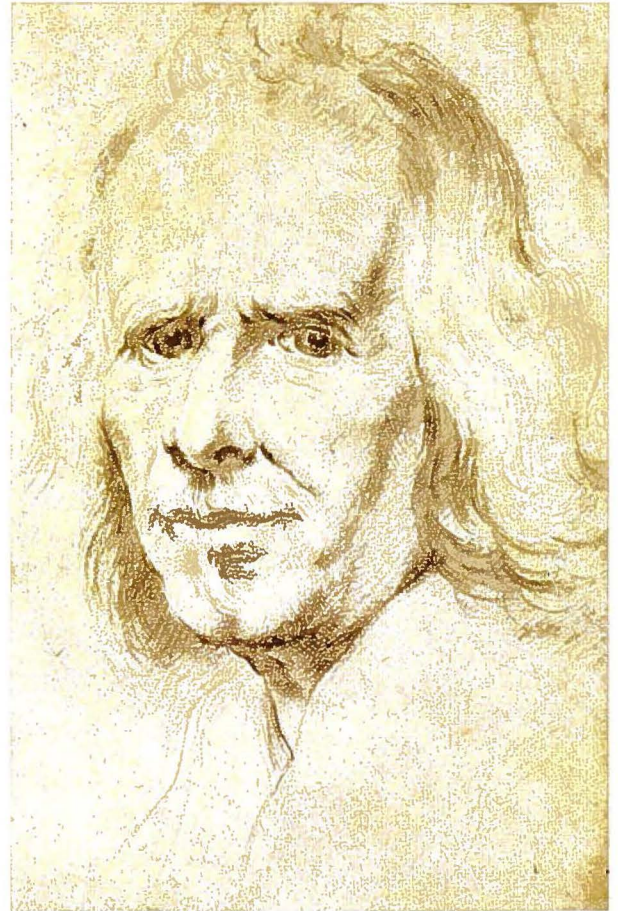
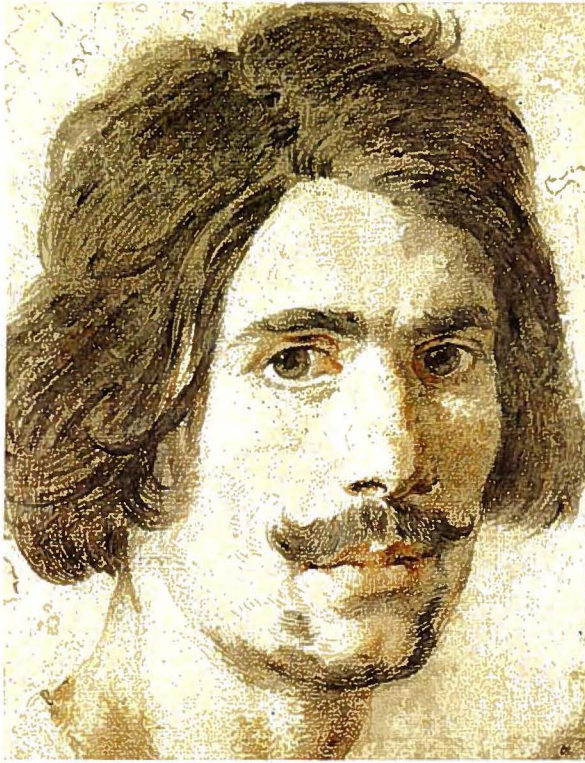


FOOTSTEPS ON THE WAY TO REDEMPTION THE PEDESTALS OF BERNINI'S BALDACCHINO IN ST. PETER'S

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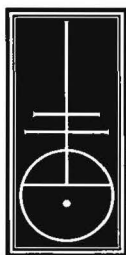
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VISIBLE SPIRIT
THE ART OF GIANLORENZO BERNINI
VOL. III

BERNINI AT SAINT PETER'S
THE PILGRIMAGE

IRVING LAVIN



The Pindar Press
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EXCURSUS C. THE PEDESTALS OF THE BALDACCHINO: FOOTSTEPS ON THE WAY TO REDEMPTION^{45a}

God, we say, is in the details. My project in this essay is to discuss in some detail some details of the Baldacchino, that is, the pedestals and the things represented on them. Some of these details are eminently conspicuous and have been subject to the most extravagant explanations, others are barely visible and are rarely, if ever noticed by the public. Taken together, I believe, these details give us to understand that the pedestals are indeed the foundation stones on which that miraculous work of art rests, not just structurally but also spiritually. With its pedestals the Baldacchino recounts in intensely human terms an epic theological drama, a brazen metaphor of the Divine Comedy.

THE CREATIVITY OF THE BALDACCHINO

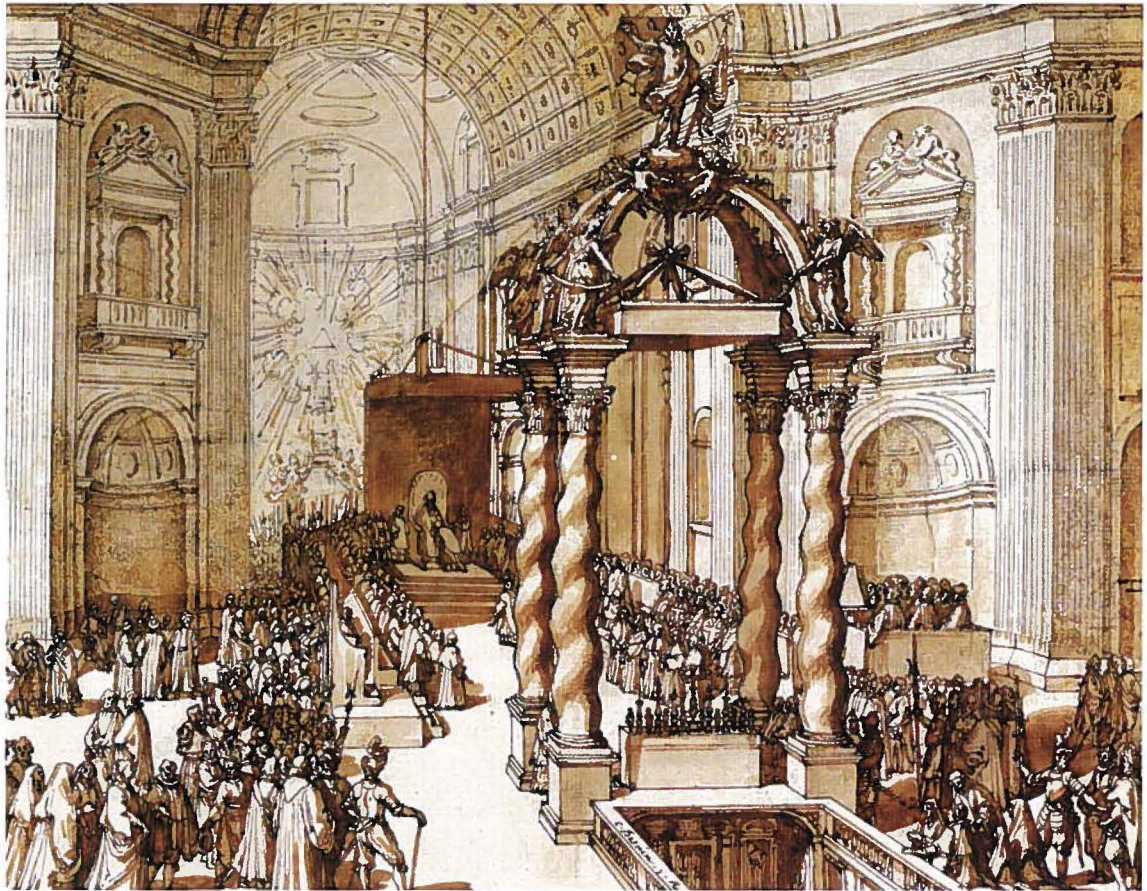
The Trinity: Bees Between Heaven and Earth

In essence the Baldacchino constitutes a fusion of the three traditional types of honorific markers that served to confer the distinction of holiness on the ciborium supported on columns, the suspended canopy, and the processional baldachin carried on staves. The idea of merging these quite distinct species into what one contemporary described as a “chimaera” was more than an ingenious solution that synthesized and epitomized the hallowed traditions and unique challenges that confronted Bernini in the unprecedented task of “furnishing” the high altar of St. Peter’s. The typological merger was also a creative act in which the three species were subsumed under a new unity, a metaphor for the divine creativity of the Holy Trinity itself, which had created the church for the express purpose of achieving the salvation of humanity.⁴⁶ This ecclesiologically generative nature of the Trinity is explicit in a drawing showing the early project for the Baldacchino, in which the sun passing through the apse window containing the triangular sign of the Trinity illuminates the choir (Fig. 31, cf. Fig. 21).⁴⁷ With God the Father portrayed in the act of creation in the apex of the lantern of the cupola, and

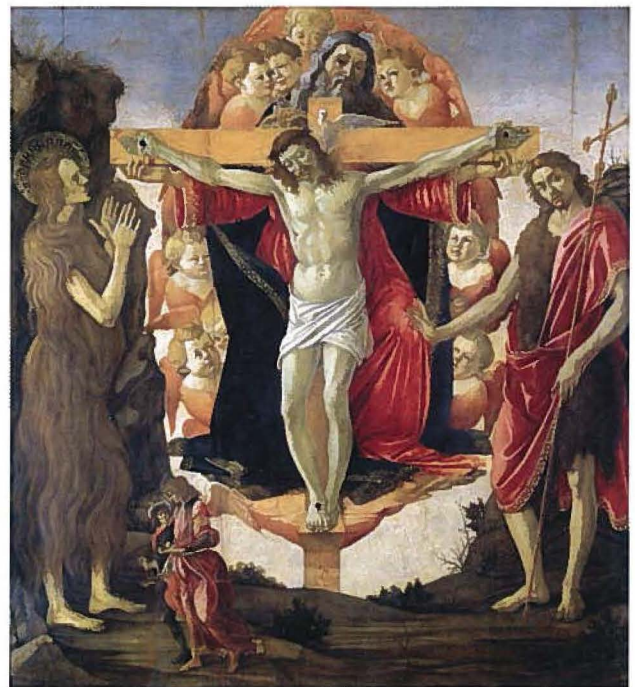
^{45a} First presented as Lavin 2009.

⁴⁶ See the comprehensive account of the theme in scholastic theology by Emery 1995.

⁴⁷ The problematic drawing, in the Morgan library, is a pastiche consisting of two sheets, one showing the choir with Bernini’s early project for the upper niches in the piers and in the apse the Cathedra Petri with the Trinitarian window, on which a second sheet has been pasted showing a papal ceremony with the early project for the Baldacchino. The apse project is evidently an alternative to that shown in a drawing at Windsor, where



31. Papal ceremony in the crossing of St. Peter's with Bernini's early projects for the choir and Baldacchino, drawing (pastiche of two sheets), detail. Pierpont Morgan Library, New York.



32. Botticelli, *Trinity with Saints*. Courtauld Institute, London.



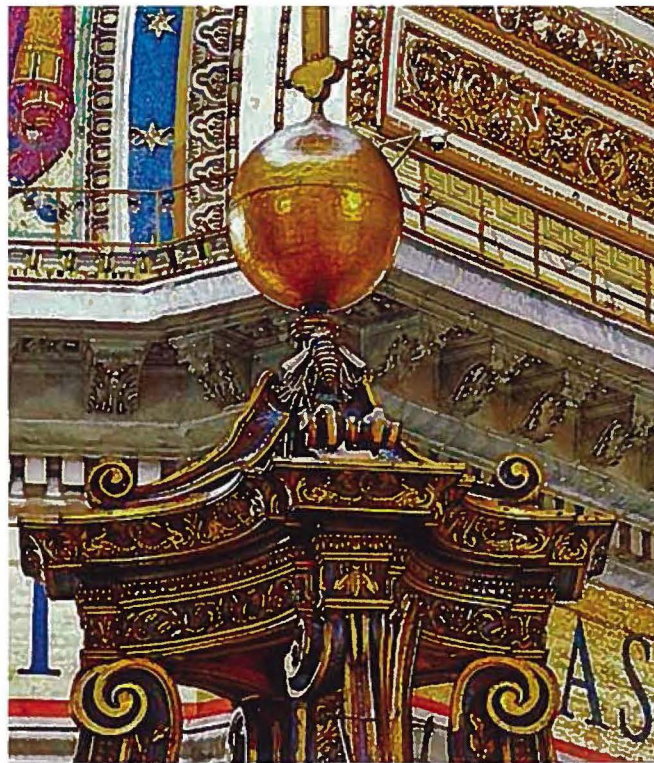
33. After Fabio Cristofani, *Ballot for the Election of Urban VIII*, tapestry. Musei Vaticani, Rome.

the glorious dove of the Holy Spirit alighting, wings wide-spread, through the underside of the canopy to illumine the crucifixion at the altar below, the Baldacchino came actually to incorporate this mystery of the Trinity, in a form that echoes the traditional disposition of the Trinity in the Throne of Grace or Mercy Seat (Fig. 32). The notion of the Trinity as the creative agent of redemption was as old as the church itself and had its direct legacy in the belief that to insure the continuity of the promise of salvation through Christ's vicar on earth, the Divine Wisdom intervened at the election of every pope. Divine inspiration is invoked frequently during the election conclaves through the ancient hymn *Veni creator spiritus* recited liturgically at Pentecost, when the Holy spirit descended on the Virgin and apostles

in the first storey, below the window, a presumably sculptured image of St. Michael carrying the keys and papal tiara appears in a sunburst above the niche containing the Cathedra upheld by Fathers of the Church (see Lavin 2007, 17f., fig. 6; Rice 1997, 89f., 267). First published by Stampfle 1973, 101-4, and attributed to Agostino Ciampelli by Thiem 1977, 310-2 (*sed contra* Prospero Valenti Rodinò 1981, 122-6), the Morgan drawing has been discussed by Merz 1991, 162 n. 125, Schütze 1994, 282-4, Dombrowski 2003, 40, Connors 2006, 122-3. None of these authors consider the Trinitarian creativity conveyed by the radiant window emblem for our understanding of the Baldacchino.

For more on the Trinitarian genesis of Urban's conception of St. Peter's see Lavin 2007, 17f.

to insure the divulgation and continuity of Christ's teaching.⁴⁸ The Holy Spirit intervened in a particularly, indeed triply auspicious way at the election of Urban VIII, August 6, 1623: during the conclave a swarm of bees descended through a window of the Sistine Chapel to settle on the wall of Barberini's cell (Fig. 33); owing to their perfect community and beneficent creativity, bees were a traditional symbol of Divine Wisdom, and three of the species had formed Cardinal Maffeo Barberini's personal coat of arms. The trinity of big bronze bees that have alighted and conjoined to bind the crown together and sustain the universally triumphant Cross at the apex, seems to reenact in perpetuity this heavenly descent of divinely providential salvation (Fig. 34). The episode was also reenacted metaphorically at the apex of Pietro da Cortona's ceiling fresco in the great salone of Palazzo Barberini, where at the direction of Divine Providence, Rome carries the papal crown above the flight of bees framed by a laurel wreath (Fig. 35); and the all-presiding inspiration of Divine Wisdom is portrayed in Andrea Sacchi's vault fresco in the north wing (Fig. 36).⁴⁹



34. Apex of the Baldacchino, St. Peter's Rome.

⁴⁸ See the references to the hymn in Leti 1671, 14, 22, 37.

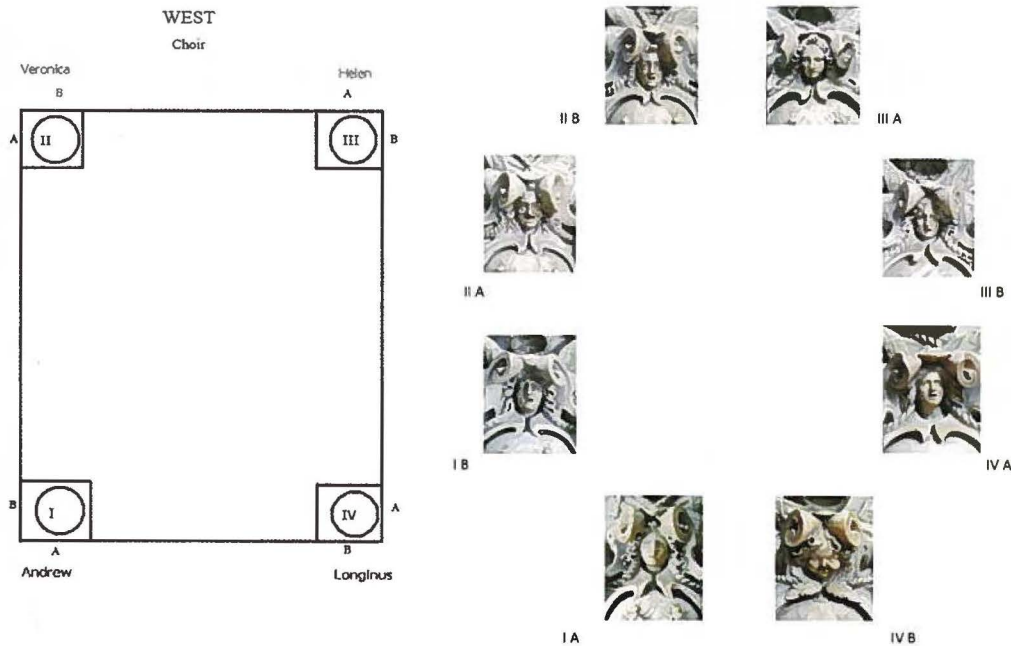
⁴⁹ See the splendid analyses by Scott (1991, 180–6, 38–67), who generously acknowledges, 185 n. 28, that it was I who alerted him to the election event and its relevance to the epiphany of the papal coat of arms in the salone fresco.



35. Pietro da Cortona, *Divine Providence and the Coronation of Urban VIII*. Palazzo Barberini, Rome.



36. Andrea Sacchi, *Divine Wisdom Illuminates the World*.
Palazzo Barberini, Rome.



37. Diagram of Pedestals and sequence of faces.

Surprisingly, perhaps, the creative nature of the Holy Spirit was represented more directly in the pedestals that serve as the very foundation stones of the Baldacchino (Fig. 37). It has frequently been observed, and much disputed, that the swelling forms and disposition of the three Barberini bees in the coats of arms on the exterior faces of each pedestal suggest the body of a pregnant woman, and that the female faces enclosed in the cartouches above portray the phases of parturition. (Figs. 38–54). The sequence begins at the left facing the nave with a smile, passes clockwise around the Baldacchino through various more or less pained expressions and ends facing the nave at the right where a radiantly beaming, winged cherub's head appears. Below, at the groin, grotesque masks, half human, half bestial, sneer and threaten vile, demonic pleasures.

The pregnancy and parturition were first mentioned in print in 1883 in a touristic guidebook to Rome, transmitting the salubrious anecdotes no doubt recounted by local ciceroni.⁵⁰ The second to consider them was a distinguished historian of ancient medicine and gynecologist Giacomo Emilio Curatulo, who in 1901 published an obstetrical analysis that he believed confirmed the birthing physiologically. The eschutcheons and the theme of

⁵⁰ Hare 1883, II, 263.



38. Baldacchino, Southeast Pedestal, East Side [IA].



39. Baldacchino, Southeast Pedestal, East Side [IA],
details of Female Head and Mask.



40. Baldacchino, Southeast Pedestal, South Side [IB].



41. Baldacchino, Southeast Pedestal, South Side [IB],
details of Female Head and Mask.



42. Baldacchino, Southwest Pedestal, South Side [IIA].



43. Baldacchino, Southwest Pedestal, South Side [IIA],
details of Female Head and Mask.



44. Baldacchino, Southwest Pedestal, West Side [IIB].



45. Baldacchino, Southwest Pedestal, West Side [IIB],
details of Female Head and Mask.



46. Baldacchino, Northwest Pedestal, West Side [IIIA].



47. Baldacchino, Northwest Pedestal, West Side [IIIA],
details of Female Head and Mask.



48. Baldacchino, Northwest Pedestal, North Side [IIIB].



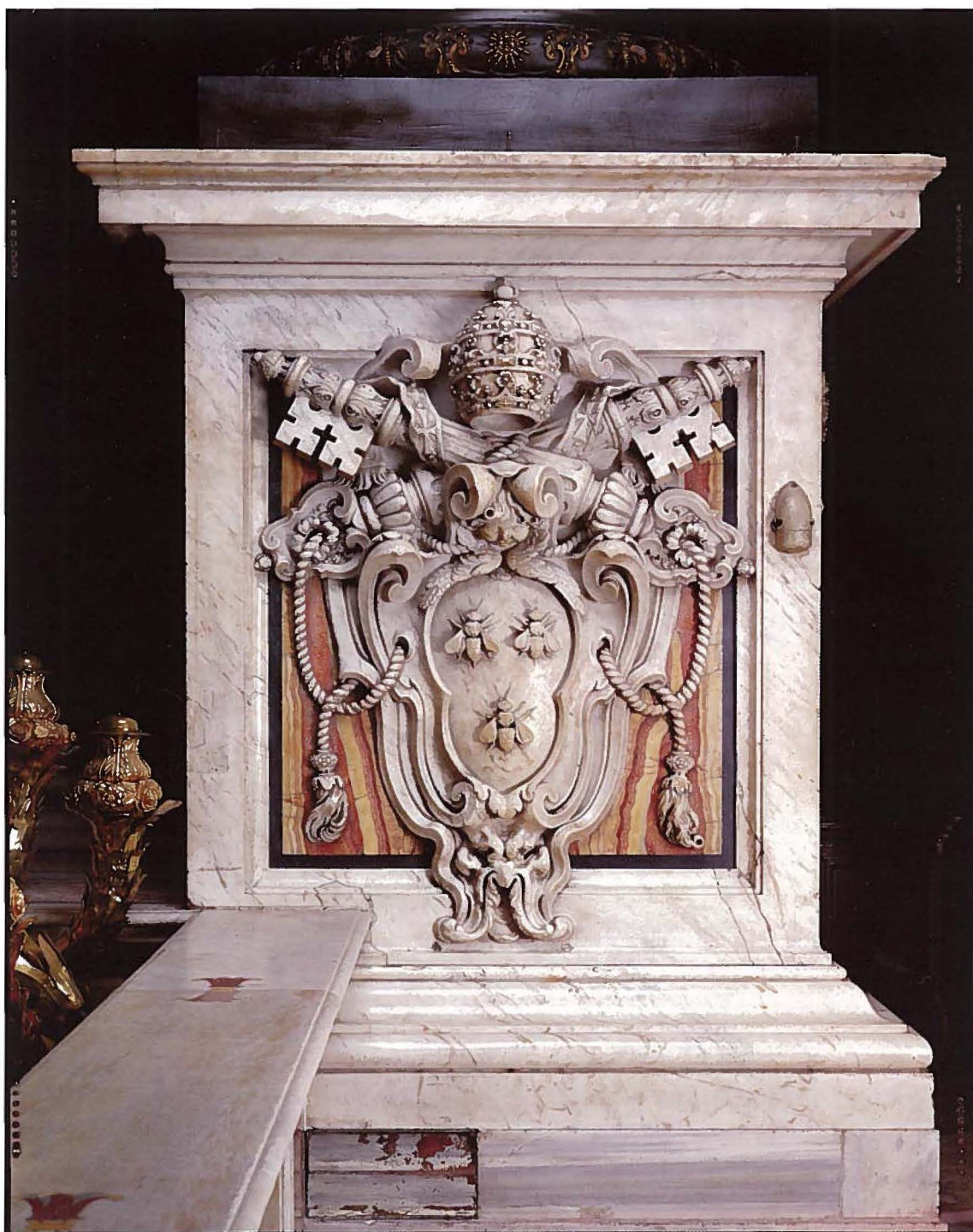
49. Baldacchino, Northwest Pedestal, North Side
[IIIB, details of Female Head and Mask.



50. Baldacchino, Northeast Pedestal, North Side [IVA].



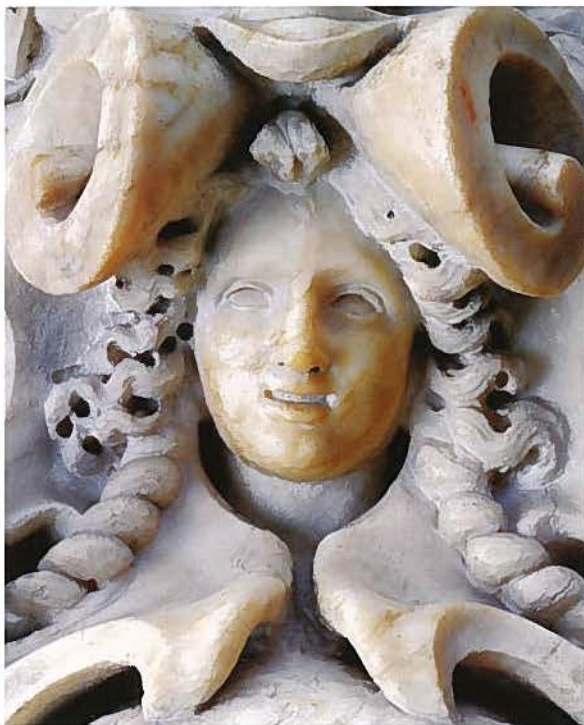
51. Baldacchino, Northeast Pedestal, North Side [IVA],
details of Female Head and Mask.



52. Baldacchino, Northeast Pedestal, East Side [IVB].

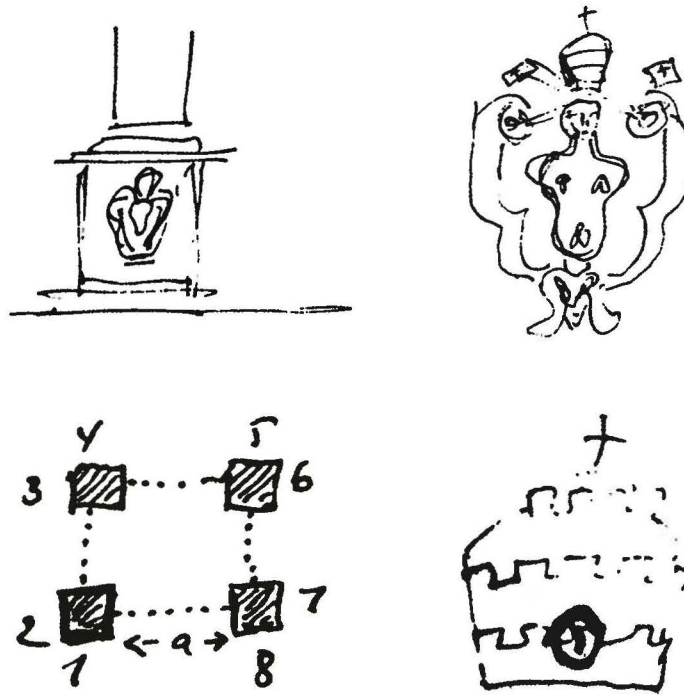


53. Baldacchino, Northeast Pedestal, East Side [IVB],
details of Child's Head and Mask.



54. Details of Figs. 39 and 53.





55. Sergei Eisenstein, sketches of the Baldacchino.

parturition were often seen as satiric, prurient allusions to scandalous rumors that circulated about the pope's family. This was also the view of the great Russian motion picture maker and theorist Sergei Eisenstein who first gathered and summarized the early literature on the pedestals in a famous unfinished treatise on cinematic montage (1937–40) (Fig. 55).⁵¹ Eisenstein interpreted the reliefs in formal terms as a perfect demonstration of his theory of montage, that is, sequential narration in film, and argued that their full significance could *only* be grasped when they were considered in this way. Ironically, he grossly misprized their meaning in a radical anticlerical vein, but his understanding of the temporal import of the escutcheons was astonishingly perceptive with respect to their ultimate significance. The pedestals have been discussed seriously only twice in recent scholarly literature. Philip Fehl explained them in adulatory terms as a “compliment” to the felicitous reign of Urban VIII.⁵² Cesare D’Onofrio considered the reliefs metaphorically, referring to the ecclesiastical tradition of the church as mother of the faithful, *Mater Ecclesia*.⁵³ As we shall see, all these

⁵¹ Eisenstein 1985, 87–100; Eisenstein 1989, 111–31; Eisenstein 1991, 67–80. The essay has been discussed by Yve-Alain Bois in Eisenstein 1989, 111–5, and by Spagnolo 2006, 56f.

⁵² Fehl 1976.

⁵³ D’Onofrio 1979, 243–9. D’Onofrio’s work was greatly dependent on that of Witkowski 1908, who was the first to consider the reliefs in positive, if witty, ecclesiastical terms.

interpretations contain elements of truth, which is, however, rooted in a heretofore totally unexplored substratum of meaning that underlies these extraordinary, powerful, and evocative images, at once discomfiting and endearing, images that are indeed the fundamental cornerstones of the Baldacchino.⁵⁴

Birth

The basic theme of the sequence is announced in the first panel, where, uniquely, the papal tiara includes a winged cherub above which a bee mounts heavenward (Fig. 56). Under the apian aegis of Divine Wisdom, the cherub seems to forecast the infant that replaces the woman's head at the end of the series. In fact, in the *Celestial Hierarchies* of the Pseudo-Dionysius, "the name cherubim signifies the power to know and to see God, to receive the greatest gifts of his light, to contemplate the divine splendor in primordial power, to be filled with the gifts that bring wisdom and to share these generously with subordinates as part of the beneficent outpouring of wisdom" (Fig. 57).⁵⁵

In ecclesiological terms the creativity of the Trinity took two main forms, with respect to God's method and purpose. The first, the creation of the Church, was embodied in John's Apocalyptic vision of the Heavenly Jerusalem in the Book of Revelation, in the famous passage at the beginning of Chapter 12, describing the appearance of the Woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet,

Rev. 12: 1–5

- 1 And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars:
- 2 And she being with child cried, travailling in birth, and pained to be delivered.
- 3 And there appeared another wonder in heaven; and behold a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads.
- 4 And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth: and the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born.

⁵⁴ Agostino Radi and Borromini were paid for executing the coats of arms between July 8, 1626 and the end of December 1627 (Pollak 1928–31, II, 342f.).

⁵⁵ VII.1; *Pseudo-Dionysius* 1987, 162. On the cherub-ornamented headdress see the comments of Tolnay 1943–60, I, 160, concerning Michelangelo's Pitti Madonna, which he calls Sibylline. D'Onofrio 1979, Fig. 188, p. 252, labels the head "allusione al concepito." According to Eisenstein 1991, 74, "It might be read as something like a chapter heading or an introductory epigraph about the birth of a new scion of the family that was crowned with the papal tiara." Witkowski 1908, 266, was most eloquent, and right on the mark: "Ces écus tourmentés n'allégorisent-ils pas encore les terribles épreuves subies par l'Eglise militante au Sion qui, reprenant pour elle le "Tu enfanteras dans la douleur" de la *Genèse*, aboutit, sous la protection de la tiare, au triomphe de la béatitude céleste, à l'Eglise triomphante ou Jérusalem, personnifiée dans le dernier écu par la tête du bébé angélique, souriant et cravaté d'ailes? Cette fois ... nous n'avons plus 'l'oeil mauvais'."



56. Tiara with cherub's head,
detail of Fig. 38.



57. Michelangelo, Pitti Madonna, detail.
Florence, Museo del Bargello.

5 And she brought forth a man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron:
and her child was caught up unto God, and to his throne.

From at least the time of Methodius's treatise on the virtues of virginity, these references to the tribulations and joys of childbirth were understood as the labor and sufferings of the Mother Church in bringing about salvation through a healing of the souls by virtue of Christ's sacrifice at the crucifixion, reenacted in the Eucharistic sacrifice of the mass.⁵⁶

The woman who appeared in heaven clothed with the sun, and crowned with twelve stars, and having the moon for her footstool, and being with child, and travailing in birth, is certainly, according to the accurate interpretation, our mother . . .

It is the Church whose children shall come to her with all speed after the resurrection, running to her from all quarters. She rejoices receiving the light which never goes down, and clothed with the brightness of the Word as with a robe.⁵⁷

⁵⁶ For a survey of interpretations of Rev. 12, see Prigent 1959; also Kramer 1956. For Methodius and Hippolytus in particular, Rahner 1971, 161f.

⁵⁷ Banquet of the Ten Virgins, ch. V, Roberts and Donaldson VI, 1951, 336

And Hippolytus, in his Treatise on Christ and Antichrist,

“she, being with child, cries, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered,” means that the Church will not cease to bear from her heart the Word that is persecuted by the unbelieving in the world.⁵⁸

The passage in Revelation was closely linked to that in John's gospel where the second creative act in the achievement of salvation, Christ's sacrifice, is defined: Christ likens the period from his death to his second coming to the travail of a woman in parturition and the joy that follows to the birth of her child,

John 16: 20–22

[20] Verily, verily, I say unto you, That ye shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice: and ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy.

[21] A woman when she is in travail hath sorrow, because her hour is come: but as soon as she is delivered of the child, she remembereth no more the anguish, for joy that a man is born into the world.

[22] And ye now therefore have sorrow: but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you.

This passage in Christ's sermon to the apostles was understood as Christ's paradoxical allusion to his own death and resurrection, comparing his suffering and that of his disciples at his death to the pangs of delivery, and their joy and his own at their redemption into eternal life achieved by his resurrection, to the joy at the birth of the child. The tribulation described by John was foreordained to the Church's gestation of the faithful through God's warning to Eve after the fall, “I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children.”⁵⁹ The great Jesuit exegete Cornelis à Lapide (1567–1637), who was then in Rome composing his famous biblical commentaries, interpreted the passage thus: “For Christ compares His death to child-birth and His resurrection to the joy after child-birth. For Christ suffered anguish and tortures like a woman in child-birth, but when He was Himself rising again through the merit of His death, and he knew that we should in like manner rise again, He greatly rejoiced Himself, and inspired the Apostles and all the faithful with great joy. . . . Hence the solemnities of the Saints are said to be their birthdays, not their burials.”⁶⁰

Purification — Healing

The particular relevance of these themes of divinely ordained gestation to the Baldacchino over the apostles' tomb at St. Peter's, was established in the early sixteenth century with Leo X

⁵⁸ Treatise on Christ and Antichrist, 62, Roberts and Donaldson, V, 1951, 217.

⁵⁹ Genesis 3:16. Multiplicabo aerumnas tuas et conceptus tuos; in dolore paries filios...

⁶⁰ Lapidé 1876–1908, VI, 171.



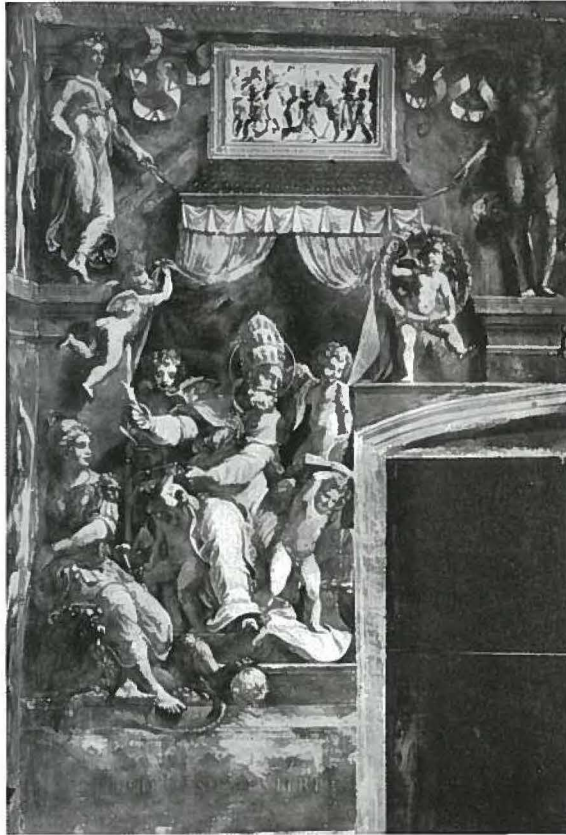
58. Raphael and workshop, *The Donation of Constantine*, fresco.
Sala di Costantino, Palazzo Vaticano, Rome.

de' Medici's program of reaffirming the hegemony of the church and the papacy in the great campaign of decorations that he entrusted to Raphael — frescos in the Vatican palace, and tapestries for the Sistine chapel. In the compass of these decorations two subjects in particular were associated with the high altar of St. Peter's, both of which served as historical and doctrinal precedent for Bernini's project. In the Sala di Costantino the *Donation of Constantine* was conceived as actually taking place in the basilica, and Raphael's portrayal of the disposition of the spiral columns from the Temple of Jerusalem in the Constantinian presbytery of Old St. Peter's (Fig. 58), as well as the suspended canopies over the flanking portraits of Sylvester I and Gregory the Great (Figs. 59–60), reverberated not only in the design but also in the meaning of Bernini's Baldacchino.⁶¹ The second connection, which arose from the same conflation of the Temple with St. Peter's as embodied in the spiral columns decorated with vine scrolls symbolic of the Eucharist, was metaphorical: the columns provided the setting for the tapestry depiction of the *Healing of the Lame Man* by Peter, in the company of St. John and a multitude of bystanders (Fig. 61).⁶² The significance of the *Healing* lies in the fact that it

⁶¹ Besides Tuzi 2002, two important studies have been devoted to the columns, Nobiloni 1997, and Kinney 2005. On the canopies, see below.

⁶² Acts 3: 1–8:

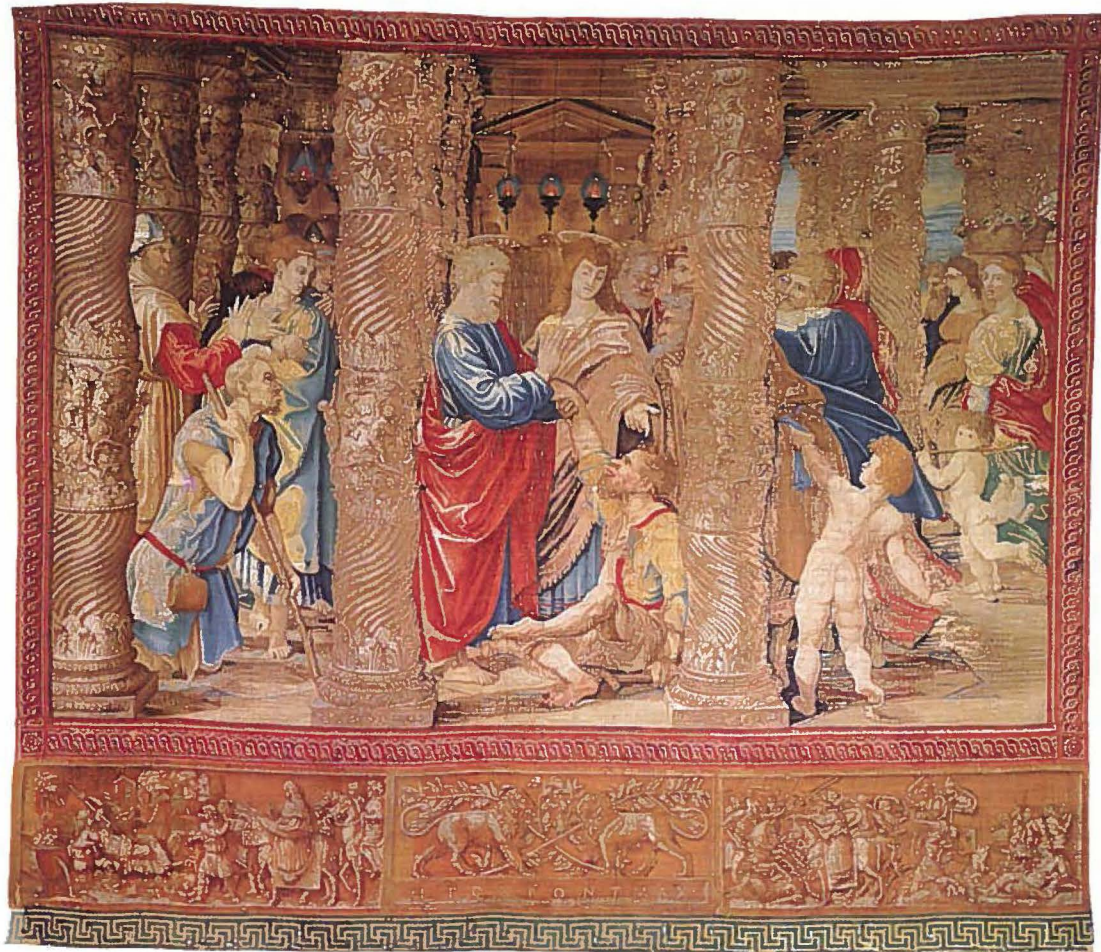
1 Now Peter and John went up together into the temple at the hour of prayer, being the ninth hour.
2 And a certain man lame from his mother's womb was carried, whom they laid daily at the gate of the temple which is called Beautiful, to ask alms of them that entered into the temple;
3 Who seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple asked an alms.
4 And Peter, fastening his eyes upon him with John, said, Look on us.
5 And he gave heed unto them, expecting to receive something of them.
6 Then Peter said, Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk.
7 And he took him by the right hand, and lifted him up: and immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength.
8 And he leaping up stood, and walked, and entered with them into the temple, walking, and leaping, and praising God.



59. Raphael and workshop, *St. Sylvester I Enthroned*, fresco. Sala di Costantino, Palazzo Vaticano, Rome.

60. Raphael and workshop, *St. Gregory the Great Enthroned*, fresco. Sala di Costantino, Palazzo Vaticano, Rome.





61. Pieter van Aelst after Raphael, *St. Peter Healing the Lame Man*, tapestry.
Pinacoteca Vaticana, Rome.

is the first miracle recounted of the apostles, that is, by Peter, Christ's chosen vicar, who insists that the miracle was not achieved by his own power but by that conveyed to him by Jesus. The healing thus inaugurated the salvific power of grace vested in the church through Peter and Christ's subsequent successors. The miracle was performed in the place where Jesus had himself performed acts of spiritual healing, in his youthful disputation with the Doctors and

2 et quidam vir qui erat claudus ex utero matris suae baiulabatur quem ponebant cotidie ad portam
templi quae dicitur Speciosa ut peteret elemosynam ab introeuntibus in templum
3 is cum vidisset Petrum et Iohannem incipientes introire in templum rogabat ut elemosynam acciperet
4 intuens autem in eum Petrus cum Iohanne dixit respice in nos
5 at ille intendeat in eos sperans se aliquid accepturum ab eis
6 Petrus autem dixit argentum et aurum non est mihi quod autem habeo hoc tibi do in nomine Iesu
Christi Nazareni surge et ambula
7 et adprehensa ei manu dextera adlevavit eum et protinus consolidatae sunt bases eius et plantae
8 et exiliens stetit et ambulabat et intravit cum illis in templum ambulans et exiliens et laudans
Dominum

later by driving out the money changers, thus signifying the power and legitimacy of Peter's vicarage. The events took place, however, before the famous Porta Speciosa, famous for its heavy brass doors, for which Raphael instead substituted the Solomonic columns whose vine scrolls gave them a sacramental significance singularly appropriate for the altar at St. Peter's tomb. Peter says explicitly to the bystanders at the event that they should not mistake him as a magician for it was not he who had worked the miracle, but through the power of Jesus.⁶³ Peter insists that while the healing was physical, it was effected through faith, not a physical but a spiritual healing. Peter was acting as the vicar of Christ, who had described himself as the physician, whose power came from his father, and declared, "they that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick ... for I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance."⁶⁴

John Shearman's analysis of the tapestry has made it amply clear that Raphael's bold transposition of the Healing of the Lame Man with reference to St. Peter's was intended to evoke the legacy of Christ the Physician, *Christus Medicus*, to Peter his vicar, and hence to Leo X, whose family name was de' Medici.⁶⁵ The theme of papal healing was represented in a relief in the Sala di Costantino above the portrait of Sylvester I, who had baptized the emperor Constantine the Great (Fig. 62). The relief refers to the fact that Sylvester had earlier cured the emperor of leprosy, which led to his conversion. In correspondence to the healing depicted here the relief above the portrait of Gregory the Great (Fig. 63) illustrates Gregory's decree that mass be celebrated over the tomb of St. Peter; four of the spiral columns are displayed in a row, as they appear before the apse in the reconstruction of the Constantinian building in the intervening fresco of the *Donation*. The fact that the columns in the tapestry are silver, rather than marble, constitutes another, specific reference to the altar, for Gregory the Great had erected over the tomb a "cyborium cum columnis suis IIII ex argento puro," and had also decreed that masses be celebrated over the body of St. Peter ("Hic fecit ut super corpus beati

⁶³ Acts 3:12, 16:

12 And when Peter saw it, he answered unto the people, Ye men of Israel, why marvel ye at this? or why look ye so earnestly on us, as though by our own power or holiness we had made this man to walk?

16 And his name through faith in his name hath made this man strong, whom ye see and know: yea, the faith which is by him hath given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all.

12 videns autem Petrus respondit ad populum viri israhelitae quid miramini in hoc aut nos quid intuemini quasi nostra virtute aut pietate fecerimus hunc ambulare

16 et in fide nominis eius hunc quem videtis et nostis confirmavit nomen eius et fides quae per eum est dedit integram sanitatem istam in conspectu omnium vestrum

⁶⁴ Matt. 9:12–13:

12 at Iesus audiens ait non est opus valentibus medico sed male habentibus

13 euntes autem discite quid est misericordiam volo et non sacrificium non enim veni vocare iustos sed peccatores

12 But when Jesus heard that, he said unto them, They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick.

13 But go ye and learn what that meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice: for I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.

⁶⁵ Shearman 1972, 55–7, 77f. Shearman does not himself make this deduction, concluding only that: "the meaning of the columns cannot, therefore, be literal but must be symbolic — either of the miraculous healing powers of one of them, or of Solomon himself, Rex Pacificus, or perhaps both" (p. 57).



62. (Detail of Fig. 59), *Sylvester I curing Constantine of Leprosy*, terracotta relief.
Sala di Costantino, Palazzo Vaticano, Rome.

63. (Detail of Fig. 60), *Gregory the Great celebrating Mass at the altar of St. Peter's*,
terracotta relief. Sala di Costantino, Palazzo Vaticano, Rome.



Petri missas celebrarentur").⁶⁶ The relief above his portrait in the Sala di Costantino actually shows him celebrating mass before a structure with four spiral columns.

Raphael perpetrated another astonishing conflation in the tapestry, also noted, but not discussed by Shearman. Raphael flanked the central episode of the *Healing of the Lame Man* with figures that clearly allude to the Hebrew rituals of presentation and purification mandated by the Lord in the book of Leviticus: at the right an infant carrying a pair of doves and a handmaiden with other celebratory food offerings, and at the left a mother carrying her child at her bosom. Following the birth of a child a woman is considered unclean for certain specified intervals according to the sex of the newborn, after which she must bring to the door of the tabernacle offerings, a lamb or a pair of pigeons or turtle doves if she is poor, to the priest, who makes an atonement for her so that she is cleansed and may again enter the sanctuary.⁶⁷ The rite of purification applied to Christ as well, since the Law of Leviticus provided that the male child be presented by the mother at the same time. The Presentation of the Christ child and the Purification of the Virgin were thus correlated themes, each with its proper feast in the calendar of the church, and both were commemorated on the same day. From the earliest Christian times the church Fathers emphasized that neither the Son of God nor the Virgin Mary had need of purification, but they did so anyway so that the ritual of the Old Law of the Hebrews, might finally be fulfilled, literally once and for all, in the New Law for all believers. And when the tapestry series was continued after Raphael's death by Giulio Romano, the *Pre-*

⁶⁶ Hic augmentavit in praedicationem canonis *diesque nostros in tua pace dispone*, et cetera. Hic fecit beato Petro apostolo cyburium cum columnis suis IIII, ex argento puro. Fecit autem vestem super corpus eius blatinio et exornavit auro purissimo, pens. lib. C. Hic fecit ut super corpus beati Petri missas celebrarentur; item et in ecclesiam beati Pauli apostoli eadem fecit.

Duchesne 1955–7, I, 312; the silver ciborium was cited by Rolf Quednau in *Raffaello* 1984, 245 (evidently unaware of this passage, Shearman, p. 57, puzzles over the silver columns); the mass mandated by Gregory was cited by Bauer 1996, 158f. I have argued elsewhere that the painted canopies over the portraits of Silvester and Gregory, were an important influence on Bernini's first project for the Baldacchino (Lavin 2008).

⁶⁷ Shearman 1972, 56.

Leviticus 12 (King James Version)

1 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,
 2 Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, If a woman have conceived seed, and born a man child: then she shall be unclean seven days; according to the days of the separation for her infirmity shall she be unclean.
 3 And in the eighth day the flesh of his foreskin shall be circumcised.
 4 And she shall then continue in the blood of her purifying three and thirty days; she shall touch no hallowed thing, nor come into the sanctuary, until the days of her purifying be fulfilled.
 5 But if she bear a maid child, then she shall be unclean two weeks, as in her separation: and she shall continue in the blood of her purifying threescore and six days.
 6 And when the days of her purifying are fulfilled, for a son, or for a daughter, she shall bring a lamb of the first year for a burnt offering, and a young pigeon, or a turtledove, for a sin offering, unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, unto the priest:
 7 Who shall offer it before the LORD, and make an atonement for her; and she shall be cleansed from the issue of her blood. This is the law for her that hath born a male or a female.
 8 And if she be not able to bring a lamb, then she shall bring two turtles, or two young pigeons; the one for the burnt offering, and the other for a sin offering: and the priest shall make an atonement for her, and she shall be clean.



64. Giulio Romano, *Presentation of Christ in the Temple*, tapestry.
Pinacoteca Vaticana, Rome.

sentation of Christ in the Temple was located in the same ideally conflated setting, appropriate to this critical act of transition from the Old Law to the New (Fig. 64).

The Old Testament purification and New Testament healing had been associated early on by Origen under the rubric of Christ's power, as *Christus Medicus*, to cleanse the soul of sin. Discussing Christ's definition of himself as the physician for the sick, not the well (Matt. 9:12–13), Origen relates the purification rituals (Leviticus 12 and 13, specifically 12: 2, the birth of a male child), to Christ's healing of the leper, the disease par excellence of uncleanness, i.e., sin (Mark 1: 40–2).⁶⁸ The underlying common denominator lay beyond these individuals: the sinfulness of woman was descended from Eve, and the lame man's defect was inherited congenitally from his mother's womb, i.e., it was also inherent. It is clear that the healing underlying both events was the redemption from the Original Sin, achieved

⁶⁸ Homilies on Leviticus, Homily VIII, Migne 1857–1905, XII, cols. 492f.

by Christ's ultimate act of charity, instituted and perpetuated through his mother, Mary/heavenly bride/the New Eve/Mother Church, and actuated at the altar. The altar was the tabernacle of the New Church constructed by Christ on the Stone of his successor, also called the *petra durissima*, the stone of refuge and security on which the church was built. Through the setting of his tapestry, Raphael extended these relationships to Peter and to St. Peter's. In the sermon that followed the healing, Peter adjured the witnesses not to assume that the power came from him, but from Jesus whom they had condemned to death, and who had himself attributed his power to his Father. In effect, the curative power of *Christus Medicus*, expressed in Christ's metaphor referring to himself as physician, descended not just to Leo X as a Medici, but to all those who occupy the papal throne. This idea lay at the very heart of the ideology of Bernini's Baldacchino.

It is important, moreover, that in all these cases the healing brought revelation and conversion, the leper cured by Christ who spread the good word (Mark 1: 43–5), the lame man and bystanders who had witnessed the miracle. At the Purification and Presentation, the witness and convert was the just and devout Simeon, who recognized Mary and Jesus and publicly proclaimed their salvation "A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel" (Luke 2: 32). This last pronouncement is crucial because it foreshadows what would become the church's basic claim to be successor to paganism and Judaism, *ecclesiae ex gentibus* and *ex circumcisione*.

Considering these implications of the two subjects Raphael combined in the tapestry, it becomes clear why the scene was set among the twisted columns — not simply because they came from the Temple of Jerusalem and were installed at the high altar at St. Peter's but also because they were Roman columns on the one hand, and on the other richly ornamented with vine scrolls that suffused them with the symbolism of the Eucharist. By framing the Healing by the Presentation, and setting them both within the symbolic columns from Jerusalem at St. Peter's, Raphael gave physical and topographic reality to the theme of succession that was Catholicism's chief claim to universality. Hence the appropriateness of the ideology expressed in the tapestry to its display in the Sistine Chapel, where papal elections were held and the succession assured.

Lupercalia

The pedestals of the baldachin incorporate, conjugate would be a better word, as cornerstones the two stones, Peter and Mary, on which Christ built his church. Following the words about childbirth in the Book of Revelation and from Christ's own mouth as reported by St. John, the tribulations and ultimate jubilation of childbirth depicted on the pedestals reenact the process of salvation that is achieved in the sacrifice at the altar and triumphs with the Resurrection of Christ in the original plan for the Baldacchino, and with the world dominion of the Cross as it was executed. The Original Sin over which the church triumphs and from which the repentant sinner is redeemed is illustrated in the satiric, indeed devilish masks that appear as if imprisoned at the "groins" of the cartouches. The grimacing visages, beginning with the male "vagina dentata," recollect, besides the biblical Original Sin, for which the Old

Law of Leviticus failed to compensate, a lewd and orgiastic Roman pagan fertility festival which the Purification of the Virgin was said to have superseded (Fig. 65).⁶⁹ In the Roman church, the Purification–Presentation, and the Candlemas celebration, which is its most conspicuous feature, had long been understood as a replacement for a pagan festival that took place in the same season. The first writer to do so, the Venerable Bede (673–735) asserted that the feast honoring Mary, February 2, was an antidote to a Roman purificatory sacrifice celebrated in that month in honor of Februus, as Pluto, the god of the underworld.⁷⁰ The history of the Purification–Presentation feast in relation to the pagan festival was thereafter embodied in church tradition, recorded notably in the thirteenth-century Golden Legend of Jacopo da Voragine, who relates that Candlemas was instituted to remedy a Roman festival honoring the goddess Februa, to celebrate her motherhood of Mars.⁷¹

⁶⁹ In particular the masks seem to echo the series of 24 engraved masks designed by Cornelis Floris, Giulio Romano, and the Monogrammist IHS, published in 1560 by René Boyvin with the title *Libro di variate mascare quale servono a pittori scultori et uomini ingenuosi*, from which our illustration is taken. See Miller 1999, No. 38, 120–5. A similar mask appears at the backside of a Protestant female pope-monster in the controversy over Pope Joanna (see below).

⁷⁰ Wallis 1999, 48f.

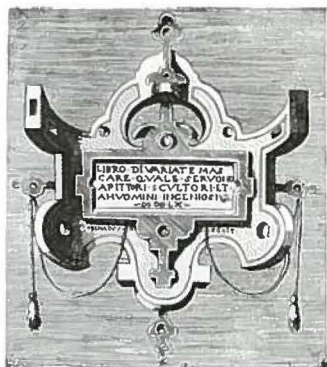
The second [month] he [Numa] called after Februus, that is, Pluto, who was believed to rule over purificatory sacrifice. In that month, in which [Numa] ordained that justice be done to the gods of the underworld, the city was obliged to make purificatory sacrifices. But the Christian religion altered this custom of purificatory sacrifice / for the better, when in that same month, on the feast of St Mary, the whole populace with the priests and ministers goes on procession through the churches and the city neighbourhoods, all singing devout hymns, and carrying in their hands burning candles given them by the bishop. As this good custom grew, it provided a model for the conduct of other feasts of the blessed Mother and perpetual Virgin as well, not in the five-year lustration of a worldly empire, but in the everlasting memory of the heavenly kingdom where, according to the parable of the wise virgins, all the elect shall go out to meet the Bridegroom, their King, with the lamps of their good deeds alight, and then shall enter into the heavenly city with Him.

Jones 1943, 208f.

Secundum dicavit Februus, id est Plutoni, qui lustrationum potens credebatur, lustrarique eo mense civitatem necesse erat, quo statuit ut iusta diis manibus solverentur. Sed hanc lustrandi consuetudinem bene mutavit christiana religio, cum / in mense eodem die sanctae Mariae plebs universa cum sacerdotil ministris hymnis modula devotis per ecclesias perque congrua urbis loca procedit, datasque a pontifice cuncti cereas in manibus gestant ardentes. Et augescente bona consuetudine, id ipsum in caeteris quoque eiusdem beatae matris et perpetuae virginis festivitibus agere didicit, non utique in lustrationem terrestris imperii quinquennem, sed in perennem caelestis memoriam; quando, iuxta parabolam virginum prudentium, omnes electi lucentibus bonorum actuum lampadibus obviam sponso ac regi suo venientes, mox cum eo ad nuptias supernae civitatis intrabunt.

⁷¹ Voragine 1969, 151–2:

... the feast was instituted first to remedy a pagan superstition. For of old the Romans, in order to honour the goddess Februa, the mother of Mars, used to light up the whole city with candles and torches in the first days of February. This was done every five years, and its purpose was to procure the favour of the goddess, so that her son Mars would insure their victory over their enemies. The period of five years between the feasts was called a lustrum. In the month of February the Romans also honoured Pluto and the other gods of the underworld. In order to win their good will for the souls of the dead, the people offered them solemn victims, and passed an entire night singing their praises, with lighted torches and candles. The women were especially devoted to this feast, in accordance with one of the myths of their religion. For the poets had said that Pluto, enamoured of Proserpine's



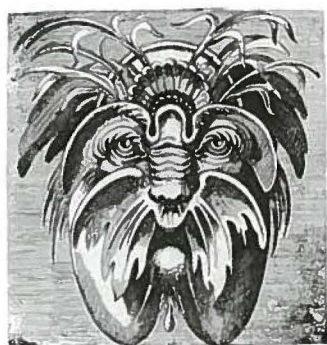
Cat. 38 pl. 1



Cat. 38 pl. 2



Cat. 38 pl. 3



Cat. 38 pl. 4



Cat. 38 pl. 5



Cat. 38 pl. 6



Cat. 38 pl. 7



Cat. 38 pl. 8



Cat. 38 pl. 9

65. *Libro di Variate maschare...*, engravings. Boyvin 1560 (Miller 1999, Cat. Nos. 1–9).

Toward the end of the sixteenth century the great church historian Cardinal Cesare Baronio (1538–1607) took a bold and crucial step by linking the Presentation specifically and explicitly to the greatest, the most popular, the most ancient, and the most prurient of all Roman celebrations, the Lupercalia (Fig. 66).⁷² Baronio based this extraordinary leap of the historical imagination on the fact that the earliest form of the Purification, the Quadragesima Epiphaniae took place on February 14, the day before the Lupercalia on February 15. The Lupercalia was, moreover, a quintessential Roman celebration, said to have been introduced by Romulus himself and celebrated on a vast scale by the entire populace of the city. The celebration incorporated the fundamental themes of augury for the coming spring, that of purification and renewal, of regeneration and fertility. In addition to orgiastic and promiscuous public orgies, of both wine and libido, the festival was characterized by a quasi-primitive ritual in which boys ran naked the length of the Via Sacra carrying goat skins, symbolic of unrestrained productivity, with which they flagellated themselves and attendant girls, who were thereby promised painless delivery of numerous offspring.⁷³ Above all, the evils of the Lupercalia had been set forth in great detail in a vituperative polemic by Pope Gelasius I (492–496) against the lingering vestige of the festival, which he condemned. Gelasius's letter had been published for the first time in 1591, and Baronio cited it in arguing his illuminating intuition, first in his discussion of the Feast of the Presentation in his 1586 revision of the Martyrology,⁷⁴ and later in his monumental *Annales*, which brought the theme to the very forefront of Catholic ideology. By way of confirmation, Baronio refers to the Roman grammarian Varro, who describes the flogging of women with goat hides and says explicitly that the Lupercalia was a celebration of fertility and purification.⁷⁵

beauty, had carried her off and made her his wife: and her parents, not knowing what had become of her, were a long time searching for her with torches and candles. In memory of this, the Roman women went in procession in order to obtain the favour of Proserpine. As it is always difficult to wipe out such a custom, Pope Sergius decreed that in order to give to this one a Christian meaning, the Blessed Virgin should be honoured each year on this day, a blessed candle being carried in the hand to this end. Thus the ancient usage was preserved, but at the same time transformed by a new intention. Candlemas was established secondly to show forth the purity of the Virgin Mary. To impress her purity upon the minds of all the Church ordered that we should carry lighted candles, as if to say: 'Most blessed Virgin, thou hast no need of purification; on the contrary, thou art all light and all purity!' Such indeed was Mary's innocence that it shone forth even outside of her, and any urgency of the flesh in others. Thus the Jews tell us that although Mary was surpassing fair, no man could ever look upon her with desire. Thirdly, the Candlemas is a symbol of the procession of Mary, Joseph, Simeon, and Anna, when they presented the child Jesus in the Temple.

⁷² Shorr 1946, 17–9, gives a succinct account of the history of the Feast of the Purification, including its relation to the pagan festivals; she seems not to have been aware, however, that it was Baronio who focused on the Lupercalia. The Lupercalia as a fecundity celebration was visualized by Domenico Beccafumi early in the sixteenth century for a palace decoration in Siena (Domenico 1990, 132, 136; Barbagli 1998, 207–19).

⁷³ On the Lupercalian ceremonies see Franklin 1921, Holleman 1974, Ulf 1982.

⁷⁴ Baronio 1586, 67. I have used the 1613 edition, p. 63.

⁷⁵ *De lingua latina* VI,13, Varro 1938, I, 184f.

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The Lupercalia was so named because the Luperci make sacrifice in the Lupercal. When the High-priest announces the monthly festivals on the Nones of February, he calls the day of the Lupercalia februatus:



66. Domenico Beccafumi, *Lupercalia*.
Martelli Collection, Florence.

It is important to realize that Baronio was not the first to emphasize the importance of the Lupercalia in the legacy of pagan religious celebrations, notably in the notoriously licentious and vituperatively vilified festival of Carnival. In contrast to many other writers, who relate carnival to the Saturnalia, which took place in December, the prolific Carmelite poet Baptista Mantuanus (1447–1516), later beatified, derived Carnival from the Lupercalia, which took place on February 15. Mantuanus's series of poems on the calendar of *Fasti* emulate in modern moralizing Christian terms those of Ovid, and his poem on Carnival, February 5, takes Ovid's account of the Lupercalia (*Fasti* II 15) as its point of departure. Mantuanus describes in vivid terms the evils of the tradition, in particular the naked men erotically aroused and wearing masks (*personata libido*) roaming the streets and lashing women with goat hides, addressed specifically to their hidden parts (*membra recondita*). Mantuanus's *Fasti* was published posthumously in 1518, with a dedication to Leo X. In

for februm is the name which the Sabines give to a purification, and this word is not unknown in our sacrifices; for a goat hide, with a thong of which the young women are flogged at the Lupercalia, the ancients called a februs, and the Lupercalia was called also Februatio 'Festival of Purification,' as I have shown in the Books of the Antiquities.

p. 184

Lupercalia dicta, quod in Lupercali Luperci sacra faciunt. Rex cum ferias menstruas Nonis Februariis edicit, hunc diem februaturn appellat; februm Sabini purgamentum, et id in sacris nostris verbum non ignotum: nam pellem capri, cuius de loro caeduntur puellae Lupercalibus, veteres februm vocabant, et Lupercalia Februatio, ut in Antiquitatum libris demonstravi.

1535 the early folklorist Johannes Boemus Aubanus (ca. 1485–1533/6) published a work on popular customs in which he, too, related Carnival to the Lupercalia.⁷⁶

Baronio's association of the Purification of the Virgin and the Lupercalia was thus not merely a coincidence of dates but also of religious substance. Though not generally accepted by modern scholars, the theory struck at the very center of the Counterreformatory effort to reaffirm the moral and theological superiority of the church over the degeneracy of the pagans and, by implication, that of the heretical Protestants and the recalcitrant Jews. Baronio had perceived, as no one before, an inner link between the Jews and the Romans, the idea of purification, which Christ had appropriated and submerged in the universal Church. Christ's sacrifice healed mankind of the original sin of the Jews and the promiscuous license of the pagans. Baronio's replacement of the Lupercalia by the Purification and Presentation fulfilled in the domain of procreation the age-old definition of the church as the successor to the *ecclesia ex circumcisione* and the *ecclesia ex gentibus*. In effect, Baronio brought to fruition the fundamental theme of the universality of the Church, as expressed in the biblical metaphor of creativity, that is childbirth, from the Woman clothed with the Sun envisioned in the Book of Revelation, and from Christ's own childbirth account of the period from his death to his Second Coming. Precisely this notion, an agony of creation triumphing over evil toward a salutary end, is portrayed on the pedestals that support the columns of Bernini's baldachin, where Urban VIII with his coat of arms succeeds Peter, the stone on which Christ built his church, who, punning on his own name, referred to Christ as a corner stone.⁷⁷

Marriage and Progeny

One of the most important of all records concerning St. Peter's is a letter addressed by Nicholas III to the canons of St. Peter's in which he avers that "The Church Militant may be visualized as the holy city of the New Jerusalem, descending from heaven and prepared by God as a bride adorned for her spouse . . ." Nicholas's idea was based on the traditional notion that when Christ assumed his Mother to heaven she became his spouse, the Mater Ecclesia and the Queen of Heaven, with all the faithful as her offspring.⁷⁸ This nuptial concept, which had been developed at length in a series of sermons on the consecration of pontiffs by Innocent III, became part of the institutional ideology of the church, so that every bishop, beginning with Peter, is betrothed to his church in an indissoluble and fruitful spiritual wedlock.⁷⁹

⁷⁶ For the foregoing on Mantuanus and Aubanus, see Trümper 1979, 30–2, 80–3, and Ulf 1982, 70–2. On Carnival and Lupercalis in Rome, see the introductory pages in Clementi 1938–9, I, esp. 14–22.

⁷⁷ Isaiah 28: 16: idcirco haec dicit Dominus Deus ecce ego mittam in fundamentis Sion lapidem lapidem probatum angularem pretiosum in fundamento fundatum qui crediderit non festinet

1 Peter 2: 6: propter quod continet in scriptura ecce pono in Sion lapidem summum angularem electum pretiosum et qui crediderit in eo non confundetur

⁷⁸ On the concept of *Mater Ecclesia*, see Plumpe 1943.

⁷⁹ The fundamental work on the ecclesiology of Innocent III is Imkamp 1983, in our context especially the sections on "The Fruitfulness of the Bride, *Mater Ecclesia*," 260–8, and "The Bond between the Pope and the Roman Church as a Spiritual Marriage," 300–23. Innocent's sermons have been beautifully translated and

Innocent's concept was illustrated in the great mosaic he commissioned for the apse of St. Peter's (Fig. 67): in the center at the earthly level of the visionary composition the sacrificial lamb was flanked by a portrait of the pope as Bridegroom and an image of *Ecclesia Romana*, while the first converts to the faith, the twelve apostles in the form of sheep, approached from Jerusalem and Bethlehem.⁸⁰ Hence the second part of Nicholas's formulation: "Christ the bridegroom increases her through the multitude of the converted, clearly implying to us that she should be increased by the number of her servants."⁸¹ A recent patristic study formulates the union of Christ and the Church and their offspring of the faithful, specifically in the metaphor of copulation.⁸² Urban VIII was surely aware of these precedents: fragments of the

edited by Vause et al. 2004; see especially sermons two and four on the Consecration of Pontiffs and three, on the first anniversary of his own election. Here also, p. 28, the St. Peter's apse mosaic is explained as an illustration of Innocent portrayed as the Bridegroom of the Roman church.

⁸⁰ See Imkamp 1983, 322, with the bibliography given there, and the excellent study of the mosaic by Iacobini 2005.

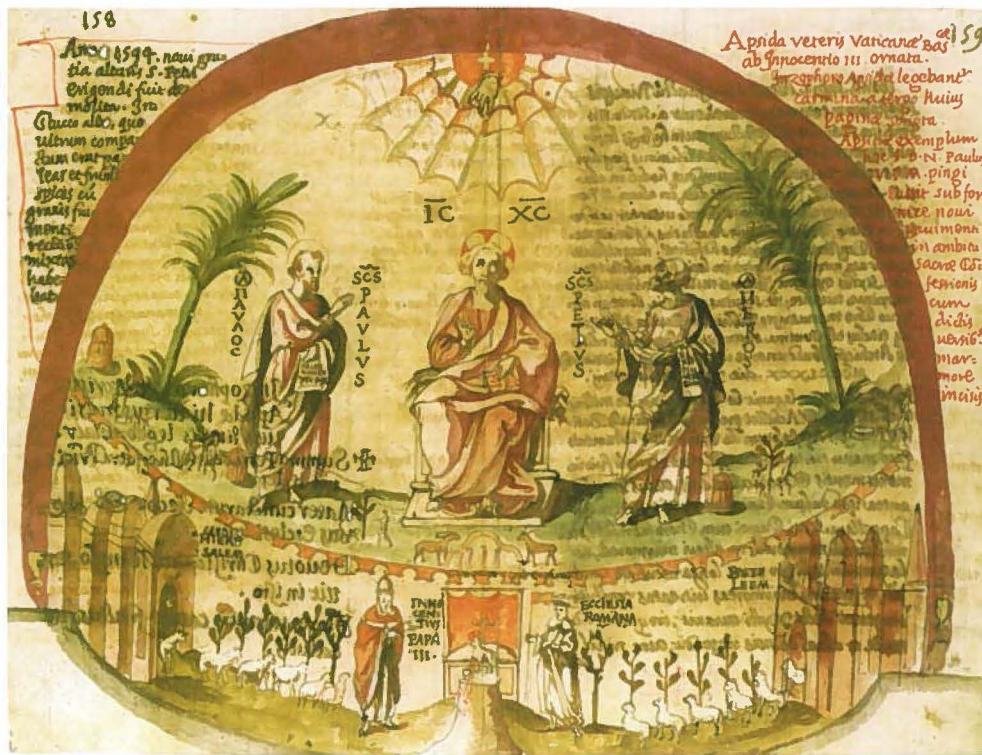
⁸¹ Nicholas III, Letter to the Canons of St. Peter's, February 3, 1279, cited by M. Aronberg Lavin in Aronberg Lavin and Lavin 2001, 43, 121f. n. 189. The letter begins,

Civitatem sanctam Jerusalem novam descendentem de celo a Deo paratam sicut sponsam ornatam viro suo militans figurare valet ecclesia ut sit civitas per militantium unitatem sancta, per conversationis exempla Jerusalem in vita pacifica, nova ut juvenus sua renovetur ut aquila, peccatorum vetustate repulsa, descendens, per timorem reverentia Deo pariter et prelatis, de celo, per gratiam in ecclesiasticis sacramentis, a Deo parata per fidem, virtutes et opera, sicut sponsa ornata viro suo per decentiam et decorem. Hec est illa Jerusalem, que secundum prophetam edificatur ut civitas, id est ad similitudinem civitatis illius, cujus participatio in idipsum. Hanc Christus sponsus amplificat per multitudinem conversorum, nobis patenter insinuans illam amplificandam fore per numerum servitorum. (The Church Militant may be visualized as the holy city of the New Jerusalem, descending from heaven and prepared by God as a bride adorned for her spouse as a city, because of the unity of her defenders; holy, because Jerusalem is the model of conversion to peaceful life; new because her youth is renewed like an eagle, repulsed by the old age of sinners; descending, because of her reverent fear of God and equally of prelates; from heaven, because of the grace in ecclesiastical sacraments; prepared by God, through faith, virtues, and works; as a bride adorned for her husband, because of her decency and propriety. This is that Jerusalem, which according to the prophet is built as a city, that is, in similitude to that City which participates in this one. Christ the bridegroom increases her through the multitude of the converted, clearly implying to us that she should be increased by the number of her servants; translation thanks to Samatha Kelly);

Gay 1938, no. 517, 197–213, "De canonicis et beneficiatis basilice S. Petri inservientibus, decultu divino et capitularis mense rebus complere sancit," cf. 197. This lengthy missive has been called the "magna carta" of the Vatican Chapter; Mann 1902–32, XVI, 80–2; Andaloro 1984, 143–77 (English resume, 178–81).

⁸²

Notum est, Christum in Cruce meruisse Spiritus sui gratias non solum fidelibus Novi Testamenti, sed etiam Antiqui Foederis. Licet mirum videri posit, tamen et hoc mysterium sub allegoria unionis sponsalis propositum est. Docet enim S. Irenaeus cum Synagogam tum Ecclesiam, in Cruce Christo unitas, a Salvatore accipisse Spiritum, idque explicat in memoriam revocans historiam Lot et filiarum eius. Postquam enim Dominus potum sumpserat in Coena Eucharistica – ita ad Irenaei mentem – recubuit in Cruce, ibique dormivit et somnum coepit, seseque univit plasmati suo, per semen divinum, qui est Spiritus Dei, sibi copulans duas synagogas, maiorem et minorem natu, ut ipsae ex Patre suo, qui Christus est, fructificarent filios vivos Deo. (Tromp 1937, 16; also 7, 9, 15, 20)



67. Apse mosaic with Innocent III and *Ecclesia Romana*, Old St. Peter's, watercolor.
MS Barb. Lat. 2733, 158f., Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Rome.

mosaic were preserved and the head of *Ecclesia Romana*, now in the Museo di Roma, came from the Barberini collection.⁸³

The Chastity of Bees

Spiritual betrothal and the laborious creation of its progeny is exactly what is emblemized in the pedestals of the Baldacchino: the birthing that takes place in the embrace of the papal arms, with the expressive heads above, the bees marking the breasts and the belly in the swollen torso, and the groin covered or replaced by the ghoulish masks that echo the goatskins with which, in the Lupercalia, pagan women were lashed at their groins to insure fertility. This increase in the faithful through conversion and baptism is precisely the kind of progeny envisaged by Methodius and other churchmen as resulting from the travails of the apocalyptic Woman clothed in the Sun, and Christ's own procreative passing from his death to his Second Coming — a troubled birth with a happy issue. This construct of the ideology of the Church depends wholly on the virginity of Mary, which is expressed in the Barberini coats of arms by the bees.

⁸³ Iacobini 2005, 49f.

Among the leading intellectuals who expected great things from the urbane and humanistically inclined new pontiff were the members of the nascent scientific society, the Accademia dei Lincei, which included the pope's controversial protégé Galileo. To celebrate the Jubilee of 1625, the major event that followed, fortuitously, as if in celebration, the pope's election (and the beginning of work on the Baldacchino), the group produced three novel, even revolutionary works of science and scholarly erudition, all devoted to the bee.⁸⁴ The first was the famous engraving, the *Melissographia*, dated 1625, showing three greatly magnified views of the bee, top, bottom, and side, arranged as in the pope's coat of arms — the first illustration of a subject observed (by Francesco Stelluti, so inscribed at the bottom of the print) under a microscope (Fig. 68). The main preoccupation in the Lincei circle was with one above all of the seeming miraculous virtues of the bee, its mysterious capacity to procreate autogenetically, without intercourse. This divine chastity had in antiquity made the bee sacred to the chaste and virgin goddess, Diana, commonly identified with the Virgin Mary, and the second work was a poetic numismatic tract with elaborate explanatory notes by the Belgian Lincean Justus Riquius, devoted to the cult of Diana as represented on coins with her sacred bee (Fig. 69). "Even the many-breasted statue of Diana at Ephesus ... did not mean that she was in any way unchaste. Her abundant breasts were not for any sexual purpose, but to imbibe nurture and nourishment."⁸⁵ So too the ample bee-breasts of the coats of arms. The chastity and fecundity of the bees are inherent in those of the pope.⁸⁶ The third Jubilee publication of the Linceans, also in 1625, was an extensive treatise on the natural history of the bee by Federico Cesi himself, titled *Apiarium*.⁸⁷ Printed with extreme density in perfect order, like a bee-hive, on four sheets conjoined to make a huge broadside (107 x 69.5 cm), the work is a wonderment in itself (Fig. 70). Cesi also starts with Roman bee coins, and eulogizes the many qualities of the bee that correspond to those of the pope and his "Urban bees." But his prime interest was precisely in the wondrous autogenesis of the bee, since it focused on the very nature of creativity. Cesi is at pains to explain, in purely "natural" terms, how the king bee (actually the queen) creates its myriad progeny without intercourse, while the females remain inviolate. Nowhere does he appeal explicitly to divine intervention, but the reference to the pope as the chaste King Bee is explicit, and he does appeal to what he calls the "seminal" or "vital" spirits of the King; and the parallel with the theology of the incarnation and the progeny of the Mother Church is implicit. All this under the aegis, as it were, of the triune image of the Barberini bees. It is particularly significant in our context that this mysterious natural history of the bee had long since been epitomized in the traditional explanation of the most famous ritual of the Feast of the Purification of the Virgin, in Voragine's *Golden Legend*: the wax

⁸⁴ For what follows here I am wholly dependent on the splendid work of Freedberg 2002, esp. 154–78.

⁸⁵ Riquius 1625. Freedberg 2002, 439, n. 26:

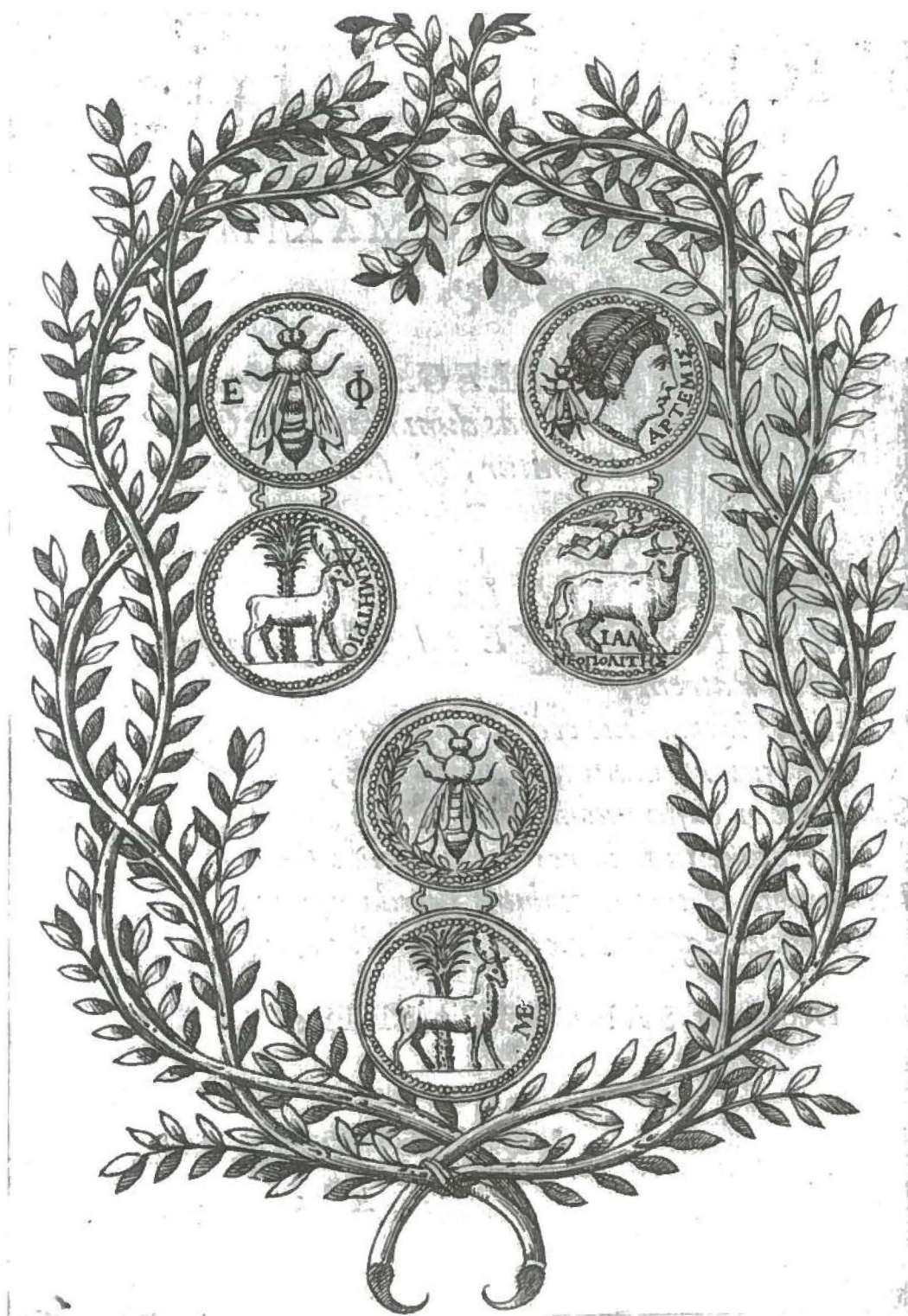
His alitur mortale genus, vitaeque animantium,

Vitales succos hinc elementa bibunt.

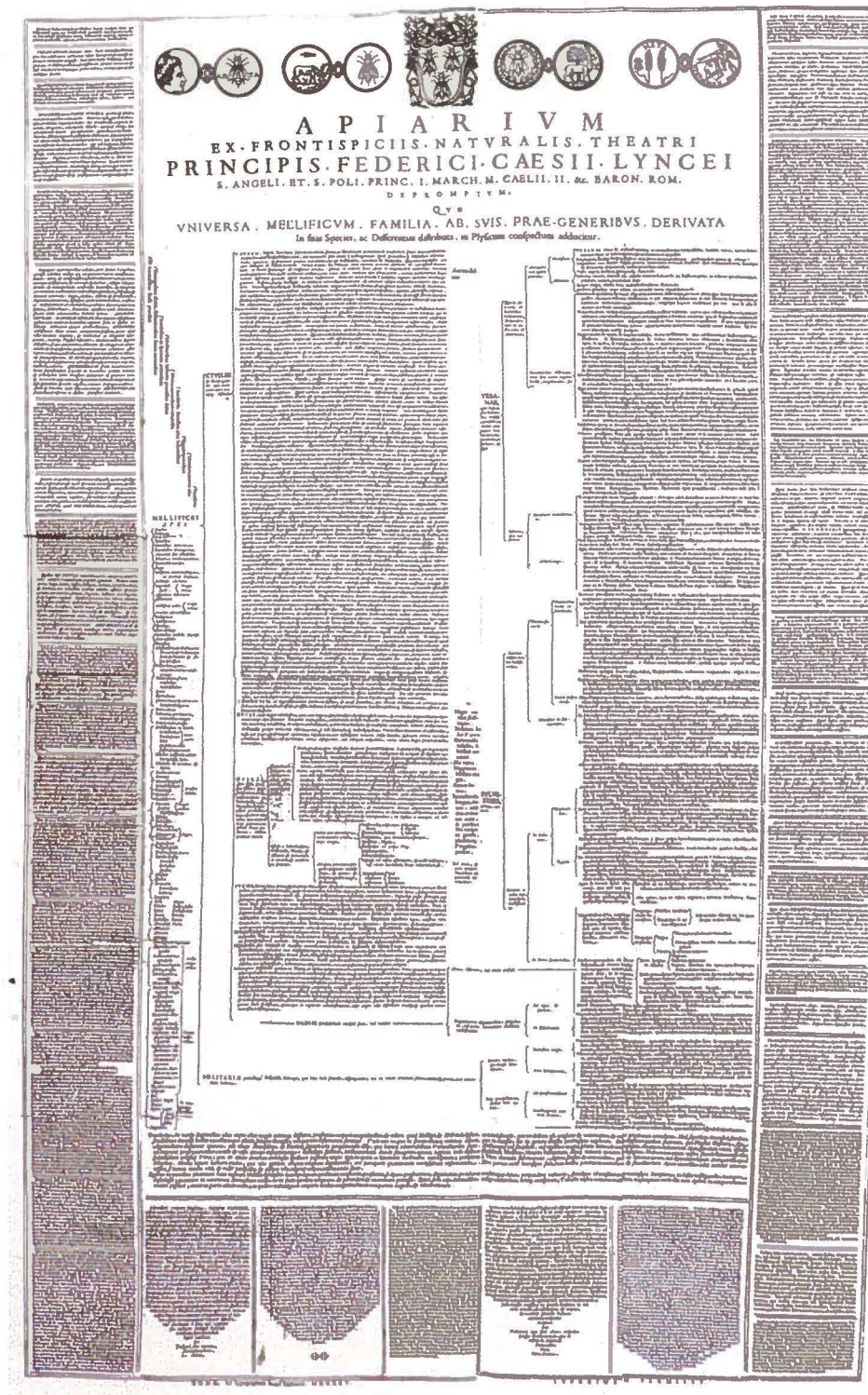
⁸⁶ "The leitmotif of the poem would thus be the parallel between the chastity of the bees and that of Urban himself." Freedberg 2002, 165.

⁸⁷ Undated but mentioned in a letter by Cesi of September 1625 (Freedberg 2002, 166). The work has recently been edited and translated by Guerrini and Guardo 2005. A fine English edition and translation remains unpublished, Kidwell 1970.

68. Hans Greuter. *Melissographia*, engraving, 1625.



69. Coins of Diana with bees, in a laurel wreath
(Riquius 1625, engraved frontispiece).



70. Federico Cesi, *Apiarium*, Rome, 1625
(photo: Ragazzini, Rome).

of the candles carried in the Candlemas celebration was "a sign of his [Christ's] body, which was born of the Virgin Mary without corruption of the flesh, as bees make honey without mingling with each other."⁸⁸

Born From the Dunghill

Another important tradition related to the theme of the progeny of the pope in his marriage with the church relates to the ritual of the investiture of newly elected popes, from the Coronation, when he is vested with the accouterments of his office, including the episcopal ring as a sign of his ecclesiastical marriage, to the ceremony of taking possession of his cathedral, in this case St. John's in the Lateran, the ancient seat of the papacy founded by Constantine on the site of the Sessorian Palace. In the case of Rome the possession signified the world dominion of the pope and the institutional church. Two biblical texts are crucial to an understanding of how this process was conceived. The first is recited by Hanna, the famous Song of Hanna, in the first Book of Samuel, where the prophetess intones her thanks to the Lord for opening her womb, previously barren, to bear her son, whom she had promised to dedicate to the priesthood, and who became the future leader of Israel.

1 Samuel 1:

27 For this child I prayed; and the LORD hath given me my petition which I asked of him:

28 Therefore also I have lent him to the LORD; as long as he liveth he shall be lent to the LORD.

1 Samuel 2:

7 The LORD maketh poor, and maketh rich: he bringeth low, and lifteth up.

8 He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth up the beggar from the dunghill (de stercore elevat), to set them among princes, and to make them inherit the throne of glory: for the pillars of the earth are the LORD's, and he hath set the world upon them.

The theme and much of the wording is repeated in Psalm 112,

5 Who is as the Lord our God, who dwelleth on high:

6 and looketh down on the low things in heaven and in earth?

7 Raising up the needy from the earth, and lifting up the poor out of the dunghill:

8 That he may place him with princes, with the princes of his people.

9 Who maketh a barren woman to dwell in a house, the joyful mother of children.

⁸⁸ Voragine 1993, I, 149. For associations of Mary with the bee, the candle, and wax, especially with respect to the virgin birth, the references in Marracci 1710, 30f., 89; Salzer 1967, s.v. Biene, Kerze, Wachs.

and the passage about the genesis and elevation of Samuel was recited by the assembled cardinals as the newly elected Pope assumed his exalted position, reminding him of his humble origin, of the divine act that had elevated him, and of the promise of sanctified progeny.

These texts are of primary importance in the history of rulership, in that they articulate the moral conditions under which God bestows the authority of dominion over others. The first is that it is indeed God on high who bestows this power. The second is that the rulership results from God's charitable act of lifting the poor and needy to the company of princes. The third is the promise of fulfillment through increase, expressed through the metaphor or analogy of joy in the wonderment of a barren woman who bears children. In sum, the ruler in his exaltation must remember that his power is not of his own making but stems from God, that his origin is humble, earthly, and poor, and that God's benefice will be the joy of his faithful subjects. For Cardinal Bellarmine, commenting on the psalm in the time of Urban VIII, the man raised from the filth of original sin joins the possessors of the Heavenly Jerusalem, and the participants of the Kingdom of Heaven. He compares this elevation to the childless woman made fertile; and the latter generally to individual women from Sarah to Anna. In a higher sense the elevation also applies to the church comprised of the gentiles, *ecclesia ex gentibus*, which remained sterile for a long time, until in old age it gave birth to many.⁸⁹

In the Middle Ages these biblical definitions of rulership gave rise to a traditional ceremony of taking possession in which once the pope was enthroned, all the cardinals honored him by elevating him and intoning the *stercore* verse from the book of Samuel, after which he threw three handfuls of coins to the people, intoning the line from the Acts of the Apostles (3: 6) spoken by Peter when he healed the lame man at the Temple of Jerusalem "Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee."⁹⁰ The medieval white marble throne in the Lateran used for this ceremony came to be known, from the biblical vocabulary, as the *Sedes Stercorata* or *Stercoraria* (the dung chair) (Fig. 71). The ceremony, in effect, consummated the marriage between the Church and the pope. The term became notorious, however, when it was associated with two other, altogether different "thrones" that were used in the ritual that followed (Fig. 72).⁹¹ Made of red marble thought to be porphyry, perforated and cut open at

⁸⁹ Bellarmino II, 1866, 268:

nam genus humanum jacebat in terra, et in stercoro peccati originalis et consequentiam miseriarum; et tamen Deus sedens in coelo respexit in terram, et inde suscitavit inopem, hominem videlicet spoliatum much a latronibus, et relictum semivivum, et jacentem in stercore miseriarum, ut collocaret eum a "cum principibus : " non quibuscumque, sed "cum principibus populi sui," possessoribus coelestis Jerusalem, et participibus regni coelorum.

Quemadmodum infelicitas virorum est status humilise et despectus, ita infelicitas mulierum est sterilitas. Sed quomodo Deus respicit viros humiles, ut de statu infimo erigat ad regnim, ita respicit humiles feminas, ut de sterilitate perducatur ad fecunditatem. Potest autem hoc totum referri ad singulas feminas, ut Saram, Rebeecam, Rachelem, Annam, et similes. Sed altiore sensu pertinet ad Ecclesiam ex gentibus congregatam, quae longo tempore mansit sterilis, sed in senectute peperit plurimos . . .

⁹⁰ Burckard 1906-14, 83.

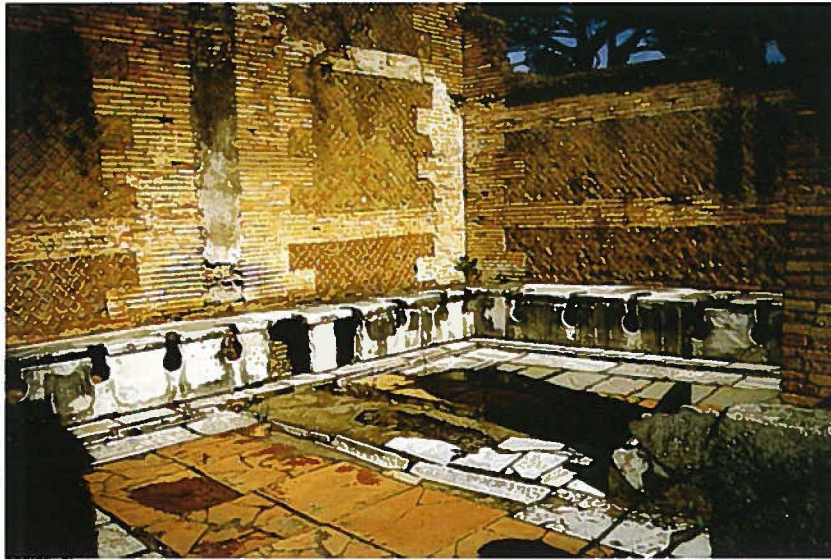
⁹¹ On the chair in the Vatican, see Helbig 1963-72, I, 156f., no. 212, with references. The second chair, identical, was removed to the Louvre by Napoleon. There is also a polychrome marble specimen in the British Museum that came from the Baths of Caracalla.



71. Papal dung throne (*sedes stercorata*),
marble. San Giovanni in Laterano,
Rome.



72. Porphyry chair. Musei Vaticani,
Rome.



73. Ancient Roman Latrine. Ostia.

the front, these chairs were of a shape that actually embodied the three elements of the biblical theme of enthronement. The perforations corresponded to those used by ancient Romans in their latrines and in obstetrical chairs, when women were delivered from a seated or reclining position, and by virtue of their material they were indeed imperial thrones (Figs. 73–4).⁹² The *sedes stercorata* and these extraordinary objects of papal ritual were notorious evidence, perhaps even the progenitors, in the endless polemics about the supposed medieval female pope Joanna who gave birth during the possession ceremony, and hence their use in verifying the sex of newly elected popes.⁹³ Through the Middle Ages the popes were indeed described as seated successively on the two porphyry chairs in a distended position as if reclining. In point of fact, however, early accounts of the coronation ceremonies give a quite specific explanation of the two chairs and the reclining position — that the newly elected pope appeared to lie between the primacy of Peter the Prince of the Apostles and the preaching of Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles. In my view the phraseology, to lie “between the two *lectulos*” (biers) of Peter and Paul, entombed at St. Peter’s in the Vatican, refers to the transitoriness of the Pope’s reign, an idea by no means inconsistent with that of the “progeny” expected of his marriage with the Church.⁹⁴ In this sense the election ceremony of a new pope may be understood as a sort of mimetic commemoration of the passing of the apostles, as well as a rebirth of the Church,

⁹² On the terracotta relief at Ostia, see Helbig 1963–72, IV, 14f., no. 3004.

⁹³ Except for the ideological implications of the biblical passages that underlay the whole phenomenon, the stories of the *sedes stercorata* and Pope Joanna have been amply studied by D’Onofrio 1979, to whose work I have been indebted. Important subsequent studies are those by Gussone 1972, esp. 251–87, Maccarrone 1991, II, esp. 1304–25, Paravicini-Bagliani 2000, 39–57, and Boureau 2001.

⁹⁴ Qui siquidem electus illis duobus sedibus sic sedere debet ac si videatur inter duos lectulos jacere, id est, ut accumbat inter principis Apostolorum Petri primatum et Pauli doctoris gentium praedicationem.

both points expressed in the pair of perforated porphyry thrones and the reclining position. The scandalous stories nevertheless became powerful instruments of anti-papal Protestant propaganda, engendering a vicious polemic through the sixteenth century, including depictions of the pope giving birth, being examined, as a female demon, as Satan himself with female breasts, wearing a quasi-tiara, enthroned, legs spread to reveal an open-mouthed, jeering face; the nether mask of Satan could also function ambiguously, expelling nude souls to a new, eternal life in Hell (Figs. 75–9).⁹⁵ Partly owing to these unsavory associations, no doubt, the *sedes stercorata* and porphyry chairs were long abandoned by Urban VIII's time.⁹⁶ But the underlying ecclesiological theme was certainly not forgotten — Bellarmine and Baronio were among the main protagonists in the debate — and the biblically mandated, three-fold constituents of papal rule, redemption from original sin, exaltation to the highest dominion, and the divinely ordained progeny born from his spiritual marriage to the church, are reflected in the coats of arms that adorn the pedestals of the Baldacchino. Mary's Magnificat in Luke I: 46ff. uses language similar to that of the Old Testament, and expresses the same idea of the Lord miraculously fecundating the barren and raising up the humble.⁹⁷ And Hannah

Maccarrone 1991, 1318 and n. 198, rejecting altogether D'Onofrio's birthing interpretation, cites this text to suggest that the purpose of the action was to give the pope a rest during the arduous ceremonies. (D'Onofrio's reading, p. 152, of *super* for *inter*, is indeed unacceptable.) My own view, based on the admonition to humility in the apostolic succession, coincides perfectly with those of Paravicini-Bagliani 2000, 50f., and Boureau 2001, 90–8; they also reject any reference to progeny, however, leaving unexplained the use of *perforated* chairs in the ritual.

⁹⁵ See the rich collection of material on the sixteenth-century debate collected and discussed by Zen 1994, 211–22. The Protestant images are discussed in this context by D'Onofrio 1979, 94–128. The fertility connotations of nether-faced devils, including the Satan figures reproduced here, have been explored in an illuminating study by Paxson 1998. Concerning Boaiutau see Bates 2005, 66f., 72; Morrona, who published the second engraving (1812, II, 240–3, pl. 10), dated it about 1500 and thought it represented the original form of Satan in Orcagna's then much restored and now largely destroyed vision of Hell in the Camposanta (see also Bucci and Bertolini 1960, 58, fig. 44).

⁹⁶ Evidently Leo X was the last pope to use all three chairs, beginning with the *sedes stercorata*, the elevation and the recitation of the passage from the Song of Hannah. In each case Leo X was said to have been seated as if reclining. D'Onofrio (1979, 159) considered this position an allusion to parturition, which in my view would indeed refer to the miraculous birth that concludes the biblical *stercore* passages. It is intriguing that this obstetrical association might have been part of the Medici-Medicus metaphor that profoundly informed the ideology of Leo's reign from the outset. “ . . . *ad quem jacentem* ... tres Priores Ordinum Cardinalium *dixerunt super eum, dum elevarunt*, suscitatus de stercore etc. et Papa *stans accepit de gremio* Camerarii *tres pugnos quatrinatorum, et projiciens dixit*, argentum, et aurum etc. . . . *Postea . . . primo sedens, quasi iacens* . . . et deinde . . . *Papa surgens ivit ad aliam Sedem*, et jacuit . . . (from the description of the papal Master of Ceremonies Paris de Grassis, published by Cancellieri 1802, 64f.).

⁹⁷ Magnificat, Luke 1:

46. And Mary said, My soul doth magnify the Lord,

47. And my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour.

48. For he hath regarded the low estate of his handmaiden: for, behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed.

49. For he that is mighty hath done to me great things; and holy is his name.

50. And his mercy is on them that fear him from generation to generation.



74. Scene of Birth, terracotta. Ostia, Museo Ostiense
(Mus. No. 4, Inv. 5204).

75. Pope giving birth, woodcut. (Wolf 1600, I, 230).





76. Pope being examined, woodcut
(Wolf 1600, I, 224).

77. Female Pope-Donkey, woodcut
(Melancthon and Luther 1523).





78. Pierre Boaistuau, Satan
(Boaistuau 1560, 1).



79. Satan, engraving *ca.* 1500,
det. (Morrona 1812, II, pl. 10).

presented the infant Samuel in the Temple at Shiloh, as Mary presented Christ in the Temple of Jerusalem.^{98 98a}

MARGINALIA: EMBLEMS OF SALVATION

Jubilee

The main themes we have discerned in the imagery of the coats of arms affixed to the pedestals are encapsulated and incorporated into the fabric of the Baldacchino itself in the form of what might be called marginalia, or rather footnotes distributed here and there on the plinths of the bronze columns.⁹⁹ These seemingly incidental details, seven in all, are in fact serendipitous testimonies to the kind of divine intervention that occurred with the invasion of bees at the pope's election (Figs. 80–7). They are of two kinds: commemorative medals, personal as well as devotional; and explicitly emblematic animals. Be it noted that these mementoes

51. He hath shewed strength with his arm; he hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts.

52. He hath put down the mighty from their seats, and exalted them of low degree.

53. He hath filled the hungry with good things; and the rich he hath sent empty away.

54. He hath holpen his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy;

55. As he spake to our fathers, to Abraham, and to his seed for ever.

Luke 1

46. Et ait Maria: "Magnificat anima mea Dominum,

47. et exultavit spiritus meus in Deo salvatore meo,

48. quia respexit humilitatem ancillae suae. Ecce enim ex hoc beatam me dicent omnes generationes,

49. quia fecit mihi magna, qui potens est, et sanctum nomen eius,

50. et misericordia eius in progenies et progenies timentibus eum.

51. Fecit potentiam in brachio suo, dispersit superbos mente cordis sui;

52. deposuit potentes de sede et exaltavit humiles;

53. esurientes implevit bonis et divites dimisit inanes.

54. Suscepit Israel puerum suum, recordatus misericordiae,

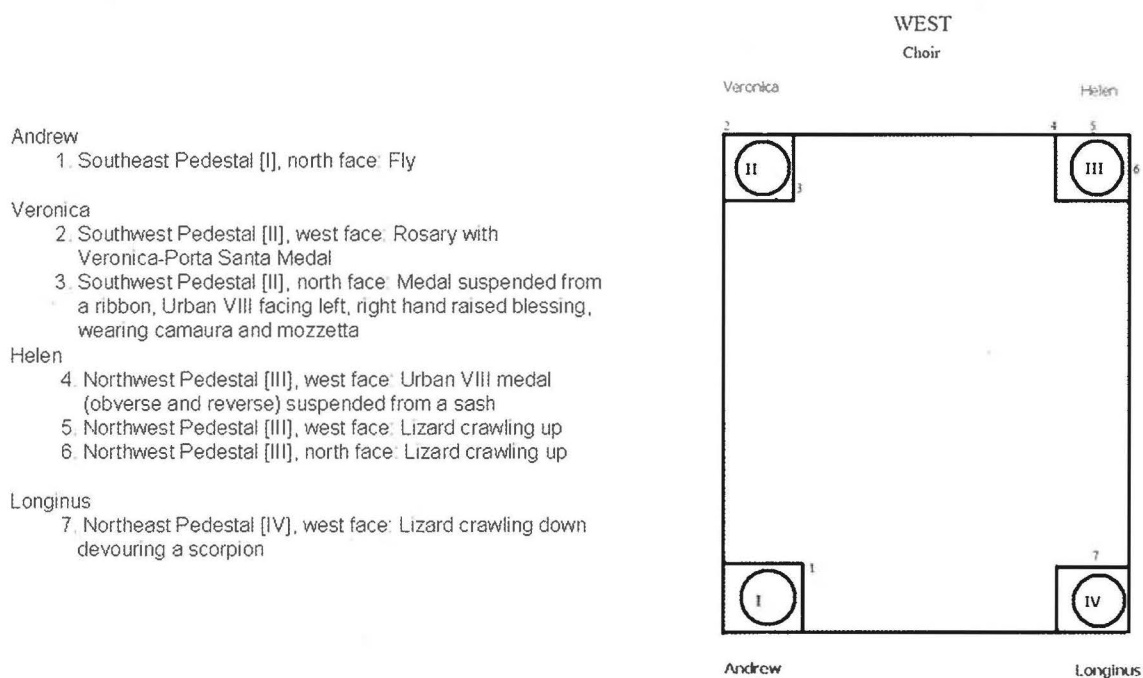
55. sicut locutus est ad patres nostros, Abraham et semini eius in saecula".

⁹⁸ Anna presented Samuel to the Lord in the temple of Shiloh (1Sam. 1:24–28); the Virgin Mary presented Jesus in the Temple of Jerusalem (Luke 2:22–39).

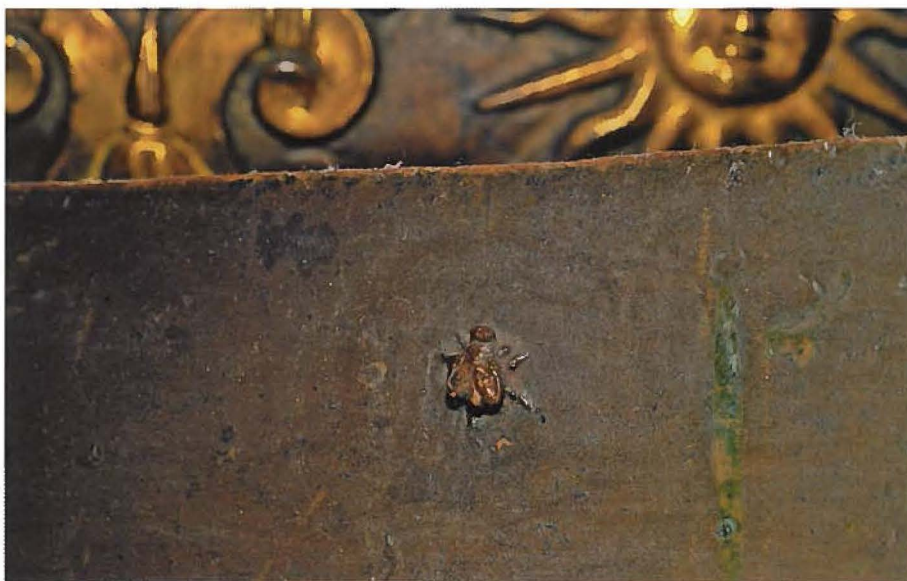
^{98a} An astonishing parallel for the main theme encapsulated in the pedestals of the Baldacchino has recently come to light, in the form of an allegorical painting by the Antwerp artist Frans Francken II (1581–1642). The picture is composed in two horizontal registers, the empyrean above, centered upon the three cardinal virtues flanked on left by Hercules, emblematic of Fortitude, and on the right by Minerva, emblematic of Divine Wisdom; below, a scene of Hell, flanked by Death as a skeleton entering from the left, and by Father Time fleeing from the right. The kind of moral allegory portrayed here is characteristic of Jesuit school drama, the plays produced, often very elaborately and in emulation of classical drama, by the students in Jesuit seminaries everywhere. (Härting 1983, 185 n. 437; Härting 1989, 342f. No. 362*).

⁹⁹ These details have been discussed and in part reproduced by Portoghesi 1967, 33; Antonazzi 1975, 2; Scarfone 1977, Wallace 1978, 161, Fehl 1986, 176f., Kirwin 1997, 140–5, Spagnolo, in Pinelli 2000, Schede, 796, Noè 2001, 62f., and in the exemplary monographic study of Urban VIII's medals by Simonato 2008, 50.

are life-size, literally true to life, and partly for this very reason, they refer to the real world, the altar itself and its role in the mission of the church. Suspended from beads or ribbons draped over the edges of the column stylobates, the medals are all of the sort that would have been acquired by pilgrims to the 1625 Jubilee and deposited by them anonymously as votive signs of their devotion, in the hope of finding miraculous cures for their afflictions. They came to St. Peter's as if to Jerusalem, circled around the Baldacchino, and ultimately the passion relics displayed in the crossing piers, celebrating Holy Year in perpetuity in a kind of virtual *via crucis* — exactly as Eisenstein understood. Two are medallion portraits of the pope, such as were often inserted in the foundations of new structures as good omens and historical records. One shows the pope facing left, his hand raised in blessing, wearing the papal cap (*camaura*) and cape (*mozzetta*). The medal is shown backwards (the pope blesses with his right hand, always the near hand on profile medals), probably as a negative form prior to casting. The anomaly is no accident: shown thus on the north face of the Veronica pedestal, the pope's blessing is toward the altar. No example of this type is extant, but there is a correspondence to the single medallion portrait of Urban shown blessing, wearing tiara and cope, issued to commemorate the canonization of Andrea Corsini, which took place on the same spot, as it were, in 1629; the scene on the reverse includes an important version of the Baldacchino itself (Fig. 88). A third medal, which shows the pope facing right toward the choir, hatless and wearing the papal cope, is doubtless the one issued in 1624, with an image of Justice on the reverse, recording the pope's efforts to achieve a peaceful settlement to the Thirty Year's War (Fig. 89).



80. List and Diagram of Locations of Baldacchino Marginalia.



81. Southeast Pedestal [I],
north face, Fly (1).





82. Southwest Pedestal [II],
west face, Rosary with
Veronica-Porta Santa
medal (2).





83. Southwest Pedestal [II],
north face, Medal suspended
from on a ribbon, Urban VIII
facing left right hand raised
blessing, wearing camaura and
mozzetta (3).





84. Northwest Pedestal [III], west face, Medal of Urban VIII (obverse and reverse) suspended on a sash (4).



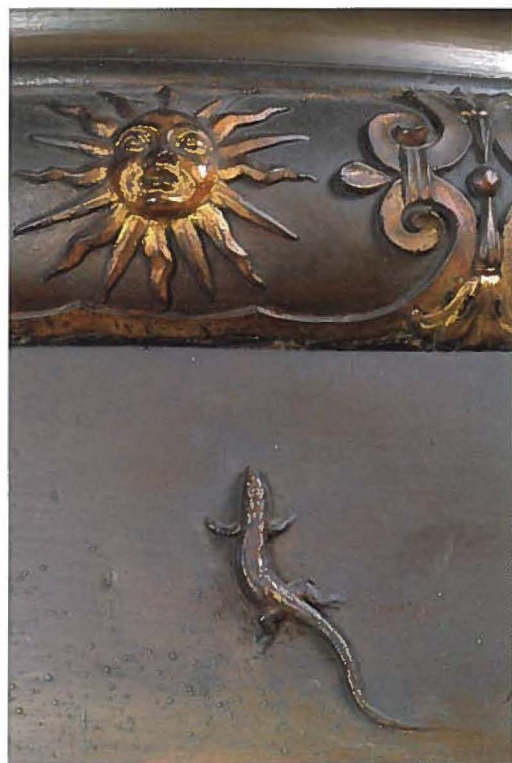


85. Northwest Pedestal [III],
west face, Lizard crawling
up (5).





86. Northwest Pedestal [III],
north face, Lizard crawling
up (6).





87. Northeast Pedestal [IV],
west face, Lizard crawling
down devouring scorpion
(7).



Of a devotional nature is a rosary from which is suspended an oval medal showing the Porta Santa flanked by Peter and Paul; this was specifically a souvenir of the Jubilee, recalling the indulgences earned by those who made the pilgrimage, passed through the portal and performed this venerable devotion to the Virgin at the high altar.¹⁰⁰ The Porta Santa, as the entrance both to St. Peter's and via the Church to redemption, was also known as the Porta Coeli, the gateway to heaven, one of the most common epithets of the Virgin, referring both to her virginity and the incarnation, and to her intercessory role in the process of salvation. The reverse of the medal in the one known example of this oval type, shows Veronica presenting her miraculous image of the Savior, the display of which during Holy Year, very rare at other times, was one of the celebration's most important features and attractions (Fig. 90).¹⁰¹

The rosary had a particular relevance to the virginal theme of the pedestals and the Trinitarian ideology of the Baldacchino as a whole, since they evoked the Woman of the Apocalypse and were recited in honor of the Trinity.¹⁰² The rosary was also given special prominence during the 1625 Jubilee in a vast celebratory procession organized by the Dominicans at Santa Maria sopra Minerva, 5–12 October. The celebration centered on a huge temporary structure designed by Orazio Torriani (who the following year collaborated with Bernini on the high altar of Sant' Agostino), which clearly reflects the Baldacchino in overall design and in many details (Fig. 91).¹⁰³ Particularly significant, however, is the fact that in a detailed contemporary account of the celebration the structure is called a "talamo," that is, a nuptial chamber, in reference to the image it contained of the Queen of Heaven holding the Christ child, striking exactly the same note as do the pedestals of the Baldacchino. The patron of the event was Carlo Barberini, the new pope's brother.

Lizards and the Sol Iustitiae

Many small animals populate the natural tendrils of the ancient marble columns, but here, isolated on the plinths, there are only lizards, a scorpion, and a fly.¹⁰⁴

The importance and meaning of two of the lizards may be illuminated — I use the word deliberately — by one of the great contributions to the art history of classical sculpture, made as recently as 2002 in a brilliant study by Renate Preisshofen. Preisshofen resolved at last

¹⁰⁰ For what follows here concerning the imagery, symbolism, and ritual related to the Holy Year, see the comprehensive survey by Fagiolo and Madonna 1984.

¹⁰¹ Fagiolo and Madonna 1984, 54, fig. II 2.12a.

¹⁰² Lapide 1866–88, XXI, col. 238. Comment on Rev. 12: 1: et in capite eius corona stellarum duodecim: Ex hoc loco nonnulli viri religiosi et cultus B. Virginis studiosi, conficiunt coronam, sive Rosarium duodecim stellarum, illudque hoc modo recitant. In honorem S. Trinitatis legunt interpolate ter orationem Dominicam, puta ter Pater noster...

¹⁰³ First published by Lavin 1973; see Fagiolo dell'Arco 1997, 262–4. On the work at S. Agostino, Wittkower 1997, 246, no. 23.

¹⁰⁴ The animals on the marble columns, including a lizard on the health-giving Colonna Santa are noted by Nobile 1997, *passim*, and see 94).

the traditional but patently anomalous and contradictory interpretation of one of the major monuments of Greek art, the so-called Apollo Stauroctonos, originally a work in bronze by Praxiteles, famous from the references to it in ancient sources and from the innumerable extant copies and variants in virtually all media (Fig. 92). The sculpture showed the god leaning against a tree or tree stump, with a lizard climbing up the trunk. The god carried a bow and arrow, as if preparing to shoot an arrow at the animal, hence the epithet, stauroctonos, lizard killer, attached to the figure by Pliny, "He also made a young Apollo with an arrow watching a lizard as it creeps up with the intent to seize at hand; this is known as the Sauroktonos or Lizard-slayer," whose interpretation was followed by the poet Martial, "Corinthian Lizard Slayer. Spare the lizard, insidious boy, as she creeps toward you; she wants to die by your fingers."¹⁰⁵ Preisshofen showed that Pliny was simply in error, misinterpreting the meaning of Apollo's gesture, perhaps by association with the story of Apollo killing the python; and especially misunderstanding the action of the reptile, which climbs up toward the god, rather than scampering away to hide, as is the animal's wont under such circumstances. Most important is the fact that throughout the physiological tradition the lizard is sacred to Apollo, with whom it is frequently associated in contexts that are clearly medicinal, invoked to augur healing from disease, and one ailment in particular, diseases of the eyes. It was said that the lizard had the extraordinary capacity when it lost its eyesight, by accident or as it aged, to face the sun and regain its eyesight miraculously from the rays of light cast from the sun's rays. Far from slaying the lizard, Apollo's luminous arrows actually heal him. The mythographer Hyginus describes Apollo, the father of Asclepius, as the first to practice the art of treating the eyes.¹⁰⁶ The Praxitelean statue is not of a type known only from a single, misguided and misleading phrase in Pliny, repeated by Martial, but instead embodies one of the best known and oft-repeated epithets of the god, Apollo the Physician (*Ἰατρός* *Iatros* in Greek, *Medicus* and *Salutaris* in Latin), perfectly embodied in the figure's tender form, gentle attitude, and benign expression.¹⁰⁷ Hence the lizard itself became a medication and magical talisman to ward off or recover from eye ailments; and the relationship was explicit, as can be seen, for example, in a gem amulet showing a lizard and inscribed LVMINA RESTITVTA, where the translucency of the material invokes the agent of the charm (Fig. 93).¹⁰⁸

It is astonishing to discover that Bernini may have been aware of the true meaning of the Praxitelean work, even though the error was only corrected by modern scholarship in

¹⁰⁵ NH 34, 70: "Fecit et puberem Apollinem subrepenti lacerate cominus sagitta insidiantem quem sauroctonon vocant" (1896, 56). Martial, Epigrams, 172 (Bailey 1993, III, 292):

Sauroctonos Corinthius

Ad te reptanti, puer insidiose, lacertaep

parce; cupit digitis illa perire tuis.

¹⁰⁶ Hyginus, *Fabulae*, No. 274; Grant 1960, 173; Marshall 2002, 196: Apollo artem oculariam medicinam primus fecit.

¹⁰⁷ The epigraphical evidence for the Greek term has been collected by von Staden in an essay "The Oath and the oaths", that will appear in France in a Festschrift for Jacques Jouanna.

¹⁰⁸ Panofka 1852, 474f., No. 109. The many physiological and medicinal sources may be traced through the citations in Preisshofen 2002, 51–3. While correcting the proof of this work I discovered Jean Sorabella's wide-ranging discussion (2007) of lizard lore and representations in antiquity, in which, however, Preisshofen's study was overlooked.



88. Medal of Urban VIII facing right wearing tiara and cope, blessing;
reverse: Canonization of Andrea Corsini, 1629. British Museum, London.



89. Medal of Urban VIII facing right, bare-headed wearing cope;
reverse: Justice seated holding balance and sword, 1624. British Museum, London.



90. Jubilee medal, Veronica and Porta Santa with SS Peter and Paul, 1625. Private collection (Fagiolo and Madonna, eds., 1984, Fig. 11. 2. 2a).

91. Orazio Torriani, "Talamo" at S. Maria sopra Minerva for the procession of the Rosary, engraving (Brandi 1625, 61).



Esemplare del Talamo di sopra descritto

92. Apollo "Salutari" (Sauroktonos) from the Borghese Collection, marble. Musée du Louvre, Paris.



93. LVMINA RESTITVTA, intaglio gem stone in gold ring.
Staatliche Museen, Berlin.



94. Faustina Minor, 145-76 AD, reverse,
Apollo with Lizard on column,
Philippopolis.
Gorny & Mosch Giessener Münzhandlung,
Auction 115, March 5th, 2002,
Lot number: 1305
(Photo courtesy Christoph Mosch).



95. Antoninus Pius, 138-61 AC.,
reverse, Apollo in a tetrastyle temple front,
Mysia. Staatliche Museen, Berlin.



96. Sauras and Batrachos Capital. San Lorenzo fuori le Mura, Rome.

97. *Synagogue*. South Transept Portal, Cathedral, Strasbourg.



2002. The statue was first associated with the passage in Pliny in the eighteenth century. The version now in the Louvre was in the Villa Borghese in the early seventeenth century, where in Jacomo Manilli's 1650 description of the villa the subject is correctly identified as Apollo *Salutare* (Apollo the Physician), and the animal on the trunk identified as a snake, which had the same attributes of shedding its skin and renewing its eyesight in the sun and was also deemed a symbol of health.¹⁰⁹ Manilli may fortunately have been unaware of Pliny's and Martial's misidentification, relying instead, as did Preissshofen, on the abundant literary and numismatic evidence that associated Apollo with healing.

Bernini and his contemporaries very likely knew the sculpture and understood it in this way. On the Baldacchino column bases two of the lizards are also shown climbing up the face of the plinth toward the emblems of the sun that alternate with bees on the torus above. Association of the Praxitelean type of Apollo healing the lizard with the architectural context of the Baldacchino may have come from coins on which the figure is actually shown leaning on a column taking aim at the lizard crawling upward (Fig. 94). A further relevance to the Baldacchino may have been suggested by coins that show the statue as a cult figure in a four-columned front of the temple of the sun god (Fig. 95).¹¹⁰ There may even have been an association with the twisted columns, from the appearance of a lizard in the spiral volute of a famous ionic capital in San Lorenzo fuori le Mura in Rome, where a frog appears in the other volute (Fig. 96).¹¹¹ The names of the animals in Greek, Sauras and Batrachos, are recorded in Pliny as two architects who designed temples in Rome; foiled in their wish to sign the buildings, instead they inserted the homonymic animals in the "spiris" (literally spirals) of the columns (*in columnarum spiris insculptae*).¹¹² Winckelmann was the first to link the passage to the capital at San Lorenzo, but the text might easily evoke the spiral columns at St. Peter's, and serve as a personal commemoration and association with the ancient architect.¹¹³ The motif thus alludes to the same kind of healing process as that associated with the Colonna

¹⁰⁹ Manilli 1650, 30: "... tra le due finestre del Piano terreno, èalzata in vna nicchia la Statua d'Apollo salutare, con vn dardo in mano, e dall'altro lato, auuolto in un tronco il Serpe, simbolo della Salute."

¹¹⁰ Fritze 1913, 33, No. 237.

¹¹¹ On the S. Lorenzo capital, see Claussen 1992, 34–8.

¹¹² Pliny, *Natural History*, XXXVI, 42, Jex-Blake 1977, 212 / 215:

Inuenio et Canachum laudatissimum inter statuarios fecisse marmorea. nec Sauram atque Batrachum obliterari convenit, qui fecere templa Octaviae porticibus inclusa, natione ipsi Lacones. quidam et opibus praepotentes fuisse eos putant ac sua impensa construxisse, inscriptionem sperantes, qua negata hoc tamen alio modo usurpasse. Sunt certe etiam nunc in columnarum spiris insculptae nominum eorum argumento lacerta atque rana [emphasis mine].

Saura and Batrachos, Lakonians by birth, ... built the temples enclosed by the galleries of Octavia. Some say that they were rich men who built the temples at their own cost, hoping that their names would be inscribed upon them. Foiled in this, they yet achieved their object in another way, so it is said, and it is undeniably true that a lizard and a frog, typifying their names, are still to be seen carved on the bases [*spiris*] of the columns.

¹¹³ Winckelmann thought the capital antique, whereas, like its companions, it dates from the early thirteenth century (see Claussen 1992, 35). The medieval artist likewise must have interpreted Pliny's text as referring to a spiral and executed the capital in emulation of the ancient architects' signatures. The term, however, is normally used for the base, or torus, of a column, which Bernini may also have realized, so that his lizards conform to both readings.

Santa and the themes of purification and Petrine thaumaturgy Raphael had associated with the twisted columns transferred from the Temple of Jerusalem to the high altar at St. Peter's. Christian thought had long considered the obstinacy of disbelief a malady of the soul associated with blindness, as in depictions of Synagoga blindfolded (Fig. 97). In the Baldacchino the miracle of healing from original sin was linked to the Church and hence to Urban. And it involved a fundamental shift of emphasis and meaning from ritual and physical healing to what might be called visionary healing that involved the double meaning of the verb to see, that is, to verify with the physical eye, and to understand and believe with the inner eye — to be “illuminated” and “restored” to the “visio dei” of Paradise before the Fall. It is in this new, visionary sense that Urban succeeds Leo X, in the role of vicarious *Christus Medicus*.

The relevance of this theme in particular to the papacy under Urban VIII is evident from another attribute under which Apollo as healer was worshiped in antiquity — so devoutly that the Hippocratic oath actually begins by invoking him, “I swear by Apollo the Physician and by Asclepius and by Health and Panacea and by all the gods as well as goddesses . . .”¹¹⁴ Shown on coins, the healer holds in his left hand a branch of laurel, famous in antiquity for its many medicinal powers, and in his left a bow and arrow (Fig. 98).¹¹⁵

The type is most famous from a figure of Apollo by the sculptor Calamis, which was moved from Apollonia in Pontus to the Capitoline in Rome. The sculpture was a colossal bronze, as tall as a tower, singled out by Pliny as a technical tour de force, a challenge that must have appealed to Bernini as he prepared his colossal bronze columns.¹¹⁶ One of the important functions of the Sun God was to protect the populous from the plague, and the coin type related to the Borghese statue, which bore the inscription *Apollo Salutaris*, was associated with a third century plague epidemic (Fig. 99).¹¹⁷ Livy records that a famous temple of Apollo Medicus in Rome, near the Theater of Marcellus, the remains of which are still to be seen, was motivated by the plague.¹¹⁸ The disease, always menacing, must have been especially worrisome to Urban since the city had been threatened at the very beginning of his reign.¹¹⁹ Laurel, the plant sacred to Apollo, immune to lightning, capable of regenerating from a branch, rather than from seed, was the third, along with the bee and the sun, of the trinity of Barberini emblems.¹²⁰ In the Baldacchino, the laurel, symbol of eternal life, climbs

¹¹⁴ Translation from Von Staden 1996.

¹¹⁵ *Lexicon* 1981–1999, II, 1, 217, No. 278. On the medicinal properties of laurel, see Pauly-Wissowa 1894–1963, XIII, 2, cols. 1438f.

¹¹⁶ Pliny, NH, XXXIV, 39:

Of audacity countless instances can be given. For example artists have conceived the idea of gigantic statues called *colossi*, as tall as towers. Of this class is the Apollo in the Capitol, brought from Apollonia in Pontus by Marcus Lucullus; it is forty-five feet high, and cost five hundred talents.

¹¹⁷ See the Online essay by David R. Sear: http://www.davidrsear.com/academy/natural_disasters.html

¹¹⁸ See the essay by Alessandro Viscogliosi in Steinby, ed. 1993–2000, I, 49–54. Livy attributes the temple to the plague at IV.25.3, and identifies it as *aedem Apollinis medici* at XL.51.6.

¹¹⁹ In July 1624 all the gates of the city had been placed under guard for fear of an invasion of the plague from Naples; Gigli 1994, I, 137.

¹²⁰ The Virgilian laurel branch as a symbol of autogenesis and eternal rejuvenation was a major theme of the Medici in Florence, no doubt an important inspiration for Urban's ideas. See Lavin 1993, 51–5, and the references cited there.

the twisted columns in the form of tendrils spiraling up toward the resurgent Christ, *Iustitiae*, as he rises to take his heavenly seat of judgment.

The medieval physiological tradition allegorized two main properties of the “Sun Lizard” in specifically visionary terms: its capacity to heal itself in old age by shedding its skin and to renew its eyesight by looking at the sun, is compared to the man who, clothed in old vestments, the eyes of his heart blinded, seeks the intelligible rising sun, that is, Christ, whose name means rising, and who is called the Sun of Justice, with healing in his wings. Thus the intelligible eyes of the heart are opened and the man sheds his old self and dons the new.¹²¹ The reference here to Malachi’s prophesy of Christ as the rising *Sol Iustitiae* with healing wings, is particularly significant in the context of what we said earlier about the Apocalyptic Woman clothed in the Sun whose travail gives birth to the Church and the Man-Child.¹²² The Apocalyptic Woman was also endowed with wings — “and to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness” (Rev. 12:14)¹²³ — and in

¹²¹ Carmody 1941, 134:

XLIX. DE SAURA ELIACE HOC EST ANGUILLA SOLIS

Est qui uocatur saura eliace, hoc est anguilla solis. Cum senuerit, impeditur duobus oculis suis, et excecatur, non uidens solis lumen. Quid faciet? ex bona sua natura inquit parietem respicientem ad orientem, et intrat in fissuram parietis, uidens ad orientem, et oriente sole aperientur ei oculi, et noua efficitur.

Sic et tu, o homo, si ergo ueteris hominis indumentum habes [Col. 3. 9, Eph. 4. 22], uide ne quando oculi cordis tui impediti fuerint, requiras intellegibilem orientem solem dominum Iesum Christum, cuius nomen uocatur oriens [cf. Zach. 3. 8, 6. 12, Luc. 1. 78] in propheta Hieremia. Et ipse est sol iustitiae, sicut apostolus dicit [cf. Mal. 4. 2]; et aperiet tibi intellegibiles oculos cordis tui, et nouum per ueteris fiet tibi uestimentum.

Carmody 1939, 60f.:

XXXVII Lacerta

Est uolatile animal quod lacerta dicitur clarum ut sol. Physiologus dicit de eo quia quando senuerit, utrisque oculis impeditur, ita ut nec solis lumen uideat. Sed suae naturae huiusce modi praestat medicamentum: inquit parietem attendentem contra orientem, et per foramen exit, et apertis oculis renouatur.

Sic et tu, homo, qui ueteri tunica indutus es, quando oculi tui cordis caligentur, quaere locum intellegibilem orientem uersus; id est, ad solem iustitiae [cf. Mal. 4,2] Christum dominum nostrum Iesum te conuerte, cuius nomen oriens dicitur [cf. Zach. 3.8, 6.12]; quatenus oriatur in corde tuo per spiritum sanctum, et lucem misericordiae suae ostendat tibi, qui illuminat omnem hominem in hunc mundum uenietem [Ioh. I.9]

¹²² Malachi 4

1 For, behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the LORD of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch.

2 But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings.

1 ecce enim dies veniet succensa quasi caminus et erunt omnes superbi et omnes facientes impietatem stipula et inflammabit eos dies veniens dicit Dominus exercituum quae non relinquet eis radicem et germen

2 et orietur vobis timentibus nomen meum sol iustitiae et sanitas in pennis eius et egrediemini et salietis sicut vituli de armento

¹²³ 14 et datae sunt mulieri duae alae aquilae magnae ut volaret in desertum [...].

the Physiologus she was actually merged with the *Sol Iustitiae*.¹²⁴ The lizard was also related directly to Christ the Healer in one of the many late medieval concordances of the Old and New Testaments, Ulrich of Lilienfeld's *Concorida Cartiatis* (ca. 1350), notable especially for its unprecedented systematic inclusion of the natural world, mainly the bestiary, along with the biblical texts as witness to God's providential plan for salvation.¹²⁵

The assimilation of the ancient concept of Apollo the Healer (*Salutari*) with Christ of the resurrection as the Savior (*Sol Salutatis*) and the Sun of Justice (*Sol Iustitiae*) was a fundamental theme of church doctrine and forms one of the provisions of the catechism itself, prepared by Carlo Borromeo and published in 1566:

1166

"By a tradition handed down from the apostles which took its origin from the very day of Christ's Resurrection, the Church celebrates the Paschal mystery every seventh day, which day is appropriately called the Lord's Day or Sunday." . . . The Lord's day, the day of Resurrection, the day of Christians, is our day. It is called the Lord's day because on it the Lord rose victorious to the Father. If pagans call it the "day of the sun," we willingly agree, for today the light of the world is raised, today is revealed the sun of justice with healing in his rays¹²⁶

The pope succeeds *Christus Medicus* as Christ succeeded *Apollo Medicus*.

¹²⁴ It is surely in this context of the lizard as the believer who "sees" the salvific light of the Woman of the Apocalypse wrapped in the sun of her Son, that it appears beneath the Virgin in Peter Breughel's *Way to Calvary* (see Gibson 2000, 140f.), and Schongauer's woodcut and Dürer's engraving of the *Flight into Egypt* (Koch 1976); and, since penitence is the route to salvation, in images of the penitent St. Jerome by Luini (together with a scorpion), Bosch (Friedmann 1980, 19, 150, 168, 269f.) and Patinir (Falkenburg 1988, 84).

¹²⁵ Ulrich links the lizard's recuperation of vision to Christ healing of the blind (Luke: 18: 35–43), to the archangel Raphael healing the blindness of Tobias (Tobit: 6: 8; 11: 11–13), to Jonathan whose eyes were enlightened by honey (1 Kings: 14: 27), and to the mother eagle of Physiologus tradition, which flies toward the sun with her offspring, dropping the one that is blinded, saving the one that sees (*Reallexikon* 1937ff., col. 833–54, esp. cols. 839 no. 27, Schmidt 1959, 92–4, Munscheck 2000, 231, Boreczky 2000, 46 figs. 67, 53, 54). Bernini later used this emblematic eagle to illustrate an important Jesuit treatise on optics (Lavin 1985).

¹²⁶ On these Apollonian–Christian convergences see especially Dölger 1925 and Rahner 1971. The Catechism:

1166 «Mysterium Paschale Ecclesia, ex Traditione apostolica, quae originem ducit ab ipsa die resurrectionis Christi, octava quaque die celebrat, quae dies Domini seu dies Dominica merito nuncupatur». 105 Dies resurrectionis Christi simul est «prima dies Hebdomadae», memoriale primae diei creationis, et «octava dies» in qua Christus, post Suam magni Sabbati «quietem», Diem inaugurat «quam fecit Dominus» (Ps. 118:24), «diem sine vespero». 106 «Cena Domini» centrum est eius, quia in ea tota communitas fidelium Domino occurrit resuscitato qui eos ad Suum invitat convivium: 107

Dies Dominica, dies Resurrectionis, dies christianorum, dies nostra est. Unde et Dominica dicitur: quia Dominus in ea victor ascendit ad Patrem. Quod si a gentilibus dies solis vocatur, et nos hoc libentissime confitemur: hodie enim lux mundi orta est, hodie sol iustitiae ortus est, in cuius pennis est sanitas». 108

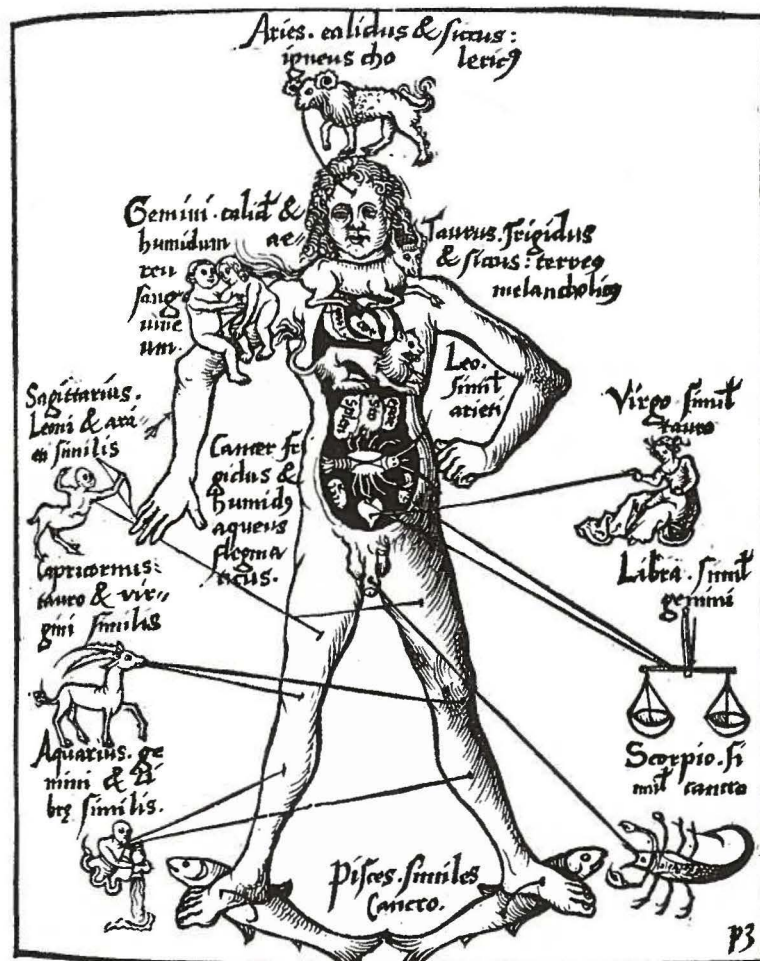
(108) Sanctus Hieronymus, In die Dominica Paschae homilia: CCL 78, 550 (Migne 1844–77, XXX, cols. 218–9).



98. Greek silver stater, 470–450 BC, reverse, Apollo holding laurel branch and bow and arrow, Metapontum. Ex coll. Walter Niggeler (Lexicon 1981–99 II, 1, 217, no. 278; photo courtesy LHS Numismatics).



99. Antonianus of Trebonianus Gallus, 251–3 AD, reverse, Apollo Salutari with laurel branch and lyre (photo courtesy David Sear).



100. Anthropomorphic zodiac, Scorpio identified with penis, engraving. Valeriano 1625, 208.



101. Lizard devouring scorpion head first
(photo courtesy Prof. Yehuda Werner,
Hebrew University, Jerusalem).

The third lizard, which now travels downward, displays the animal's own salvific virtue, its enmity with the scorpion.¹²⁷ The scorpion is almost universally evil in the physiological literature. The most notorious of these associations by far was the scorpion's identification with the libido and lasciviousness, and indeed the genitalia, that is, the original sin of carnal knowledge that brought about the expulsion of humankind from Paradise. In the anthropomorphic zodiacal system (*melothesia*) that distributed the constellations to parts of the human body, Scorpio was identified with the penis (Fig. 100). According to Giovanni Piero Valeriano the scorpion "represents the libido and lascivity, and among the human parts the shameful ones are dedicated to him."¹²⁸ Cesare Ripa repeats Valeriano's statement, and adds a description of the personification of Libido that is particularly interesting in our context: "A woman lasciviously adorned, ... holding in her right hand a scorpion, nearby a goat erotically aroused, and a vine with bunches of grapes."¹²⁹ When one recalls the sacramental, originally Bacchic grape vines, that covered the twisted columns brought from Jerusalem, analogy with the Bacchanalian and goatskin ritual of the Lupercalia is inescapable. The motif shown here evidently reflects a remarkable phenomenon recorded by Pliny and preserved in the medieval bestiary tradition.¹³⁰ The scorpion is so frightened by a certain kind of lizard, the *stellio* (the name derived from its speckled — starry — markings), that it is literally "scared

¹²⁷ References in Nock 1972, 274.

¹²⁸ Valeriano 1625, 208 (first edition 1556): Oltre di questo, lo scorpione dipinto dimostra la libidine e la lasciuia, e tra le parti del corpo humano, à lui sono dedicate le parti vergognose.

¹²⁹ Ripa 1603, 295: *Libidine*. Donna lasciuamente ornata . . . nella man destra terrà vn scorpione, à canto vi sarà vn becco acceso alla libidine, & vna vite con alcuni grappi d'vne.

¹³⁰ Pliny, *Natural History*, XXVIII, 90, ed. Rackham et al., 1938–63, VIII, 240/1

Scorpionibus contrarius maxime invicem stelio traditur, ut visu quoque pavorem his adferat et torporem frigidi sudoris. ... in Italia non nascitur. est enim hic plenus lentigine, stridoris acerbi, et vescitur araneis, quae omnia a nostris stelionibus aliena sunt.

The stelio is said in its turn to be such a great enemy to scorpions that the mere sight of one strikes them with panic, and torpor with cold sweat. ... This kind is not found in Italy, for it is covered with spots, has a shrill cry, and feeds on spiders, all which characteristics are lacking in our stellios. ...

Professor Arsenio Ferraces-Rodríguez has kindly called my attention to a corresponding passage in a thirteenth century English bestiary: Hic autem scorpionibus adeo contrarius dicitur, ut uiso eo pauorem huius adferat et torporem. (Oxford MS Bodley 533, fol. 24vb, Pächt and Alexander 1966–73, III, 40, no. 443).

stiff," so that the lizard may devour his enemy without danger from its immobilized stinger. Also interesting is Pliny's remark that the stellio is not found in Italy. The tradition has been confirmed by scientific studies of the behavior of the stellio in Israel, where it is reported that "scorpions were normally grabbed sideways at the mesosoma, so that initially the metasoma (and stinger) protruded to one side of the gecko's mouth, and the pincers protruded to the other side. Only in one of the six well-observed cases was the scorpion grabbed from in front. Thus in all cases, the metasoma and stinger were initially left free but in four of the six cases they were stiff (as if paralysed) and no stinging occurred (Fig. 101)."¹³¹ Finally, it is surely significant that at the Last Judgment, the damned should also be swallowed head first into Hellmouth, the agent of God serving to punish sinners (see Fig. 79).

The salvific, solar lizard devouring the scorpion, head first, on its way to inferno, is thus emblematic of the same drama portrayed in the coats of arms on the pedestals, which enact the purification and healing of the original sin worked through the labor of Christ's sacrifice at the altar.

The Colonna Santa, the Lizard, and Apollo

The Apollonian tradition of healing was imbued in St. Peter's in one of its most important relics, the Colonna Santa, which had been part of the Constantinian choir with its spiral columns from the Temple of Jerusalem (Fig. 102). Shearman noted in connection with the theme of healing under the Medicean pope Leo X that the Colonna Santa had been singled out as having miraculous curative powers, especially for illnesses of the mind, those possessed by malign demons, epileptics (Figs. 103–4).¹³² The column is first mentioned for its miraculous healing powers toward the middle of the fifteenth century, when it stood isolated and protected from the pious and acquisitive fingers of pilgrims, in an octagonal marble enclosure provided by Cardinal Giordano Orsini; an inscription with the date 1438 described the column's powers to expel demons and liberate those vexed by unclean spirits (Fig. 105).¹³³ As far as I am aware, the question has never been asked why this particular column should have been endowed with the ability to cure maladies not of the body but of the soul. This particular virtue was of course consistent with the tradition that Christ had leaned against the column as he preached at the Temple, that is, its power derived physically from contact

¹³¹ Zlotkin et al., 2003, 644.

¹³² The sources are cited in Shearman 1972, 56, n. 69, 71. On the Colonna Santa drawing by Francisco da Hollanda reproduced here, see Nabiloni 1997, 97, Tuzi 2002, 177f.

¹³³ The inscription speaks of demons expelled, the liberation of those vexed by malign spirits, and many miracles worked daily. Ward-Perkins 1952, 24 n. 19:

H(a)ec e(st) illa colu(m)na · in qua(m) d(omi)n(u)s n(oste)r YH'VS XPS appodiatu(s) · dum populo predicabat et deo p(at)ri p(re)ces i(n) templo effundebat · adherendo stabat qu(a)e una cu(m) aliis undeci(m) hic circu(m)stantibus de Salomonis templo in triumphum hui(us) basilic(a)e · hic locata fuit: demones expellit et ab inmundis (sic) spiritibus vexatos liberos reddit · et multa miracula cotidie facit; p(er) reverendissim(um) p(a)trem et d(omi)num Card(in)alem de Ursinis ornata: anno domin(i) MCCCCXXXVIII

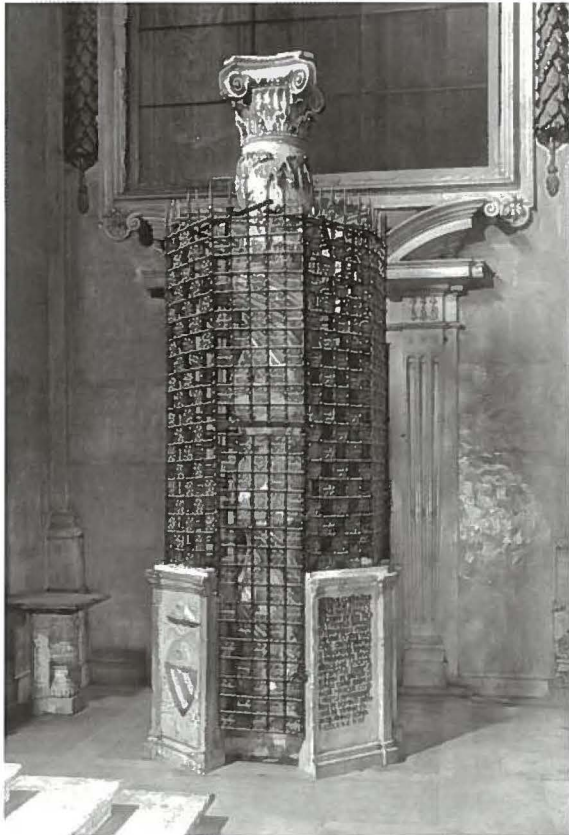


102. Colonna Santa.
Museo del Tesoro,
St. Peter's, Rome.

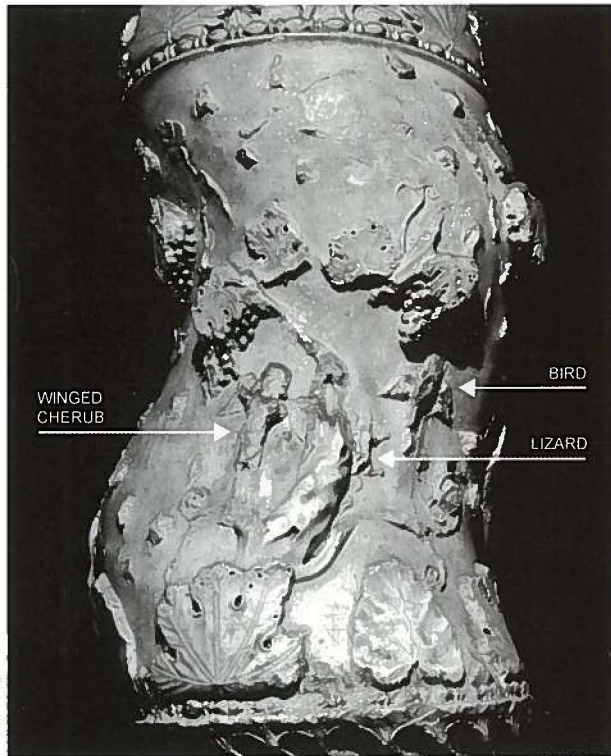


103. Colonna Santa in
the Chapel of the Pietà,
1888. St. Peter's, Rome.

104. Francisco da Hollanda, Christ leaning against the Colonna Santa, drawing. Biblioteca del Real Monasterio de San Lorenzo, Escorial.



105. Colonna Santa with protective cage, in the Chapel of the Pietà, 1888. St. Peter's, Rome.



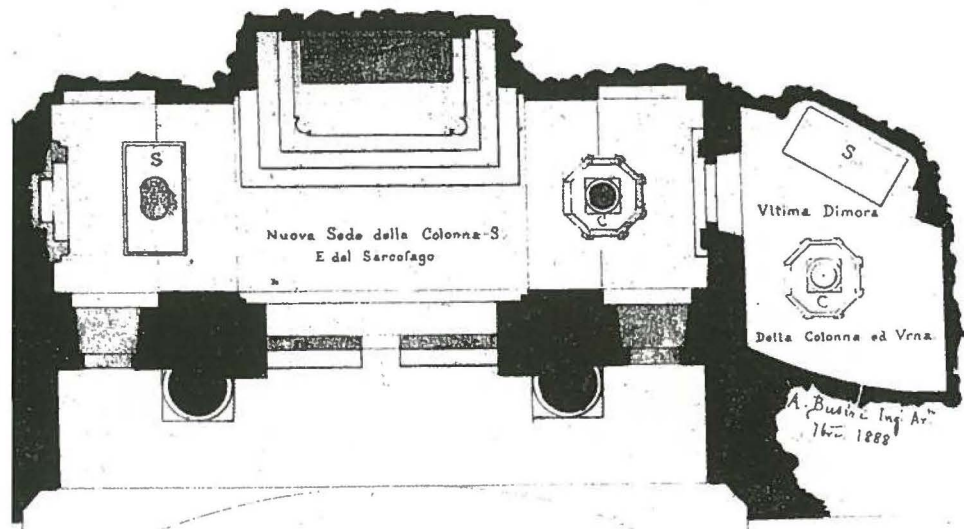
106. Colonna Santa, lower front figured section, symbolic details indicated.
St. Peter's, Rome.

107. Colonna Santa, lower front figured section, showing symbolic details.
St. Peter's, Rome.





108. Mosaic of Christ-Apollo. Tomb of the Julii, Grotto, St. Peter's, Rome.



109. Andrea Busiri Vici, plan of the Cappella della Pietà showing old and new disposition of the Colonna Santa (Busiri Vici 1888, detail of pl. II).



110. Cappella della Pietà before removal of the Colonna Santa to the Museo Sacro (now Museo del Tesoro). St. Peter's, Rome.

with Christ's body and spiritually from the words he uttered to convert (heal) his listeners. But fundamentally Christ's sanctity was incorporated in the column itself by a providential grouping of motifs sculpted in relief on its front face: a tiny lizard flanked on the left of a vine rinceau by a winged putto reaching to pluck a grape from a cluster on a branch nearby, and on the right by a bird flying heavenward (Fig. 106–7). The vine scroll and the grapes were of course emblematic of the Eucharist, and the heaven-bent bird emblematic of the Holy Spirit and the heaven-bent soul. Although small animals populate the vine scrolls of the other spiral columns, this motif is unique to the Colonna Santa, and that this face was considered the front of the column is evident from the fact that it confronts the devotee approaching Cardinal Orsini's enclosure.¹³⁴ As we have seen, the lizard was from antiquity sacred to the Sun God Apollo by virtue of its ability to renew its failing or lost eyesight by looking to the rays of the sun. It thus became emblematic of divinely effected cures of vision, conceived in the case of the Colonna Santa, as demons and unclean spirits. The Apollonian association of the lizard must have seemed providential in view of the fact that St. Peter's was long believed to have been built adjoining a temple of Apollo, variously identified with one of two ancient rotundas later converted, one to St. Petronilla, the other to St. Andrew; both were destroyed to make way for the new basilica.¹³⁵ In the *Mirabilia Romae*, the early pilgrims' guide book to Rome, the very name Vatican came from the rituals practiced by the priests (vates) of the temple of Apollo.¹³⁶ In this way the translation of the column to St. Peter's converged with the pagan therapeutic legacy at the site. The same legacy evidently underlay the tradition evinced in the twelfth century description of the basilica by Petrus Mellius, who states that the twisted columns came from the temple of Apollo at Troy.¹³⁷ In 1574 during excavations under the high altar an early Christian tomb was discovered, whose vault was covered with a splendid mosaic representing Christ-Helios rising heavenward in his quadriga, amidst a celestial canopy of interlacing vine-scrolls (Fig. 108). Although the subject was not recognized

¹³⁴ Two winged putti reaching to pluck clusters of grapes appear on the back side of the Colonna Santa, depicted by Francesco da Colonna. A winged putto and a lizard appear, without the bird, on one of the columns flanking the reliquary niche of St. Longinus (Nobiloni 1997, fig. 26, p. 96).

¹³⁵ No Temple of Apollo is known to have existed at the Vatican, but the tradition, first recorded in the sixth century, persisted well into the sixteenth. The tradition is the subject of an exemplary study by Elisabeth Schröter 1980. Schröter is mainly concerned with the humanistic repercussions of the Apollonian association, however, and does not consider its importance for the papal mission of spiritual healing

¹³⁶ Valentini and Zucchetti 1940–53, III, 43:

Infra palatium Neronianum est templum Apollinis, quod
dicitur Sancta Petronilla, ante quod est basilica quae vocatur
Vaticanum, ex mirifico musibo laqueata auro et vitro. Ideo dicitur
Vaticanum, quia vates, id est sacerdotes, canebant ibi sua officia ante
templum Apollinis, et idcirco tota illa pars ecclesiae Sancti Petri
Vaticanum vocatur.

The rotunda converted to St. Andrew was variously identified with Mars, Diana, and Apollo (Cerrati 138–9, 180).

¹³⁷ Valentini and Zucchetti 1940–6, III, 348: "XII. columpnas, quas di Graecia portari fecit, quae fuerunt di templo Apollinis Traoiae"; cf. Ward-Perkins 1952, 24; Nobiloni 1997, 117, 119.

at the time, and there is no further reference to the tomb until it was reopened in modern excavations at the end of World War II, the discovery may have reinforced the Apollonian heritage of the site.¹³⁸

A measure of the significance of the spiritual healing embodied in the Colonna Santa, not only for the ideology of the Baldacchino but for the role of St. Peter's itself in the process of salvation, is evident from the fact that in 1632 it was installed in a chamber adjoining the first chapel on the north side of the nave, the furnishing of which was then in course of completion (Figs. 109–10). The column was joined at the same time by another miraculously salutary relic, a frescoed image of the Virgin and Child, the *Madonna della Febbre*, that had come from the converted rotunda of S. Andrea, to which the painting had given its own name.¹³⁹ No doubt the location, immediately adjacent to the Porta Santa, was conceived as the ideal starting point of the pilgrim's procession through the basilica to the high altar. The intention was evidently to concentrate the focus of miraculous healing in the basilica on this primary location.

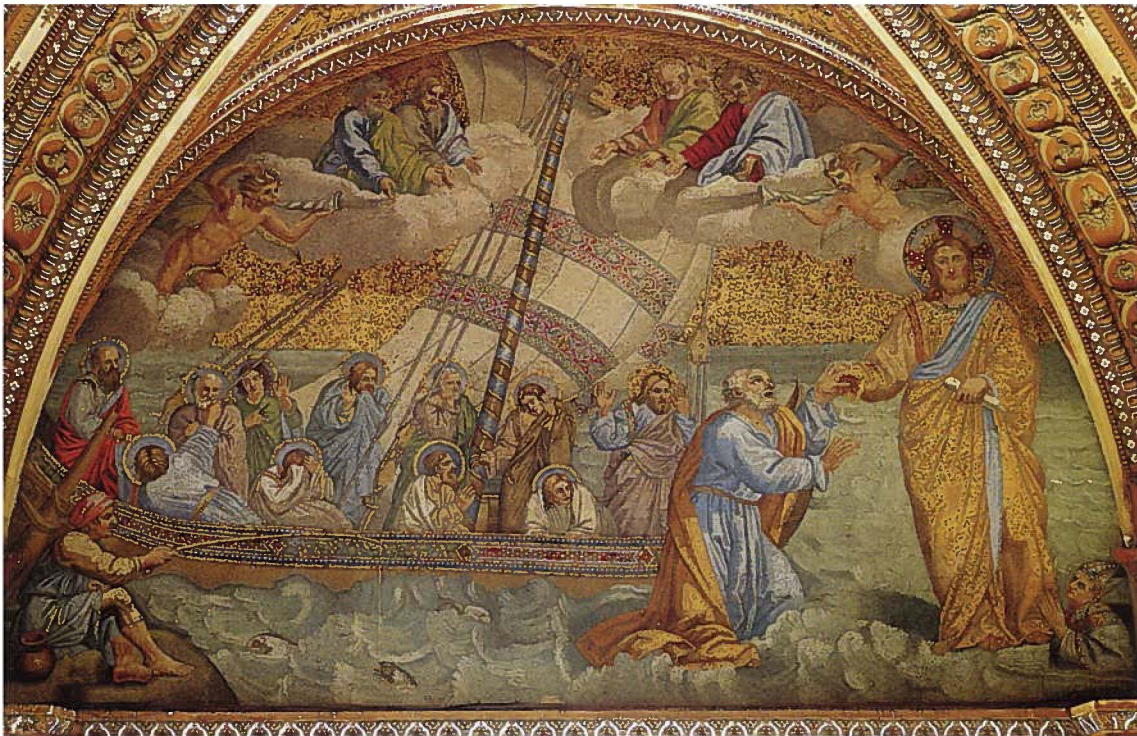
Giotto's Navicella, the Natalis Solis Invictus, and the Sol Iustitiae

What might well be called the sun mysticism of Urban VIII worked its magic not only at the center of St. Peter's in the Baldacchino, it also embraced the church at either end, in the apse at the west where the window above the Cathedra Petri would have illuminated the emblem of the Trinity (see pp. 41, 43, and Fig. 31 above), while at the east entrance the rising sun shone through two huge windows that flanked one of the most important relics of Old St. Peter's, Giotto's famous mosaic of the *Navicella* (Christ summoning the fisherman Peter from his boat in the stormy Sea of Galilee — the act that inaugurated the established Church) (Fig. 111).¹⁴⁰ Urban had the mosaic installed in this location in 1628 in tandem, conceptually as well as chronologically, with the execution of the Baldacchino. The *Navicella* had originally

¹³⁸ Apollonji-Ghetti 1951, 37–42. Alfarano described the mosaic, but conjectured that it was pagan: Fu fatto in questo medesimo anno (1574) un portichetto innante la porta dell'altar maggiore, appresso all'altare di S. Sisto PP. primo, 2 sostentato di doi colonne bellissime, dei quali volendosi fare i fondamenti fu ritrovata una bella sepoltura fra l'una colonna e l'altra innante l'altar maggior tutta di musaico antiquo con figure che parevano cavalla più presto giudicai fosse di gentili. (Cerrati 1914, 154, also 168)

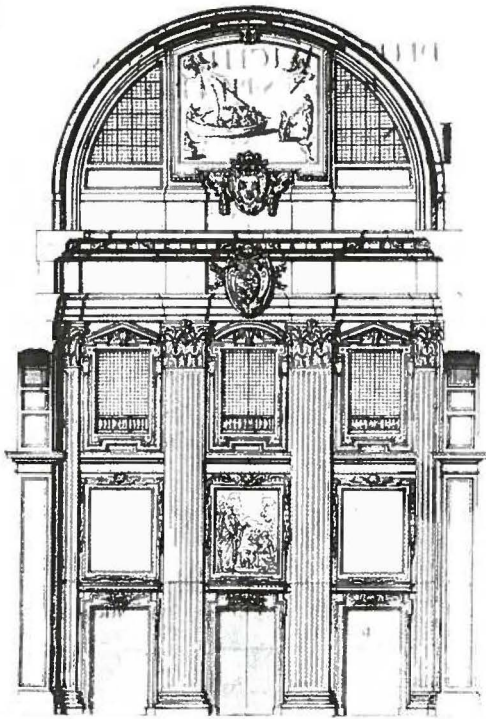
¹³⁹ Torrigio 1635, 17: "Nel 1632. [the Colonna Santa] è stata posta presso alla Cappella del Crocifisso, e vi è stata anco collocata vna diuota Imagine di Maria Verg. che staua già nella Basilica vecchia nella naue dell'altar di S. Andrea." In 1631, evidently to enhance the image in preparation for the move, the Madonna and Child were given golden crowns (Rice 1997, 184). The chapel is now the Chapel of the Pietà, from Michelangelo's sculpture installed at the altar in 1749 (Rice 1997, 219). The 1643 date of an inscription over the door to the chapel recording the exposition of the image, presumably refers to the completion of the work (Rice 1997, 184). The Colonna Santa was moved into the Cappella della Pietà proper, at the flank of Michelangelo's sculpture, in 1888 (Busiri Vici 1888, pl. II, shows the former and the new locations). In 1975 it was moved to the Museo del Tesoro in the Sacristy (Petrassi 1975).

¹⁴⁰ For what follows here concerning the solar history and significance of the *Navicella* (though not in relation to the Baldacchino), see Köhren-Jansen 1993, 230–3. On the vicissitude of the mosaic see also Marder 1997, 76–8, Bauer 2000. On *Sol Invictus* and its Christian legacy, Halberghe 1972, 373–5.



111. Giotto, *Navicella*, mosaic (much restored).
St. Peter's, Rome.

been made ca. 1300 for the inside of the entrance wall of the open atrium of the old basilica, facing the facade (Figs. 112–3). After the atrium was demolished the mosaic was preserved, elaborately restored, and installed near the entrance to the Vatican Palace — until Urban decided to return it to its featured location at the entrance to the church, but now high up, between the windows and on the inner facade facing the worshiper exiting toward the east. The choice was deliberate, and its purpose was to create in the new basilica an exact counterpart to the cooptation-conversion at the high altar of the ancient Lupercalian and Hebrew purification rites. In this case, the celebration was that of the third great Apollonian tradition, besides the *Salutaris* and *Iustitiae*, the *Sol Invictus* that had long been identified with the Roman emperors and whose birth was celebrated in the winter festival of the *Natalis Solis Invictus*, on December 25. In the time of Constantine the ancient festival was converted to Christmas and the birth of the Christian *Sol Iustitiae*, but Leo the Great (440–461) complained that pilgrims visiting the basilica were still wont to turn and kneel facing eastward in devotion to the rising sun. Eventually, in fact, the celebration of Christ's birth was shifted from Epiphany, January 6, to December 25. All this was well known in Urban's time. It was said, indeed, that the *Navicella* was originally intended to substitute the Calling of Peter for the pagan sun worship. As the high altar was intended to replace the Lupercalia, Urban's installation of the *Navicella* was clearly intended to replace the *Sol Invictus* with the Calling of Peter and the rising of the *Sol Iustitiae*. The basilica through its entire length thus



112. Domenico Castelli, inside (eastern) entrance wall of St. Peter's, drawing. MS Barb. Lat. 4409, fol. 3r., Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Rome.

113. Inside (eastern) entrance wall. St. Peter's, Rome.



superseded the classical solar heritage, fulfilling the spiritual promise of Malachi, the last of the Hebrew Prophets (1:11):

For from the rising of the sun even unto the going down of the same my name shall be great among the Gentiles; and in every place incense shall be offered unto my name, and a pure offering: for my name shall be great among the heathen, saith the LORD of hosts.¹⁴¹

Again, Cardinal Baronio may have been a prime mover in this grandiose scheme of cosmic historical theology; his great reverence for the mosaic and understanding of its history was still reported later in the century. One day he was asked why it had been placed in the middle of the portico, in front of the portal of the basilica, rather than elsewhere. "He replied that it was to eliminate the superstitious custom of some people who, entering the church, in the ancient manner of the Gentiles turned toward the east, as pope St. Leo reported, and lowering their heads in honor of that luminous planet, gave it profound reverence."¹⁴²

It was said that Urban opened the flanking windows so that the mosaic could be better appreciated with the great flood of light.¹⁴³ Urban's antagonistic successor, Innocent X, later removed the *Navicella* from its place in the sun, as it were, because it was too high and difficult to see in the glaring light.¹⁴⁴ In 1675 it was transferred to its present, in effect, the original location on the inner wall of the narthex portico above the central entrance, facing Bernini's "Feed my Sheep" (cf. Fig. 139).¹⁴⁵

¹⁴¹ Ab ortu enim solis usque ad occasum magnum est nomen meum in gentibus et in omni loco sacrificatur et offertur nomini meo oblatio munda quia magnum nomen meum in gentibus dicit Dominus exercituum.

¹⁴² "Divozione singolare del Card. Baronio alla Navicella di s. Pietro: Guardava egli un giorno la Navicella di S. PIETRO fatta con nobil megistero da Ghiotto celebre artefice, di esquisito Mosaico, posta nel mezzo del Portico, dirempetto alle porte della Basilica, & erano con esso lui li Cardinali Dietrestain, Taverna, Pamfilio, e Tarugi, uno de'quali lo pregò à dir loro, per qual cagione fosse stata da i Maggiori in quel sito più tosto, che in alto; al quale rispose; Per togliere la superstiziosa usanza d'alcuni; li quali nell'entrare del Tiempo, secondo l'antico costume de' Gentili, si rivolgevano verso l'Oriente, come avisò S. Leone Papa, e piegato il capo in onore di così luminoso Pianeta, facevano à quello profonda riverenza. Sono tant'anni continui (disse il pio, & eruditissimo Cardinale) che io seguito à visitare questa Sacra Istoria, e Pittura; nè mai tralasciai di venerarla in ginocchio, aggiundendovi questa breve orazione, Domine ut erexisti PETRVM à fluctibus, ita eripe me à peccatorum undis. Le quali parole furono ricevute con godimento da quei divoti Cardinali, e subito Pamfilio con gli altri, genuflessi recitarono la medesima Orazione con grand'edificazione de' circostanti, proseguendo poi sempre il medesimo pio costume essi, e molti altri, che visitano questa S. Basilica sino al giorno d' oggi." (Piazza 1687, 388; cited by Köhren-Jansen 1993, 132)

¹⁴³ . . . da ambi i lati gli apri fenestroni perche meglio con la copia de raggi potesse essere vagheggiata (from a report of 1644–53, cited by Marder 1997, 268 n. 112).

¹⁴⁴ . . . non godendosi per la troppa altezza, et abbarbagliandosi la vista nel rimirla per le due finestre laterali . . . (report by Virgilio Spada published by Gùthlein 1979, 186).

¹⁴⁵ Marder 1997, 78.

Beelzebub

The last and least conspicuous of the animal marginalia is perhaps the most important of them all. In the biblical tradition the fly has one and only one association, that is, with the Philistine God Beelzebub, whose name was commonly translated as Lord of the Flies and equated with Satan. Of particular relevance here is the fact that he was consistently invoked in matters of healing. So in the second Book of Kings the ruler Ahaziah, who had suffered a fall, sent to inquire of Beelzebub the God of Ekron, whether he would recover. Offended by this want of faith in himself, the God of Israel decreed that he would indeed die of his injury.¹⁴⁶ He appears repeatedly in the Gospels when the disbelieving Jews attributed Jesus's power to heal and cast out devils to the power of Beelzebub, now identified as Satan himself; to which Jesus replies, that cannot be so, since the house divided against itself shall not stand.¹⁴⁷

Matt. 12:23–8

23 And all the people were amazed, and said, Is not this the son of David? 24 But when the Pharisees heard [it], they said, This [fellow] doth not cast out devils, but by Beelzebub the prince of the devils. 25 And Jesus knew their thoughts, and said unto them, Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand: 26 And if Satan cast out Satan, he is divided against himself; how shall then his kingdom stand? 27 And if I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do your children cast [them] out? therefore they shall be your judges. 28 But if I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God is come unto you.¹⁴⁸

Cornelis à Lapide interprets the passages in 2Kings and the gospels in exactly this way, ascribing all manner of evils to the Lord of the Flies, especially the libido and anabaptism.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁶ 2Kings 1: 2, 3, 6, 16.

¹⁴⁷ Matt. 10:25; 12:24; 12:27; Mark 3:22; Luke 11:15.

¹⁴⁸ 23 et stupebant omnes turbæ et dicebant numquid hic est Filius David. 24 Pharisei autem audientes dixerunt hic non eicit daemones nisi in Beelzebub principe daemoniorum 25 Iesus autem sciens cogitationes eorum dixit eis omne regnum divisum contra se desolatur et omnis civitas vel domus divisa contra se non stabit 26 et si Satanas Satanas eicit adversus se divisus est quomodo ergo stabit regnum eius 27 et si ego in Beelzebub eicio daemones filii vestri in quo eiciunt ideo ipsi iudices erunt vestri 28 si autem ego in Spiritu Dei eicio daemones igitur pervenit in vos regnum Dei

¹⁴⁹ For Beelzebub see on 2Kings 2, Lapide 1866–88, IV, 3:

Vide dicta Matth. x, 25. Quibus adde nonnullos cum Serario sentire, quod Beelzebub sive Myodes, id est Deus muscæ, fuerit libidinis deus, aut dea quæpiam, ob impudicitiam et libidinem quæ in muscis notatur; unde Lucianus in Encomio muscæ tradit olim fuisse meretrices, quæ muscæ vocabantur. Insuper dit (dæmones) omnes propter multitudinem, insolentiam, impudicitiam, mordacitatem, sordes, fœtorem, muscæ vocari possunt: unde hoc sæculo dæmon specie magnæ muscæ vel crabronis involans in eum, qui relictæ fide orthodoxa Anabaptismum profitebatur, illico eum quasi possidens, S. Scripturæ peritum efficiebat, eundemque hac peritiâ privabat, si ab Anabaptismo ad fidem rediret, uti oculati testes narrant.

On Mathew 10: 25, Lapide 1876–1908, II, 33f. and Lapide 1866–88, XV, 271f.

114. Jacques de Gheyn, *Three Flies*, drawing. Frankfurt am Main, Städelches Kunstinstitut.



The little, insidiously inconspicuous insect thus represents the very devil and his myriad hosts, whose power is exorcized at the altar of St. Peter's.¹⁵⁰

An ironic inversion of zoological healing under the aegis of Urban VIII may be found in an extraordinary drawing by the great Dutch master of natural and supernatural imagery Jacques de Gheyn II (1565–1629) (Fig. 114). The composition emulates the Barberini microscopic bee emblem (Fig. 68), substituting three microscopic views of “real” flies (including their shadows) arranged in a similar way.¹⁵¹ The relationship can scarcely have been coincidental, and the metamorphosis into flies was surely inspired by the knowledge of the fact that the Barberini crest originally consisted of three large but humble horse-flies — *tafani*, whence Tafano, the name of the Tuscan locality whence the family sprang. The tafano, whose bite was vicious, even mortal in droves, had a particularly bad reputation, and Maffeo adopted the noble bee instead when he became cardinal. The matter was important enough so that some years later the pope's nephew Cardinal Francesco sent to Florence to have the flies excised from the coats of arms visible there and in their subsequent home town nearby, Barberino in Val d'Elsa.¹⁵² In antiquity the fly was identified with the plague and, by a familiar homeopathic principle of like healing like, fly amulets were worn to ward off the enemy. The medieval Mantic Virgil was said to have warded off the plague from Naples with a huge bronze fly.¹⁵³ There was a major outbreak of the plague in the Netherlands in 1624, and de Gheyn, who was deeply

¹⁵⁰ I believe, in fact, that this “devilish” import may underlie many works in which “illusionistic” flies alight as if from the “real” world (for which see Pigler 1964, although he does not consider the biblical Beelzebub).

¹⁵¹ On de Gheyn's flies see “*Nach dem Leben. . .*,” 2000, 94, where it is noted that his microscopic works date from the last years of his life.

¹⁵² On the Barberini coat of arms and its transformation by Maffeo from menace to munificence, see Lavin 2007.

¹⁵³ See the references given in Pigler 1964, 60f., Heckscher 1985, 78.

involved with witchcraft and devilry, may have had this kind of Barberini Trinitarian papal therapy in mind.¹⁵⁴ Although married to a Catholic, de Gheyn in 1598 had made a portrait of Marnix van St. Aldegonde that was published repeatedly beginning in 1631 in Marnix's famous pre-Barberini anti-catholic bee diatribe *The Beehive of the Holy Roman Church* (*De Byencorff der H. Roomsche Kercke*), first published in 1569.¹⁵⁵ Here, alone among the animals that inhabit the columnar plinths, the minuscule fly is gilt, glowing with the glittery allure of sin.

* * *

The mementoes that grace the lowermost plinths of the columns appear to have been left, as if inadvertently, by the "providential" hand of the Baldacchino's creator. They appear inexplicably, and their very inadvertency is an essential ingredient in the heaven-sent message they convey. For taken together these memorabilia tell a memorable story of their own, consistent with and underlying the main theme of the pedestals, that is, the expiation for original sin purchased by Christ's sacrifice and achieved through its reenactment at the altar. In that case the initial fornication begins at the left, or sinister side of the entering worshiper, moves in a purificatory circuit clockwise about the altar to end with the felicitous newborn soul at the right, as the pilgrim prepares to depart. Accordingly, Beelzebub the King of the Flies lurks unseen, from the beginning, back inside the first pedestal; the pope, the rosary, and the healing lizards, placed nearest the sanctuary of the choir, guard the route; and at the end, the embodiment of the original sin is finally destroyed by the Apollonian agent of the sun's salubrious power. The drama unfolded in these details seems to encapsulate the overarching theme with which Urban imbued the basilica itself, to which he may himself have referred when he described Bernini:

"Rare man, sublime intelligence, and born for Divine Purpose, and for the glory of Rome to bring light to that Century."¹⁵⁶

With all their depth of meaning, however, the Baldacchino's little marginalia are also charming, sophisticated, witty, even humorous, and thus ingratiating in a spirit that can best be described, I think, as "urbane." This quality, characteristic of Bernini, also permeates other, contemporary work he carried out for Urban VIII, and corresponds to a fundamental cast of the new pope's mind, his public policy, as well as the very name he chose as Christ's vicar.¹⁵⁷ Except for the scorpion and the fly, the Baldacchino of St. Peter's pullulates with animation; everything everywhere is in motion, a living organism, a veritable chimaera and justly a divine creation, at the very center of Christianity.

¹⁵⁴ On the 1624 plague in the Netherlands, see Israel 1995, 484, 625. On de Gheyn's conflation of natural science and witchcraft, see Swan 2005.

¹⁵⁵ Waard 2002; Beemon 1992.

¹⁵⁶ *Huomo raro, Ingegno sublime, e nato per Disposizione Divina, e per gloria di Roma a portar luce a quel Secolo* (Bernini 1713, 27).

¹⁵⁷ On Urban's choice of name and the theme of urbanity see Lavin 2007.

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