

VISIBLE SPIRIT

THE ART OF  
GIANLORENZO BERNINI

VOL. II

IRVING LAVIN



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## XX

**'Impresa quasi impossibile'**  
**The Making of Bernini's Bust of Francesco I d'Este**

WITH some reluctance in the spring of 1651, Bernini agreed to sculpt the portrait of Francesco I d'Este, the ruler of a duchy of one of the oldest and most glorious, but now much reduced families of Italy (Fig. 1). The capital had in 1598 been moved to the small, provincial town of Modena, when the traditional seat of the duchy, Ferrara, devolved to the papacy at the death without heir of Francesco's uncle. Bernini's portrait formed part of a vast, concerted program of construction and art patronage at the highest possible level, which Francesco undertook in an effort to restore the prestige and importance of his house. The likeness, by the most illustrious and sought-after artist of the day, at the service of the pope himself, was to be based on painted portraits by Justus Sustermans, who served intermittently as court painter for the Duke. There was never a thought of Bernini going to Modena or of the Duke going to Rome, a circumstance that necessitated frequent exchanges of letters between the Duke, his agents in Rome, and the artist. The correspondence is preserved virtually complete in the ducal archive at Modena, so that the bust of Francesco takes its place alongside Bernini's other secular ruler portraits, the lost bust of Charles I of England, and the bust and equestrian portraits of Louis XIV, among the artist's best documented works. The documentation concerning the bust of Charles I has been extensively investigated, and the portraits of the French king have been the subject of monographic studies.<sup>1</sup> The rich vein of information about the bust of Francesco has also been mined by generations of scholars, but the records have been cited only in part and in scattered pub-

<sup>1</sup> See note 5 below.

lications. When, after completing an essay on Bernini's image of the ideal Christian Monarch (see Chapter XXIII), I learned that the young Modenese scholar Giorgia Mancini had been exploring the ducal correspondence systematically, I invited her to prepare as an Appendix a complete transcript of the documents pertinent to Bernini's portrait, along with a summary of their contents. Many of the documents are new, including the remarkable record of the process of packing and shipping the sculpture, in which Bernini took particular personal interest. This archival material, to which I added what could be gleaned from other contemporary sources, as well as early visual records of the sculpture, was included as an appendix to the aforementioned essay, in a separate volume published in Italian; the documents frequently cited in the footnotes here refer to that appendix.<sup>2</sup>

\* \* \*

‘Far che un marmo bianco pigli la somiglianza di una persona, che sia colore, spirito, e vita, ancorche sia lì presente, che si possa imitare in tutte le sue parti, e proportioni, è cosa difficiliss.ma. Creder poi di poter farlo somigliare con haver sol davanti una Pittura, senza vedere, ne haver mai visto il Naturale, è quasi impossibile, e chi a tale impresa si mette più temerario che valente si potrebbe chiamare.

Hanno potuto tanto però verso di me i comandamenti dell’Altezza del sig.r Card.l suo fratello, che mi hanno fatto scordar di queste verità; però se io non ho saputo far quello, che è quasi impossibile, spero V.ra Alt.za mi scuserà, e gradirà almeno quell’Amore, che forse l’Opera medesima le rappresenterà . . .’

Gianlorenzo Bernini to Francesco I d’Este, October 20, 1651.<sup>3</sup> (Fig. 2)

As a prelude to the discussion in the title essay of the formal and ideological significance of Bernini's ruler portraits, I want here to single out and consider from the wealth of documentary information now available concerning the bust of Francesco d’Este two points that seem to me especially important respecting the actual fabrication of the work, one procedural, the

<sup>2</sup> Lavin 1998. For the shipping records, see Docs. 35–7, 41, 44–5, 47–59, 61, 63–4.

<sup>3</sup> See Appendix, Doc. 43.

other sociological. Procedure in this case refers to the particular difficulty, repeatedly emphasized by Bernini himself, of creating a portrait without seeing the sitter. The task of making a sculptured bust of a living person (posthumous portraits for tombs and monuments were another matter<sup>4</sup>) from painted prototypes was in fact unprecedented. As far as I can discover, this was a new mode of creating portrait sculpture, which Bernini inaugurated with his bust of Charles I of England (1635–36), followed with that of Charles's wife Henrietta Maria (1638, never executed), both based on three views of the subjects painted by Van Dyck, and that of Cardinal Richelieu (1640–1), based on a triple portrait by Philippe de Champaigne, and culminated in 1650–51 with the bust of Francesco I.<sup>5</sup> The new procedure, however noteworthy in professional terms, was not an end in itself, but served a new purpose. It was equally remarkable that three powerful heads of state should enter into a veritable competition to have themselves portrayed, sight unseen, by an artist far away. The phenomenon constitutes an important development in European cultural history since it signaled the emergence of the artist as the modern, international 'culture hero' who surpassed all his predecessors in virtuosistic conception and technical bravura, equivalent in both form and substance to the emergence of the 'absolute monarch,' the modern international political hero whose personal image Bernini created in these very works.

To a degree, at least, this epochal conjunction of politics and art must have been evident to all concerned: to Bernini, since, as we shall see, he had a very clear vision of the ideal Christian monarch his portraits were intended to convey; to his biographers, Filippo Baldinucci and Domenico Bernini, the artist's son, considering the terms in which they introduced their accounts of these works: 'Divulgavasi in tanto sempre più la fama di questo artefice, ed il nome di lui ogni dì più chiaro ne diveniva: onde non fu gran fatto che i maggiori potentati d'Europa incominciassero a gareggiare, per così dire, fra di loro per chi sue opere aver potesse,'<sup>6</sup> 'Ma' volando sempre più grande per l'Italia la fama del Bernino, e divenendo ogni dì più

<sup>4</sup> For which see Montagu 1985, I, 171.

<sup>5</sup> For summary accounts of these works see Wittkower 1981, 207 f., 224, 246 f., 254 ff., and recently Avery 1997, 225–50. Documentary studies: on the busts of Charles I and Henrietta Maria see Lightbown 1981; on that of Richelieu, Laurain-Portemer 1981, 177–235; on the bust of Louis XIV, Wittkower 1951, Gould 1982, 35, 41–5, 80–7, and Tratz 1988, 466–78; on the equestrian, Wittkower 1961, supplemented by Berger 1985, 50–63.

<sup>6</sup> Baldinucci 1948, 88.

chiaro il suo nome per il Mondo, trasse ancora a se i Maggiori Potentati dell'Europa, quali parve, che insieme allora gareggiassero per chì sue Opere haver potesse';<sup>7</sup> and to the noble patrons themselves, considering the assiduity with which they cultivated the artist, the enormous sums they paid, and the ecstatic receptions that greeted the results. Of great importance is the fact that the portraits were not conceived independently, but in specific relation to and emulation of one another. They form a closely interconnected series, artistically as well as historically. Bernini's ruler images incorporate an art-and-historical paradox: they are highly personalized icons, created by a single individual, of the international development that created the European nation-state.<sup>8</sup> Perhaps the most eloquent testimony that has come down to us of the significance of Bernini's role in the international religio-political sphere is provided by an astonishing remark — beyond any suspicion of flattery — made by a member of the English court in a letter to Mazarin requesting him to use his good offices in Rome to expedite the project for the portrait of the Queen (there were no direct relations between the papacy and the English crown, although there was hope on both sides that Charles might ultimately be converted). The Lord Montaigu observes that Bernini had done more for the doctrine of images in his country than ever had done Cardinal Bellarmine (the great Jesuit apologist for the church); the veneration accorded Bernini was undisputed: 'Le cavalier Bernino a plus fait pour la doctrine des images en ce pays-cy que n'a jamais [fait] le card. Bellarmine. La vénération luy est accordé sans controverse. . . .'<sup>9</sup>

The nature of the artistic tour de force that produced these works was encapsulated in the elegant note, quoted near the beginning of this chapter, which Bernini wrote to Duke Francesco as he was preparing to ship the finished sculpture. Seemingly a casual flourish of self-indulgence and flattery, the letter is in fact a veritable three-sentence treatise — lament might be a better word — on portraiture in marble as Bernini conceived that art. The challenge for him lay in infusing the likeness of the subject with three essen-

<sup>7</sup> Bernini 1713, 64.

<sup>8</sup> It is perhaps significant of the sense of national identity inherent in these commissions that, as also reported by the biographers, Phillip IV of Spain acquired not a portrait of himself but a large bronze crucifix for the royal tomb chapel at the Escorial, for which Bernini received a large gold necklace (Bernini 1713, 64, Baldinucci 1948, 108; cf. Wittkower 1981, 228 f.).

<sup>9</sup> July 21, 1640; Laurain-Portemer 1981, 202, n. 105.



1. Bernini, Francesco I d'Este, Museo Estense, Modena.

Serma *Alcorno* 19  
 1651.  
 20. Ottobre  
 Bernini Cav. Gio. Lorenzo  
 Far che un Marmo bianco pigli la somiglianza  
 di una Persona, che sia colore, spirito, e vita,  
 ancorche sia li presente, che si possa imitare  
 in tutte le sue parti, e proporzioni, è cosa  
 difficilissima. Creder poi di poter farlo somi-  
 gliare con hauer ~~una~~ davanti una Citara, senza  
 uedere, ne hauer mai visto il Naturale, è quasi  
 impossibile, e chi a tale inguerra si mette, più  
 temerario che valente, si potrebbe chiamare.  
 Hanno postato tanto spero, uerso di me i Comanda-  
 menti dell'Altezza del sig. Card. suo fratello,  
 che mi hanno fatto scordar di queste Verità,  
 però deio non ho saputo far quello, che è quasi  
 impossibile, spero V. A. mi scuserà, e  
 gradirà almeno quell'amore, che forse l'Opera  
 medesima le rappresentarà. E qui venendo  
 m'inchino all'Altezza Vostra Serma di Roma li 20. Ottobre  
 D. Nra. Altezza Serma  
 Humilissimo seruo  
 Gio. Lorenzo Bernini

2. Bernini to Francesco I, October 20, 1651.  
 Archivio di Stato, Modena, A.mat., 9/1.



3. Leonardo da Vinci, three heads, drawing. Biblioteca Reale, Turin.



4. Lorenzo Lotto, triple portrait. Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna.

tial qualities, color, spirit and life, to each of which he attached particular meaning and importance. Difficult in any case, the challenge was virtually futile — quasi impossible — when the subject was before the sculptor only in the form of paintings. The full meaning of Bernini's conceit becomes evident when one considers the implications of his three critical points of reference.

The problem of creating a sculptured likeness from painted models had a profound resonance arising from the concern of artists since the Renaissance to provide theoretical foundations for their vocations and raise them from the level of the medieval crafts to what came to be thought of as the Fine Arts. Painting and sculpture, though hand-made, were to be regarded as equivalent to the traditionally exalted intellectual arts of music and literature, notably poetry.<sup>10</sup> One of the key agencies of this transformation was the great heritage of professional rivalry over the relative merits and difficulty — hence nobility — of painting versus sculpture, known as the *Paragone*, or comparison of the arts.

It can hardly be coincidental that the earliest testimony to this debate in the context of portraiture comes from Leonardo, the inventor of the *Paragone* as a formal disputation on the arts: a drawing by Leonardo showing the same head in what might be described as the three 'minimal' positions, profile, three-quarter, and full-front (Fig. 3).<sup>11</sup> The head is often identified as that of Leonardo's patron Cesare Borgia, but there is no evidence that a sculptured portrait of Borgia was intended and the omission of the torso speaks against such a purpose. Leonardo's drawing seems rather intended to demonstrate the possibility of representing simultaneously in two dimensions what the sculptor represents successively in three. In its most developed stage, however, the *Paragone* was not simply a matter of form, but also of color, that is, two-dimensional polychromy versus three-dimensional monochromy. This issue underlies the earliest known example of a painted triple portrait — a goldsmith, by Lorenzo Lotto, now with three views united in a single composition (Fig. 4). There is no evidence that the Lotto was intended for a sculptured portrait; indeed, the nature of the poses (the inclusion of the lost profile and the omission of a frontal

<sup>10</sup> The classic text on the subject remains that of Lee 1977.

<sup>11</sup> On Leonardo's *Paragone* and its antecedents, see the recent edition by Farago 1992; on the *Paragone* in the sixteenth century, Mendelsohn 1982; on painting vs. sculpture in particular, Pepe 1968. On the Turin drawing, Pedretti 1975, 10 f.



view),<sup>12</sup> the change of gesture, the inclusion of the attribute of a box of rings, all seem to exclude that possibility. It is much more likely that the carefully varied redundancy was intended precisely to defy the suggestion of subservience to an other medium, and serve instead as a sophisticated salvo in the Paragone on behalf of painting. Then thought to be a work by Titian, the picture entered the collection of Charles I, where it was accessible to Van Dyck and in turn became the model for his triple portrait of the king intended for Bernini's use (Fig. 5).<sup>13</sup> Van Dyck evidently understood the Lotto in the Paragone tradition, since he now melds Leonardo's three essential views into a single, composite portrait. The three views give the figure an effect of rotation, the change of gestures suggests motion and action, while the luscious coloring, different for each view, belies the picture's purpose as a model for marble sculpture. Van Dyck's reserved but splendid display of conceptual intelligence and pictorial bravura was not simply a model for, but the painted emulation of a sculptured bust; it was surely intended as a challenge to Bernini, which Bernini just as surely understood as such, and by which he was deeply affected.<sup>14</sup> Subsequently, when asked to provide images of Henrietta Maria to serve Bernini for a portrait of the queen, Van Dyck seems to have started with a multiple portrait like that of the king, but instead provided three separate views, one frontal and two profiles (Figs. 6–8).<sup>15</sup> The idea of creating a coherent, symmetrical, multifacial composition was abandoned in favor of self-sufficient images that could — unlike a sculpture — function independently and yet also be seen simultaneously. The change may have responded to the sculptor's own predilection, based on the traditional method of carving sculptures by first inscribing the

<sup>12</sup> The triple portrait as a type has been studied by Keisch 1976, whose argument (p. 207), I follow on this point. Recently, and quite independently, Humphrey has also reached the conclusion that Lotto's picture is not related to a sculptured portrait but a comment on the Paragone (Humphrey, 1997, 110 f., Brown, *et al.*, 1977, 175–7).

The significance of the differences in poses is evident from Bernini's own description of Van Dyck's picture, reported in Doc. 10: *tre maniere di postura in profilo in faccia et un'altra partecipante d'ambidua quelle*.

<sup>13</sup> Millar 1963, 96 f.

<sup>14</sup> This understanding of Van Dyck's portrait was suggested by Wheelock in Wheelock, *et al.*, 1990, 288 f.

<sup>15</sup> The original project for a triple portrait emerged from the infrared photocopy of the profile view in Memphis, which showed at the right a portion of the frontal view, as reported in Wheelock, *et al.*, 1990, 307–9. We know that three views were intended from a letter of November 27, 1637: *The Queen 's'è lasciata depingere in quelle tre maniere che si desiderano per fare la testa compagna di quella de Re'* (Lightbown 1981), 472 n. 57).



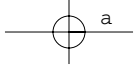
5. Anton van Dyck, triple portrait of Charles I. Windsor Castle.



6. Anton van Dyck,  
Queen Henrietta Maria.  
Brooks Memorial  
Art Museum,  
Memphis, TN .



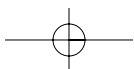
7. Anton van Dyck,  
Queen Henrietta Maria.  
Windsor Castle.



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8. Anton van Dyck, Queen Henrietta Maria. Windsor Castle.





9. Bernini, Cardinal Richelieu.  
Musée du Louvre, Paris.

10. Philippe de Champaigne,  
triple portrait of Richelieu.  
National Gallery of Art,  
London.



primary views separately on the faces of a rectangular block.<sup>16</sup> In Henrietta's case, also, the subtle shift from the full polychromy of the face to the pale white tonality of the torso, may relate to the Paragone theme.

It is likely that Bernini's work on the bust of Charles was in turn the direct inspiration for the third in the series of 'Paragone portraits,' that of Richelieu (Fig. 9). Van Dyck's painting was sent to Rome soon after March 17, 1635, and the finished bust was shipped from Rome in April 1637.<sup>17</sup> The Richelieu project may well have been conceived by Giulio Mazzarino (later Cardinal Mazarin), who until his departure for Paris, December 13, 1639, was in Rome while Bernini was working from Van Dyck's painting. Hence Philippe de Champaigne's triple portrait was explicitly linked to the same Paragone tradition, and also to Bernini's creation of the ideal ruler image — in this case the cardinal-minister (Fig. 10).<sup>18</sup> Champaigne, however, adopted the unprecedented alternative of flanking a three-quarter view by two profiles, thus specifically avoiding the sense of rotation in favor of the static symmetry of an iconic devotional image. The simultaneous appearance of opposing, flat views about an oblique center seems uncanny. The seminal role of Van Dyck was acknowledged by Mazarin's wish (never realized) to replace the Champaigne prototype, which was deemed unsatisfactory, with portraits by Van Dyck himself to serve in the creation of another, full-length sculptured image of the cardinal.<sup>19</sup> Where Bernini most acutely felt the challenge of these pictures was in the domain of color — the first of the three desiderata Bernini defined. The Paragone with Van Dyck's image evidently gave rise to Bernini's famous disclaimer that the whiteness of marble made it virtually impossible to achieve a convincing likeness in that medium. The earliest record of the dictum is the anecdote in the diary of Nicholas Stone, a British sculptor who visited Bernini's studio in Rome, for October 22, 1638: 'How can itt than possible be that a marble picture can resemble the nature when itt is all one coulour, where to the contrary a man has on coulour in his face, another in his haire, a third in his lips; and his eyes yett different from all the rest? Tharefore sayed (the Caulier

<sup>16</sup> On Bernini's drawings for portraits and caricatures, and the process of marble carving, see Lavin 1990, 24, 39 f., nn. 18, 19.

<sup>17</sup> For the dates see Lightbown 1981, 442, 445.

<sup>18</sup> The large literature on the Champaigne's and Bernini's Richelieu portraits may be reached though the important contributions of Gaborit 1977, and Laurain-Portemer 1985.

<sup>19</sup> Laurain-Portemer 1985, 87.

Bernine) I conclude that itt is the impossible thinge in the world to make a picture in stone naturally to resemble any person.'

The circumstances of the observation are relevant. Bernini is speaking of his portrait of a visitor from England, Thomas Baker, which he made after that of Charles 'because itt should goe into England, that thay might see the difference of doing a picture after the life or a painting.'<sup>20</sup> In the succeeding passage Stone reports Bernini's oath not to make such portraits, even if by the hand of Raphael (clearly a recognition of the beauty of Van Dyck's painting), given in response to a request by the pope himself that he make a portrait after a painting 'for some other prince'; this latter can only have been Richelieu.<sup>21</sup> Bernini repeated the white-face analogy more than once to Paul Fréart de Chantelou, who kept a detailed diary of Bernini's visit to Paris in the summer of 1665 to redesign the Louvre; and it was reported by Baldinucci and Domenico Bernini where it is used not as a defense, but to

<sup>20</sup> On this portrait, now in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, see Wittkower 1981, 208.

<sup>21</sup> '... after this he began to tell us here was an English gent: who wooed him a long time to make his effiges in marble, and after a great deale of intreaty and the promise of a large some of money he did gett of doing a picture after the life or a painting; so he began to imboast his physyognymy, and being finisht and ready to begin in marble, itt fell out that his patrone the Pope came to here of itt who sent Cardinall Barberine to forbid him; the gentleman was to come the next morning to sett, in the meane time he defaced the modell in diuers places, when the gentleman came he began to excuse himselfe that thaire had binn a mischaunce to the modell and y<sup>e</sup> he had no mind to goe forward with itt; so I (sayth he) I return'd him his earnest, and desired him to pardon me; then was the gent. uery much moued that he should haue such dealing, being he had come so often and had sett diuers times already; and for my part (sayth the Caelier) I could not belye itt being commanded to the contrary; for the Pope would haue no other picture sent into England from his hand but his Mai<sup>ty</sup>; then he askt the youg man if he understood Italian well. Then he began to tell y<sup>e</sup> the Pope sent for him since the doing of the former head, and would haue him doe another picture in marble after a painting for some other prince. I told the Pope (says he) that if thaire were best picture done by the hand of Raphyell yett he would nett undertake to doe itt, for (sayes he) I told his Hollinesse that itt was impossible that a picture in marble could haue the semblance of a liuing man; then he askt againe if he understood Italian well; he answered the Caelier, perfectly well.

then sayth he, 'I told his Holinesse that if he went into the next rome and whyted all his face ouer and his eyes, if possible were, and come forth againe nott being a whit leaner nor lesse beard, only the chaunging of his colour, no man would know you; for doe not wee see y<sup>e</sup> when a man is affrighted thare comes a pallness on the sudden? Presently wee say he likes nott the same man. How can itt than possible be that a marble picture can resemble the nature when itt is all one coulour, where to the contrary a man has on coulour in his face, another in his hair, a third in his lipps, and his eyes yett different from all the rest? Therefore

emphasize the greater difficulty of sculpture compared with painting.<sup>22</sup> Given Bernini's preoccupation with the problem of representing skin tones in marble, to which he alluded in his letter to Duke Francesco, the Paragone surely also played a role in his conception of the challenge he sought to meet in his portraits based on paintings.<sup>23</sup> The idea for a comparable portrait of Francesco d'Este may have arisen directly from that of Richelieu, since the

sayd (the Caelier Bernine) I conclude that itt is the impossible thinge in the world to make a picture in stone naturally to semble any person'. (Stone 1919, 170–1.)

The story is also told by Vertue: 'The Cavalier told this Author. that it was impossible to make a bust in Marble. truly like. & to demonstrate it he ordered a person to come in. and afterwards, haveing flower'd his face all over white. ask'd Stone if ever he had seen that face before. he answered no. by which he ment to demonstrate. that the colour of the face. hair. beard. eyes. lipp. &c. are the greatest part of likeness. (Vertue 1929–30, 19 f.)

<sup>22</sup> 'En parlant de la sculpture et de la difficulté qu'il y a de réussir, particulièrement dans les portraits de marbre et d'y metre la ressemblance, il m'a dit une chose remarquable et qu'il a depuis répétée à toute occasion: c'est que si quelqu'un se blanchissait les cheveux, la barbe, les sourcils et, si cela se pouvait, la prunelle des yeux, et les lèvres, et se présentait en cet état à ceux mêmes qui le voient tous les jours, qu'ils auraient peine à le reconnaître; et pour preuve de cela, il a ajouté: Quand une personne tombe en pâmoison, la seule pâleur qui se répand sur son visage fait qu'on ne le connoit presque plus, et qu'on dit souvent: *Non pareo piu desso*'; qu'ainsi il est très-difficile de faire ressembler un portrait de marbre, lequel est tout d'une couleur'. Chantelou 1885, 18 (June 6); cf. 1885, 94 (August 12); '... esser però nel far somigliare in scultura una certa maggior difficoltà, che non nella pittura, mostrando esperienza, che l'uomo, che s'imbianca il viso non somiglia a se stesso eppure la scultura in bianco marmo arriva a farlo somigliante' Baldinucci 1948, 146' '... la Pittura può... con la varietà, e vivacità de' colori più facilmente accostarsi alla effigie del rappresentato, e far bianco ciò che'è bianco, rosso ciò che'è rosso; Ma la Scultura priva del comodo de' colori, necessitata ad operar nel sasso, hà di mestiere per rendere somiglianti le figure di una impressione vivissima, mà schietta, senza l'appoggio di mendicati colori, e colla forza solo del Disegno ritrarre in bianco marmo un volto per altro vermiglio, e renderlo simile; Ciò che non riuscirebbe, conforme mostra l'esperienza, in un huomo, che inbiancandosi il viso, benche habbia le medesime fattezze, rimanesse simile a se, e pur bisogna, che lo Scultore ne procuri la somiglianza sul bianco marmo'. Bernini 1713, 29 f.

<sup>23</sup> Doc. 43. 'Il a dit autre chose plus extraordinaire encore: c'est que, quelquefois, dans un portrait de marbre, il faut, pour bien imiter le naturel, faire ce qui n'est pas dans le naturel. Il semble que ce soit un paradoxe, mais il s'en est expliqué ainsi: Pour représenter le livide que quelques-uns ont autour des yeux, il faut creuser dans le marbre l'endroit où est ce livide, pour représenter l'effet de cette couleur et suppléer par cet art, pour ainsi dire, au défaut de l'art de la sculpture, qui ne peut donner la couleur aux choses'. Chantelou 1885, 18 (June 6). It is interesting in this connection that Bernini perceived the aging of marble as an approximation to the color of flesh: 'le marbre, neuf ou dix ans après avoir été travaillé, acquiert je ne sais quelle douceur et devient enfin couleur de chair'. Chantelou 1885, 94 (August 12).



Modenese agent in Rome gave the Duke a wide-eyed report of the spectacular gift the artist received for his efforts;<sup>24</sup> and memory of the royal commission was still an important factor years later in the discussions concerning Francesco's portrait.<sup>25</sup>

While it is wholly characteristic that Bernini should be preoccupied by the representation of color in marble sculpture, the dilemma is inherent in the medium, and color is in fact only one of the qualities to which Bernini refers when in his letter to the Duke he calls the feat he accomplished in the bust 'quasi impossibile.'<sup>26</sup> The unique problem here lay not so much in the material as in extrapolating a likeness from only painted models, never having seen 'the natural,' as Bernini says. After the experience of Charles I he had sworn never again to hazard such a task.<sup>27</sup> In the case of Francesco d'Este the problem was compounded by the fact that Bernini actually had before him in working the portrait only two profile views; delivery of the frontal view he urgently requested was delayed, and in the end he had to make do with the side views and simple measurements of the Duke's height

<sup>24</sup> See the letter of February 22, 1642, in Freaschetti 1900, 112 n. 2: 'Per la Città si è saputo che il Cardinale di Richeliù ha donato un gioiello superbissimo al Cavalier Bernino, et che il Cardinal Mazarino l'ha regalato nobilissimamente per la statua che di sua mano ha fatto al primo: onde mille sono gli Encomij che si fanno sopra la Generosità di ambidue'. The gift was mentioned by Bernini 1713, 68: 'Gradì quel Principe [Richelieu] in modo tale il Ritratto che ne dimostrò il gradimento col dono di un Gioiello, che mandò al Cavaliere di trentatré Diamanti, fra' quali ve n'erano sette di quattordici grani l'uno di peso. Al Balsimelli fè dare per mancia otto cento scudi'. The jewel is evidently one with a portrait of Richelieu listed among Bernini's notable remunerations, valued at 8000 scudi (see n. 50 below); it is among the many listed in the inventory of Bernini's possessions: '. . . un gioiello con il ritratto di Re di Francia circondato da tredici diamanti grossi quanto un cecio, tondi lavorati a faccette e numero novantasei diamanti tra piccoli e mezzani'. Borsi *et al.* 1981, 113.

<sup>25</sup> Docs. 10, 20, 35.

<sup>26</sup> See our epigraph Doc. 43. Cardinal rinaldo had used the phrase 'quasi impossibile' in the same context, doubtless repeating what he had heard from Bernini's comments to Nicholas Stone in 1638, cited in n. 21 above.

<sup>27</sup> Bernini's oath was reported by Stone (n. 21 above) and is also mentioned in the correspondence concerning the bust of Francesco, Docs. 10, 38.

In the end, Bernini was reluctant to do portraits at all, and cited Michelangelo as precedent: 'Il a répété le difficulté qu'il y a à faire un portrait de marbre . . . Il a dit que Michel-Ange n'en avait jamais voulu faire. . . Il a dit ensuite à ces Messieurs la peine où il était toutes les fois qu'il était obligé de faire un portrait; qu'il y avait déjà du temps qu'il avait résolu dans son esprit de n'en plus faire, mais que le Roi lui ayant fait l'honneur de lui demander le sien, il n'avait pas pu refuser un si grand prince . . .' Chantelou 1885, 94 (August 12); *cf.* Chantelou 1885, 111 (August 21).

and shoulder width.<sup>28</sup> Of course, he was obviously proud of what he did accomplish, and his protestations of difficulty were certainly intended to augment the appreciation of the result. Yet the sense of inadequacy, even failure, evident in Bernini's complaint is certainly also genuine — indeed, pathetic, considering that portraiture was, after all, a specialty of his, to say the least. His aptitude for creating likenesses was the basis of his phenomenal reputation as a child prodigy, and contributed largely to the international renown he enjoyed throughout his career.<sup>29</sup> The source of Bernini's ruefulness about an artistic genre for which he himself was responsible lay rather in the other qualities mentioned in his letter to Francesco: 'spirit' and 'life.' And his frustration in these respects was a fatal by-product of the way he understood the art of portraiture.

Remarkable insights respecting this last point arise almost incidentally from the Duke's original indecision whether to commission the work from Bernini or his great rival, especially in the domain of portraiture, Alessandro Algardi. The documents recording the negotiations also provide an extraordinary opportunity to compare and contrast the *modi operandi* of these two giants of Italian Baroque sculpture. The Duke's brother, Cardinal Rinaldo, writing from Rome on July 16, 1650, reported: 'Il Cav.re Algardi scultore si fa pagare i ritratti di marmo intendendo di busto, ò mezza figura centocinquanta scudi l'uno, oltre il marmo, che segli dà, ò segli paga. ne daria uno compito per tutto il mese pross.o d'Agosto quando dovesse farlo, e potrà cavar, e formar il luto dalla Pittura, e lo perfezionarà in presenza di chi dovrà sodisfarli, per farlo poi più esattam.te in marmo. Hà due altre persone sotto di sé di condiz.e inferiore nel mestiere da' quali s'haverebbe l'opra per la metà del sud.o prezzo e forse meno.'<sup>30</sup> In modest, businesslike fashion, in a simple, straightforward reply, Algardi offered a fixed time schedule and a fixed price of 150 scudi. He even offered to have the work executed by his assistants, at half the cost or less. Not so Bernini, who refused to commit himself on either time or compensation, emphasizing the great difficulty in executing portraits under such circumstances.<sup>31</sup> To offer less than the best,

<sup>28</sup> The frontal view is mentioned in Docs. 10, 11, 12, 14, 16, 17, 20, 69, 73; the shoulder measurements in Docs. 20, 21.

<sup>29</sup> On the early portraiture of Bernini, see Lavin 1968.

<sup>30</sup> Doc. 5. On this episode, see also the discussion by Montagu 1985, I, 157–62.

<sup>31</sup> On time and compensation, see p. 779 and n. 47 below. On the difficulty, Docs. 10, 14, 20, 38, 42, 43. On 'difficoltà' as a norm of artistic achievement in the Renaissance, see Summers 1981, 177–85.

and treat the D'Este Duke as if he were bargain hunting would have been beneath both their dignities. Ironically, in his reply of July 22, the Duke suggested a 'gift' of 100 doubloons to Bernini (worth 200 scudi), while expressing his 'indifference' as to whether Bernini or Algardi made his portrait.<sup>32</sup> In the end, because he wished himself to be seen in a class with the leading monarchs of his time, Francesco was happy to pay Bernini 3000 scudi for what he might have obtained from Algardi for 150 scudi and the price of the marble! We shall consider the significance of Bernini's attitude presently. The important point here concerns the nature of the difficulty of executing a portrait from painted prototypes alone, which seems to have presented no extraordinary obstacle to Algardi,<sup>33</sup> but which Bernini found intimidating to the point of defeat.

The real reason for which he considered the task quasi impossible and for which he could never be fully satisfied with the result, lay elsewhere than in the matter of achieving likeness in the traditional and normal sense of that term. The problem arose inevitably from the fundamental principles of what might be called Bernini's 'psycho-philosophy' of portraiture, and his method of creating portraits, as these may be gathered from his letters, his various statements reported by his biographers, and especially from the detailed account that has come down to us of his work on the bust of a monarch, the last in the concatenated series of Bernini's secular ruler portraits to whom he did have ready and frequent access, Louis XIV (p. 923, Fig. 2).<sup>34</sup> Chantelou records that the king 'sat' for the artist on no less than seventeen occasions, five for drawing the subject and twelve for working the marble.<sup>35</sup> From this wealth of direct testimony concerning the artist's working methods — which is itself unprecedented in the history of art — it is clear, first of all, that the notion of likeness had for Bernini a very singular meaning.<sup>36</sup> Bernini did not conceive of the sitter as a 'sitter' at all. He insisted on 'sopping up' the character and personality of the subject by sketching him end-

<sup>32</sup> Doc. 6.

<sup>33</sup> On this point, see also Tratz 1988, 466.

<sup>34</sup> Bernini's earlier portraits of 'royal heroes' (for which concept, see Lavin 1998, 33–52) were specifically recalled in one of the poems on the bust of Louis (Chantelou 1885, 100, August 16).

<sup>35</sup> See Chantelou 1985, 38, n. 116.

<sup>36</sup> For what follows, Wittkower's splendid study (1951) remains an inspiration.

lessly in action — moving, working, playing tennis, conversing<sup>37</sup> — because one is never more like oneself than at those moments;<sup>38</sup> he preferred to represent the subject as he started or finished speaking (the exquisitely subtle psychological discrimination is paradoxical, since it focuses on the inher-

<sup>37</sup> See the descriptions cited in the next note. Bernini himself described the purpose of the sketches: Le Cavalier . . . a besoin à présent de voir le Roi pour le particulier du visage de Sa Majesté, n'ayant jusques ici travaillé qu'au général; durant quoi il n'a même presque pas regardé ses dessins, qu'aussi ne les avait-il faits que pour s'imprimer plus particulièrement l'image du Roi dans l'esprit et faire qu'elle y demeurât *insuppata et rinvenuta*, pour se servir de ses propres termes; qu'autrement, s'il avait travaillé d'après ses dessins, au lieu d'in original il ne ferait qu'une copie; que même, s'il lui fallait copier le buste lorsqu'il l'aura achevé, il ne lui serait pas possible de le faire tout semblable; que la noblesse de l'idée n'y serait plus à cause de la servitude de l'imitation . . . (Chantelou 1885, 75, July 30). The point Bernini makes here about not repeating himself even in deliberate copies of the same bust was based on no less than three instances in which replacements were required by imperfections in the marble: Scipione Borghese, Urban VIII, Innocent X (see Johnston *et al.* 1986, No. 14; Wittkower 1981, 221 f.). In each case, the second versions show subtle but significant changes. No doubt because of the time limitations, to provide for just such an eventuality, as Domenico Bernini reports, Bernini at the outset ordered two blocks to be prepared for the bust of Louis. The time factor is mentioned in a letter of June 5 by Matteo de' Rossi (Miroir 1904, 207) and on June 11 by Chantelou (1885, 30). On the two blocks of marble, see Chantelou 1885, 40 f., June 30, and Bernini 1713, 135.

Given Bernini's repeated emphasis on the limitations of marble portraiture, especially with respect to colour, it will be seen that more than flattery lay behind Bernini's remarks in the famous exchange between the artist and the King on one such occasion, reported by Chantelou: ' . . . il a dessiné d'après le Roi, sans que S. M. ait été assujettie de demeurer en une place. Le Cavalier prenait son temps au mieux qu'il pouvait; aussi disait-il de temps à autre, quand le Roi le regardait: '*Sto rubando*'. Une foi le Roi lui repartit, et en italien même: '*Si, ma è per restituire*'. Il répliqua lors à Sa Majesté: '*Però per restituire meno del rubato*'. (1885, 40, June 28.)

<sup>38</sup> Diceva egli che nel ritrarre alcuno al naturale consisteva il tutto in saper conoscere quella qualità, che ciascheduno ha di proprio, e che non ha la natura dato ad altri che a lui, ma che bisognava pigliare qualche particolarità non brutta, ma bella. A quest'effetto tenne un costume dal comune modo assai diverso, e fu: che nel ritrarre alcuno non voleva ch'egli stesse fermo, ma ch'e' si si movesse, e ch'e' parlasse, perché, in tal lmodo, diceva egli, ch'e' vedeva tutto il suo bellow e lo contrafaceva com'egli era: asserendo, che nello starsi al naturale immobilmente fermo, egli non è mai tanto simile a se stesso, quanto egli è nel moto, in cui quelle qualità consistono, che sono tutte sue e non d'altri e che danno la comigianza al ritratto; ma l'intero conoscer ciò (dico io) non è giuoco da fanciulli. (Baldinucci 1948, 144.) Tenne un costume il Cavaliere, ben dal commune modo assai diverso, nel ritrarre altrui ò nel Marmo, ò nel disegno: Non voleva che il figurato stasse fermo, mà ch'ei colla sua solita naturalezza si movesse, e parlasse, perche in tal modo, diceva, ch'ei vedeva tutto il suo bello, e'l contrafaceva, com'egli era, asserendo, che nello starsi al naturale immobilmente fermo, egli non è mai tanto simile a sè stesso, quanto è nel moto, in cui consistono tutte quelle qualità, che sono sue, e non di altri, e che danno la somigianza al Ritratto. (Bernini 1713, 133 f.)

ently unselfconscious phases of what is, after all, the rhetorical act *par excellence*, speaking).<sup>39</sup> Algardi felt able to satisfy his patron (and himself) by preparing the sculpture from the painted models, and finishing it in the presence and to the satisfaction of whoever was responsible for the work. Such a procedure could never have satisfied Bernini, since only from the living model could he could observe and reproduce, not only the subject's features but also, and especially, his characteristic expression and movement — in a word, his spirit and life. A corollary of this definition and mode of creating a likeness was the equally unorthodox way Bernini put the final touches on the bust of Louis. To the amazement of those who witnessed the process, he deliberately discarded the preparatory studies and models he had so laboriously produced, and completed the work not from memory but directly from the living model, in the presence of the king in person — otherwise, he said, he would be copying himself, not Louis XIV.<sup>40</sup>

The central point, however, central also in Bernini's list of the three

<sup>39</sup> Le Cavalier, continuant de travailler à la bouche, a dit que, pour réussir dans un portrait, il faut prendre un acte et tâcher à le bien représenter; que la plus beau temps qu'on puisse choisir pour la bouche est quand on vient de parler ou qu'on va prendre la parole; qu'il cherche à attraper ce moment. (Chantelou 1885, 133, September 4.) On the notion of the 'speaking likeness', see important paper by Harris 1992.

<sup>40</sup> See the passages in Chantelou cited in n. 34 above and n. 39 below. The procedure is described by the biographers: 'Per fare il ritratto della maestà del re di Francia, egli ne fece prima alquanti modelli; nel metter poi mano all'opera, alla presenza del re tutti se gli tolse d'attorno e a quel monarca che ammirando quel fatto, gli domandò la cagione del non volersi valere delle sue fatiche, rispose che i modelli gli erano serviti per introdurre nella fantasia le fattezze di chi egli dovea ritrarre, ma quando già le aveva concepite e dovea dar fuori il parto, non gli erano più necessari, anzi dannosi al suo fine, che era di darlo fuori non simile a' modelli, ma al vero'. (Baldinucci 1948, 144); 'In oltre fù suo costantissimo proposito in somiglianti materie, far prima molti disegni, e molti della figura, ch'egli dovea rappresentare, mà quando poi nel Marmo metteva mano all'opera, tutti se li toglieva d'attorno, come se a nulla gli servissero: E richiesto dal Rè, che prese meraviglia di questo fatto con domandargliene la cagione, del non volersi valere delle sue istesse fatiche, rispose, che i Modelli gli erano serviti per introdurre nella fantasia le fattezze di ch'egli dovea ritrarre, mà quando già le haveva concepite, e dovea dar fuori il parto, non gli erano più necessari, anzi dannosi al suo fine, che era di darlo fuori, non simile alli Modelli, mà al Vero'. (Bernini 1713, 134.)

See also the report of Bernini's enemy in Paris, Charles Perrault: Il travailla d'abord sur le marbre, et ne fit point de modèle de terre, comme les autres sculpteurs ont accoutumé de faire, il se contenta de dessiner en pastel deux ou trois profils du visage du Roi, non point, à ce qu'il disoit, pour les copier dans son buste, mais seulement pour rafraîchir son idée de temps en temps, ajoutant qu'il n'avoit garde de copier son pastel, parce qu'alors son buste n'auroit été qu'une copie, qui de sa nature est toujours moindre que son original. (Perrault 1909, 61 f.)

essential qualities he sought in his portraits, lay beyond even the creation of a 'living' likeness. The point is already evident in another, complementary peculiarity of Bernini's portrait-working procedure: at the very outset, even before working on the likeness, he sketched in clay the 'action' he intended to give the bust;<sup>41</sup> he began, that is, with a concept, which he continued to develop in the model, while studying the details of the king's features in life drawings. And this 'idea' of the subject is what preoccupied him when he put aside the drawings to work on the marble. Bernini himself defined the point in the explanation he gave of the relationship between his way of working on a portrait and the meaning he wanted it to convey. The statement occurs in a passage where Bernini explains to Colbert the rapid progress he was presently making in carving the bust of Louis XIV: 'until now he had worked entirely from his imagination, looking only rarely at his drawings; he had searched chiefly within, he said, tapping his forehead, where there existed the idea of His Majesty; had he done otherwise his work would have been a copy instead of an original. This method of his was extremely difficult, and the King, in ordering a portrait, could not have asked anything harder; he was striving to make it less bad than the others that he had done; in this kind of head one must bring out the qualities of a hero as well as make a good likeness.'<sup>42</sup> Here it is clear that the ultimate difficulty lay in Bernini's ultimate goal, to realize his own idea of the monarch — his 'spirit' — by capturing the King's heroic qualities while recording Louis's likeness, as Bernini understood that notion. For Bernini a portrait was a preternatural thing, a composite counterfeit of an idea and of vitality

<sup>41</sup> '... il a demandé de la terre afin de faire des ébauches de l'action qu'il pourrait donner au buste, en attendant qu'il travaillât à la ressemblance'. Chantelou 1885, 30, June 11. On the point see Wittkower 1951, 6. Giulio Mancini in the early seventeenth century made the fundamental distinction between the 'ritratto semplice', that of pure imitation, and the 'ritratto dell'azione et affetto' (Mancini 1956–7, I, 115 f.; see the perspicacious note by Bauer in Chantelou 1985, 85 f., n. 154).

<sup>42</sup> M. Colbert Lui a témoigné être étonné combien l'ouvrage étoit avancé, et qu'il le trouvait si ressemblant qu'il ne jugerait pas qu'il fût besoin qu'il travaillât à Saint-Germain. Le Cavalier a reparti qu'il y avait toujours à faire à qui voulait faire bien; que jusqu'ici il avait presque toujours travaillé d'imagination, et qu'il n'avait regardé que rarement les dessins qu'il a; qu'il ne regardait principalement que là dedans, montrant son front, où il a dit qu'étoit.) l'idée de Sa Majesté; que autrement il n'aurait fait qu'une copie au lieu d'un original, mais que cela lui donnait une peine extrême et que le roi, lui demandant son portrait, ne pouvait pas lui commander rien de plus pénible: qu'il tâcherait que ce fût le moins mauvais de tous ceux qu'il aura faits; que, dans ces sortes de portraits, il faut, outre la ressemblance, y mettre ce qui doit être dans des têtes de héros'. (Chantelou 1885, 72 g., July 29.)

itself. For this reason, above all, to carve a marble portrait of a living subject without seeing him in action was for Bernini not only difficult, but 'quasi impossible'; and, after the bust of Francesco, he kept his vow never to do so again.

The second, 'sociological' point I want to consider concerns Bernini's attitude toward the D'Este commission. It is very clear that Bernini was not anxious to undertake the portrait, and there may have been other reasons than the difficulty of the task. Francesco I was, after all, not as important as Charles I or Richelieu. There may also have been a political factor. Francesco I was closely tied to France, most conspicuously in his capacity as commander of the French troops in Italy. Bernini had been intimately associated with Urban VIII Barberini, who had also been a partisan of France. When Urban VIII was succeeded by Innocent X Pamphili, the arch-enemy of both the Barberini and the French, Bernini fell from favor and had only recently redeemed himself with his invention for the Innocent's pet project for the fountain in the Piazza Navona, where the pope was building his new family palace. Perhaps Bernini felt it unwise to work too closely with the French faction. Even so, Bernini's dealings with his noble patron must have seemed even more remarkable then than they do today. He was so occupied with other projects, notably the Piazza Navona fountain that he had no time;<sup>43</sup> he was so busy that it was difficult to reach him;<sup>44</sup> he worked only for friends and important patrons; he had to be frequently coaxed and reminded, and sufficiently remunerated; he would never discuss time or money,<sup>45</sup> and specific terms only emerged indirectly, in relation to payments and honoraria he had received from other grand patrons: 3000 scudi from Innocent X for the Piazza Navona fountain,<sup>46</sup> a diamond ring worth 6000 scudi from Charles I for his bust of the king.<sup>47</sup>

All this reflects the attitude, and acumen, of the most successful and sought after image-maker of the day. But the attitude involved much more than finances. The social status of the artist was involved. In so many words,

<sup>43</sup> Docs. 9, 25.

<sup>44</sup> Doc. 23.

<sup>45</sup> Doc. 4.

<sup>46</sup> Doc. 32, 40, 41, 68, 69.

<sup>47</sup> Doc. 20 and n. 50 below. Other sources put the value at 4000 scudi (Lightbown 1981, 447 ff., who also compares the costs of other works by Bernini, e.g., 1000 scudi for the portrait of Scipione Borghese).

Bernini was said to 'act independent' (*opera da sé*)<sup>48</sup> — and I suspect this was precisely the point. Bernini's attitude must indeed have seemed arrogant, especially for an artist; but for this very reason it signified that he belonged, and clearly thought of himself as belonging, in a long tradition reaching back to antiquity and including in his own time the likes of Velasquez and Rubens, of artists who sought to rise above the condition of servile artisan to the level of an aristocracy of the spirit, a meritocracy of the intellect and creativity. Nobility was not paid wages, and the proper, indeed only, form of recognition among the aristocracy was the gift. It is symptomatic in this context that throughout the correspondence the consideration for Bernini is exclusively referred to as a 'gift' (*regalo*), never as a payment or a fee.<sup>49</sup> The distinction is clear from the fact that for all three princely busts (Charles I, Richelieu, Francesco I) Bernini received, or was offered in the case of Francesco, gifts, whereas the messengers who delivered the sculptures were given 'tips'.<sup>50</sup> The phraseology was significant when Francesco's agent in Rome reported that Mazarin had 'regalato nobilissimamente'.<sup>51</sup> Francesco resorted to a delicate subterfuge in deference to this principle of social dis-

<sup>48</sup> 'questo opera da sé, et vi vuole destrezza nel sollecitarlo' (Doc. 23).

<sup>49</sup> See the documents cited in n. 46 above; also Doc. 37. On the significance of the gift as remuneration, see the section on 'Old and New Ways of Evaluating Works of Art' in Wittkower, R. and M., 1963, 22–25, and recently Warwick 1997, 632 f. The Wittkowers tended to see the gift in relation to the earlier, craft tradition of barter and payment in kind, rather than in the tradition of noble courtesy. The main difference is that in the former case the goods were generally of a practical nature, whereas in the latter they were conspicuously luxury items. On the 'Nobility of the artist's profession' and related factors, see the Wittkowers's chapter 'Between Famine and Fame', 253–80. In one instance Bernini himself uses the phrase 'mi fa pagare' (Doc. 76).

<sup>50</sup> The gifts for the portraits are mentioned in a list of some of Bernini's notable remunerations, among the Bernini papers in the Bibliothèque National in Paris:

Aclune remunerazioni haute dal cav.re Bernino

Per il ritratto del Rè Carlo 2.o d'Inghilterra un'diamante che portava in ditto, di valore di sei mila scudi

Per il ritratto del Card.le Richelièu una gioia di quattro mila scudi

Per il ritratto del Duca Fran.co di Modena tre mila scudi in tanti Argenti B.N. ms ital 2084, fol. 126 r.

Domenico Bernini mentions the generous 'mancia' given to the assistants who accompanied to their destinations the busts of Charles I, '... si cavò dal dito un Diamante di sei mila scudi di valore, e consegnatelo a Bonifazio disse, ...; in oltre mandò al Cavaliere copiosi regali di preziosissimi panni, & a Bonifazio fè donare per mancia mille scudi' (Bernini 1713, 65 f.), and Richelieu (see n. 24 above).

<sup>51</sup> See n. 24 above.



tion, instructing his emissary to tell Bernini that the Duke had sent 3000 scudi in order to purchase a suitable gift, but that the artist might take the money, if he preferred.<sup>52</sup> Bernini opted for the cash, because he was 'already sufficiently provided with jewels and silver'.<sup>53</sup> People, including Bernini, were saying that the size of the consideration, being equal to the generosity of Innocent X for the Piazza Navona fountain, risked putting even the pope to shame.<sup>54</sup> Bernini described the value of the gift as the mark of the 'more than regal' generosity of the House of Este.<sup>55</sup> It is important to understand that the idea and value of a 'princely' reward worked both ways: the report that he had outclassed the pope was certainly intended to flatter Francesco, who had himself remarked that by making Bernini happy he would affirm his own status as a patron: 'col far restar contento il Bernino penso di conservarmi il credito di stimar la virtù et i virtuosi'.<sup>56</sup> The credit Francesco earned by this grand gesture of magnanimity contributed to the 'reputation' that contemporary political theory required of the virtuous-ruler.<sup>57</sup> For Bernini, indeed, the idea of a meritocracy also worked both ways, as when years later he told Louis XIV he admired the king more for his virtù than for his noble birth (see Lavin, 1998, 47).

From a formal point of view the series inaugurates a new phase in the history of European art. Two portraits of Charles I, very different from one another, have good claim to reflect Bernini's bust, which was lost in the famous fire of Whitehall in 1698. Most frequently cited are a bust shown in an engraving attributed to Robert Van Voerst and, with a different pedestal, a sculpture attributed to Thomas Adey (Figs. 12, 13). A strong argument against this work being a true copy after Bernini's sculpture is that everything about the image, including the pedestal shown in the engraving, coincides with the conventional bust-type of Charles I developed by François Dieussart before Bernini's sculpture arrived in England<sup>58</sup> — every-

<sup>52</sup> The Duke conceived the plot when he discovered that the German silver credenza he had thought to acquire was exorbitant and not worth the price: Doc. 30. The 3000 scudi for Bernini are mentioned in Docs. 66, 77, 79. Cf. also Docs. 86, 87, 88.

<sup>53</sup> Doc. 69. On Bernini's collection of jewels see n. 24 above.

<sup>54</sup> Doc. 68.

<sup>55</sup> Doc. 76.

<sup>56</sup> Doc. 18; see also Doc. 85.

<sup>57</sup> On reputation see Lavin 1998, 35, 37.

<sup>58</sup> The engraving and the Windsor bust were first related to Bernini's lost portrait, respectively by Cust 1908–9, and Esdaile 1938, 1949. The counterargument, based on the earlier busts by Dieussart, was made by Vickers 1978.



11. Attributed to Robert van Voerst, Charles I, engraving.  
British Museum, London.



12. Thomas Adey (?), Charles I. Windsor Castle.

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13. Louis-François Roubiliac (?), Charles I,  
Courtauld Institute Galleries, London.

thing, that is, except for one feature, the sideward and upward thrust of the head — the theme of the divinely inspired monarch which thereafter became one of the signal features of Bernini's ruler portraits. On the other hand, there are strong reasons to find a reflection of Bernini's bust in a terracotta portrait of Charles attributed to Roubiliac, notably the fact that, unlike other busts of the King, this one includes both the order of St. George as a pendant at the breast and the Star emblazoned on the cloak over the heart — as in Van Dyck's portrait (Fig. 13);<sup>59</sup> and the fact that the lower torso is enveloped by the drapery in such a way as to 'dissimulate' the amputated edges — an idiosyncratic illusionistic device that Bernini also developed into a buoyant vehicle of apotheosis.

In any case, it seems clear that Bernini departed from Van Dyck's model in three essential ways, by showing the king in armor, by changing the disposition of the head, and by treating the drapery as a metaphorical adjunct of the bust form. If we imagine the figure of the king heroicized by the military costume, the head's psychological expression of lofty inspiration, and the uncanny, 'floating' effect of the torso, we shall have some sense of what must indeed have seemed a revolutionary and ideal way of portraying a Christian head of state. Even the bust of Cardinal Richelieu, as quasi-head of state, has an exalted, regal bearing that does not appear in Philippe de Champaigne's portrait, and has no counterpart in Bernini's busts of other ecclesiastics, including the popes.<sup>60</sup>

All these considerations lay behind the portrait of Francesco I, so that, *mirabile dictu*, the very factors that made the bust an 'impresa quasi impossibile' also made it the herald of a new epoch in the history of European culture.

<sup>59</sup> See Vickers 1978.

<sup>60</sup> On the ancient precedents for this theme see L'Orange 1982; in relation to Bernini, Lavin 1993, pp. 161 ff., and Lavin, 1998, 41f. In Bernini's work the type had its nearest analogy in images of religious inspiration expressed in such portrayals as those of Roberto Bellarmino, suor Maria Raggi, and Gabrielle Fonseca. It is important to note, however, that with the exception of Richelieu, Bernini never used this type for his portraits of living ecclesiastics, including popes (for whom humility was the key), but returned to it at the end of his life for his 'portrait' of the Salvator Mundi (for which, in relation to the tradition of portrait-bust apotheosis, see Lavin 1972, 177–84).

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