, which the artists there followed in preference to Bernini's own sculpture, then in the collection of Innocent XI's nephew, Livio Odescalchi. The obvious solution was offered by Di Giola, who refers to the copy of the Savior painted by Bernini's protege Baciccio (lost, but clearly reflected in another work by him), which Bernini left to Innocent XI (as recorded by Domenico Bernini, see Lavin 1973, 162), and which was also in the Odescalchi collection when the reliefs were made.

monarchies of the seventeenth century; and the papacy, in its special way, was certainly among them. Within this context, what we are witnessing here is nothing less than the birth of a modern notion of the poor as a distinct class, and of welfare as an abstract, global concept. And this new level of consciousness is, in turn, an essential component of the new conception of the social body itself as an organic whole embracing all its members, including even the undesirable. I use the word embrace advisedly because the poor are not only recognized as a group, they are also the subject of universal concern, a challenge not only to the personal conscience of the individual but to the collective conscience of government and the governed. It might be said that indigent people are no longer dependent on private Christian charity, and instead 'the poor' become a collective social responsibility.

The man who formulated the idea of the hospice adopted by Innocent XII as the solution to the problem of the homeless in Rome, who helped work out its organization and administration, and who was assigned an important role in carrying it out, was none other than Bernini's beloved nephew, the Oratorian priest Francesco Marchese. After the artist's death Marchese became an increasingly important figure in the intellectual religious life of the city and deeply concerned with its social problems. He was appointed Apostolic Preacher by Innocent XI (1676–89) in 1689.[36] The tract he wrote in 1691 describing his proposal — which was only part of a much wider program of reform — is still preserved.[37] It was obviously Father Marchese who saw the appropriateness of Bernini's portrait of the Savior as the emblem of the hospice. He was not simply promoting the fame of his uncle's art — there was certainly no need for that. He understood that Bernini's image and the apostolic hospice were in fact profoundly related: both were motivated by essentially the same, in the end quite unprecedented ideal of a truly universal charity.

I suspect there was more to this relationship than meets the eye; more, that is, than merely a happy inspiration on Father Marchese's part. Marchese's project, in fact, was a development and elaboration into a coherent program of a scheme for the same kind of hospice that had been outlined by one of his older confreres at the Oratory, Father Mariano Sozzini,

[36] Marchese was named Apostolic Preacher to succeed Bonaventura da Recanati; see Bonadonna Russo 1979, 258 n. 14; Lippi 1889, 273–4; for the date, See *Dictionnaire* 1912 ff, IX, cols. 808–9.

[37] On the date See Contardi in Contardi *et al.*, eds., 1988, 34 n. 6.

many years before. Sozzini had originally sketched out his ideas on the deplorable conditions in Rome in 1670, the very year in which Bernini's visual meditation on the blood of Christ appeared, accompanied by Marchese's explanatory booklet. Sozzini made a more developed proposal for reform soon after Innocent XI became pope in September 1676, and later that same year we hear that Bernini himself had been asked to refurbish the Lateran palace for a hospice for the poor.[38] Proposals to use the Lateran palace for this purpose had already been made twice before in Bernini's time, in the reign of Alexander VII, and again early in that of Clement IX.[39] None of these projects was carried out but the coincidences can scarcely have been fortuitous and I cannot help thinking that Bernini himself might have been the common denominator.

Certainly, the Oratorians and particularly Sozzini and Marchese were the prime movers of the whole enterprise, and it has been suggested that Marchese may have proposed his uncle for the restoration of the palace.[40] I wonder, however, whether the underlying notion of universal charity — expressed nowhere more succinctly than in the *Sangue di Cristo* composition and in the bust of the Savior — might really have been Bernini's, stemming ultimately from his own interpretation and application of the Art of Dying. It is worth recalling in this connection that in his tract on the maladies of the church, composed in 1670, the year Marchese's treatise illustrated by Bernini's *Sangue di Cristo* was published, Sozzini argued that Rome had a special moral obligation to the poor: in the papal city luxury was more pernicious than elsewhere because it was purchased with the Blood of Christ (that is, the donations of the faithful) and the patrimony of

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[38] On the dating of Sozzini's project for Innocent XI see Bonadonna Russo 1979, 260, 265 n. 42, 273 f; Contardi in Contardi *et al.*, eds., 1988, 18.

The report of Innocent's charge to Bernini to refurbish the Lateran palace is dated November 21, 1676: 'Ha fatta Sua Santità chiamare il Cau.r Bernini, et impostoli di douere ristaurare il Palazzo Lateranense uolendo porui l'Arti, ò uero farlo habitatione de poueri' (Fraschetti 1900, 398 n, 1). A written discussion of the restoration project is preserved: *Calcolo e riflessione sopra al palazzo apostolico in S. Giovanni in Laterano per il premeditato hospedale* (Bibl. Vall., G. 62, fols. 325–33; *cf.* Bonadonna Russo 1979, 273 n. 58; Contardi in Contardi *et al.*, eds., 1988, 34 n. 22).

[39] In an interesting social critique of the city at that period, discussed by Krautheimer 1985, 126ff, 191 f.

[40] Innocent's close ties to the Oratorians were emphasized by Bonadonna Russo 1979, 258 f. The suggestion was made by Contardi in Contardi *et al.*, eds., 1988, 34 n. 24.

the poor (the goods of the Church).[41] The possibility of Bernini's conceptual contribution may be enhanced by another circumstance that can hardly be fortuitous. The two most famous and popular of all bust-length images of Christ were associated with the Lateran, whose original and primary dedication is to the Savior.[42] In the center of the apse of the church (Fig. 39) is a cloudborne bust of Christ that was reputed to have appeared in the sky, reciting the blessing *Pax vobis* to the people, on November 9, 324 A.D., the day the basilica was consecrated by Pope Sylvester I, at the behest of the emperor Constantine the Great, as the cathedral of Rome. The second image (Fig. 40) is housed next to the Lateran in the *Scala Santa*, a structure containing the relic of the steps from the palace of Pilate where Christ was judged. This portrait of Christ 'not made by hand' was the icon that on the feast of the Assumption was carried through the streets of Rome to S. Maria Maggiore, where it was met by the *Salus populi romani*. The two Lateran images were linked, so to speak, through the Venerable Company of the Most Sacred Image of the Most Holy Savior at the Sancta Sanctorum. This noble confraternity, one of the oldest in Rome, was charged with guarding the Sanctum Sanctorum icon, and also with administering the great hospital for the poor and infirm that had been attached to the church of the Lateran since the late middle ages. The emblem of that confraternity was a bust of Christ that recalls the apse image, but appears above a parapet-like, ornamented base, so as to suggest also the elaborately framed, full-length icon Figs. 41, 42).[43] The emblem was displayed on the confraternity's doc-

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[41] '. . . il lusso in Roma è piú pernicioso che nelle altre città . . . perché si fa col sangue di Cristo e col patrimonio de' poveri,' Döllinger 1882, 472; cited by Bonadonna Russo 1979, 261.

[42] The Lateran icon of the Savior has been discussed recently by Wolf 1990, 60–5; on its monumental mosaic counterpart in the apse of the Lateran, See Warland 1986, 31–41, 212; D'Onofrio 1990, 226–9. I am indebted at this point to William Tronzo, who reminded me of the Lateran icon in connection with Bernini's bust of the Savior.

[43] On the hospital, the confraternity and its emblem and the Lateran images see De Angelis 1958; Lumbroso and Martini 1963, 394 ff; Pavan 1978, 1984; D'Onofrio 1990, 212 ff; Freiberg 1995, 113–5. Freiberg 1988, 352 n. 168, aptly suggested that the two angels shown below and flanking the Savior image in Fig. 42 (in the form of the confraternity emblem) allude to the pair of angels that flank the ark of the covenant in Exodus 25:1–23; Bernini's angels might make the same point. Grisar 1908, 49, interpreted the Confraternity's emblem 'illusionistically' as reflecting the view of the icon protruding above the altar of the Sancta Sanctorum. The silver frame of the icon covers all but the face, whereas in the apse mosaic Christ is represented in the form of a bust. D'Onofrio is therefore undoubtedly correct in relating the emblem to the Lateran apparition; the Confraternity, linked both to the

uments and, in the form of reliefs, on the buildings that served the hospital; these reliefs clearly inspired the use of Bernini's image for the Hospice of Innocent XII. Indeed, they may even have inspired Bernini's image itself.[44]

The revival of interest in the great procession, or rather the icons involved in it, may have had another significance for Bernini, as well. At several points along the way the cortege stopped, the Christ icon was introduced to other images of the Virgin and — a particularly noteworthy part of the ritual from our point of view — the feet at the bottom of the image were anointed.[45] Although most of the figure was hidden by the reliquary cover, the image was conceived as a spiritual whole, whose full, mystical significance was conveyed by the very partiality of the material presence — very much the effect of Bernini's 'unamputated bust.'

I have little doubt, though I certainly cannot prove it, that Bernini chose to make a bust of the Savior in the first place in allusion to the Christ images at the Lateran, including that of the venerable confraternity of the Lateran hospital, because the project for the new hospice was in the offing, and even because he thought his own image might be used in precisely the way it was used twenty years later — as a model of charity. This hypothesis, in turn, may shed light on a problem inherent in the biographers' account of the origin of the bust as having been executed in the last year of the artist's life, although he had begun preparing for death some time before, and destined for Queen Christina of Sweden: mounted on its base the grandiose scale of the work seems better suited for a public monument than a private devotional image, even one intended for a queen. There is no

Sanctum Sanctorum and to the basilica, evidently fused the two images by adopting the bust form from the apparition, but providing it with an ornamented base that recalls the elaborate frame of the icon.

[44] Di Gioia in Contardi *et al.*, eds., 1988, 324, 326 f, has also associated Bernini's bust and the Lateran hospice images to the emblem of the confraternity. An interesting appreciation of the special, mystical qualities of the Lateran icon, and especially its visage, is found in Francisco de Hollanda's mid-sixtenteeth-century dialogues with Michelangelo: 'Ora giacché Dio Padre voile, che fosse cosi ben guarnita e dipinta l'arca delle sue leggi, con quanto piú studio e serietà vorrà, che sia imitata la Sua faccia divina e quella di Suo figlio Signor Nostro, e la purezza, la castità, la bellezza della gloriosa Vergine Maria, che fu solo dipinta da S. Luca Evangelista, come il volto del Salvatore, che è nel Santo Sanctorum a S. Giovanni in Laterano . . . l'Immagine con quella severa semplicità che ha l'antica pittura e quei divini e soprannaturali occhi, ispiranti tema, come conviene al Salvatore' (Bessone Aurelj 1953, 137 f).

[45] On this ritual, see Wolf 1990, 54 f.

evidence that Bernini ever planned a funerary monument for himself. His testament stipulates simply that he be interred in his family vault in S. Maria Maggiore — he grew up in a house across the street from the Cappella Paolina, where he had worked as a boy alongside his father, the leading sculptor in Rome of his generation.[46] It is tempting to suppose that Bernini thought of the bust in 1676, with a view to installing it in the proposed new hospice at the Lateran palace, to be refurbished according to his design. This was the context for which the conception recorded in the Corsini drawing and the subsequent copies was intended. Innocent XI's failure to follow through with the project may have been among the motivations that lay behind Bernini's devastating caricature of the crabbed and austere hypochondriac, whose popular nick-name was the 'No-Pope' (Fig. 43).[47] And the disappointment may have contributed to the change in attitude that resulted in the final version of the work.

[46] The relevant passage in Bernini's testament reads as follows: 'Il mio corpo voglio che sia seppellito nella sacrosanta basilica di S. Maria Maggiore, dove oltr'havere la sepoltura di casa mia, servirà a monsignor Pietro Filippo mio figlio canonico della mede.ma basilica per una quotidiana memoria di raccordarsi dell'anima mia. Li funerali rimetto ad arbitrio dell'infrascritti miei heredi alli quali raccordo, ch'a'poveri defunti sono piú necessarii li suffragi di messe et orationi che di apparenze dell'esequie' (Borsi *et al.*, eds., 1981, 60). He was buried in a lead casket, with an inscription giving his name and the date of his death. On Bernini's testament, burial and paternal house see Lavin 1972, 159, 162, 183; D'Onofrio 1967, 144; Borsi *et al.*, eds., 1981, 13–8, 35 f.

We might add, incidentally, that Bernini's self-portraits are also distinctly modest and unassuming compared to those of his illustrious contemporaries, Rubens, Rembrandt, Velasquez.

It is interesting to note that, although Bernini referred to all of his works as his 'children,' one in particular evidently had special significance for him — but personal and private, not as a tomb or other public memorial. His biographers mention that only one work by his own chisel was left in his house at his death, the figure of *Truth discovered by Time*, now in the Galleria Borghese, which in his testament he enjoined his heirs from ever alienating, intending that it serve as a permanent reminder to his descendants that 'the most beautiful virtue in the world consists in the truth, because in the end it is discovered by time' (Borsi *et al.*, eds., 1981, 71 f. See the discussion of this work in Lavin 1980, 70–4.

[47] Innocent XI was from early on one of the skeptics as to the bureaucratic feasibility and ethical propriety of such a project in Rome; he found especially repugnant the idea of reclusion of the poor, 'like prisoners in a jail.' In his view, it was reported, if one were to establish 'un ospizio chiuso allora, come accade in tutti gl'altri, sarebbe necessario che il povero prima di potervi entrare andasse con il memoriale tre o quattro giorni supplichevole alli deputati, e cosí finisse di morire di stento, oltre che sarebbe necessario che il povero restasse ivi come prigioniero in una carcere, nella guisa che si costuma in Amsterdam, cosa che gli pareva che diamentralmente si opponesse alla libertà che devono avere li poveri cattolici, massime

If Bernini did indeed conceive the bust for the Lateran hospice, it was not simply an act of private devotion, but was also intended from the beginning, like the *Sangue di Cristo* composition, as a public, indeed reproducible appeal for redemption. I can offer one more partial, but reassuring bit of comfort for the — admittedly hazardous — hypothesis that Bernini's ideas might have played a significant role in the formulation of this papal institution of universal public charity. Innocent XII issued a number of medals commemorating various aspects of the enterprise, including one in 1692–93 to celebrate the opening of the Lateran palace to the poor, which showed the building and the adjacent transept façade in the familiar diagonal view across the piazza (Fig. 44).[48] Another medal, issued the following year, illustrated the act of charity itself by an extraordinary variation on the familiar allegory of Christ's sacrifice, the pelican feeding its young its own blood by piercing its own breast (Fig. 45). Ordinarily, the bird and its offspring are shown in isolation, but here the pelican stands on a huge box that must allude to the papal coffer, while its young are shown below in a wide landscape. From the huge bird's breast a great cascade of blood gushes forth in such abundance as to feed the young and inundate the earth to provide sustenance for all its creatures. The accompanying legend, *Sinum suum aperuit egenis* puns ingeniously on the word sinus, which means both purse or coffer and breast or heart — the Church opens her purse and breast not only to her own but to all the poor. The idea clearly reflects Bernini's *Sangue di Cristo* composition and thus closes the circle surrounding Bernini's art of dying and two of the major religious and social enterprises of his last years at S. Maria Maggiore and the Lateran;[49] had the projects been carried out they would, together with his work at St. Peter's have given Bernini's stamp to the three greatest centers of popular devotion in Rome.

The possibility that a mere artist might have influenced the development of such grand ideas may seem less farfetched if one recalls that Bernini was a close friend of a whole series of popes and conversant with the most

pellegrini' (Bonadonna Russo 1979, 264, 271, 272; Contardi in Contardi *et al.*, eds, 1988, 19, 34f n. 24). On this point see p. 244 above.

On Bernini's caricature of Innocent XI and his particular problems with that pope, see Lavin 1990, 32–6.

[48] The medals of Innocent XII are listed and discussed by M. Mercali in Contardi *et al.*, eds.,1988, 45–58.

[49] The analogy between the medal and Bernini's composition was noted in Witman 1983, 155.

powerful people in Rome. He certainly thought big, in death as in every other way: he said he believed that when he came to settle his account with God he would be dealing with a lord who did not count half-pennies.[50] While not properly an intellectual, Bernini was a gifted and thoughtful intellect who wrote and produced brilliant satirical comedies, and could discuss spiritual and theological issues like a professional — that was the phrase used by another of his close friends, the great General of the Jesuit order, Giovanni Paolo Oliva.[51] Nor should the gestation of such grandiose social ideas be surprising in an artist whose great public squares, fountains and monuments, gave Rome the modern aspect by which it is still conspicuously defined. In a remarkable document defending his proposals for the Piazza S. Pietro Bernini specifically addressed the problem of the poor and homeless under the aspect of Charity; eulogizing Alexander VII, he emphasized the utility of public works, rather than outright dole, which encouraged idleness and vice.[52] Indeed, it seems appropriate in this context that he

[50] *Cf.* Lavin 1972, 160 f.

[51] *Cf.* Lavin 1972, 160 f.

[52] 'Applicò subito a i mali gl'opportuni remedii, e compassionando la povertà, che non solo priva d'impiego errava vagabondo per la Città, ma languiva oppressa da una carestia che quanto piú affligeva il Popolo, tanto maggiormente doveva far spiccare la sua pietà, si volse a distribuire grand.ma quantità d'oro, benché la scarsezza dell'erario fosse un'argine opposto al torrente di questa devota munificenza. Portato il nostro liberalissimo Prencipe dalla piena Carità ben providde, che l'aprire semplicemente a beneficio comune i Tesori era un fomentare otio, et un nudrire i vitii. Onde quell'istesso antidoto che s' applicava per la salute poteva essere un tossico piú potente per avvelenarla. Cosí dunque represse quella fiamma di Carità, non per estinguerla, ma acciò maggiormente à prò di suoi sudditi si dilatasse, quindi pensò dar principio ad una gran fabbrica, mediante la quale si'eccitasse l'impigeo nei vagabondi, e si sovvenisse con il giro di grossa somma di denaro alle correnti necessità.' (He quickly applied opportune remedies to the evils, and, compassionate with poverty — which not only wandered unemployed about the city, but languished under the oppression of a famine that increasingly elicited his pity the more it afflicted the people — he turned to distributing large quantities of gold, although the poor harvest limited the torrent of this devout munificence. Moved by whole hearted Charity, this most generous pope saw clearly that simply to open the Treasury for the common good was to promote idleness and nourish vice. Whence the very antidote one applied to restore health could be the most potent toxin to poison it. He therefore repressed that flame of Charity, not to extinguish it but so that it might be more greatly dispersed to the benefit of his subjects, whence he thought to begin a great construction, through which to encourage labor among the homeless, and by the expenditure of a large sum of money alleviate the immediate need.) Rome, Biblioteca Vaticana MS Chigi H II 22, fols. 105–9v, transcribed and dated 1659–60 by Brauer and Wittkower 1931, 70, n. 1; dated 1657–8 by Krautheimer 1985, 1–74. Further to this subject in Lavin 1997.

25. Apse mosaic. Rome, S. Clemente (photo: Alinari 7177a).

26. *Madonna di S. Sisto*. Rome, S. Maria del Rosario
(photo: ICCD E55673).

27. Jacopo Torriti, *Coronation ofthe Virgin*. Rome, S. Maria Maggiore
(photo: Anderson 17662).

28. *Relief of the Savior*, formerly
Dogana della Terra.
Rome, Museo di Roma
(photo: MNCSA 27099).

29. *Relief of the Savior*, formerly
Dogana della Terra.
Rome, Museo di Roma
(photo: MNCSA 27109).

30. Dogana della Terra
(Temple of Hadrian). Rome
(photo: Anderson 544).

31. Dogana della Terra
(Temple of Hadrian),
detail of entrance wall. Rome
(photo: Museo di Roma).

32. *Relief of the Savior.*
Rome, Palazzo di Montecitorio
(photo: MNCSA 27025).
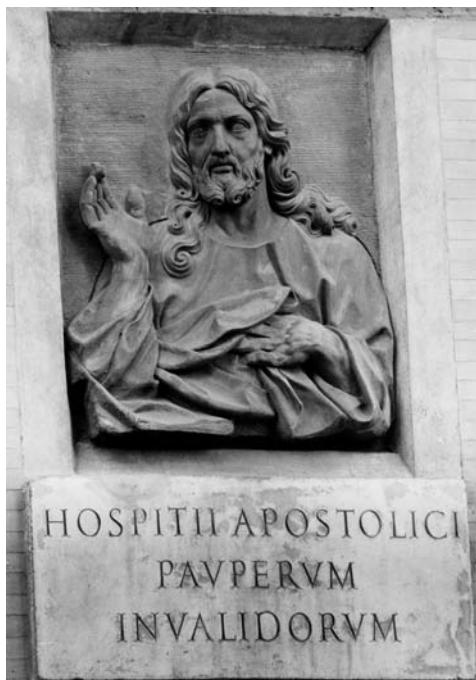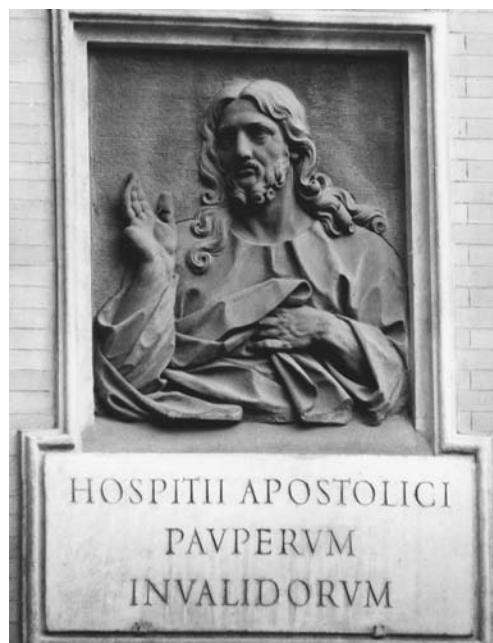
33. *Relief of the Savior.*
Rome, Palazzo di Montecitorio
(photo: MNCSA 27024).

34. *Relief of the Savior*,
formerly Dogana di Ripa.
Present wherabouts unknown.

35. *Relief of the Savior*,
formerly Palazzetto
del Vicegerente.
Museo Nazionale di
Castel S. Angelo, Rome
(photo: MNCSA26435).
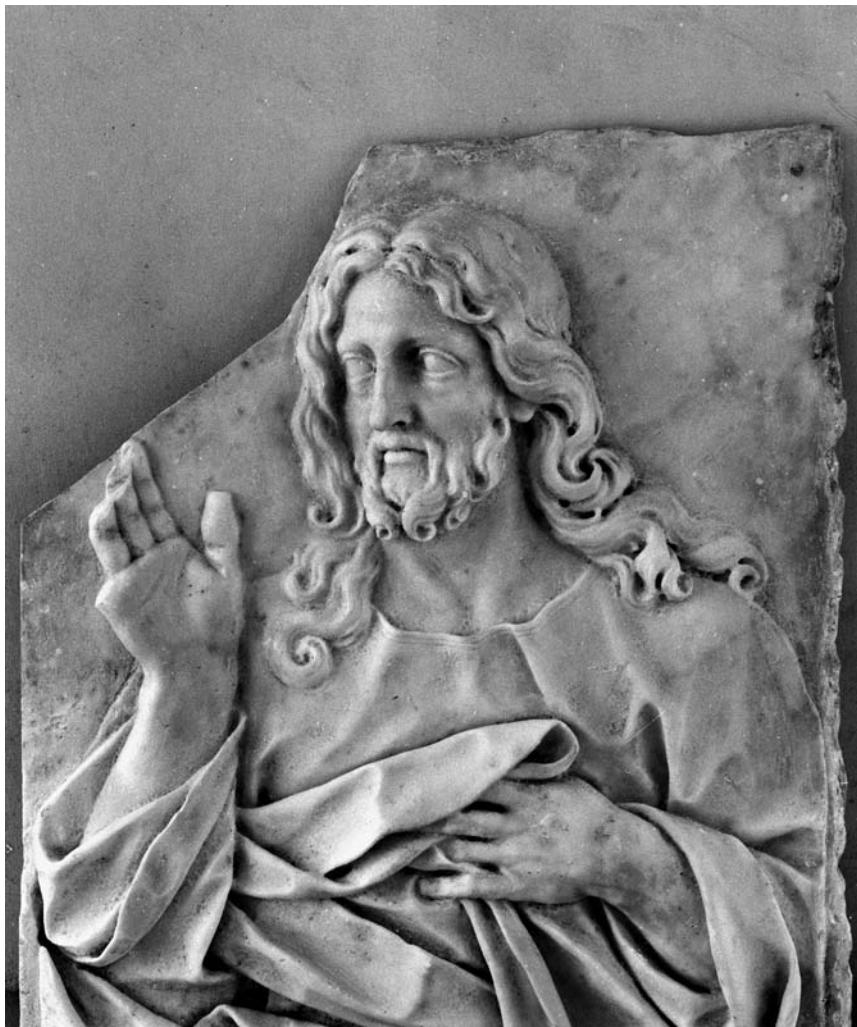
36. *Relief of the Savior*, formerly Monastero delle Filippine.
Complesso monumentale di S. Michele, Rome
(photo: MNCSA 27078).

37. Lateran Palace, Rome (photo: Anderson 97).

39. Apse mosaic. S. Giovanni in Laterano, Rome (photo: Alinari 7149).

38 The Lateran palace as hospice for the poor, engraved frontispiece by P. S. Bartoli
inscribed with Isaiah 58.7: *egenos vagosque induc in domum tuam*
(thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house) (after Piazza 1693).

40. Icon of the Savior. Chapel of the Sancta Sanctorum,
Scala Santa, Rome (photo: Anderson 2338).

41. Emblem of the Confraternity of the SS. Salvatore ad Sancta Sanctorum. Hospital
of S. Giovanni in Laterano, Rome
(photo: MNCSA).
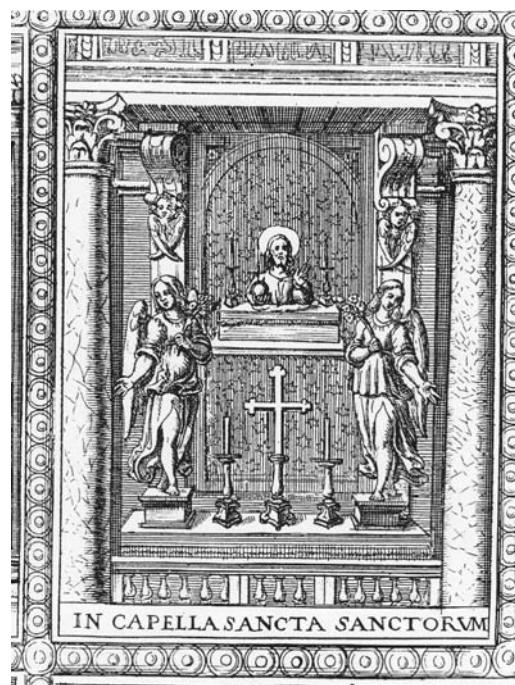
42. Emblem of the Confraternity of the SS. Salvatore ad Sancta Sanctorum, detail of an engraving by Giovanni Maggi and Matthieas Greuter, ca. 1610
(photo: Biblioteca Hertziana, Rome H D8550).

43. Gianlorenzo Bernini, caricature of Innocent XI. Museum der bildenden Kunst, Leipzig.

44. Medal of Innocent XII. Biblioteca Vaticana, Rome.

45. Medal of Innocent XII. Biblioteca Vaticana, Rome.
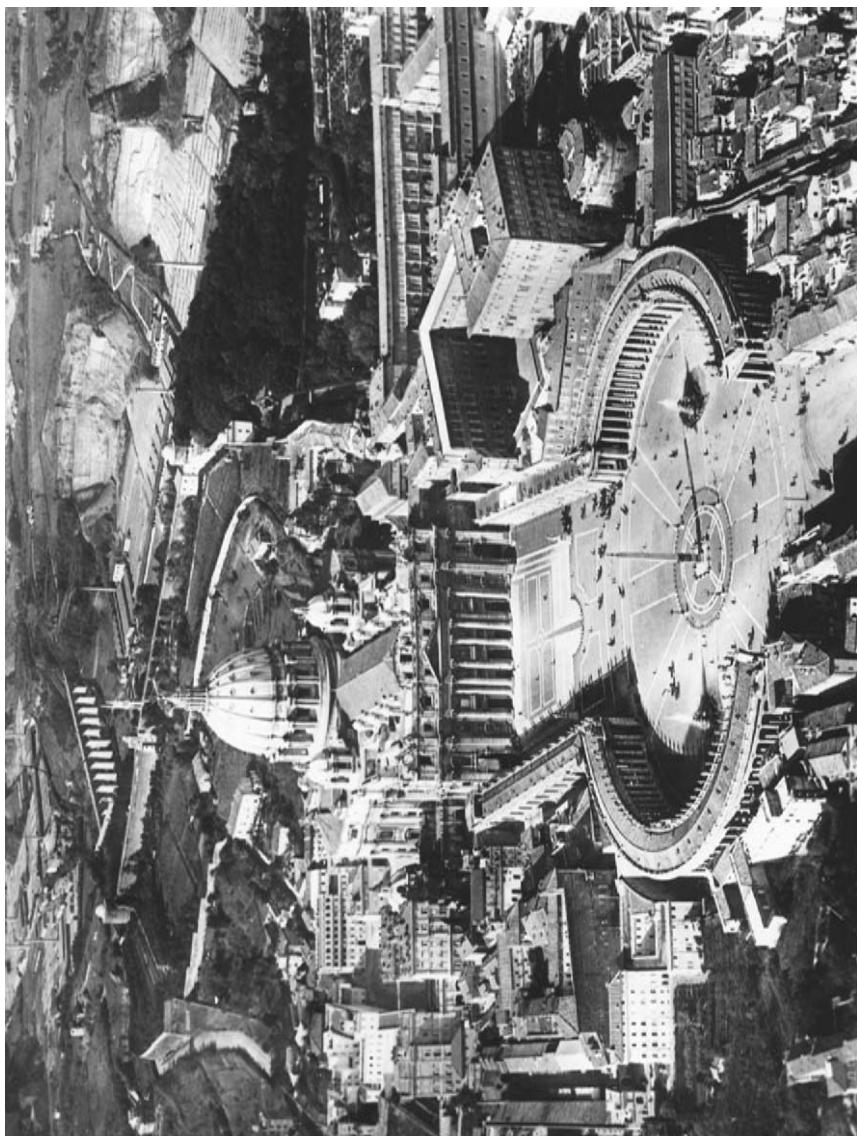
46. Gianlorenzo
Bernini.
Piazza S. Pietro,
Rome
(photo: Alinari
41228a).
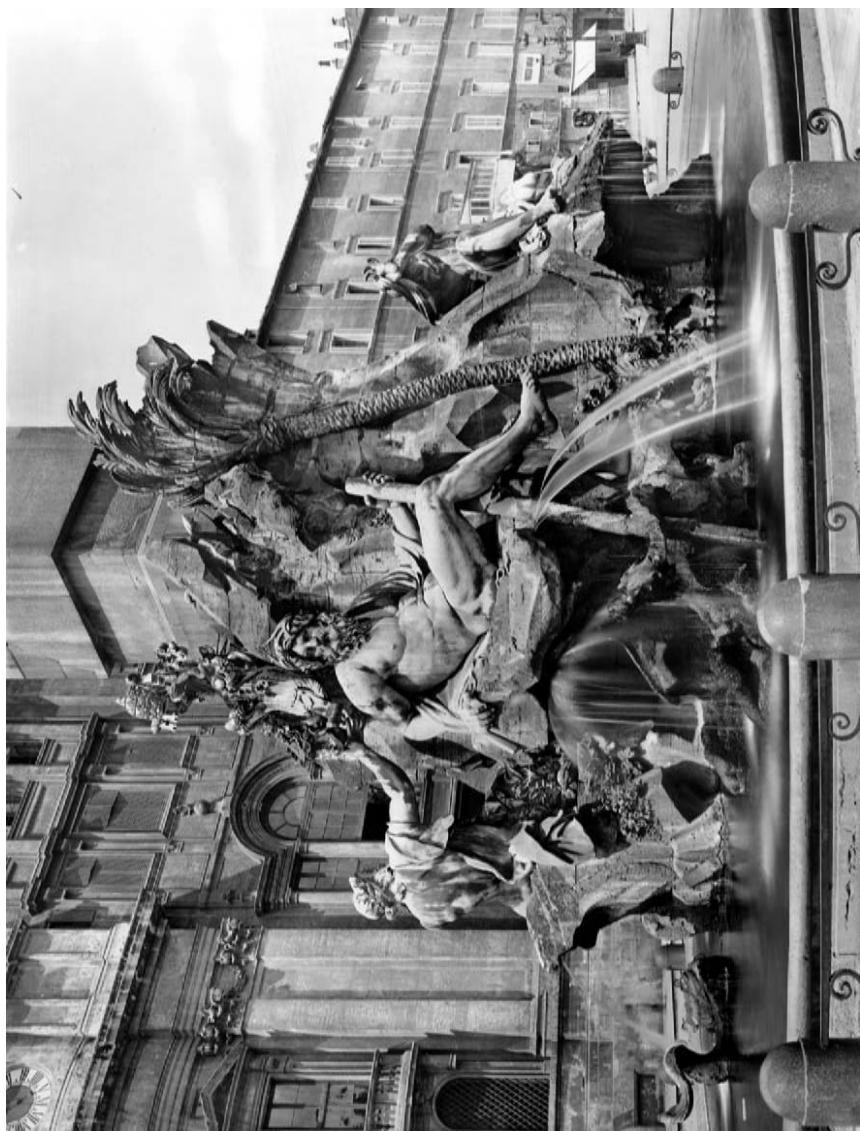
47. Gianlorenzo Bernini, fountain of the Four Rivers. Piazza Navona, Rome (photo: Alinari 6700).

conceived the colonnades that bounded the vast space in front of St. Peter's as a colossal pair of arms embracing all mankind (Fig. 46) — to express, as he said in the same document, the Church's 'act of maternally receiving in her open arms Catholics to be confirmed in faith, heretics to be reunited with the Church, and unbelievers to be enlightened by the true faith.'[53] Nor should such radical social ideas be surprising in an artist who, in the sphere of public art, introduced into the urban center rustic, natural forms previously thought fit only for gardens, theatrical landscapes and portrayals of the underworld (Fig. 47). Privately, while Bernini frequented the high and mighty, he was far from obsequious in their regard. He lampooned them mercilessly in his comedies; and he created the modern caricature, in which the sublime is deliberately reduced to the ridiculous — a stylistic and social revolution he inaugurated precisely by raising socially popular and stylistically impoverished graphic traditions like graffiti and children's drawings to the level of high class satire.[54]

*   *   *

For better or worse, Innocent XII's great social adventure was a dismal and almost immediate failure. The foundation was established in 1692 and only four years later, in 1696, recruitment was halted. The hospice itself continued for some time in ever diminishing conditions, to be replaced later in the century by an even more ambitious welfare institution in Rome; and of course the idea of a universal charity for the poor as a public responsibility continued to evolve in one form or another ever after. The original experiment ended with the abandonment of one key provision, which totally transformed the basic concept, namely the forced internment of the poor. Residence in the hospice was no longer obligatory, and the homeless returned to their homelessness. Contemporary sources make it both

[53] '. . . essendo la Chiesa di S. Pietro quasi matrice di tutte le altre doveva haver'un portico che per l'appunto dimostrasse di ricevere à braccia aperte maternamente i Cattolici per confermarli nella credenza, gl'Heretici per riunirli alla Chiesa, e gl'Infedeli per illuminarli alla vera fede.' Brauer and Wittkower 1931, 70, n. 1; see Kitao 1974, 14, and index s.v. 'arms of the church, image of.'

[54] It is worth recalling in this connection that Bernini was notorious for lampooning in his plays and caricatures people who ranked high in the social order, even the pope (Fig. 43), whereas the subjects of the 'ritrattini carichi' by his predecessors, the Carracci, were characteristically undistinguished. On Bernini's satirical plays and caricatures, see Lavin 1980, 146–57; 1990.

painfully and ironically clear that this sublime social edifice collapsed for three main reasons. From the benefactors' point of view it was too expensive. The income from all the sources of funding never even approached the costs. The concept of self-sufficiency proved unrealistic and the state could not cover the enormous deficit. On the other hand, the beneficiaries themselves were unhappy with their new found security; they did not wish to be confined, however comfortably, and came to regard the pope's palace as a gilded cage from which they longed to escape. Some admitted that they actually liked the vagabond life of a poor mendicant, for the very freedom from constraints, including financial ones, it afforded. One of the refuseniks is recorded as explaining, 'This way of living in freedom, a bit here, a bit there, we like it too much. And someone who tastes the joys of knavery cannot easily do without it.'[55]

Finally, and perhaps most prophetically, there were those who objected on principle. They defended the indigent by arguing that to incarcerate people merely because they are poor is unjust; it made poverty into a kind of crime, punishable by isolation from the rest of society. And this point had a corollary in another, even more radical notion some critics espoused, that to beg for a living is, after all, a God-given right. A man must be free to make his own way, even by mooching, if he wants to.

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[55] 'Questo modo di vivere in libertà, mo qua, mo là, a scrocco senza fare fatica, piace troppo a noi altri, e . . . chi gusta una volta della furfanteria, non può poi cosí facilmente ritirarsi' (testimony of 1595; Simoncelli 1973–4, 148).

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