Bernini as the Seicento Michelangelo:  
Imitation and Identity in Art, Architecture and Biography

by

Carolina Mangone

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Carolina Mangone 

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Abstract 

This dissertation examines how Gianlorenzo Bernini (1598-1680), acclaimed the “Michelangelo of his age,” constructed his identity by imitating the art, practices and persona of Michelangelo Buonarroti (1475-1564). Buonarroti’s “inimitability,” a disputed sixteenth-century notion that became ever more contentious as newly critical seventeenth-century perspectives of his work and practice questioned his worth as a model for imitation, furnishes the point of departure for investigating how Bernini became Bernini through and against his predecessor. By analysing Gianlorenzo’s formal, stylistic, theoretical and conceptual references to Buonarroti in his early narrative sculpture (ch.1), his sculpted self-portraits (ch.2), his work at St. Peter’s (ch.3), his architectural ornament (ch.4) as well as the intertextual strategies attending the literary uses of the association between the two artists (ch.5), I shed light on various imitative modes –ranging from emulation, allusion and paraphrase, to repetition, quotation and bricolage – that Bernini and his biographers employed to shape the artist into Michelangelo’s worthy “son” rather than his burdened epigone. In positing a filial model as a flexible framework for understanding Bernini’s life-long relationship to Michelangelo, I take a cue from early modern art writers who suggested that the way to
overcome Buonarroti’s inimitability was to resemble him faintly, the way a son resembles a father. Yet while the latter saw filial likeness as fixed, I show that the son’s (Bernini’s) resemblance to his chosen father (Michelangelo) changed by degree and in demeanor over time, according to discipline and, sometimes, from subject to subject. And by reconstituting the respective prisms through which Bernini and his biographers regarded the work and life of Buonarroti, I show that each perceived Michelangelo differently based on the manifold representations of him, his work and his practice that existed in critical, biographical, theoretical and pictorial sources. In turn, multiple constructions of Bernini’s identity as the seicento Michelangelo emerge. This dissertation ultimately suggests that to imitate Michelangelo successfully was not only to inscribe oneself into history but to rewrite the past by altering the perception of Buonarroti from an inimitable vanguard to a fecund “father” of a new generation.
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Undeterred by Michelangelo Buonarroti’s reputation as an inimitable artist, a notion propagated by his sixteenth-century biographers, by critics of his allegedly hackneyed and slavish followers, and by a handful of art writers in the next century, Gianlorenzo Bernini imitated his predecessor repeatedly without succumbing to the fate of epigone. Gianlorenzo Bernini, his patrons and supporters, his biographers and even his stalwart detractors, shaped his art and persona with Michelangelo Buonarroti foremost in mind. Throughout his career as a sculptor, Bernini culled from Michelangelo’s forceful figures in sculpture and painting. When Gianlorenzo turned his attention to architecture, he engaged with Buonarroti’s licentious departure from the antique. And at St. Peter’s, numerous popes enlisted Bernini’s skills in sculpture and architecture to contribute to Buonarroti’s partly-realized new church. Only in Bernini’s scant painted oeuvre is there no substantive trace of Michelangelo. Concurrent with this artistic paragone, contemporaries christened Gianlorenzo the “Michelangelo of his age,” courtiers discussed affinities between the two artists in various letters and avvisi, and writers authored poems, guidebooks, dialogues and texts that compared them, if not always favourably. Even after the artist’s death, Bernini’s association with Michelangelo pervaded his biographies by Filippo Baldinucci and Domenico Bernini and coloured his critical fortune.

My dissertation examines how Michelangelo’s example in art and life shaped Bernini’s artistic and biographical identities. By exploring the mechanisms used by Gianlorenzo to imitate Buonarroti in art and architecture, and the intertextual strategies attending literary uses of the association between the two artists, I offer a portrait of the
protean ways Bernini and his contemporaries constructed the artist’s self-hood in relation to Buonarroti. In other words, I ask how one becomes the new Michelangelo, and what it means to be the Buonarroti of a new age.

By examining Bernini’s historical association with Michelangelo, I travel a path that follows the direction, if not the exact footsteps, trod by a long list of scholars who have come before me. Though there is no comprehensive study of this topic, Bernini’s *imitatio Buonarroti* has been a leitmotif in Bernini scholarship (and, to a lesser extent, in broader narratives of the Baroque) since the turn of the twentieth century. The subject was introduced by Stanislao Fraschetti, who, in his inaugural monograph on the artist from 1900, identified numerous Michelangelo sources in Gianlorenzo’s sculpture and architecture, and published various contemporary documents and writings that drew parallels between the two artists.¹ Since this publication, scholars have identified more works by Bernini that refer to Michelangelo, along with further evidence of the Bernini-Michelangelo *paragone* in the literature of the period. And though many studies invoke the expression “new Michelangelo” as a meaningless sobriquet (or even as an inherently definitive appellation, the significance of which requires no elucidation),² others more critically consider what it means to be known as the Michelangelo of the seventeenth-century by focusing on modes of imitation. The earliest sustained examinations of Bernini’s mimetic engagement with his predecessor dealt with sculpture, followed by expositions on architecture and biography.

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² Indicative of an uncritical approach to Bernini’s relationship to Michelangelo is the essay by Maria Grazia Bernardini, “‘Il gran Michelangelo del suo tempo’: la vita, il personaggio,” in *Gian Lorenzo Bernini: regista del Barocco*, eds. Maria Grazia Bernardini, Maurizio Fagiolo dell’Arco (Milan: Skira, 1999), 39-61, whose title quotes Paul V’s prophecy that Bernini would be the new Michelangelo from Domenico Bernini’s *Vita*, but whose text mentions the relationship between the two artists only in passing.
Critical writing about Bernini’s sculpture as it relates to Michelangelo’s art deals primarily with Gianlorenzo’s early works. For example, in Gian Lorenzo Bernini: Sculptor of the Roman Baroque, first published in 1955, Rudolf Wittkower observed that Bernini’s earliest life-size figures “recaptured something of [Michelangelo’s] dynamic vigour: the ‘Dawn’ of the Medici Chapel and the Christ of the Florentine Pietà indicate the spiritual parentage of this style.” Whereas Wittkower saw a vague affinity between the two artists’ work, in Bernini: Una introduzione al Gran Teatro del Barocco (1967), Maurizio and Marcello Fagiolo dell’Arco perceived a significant difference. They claimed that Gianlorenzo “loved [Buonarroti] and believed he was faithful to him, even if he came to work a radical distortion of his ideas.... One need only examine the early sculptures to recognize how the problems are the same as Michelangelo, but with an interpretation that ultimately betrays Michelangelo.”

Cesare D’Onofrio observed that Gianlorenzo suffused his Buonarroti references with “extroverted and sensual features,” and sought to more clearly define the nature of Bernini’s early sculptural engagement with Michelangelo by situating it within a cultural context. In his seminal Roma vista da Roma (1967), D’Onofrio identified the formative patronage of Maffeo Barberini and his intellectual circle as the driving force behind the young sculptor’s michelangelism. He also distinguished between the desire of the sculptor’s patrons to equate Bernini with Michelangelo, and Gianlorenzo’s own perception of his difference from the latter as implied by Bernini’s few recorded criticisms of Buonarroti’s figures. D’Onofrio’s contribution was seized upon by Rudolf

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Preimesberger, who posited a correspondence between Gianlorenzo’s negative appraisal of his predecessor and his own practice of imitation. Preimesberger asked whether the “explicit Michelangelism” of the early sculptures “[did] not also contain an element of criticism of Michelangelo,” and connected this critical engagement to the artist’s burgeoning identity. He noted, for example, that contemporary references to Gianlorenzo as the new Michelangelo “played a significant part in Bernini’s self-image and artistic practice [as] can be seen in the fact… that he entered into a competitive relationship with the tradition of Italian sculpture,” especially that of Buonarroti. Seymour Howard similarly, if theatrically, posited that Bernini’s references to Michelangelo (and the antique) showcased “penetrating dramas of 1) duty, 2) support, 3) struggle, 4) conquest and 5) animate metamorphosis, culminating finally in statements of an unprecedented kind of autonomy.” And, in the catalog for the Bernini Scultore exhibition of 1998, entries by Preimesberger and Sebastian Schütze on the early sculptures further developed the theme of competition and presented Bernini’s imitation of his predecessor as a pursuit of ascendancy. Most recently, Schütze expanded on the material from the catalog in a chapter from his book on Cardinal Maffeo Barberini’s patronage, assigning a greater role to Barberini’s purported shaping of Bernini, his subjects and their innovative interpretation, than previously envisioned. The picture of the critical and rivalrous

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7 Ibid., 7.
10 Sebastian Schütze, Kardinal Maffeo Barberini, später Papst Urban VIII., und die Entstehung des römischen Hochbarock (Munich: Hirmer, 2007), 193-243.
natures of Bernini’s sculptural *imitatio Buonarroti* (not to mention the patronal stimulus) that emerges from the above studies points to self-formation as an act of supersession.

Despite the evidence of Gianlorenzo’s formal allusions to and recorded praise of Buonarroti’s architecture, studies of Bernini’s engagement with Michelangelo’s architecture are fewer and more controversial than those devoted to his imitation of the latter in sculpture. In keeping with Rudolf Wittkower’s 1966 essay on Gianlorenzo’s architectural influences (an elaboration upon observations made by Valerio Mariani in 1935), most scholars contend that Gianlorenzo’s buildings more closely resemble works by conservative, classicizing architects of the previous century, like Palladio, than Buonarroti’s licentious model. Against this consensus, two scholars have amply demonstrated that Bernini’s architecture and practice were inflected by a close consideration of Michelangelo. In a largely ignored article of 1947, Pamela Askew analyzed many of Gianlorenzo’s extant buildings and unrealized designs, identifying two phases of Bernini’s *imitatio Buonarroti*, without obscuring his susceptibility to the influence of other sixteenth-century Roman architects. Askew argued that before 1650, Gianlorenzo borrowed architectural motifs directly and “tended to combine Renaissance and Michelangesque vocabularies,” whereas after 1650, “the dynamic principles of

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Michelangelo’s architecture take precedence over a Michelangesque vocabulary.” In 1983, Christof Thoenes further expanded upon the nature of this relationship with an article that reconsidered Wittkower’s notion that Palladio was the “determining influence” in Gianlorenzo’s architecture. He argued that Michelangelo’s Roman work, not Palladio’s Venetian architecture, was necessarily Gianlorenzo’s model because Buonarroti had been the most important architect in modern history to work in Rome and for the popes. Thoenes also proposed four ways in which Gianlorenzo identified with his predecessor’s theory and practice of architecture: 1) Bernini engaged in “biographical imitation” by “behaving like Michelangelo had comported himself in analogous situations”; 2) he “played the partisan of Michelangelo, defending his work”; 3) he “appealed to Michelangelo on theoretical questions” and, 4) he “quoted” Michelangelo’s architectural vocabulary.

Notwithstanding the many intersections between Bernini and Michelangelo demonstrated by these studies, Buonarroti mostly occupies the margins of scholarship on Gianlorenzo’s architecture. One explanation for this is a perceived lack of individuality in Bernini’s formal references to his predecessor’s architecture when compared to the originality of his sculptural allusions to Buonarroti. Consider, for example, a statement by Aloisio Antinori about the disparity between Bernini’s sculptural and architectural engagements with his predecessor in a recent article examining Michelangelo’s and

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13 Ibid., 54-5
Palladio’s critical fortunes at the time of Bernini’s early architectural development.\footnote{Aloisio Antinori, “Sulla prima formazione di Bernini architetto: michelangiolismo e palladianesimo a Roma da Paolo V a Urbano VIII,” in Bernini dai Borghese ai Barberini: la cultura a Roma intorno agli anni venti, eds. Olivier Bonfait and Anna Coliva (Rome: De Luca, 2004), 3-11.}

According to Antinori, Gianlorenzo felt he was “in a position to compete with Michelangelo,” as a sculptor, while as an architect, “he continued for all his life to judge Michelangelo a supreme and unreachable model, with whom it was not possible to compare except by imitation (as occurs in those instances… that Thoenes calls Bernini’s michelangesque ‘quotations’).”\footnote{Ibid., 9: “…lo fece sentire in grado di competere con il Buonarroti in quell’arte. In architettura, invece, egli continuò per tutta la vita a giudicare Michelangelo un modello supremo e inarrivabile, al quale non era possibile rapportarsi se non per imitazione (come avviene in quei casi, peraltro rari, che Thoenes chiama le ‘citazioni’ michelangiolesche di Bernini.”} In other words, in architecture Bernini is burdened by the anxiety of Michelangelo’s influence and, therefore, struggles to assert his identity.

In the scholarship on Bernini’s relationship to Buonarroti in art writings and biography, imitation of Michelangelo’s person is often conflated with the visual evidence of Gianlorenzo’s imitation of his predecessor’s works. Nevertheless, they are distinct aspects of Gianlorenzo’s identity as the new Michelangelo. D’Onofrio was the first to consider the textual comparison of the two artists critically and intertextually. In 1966, he published a dialogue between Bernini and Lelio Guidiccioni, written by the latter in 1633 during the pontificate of Urban VIII (formerly Maffeo Barberini), in which he noted a Michelangelo \textit{topos} that later re-appeared in Bernini’s biographies.\footnote{Cesare D’Onofrio, “Note berniniane I: Un dialogo-recita di Gian Lorenzo Bernini e Lelio Guidiccioni,” Palatino 10 (1966): 127-34.} D’Onofrio demonstrated that within the colloquy, Gianlorenzo’s stated perspective on innovation paraphrased Buonarroti’s dictum that those who follow others never get ahead. In his \textit{Roma vista da Roma}, D’Onofrio not only introduced more literary sources from the Barberini/Urban circle that functioned as subtexts for the \textit{vite}, but also identified many
affinities between passages in Bernini’s lives and the content of Michelangelo’s biographies. For D’Onofrio, the imitatio Buonarroti of the biographies, as much as that of Bernini’s art, was the product of Gianlorenzo’s auto-mythologizing. This myth was, in turn, “recounted – by way of his son Domenico’s mouth,” whose role in writing the biography was reduced to amanuensis.

Catherine Soussloff explored the implications of D’Onofrio’s studies in her unpublished dissertation from 1982 that identified more Michelangelo themes in the Bernini biographies as well as in the diary of Paul Fréart de Chantelou, a daily account of Gianlorenzo’s activities and conversations during his stay in Paris. Her analysis focused on how Michelangelo’s artistic practice furnished the subtext for discussions about disegno, nature, antiquity, portraiture and the paragone in all three texts. She also considered the ways Baldinucci’s and Domenico’s vite linked Bernini’s universality in the arts and his fashioning as the new Michelangelo to Maffeo Barberini/Urban VIII. Unlike D’Onofrio’s perspective on the biographies, which prioritized Domenico’s and saw Baldinucci’s as an insignificant variant of the other, Soussloff highlighted the distinctiveness of the two vite and gave greater credit to their authors, not their subject, for crafting Bernini’s textual likeness to that of Michelangelo. Soussloff also underscored the contradiction between the biographers’ reading of Bernini’s mimetic practice and the visual evidence of the work itself, citing the formal sources for the statue of St. Lawrence (among the many early works that look to Michelangelo), and the

biographers’ interpretation of its genesis as an example. But despite her emphasis on the
disjunction between art and biography, she ultimately concluded that “Bernini’s art can
be best understood through a critical reading of the sources, the interpretation of which
can then add to our understanding of the work of art itself.”

It is only recently, in *Bernini’s Biographies: Critical Essays* (2006) edited and
introduced by Maarten Delbeke, Evonne Levy and Steven F. Ostrow, that Gianlorenzo’s
*vite* have purposefully not been used as a lens through which to understand his artistic
*imitatio Buonarroti*, but studied as texts in dialogue with other written works –
Michelangelo’s two biographies foremost among them. Levy’s essay on chapter two of
Domenico’s *Vita*, for example, not only highlights instances in the text that rewrite
Buonarroti’s *vite*, but also shows how Domenico used filial imitation to characterize
Gianlorenzo’s art practice and define his singularity. Delbeke offers a comparative
reading of Baldinucci’s and Domenico’s respective passages on the *bel composto*,
demonstrating the nuanced ways that Michelangelo’s universality and rule breaking
artistic practice are inscribed into these accounts and, in turn, into Bernini’s identity as an
artist (in Baldinucci) and as a man (in Domenico). And, looking beyond the influence
of Michelangelo’s biographies, Eraldo Bellini examines the rich body of writings from
the courts of Urban VIII and Alexander VII that evoke the Bernini-Michelangelo theme,
thus greatly expanding the intertextual terrain explored by Bernini’s biographers.

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21 Soussloff, “Critical Topoi,” 139.
22 Maarten Delbeke, Evonne Levy and Steven F. Ostrow, eds., *Bernini’s Biographies: Critical Essays*
(University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2006).
23 Evonne Levy, “Chapter 2 of Domenico Bernini’s *Vita* of his Father: Mimesis,” in Delbeke, Levy and
Ostrow, eds., *Bernini’s Biographies*, 165.
24 Maarten Delbeke, “Gianlorenzo Bernini’s *Bel Composto*: the Unification of Life and Work in Biography
and Historiography,” in Delbeke, Levy and Ostrow, eds., *Bernini’s Biographies*, 251-74.
25 Eraldo Bellini, “From Mascardi to Pallavicino: the Biographies of Bernini and Seventeenth-Century
Roman Culture,” in Delbeke, Levy and Ostrow, eds., *Bernini’s Biographies*, 275-313.
The studies in this historiographical survey of Bernini’s *imitatio Buonarroti*, however rich, reveal a fragmentary picture of a far larger, systematic and extensive issue, the complexity and implications of which will only be revealed by a monographic treatment. My dissertation examines the artistic, architectural and biographical aspects of the Bernini-Michelangelo association, while endeavoring to preserve their relative independence, one from the other. In other words, consistent with the recent scholarship that regards the *vite* as interpretations, not explanations, I treat the visual and textual material as correlative, rather than contingent. In addition, my study broadens the artistic and architectural terrain of Gianlorenzo’s engagement with his predecessor by investigating artistic genres and architectural themes that have been largely overlooked by scholars concerned with the relationship between the two artists. If my exploration of the imitative strategies underscoring Bernini’s relationship to Michelangelo aligns my project with previous scholarship, my sustained framing of imitation as an aesthetic mode of creative self-formation or subject formation, rather than a barometer of creativity, sets this study apart. My project is also distinct in that it sets Gianlorenzo’s fashioning after Buonarroti against the latter’s much discussed reputation for being inimitable. Ultimately, through Michelangelo, I seek a better understanding of Gianlorenzo’s and his biographers’ purchase on individuality.

**Michelangelo the Inimitable**

While artists of Michelangelo’s generation sought to emulate ancient models that were considered perfect, in the period after Michelangelo, and especially in the seventeenth century, artists frequently rated paradigms set by sixteenth-century
exemplars above the antique and aspired to these modern archetypes in their works. Guido Reni strove to become a Raphael redivivus; Giovanni Lanfranco fashioned himself after Correggio; Padovanino remade Titian; and, Caravaggio, Borromini and Bernini all endeavored to align themselves, however discreetly, with Buonarroti’s precedent. This phenomenon is a product of the effect that Giorgio Vasari’s 1568 *Lives* had on the artistic culture of the latter half of the century and the successive era. As Elisabeth Cropper has suggested, once Vasari’s text established a new pantheon of modern exemplars – sixteenth-century masters who were the equals (or greater) of the antique – artists were forced to enter into a dialogue with the authoritative models of the *immediate* past in order to secure their own positions in the present.26 Vasari’s narrative of modern achievement thus laid the veritable foundations, to be confronted by emerging artists, of a post-antique canon of perfect works. But among the exemplary artists of Vasari’s third age, Michelangelo was unique; only he was celebrated as a universal artist who surpassed the ancients, all moderns and nature itself. And he alone was persistently, and problematically, deemed inimitable in all the arts.

Michelangelo’s inimitability – a claim, however contentious, that would dog his followers – was introduced into Buonarroti’s legacy by Ascanio Condivi. Near the end of his 1553 *Life of Michelangelo*, Condivi wrote: “Now, to conclude these remarks of mine, I say that it seems to me that in painting and sculpture, nature has been generous and liberal to Michelangelo with all her riches, so that I am not to be blamed for saying

that his figures are almost inimitable.”

Eulogists like Giovan Maria Tarsie adopted this viewpoint at Michelangelo’s death, praising the artist and his art as “rare, individual, particularized, almost miraculous, inimitable” and even “incomprehensible” in their published orations and poems. And although Vasari had not invoked the word “inimitabile” in his first Michelangelo biography, he did employ it in the 1568 edition, writing that “everything [Buonarroti] made, whether with the brush or the chisel, is almost inimitable.” In architecture, too, Vasari’s Buonarroti was an incomparable vanguard working “in a style more varied and more original than any other master, ancient or modern…. This license has greatly encouraged those who saw his work to try to imitate it, and subsequently we have seen the creation of new kinds of fantastic ornamentation containing more of the grotesque than of rule or reason.” In other words,
his architectural imitators not only failed to match Michelangelo, they botched his example. For Vasari and likeminded writers, the inimitable Buonarroti and his art comprised absolute perfection that existed outside history, time and change. His example was one to which artists should aspire, notwithstanding its unrealizability. Michelangelo, in short, was exempt from succession.

Michelangelo’s inimitability, as Jane Tylus has noted, situated him “outside of the laws of artistic practice whereby one artist could imitate, and thereby learn from, another.” Imitation of exemplary models was common pedagogical practice in the workshops and academies of the early modern period. By studying and copying the best artistic examples, a young artist learned the fundamentals of his profession. More importantly, by assimilating the lessons of one or more of the most admired masters, the novice ultimately moved towards creative self-realization and developed an independent and individualized artistic style. Since artists could neither profitably learn from nor develop themselves by mimicking Michelangelo’s example, he represented a dead-end within the economy of imitation.

According to some critics, however, it was not the master’s purported inimitability that led aspiring Michelangelos up a blind alley, but his failure to create a school in which he could instruct followers in the essentials of his art and practice. Paolo Giovio first remarked upon Michelangelo’s eschewal of pedagogical responsibility in his brief “Michaelis angeli Vita” dated to around 1527:

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quelli che hanno veduto il far suo, di mettersi a imitarlo, e nuove fantasie si sono vedute poi alla grotesca, più tosto che a ragione o regola, a’ loro ornamenti.”


Michelangelo’s great genius was contrasted by a nature so rude and untamed so as to confer on his private life unbelievable scandal and to deprive the future of the disciples that might have continued his art. Although princes implored him to do so, he never let himself be persuaded to be the master of anyone or even to allow anyone in his workshop as an observer.\textsuperscript{33}

Giovio blames Michelangelo’s desire to hoard his knowledge on his character, but reading between the lines of this passage, one envisions a Michelangelo so paranoid at the prospect of being rivaled that he hid his secrets so as not to be surpassed. This is precisely Baccio Bandinelli’s position in a letter of 1547 to the Duke of Florence, in which he explained the motives behind Michelangelo’s reluctance to furnish him with marble works, stating “that it was simply because he never wanted help from others so they would not become masters” in their own right.\textsuperscript{34} Two years prior, Pietro Aretino complained that had Michelangelo satisfied his request for a drawing, he would have been able to discredit the “invidious reports that you [Michelangelo] can only give things to Gherardi [Perini] and Tomai [Tommaso de’ Cavalieri],”\textsuperscript{35} that is, to his two most beloved pupils, alone. Claims of Michelangelo’s parsimonious tutelage persisted, and in the next century Giovan Pietro Bellori reiterated this thread of Michelangelo’s critical misfortune, extolling the virtue of teaching as “the mark of a most fertile talent” and, in turn, characterizing Michelangelo as “sterile rather than fecund.”\textsuperscript{36}

\textsuperscript{34} Vasari/Barocchi, \textit{Vita}, 4:1958-9: “E sappi Vostra Eccellenza, che la causa che e’ [Michelangelo] non ha mai fornito nessuna opera di marmo è solo stato perché non ha mai voluto aiuto di persona per non fare de’ maestri, perché la vostra casa non abbia questa memoria.”
\textsuperscript{35} Ibid., 4:1958: “Or così ve lo perdoni Iddio, come non ragiono ciò per isdegno ch’io ebbi circa le cose desiderate, perché il sodisfare al quanto vi obligaste mandarmi doveva essere procurato da voi con ogni sollecitudine, da che in cotale atto acquetavate la invidia, che vuole che non vi possin disporre se non Gherardi e Tomai.”
perceived shortcoming was not manifest in an absence of pupils, per se, but in a host of hapless epigones who vainly attempted to imitate his art.

Rallying against claims that Michelangelo’s unwillingness to teach foreclosed the future for his followers, Condivi and Vasari argued that Buonarroti and his art fostered possibilities for imitation and continuity by way of active and passive instruction. Both biographers flatly dismissed the charge that Michelangelo was loath to impart his knowledge. \(^{37}\) Rather, they wrote of an able and generous teacher plagued with poor students. “But, as misfortune would have it,” lamented Condivi, “the pupils he has come across either had little aptitude or, if they had aptitude, they did not persevere but considered themselves masters after a few months of study with him.”\(^ {38}\) Vasari echoed this sentiment: “To be sure, he was unlucky with the people who went to live with him in his house, but this was because he chanced upon pupils who were hardly capable of following him.”\(^ {39}\) However keen a teacher, his students’ failures here slyly underscore Michelangelo’s status as matchless. Both biographers also countered claims of Michelangelo’s inability or unwillingness to teach by pointing to works that were veritable “schools” in and of themselves, like the Battle of Cascina cartoon, which made “excellent painters” of “those who subsequently studied it and made copies of the

\(^{37}\) Condivi/Wohl, Life, 106; Condivi, Vita, 63-4: “Né è vero che molti gli appogiano, che non abbia voluto insegnare, anzi ciò ha fatto volontieri, e io l’ho conosciuto in me stesso, al qual egli ha aperto ogni suo sécreto che a tal arte s’appertiene.” Vasari/Bull, Life, 1:421; Vasari/Barocchi, Vita, 1:119: “E questi che dicano che non voleva insegnare, hanno il torto, perché l’usò sempre a’ suoi famigliari et a chi dimandava consiglio.” Vasari also claimed that Michelangelo was a divine gift sent to the world for the benefit of other artists, see Vasari/Bull, Life, 323, 431; Vasari/Barocchi, Vita, 1:3, 132.

\(^{38}\) Condivi/Wohl, Life, 106-7; Condivi, Vita, 64: “ma la disgrazia ha voluto che si sia abbellato o a subietti poco atti, o, se pure sono stati atti, non abbino perseverato, ma, poi che sotta la disciplina sua saranno stati pochi mesi, si sien tenuti maestri.”

\(^{39}\) Vasari/Bull, Life, 421; Vasari/Barocchi, Vita, 1:119: “Si può ben far giudizio di questo, che con coloro che stettono con seco in casa ebbe mala fortuna, perché percosse in subietti poco atti a imitarlo.”
figures,”40 or the Medici Chapel, with “statues… so beautifully formed, their attitudes so lovely, and their muscles treated so skilfully, that if the art of sculpture were lost they would serve to restore it to its original luster.”41 Even the creation of the Florentine Accademia di Disegno, of which Michelangelo was the honorary artistic figurehead, implicitly promised that the master’s practices and achievements, if not his style, might be transmitted to the novice painter, sculptor and architect alike.42 This institutional attempt to harness Michelangelo’s highly individual example for the collective future of art, posthumously enshrined the master as an ever-living teacher.

Notwithstanding Vasari’s admiration for Michelangelo as teacher (not to mention his own purportedly advantageous tutelage under the master), his 1568 Lives offered an alternative to Buonarroti’s model in the example of Raphael, who wisely used Michelangelo’s inimitability – the yoke of many – as a route to emancipation.43

Raphael decided that since he was unable to match Michelangelo in the kind of painting to which his rival had put his hand, he would equal Michelangelo in other respects and perhaps even surpass him, and thus instead of imitating Michelangelo’s style, which would have been a vain

40 Vasari/Bull, Life, 342; Vasari/Barocchi, Vita, 1:26: “tutti coloro che su quel cartone studiarono e tal cosa disegnarono, come poi si seguitò molti anni in Fiorenza per forestieri e per terrazzini, diventarono persone in tale arte eccellenti.” Condivi/Wohl, Life, 37; Condivi, Vita, 28: “Dal quale artificioseissimo cartone eber luce tutti quelli che dipoi misser mano a pennello.” In his 1591 guidebook to Florence, Francesco Bocchi even noted that “the best artists of our own time, and in fact of all times, have drawn their inspiration from such designs [i.e. the cartoon] by Michelangelo.” Francesco Bocchi, The Beauties of the City of Florence. A Guidebook of 1591, intro., trans., and annot., Thomas Frangenberg and Robert Williams (London: Harvey Miller, 2006), 109. For the reception of the cartoon as the teacher of the best artists, see Vasari/Barocchi, Vita, 2:261-2, who also notes that Vasari (in his life of Aristotile da Sangallo) and Cellini (in his autobiography) characterize the cartoon a “school.”

41 Vasari/Bull, Life, 368; Vasari/Barocchi, Vita, 1:61.

42 “At the academy’s foundation, Cosimo’s men seized upon Michelangelo’s method of learning – not his style, but his combination of theory and practice, which, together with measured judgment, were held to be the source of his perfection.” Karen-Edis Barzman, The Florentine Academy and the Early Modern State: The Discipline of Disegno (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 18. For Michelangelo and the Florentine academy, more broadly, see also Fredrika H. Jacobs, “(Dis)assembling: Marsyas, Michelangelo and the Accademia del Disegno,” Art Bulletin 84 (2002): 426-48.

waste of time, he began to attain great versatility in all those other aspects of painting that have been described. If other artisans of our time had done the same thing instead of studying nothing but the work of Michelangelo, without either imitating him or being able to reach such a high level of perfection, they would not have labored in vain.  

Vasari’s account of Raphael’s stylistic development vis-à-vis Buonarroti differs from Condivi’s, which emphasized Raphael’s gratitude for being “born in Michelangelo’s times, as he copied from him a style which was quite different from the one which he had learned from his father.” Whereas Condivi’s Raphael was indebted to Michelangelo, Vasari’s Raphael judiciously recognized that excelling Michelangelo in that which he was perfect (namely the representation of forceful nude men) was impossible, and so he pursued a more moderate path of imitating nature in her variety. Raphael’s “modo mezzano” (middle path), as Vasari elsewhere put it, was a prudent alternative to the prospect of failure posed by trying to compete with Michelangelo alone. In the face of Michelangelo’s singular and inimitable perfection, Vasari’s Raphael ensured the continuing progress of art.

Vasari’s portrayal of Raphael’s selective imitation as an alternative to Michelangelo’s dead-end is, in part, a response to Lodovico Dolce’s *Dialogo sulla pittura* (1557). Dolce countered claims of Michelangelo’s preeminence in painting by casting

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44 (italics mine) Vasari/Bull, “Life of Raphael,” in *Lives of the Artists*, 317-8; Vasari/Barocchi, *Vita*, 1: 221: “Raffaello si risolvé, non potendo aggiungere Michelagnolo in quella parte dove egli aveva messo mano, di volerlo in queste altre pareggiare e forse superarlo; e così si diede non ad imitare la maniera di colui, per non perdervi vanamente il tempo, ma a farsi un ottimo universale in queste altre parti che si sono raccontate. E se così avessero fatto molti artefici dell’età nostra, che, per aver voluto seguitare lo studio solamente delle cose di Michelagnolo, non hanno imitato lui né potuto aggiungere a tanta perfezione, egli non arebbono faticato in vano.”


Raphael as the master’s equal and superior, an artist with a command not only of Buonarroti’s forceful figures, but also of an array of figure types found in nature. According to Dolce, Raphael “had such a marvelous variety in all of his works that there is no figure which is like any other either in air or motion, hence there appears no shadow of what painters today derogatively call maniera (mannerism), that is to say, bad practice, where the forms and faces one sees are almost always alike.”

As Roskill observed, Dolce’s use of the word “maniera” here refers to followers who mimic a master’s innovations in so limited a way that all they produce are derivative types rather than original works. Raphael’s variety offered a way out of the endless repetition of such mannerism, a mode of operating that Dolce also linked implicitly to Buonarroti’s imitators. Dolce even chastised those who deemed Michelangelo the best artist or who blindly followed his lead, calling them “the kind of people who, with no further understanding, run along behind others, like one sheep following another; or of certain daubers, who are apers of Michelangelo.” Unable to transform their model or assert their independent artistic selves, Buonarroti’s epigones, unlike Dolce’s Raphael, deferred artistic progress with their endless repetition.

Dolce’s concerns about the artistic decline associated with imitating Michelangelo were taken up, in part, by Giovanni Battista Armenini in his De’ veri precetti della pittura (1586/87). Armenini observed a qualitative decline in painting from the middle of the sixteenth-century onward, which he attributed to the general neglect among great

47 “…in tutte le sue opere egli usò una varietà tanto mirabile, che non è figura, che ne d’aria ne di movimento si somigli, tal che in ciò non appare ombra di quello, che da Pittori hoggi in mala parte è chiamata maniera, cioè cattiva pratica; ove si veggono forme e volti quasi sempre simili.” As transcribed with translation in Mark W. Roskill, Dolce’s Aretino and Venetian Art Theory of the Cinquecento (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000), 176-7.
48 Ibid., 312-3.
49 Ibid., 91, 90: “Forse di que’, che non sanno: iqua li senza intendere altro, corrono dietro il parer d’altrui come fa una pecora dietro l’altra: over di alcuni pittorucci, che sono Scimie di Michel’Agnolo.”
artists (except Raphael) to create schools in which novices might learn to master and then recast their sources. For Armenini, good painting demanded the judicious imitation of exemplars. Aspiring artists could pursue one of two imitative paths – follow either the art of one master or that of many exemplars – in order to develop a strong and individual style. Though he recommended the latter pluralistic mode (for which Raphael stood as his model) and warned against the pitfalls of pursuing one master, especially Michelangelo, whose forceful and individual manner was debilitating to those who had yet to develop a strongly individual style, he nonetheless offered advice on how to imitate Buonarroti successfully:

But it is time we consider those who wish to acquire a good style from one master only, drawing and imitating everything of his with purpose and making his works their unique model. Michelangelo used to say to these students that one never led by following. In any case, they must imitate in such a way that they reproduce the model not in one or two parts, but in all; thus, while they seek to imitate one facet, they must not diverge from another, but must consider and learn all parts equally well. Consequently, when putting into practice later what they have learned, they will be similar to the master as the father is to the son and one brother to another. This applies especially to those who attempt to imitate the way of Michelangelo Buonarroti, for many who have tried have succeeded only in appearing awkward. The reason is that since his style is very difficult… few wish to imitate him in all respects. Because some concentrate on one part alone and some another, and some transform Michelangelo’s style or entangle it with others, one sees motley and strange styles in these people. For the greatest of their errors is to try to combine features of Michelangelo’s style with some of another painter, which although beautiful separately, do not combine but, rather, remain distinct. Nor do they see in how many ways Michelangelo’s style diverges from all others.  

50 (italics mine) Giovanni Battista Armenini, *On the True Precepts of the Art of Painting*, ed. and trans. Edward Olszewski (New York: B. Franklin, 1977), 136-7; idem, *De veri precetti della pittura*, ed. Marina Gorreri (Turin: Giulio Einaudi editore, 1988), 82-3: “Ma è tempo che trattiamo sopra di quelli che la buona maniera pigliar vogliono da un solo, ritraendo et immitando di lui ogni cosa, come per scopo e singularissimo esempio loro. A queste solea dire Michelangelo che chi andava dietro a gli altri, mai gli passava inanzi. Ma questi debbono essere tali nell’imitazione, che essi abbino similitudine con gli esempi non in una o in due parti, ma in tutte, di modo che, mentre cercano d’assomigliarsi in una, non discordino nell’altra, ma egualmente le considerino e l’imparino, si che nel porle in atto poi le stiano di maniera, che le siano simili come il padre al figliuolo e l’un fratello all’altro, et in speciale a quelli che la
While acknowledging Michelangelo’s own disavowal of following others, Armenini contended that when imitating Buonarroti, one must assimilate him fully and single-mindedly and avoid mixing, so that one’s parentage remained wholly evident. According to Armenini, Michelangelo’s style was so forceful and individual it was incompatible with any other. Francesco Bisagno carried this thinking into the subsequent century in his *Trattato della Pittura* (1642), a unique patchwork of late sixteenth-century theories (especially those of Armenini and Gian Paolo Lomazzo) that reiterates the above passage almost verbatim. Yet Bisagno’s appropriation, as Philip Sohm notes, should not be understood as anachronistic, but rather as encouraging the persistence of sixteenth-century theory in his own age. Though the artistic landscape had changed significantly in the years between Armenini’s and Bisagno’s publications, the efficacy of Michelangelo’s example, as the latter work and other contemporary texts indicate, remained a subject of continuing controversy.

strada tentano et imitano di Michelangelo Buonaroti. Conciosiaché nel cercar questa di solennissimi goffi ci riescono, imperò che, essendo difficilissima, come si sa e si vede, pochi ci sono che la vogliono imitar apieno, attesoché, a chi di una parte si cura solo e chi un’altra pigliando et altri quella di lui tramutando et intricandola con l’altra, così diverse e strane maniere si veggono rimanere in costoro, perché del loro male non è il maggiore, quanto è il volerli traporre delle parti altrui, le quali quantunque siano bellissime nel suo genere, quivi però à mischiarle si vede che rimangono disunite. Né essi si accorgono in quanti modi questa maniera sia difficile e diversa da tutte l’altr’.

51 Francesco Domenico Bisagno, *Trattato della Pittura* (in Venetia: per li Giunti, 1642), 27-30: “Hor trattando sopra di quelli, che la buona maniera pigliar vogliono da un solo ritraendo, & imitando di lui ogni cosa, come per iscopo è singularissimo esempio loro, a queste sole a dire Michel’Angelo, che chi andava dietro à gl’altri non gli avanzava mai: ma questi debbono essere tali nell’imitatione, che essi habbino similitudine e con gli essempi, non in una, ò due parti, ma in tutte, di modo che mentre che cercano di assomigliarsi in una, non discordino nell’altra, ma egualmente le considerino, e l’imparino, si che nel porle in atto poi che istiano di maniera, che siano simili, come il Padre al Figliuolo, & un Fratello all’altro, & imparicolare à quelli, che la strada tentano, & imitano di Michel’Angelo Buonaroti, perciocché nel cercar questa, solennissimi goffi vi riescono, consciosi ch’essendo difficilissima, come si sa, e si vede, pochi vi sono, che la vogliono imitar à pieno, attesoché, chi d’una parte si cura solo, e chi un’altra pigliando, & altri quella di lui tramutando, & intricandola con altre, così diverse, e strane follie si veggono rimanere in costoro, perché del loro male non è il maggiore, quanto è il volerli traporre delle parti altrui, le quail quantun-que siano bellissime nel suo genere, e quivi però à mischiarle, si vede che rimangono disunite, nè essi si accorgono in quanti modi questa maniera sia difficile, e diversa da tutte l’altr’.”

By recommending that artists wishing to imitate Michelangelo dedicate themselves to a comprehensive study of the master alone, Armenini and Bisagno make Buonarroti the exception to a contemporary strain of thought among artists and theorists that no single master could furnish a complete model of perfection. Championing a pluralistic/selective approach, the majority of artists and theorists took their cue from Gianfrancesco Pico, who, in an early sixteenth-century debate about good literary style advocated selective imitation above Pietro Bembo’s preference for imitating the sole exemplar in a given genre. For example, Vasari praised Raphael who, “from many masters… made a single one, which was then always held to be his own”; Lomazzo wrote that the best canvas would be an Adam and Eve combining Michelangelo’s design and Titian’s painting for the male figure and Raphael’s design and Correggio’s coloring for the female figure; Francesco Scannelli’s ultimate painter possessed the liver (Raphael), heart (Titian), brain (Correggio) and other organs embodied by the best

53 On the pluralistic or Zeuxian model and its implications for an artist’s style, see Sohm, Style, 35-9. On Michelangelo’s adoption of the Zeuxian trope of eclectic imitation, see David Summers, Michelangelo and the Language of Art (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981), 186-99. While most art writers who purported to record Michelangelo’s thoughts (like Condivi, Vasari and Francisco de Hollanda) indicated that the artist espoused Zeuxian imitation, it should be noted that, according to Vincenzo Danti, Michelangelo was skeptical of the Zeuxian theory and did not work according to its principles, see Summers, Michelangelo, 195-6.


sixteenth-century artists;\textsuperscript{57} and, according to Carlo Cesare Malvasia, Lodovico Carracci told his cousin Annibale that “to imitate a single master is to make oneself his follower and his inferior, while to draw from [Titian, Correggio, Veronese, Parmigianino] and… other masters is to make oneself their judge and leader.”\textsuperscript{58} Yet, as Maria Loh has noted, these examples were not the only way to theorize practice, and many artists – including, purportedly, Bernini, who admired the Carracci manner – deemed pluralistic imitation equivalent to making grotesque monsters.\textsuperscript{59}

Notwithstanding the various arguments surrounding imitation, all agreed that the imitator’s ultimate goal was to transform his model(s), that is, to emulate rather than to ape. This ideal was also emphasized by Armenini’s and Bisagno’s unique combination of a filial metaphor with a single-model ideal derived from Bembo for following Michelangelo. For Bembo, imitation demanded that one “transform himself into [the model], and render himself wholly similar to him,” possessing the model’s style, language, temperament and so on.\textsuperscript{60} Although Bembo saw this as the sole (if rarely

\begin{thebibliography}{99}
\item As translated in Anne Summerscale, Malvasia’s “Life of the Carracci”: Commentary and Translation (University Park: Penn State University Press, 2000), 129.
\item “L’imitazione abbraccia tutta la forma dello scritto imitato, e cerca d’impadronirsene in ogni singola parte…Chi vuol meritarsi il nome d’imitatore… deve riprodurre la totalità dello stile del suo modello;” and, “L’imitare di cui parliamo non è che il trasferire nei propri scritti qualcosa di simile allo stile altrui, ed il possedere nello scrivere quasi lo stesso temperamento di chi ci si propone d’imitare.” As cited in Battisti, “Il concetto d’imitazione.” 96.
\end{thebibliography}
achieved) path to surpassing one’s model, as scholars have noted, his position implied the wholesale submission of the imitator to the imitated, free of criticism, conflict, or creative self-formation. But Armenini and Bisagno reformulate the submissive element of single-model imitation by coupling it with the theme of father and son rooted to Seneca the Younger’s frequently adopted Epistle 84:

> This is what our mind should do: it should hide away all the materials by which it has been aided, and bring to light only what it has made of them. even if there shall appear in you a likeness to him who, by reason your admiration, has left a deep impress upon you, I would have you resemble him as a child resembles his father, and not as a picture resembles its original; for a picture is a lifeless thing.

When filtered through the filial model, Bembo’s notion of willing submission to a single model turns into calculated transformation or imitation akin to the natural (though involuntary) laws that dictate the likeness between fathers and sons. By equating good imitation of a single model to familial resemblance, these authors underscored the virtues of difference within similarity and continuity within change. Filial status thus signaled conditional independence. And just as a son reveals his parentage while remaining distinct from his father, so too, good imitation subtly, but unmistakably, discloses its origins. In an earlier adoption of Seneca’s metaphor, Petrarch elaborated on familial similitude, writing “there is often a great divergence in the particular features [of father and son], but there is a certain suggestion, what our painters call an ‘air’…which makes the resemblance.” This shared air (*aria*) is not an affinity of form, but of style or

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62 On Senca’s 84th Epistle see Greene, *Light in Troy*, 73-5.
63 As cited in ibid., 75.
64 On Petrarch’s adoption of Senca’s epistle, see Greene, *Light in Troy*, 93-7; Cropper, *Domenichino Affair*, 101-2.
character. Armenini’s and Bisagno’s extension of the metaphor to include the discrete resemblance between one brother and another also underscores the variety of individual artistic selves that might arise from imitating one exemplary father.

It is striking that although Michelangelo had been characterized as inimitable in all three arts, theoretical responses to the problem of imitating him unfolded almost solely in writings on painting. The scarcity of discussions in tracts on sculpture or architectural treatises is difficult to explain. Michelangelo’s inimitability might have garnered more attention in texts on painting simply because the art theorists of this period wrote more about painting than sculpture or architecture. Perhaps the increasing theoretical priority of painting over sculpture also played a role. It might even be the case that for some theorists, a distinction did not need to be made between the figural arts, for example, Armenini’s filial model for painters could be readily adopted by sculptors. And, yet, earlier in the century Dolce did distinguish between these two media when it came to imitating Michelangelo. While he argued that in painting, Raphael’s (and, above that, Titian’s) example not only matched, but also surpassed that of Michelangelo, Dolce held that in sculpture Buonarroti was out of reach of followers; indeed, in this art only he could surpass himself. But if the literature offered no theoretical route for sculptors or architects through the impasse created by the master’s forcefully individual (and therefore inimitable) art and style, we should not take this to mean that the question of imitating Michelangelo in these two disciplines was less fraught than in painting.

Closer to Bernini’s time, the burden of imitating Michelangelo in both sculpture and painting is acknowledged in Raffaello Borghini’s *Il Riposo* (1584), a dialogue on the merits of art featuring four interlocutors who pay lip service to the master’s style and oeuvre without undermining a future for his followers:

Sirigatti: Being gathered at the summit of perfection of sculpture and painting in discussing Michelangelo, it would seem to me, if it does not displease you, that we can bring our discussion to a close. It is not appropriate for us, having climbed to the top of the mountain, wanting to go forward, to go down to a lower part.

Vecchietti: …*But* rather than finishing our discussion on the heights of Buonarroti, it would seem we should not so greatly look down on those craftsmen who cannot arrive at such excellence. That would be a great fault, since praise is given to all of those who race with swift steps even though they do not acquire first prize.

Valori: Truly Bernardo is right… and we would wrong the painters and sculptors who live today, and too greatly dash their hope – being themselves among those with great study, try to imitate Michelangelo – if we also do not discuss them.

If the discussants offer no advice on how to imitate the master successfully, they nonetheless praise the very effort among painters and sculptors (notably among the latter, so-called mannerist sculptors Vincenzo Danti, Giambologna, Ammanati and Gregorio de Rossi) to rival him, in and of itself, as a goal.

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67 (italics mine) Raffaello Borghini, *Il Riposo*, ed. and trans. Lloyd H. Ellis Jr. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007), 243; idem, *Il riposo di Raffaello Borghini, in c vi della pittura, e della scultura si fauella, de’ più illustri pittori, e scultori, e delle più famose opere loro si fa mentione; e le cose principali appartenenti à dette arti s’insegnano* (Fiorenza: G. Marescotti, 1584), 281: “Essendo noi giunti alla somma perfettione della Scultura, e della Pittura in ragionando di Michelagnolo, à me perrebbe, quando à voi non dispiacesse, che si potesse por fine à nostri parlarì; accioche non ci convenisse, essendo saliti in cima al mnte, volendo più avanti trascorrere, icendere al basso. Anzi il dimorare in questa altezza, rispose il Vecchietto, come luogo non proprio nostro ne sarebbe di noia, e frse di pericolo per lo còbattimento de’venti, che offende quelli, che sopra le cime de’monti si fermano; oltre à che terminando noi il nostro ragionamento nell’altezza del Buonarruoto, parrebbe che quelli artefici, che à tâta eccellenza arrivari non possono disprezzazzimo; il che sarebbe gran fallo; conciosia che lodar si deono utti coloro, che con velovi passi corrono, comeche il primo pregio non s’acquistino. Divero che M. Bernardo ha ragione, soggiunurse l’Valori, e noi faremmo torto a’pittori, & à gli scultori, che hoggi vivono, e troppo di speranza torremmo loro (essendocene di quelli, che con grande studio cercano d’imitare Michelagnolo) se di loro etiandio non ragionassimo.”
It is likely that Michelangelo’s inimitability is not present in writings on architecture because the question of imitation in this discipline is somewhat different than that in the figural arts. Here the issue was not *whose* style should be emulated but rather *which* of the one or more of the regionally authored ancient architectural orders should be adopted and how they should be employed.\(^6\) But the ill-effect of Michelangelo’s unmatched mastery upon aspiring architects did not go unnoted. In Pirro Ligorio’s unpublished treatise of 1570-80, Buonarroti’s followers are not only derided for imitating his innovative forms but for being silly impostors:

> So as to appear as excellent as was Michelangelo Buonarroti [those aspiring to be architects] put on a hat and short boots with shoes over them and have bushy eyebrows under the shaggy hat to imitate his knowledge, as if that were in the hat or boots, and as associating with a doctor one learns to go dressed as one without having the knowledge or method to be able to study as they do in order to go about so dressed, they wish to appear doctors or Michelangelos.\(^7\)

The passage suggests that the only way to achieve Buonarroti’s success is to acquire his hard-earned knowledge, a difficult task his followers apparently try to circumvent by masquerading as him instead.

While sixteenth- and seventeenth-century art writers offered few strategies to artists wishing to profitably imitate Buonarroti, my examination of Bernini’s imitation of Michelangelo in art and architecture reveals a number of theories *in practice* by which

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\(^7\) As translated in David Coffin, “Pirro Ligorio on the Nobility of the Arts,” *JWCI* 27 (1963): 193, with original passage in Italian.
the seicento artist encountered, if not always overcame, the obstacle of the cinquecento
master’s inimitability.\(^70\) I employ Seneca’s filial metaphor as a flexible interpretive lens
through which to understand what was a life-long relationship expressed through and
across media. In adopting a model of fathers and sons to frame Bernini’s work and
practice, I work not only with Armenini’s precept but also with the perspective offered in
Domenico Bernini’s biography of his father, whose filial theme for characterizing
Bernini’s art making was in contrast with Filippo Baldinucci’s selective/pluralistic
version of his subject’s imitative processes.\(^71\) But whereas Domenico’s text treats
Bernini’s filial attitude towards Michelangelo as the same for all the arts, I offer a more
nuanced portrait of the shifting dynamics of imitation as they unfold between fathers and
sons across the arts and from one encounter to the next. The degrees of formal
resemblance between father and son that were fashioned by Bernini’s imitation of
Michelangelo – whether stylistic, figural or conceptual\(^72\) – are only part of a much more
complex familial relationship.

By classifying Bernini and Michelangelo as son and father, respectively, my
dissertation also deals with a paradox particular to the problem of imitating Buonarroti:

\(^70\) Denis Mahon, *Studies in Seicento Art Theory* (London: Warburg Institute, 1947), first noted the
inconsistency between seventeenth-century art and theory and perceived theoretical principles in working
methods. Since then scholars have demonstrated that that theory is deeply inscribed in the practices of
numerous artists. My work builds upon studies by Pamela Askew, Timothy K. Kitao, Rudolf Preimesberger,
George C. Bauer, Sebastian Schütze, Matthias Winner and others, who have established that Gianlorenzo’s
artistic and architectural practices reveal theories of art (though not theories of imitation) often indebted
to Michelangelo’s principles. See, for example, Askew, “The Relation of Bernini’s Architecture”; Timothy
K. Kitao, *Circle and Oval in the Square of Saint Peter’s: Bernini’s Art of Planning* (New York: New York
University Press, 1974); Preimesberger, “Themes from Art Theory”; George C. Bauer, “Bernini e i
‘modelli in grande’,” in Spagnesi and Fagiolo eds., *Gian Lorenzo Bernini Architetto*, 1:279-90; idem,
“Bernini and the Baldacchino: on Becoming an Architect in the Seventeenth Century,” *Architectura* 26

\(^71\) On the imitative frameworks used by Domenico Bernini and Filippo Baldinucci in their biographies of
Bernini, see Levy, “Chapter 2,” 159-63.

\(^72\) For seventeenth-century writings on the various objects of imitation from style, figure, concept, see Loh,
“New and Improved,” 483-90.
How does one become the (good) son of an artist who not only lacked (worthy) progeny, but also, depending on the view to which one subscribes, was unwittingly denied or consciously eschewed fatherhood? Is it possible to make Michelangelo into a (good) father? How does Bernini’s biological father, Pietro, a sculptor in his own right and the first teacher of Bernini figure into this picture? And what of Bernini’s ‘brothers,’ as it were, contemporaries who also claimed Michelangelo as their father?

**Fathers and Sons, Imitation and Identity**

Modern theorists of the art and literature of various epochs often use the metaphor of fathers and sons to characterize the material and conceptual properties of imitation and to define the dynamics inherent in the imitative process, yet they differ on the character of these family ties. Among the most provocative is Harold Bloom, whose *Anxiety of Influence* (1973), a study of the hindrance strong poetic precursors exert on later poets, resonates, in part, with sixteenth- and seventeenth-century concerns that Michelangelo’s powerful model debilitated followers. Bloom saw post-enlightenment poets (and ambitious writers from the Renaissance onward) as engaged in an anxious Oedipal struggle for independence and primacy in which an oppressive father had to be Overthrown and repudiated in order for the son to become his unique self. His focus was on so-called “strong poets” who rallied against the precursor, which he distinguished from so-called “weak poets” who idealized the precursor. For Bloom, the aim of the strong son’s anxious, agonistic struggle for self-definition was to eschew continuity with the father by way of deliberate misinterpretation:

Poetic influence – when it involves two strong, authentic poets, - always proceeds by a misreading of the prior poet, an act of creative correction.
that is actually and necessarily a misinterpretation. The history of fruitful poetic influence, which is to say the main tradition of Western poetry since the Renaissance, is a history of anxiety and self-saving caricature, of distortion, of perverse, willful revisionism without which modern poetry as such could not exist.73

On the one hand, if Bloom’s insistence on misprision – the deliberate misreading or misinterpretation of the precursor – is profitably applied to the post-Romantic period, it nonetheless misunderstands early modern imitation, which, after all, seeks understanding of the model as a means to move away from it. On the other hand, Bloom’s Freudian lens casts new light on early modern theories of imitation by introducing the son’s mood or disposition to an otherwise passive biological metaphor of generational resemblance and influence. Bloom’s theoryvaluably underscores the presence of “dynamics” in poetic father-son relations. But as many critics have noted, his theory privileges the negative sentiment and conflict in the Freudian family romance at the expense of more affirmative, constructive possibilities of interaction and self-definition.

By considering more fully the constructive aspects of imitation in conjunction with signs of potential discord, my approach to Bernini and Michelangelo (as veritable son and chosen father) pursues the path of the ambivalent heir, rather than Bloom’s angst-ridden usurper. This approach is more closely aligned to recent scholarship on imitation, allusion and intertextuality74 in early modern art and literature, which


74 Although the modern critical category of intertextuality, as conceived by Julia Kristeva in 1966, was not concerned with intentions, my use of the term/category follows that of subsequent theorists who have gone beyond the original definition and argued that texts do not operate independent of human agency, nor can they be understood outside their historical circumstances. My employ of the term, however, is limited and I often use “allusion,” which Christopher Ricks and William Irwin have argued, better captures the authorial intention theorists have too freely ascribed to intertextuality, in its stead. According to Ricks and Irwin, allusion allows for both conscious and unconscious, historically grounded intentionality. Allusions are also not limited to indirect reference, but can be either overt or covert. This is made apparent in the sixteenth-century poet Marco Girolamo Vida’s statement: “Often I like to play with and to allude to [alludere] phrases from the ancients and, while using precisely the same words, to express another meaning.” Most
emphasizes the productive continuity inherent in less burdened family dynamics. My introduction to this scholarship was Thomas Greene’s *Light in Troy* (1982), which read the Renaissance writer’s imitation of ancient sources not as an Oedipal crisis – though fear of inferiority plays a role – but as an expression of the critical self-consciousness possessed by the courageous son in the face of his intimidating father: “The discovery of the ancient world imposed enormous anxiety on the humanist Renaissance, but its living poetry represents a series of victories over anxiety, based upon a courage that confronts the model without neurotic paralysis and uses anxiety to discover selfhood.” For Greene, such “conditional independence” was at once productive and self-affirmative, if rife with antithetical forces of “confidence and apprehension, freedom and claustroplation, harmony and violence” that “disclosed [the author’s] own ambivalences.” Although James Ackerman distinguished the oppression of modern “influence” and “anxiety” from the freedom of early modern “imitation [which] produced sustenance and security”, he too emphasized continuity through active challenge: “Imitation stressed community, the feeling of solidarity that the maker of the present has with his ancestors – ancestors whom he engages in a contest of skill and imagination.” And Maria Loh, who similarly dismissed the notion of early modern anxiety as “anachronistic malaise,” argued that imitation was a constructive form of respectful rivalry following “an eristic model of influence and imitation that sought continuity rather than rupture.” Like the above

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76 Ibid., 103.

77 Ackerman, “Imitation,” 13, 14.

studies, my thesis that the artistic affiliation of Bernini with Michelangelo was that of a filial inheritance, constructed by Bernini and later reframed to different ends by his biographers, does not preclude the possibility that even happy father and son relationships were rife with tension: filial resentment could mingle with gratitude, rivalry might co-exist with admiration, and striving to do better perhaps belied the security offered by authority. Nor does my study propose that the heir’s viewpoint is fixed, but rather that the dynamic between father and son – particularly in a long-term relationship such as that between Bernini and Michelangelo – is ever changing.

Inheriting, as numerous scholars of early modern imitation demonstrate, is also a process of subject formation or becoming. Greene, for example, argued that the literary intersection of the self and the other, of imitation and history, produced constructions about a text’s (and its author’s) origins and formation: “the imitative poem sketches, far more explicitly and plainly than most historically conscious texts, its own etiological derivation; it acts out its own coming into being. And since its subtext is by definition drawn from an alien culture, the imitative poem creates a bridge from one mundus signifcans to another.”

Thus unlike Bloom, who sketched a poetic history of influence that undermines historicity or tradition, Greene showed that the link between two (temporally and conceptually) foreign worlds (and selves) is fashioned by the constant and deeply formative interplay of difference and similitude as inscribed in what he calls “heuristic” and “dialectical” imitation. Jean-Claude Carron likewise argued that by

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79 (italics mine) Greene, Light in Troy, 41. Or, as Greene states earlier in the text, “[Imitation] makes possible an emergent sense of identity, personal and cultural, by demonstrating the viability of diachronic itineraries,” ibid., 19.

80 According to Greene, Light in Troy, 40-45, “heuristic” and “dialectical” imitation are two of the most innovative and productive of four categories of imitation that he identifies as operant in the Renaissance. Heuristic imitations “advertise their derivation from the subtexts they carry with them, but having done that, they proceed to distance themselves from the subtexts and force us to recognize the poetic distance
imitating the past, Renaissance poets “were able to recognize, in spite of the distance
which alienated them from the past, a continuity which could be understood as a
‘historical’ and personal dialogue.” To imitate was thus also to discover the uniqueness
and individuality (which becomes more apparent by way of affiliation with another) that
underlies self-knowledge. As Carron writes, imitation was an essential step in the
process of self-realization:

One imitates not in order to copy others, or to overtake them on their own
ground, but rather to become oneself, to achieve self-recognition. Identification – but with oneself – was the goal. Recognizing what allowed
the models to become what they were in their own times allowed the
moderns to imitate them precisely in terms of this self-realization. One
appropriates oneself to one’s own time and to oneself.82

Ackerman further emphasized the prospect of individuation that results from assimilating
oneself into tradition: “Imitation as the premoderns saw it operated forward… [it was] the
necessary preparation for emulation, the step forward into creative self-realization.”83
While my dissertation is in sympathy with the above characterizations of the productive
relationship between imitation and becoming, I also maintain, as other studies on the
early modern individual have indicated, that the self is not static but mutable and often

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82 Ibid.
83 Ackerman, “Imitation,” 13.
fluctuating. By focusing on the creative flexibility – both within and across disciplines – of Bernini’s self-reflexive imitation, I emphasize a dynamic concept of individuality.

My pursuit of a concept of selfhood for Bernini that is contingent upon an historical other, is further informed by the work of Maria Loh, which recently expanded the parameters of subject formation in the filial model by moving beyond the exclusive emphasis on the son as subject, and considered the connectedness of the son and father as two mutually (re)forming subjects. Using Deleuze and Guattari’s “rhizomatic” model for history, she challenges the uni-directionality – from father to son – of the filial model:

Whereas the tree imposes a system of filiation ordered around superiors and inferiors, the rhizome is about alliance, connection, interdependency, codeterminacy and heterogeneity, about the kind of casual interpenetration in which new stems graft onto old filaments and transform the nature of both in the same instance.

Abandoning the linear trajectory of inheritance, Loh demonstrates that through imitation, the historical selves of the imitator and the imitated are subject to reciprocal inflection and revision; just as the son creates himself through the father, so too his self-image transforms that of the father. Her suggestion that “the repetitive artist embraced his historical situatedness and remade the father figure in his own image,” is a subtle rethinking of Bloom’s last phase in his six-stage theory of imitation, the “return from the dead” in which the strong imitative poet produces a poem with “the uncanny effect… that the new poem’s achievement [seems] not as though the precursor were writing it but as

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86 This is implied by her book’s title, *Titian Remade*, a moniker that refers equally to Padovanino and Titian, son and father.
87 Loh, *Titian Remade*, 114-5.
though the latter poet had written the precursor’s characteristic work.”\textsuperscript{88} But this is not simple transposition. As Bloom later clarifies, the strong poet “oddly retains priority over their precursors, so that the tyranny of time is almost overturned, and one can believe… that they are being imitated by their ancestors.”\textsuperscript{89} Loh gives nuance to this view when she suggests that the imitative artist makes himself into a distinct and historically contingent reincarnation of his predecessor and, in doing so, remakes what is characteristic about the predecessor himself. Although Loh focuses on the creative, subject-forming possibilities of “repetitive” art-making (an openly derivative category of imitation akin to Greene’s notion of “reproductive” or “sacramental” imitation, but without the burden of influence\textsuperscript{90}), her investigation ultimately lays the groundwork for rethinking the unidirectional genealogies that art historians of the early modern period have imposed on emulative practices and practitioners, too.

Consistent with these post-Bloom hypotheses, this dissertation posits that Bernini’s self-reflective imitation of Michelangelo shaped his own identity and, in the process, occasionally reshaped that of his predecessor. To imitate Michelangelo successfully was tantamount to rewriting history and changing the perception of the master himself. While one cannot change a progenitor’s works (unless, of course, the imitation involves finishing a work left incomplete by a predecessor – and Bernini did this more than once), one can alter the perception of the artist imitated. And by fashioning himself into the inimitable Buonarroti’s worthy son throughout his life by

\textsuperscript{88} Bloom, \textit{Anxiety of Influence}, 16.
\textsuperscript{89} Ibid., 141.
\textsuperscript{90} The lowest ranking of his four categories of literary imitation, Greene characterizes “reproductive” or “sacramental” imitation as a work that “celebrates an enshrined primary text by rehearsing it liturgically, as though no other form of celebration would be worthy of its dignity…. The model or subtext is perceived as a fixed object on the far side of an abyss, beyond alteration and beyond criticism, a sacred original whose greatness can never be adequately reproduced despite the number of respectful reproductions.” See Greene, \textit{Light in Troy}, 38.
using various strategies of imitation, like quotation, paraphrase, allusion, bricolage and emulation, Bernini fashioned and his biographers authored discrete seventeenth-century histories of Michelangelo as father.

**Why Bernini and Michelangelo?**

While Michelangelo’s impact on the artistic culture of sixteenth-century Italy remains a seemingly boundless area of investigation in recent art historical scholarship, Buonarroti’s continuing presence as an equivocal yet catalyzing force in seventeenth-century art and art writing is relatively underexplored. The prevailing view of the artist’s seventeenth-century reception delineates an apparent dichotomy between prominent episodes of artistic engagement with Michelangelo (for instance, in the works and self-fashioning of Caravaggio, Rubens and Borromini) and his precipitously declining...
fortunes in art criticism and academic theory, in which Raphael and the antique were considered the preferred models for contemporary artistic practice. My study of Bernini’s imitation of Michelangelo seeks to give nuance to the state of scholarship by shedding light on what is an ongoing and far less one-dimensional theoretical reception of Michelangelo in the seventeenth-century, and by demonstrating how Bernini’s art and practice contributes to the theoretical discussion about Michelangelo’s preeminence in art. I also show that during the seicento, the issue of Buonarroti’s inimitability became ever-more complicated and controversial, as longstanding views about his singularity collided with newly critical perspectives of his work and practice that brought into question his very worth as a model for imitation. Though one among many seventeenth-century artists in dialogue with Michelangelo, Bernini’s engagement was distinguished from that of his contemporaries by the life-long, programmatic and multi-disciplinary nature of his self-definition vis-à-vis his predecessor. Given the recognition of exceptionalism accorded to both artists in their time, parallel reflections were inevitable. Their works (and their lives) were emblematic for a whole host of issues, including the status of the artist, the theoretical substance of art, and the place of art in history. While the relationship of one titan to another should suffice, in a number of instances, I also attend peripherally to the *imitatio Buonarroti* of Bernini’s contemporaries in order to more fully

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understand the stakes involved in imitating Michelangelo during this period. As a very important case study – perhaps the most important one – of a larger phenomenon, the themes investigated herein have broader implications for the role Buonarroti’s art and life played in shaping artistic identities and in constructing the theory and practice of the period.

Although scholars have demonstrated that in sculpture, painting and architecture, Bernini imitated various models from the recent and the distant past, often culling many sources in one work, Michelangelo is the most frequently referenced and perceptible referent in this mix. My perspective on Buonarroti’s dominance in Bernini’s work follows Greene’s observation that, “all major works grow from a complex set of origins. But this proliferation must not obscure the special status of that root the work privileges by its self-constructed myth of origins.” If Bernini, as subject, is the major work in question, Michelangelo is the privileged root (and co-subject) in his artistic and textual ontology of selfhood. And yet Gianlorenzo’s self-formation vis-à-vis his predecessor cannot be understood strictly as a tale of two artists – the living Bernini and the undying

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95 Greene, Light in Troy, 19.
Michelangelo – but also as a relationship with a larger field of references related to Michelangelo, including Raphael as well as the many Buonarroti followers that contributed to his critical misfortune.

My pursuit of Bernini’s and his biographers’ concept of selfhood as contingent upon an historical other, and its implications for a multifaceted construction of a new Michelangelo, is developed over five chapters. In the first four chapters I focus on the relationship between Bernini’s works and his sources in Michelangelo’s oeuvre and on the dialogue among Gianlorenzo’s art and practice, the art theory of his time and the varied reception of Michelangelo’s art and practice. In the fifth chapter, I shift attention from Gianlorenzo to his biographers, concentrating on how Filippo Baldinucci and Domenico Bernini constructed discrete versions of Bernini’s affiliation with Michelangelo and on the relative presence in their *vite* of Ascanio Condivi’s and Giorgio Vasari’s respective versions of Michelangelo.

In chapter one, I examine Bernini’s fashioning after Michelangelo in sculpture, particularly as revealed in the illusion of motion in select statues from his early career and in a representative later work, all of which emulate figures by Buonarroti. A close visual analysis of these sculptures draws attention to the insight and understanding with which Gianlorenzo approached his predecessor’s aesthetic, rhetorical and theological representation of movement. My aim is to show that Bernini’s engagement with Buonarroti is an act of continuity that underscores motion (*moto*) as familial territory, which is essential to understanding Gianlorenzo’s filial sense of selfhood as constituted through and against his artistic father, Buonarroti. Here also the metaphor of fathers and
sons is as inherent to Bernini’s practice of imitation as it is to the subjects of his animated sculptures.

In chapter two, I offer a fuller picture of the significance of motion to Bernini’s conception of himself and of his style. My focus is the sculptor’s allegorical self-portraits as the Damned Soul and the David, both of which are indebted to formal and conceptual sources in Michelangelo’s art. I consider these against the terms of Gianlorenzo’s portrait practice, which sought to reveal character through movement. My reading of Bernini’s self-portrayals demonstrates that the artist constructed two versions of his character by conceptualizing anew the fury (furia) associated with Michelangelo’s figural movement, artistic temperament and capacity for invention. These two portraits thus offer the opportunity to reflect on the ambiguous boundaries between the notion of style as an intrinsic, auto-mimetic or self-revealing quality and the notion of style as the result of imitation and self-fashioning.

In chapter three, my attention turns to architecture, specifically Bernini’s contributions to the inner and outer fabric of St. Peter’s, a building distinguished, in part, by Michelangelo’s partly-realized design. I begin by studying the process employed in the design of the Baldacchino, Bernini’s first architectural project, in order to establish how he defined himself as a sculptor-architect whose eye for proportion, like that of Michelangelo before him, proved his aptitude for architecture despite a lack of training in the discipline. I also problematize Gianlorenzo’s michelangesque identity as a sculptor-architect, by considering the implications of his pursuit of an intuitive path to becoming an architect in an age when architecture was increasingly specialized, its practitioners formally apprenticed in the technical, practical and aesthetic demands of the profession.
My subsequent examination of the optical proportions that Bernini employed in the
design of his bell towers, unrealized façade designs and colonnade, suggests that at this
site Gianlorenzo operated like Buonarroti’s posthumous collaborator: he reclaimed
essential aspects of Michelangelo’s vision for St. Peter’s in the wake of Carlo Maderno’s
alterations, without, however, obscuring the individuality of his own interventions.
(Although this chapter is limited to Bernini’s architectural projects at St. Peter’s, my
future investigation will also consider Gianlorenzo’s sculptural contributions to the
basilica, especially for the crossing and apse. While the latter are related to the
discussion at hand, I chose to exclude them here so as to offer a more concentrated
portrait of Bernini as architect.)

In chapter four, I review Bernini’s architectural ornament, which frequently cited
the new vocabulary of motifs that Michelangelo created by way of a licentious mixing of
the ancient orders. My analysis begins with the reception of Buonarroti’s architecture in
architectural treatises that either rejected his innovations or set them alongside the
classical canon of ornamentation as if it were a sixth order. I demonstrate that Bernini
engaged in a practice of bricolage, prevalent in the sixteenth-century and used by
Michelangelo, but distinguished by the inclusion of Buonarroti’s ornament in the
repertoire of parts to be quoted and mixed. By introducing the work of Bernini’s
contemporary, Francesco Borromini, who not only quoted Michelangelo’s ornament but
also fashioned himself as Buonarroti’s architectural heir, I hope to shed light on the
distinguishing features and implications of Bernini’s and Borromini’s rivalrous imitation
of Michelangelo’s vocabulary.
In the final chapter, I examine the biographical imitatio Buonarroti, focusing on how Michelangelo’s two biographies functioned as subtexts for Gianlorenzo’s vite. I analyze the discrete modes of imitation that Baldinucci and Domenico employed to frame Gianlorenzo’s artistic practice and formation, especially as they pertain to his early development as a sculptor, and I demonstrate that Michelangelo’s critical reception is inscribed into their narratives. My intertextual reading of the Bernini and Michelangelo vite also considers the artists’ relations to their papal patrons, a central theme in all four texts. I describe how the biographers represent their subjects as court artists and, in that context, how patronage by sacred and secular princes testifies to the nobility of Bernini’s and Michelangelo’s profession, as well as their status among men, by paying tribute to the power of their intellect.

My conclusion reflects briefly upon the consequences of separating Bernini’s self-fashioning after Michelangelo in sculpture and architecture from the biographical imitatio Buonarroti.

This dissertation does not address Bernini’s painting. According to Bernini’s biographers, an essential quality of Gianlorenzo’s resemblance to Michelangelo was his universality as an artist (even if the biographers discussed their subject’s engagement with painting only cursorily). Yet in this medium, unlike in sculpture and architecture, the terms of the comparison between Bernini and Michelangelo are limited to one: simply put, both painted. Scholars have suggested that Gianlorenzo was little interested in engaging formally or conceptually with Michelangelo as a painter. Rather, his painting

is indebted to the Carracci reform, with the style and content of his canvasses mined from those of the Carracci, their pupils, Caravaggio and other contemporaries, more than from those of any sixteenth-century painter. A re-assessment of current thought regarding Bernini’s relationship to Michelangelo in painting would be complicated by the limited number of paintings that can be attributed securely to Gianlorenzo. Though Bernini’s biographers estimated that the artist painted between 150 and 200 canvases, few are documented works. Bernini scholars, as a result, are divided over attribution, identifying an autograph corpus (mostly portraits, some academic nudes, and a few istorie) of as many as 50 paintings to as few as 16. Connoisseurial problems are beyond the scope of this dissertation and, in the absence of a widely accepted corpus of paintings, a substantive study of whether Michelangelo’s work was significant or not to Bernini’s identity as a painter is currently not feasible.

97 See, especially, Montanari, “Storia di Bernini pittore.”
98 See Petrucci, Bernini pittore.
99 See Montanari, Bernini pittore.
Chapter One

Becoming Bernini

“Come, Lorenzo, I invite you to observe again the works of Michelangelo Buonarroti, that you among those devoted to him are the most industrious, the wisest and the most appreciated.” With this laudatory exhortation written sometime between 1623 and 1630, the Florentine poet, Francesco Bracciolini, began a lengthy poem encouraging Bernini to revisit Michelangelo’s sculpture. In a pivotal stanza, the poet hails the cinquecento artist as an unparalleled animator of stone, who, even more than the ancients, surpassed nature, godlike, by giving life where it did not exist:

Oh without compare, illustrious Michele,
Who teaches Nature to obey art,
And designs marbles
Such that the horridness [of Nature] is not carved;
Nature has not created them to die
And so dying is not permitted them,
But it has preserved them to entomb the living.
And you [i.e. Michelangelo] deprived of life
Have given them [i.e. the stones] that which they do not have
To repair the damage of their death,
Giving life where it is deprived;
And with peculiar fate
They have life from you and from Nature, death;
It is by you that the dead reawaken
And heaven, with its blessing,
Does not dare to keep watch over who lies dead.101


101 (translation mine) “O senza paragon, chiaro Michele,/C’ubbidir l’arte alla Natura insegni,/E i sassi tuoi disegni/Tal che l’orritudità non vi si cele;/Per morir non gli fece/Natura, onde morir a lor non lece./Ma gli ha serbatti a seppellire i vivi./E tu di vita privi/Dai lor ciò che non hanno/Per ristorar della lor morte il danno,
Ministrando la vita onde son privi/E con estrania sorte/Han da te vita e da Natura morte./De te che i morti avvivi/E ‘l ciel, sia con sua pace./Non ardisce vegliar chi morto giace.” As transcribed in Soussloff, “Imitatio Buonarroti,” 601.
Bracciolini charges Bernini to meet this extraordinary standard of sculptural liveliness later in the poem, when he asks the sculptor to take up his chisel and “insult death, so that life [i.e. of the marbles and of the artist’s fame] might be preserved indefinitely.”\footnote{Ibid., 602: “…un’altra alza i martelli/Sulla marmo rea cote/E castigando il suo rigor percuote;/E questi fabbri e quelli/Fanno ingiuria alla morte, onde la vita/Si conserva infinita.”}

The poet’s invitation to Gianlorenzo to look again at Buonarroti to engage in his own sculpted dialectic of life and death, insensate stone and sentient being, was just that: a second look. By the time these verses were written, Bernini had carved numerous sculptures, for example, the\footnote{Although scholars had previously noted Bernini’s sculptural references to Michelangelo, it was only with D’Onofrio’s 1967\textit{Roma vista da Roma} that what would become an accepted corpus of sculptures by Bernini that engage with Michelangelo’s Florentine and Roman art was established: the \textit{St. Lawrence, St. Sebastian, Anima Dannata, Neptune and Triton}, that referred to works from Michelangelo’s figural oeuvre. \footnote{Ibid.}} St. Lawrence, St. Sebastian, Aeneas group, Anima Dannata, Neptune and Triton, that referred to works from Michelangelo’s figural oeuvre.\footnote{103 Despite Bracciolini’s implication that Bernini had yet to rival his predecessor, these works engaged perceptively and competitively with a feature of Buonarroti’s art that was fundamental to conveying the illusion of life: that is, the suggestion of motion specifically by way of heroic musculature and forceful torsion. \footnote{For the studies most significant for my investigation of the relationship between the suggestion of movement and the perception of living presence in Michelangelo’s art, see David Summers, “Maniera and Movement: the Figura Serpentinata,” \textit{Art Quarterly} 35 (1972): 265-301; idem, “Contrapposto: Style and Meaning in Renaissance Art,” \textit{Art Bulletin} 59 (1977): 336-61; idem, Michelangelo, esp. 71-96; 397-99, et al.}}

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Scholars have long seized upon motion as the predominant (though not exclusive) quality of sculptural liveliness by which Bernini *simultaneously* connected himself to and distinguished himself from Michelangelo’s example. Wittkower, for example, described the early free-standing sculptures as derived “characteristically” from mannerist formulas in which, “far above the mass of contemporary stereotyped productions, [Bernini] recaptured something of Michelangelo’s dynamic vigour.” Yet he quickly passed over his acknowledgement of Bernini’s likeness to Buonarroti in order to underscore a fundamental difference that is apparent in the *Aeneas* group, which, as Wittkower observed, is derived from “Michelangelo’s most mannerist sculpture,” the Minerva *Christ*:

“But much more significant than these mannerist reminiscences, there is to be found in [the *Aeneas* group] an active play of muscles and sinews under the skin, an energy and elasticity in the movement of an arm, in the grip of a hand or the bending of a knee, which contrast decisively with mannerist sculpture.” Wittkower concludes by asserting that this more flexible animation marked the “birth of a realistic style, ushered in by the invigorating study of antiquity.” In short, Wittkower sees Bernini’s originality as the result of a synthesis of the artificial complexity of Michelangelo’s powerful movement and the true-to-life naturalism captured by ancient sculptors, in order to achieve a new, more credible dynamism.

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106 Ibid., 14.

107 Ibid.
Subsequent studies have expanded on Wittkower’s observations about the aesthetics driving Bernini’s naturalistic enlivening of Michelangelo’s motion by considering, in particular, whether Bernini’s purported reproach of Buonarroti’s muscled contours, anatomical expertise and conspicuous artifice in Paul Fréart de Chantelou’s 1665 *Journal du voyage du Cavalier Bernini en France* is palpable in his early statues. Attributing to Bernini a “reform of sculpture” comparable to the Carracci’s achievements in painting, Soussloff argued that Bernini’s critical attitude towards Michelangelo was manifest in the *St. Lawrence*, in which he “emphasized naturalism over his [artistic] sources.” To substantiate her reading of the statue’s assertive naturalism, Soussloff undertook the first close examination of Bernini’s critique of Buonarroti in Chantelou’s *Journal*, which she measured against the artist’s numerous comments in the same text on the virtues of studying nature and the antique. On the one hand, Soussloff’s analysis aptly contextualized the mature Bernini’s ostensible preference for the antique over Michelangelo by demonstrating that his assessment echoed the themes of Buonarroti’s mid- to late-seventeenth-century critical misfortune. On the other hand, her reading problematically implied that Bernini’s late-career reproach of his predecessor is the retrospective lens through which to understand Bernini’s early work.

If, in his numerous studies of the art theoretical content of Bernini’s early sculpture, Preimesberger is more sensitive to the discourse that was current within

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109 Ibid., 93: “[In Chantelou] Michelangelo is used as a measure of the artist and the art of an age. Thus, Bernini criticized Michelangelo’s maniera to show the improvements which had been achieved in his own work. Bernini and Bellori criticized Michelangelo’s maniera to state their positions regarding the work of an earlier period, the Antique.” Ibid., 90: “It is clear in the diary that Bernini felt that he had corrected in his works the flaws which [Bellori’s] criticism made of Michelangelo’s maniera [i.e. lack of ‘spirit’ or liveliness as Bellori put it].”
cultural circle that oversaw the young sculptor’s development at the outset of the
seicento, he nonetheless proposes that the criticisms Bernini purportedly voiced in
the presence of Chantelou were representative of his attitude towards Buonarroti
over forty years prior.\footnote{It should be asked if the explicit Michelangelism of the Saint Lawrence does not also contain an
element of criticism of Michelangelo. Bernini, who testified [in Chantelou’s Journal] that he copied
Michelangelo very often in his youth, was certainly familiar with the varying judgments of Michelangelo’s
early and later works, of his grazia and terribilità. Later [i.e. while in France] he repeated several topoi of
Michelangelo criticism in conversation: Michelangelo’s works mastered disegno and anatomia, but not “the
appearance of flesh”; they contained more arte than grazia. Is it going too far to assert that the intention of
the St. Lawrence was to replace the dry, emphatic musculature of Michelangelo’s nudes with a different
modeling, which Baldinucci later called “tenero e vero,” to add “the appearance of flesh” to the anatomia
of the model?” Preimesberger, “Themes from Art Theory,” 7. See also idem, “Enea e Anchise,” and,
“David,” in Coliva and Schütze, eds., Bernini scultore, 117-8, 210-7.}
As such, he suggests that Bernini’s early michelangelism
was both a gesture of alliance to Buonarroti and a form of critical imitation that
demonstrated his ability to overcome his predecessor’s artificiality by way of a
corrective measure of realism: “the same radical transformation of the model in the
appearance of a phenomenal naturalism is clearly visible in Bernini’s interpretation
of the movement of Michelangelo’s [Minerva Christ].” Underlying
Preimesberger’s assessment of Bernini’s naturalism, which he sees as a triumph over
Michelangelo’s artifice, is the art theoretical tension between grace and art, here
played out by the two early modern masters of Italian sculpture.

Bernini doubtless approached Michelangelo’s representation of motion with a
seicento eye for the “natural” or “real” that was likely learned through a careful study of
nature as well as the antique. But the notion that his engagement with his predecessor
was an act of rivalrous identification, fuelled by a polemical ambition to correct the
artificiality of his model, is too limiting. Rather than ask how (or whether) Bernini’s
statues qualitatively depart from the aesthetics of Buonarroti’s muscled animation we

\footnote{Preimesberger, “Enea e Anchise,” 117.}
might ask, instead, what it is they preserve of his predecessor’s motion, not only from the standpoint of form, but from a vantage point sensitive to the intimate relationship between form and meaning in Michelangelo’s art. Preimesberger and Schütze have touched on some of the iconographical implications of Bernini’s references to Michelangelo, but a more thorough and systematic analysis of how the substance and expression of Buonarroti’s works exist in Gianlorenzo’s sculpture is needed. Certainly the critical reception of Michelangelo’s work, especially the response to his artifice, should not be ignored in a study of Bernini’s engagement with his predecessor. Yet it cannot be assumed, as a result, that an appreciation for the rhetorical and theological dimensions of Buonarroti’s representation of motion inevitably ceded to or paled in the face of the increasing pressure of appeals to naturalistic movement. At least not for Bernini.

A close visual analysis of the St. Lawrence, the St. Sebastian, the Aeneas group and the David, will show that the young Bernini was a sensitive interpreter of the meaning inherent in Michelangelo’s cinquecento aesthetic of motion, discerningly translating it and imbuing it with new relevance. In doing so, I offer a perspective on Buonarroti that is different from the one Chantelou ascribes to the mature Bernini, which, as we have seen, has become an accepted lens through which to understand the sculptor’s early imitation of his predecessor. My examination sheds new light on the relationship between Bernini and Michelangelo by identifying in the early sculptures continuities that underscore Gianlorenzo’s appreciation for the relevance and appropriateness of his predecessor’s nuanced representation of life through motion. These works ultimately illustrate a theory of moto in practice that serves to construct a narrative of Bernini’s
becoming and his self-inscription into the modern history of sculpture. This becomes a story of subject formation that also rewrites the history of Michelangelo’s identity as a father.

**Son (and Father) in the Making**

Bracciolini’s poem, “Come Lorenzo…,” which was likely recited at the Barberini court (among whose members Bernini may have been included), not only identifies sculptural liveliness as the fundamental category underlying the *paragone* between Bernini and Michelangelo, but also points to the discrete cultural context in which his engagement with his predecessor had been nurtured.\(^{112}\) As Schütze has demonstrated, Cardinal Maffeo Barberini, in the years prior to his election to the papal throne, cultivated a neo-Medician court in which he took up the image of Lorenzo il Magnifico *redivivus* and oversaw the formation of the young Bernini, in turn, as his new Michelangelo.\(^{113}\) During this same period, Barberini and his Florentine compatriots in Rome and Florence were engaged in efforts to promote Michelangelo’s lasting authority and exemplarity.

The coincidence of Bernini’s formation and Buonarroti’s renewed commemoration, as has been suggested, was purposeful and mutually reinforcing.\(^{114}\) In

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\(^{113}\) Schütze, *Kardinal Maffeo Barberini*, 193-249, sees Barberini’s influence over Bernini as so pervasive that it fundamentally shaped the manner in which his early sculptures, from the *St. Lawrence* (1616) through the *Apollo and Daphne* (1625), engaged with Michelangelo, from the choice of subject to be represented, the work(s) of art to which they referred, and even through to the poetic/theological *concetto* of the final statue.

\(^{114}\) Although Soussloff and Schütze have characterized the efforts to celebrate Michelangelo as a “revival” organized in face of Buonarroti’s dwindling reputation, the term seems too strong, as it is unlikely that Michelangelo’s reputation was, as yet, so diminished that it needed dramatic restoration. On the early seicento “revival” of Michelangelo’s reputation by Michelangelo Buonarroti il Giovane in Florence and by members of the Barberini circle in Rome, see Soussloff, “Imitatio Buonarroti,” 594-5; Schütze, *Kardinal Maffeo Barberini*, 226-32.
1623, for example, the first edition of Michelangelo’s *Rime* was published with a lengthy dedication to Maffeo, a poet in his own right, that evoked the comparison between poetry and art\(^{115}\) (a conceit echoed by Bracciolini, who in the later stanzas of his poem conflates the animating powers of the sculptor and those of the poet and, in turn, Bernini and himself).\(^{116}\) This collection of poems was edited by Michelangelo Buonarroti il Giovane, long-time associate of Maffeo and grandnephew of Michelangelo,\(^{117}\) who, from 1615 to 1637, transformed the Casa Buonarroti in Florence into a memorial to his famous ancestor’s life and work.\(^{118}\) In Rome, the Florentine Leonardo Strozzi (descendant of Filippo Strozzi, to whom Michelangelo had given two sculptures intended for the Julius II tomb) commissioned a chapel in Sant’Andrea della Valle (1606-12) that was decorated with bronze copies made from casts of Michelangelo’s Vatican *Pietà* and his *Leah* and *Rachel* [figs. 1 and 2].\(^{119}\) Framed within architecture that by the latter part of the

\(^{115}\) Soussloff, “*Imitatio Buonarroti*,” 593-4. Buonarroti il Giovane’s edition of his uncle’s poems was published under the title: *Rime di Michelagnolo Buonarroti. Raccolte da Michelagnolo suo nipote* (Florence: Giunti, 1623).


\(^{119}\) Remarkably, casts for the bronze were taken directly from the *Leah* and *Rachel*, whereas the cast for the *Pietà* was made from a plaster copy, not the original itself. On the chapel decoration, see M. Adower, “La Cappella Strozzi in Sant’Andrea della Valle in Roma e le statue in bronzo do Gregorio Rossi,” *Regnum Dei* 36 (1980): 83-98; Maria Barbara Guerrieri Borsoi, *Gli Strozzi a Roma: mecenati e collezionisti nel Sei e Settecento* (Rome: Colombo, 2004), 51-65; Schütze, “San Lorenzo,” in Coliva and Schütze, eds., *Bernini*
seicento, and possibly earlier, was erroneously believed to have been designed by
Michelangelo himself, this sculptural ensemble presented the viewer with a pseudo-
contemporary performance by the long-dead master. Constructed during the same years
that a handful of early seicento sculptors, such as Pietro Bernini and the young
Gianlorenzo, were carving works for the Barberini Chapel across the nave, the Strozzi
Chapel endorsed the pertinence of Buonarroti’s example.

Bernini first imitated Michelangelo in his St. Lawrence (c.1616-17) [fig. 3], a
work that was purchased by, perhaps even carved specifically for, Leone Strozzi. But
rather than reverently reproduce Michelangelo, as with the bronzes of the Strozzi Chapel,
Bernini enters here into a productive dialogue with Michelangelo’s experiments in
motion, thinking through the terms set for movement by his predecessor, and adapting
them to a new course. The St. Lawrence represents an unusual moment in the narrative
of the saint’s martyrdom. Instead of depicting Lawrence’s witty defiance of his
executioners, when the martyr nonchalantly announces that he is cooked on one side and

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scultore, 74; Schütze, Kardinal Maffeo Barberini, 125-30. The bronze copies of Michelangelo’s statues in
the Strozzi Chapel merit fuller investigation from the perspective of mechanical copying and notions of
authorship and authenticity.

120 For example, in Filippo Titi’s description of the Strozzi chapel from the Studio di pittura, scoltura, et
architettura, nelle chiese di Roma (Rome: Mancini, 1674), 148, he notes that, “vi è una Madonna con un
Christo in braccio morto, e due statue da i lati, il tutto fatto di bronzo, copiato accuramente dagl’originali di
Michel’Angelo Bonarroti, che ne fù l’Architetto.” Similarly, an elevation of the Strozzi chapel’s central
wall and decoration in Domenico De Rossi’s Studio d’Architettura Civile (Rome: Domenico de Rossi,
1702-21), 3:6, appeared under the heading, “Architettura di Michel Angelo Buonaroti.” On the historical
attribute to Michelangelo, see Guerrieri Borsoi, Gli Strozzi a Roma, 53-4; Schütze, Kardinal Maffeo
Barberini, 129, 129n547.

121 For a comprehensive study of the decoration, iconography and typology of the Barberini Chapel see
most recently, Schütze, Kardinal Maffeo Barberini, 46-121, esp. 73-90, on the sculptures.

122 Lack of documentary evidence makes it difficult to determine the precise date of the statue and whether
the patron, Leone Strozzi, commissioned the work from Bernini or purchased the sculpture soon after its
execution. Bernini’s biographers also disagree on this issue (Baldinucci suggests the work was made for
Strozzi, while Domenico contends that the sculpture was born of Bernini’s devotion to the saint and only
later purchased by the patron). The catalogue of the Borghese exhibition established a plausible date of
1616-17 based on its stylistic affinity to the St. Sebastian, which can be securely dated to the same years.
On the dating and patronage of the St. Lawrence, as well as a historiography of debates over the possible
dating, see Schütze, “San Lorenzo,” 67, 72-4, 74n1; Schütze, Kardinal Maffeo Barberini, 194n5.
should be turned over, Bernini portrays Lawrence’s appeal to God in the instant before dying.\textsuperscript{123} As Schütze observed, the saint’s recumbent pose, from the sweeping contour of the torso supported by the bent arm to the extended leg and splayed toes, mirrors Michelangelo’s Adam from the Sistine Creation scene [fig. 4].\textsuperscript{124} Yet Bernini transforms the Adam, a figure that listlessly accepts the divine touch of human life,\textsuperscript{125} into a Lawrence that eagerly moves, despite physical restraint, towards eternal life. This distinction is most apparent in Bernini’s animating redistribution of Adam’s relaxed upraised knee and the extended arm that sits upon it. Lawrence’s leg is not at rest, but rising. And though his limbs are lashed by flames and restrained by manacles [fig. 5], he draws himself heavenward.

Shackles are rare in representations of Lawrence’s martyrdom. Preimesberger has suggested that the saint’s fetters would have not only been understood as historically accurate, but also signalled, figuratively, the triumph of faith over all constraint.\textsuperscript{126} These chains might also allude to a frequently retold anecdote about sculptural liveliness. In Plato’s Meno (97d), Socrates marvelled that the statues of Daedalus, the first sculptor, were so animated they required restraints, for “if they are not fastened up they play truant

\textsuperscript{123} The novelty of Bernini’s representation of St. Lawrence was first discussed by Preimesberger, “Themes from Art Theory,” 1-7. For the most recent discussion of the sculptor’s innovative representation (with bibliography), see Schütze, Kardinal Maffeo Barberini, 197.

\textsuperscript{124} Though I see Michelangelo’s Adam as the most significant source for Bernini’s St. Lawrence, scholars have identified numerous other references to Buonarroti’s oeuvre in this one sculpture. The relationship between the St. Lawrence and the Adam was first observed by B. Schmitt, Giovanni Lorenzo Bernini: Figur and Raum (St. Ingbert: Röhrig, 1997), 29 and later supported and richly developed by Schütze, “San Lorenzo,” 70; Schütze, Kardinal Maffeo Barberini, 200. On the relationship between the St. Lawrence and the Christ from Vatican Pietà, see Wittkower, Gian Lorenzo Bernini, 232; D’Onofrio, Roma vista da Roma, 177; Kauffmann, Giovanni Lorenzo Bernini, 20; Schütze, “San Lorenzo,” 69; Schütze, Kardinal Maffeo Barberini, 197-200. On the relationship between the St. Lawrence and the River God in Casa Buonarroti, see Kauffmann, Giovanni Lorenzo Bernini, 20; Preimesberger, “Themes from Art Theory,” 6-7; Schütze, “San Lorenzo,” 69. Kauffmann, Giovanni Lorenzo Bernini, 20, also notes a possible reference to the Crepuscolo from the Medici Chapel.

\textsuperscript{125} On the paradoxical motion of the Adam, balanced “between agency and dependency,” both “receiving and reaching,” see Nagel, Michelangelo, 153-4.

\textsuperscript{126} Preimesberger, “Themes from Art Theory,” 5.
and run away; but, if fastened, they stay where they are.”  

Michael Cole has observed that like Daedalus, cinquecento sculptors represented figures enchained in order to suggest animation, the binds signalling a vestige of and a reason for movement. The fetters on Bernini’s St. Lawrence, in turn, not only underscore the centrality of motion to his conceit but also place Gianlorenzo’s creative power into a paragone with the ancient sculptor-magus of seemingly living stones.

Michelangelo’s artistry had been compared to divine facture, particularly with reference to the Adam, and St. Lawrence’s resemblance to this figure also invites comparison between Bernini and God’s forming of man as the paradigmatic creative act. As Schütze suggested, Bernini’s statue meets the challenge implicit in Vasari’s description of Adam as “a figure whose beauty, pose, and contours are such that it seems to have been fashioned that very moment by the first and supreme creator rather than by the drawing and brush of a mortal man.”

Bernini, in turn, sculpts his Lawrence, the new Adam, just as God modeled the first man out of clay. The implications of this paragone with Michelangelo on the topos of artistic creation that rivals divine facture becomes richer when one considers that the St. Lawrence was also the sculptor’s first known full-figure of a man. Bernini’s ‘first man’, as it were, visually proclaims a new

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128 “If we allow that some artists, at least, must have hoped that viewers would associate their work with the moving of bodies, then it is worth noting that binding could serve as a trace and as a cause of motion, especially where statues were concerned.” Michael Cole, “The Demonic Arts and the Origin of the Medium,” Art Bulletin 84 (2002): 632.

129 Schütze, Kardinal Maffeo Barberini, 200. Vasari/Bull, Life, 356; Vasari/Barocchi, Vita, 1:44: “figurato – di bellezza, di attitudine e di dintorni – di qualità che e’ par fatto di nuovo dal sommo e primo suo creatore più tosto che dal penello e disegno d’uno uomo tale.”

130 Schütze, Kardinal Maffeo Barberini, 200-1.
age in sculpture rooted in Michelangelo’s forms, particularly in the power of motion to suggest living presence.

Bernini’s *imitatio Buonarroti* is also subtended by St. Lawrence’s *imitatio Christi*. The saint’s serene visage, as has long been noted, is modeled upon Christ’s face from Michelangelo’s Vatican *Pietà* *[figs. 6 and 7]*. With a Christ-like Lawrence, Bernini bound his practice of artistic imitation to Christian mimetic tradition. The martyr’s physiognomic resemblance to Christ might be understood as an external manifestation of an internalized process of the corrective reform of his soul after Christ’s example. By giving his saint the features of the Vatican *Christ*, Bernini transforms Michelangelo’s pre-lapsarian Adam into a new, perfected post-lapsarian Adam, reformed in the Son’s image and striving to be reunited with the father. It is an image of Senecan filiation that exists on two mimetic registers: just as Lawrence’s physiognomy subtly recalls his kinship to Christ, Bernini’s statue vaguely, yet suggestively, resembles that of his artistic father.

A drawing of *God the Father* *[fig. 8]* by one Bernini’s followers, dated to the 1630s, and falling neatly within Bernini’s tenure from around 1630 to 1640 as master

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133 The drawing (227 x 358 mm, red chalk on folded white paper) is cited, though not reproduced, in the catalogue by Anthony Blunt and Hereward Lester Cooke, *The Roman Drawings of the XVII & XVIII Centuries in the Collection of Her Majesty the Queen at Windsor Castle* (London: Phaidon Press, 1960), 27, no. 70, where it is attributed to a “follower of Gian Lorenzo Bernini.” I am grateful to the Windsor Castle Print Room and Royal Library for permitting me to reproduce the drawing, the first reproduction for publication. I also owe thanks to Professor Evonne Levy for alerting me to the existence of this drawing.
of a Roman academy of painters (separate from the Accademia di San Luca),\textsuperscript{134} might be seen as a pendant to the sculptor’s reimagining of Michelangelo’s Adam because it is modeled after the figure of God from the Sistine Creation scene [\textit{fig. 9}]. Although this drawing has been ignored in the Bernini scholarship owing to the uncertainty of the attribution, it offers evidence, at the very least, that a discerning study of Michelangelo was part of the master’s curriculum. The drawing offers a new interpretation of God’s interaction with an unseen Adam at the moment of the latter’s enlivening, and as with Bernini’s sculpture, Buonarroti’s representation of motion is the primary theme of the draughtsman’s imitation. But whereas Michelangelo’s God glides weightlessly through the air, his body wound in an acrobatic \textit{contrapposto} as putti carry him towards Adam, the God in the later drawing is a solitary deity crouched in an equally athletic chiasmus as he reaches across a vaporous precipice to animate his first man. By uncrossing the Sistine God’s limbs, bringing his left knee forward and resting his arm on his hip – a counterbalance that creates the effect of a God ready to propel himself forward independently – the draughtsman creates a super-human figure who nonetheless moves in a more plausible, less otherworldly manner. The change evokes a passage from Chantelou in which Bernini disparaged the artificiality of a female figure in an unnamed painting by Veronese: “the upper part of her torso is turned one way and the lower part the other, an impossibly unnatural contortion.”\textsuperscript{135} Gianlorenzo proceeded to demonstrate his point by attempting, unsuccessfully, to assume the same pose. Based on the anonymous drawing, we can imagine that Bernini’s practice of physically testing the

\textsuperscript{134} Montanari, \textit{Bernini pittore}, 36-51, has argued that the academy curriculum included life drawing, copying after Bernini, and method acting, the latter of which was undertaken so the artist could attain the powers of persuasion associated with rhetorical practice.

\textsuperscript{135} Chantelou, \textit{Diary}, 107; idem, \textit{Journal}, 110 (August 9).
viability of poses and remaking them based on physical experience was also part of the academy’s program of study, and may have shaped the appearance of this unknown follower’s design.

Alongside the more naturalistically conceived motion in the drawing of God the Father, the newly revised pose nonetheless preserves the rhetorical and theological dimension of Michelangelo’s Sistine God. Leo Steinberg has argued that God’s twisting action is essential to the expression of the Christian theology of mankind and salvation implicit in the painting: as God reaches out with his right hand to infuse the first man with the spark of life, his left arm shelters Adam’s future wife and his left hand rests ritualistically upon the shoulder of the second Adam, the infant Christ. Man’s fall and redemption are thus bridged with one dynamic gesture. Bernini’s follower, despite the absence of Adam, Eve and Christ, maintains the expansive and multipurpose reach of God’s arms from the pointing right finger to the bent left elbow and distinctive gesture of the hand that now rests on God’s hip, thus summoning the missing figures to mind. Had the artist not understood the sophisticated meaning of God’s pose, he could have repositioned the bent left arm. That the draughtsman intended to preserve the meaning attributed to God’s forceful counterpoise becomes evident if we compare his drawing with Domenichino’s allusion to Michelangelo’s Creation in his Rebuке of Adam and Eve (1626) [fig. 10].

Although Domenichino’s God more closely mimics Michelangelo’s, the figure’s torsion is noticeably less forceful: his legs are uncrossed, the

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once tensed right arm is now gently bent, and the left arm that actively embraced Eve and left hand that grasped Christ here passively rests – though still purposefully – on a globe (that, in turn, sits on the shoulders of Christ). While the more relaxed pose suits the subject (especially since Eve is here represented in Eden with Adam), it is also in keeping with Domenichino’s preference for less assertive torsion. But more importantly, it shows that more than one artist was looking at Michelangelo’s God at this time and rethinking the theology and rhetoric of the figure’s pose to different ends.

If we turn to Bernini’s St. Sebastian (c. 1616-17) [fig. 11], we see yet another subtle reflection on the form and meaning of Michelangelo’s motion, this time in a figure conceived for Cardinal Maffeo Barberini and possibly intended for display in the family chapel at Sant’Andrea della Valle. The statue represents the martyr in a moment of physical exhaustion, shortly after Sebastian’s executioners left him for dead, and sometime before he was discovered, still alive, by his fellow Christians. Bernini modeled his Sebastian on two figures of the dead Christ by Michelangelo: the face is modeled on that of the Christ of the Vatican Pietà, once again calling to mind an imitatio Christi, and Sebastian’s pose imitates this same Christ and, to an even greater extent, that of the Christ from the Florence Pietà [figs. 12 and 13] which was still in Rome at the time. But rather than represent death, Bernini’s St. Sebastian exhibits delicate signs

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137 On the commission for the St. Sebastian and the unresolved debate over its intended location (with bibliography), see Schütze, “San Sebastiano,” Coliva and Schütze, eds., Bernini scultore, 83-4; idem, Kardinal Maffeo Barberini, 210, 210n18.
138 Bernini’s novel approach to the subject, particularly its affinity to contemporary paintings of St. Sebastian, has been thoughtfully discussed by Schütze, “San Sebastiano,” 85-7; idem, Kardinal Maffeo Barberini, 211-5.
139 On the relationship between the St. Sebastian and the Christ from Vatican Pietà, see Wittkower, Bernini, 232; D’Onofrio, Roma vista da Roma, 177-83; Kauffmann, Giovanni Lorenzo Bernini, 27; Preimesberger, Themes from Art Theory, 3; Schütze, “San Sebastiano,” 87-9; idem, Kardinal Maffeo Barberini, 211, 214. On the relationship between the St. Sebastian and the Christ of the Florence Pietà, see Wittkower,
that he is emerging from his death-like torpor. His open mouth seems to draw a shallow
breath; he holds himself upright, if tenuously, by the right arm that lightly cradles a
branch of the tree stump against which he sits; and he still maintains control over his
limbs, which do not fall awkwardly about him, but are poised in restful attention; his left
foot, in particular, raised on its toes, suggests the potential for movement.

Schütze has argued that by representing a St. Sebastian in a liminal state modelled
explicitly on Michelangelo’s representations of the dead Christ, Bernini surpassed his
predecessor. His contention rests on Lomazzo’s classification of the Vatican Christ as
the paradigmatic moto of death, describing it as a figure in which “appear the true
motions that make death, because all the limbs are falling and lacking any vigour with
which to sustain themselves any longer.”140 Indeed, throughout the sixteenth and
seventeenth centuries, the Vatican Pietà was the subject of an ongoing art theoretical and
poetic discourse on sculptural liveliness, in which Michelangelo’s figure of the Virgin
was celebrated as an example of vivid animation and the Christ was praised for
embracing the immobility of the dead.141 This discussion of the living and dead is
indebted to Alberti’s passages on the Meleager, an exemplary representation of death in

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Gian Lorenzo Bernini, 13, 232; Schütze, “San Lorenzo,” 88. Wittkower, Gian Lorenzo Bernini, 13, also
suggested that Bernini’s sculpture looks to the Aurora in the Medici Chapel.
140 “Et in questa materia si hà da considerare che si come i moti del’animo fanno muovere il corpo secondo
le potenze loro, così ancora i moti cagionati dalla morte, rendono il corpo immobile come la terra, prive di
forza, e gagliardia tutte le membra. Si come giudiziosamente osservò… Michel Angelo nel Christo morto
di marmo in grembo alla madre che è in Santo Pietro in Vaticano, ne ignali si veggonvi i veri moti che fa la
morte, vedendosi tutti gli membri cadenti, e senza alcun’ vigore da potersi più in se sostenere.” Gian Paolo
Lomazzo, Trattato dell’arte della pittura (Milan, 1584; repr., Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 1968), 167-8. For
discussions of Lomazzo’s theory of motion, see Lee, Ut Pictura Poesis, 217-9; Summers, Michelangelo, 81-3, 411-4. For an analysis of Lomazzo’s passage within the context of the Vatican Pietà’s literary
reception, see Rebekah Smick, “Evoking Michelangelo’s Vatican Pietà: Transformations in the Topos of
Living Stone,” in The Eye of the Poet: Studies in the Reciprocity of the Visual and Literary Arts from the
141 On the theme of liveliness in the literary reception of Michelangelo’s Vatican Pietà, see Smick,
“Evoking Michelangelo’s Vatican Pietà,” 23-52; Jacobs, Living Image, 168-70. See also, Schütze, “San
Sebastiano,” 87; idem, Kardinal Maffeo Barberini, 211, 214.
which “those who are bearing the burden appear to be distressed and to strain with every
limb, while in the dead man there is no member that does not seem completely lifeless…
all droop inertly down, all combine together to represent death.” 142 Benedetto Varchi
subsequently transposed Alberti’s terms for well-represented death onto the Vatican
Pietà. 143 And although the Christ of the Florentine Pietà did not enjoy the same
paradigmatic status in art theory, it conformed to the formal conditions for the dead. As
Condivi observed, this later “Christ, released [from the cross] falls with all his limbs
slackened,” albeit in a “very different position” than that of Michelangelo’s earlier
Pietà. 144 Giovanni Andrea Borboni, author of a history of sculpture that celebrates the
cinquecento master as the summit of achievement, so admired Michelangelo’s Christs
that he rather selectively claimed that “in Rome Buonarroti immortalized himself in the
sculpting, as you heard, of statues of dead bodies.” 145 From this perspective, Bernini’s St.
Sebastian can lay claim to the power of resurrecting Buonarroti’s dead.

There is another way to appreciate Bernini’s reflection upon Michelangelo’s
representation of Christ’s quietus. Rather than view the St. Sebastian according to the
foregoing texts, which hold that Buonarroti depicted Christ’s death with empirical
accuracy, it can be imagined that Bernini apprehended the theological nuance implicit in
his predecessor’s Pietàs themselves. Alexander Nagel has offered a reading of the

143 Varchi’s assessment of the Vatican Pietà was first presented to the Florentine academy in 1547 and then published in his Due lezioni three years later. For Varchi on the Vatican Pietà, see Smick, “Evoking Michelangelo’s Vatican Pietà,” 25-9
144 Condivi/Wohl, Life, 90; Condivi, Vita, 51: “Il Christo, abandonato, casca con tutte le membra relassate, ma in atto molto differente e da quel che Michelagnolo fece per la Marchesana di Pescara, e da quel della Madonna della Febre.”
145 “Ma se in Roma il Buonarota s’immortalò nello scolpire, come udiste, le Statue de’Corpi morti, oltre a quelle da cui si rappresentano I vivi, in Fiorenza sua Patria, parve che facesse prova di risuscitarle.” Giovanni Andrea Borboni, Delle statue (Rome: Nella stamparia di Iacomo Fei, 1661), 78.
theology of Michelangelo’s Christs that the art theory of the period does not acknowledge by demonstrating that for Buonarroti, “the dead Christ was not a mere corpse,” but an ambiguous body, subsisting in a state of latent animation that lies between the moment of his death and the instance of his resurrection. If, as for Lomazzo, Michelangelo’s Christ falls into death, Bernini’s *St. Sebastian* falls back into life, thus reasserting the veiled liveliness of Michelangelo’s dead Christs by inviting us to perceive the martyr’s imminent awakening from a death-like sleep, just as St. Irene set out one night expecting to recover Sebastian’s dead body only to find him unexpectedly alive.

Bernini’s sympathetic engagement with Michelangelo’s Florentine Christ is consistent with his purported endorsement of the figure referred to in a letter written by Paolo Falconieri to Apollonio Bassetti on 17 November 1674, two weeks after the Florentine *Pietà* was transferred from Rome to Florence:

Still, there is something which Bernini has told me and I know is most true, and it is this: that the Christ, which is almost completely finished, is an inestimable marvel, not only in itself but because Michelangelo made it when he was over 70 years old. And that [Bernini] having come of age, and consequently a master since he had begun to become one in youth, had studied it continually for months and months. Who in Florence is able to judge the work better than Bernini?

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146 Nagel, *Michelangelo*, 98. Although the Christ of the Vatican *Pietà* was characterized by many contemporaries as the paradigmatic image of death’s immobility, Nagel has demonstrated that in this early Christ, as in each of Michelangelo’s sculpted reflections upon the nature of the dead Christ (as well as his early painted *Entombment*), the artist suffused the body with subtle signs of life so as to underscore the “latent animation in the limp figure.” See also ibid., 99-101, 202-8, for Nagel’s readings of the motions of each of the figures in Michelangelo’s early and late *Pietàs*.


148 “Ma quello, che a detto il Bernino a me, so ch’è veriss.mo, et è questo; che il Cristo ch’è quasi finito tutto è una cosa tanta maravigliosa inestimabile, non solo per se, ma per averla fatto Michelagnolo dopo l’aver passato l’età di 70 anni, e ch’egli uomo fatto, e conseguentemente maestro, perche cominciò ad esserlo da giovanotto, vi aveva studiato se mesi e mesi continui. Ora chi possa a Firenze guidicarne meglio del Bernino…..” As transcribed in Wasserman, *Michelangelo’s Florence Pietà*, 236. On the significance of
Part of what makes this claim interesting lies in Gianlorenzo’s unequivocally self-reflexive appraisal of the sculpture: now too in his seventies, Bernini not only admired Michelangelo’s septuagenarian production but also revealed that he had studied the late Pietà carefully. The work was constitutive of his own early mastery of sculpture. Following the statue’s unexpectedly poor Florentine reception, due partly to its unfinished state, Bernini’s claim defends the merit and instructional value of this non-finito. Some years earlier, in their Trattato della Pittura e Scultura (1652), Domenico Ottonelli and Pietro Cortona similarly defended the pedagogical and conceptual value of Michelangelo’s non-finiti. Relaying the opinion of an unnamed “gran Professore” (Bernini perhaps?), who claimed that Michelangelo’s unfinished statues might “serve as exemplars” for aspiring artists, the authors cite two pietàs (likely the Florence Pietà and the Palestrina Pietà) as foremost among them. They also take note of Taddeo Zuccaro’s studies and paintings after the Florence Pietà, to further illustrate that Michelangelo’s unfinished works, far from being defective, were “most perfect” because they represented the maker’s idea, which might profitably be mined by imitators.

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this letter, see also D’Onofrio, Roma vista da Roma, 172-3; Lavin, “Five Youthful Sculptures,” 236-37n92; Goldberg, Patterns in Late Medici Art Patronage, 187; Wasserman, Michelangelo’s Florence Pietà, 110-1. Wasserman, Michelangelo’s Florence Pietà, 109-11.

149 “Non voglio lasciar di riferire ciò, che mi disse un gran Professore intorno al famosissimo Michel’Angelo, cioè che più volte lasciò in Roma l’opere abbozzate; perché se bene erano tali, che potevano servir d’esempi ad altri Maestri, nondimeno à lui non riuscivano di perfettissima sodisfattione. Tali sono i due Gruppi di Pietà, de’quali uno fu trovato seppellito in una stanza à terreno, & hore si vede pubblicamente in una Officina di Roma: e l’altro stà nel giardino che ë del Sig. Cardinal Bandino à Monte Cavallo.” Gian Domenico Ottonelli and Pietro Berrettini da Cortona, Trattato della Pittura, e scultura, uso, et abuso loro. Composto da un theologo, e da un pittore, ed. Vittorio Casale (Florence: G. A. Bonardi, 1652; repr., Rome: Libreria Editrice Canova, 1973), 210. This passage is preceded by a discussion of the merit of unfinished ancient sculpture and followed by a section on the integrity of da Vinci’s abandoned paintings, which suggests that the virtue of unfinished works (non-finiti) by even the most esteemed artists was contested ground. See D’Onofrio, Roma vista da Roma, 188, on this passage and the pietàs to which Ottonelli and Cortona are likely referring.

150 “E queste due Bozze, oltre l’altre, che si veggono tralasciate, sono di tanta bellezza, che Taddeo Zucchero stimò bene impiegata la sua fatica in disegnarle, colorirle, e ridurle in opera: come vedesi in Roma nella Madonna de’Monti, e nella Pietà del Consolato de’Fiorentini. E da questo argomento si può, che non è cosa insolita, ne indecente ad un consumato Artefice lasciar, ò guastar un’opera, non finita, e
Sculptors as well as painters sought to mine the ideas in Michelangelo’s *non-finiti*, but not all of them comprehended the nuance as well as Bernini. For example, around 1596-1600, Tomaso della Porta carved a *Deposition* that derives its composition from Michelangelo’s Florence *Pietà* [fig. 14]. Yet rather than portray Christ suspended between death and new life, Della Porta’s statue exaggerates the Albertian distinction between the motions of the living and those of the dead, by heightening the effort exerted by Christ’s attendants to support his wholly spiritless, dangling limbs. By contrast, in 1605, Stefano Maderno produced two versions of the mutilated *Pietà*, a terracotta relief and a clay statuette, both of which depict Nicodemus holding the body of Christ [figs. 15 and 16], that attend sensitively to Michelangelo’s rendering of Christ’s latent animation. In the relief, the isolated Nicodemus and Christ mimic the relationship in Michelangelo’s statue, yet with the two Marys who help to sustain Christ’s body now absent, Christ seems to participate more actively in holding himself up. Note, in particular, the actively tensed toes of his left leg. In the statuette, Nicodemus, seated and holding Christ on his lap, acts more like Michelangelo’s Virgin Mary; he sustains a subtle balance with the Christ, who with toes again at the ready, mouth agape and right arm awakening, contributes feebly to the task of holding up his own worn body.

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154 On Stefano Maderno’s terracottas, see Fehl, “Michelangelo’s Tomb in Rome,” 23-24; Ian Wardropper and Fronai Simpson, *From the Sculptor’s Hand: Italian Baroque Terracottas from the State Hermitage Museum* (Chicago: Art Institute of Chicago, 1998), 44-5; Schütze, *Kardinal Maffeo Barberini*, 222.

155 Maderno’s decision to mimic only the figures of Nicodemus and Christ also points to an intimate and self-conscious reflection upon the belief held by some at the time that Buonarroti’s Nicodemus was a self-portrait. It is also possible to distinguish Michelangelo’s features in the supporting figure from both the
Bernini, by comparison, underscores Michelangelo’s idea of the dead Christ’s subtle livingness even more emphatically by adapting the pose to a representation of a solitary St. Sebastian, who, with the aid of only a tree-stump, must sustain and balance himself.

Just after Bernini completed his *St. Sebastian*, Cardinal Barberini set out to secure an opportunity for the sculptor that would require an alternate mode of engagement with a *non-finito* by Michelangelo that had significant implications for the reception of Michelangelo’s muscled animation. In October 1618, Maffeo wrote a letter to his brother Carlo inquiring about an unidentified “statue already begun by Michelangelo” that he hoped to obtain cheaply so that “the son of [Pietro] Bernini, who is having great success, would finish it.”

Completing marbles abandoned by their original makers, even those blocked out by Michelangelo, was not uncommon in early seicento Rome, despite an emerging view that an imperfect original was better than a completion by a later artist. According to Giovanni Baglione, the French sculptor Nicolas Cordier took an *abbozzo* of an unknown pope by Michelangelo and refashioned it into a statue of *St. Gregory the Relic and the statuette and to see these works as an homage to Buonarroti. By revisiting Michelangelo’s reflections on the Christ, Maderno inscribes himself onto a tradition tied to Michelangelo’s self-representation. On the biblical identity of the bearded figure in Michelangelo’s *Pietà* and the early modern sources that suggest this is a portrait of Michelangelo, see especially, Wolfgang Stechow, “Joseph of Arimathea or Nicodemus?” in *Studien zur toskanischen Kunst: Festschrift für Ludwig Heinrich Heidenreich* (Munich: Prestel, 1964), 289-302; Jane Kristof, “Michelangelo as Nicodemus: The Florence *Pietà*,” *Sixteenth Century Journal* 20 (1989): 163-82; Wasserman, *Michelangelo’s Florence Pietà*, 17, 19, 34, 137-44.

156 “Mi disse una volta il Signor Cavaliere Passignano che al Signor Michelangelo Buonarroti restava qui verso il palazzo d’Alessandrino una statua cominciata già da Michelangelo, e che ne haverbbe fatto fuori; se si può haver per buon mercato sotto mano col mezo Passignano la piglierei perché il figlio del Bernino che fa grande riuscita la perfettionerebbe.” This letter is transcribed and discussed by D’Onofrio, *Roma vista da Roma*, 172. See also Lavin, “Five Youthful Sculptures,” 236.

157 This sentiment is suggested in a letter of 13 July 1607 from Francesco Buonarroti to Michelangelo il Giovane, in which he describes an unfinished work by Michelangelo and argues that it is not worth purchasing because it has been touched by another hand. See Irene Baldriga, “The First Version of Michelangelo’s Christ for S. Maria sopra Minerva,” *Burlington Magazine* 142 (2000): 742n10: “Il signor Passignano risolutamente sconsiglia a pigliar la borza si perché è tocca da altra mano al certo, si ancora che dove prima gli era stato dato intender che la valuta fussi quanto di marmo, et hora chieggono 300 scudi, cosa che non li vale, e ne sconsiglia in tutto et per tutto.” Respect for the imperfect original is also the point of Ottonelli and Cortona’s discussion of *non-finiti* (see above) in their *Trattato della pittura.*
Michelangelo’s abandoned first version of a *Risen Christ* for the Minerva arguably met a similar fate. Sometime between 1607 and 1638, Vincenzo Giustiniani, collector and connoisseur of antiques, arguably acquired the unfinished statue, which, according to an early seventeenth-century report, was in the same state as Michelangelo’s *St. Matthew* for Florence’s Opera del Duomo and his *Pitti Slaves*, the general outlines and appearance of which were perceptible, and had it completed by a contemporary sculptor. The evidence that Michelangelo’s abandoned first *Christ* (henceforth the Bassano *Christ*) was on the market at the beginning of the century, and may have still been for sale when Cardinal Barberini wrote his letter, makes the work a likely candidate for the unidentified statue that the cardinal asked for Bernini to complete. Christoph Frommel has recently argued that Michelangelo’s unfinished

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159 This assessment comes from a letter of 25 May 1607 written by Francesco Buonarroti to his cousin Michelangelo il Giovane (nephew of Michelangelo Buonarroti): “Venne il signor Passignani, ragionaiseco mostrandoli la Vostra intenzione, mi disse che era nel medesimo grado questa borza che il Santo Matteo dell’Opera et I Prigioni di Pitti al suo giudizio…. ” As cited in Baldriga, “The First Version of Michelangelo’s Christ,” 742n9.


161 The unfinished Christ is first mentioned in a series of letters dated May-June 1607 from Francesco Buonarroti, then in Rome, to Michelangelo il Giovane in Florence. Francesco writes that the painter, Domenico Passignano, encouraged him to see and consider purchasing an unfinished marble representing a Christ, like the *Minerva* Christ, but in a different pose. Francesco, however, did not buy the work as it was ultimately deemed to have been retouched by another artist and was selling for too high a price. The next certain mention of the unfinished Christ, according to Danesi-Squarzina and Baldriga, is in the 1638 inventory of the statue in the Giustiniani collection. The whereabouts of the first version of Michelangelo’s Christ between 1607, when Francesco Buonarroti rejected it, and 1638, when it was listed in the Giustiniani inventory, cannot be ascertained with any certainty. Thus it is plausible that Maffeo’s 1618 reference to an unfinished work that Passignano (the same intermediary as in the earlier Buonarroti letters) “once told him” of an unfinished Michelangelo. Whether Maffeo found the price of the unfinished work too steep, or the work had already been purchased by Giustiniani, is a matter of conjecture. For the documents pertaining to the early seicento history of the first version of the Christ, see Baldriga, “The First Version of Michelangelo’s Christ,” 741-2; Danesi-Squarzina, “The Bassano ‘Christ the Redeemer’,” 746-7, 750-1.
Christ was indeed finished by Bernini, not for Maffeo Barberini, but for Giustiniani, who beat the cardinal to the purchase. Although the scant documentary evidence renders Frommel’s proposition debatable, his formal argument in favour of a Bernini attribution is compelling. He identifies the hand of the seicento sculptor in the soft contours of Christ’s form, in the expressive delicacy of his hair and face, as well as in the hands that press into the sponge and drapery, as if these objects were crafted of pliable matter. In the completed Bassano Christ, Frommel sees early hallmarks of Bernini’s virtuosic handling of intractable stone.

Whoever was appointed to recarve the statue (and I concur with Frommel that Bernini’s hand is at work here), scholars have noted that the softly modelled contours of the Bassano Christ conform to Giustiniani’s classicizing tastes because they avoid Michelangelo’s characteristically muscled manner, which was often the subject of criticism by detractors from Dolce onward. The result is a final work that only vaguely summons Buonarroti to mind, or at least not a Michelangelo with which contemporaries were familiar. But does this necessarily mean that the identity and authority of the original maker has been irreverently hacked away by a successor’s historically insensitive, even unreservedly critical, chisel? What does it mean to complete a Michelangelo in such an incongruous manner? Must this reworking be understood only as a correction of

Alternatively, D’Onofrio, Roma vista da Roma, 172, posited that the unfinished work in question was the Rondanini Pietà, while Lavin, “Five New Youthful Sculptures,” 236, put forward the Palestrina Pietà as a possible candidate.


Ibid., 198-200.

On the reception of Buonarroti’s muscled manner from Dolce through the seventeenth-century, see Thuillier, “Polémiques autour de Michel-Ange,” 361-3, 365-7; Rosenberg, Raphael and France, 23-5, 27-8; Roskill, Dolce’s Aretino, 164-3, 171-3.
Buonarroti? Or, is it possible to see the modifications as an attempt to modernize his style, even to redefine it retrospectively?

By completing Michelangelo’s Bassano Christ so that it conforms to its patron’s taste for fleshier forms, Bernini engagement might be characterized as a cross-generational exchange that inverted the common paradigm of influence that moves from father to son, and here reimagined the father. Like the seicento restorers of antique statues who, as Jennifer Montagu has argued, anachronistically introduced the formal or iconographic sensibilities of their own period into the fragmented stones of the distant past, so too Bernini’s completion of Michelangelo’s Christ is not archaeological accurate, so to speak. Rather than realize Buonarroti’s statue according to the style of its successor in the Minerva (which we might imagine corresponded more closely to Buonarroti’s original vision for the Bassano Christ’s contours), the seicento sculptor offers a finished cinquecento statue, imbued with current classicizing tastes for softer contours. Montagu suggests that when an antique work is updated in this fashion, the result is an object whose “status between ancient and modern is ill defined.” I would suggest, alternatively, that Bernini’s creative completion of Michelangelo, although inauthentic to the latter’s style, does not necessarily muddy the statue’s classification as a Michelangelo; rather, by softening the typically muscled contours of his figures, it alters what the viewer might define as characteristic of Buonarroti’s style. As a restoration that brings Michelangelo into one seventeenth-century paradigm of modernity, the Bassano Christ offers in stone what Loh sees in Titian’s completion of Bellini’s painting, that is,

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166 Ibid., 155.
an “instance of history folding over itself, a double belonging that uproots rigid, hierarchical, arborescent models of influence.”

In 1618, the year that Maffeo Barberini inquired after Michelangelo’s *non-finito* for Bernini to complete, the young sculptor began carving his *Aeneas, Anchises and Ascanius* [fig. 19], which (not coincidentally) takes as its referent the second version of the Minerva *Christ* [fig. 20]. As with the *Bassano* Christ, Bernini’s *Aeneas* group makes a particular claim about what is characteristic of Michelangelo. And like the *St. Lawrence* and *St. Sebastian*, which both explored Buonarroti’s illusion of life, the *Aeneas* group, one of four works created in rapid succession for Scipione Borghese,

offered a sensitive interpretation of the torsion, unsteadiness and imminent movement that was at the heart of Michelangelo’s *concetto* for the Minerva *Christ*.

Just as Christ embraces the cross, so too the Aeneas grasps his aged father. But while Christ teeters unsteadily in a standing position as he embraces his burden, the Trojan hero maintains a shaky balance as he shoulders Anchises while striding determinedly forward. As Kauffmann and Preimesberger have noted, Bernini not only transformed a figure expressing potential motion into kinetic motion, he also gave new meaning to the functional physicality of Michelangelo’s twisting figure, by turning torso more acutely, dropping his shoulder more sharply, and curving his spine more dramatically, in order to convey realistically he stress of the father’s weight upon the

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168 Numerous scholars have noted and discussed the formal affinity between Bernini’s statuary group and Michelangelo’s figure. Italo Faldi, *La Galleria Borghese. Le sculture dal secolo XVI al XIX* (Rome: Istituto poligrafico dello Stato, 1954), 28; Hibbard, *Bernini*, 34; D’Onofrio, *Roma vista da Roma*, 262; Preimesberger, “Themes from Art Theory,” 112; idem, “Enea e Anchise,” 117-8; Schütze, *Kardinal Maffeo Barberini*, 237. Scholars have also seen sources for Bernini’s Aeneas group in various painted representations of the same subject. See especially, Kauffmann, *Giovanni Lorenzo Bernini*, 31-8; Schütze, *Kardinal Maffeo Barberini*, 236-7.
son’s physical form in action. The extreme torsion evident in the posture, as Kauffmann first observed, reveals Bernini’s careful study of Leonardo’s *Trattato*, particularly the passages on “a man who carries a burden upon his shoulders” while walking. However apt Kauffmann’s and Preimesberger’s analyses of *Aeneas*’s motion, in their attempt to differentiate Michelangelo’s *contrapposto*, which (likely informed by the late-cinquecento criticism of Buonarroti’s complex poses) they read as predominantly aesthetic, from Bernini’s more natural *contrapposto*, they make of the cinquecento artist a largely formal referent for his predecessor. But did Bernini see beyond Michelangelo’s artifice and apprehend the symbolic dimension of the Minerva *Christ*’s pose?

Michelangelo’s dramatically counterpoised and precariously imbalanced Christ was theologically motivated. As Nagel has argued, in order to elucidate the relationship between Christ’s death and the promise of Christian salvation, Michelangelo adapted bacchic imagery to his representation of Christ, thereby making the man/god an equivocal figure, “precarious in [his] instability, yet powerful in [his] vulnerability.” Apprehending this conceit, Bernini appropriated the early Christian tradition of interpreting Aeneas as a precursor of Christ, by creating a figure who strides naked, exposed and unsteady, shouldering the burden of his father in order to fulfill his destiny of founding Rome, a journey long associated with Christ’s Second Coming and building

a New Jerusalem.174 Bernini’s Aeneas group alluded as well to a contemporary association between the Minerva Christ and an episode in the Apocryphal Gospel of Peter. Fleeing likely martyrdom in Rome, Peter encountered the Risen Christ and asked him “Where are you going (Domine quo vadis)?” To which Christ replied, reprovingly, “To Rome to be crucified again.” The earliest textual correlation between Michelangelo’s statue and this story was made in 1590 by a Spanish art writer.175 Just over a decade later, this same correlation was implied in Annibale Carracci’s Domine Quo Vadis? [fig. 21], the Christ of which is modelled on Buonarroti’s sculpture.176 A gesso replica of the Minerva Christ at the Church of Domine Quo Vadis outside Rome underscored the pervasiveness of such readings of Michelangelo’s statue.177 By illustrating the very moment that follows the one represented by Michelangelo’s Minerva Christ, this painting helped reinforce the timelessness of Michelangelo’s statue.

176 While this formal reference to the Minerva Christ has not, to my knowledge, been noted in the literature on the artist, Annibale Carracci (along with Agostino) is known to have emulated Michelangelo’s sculptures in his paintings, as with the Pietà (c.1599-1600) at the Museo Capodimonte in Naples, which looks to Buonarroti’s Vatican Pietà. On the Carracci imitation of Michelangelo, see Sydney J. Freedberg, Circa 1600: A Revolution of Style in Italian Painting (Cambridge: Harvard, 1983), 37, 40, 41-6; Carl Goldstein, Visual Fact over Verbal Fiction: A Study of the Carracci and the Criticism, Theory, and Practice of Art in Renaissance and Baroque Italy (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 136-47, 177-9, 182-5. On the Domine Quo Vadis, see Donald Posner, Annibale Carracci, a study in the reform of Italian painting around 1590 (New York: Phaidon, 1971),1:60; Silvia Ginzburg Carignani, Annibale Carracci a Roma: gli affreschi di Palazzo Farnese (Rome: Donzelli, 2000), 111-3.
177 The gesso replica was first noted by William E. Wallace, “Michelangelo’s Risen Christ,” Sixteenth Century Journal 28 (1997): 1277-8. See also Nagel, Controversy of Renaissance Art, 143, who suggests that the perceived connection between the Minerva Christ and the Domine Quo Vadis story gives Michelangelo’s statue an ancient pedigree.
Christ, the next step toward Rome and into renewed life, Bernini’s representation of a
Christianized Aeneas, viewed through a Domine Quo Vadis prism, seems to understand
the pose the statue imitates in a manner similar to that portrayed in Annibale’s painting.

Bernini’s take on the Minerva Christ’s unstable torsion is not limited to the figure
of Aeneas. Overlooked until now is the fact that the sculptor modeled all three
generations on Michelangelo’s statue, each moving (or not, as it were) according to the
norms of his respective age [figs. 22 and 23]. Like the Christ, the apprehensive
Ascanius clings to his father’s garments as he moves tenderly forward. Aeneas’s flexible
stride is all vigour and strength, as he grasps his own father. And Anchises, though
weakened by age and resting stiffly on his son’s shoulder, counterbalances Aeneas’s
stance, holding the family gods in one hand and stabilizing himself with the other.
Bernini’s ages of man reflects the diversity found in nature. Although each figure is
distinct, they all operate together in a complex reciprocal relationship of opposing and
complementary forces. Mutually supporting, these figures echo the structural and
symbolic intertwining of Michelangelo’s Christ and his cross.

Bernini’s three figures are as differentiated in their motions – tender/Ascanius,
forceful/Aeneas, stiff/Anchises – as they are in their physiognomics – pudgy/Ascanius,
athletic/Aeneas, gaunt/Anchises. Their nuanced forms can be read as a response to the
charge of monotony levelled by Dolce at Michelangelo for his often single-minded
representation of muscled men in forceful action.  

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178 Kauffmann, Giovanni Lorenzo Bernini, 32-5, has noted that the action of each figure mirrors the other,
but he does not see Aeneas, Anchises and Ascanius as distinct iterations of the same source.
179 While no one, to my knowledge, has discussed the three-fold representation of motion or pose vis-à-vis
Michelangelo in the Aeneas group, Preimesberger was the first to consider the varied treatment of flesh in
the three figures. Preimesberger, “Themes from Art Theory,” 10; idem, “Enea e Anchise,” 117.
He is supreme, however, in one mode – supreme, that is, in making the nude body muscular and elaborated, with foreshortenings and bold movements which show off in detail every artistic problem. In other modes, however, he fails to measure up not just to himself, but to others as well – the reason being that he does recognize or else is unwilling to take into account those distinctions between the ages and the sexes… which Raphael handles so admirably. And the man who sees a single figure of Michelangelo, sees them all.  

Consistent with Dolce’s (and others’) view of Raphael, Bernini demonstrates that he is the master of many types, but in a manner unlike Raphael’s. Rather than look to many models beyond Buonarroti, Bernini thinks through Michelangelo’s distinctive type of figural representation (here characterized by the Minerva Christ) and from it produces multiple figural types. In view of Dolce’s assessment, Bernini’s discrete iterations, modeled after a single example in his predecessor’s oeuvre, read as critical correctives to the uniformity of Michelangelo’s figures. And by creating variety through repetition, Bernini also overcomes the crippling myopia Dolce attributed to those epigones who hindered artistic progress by mindlessly replicating Buonarroti’s style. In his 1691 Vocabolario Toscano dell’arte del disegno, Filippo Baldinucci christened the stilted manner of these hapless followers the “maniera legnosa” (wooden style) which he described as:

an affliction of taste that prevents [artists] from making [their] figures svelte and giving them movement and animation… make them appear hard, almost as if they were copied not from a living person, but from a painted wooden statue…. many who were burdened with this ugliness during the last century wanted to imitate the divine Michelangelo in making muscles….This danger was foreseen by the high genius of that sublime

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180 Roskill, Dolce’s Aretino, 171-3 and, earlier, 163-4. On Dolce’s assessment of the artificial (as opposed to natural) variety expressed by Michelangelo’s forceful figures, see Summers, Michelangelo, 73-4, 87-8
181 This is the argument put forth by Preimesberger, “Themes from Art Theory,” 10; idem, “Enea e Anchise,” 117.
For Baldinucci, artists who expended too much effort copying Michelangelo instead of
studying nature created hard, lifeless art. Bernini’s Aeneas group evaded the fate to
which so many of Buonarroti’s followers purportedly succumbed, reconciling the
imitation of Michelangelo with the example offered by nature, and demonstrating how to
transform his predecessor’s inimitable, dead-end paradigm into a flexible, imitable path
for the future.

Scholars have assumed that Bernini’s response to the Minerva Christ in his
Aeneas group is consistent with the criticisms of Michelangelo’s art articulated in Paul
Fréart de Chantelou’s Journal, a chronicle of Bernini’s activities and conversations
during his 1665 Paris sojourn. Although this journal purports to faithfully record
Gianlorenzo’s views on art and, in particular, his attitude towards Michelangelo, 183

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182 “Maniera legnosa; di quel Pittore, che quantunque abbia buon colorito, invenzione, e altre belle qualità; contuttociò, per una certa infelicità del gusto suo nel fare sveltire le parti delle figure, e dare ad esse moto, e prontezza, con un certo colorir terminato, le fa apparir dure, quasi che fossero ritratte, non da persona viva, ma da una statua di legno dipinta. Questo vizio si riconosce più dal tutto, che dalle parti, le quali bene spesso possono apparire, ciascheduna da sè ben disegnate, ben colorite, e abbigliate; e contuttociò esser cariche di questa bruttura, la quale si scorge in molti di coloro principalmente, che nel Secolo passato vellero imitare il divino Michelagnolo nel muscolegggiare, e abbigliare le figure; il che fa conoscere quanto sia la differenza da colui, che nell’operare vò a seconda d’un altro, benchè singolare nell’arte, a quello che seguia un chiaro lume del proprio intelletto, che le ragioni del ben fare alla mano somministra. Questo accidente fu dall’alto ingegno di quel subblime Artefice preveduto; quando ebbe dire una volta: Questa mia maniera vuol fare dimolti goffi Artefici.” Filippo Baldinucci, Vocabolario toscano dell’arte del disegno (Florence: Santi Franchi, 1691; repr., Florence: Studio per Edizioni Scelte, 1975), 88-9. For a discussion of Baldinucci’s definition within the context of seicento art theory, see Sohm, Style, 32-3, 177, 180-1. Baldinucci’s reference to Michelangelo’s purported recognition of the danger of his style is appropriated from Armenini’s discussion of the influence of Michelangelo’s Sistine paintings: “One day Michelangelo, on entering the Sistine chapel in the company of a bishop, for some purpose of his, saw these various attempts and it seems that he said, “Oh, how many men this work [i.e. the Last Judgment] of mine wishes to destroy.” Armenini, True Precepts, 138; idem, De veri precetti, 83: “vedute un dì da Michelangelo, nell’entrar che fece in Capella [Sistina] in compagnia d’un vescovo, credo per altre sue faccende, par che con quello dicesse, ‘O quanti quest’opera mia ne vuole ingoffire’.”

183 Bernini’s purported references to Michelangelo in the Journal outnumber references to any other artist. He refers to Michelangelo 24 times. The next most frequent references are to Annibale Carracci, mentioned 15 times, and Raphael, mentioned 13 times. Bernini regularly discussed Michelangelo’s achievements in painting, sculpture and architecture, and peppered his conversation with anecdotes about Buonarroti and frequently quotes the latter’s views on art. Chantelou, Diary, 22, 26 (June 8), 30 (June 12), 41-3 (June 25),
numerous scholars have rightly questioned the reliability of this text as a source for
Bernini’s perspective, noting that the artist’s purported comments about artists, art theory, practice and connoisseurship frequently differ from what can be gleaned from the
evidence of Bernini’s art (from any time in his career), or from the various anecdotes
about art and process in Baldinucci’s and Domenico's *vite* of the artist.\textsuperscript{184} Indeed, the
French bias of the Bernini of the *Journal* suggests that the artist either slyly adopted the
views of his audience, or that Chantelou used Bernini as a mouthpiece for his own ideas
on art. I therefore read the *Journal* neither as a document of Bernini’s thoughts nor as an
outright construction by Chantelou, but as a motivated framing of Bernini’s actions and
words.

On June 25, for example, Bernini purportedly claimed that Michelangelo “had not
the gift for making creatures of flesh and blood, and they were beautiful and remarkable
only for their anatomy.”\textsuperscript{185} Anatomy here is subtly pejorative. Lacking the soft,

\textsuperscript{184} See most notably Eleanor Dodge Barton, “The Problem of Bernini’s Theories of Art,” *Marsyas* 4 (1945-47): 81-111, who suggested that in light of apparent discrepancies between the diary, the biographies and Bernini’s art, it is possible that Bernini accommodated his views to suit the theoretical leanings of his
French hosts. Alternatively, Ostrow has proposed that the disparity between the often negative light in
which Michelangelo is cast in the diary, and Buonarroti’s status as exemplar in the *vite*, indicates that the
diary, like the biographies, is a motivated text wherein Bernini’s “voice” represents Chantelou’s, not
Gianlorenzo’s, attitudes. See Ostrow, “Bernini’s Voice.” For discussions of the art theoretical content in
Chantelou, including Bernini’s appraisal of Michelangelo, see Madeleine Foisil, “Le goût du Bernin
d’après le journal de Chantelou,” in *Études européennes: mélanges offerts à Victor-Lucien Taïpé*, ed. R.
Gianlorenzo Bernini d’après le Journal de Chantelou: un chapitre italophile de la littérature artistique du
Del Pesco, *Bernini in Francia*, 100-30; Steven F. Ostrow, “Bernini e il paragone,” in *Bernini pittore*, ed.
\textsuperscript{185} Chantelou, *Diary*, 41; idem, *Journal*, 64 (June 25).
animating quality of flesh, of *viva carne*, Michelangelo’s implicitly hard, muscled silhouettes, male and female, bore instead the deadening effect of his dedicated study of the body’s structure. On the same day Bernini apparently criticized the Minerva *Christ* using an anecdote about Annibale Carracci, the painter who is often invoked in the journal as a respected authority on Michelangelo as well as a purported mentor to the young Bernini.\footnote{The vital role that Annibale plays in the *Journal* as authority on art and practice and as the virtual teacher of Gianlorenzo was recently observed by Ostrow, who also demonstrated that Bernini’s self-fashioning in the diary as Annibale’s heir is in striking contrast to the *vite*, which present Bernini as a new Michelangelo. Ostrow, “Bernini’s Voice,” 125-31. Bernini’s professed relationship with Annibale Carracci merits further investigation, not for its veracity (which is a moot point) but for its implications for Bernini’s complex construction of his artistic self-hood and his art theory. On Bernini’s claim to artistic descent from Annibale, see Montanari, introduction, 20-2; idem, “At the Margins of the Historiography of Art,” in Delbeke, Levy and Ostrow, eds., *Bernini’s Biographies*, 100-1. Annibale Carracci’s formal influence on Bernini’s early sculpture is also mainstay of contemporary scholarship, see Hibbard, *Bernini*, 62-4, 94, 172-3; M. and M. Fagiolo dell’Arco, *Bernini*, 33-4; Kauffmann, *Giovanni Lorenzo Bernini*, 21, 28, 31, 33, 53, 71, 148, 219, 225, 231, 235; Preimesberger, “Themes from Art Theory,” 11; Preimesberger, “David,” 210-1; Schütze, *Kardinal Maffeo Barberini*, 219, 222, 242-3.\footnote{Chantelou, *Diary*, 42-3; idem, *Journal*, 64 (June 25): “Continuant à parler de Michel-Ange et de ses ouvrages, le Cavalier a dit qu’Annibal Carrache entrait un jour dans la Minerve avec plusieurs de son école, un d’eux, qui était florentin et par conséquent grand louangeur de ses compatriotes, lui dit: ‘Hé bien, seigneur Annibal, que dites-vous de cette statue de Christ? *Caspita*, dit Annibal, elle est de Michel-Ange. Considérez enfin la beauté, vous autres (se tournant vers la compagnie). Mais pour la bien connaître, il faudrait bien voir comme les corps étaient faits dans ce temps-là,’ se raillant, et de ce que Michel-Ange n’avait pas imité la nature.”}}

In this instance, Annibale seems to serve as a proxy for Bernini’s own views:

One day Annibale Carracci went to Santa Maria sopra Minerva with some pupils from his school. One of them was a Florentine and always singing the praises of his compatriots. He said to him, “Well, Signor Annibale, what do you say to this statue of Christ?” “Caspita,” exclaimed Annibale and, turning to the assembled company, said, “It is by Michelangelo, look well at its beauty, but to understand it thoroughly, you must know how bodies were constructed at that time,” in this way making fun of Michelangelo, whose style did not imitate nature.\footnote{(italics mine) Chantelou, *Diary*, 42-3; idem, *Journal*, 64 (June 25): “Continuant à parler de Michel-Ange et de ses ouvrages, le Cavalier a dit qu’Annibal Carrache entrait un jour dans la Minerve avec plusieurs de son école, un d’eux, qui était florentin et par conséquent grand louangeur de ses compatriotes, lui dit: ‘Hé bien, seigneur Annibal, que dites-vous de cette statue de Christ? *Caspita*, dit Annibal, elle est de Michel-Ange. Considérez enfin la beauté, vous autres (se tournant vers la compagnie). Mais pour la bien connaître, il faudrait bien voir comme les corps étaient faits dans ce temps-là,’ se raillant, et de ce que Michel-Ange n’avait pas imité la nature.”}

Annibale’s emphasis on the outmoded structure of Christ’s body, which may refer to the arrangement of muscles, the *contrapposto* stance, or both, historicizes Michelangelo’s figural style. Far from a condemnation, Carracci’s purported claim that one must assess Buonarroti’s statue with an eye for the practices of the artist’s own period in order to
appreciate it, approaches Michelangelo with discerning historical relativism. However, the gloss at the end of quote, “in this way making fun of Michelangelo, whose style did not imitate nature,” – arguably Chantelou’s editorializing – turns Carracci’s sensitive assessment into a criticism of Michelangelo’s artifice.

On October 21, Chantelou’s Bernini purportedly referred once more to the Minerva Christ, this time in a layered critique of Michelangelo’s lack of naturalism:

They talked about sculpture; on the subject of the king’s bust the Cavaliere [i.e. Bernini] repeated what he had said many times, that Michelangelo never wanted to undertake a portrait; he was a great man, a great sculptor and a great architect; nevertheless he had more art than grace, and for that reason he had not equalled the artists of antiquity; he had concerned himself chiefly with anatomy, like a surgeon; it was this that caused Annibale Carracci… to jest about his Christ in the sopra Minerva…188

By juxtaposing Buonarroti’s aversion to portraiture, which typically depends on the study of a living model, to his near-professional engagement with the art of post-mortem, Bernini insinuates that Michelangelo’s sculpture mirrored the rigor mortis of his models. Indeed, the passage evokes images of Michelangelo wielding not a chisel, but a scalpel.189 And the assertion that Buonarroti possessed “more art than grace” further accentuated the lifelessness of his stone. In the context of early modern art writing, “grace” (grazia) connoted effortless execution, ease of figural movement and

188 (italics mine) Chantelou, Diary, 137; idem, Journal, 132 (August 21): “L’on a discouru de la sculpture, et au sujet du buste, le Cavalier a répété ce qu’il a dit plusieurs fois, que Michel-Ange n’a jamais voulu faire de portrait, que c’était un grand homme, un grand sculpteur et architecte, que néanmoins il avait eu plus d’art que de grâce, et pour cela n’avait pas égalé les Antiques, s’étant principalement attaché à l’anatomie comme font les chirurgiens; ce qui avait donné lieu à Annibal Carrache qui avait, a-t-il dit, un grande cervellone, de le railler au sujet de son Christ de la Minerve; et à ce sujet a répété ce qui est déjà rapporté en plus d’un lieu de ce mémoire.”

189 The comment recalls a note made by the Carracci in their postille to Vasari’s Lives (alongside the passages on Bartolomeo Torri, the artist-anatomist who cluttered his home with body parts), in which they criticize painters who were consumed with anatomizing: “È gran cosa che molti pittori, non so s’(‘io) debbo dire poco intendenti di quest’arte, attendon(o) et consumando tanto te(mpo) intorno a questa anno(to)mia, che con tutto ch(e) sia buono il sapere non è però necessario il cacciarsvi dentro (come) fanno i medici, ma n(on) piu ché qua non è (il) suo loco.” As cited in Mario Fanti, “Le postille Carraccesche alle Vit e del Vasari: il testo originale,” Il Carrobbio 5 (1979): 155. See also Charles Dempsey, “The Carracci Postille to Vasari’s Lives,” Art Bulletin 68 (1986): 72-6.
liveliness. Grace is here in tension with “art/artifice” (arte), a type of conspicuous figural ornament appreciated by some as the acme in representing living presence. In the hands of those less sympathetic to embellishment, as in this context, it signified rigid, ungainly and spiritless art. In Bernini’s purported critique, Michelangelo’s artifice, defined largely by his technical knowledge of anatomy, fails to transcend art and achieve the aninate grace inherent in nature and perfected in ancient art.

By suggesting that Michelangelo failed to achieve the spark of grace that enlivened antique art and transformed it into nature’s rival, notwithstanding his anatomical expertise, the Chantelou passage transforms into a shortcoming that which Buonarroti’s cinquecento advocates saw as an unparalleled advantage. He does so...
using the terms that Giorgio Vasari employed to distinguish Michelangelo’s age from the one preceding it. In the preface to part three of his Lives, Vasari writes that even though the artists of the second age had mastered the technical aspects of art, their diligently executed works were nonetheless imperfect. Only with the artists of the third age, at the summit of which was Michelangelo, did art reach perfection by exhibiting an animated gracefulness that went beyond mere technical expertise (the achievement of the second age) and surpassed all that came before it, including the antique. As different as he is from the hero of Vasari’s narrative, the Michelangelo of


194 I am grateful to Professor Alexander Nagel for alerting me to Chantelou’s historical revisionism.

195 Giorgio Vasari, Le vite de’ più eccellenti pittori, scultori e architettori nelle redazioni del 1550 e 1568, ed. Rosanna Bettarini, commentary Paola Barrochi (Florence: Sansoni, 1966-71), 4:6-8 (hereafter cited as Vasari/Bettarini-Barocchi, Vite): “Et avegnaché molti di loro cominciassino, come Andrea Verrocchio, Antonio del Pollaiuolo e molti altri più moderni, a cercare di fare le loro figure più studiate e che ci apparisse dentro maggior disegno, con quella imitazione più simile e più apunto alle cose naturali, nondimeno e’ non v’era il tutto, ancora che ci fusse una sicurtà più certa che egli andavano verso il buono, e ch’elie fussino però approvate secondo l’opere degli antichi... ché s’eglino avessino avuto quelle minuzie dei fini che sono la perfezzione et il fiore dell’arte, arebbono avuto ancora una gagliardezza risoluta nell’opere loro, e ne sarebbe conseguito la leggiadria et una pulitezza e somma grazia che non ebbono, ancora che vi sia lo stento della diligenza, che son quelli che danno gli stremi dell’arte nelle belle figure o di rilievo o dipinte. Quella fine e quel certo che, che ci mancava, non lo potevano mettere così presto in atto, avvengaché lo studio insecchisce la maniera, quando egli è preso per terminare i fini in quel modo. Bene lo trovaron poi dopo loro gli altri, nel veder cavar fuora di terra certe anticaglie citate da Plinio delle più famose: il Lacoonte, l’Ercole et il Torso grosso di Belvedere, così la Venere, la Cleopatra, lo Apollo, et infinite altre, le quali nella lor dolcezza e nelle lor asprezze, con termini camosi e cavati dalle maggior’ bellezze del vivo, con certi atti che on in tutto si storcono ma si vanno in certe cagione di levar via una certa maniera secca e cruda e tagliente, che per lo soverchio studio avevano lasciata in questa arte [list of artists whose style was dry, hard and cutting]; i quali, per sforzarsi, cercavano fare l’impossibile dell’arte con le fatiche, e massime negli scòrti e nelle vedute spiecevoli, che, sì come erano a loro dure a condurle, così erano aspre a vederele; et ancora che la maggior parte fussino ben disegnate e senza errori, vi mancava pure uno spirito di prontezza, che non ci si vede mai, et una dolcezza ne’colori unita, che la cominciò ad usare nelle cose sue il Francia Bolognese e Pietro Perugino; et i popoli nel vederla corsero come matti a questa bellezza nuova e più viva, parendo loro assolutamente che e’ non si potesse già mai far meglio.” On Vasari’s preface to part three of his Lives and his distinctions between the second and third ages, see Rubin, Giorgio Vasari, 235-52, 254; Jacobs, Living Image, 34-6.
Chantelou’s Journal is now paradoxically Vasarian in that he is made to possess the flaws of the second age of art. Chantelou’s historical revisionism demotes Michelangelo to the previous age by using the very means Buonarroti used to surpass the animate naturalism of the antique against him. Chantelou’s art/grace opposition also calls to mind the distinction Dolce drew between Michelangelo’s artistry and the grace of Raphael,\(^{196}\) the artist, not coincidentally, who was extolled by Chantelou and his contemporaries as having possessed all of the virtues of ancient art.\(^{197}\)

Though it has gone unnoted, the explicit distinction attributed to Bernini in Chantelou’s Journal between graceful antiquity and the artful Michelangelo echoes a criticism of the Minerva Christ made closer in time to Bernini’s Aeneas. In his Discorso sopra la scultura (c.1627), Vincenzo Giustiniani, the owner of the re-carved Bassano Christ, judged the Pighini Adonis (now the Vatican Meleager) [fig. 24] to be more animate and natural than the Minerva Christ:

> It is necessary that the sculptor not only have knowledge equal to the painter in drawing perfectly, on the basis of experience acquired from the good ancient and modern statues and bas-reliefs, but also that he be superior to him in knowing how to give a beautiful pose to his figures. This means that they be well placed on the base and of such grace and liveliness that they overcome the limits imposed by the stone, as can be seen in certain ancient statues. It is especially true of the Pighini Adonis, which is a full-length standing statue, so well proportioned in every part, of such exquisite workmanship, and with so many signs of indescribable vivacity, that in comparison to other works it seems to breathe, yet it is of marble like the others. And in particular Michelangelo’s Christ in the church of Santa Maria sopra Minerva, which is extremely beautiful and made with industry and diligence, but seems a mere statue. It does not have the liveliness and spirit of the Adonis, from which one may conclude that this particular consists of a grace given by nature, without which it is unattainable by art.\(^{198}\)

\(^{196}\) Roskill, Dolce’s Aretino, esp.173-77.
\(^{197}\) On Raphael’s reception in seventeenth-century France, see Rosenberg, Raphael and France, esp, 17-20, 22-5.
\(^{198}\) (italics mine) “Allo scultore è necessario non solo il sapere disegnare perfettamente, con l’esperienza fatta nelle buone statue antiche e moderne, e bassirilievi, al pari del pittore; ma conviene che lo superi in
According to Giustiniani, the difference between the graceful *Adonis* and the artful *Christ*, above all, is in their “postura” (pose), a term that was sometimes used as a synonym for movement when writing about sculpture, and which he claims is the primary means by which the sculptor may surpass the painter. Though he does not describe the poses that distinguish the seemingly breathing antique marble from Michelangelo’s inanimate stone, what Giustiniani is likely objecting to, as Estelle Lingo argues, is the Christ’s heroic torsion, particularly in the upper body, which seems exaggerated compared to the uncomplicated *contrapposto* of the Adonis. The alliance between animating grace and easy counter-balance inferred by Giustiniani description of the Adonis is captured by Baldinucci’s definition of “*grazia di movenza*,” a kind of action most apparent in poses of gentle counter-position, neither forced nor affected (*senza stiracchiamento*, o...
affettazione). Measured against this definition, Michelangelo’s Christ falls into the category of contrived and strained contrapposto that makes it “seem a mere statue” – a lifeless work of art. Given Giustiniani’s unfavourable assessment of the Minerva Christ, we can imagine that he approved of the “diversa positura” of the Bassano Christ that Bernini may have completed for him, since its easy contrapposto (which had already been largely determined by Buonarroti’s chisel) more closely resembles that of the Pighini Adonis than the spiralling torsion of its successor.

Giustiniani’s assessment signals a new moment in the written critical reception, specifically of Michelangelo’s Minerva Christ and, generally, a shift in taste among certain critics away from Buonarroti’s amplified contrapposto and toward the delicacy offered by select antique examples. Contrast Giustiniani’s criticism with the acclaim for the statue in the latter part of the sixteenth-century by Borghini, who called the Christ

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201 “Grazia di movenza. f. Secondo il Paggi nella Tavola, è quella piacevolezza di movimento, la quale accresce la bellezza, ed alle volte è più gradita: si considera nel soave moto di tutto il viso, e anche degli occhi, e della bocca nel favellare e nel ridere; nel moto delle mani e d’altra membra, e finalmente della persona tutta, che soavemente atteggi senza stiracchiamento, o affettazione. Aiutano questa grazia alcune regole del moto, come per esempio: se la gamba destra viene innanzi, il braccio destro vada indietro: se il braccio tutto con la spalla s’abbassa, il fianco tutto con la gamba s’innalzi; se un braccio s’innalza sopra il capo, la sua gamba si distenda: la testa giri sempre verso quel braccio che viene innanzi. Non si faccia mai calare, né alzare la figure tutta da un lato; ma sempre le membra contrastino fra di loro; e simili avvertenze, che bene annosi da chi possiede l’arte, che sa anco quand’è tempo d’osservare, e quando nò.” Baldinucci, Vocabolario, 70. On the late cinquecento reception of Michelangelo’s figures as forced, specifically with reference to the critical term sforzate, see Cole, “Figura Sforzata,” 527-9; idem, Ambitious Form, 46-50.

202 Lingo, François Duquesnoy, 41.

203 This phrase comes from a letter written by Francesco Buonarroti to Michelangelo il Giovane, which describes the unfinished Bassano Christ as “una borza di marmo di mano di Michelangelo del Cristo della Minerva dello stesso, ma in diversa positura, et a lui gli piace.” As cited in Baldriga, “The First Version of Michelangelo’s Christ,” 742

204 Ibid., 745. Cf. Frommel, “Michelangelo, Bernini e le due statue del Cristo risorto,” 198, who suggests that Michelangelo intended the first Christ to stand with his arm crossing his chest much like the second version. Thus, the only distinction between the two versions would have been a more dramatic forward bend. Frommel’s argument, however, seems to make too little of the claim by contemporaries that the first version of the Christ was in a “diversa positura” than the second.

205 As noted above, if there is an element of critique of Michelangelo to be seen in the newly completed statue of the Risen Christ itself, it is not in the pose, per se, (as this was already largely worked out by Buonarroti), but in the fleshy contours that eschew the muscled hardness of the Minerva Christ.

206 On the taste for the delicate antique and the budding “archaeological” appreciation of ancient art, see Cropper and Dempsey, Nicolas Poussin, 23-63; Lingo, Francois Duquesnoy.
a “figura mirabilissima,” or Lomazzo, who praised its “bellissime attitudini.”

Replicas of the statue, like Taddeo Landini’s marble copy in the Florentine church of Santo Spirito, the gesso copy purchased by the Florentine academy in 1583, and the gesso models of the Minerva Christ’s legs in the possession of the Accademia di San Luca, point to the esteem for it and its pedagogical value. And in Girolamo Francini’s *Trattato nuovo delle cose maravigliose dell’alma città di Roma* (1600), a best-selling guidebook to the Eternal City that appeared in numerous editions throughout the century, the Minerva Christ was one of only three modern statues to be illustrated in the text.

In an engraving of the Minerva Christ by Jacob Matham that appeared in the same year Francini’s book was published, we might discern subtle hints of the criticism that is later fully articulated by Giustiniani [fig. 25]. Matham’s chosen view of the figure, from the left and slightly below the actual in-situ vantage of the sculpture, accentuates the upward thrust of Christ’s pose and glance, thereby lessening the impression of circuitous

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207 For Borghini’s and Lomazzo’s responses to the Minerva Christ, see Vasari, *Vita*, 3:903.
209 Barzman, *Florentine Academy*, 204.
210 According to the academy’s records, the models were donated by Jacomo Rocchetti in 1594: “Mastro Jacomo Rocchetti gessi doi gambe del Christo de la Minerba.” See Pressouyre, 1:72n75. The odd choice of the legs as a part of the Minerva Christ’s body worthy of particular study might have been influenced by Sebastiano del Piombo’s remark: “Perché val più e’z enochii de quella figura che non val tutta Roma,” as cited in Barocchi and Ristori, eds., *Carteggio*, 2:314. A Spanish art writer also noted that sculptors admired and imitated the legs of the Minerva Christ: “Es figura celebratissima y de tanta stimación entre las personas peritas en el arte de la scultura, que está todo el mundo lleno de los braços y piernas y los demás miembros que los scultores an formado, vaziado y moldeado para ymitar contrahazer los d’esta figura.” From Diego de Villalta’s *Tratado*, quoted in Vasari/Barocchi, *Vita*, 3:903. On this passage, see also note 175 above.
211 The guidebook includes a woodcut illustration of the work accompanied by a brief text that reads: “Questa è la incomparabil statua del N.S. Giesu Christo, del non mai, lodate a bastanza & immortal Michele Angelo Bonarota. E nella sopradetta chiesa di S. Maria sopra Minerva, dell’ordine di S. Domenico...” Girolamo Francini, *Trattato nuovo delle cose maravigliose dell’alma città di Roma* (Rome: Giacomo Mascardi, 1600), 94. The two other modern statues that are illustrated are Michelangelo’s Moses and the full-length bronze portrait of Sixtus V in the Capitoline.
intertwining in Michelangelo’s dramatic contrapposto.\(^{212}\) His rendering of the front foot and toes, which he anchors firmly to the ground upon which Christ stands, also avoids the unsteady balance and sense of imminent movement in the Michelangelo’s Christ, the toes of which project over the edge of the base. When this engraving is compared to Nicholas Beatrizet’s 1558 engraving of the Minerva Christ [fig. 26], in which a site-specific view is eschewed in favour of a more archaeological representation of the figure’s pose, including the body’s muscled contours and, notably, the figure’s toes which hang over the base, Matham’s emendations are all the more apparent.\(^{213}\) But it is only with Francois Duquesnoy’s imitation of the Minerva Christ in his ivory statuette of Christ Bound [fig. 27], dated to the 1620s,\(^{214}\) thus contemporary with Giustiniani’s critique, that the classicizing taste for delicate contours and ease of motion fully restyled Michelangelo’s statue. Though softly fleshed and posed in a sweeping s-curve indebted to the Minerva Christ pose, Duquesnoy’s Christ, whose feet are planted fully on the ground, and whose arms rest gently to one side, revised the precarious instability of Michelangelo’s muscled contrapposto.

If Matham’s engraving and Duquesnoy’s statuette exhibit an alternative to Michelangelo’s artifice, consonant with Giustiniani’s and, later, Chantelou’s criticisms, Bernini’s Aeneas group demonstrates instead a desire to preserve Michelangelo’s aesthetic of motion, along with its rhetorical implications. Indeed, among the numerous

\(^{212}\) On Matham’s engraving, see Bernadine Barnes, Michelangelo in Print: Reproductions as Response in the Sixteenth Century (Burlington: Ashgate, 2010), 160-1.

\(^{213}\) Ibid., 160.

\(^{214}\) The ivory Christ Bound was recently acquired by the National Gallery of Art, Washington, and dated by Nicholas Penny to the 1620s. This early date is based, in part, on the knowledge that Duquesnoy’s ivories were what first attracted the attention of major Roman patrons after his arrival in Rome in 1618. Although the ivory itself has yet to enter into the Duquesnoy literature, the sculptor produced many variants of the statuette that have recently been studied and catalogued by Marion Boudon-Machuel, François du Quesnoy: 1597-1643 (Paris: Athena, 2005), 96-7, 224-7.
instances of the Minerva Christ’s reception, the most meaningful to Bernini was Pietro Bernini’s (Gianlorenzo’s father) open adaptation of the statue in his St. John the Baptist (1612) [fig. 28].

Pietro’s figure is mirrored in Bernini’s Anchises, the most richly allusive of the three figures Gianlorenzo derived from the Minerva statue. Like the biblical John the Baptist who “prepares the way” (Malachi 3:1), Pietro, whose Baptist was translated into an Anchises, functions as precursor by directing the course for his son both literally and symbolically. Furthermore, as Cole has observed, Bernini’s representation of the aged father gazing fixedly into the distance captured the Aeneid’s characterization of Anchises as “prospiciens (looking through the shade/ seeing far off/ foreseeing/ providing for).”

Though Pietro trained his son, there is very little discussion in the biographies of Bernini’s artistic relationship with his father, except where the Aeneas group is concerned. Filippo Baldinucci’s exegesis of the work focuses upon the formal resemblance between the styles of father and son: “although something of the manner of his father, Pietro, is discernible, one still can see… a certain approach to the tender and true, toward which from then on his excellent taste led him.”

According to documents of payment, the Aeneas group was Bernini’s first large-scale work as an autonomous sculptor, no longer an apprentice to his father but a master in his

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215 While it has long been noted that Pietro’s Baptist emulates Michelangelo’s Christ, no other scholar, to my knowledge, has noticed the affinity between Bernini’s Anchises and Pietro’s Baptist. However, Charles Avery asserted that Bernini’s Aeneas was modeled on Pietro’s figure. See Charles Avery, Bernini: Genius of the Baroque (London: Thames and Hudson, 1997), 43. It should be noted it is unlikely that Pietro was the individual to have selected the Minerva Christ as his referent; rather, this model was imposed on him. Pietro inherited the commission for the John the Baptist after the death of Nicolas Cordier, who had been working on the marble. According to documents regarding the state of the statue at the time of Cordier’s death, the attitude and pose of the figure had already been blocked out by the French sculptor. On the commission and carving of the John the Baptist, see Hans-Ulrich Kessler, Pietro Bernini: 1562-1629 (Munich: Hirmer, 2005), 72-6, 326-32; Pressouyre, Nicolas Cordier, 1:2, 166-74.


217 Baldinucci/Enggass, Life, 12; Baldinucci, Vita, 78.
own right. Yet Gianlorenzo’s reprise of Pietro’s Baptist expresses an underlying continuity with his father’s work, so much so that the Aeneas group was sometimes attributed to Pietro or thought to be largely by his hand. The layered emulation of the Minerva Christ that is at play in the figure of Anchises and in the trio of figures as a whole, underscores both Pietro’s and Gianlorenzo’s shared, albeit distinctive, resemblance to Michelangelo. The Aeneas group is like a meta-artistic essay on Seneca’s filial metaphor of imitation, where the parental imprint is perceived as a mild echo in the son, *ad infinitum*.

By imitating both Michelangelo and Pietro, Bernini suggestively carved his own artistic parentage into the group. Virgil’s tale of Aeneas carrying Anchises from the flames of Troy with Ascanius in tow was understood as a generational metaphor that expressed the devotion of children to their parents and signalled the promise of prosperous renewal. While scholars have read the iconography of the Aeneas group as a symbol of the patron Scipione Borghese’s devotion to his uncle, it possible to understand Bernini’s layered imitation as an allegorical genealogy that expressed his own filial piety toward his biological father, as well as toward his adopted forefather, Michelangelo. Within this autobiographical construction, Aeneas might be imagined as Gianlorenzo while Anchises is an amalgam of Pietro and Michelangelo. I am even tempted to see Anchises’s visage, with its two pronged beard, furrowed brow, sunken eyes and prominent nose, as loosely resembling portraits of Michelangelo, especially the

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219 For debates over the style and authorship of the statue, see D’Onofrio, *Roma vista da Roma*, 261-72.
posthumous image by Bernini’s contemporary Cristofano Allori in the Casa Buonarroti [fig. 29]. And just as Aeneas’s flight from Troy marked the fulfillment of a prophecy to re-establish Trojan glory on Roman soil, so too Bernini’s sculpture asserts the transfer of sculptural primacy from Florence, home to the adolescent Michelangelo and Pietro, to Gianlorenzo’s adopted city of Rome. The Florentine origins of this trio are underscored by the family gods in Anchises’s hand, which are like miniatures of Michelangelo’s dukes from the Medici chapel [figs. 30 and 31].

Yet it is in Rome where the glory of a new generation, the character of which is marked by a competitive respect for Michelangelo’s paradigm, will be established upon the traditions of the old. However, this new imperium will not end with Aeneas/Bernini. Rather, as intimated by the figure of Ascanius who holds the flame signifying the future and looks out into the beyond, this line of michelangesque descendants is a dynasty without apparent end.

By acknowledging the potentially overwhelming or encumbering nature of the “strong” precursor within the context of filial devotion and gratitude, Bernini’s Aeneas group ultimately constructs a nuanced image of the dynamics of imitation. Anchises (or Michelangelo/Pietro) is represented as Aeneas’s (or Gianlorenzo’s) burden, but also his benefactor, both his cross and his salvation, as it were. The weight of the father must be dutifully, if arduously borne, in order for the son to move successfully forward. This point of view has new implications for the problem of imitating Michelangelo: by authoring Michelangelo as a “father figure,” Bernini makes the once inimitable and timeless Buonarroti, imitable and historically bound. And rather than suggest that his own engagement with Michelangelo has resulted in a new inimitable paradigm; instead,  

221 Although this observation was first made by Seymour, “Identity Formation,” 168n27, he does not develop its implications.
he affirms his own historical contingency by forecasting a future son, or followers, in the figure of Ascanius.

If, with the Aeneas group, Bernini constructed an image of himself as the sculptor who perpetuated Michelangelo’s tradition, with the 1623 David [fig. 32], his most rivalrous self-declaration vis-à-vis Michelangelo, he sought to redefine tradition itself. The statue invites comparison with the Florentine legacy of Davids, particularly Michelangelo’s colossal biblical hero [fig. 33], which engaged in its own agon with the eponymous statues by Donatello and Verrocchio. Michelangelo broke with the tradition of representing David post-battle, sword in hand and Goliath’s severed head at his feet, by showing the young warrior in a moment of preparation and contemplation, sling at the ready, pre-battle. Bernini took up the challenge posed by Michelangelo’s innovation, creating his own novel take on the subject. Rather than represent the warrior battle-ready, he carved a hero engaged in battle and thinking in action, a fleeting moment Baldinucci described as “in the act of aiming his sling at the forehead of the giant Philistine.”

Bernini’s David twists dramatically to his right as he pulls his slingshot taut in the instant before pivoting rapidly and hurling the stone at Goliath, who looms somewhere behind him and whom he sees in his mind’s eye.

Although Bernini rejects the gentle contrapposto of the Renaissance Davids, particularly Michelangelo’s, his figure does recall the complex torsion of the latter’s

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222 Baldinucci/Enggass, Life, 13; Baldinucci, Vita, 78.
223 For the thoughtful and convincing argument against the long-held belief that Bernini’s David gazed at an unseen giant that occupied a space somewhere in front of the statue, see Thomas Glen, “Rethinking Bernini’s David: Attitude, Moment and the Location of Goliath,” RACAR 23 (1996): 84-92.
224 We do not know if the young Bernini saw Michelangelo’s David first hand. According to Bernini’s biographers, the 1665 trip to Paris via Florence was the only time the artist traveled outside Rome. Yet scholars take it as axiomatic that Bernini would have made journeys to Florence in his youth in order to study Michelangelo. At the very least, Bernini would have known of Michelangelo’s David from oral descriptions of the work by his Florentine patrons as well as his father and possibly by way of drawings
Victory [fig. 34]. Yet he situates the Victory’s pose in the context of explosive battle rather than its subdued aftermath, thereby departing from the manner in which Michelangelo’s imitators typically responded to the statue. The Victory’s twisted pose had been reiterated by a long list of sixteenth-century sculptors in their representations of secular triumphs: Bandinelli’s Hercules and Cacus; Ammanati’s Allegory of Victory; Pierino da Vinci’s Samson and Philistine; Giambologna’s Florence triumphant over Pisa; and, Danti’s Honor triumphant over Falsehood. Cole has argued that the makers of these dramatically contorted and bent figures not only privileged artifice over the communication of subject, but also that they did so in full awareness of the censure after the original contained in the sketchbooks of artists in Rome. The earliest print of Michelangelo’s David, as far as I know, was created by François Perrier around 1633 as part of a suite of six antique and modern statues including, Michelangelo’s Bacchus, the Farnese Hercules, the Commodus as Hercules, the Capitoline Urania and the Farnese Flora. On this print, see Alvin L. Clark, Jr., François Perrier: Reflections on the Earlier Works from Lanfranco to Vouet (Paris: Galerie Eric Coatalem, 2001), 21-2.

Though no one, as far as I know, has fully considered the implications of Michelangelo’s Victory as a source for Bernini’s David, Preimesberger observed that the extreme contortion in Bernini’s statue purposefully recalled the ancient sculptural archetype of flexus, Myron’s Discobolus, upon which Michelangelo’s Victory was likely based. The Discobolus was known in the period from the descriptions of Lucian, who characterized the pose as natural in its suggestion of fleeting motion (“…the one bent over into the throwing position, with his head turned back to the hand that holds the discus, and the opposite knee slightly flexed, like one who will spring up after the throw?”) and of Quintillian, especially, who celebrated the exaggerated twist as decorous artificiality that demonstrated difficulty, novelty and variety. He also drew a parallel between the lifelike motion of the statue and forceful figures of speech that departed from the norm. (“The body when held bolt upright has but little grace, for the face looks straight forward, the arms hang by the side, the feet are joined and the whole figure is stiff from top to toe. But that curve, I might almost call it motion, with which we are so familiar, gives an impression of action and animation. So, too, the hands will not always be represented in the same position, and the variety given to the expression will be infinite. Some figures are represented as running or rushing forward, others sit or recline, some are nude, others clothed, while some again are half-dressed, half-naked. Where can we find a more violent and elaborate attitude than that of the Discobolus of Myron? Yet the critic who disapproved of the figure because it was not upright, would merely show his utter failure to understand the sculptor’s art, in which the very novelty and difficulty of execution is what most deserves our praise. A similar impression of grace and charm is produced by rhetorical figures, whether they be figures of thought or figures of speech. For they involve a certain departure from the straight line and have the merit of variation from the ordinary usage.” Institutio Oratoria, II.xiii.9-11) In essence, the “violent and elaborate” bend of the Discobolus goes beyond mere enlivening by demonstrating decorous and innovative artifice. On the reception of Quintillian’s description of the Discobolus by Renaissance theorists, particularly Alberti, Leonardo and Lomazzo, and the correlation between the force and persuasiveness of ornamental rhetoric and embellished figural motion, difficulty and variety in art, see also Summers, “Contrapposto,” 337-41; idem, Michelangelo, 91-3, 96, 178, 193, 407; Eck, Classical Rhetoric, 5-7, 60, 161-2.
levelled at Michelangelo’s indecorous *sforzi* (forced poses) in the *Last Judgment*.

In his 1564 *On the Errors of History Painters*, Giovanni Andrea Gilio had criticized Michelangelo in particular, and painters in general, who “have as their first intent to twist the head, the arms, or the legs of their figures. Thus one says that [the figures] are *sforzate*, and these *sforzi* are sometimes such that it would be better for them not to be there, for [the painters] think little about doing the subject of their story, if they consider it at all.” Gilio and others conceded that while the poses of figures in religious works should be delicate, in keeping with their sacred identities, figures in secular or poetic subjects could be represented in whatever attitude the artist desired. According to Cole, those sculptors of secular triumphs who carved figures posed in *sforzi* inspired by Michelangelo delighted in the aesthetic freedom of a so-called “poetic mode.”

Bernini’s adoption of the *Victory* pose for his proleptically triumphant *David*, in turn, relishes the demonstration of artifice and difficulty that underlies its *sforzo*, while respecting the religious prescriptions regarding decorous representation.

A passage on pose from Borghini’s *Il Riposo*, which reflects upon Gilio’s criticisms, sheds more light on the decorousness of Bernini’s *David*:

But passing to poses, I say that these need to conform in everything to the narrative and to the person that they illustrate. Therefore, it is necessary when painting the sacred narratives, to make grave, modest and devout, not fierce or forced, the poses of patriarchs, prophets, saints, martyrs, the Saviour of the World, the Queen of Heaven, and of the angels. It will be very appropriate to make those of tyrants and their ministers fierce and cruel, but not immodest and lascivious. This takes away the devotion that one has in gazing on the saints near them. *When wars and arguments are*

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227 As translated by Cole, “*Figura Sforzata*,” 527.
painted, then you are able to play with forceful, vigorous and terrible poses.\textsuperscript{229}

According to Borghini’s logic, Bernini’s violently twisted \textit{David} would have been appropriate to the subject of a biblical battle, especially one in which a fearsome Philistine opponent was overcome by the righteous fury of a divinely appointed young warrior. By reconciling artful torsion with sacred history, Bernini openly confronted the critics who saw only indecorous artifice in the \textit{sforzi} of Michelangelo’s religious figures. Rather than chasten Buonarroti’s example, Bernini’s \textit{David} extols his predecessor’s work.\textsuperscript{230}

Scholars have adduced various other sources for \textit{David}’s action: the \textit{Borghese Gladiator}, a rare example of vigorous action in antique sculpture that was acquired by Scipione Borghese in 1613;\textsuperscript{231} Annibale Carracci’s figure of Polyphemus in \textit{Polyphemus and Acis} in the Farnese Gallery, which Bellori hailed as a representation of Leonardo’s “man who waits to throw a stone with great force”;\textsuperscript{232} and Leonardo’s description of a man who “wants to throw a spear or rock or something else with energetic motion” and “twists and moves himself from there to the opposite side, where, when he gathers his

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\item[(\textsuperscript{229})] (italics mine) Borghini, \textit{Il Riposo}, 129; idem, \textit{Il riposo}, 179-80: “Ma passando all’attitudini dico, che quelle deon essere in tutto conformi all’istoria, & alla persona, che doemo; perciò che dipignendosi historie sacre si deon fare l’attitudini de’Patriarchi, de’Profeti, de’Santi, de’Martiri, del Salvador del mondo, della Reina de’Cieli, e degli Angoli gravi, modest e, e divote, non fiere, e non isforzate; ma quelle de’Tiranni, e de’minstri loro sarà molto convenevole far le fiere, e crudeli; ma non dishoneste, e lascive, per non iscemare la divotione, che s’ha nel rimirare i Santi che à quelli sono appresso. Quando si dipingono guerre, e contese all’hora si può scherzare con attitudini sforzate, gagliarde, e terribili.” See Cole, \textit{Ambitious Form}, 48-9, for a discussion of the implications of this passage.
\item[(\textsuperscript{230})] Preimesberger, “David,” 211-5, has similarly suggested that Bernini’s artfully twisting \textit{David} exhibits “thematic decorum,” but he does not situate this observation within discussions of Michelangelo’s lack of decorum, or alongside the work of Michelangelo’s early imitators.
\item[(\textsuperscript{232})] As noted by Wittkower, “Bernini Studies -1,” 72; Kauffmann, \textit{Giovanni Lorenzo Bernini}, 52; Howard, “Identity Formation,” 155; Preimesberger, “Themes from Art Theory,” 11; Preimesberger, “David,” 210-1; Schütze, \textit{Kardinal Maffeo Barberini}, 242.
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strength and prepares to throw, he turns with speed….  

Indeed, the sculpture seems to take a cue from all three precedents. Yet Bernini plainly advertises a source for the energetic motion of the David that has hitherto gone ignored, namely, himself.

By carving the figure in his own likeness, Bernini explicitly presents his individual experience and vigorous action as the living, animating referent for his statue [figs. 35 and 36]. As a full-length self-portrait, the David makes manifest Bernini’s claim made in conversation with Chantelou that he determined the poses of his sculptures by “put[ing] himself into the attitude that he intended to give the figure he was representing and then [had] himself drawn by a capable artist” so as to capture the requisite naturalism and expression of his subject. In the sculptures carved before the David, the measure of Gianlorenzo’s self-reflexive engagement with Michelangelo was tacitly inscribed in his thoughtful reinterpretation of both the form and meaning of Michelangelo’s motion. Self-expression in these sculptures was contingent on the recollection of a recognizable, extant model. By contrast, Bernini’s literal self-imaging

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234 Baldinucci/Enggass, Life, 13; Baldinucci, Vita, 78, tells us that “[Bernini] modeled the beautiful face of this figure after his own countenance.” The biographer’s claim is substantiated by the physiognomic resemblance between the David’s visage and contemporary portraits of Bernini. On Bernini’s possibly frequent self-representation as David, see Avigdor W.G. Posèq, “Bernini’s Self-Portraits as David,” Source 9 (1990): 14-22.
235 Chantelou, Diary, 60; idem, Journal, 76 (July 14). Bernini’s commitment experiencing the motions and emotions of his subject is confirmed in Tomaso Montanari’s recent study of Bernini’s painting practice and pedagogy in which he suggests that during Bernini’s tenure as master of a painting academy in Rome, he institutionalized method acting by encouraging his students to draw him and each other in the guise of religious characters and by mounting yearly theatrical productions in which students performed as actors. See Montanari, Bernini pittore, 36-51.
236 Bernini’s process has its roots in texts on rhetoric, which held that the only way an orator could persuasively communicate the motions and emotions of any subject was to feel them for himself. This observation was first made by Anthony Blunt in his notes to Chantelou’s journal. See Chantelou, Diary, 60n49. The practice was recently discussed within the context of imitation theory, biography and Bernini’s rapport with Michelangelo in Levy, “Chapter 2,” 172. On the correlations among rhetorical method, artistic practice and the reception of art, see Jennifer Montagu, The Expression of the Passions (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994), 4-7, 50-51, 56, 57, and, most recently, Eck, Classical Rhetoric, esp. 1-12.
in the *David* would seem to conceal the evidence of external formal models, patently denying, if not altogether truthfully, contingency. But far from a triumphant self-portrait of autonomy, the *David* is a subtle narrative of succession in which Bernini firmly asserted his own identity.

Preimesberger has suggested that Goliath, or the giant adversary of Bernini’s *David*, is Michelangelo as personified by his own *David*, a sculpture popularly referred to as “il gigante.”

Although Bernini definitely intended to rival Michelangelo with this sculpture, this allegorical self-portrait need not be seen as expressing intent to kill the father, so to speak! An alternative reading in which we might understand Bernini constructing a less violent stance towards his adopted father is possible.

Rather than imagine Michelangelo as the unseen Goliath, we might think of him instead as the biblical King Saul, the young warrior’s father-figure who is summoned by way of the skirted cuirass visible between the *David*’s legs that slumps like the hollow, enervated flesh of a flayed torso [fig. 37]. The Bible recounts that Saul gave David his own armour to wear into battle. The young warrior donned the king’s helmet, sword and coat of mail, but because he was unaccustomed to using such instruments, he opted instead to fight with stone, the weapon with which he was more familiar (I Samuel 17:38-40).

If Gianlorenzo’s statue, like that of Michelangelo, can be read as a metaphor for his activity and identity as a sculptor, and if we take Michelangelo the sculptor as

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239 Cole, *Ambitious Form*, 133-4, suggests that the nudity of Michelangelo’s *David* also evokes Saul’s gift of the armour in the biblical story of David.
Bernini’s adopted “father,” it may be possible to understand the relationship between
Saul and David (intimated here by the cuirass) as analogous to the one between
Michelangelo and Bernini. The latter’s decision to represent the rejected skin of armour,
alone among Saul’s gifts, evokes Buonarroti’s anatomical study, and even the shedding
of skin with which Michelangelo was identified in Condivi’s *Vita*, the artist’s own letters
and poetry, and the alleged self-portrait in the Sistine *Last Judgment* as the flayed flesh of
St. Bartholomew. 241 When the hard armour is stripped away from the *David*’s muscular
body, like the flesh from a cadaver or écorché, what is revealed is not an anatomized
form but the living artist himself. Bernini’s muscular, anatomically correct figure
appears to move freely and dynamically in his own living skin, as if were. Bernini has
also sloughed off the woodenness of Michelangelo’s imitators, who, seeking only to
reproduce Buonarroti’s muscled forms, failed to rival nature with the impression of life.

While the biblical story of David and Goliath is rife with agonistic aggression, the
David and Saul episode that preceded it and was discernible in Bernini’s sculpture, is
about striving to become one’s own master, in which an admiring and ambitious “son”
asserts his self-sufficiency from a powerful, yet generous adopted “father” who is
solicitous of a potential heir. Just as the pose of the *Victory*, with the captive subdued
beneath him, has been interpreted thematically as the succession of the young generation
over the old, 242 so too the youthful Bernini, like David, here fully succeeds Buonarroti,
his artistic Saul. Yet far from representing the violent casting-off of a burdensome
paternal yoke, a triumphant *David* demonstrated Bernini’s awareness of the historical and

241 Condivi/Wohl, *Life*, 106; Condivi, *Vita*, 63: “Mentre ch’è stato più robusto, più volte ha dormito vestito
e con li stivaletti in gamba, quali ha sempre usati sì per cagion del granchio, di che di continuo ha patito, sì
per altri rispetti, e è stato qualche volta tanto a cavarselg, che poi insieme con li stivaletti n’è venuta la
pelle, come quella di biscia.”
individual differences between himself and his artistic father, and openly proclaimed his independent artistic self by way of an admiring rivalry. Bernini here becomes Bernini by literally stepping into Michelangelo’s place.

**Revisiting the Father in Self-Defence**

Although scholars have seen glimpses of Michelangelo in Bernini’s later works, most notably in the *St. Teresa*, the *Habakkuk* and the *St. Jerome*, the seventeenth-century sculptor engaged much less frequently with his predecessor’s figural art in his mature years than he had in his youth. In view of the course of development implicit in the early modern pedagogy of imitation, this slackening of interest may come as little surprise: once a novice artist had fully realized himself through and against his model – the very claim Bernini constructed vis-à-vis Michelangelo in his self-portrait as *David* – further agons of the same nature were redundant, contributing little more to the new master’s identity. If we couple Bernini’s own rapid learning curve *a propos* his predecessor’s example with the increasingly hostile criticisms from the mid-seventeenth-century onward of both Michelangelo’s forceful style and the efficacy of his art as a model for emulation, the fact that the mature Bernini continued to imitate Michelangelo at all merits consideration.

One can imagine that the mounting attacks on Buonarroti’s reputation were as damaging to the cinquecento artist’s posthumous fortune as they were to Bernini’s living construction of his identity. After years of judiciously emulating his predecessor, a practice essential to his mastery of sculpture as well as a fundamental part of his self-definition as the “new Michelangelo,” the demotion of Buonarroti in terms that often
favoured Raphael threatened to undermine Bernini’s authority. I would suggest that Bernini’s late-career return to Michelangelo, specifically in his Chigi Chapel 

*Habakkuk and the Angel* and *Daniel in the Lion’s Den*, two sculptures involved, indirectly, in a site-specific debate about the superiority of Michelangelo or Raphael, not only respond to the dramatic critical turn in his predecessor’s fortune around the middle of the seventeenth century, but they do so largely in self-defence.

Bernini’s *Habakkuk* and *Daniel* were carved for the Chigi Chapel in Santa Maria del Popolo under Alexander VII (1655-67), who, as a young cardinal, first met Bernini in the mid-1620s at the Barberini court. Once Alexander Chigi became pope, he cultivated a neo-Barberinian atmosphere in which the Bernini/Michelangelo association enjoyed renewed vigour. While the Chigi papacy is the period often associated with Bernini’s rise to architectural maturity, which included an active engagement with Buonarroti’s built legacy, Alexander and his court continued to celebrate the relationship between Bernini and Michelangelo as sculptors. In 1661, for example, the Sienese prelate Giovanni Andrea Borboni published *Delle Statue*, a history of sculpture that not only praised Michelangelo and Bernini as the moderns whose lively marbles restored sculpture to its ancient glory, but also connected Gianlorenzo’s role in this achievement, in part, to Alexander’s patronage. Though Borboni devoted most of his chapter on modern sculpture to Buonarroti, he nonetheless presented Bernini as his unequivocal heir: “But when even those Vecchioni Aristarchi will not surrender; I will put before their eyes one [i.e. Bernini], who, strongly driven to demonstrate the height of his professional achievement, will succeed easily in making them see clearly the reverberations of the

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splendours of Buonarroti in his most stupendous works.”

Discussions of Bernini’s *Pluto and Proserpina*, *Apollo and Daphne*, *David*, his *Four Rivers Fountain*, and the bust of the Duke of Modena, followed, which served to underscore Borboni’s positioning of Bernini as the artist born to prove the superiority of modern sculpture over the antique.

With his *Daniel* (1656-7) and *Habakkuk* (1658-61) [figs. 38 and 39], sculptures that complete the long-unfinished decoration for the Chigi Chapel in Santa Maria del Popolo, Bernini made a claim similar to Borboni’s by engaging competitively with the modern artist most readily identified as embodying the perfect resurgence of classical ideals, Raphael. In 1655, Alexander commissioned Bernini to create the two statues as pendants to the *Elias* and *Jonah* [figs. 40 and 41], which were purportedly designed by Raphael and executed in the mid-1510s by the little-known Florentine sculptor, Lorenzetto. As Christina Strunck has recently argued, Bernini’s two sculptures must

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be considered alongside the Chigi Chapel’s seicento literary reception. She points, in particular, to the importance of an anonymous Latin panegyric, tentatively attributed by Strunck to Bellori, entitled the *Chisiani Sacelli Descriptio* and written sometime in the early months of Alexander’s pontificate, coeval with Bernini’s commission. This tract reframed the *Elias and Jonah* within the context of the legendary artistic rivalry between Raphael and Michelangelo. While the original source for the antagonism between the two cinquecento artists can be traced to Vasari, the seventeenth-century panegyric is the only text that identifies the works in the Chigi Chapel as a part of this contest. The panegyric effectively fabricates a site-specific cinquecento polemic that has implications for the interpretation of Bernini’s seicento work in the chapel, even if it does not discuss the later sculptor or his Chigi statues specifically.

The *Chisiani Sacelli Descriptio* praises the Chigi Chapel’s masterful architecture, sculpture and painting, thus redefining Raphael as a universal artist, the cornerstone of Michelangelo’s reputation (and, by this time, Bernini’s too). Two significant passages articulate an agonistic drama between Raphael and Michelangelo: one deals with the merits of the chapel’s sculpture, and another assesses its painting. In the section on sculpture, the author writes that just as Michelangelo helped his pupil, Sebastiano del Piombo, create an altarpiece for the chapel seeking to rival Raphael in painting, so too, Raphael competed vicariously with Michelangelo’s reputation as a sculptor by assisting

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248 Strunck, “Bellori und Bernini rezipieren Raffael.”
249 Since the text was included among the Chigi family documents, we might surmise that although it was not published, it was likely read before the papal court, or even by the pope himself. The authorship of the panegyric is a subject of debate. Based on a comparative analysis of other texts in the latter half of the seicento, Strunck has tentatively ascribed the work to Bellori, see ibid., 137, 139-40, 143-6.
250 Ibid., 141-3. For a survey of the cinquecento rivalry between Michelangelo and Raphael, see Goffen, Renaissance Rivals, 171-264.
Lorenzetto with the design of the chapel’s statues. Later passages on painting revisit the contest between the two masters. The author writes that the unfinished state of Sebastiano’s altarpiece, which was executed in Michelangelo’s style, demonstrates that the painter, and by extension, Buonarroti, simply could not compete with Raphael. Michelangelo’s failed painting venture with Sebastiano underscores Raphael’s superiority in painting, as well as his triumph over Michelangelo’s sculpture through Lorenzetto. In short, the Raphael of the Chisiani Sacelli Descriptio is, unequivocally, superior to Michelangelo.

The Latin panegyric was composed around the same time that art theorists challenged Buonarroti’s status as an artist worthy of imitation, and championed Raphael’s stature. In his 1662 Idée de la Perfection de Peinture, Roland Fréart de Chambray launched a vehement campaign against Michelangelo’s painting, in which he censured the exaggerated contortions and muscled artificiality and advised artists to avoid Buonarroti’s example. Chambray counselled artists, instead, to follow the correct “antique” models of Raphael and his modern French counterpart, Poussin. André

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252 “Hemisphaerium modo inspecturis, in signorum prius admiratione est immorandum: enimeverò in loculamentorum uno, spectator Ionae insidentis, pede, que referentis ab ore Cete simulachrum, Raphaelis manu expolitum et nobile. Cum enim Michael Angelus Bonarota Sebastianum Venetum Pictorem alumnum suum, laudibus summis, in aemlationem Raphaelis traheret; atque ed eius imagines opem, manumeque admoveret, Raphael, ad eludendum Michaelem apprimè Statuarium, Laurentio florentino Sculptori favit, eidemque facienda inuiuxit sculpitia Sacelli, quod tunc ipse met Raphael summam manum imposuit; atque in corpora uno, omnia artis momenta compegit: opus est profectò antiquorum Graecorum famâ dignum.” As transcribed in ibid., 174. My thanks to Christine Kralik for discussing this text with me and offering an informal translation of the Latin.

253 “Sed praeclarissimo Artifice morte perempto, reliqua minus foeliciter alij Pictores moliti sunt: dum enim sibi persuadet Sebastianus Raphaei se se parem esse, in tabulâ super altari, natalitia Virginis referente tamdiu cunctator insedit, ut eandem denique imperfectam reliquirit. Pater Deus apparat in superiori tabulâ Virginis Natale afflans, coetu comitante Angelorum, eiusdem Sebastiani, ac Micheaelis Angeli stylo conspicuous: mulieres vero que in inferiori superficie natam exhibent Virginem atque incunabula praestant absolutate sunt a Francisco Salvio, cum alij Soacelli picturis.” As transcribed in ibid., 175. Again, thanks to Christine Kralik for her assistance with this Latin text.

Félibien, who acknowledged that Michelangelo excelled in particular aspects of painting in his 1666 *Entretiens*, nonetheless deemed Raphael superior and even asserted that the latter’s mastery of anatomy and forceful figures was comparable to that of Buonarroti.255 Already in Boselli’s 1657 treatise on sculpture, which was contemporary with Bernini’s Chigi Chapel works, Raphael was being identified as the “true Apelles of our times,” and the only modern artist whose works furnished contemporary sculptors with the best models of figural action.256 Michelangelo, who is mentioned a few times in Boselli’s text, was not considered an unparalleled modern, but rather a sculptor who had yet to match the achievements of both the ancients and Raphael. And in two anonymous manuscripts that were likely written by Bellori around 1695, titled “On the excellent genius and grace of Raphael compared to Apelles,” and “On whether Raphael aggrandized and improved his style for having seen the work of Michelangelo,”257 the author not only repudiated Vasari’s assertion that Raphael’s art improved after studying Michelangelo, but also characterized Raphael as a model for sculptors, and a sculptor in his own right. Echoing the argument made in the *Chisiani Sacelli Descriptio*, Bellori’s first manuscript established Raphael’s excellence by referring to his vicarious triumph over Michelangelo in the Chigi Chapel.258

256 Boselli, *Osservazioni*, 124, see also 100-1, 138, 147-8.
257 As Strunck, “Bellori und Bernini rezipieren Raffael,” 164n71, notes, the “Dell’Ingegno eccellenza e grazia di Rafaele comparato ad Apelle” and the “Se Raffaello ingrandì e migliorò la maniera per aver veduto l’opere di Michel’Angelo” were discovered among the papers of Bellori’s *Descrizione* (1695). Both texts are transcribed in full on the online resource dedicated to Bellori’s writings entitled “Belloriano”. For both manuscripts, see the online *Corpus Informatico Belloriano*: http://biblio.signum.sns.it/cgi-bin/bellori/bfrCGI?cmd=1&w=37&q=Raffaello+e+Apelle, and, http://biblio.signum.sns.it/cgi-bin/bellori/bfrCGI?cmd=1&w=36&q=Raffaello+e+Michelangelo.
258 “Non mancò Rafaele all’artificio della Plastica, che è il modello della Scoltura, lavorando di rilievo in creta, o stucco, o in altra material: arte rinuovata nella sua scuola, come avanti si è detto, in tanti ornamenti delle loggie, un’ammirabile esempio ce ne lasciò Rafaele sollecitato da Michel Angelo. Esaltava questi
Responding to this reevaluation of Buonarroti vis-à-vis Raphael, especially the rivalry articulated in the *Chisiani Sacelli Descriptio*, Strunck suggests that Bernini’s emulation of Michelangelo in the Chigi Chapel, specifically the figure of *Habakkuk*, engages in a three-fold paragone: between Raphael and Michelangelo; between Bernini and Raphael; and between sculpture and painting. Yet the Latin panegyric offers more than a new context for thinking about familiar comparisons. I would suggest that another layer of site-specific duelling is present here, that is, between Bernini, the new Michelangelo (who represents the old Buonarroti) and, Lorenzetto, standing in for Raphael. Competition by proxy is central to the text’s paragone between Raphael and Michelangelo: the artistic identities of the two famed cinquecento artists are represented vicariously by way of the work of two artists who followed their designs and imitated their styles. Within this site-specific agon by proxy, a context that offers a particular (though restricted) frame for thinking about Gianlorenzo’s michelangelism, Bernini’s allusions to Michelangelo should not be understood as self-effacing surrogates for the work of Buonarroti, but as self-affirming and self-reflective imitations guided by Michelangelo’s *concetti*, that aim to trump Raphael. Bernini takes up the challenge implied by the author of the panegyric, who thought that the Sebastiano del Piombo—

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smisuratamente Sebastiano Veneziano discepolo di Giorgione, che aveva, portato a Roma un buon colorito; e perché costui mancava nel disegno, non lo aiutava solo co’ suoi disegni, e cartoni, ma gli ritoccava l’opere, per far contrasto a Raffaello, il quale sdegnava concorrere con Sebastiano minore di ogni suo discepolo. Chiamato però Lorenzetto scultore Fiorentino, gli allogò due statue nella Cappella di Agostino Chisi al Popolo, Giona, ed Elia: Si applicò egli al Giona con disegni, e con ritoccare il modello, tanto che Lorenzetto condusse una delle più insigni statue della Scoltura moderna, e facilmente la migliore, di una maniera tenera e delicate, nella quale mai prevalse Michel Angelo.” From the “Dell’Ingegno eccellenza e grazia di Rafaelle comparato ad Apelle”, http://biblio.signum.sns.it/cgi-bin/bellori/birCGI?cmd=1&w=37&u=Raffaello+e+Apelle. The passage is contextualized within contemporary art theory in, Strunck, “Bellori und Bernini rezipieren Raffael,” 138-43.

Michelangelo venture had failed, and seeks to prevail over Lorenzetto-Raphael, for the sake of his own reputation and identity as much as Buonarroti’s.

Bernini’s *Habakkuk* reactivated the competition by proxy that was staged in the contemporary *Chisiani Sacelli Descriptio*, by pitting Lorenzetto’s/Raphael’s celebrated sculpture of a seated *Jonah* against Michelangelo’s seated *Jonah* from the Sistine chapel [fig. 42], here transmuted into stone. Bernini translated Michelangelo’s painted illusion of three-dimensional presence into a sculpture that physically and assertively occupied the chapel space: like his painted counterpart, *Habakkuk* sits precariously on his plinth, his upper body leaning sharply back into the shallow niche, while his leg projects into the viewer’s space. By contrast, the animated leg of Lorenzetto’s *Jonah* is delimited by the whale’s mammoth jaw upon which it rests. The leg, which is neither free of the block of marble nor animated in appearance, is bound to the realm of the niche. Motion in the *Habakkuk* differs from that of Lorenzetto’s *Jonah* by its unrestrained arm that reaches across his body and gestures outside the architectural confines of his space. Even when the *Habakkuk* is compared to Lorenzetto’s/Raphael’s *Elijah*, whose twisting pose and limbs are indebted to Michelangelo’s *Moses* and are closer to that of the Habakkuk, Bernini’s claim for more forceful liveliness is clear.

Concurrent with Bernini’s rivalrous and spirited response to the Chigi *Jonah*, Orfeo Boselli praised Lorenzetto/Raphael’s statue as one of the best modern sculptures of

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260 Upon his first visit to the chapel in 1626, Fabio Chigi (later Alexander VII), though astonished by the beauty of both sculptures, identified the *Jonah* as superior; seicento guidebooks similarly lauded the *Jonah* above the *Elias*; the author of the *Chisiani Sacelli Descriptio* privileged the *Jonah* as the chapel’s most distinguished sculpture. Fabjan, “Fabio Chigi,” 47-56; Strunck, “Bellori und Bernini rezipieren Raffael,” 133.

261 The observation that Bernini’s sculpture was based on Michelangelo’s *Jonah* was first made by Battaglia, *La Cattedra berniniana*, 92-3, and subsequently adopted by Kauffmann, *Giovanni Lorenzo Bernini*, 230; Fabjan, “Fabio Chigi,” 47-56; Strunck, “Bellori und Bernini rezipieren Raffael,” 154.
a figure seated in an S-pose. Boselli’s assessment followed a chapter in his Osservazioni entitled: “Dell’atto più leggiadro in generale, e della maravigliosa operazione della lettera S nelle statue che posano,” that underscored his taste for gentle animation by redefining the vigorously twisting figura serpentinata, often associated with Michelangelo, according to classical norms of subtle contrapposto. If Boselli’s characterization of this S-pose as leggiadro, which Baldinucci described as a youthful, light and agile posture that gives the impression of movement without great exertion, did not signal a significant reconceptualization of Buonarroti’s characteristically spiralling action to the reader, the ancient statues he cites as exemplars of this S motion – the Farnese Flora, Vatican Antinoos and Apollo Belvedere – confirm his classicizing aesthetic of restrained, delicate motion. And even though Boselli credited Michelangelo with creating the best modern seated statue in his Moses, this is a rather attenuated representation of motion in Buonarroti’s sculpted oeuvre. Borboni’s appraisal of Michelangelo according to the standards of gentler contrapposto is also apparent in the list of modern statues that he rated as second only to the Moses; Lorenzetto’s/Raphael’s Jonah, Cristoforo Stati’s Magdalene and Sansovino’s St. Anne. In contrast to the

262 Boselli, Osservazioni, 136. The comment is made in section 14, entitled: Dell’atto delle statue a sedere, con l’operazione della lettera S in loro.
263 Ibid., 130. For a different interpretation, see Elisabetta Di Stefano, Orfeo Boselli e la “nobiltà” della scultura (Palermo: Centro Internazionale Studi Estetica, 2002), 33-4, who suggests that Boselli’s use of the S pose is a wholesale adoption of Lomazzo’s theory of the serpentine form.
264 “Leggiadria f. Un certo portamento della persona rappresentata in pittura così leggiadro & agile, ch’è pare ch’ella si muova, e quasi non abbia peso, ma leggierissimamete si sostenti, è propria della gioventù…” Baldinucci, Vocabolario, 82. On the use of leggiadra in art literature, see Sohm, Style, 102-3, 111-2. See also Grassi and Pepe, Dizionario, 399.
265 Boselli, Osservazioni, 136: “Non difetto in questa parte il giudizioso Michelangelo, che in riguardo del sito fece il Mose sedere con tanto garbo che, o più alto, o più basso che fosse, sarebbe fuor di veduta, da lui prima considerata ed eletta. Fra le figure moderne, ben siede il Giona della Cappella de’Chigi, la Maddalena nella Cappella de’Barberini in Sant’Andrea della Valle, opera di Cristofano Braccianese, mio primo maestro. Il gruppo della Vergine Santissima con Sant’Anna, posto sotto il Profeta dipinto da Raffaelle in Sant’Agostino di Roma maestosamente si raprasenta.” The sentiment is echoed much later by Bellori in his “Dell’Ingegno eccellenza e grazia di Raffaello comparato ad Apelle.” In a passage that
seated figures rated best by Boselli’s, Bernini’s vigorously chiastic Habakkuk favours Michelangelo’s forceful, brawny animation over the delicate motion of Lorenzetto’s/Raphael’s ephbe. By pitting his sculptural iteration of Michelangelo’s painted Jonah against Lorenzetto’s/Raphael’s sculpted Jonah, Bernini participated in the competition by proxy underscored by the Latin panegyric, and claimed for himself and for Michelangelo a posthumous triumph over an increasingly celebrated cinquecento rival.

As with Bernini’s earlier imitations of Michelangelo, his choice for the Habakkuk of the muscled, multipurpose pose of Jonah, who twists as he looks up towards the God of Creation in the Sistine ceiling while proleptically pointing below to the Last Judgment, mines the rhetorical dimension of his predecessor’s figure. Bernini’s Habakkuk and the Angel and his Daniel in the Lion’s Den, though physically separate, represent two parts of one narrative united by pose: the Habakkuk gestures in vain at a basket of bread intended for workers in the fields as he turns and looks in the opposite direction, astonished, at an angel who is about to transport him and his food to Daniel, the figure across the chapel to whom the angel points.

Although scholars have widely accepted Brauer and Wittkower’s argument that the Daniel is inspired by the father from the Laocoön group, an antique model for the kind of forceful action preferred by Bernini, little about these two sculptures, beyond
perhaps the angle of the head and the muscular contours, is similar. One of the most striking features of Daniel’s pose is the prominence of his awkwardly bent left leg, the knee that projects forward into the chapel space, and the toes that lift the limb upward. This is the limp left leg of Michelangelo’s Florentine Christ, awakened [fig. 43]. Daniel’s limb is rendered so convincingly that the viewer does not notice the virtual absence of the right leg, which is recessed and obscured by flowing drapery. This echoes the Florentine Christ’s missing leg, not restored, but rendered so that it appears absent.

Although Daniel’s upper body differed from that of Michelangelo’s late Christ – Bernini attenuated the exaggerated twist of the Christ’s torso and had the prophet actively gazing toward heaven, his arms extended in supplication – it is possible that Gianlorenzo reimagined the pose of Rachel, the contemplative supplicant of the Julius tomb [fig. 44]. Doubly inspired by Buonarroti’s dead Christ and praying Rachel, Bernini again insisted on the relevance of the cinquecento artist’s forceful spiralling forms to the decorous representation of Christian narratives. The Daniel, who is presented addressing God, hoping for deliverance from death, revisited the theological implications of Michelangelo’s ambiguous Christ who hovers between death and resurrection. Yet Bernini visited the theme by adapting the pose, not to a body in vaguely animate torpor, but to an active figure whose life, nonetheless, hangs in the balance. By way of this transposition, Bernini referred to the traditional identification of Daniel, who was miraculously saved from certain death in the lion’s den, thereby prefiguring Christ’s resurrection and triumph over death.

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267 The Pasquino and Belvedere Torso have also been suggested as models for Bernini’s Daniel, see Strinati and Grazia Bernardini, eds., Gian Lorenzo Bernini, 357.
Bernini had looked, decades earlier, to Michelangelo’s late Christ for his *St. Sebastian*, and he now took up the task of completing the mutilated stone, not by filling in the missing limb, but by respecting the incompleteness of the *non-finito*. This gesture may have been in acquiescence to the view, held by some seventeenth-century connoisseurs, that the imperfect original was superior to a tampered restoration. It may also have responded to the complaint made by the author of the *Chisiani Sacelli Descriptio* that the unfinished state of Sebastiano del Piombo’s michelangesque painting was a failure. As a work that Michelangelo entrusted to one of his followers to complete, the very history of the Florence *Pietà*’s facture and ultimate irresolution made it an appropriate model to emulate in the Chigi chapel, a site defined by the author of the Latin panegyric as one of surrogate self-representation, since it served as a reminder that Buonarroti authorized another sculptor to complete his work.

Bernini’s purported criticisms of Michelangelo’s muscled contours, anatomical expertise and conspicuous artifice, recounted by Chantelou in his journal, are belied by the michelangesque *Daniel and Habakkuk*, which were completed four years before his trip to France. It is also possible that the French bias of Gianlorenzo’s remarks, if it does represent something of his conversation, especially regarding Buonarroti’s inferiority to the antique, is self-defensive in the face of Michelangelo’s plummeting fortunes. Some of the charges levelled against the cinquecento master may have justifiably been directed at Bernini as well. On the other hand, if Chantelou did reframe Bernini’s comments to echo the recent attacks on Michelangelo’s art, is it possible that he intended the reader to perceive in the criticism of Buonarroti the terms for assessing Bernini too?
Bernini’s lifelong engagement in sculpture with Michelangelo began as the fortunes of the cinquecento master waned, and continued through the precipitous fall in his critical reception. Throughout, Bernini remained a discerning advocate. Yet his endorsement of his predecessor, which was always competitive in terms of its Senecan filiation, mutated over time and mingled different degrees of deference and self-assertion. Later, as a mature sculptor, he reflected upon the very foundations of his own claim to authority. If Bernini’s early St. Lawrence, St. Sebastian, Aeneas group and David, constructed the narrative of a respectful yet increasingly agonistic and dominant son, in the later David and Habakkuk a fully assured Bernini worked in a kind of belated and affirmative partnership with his “father” in order to confirm Michelangelo’s – and his own – exemplarity and enduring relevance.
Chapter Two

Bernini’s Furia

In 1681, three months after Bernini’s death, Pierre Cureau de la Chambre published a panegyric in French of the artist that included a biographical sketch, descriptions of his most important works and a brief reflection on his professional likeness to Michelangelo that concluded with the following remark: “One and the other, to tell the truth, had a severe temperament, wild, lively, swift, curt and impetuous, particularly the latter [i.e. Bernini].” Whether a purposefully forced parallel, an indiscriminate conflation or a sign of his ignorance, la Chambre’s virtual equation of the two artists’ dispositions had significant implications for a reader accustomed to the biographical commonplace of understanding art – particularly style – as the unmediated, revealing and personal expression of an artist’s character or identity. His subsequent reflection, that a lively bust by Bernini that had recently arrived in Paris possessed all of

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268 “L’un et l’autre, à dire le vray, d’humeur un peu austere, farouche, vive, prompte, brusque et impetuese, principalement le dernier.” As transcribed in, Tomaso Montanari, “Pierre Cureau de La Chambre e la prima biografia di Gian Lorenzo Bernini,” Paragone 50 (1999): 126. La Chambre’s 1681 panegyric, the “Éloge de M. le cavalier Bernini,” was published in the Journal des sçavans and later expanded and republished in 1685 as the “Préface pour servier à l’histoire de la vie et des ouvrages du Cavalier Bernini.” For a full transcription of these texts, as well as a brief analysis of their themes and context, see idem, “Pierre Cureau de la Chambre”; idem, “Bernini e Cristina di Svezia: alle origini della storiografia berniniana,” in Gian Lorenzo Bernini e i Chigi tra Roma e Siena, ed. Alessandro Angelini (Cinisello Balsamo: Pizzi, 1998), 400-1, 410, 417-9; idem, “At the Margins,” 91-2.

the qualities of its maker, is bound up with this tradition. And though la Chambre does not compare Bernini’s manner to that which is apparent in any works by Buonarroti, he tacitly collapses the styles of the old and the new Michelangelo by way of his description of their mutual temperaments. Yet this parallelism is somewhat puzzling, especially since, in early modern terms, the notoriously melancholic Michelangelo was from Saturn, while Bernini, the impetuous choleric, was from Mars.

Whether motivated or inadvertent, la Chambre’s conflation of the artists’ tempers and, by implication, their artistic manners, raises a significant question: how does Gianlorenzo’s personal style – that is, his unique inner character as present in his works – complicate his identification with Buonarroti, particularly since such self-reflectivity competes with the Petrarchan notion that as a consequence of filial imitation the son’s style ultimately shares something of father’s “aria” (individual disposition)? This question is all the more relevant to my investigation of Bernini’s imitatio Buonarroti since aria is intimately related to the liveliness or vividness of a representation, particularly as it is expressed through motion. Aria was a subtext of my previous

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270 “Ce qui est bien remarque dans un buste de luy nouvellement arrivé ici, qui est parlant et comparables à tout ce qu’il y a de plus précieux et de plus achevé en ce genre là.” As cited in Montanari, “Pierre Cureau de La Chambre,” 126. (Note that this line immediately follows la Chambre’s description of temperament in footnote 268 above.)

271 “A proper imitator should take care that what he writes resemble the original without reproducing it. The resemblance should not be that of a portrait to a sitter – in that case the closer the likeness the better – but it should be the resemblance of a son to his father. Therein is often a great divergence in particular features, but there is a certain suggestion, what our painters call an ‘air,’ most noticeable in the face and eyes, which makes the resemblance.” Petrarch as translated in Greene, *Light in Troy*, 95-96. On aria, see the fundamental article by David Summers, “ARIA II: The Union of Image and Artist as an Aesthetic Ideal in Renaissance Art,” *Aritus et Historiae* 10 (1989): 15-31, and, idem, *Michelangelo*, 56-9. Interpretations of Petrarch’s passage vary. For Summers, filial imitation leads to the creation of distinct manners between father and son. By contrast, Kemp, “‘Equal Excellences’,” 2-3, sees Petrarchan aria as a shared quality between master and follower. I adopt the interpretations offered by Greene, *Light in Troy*, 97-8, and, Sohm, *Style*, 11, 12-13, who see the aria resulting from filial imitation as more complex, that is, as both discretely personal and inherited or learned.

chapter, in which I argued that Bernini constructed his artistic identity through and against Michelangelo’s forceful model of figural animation. By identifying movement in particular as familial territory, I posited that Gianlorenzo’s imitation of his adopted father served to reveal himself as the worthy son who not only made Michelangelo’s style newly relevant but also imposed himself over his predecessor. But if, as Sohm has observed, an artist’s inherently personal style regularly intrudes on the style-forming activity of imitation, then there is another side to my picture of Bernini’s selfhood as a sculptor vis-à-vis Buonarroti that has yet to be addressed.273 This chapter thus expands on Bernini’s self-defining emulation of Michelangelo by considering the equivocal boundaries between artistic style as learned (ars) and artistic style as characteristic or innate (ingegno).274 In order to draw out the creative interplay between Bernini’s characteristic style and the manner/disposition of his exemplary other, I analyze the seicento sculptor’s allegorical self-portraits as the Damned Soul and the David, both of which make claims about the presence of the artist’s inner nature in his work while engaging concurrently in a subject-forming dialogue with sources from Michelangelo’s oeuvre. In other words, by treating ars and ingegno as a false dichotomy that is more productively understood as correlative,275 I ask how these two portraits of the artist as a young man in furious motion are at once self-fashioning and self-revealing (and I mean the former in the double sense of fashioning oneself after the subject one represents and after the artist one imitates).

273 Sohm, Style, 40.
274 On the tensions and ambiguities that arise as a result of early modern authors writing about style as either learned art (ars) or character/innate talent (ingegno), see ibid, 62-78.
275 Again, my thinking is indebted to Sohm, Style, 38-42.
My examination of the character of Bernini’s art vis-à-vis that of Michelangelo is informed by the early modern adage that “every artist represents himself.” I explore this notion not as an essential truth about the relationship between art and life, but as a construction with which Bernini meaningfully and self-consciously engages. I approach Bernini as a savvy maker of his own personal myth, an auto-biographer in stone whose self-portraits are the representations – not the unconscious manifestations – of a choleric persona (which may or may not reflect an ‘authentic’ self). These works are, in turn, in dialogue with the artistic qualities attributed to his melancholic predecessor (which also may or may not have mirrored his ‘true’ being). And because Michelangelo’s saturnine temper was thought to explain not only the individuality of his forceful, terrible style, but also to lie at the origin of his inspiration, the very impetus for his artistic processes, my study of Bernini’s allegorical self-portraits examines how his martial disposition is conveyed in the manner he represents motion, in the source(s) he credits for his creativity and in his very practice of making sculpture. In other words, I show how character advertises itself not only by way of style, but also through the visual cues it offers about the artist’s mechanisms of inspiration as well as in what it suggests about artistic process. My analysis of the Damned Soul begins with character as style,

\[\text{276 Kemp, “'Ogni dipintore dipinge sé',”; Zöllner, “'Ogni pittore dipinge sé'.”}\]
\[\text{277 A similar approach was taken by David M. Stone, “'In Figura Diaboli': Self and Myth in Caravaggio’s David and Goliath,” in From Rome to Eternity: Catholicism and the Arts in Italy, ca. 1550-1650, eds. Pamela M. Jones and Thomas Worcester (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 36-46, in which he argues that Caravaggio, in his art, “took on the theory of 'ogni dipintore dipinge sé' self-consciously.”}\]
moves to inspiration and culminates in a discussion of processes. The final section on the *David* brings these all together.

Although there have been various studies of Bernini’s self-portraits proper, especially the drawings and paintings created in the 1620s and 30s, his allegorical self-portraits in sculpture – all of which I think can be isolated to the period of his early imitation of Buonarroti – have not been treated as interrelated. Moreover, while scholars continually see a fiery presence in Bernini’s self-portraits, no study has offered substantive consideration of the potential thematization of Bernini’s choler in his art itself, let alone in his allegorical self-representation. Nor have any attended to how his purportedly ardent nature might be inscribed into his engagement with the work and persona of the moody Michelangelo. For example, in Preimesberger’s nuanced readings of the *Damned Soul* and the *David*, he notes that these works “reveal the michelangiolismo of the early period,” and rightly sees in the two vivid, self-reflective

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280 While my discussion will be limited to the *Damned Soul* and the *David*, I do believe that it is possible to identify another allegorical self-portrait in the figure of Triton from Bernini’s *Neptune and Triton* fountain group in the Victoria & Albert Museum, originally created for the garden pool of the Villa Montalto in Rome. As with the former sculptures, I would argue that this self-representation can be analyzed through the lens of character (or the performance of character) and its implications for style, process and ideation. I do not analyze it here, however, because the connection to Michelangelo is much less apparent than in the other two examples.


282 On the other hand, Bernini’s choler as characterized by Filippo Baldinucci and Domenico Bernini in their respective *vite* has been the subject of a subtle analysis, for which see Frank Fehrenbach, “Bernini’s Light,” *Art History* 28 (2005): 1-42.
expressions of rage (whether demonically inspired or divinely guided) a rivalrous
demonstration of the difficiltà and terribiltà customarily associated with Buonarroti’s
art. But when he turns to an analysis of the physiognomies that define the character
(both fleeting and permanent) of these visages, he states that Bernini “goes beyond
Michelangelo” in the study and expression of affect in a way that virtually effaces any
trace of the cinquecento artist from an analysis of the work. My goal, by contrast, is to
explore Buonarroti’s discursive presence in Bernini’s allegorical self-portraits.

Although scholars have noted that what is common to both the Damned Soul and
the David is their expression of fury, none have reflected on how the furia/furore of these
sculptures, in the full range of the term’s meanings, functions as a kind of fertile ground
between Michelangelo and Bernini, mediating the former’s purported furore
melancholicus and the latter’s professed furore cholericus. By closely examining the
formal and conceptual values attending the furious bearing performed in Bernini’s
allegorical self-portraits, we will see that the sculptor engaged with the various
connotations of Buonarroti’s fury – vigorous motion, divine inspiration and melancholic
color – only to destabilize and reframe them so that they point to Gianlorenzo’s
dynamic style, creative brilliance and choleric ingegno. His allegorical self-portraits thus
underscore a tension between his fashioning after Buonarroti and his self-representation
as a “new Michelangelo” with a fiery essence that Bernini constituted as all his own.

My criteria for identifying a work as a potential self-portrait are informed by the
early modern conventions of making and reading portraits. The “empirical” evidence

International Congress of the History of Art, ed. Irving Lavin (University Park: Pennsylvania State
284 Ibid., 2:416.
scholars have used to designate faces from Bernini’s oeuvre as self-portraits ranges from the documentary and biographical to the connoisseurial. Only one of the allegorical self-portrayals to which I will refer here, the *David*, was identified by seventeenth-century viewers as Bernini.\(^{285}\) Comparison of this sculpted likeness to a corpus of painted or drawn self-portraits attributed to Bernini by modern viewers seems to corroborate the seicento identification and, as a result, scholars have widely accepted the work as a self-portrait. The arguments in favour of seeing a self-portrait in the *Damned Soul*, by contrast, rest solely on modern judgments about the resemblance of this contorted visage to the physical features of other attributed self-portraits, especially the Borghese painting of c. 1623 [figs. 45 and 46].\(^{286}\) While I find the similarities among these faces convincing enough to recognize the subject as Bernini, my case for identifying the *David* and the *Damned Soul* as putative self-portraits, rests more heavily on the manner in which these countenances (from head to toe) move. Motion, first and foremost, is the sign that I will argue categorizes these faces as Bernini’s; the mimetic exactitude of physical features is a second order of signification. This approach, as we shall see, is in keeping with Bernini’s purported theory of portraiture, which privileged representing the characteristic movement of an individual above their physical likeness as the key to

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\(^{285}\) The primary sources for this identification are the *vite*, both of which claim that Bernini modelled the features of the *David* on his own visage. Baldinucci/Enggass, *Life*, 13; Baldinucci, *Vita*, 78; Domenico Bernini, *Vita del cavalieri Gio. Lorenzo Bernini, descritta da Domenico Bernini suo figlio.* (Rome: Rocco Bernabò, 1713; facsimile ed., Todi-Perugia: Ediart, 1999), 19 (hereafter cited as Bernini, *Vita*).

\(^{286}\) The identification of the *Damned Soul* as a self-portrait was first tentatively made by Wittkower who wrote that “the *Anima Dannata* may possibly have been worked before the mirror.” His conjecture was widely adopted by nearly all Bernini scholars (with the exception of Lavin, who simply does not mention the possibility that Bernini modelled the visage on his own face). Wittkower, *Bernini*, 233; Hibbard, *Bernini*, 31; Preimesberger, “Eine grimassierende Selbstdarstellung Berninis”; Avery, *Bernini*, 66; Sebastian Schütze, “Anima Beata e Anima Dannata,” in Coliva and Schütze, eds., *Bernini scultore*, 157-58; Posèq, “On Physiognomic Communication in Bernini,” 168-70. On the Borghese self-portrait, see Ann Sutherland Harris, “Vouet, le Bernin et la ‘ressemblance parlante’,” in *Rencontres de l’Ecole du Louvre, Simon Vouet*, ed. Stéphane Loire (Paris: La Documentation Française, 1992), 196-205; Hermann Fiore, “Tre ritratti dipinti,” 233-9; Petrucci, *Bernini pittore*, 310-1; Montanari, *Bernini pittore*, 88-9.
signalling their living presence or lifelikeness in a portrait. Reading early modern portraits is not an exact science (not then or now), but by considering the period’s visual conventions of portrayal and the concurrent perceptions about the physiognomy of motion by which artists (and sitters) constructed faces and viewers deciphered them, I hope to make legible Bernini’s attempts to represent or perform character – as style, as imagination, as process – in his allegorical self-portraits. Ultimately, I hope to show that notions of Bernini’s individuality and character should be constructed from the outside in, not the inside out.

**The Damned Soul as ‘True’ Likeness**

Sometime during the period of his youthful study of Michelangelo, Bernini created what is widely recognized by modern scholars as one of the earliest extant representations of his own likeness and his first allegorical self-portrait, the *Damned Soul*. In it, his visage is grotesquely distorted as every muscle and feature moves in response to an anguished cry: the tongue curls within a gaping mouth, the pliant flesh is stretched and rippling with motion and the deeply furrowed brow and scrunched nose

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288 On the problem of interpreting appearances and the early modern portrait as “an expression of the desire for legibility,” see Wilson, “The Renaissance Portrait.”

frame a terrifyingly wide-eyed gaze. Even his hair lashes untamed like the flames of hell. This is the artist’s soul here presented as a tightly cropped portrait that communicates, through facial expression alone, the violent rage fictionally experienced by his psyche as it faces the feverish torments of eternal perdition. Bernini conceived this vividly individuated head as a pendant to the *Blessed Soul* [fig. 47], which represents the antithetical expressive response to the revelation of one’s Christian reward. A dramatic close-up of a beautiful and unblemished female, this radiant visage basks in ecstasy while gazing serenely heavenward, her lips gently parted. Together these busts convey nuanced physical and psychological reactions to the revelation of two disparate Christian fates.

Scholars have widely accepted Lavin’s assertion that the *Damned Soul* and *Blessed Soul* were created in 1619, a date he established by way of an inconclusive inventory of Pedro Foix Montoya’s household possessions from December 1619 that merely refers to “dos estatuas” (two statues).290 While the busts were definitely recorded in a much later inventory of Montoya’s possessions from around 1630,291 neither this document nor the previous one offers clues to date the busts’ execution. Stylistic analysis offers little more clarity. For example, in one of the earliest assessments of these heads, Wittkower noted that “the ‘doughy’ hair of the *Anima Beata*, the treatment of the eyes, of the wreath, etc.” were connected to Bernini’s *St. Lawrence*, *St. Sebastian* and *Aeneas* group, while the gaping mouth and tense facial expression of the *Damned Soul*, “point forward to the later Borghese groups [i.e. the *Pluto and Proserpina*, the *Apollo and Daphne* and the *David*].”292 Despite the fact that the style of one bust suggested an earlier date than the style of the other, Wittkower ultimately dated both busts to around

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290 Lavin, “Portraits of No-Body,” 101, 125, doc. 1.
291 Ibid., 125, doc. 2.
1619, a dating that gained greater weight in the wake of Lavin’s argument. But given the debatable nature of the archival evidence, I would like to consider the possibility that both the Damned and Blessed Souls are later works datable on the basis of style to around 1623. As Wittkower noted, the expressivity of the Damned Soul – its deeply furrowed furrowed, dramatically raised brow, bulging eyes, flesh stretched to its limit, tongue lashing and hair waving – is much closer to the distressed visages of Daphne [fig. 48] and of Proserpina [fig. 49] or even the flesh on Pluto’s cheek that is desperately wrenched by Proserpina’s hand [fig. 50], than to the any of the earlier statues. Even the comparatively restrained Blessed Soul looks more like Bernini’s Santa Bibiana (1624-26) [fig. 51] than the St. Lawrence, St. Sebastian or Aeneas group. In fact, her parted lips, alone, a motif that Bernini did not start to employ until the 1620s, might be said to qualify her for inclusion among the later sculptures. Thus, in light of the stylistic affinities among the Damned Soul, the Blessed Soul and the Borghese sculptures, a date of around 1623 for Bernini’s busts seems plausible. And as I hope to further demonstrate, there is also indirect conceptual evidence to support this later date.

By representing this pair of souls in the format of the sculpted bust, Bernini gave new meaning to an old convention. As Lavin, in particular, has demonstrated, the Damned Soul and Blessed Soul belong to a tradition of eschatological imagery, especially print series and coloured wax busts of anonymous souls, that arose out of popular texts on the Ars moriendi (The Art of Dying) and the Quattuor novisima (The Four Last Things)

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293 It is worth noting that contrary to the trend of dating the two soul-portraits to around 1619, John Pope-Hennessy, situated the works around 1621 based on the expressiveness of the faces. See John Pope-Hennessy, Italian High Renaissance and Baroque Sculpture, 2nd ed. (Phaidon: London, 1970), 425.
and were devised as aids for contemplating death and the afterlife.\textsuperscript{294} Originating in medieval scholasticism, and underscoring the universal and collective experience of death, eschatology enjoyed renewed popularity in Counter-Reformation thought and gave rise to various genres of imagery that encouraged self-reflection and self-purgation.\textsuperscript{295} Yet the early modern resurgence of this branch of theology, unlike its medieval incarnation, emphasized the moral implications of personal conduct and the destiny of the individual soul over the plight of humanity.\textsuperscript{296} As has been noted, Bernini’s explicit adoption of a portrait format – divorced from narrative or symbol – for his pendant souls, responds to this contemporary shift in emphasis from the general to the particular by emphasizing the intimate and uniquely individual, psychological and emotional experience of the hereafter.\textsuperscript{297} Lavin has argued that Bernini’s “soul portraits” should be understood as individuated portrayals of “Everyman and Everywoman, but No-Body,” that is, as particularized types but not as representations of a specific individual.\textsuperscript{298} Thus, despite stressing the artist’s use of the portrait format, he denies these two busts any concomitant function as portraits proper. In order to further his claim, Lavin identified the soul portraits as works conceived to adorn the tomb monument for Pedro de Foix Montoya \textbf{[fig. 52]}, a conclusion based on the busts’ appearance in Montoya’s posthumous

inventory of c.1630. As works that Lavin conjectures as having flanked a bust proper, the soul portraits were entered into the realm of communal typology or signification alone. Yet the anonymous wax soul portraits to which Bernini’s two sculpted souls are indebted points to the possibility of a more personal interpretation. In the seventeenth century, wax busts of the Four Last Things were displayed in ways that permitted the viewer to see them, literally and figuratively, as representations of particular persons, specifically as reflections of themselves [fig. 53].

Mirrors were typically affixed to the sides of the boxes within which these wax busts were framed, allowing the viewer to contemplate the represented soul and their own features in a single glance, since both were infinitely reflected and superimposed in the glass. A viewer familiar with the visual strategies deployed in this category of representation would arguably have been prepared – even conditioned – to look for “Somebody” in particular in Bernini’s soul types. In view of this convention, it is possible that the Damned Soul and Blessed Soul functioned as representations of common soul states and, simultaneously, as artful portrayals of the individual characteristics that destined a specific man (the artist himself) and perhaps also a specific, though unknown, woman (Bernini’s current beloved, perchance?) to their respective fate.

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299 The circumstances surrounding the commission, function and intended location of the Damned Soul and its pendant, the Blessed Soul, are unknown. Lavin has suggested that the busts were intended to decorate Montoya’s tomb, for which Bernini also carved a portrait of the prelate in 1622. See Lavin, “Bernini’s Portraits of No-Body,” 101, and Schütze, “Anima Beata e Anima Dannata,” 157-58, who has adopted this view. Until new documentation is found, the issue of the patron and the intended location for the busts must remain suspended.

300 On the early seventeenth-century wax soul busts and the visual strategies by which these works engage and shape the viewer, see Göttler, Last Things, 217-72.

301 Ibid., 220-3.

302 Bernini may have been known to have used female acquaintances as models. In an anonymous pamphlet known as Il Costantino messo alla berlina, circa 1725, Bernini was derided for using his mistress, Costanza Bonarelli, as the model for the figure of Charity on the tomb of Urban VIII: “I leave aside his Costanza transformed into a Charity with so many (I don’t know whether they are sons or fathers) at her breast that she should rather be Justice, her companion, of whom it is proper that she give of herself to everyone.”
While scholars have justifiably characterized the *Damned Soul* as a bravura demonstration of Bernini’s command of the theory and practice of expression, I would like to suggest a concomitant theoretical context by situating this sculpted head within the parameters of Bernini’s alleged portrait practice. According to the biographer Domenico Bernini, whose account varies only slightly from that of Filippo Baldinucci, when creating a portrait Bernini

did not want the subject to remain still, but rather that the person he was portraying moved and spoke naturally, because by these means, he said, he saw all [the subject’s] own beauty. And he captured [the subject] as he was, with assurances that in remaining immobile and naturally still one is never as similar to oneself than when in motion, in which consist all the qualities that are one’s own and not of others. It is this which gives likeness to a portrait.

translated in, George C. Bauer, ed., *Bernini in Perspective* (New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1976), 53. Comparison with Bernini’s bust of Costanza indeed suggests that the figure of Charity is based on the artist’s lover. On the dating of the text, see Tod Allan Marder, *Bernini’s Scala Regia at the Vatican Palace* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 209, 294-95n170, who demonstrated that since the author refers to the statue of Charlemagne (completed by Agostino Cornacchini in 1725 for the narthex of the basilica), the text must have been written no earlier than 1725. As Montanari has demonstrated, Bernini also modeled his figure of *Truth* for the tomb of Alexander VII on Queen Christina of Sweden. See Tomaso Montanari, “Dall’elezione di Clemente X (1670) alla morte di Bernini (1680). Cristina e gli esordi della storiografia berniniana,” in Angelini, ed., *Gian Lorenzo Bernini e i Chigi*, 460-4. Given this evidence, it is possible that Bernini used his female acquaintances as models for other allegorical works. Avery, *Bernini*, 92, has also proposed, albeit less convincingly, that Costanza was the model for Bernini’s *Medusa*.  


304 (italics mine) Bernini, *Vita*, 133-4: “Tenne un costume il Cavaliere, ben dal commune modo assai diverso, nel ritrarre altrui ò nel Marmo, ò nel Disegno: Non voleva che il figurato stesse fermo, mà ch’ei colla sua solita naturalezza si movesse, e parlassè, perchè in tal modo, diceva, ch’ei vedeva tutto il suo bello, e l’contrafaceva, com’egli era, asserendo, che nello starsi al naturale immobilmente fermo, egli non ò mai tanto simile a sè stesso, quanto è nel moto, in cui consistono tutte quelle qualità, che sono sue, e non di altri, e che danno la somiglianza al Ritratto. Non perciò molte volte voleva ancora, che immobile rimanesse il rappresentato, per poterne più attentamente ritrarre quelle parti, quali richieggono una ispezione oculare, ferma, e attenta.” See also, Baldinucci/Enggass, *Life*, 77-8; Baldinucci, *Vita*, 144: “Diceva egli che nel ritrarre alcuno al naturale consisteva il tutto in saper conoscere quella qualità, che ciascun secondo ha di proprio, e che non ha la natura dato ad altri che a lui, ma che bisognava pigliare qualche particolarità non brutta, ma bella. A quest’effetto tenne un costume dal commune modo assai diverso, e fu: che nel ritrarre alcuno non voleva ch’egli stesse fermo, ma ch’ei s’ì movesse, e chi’ parlassè, perchè, in tal modo, diceva egli, chi’ vedeva tutto il suo bello e lo contrafaceva com’egli era: asserendo, che nello starsi al naturale immobilmente fermo, egli non è mai tanto simile a se stesso, quanto egli è nel moto, in cui quelle qualità consistono, che sono tutte sue e non d’altri e che danno la somiglianza al ritratto; ma l’intero conoscer ciò (dico io) non è giuoco da fanciulli.”
Ensuring far more than the possibility of capturing physical resemblance, Bernini’s eschewal of having a sitter pose in favour of closely observing their carriage – that is, their physical attitude, gait, gesture, facial expression and speech – apparently enabled him to discover that which was specific to them alone and then to transfer onto stone the distinguishing character of his subject’s movement. As Delbeke has noted, what Bernini is looking for in the characteristic motion of his sitter is what early modern art writers might call *aria* or *costume*, which is a combination of fleeting emotion and

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305 Bernini’s aversion to having his subject pose does not run counter to what Berger, “Fictions of the Pose,” would call the performative nature of the act of posing for a portrait and the sitter’s desire to embody social identities. Rather it displaces the agency of “posing” wholly away from the sitter and into the hands – or rather the mind – of the artist, who performs the sitter’s ideal inwardness or identity for them. In light of Bernini’s professed commitment to carefully selecting and conveying movement that is characteristic of his sitter, it is easy to understand why Bernini was averse to create a portrait of a subject by studying paintings or drawings of the individual in lieu of living model him/herself. An immobile record of a sitter’s external appearance was akin to an insensate corpse and, as such, could offer nothing to satisfy his requirements for capturing true likeness. Bernini’s aversion to creating portraits without sittings from life is first recorded in the diary of the English sculptor, Nicolas Stone, in 1638 who was present when Gianlorenzo expressed his dissatisfaction with the bust of Charles I, which he had created after a triple portrait by Van Dyck. See W. L. Spiers, “The Notebook and Account Book of Nicholas Stone,” *The Walpole Society* 7 (1918-19): 170-1. Bernini worked under similar limitations when he carved the bust of Cardinal Richelieu, which was based on a painted triple portrait by Philippe de Champagne, as well as the bust of Francesco D’Este, executed after two profile portraits painted by Justus Sustermans. The experience of creating the latter led Bernini to vow never again to create a portrait without having had the opportunity to study his subject in the flesh. For commentaries on these busts see, R.W. Lightbown, “Bernini’s Busts of English Patrons,” in *Art the Ape of Nature – Studies in Honour of H.W. Janson*, ed. Mosche Barasch and Lucy Freeman (New York: H.N. Abrams, 1981), 439-76; Irving Lavin, “Il busto di Francesco I d’Este di Bernini: ‘impresa quasi impossibile’,” in *Sovrane passioni: le raccolte d’arte della Ducale Galleria Estense*, ed. Jadranka Bentini (Milan: Motta, 1998), 86-99; Andrea Bacchi, Catherine Hess and Jennifer Montagu eds., *Bernini and the Birth of Baroque Portrait Sculpture* (Los Angeles: J. Paul Getty Museum; Ottawa: National Gallery of Canada, 2008), 241-5.

Thus, in Bernini’s portraits, it was capturing the illusion of mobility as a physiognomic quality or air (far more than conveying strict physical resemblance), that was essential to his visual construction of ‘true’ likeness, because it externalized a person’s inner nature.

Although the Damned Soul more likely records the act of Bernini posing than any distilled observation of his natural motions before a mirror, what he captures in this allegorical self-portrait is more than just the fleeting emotion or pathos of his subject. An image of the fiery state of his invisible soul, the bust goes beyond its typical categorization as a study of expression and meets the demands Bernini placed on portraiture proper by also visualizing more enduring qualities of his individual character or ethos. If we accept the biographers’ claims that Bernini thought that the physiognomy of movement rendered legible his subject’s inner self (and the fact that the claim is made

307 Delbeke, “The Pope, the Bust,” esp. 208-9. Delbeke connects Bernini’s portrait theory to Bocchi’s costume, which refers to both the permanent, physiognomic aspects of character (ethos) as well as the transient expressions (pathos). These, in turn, pointed back to a person’s unchanging temperament and character. Though Bocchi is not talking about portraiture proper, by offering a dualist notion of motion that comprises both passing affect and enduring characteristic movement in one image, the cinquecento theorist makes the appearance of liveliness a particularly rich tool for portraitists seeking to represent more than just a lifelike image, but also the illusion movement that expresses character. The unusual dual nature of Bocchi’s use of term costume to mean both ethos and pathos, as well as the greater significance given to permanent, essential character over passing emotion, was first noted by Mosche Barasch, “Character and Physiognomy: Bocchi on Donatello’s St. George. A Renaissance Text on Expression in Art,” Journal of the History of Ideas 36 (1975): 419-21, and further discussed by Merek Komorowski, “Donatello’s St. George in a Sixteenth-Century Commentary by Francesco Bocchi. Some Problems of the Renaissance Theory of Expression in Art,” in Ars Auro Prior. Studia Ionna Bialostocki Sexegenera Dicata (Warsaw: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 198), 62, and Robert Williams, Art Theory and Culture in Sixteenth-Century Italy: From Techne to Metatechne (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 193, 202-6.

308 This is not to suggest that Bernini ignored the physical features of the individual. As Domenico notes, Bernini purportedly viewed the act of capturing a subject’s facial features as a secondary, though still requisite, concern. See Bernini, Vita, 134: “Non perciò molte volte volvea ancora, che immobile rimanesse il rappresentato, per poterne più attentamente ritrarre quelle parti, quali richieggo una ispezione oculare, ferma, e attenta.” The hierarchy Bernini here establishes is also underscored in Chantelou’s Journal, where we are told that Gianlorenzo spent considerable time carving the King’s moving contours into the marble before he turned his attention to the immobile physical details of Louis’ visage. Only then, over the course of a few days, did Bernini scrutinize the King’s mouth, nose, cheeks and forehead. Yet even as he worked on the particulars of the monarch’s face, Bernini repeatedly noted the absolute necessity of accurately capturing the broader outlines of the sitter if one wanted to achieve resemblance in a bust. Chantelou, Diary, 131, 246; idem, Journal, 128, 217 (August 19, October 2).
in both *vite* as well as in Chantelou’s diary suggests that it should be taken seriously, if critically), then it is even possible that his *Damned Soul* and *Blessed Soul* are very early reflections upon what would become the essence of his portrait practice. Indeed, the possibility that these busts were created around 1623, that is, on the cusp of Bernini’s development in portrait sculpture of the so-called “speaking likeness,” is suggestive.

Although the notion that the inner presence or character of a subject was externalized in the body was an art theoretical commonplace, Bernini’s direct correlation of represented motion and individual character in portraiture was relatively new to writing on portrait theory (if not wholly “different from the common method” as Baldinucci and Domenico claimed). According to the Bolognese biographer Carlo

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309 In preparation for his portrait of Louis XIV, the artist insisted on observing the king “walking around and talking as usual without being tied down in any way” and sketching him as he performed sundry daily activities from playing tennis to carrying out state business at a council of ministers. Chantelou explained to the curious onlookers at the French court that were accustomed to seeing artists study the physical appearance of the monarch while he was immobile, that had Louis “been constrained to stay in one position, [Bernini] would not have been able to make the portrait so lively.” Numerous entries in the diary also make clear that the sculptor was as attentive to the expressions of the king’s face as he was to motions of the monarch’s body. For example, Bernini put himself to the task of studying the nuanced motions of Louis’ mouth, which the diarist claimed “changed so often, [that Bernini] sometimes had to spend a long time watching the King before choosing the expression that was most becoming.” See Chantelou, *Diary*, 40, 43, 59, 115, 131, 170-71, 246; idem, *Journal*, 62-3, 65, 115, 128, 159, 217 (June, 23, 26, 28, July 12, August 12, 19, September 6, October 2).

310 According to Chantelou’s diary, Bernini stated that the “best moment for representing the mouth [was] just prior to or just following speech,” an attitude known as the “speaking likeness.” Since antiquity, the open mouth motif was a form of expression thought to indicate character and individuality. The term “speaking likeness” was coined in by Rudolf Wittkower in idem, *Bernini’s Bust of Louis XIV*, 7, to characterize those busts by Bernini whose open-mouthed expressions suggest lively, exteriorized engagement with their surroundings. Although the illusion of speech in art had been praised by ancient writers and echoed by Renaissance theorists, its appearance in Italian portraiture is rare before 1600. On the theory and application of the “speaking likeness” in seventeenth-century painting and sculpture, see Sutherland Harris, “Vouet, le Bernin et la ‘ressemblance parlante’,” 192-208; Michael Hill, “Cardinal Dying: Bernini’s Bust of Scipione Borghese,” *Australian Journal of Art* 14 (1998): 9-24; Clovis Whitfield, “Portraiture: from the ‘simple portrait’ to the ‘ressemblance parlante’,” in *The Genius of Rome, 1592-1623*, ed. Beverly Louise Brown (London: Thames and Hudson, 2001), 140-71; and, most recently, Bacchi and Hess, “Creating a New Likeness,” 20-9; Catherine Hess, “‘Speaking Likeness,’” in Bacchi et al, eds., *I marmi vivi*, 165-79.

311 Although Bernini’s thoughts on motion in portraiture are representative of seventeenth-century ideas about portraits, the notion of the moving representation/portrait (of heroes and famous men) was first articulated by Pomponius Guaricus who wrote that a portrait should represent the individual “out of itself” by conveying the individual’s animation. His idea was rooted to physiognomic theories that sought to deduce the interior of a being from their exterior. Pomponius Guaricus, *De sculptura* (1504), ed. Paolo
Cesare Malvasia, the late-cinquecento painter Bartolomeo Passerotti practiced a “true mode” of portraiture in which he studied “the actions and gestures that were particular to an individual’s nature as well as the class (genio) of his subject” and then represented them “not immobile and insensate, but in action and motion, and thus with his work animating and narrativizing them (istoriandoli)...”^312 It was purportedly also Agostino Carracci’s habit to capture the unique temperament of the person he was portraying by observing their expressions and actions so he might represent his subject, body and soul.^313 As Luigi Grassi noted, the emphasis these artists are said to have placed on moto in portraiture corresponds to Giulio Mancini’s “ritratto composto,” a superior category of portrait that married the basic demand of capturing physical appearance with the more difficult and noble aspects of “action and the expression of affect,” that is, the qualities of the soul that are revealed through motion.^314

Cutolo (Naples: Edizioni Scientifiche Italiane, 1999), 170-1, 222-5. On Guaricus and physiognomy as it relates to portrayal, see Koerner, Moment of Self-Portraiture, 9, and, Wilson, “The Confusion of Faces,” 179. While Renaissance artists may have realized this theory in practice, it was not assimilated into portrait theory proper (as far as I have been able to discern) until the work of Giulio Cesare Mancini. It should be noted, however, that the fundamental role of moto is implicit in Lomazzo’s passages on portraiture. See Marianna Jenkins, The State Portrait: Its Origin and Evolution (New York: College Art Association, 1947), 42-4, and, more recently, Edouard Pommier, “Il volto di Lomazzo,” in Il volto e gli affetti: fisiognomica ed espressione nelle arti del Rinascimento, ed. Alessandro Pontremoli (Florence: Olschki, 2003), 61-81.


^314 Mancini defined two portrait types in his Considerazioni sulla pittura (ca 1617-21) according to their differing mimetic aims. The first was the “ritratto semplice,” which, motionless, merely duplicated external appearances. The second was the “ritratto composto,” a type that resonates with Bernini’s conception of portraiture, and was the purview of judicious artists who exercised their intellect and creativity to capture “the manner of that affect, motion, pose and expression” observed in their subject. See Giulio Cesare Mancini, Considerazioni sulla pittura, eds. Adriana Marucchi and Luigi Salerno (facsimile ed.; Roma, Accademia nazionale dei Lincei, 1956), 2:113, 114-6. Although Grassi, “Lineamenti,” 483-6, was the first to note the affinity between Mancini’s portrait theory and the work of contemporary portraitists, recently Mancini’s theory has been more fully contextualised within early modern portrait theory, especially as it pertains to seicento portrait practice. See Whitfield, “Portraiture,” 140-71; Bodart, “L’excellence du portrait,” 51; Bacchi and Hess, “Creating a New Likeness,” 24; Hess, “‘Speaking Likeness’,” 168, 175.
While all but Passerotti’s mode of portrait-making purport to rely exclusively on those qualities of motion that are particular to a single being, it is unlikely that Bernini and Agostino were insensitive to the broader “class” of beings to which their particular living subject belonged. Diane Bodart has argued that Bernini’s practice of portraying princes, particularly Louis XIV, actively reconciled the gap between the king’s proverbial two bodies, that is, his social type and his individual person. Bernini’s self-portrait as the Damned Soul achieves the same reconciliation; it is at once personal and common, simultaneously about his unique self and about the (artistic) type to which he belonged. But in selecting a visual model for his type, Bernini avoided the anonymous, as we shall see, and rooted his own image in a source recognizably associated with a particular artist’s name.

Finally, an alternative proposal for the intended location for Bernini’s soul portraits also encourages a reading of the sculptures that is equally attentive to their individuated qualities, particularly that of the Damned Soul. According to Christina Göttler, the busts were most likely conceived for a private collector and connoisseur, an observation that suggests that they were probably designed to be placed on a table or pedestal in much the same way one would display a sculpted portrait. Their matching socles of giallo antico, like that supporting Bernini’s Bust of Paul V (1618) [fig. 54], further underscores their ‘portrait-ness,’ so to speak. If they were indeed commissioned by a devout and art-loving patron, particularly one invested in the career of an up-and-coming Michelangelo, it is likely that this maecenas would have recognized and

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315 Bodart, “L’excellence du portrait.”
316 Göttler, Last Things, 262.
317 On the bust of Paul V, see Anna Coliva, “Paolo V,” in Coliva and Schütze, eds., Bernini scultore, 102-9, with comprehensive bibliography. Coliva notes that the marble base of the papal bust is original.
appreciated the self-portrait and delighted in the art theoretical parlour-room discussion it might have stimulated among other art lovers. It is with a conjectural audience of such cognoscenti in mind that I proceed with a multi-layered reading of the Damned Soul.

**Bernini in Michelangelo’s Fury?**

Bernini’s Damned Soul, his first autobiographical sculpture, responds directly to a work by Buonarroti. The bust’s expression of rage resembles one of Buonarroti’s rare studies of affect [fig. 55], a drawing characterized by one patron in the cinquecento as “a visage apparently of fury,” and by another as “a head of a fury.”

The so-called Fury is part of a group known as the Teste Divine, which Andreas Schumacher has recently argued, are Michelangelo’s alternatives to portraiture (and the attendant requirement of replicating nature), expressing instead the artist’s fantasia, commitment to Zeuxian imitation and pursuit of ideal representation.

Michelangelo’s Fury, in particular, was not only copied frequently and adapted by contemporaries, but also considered by some

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318 The affinity between Michelangelo’s Fury and Bernini’s Damned Soul has been noted by Preimesberger, “Eine grimassierende Selbstdarstellung Berninis,” 2: 416; Lavin, “Portraits of No-Body,” 109; Schütze, “Anima Beata e Anima Dannata,” 164-65. Michelangelo’s Fury was executed around 1525 and is one of a set of drawings known as the “teste divine” which, according to Vasari, were given by the artist to his pupils and friends. The Fury was likely given to Gherardo Perini and, according to Medici documents and inventories, passed into the hands of Prince Francesco de Medici after the Perini’s death in 1564. On the Fury, its meaning, function, and reception by artists and patrons, see Creighton Gilbert, “Un viso quasiche di furia,” in Michelangelo Drawings, ed. Craig Hugh Smyth (Washington: National Gallery, 1992), 213-25; Eike D. Schmidt, “‘Furor’ und ‘Initiatio’: visuelle Topoi in den Laokoon-Parodien Rosso Fiorentinos und Tizians,” in Visuelle Topoi: Erfindung und tradiertes Wissen in den Künsten der italienischen Renaissance, eds. Ulrich Pfisterer and Max Seidel (Munich: Deutscher Kunstverlag, 2003), 351-83; and, especially, Andreas Schumacher, Michelangelos “teste divine”: Idealbildnisse als Exempla der Zeichenkunst (Münster: Rhema, 2007), 19-23, 158-60, 183-91, 202-5, 233-40.

319 Schumacher, Michelangelos “teste divine”. On Michelangelo’s adoption of the Zeuxian trope of eclectic or ideal imitation, see Summers, Michelangelo, 186-99. While most art writers who purported to record Michelangelo’s thoughts (like Condovi, Vasari and Francisco de Hollanda) indicated that the artist espoused Zeuxian imitation, it should be noted that according to Vincenzo Danti, Michelangelo was skeptical of Zeuxian theory and did not work according to its principles. See Summers, Michelangelo, 195-6; Édouard Pommier, Théories du portrait: de la Renaissance aux Lumières (Paris: Gallimard, 1998), 51-2.
as a modern visual exemplum of extreme suffering akin to the ancient *Laocoön*.

The high regard in which the drawing was held in the cinquecento is underscored by the evidence that it alone among the *Teste Divine* was engraved by Antonio Salamanca and circulated in the second half of the cinquecento [fig. 56]. Though we cannot say with certainty that Bernini knew of the latter, his decision to represent the bust in a three-quarter pose, an angle that departed from the decidedly frontal wax busts of eschatological imagery, and with his flame-like hair lashing about, as in Michelangelo’s prototype, it is most likely that this engraving was the model for his own grimacing self-portrait.

By representing the *Damned Soul* – his soul – as a furious visage, Gianlorenzo did more than remake Michelangelo’s drawing of *Fury* into a first-person expression. I would suggest that in doing so he also aligned the motions characteristic of his construction of individuality with the aesthetic and philosophical connotations of fury. In the early modern period, two nouns were used (sometimes interchangeably) to indicate fury, “furia” and “furore,” both of which signified more than anger. As David Summers has shown, *furia/furore* was thought to be, on the one hand, a quality of movement and, on the other hand, the very essence of motion – the inspiriting quality that brought art to life. The terms described the impulsive nature of preparatory studies and characterized

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321 Circumstantial evidence suggests that the engraving was made sometime before 1562. See Gilbert, “Un viso,” 218-89, 225n21; Schumacher, *Michelangelos ‘teste divine’*, 23, 160.
the vitality of inspired execution that underlies lifelike art.\textsuperscript{324} And, like many aesthetic terms, \textit{furia/furore} was applied equally to images and to image-makers to underscore the fervent nature of their innate talent and character. \textit{Furore}, in particular, was also linked to the concept of poetic frenzy and was associated with the rapture of divine inspiration that fuelled innovation in the arts.\textsuperscript{325} In this guise, \textit{furia/furore} not only connoted extraordinary intellect and creative capacity, but was also a quality thought to be possessed by individuals with a melancholic disposition.\textsuperscript{326} In the cinquecento, no one artist and his work epitomized the aesthetic, creative and temperamental meanings associated with fury more than Michelangelo.\textsuperscript{327}

Lomazzo enshrined the \textit{furore/furia} of Buonarroti’s animated figures in his \textit{Trattato della Pittura} (1584). In a lengthy discussion of Michelangelo’s precepts for the \textit{figura serpentinata}, Lomazzo wrote that “the most grace and loveliness that a figure can possess is that it appears to move, [a quality] that painters call the \textit{furia} of a figure.”\textsuperscript{328}

\textsuperscript{324} Summers, \textit{Michelangelo}, 59-61. Cf. Cole, \textit{Cellini}, 145-8, who demonstrates that in Cellini’s work as a sculptor of bronzes, the artist emphatically distinguished the “slow, prospective furor of disegno” from the “quick, reactive furor of casting” as a justification for the prolonged time it took, from modeling through polishing, to complete a bronze statue.


\textsuperscript{328} Lomazzo, \textit{Trattato}, 13: “Imperocché la maggior gratia, e leggiadria che possa havere una figura è che mostri di muoversi, il che chiamano i pittori furia della figura.” See also Summers, \textit{Michelangelo}, 60, 81.
The noun *furia* in this usage is a synonym for *moto*. And by defining it in association with the serpentine formula for figural motion purportedly invented by Michelangelo, he implies that the cinquecento artist is its most exemplary practitioner, a master of all manner of lifelike animation from subtle stirrings through bold activity. Lomazzo makes more explicit reference to Michelangelo’s mastery of *furia* in a subsequent chapter: “Michelangelo was *stupendissimo* [in the representation of motion], and since he understood it to be most difficult, he devoted long and continuous study to it, so that the figures in his paintings are set forth in more difficult attitudes and outside the common usage, though all tending to a certain *fierezza* and *terribilità*.”

Unlike the above elision of *furia* and motion (in all its variety), Lomazzo here uses *fierezza* and *terribilità* as adjectives that qualify Michelangelo’s demonstrably artful and difficult figural motion specifically as forceful, intense, awesome and grand. The adjectives also underscore his virtuosic execution, boundless creativity, explosive comportment. In short, *fierezza* and *terribilità* defined the character of Michelangelo’s *furia* in art as much as in life.

Lomazzo also used the term *furia* to describe the inner animating potency of the artist. But while he prized the innately energetic talent that produced vigorous movement, he nonetheless cautioned artists possessed of fury to bridle their natural ability with the reigns of reason so that their inborn capacity for invention was not in constant overdrive. He thus praised the excellent painter who “not so much aided by nature as consumed in

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329 Lomazzo, *Trattato*, 111 “Michel’Angelo anch’egli fù stupendissimo in questa parte, e si come quegli che la conosceva difficilissima, vi mise lunghissimo, e continuo studio. Per il che si veggonno ne le sue pitture i moti più difficili, e fuori del comun uso espressi; mà però tutti tendenti à certa fierenza e terribilità.” On the passage, see Summers, *Michelangelo*, 411.

his art, seeks to elect the best gesture of whatever effect, *restraining the superabundant natural furia with the deliberate reason he has in his idea... always making visible in any member I do not know what furia conforming to the principle movement.*” In this passage, Lomazzo uses fury in two ways: first, to describe the vigorous inventive capacity of an artist (here restrained by the powers of his intellect, that is, furious *ingegno* disciplined by *ars*) and, second, as a vague or charming quality (*non so che*) often associated in his writings with grace, which can be shaped into any motion. Lomazzo’s association of controlled *furia* with indeterminate charm seems a conscious reformulation of Leon Battista Alberti’s explicit proscriptions against untamed fury. Alberti, like Lomazzo, believed that in order to chasten audacious motions and to produce art that eschewed reckless artifice, fierce natural talent (*ingegno*) had to be tempered by diligent study (*ars*). Yet Alberti differed from Lomazzo in that he explicitly censured excessively bold movements as the antithesis of graceful and sweet action that “show[ed] the *ingegno* of the artist to be too fervent and furious.” By contrast, Lomazzo’s conflation of fury and vague charm (which also draws on what Dolce says about Raphael’s balance of force and delicacy) enables him to claim that innate and abundant artistic furor is the productive, even necessary, basis for the depiction of all motion. It need only be harnessed by the intellect so that the vitality emanating from it might be adapted to an infinite range of actions. Lomazzo placed Michelangelo among those artists who gave their paintings “attractive, proportioned

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334 For an analysis of Alberti’s resistance to vigorous motion and ideation within the broader context of cinquecento theories of movement in art, see Summers, “Contrapposto,” 339-44.
movements [that were] guided by reason and accompanied by natural fury."\textsuperscript{336} Although this claim rests uneasily with his observation that Buonarroti’s assiduous studies of movement resulted in figures represented in complex action with little differentiation, all possessing “a certain \textit{fierrezza} and \textit{terribilità},”\textsuperscript{337} what is essential about Lomazzo’s observation is that the master’s art typically struck a familiar note. That is, there is something individuated and characteristically “Michelangelo” about the fury of Michelangelo’s art.

Among Michelangelo’s critics, the artist’s fierce style of figural action provided fodder for arguments against claims that he was a master of motion. When Lodovico Dolce stated that boldly energetic “movements ought not to be continuous and common to all of the figures, since human beings are not always in motion, or so violent that they look deranged,”\textsuperscript{338} his condemnation was aimed implicitly at Buonarroti and his epigones who continually adopted “the most fearsome (\textit{terribile}) and complicated” mode.\textsuperscript{339} Contrast this to Dolce’s Raphael, who produced both pleasurable and fearsome figures “with, at the same time, more temperate and gentler actions.”\textsuperscript{340} Solidly laying the groundwork for later detractors, the Venetian writer saw in Michelangelo’s work violent “forms and faces [that were] are almost always alike…” and thus wholly insensitive to

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{336} Lomazzo, \textit{Trattato}, 111. \\
\textsuperscript{338} As translated in Roskill, \textit{Dolce’s Aretino}, 147. \\
\textsuperscript{339} Ibid., 177. \\
\textsuperscript{340} Ibid.}
the variety necessary to achieving decorum.\textsuperscript{341} In Giovanni Andrea Gilio’s tirade against the indecorum of Michelangelo’s \textit{Last Judgment}, the theologian drew an implicit connection between the artist’s consistent use of \textit{sforzi} (forced poses), his anatomical studies and his very furor by situating him among a class of “new anatomists of fury in their figures, miniatures, acrobats and giants (\textit{figure, figurette, figuraccie, e figuroni})… who make nature cry and art laugh.”\textsuperscript{342} Developing Dolce’s notion of the insanity of Michelangelo’s figures one step further, this passage casts Buonarroti and his followers themselves as possessed anatomists whose unbridled inspiration, far from “legitimating a claim to inspired fury,” results in ribald and risible contortions.\textsuperscript{343} Gilio’s censure of Michelangelo’s extravagant contortions was revisited in the seicento particularly by Roland Fréart de Chambray, who launched a vehement attack on Michelangelo’s \textit{Last Judgment} in his \textit{Idée de la Perfection de la peinture} (1662), but who mentions nothing of the artist’ fury.\textsuperscript{344} Nonetheless, the association of Michelangelo with a kind of arduous furor that produced fearsome (not comical) figures that inspired dread or fear in the beholder was echoed through next century, especially by his detractors like André

\textsuperscript{341} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{342} “Quindi avviene che i nuovi notomisti del furioso ne le loro figure, figurette, figuraccie, e figuroni fanno fare agli uomini, a l’arme, ai cavalli sforzi, pieghe e altr’attì tanto sgarbati, che la natura piange e l’arte ride, vedendo tanti ciarpelloni, tante barbarisì, e tanti latini falsi, che tutto ’l giorno si fanno.” Giovanni Andrea Gilio, \textit{Degli errori de’ pittori} (1564), in Paola Barocchi, \textit{Trattati d’arte del Cinquecento fra manierismo e controriforma} (Bari: G. Laterza, 1961), 2:49, 590n3, who suggests that the expression “notomisti del furioso” was inspired by Aretino’s letter to Michelangelo of 1545 and Dolce’s \textit{Aretino}. See also Summers, \textit{Michelangelo}, 80. On this passage as a reaction to anatomical practice, artistic animation and demonic magic, see Campbell, “‘Fare una Cosa Morta Parer Viva’,” 610-5.
\textsuperscript{343} Campbell, “‘Fare una Cosa Morta Parer Viva.’,” 612.
Félibien who observed that the artist had but one mode of operating: “He possessed that
fire and that fury that engendered the terrible and surprising.”

Bernini’s self-portrayal as the Damned Soul engages in this discussion about
Michelangelo’s furor and the art it begets. His wildly animated self-expression claims
that he and his art possess the qualities associated with his predecessor’s furia – the
complexity of action, the fierce and terrible style, and the audaciousness that underlies
the individual and explosive inner talent of its maker – with a surprising twist. By
condemning the irrational, uninhibited furor of his raging soul to the fires of hell, Bernini
apparently aligned himself with the critics’ view that Michelangelo’s style and, by
implication, his ingegno were too fervent. In doing so, it would seem that the sculptor
identified his own art as culpable of displaying the fierce and indecorous figuration for
which detractors censured Buonarroti. Indeed, Preimesberger was the first to read
Bernini’s Damned Soul in light of proscriptions against forceful action and extreme,
indecorous poses (though he does not indicate which are the most relevant theorists in
this regard nor does he refer specifically to criticisms of Michelangelo’s art), and his
interpretation has been widely adopted by subsequent scholars. He argues that Bernini’s
wildly grimacing self-portrait, however self-condemnatory, is far from exhibiting
censorious impropriety. Rather, he sees the bust as a justifiable and self-conscious
demonstration of the “aesthetic of ugliness” that is appropriate to the subject
and which

346 Preimesberger, “Eine grimassierende Selbstdarstellung Berninis,” 2:417. Both the art critic Giovanni Antonio Massani/Mosini (Urban VIII’s maestro di casa) and Giovanni Agucchi argue for the aesthetic legitimacy of ugliness by suggesting that the idea of the ugly is a necessary counterpart to the idea of beauty and the ugly is created by actively distorting the beautiful (much like a grotesque or caricature). As discussed in, Mahon, Studies in Seicento Art Theory, 145, 258-74. See also, Posèq “Bernini’s Self-Portraits as David,” 15; idem, “Physiognomic Communication in Bernini,” 170-1.
demonstrates Bernini’s extraordinary skill by engendering *stupore* and *meraviglia* in the viewer (very much like the petrifying power of Leonardo’s/Caravaggio’s *Medusa*).\(^{347}\)

While I do not necessarily disagree with this reading (although his general reference to issues of decorum is too vague), I would argue that Bernini’s *Damned Soul* is less a conscious expression of self-abasement and more a brazen polemicization of his own furious style and *ingegno*. I would further suggest that any interpretation of the *Damned Soul* that does not attribute a role to the *Blessed Soul* is incomplete.

In order to appreciate the potentially controversial role that I think Bernini has adopted with his allegorical self-portrait, it is necessary to consider the *Damned Soul* alongside its formal and conceptual pendant. By juxtaposing his violently grimacing visage to the sweet expression of the *Blessed Soul*, Gianlorenzo brings to mind a passage from Dolce’s *Aretino* that censures Buonarroti’s emulators: “And those who bowed to Michelangelo were mostly sculptors, who limited themselves to imitating only the *disegno* and the *terribilità* of his figures, as it seemed to them that the gentle and graceful (*leggiadra*) style of Raphael was too easy, and thus lacking artifice.”\(^{348}\) Dolce asserted that these epigones were so blinded by the desire to show difficulty in art, that they misguidedly forsook Raphael’s grace, beauty and facility in favour of Michelangelo’s

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\(^{348}\) “E quelli che inchinavano a Michelangelo erano per lo più scultori, i quali si fermavano solamente sul disegno e sulla terribilità delle sue figure, parendo loro che la maniera leggiadra e gentile di Raffaello fosse troppo facile, e per conseguente non di tanto artificio.” Roskill, *Dolce’s Aretino*, 90. As discussed in Chapter One of this dissertation, Dolce saw more variety in Raphael’s seemingly effortless elegance, which allowed him to “produce figures of every type” of motion and expression, than Michelangelo’s single-minded display of animated complexity. It should be noted that Preimesberger, “Eine grimassierende Selbstdarstellung Berninis,” 2:416, was the first to recognize the “terribilità” and “difficoltà” of Bernini’s self-reflexive imitation of Buonarroti, but he does not contextualize his observation within the critical reception of Michelangelo’s art.
aggressive and forceful display of action. When seen in the light of this passage, it is significant that the michelangesque Damned Soul should be put adjacent to the Blessed Soul, which, with her long locks tied loosely in a bun and strands of hair cascading gently off her shoulders, looks noticeably like Raphael’s central figure from his altarpiece of the Ecstasy of St. Cecilia [fig. 57] that had been copied for a Roman church by Guido Reni, the seicento’s “new Raphael.” Schütze has suggested that Bernini’s Blessed Soul resembles the beatific visages created by Reni, particularly his portrait painting of St. Cecilia. I would posit, inversely, that Bernini sought to evoke Raphael in his female head, even if indirectly through Reni.

By evoking the disparate styles of two cinquecento rivals in his counter-posed soul portraits, Bernini visualizes Dolce’s opposition between Michelangelo’s terribilità and Raphael’s grazia, to slightly different ends. On the surface, the sanctified role played by the female bust appears not only to champion grace as the aesthetic virtue par-excellence, but also, in doing so, intimates that Raphael was the most decorous (and, therefore, worthy) paradigm to imitate. Indeed, Bernini’s apparent condemnation of terribilità and consecration of grazia even seems to anticipate Fréart de Chambray, who labelled Michelangelo the “bad angel” of art whose example was the unequivocal path to artistic perdition, and Raphael the “good angel” who offered artists the road to salvation. Seen in this light, the Damned Soul/Bernini must be read as a portrait of the

349 The resemblance between Bernini’s Blessed Soul and Raphael’s St. Cecelia was first noted by Victor I. Stoichita, Visionary Experience in the Golden Age of Spanish Art (London: Reaktion Books, 1995), 168.  
350 Schütze, “Anima Beata e Anima Dannata,” 163. Guido Reni was the seicento embodiment of the graceful artist whose numerous representations of beatific females had been influenced by Raphael’s style. On Bernini’s appreciation of Reni’s art and the painter’s lifelong influence on the sculptor’s work, see Ursula Schlegel, “Bernini und Guido Reni,” Jahrbuch der Berliner Museen 27 (1985): 101-45.  
351 Chambray, Idee de la perfection, 65-6. On Chambray’s comparison between Raphael and Michelangelo and the seventeenth- to eighteenth-century reception of Buonarroti as evil or devilish, see Paul Barolsky,
artist as burdened epigone, overwhelmed by Michelangelo’s monotonously furious and terrible art. But while the Damned Soul indicates that the artist’s aesthetic sensibilities and style tend toward Michelangelo, the Blessed Soul, also the work of the artist (though not a self-portrait), demonstrates that he is capable of working in Raphael’s graceful manner, too. Bernini’s pair of heads, then, one terrible the other graceful, suggests that the artist’s furia – as a defining quality of his style and his ingegno – like that described by Lomazzo, is the essence of figural variety and the source for generating all manner of movement from fierce to delicate. Furthermore, Bernini’s association of the two cinquecento artists styles with gendered types – vigorous, masculine Michelangelo and graceful, feminine Raphael\(^{352}\) – makes of these paired soul-portraits a kind of monochrome sculptural counterpart to Lomazzo’s ideal painting of Adam and Eve in which the figure of Adam is composed of Michelangelo’s design (and Titian’s color) and that of Eve is made up of Raphael’s design (and Correggio’s color).\(^{353}\) Seen from these perspectives, Bernini’s self-portrait offers a provocative and daring identification with Buonarroti, including the potential ills of terribiltà and unrestrained fury only to demonstrate, I would argue, that he can deploy his Michelangelo-like furor with striking breadth and, thus, to his own artistic advantage.

By analysing the Damned Soul and Blessed Soul as a pair, another form of furia makes itself evident. It is possible to see Bernini’s grimacing face as an expression of the tortuous burning of the Petrarchan artist-lover whose furor poeticus/amoris is directed towards his unattainable and beautiful beloved, here played by the Blessed Soul that

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\(^{352}\) Sohm, “Gendered Style,” 774.

\(^{353}\) On Lomazzo’s ideal painting of Adam and Eve, see Mahon, “Eclecticism and the Carracci,” 316; Sohm, Style, 36-7; Loh, “New and Improved,” 486.
wears not the laurels of Petrarch’s Laura but a floral garland.\textsuperscript{354} Just as Petrarch turns the inaccessibility of the beloved into the driving force of poetry, it might be said that here Bernini visualizes a dialogue between the two heads that links his blistering passion for an unattainable woman to his artistic furo. The sculptor’s appreciation for Petrarchan themes is richly visualized in the near contemporary Apollo and Daphne (1623), a work that Andrea Bolland has convincingly argued “sealed the young Bernini’s credentials as a poetic sculptor”\textsuperscript{355} and which, not coincidentally, was created at the very moment Michelangelo’s Petrarchan poems were first published. But while the latter statue group engages in what Bolland has described as a Petrarchan play of sight and touch, the contemporary (if we accept a later dating) Damned Soul and Blessed Soul figure an intangible distance between the lover and his beloved that is a leitmotiv of Petrarch’s verses.\textsuperscript{356} Especially apt in this instance, is the gap between lover and beloved that can only be overcome by a particular kind of seeing: namely, the “internal gaze of memory and imagination.”\textsuperscript{357}

The Blessed Soul, whose eyes are fixed with spiritual or divine love, should be understood as occupying the realm of the Damned Soul’s/Bernini’s inner eye at the

\textsuperscript{354} While it has been suggested that Michelangelo’s drawing of Fury was given by the artist to Gherardo Perini as an expression of Buonarroti’s furor amoris, Preimesberger, “Eine grimassierende Selbstdarstellung Berninis,” 2:416, has rightly questioned whether this context would have been known or even relevant to Bernini’s self-representation. I would agree that it is unlikely that Bernini associated the work with Michelangelo’s purported affection for Gherardo. However, Bernini’s pairing of the Damned Soul and the Blessed Soul strongly suggests that one of the possible interpretations of the fury of Michelangelo’s head is as that of an inflamed lover. On Michelangelo, Gherardo and the gift of the drawing of Fury, see most recently, Schumacher, Michelangelos “teste divine”, 19-35.


\textsuperscript{357} Bolland, “Desiderio and Diletto,” 316-8; Noferi, “Il canzoniere del Petrarca.”
moment his own outward gaze confronts the unworthiness of his feverish mortal desire. Here touch can only be satisfied by the imagination. His base, smouldering passion (however unrequited) for his Blessed Soul/beloved engenders so fierce and vivid an image in his imagination, so deep an impression on his Damned Soul that Bernini is able to render her represented marble soul (her immaterial essence, here physically present) delicate, lively and soft. The seicento sculptor makes the performance of his eternal soul’s life after death – an undying burning – the fateful force that animates his stone. 
Where desire is present, even unrequited passion, Bernini’s capacity for representation is fired. In other words, the artist’s insatiable yearning for his marble inamorata, as vivid in his mind as her intangible stone presence, is here figured as a condition of his capacity for invention, the very key that triggers the fury of his imagination. And, ultimately, it is in the viewer that another sort of relationship between the lover and the beloved takes an unexpected turn. In Bernini’s pair of souls it is not the artist who is rendered lifeless by his love for art, but, as Preimesberger suggested, the marvelling and stupefied viewer – a lover of sculpture in his own right – that is struck immobile like the dead.

What is striking about the Damned Soul is that coupled with its every gesture of reciprocity or identification with the manifold implications of Michelangelo’s fury is a witty overturning or competitive play that calls attention to Bernini’s authorized self.
Consider further, for example, the implication of ‘condemning’ the furious action of his 

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358 Many years later, Bernini’s biographers also used the language of love to describe his relationship to art (whether his own or that which he studied) in a handful of passages. See, for example, Bernini, *Vita*, 13: “Sicché era cosa così solita il non comparire in Casa Gio; Lorenzo, che il Padre non vedendolo per giorni intieri, nè pure domandava di che ne fosse, certo già della dimora di lui nello Studio di S. Pietro, dove, al dir del figliuolo, stavan di Casa le sue Innamorate, intendendo delle Statue che vi erano” (italics mine). For an alternative reading of the role of love in Bernini’s sculpture that considers the relationship between Christian “hermeneutics of love” and the aesthetics of Bernini’s portraiture, particularly as the former relate to the question of the sculptor’s sitter (as ‘original’) and the portrait (as ‘copy’), see Evonne Levy, “Repeat Performances: Bernini, the Portrait and its Copy,” *Sculpture Journal* 20 (2011): 243-5.
soul portrait to the fires of hell. Burning with the motions of diabolical madness (as much as amorous possession), Bernini distances himself from the characterization of Michelangelo’s powers of animation as “divine.” In the minds of Michelangelo’s defenders, and typically also his artistic followers, the artist’s fervid talent and the energetic motion associated with it, was divinely inspired. His rendering of movement was god-given and the spirited gestures and actions of his figures revealed, in turn, the heavenly source of his own energetic furor. When art writers gave the label “divino” to Michelangelo’s figures in painting and sculpture, they were evoking precisely this elision between mortal and divine agency.

According to Lomazzo, the force of “il Divino’s” figures epitomized the divinely inspired artist. Invoking Buonarroti’s epithet throughout his text, theorist claimed that the illusion of presence and animation could only be produced by an artist whose imagination was nourished by supernatural energy. In his Della forma delle muse (1591), Lomazzo gave weight to this view by drawing an analogy between the visual and literary arts and compared the artist’s divine impulse to express the motions and gestures of the human body with that of fury experienced by the inspired poet who is motivated to write. For a figure to have furia (in the sense of motion), the artist himself had to be gifted with poetic fury. The concept of furor poeticus, supernatural frenzy that enraptured the poet and fuelled their creativity, originated in antiquity with Plato and was

359 On the divine origins of Michelangelo’s rendering of movement, see Summers, Michelangelo, 69, 175; Edgar Wind, “Michelangelo’s Prophets and Sibyls,” in Art and Politics in Renaissance Italy, ed. George Holmes (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 280-91; Campbell, “‘Fare una Cosa Morta Parer Viva’,” 596-620, esp. 596-8.
360 “Just as it is necessary for the poet to possess… a certain desire and inclination of the will which the ancients call the frenzy of Apollo… wherefore he is moved to poeticize, so does it happen that…the painter possesses the knowledge and strength to express the principal movements as thought they were instilled within himself.” As cited and discussed in Noel L. Brann, The Debate over the Origin of Genius in the Italian Renaissance (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 274-7. See also Summers, Michelangelo, 69.
fully synthesized into Christian thought by the Renaissance humanist Marsilio Ficino who argued that the fertile intellect was divinely guided. The supernatural frenzy of the poet was a kind of animating vigour – it engendered an uncommon quickness and velocity of the intellect, an inner vivacity that could be transposed from the poet to his work. The same held true of the divinely inspired artist who was able to surpass the norm by producing lifelike works that equalled God’s creation. Like an alter deus the gifted artist was capable of enlivening art by infusing it with his own spirit.

Yet as Michael Cole has argued, the increasing desire to ascribe divinity to an artist’s power to enliven art put into greater relief the possibility that the source of artifice might equally be diabolical. Ficino himself acknowledged two sources of inspired genius, the divine and the demonic, but he was careful to circumscribe poetic and artistic creation within the limits of celestial influence. Nonetheless, lively art slipped easily from the purview of heaven to that of hell. For example, in his Dialogo contra i poeti (1526), Francesco Berni described the poetic impulse as a kind of maleficent, diabolical possession and characterized his own literary endeavours as motivated by an “infernal spirit.” A decade later, the poet aimed his scepticism regarding the heavenly origins of creativity directly at artists, specifically Michelangelo, by parodying Buonarroti’s divine status in a poem dedicated to Sebastiano del Piombo, a painter whose

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364 On the fine line between the divine and demonic in Ficino’s melancholic inspiration, see Jean Clair, “Aut deus aut daemon. Die Melancholie und die Werwolfskrankheit,” in Melancholie. Genie und Wahnsinn in der Kunst, ed. idem (Ostfildern: Hatje Cantz, 2005), 118-25.

365 As discussed in Campbell, “‘Fare una Cosa Morta Parer Viva’,” 599-600.
devotion to the master bordered on cult-like obsession. Such satirical allusions to demonic power co-existed with serious anxieties about the affinity between human and demonic artifice. In Francesco Cattani da Diacceto’s *On the Art of Magic Superstition* (c.1560s) a demon’s creative capacity, specifically for producing figures able to mimic human motion, was compared to a painter’s illusionism. And three years later in the *Trattato….de la emulatione che il demonio ha fatto a Dio* (1563) the theologian Andrea Gilio da Fabriano derided any human attempt to imitate the divine as motivated by devilish sorcery, a position he publicized in a treatise devoted to censuring the various ways in which man misguidedly pretended to godliness.

While the “new Michelangelo’s” performance of his diabolical agency is neither a parody of the old Michelangelo’s “divinity” (though it does have a note of humour) nor a heretical self-condemnation, the *Damned Soul* does make a claim about the condition of Bernini’s inspiration that is in contrast to the god-given furor typically associated with Buonarroti. The sculptor’s maleficent possession is at odds with the ecstasy that was thought by many to be the vehicle of poetic madness (an experience that was violent, but not divorced from God). Indeed, in light of Bernini’s allusion to Michelangelo’s representation of “Fury,” this self image as a *Damned Soul* seems to underscore the fragile distinction between divine furor and demonic inspiration – especially since the symptoms of both states could range from ecstatic frenzy to depression, from productive abstraction of the mind to burdensome madness. Roaring with maniacal rage, Bernini

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366 For a discussion of the poem’s ironic tone as well as Michelangelo’s response, see ibid., 598-9.
368 Ibid., 622; Jacobs, *Living Image*, 5
369 This fragile distinction or slippage between productive and destructive madness seems to play itself out in the reception and historiography of Michelangelo’s “Fury” which, as Schmidt, “‘Furor’ und ‘Imitatio’,” 358, has noted, has given rise to two different strands of interpretation – on the one hand, as an image of a damned soul and, on the other hand, as a representation of *furor amoris/poeticus*. In his analysis of Rosso’s
here opposes the idealizing claims of furious inspiration and describes his insight as fiendish torment that possesses his soul.

In order to appreciate what might be at stake in Bernini’s self-promotion as a sculptor consumed by the hellish fires of inspiration, it is perhaps useful to consider the medieval topos of God as a smith. The theme appears in Giovanni Battista Marino’s *La Pittura* (1614), a treatise on painting which juxtaposed demonic artifice to divine facture, and, at one point poses the following rhetorical question: “Who was this Painter, who was so arrogant, so ignorant, that he wished to correct the perfect images of the great smith of smiths? It was wicked Lucifer.” In Marino’s conceit, the illusionistic art of painting is the devilish counterpart to the tangible verity of divine sculpting (whether modeling, carving or founding). By representing himself as spiritato, or in the grip of a maleficent possession, Bernini’s *Damned Soul* overturns this equation and introduces a different paragone of makers and media, one that turns the art of the marble carver into the maleficent foil to God, a Vulcan-like forger of animate life or the creator of the first man out of clay or stone. Bernini’s very self-image as a condemned malefactor even calls into

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371 As cited in Cole, “The Demonic Arts,” 622, who situates the content of the passage within discussions about the demonic or magical illusionism of the art of painting (in contrast to the three-dimensional “truth” of sculpture).

372 An art theoretical correlation between maleficent possession in sculpted figures and heat is intimated by Boselli, who cautions artists against creating too animated movement: “In order to be good, a [figure’s] attitude… should be more lively than cold, but with consideration that it is not possessed.” [L’atto, per esser buono, oltre all’esser proprio dell’azione – come s’e detto – si dee fare piuttosto spiritoso che freddo, ma con riguardo, che non sia spiritato.] Boselli, *Osservazioni*, 124. Di Stefano, *Orfeo Boselli*, 15, 31, has suggested that Boselli’s criticism of too spirited or possessed motion in the above passage, and throughout his treatise, is an implicit criticism of Bernini’s figures. On the state of being spiritato and the equivocal implications of spiriti in art, see also Campbell, “‘Fare una cosa morta parer viva’,” esp. 600-1, n40; Cole, “The Demonic Arts,” 629, 631-2; idem, “Discernment and Animation,” 159-60.
question his purported use of the adage that painting is a lie and sculpture a truth wherein “one [i.e. painting] is the work of the Devil, and the other [i.e. sculpture] of the Almighty.” Here, Bernini uses the truthful medium of marble to characterize himself and his art as the work of a malign spirit.

In light of the maleficent undertones of Bernini’s fiery soul portrait, the example of Benvenuto Cellini (one of Michelangelo’s most ardent rivals), a metalsmith who characterized himself as infuriato and in a diabolico furore as he cast his bronze Perseus, is instructive as it offers a fuller context with which to understand the seicento sculptor’s sense of his artistic character and its implications for his work. Throughout his autobiography, particularly in the passages on the Perseus, Cellini pointed to the interconnections among his choleric disposition, his infernal creative impulses and the fiery processes he manipulated in order to cast bronze sculpture. Metal fusing had long been perceived as a maleficent craft capable of imparting spirit into lifeless matter, and the demonic undertones of the bronze caster’s own harnessing of this art are underscored by his insistence on the demonic possession of his faculties. His temperament is implicated in this process, too. The generative powers of fire – those innate to the artist’s character, those driving his inspiration and those harnessed in his forge – transformed Cellini’s animated sculptures into seemingly living creations that

373 Chantelou, Diary, 259; idem, Journal, 228 (October 6).
375 On the correlation of fire and facture in this anecdote and throughout Cellini’s autobiography, see Orsino, “Il fuoco nella vita di Benvenuto Cellini.”
dangerously rivalled God’s paradigmatic act of creation. In short, multiple sources of life-giving heat were the essence of his diabolically animated art.

Although Bernini would not have read Cellini’s autobiography, which remained unpublished until 1728, his Damned Soul nonetheless seems to assume the enlivening powers of the fiery bronze caster for the carver of marble sculpture. Just as heat defines Cellini’s character, creativity and practice, so too the inferno that consumes Bernini’s soul allegorizes the fiery mechanisms that enliven his being, his inspiration and his process. With the Damned Soul, Bernini locates the origin of his art and the source of his imagination in the unquenchable fire of his soul. As with the image Cellini projects of himself in his autobiography, this self-portrait suggests that heat enters Bernini’s work through the heat of his furious spirit, which also shapes his fiery temperament as well as his infernal imagination. Yet, unlike Cellini, who liquefies metal in the furnaces of his forge, fire itself is not among the tools Bernini employs in sculpting, unless we consider his practice of undertaking preliminary work in clay – a medium itself subject to the flame. But the evidence of his modelling in clay is erased in the final marble bust. Rather, if a claim is being made about process here, it is that the ardent Bernini himself

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377 On Cellini’s perception of the art of infusing as like God’s paradigmatic act of sculpting, see Cole, “Cellini’s Blood,” 222-3.
378 As Michael Cole, “The Medici Mercury and the Breath of Bronze,” in Large Bronzes in the Renaissance, ed. Peta Motture (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), 138, has observed, the “question of how transformational heat entered their [i.e. sculptor’s] own creative processes was apt to raise a paragone of media.” I think that Bernini’s Damned Soul evokes just such an implicit comparison between the processes attending working in marble and bronze (however indirectly with Cellini’s processes themselves).
379 An art theoretical correlation between possession in sculpted figures and heat is intimated by Boselli, who cautions artists against creating too animated movement: “In order to be good, a [figure’s] attitude… should be more lively than cold, but with consideration that it is not possessed.” [L’atto, per esser buono, oltre all’esser proprio dell’azione – come s’e detto – si dee fare piuttosto spiritoso che freddo, ma con riguardo, che non sia spiritato.] Boselli, Osservazioni, 124. Di Stefano, Orfeo Boselli, 15, 31, has suggested that Boselli’s criticism of too spirited motion in the above passage and throughout his treatise is an implicit criticism of Bernini’s figures. On the state of being spirito and equivocal implications of spiriti in art, see also Campbell, “‘Fare una cosa morta parer viva’,” esp. 600-1; Cole, “The Demonic Arts,” 629, 631-2; idem, “Discernment and Animation,” 159-60.
can melt marble. His soul-heat is the substance of his sculptural facture; he animates stone by inspiriting it with his own fire – his very stone soul images fire. Indeed, when the seicento sculptor (and his contemporaries) purportedly claimed that he was able to manage stone as if it were as malleable as dough or wax, he sidestepped modelling in clay and drew an implicit parallel between the potential of his own inner heat to mutate marble into other substances – or at least the appearance of them – and the transformative potency of the forge. What better evidence of the softening effect of Bernini’s fiery operations on marble than the delicately animate *Blessed Soul* at his side.

More than just a foil to Michelangelo’s “divinity,” Bernini’s self-image (of his diabolical burning) as a *Damned Soul* also underscores the instability of the early modern characterization of the gift of divine furor as the purview of the cold, melancholic temper. The alliance between the saturnine temper and innate talent (*ingenium*) was first noted by Aristotle. But it was only with Marsilio Ficino in his *De divino furore* (1457) that a potent and novel union between the creative madness of the Aristotelian

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380 Baldinucci/Enggass, *Life*, 74-5; Baldinucci, *Vita*, 141; Bernini, *Vita*, 149: “Questo, che da lui veniva imputato per difetto, esser il pregio maggiore del suo Scalpello, con cui vinto haveva la difficoltà di render il marmo pieghevole come la cera, e haver con ciò saputo accoppiare in un certo modo insieme la Pittura, e la Scultura. E’l non haver ciò fatto gli antichi Artefici esser forse proventuo dal non haver loro dato il cuore di rendere i sassi così ubbidienti alla mano, com se stessi fossero di pasta.” These are not, however, the earliest mentions of Bernini’s ability to bend marble. As far as I know, Luigi Scaramuccia was the earliest writer to comment on the sculptor’s extraordinary ability to work marble like wax: “Ogn’angolo [of the Villa Borghese] in somma sembravagli un Cielo; ma quel che più causò in essi loro straordinaria meraviglia fù l’Apollo e Dafne, Statue scolpite dal Cavagliere Lorenzo Bernino, le quali havendo per lungo spatio contemplate, dissero concordemente esser quello un ristretto di perfetta Maestria, ne potersi da essi in materia tale pretendere cosa maggiore, e quello che maggiormente li faceva stupeire era (oltre il puntual disegno, gratia, porportione, e aria di Teste quasi divine) il vedere così facile il laborio, e di tal modo in esso adoperato lo Scalpello, che più tosto in cera, che in Marmo poteva credersi impiegato, ed’ il Crine disciolto, e le Foglie del Lauro, nel quale si converte la Ninfa, era non meno degno spettacolo alli due, di quello fossero alla stessa Natura d’ammirazione; po iche più tosto sfilati, sottili, e veri, che finti, e da pesante Martello artificiosamente impressi si fanno stimare.” Luigi Scaramuccia, *Finezze de pennelli italiani ammirate e studiate da Girupeno sotta la scrota e disciplina di Raffaello d’Urbino* (Pavia: Per Gio. Andrea Magri, 1674; repr., Milano: Edizioni Labor, 1965), 18.

melancholic and the divine rapture of platonic furor was forged. Newly elevated, melancholy occupied an exceptional position among the humours as the temperament contingent to greatness as it was imbued with the extraordinary capacity to generate new ideas. Humourological texts stated that individuals were governed by one principal temperament in conjunction with, to lesser degrees, the other three temperaments, which asserted themselves under various circumstances. The creative drive of the melancholic, for example, was stimulated by a rise in temperature of his black bile that loosely resembles the natural heat of the yellow bile choleric. But for all its advantages, the saturnine disposition was thought both a gift and a curse: it could generate extraordinary intellectual powers, stimulate incomparable insight and engender bouts of creative energy, or, in equal measure, it could beget depression and insanity, or produce emotional volatility that stifled contemplation and resulted in creative paralysis. In other words, the melancholic vacillated between hot frenzy and cold torpor.

Michelangelo, more than any other cinquecento artist, embodied the melancholic genius constantly torn between the blessings and afflictions inherent in his saturnine nature. His artistic persona was as deeply invested in the rhetoric of melancholia as it was in the notion of his “divinity” and the fury of his “terrible” motion. Buonarroti’s own poetry and correspondence is rife with references to his melancholy, identifying

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382 Klibansky, Panofsky and Saxl, *Saturn and Melancholy*, 241-74; Brann, *Debate over the Origin of Genius*, 82-152.
384 Ibid., 18-9, 24, 31-3.
mostly with its adverse effects.\textsuperscript{386} Even his friends blamed the artist’s disposition for lapses of judgment that threatened to destroy his career.\textsuperscript{387} His biographer Giorgio Vasari, by comparison, craftily suppressed the ills associated with his hero’s disposition by authoring a Michelangelo uniquely endowed with only the best qualities of an otherwise bi-polar temperament.\textsuperscript{388} Lomazzo adopted a similarly one-sided take on Buonarroti’s melancholy in the \textit{Idea del tempio della pittura} (1590), where Michelangelo is enshrined in a pantheon of great painters as the modern archetype of Saturnine contemplation, a temperament inflected by the divine that produced fierce and terrifying art.\textsuperscript{389}

These textual characterizations of Michelangelo’s temperament are echoed in visual representations. In life and well after his death, from Raphael’s arguable portrait of Michelangelo as Heraclitus in the 1511 \textit{School of Athens} or the frontispiece to Paolo Giovio’s 1528 \textit{vita} of Michelangelo, to the circa 1620 painting of Michelangelo as inspired poet or the coeval statue of Michelangelo as a philosopher both in the Casa Buonarroti \textbf{[figs. 58-60]}, he was often represented as an insightful melancholic, isolated from the crowd and lost in contemplation/depression as he sits with his head resting upon

\textsuperscript{386} Kemp, “The ‘Super-Artist’ as Genius,” 42-4; Ruvoldt, “Michelangelo’s Dream,” 91-2; Britton, “‘Mio malinchonico’,” 662.
\textsuperscript{387} On Michelangelo’s correspondence with Sebastiano del Piombo, who commented on his temperament, see Barocchi and Ristori, eds., \textit{Carteggio}, 3:355-7: “Per amor de Dio, quadetevi de qualche consiglio de umor melinconico, che sempre v’anno ruinato.” On this passage, see Summers, \textit{Michelangelo}, 235; Ruvolt, “Michelangelo’s Dream,” 91-2.
\textsuperscript{388} Britton, “‘Mio malinchonico’,” 662-70, demonstrates that in light of Vasari’s condemnation of artists like Pontormo and Parmigianino who exhibited the bizarre behaviour and strange art associated with melancholy, the biographer’s efforts to suppress and repudiate any claims that Michelangelo and his art revealed the defects associated with the melancholic temperament are conspicuous. Vasari’s approach is explicitly defensive and makes of Michelangelo the exemplar of melancholic perfection.
\textsuperscript{389} Gian Paolo Lomazzo, “Idea del tempio della pittura (1590),” in idem, \textit{Scritti sulle arti}, ed. Roberto Paolo Ciardi (Florence: Marchi & Bertoli, 1973), 1: 279. In this passage, Lomazzo also distinguishes between artists possessed of the positive and negative aspects of saturnine temperament. On the text, more broadly, see Kemp, “‘Equal Excellences’.”
his hand. Michelangelo, however, avoided this formula for melancholy in his own self-representation. While his allegorical self-portraits as the enervated, lifeless flesh of the flayed St. Bartholomew and as Nicodemus rapt in quiet introspection and sorrow [figs. 61 and 62], to name the most well-known, might resonate with the cold, despairing, pensive and languid qualities associated with melancholy, temperament is not the primary (or even secondary) subtext of these images. Indeed, in his self-imaging Michelangelo seems less interested in showing himself as an introspective melancholic and more preoccupied with representing the vicissitudes of his own Christian suffering. Bernini, on the other hand, performed both.

Bernini’s portrait of his spirited raging visage stands in striking contrast to both the melancholic Michelangelo of unauthorized portraits as well as the sombre weariness of Michelangelo’s self-representation, whether in text or image. As a soul animatedly consumed by fire – the most dynamic and vital of the elements, traditionally associated with the spark of life – the sculptor aligns his devilish inspiration specifically with heat. His visualization of the violent physical and psychological turmoil that he fictionally suffers as a result of his infernal disposition resonates with his later-life claim that he was so fiery a youth that he would have abandoned himself to uncontrolled vehemence had

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God not saved him from ruin. But Bernini’s is not the temporary fire of the inspired melancholic. Contemporary accounts agree that Gianlorenzo possessed the fiery disposition, martial nature and physiognomic features typically associated with the choleric personality. He had a dark complexion, sable hair and charcoal eyes [fig. 63], which, according to Baldinucci were “spirited and lively with a piercing gaze under heavy eyebrows.” Bernini’s fierce appearance was further mirrored in his heated conduct:

His behaviour was fiery and his speech made an effective impression. When giving orders he terrified by his gaze alone. He was much inclined to anger and easily inflamed. To those who rebuked him for it, he would respond that the same fire that seared him more than others also impelled him to work harder than others who were not subject to such passions.

Baldinucci might easily have been looking at the self-portrait as the Damned Soul when writing this description. And we need only look to early modern humoral theory to see that the Bernini visualized in the early allegorical self-image (and later described by his biographers) possessed the worst and best qualities of the choleric temperament:

Giovanbattista della Porta’s Della fisionomia dell’huomo (1610) not only defined the choleric as inclined to ire, audacious, impetuous and astute, but also, on the authority of Avicenna, asserted that a hot temperament produced vivacity and perspicuity of intellect as well as furious motions. The self-portrait as the Damned Soul also vividly conjures an image of the “terrible,” “ferocious,” “violent” and “ire-filled” movement explicitly

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393 Chantelou, Diary, 73; idem, Journal, 85 (July 23).
394 Baldinucci/Enggass, Life, 72; Baldinucci, Vita, 138: “Fu il cavalier Giovano Lorenzo Bernino uomo di giusta statura, di carni alquanto brune, di nero pelo, che poi in canuti l’età. Ebbe occhio spiritoso e vivace con forte guardatura, ciglia grandi e di lunghi peli; fu ardente nell’operazioni e col suo parlare efficacemente imprimeva. Nel comandare, con nulla più che col solo sguardo atterriva; fu assai disposto all’ira, onde facilmente s’accendeva e a chi di ciò il biasimava, rispondeva, che quello stesso fuoco, che più degli altri era solito infiammarlo, facevalo anche operare assai più, che altri non soggetti a tal passione non fanno.”
395 Della Porta, Della fisionomia dell’huomo, 82.
identified with the choleric artist in Lomazzo’s *Idea del tempio della pittura*, which explained individual style by way of humoral character.\(^{396}\)

Bernini’s promotion of his fiery temperament in the *Damned Soul* merits further probing, particularly vis-à-vis Michelangelo’s melancholy and the trope of the saturnine artist. Despite its potential ills, the prevailing fifteenth- and sixteenth-century idea that all outstanding men were necessarily melancholics often meant that if an artist was not naturally endowed with a Saturnine temper, he endeavoured to affect it, especially if he sought to compare to Michelangelo. The cholERICALLY disposed Cellini, for example, emphatically complained of suffering from the ills of a melancholic temper!\(^{397}\) Romano Alberti, by comparison, deemed a wistful, morose temper the necessary consequence of aspiring to mimesis: “painters become melancholic because, wanting to imitate, they must retain visions fixed in their minds so that they may reproduce them as if they have seen them in reality…. In this way they keep their minds so abstracted and detached from reality that, in consequence, they become melancholic.”\(^{398}\) Yet not all believed that the saturnine disposition was the single route to genius. As the seventeenth century approached, the vogue for identifying genius exclusively with the saturnine disposition was markedly on the decline.\(^{399}\) Armenini, for example, grumbled that “a cursed thought has entered the minds of common people and perhaps the wise also: They think that it is a fact of nature that a painter cannot be most excellent unless he is blemished by some ugly and unspeakable vice, accompanied by a capricious and fantastic humour owing to many oddities of the mind.” He took direct aim at those “foolish practitioners” who

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396 On Lomazzo’s temperamental theory, see Kemp, “‘Equal excellences’.”
399 Brann, *Debate over the Origin of Genius*, 333-441.
affect a melancholy eccentricity to no advantage to themselves, except the belief that by these antics they have become most singular men. We can judge how erroneous and removed from the truth similar opinions are by looking at the example of the aforementioned [i.e. non-melancholic] excellent masters who show it is the other way around.400

Though the greatness associated with the saturnine temperament was not supplanted by another disposition, art writers (among others) nonetheless entertained the possibility that melancholy was not the single disposition of innate talent and supernatural inspiration. Lomazzo, as noted above, offered an inclusive perspective on temperamental genius in his Idea del Tempio della pittura by presenting not one model for artistic greatness, but a pantheon of painters whose various dispositions marked their art with a discrete, god-given excellence.401 It is within the context of such praise for alternatives to the melancholic temper that we might understand Bernini’s self-promotion (however charged) of his terrible style, impassioned ideation and heated processes as choleric.

For Bernini’s biographers, especially Domenico, as Frank Fehrenbach has shown, Gianlorenzo’s innate fire and choleric temperament were the source of his creative fervour and the enlivening agent of his sculpture.402 At the outset of his Vita, Domenico employed metaphors of heat and fire to explain Bernini’s inclination toward the art. Using the analogy of “an adjacent coal [that] cooks better than the whole of the distant sun” he stated that it was no surprise that the youth took up his father’s profession.403 Once set on the sculptor’s path, fire continues to fuel Bernini’s artistic development: in the study of ancient statuary the young artist distinguished himself as an “ardent genius”

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401 Kemp, “‘Equal excellences’.”
402 Fehrenbach, “Bernini’s Light.”
403 Bernini, Vita, 4: “Ma come che l’esempio vivo suol essere incentivo, e norma nell’opeare, e più cuoce un carbonico vicino, che tutto il Sole lontano, facilmente avvenne, che vedendo Gio:Lorenzo inclinato il Padre alle opere di Scultura....”
who was “enflamed” by the very sight of exemplary marbles and succeeded in recreating their “luminous quality”; as he carved the Borghese sculptures he was, like the poet-lover, “much inflamed” and “much enamoured”; and he made marble come to life by releasing his own innate spirit through the blazing light of his eyes and infusing it into his stone. In the most vivid demonstration of Bernini’s fiery impulses, both biographers portrayed Gianlorenzo fueling his already ardent soul by submitting his flesh to fire so as to accurately represent the martyrdom of St. Lawrence. A life-giving blaze is also at the symbolic root of one of Bernini’s epithets: Mid-way through his text, Domenico recounts an episode in which Sforza Pallavicino purportedly called Bernini the “fenice degli ingegni” (phoenix of the ingenious ones). As Delbeke has shown, like the mythical phoenix that is one-of-a-kind and perpetually reborn from the ashes from the fire that consumed its former self, the “fenice degli ingegni” is a unique and innately brilliant individual who, descended from a series of exceptional forebears, inaugurates an era and defines its terms. Fire, in short, was the agent of the biographical Bernini’s character and ingegno.

By introducing how Baldinucci and Domenico used fire imagery to shape their respective biographical portraits of Bernini’s heated processes, his inspiration and his being, my aim is not to project this imagery of the biographer back onto the artist’s allegorical self-imaging, as is sometimes done. Neither the Damned Soul nor the

404 Ibid., 14.
405 Ibid., 18.
406 Ibid., 148, 180. See also Baldinucci/Enggass, Life, 72; Baldinucci, Vita, 139.
408 Bernini, Vita, 97-8.
allegorical self-portrait as *David* to which I will turn next should be read synonymous with the biographical Berninis. Rather, having drawn a reading of the character (and its attendant implications for style, ideation and process) out of the *Damned Soul* itself in the preceding arguments, instead of from the characterization of Bernini in the *vite* or other accounts of encounters with the artist, I seek to underscore the possibility that Bernini’s sculpted self-representation(s) served to construct an identity or public character (whether a sincere representation of his inner being or otherwise)\(^410\) and to shape how he was seen and mythologized by his biographers and others.\(^411\) In other words, with his allegorical self-images – especially the very publicly displayed David – Bernini produced a choleric persona that preceded and, subsequently, influenced how contemporaries characterized him.\(^412\)

Although Bernini’s self-representation likely influenced his biographical identities, his biographers exercised their own license when crafting a persona from the cues left by their subject. Just as the *Damned Soul* visualized some of the negative aspects of the sculptor’s temper – rage, madness, possession – so too Baldinucci and Domenico note that Bernini’s fire, for all its creative and animating potency, had its tribulations. Yet both biographers have Bernini negotiate his way through or, rather, out of these ills in distinct ways. Baldinucci writes that the ardour that motivated the artist also “kept him in a state of poor health until age forty. Because of [his inner heat] he could not bear without injury the rays of the sun or even the reflection of the rays, which


\(^411\) For a discussion of how constructed or idealized realities, especially as presented in portraiture, can be made possible/visible through art, see Loh, “Renaissance Faciality,” esp. 349-50.

\(^412\) Stone, “*In Figura Diaboli*,” argues for a similar trajectory of influence with Caravaggio, that is, one that originates in the artist and his work and subsequently appears in the writings of biographers and accounts by contemporaries in slightly varying or biased guises.
often gave him a migraine. With increasing years this excessive heat lessened and he entered into a state of perfect health which he enjoyed until his last illness. Artists’ biographies are rife with accounts of painters and sculptors for whom exposure to the sun caused all manner of illness and, in some instances, the combination of fervent talent and burning rays was lethal – resulting in death by overheating. Fortunately for Bernini, at least in Baldinucci’s text, the cooling effect of aging offered a natural and gradual cure to this excessive heat. In Domenico’s account, however, Gianlorenzo experienced a much more violent transformation from highly explosive youth to moderately enflamed adult.

According to the biographer, Bernini’s impassioned method of enlivening stone threatened to consume him:

[Gianlorenzo’s] tireless mode of operating, to make that which others, united together, could not accomplish, is wholly arduous, particularly the continuous working of marble, in which he was so fixated, that he seemed ecstatic, and in the act of sending forth from his eyes the spirit which gives life to stones. This caused great harm to him, such that it cast him into bed with a most acute fever and the possibility of death.

Domenico describes his father’s attempt to animate inert matter with ocular emanations as akin to a state of divine poetic frenzy, in which Bernini experienced a trancelike exaltation of his body and spirit. Frank Fehrenbach has argued that the biographer’s characterization of Gianlorenzo’s facture, particularly as a process in which the artist

\[\text{italics mine}\] Domenico, \textit{Vita}, 48: “Quel suo indefesso operare, quel suo non far cosa, che l’altra insieme unitamente non ne facesse, e tutta ardue, e particolarmente quel continuo lavoro in Marmo, in cui era così fisso, che sembrava anzi estatico, e in atto di mandar per gli occhi lo spirito per render vivi li Sassi, fu in lui gran causa di male, che l’ab battè nel letto con febre acutissima, e accidenti mortali.”

\[\text{italics mine}\] Delbeke, Levy and Ostrow, “Prolegomena to the Interdisciplinary Study of Bernini’s Biographies,” in idem, eds., \textit{Bernini’s Biographies}, 35-6, see this episode as an example of the “hagiographic effect” in art biography and relate the story to saintly rapture.

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\(^{413}\) Baldinucci/Enggass, \textit{Life}, 72; Baldinucci, \textit{Vita}, 138: “Questo stessò naturale caloroso tennelo fin o all’età di 40 anni in istato di poca sanità, onde non potea senza danno di quella soffrire nonché i raggi del sole, gli stessi riverberi, che però fu solito patire di emicranio. Coll’avanzarsi poi degli anni, scemando l’eccedente calore, si condusse a stato di perfetta salute, la quale egli poi si godè fino all’ultima sua infermità.”


\(^{415}\) Delbeke, Levy and Ostrow, “Prolegomena to the Interdisciplinary Study of Bernini’s Biographies,” in idem, eds., \textit{Bernini’s Biographies}, 35-6, see this episode as an example of the “hagiographic effect” in art biography and relate the story to saintly rapture.
enlivens marble by inspirting it with his gaze, is indebted to contemporary theological and philosophical discourses which held that God animated the world by emitting spirit-filled light from his being.\textsuperscript{417} If the biographer’s analogy between Bernini’s creative powers and those of the divine was indeed apparent to the seicento reader, it would also not have gone unnoticed that that the artist’s supernatural transport was too much for him to bear. Like the mortal Semele who was incinerated upon seeing Zeus in his divine glory, Domenico’s Bernini almost burned to death as his facture dangerously paralleled that of God. And the grave illness that followed this failed act of animation reads as a kind of benign punishment for the artist’s demiurgic pretensions. Especially since it was only when Bernini was given a magical elixir by Pope Urban VIII, God’s appointed earthly representative, that the artist was restored to life.\textsuperscript{418}

Domenico’s anecdote not only signals a moment of conversion in the choleric artist’s Vita – it is at this point that a less fiery Bernini marries, has children and turns his attention to writing comedies in lieu of attempting to animate stone – it also subtly underscores the very human limitations of Gianlorenzo’s vivifying potential.\textsuperscript{419} Rather

\textsuperscript{417} Fehrenbach, “Bernini’s Light.” While Fehrenbach’s use of contemporary theories of the processes of divine animation to explain metaphors of light, heat and facture in Bernini’s biographies is plausible, his subsequent application of the theology of luminous animation to Bernini’s use of light in sculptural ensembles seems too literal.

\textsuperscript{418} Bernini, \textit{Vita}, 49: “Haveva il Papa risaputo, che per il lungo male si ritrovava assai abbandonato di spiriti, onde gli fe presentare un picciolo vaso capace di sol tanto, quanto contener potrebbe la metà di una noce, con dentro un certo liquore ben chiuso, e sigillato, una cui goccia solamente accostata alle labbra rendeva maravigliosamente le forze.”

\textsuperscript{419} The moralizing subtext of Domenico’s story is perhaps more apparent when the episode is compared to an anecdote about the choleric Cellini, whose creative ardour also resulted in a potentially deadly fever. In his autobiography, Cellini claimed that he exerted himself so excessively during a failed attempt at casting his bronze \textit{Perseus} that he was felled by a raging temperature. But rather than succumb to his ailment and accept artistic defeat, he managed to recast the metal, regaining his own vital spirits in the process. As the mould filled and the statue was brought back to life, Cellini fell to his knees and called out, “Oh God, who by infinite power raised yourself from the dead and ascended into Heaven?” boldly evoking an analogy between divine animation and his own ability to resurrect the dead. And, yet, a few lines later, Cellini called his fiery casting process “a diabolical art.” Cellini’s feverish triumph, unlike the feverish failure of Bernini, straddles the line between divine facture and demonic magic. See Orsino, “Il fuoco nella vita di
than point to the potentially diabolical aspects of the fiery sculptor, the biographer subtly implies that Bernini’s creative power emulated that of the divine and then explicitly denies him the status of a demi-god by underscoring the artist’s mortal impotency. Gianlorenzo’s inability to restore his own health, to enliven himself, ultimately circumscribes his ardent powers of animation within the limits of licit facture.

Although the biographical Berninis are not perfect, especially not Domenico’s, the latter attempts to shelter the animating potency of artist’s fiery temperament from the flames of hell. This is most apparent when we read the Damned Soul and its implications for the sculptor’s choleric processes and inspiration against Domenico’s description of the making of the early St. Lawrence, a representation of Bernini’s name-saint that the biographer reads as a kind of allegorical self-portrait of the artist’s religious fervour. Domenico writes that the young sculptor re-enacted Lawrence’s agony on the grill, burning his own body and observing in a mirror the effects on his agonized face and altered flesh so as to convincingly represent the saint’s martyrdom. While we should not take literally this assertion that the artist tortured himself for his art, Domenico’s characterization of Bernini “experienc[ing] in himself” (“provare in se”) the agonies of

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Benvenuto Cellini,” for a discussion of the imagery of fire that is employed in this episode and throughout Cellini’s Vita.

420 Domenico’s distancing of Bernini from “divinity” may have been informed by the work of Sforza Pallavicino (a major figure in the biographer’s vita of his father), particularly his Arte della Perfezion Cristiana, in which he argued that the work of artists like Michelangelo and Bernini could not be compared to the work of the divine because the gap between the living and the lifeless could not be bridged. See Delbeke, “The Pope, the Bust.”

421 On Bernini’s defects and the humanity of this ‘Gran’Uomo’ in the biographies, especially Domenico’s Vita, see Delbeke, Levy and Ostrow, “Prolegomena,” 45, 47-8; Levy, “Chapter 2.”

422 Bernini, Vita, 15: “Per divozione del Santo, di cui portava il nome, volle ritrarre in marmo S. Lorenzo in atto di essere abbrugiato nudo sopra la graticcia, e per rappresentare adeguatamente nella faccia del Santo il dolore del Martirio, e l’effetto, che far doveva il fuoco nelle de lui carni, si pose egli medesimo con una gamba, e coscia nuda presso la bragia accesa, per cui venendo a provare in se il Martirio del Santo, ritraeva poi col lapis alla vista di uno Specchio i dolorosi moti della sua faccia, e osservava i vari effetti, che facevano le propie carni alterate dal calore della fiamma.” Domenico’s account of the statue’s genesis has recently been examined by, Levy, “Chapter 2” 172-3; Dumm, “Gianlorenzo on the Grill,” 223-50.
martyrdom are nonetheless significant, as the imagery presents an image of his father
subjecting himself to the flames of virtue rather than yielding to a wicked conflagration.
As Heiko Damm has argued, Domenico’s version of this trial by fire for art and out of devotion is a story about self-discovery in which the young Bernini ultimately gives birth to a virtuous self, dedicated to art and to God.\textsuperscript{423} And in light of the gap between the beatifically calm face of the \textit{St. Lawrence} and Domenico’s description of the artist’s agonized visage that served as the model for the sculpture, Damm has suggested that the biographer simply transposed an anecdote originally associated with the Damned Soul to the martyr’s sculpture so as to underscore Bernini’s Christian virtues.\textsuperscript{424} Whether or not this is the case, it is apparent that Bernini’s self-mythologizing and the life-making at the hands of his son are distinctly at odds. Moreover, where Domenico would have Bernini discover himself not through Buonarroti but by experiencing the christomimesis of his name-saint, Bernini’s Damned Soul self-consciously performs and reshapes the ‘fury’ of Michelangelo in order to authorize his own self-image.

By representing himself in and as Michelangelo’s “Fury”, Bernini constructs his selfhood by way of a dynamic interplay between mediated external and allegedly unmediated internal forces, between fashioning after an exemplary other and “revealing” the singularity of his ostensibly intrinsic essence. Michelangelo’s paradigm is thus neither a mask nor a yoke (as critics thought it had been for many in the previous century), but a productive interface that allowed Bernini to play with constructs about that which is self-revealing and that which is self-fashioning. With the Damned Soul, the sculptor performs the character of his own fury – from style, to inspiration and

\textsuperscript{423} Damm, “Gianlorenzo on the Grill,” 232.
\textsuperscript{424} Ibid., 231-2, demonstrates the subtle ways in which Domenico’s description of Bernini’s artistic martyrdom adopts the language of Christian suffering.
through to process – as simultaneously learned and innate. And while Bernini happily
shares traits with his forebear, it is the imagery of fire, in particular, that functions to
bring his particularities as an artist into focus. But as the next example shows, Bernini’s
sense of himself vis-à-vis Michelangelo is not only mobile and shifting, but also the
nature of his own fire is ever changing and mutable.

Bernini as David: Choleric Furor and the Practice of Sculpture

Bernini was not wed to a construction of his hot-temper as malign. Just a few
years after he created the Damned Soul, he re-performed his choleric identity in his self-
portrait as David, the biblical warrior whose martial fury was not driven by untamed,
fiendish impulses, but nobly motivated and divinely guided. By giving this alternative
face to his choler, Bernini was not expressing a kind of conversion or reformation of his
heated ways (as did his biographers), but rather, engaging with the various theoretical
commonplaces associated with his temper. And, here too, Bernini authorizes an image of
his choleric fury, again in its full range of meanings, by thinking through a type created
by Michelangelo.

My analysis begins with Baldinucci’s description of the self-portrait as David, in
which the biographer likens the impetuous furor of Bernini’s sculptural practice to the
biblical hero’s energetic ire. The biographer’s reading, as we shall see, is not a lens
through which to understand Bernini’s sculpture but a distinct and aposteriori
interpretation that engages with a familiar topos:

In this work Bernini overwhelmingly surpassed himself…. from youth, as he was wont to say, he devoured marble and never struck a false blow, an accomplishment of those who are superior to art itself, rather than of those who are merely expert in art. He modeled the beautiful face of this figure
The powerful knitted brows, the terrible fixity of the eyes, and the upper jaw clamped tightly over the lower lip wonderfully expresses the rightful wrath of the young Israelite in the act of aiming his sling at the forehead of the giant Philistine. The same spirit of resoluteness and vigour is seen in all parts of the body, which lacks only movement to be alive.\(^{425}\)

Here the young sculptor, who never strikes a false blow, is akin to the young warrior with his unerring aim. Both hit their target with precision, fervour and, above all, instinctive mastery. Baldinucci parallels the penetrating focus and unhesitating action of the *David* to Bernini’s sculptural process and the vigorous operations of the artist himself. He describes a portrait of the artist as a young man in a fury – one in which labour of *both* the mind (as signalled by the determined, wrathful expression) and the hand (about to strike, tried and true) are represented as a decisive and virtuous motion. As Cole has noted, by conflating David’s and Bernini’s respective victories, Baldinucci here offers a variation on the poetic link Michelangelo himself made between the biblical warrior’s triumph and the extreme physical and intellectual effort of his own sculptural prowess:

“David with his sling/and I with my bow/Michelangelo.”\(^{426}\)

A much earlier description of Bernini in the act of carving written by Lelio Guidiccioni in 1633\(^ {427}\) evokes another – if more subtly expressed – parallel between

\(^{425}\) (italics mine) Baldinucci/Enggass, *Life*, 13; Baldinucci, *Vita*, 78.

\(^{426}\) “Davide cholla Fromba/ e io collarcho/ Michelangelo,” Cole, *Cellini*, 157. Cole underscores, in particular, the biographer’s emphasis on Bernini’s control of the blow, which he sees as a description of sculptural *disegno*. (It should be noted, however, that Cole mistakenly identifies the passage on Bernini’s *David* as an account from Domenico Bernini’s *Vita.*) For a layered discussion of the annotated drawing of a David on which Michelangelo penned his comparison between David’s feat of killing a giant and his own carving of stone, see Lavin, “David’s Sling and Michelangelo’s Bow.” See also, David Summers, “David’s Scowl,” in *Michelangelo, Selected Scholarship in English*, ed. William E. Wallace (New York: Garland, 1995), 314; Charles Seymour, *Michelangelo’s David: A Search for Identity* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1967), 9.

\(^{427}\) Lelio’s description comes from a lengthy letter of 4 June 1633. The letter has been analyzed most recently by Rudolf Preimesberger, “Lelio Guidiccioni’s Letter to Bernini: A Commentary,” *Sculpture Journal* 20 (2011): 207-22, who demonstrates that it is an encomiastic text thoroughly rooted in the rhetoric of the *paragone*. His focus, however, is not on Guidiccioni’s description of Bernini’s working practice, but on the portraits of Urban VIII, in particular, and Scipione Borghese. Although Preimesberger rightly notes
David and the sculptor. Having had occasion to witness Gianlorenzo “draw life from a stone” as he carved a bust of Urban VIII, the poet expressed his awe for the artist’s working process:

But what a method he had in executing his works! What dominion over art! I will never forget the delight I felt from always being privy to the operations, seeing Your Lordship [Bernini] every morning execute a thousand contrary motions with singular ease; always discussing the topics underway suitably and straying with your hands very far from the discussion; crouching, stretching, running your fingers over the model, with the nimbleness and variety of someone touching a harp; marking the marble with coal in one hundred places, striking it with the mallet in a hundred others; that is, striking in one part, and looking in the opposite place; pushing the hand to strike before you and turning your face to look behind.428

As in Baldinucci’s reading of the David, Guidiccioni sees in Bernini’s facility and exactitude his “dominion over art.” But unlike the biographer’s description of a single,

that Guidiccioni avoids the epithet “Michelangelo of our century” in this letter (as in his other writings on Bernini), it is likely, as D’Onofrio and Delbeke have shown, that Michelangelo is a subtext of his compositions in honour of Bernini. Guidiccioni’s letter is transcribed in full and discussed by Philipp Zitzlsperger, Gianlorenzo Bernini: die Papst- und Herrscherporträts: zum Verhältnis von Bildnis und Macht (Munich: Hirmer, 2002), 55-62, 66-9, 179-83. See also, D’Onofrio, Roma vista da Roma, 380-7, who discussed and selectively published the same text. On Guidiccioni’s writings on Bernini and the implicit presence of Michelangelo in them, see Maarten Delbeke, La fenice degl’ingegni: Ein alternatief pespectief op Gianlorenzo Bernini en zijn werk in de geschriften van Sforza Pallavicino (Ghent: Ghent University Architectural and Engineering Press, 2002), 28, 33-40.

428 (italics mine) “Ma qual modo ha ella tenuto del la voro attuale! Che dominio sull’arte! Io non sono mai per dimenticarmi il detto che m’è toccato dall’intervenir sempre all’opera, vedendo ciascuna mattina V.S. con leggiadria singualre fare sempre mille moti contrarii; doscrror sempre aggiustato sul conto delle cose occorrenti et con le mani andar lontanissimo dal discorso; rannicchiarsi, distendersi, maneggiar le dita sul modello, con la prestezza, et varietà di chi tocca un arpe; segnar col carbone il marmo in cento luoghi, batter col mazzuolo in cent’altri; batter dico, in una parte, et guardar nell’opposta; spinger la mano battendo innanzi, et volger la faccia guardando indietro; vincere la contrarietà, et con animo grande soprirle subito”

As transcribed in Zitzlsperger, Gianlorenzo Bernini, 181, Giustiniani’s description of Bernini’s lively carving seems as contrived or art historically conscious as Blaise de Vigenère’s awed description of Michelangelo’s own frenzied carving: “I have seen Michelangelo, although more than sixty years old, and no longer among the most robust, knock off more chips of a very hard marble in a quarter of an hour than three young stone carvers could have done in three or four, an almost incredible thing to one who had not seen it; and he moved with such impetuosity and fury that I thought the whole work would fall to pieces, knocking to the floor with a single blow large chunks three or four fingers thick, so precisely aimed that if he had gone even minimally too far than necessary, he risked loosing it all, because it cannot be repaired, nor reformed as with images of clay or stucco.” As translated and discussed in Lavin, “David’s Sling and Michelangelo’s Bow,” 167-9. See also, Vasari/Barocchi, Vita, 2:232-3, who sees Vigenère’s passage as inspiring later romantic writers to characterize Michelangelo as “disdainful of ordinary [carving] processes” and full of “ardor and tenacity,” and Cole, Cellini, 146-7, 216n111, who questions the evidentiary value of Vigenère’s account.
purposeful action guided by furious concentration, Guidiccioni’s account of the sculptural act is a lively catalogue of a whole plethora of actions that unfold with deceptively little mental absorption on the part of the artist. Yet it is the very ease and variety with which Bernini deftly manipulates his material – despite apparent distraction – that actually discloses the alertness of mind. The sprezzatura of the sculptor’s impulsively dextrous action and calculated mental preparedness are, in turn, the very essence of furia. Guidiccioni’s account ultimately makes of the artist himself the physical and intellectual embodiment of motion in all its complexity – in essence, the living incarnation of furor – which Bernini, in turn, imparts to the highly animated portrait he is in the act of carving. And by characterizing Bernini’s movement as encompassing the breadth of an agile harpist and a forceful striker – two aspects of the biblical David’s identity (psalmist and warrior) that also happen to be represented in Gianlorenzo’s allegorical self-portrait [fig. 64] – Guidiccioni suggestively makes the sculptor into a David.

The presence of the harp in both Guidiccioni’s description and Bernini’s statue might also be understood as a nuanced reflection upon Michelangelo’s own identification with David in the distich noted above. At least one seventeenth-century interpreter of the artist’s two richly layered lines, his great-nephew Michelangelo Buonarroti the Younger (publisher of the first edition of the Rime di Michelagnolo Buonarroti in 1623 and longtime friend of Cardinal Maffeo Barberini) apparently interpreted the “bow” as a reference

429 Summers, Michelangelo, 60-4.
430 I would argue that it is not coincidental that Guidiccioni’s description of Bernini’s repertoire of working movements follows a lengthy account of the various motions represented in the very bust of Urban VIII he so animatedly carved, a juxtaposition that implies that the liveliness of the bust is due, in part, to the dynamism of its maker. On the successive and simultaneous motions that Guidiccioni sees in the bust of Urban VIII, see Preimesberger, “Lelio Guidiccioni’s Letter to Bernini,” 212-3.
to the curved frame of a harp.\textsuperscript{431} This construal, as Robert J. Clements noted, does not obscure the theme of physical and intellectual prowess; rather, it supplements it with the agile and cerebral operations of the musician.\textsuperscript{432} Buonarroti the Younger’s interpretation of “bow” as “harp” – which we might imagine as a subject of discussion among the seicento connoisseurs of Michelangelo – might offer an explanation for the otherwise unusual presence of the harp in Bernini’s statue, which is typically interpreted as a reference to the poetic ambitions of Maffeo Barberini,\textsuperscript{433} but which alternatively could be a metaphor for the artist’s/hero’s activity. Indeed, just as furor moved the poet to break out into spirited song, as Ficino claimed, here, too, \textit{ut scultura poesis}, furor moved the sculptor to breathe life into stone. Bernini’s harpist/warrior visualizes the correlation between the sculptor’s poetics (the harp which he has set aside) and the work of his hand.

\textsuperscript{431} Robert J. Clements, \textit{The Poetry of Michelangelo} (New York: New York University Press, 1965), 154-60. Clements, as far as I know, is the first scholar to mention Buonarroti the Younger’s interpretation of the bow as harp, however, he does not indicate where it is among the latter’s writings that he found the reference. I have consulted the 1623 \textit{Rime} and not seen any such reference. If we are to take Clements at his word, it is likely he came across this interpretation among Buonarroti the Younger’s copious notes, documents and correspondence that are housed in the archive of the Casa Buonarroti (which I have consulted, but before I came across Clements’ reference). Clements suggests that even before Buonarroti the Younger’s interpretation, there is evidence which suggests that Michelangelo himself intended an association between “bow” and “harp.” Clements connected the (now lost) bronze \textit{David} that Michelangelo made for Maréchal de Gié with the distich in the drawing by way of a French inventory which indicates that when the work was displayed in France, Michelangelo inscribed the base of the bronze statue with a verse that likened David’s sling and his harp: “D’un seul just coup de ma fronde/ Et de ma harpe je fis voir….” Clements’ interpretation develops Joseph Tusiani’s earlier and more general association of the “bow” with music: “The fact that David, a poet, had to resort to a sling and a stone to attain his goal may suggest that Michelangelo, a sculptor, might have felt, in a moment of dejection, the futility or limitation of one art and the need of another. But why the bow? The theme of bow and arrows, which was dear to Petrarchists of the Renaissance, will recur in most of Michelangelo’s love poems. Whatever the interpretation, there is strength in this sudden and almost abrupt association of sling and bow, of stone and song.” See Joseph Tusiani, \textit{The Complete Poems of Michelangelo} (New York: Noonday Press, 1969), 169. For a critique of Clements’ reading, see Seymour, \textit{Michelangelo’s David}, 6, 84n5.

\textsuperscript{432} Clements, \textit{Poetry of Michelangelo}, 159.

\textsuperscript{433} On the harp as an allusion to Maffeo Barberini/Urban VIII and his own practice of poetry, see Preimesberger, “Themes from Art Theory,” 12-3; idem, “David,” 218; Avery, \textit{Bernini}, 71; Schütze, \textit{Kardinal Maffeo Barberini}, 240-1. On the frontispiece showing \textit{David Strangling the Lion} (also with a harp cast aside) that Bernini created for Urban VIII’s small volume of published Latin poems, the \textit{Poemata} (1631), see D’Onofrio, \textit{Roma vista da Roma}, 35-41; Maurizio Fagiolo dell’Arco, “Illustrazioni e disegno per i \textit{Poemata} di Urbano VIII,” in Bernardini and Fagiolo dell’Arco, eds., \textit{Gian Lorenzo Bernini: regista}, 411-2; Posèq, “Bernini’s Self-Portraits as David,” 17-9; idem, “Physiognomic Communication in Bernini,” 172-4; Schütze, \textit{Kardinal Maffeo Barberini}, 28-9.
(the stone in the sling that will offer a blow that does not kill, but rather, creates a “living” statue). A few years after the David was carved, Agostino Maccardi explicitly associated the life-giving powers of Bernini’s tools with those of a mythological musician Amphion – an ostensible counterpart to the biblical David – writing that the youth was the only sculptor who “with a chisel knows how to give a sense of life to stones better than Amphion with his fabulous song.” The analogy implies that just as stone blocks leapt into action at the sound of Amphion’s lyre, so too Bernini, using his chisel (or his sling, as it were), coaxed motion from inanimate marbles.

Just as it is possible to read the Davidian allusions in the above passages as metonyms for the sculptor’s physical and intellectual triumph over the difficulties of his art, so too Preimesberger has understood Bernini’s statue as an allegory of difficoltà of the sculptural process akin to that expressed in Michelangelo’s distich. Cole has pursued the correlation between the intellectual and physical somewhat differently by underscoring the relationship between artistic forethought and facture and characterizing Bernini’s David as a “demonstration of how the body of the hero [i.e. sculptor] might follow the purpose of a conception.” For Cole, Bernini’s statue is a “partisan” elaboration upon Michelangelo’s sculpture of David, itself a representation of the whole body engaged in the “act of perception.” The relevance of Cole’s emphasis on

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434 Agostino Maccardi, Discorsi morali sulla Tavola di Cebetex (Venice: Girolamo Pelagallo, 1627), 320-1. For an analysis of the symbolic and artistic content of the full passage of Maccardi’s discourse from which this allusion to Amphion is taken, see Bellini, “From Maccardi to Pallavicino,” 279-83. See also, Elisabeth Cropper, The Ideal of Painting: Pietro Testa’s Düsseldorf Notebook (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), 159-60; idem, Domenichino Affair, 160. More broadly, on seventeenth-century ideas regarding the power of music to enliven the spirits, see Montagu, Expression of the Passions, 53-5.


436 Cole, Cellini, 156-7. Cole’s analysis develops Kauffmann’s reading of Bernini’s David as an expression of the sculptor’s virtuous and heroic victory and, ultimately, as an example of fortitude. See Kauffmann, Giovanni Lorenzo Bernini, 57-8.
conception, that is, the mental faculty of disegno that literally triggers artistic action, emerges more fully when we view Bernini’s allegorical self-representation against the sculptor’s own purported description of his working process, specifically his method of preparing for and executing a portrait.

According to Bernini’s biographers, the sculptor began a portrait by sketching and modelling his subject as he observed him in motion, but when it came time to carve the individual’s animated likeness in stone Gianlorenzo set aside his preliminary drawings and clay models and proceeded from the image in his mind’s eye:

when asked by the king, who marvelled at his actions, why he did not want to make use of his [preliminary] work, [Bernini] responded, that the models served to introduce the features of his subject into his imagination, but once [the subject] was conceived there and it was time to give birth [to the portrait], they were no longer necessary, in fact, they were damaging to his purpose, which was to give forth not something similar to his studies, but to the real.

Chantelou likewise observed that Bernini had made the drawings of Louis XIV “only to imprint the image of the king on his mind as forcibly as possible, so that he should drench (inzupparsi) and saturate himself (imbeversi) in it, to use [Bernini’s] words; had he followed the drawings very closely, he would have made a copy instead of an

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437 On design, in its dual meaning of ideation and action, as an exercise of virtue, see Cole, Cellini, esp. 118-40.
438 Bernini, Vita, 134: “In oltre fù suo costantissimo proposito in somiglianti materie, far prima molti disegni, e molti della figura, ch’egli doveva rappresentare, mà quando poi nel Marmo metteva mano all’opera, tutti se li toglieva d’attorno, come se a nulla gli servissero: E richiesto dal Rè, che prese maraviglia di questo fatto con domandargliene la cagione, del non volersi valere delle sue istesse fatiche, rispose, che i Modelli gli erano serviti per introdurre nella fantasia le fattezze di chì egli doveva ritrarre, mà quando già le haveva concepite, e doveva dar fuori il parto, non gli erano più necessari, anzi dannosi al suo fine, che era di darlo fuori, non simile alli Modelli, mà al Vero.” See also, Baldinucci/Enggass, Life, 78; Baldinucci, Vita, 144: “Per fare il ritratto della maestà del re di Francia, egli ne fece prima alquanti modelli; nel metter poi mano all’opera, alla presenza del re tutti se gli tolse d’attorno e a quel monarca che ammirando quel fatto, gli domandò la cagione del non volersi valere delle sue fatiche, rispose che i modelli gli erano serviti per introdurre nella fantasia le fattezze di chì egli doveva ritrarre, ma quando già le aveva concepite e dovea dar fuori il parto, non gli erano più necessari, anzi dannosi al suo fine, che era di darlo fuori non simile a’ modelli, ma al vero.”
The sculptor’s studies of his subject in motion thus not only served empirically to furnish knowledge of the individual character of his subject, but also functioned to create a storehouse of mental images from which he could create an original, syncretic likeness of his subject. Within the specific context of portrait theory, Bernini’s practice can be understood as defensive – it underscores the fundamental role of the mind and the imagination in the creation of a portrait, a genre thought by some (most notably, Michelangelo) to exhibit the least intellectual form of imitation.

Bernini’s purported use of procreative and digestive metaphors – concepire, partorire, inzupparsi, imbeversi (synonym of impregnarsi) – to characterize his method of invention further emphasized the autonomy of his portrait from any referent by likening his imagination to a womb and the portrait born of it to his own offspring.

It is this very capacity for conceiving mental pictures that are promptly born of vigorous physical labour that is visualized in the David. And as a self-portrait, the statue also makes the claim that the image in the hero’s/sculptor’s mind – which is, paradoxically, the very sculpture itself – rivals in lifeliness the living Bernini. The sculptor’s allegorical demonstration of the fury of his own ideation and execution thus summons to mind Vasari’s (and others’) characterization specifically of the furore di disegno, the facility by which masterful artists realized their ideas in drawing: “it also

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439 (italics mine) Chantelou, Diary, 92; idem, Journal, 98 (July 30). This claim is repeated throughout Chantelou’s Diary, 89, 115; idem, Journal, 96, 115-6 (July 30, August 12): “qu’il ne s’était pas meme servi depuis de ses dessins, afin de ne pas faire une copie de son proper ouvrage au lieu d’un original; qu’il ne les avait faits à diverses fois que per inzupparsi et imbeversi dell’immagine del Re, ce sont ses propres mots.”

440 Delbeke, “The Pope, the Bust,” 217.


442 On procreative and digestive metaphors in relation to imitation and invention, see Pigman, “Imitation in the Renaissance,” 5-9; Kemp, “From ‘mimesis’ to ‘fantasia’,” 381-2; Jacobs, Living Image, 23-4, 119.
often seems that rough sketches, which are created in an instant of artistic frenzy, express
the idea behind them in a few strokes.\textsuperscript{443} Bernini’s \textit{David} appropriates the prized
vividness of the quickly-realized rough drawing to a representation of ‘mental sketching,’
as it were. But Bernini’s conceptions did not require a long period of gestation. The
immediacy of the sculptor’s invisible \textit{disegno} – a sudden flash in the mind that will be
quickly realized in physical, visual form with an unerring blow – carries itself through to
the statue itself, thus collapsing the distance between an inspired sketch and a masterfully
executed final work and, in doing so, sustaining the impetuous fury of design from
conception through birth.\textsuperscript{444}

If, on the one hand, Bernini’s \textit{David} is about “conception” and Michelangelo’s,
on the other, is about “perception,” both sculptors convey furious mental operations by
way of the biblical hero’s scowling visage [figs. 65 and 66], an audacious expression
which scholars have suggested makes visible the \textit{pathos} (fleeting emotion) and \textit{ethos}
(individual character) of the biblical hero’s soul and, in turn, that of the sculptor. Rooting
his analysis in the early modern physiognomic thought, which sought to discover the
temperament of an individual in their face as well as in the expressive motions of their

\textsuperscript{443} Vasari/Bettarini-Barocchi, \textit{Vite}, 1:117: “Gli schizzi, de’ quali si è favellato di sopra, chiamiamo noi una
prima sorte di disegni che si fanno per trovare il modo delle attitudini et il primo componimento dell’opra;
e sono fatti in forma di una ma[c]chia e accennati solamente da noi in una sola bozza del tutto. E perché dal
furor dello artefice sono in poco tempo con penna o con altro disegnatoio o carbone espressi solo per
tentare l’animo di quel che gli sovviene, perciò si chiamano schizzi.” See also Armenini, \textit{True Precepts},
147; idem, \textit{De veri precetti}, 94: “Gli è forza che la materia si esprima in più volte: io dico quando una parte
e quando due, ovvero tutta ancora, seconda la qualità e grandezza sua, e chi si vien facendo sul furore di
quel concetto che subito si espone a guisa di macchia, che da noi schizzo o bozza si dice, conciossiaché si
accennano diverse attitudini di figure e di altre materie in tempo brevissimo, secondo che confusamente ne
sovviene.” On Vasari’s and others’ treatment of the spontaneous quality of \textit{furia} as a preliminary process,
\textsuperscript{444} On the virtues and vices of speedy execution, see Summers, \textit{Michelangelo}, 64-5. Cole has also
demonstrated that Cellini’s concept of fury is intimately related to sculptural \textit{disegno}. But unlike Bernini’s
representation of the spontaneous fury of his ideation and execution, Cellini perceived “the slow,
prospective furor of \textit{disegno}” as “distinguishable from the quick, reactive furor of carving.” See Cole,
\textit{Cellini}, 147.
David Summers has argued that the heavily furrowed brow, square forehead and intense glare of Michelangelo’s *David* resembles the lion-man described in Giambattista della Porta’s *Della fisionomia dell’huomo* (first published in Latin as *De humana physiognomia*, 1589) [fig. 67]. Della Porta identifies the lion as the most masculine animal type graced with the qualities of courage and daring, though inclined to anger and fury. Michelangelo’s allusion to the bold and furious leonine type not only appropriately represents the young David as the “Lion of Judah,” but also suits the resoluteness of spirit required of a sculptor whose idea must penetrate the intractable medium of stone. Preimesberger has applied similar leonine physiognomics to an analysis of Bernini’s *David*, seeing the contracted muscles of the brow as a self-reflective interpretation of Michelangelo’s bold warrior/sculptor whose intellectual machinations drive his physical triumph. Perhaps most significant, especially with regard to Bernini’s use of his own features for the *David*, the lion is typically identified as the animal with a choleric disposition in personifications of the tempers, as in Ripa’s *Colerico* [fig. 68].

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446 Summers, “David’s Scowl,” 311-22.
447 Della Porta, *Della fisionomia dell’huomo*, 92.
448 Summers, “David’s Scowl,” 315.
450 Cesare Ripa, *Iconologia, nella quale si descrivono diverse imagini di virtù, vitij, affetti, passioni humane, arti, discipline, humori, elementi, corpi celesti, prouincie d’Italia, fiumi, tutte le parti del mondo, ed altre infinite materie* (Siena, Gli Heredi di M. Florini, ad instanza di B. Ruoti, libraio in Fiorenza, 1613), 84-5.
The disposition suggested by the respective scowls of the cinquecento and seicento Davids is a significant part of understanding Bernini’s self-representation and his engagement with Michelangelo’s own identity formation. But Bernini’s davi
dian furor may not be that of a lion. Avigdor Posèq has argued that the sculptor’s expression in the David neither resembles a lion, nor wholly conforms to della Porta’s leonine type in either appearance or character. He posits, instead, that the artist’s scowl recalls that of an eagle, whose features cross with the lion.\(^{451}\) Posèq’s argument is grounded in descriptions of Bernini’s appearance, especially those by Chantelou and Cureau de la Chambre who both write: “His face resembles an eagle’s, particularly the eyes: black, vivid and piercing; he has thick brows and a lofty forehead, slightly sunk in the middle and raised over the eyes.”\(^{452}\) According to della Porta, an individual resembling an eagle had deeply set leonine eyes, a high brow and aquiline nose and possessed, in tandem with the eagle’s magnanimity, regal air and liberality, a rapacious and warrior-like ferocity [fig. 69].\(^{453}\) From a symbolic standpoint, the eagle’s noble rage perhaps better represents the dual nature of the warrior-king David than the lion’s courageous ire. Luigi Scaramuccia perceived both types as present in Bernini’s David in 1674, shortly before Baldinucci put pen to paper: “You see ire in the face of that generous Shepherd, yes, but possessed of a natural Regality, however, that charms you.”\(^{454}\) What is more, though it has gone


\(^{452}\) Chantelou, Diary, 14-5; idem, Journal, 46 (June 6). Bernini is described in similar terms by La Chambre in his French biography of the artist: “Son visage a\'oit du rapport à aigle, particulièrement les yeux: noirs, vivs e perçans. Il a\'oit le nez grand e le front large un peu cave par le milieu et relevé doucement au dessus des yeux,” as transcribed in Montanari, “Pierre Cureau de La Chambre,” 125.

\(^{453}\) “L‘Aquila ha gli occhi leonati, riposti in dentro e profondi; il naso adunco e ben rilevato dal fronte…. È di costume feroci, guerriera; magnanima e liberale, di animo regale; rapace et animosa.” Della Porta, Della fisionomia dell’huomo, 103.

\(^{454}\) “Il Davide pure del medesimo Cavagliere per gran pezza osservarono, che con vivace, e ardito movimento stà in atto di avventare il colpo del fortunato Sasso in colui, che Gigantescamente oltraggiava il
unnounced, Bernini offers external clues in the very statue of David itself to help the viewer read his character as equivalent to this avian physiognomic type. The sculptor’s/warrior’s harp, the instrument he temporarily cast aside in order to take up the battle, is crowned with an eagle’s head whose features and expression mirror those of Bernini as the scowling David himself [fig. 70]. The presence of the eagle thus not only lends support to Bernini’s fearsome grimace, but also asserts, if we adopt Della Porta’s aquiline logic, that his ferocious character is tempered by majesty. The eagle-like furor of Bernini is here presented as that of a princely sculptor whose wrathful operations make him destined for God-sanctioned glory.

The eagle was also, if only rarely, an emblem of the choleric temperament. In his 1554 engravings of the Four Temperaments, the German printmaker, Virgil Solis, represented COERIVS – whose actions, according to the inscription below, are characterized by abundant force – as a female personification attended by a screeching eagle and a growling lion [fig. 71]. The greater physical intimacy between the eagle and the personification herself, particularly the eagle’s proximity to her head (as opposed to the lion’s position near her feet), suggests a stronger association with the intellective

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455 The eagle does not so much reveal Bernini’s physiognomy, but rather offers external evidence to help viewer constitute it. Bernini’s apparent attempt to make his own physiognomy legible resonates with Bronwen Wilson’s observations about the representational strategies artists/sitters adopted to make the interiority of sitters decipherable to the viewer of portraits. As Wilson has noted, the growing interest in (and even suspicion of) physiognomic treatises in the later part of the cinquecento and into the seicento, is a response to the difficulty of reading a person’s interiority from external cues. And even if physiognomy was not always an accurate indicator of character, it nonetheless offered knowledge that made the inner being legible. See Wilson, “The Renaissance Portrait,” 467-71; idem, “The ‘Confusion of Faces’: The Politics of Physiognomy, Concealed Hearts, and Public Visibility,” in Making Publics in Early Modern Europe: People, Things and Forms of Knowledge, eds. Bronwen Wilson and Paul Yachnin (New York: Routledge, 2010), 179-87.

potency of heat. Solis’s image does not have an Italian equivalent, yet we might look to della Porta’s text as evidence that Bernini’s contemporaries recognized the same affinities between the eagle’s fiery spirit and the martial disposition. Della Porta describes the eagle and, in turn, the aquiline-man as ferocious, bellicose, magnanimous, liberal, regal, rapacious and spirited. And though he does not specifically identify the type as choleric, the attentive reader who has perused della Porta’s descriptions of the four temperaments at the outset of his text could not but notice that the choleric temper alone possesses all of the eagle’s qualities. One such discerning reader was Johann Kaspar Lavater, the eighteenth-century physiognomist who made explicit the connection between fiery dispositions and the noble eagle that della Porta had implied by giving a markedly aquiline profile to his choleric type [fig. 72].

By individualizing the choleric-tempered David with his own fiercely aquiline gaze, Bernini makes a much more personal claim about the kind of character that is suited to the strenuous intellecctual processes of sculpture, a character different from Michelangelo’s wholly appropriate (though temperamentally non-Saturnine and thus, less thoroughly self-reflective) lion-David. And notwithstanding his allegiance to Michelangelo’s representation of mental, “perceptual” faculties, which are conveyed in a

457 Della Porta, Della fisionomia dell’huomo, 103, 260.
459 Although Posèq, “On Physiognomic Communication in Bernini,” 169-79, argued in favour of reading Bernini’s physiognomy as aquiline (based solely on the descriptions of Bernini by contemporaries and by his biographers), it is striking that he explicitly denies the possibility that the temper demonstrated in the David is choleric: “The young David may have been enraged by his Philistine opponent however there is no ground to describe him as choleric.”
David whose whole body is rapt in the non-activity of furious anticipation, Bernini’s
David also displays, quite literally, a rivalrous position. The ardent motions of
Bernini’s/David’s mind impel him, unlike that of Michelangelo’s biblical hero, towards
an equally impetuous action. Reverberating with the fire of ideation and manual activity
(as opposed to potential activity) Bernini’s David is moved by the same martial heat that
propels its maker. The serpentine pose of this allegorical self-portrait further underscores
the ardent nature of Bernini’s being and, in turn, his sculptural operations. In the David,
it is the signifying power of the motions of the body, as much as those of the face, that
make it possible to decipher Bernini’s construction of his choleric identity.

In a study of the physiognomy of fury as represented in the early works of
seventeenth sculptors, Ulrike Müller Hofstede demonstrated that furore/furia was
frequently associated with the ardour of carving as well as the force of the sculptor’s
ingegno. Hofstede does not consider temperament, nor does she discuss Bernini’s
David, yet the rhetoric of this statue perhaps best underscores the innately fervid presence
of mind and body that she suggests defines the sculptor’s practice. Far more than
summoning (or surpassing) Michelangelo’s example, Bernini’s sculpture rather vividly
evokes Cesare Ripa’s personification of INGEGNO [fig. 73]: a winged nude youth with a
ferocious and bold countenance who wears an eagle topped helmet and is in the act of
pulling taut a bow with his left hand and an arrow with his right. According to Ripa’s

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461 “Un giovane d’aspetto feroce, e ardito, sarà nudo, haverà in capo un elmo, e per cimero un’Aquila a
gl’homeri l’ali di diversi colori. Terrà con la sinistra mano un’arco, e con la destra una frezza, stando con
attenzione in atto di tirare.” Ripa, Iconologia, 238-9. A similar parallel between Ripa’s Ingegno and the theme of ingegno in Bernini’s biographies has been made by Delbeke, Levy and Ostrow, “Prolegomena,” 42, 44. By comparison, Kauffmann, Giovanni Lorenzo Bernini, 57, related Bernini’s David to Ripa’s Fortezza, a personification of a spirit that is undefeated thanks to its love of virtue: “con animo invitto per
description, the ferocious visage demonstrates vigour and force, the wings express speed, quickness of speech and variety of invention, the eagle specifies generosity and sublimity and, finally, the bow and arrow indicate a potent and incisive intellect. For Ripa, ferocity is thus the essence of innate talent, not just one possible aspect of it. This is a significant departure from Alberti’s disparagement of the individuality revealed by too fervent motion and ingegno. And while Ripa’s personification of ingegno was not discipline specific, Bernini’s David situates the concept expressly within the realm of sculpture. His fearsome countenance, his act of pulling taut the sling in the instant before unleashing the stone, his eagle-topped harp are close adaptations of the essentials of Ripa’s description that make of the furor of the choleric sculptor the living embodiment of ingegno. In the David, furious innate talent and action is temperament- and medium specific. And, here, it is distinctively Bernini. The David gives a new face, and with it a newly individuated persona, to Michelangelo’s example of the artist possessed of fury.

amor della virtù.” My investigation of the relationship between Bernini’s David and Ripa’s Ingegno was first inspired by Lavin’s rich study of the distich accompanying Michelangelo’s drawing of David. Lavin suggestively likened the Herculean connotations of Michelangelo’s poem to Ripa’s personification of Ingegno. See Lavin, “David’s Sling and Michelangelo’s Bow,” 164.

A mention should be made about the external motives for Bernini’s self-portrayal in these two allegorical portraits. Unlike the many painted and drawn portraits that the artist created for himself and often gave away as gifts, the Damned Soul and the David were linked to specific patrons and created on commission. We can thus assume that the patron not only appreciated the self-portrait, but perhaps even encouraged the artist to use his own features. It is also likely that Bernini’s patrons, either spurred on by Maffeo Barberini or stimulated by their own desire to shape the identity of the “new Michelangelo,” fostered the michelangesque allusions in both works. While little is known about the sympathies and activities of the Spanish Cardinal Pedro Foix de Montoya, who might have commissioned Bernini’s two soul portraits, the high ranking associations of Cardinal Alessandro Peretti Montalto, the original patron of the David, suggests something of the complex network of maecenas actively participating (possibly even competing) in the of fashioning Bernini into Michelangelo his age. Both of Gianlorenzo’s biographers mention only Scipione Borghese as the patron of the David and note that Maffeo Barberini held a mirror for the artist as he studied his own features for the portrait. But documents demonstrate that the statue was begun under the auspices of Cardinal Montalto, nephew of Sixtus V, who had commissioned the Neptune and Triton fountain from Bernini a year or so prior. The poses of the figures in the fountain sculpture not only look to forms inspired by Michelangelo’s Victory, but I would suggest that visual comparisons between contemporary images of Bernini and the face of Triton also make it possible see this as another allegorical self-portrait. If this is the case, we have two instances of allegorical portraits for a single patron.
that engage loosely with forms and/or artistic concepts associated with Michelangelo. Bernini’s fiery character is also performed in this work by way of Triton’s breath. As Cole, “The Medici Mercury,” has shown, breath was a commonplace of Italian fountain conceits, its frequent presence explained by theories rooted in Aristotle and Hippocrates that described the processes of exhalation and distillation as the introduction of heat into water or earth which causes the exhalation of “spirits” in the form of wet vapour. Bernini self-reflective iteration of this concetto in the form of the exhaling Triton appropriates this power of metamorphosis for the productive processes of the cholic artist; inherently full of hot air, the fiery sculptor produces the life-giving water through the mutable operations of his ardent breath. By breathing his own fiery spiritus into water, Bernini enacts the metamorphosis at the heart of Ovid’s tale of re-creation from Metamorphoses (Book 1:274-91, 329-39) that furnishes the conceit for the fountain ensemble. It would seem that Cardinal Montalto played a significant and as yet unnoticed role in Bernini’s early allegorical self-representation and self-definition through Michelangelo.
Chapter Three

Bernini the Sculptor-Architect at New St. Peter’s

Sometime during the pontificate of Alexander VII (1655-67), Bernini made a drawing of a niche for an unidentified papal project outside St. Peter’s [fig. 74] to which he added the following annotation: “It seems to me it will work well in this manner and the niche will be four palmi wide as you requested. I say that it will work well not because it is my invention, but that of the master, that is, Michelangelo Buonarroti, and he made it at Saint Peter’s.”464 When Bernini wrote these words he had been the official Architect of St. Peter’s for around thirty years, thus it comes as no surprise that he was intimately acquainted with his predecessor’s work at this site. Nor is it particularly remarkable that the artist who so successfully and self-servingly emulated Michelangelo in sculpture should have also wanted to fashion himself after the master in architecture to similar ends. What is unexpected, however, is the self-effacing tenor of Bernini’s deference to Buonarroti’s example: it is Michelangelo’s Petrine architecture, not his own, that is infallible and, by implication, superior. While this might be explained by Gianlorenzo’s purportedly high estimation of Michelangelo’s architectural skills (which he purportedly praised as “divine” in Chantelou’s diary),465 nowhere had he juxtaposed his own expertise so unflatteringly to that of the cinquecento master. Bernini’s

464 “In questo modo mi pare che faceste bene et la nicchia sarebbe larga palmi quattro come si desidera. Dico che farebbe bene non perchè sia mia invenzione, ma è del maestro cioè di Michelangelo Buonarroti, et la fatta a S.Pietro.” As cited in Giovanni Morello, “I rapporti tra Alessandro VII e Gian Lorenzo Bernini,” in Documentary Culture, eds. Elizabeth Cropper, Giovanna Perini and Francesco Solinas (Bologna: Nuova Alfa Editoriale, 1992), 194n42. The drawing [BAV Chig. G II 48, f. 356], which is among numerous paper works by Bernini that are contained in the Chigi documents, might be connected to the sundry projects the architect was designing for Siena Cathedral. As Morello intimates, Bernini’s annotation might have been for the benefit of the German architect Giovanni Paolo Schor, who was overseeing work at the Sienese church on his behalf.

465 Chantelou, Diary, 41; idem, Journal, 64 (June 25).
identification of Michelangelo as the author of the niche design, reads at once like a
confident, astute reuse of an exemplary model and a cautious, even preemptive, gesture in
anticipation of criticism of his own authority. If this annotated drawing implies that the
seicento architect had a modest association with Michelangelo’s Petrine example outside
St. Peter’s, we might ask what Bernini’s relationship was with “the master” at the basilica
itself.

When Bernini assumed the title of Architect of St. Peter’s in February 1629, he
was the latest in a series of architects charged with contributing to a building project
which, though ever-changing, decades in the making, multi-authored, and conscious of its
original Constantinian fabric, was significantly shaped by Buonarroti’s unfinished design.
In the wake of Michelangelo’s celebrated tenure as Architect of St. Peter’s,466 the
responsibility of living up to, let alone surpassing, his on-site legacy was a particularly
onerous enterprise for his many successors. The latter were distinguished, however, by
how they engaged formally and conceptually with their fragmentary architectural
inheritance. Giacomo Della Porta, for example, was praised for completing the cupola
according to Michelangelo’s designs and creating little domes that respectfully emulated
the style of the master,467 while Carlo Maderno, who sensitively adopted Michelangelo’s
architectural vocabulary, was nonetheless maligned for having destroyed the proportion

466 For a general overview of Michelangelo’s plans for New St. Peter’s, see Henry A. Millon and Craig
Hugh Smyth, “Michelangelo and St. Peter’s: observations on the interior of the apses, a model of the apse
vault, and related drawings,” Römisches Jahrbuch für Kunstgeschichte 16 (1976): 137-206; James
Carlo Argan and Bruno Contardi, Michelangelo Architect, trans. Marion L. Grayson (New York: Harry N.
467 Federico Bellini, “La cupola di San Pietro da Michelangelo a Della Porta,” in Sankt Peter in Rom 1506-

Bernini’s building activity at the basilica, which includes the Baldacchino, bell towers, a set of façade designs, and the colonnaded piazza, \footnote{I do not include Bernini’s \textit{Scala Regia} in this discussion of Bernini’s architectural contributions to St. Peter’s because the work is part of the Vatican Palace, not the Basilica proper.} is an important feature of his identity as the seicento Michelangelo as it comprises one aspect of his fashioning after Buonarroti the architect. Given the task of completing a work-in-progress whose defining contribution by Michelangelo was deemed to have been spoiled by Maderno (Gianlorenzo’s immediate predecessor), Bernini’s Petrine ventures were distinct from his architectural commissions outside St. Peter’s where he was typically employed to design new edifices or to construct façades for buildings not associated with Buonarroti. Only at the basilica would it have been necessary (rather than discretionary, as with the drawing above) to enter into dialogue with Michelangelo’s formal language, physical imprint and unrealized designs as well as with the interventions, sensitive or otherwise, of Buonarroti’s previous successors at the site. Bernini’s engagement with Michelangelo at St. Peter’s is thus more akin to unofficial “posthumous collaboration” \footnote{I borrow the phrase “posthumous collaboration” from literary studies, where it is employed to describe a text by a living writer that completes a story left in fragmentary form at the time of the original author’s death (sometimes these texts, although they purport to complete an unfinished work, are written entirely by the living writer). In this type of collaboration, the living writer may or may not have any sense of how the original author envisioned the completed work. And even if the living writer is aware of the deceased author’s intentions, this knowledge may have little influence on the final, complete work. Although posthumous collaboration serves to reinstate the centrality of the original author, the import of subsequent authors need not be seen as subordinate; indeed, sometimes it is flagrantly insubordinate. As Gordon} than the kind of
imitation I have been exploring thus far, for it is not grounded in an autonomous work that visibly and/or conceptually evoked his predecessor’s oeuvre but in interdependent pieces contingent on an existing Michelangelo-Maderno fabric that determined, in part, their appearance. And just as the extant church measurably affected Bernini’s interventions, so too, Gianlorenzo’s work changed how both Buonarroti’s and Maderno’s contributions would be perceived.

Bernini’s architectural contributions to St. Peter’s are the subject of numerous case studies that examine his projects as separate enterprises and situate them within their complex religious, political and architectural contexts. Although these investigations frequently consider Michelangelo’s legacy at the site and its impact on Gianlorenzo, this relationship is rarely the predominant focus. The result is a fragmentary portrait of how Bernini’s Petrine architecture entered into what I would argue was a consistent and self-conscious dialogue with Buonarroti’s physical imprint on St. Peter’s as well as the

McMullan has shown with regard to Shakespeare and his posthumous collaborators, sometimes the latter “[learns] from his master only then to ease him out of his role.” In other words, by way of study and adaptation, the posthumous collaborator asserts himself while underscoring the importance of the original author. For the studies on posthumous collaboration in literary work most influential to my thinking about Bernini’s work at St. Peter’s, see Gordon McMullan, *Shakespeare and the Idea of Late Writing: Authorship in the Proximity of Death* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), esp. 230-35; Don Herron, “The Dark Barbarian,” in *The Dark Barbarian: The Writings of Robert E. Howard, a Critical Anthology*, ed. Don Herron (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1984), 164-74.


latter’s designs for the basilica, whether a matter of record or of the historical imagination. By re-examining Gianlorenzo’s architectural interventions into the inner and outer fabric of the church – whether these were realized, eventually torn down or extant only at the design stage – against his predecessor’s work and identity as an architect, I hope to better situate Bernini’s attitude to Michelangelo’s Petrine vision and more fully understand this discrete aspect of his formation after Buonarroti the architect.

Bernini’s work at St. Peter’s marks the historical beginning of his architectural career. In 1629, when he took up his official tenure at St. Peter’s, he was an untrained architect known largely for his virtuosic lifelike sculptures of the human form. Yet over the previous five years he had been working on the Baldacchino [fig. 75], his first architectural contribution to the basilica473 and the monument that would transform him from a sculptor into an architect. As George C. Bauer has demonstrated, the theoretical and practical basis for this metamorphosis lay in the notion developed in the cinquecento that sculptors were eminently suited to the practice of architecture because, like architects, they created three-dimensional works that were measured according to human proportions. Rallying visual, documentary and biographical evidence, Bauer highlighted the determining role proportion played in the monument’s development and conception and showed that Bernini’s manner of adjudicating measures went beyond quantitative proportions in order to accommodate a qualitative impression of dimension indebted to Michelangelo’s “giudizio dell’occhio” (compasses in the eyes).474 Although Bauer’s study implicated Buonarroti in Bernini’s formation as an architect, he was not invested in an argument about Bernini’s identification with Michelangelo, the very paradigm of the

473 Although the Baldacchino is neither sculpture nor architecture proper, but a mixture of the two, seicento writings repeatedly classify the work as architectural.
474 Bauer, “Bernini and the Baldacchino.”
sculptor-cum-architect whose eye for proportion proved his architectural sensibility and was deemed by some as constitutive of his success. In part one of this chapter, I revisit the visual, documentary and textual material related to the Baldacchino (including material not examined by Bauer), but rather than treat this disparate evidence as mutually supporting, I approach each as a separate entity that offers its own construction of Bernini as a michelangesque architect and which may or may not be interrelated. My examination begins with an analysis of visual and documentary material in order to make evident the processes and principles behind the Baldacchino’s production and to demonstrate that part of Bernini’s fashioning after Buonarroti, the sculptor-architect, entailed adopting his practices. I read this evidence against various seicento writings on the monument as well as Bernini’s “contrapposti,” that is, his purported theory of proportions as recorded in Chantelou (which have not been brought to bear on this issue), in order to offer a more nuanced picture of how Bernini, contemporary writers and his biographers used the Baldacchino to define the type(s) of architect Gianlorenzo had become.

In the second part of this chapter, I move to the exterior of St. Peter’s and engage in a close formal analysis of Bernini’s bell towers, façade designs and colonnade, with a focus on how the sculptor-cum-architect continued to employ the principles of qualitative visual proportion he used in the Baldacchino. I consider these interventions as an accretive ensemble through which Bernini recalibrated the relationship between Michelangelo’s and Maderno’s contributions to Buonarroti’s advantage. Bernini, like Michelangelo before him, would have been aware that once one component of a design
was altered, the whole dynamic of a space had to change. This was as true of ancient buildings modified by later additions as it was of modern buildings begun by one architect and completed according to the designs of another. But given that at St. Peter’s it was not possible to strip Maderno’s additions from Michelangelo’s partially-built original and complete the church according to the latter’s desires (though apparently some suggested it), Bernini’s interventions engaged in a (posthumously) collaborative dialogue with the extant church as well as with elements of Michelangelo’s purported designs (whether they existed on paper or in the cultural imagination) in order to reclaim essential aspects of Buonarroti’s St. Peter’s – the central thrust, the prominence of the dome, the principal formal gestures and the proportional harmony – without, however, compromising his own invention. And at each turn, Bernini accomplished this restoration by way of insistently michelangesque means.

475 For a sensitive analysis of Michelangelo’s (and others) attempts to secure their long-term designs against alteration and his recognition that one change necessitated a whole revision of the design, see Howard Burns, “Building against Time: Renaissance strategies to secure large churches against changes to their design,” in L’Eglise dans l’architecture de la Renaissance, ed. Jean Guillaume (Paris: Picard, 1995), 107-31. In a letter to an unknown prelate, written between 1550 and 1560, Michelangelo wrote that “when the whole form of the plan changes it is not only permitted, but necessary, to change also the adornments, and similarly their corresponding parts.” As transcribed in Summers, Michelangelo, 418, who suggests that Michelangelo is arguing in favour of bilateral symmetry. On Bernini’s purported refusal to embellish the interior of the Pantheon on the grounds that any change, whether to the decoration or the structure, would ruin the symmetry of the whole, see Tod Allan Marder, “Bernini and Alexander VII: Criticism and Praise of the Pantheon in the Seventeenth Century,” Art Bulletin 71 (1989): 628-45; idem, “Symmetry and Eurythmy at the Pantheon: The Fate of Bernini’s Perceptions from the Seventeenth Century to the Present Day,” in Antiquity and its Interpreters, 217-26.

476 According to Chantelou’s diary, although “suggestions had been made to pull [Maderno’s nave and facade] down,” Urban VIII and Innocent X were reluctant to begin their pontificates “with extreme demolition.” Chantelou, Diary, 62; idem, Journal, 76-7 (July 15).

477 The affinity between Bernini’s and Michelangelo’s practice is noted, though not thoroughly explored, by Pamela Askew, Yves Bruand and Christof Thoenes in their respective studies of the relationship between the two architects (see note 472 above). For example, in Askew’s analysis of Gianlorenzo’s work at and outside St. Peter’s, she asserted that even though the Bernini’s formal solutions differed from Michelangelo Roman precedents, they were nonetheless similar to the works of his predecessor in concept. Though her study ultimately points to deep theoretical affinities regarding proportion, optics and axiality between the two architects, she does not however fully explore the specifics of their shared theoretical precepts or the implications of these for Bernini architectural self-fashioning. In Bruand’s analysis of the role of Michelangelo’s Campidoglio in the genesis of Bernini’s piazza at St. Peter’s, he similarly suggested that Bernini’s piazza loosely emulated the logic of Michelangelo’s optics and axiality. Thoenes also briefly
My approach develops a line of inquiry suggested by Christof Thoenes in a brief essay on Bernini’s multifaceted imitation of Michelangelo’s architectural identity, in which he characterized Bernini’s work at St. Peter’s as that of a “partisan” and defender of Michelangelo’s original design.\(^{478}\) According to Thoenes, Bernini’s advocacy of Buonarotti was twofold: on the one hand, Bernini sought to resurrect formal components of Michelangelo’s designs for the site (like the four-columned porch and the stepped podium) and, on the other hand, he attempted to overcome the “error” of Maderno’s nave (for example, by using the Baldacchino to reinvigorate the centrality of the once Greek-cross church).\(^{479}\) Similarly, Horst Bredekamp, who defined the cumulative construction of New St. Peter’s as one of “productive destruction,” briefly characterized all of Bernini’s contributions, especially the colonnade, as motivated by the desire to mitigate the flaws caused by Maderno’s departure from Buonarroti’s design.\(^{480}\) Although Thoenes and Bredekamp aptly underscore the relevance of Michelangelo’s project to Bernini’s work at St. Peter’s (which does not preclude the significance for Gianlorenzo of the antique, most evident in the Baldacchino and colonnaded piazza),\(^{481}\) the notion that Bernini was an advocate of Buonarroti’s St. Peter’s requires contextualization.

\(^{478}\) Thoenes, “Bernini Architetto tra Palladio e Michelangelo,” 118. Bernini’s defense of Buonarroti at St. Peter’s is one of four categories where Thoenes sees an affinity between the architectural identities of Bernini and Michelangelo. He also suggests that Bernini: 1) behaved like Michelangelo, that is, biographical anecdotes about his architectural production recalled those in Buonarroti’s biographies; 2) adopted Michelangelo’s architectural theories; and, 3) quoted Michelangelo’s architectural forms directly.

\(^{479}\) Ibid., 118.

\(^{480}\) Horst Bredekamp, \textit{Bau und Abbau von Bramante bis Bernini. Sankt Peter in Rom und das Prinzip der produktiven Zerstörung} (Berlin: Klaus Wagenbach, 2000), 113-20 (on Bernini).

I suggest that Gianlorenzo’s “partisan” attitude echoes the pro-Michelangelo position championed by Maffeo Barberini/Urban VIII and vociferously promoted by him while still a cardinal during the Congregazione della Fabbrica’s deliberations from 1605 to 1612 over how to complete the new church. Barberini, who had been praised by Buonarroti il Giovane for “having taken into protection... the memory and glory of Michelangelo Buonarroti regarding the duty to follow his orders [in the building of St. Peter’s]” and for being his “defender in that business” of finishing his work, was one among a largely Tuscan faction who wished to proceed according to Michelangelo’s centralized design and complete the building with a façade (an element not clearly outlined by the architect) that not only complemented Buonarroti’s architectural language but also showcased his spectacular dome. Against proposals to extend the nave and in

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482 In 1605, under Paul V’s initiative, the Congregazione della Fabbrica determined to tear down what remained of Old St. Peter’s and complete the new church. For discussions of the debates that ensued over how to complete the church, see Ludwig Freiherr von Pastor, The History of the Popes from the Close of the Middle Ages (Nendeln, Liechtenstein, Kraus Reprint, 1969), 26:385-8; Hibbard, Carlo Maderno, 66-68, 156-58; Zygmunt Ważbiński, “Il cardinale Francesco Maria del Monte e la fortuna del progetto buonarrotiano per la basilica di San Pietro a Roma: 1604-1613,” in Milon and Munshower, eds., An Architectural Progress, 1:146-69; Thoenes, “Madernos St.-Peter-Entwürfe,” 1:171-81; Louise Rice, The Altars and Altarpieces of New St. Peter’s (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 34-38; Bredekamp, Bau und Abbau, 110-5.

483 “ella si è presa in protezione con tanto onore la memoria, e la gloria di Michelagnol Buonarroti intorno al doversi seguitare il suo ordine d’architettura nella fabbrica di S. Pietro... poiché quel buon vecchio già tanto tempo fà morto, ha hauto lie per difensore il quel negozio...” As cited in D’Onofrio, Roma vista da Roma, 56n17. The passage comes from a letter sent by Buonarroti il Giovane to Maffeo on 24 May 1608. On the letter in context see also Ważbiński, “Il cardinale Francesco Maria del Monte,” 149-50, 158n59.

contrast to criticisms that Michelangelo’s designs did not meet the liturgical, ceremonial and symbolic needs of the church, the cardinal purportedly outlined how Buonarroti’s edifice could be adapted to accommodate these new demands. As Ważbiński has shown, the debate over the fate of Michelangelo’s church was largely underpinned by two competing interests, that is, attending to the varied needs of the church versus realizing and preserving Buonarroti’s building as a matter of cultural patrimony. Although the pro-Michelangelo faction lost this debate, as I hope to demonstrate, Barberini’s desire to safeguard Buonarroti’s church is perpetuated in Bernini’s architectural work at St. Peter’s from the papacy of Urban VIII through that of Alexander VII. When seen from this vantage, Bernini Petrine interventions emerge as attempts to reconcile the church’s various demands with the cultural patrimony bequeathed by Michelangelo.

I conclude by considering the vicissitudes of Bernini’s reputation as Architect of St. Peter’s, which I argue are tied as much to the aesthetic reception of his work as it is to attitudes regarding his identity as a sculptor-architect and his claim to architectural authority based on a knowledge of qualitative proportion. Ultimately and ironically, for all of Bernini’s efforts to reclaim the essence of Michelangelo’s vision, the issue how he became an architect and, by extension, the nature of his architectural practice and its implications for his competence (or lack thereof) in the discipline – however like

485 The proponents of this view, Paul V among them, pointed out that Michelangelo’s design was inadequate because: no space had been allotted for either a sacristy or a choir; the porch on the façade could not accommodate a benediction loggia; and, the centralized plan covered only part of the consecrated ground circumscribed by the old basilica. The proposals for the ensuing competition, whether they preserved Michelangelo’s centralized plan or offered a longitudinal design, had to provide solutions to the lacunas in Buonarroti’s design. See Pastor, History of the Popes, 26:385-8; Hibbard, Carlo Maderno, 66-8, 156-8; Rice, Altars and Altarpieces, 34-35; McPhee, Bernini and the Bell Towers, 11.
Michelangelo’s example – threatened to ruin his reputation as heir to Buonarroti, not to mention his predecessor’s Petrine architecture itself.

Measuring up to Michelangelo: Bernini’s Baldacchino in Practice and in Text

Around February of 1624, Bernini began working at St. Peter’s as a sculptural assistant to Carlo Maderno by making four stucco angels that were to support a cloth canopy for the last of four temporary baldachins that had been raised over the altar at the crossing. Maderno’s provisional structure apparently did not satisfy, for on 7 June the Congregazione della Fabbrica announced a competition soliciting “those who have architectural schemes, inventions or otherwise for the baldachin” to present models of their designs within fifteen days. Just seven days later, however, a full scale model of a column by an unnamed competitor had been raised on the site and, on 17 June, the maker of this anonymous entry was revealed when Bernini was proclaimed the winner of what was basically a sham competition. This selection likely distressed Maderno, for while it is unclear whether he submitted a new design for the competition, he had already

488 On Maderno’s last model for the baldachin, see Hibbard, Carlo Maderno, 72-4, 166-8; Lavin, Bernini and the Crossing, 10; Kirwin, “Bernini’s Baldacchino Reconsidered,” 162, 170; idem, Powers Matchless, 94-6. When Urban VIII fixed the location of the Baldacchino at the crossing of St. Peter’s, he ended over twenty years of debate about whether the high altar should be placed in the apse or over the apostle’s tomb, and in doing so, also reinvigorated the centrality inherent to Michelangelo’s original design, which had similarly envisioned the high altar over the tomb rather than at the apse. On Urban’s role in ending the dilemma over the priority of the tomb versus the apse, see Lavin, Bernini and the Crossing, 4-5, and, most recently, Kirwin, “Bernini’s Baldacchino Reconsidered,” which suggests that Urban’s predecessors, Clement VIII and Paul V, had already reaffirmed the priority of the tomb over the apse in their liturgical practice and in the commission of temporary monuments to be placed over the crossing.


490 See especially Kirwin, “Bernini’s Baldacchino Reconsidered,” 162-3, 170, who published documents that demonstrate Bernini was at work on the permanent baldachin much earlier than the chronology laid out by Lavin, Bernini and the Crossing, 10, who dated Bernini’s initial engagement on the Baldacchino to mid-July, when the artist first began receiving payment for his work on the structure.
produced a number of provisional structures for previous popes and installed two life-size models for the monument under Urban’s direction. Adding insult to injury, Bernini had been chosen on the basis of a model column that Kirwin has shown not only emulated the appearance of Maderno’s design but also, and more importantly, reconsidered its proportions. It was with this display of his keen sense for proportion that Bernini began his transformation from sculptor to architect, and soon, to official Architect of St. Peter’s.

In light of the radical shifts in fortune that accompany the election of a new pontiff, it is perhaps little surprise that that the Congregation ultimately passed over Maderno (with whom Urban had long clashed over his alterations to Buonarroti’s church), in favour of Bernini, the pope’s protégé whose formation into a new Michelangelo of sculpture he had helped to shape. We might also imagine, as many did at the time, that Bernini arrived at his better-proportioned winning design as a result of having been involved in Maderno’s own work for the monument and in collusion with the pope, with whom he likely discussed the aesthetic merits and limitations of Maderno’s precedents.

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491 On Maderno’s various designs and models for the monument over the altar, see Hibbard, Carlo Maderno, 72-4, 166-8; Kirwin, “Bernini’s Baldacchino Reconsidered,” 154, 158-61, 167-9.
492 Bernini’s dependence on the work of his predecessors, particularly Maderno’s designs for the Baldacchino, has been amply demonstrated in the scholarship, see Kirwin, “Bernini’s Baldacchino Reconsidered,” 163-4; idem, Powers Matchless, 106-9, 153-5. According to a much later report by Francesco Borromini (Maderno’s architectural assistant at the time of the competition), Urban told Maderno that even though he had created numerous models for the Baldacchino, “he must be satisfied that Bernini did this work (Urbano disse al d.o Carlo si contentasse che il Bernino facesse d.a opera).” The statement comes from a Roman guidebook written by Borromini’s friend Fioravante Martinelli and copiously annotated by Borromini. The guidebook, including the aforementioned passage, was published by D’Onofrio, Roma nel seicento (Florence: Vallecchi, 1986), 158. See also Kirwin, Powers Matchless, 106.
493 Kirwin, “Bernini’s Baldacchino Reconsidered,” 162-3; idem, Powers Matchless, 97-8. As Kirwin and Bauer have noted, it is perhaps in this light we might even understand Bernini’s attribution of the pensiero for the Baldacchino to the pope himself. Bernini’s ascription of the pensiero to Urban is recorded in a highly constructed dialogue between Bernini and the poet Lelio Guidicciioni, who wrote of the purported encounter in the wake of the baldachin’s unveiling, see D’Onofrio, Note berniniane I: Un dialogo-recita,” 134; Delbeke, Fenice degli ingegni, 33-9. On Urban’s role in the possible conception of the monument, see Bauer, “Bernini and the Baldacchino,” 147; Kirwin, Powers Matchless, 101-6.
But papal favour, and the insider knowledge that accompanied it, may have been stimulated by another factor. As Bauer has argued, selecting a sculptor to carry out the work of an architect was a tradition with sound theoretical precedent rooted in the discussion on proportion. It was a prevalent Renaissance notion that sculptors, owing to their specialized knowledge of human proportion, were eminently suited to the practice of architecture, since the latter was an art of measures: proportional, geometrical, perspectival and perceptual. Michelangelo exemplified the sculptor-cum-architect whose unparalleled facility with the proportions of the human body made him, *de facto*, the greatest architect of his time. Buonarroti himself claimed that mastery of the members of the human form was indispensable to an architect and his contemporaries celebrated him as the supreme living affirmation of the precept that knowledge of the body translated into architectural expertise. Benvenuto Cellini, for example, claimed that Michelangelo was “the greatest architect who ever lived, simply because he was the greatest sculptor and the greatest painter.” If Buonarroti’s mastery of bodily proportion was thought to have guaranteed his architectural excellence, then, as Bauer

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494 Bauer, “Bernini and the Baldacchino.”
intimates, it is plausible that the Congregation believed that placing their faith in the artist who had been groomed into a new Michelangelo of sculpture would yield promising results as an architect. The novice Bernini’s winning design for the baldachin, particularly its reconsideration of the proportions of a previous model, hinted as much.

Relying on the evidence of a manuscript known as the *Ristretta* that is among the various papers compiled by Bernini’s family in the 1670s and constituting the basis for his biographies, Bauer maintained that Urban himself evoked Michelangelo’s example as a sculptor-architect in the face of concerns that Gianlorenzo was too young and too inexperienced to create the Baldacchino. According to this text, the pope purportedly claimed that “all good sculptors have a greater advantage in architecture, which is none other than the little sister (*sirocchia*) of proportion that has been derived from a well-proportioned man. That which the sculptor studies continually gives him greater advantage as is demonstrated by the experience of a [work by] Michelangelo.”

This biographical anecdote (which did not, however, make its way into either of Bernini’s vite) suggests that Buonarroti’s precedent was the lens through which Bernini’s family and circle of associates working on the story of his life wanted the reader to apprehend the novice architect’s work on the baldachin. But this anecdote should not be construed as documentary evidence of a controversy surrounding Bernini’s appointment or even of

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498 *Ristretta della vita del Cav.e Bernino*, Paris, Bib. Nat. Ms. Ital, 2084, fol. 130r-131v, published fully in Felicita Audisio, “Lettere e testi teatrali di Bernini,” in *Barocco romano e barocco italiano: il teatro, l’effimero, l’allegroria*, eds. Marcello Fagiolo and Maria Luisa Madonna (Rome: Gangemi, 1985), 42-3. The *Ristretta* is a lengthy narrative on Bernini’s contributions to the crossing of St. Peter’s, particularly the Baldacchino. The manuscript belongs to the sundry material compiled by the members of Bernini’s family and circle of supporters who, in the last years of his life, were preparing to write a biography of the artist. The *Ristretta* was definitely written sometime after 1653, as the text includes a reference to the Cathedra Petri.


500 “A questo fu risposto da Urbano che i scultori valenti, omini hanno più avantaggio in Architettura, non essendo altro che sirocchia di proporzione e queste son state cavate dal huomo ben proporzionato che quello che studia lo scultore continuamente però n’ha più avantaggio come mostra l’esperientia in un Michel Angelo.” As cited in Audisio, “Lettere e testi,” 43.
Urban’s possible invocation of Michelangelo in his protégé’s defense. Through his essay, Bauer treats this biographical material, as well as other passages from Bernini’s two biographies, as documentary evidence. My aim is to separate biography from historical and material evidence, even if, ultimately, they are mutually reinforcing. In this light, it should be noted that according to Kirwin, Powers Matchless, 98n7, an unsigned and undated critique of Bernini’s baldachin design and his inexperience as an architect is contained among Barberini papers at the Vatican Archives. I did not have the opportunity to consult this material.

Thus we can only surmise that Buonarroti’s association with the *topos* of the sculptor-architect was in the pope’s mind, if not also the minds of his court and the Congregation, when Bernini was awarded Baldacchino project.

The notion that artists expert in representing the body made the best architects purportedly resonated with Bernini. According to the late seventeenth-century journal of his Swedish pupil, Nicodemus Tessin the Younger, Gianlorenzo stated that “architecture is derived from human proportion, from which we discern that the most excellent architects were also sculptors and painters: Michelangelo Buonarroti, Bramante of Urbino, Ammanati, Peruzzi, Baldassare of Sienna….” Bernini apparently made the same claim over a decade earlier while in Paris: “architecture consisted in proportions drawn from the human body, and the reason why painters and sculptors succeeded better than others in that art was their constant study of the human form.” Chantelou further writes that Bernini stated “beauty in architecture… as in all else, lay in proportion, the origin of which was divine.” In both Tessin’s account and Chantelou’s diary, Bernini reportedly qualified the notion that both sculptors and painters were suited to architecture by appealing to Michelangelo’s position on the subject, which offered a decided bias in

501 Throughout his essay, Bauer treats this biographical material, as well as other passages from Bernini’s two biographies, as documentary evidence. My aim is to separate biography from historical and material evidence, even if, ultimately, they are mutually reinforcing. In this light, it should be noted that according to Kirwin, Powers Matchless, 98n7, an unsigned and undated critique of Bernini’s baldachin design and his inexperience as an architect is contained among Barberini papers at the Vatican Archives. I did not have the opportunity to consult this material.

502 The evidence for Bernini’s thoughts on the relationships among architecture, proportion and the body were not considered by Bauer.


504 Chantelou, Diary, 48; idem, Journal, 67 (July 1).

505 Chantelou, Diary, 9; idem, Journal, 43 (June 2).
favour of sculptors, above painters, as architects. For example, according to Chantelou, Bernini referred to a letter purportedly written by Michelangelo to a Florentine patron to select Ammanati, the sculptor, over Vasari, the painter, to oversee a building project, since in matters “of architecture one should always chose the sculptor.”506 In light of Bernini’s own abrupt entry into architecture after achieving mastery as a sculptor many decades earlier, his late-life references to Michelangelo’s endorsement of sculptor-architects read as implicitly self-reflexive if not expressly retrospective.

Although Tessin’s and Chantelou’s account of the mature Bernini’s views cannot provide the lens through which to understand the Baldacchino, an analysis of the process that went into creating his earliest architectural project furnishes a theory in practice that ultimately bears out the claims purportedly made by Gianlorenzo so many years later. It is likely that Michelangelo’s example was present in the mind of the young Bernini when he embarked on the Baldacchino, particularly since the documentary evidence from the time of the monument’s construction shows that Bernini, the Pope and the Congregation understood that constructing such a monument at the crossing of St. Peter’s posed a problem of proportion.507 According to an account from around 1626, the prevailing view was that before Bernini offered his winning competition model, “no models were found that were proportioned to the vastness of the cupola or the great size of the temple,

506 Michelangelo’s letter is mentioned twice in the French diary. See Chantelou, Diary, 58, 71; idem, Journal, 74, 84 (July 12, 22). In Chantelou, Bernini claims that he not only saw this letter among the papers of a Francesco Villamena (painter, engraver) but also that Lorenzo de Medici, who was looking for an architect for his library, was the recipient of the missive. See Chantelou, Diary, 58-9n40. The claim that sculptors make the best architects is also made in Tessin’s journal, but without reference to any letter. See, Kommer, Nicodemus Tessin der Jüngere, 159. On Ammanati’s aspirations as an architect, particularly from the perspective of the sculptor-architect, see Cole, Ambitious Form, 158-62, 168-70.

507 Though Bauer was the first scholar to fully discuss and contextualize the seventeenth-century evidence that the Baldacchino posed a problem of proportion, it has long been noted by scholars that proportion is the fundamental architectural issue on the site. It is the Annibale Carracci “prophecy” as described in Bernini’s biographies (discussed below), in which Annibale predicted that a genius would create two monuments in St. Peter’s proportionate to the vastness of the space, that signaled to later interpreters the importance of proportion as a major historical concern for the study of the Baldacchino.
all of them, when seen in place, being either so small as to disappear or [so large as to be] an impediment to view.” The passage is significant not only because it establishes Bernini’s skill in the art of measures, but also, and more importantly, it indicates that creating a baldachin proportionate to the site was more complex than simply arriving at proportional harmony among the various components of the structure itself. The task demanded that the very space within which the monument would sit became a constitutive part of its composition as it would ultimately govern its optical effect. As the centerpiece of a complex and otherwise disjunctive ensemble, the Baldacchino had to negotiate the height of Michelangelo’s dome with the length of Maderno’s nave all the while giving visual focus to the central altar without, however, obscuring the view of the apse. Only by addressing the monument’s proportion specifically as a problem of context might such disharmony be brought into concord and, in turn, be visually pleasing.

Bernini’s design process for the baldachin, from the columns through to the canopy, reveals that arriving at the correct proportions for a monument that had to reconcile the manifold and competing components of the site demanded more than calculations made on paper. Rather than follow any fixed rule or abstract measure, Bernini created a second full-scale model of a column and pedestal and erected it over the altar area on 10 September 1624 in order to ascertain whether the scale of his proposed

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508 This passage comes from a manuscript by a canon of the Basilica, R. Ubaldi, who offers an account of the excavations undertaken around the main altar so that the foundations for the Baldacchino could be laid. See R. Ubaldi, “Relazione di quanto è occorso nel cavare i fondamenti per le quattro colonne di bronzo erette da Urbano VIII all’ altare della basilica di s. Pietro fatta da signor R. Ubaldi canonico della medesima basilica,” in Mariano Armellini, *Le chiese di Roma dal secolo IV al XIX*, ed. Carlo Cecchelli (Rome: Ruffolo, 1942), 863: “sin d’ora un si erano trovati modelli, che proporzionassero l’ampiezza della cupola e la grandezza del tempio, essendosi veduti, mentre vi sono stati in mostra o scomparire come piccioli, o impedire il prospetto…” For a discussion of the temporary monuments that were erected on the site from the papacy of Clement VIII through the early months of Urban VIII’s pontificate, with a particular emphasis upon re-evaluating the evidence regarding their dimensions, see Kirwin, “Bernini’s Baldacchino Reconsidered.”
monument satisfied contextual and visual demands.\textsuperscript{509} Only in situ could the optical effect of his design be properly judged and the necessary changes identified.\textsuperscript{510} Once Bernini was satisfied with the appearance of the mock-up, which apparently took some months and included various alterations, contracts were drawn up with founders stipulating that the “design of the work in its size, proportion and quality” be scrupulously followed.\textsuperscript{511} Ultimately, Bernini’s extensive and practical use of models suggests that proportion was best determined by the eye.

Bernini’s dependence on empirical observation, perception and intuition in judging the scale of his work did not end when the spiraling bronze columns, up to the top of the capital, were installed over the central altar around the spring of 1627.\textsuperscript{512} In the following year, a scale model of the first phase of the superstructure (that is before the plans to crown the monument with a statue of the Risen Christ were abandoned in favour of an orb and cross)\textsuperscript{513} was placed atop the now permanent columns in order to gauge the impression of the whole in situ. Soon after, plans were made to create a permanent canopy after this design. But Urban’s 1627 decision to add reliquaries to the crossing piers eventually resulted in a change to the iconography of the baldachin, thus demanding a new superstructure design and yet another mock-up.\textsuperscript{514} The effect of this trial of the

\textsuperscript{509} Kirwin, \textit{Powers Matchless}, 106-7.
\textsuperscript{510} Though the practice of erecting full-scale site models originated in the previous century, and was practiced at St. Peter’s by Maderno, Bernini seems to have employed them more extensively than any of his predecessors. For a comprehensive discussion of Bernini’s use of models and the general practice of model making as an aid to achieving good proportion, see Bauer, “Bernini e i ‘modelli in grande’,” 279-90. On Bernini’s use of models for the Baldacchino, see also Kirwin, \textit{Powers Matchless}, 25; Bauer, “Bernini and the Baldacchino,” 156-7.
\textsuperscript{511} Lavin, \textit{Bernini and the Crossing}, 95; Kirwin, \textit{Powers Matchless}, 115.
\textsuperscript{512} The columns were installed on 29 June, the feast day of Sts. Peter and Paul, see Bauer, “Bernini and the Baldacchino,” 158; Kirwin, \textit{Powers Matchless}, 124, for discussion and reference to original documents.
\textsuperscript{513} On the formal and symbolic evolution of the designs for the superstructure, see Lavin, \textit{Bernini and the Crossing}, 10-27, 35-9; Kirwin, \textit{Powers Matchless}, 147-87.
\textsuperscript{514} Lavin, \textit{Bernini and the Crossing}, 19, 35-7; Bauer, “Bernini and the Baldacchino,” 159, 161-2; Marder, \textit{Bernini and the Art of Architecture}, 32-4, 37-8.
second phase of the superstructure design atop the bronze columns is recorded in three perspective drawings made by Francesco Borromini, Bernini’s architectural collaborator and likely technical consultant.\(^{515}\) (As scholars have demonstrated, the latter’s technical collaboration, especially regarding structural issues posed by the monument, was essential to the Baldacchino’s successful realization.)\(^{516}\) Created sometime between 1628 and 1631, these drawings illustrate the visual dialogue between the baldachin and its surroundings and offer evidence of what Bernini was trying to achieve with his full-scale models (although, as Bauer has noted, their usefulness as a means to evaluate the scale of the baldachin would have been far inferior to the experience of the models themselves).\(^{517}\) One drawing [fig. 76] shows the effect of the baldachin within the vast space of the crossing, specifically as it is framed by the western vault and flanked by architectural adjacencies of the south west wall, from the pier through to the apse.\(^{518}\) A second drawing [fig. 77] registers the relationship between one column of the baldachin

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\(^{515}\) The degree of Borromini’s assistance to Bernini in architectural matters, particularly the technical design of the columns and capitals for the Baldacchino, is much debated. Thelen, Zur Entstehungsgeschichte der Hochaltar-Architektur, 63, was the first to suggest that Bernini and Borromini discussed architectural problems, especially technical concerns, attending the monument. Since then, the notion that Borromini played a pivotal collaborative role in the design of the columns (and, in the minds of some, even the superstructure) has gained support, especially by Kirwin, Powers Matchless, 125-35; Marder, Bernini and the Art of Architecture, 38; and, Sabine Burbau, Die Rivalität zwischen Francesco Borromini und Gianlorenzo Bernini (Oberhausen: Athena, 1999), 69-72. Conversely, Irving Lavin, “The Baldacchino. Borromini vs Bernini: Did Borromini forget himself?” in Satzinger and Schütze, eds., Sankt Peter in Rom 1506 – 2006, 275-300, maintains that the design and technical surveyorship of the Baldacchino were Bernini’s own. Borromini’s drawings of Bernini’s in-situ model baldachin were first discussed and identified by, Thelen, Francesco Borromini. Die Handzeichnungen (Graz: Akademische Druck Verlagsanstalt, 1967), 1:79-82. Chandler Kirwin has offered the most sensitive reading of Borromini’s drawings and their role in Bernini’s design for the Baldacchino, see Kirwin, Powers Matchless, 162-4. See also Richard Bosel and Christoph L. Frommel, eds., Borromini e l’universo barocco (Milan, Electa, 2000), 2:94; Lavin, “The Baldacchino,” 282-4.

\(^{516}\) See especially, Kirwin, Powers Matchless, 134-5, 162-74, 176-7; Burbau, Rivalität, 57-72.

\(^{517}\) Bauer, “Bernini and the Baldacchino,” 157n73.

and the architectural profile of the south-east terminus of the nave.\textsuperscript{519} The third drawing [\textbf{fig. 78}] is made from even further back, from about the mid-point in the nave, so that the baldachin might be seen in relation to Michelangelo’s drum and the vast emptiness of the crossing.\textsuperscript{520} As numerous scholars have noted, Borromini’s perspectives appear to be taken from vantage points determined by the imagined experience of Michelangelo’s centralized plan, that is, from the edge of the crossing and from the mid-point along the nave that would have marked the entrance to Buonarroti’s unrealized Greek cross church.\textsuperscript{521} While this does not mean that Bernini (under whose direction Borromini’s perspectival studies were undertaken) was uninterested in the vantage from the entrance, it does suggest, as many have observed, that the baldachin was situated and proportioned so as to best recalibrate the crossing as both the focus and the ideal center of the church, that is, as Michelangelo had envisioned it.\textsuperscript{522} The evidence of these studies also indicates we should see the Baldacchino as much more than just a monument crafted according to site dynamics. As a structure that reconciled the great height of Michelangelo’s dome with the unforeseen length of Maderno’s nave, we might characterize the Baldacchino as the \textit{post-facto} architectural basis of St. Peter’s internal proportions.

The experience of seeing the mock-up baldachin \textit{in situ} was likely unsatisfactory, as formal changes to the superstructure soon followed that ultimately reshaped the proportional relationships between monument and site. An analysis of the development


\textsuperscript{520} Kirwin, \textit{Powers Matchless}, 163-64.

\textsuperscript{521} Bosel and Frommel eds., \textit{Borromini e l’universo barocco}, 2:94, with relevant bibliography.

of the second phase in the design of Bernini’s canopy, from preparatory drawings to the final work itself, suggests that the church contributed as much to determining the proportions of the baldachin as it did to shaping its formal details. It might even be argued that the very perception of harmonious proportion between the baldachin and its surroundings is strengthened by formal consonances with carefully chosen elements from the rest of the church.

The earliest study connected with the second phase envisions a crown of slender, gently concave ribs that echo those on the exterior canopy of the lantern of St. Peter’s [figs. 79 and 80]. The allusion suggests that Bernini commenced this phase of planning by thinking explicitly about engaging in a dialogue with Michelangelo’s Petrine architectural vocabulary. On the verso of this sheet, Bernini departs from any strict formal consonance with the lantern, transforming the ribs into s-shaped volutes that function more successfully as transitional elements that guide the eye from the broad rectangular outline of the baldachin base through the narrow, upward thrust of the monument’s cap [fig. 81]. This formal change further mediates the wide proportion of the transept with the height of the crossing. On only two of the nine iterations of the superstructure found on both sides of this sheet is Bernini concerned with the juncture between the superstructure and the columns upon which it rests. One of these, the red chalk sketch in the center of the verso [fig. 81 detail], shows two angels supporting the baldachin canopy standing on plinths atop the column capitals. This arrangement echoes that seen in Borromini’s perspectival drawings. Lacking in both sketches is the

523 As noted by Kauffmann, Giovanni Lorenzo Bernini, 89-90; Bauer, “Bernini and the Baldacchino,” 162; Kirwin, Powers Matchless, 161.
prominent impost block that is a part of the final Baldacchino design [fig. 82]. For this latter component of the superstructure, which was essential to arriving at the optimal visual proportions of the final monument, Bernini looked to Michelangelo’s impost blocks on the columns in the center niche of the south transept [fig. 83]. Bernini, likely encouraged by Borromini, had already used these marble columns as the source for the baldachin’s composite capital, not to mention the height of the spiraling bronze columns themselves, and, by way of the impost block, they would serve once again to heighten the baldachin superstructure and re-adjust its overall proportions [fig. 84]. By referring to Michelangelo in the final appearance of the Baldacchino’s columns, from base to capital to superstructure impost, Bernini visually re-centered the monument itself, which of necessity stood just to the east of center in the crossing, with the central axis of the tribune niches [fig. 85].

The priority that Bernini placed on visual perception when determining proportional relations among the component parts of the baldachin and its surroundings, recalls comments he purportedly made while in France regarding the main altar at Val-

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525 The visual evidence from engravings and medals created after early designs for the Baldacchino suggest that the inclusion of the impost block had already been determined before Bernini arrived at the final appearance of the monument. But in none of these early representations is the height of the impost as tall, nor as emphatically indebted to Michelangelo, as that in the work itself. See, for example, the bronze pontifical medals of 1626 and of 1629 as well as the engraving of St. Peter’s made on the occasion of Elisabetta of Portugal’s canonization, 1625, Lavin, *Baldacchino, the Crossing*, 10-1, figs. 30, 31, 32; Anna Gramiccia, ed., *Bernini in Vaticano* (Rome: De Luca, 1981), 286, 287; Kahn-Rossi and Franciolli, eds., *Il giovane Borromini*, 418-9, with comprehensive bibliography. On the final working drawing (now in the Windsor Castle drawing collection) by Borromini for the impost block of the Baldacchino, see Brauer and Wittkower, *Zeichnungen*, 1:21; Thelen, *Francesco Borromini*, 1:85; Kahn-Rossi and Franciolli eds., *Il giovane Borromini*, 423; Burbaum, *Rivalität*, 71-2.
The reference to this altar is suggestive, for the structure not only emulates the Baldacchino, but at the time was being overseen by Bernini who apparently noted the contextual constraints that would shape its appearance: “Referring to the architectural considerations in connection with the altar, the Cavaliere said they must bear in mind the place for which a work was destined; the members of a cornice appeared smaller in the light of out-of-doors, than when lit by special means; moreover great attention must be paid to what are termed the contrapposti.” Bernini’s sensitivity to how lighting conditions altered the perception of scale adds another layer to the site-specificity of the altar. But it is his notion of contrapposti that underscores the myriad factors that shape a work’s proportions. His definition of the term comes in response to a courtier’s claim that geometry and perspective were the essence of an architect’s knowledge. According to Chantelou, Bernini countered the courtier by asserting that “one of the most important things was to have a good eye in assessing the contrapposti, so that things should not only appear to be simply what they were, but should be drawn in relation to objects in their vicinity that change their appearance.”

530 The altar was designed and executed by Gabriel Le Duc in emulation of the Baldacchino. During Bernini’s stay in France, Le Duc’s work on the altar came to a halt and Bernini was asked to provide his own designs for the monument. The latter were never realized and Le Duc’s work was ultimately brought to fruition. According to Chantelou, Bernini was not a fan of Le Duc’s design. See George C. Bauer, “Bernini’s altar for the Val-de-Grâce,” in Light on the Eternal City: Observations and Discoveries in the Art and Architecture of Rome, eds. Hellmut Hager and Susan Scott Munshower (University Park: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1987), 177-88.

531 (italics mine) Chantelou, Diary, 71; idem, Journal, 84 (July 22): “Parlant après de l’architecture au sujet de cet autel, le Cavaliere a dit que l’une des considérations que l’on y devait avoir était celle des lieux où les ouvrages étaient posés, pour ce que les membres des corniches diminuent beaucoup au grand air, ce qui n’arrive pas à la lumière particulière, et qu’il faut, outre cela, avoir un grand égard à ce qu’on appelle i contrapposti.”

532 Chantelou, Diary, 139-40; idem, Journal, 134-5 (August 23): “Le Cavalier a ajouté qu’un des points le plus important était d’avoir un bon oeil pour bien juger des contrapposti, que les choses nous paraissent non seulement ce qu’elles sont, mais eu égard à ce qui est dans leur voisinage, qui change leur apparence.” On Bernini’s notion of the contrapposti, see Kitao, “Bernini’s church façades,” 283-4; idem, Circle and
Michelangelo’s wisdom that in “architecture one should always choose the sculptor,” a claim that suggests his notion of the contrapposti is indelibly tied to sculptor-architect’s knowledge of proportion. In a later passage, Bernini apparently illustrated how contrapposti work by way of examples drawn, significantly, from sculpture, architecture and the human form: the head of a statue looked smaller against a draped shoulder; the height and size of a building appeared greater when flanked by smaller structures; a man dressed monochromatically appears larger when next to one in motley-coloured costume. Bernini thus apparently believed that all human perception of size was shaped by the physical environment within which an object was seen. In the realm of architecture, this meant that the rules of geometry and perspective were insufficient measures of whether a work, once installed within the complex fabric of its surroundings, would please the eye. In short, Bernini’s purported notion of the contrapposti (a concept which suggests it is impossible to truly see anything in isolation) attended to two interrelated factors: juxtaposition and visual perception.

First, juxtaposition. Bernini’s definition of the contrapposti, as Lavin and Summers have noted, is rooted in Renaissance perceptions of the affinity between the arts of rhetorical and figural juxtaposition. Counter-position, whether in written or pictorial form, whether ornamental or structural, was a fundamental vehicle of invention and variety. By way of antithesis, an orator or artist could either enhance and draw attention to oppositional variety or, conversely, bring sundry contrasting elements into

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Oval, 52-3, 60, 66, 123n208; Lavin, Bernini and the Unity, 10-12; Gordon and Ostrow, “On Function and Style in Bernini’s Drawings,” in Lavin, ed., Drawings by Gianlorenzo Bernini, 11-2; Bauer, “Bernini e i modelli in grande,” 279-81; Summers, Michelangelo, 362; Delbeke, Fenice degli ingegni, 156-62.
533 Chantelou, Diary, 139-40; idem, Journal, 134-5 (August 23).
534 Lavin, Bernini and the Unity, 9-11; Summers, Michelangelo, 362.
accord. It is the latter notion of unity through diversity that is largely evoked in Bernini’s contrapposti, which he employed to describe a kind of visual harmony in figural representation and architecture that is achieved through an optically pleasing composition of contrasts.\textsuperscript{536} It should be noted, however, that Gianlorenzo was not unique in working according to these principles; and even if he is the only seicento artist who seems to have used this term, he probably did not invent it. Rather, it is likely that his application of this rhetorical expression to his practice is indebted to Sforza Pallavicino, theologian and longtime friend of Bernini, whose Trattato dello stile e del dialogo (1662) included a chapter entitled “De’ contrapposti.”\textsuperscript{537} Pallavicino’s explanation of rhetorical juxtaposition echoed the dual nature of cinquecento definitions. He not only asserted that contrasts offered variety, but also maintained that antithesis allowed the intellect to perceive “that similitude, proportion and correspondence among things that otherwise are, in of themselves, contrary or unrelated.”\textsuperscript{538} As Delbeke has noted, instead of Bernini’s notion of visual coherence in art that trumps actual proportional relationships in nature, Pallavicino here offers an argument in favour of aural harmony over normative disposition of words in speech by asserting that such counter-position does not depend on “the nature of things, but on the ring of the words.”\textsuperscript{539} The good orator thus relies on judgment and intuition. Bernini’s and Pallavicino’s overlapping definitions suggest that art and oratory share in an aesthetic of compositional unity.\textsuperscript{540}

\textsuperscript{536} While Lavin, Bernini and the Unity, 9-10, suggests that Bernini “employed the term in a new way”, without however explaining just what the novelty of the term is, Summers, Michelangelo, 362, points out that Bernini’s conception is deeply indebted to the complexity of Renaissance usage.

\textsuperscript{537} Montanari, “Gian Lorenzo Bernini e Sforza Pallavicino,” 62; Delbeke, Fenice degli ingegni, 156-9.

\textsuperscript{538} Sforza Pallavicino, Trattato dello stile e del dialogo (Rome: Mascardi, 1662), 178. Delbeke, Fenice degli ingegni, 156-9.

\textsuperscript{539} Pallavicino, Trattato, 179-80. Dekbeke, Fenice degli ingegni, 156-9.

\textsuperscript{540} On the relationship between Sforza Pallavicino’s writings more broadly, whether on oratory or theology, and the visual arts, see Delbeke, Fenice degli ingegni; idem, “The Pope, the Bust.”
Second, visual perception. The priority that Bernini placed on the eye as the arbiter of proportion and balance when grappling with juxtaposition further evokes a concept intimately associated with Michelangelo: *giudizio dell’occhio*.\(^{541}\) According to this principle, the innately talented artist was not bound by fixed, quantitative rules of proportion and measure; rather, he transcended these norms by deferring to the more perfect and pleasing sensory measurements of his mind and eye, of qualitative proportion.\(^{542}\) The best measures were thus realized intuitively and in practice; only by these means could the weaknesses of numerically calibrated proportions be overcome. Ultimately, *giudizio dell’occhio* was a quality that required and revealed innate talent (*ingegno*) since it was neither teachable nor bound by rules (*arte*).\(^{543}\) Buonarroti’s association with this concept is first attested by Vasari, who wrote that the artist “sought nothing else than that, in putting everything together, there should be a certain harmony of grace in the whole, that nature does not make, saying that it is necessary to have compasses in the eyes and not in the hand, because the hand works and the eye judges; he also held to this way in architecture.”\(^{544}\) Michelangelo’s precept subsequently became a commonplace in the writings of late Renaissance theorists, particularly Lomazzo, who made the artist into the authoritative practitioner of optical judgment in all three arts.\(^{545}\)
Armenini, by comparison, believed that artists who ascribed to Michelangelo’s precept that the “hand works and the eye judges,” did so misleadingly, for they worked at the expense of proper measures. He noted that although the best painters measured according to their own intuitive sense of judgment, they nonetheless based this judgment on a thorough knowledge of proportion, “and that is what Michelangelo meant about having compasses in their eyes.” Buonarroti’s words were given new relevance in the seicento by Bisagno, who echoed almost verbatim Armenini’s views (although he rewrote Michelangelo’s maxim to apply only to painters), to the exclusion of sculptors whose art, he believed, was inferior to painting as it did not need to attend to optical perspective but the geometry of proportion alone. In the wake of Bisagno’s interpretation of Michelangelo’s precept, Bernini’s investment in optically conditioned proportions as characterized in Chantelou becomes an unintentionally polemical stance.

Although Chantelou’s diary cannot be understood as an unmediated document of Bernini’s words and actions, the affinity between Pallavicino’s definition of contrapposti in his Trattato and Gianlorenzo’s use of the same term (which is written in Italian in the French diary) anchors the notion concretely to the sculptor-architect. Chantelou’s l’occhio, cioè senza l’esercitare in queste ragioni, che solamente col suo vedere, senza più angoli né linee o distanze, si può render atto e far che la mano dimostri in figura tutto quello che vuole, ma non in altro modo di quello che si gli aspetta perspettivamente per vederlo. Così per l’uso dell’esercitazione, fondata sopra il perfetto dell’arte, si mostra quello in figura che non possono quanti profondi prospettivi sono; benché chi non è né geometra, né esercitato nel disegno, non può conseguire, né penetrare, né esprimere con le sue speculazioni, divisioni, pruove, tagli e simili. Perché tutta quest’arte, per dirlo in una parola, e tutto il suo fine è di saper disegnare tutto quello che si vede con le medesime ragioni che si vede.”

546 Armenini, True Precepts, 165-7; idem, Veri precetti, 116: “e ciò che intendeva Michel Angelo di quel sesto, che si è detto di sopra did over aversi ne gli occhi.”

547 Bisagno, Trattato, 77: “E se bene pare à molti, che i Pittori valenti, non le usino per ordine il compasso, il che è vero, perché il modo, che hanno del servirsene sempre, e prima col lume del loro discorso, il quale è però mediante la ferma scienza di quelle; e così vengo in cognition di quello che intendeva Michel’ Angelo, quando diceva, che era necessario, che il buon Pittore havesse il sesto, è ver compass negli occhi.”

548 Ibid., 9: “A confirmatione di quanto s’è detto, si trova di più la differenza, che è trá la Scoltura, è la Pittura, poiché l’una considera proporzione Geometrica, e l’altra non solamente la considera, ma la tira con l’occhio prospettico.”
motivated framing of his subject’s ideas about counter-position is apparent in a gloss in which he opposes the notion that the visual impression of objects is altered by their relationship to their surroundings: “As for me, I believe that in nature itself the object undergoes a certain diminution, so that it is not necessary to put into the imitation what is not in nature.” Yet Chantelou quickly qualifies his skepticism by referring to the authority of Vitruvius who claimed the “ancients were careful to make the columns of the angles of their temples larger by a sixteenth than the others,” in order to accommodate optical impressions. The French diarist’s second interjection is subtly critical, for although his mention of Vitruvius seems to support Bernini’s position, this ancient precedent for making optical adjustments to architecture nonetheless depends on mathematically-determined alterations (i.e. “larger by a sixteenth”) as opposed the kind of subjective measures that Gianlorenzo advocates.

Despite the many years that separate Bernini’s definition of the contrapposti and his work on the Baldacchino, the principles behind the theory articulated in Chantelou’s diary are wholly evident in the process by which Gianlorenzo, as a young sculptor, created his first architectural project. And though it is anachronistic to apply the term “contrapposti” to the Baldacchino, it is by meeting the demands of optical perception inherent to its meaning, which necessitated that the sculptor bypass set rules about architectural proportion and operate according to an criteria of judgment based on discerning observation, that Bernini measured up to Michelangelo’s example as a

549 Chantelou, Diary, 17, idem, Journal, 47 (June 6): “Pour moi, je crois que, dans la nature même, cette diminution se ferait; ainsi qu’il ne faut pas faire dans l’imitation ce qui n’est pas dans la nature.”
550 Ibid: “Je ne lui dis pas cela, et depuis j’ai pensé que les Antiques ont observé de faire les colonnes qu’ils posaient aux angles des temples plus grosses d’une seizième partie que les autres à cause, comme dit Vitruve, qu’étant environnées d’une plus grande quantité d’air qui mange de leur quantité, elles auraient paru moins grosses que les autres, qui leur sont voisines, quoiqu’elles ne le fussent pas en effet.”
sculptor-architect. By completing an architectural monument without any formal training or study in the discipline, Gianlorenzo demonstrated, like Buonarroti before him, that his shrewd sense for proportion made him innately suited to the job.

There is no evidence from the period during which the *Baldacchino* was under construction, or even from its immediate aftermath, to indicate whether Bernini’s contemporaries perceived the optical measures Bernini employed to arrive at harmonious proportions of the bronze monument as a performance of Michelangelo’s “compasses in the eyes.” However, Delbeke has demonstrated that this is precisely how Domenico Bernini wished the reader of his biography of Bernini to understand the monument over 80 years later. Delbeke’s discussion merits rehearsal, particularly in light of his observation that, “Domenico paraphrases Pallavicino’s own definition of contrapposto” when describing the Baldacchino. While the biography is not a literal exposition of Bernini’s theory at work (Domenico does not use the term *contrapposti*), the text nonetheless presents a narrative of how Bernini’s, as well as the viewer’s, “eye” for the baldachin might be seen through a michelangesque lens.

As Delbeke demonstrates, proportion is the theme of Domenico’s discussion. This theme is introduced by an anecdote about the 14 year-old Bernini’s visit to St. Peter’s in the company of Annibale Carracci who, contemplating the space of the church exclaimed: “a prodigious genius will come who will create two great monuments, in the center and at the back, proportionate to the vastness of this Temple.” Domenico’s subsequent assessment of the monument begins with the perspective of the viewer and he

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551 Delbeke, “Gianlorenzo Bernini’s *Bel Composto*,” 252-8.
552 Ibid., 256.
553 Bernini, *Vita*, 37-8: “Credete a me, ch’egli hà pure da venire un prodigioso ingegno, che in quel mezzo, e in quel fondo hà da fare due gran Moli proporzionate alla vastità di questo Tempio.”
asserts that the eye of the spectator alone can judge the merit of the work, since it is only this sense that can take in the work and all that is connected to it, that is “the site, the building, the vastness of the void that [the baldachin] fills without cluttering it, the beauty of the reliefs, the richness of the material, and all that [the monument] is, and the proportion that beyond itself all comes into agreement.”

Domenico then moves to his own assessment of proportion, stating that the “miraculous ordering of parts,” which includes those external to the monument, could not have been determined in so immense a space by simply using fixed rules of measure. Rather, he claims, Bernini arrived at the appropriate measure by departing from the rules. Only by these means was Gianlorenzo able to create columns that were “immeasurable but proportionate” (smisurate, mà proporzionate Colonne).

The biographer ends his discussion of the Baldacchino by way of an anecdote involving Sforza Pallavicino that further develops the means by which the artist aimed at creating its harmonious proportions. According to the story, when Pallavicino and Bernini visited St. Peter’s as adults, the theologian inquired how the artist managed to create a work that looked proportioned from a number of vantage points, Bernini replied “with the eye.” In Domenico’s account then, as Delbeke argued, it is by creating the Baldacchino using means that transcend the rules – the giudizio dell’occhio – that Bernini himself embodies the qualities of Buonarroti the architect.

Filippo Baldinucci’s biography presents a different framework for thinking about the relationship between Michelangelo and Bernini forged by the Baldacchino. As Delbeke’s analysis again shows, Baldinucci was not interested in the baldachin’s

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554 Bernini, Vita, 38-9: “che con riguardare unitamente il Sito, la Mole, la Vastità del Vano, che empie senza ingombrarlo, la Vaghezza de’ Rilievi, la Ricchezza della Materia, e tutto ciò che essa è, e la proporzione che fuor di essa nel Tutto s’accorda….”

555 Bernini, Vita, 40.
proportions or the optical method Bernini employed to discern them; rather, his
discussion of the monument is the culmination of Gianlorenzo’s mastery of the three
arts. It is upon the completion of the Baldacchino, which follows his work in sculpture
and coincides with his mastery of painting that Bernini emerges as a universal artist.
Thus, for Baldinucci, the architecture of the Baldacchino serves to confirm that Bernini’s
talent, which he measures by artistic universality alone, is equal to that of Michelangelo.

In light of the biographers’ differing approaches to Bernini’s michelangelism, it is
not surprising that Domenico’s discussion of the Baldacchino was more deeply indebted
to the Ristretta (discussed above). The manuscript, like Domenico’s biography, is
preoccupied with the baldachin’s proportions and the means by which Bernini discerned
them. But rather than evoking the giudizio dell’occhio, the writer of the Ristretta sees the
problem of the monument’s proportions as the vehicle for yet another kind of affinity to
Michelangelo. Here, the notion of difficoltà, which involves making the most from the
least or overcoming strict limitations, is the theoretical node. Though the term had
currency since the early Renaissance, as with giudizio dell’occhio, Michelangelo was the
champion of difficoltà from the mid-cinquecento onward, thus furnishing the primary
subtext for the argument in the Ristretta.

According to the Ristretta writer, Bernini threw himself into creating designs and
models for the Baldacchino in order to “overcome the many difficulties his predecessors
encountered,” in their own attempts to satisfy the demands of the work and the site.

556 Delbeke, “Gianlorenzo Bernini’s Bel Composto,” 258-64.
557 Summers, Michelangelo, 177-85.
558 “Il Bernino doppo che con molta modestia ebbe significato la sua debolezza per un’opera di tanta
importanza ubbidì senza sparagno di fatiche e di viggilie per molti mesi in far disegni e modelli per
superar molte difficoltà che da professori antecedenti ereno state incontrate le quali se n’espicheranno le
principali.” Audisio, “Lettere e testi,” 42.
The author subsequently enumerates the difficulties of proportion posed by the *Baldacchino*. First, the smallest member of the monument must be proportioned to the immensity of the church and the altar, otherwise one “runs the risk of putting a dwarf in a circle of giants or a spindle in the middle of a huge piazza.”  

Second, as the work is made taller, so too must the proportion of its width increase. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, the larger the monument grows, the more it impedes the view from the entrance of the lovely symmetry of the church “which is the most beautiful and difficult thing in architecture ever done by Michelangelo.” The author concludes by suggesting that as a result of these combined hurdles, the *difficoltà* of Bernini’s task trumps even that faced by Buonarroti. By inserting Michelangelo’s achievement into the list of Gianlorenzo’s challenges, the author further signals both a parallel and a significant difference. Michelangelo and Bernini both made a virtue of difficulty, but only Bernini had to overcome an obstacle set, in part, by his predecessor: symmetry achieved through balanced proportion. Paradoxically, it is through asymmetry that Bernini maintains Buonarroti’s harmony. As the author suggests, in order to accommodate the frontal view of the work, as well as the vantage from the lateral tribunes, Gianlorenzo created a rectangular altar which he placed markedly off-center in the crossing. The implication is that by creating a monument that does not undermine Michelangelo’s symmetry, but enhances it while simultaneously attending to other problems, Bernini surpasses Michelangelo at his own exercise of *difficoltà*.

While they do not agree on what kind of michelangelism is present in the Baldacchino, Bernini’s biographers (including the writer of the *Ristretta*) were keen to

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559 Ibid.  
560 (italics mine) Ibid: “la più bella e *dificil* cosa ch’in architettura abbia fatto Michel’Angelo.”
shape their subject’s achievement according to his predecessor’s example. They were not alone. One instance of the early reception of the Baldacchino, from the immediate aftermath of its unveiling (thus anticipating the biographical agendas), also develops another paragone between Michelangelo and Bernini. In October 1633, the poet Lelio Guidiccioni penned a dialogue (which may have been spoken in the presence of Urban) between himself and Bernini that places the baldachin at the center of a debate about imitation, specifically on whether to follow the path of ancient exemplars or to pursue novelty free from example.  

Guidiccioni here takes up the cause of tradition, affirming that it is only by “venerating” the ancients and “following the path, but not the strides” that a new standard is made. Championing innovation ex nihilo, Bernini responds “I esteem walking along a new road more glorious than taking up the ancient one, missing it among the multitude wandering there.” Bernini’s position, as numerous scholars have noted, echoes Michelangelo’s oft-repeated detto on imitation: “No one who follows others can ever get in front of them, and those who cannot do good work on their own account, can hardly make good use of what others have done.”

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561 On Guidiccioni’s dialogue, see D’Onofrio, “Note berniniane I: Un dialogo-recita”; Kirwin, Powers Matchless, 213-8; Delbeke, Fenice degli ingegni, 33-9; Bellini, “From Mascardi to Pallavicino,” 300-1.

562 “Anzi dobbiamo in tutto et per tutto far del nostro, col venerare gli antichi vestigi; et da quei grand’huomini pigliare il passeggio, ma non i passi, né del lor piè fare il nostro. Dobbiamo però tener l’istessa strada, et non volere inventarne di nuove perché ci serviranno di rompicolli; et il farlo non è arte in verità, ma destruttione, et imbrattamento d’arte.” As transcribed in D’Onofrio, “Note berniniane I: Un dialogo-recita,” 129.

563 “Più glorioso stimavo il caminare per la nuova strada che andando per l’antica, perderla trà la molitudine che v’ondeggia per entro.” As transcribed in D’Onofrio, “Note berniniane I: Un dialogo-recita,” 129.

564 Vasari/Bull, Life, 426-7; Vasari/Barocchi, Vita, 1:127-8: “Domandato da uno amico suo quel che gli paresse d’uno che aveva contrafatto di marmo figure antiche delle più celebrate, vantandosi lo immitatore che di gran lunga aveva superato gli antichi, rispose: ‘Chi va dietro a altri, mai non li passa innanzi; e chi non sa far bene da sé, non può servirsi bene delle cose d’altri.’” D’Onofrio, “Note berniniane I: Un dialogo-recita,” 129, was the first to note the relationship between Bernini’s position on imitation in the dialogue and Michelangelo’s detto. See also Kirwin, Powers Matchless, 213-8; Delbeke, Fenice degli ingegni, 36.
Thus casts Bernini’s baldachin in a michelangesque light; created outside example, it is without compare.

Just a few years after Guidiccioni wrote his dialogue, the singularity of the Baldacchino was perpetuated in a much more accessible text that also, as in Baldinucci’s biography, emphasized Bernini’s multifaceted talent – with an unexpected twist. In the *Ristretto delle grandezze di Roma* (1637), a short guide to Rome written by Pompilio Totti and dedicated to Urban VIII’s nephews, Carlo and Maffeo Barberini, Bernini’s bronze monument is characterized as an exceptional work by which Bernini triumphed over Michelangelo’s accomplishment in three arts.

This edifice is no less admirable for its material and work, *as for being unique in the world; I am certain that no work of metal of such vastness and beauty has ever been made, not even by the ancient Romans. It is the design and work of Cavalier Bernino, Florentine Sculptor, Architect, and Painter, just as Michelangelo managed to arrive in the Glory of perfect practice, by his practice of these three noblest professions; thus [Bernini] contrived with the reach of the fourth [art], [that is] working marvelously in casting, to surpass him.*

With this one work, according to Totti, Bernini has outstripped both antiquity and Michelangelo. Not only are the size and beauty of the Baldacchino utterly novel, but also the process of bronze-casting that went into its making (from which Bernini was, in

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reality, largely removed) defines Gianlorenzo as the master of a fourth discipline, thus distinguishing his artistic breadth from that of his modern exemplar. Dedicated to members of the Barberini clan and promoting the pope’s favorite artist as the “new Michelangelo,” Totti’s text would have appealed to Urban’s by now well-known aspirations for Bernini.

It is thus curious that in the following year, when Totti’s guide was expanded and reissued to a wider audience under the title of Ritratto di Roma moderna, the triumphant tenor of Bernini’s achievement and the explicit paragone with Michelangelo are abandoned. If the Baldacchino is still celebrated as unparalleled in the modern and ancient world, it is now simply the “design and work of Cavalier Bernino Florentine Sculptor, Architect and Painter of most singular name.” Neither Buonarroti nor a fourth art of bronze casting are mentioned. Instead, the reader is given information about the extraordinarily large dimensions and great weight of the monument. And it is not just this passage that has changed, but the whole tenor of the entry on St. Peter’s. In the earlier edition, for example, Buonarroti is only mentioned in the passage on Bernini’s Baldacchino. In the subsequent edition, though many of Bernini’s contributions to the church under Urban are listed, greater praise is given to Michelangelo as one of the

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567 On Bernini’s collaboration with founders on contract for the project and his possible work in the foundry, see Kirwin, Powers Matchless, 113-6, 128-9.
568 On the popularity of Totti’s second edition, which represents a new type of city guide, see Rose Marie San Juan, Rome: A City Out of Print (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001), 59-60, 61-7.
569 “Questo edificio è non meno ammirabile per la materia, e lavoro, che per esser unico al Mondo; essendo certo, non esser mai stata fin ora fatta, ne anco da gli antichi Romani, mole alcuna di metallo in tanta vastità, e bellezza. E’ disegno, e fattura del Cavalier Bernino Scultore, Architetto, e Pittor Fiorentino di singolarissimo nome. Le quattro colonne di bronzo, che sostengono il baldacchino sopra il detto Altare passano di peso cento dieci mila libre, poiché essendosene pesate due, si trovarono pesare col’lor capitelli, e base ne libre cinquantacinque mile, ottocento, e novantasette.” Pompilio Totti and Lodovico Totti, Ritratto di Roma Moderna (Rome: Mascardi, 1638), 11. On the passage, see Delbeke, Fenice degli ingegni, 38.
principal contributors to and architects of St. Peter’s and the “unsurpassed singular
teacher of architecture to all.”

The change in tone between the various Totti editions is difficult to explain. Though the 1638 edition was intended for a wider audience and produced in greater numbers, it is hard to imagine that the Barberini would not have welcomed popular press promoting Bernini as the modern rival of Michelangelo, especially since this second text was dedicated to another of Urban’s nephews, Antonio Barberini. Resistance to the notion that Gianlorenzo had surpassed Michelangelo may have resided in mounting popular disfavor of Bernini as the architect of the site. By this time Bernini’s technical supervision of the baldachin been called in to question and he was brought before the Congregation to identify those aspects of the construction and technical planning of the Baldacchino that he had overseen. Bernini underscored his direct and constant participation in the design and construction of the monument, took credit for the execution of the small- and large-scale three dimensional models (made of wood and of paper mache), and claimed that he oversaw work in the foundry, even preparing the pieces for casting, “with great risk to his life.” While Bernini’s explanation satisfied the Congregation, his technical skills – especially regarding structural issues – remained under question, particularly in light of his other work at the crossing of St. Peter’s. Indeed, perhaps most significant to the change of tone in the two guidebooks, on 26 December 1636, immediately before the first edition of Totti’s text was published,

572 Kirwin, *Powers Matchless*, 113-5, 125, 127-8, offers an analysis of reports wherein Bernini was called before the Congregation to identify those aspects of the construction and technical planning of the Baldacchino that he had overseen.
573 Ibid., 128.
Bernini was accused of causing cracks in the dome of St. Peter’s. According to the architect’s adversaries, his technically inexpert work on the crossing piers weakened the support for the dome, not only causing it to split but also threatening the collapse of the entire edifice.

The architect’s embellishment of the crossing piers was conceived as a complement to his design of the Baldacchino and, together, these projects not only renewed the centrality of the crossing, but also transformed it into a dynamic space of myriad contrapposti. It would seem, however, that the structural failure of one aspect of this project compromised the success (whether of proportion, difficulty or universality) of the other. Though documents from the same year suggest that some individuals saw the criticisms of the crack in the dome as nothing more than the ravings of Bernini’s enemies, who were jealous of his success and intent on disgracing him, the allegations

574 For the first comprehensive study of this event, see Tod Allan Marder, “A Fingerbath in Rosewater: Cracks in Bernini’s Reputation,” in Satzinger and Schütze, eds., Sankt Peter in Rom, 427-34, with previous bibliography.
575 Marder, “A Fingerbath in Rosewater,” 428.
576 Though it is beyond the architectural focus of this chapter, it must be noted that Bernini’s Baldacchino (and, to a lesser extent, his work on the piers and their decoration) is intimately tied to his sculptural decoration for the apse. The latter was begun during Urban’s reign with unrealized plans for an altar decoration at the apse as well as Bernini’s relocation of Paul III’s tomb from the crossing to the western apse and his creation of its formal and conceptual pair, the tomb of Urban. Together, the appearance and arrangement of these tombs evoked Michelangelo’s composition in the Medici Chapel. The contrapuntal connection between the altar and apse area was fully realized, however, under Alexander VII’s reign during which time Urban’s earlier plans to create an altar decoration at the apse came to new fruition with the Cathedra Petri. As drawings for the work indicate, the monument was calculated to be seen through the baldachin, thus creating another contrapposto in the space which served, at least visually, to recreate the traditional connection between the apse and the tomb. On the decoration of the crossing and Bernini’s work on the apse tombs, see Lavin, Bernini and the Crossing; idem, “Bernini at St. Peter’s,” in St. Peter’s in the Vatican, ed. William Tronzo (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 111-243; Sebastian Schütze, “‘Urbano inalza Pietro, e Pietro Urbano’: Beobachtungen zu Idee und Gestalt der Ausstattung von Neu-St. Peter unter Urban VIII,” Römisches Jahrbuch der Bibliotheca Hertziana 29 (1994): 213-87. For Urban’s possible intentions for decorating the apse altar, see Louise Rice, “Urban VIII, the Archangel Michael, and a Forgotten Project for the Apse Altar of St Peter’s,” Burlington Magazine 134 (1992): 428-34; idem, Altars and Altarpieces, 87-91, 98-103, 265-71. On the Cathedra petri, see Rice, Altars and Altarpieces, 265-71; Sebastian Schütze, “‘Werke als Kalküle ihres Wirkungsanspruchs’: die Cathedra Petri und ihr Bedeutungswandel im konfessionellen Zeitalter,” in Satzinger and Sebastian Schütze, eds., Sankt Peter in Rom, 405-25. In a future study I intend to include (sculpture particularly his tomb of Urban VIII and the Cathedra Petri) in an analysis of Bernini’s work at St. Peter’s.
persisted. By 1638 censure reached a popular level and, in February of the same year, news spread that a theatre troupe in Rome was preparing a comedy satirizing Bernini by comparing the cupola to a *braghiere*, a cracked and wrinkled man. It was only after Bernini appealed to Cardinal Francesco Barberini to intercede on his behalf that the play was stopped that the architect’s detractors silenced. At least, that is, for the moment.

Juxtaposed to the artistic success of the Baldacchino, which was due in large part to the technical collaboration of Borromini, the crisis of the structurally unsound piers and its effect on the dome introduces the lifelong problem attending Bernini’s reputation as an architect, in general, and his work at St. Peter’s, in particular, that is, his technical inexpertise. The issue of Bernini’s competence in architecture, beyond his knowledge of proportion, also complicates his identity as Buonarroti’s worthy heir at the site. As we shall see, having an eye for measures alone was not sufficient to make him an architect equal to Michelangelo.

*Mitigating Maderno, Reclaiming Michelangelo: Bernini’s Bell Towers, Façade and Colonnade*

In 1636, despite concerns of some that Bernini the sculptor-architect lacked the necessary technical skills that would fully complement his deft eye for proportion in architecture, Urban VIII invited Bernini to erect bell towers over the basilica’s façade.

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577 Marder, “A Fingerbath in Rosewater,” 428, discusses an *avviso* by the Modenese ambassador Francesco Mantovani, first published by Stanislao Fraschetti, that reports that the crack had stimulated widespread worry as it threatened the collapse of the whole church as well as the Vatican palace.

578 “Serenissimo Prencipe – Gli scolari di Capranica volevano nella loro Comedia far comparire una Cupola col Braghiere, per mostrare che per cagione de Bernini la Cupola di San Pietro si trovi a maltermine...” As quoted in Fraschetti, *Bernini*, 71n4, from an *avviso* by Francesco Mantovani.

579 The pope had been thinking about erecting towers since 1626, a period from which we have a number of studies for single-story structures by Borromini. On Borromini’s drawings, which are iterations of Maderno’s single-story plans, see Thelen, *Francesco Borromini*, 1:33-36; McPhee, *Bernini and the Bell*
Although, while still a cardinal, Barberini took measures to preserve Michelangelo’s St. Peter’s and purportedly confronted Paul V’s decision to depart from the architect’s plans by declaring “that another pope would have demolished Maderno’s design to restore that of Michelangelo,” documents suggest that once he assumed papal office, Urban thought the more prudent resolution lay not in razing Maderno’s work but in creating towers that would attenuate the disproportionate relationship between the Buonarroti’s dome and Maderno’s extended nave and façade. In order to understand how Bernini attempted to mediate the disjuncture between these two phases of the basilica’s construction, it is necessary to examine Maderno’s alterations and their immediate reception.

In 1607, after almost two years of deliberation over whether to complete St. Peter’s according to Buonarroti’s intentions or to abandon his Greek-cross design, Paul V and the Congregazione della Fabbrica decided to adopt Maderno’s proposal for a Latin cross addition. Despite his radical departure in plan from Michelangelo’s church, Maderno’s first project for St. Peter’s not only respected Buonarroti’s architectural vocabulary on the site, but also endeavored to preserve the same proportions. His seven-bay façade [fig. 87] included ornament that emulated Michelangelo’s Petrine

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Towers, 35-7, 276-7; Bösel and Frommel eds., Borromini e l’universo barocco, 2:93; Burbaum, Rivalität, 163-6.

580 “Disse a Papa Paolo che un altro Papa haverebbe demolito il nuovo disegno del Maderno per restituire quello di Michelangelo.” Cardinal Maffeo’s statement is culled from an anecdote in his unpublished biography by Herrera [Barb. 4901, pp. 47-49, Vat. Lib.], portions of which were transcribed in Pastor, History of the Popes, 26:475.

581 As noted in papal documents from the period [Discorso, Barb. 4262, Vat. Lib.], see Pastor, History of the Popes, 29:481n3; McPhee, Bernini and the Bell Towers, 37-40.

582 For discussions regarding the early seicento controversy surrounding the completion of New St. Peter’s and the various proposals for the plan and façade submitted by competing architects, particularly Maderno’s, see Wąźniński, “Il cardinale Francesco Maria del Monte”; Hibbard, Carlo Maderno, 66-7, 156-8; Thoenes, “Madernos St.-Peter-Entwürfe”; Roca de Amicis, “La Facciata di S. Pietro,” 279-84, McPhee, Bernini and the Bell Towers, 5-12.

window decoration as well as his colossal order; it created continuity between the flanking walls of the church and the front by extending Buonarroti’s distinctive attic register through the length of the east elevation; and it framed the church entrance with an engaged four columned porch that referred in relief to the unrealized designs for a free-standing porch.\textsuperscript{584} The width of this façade was also was slightly narrower than Maderno’s plans for a tapered nave, which would have permitted a view of the outer walls of Michelangelo’s church as far back as the transept arms [fig. 88].\textsuperscript{585} The overall effect would have been a sensitive integration, formally and proportionally, of the cinquecento building with its seicento extension.

In 1612, however, the harmony of Maderno’s design was vitiated when Paul V ordered that the two bell towers, which the architect had placed just behind the façade above the easternmost chapels of the nave, should instead flank the façade.\textsuperscript{586} Maderno’s subsequent addition of two outer bays with attics surmounted by one story towers dramatically altered the proportions of the façade [fig. 89]. Now virtually doubled in width, the unusually broad façade diminished the prominence of the porch. Maderno attempted to mitigate this effect by echoing the porch form in the first story of each tower. But this repetition does little to reinforce the primacy of the porch in the first design, or even to reduce the perception of the façade’s excessive width. And though Maderno deployed colossal pilasters and arches to define these towers as distinct, the façade

\textsuperscript{584} Maderno’s first design for the façade is known through an elevation attributed to the artist’s hand. This vision of the façade also appears in a fresco in the Vatican Palace (1611) as well as a medal commemorating the foundation of the façade, see Hibbard, \textit{Carlo Maderno}, 68-9, 160-1; Thoenes, “Madernos St.-Peter-Entwürfe,” 1:175, 177-8.

\textsuperscript{585} On Maderno’s original vision for the nave and its sensitivity to maintaining the impression of centrality inherent to Michelangelo’s portion of the church, see Hibbard, \textit{Carlo Maderno}, 71-2, 163-5; Thoenes, “Madernos St.-Peter-Entwürfe,” 1:175-6.

\textsuperscript{586} For Paul V’s decision to change the location of the bell towers, see Hibbard, \textit{Carlo Maderno}, 69; Thoenes, “Madernos St.-Peter-Entwürfe,” 1:177-8; McPhee, \textit{Bernini and the Bell Towers}, 14-7.
nonetheless reads as a single unit that radically changed the whole. If by way of this addition the pope purportedly intended to make the façade appear more “proportionate to the massiveness of [Michelangelo’s] temple,” the perceived result was precisely the inverse. The architect’s towers and wide façade were thought to have indelibly marred the proportional relationships between the front face and the rest of the church. And it was Maderno, not Paul V, who carried the burden of guilt henceforth as the heir who ruined the beautiful symmetry of Michelangelo’s church.

Among the most vociferous opponents of Maderno’s revised scheme was Cardinal Maffeo Barberini. From the moment of his appointment to the Congregazione in 1608, Maffeo had been a staunch defender of Buonarroti’s centralized church and, in turn, an active opponent of Maderno’s longitudinal extension. He even rallied the support of other cardinals and interested parties in a last effort to convince Paul V and the Congregation if not to preserve Michelangelo’s designs, then, at least, to select a proposal that was more sensitive to them. Though Maffeo’s arguments fell on deaf ears and the new construction proceeded, he continued to follow Maderno’s progress closely. On 30

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587 “Domenica il Pontefice... se ne passò a San Pietro, ove restò et diede una visita alla fabbrica di quella basilica, dando ordine di principare li due campanili disegati, uno di quà, et l’altro di là della facciata, che nella parte inferiore si li potrà passar sotto, et farrano parere la facciata più larga, et proportionata alla grandezza del tempio vecchio, fatto secondo l’architettura di Michel Angelo Bonaroti.” Avviso of 5 September as quoted in Hibbard, Carlo Maderno, 176. McPhee, Bernini and the Bell Towers, 19-28, also notes that while the passages suggest that Paul V’s desire to move the bell towers from their original position behind the façade to flanking the front face were motivated by aesthetics, latter documents indicate that structural concerns regarding the stability of the towers and façade were ultimately behind the change. 588 According to Urban VIII’s biographer, Herrera, while still a cardinal the soon-to-be-pope had demonstrated a keen eye for the functional, liturgical and symbolic merits of Michelangelo’s design, so much so that he even offered counter-arguments to Paul V’s and the Congregation’s criticisms of its failures. Arguing in favour of preserving Buonarroti’s church, Maffeo pointed to the spaces in his design that could accommodate a sacristy and a choir, he showed how the external columned portico was, in fact, an advantageous place for a benediction loggia and he explained that this portico would, in turn, extend over the whole sacred ground of the old church. The biographer’s account of Cardinal Maffeo’s defense of Michelangelo’s church is discussed and transcribed in Pastor, History of the Popes, 26:387-8, 475-6. 589 See Wąźniński, “Il cardinale Francesco Maria del Monte,” who demonstrates that from the moment of Maffeo Barberini’s appointment to the Congregation in early 1608, the cardinal, in league with Francesco Maria del Monte (who had already emerged in his previous two years on the committee as pro-Michelangelo), acted as voice of Michelangelo Buonarroti il Giovane and other Tuscan parties.
June 1613, soon after Maderno presented the pope with his revised scheme for the façade, towers and new nave, Maffeo received engravings of the proposed changes and quickly voiced his dissatisfaction.\footnote{The engravings of the façade elevation and the new plans for the nave were made by Mattheus Greuter in May of 1613. See Thoenes, “Studien zur Geschichte des Petersplatzes,” 132-3; Hibbard, \textit{Carlo Maderno}, 68-70; McPhee, \textit{Bernini and the Bell Towers}, 14-5, 17.} The cardinal was particularly critical of the elevation, which, in his view, showed much more of the dome than would actually be visible to the eye when standing before the church.\footnote{For a discussion of Cardinal Barberini’s critique of the engravings and of Maderno’s defense, see Thelen, \textit{Zur Entstehungsgeschichte der Hochaltar-Architektur}, 27; Camillo Scaccia Scarafoni, “Prime critiche e prime proposte di modificazioni alla Basilica Vaticana dopo i lavori compiuti da C. Maderno,” \textit{Rivista d’arte} 21-22 (1939-40): 65-90; Hibbard, \textit{Carlo Maderno}, 69-70; Burbbaum, \textit{Rivalità}, 124-6.}

Once again, despite Maffeo’s reservations, construction on Maderno’s design proceeded only to stimulate further censure by a handful of architects once the façade, up to the attic, was complete \textbf{[fig. 90]}. For example, in a manuscript from around 1620 that outlines the ills of Maderno’s design, Papirio Bartoli recommended that the attic be replaced with a pediment that would not only remedy the disproportion but also afford a better view of the small domes and the central cupola, which, as a result of Maderno’s poor design, appeared to rise from the façade rather than from the drum.\footnote{Excerpts of Bartoli’s manuscript, which responds to all of Maderno’s contributions to the interior and exterior of St. Peter’s, have been reprinted and discussed by Scarafoni, “Prime critiche e prime proposte”, and, most recently, Roca de Amicis, “La Facciata di S. Pietro,” who focuses on Bartoli’s critique of Maderno’s façade and his proposed alternatives that reveal affinities to the 1606-7 proposals by Girolamo Rainaldi and Domenico Fontana.} The two counter-designs that complement the manuscript \textbf{[figs. 91 and 92]} envision the removal of the attic story from both the façade and tower bays and its replacement with a monumental cornice that was low enough to restore the view of the dome.\footnote{On Bartoli’s designs, see Scarafoni, “Prime critiche e prime proposte,” 82-90; Marder, \textit{Bernini’s Scala Regia}, 84; McPhee, \textit{Bernini and the Bell Towers}, 28-9, 34-5.} He added a second, large pediment above the central portion of the cornice which unified the façade and drew the eye towards the drum. Bartoli also presented two alternatives for the towers:
in one, he created tall, broad towers that sat well in front of the façade, thus creating a physical and visual distinction between the façade and towers, in another, tall, tiered towers sat atop Maderno’s bases. Both schemes sought, through different means, to create proportional harmony between Michelangelo’s dome and Maderno’s façade. A contemporary counter-project by Martino Ferrabosco sought a similar effect by leaving the façade and bell towers untouched and constructing soaring, thick, three-story towers above them [fig. 93]. In lieu of structural changes, Ferrabosco enlists height to create equilibrium among the parts. The tall towers have the effect of not only narrowing and lowering the façade, but also framing and, thus, also lowering the height of the dome. Though neither of these projects was undertaken, their different remedies to the problem of disproportion between Maderno’s façade and Michelangelo’s church and dome behind it set the tone for Bernini’s subsequent engagement with the exterior of St. Peter’s.595

Between 1636 and 1641, Bernini responded in part to the challenge posed by the bell towers using the same logic he applied to the Baldacchino: he conceived of the optical proportion of these structures in context and employed them as corrective elements in an imperfect ensemble that would succeed in visually reconciling the disparate parts of the whole. While the earlier counter-projects were also sensitive to context, proportion and to visual harmonies, Bernini’s designs are distinguished by a heightened dialogue with the form and proportion of Michelangelo’s contribution to the architectural fabric of the extant church.

595 The influence of these designs on Bernini and his subsequent proposals for the towers and façade projects was underscored by McPhee, *Bernini and the Bell Towers*, 136-64.
Bernini’s bell towers, as Sarah McPhee has demonstrated, developed over time, increasing in height at every stage of his design for the south tower, the first of the pair to be erected.\footnote{Chapter 2 of McPhee’s text offers a careful examination of drawings by Bernini and his workshop as well as textual and visual records of the construction in order to reconstruct the progress on and appearance of Bernini’s bell towers. My analysis is indebted to her investigation.} The artist likely set out to create a two-story tower, the base of which looked much like that in the final design, with 24 Corinthian columns clusters disposed along the polygonal footprint of Maderno’s tower base \[\text{fig. 94}]. In the earliest stages of planning, the second story may have been a narrower version of the above capped by a pyramidal crown.\footnote{McPhee, \textit{Bernini and the Bell Towers}, 44-9.} According to a fresco in the Vatican Palace from around 1637-38 \[\text{fig. 95}\], Bernini introduced an arched opening at the second level and added a third, squatter story with an attic order topped again by a triangular crown.\footnote{The fresco was painted by Simone Lagi and Marco Tullio Montagna in the apartment of the Noble Guards in the Vatican Palace, see Gramiccia, \textit{Bernini in Vaticano}, 166-67; McPhee, \textit{Bernini and the Bell Towers}, 47, 49-50.} The appearance of the towers in this representation corresponds closely to a detailed drawing by Bernini \[\text{fig. 96}\].\footnote{Based on the formal correlation between this drawing and the appearance of the upper stories of the towers represented in the Vatican Palace fresco, McPhee, \textit{Bernini and the Bell Towers}, 41-50, 265-6, dates this drawing to sometime between 1637 and 1639, that is, significantly earlier than previously considered. See also, Kieven, \textit{Von Bernini bis Piranesi}, 99-100; Marder, \textit{Bernini and the Art of Architecture}, 75.} and this drawing demonstrates that his design was based explicitly on Buonarroti’s whole lantern and attic course \[\text{fig. 97}\]. Here Bernini has reduced the many thin scrolled ribs of Michelangelo’s canopy to four wide ribs that correspond to the four angled corners of the tower. As in the lantern, Bernini’s ribs are aligned with volutes that buttress the canopy. This superstructure, in turn, rests upon an attic course that reaffirms Michelangelo’s pilaster and window decoration on the lateral sides of the church.

From this point forward, it appears that Bernini was mostly concerned with the appearance and dimensions of the third story. A studio drawing from around three years
later [fig. 98] indicates that Bernini revised his two-story scheme by adding more height through an intermediary columnar story and by drawing an even closer visual affinity between his tower superstructure and that atop the dome.\(^{600}\) In this iteration, the multiple slender ribs of Michelangelo’s canopy are evoked in order to create a layered effect that carries down through to a tapered attic course. These tapered walls act like the scrolls of Buonarroti’s lantern and, as in the latter, they are held up by paired columns. The shell decoration from Buonarroti’s attic widow ornament is now displaced to function as a transitional element between the canopy and attic. Here, as in the earlier design, this marriage of the architectural vocabulary of lantern and attic helps to diminish the perceived distance between the façade and dome.

According to McPhee’s reconstruction of the final appearance of the towers [fig. 99], Bernini had calibrated his design to echo the elevation of Maderno’s façade and to correspond to the architectural vocabulary of the dome and the cupolette.\(^{601}\) The tripartite division of the towers parallels the horizontal sections of the façade (from the ground to the balustrade, from the balustrade to the entablature and from the entablature to the top of the attic order). The individual elements of each tower story also function, simultaneously, to create consonances with the architecture behind the façade: the first story, with its paired columns that frame a squared opening recall those around the drum; on the second story sixteen composite columns frame arched openings that emulate the arrangement on the little domes; the third story recalls the columnar rhythm of the lantern base with the whole surmounted by a tall tapering canopy, which further elongated the tower. Its decorative embellishments, which earlier engaged explicitly with Buonarroti’s

\(^{600}\) On this drawing and its attribution, see Brauer and Wittkower, Zeichnungen, 1:39; McPhee, Bernini and the Bell Towers, 47, 263-4.

\(^{601}\) McPhee, Bernini and the Bell Towers, 73.
lantern and attic, are now either omitted or only vaguely defined. The overall result is a web of formal juxtapositions adjusted to dimensions that give the visual impression of a proportioned and harmonious whole. Bernini’s towers not only mediate the work of Michelangelo and Maderno, but also, their tall, tapering form appears to reduce the breadth of the façade without competing with the vista of the dome.

Bernini’s south tower was unveiled on 21 June 1641 to unqualified censure. His failure, in eyes of the Pope and the Congregation, was one of proportion. As McPhee has shown, the third story of the tower was deemed too small in relation to the lower stories and thus insufficient to reconcile the distance between the dome and façade. Though Bernini immediately sought to remedy the situation, his apparent mis-calibration was soon complicated by allegations that the weight of his towers had caused cracks in the façade that threatened the collapse of the whole front of the church. In the wake of this revelation, the third story of his tower was abruptly dismantled and work came to a halt. For the second time in the span of a few short years, Bernini was blamed for compromising the structural integrity of St. Peter’s. And in this instance, it was not just his technical aptitude that rested on foundations as unstable as those of St. Peter’s itself.

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602 McPhee’s reconstruction of this final version of the tower’s pyramidal cap is based on an anonymous sectional drawing which she dates to 1641, see ibid., 69-71, 264. While the drawing shows little ornament on the exterior of this pyramid, its purpose was not to demonstrate how the final was to be decorated but, rather, to communicate the means by which the inner structural system that was to support this cap. Though McPhee asserts that this pyramid and base would have had minimal decoration (dolphin ornaments at the peak, an orb with cross and papal keys) it seems unlikely that Bernini would have left this dominant form so bare. The evidence of both the preliminary drawings for this tower (and even those for the tower designs created during Innocent X’s reign) suggests that he envisioned a much more ornamented terminus.

603 McPhee, *Bernini and the Bell Towers*, 63, 74-5, offers a corrective to the long-held belief that the appearance of the cracks was the primary, or at times, the only real reason for the tower failure. Brauer and Wittkower, *Zeichnungen*, 1:38n5, for example, dismissed the contemporary complaints about the aesthetics and proportion of the tower as a cover-up for the structural failure. According to one contemporary account, “since the third story struck many as very small, Pope Urban VIII ordered it to be torn down to the ground....” For this and other reports about Bernini’s failure and its impact on the artist’s health, see Marder, *Bernini and the Art of Architecture*, 74.

but his visual judgment as well. Having created a work that was first deemed to be
disproportionate and then also discovered to be structurally unsound, Bernini never
looked less like Michelangelo. Upon Urban’s death four years later, the carcass of the
tower still stood untouched, a visible blight on the architect’s reputation and aspirations
and reminder that the pope’s desire to shape the sculptor-architect into a Michelangelo
redivivus at St. Peter’s was, despite initial success, now increasingly and seriously
impaired.

When Innocent X became pope in 1644 he inherited the unresolved problem of
Bernini’s bell towers [fig. 100]. Intent on completing St. Peter’s in time for the 1650
Holy Year, the pontiff organized a committee led by his architectural advisor, Virgilio
Spada, to investigate the condition of the cracked façade and the stability of the extant
tower so that an adequate remedy to the arrested project might be found. Spada’s
inquiry determined that Maderno’s poor foundations, above all, were culpable for the
fissures. Though he acknowledged that Bernini and his tower played an unwitting role
as catalyst of the damage, Spada nonetheless argued that the current structure be
conserved. Yet concerns about the tower’s structural integrity persisted, and despite
Spada’s (and others’) repeated defenses, proposals for new, two-story solutions were
solicited. Once again, Bernini’s competence as an architect was thrown into question.

Over the course of a few months the Congregation consulted with a host of
architects on designs that sought to lessen the weight of the towers and bring the various

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605 On Virgilio Spada and his position as architectural consultant to Innocent X, see Franz Ehrle, “Dalle
carte e dai disegni di Virgilio Spada,” *Atti della Pontificia Accademia Romana di Archaeologia* 2 (1928):
606 For Spada’s inquest into the foundations of St. Peter’s and the stability of the tower and façade, see
elements of the church into harmony.\footnote{On the various proposals that were brought forward by Bernini and his contemporaries, among them, Martino Longhi, Giovanni Battista Mola, Andrea Bolgi, and Girolamo and Carlo Rainaldi, see McPhee, \textit{Bernini and the Bell Towers}, 129-64.} The submissions of Carlo Rainaldi and Bernini, in particular, elicited the greatest interest. What distinguished their proposals was the daring introduction of radical structural changes that recalled Bartoli’s counter-projects of twenty years earlier.\footnote{As Dorothy Metzker Habel, \textit{The Urban Development of Rome in the Age of Alexander VII} (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 277, notes, representations of Papirio Bartoli’s designs and other earlier piazza projects are among the materials in a file on St. Peter’s Piazza (in the Vatican Chigi Archives) that appears to have been Alexander’s own. Bernini likely consulted this material.} Rainaldi offered two slightly varying designs for changes to the façade and towers \textit{[figs. 101 and 102]}, both of which revolved around one conceit: he eliminated the attic order of the towers and the adjacent bay, thus creating a distinct visual break between the campanili and the façade and reactivating the visual primacy of the porch as well as the dome.\footnote{Brauer and Wittkower, \textit{Zeichnungen}, 1:41; McPhee, \textit{Bernini and the Bell Towers}, 147-64, following the lead of Kieven, \textit{Von Bernini bis Piranesi}, 156, 160, has convincingly demonstrated that the visual and textual evidence attests that Rainaldi and Bernini engaged in a rich collaborative exchange throughout the design process, with the latter architect likely developing the ideas presented by the former.} Bernini’s own two designs further develop Rainaldi’s conception of visually discrete façade and towers by introducing significant structural changes that made these two elements physically independent.\footnote{McPhee, \textit{Bernini and the Bell Towers}, 147-64, following the lead of Kieven, \textit{Von Bernini bis Piranesi}, 103-5; Marder, \textit{Bernini and the Art of Architecture}, 78-9; McPhee, \textit{Bernini and the Bell Towers}, 151-3, 156-8, 267-8.} In his first proposal, Bernini went beyond simply limiting the attic story to the central portion of the façade; he also eliminated the bays that extended beyond the width of the nave, thus literally restoring the likely width of Michelangelo’s unrealized façade \textit{[fig. 103]}.\footnote{Brauer and Wittkower, \textit{Zeichnungen}, 1:41; Kieven, \textit{Von Bernini bis Piranesi}, 103-5; Marder, \textit{Bernini and the Art of Architecture}, 78-9; McPhee, \textit{Bernini and the Bell Towers}, 151-3, 156-8, 267-8.} A deep recess extending along the outer walls of the nave here separates the façade and towers. Bernini also offers three alternatives for the tower decoration, all of which insist on large central apertures opening up a view to the edifice beyond. Bernini’s structural changes are less ambitious in his second proposal. Rather than cut into the fabric of Maderno’s
façade, Bernini retains all but the tower bays of Maderno’s attic-topped façade as a backdrop for a monumental projecting porch and similarly projecting campanili [fig. 104]. The bases of these freestanding towers are reconceived as narrow, closed bays with niches and windows framed by colossal pilasters that mimic the vocabulary of Buonarroti’s external bays. These are capped, in turn, with single-story arched towers that terminate in a canopy that re-evokes the pitch and form of the lantern. And the newly conceived projecting façade, with its deep four-columned porch with pediment that frames the main entrance, is similarly inspired by Michelangelo. Both proposals seek to remedy recent structural concerns and the perennial defect of Maderno’s façade by transforming the whole into an ensemble of old and new.

Unlike the negative response to his south tower four years prior, Bernini’s proposed reconstructions of the façade and campanili were widely praised. In December 1645, when the group of architects who had participated in the competition were asked to assess the designs of Rainaldi and Bernini, they judged the latter “universally the best,” as his project “[had] parts most proportionate to the whole, and most natural, and [was] more solid and of greater magnificence.”

This vindication by his peers of Bernini’s eye for proportion and counter-position, however, was a short-lived triumph. Two months later, at a meeting of the Congregation, Innocent X announced that the designs of an unnamed architect would be followed and subsequently ordered the dismantling of Bernini’s extant tower. Yet no further action was taken. And in the wake of the

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612 Brauer and Wittkower, Zeichnungen, 1:42; Kieven, Von Bernini bis Piranesi, 106-07; Marder, Bernini and the Art of Architecture, 78; McPhee, Bernini and the Bell Towers, 167, 270.

613 The heavy shading in this central section suggests that this porch projected beyond the triple-arched structure that Bernini had inserted in front of Maderno’s façade.

614 As quoted in McPhee, Bernini and the Bell Towers, 162, who suggests that the praise refers specifically to Bernini’s first design for the façade and towers.
apparently aborted project, the very demolition of the south campanile was perceived as a public declaration of Bernini’s failure.

Bernini began carving his *Truth revealed by Time* [fig. 105] in the immediate aftermath of the tower debacle.615 It is widely argued, following the cue from Domenico Bernini’s *Vita*, that Gianlorenzo created this statue as a defense against this blight upon his reputation.616 Though the sculpture’s meaning is complex and multilayered, an essential stratum of signification derives from the theme of Lucian’s *Calumny of Apelles*, that is, the eventual exposure of truth that vindicates an artist of calumnious charges. But what particular truth(s) about Bernini’s tower (and even his later tower/façade proposals), if any, does the statue reveal? This question has not been considered by scholars. Yet in the light of McPhee’s discovery that Bernini’s campanile failed to realize harmonious dimensions, Matthias Winner’s argument that figural proportion is fundamental to *Truth’s* formal and theoretical meaning takes on new relevance.617 Though Winner does not develop the possible implications of his reading of the statue for Bernini’s architecture, his argument might be expanded and revised to shed light on how *Truth* 

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616 Bernini, *Vita*, 80-1. Both Domenico and Baldinucci write about the statue of *Truth* in their vite and, as Delbeke, Levy and Ostrow, “Prolegomena,” 44-7, have recently demonstrated, the biographers relate the theme of truth to their subject’s life in different ways. They argue that for Baldinucci, Bernini’s *Truth* (which he describes as missing the figure of Time) is a sign of the artist’s own timelessness and constancy, while for Domenico, the *Truth* (which he describes as produced as a direct result of his disfavour in Innocent’s court following the tower failure) represents the immutable virtue of the artist, a quality unmarred by changes in fortune. See also, John. D. Lyons, “Plotting Bernini: A Triumph over Time,” in Delbeke, Levy and Ostrow, eds., *Bernini’s Biographies*, 143-58.

617 Winner, “Veritas,” 303-5. This is just one of manifold Christian, art theoretical, iconographical and biographical meanings of the statue that Winner explores.
responds, if not directly to the censure leveled against Bernini’s bell towers, then to the implicit challenge this turn of events leveled against Bernini’s identity as a sculptor-architect.

According to the earliest account, Bernini’s original design for *Truth revealed by Time* was for a two-figure group of an airborne aged man pulling away a drapery to reveal a nude female figure who, in turn, was to be surrounded by architecture and bas-relief. The description comes from a 1647 letter by the Duke of Bresciano who had seen a bozzetto of the statue and, as Winner observed, made particular note of the sculptor’s emphatic play with contrast: “One can see the difference in the symmetry of a man compared to that of a woman, [as well as] the difference in the face and flesh of an old man compared to that of a maiden. There will be space to represent something of architecture and also bas-relief if it is judged apt enough so as not to make the work trite.”

Bernini’s statue, in short, was an exercise in his notion of contrapposti: masculine scale versus feminine measure, old age versus nubile youth, sagging muscul arity versus pillowy fleshiness, figural form versus architecture. Though the Duke minimizes the role of architecture in the group, according to Chantelou’s account, Bernini envisioned a significant part for architecture in the early phases of planning and included columns, obelisks and mausoleums as part of the ensemble. It might be argued that the

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618 “Vi si vedrà la differenza della simetria d’un huomo a quella d’una donna, la differenza della faccia e carnagione di un vecchio a quella d’una giovine. Vi sarà campo du far vedere qualche cosa di architettura et anche basso rilevo se si giudicherà a proposito che non triti l’opera.” As quoted in Winner, “Veritas,” 295.

619 Chantelou also notes that Bernini described his original design for the two-figure group as including columns, obelisks and tombs. See Chantelou, *Diary*, 142; idem, *Journal*, 136 (August 23): “Le Cavalier a dit qu’il a fait pour le laisser à sa maison, que la figure du Temps, qui porte et montre par même moyen des effets du temps, qui ruine et consume enfin toutes choses; que dans son modèle il a fait des colonnes, des obélisques, des mausolé...”
number of competing elements that the artist challenged himself to reconcile in this statuary group is comparable to the architectural balancing act he faced at St. Peter’s.

If the play of contrasts apparent in the original design for Truth is lost in the final single-figure sculpture, the priority that Bernini placed on visual perception in assessing proportional relationships is preserved in the solar mask that Truth holds in her right hand. The image of Truth clasping the sun is derived from Ripa’s Iconologia [fig. 106], but as Winner argues, Bernini has made a significant alteration to the sun and the manner in which his female grasps this attribute. Rather than display the full face of the sun, this solar mask is eyeless. Truth’s thumb extends to the space where we would expect the left eye, her thumbnail taking the place of the missing pupil [fig. 107]. This conceit evokes the well-known story of Phidias who carved a marble sculpture of a lion using only his fingernail to determine the proportions, which Winner demonstrated persisted in Renaissance texts like the treatise on proportion by Daniele Barbaro, who counseled artists to use the length of their thumb as a modular measurement.620 It is against this tradition of perceiving the thumb a standard measure of proportion, according to Winner, that we should understand Truth’s unusually prominent digit.621

Winner’s reading of the thumb as yardstick is convincing, yet his argument seems incomplete without a fuller consideration of Bernini’s conflation of Truth’s thumb and the sun’s eye. I would suggest that the thumb does not supplant the eye; rather, thumb and eyeball coalesce to create a kind of visual shorthand for Michelangelo’s notion of the compasses in the eyes, the giudizio dell’occhio. Truth’s tools are not the square, quadrant

621 Ibid., 304: “Se dunque la Veritas berniniana lascia intravedere nella visione frontale solo l’unghia di un ditto (anguis), quella del pollice destro, siamo dunque autorizzati a intenderlo come modulus, secondo il motto fidiamo, in due sensi. In primo luogo, il modulus minimo della simmetria del corpo della Veritas è l’unghia del suo stesso pollice!”
and compass that provide strict geometric measures, but something much more flexible. Thumbing her attribute of the sun, Bernini’s Truth is an allegory of the visual and intuitive measurement so indelibly linked to Buonarroti and, even more specifically, a visualization of Bernini’s theory of the contrapposti.\footnote{ Winner, “Veritas,” 304, very briefly mentions Bernini’s contrapposti, but considers the notion exclusively from the perspective of sculptural theory and divorced from Michelangelo’s giudizio dell’occhio.} The latter would have been all the more apparent had the figural, architectural and representational juxtapositions of the initial design been executed. In the face of the perceived tower failure – a failure in judging proportions in context – then Truth’s revelation of Gianlorenzo’s judicious eye for assessing measures might be understood as a sculptor’s justification of the expertise underpinning his architectural intelligence. She stands as a personification of the wisdom of the sculptor-architect.

For the remainder of Innocent X’s pontificate, Bernini’s activity as Architect of St. Peter’s was limited to sculptural commissions and to completing the decoration of the nave for the 1650 Jubilee. While the pope continued to pursue his ambition to finish the church, both inside and out, he solicited the architectural expertise of Carlo Rainaldi from whom he requested designs for the completion of St. Peter’s façade and for the creation of a new piazza before it. Over the course of the five subsequent years during which Rainaldi produced numerous designs for the project, Bernini witnessed the potential formation of a rival heir to Michelangelo’s architectural legacy on the site.\footnote{Contemporary evidence suggests that Carlo Rainaldi created as many as four piazza designs, one square, another circular, a third oval and a fourth hexagonal, for Innocent X. On these designs, see Ehrle, “Dalle carte,” 29-30, 36, 42; Brauer and Wittkower, Zeichnungen, 1:67, 97-8; Kitao, Circle and Oval, 86n31 and Marder, Bernini’s Scala Regia, 84, 103-4, 270n8, who suggests that the circle and oval plans that Rainaldi created for Innocent were revisited during Alexander’s reign and “redrawn to respond to the challenge of Bernini’s designs.”}
Rainaldi’s most well-known and influential design proposed a polygonal piazza formed by multi-storied porticoes opening to loggias on the ground floor and offices on the upper levels [fig. 108]. Its component parts were reflections upon the earlier, unofficial designs for the project created around 1620 by Maderno, Bartoli and Ferrabosco. The forecourt in Rainaldi’s design is especially indebted to the latter’s example [fig. 109], which preserved the northern clock tower entrance to the Vatican Palace that Ferrabosco had constructed on a slightly oblique angle due to site restrictions, and paired it on the south end with a functionless pendant laid out on a right angle to create the illusion of symmetry and the impression of a true square. Rainaldi adopted this arrangement and further attenuated any appearance of asymmetry by extending a line of porticoes from the outer walls of these towers to form a polygonal square with two prominent axes. These axes led from the entrance of each tower through the piazza and beyond the third arm into the Borgo in seemingly parallel paths. Thought the width of the third arm makes it difficult to imagine that these axial pathways were directly connected to the principal streets of the Borgo (as Bernini’s eventually would), it is nonetheless apparent that from this early stage, some meaningful connection between St. Peter’s and the urban cityscape was intended.

624 Brauer and Wittkower, Zeichnungen, 1:67, 97-9; Thoenes, “Studien zur Geschichte des Petersplatzes,” 120-21; Kitao, Circle and Oval, 7, 86n31; Kieven, Von Bernini bis Piranesi, 162-3; Marder, Bernini’s Scala Regia, 84.
625 Thoenes, “Studien zur Geschichte des Petersplatzes,” 118-20; Marder, Bernini’s Scala Regia, 83-7.
626 As Thoenes has demonstrated, the oblique angle of this clock tower (which was anticipated in Maderno’s own plans for the clock tower and piazza) was dictated by the necessity to maintain a connection between the borgo and the tower entrance. For detailed analyses of how the conditions of the site (including the irregular nature of the terrain, extant buildings and axial connections between the basilica and the city beyond) determined the layout of Ferrabosco’s clock tower, see Thoenes, “Studien zur Geschichte des Petersplatzes,” 112-29, who focuses upon the relationship between the arm of the clock tower and the space of the piazza and Borgo beyond, and, most recently, Marder, Bernini’s Scala Regia, 56-76, who highlights the connection between the tower arm, the church and Vatican Palace and argues that a connection between the piazza and palace was not a consideration until Bernini’s arrival on the site.
While the axial symmetry of this arrangement owes much to the logic of Ferrabosco’s precedent, the conceit of mobilizing old and new buildings, whether false, functional or both, to create the appearance of axial and structural symmetry within an architectural ensemble linked to the urban surroundings is equally indebted to Michelangelo’s design for the Campidoglio [figs. 110 and 111]. The latter was being completed at the very same moment by Carlo’s father, Girolamo Rainaldi, at Innocent’s behest.627 At the Capitoline Michelangelo had designed two obliquely disposed porticoed façades – one serving as the entrance to a larger, extant functioning building, the other a purely visual pendant – that flanked a larger building and tapered towards a monumental stair so to unite two axes at a central point. Though the Campidoglio was already an important model, it is likely with the introduction of Rainaldi’s design that Michelangelo’s civic square became an especially prescient example, conceptually and formally, for subsequent resolutions to the myriad site-specific problems – axial relationships and harmonious proportions foremost among them – attending the piazza design.628 The relationship between these concurrent projects was likely apparent to, if not also encouraged by, Innocent and the Congregazione.629 Indeed, an engraving of Rainaldi’s piazza project in Filippo Bonanni’s building history of St. Peter’s, the Numismata Pontificum Romanorum Templi Vaticani Fabbricam (1696) [fig. 112], which

628 While the possibility that Rainaldi’s design was informed by Buonarroti’s example has been overlooked, scholars have long recognized an affinity between Michelangelo’s Campidoglio and Bernini’s first and final designs for the Piazza of St. Peter’s and debated the extent to which Buonarroti’s geometry, axial logic and optical effects at the Capitoline shaped Gianlorenzo’s response to the practical and functional demands of his square (see discussion below).
629 Though Innocent X did not cultivate any particular reverence for Michelangelo or for fashioning contemporary artists in a michelangesque mould, it is likely that he sought to highlight symbolic associations between the two sites by way of formal affinities. On the symbolic affinities of the Campidoglio and St. Peter’s Piazza, see Haus, “Piazza S. Pietro – Concetto e forma,” 1:291-7.
suggests that Rainaldi’s porticoes would also have looked striking like Michelangelo’s porticoed facades [fig. 113], invites explicit comparison.\(^{630}\)

Fortunately for Bernini, Innocent X died before Rainaldi’s plans for the piazza could be executed. Perhaps even more fortuitously, under his successor, Alexander VII’s neo-barberinian court, papal interest in fashioning Bernini as Michelangelo’s active and worthy architectural heir to the church resumed. On 31 July 1656, one year after Alexander’s election, the pontiff reaffirmed Bernini’s position as *Architect of St. Peter’s* in practice as much as in name by appointing him to furnish new designs for the piazza.\(^{631}\) Bernini’s first proposal, which can be reconstructed through written responses to it, envisioned a trapezoidal piazza formed by two porticoed loggias placed at oblique angles in the area now occupied by the colonnade. As Kitao’s reconstruction suggests [fig. 114] the plan of these loggias likely recalled the outlines of Ferrabosco’s early schematic for systematizing the irregular space before the church [fig. 115].\(^{632}\) Bernini seems only to have developed the lower portion of the piazza with detached loggias, which suggests that he intended to complete the upper portion according to Rainaldi’s, or even Ferrabosco’s, earlier plans. Bernini’s independent, angled loggie, both in their formal appearance and in their spatial disposition likely resembled the lateral palaces on

\(^{630}\) Filippo Bonanni, *Numismata Summorum Pontificum Templi Vaticani Fabricam Indicata cum Explanationibus* (Rome: Felicis Caesaretti, 1696), 188. Bonanni’s text offered engravings of two piazza designs by Rainaldi, one polygonal the other oval, both of which included the same two storied arcaded porticoes.


\(^{632}\) Thoenes, “Studien zur Geschichte des Petersplatzes,” 118-9; Kitao, *Circle and Oval*, 5-10; Marder, *Bernini’s Scala Regia*, 85-7.
Like the latter, these loggie also served to frame a dominant, central structure. And just as the Capitoline palaces channeled two axes towards one central conduit that led to the city beyond, so too, the perceptible diagonal on which Bernini’s loggie were set appear to have aligned directly with the Borgo’s two main streets beyond the piazza, the Borgo Nuovo and the Borgo Vecchio.

When Bernini presented this design to the Congregation on 19 August, the members recommended that the loggie be lengthened and, rather than have them narrow markedly at the east end, keep these arms as parallel as the limitations of the site would allow. The committee’s response reveals that the conditions of the site, first and foremost, were to fundamentally shape the appearance of Bernini’s designs (as was the case with the proposals of his predecessors). Yet however much the functional and practical restrictions of the irregular space before the basilica dictated the form of the piazza, it seems apparent that Bernini looked to Michelangelo’s Capitoline example throughout his design process for guidance of how to resolve the complexities of St. Peter’s, a site whose axial, spatial and proportional problems mirrored those faced by Buonarroti. Michelangelo’s precedent may also have been in the pope’s mind, for a few days before the committee appealed to the architect to create a more parallel plan,

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633 Albert Erich Brinkmann, *Platz und Monument als künstlerisches Formproblem* (Berlin: E. Wasmuth, 1923), 68-9, was the first to recognize the relationship between Bernini’s early proposal for trapezoidal loggie and the arrangement at the Campidoglio. His argument was taken up and developed more fully by Askew, “The Relation of Bernini’s Architecture,” 45-8, and, Kitao, *Circle and Oval*, 9-13.
634 For the Congregation’s response to the first design, see Kitao, *Circle and Oval*, 6-7; Del Pesco, *Colonnato di San Pietro*, 42; Marder, *Bernini’s Scala Regia*, 86-7.
635 Brinkmann, *Platz und Monument*, 68-70, and, Askew, “The Relation of Bernini’s Architecture,” 45-8, both noted and briefly discussed the optical and axial affinities between Bernini’s piazza and Michelangelo’s Capitoline project, seeing them, in Askew’s words, as “similar in concept, though not in detail.” Kitao, *Circle and Oval*, 9-10, similarly looks to the Campidoglio as the model for Bernini’s conception of flow and form in the piazza. While Brinkmann, Askew and Kitao see Michelangelo’s project as a point of departure for Bernini, Bruand, “Place du Capitole,” 176-83, argues against any genesis in Michelangelo, noting that the exigencies of the site of St. Peter’s, above all, dictated Bernini’s formal and conceptual strategies. However, Bruand does note that Bernini adopted the optical lessons offered by the Capitoline in the piazza of St. Peter’s.
Alexander had requested that Bernini’s trapezoidal portico be reduced to a single-story structure surmounted by a balustrade and statues, an arrangement that looked implicitly to the ornament (if not the elevation) of the lateral palaces at the Capitoline.\footnote{229}

Between these early discussions of the piazza design and the final resolution to adopt an oval piazza with a trapezoidal forecourt, Bernini experimented with either square, rectilinear and/or circular plans that, like the first proposal, were detached from the church.\footnote{636} It was during this middle phase of planning that Bernini also constructed a full-scale model in order to test his second design.\footnote{638} According to a circa 1659 manuscript known as the \textit{Giustificazione} and written by Bernini (though as a third-person account), the architect created at least two models of this interim project and seeing them \textit{in situ} led to the final oval/trapezoid design.\footnote{639} In the manuscript, Bernini also recounts

\footnote{636}The request is recorded in Alexander’s diary, see Krautheimer and Jones, “Diary of Alexander VII,” 203, no. 32 (13 August 1656). On the diary entry, see Marder, \textit{Bernini’s Scala Regia}, 86-7.

\footnote{637}The possible appearance of the plans Bernini produced after his first trapezoidal design is much debated. The discussion mostly revolves around the date and attribution of a double plan (see Marder, \textit{Bernini and the Scala Regia}, 32-3, fig. 80, known as BAV Chigi P VII 9), which shows designs for a rectangular and a circular piazza. Engravings of this drawing appeared in Carlo Fontana’s \textit{Tempio Vaticano} (1694), where it was attributed to an unknown artist, and in Filippo Bonanni’s \textit{Numismata Summorum Pontificum} (1696), who instead identified Bernini as its author. Brauer and Wittkower, \textit{Zeichnungen}, 1:97, accepted the rectangular plan as representative of Bernini’s ideas, but interpreted the circular plan as a counter-project. More recently, Kitao, \textit{Circle and Oval}, 12, 91n47; Del Pesco, \textit{Colonnato di San Pietro}, 46-7 and Marder, \textit{Bernini’s Scala Regia}, 86-7, have rejected an attribution of the drawing to Bernini and support the possibility that these represent counter-designs. Kitao, \textit{Circle and Oval}, 10-2, further proposes (based on the language of a document known as the \textit{Giustificazione}, discussed below) that Bernini’s interim design must have been a square and not rectangular at all.

\footnote{638}Documents indicate that a full-scale model of a section of Bernini’s one-story loggia (including three-arches framed by four Doric pilasters and capped with a frieze) was erected on the site in April 1657. See Marder, \textit{Bernini and the Scala Regia}, 88.

and defends of the process that led to the decision to adopt an oval/trapezoidal plan. Perhaps most strikingly, he not only attributes the final appearance of the piazza to Alexander, but also intimates that a michelangesque giudizio dell’occhio was the governing principle by which the pope, in league with Gianlorenzo, arrived at the new scheme. Though the Giustificazione is typically treated as a document, in light of Bernini’s flattery characterization of Alexander’s architectural intelligence and role in the conception of the monument, it should be understood as much as a text with strategic aims and biases as it is a record of events.¹⁶⁴⁰

After a brief mention of the functional demands of the porticoed portion of the piazza, the Giustificazione offers a nuanced discussion of how visual proportions shaped decision-making on the site. According to the text, Alexander chose a single-story portico not only because it enhanced the beauty and decorum of the temple, but also because he recognized that the low-lying structure would “conceal [the temple’s] many imperfections” and function as a visual corrective to the squat (quatta) façade since it would “set it off and, in a sense, raise it above its own height.”¹⁶⁴¹ Like the towers and the designs for the façade that came before it, the piazza is here identified as yet another Petrine project enlisted to remedy the defect of Maderno’s façade. And it is the pope, of Bernini’s models. While most of the above scholars have ascribed the manuscript to Bernini, Morello, “I rapporti tra Alessandro VII e Gian Lorenzo Bernini.” 199-200, recently suggested that the text could be attributed to Domenico Bernini. As evidence he notes the marginal annotation – “M(onsigno)r Bernini” – written in pen by Fabio Chigi. Though Morello does not state so explicitly, it is likely that Chigi’s identification Bernini as “Monsignor” and not “Cavaliere” led him to point to an alternate author. Alternatively, Montanari, “Gian Lorenzo Bernini e Sforza Pallavicino,” 48, suggests that Pallavicino assisted Bernini in writing the text. In the absence of further evidence, I maintain the traditional attribution to Gianlorenzo (although it is likely he had assistance composing it).

¹⁶⁴⁰ Dorothy Metzker Habel sees the Giustificazione in a similar light and characterized the work as “an official presentation... diplomatic in style.” Habel, Urban Development of Rome, 184.
¹⁶⁴¹ “S’aggiungeva che il formare un Portico, non solo apportava maggior bellezza e decoro al Tempio ma veniva à coprire molte imperfezioni di quello, essendo che la facciata che per se stessa è di forma quatta havrebbe spiccata, et in certo modo si sarebbe sollevata sopra se stessa.” Brauer and Wittkower, Zeichnungen, 1:70n1.
armed with a sensitive eye for the effect of juxtaposition in perceiving proportion that resembles Bernini’s eye for the contrapposti, who proposes a single-story portico to offset the proportions of the façade. Chantelou’s Bernini more realistically laid claim to this visual resolution when he apparently referred to “the façade of St. Peter’s and the much lower colonnades he had placed on either side of it in order that the façade should look taller in contrast,” as a characteristic architectural example of how the contrapposti worked.  

After describing Alexander’s decision to proceed with a single-story portico, the Giustificazione proposes that Alexander commanded Bernini to come up with designs that would offer an optical solution to the excessive width of the façade. Aware of the problems posed by the vastness of the piazza project and its proximity to the huge church, Bernini made a full-scale model of a small segment of the portico. The pope subsequently judged the proportions of the model in situ, recalling that “before Buonarroti began the cornice of Palazzo Farnese he made a wood model, which, when installed at the top of the site was judged to be so small that he increased it almost by half, which gave occasion to his most beautiful saying that distance was an enemy that had to be fought out in the open.” According to the text, while Bernini’s decision to make full-scale models in order to foresee problems posed by the demands of the monument

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642 Chantelou, Diary, 140; idem, Journal, 135 (August 23). Bernini repeatedly used the example of St. Peter’s piazza to justify his plans for the Louvre, which would required similar optical adjustments, see Chantelou, Diary, 48, 61-2; idem, Journal, 67, 76-7 (July 1, 15). On this passage and its implications for Bernini’s conception of the piazza of St. Peter’s, see Bredekamp, Bau und Abbau, 116-9.

643 “acciò S. Santità dalla grandezza del sito ne giudicasse la proportione ricordevolle che il Buonarroti prima di principiare il Cornicione del Palazzo Farnese ne fece il modello di legno e messolo nell’altezza del suo sito riuscì così piccolo, che lo accrebbe quasi la metà, il che diede occasione à quel suo bellissimo detto che la lontananza era un’inimico, con il quale bisognava combattere à campo aperto.” Brauer and Wittkower, Zeichnungen, 1:70n1. On this passage and Bernini’s practice of architectural model-making at St. Peter’s, see, Bauer, “Bernini e i ‘modelli in grande’,” 284-7. On Michelangelo’s model cornice for Palazzo Farnese, see Ackerman, Architecture of Michelangelo, 182-4; Argan and Contardi, Michelangelo Architect, 265, 267.
and the site was “considered very prudent,” the architect’s shrewdness was exceeded by “the judgment of his holiness [who] saw even further ahead” and asserted that one could not accurately assess the height of a mock-up if one did not also evaluate the length.644

Alexander thus ordered the architect to erect crossbeams that would span the length of the portico so that he might accurately judge the whole effect. With one look at this second model, the pope “not only determined the height of the work but could judge its form, something which astounded even the architect grown old in that profession,” he also “immediately foresaw the disadvantages that would be encountered in giving a square shape the portico.”645 According to the text, it was thus Alexander who, in an instant and with “more than human judgment (con giudito più che humano)” resolved upon the oval form which was pleasing to the eye and overcame all of the difficulties of the site.

Ultimately, the Giustificazione presents the pope, as much as Bernini, as the architect who resembles Michelangelo.

According to the Giustificazione, as in reality, the demands of the site conditioned the final choice of the oval piazza with trapezoidal forecourt. And though Michelangelo’s Capitoline is not mentioned in the text, this precedent is no less prescient in this final solution than it was in Bernini’s first proposal. In fact, the proportional harmony and axial logic of Buonarroti’s square are now more relevant than before, particularly since Bernini’s new conception of the trapezoidal forecourt (which does away with Ferrabosco’s tower) is calculated to align with the city beyond through his

644 Brauer and Wittkower, Zeichnungen, 1:70n1.
645 Ibid: “Si portò N. Sig.re. à vedere questa dimostrazione, e con ingegno più che humano, non solamente determinò l’altezza dell’opera, ma ne giudicò la forma, cosa che fece stupire l’istesso Architetto invecchiato in questa professione...” and “Antivedde subito gli inconvenienti che s’incontravano in fare il Portico in forma quadrata...”
Terzo Braccio, a component introduced into his design after he settled upon the oval/ trapezoid plan [fig. 116].

Just as Michelangelo flanked the principal building at the Capitoline with two low-lying, obliquely disposed wings that served to accentuate the height of the central structure, so too Bernini created paired lateral corridors in his forecourt whose low elevation and tapering angle – even more than the oval portico – functioned as optical correctives to the disproportioned façade, creating the illusion of a taller and narrower church [fig. 117]. Bernini’s trapezoidal forecourt, even more emphatically than his earlier oblique porticoes, reinvigorated pre-existing axial relations between the site and the city as Michelangelo had before him. At the Capitoline, as at St. Peter’s, two oblique axes that originate at the outermost corners of the central building are carried through the site by the lateral structures and continue to narrow until they converge at or just beyond a central focal point. In Michelangelo’s plan, the imagined lines of the axes come together at base of a monumental stairway. In Bernini’s plan, the axes meet in the area of the Borgo, slightly past the confines of the architect’s unrealized Terzo Braccio. Thus rather than funnel the visitor through a central node, as at the Campidoglio, the visitor to St. Peter’s is directed around it. The effect is twofold. While the physical separation of the two axes is maintained, thus reinforcing the dual access to the piazza, particularly the Palace entrance, from the Borgo streets, the presence of the Terzo Braccio creates the illusion that the two lines actually converge at its core. Ultimately, the trapezoidal

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elements at both St. Peter’s and the Campidoglio, act as the compositional hinge of an architectural ensemble; they are the essential mediating elements that together reconcile the various disparate components of the site.

In 1667 Bernini proposed an unrealized revision to the Terzo Braccio and, by extension, to the whole piazza, that would have brought the axes of his square even closer to the precedent set at the Capitoline. According to a drawing from this time [fig. 118], the architect intended to push this third arm back, creating a subsidiary court in the space of the Borgo, so that the two axes met, physically and visually, at this unrealized arm of the piazza.⁶⁴⁸ And like the viewer’s perspective from the base of the Capitoline stairs, it was from the recessed space of the Terzo Braccio that the remedying effect that Bernini’s piazza had on the whole church ensemble would have been best appreciated. It was from this vantage that the tapered forecourt exerted the greatest corrective effect on the immoderate breadth of the defective façade and that the visibility of Michelangelo’s dome was substantially improved.⁶⁴⁹ In essence, this late vision of the Terzo Braccio was imagined as the ideal point from which the contrapposti of the exterior of St. Peter’s, that is, the colonnade, the tapered forecourt, the façade and the dome, would all appear to exist in harmonious proportion.

While the evidence of the piazza and the subtext of the Giustificazione suggest that Bernini (in collaboration with Alexander) consciously employed various lessons from Michelangelo in order to arrive at a solution for Saint Peter’s square, the ultimate appearance of the monument was nonetheless deemed a radical, and by some accounts,  

⁶⁴⁸ On Bernini’s 1667 alteration to his design for the terzo braccio see, Brauer and Wittkower, Zeichnungen, 1:85-6; Kitao, Circle and Oval, 49-52; Del Pesco, Colonnato di San Pietro, 95-6. For the history and reception of the various unrealized designs by Bernini and by Carlo Fontana for the terzo braccio terminus of the piazza, see Hager, “Bernini, Carlo Fontana e la fortuna del ‘Terzo Braccio’,” 337-60.
⁶⁴⁹ Kitao, Circle and Oval, 52-6; Bredekamp, Bau und Abbau, 118-9.
wholly injudicious, departure from what many believed were Buonarroti’s own intentions for the piazza. Although no drawings or models survive to suggest that Michelangelo created designs for the square before his basilica, in the popular imagination the architect’s vision for the architecture of St. Peter’s was far more comprehensive than the extant evidence would suggest. At least three seventeenth-century texts not only ascribe an original, if vaguely defined, piazza design to Michelangelo but also highlight Bernini’s (and Alexander’s) departure from it.

In his *Life* of the artist, Baldinucci states that Gianlorenzo’s oval plan abandoned Michelangelo’s design. Though the biographer does not indicate what shape Buonarroti’s plan took, he is careful to justify Bernini’s alternative, noting that the design accommodated otherwise obstructed views to the Benediction loggia and the window in the papal palace. If Baldinucci’s tenor is defensive, it is likely because the two earlier reflections upon Bernini’s and Michelangelo’s respective designs for St. Peter’s piazza are critical. The first critique comes from an *avviso* sent to Venice in 1666 by the

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650 An anonymous fresco (c.1585-90) in the Vatican Library showing an ideal view of Michelangelo’s St. Peter’s with a massive square porticoed piazza surrounding it is often cited as possible evidence that Michelangelo had planned to have a square before his church. However, it is unlikely that this fresco represents Buonarroti’s intentions since the imagined piazza would have necessitated the destruction of the Pauline and Sistine chapels. For an analysis of the visual evidence of Michelangelo’s thoughts on an atrium of piazza, including the aforementioned fresco, see Thoenes, “Studien zur geschichte des Petersplatzes,” 106; Haus, “Piazza S. Pietro – Concetto e forma,” 1:292.

651 Baldinucci/Enggass, *Life*, 43; Baldinucci, *Vita*, 109; “…diede principio ed a suo tempo compimento al portico di S. Pietro. Nell’ordinarne questa gran fabbrica volle valersi della forma ovale, discotandosi in ciò dal disegno di Michelagnolo e questo fece a fine di più avvicinarsi al palazzo apostolico, e così meno impedire la veduta della piazza dalla parte del palazzo fabbricato da Sisto V con il braccio comunicante colla scala regia.” Baldinucci’s defense of the oval piazza as a solution that accommodated essential views to the Benediction Loggia and Palace window echoes the arguments laid out in the *Giustificazione*, see Brauer and Wittkower, *Zeichnungen*, 1:70n1; Kitao, *Circle and Oval*, 89-90n40, and workshop drawings which show that Bernini considered carefully the sightlines created by his colonnade, see Kitao, *Circle and Oval*, 52-6. Despite Bernini’s investment in the problem of accommodating necessary sightlines, his oval design was criticized by many as patently obstructing essential views to the church and palace. On these critiques, see Marder, *Bernini’s Scala Regia*, 100-1,103, with earlier bibliography.
Venetian ambassador, Niccolò Sagredo, which deemed Alexander, in league with “modern” architects, culpable for abandoning Buonarroti’s intentions:

The vast monument of a grand order of porticoes that the pope has undertaken to erect around the piazza of the Vatican Basilica surpasses all excesses, because departing from the designs by Michelangelo Bonarota, famous and worthy Architect of the Temple of St. Peter’s, whose concept was limited to an order of porticos of large but not excessive cost… the Pope…turned away from this design and followed those of the moderns, who made it of disproportionate size, to better match the genius of his Holiness….

In the ambassador’s mind, the new portico is a monument that celebrates financial excess and ego-driven measures of proportion. The immoderate nature of this design, whose architect does not even merit naming, is all the more offensive because it was selected above the economy, both of scale and of cost, inherent in Buonarroti’s apparently judicious proposal. In the second critique, written in 1661 by the Sienese prelate Lodovico de Vecchi to prince Leopold de Medici of Florence, Bernini and his unnamed supporters bear the burden of guilt for discarding Michelangelo’s worthier design for the piazza of St. Peter’s:

The new portico of Saint Peter’s is finished on one side, and twenty columns have been made for the other. The opposition that Michelangelo leveled at Santo Spirito in Florence, with its resemblance to a cane field, might be more reasonably made of the portico, only a third of which can be appreciated upon exiting from the church. Nor did I know how to find the visual focal point, without the eye being offended by some part…. I marvel that in place of Michelangelo’s design, they put forth that of

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652 “Ma supera tutti li eccessi la mole vasta che il Papa ha intrapreso d’eriggere intorno alla Piazza della Basilica Vaticana d’un grand’ordine di Portici, imperocché recedendo dai disegni del già Michelangelo Bonarota, famoso e benemerito Architetto del medesimo Tempio di S. Pietro, il quale disegno si riduceva ad un ordine di Portici di grande ma non eccessiva spesa… il Papa, dico, recendendo dal detto disegno, s’è attenuto a quei dei Moderni, che l’han fatto di smisurara grandezza, per meglio incontrare il genio di sua Santità.” As cited in Marino, “Il colonnato di Piazza S. Pietro,” 119n48.

653 For debates about the proportion of Bernini’s portico design, from his early vision for a single portico of Doric arches to his later adoption of a triple portico of Doric columns, see Kitao, Circle and Oval, 15-9; Marder, Bernini’s Scala Regia, 86-91.
Bernini, about which, in discussion I heard responses to its opposition that did not satisfy my meager understanding.\textsuperscript{654}

Baffled by the apparent victory of Bernini’s designs over those of Michelangelo, De Vecchi takes particular exception to the portico’s dense arrangement of columns, which had already been a subject of much debate,\textsuperscript{655} and to the piazza’s awkward shape, which many believed was an affront to the eye that prohibited the viewer from taking in the monument as a whole. The most damning aspect of this passage, however, is the prelate’s use of Buonarroti as a mouthpiece for his own critique. By redeploying Michelangelo’s purported opposition to the thicket of columns inside Santo Spirito for use in his attack against Gianlorenzo’s colonnade, he makes Buonarroti himself posthumously critical of Bernini.

However markedly Bernini’s piazza departed from the plan and appearance of Michelangelo’s designs as they existed in the seicento imagination, Gianlorenzo’s vision nonetheless sought to establish formal continuities (to complement the axial affinities and proportional correctives) between his contributions to the site and those of his predecessor. He even attempted to connect the massive thicket of columns that made up his colonnade, and which were so abhorrent to the Sienese prelate, to Michelangelo’s


\textsuperscript{655} The freestanding Doric columns of the portico were introduced into the piazza design late in the spring of 1657 and first appear on a foundation medal produced for the ceremonial laying of the cornerstone for the project on 28 August 1657. From this moment forward, debates about the number, arrangement and proportion of the columns ensued, see Del Pesco, Colonnato di San Pietro, 31-8; Marder, Bernini’s Scala Regia, 90-1.
own vision of the church. According to the 1659 plan of the piazza [fig. 119], Bernini intended to introduce a free-standing, four columned porch to the front of the church that evoked the first row of the monumental columnar entrance that Buonarroti intended for the façade [fig. 120]. The reintroduction of Michelangelo’s projecting porch would also have mitigated Maderno’s defective proportions as it emphasized the central bays by pushing them into the piazza and, in turn, narrowed the excessive breadth of the façade. More importantly, by giving new emphasis to the columns of the façade as independent, plastic entities, the architect not only overtly recalled his predecessor, but also used this formal citation to link the columns in his controversial colonnade and the church façade itself. Bernini generated further correspondences between the porch and colonnade by repeating the motif of the four-columned entrance at the two passageways that bisect the curved arms of the portico and at the center of the Terzo Braccio. Although it has not been noted, by reclaiming Michelangelo’s porch for this piazza design, Bernini ultimately does more than affirm continuity with his predecessor; the plan asserts that Buonarroti’s columnar porch is the generating motif for the oval portico itself, as if Michelangelo foresaw Bernini’s colonnade.

Bernini’s reintroduction of the porch is as much a self-serving allusion to his predecessor as it is a vindication of Michelangelo’s original vision. A drawing of the porch in both elevation and section demonstrates that Gianlorenzo also conceived of this architectural element as a Benediction Loggia, from which the pope (who is drawn in

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656 Brauer and Wittkower, Zeichnungen, 1:76n1, 80, 83-4, 88-90; Kitao, Circle and Oval, 38-41, 48-9; Del Pesco, Colonnato di San Pietro, 74-5; Marder, Bernini's Scala Regia, 107-8

657 Though it has not been noted, the reintroduction of the columned portico may have been in response to continuing criticisms first recorded in an avviso from 10 November 1657 that remarked upon the lack of correspondence between the model for the colonnaded portico and “the design of the façade of St. Peter’s.” On this avviso, see Del Pesco, Colonnato di San Pietro, 61; Marder, Bernini’s Scala Regia, 91.
shorthand above the balustrade of the sectional view) might address the people [fig. 121].^{658} Likely drawn around 1659, the same time as the aforementioned plan for the piazza, Bernini’s drawing summons to mind a now decades-old debate about the functionality of Michelangelo’s porch. At the beginning of the seventeenth century, during the deliberations over whether to depart from or to maintain the cinquecento architect’s plans for St. Peter’s, Buonarroti’s porch was criticized for not accommodating a benediction loggia from which the pope could bless the faithful throngs. In the architect’s defense, Cardinal Barberini demonstrated how the porch might be adapted to the purpose: “above the central part of Michelangelo’s temple one could excavate sufficient space with a beautiful banister for benedictions. And the pope and a good part of the populous would be under the portico, and the others who did not fit within would remain outside: something which gives grandeur.”^{659} Bernini’s drawing gives form to the Cardinal’s argument and, in doing so, reconciles the demands of functionality with Michelangelo’s cultural patrimony. Thus, in one of his last proposals for the architecture of St. Peter’s, Bernini returns to the pro-Michelangelo vision of the mentor who set him on the path to becoming a new Buonarroti at St. Peter’s and underscores the enduring significance of Urban’s own partisan stance to his very engagement with the church.

The examples of the porch and the colonnade inspired by it, the last of Bernini’s major contributions under examination, perhaps best encapsulate one aspect of what is at stake in Bernini’s engagement with Michelangelo at St. Peter’s. By using Buonarroti’s lost design as a principle component in the formal and conceptual genesis of his own


^{659} The Cardinal’s defense is recorded by his biographer, Herrera: “Sopra la parte di mezzo del tempio di Michelangelo si poteva cavar spatio sufficiente con bella ringhiera per le benedizioni et il Papa sarebbe stato sotto il portico et una buona parte del popolo, e l’altro, che non capiva dentro ad esso, sarebbe rimasto fuori: cosa che dava grandezza.” As cited in Pastor, *History of the Popes*, 26:475.
forms, Gianlorenzo channeled Michelangelo’s authority over the development of a site long directed and altered by others. His contributions kept pace with new and ever-evolving demands, while attending sensitively to the architectural and historical integrity of Michelangelo’s designs and their inherent adaptability. Yet Bernini’s posthumous collaboration with his predecessor, however partial to the latter’s vision, is neither self-effacing nor derivative. Rather than undertake a self-subordinating return to Buonarroti’s project, he engaged in creative, cross-generational dialogue with the physical fabric of the basilica and with the evidence (whether visual or textual) of his predecessor’s ideas, that ultimately re-imagined and re-calibrated aspects of Michelangelo’s vision for St. Peter’s in the “then” and the “now.” Bernini’s architectural work at St. Peter’s reinstated Michelangelo’s original emphasis on centrality and on the visual predominance of the dome as well as his conception of a porch-fronted façade, transforming them into part of an active, newly mobilized experience of the church. Bernini’s engagement at the basilica was thus mutually reforming: by conceiving of his interventions, in part, as a means to underscore essential aspects of his predecessor’s church – a vision limited to that which Buonarroti was able to execute before his death and anchored to ideas about his designs that circulated in print and in the preserve of collective memory – the seicento heir to St. Peter’s left his own individual imprint on the site and reshaped how the viewer apprehended the spatial, proportional and formal dynamics of Buonarroti’s contribution.

Bernini’s designs for the porch, like his plans for the Terzo Braccio, were never realized, thus leaving his vision for the piazza (particularly its michelangesque resonances with the façade) incomplete and imperceptible. The unfinished nature of Bernini’s piazza designs also meant that the defect of Maderno’s façade remained largely
unremedied. However much the scale of the oval colonnade and trapezoidal forecourt mitigated the breadth and height of the façade, without the porch and Terzo Braccio, the ensemble of contrapposti that makes up the exterior view of St. Peter’s is a promising assembly of parts that does not quite add up to a harmonious whole. Despite his decades-long work to restore Michelangelo’s original church – from the bell towers to the façade and finally the piazza – Bernini’s allegiance to Buonarroti at St. Peter’s is belied by what little of his design was brought to fruition in his own day.

According to Bernini’s assistant and successor to his post as Architect of St. Peter’s, Carlo Fontana, the unfinished state of the square was, in of itself, a major flaw. In the Tempio Vaticano (1694), Fontana praised the symmetry of Bernini’s piazza design, particularly the harmonious disposition of its many parts. However laudable the symmetry of Bernini’s designs may have been on paper, the fact that the terzo braccio was not realized in three-dimensions led Fontana to conclude the actual monument itself lacked proportion and balance. He buttressed his critique by citing Vitruvius, which held that “one should never leave unfinished those parts that give symmetry to the whole.”

Fontana concluded by asserting that piazza offered little to delight the eye, since the absence of the Terzo Braccio inflicted upon “the ensemble (Composto) of these Edifices [i.e. the piazza and the church] the same deformity that one sees in a human

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660 Sono con tal disposizione, e così ordinatamente disposte le Parti di quelle sontuose fabbriche che cingono presentemente la Piazza Vaticana, cioè de’ Portici circolari e Corridori, col Prospetto del Tempio, che, dall’esposizione di Vitruvio, trovasi in essi il conventinete consenso accompagnato da una vaga e piena simmetria. Più decorosi e magnifici, però, comparirebbero questi Edifizij, quando fosse compìta la parte che manca nel fine della Piazza, in quel lato di rincontro al Tempio…. secondo si scorge dalli Disegni e Medaglie fatte dal Bernino Autore de’ Portici, si mostra che doveva essere il predetto compimento costituito, dentro la linea che circoscrive questa non perfetta Elipse, con una parte di Fabbrica di ornato simile e corrispondente a’ Portici; il che, per vari accidenti e ragioni, non potè effettuarsi.” Carlo Fontana, “Il Tempio Vaticano e sua origine,” in Il Tempio Vaticano 1694: Carlo Fontana, ed. Giovannina Curcio (Milan: Electa, 2003), 128.

661 Ibid., 128-9: “Ma perché negli Edifizij non devolsi mai lasciare imperfette quelle parti che devono rendere il Composto ben simetriato, come da Vitruvio si apprende…..”
body that is deprived of some principal member,” that is, its proportions were perceived as unbalanced.

The ultimate irony of Bernini’s tenure as Architect of St. Peter’s, however, was not that his efforts to remedy Maderno’s errors and restore Michelangelo’s original were largely unrealized, but that the sculptor-architect was repeatedly blamed for causing defects to the very structural fabric of the church. Recall that in the late 1630s, Bernini’s technical competence was challenged when his work on the crossing piers was identified as the cause of cracks on the interior of Michelangelo’s dome. Though these accusations against Bernini dissipated without any need for an investigation, by the beginning of the 1640s his bell tower was blamed for triggering cracks in the façade and the unremitting allegations resulted in an official inquiry. Despite a formal exoneration, his tower was dismantled along with any unqualified confidence in his technical expertise. Finally, in the last year of his life, almost a decade after Bernini made any architectural contribution to St. Peter’s, accusations that his crossing piers he had brought about the cracks in the dome resurfaced with vigour. These criticisms stimulated a formal inquiry into the matter upon which Baldinucci’s lengthy defense at the end of the Vita of Bernini’s work on the crossing of St. Peter’s and technical skills was based. Yet for all Baldinucci’s

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662 Ibid., 129: “Effetuandosi dunque questo nostro pensiero, apportarebbe all’occhio non tanto godimento, che di presente non rivece, per la mancanza di quella parte che rende al Composto di questi Edifizij l’istessa deformità che si scorge in un corpo umano, il quale sia privo di qualche membro principale....”

663 Marder, “A Fingerbath in Rose Water,” 431, with earlier bibliography. According to an avviso written on 13 April 1680, rumour was circulating in the Vatican Palace that the dome was on the verge of crumbling as a result of Bernini’s earlier work on the piers. The reigning pope, Innocent XI, charged his architects to investigate and they, in turn, saw no cause for concern. Yet the perceived threat of collapse persisted and on 1 June another avviso reiterated the concerns regarding the stability of the dome and noted that an iron reinforcement would be inserted in the structure to prevent it from giving way.

664 The pope charged Mattia de’Rossi, with the aid of Carlo Fontana and Giovanni Antonio de’Rossi, to investigate the situation and produce a report on his findings. Mattia’s document is lost but his conclusions form the basis of Baldinucci’s lengthy defense of Bernini at the end of his Vita, wherein he asserted: that the excavation of the grotto stairwells that caused the cracks actually predated Bernini’s work on the piers by about 20 years; that the architect had not bored into the masonry of the pier niches, but had left them...
efforts to restore his subject’s reputation as Architect of St. Peter’s, the perception that
Bernini was technically unskilled persisted.

While it is not my aim to defend Bernini’s technical expertise or apologize for his
lack of it (as did his supporters), I am interested in what was at stake in the repeated
attacks of Gianlorenzo’s proficiency as an architect. From his very first project at St.
Peter’s almost through to his last, Bernini’s practical and technical knowledge of
architecture were called into question regardless of whether the structure or stability of
the final work merited suspicion. As many have noted, these criticisms are rooted, in part,
in Bernini’s lack of formal training in the discipline. I would suggest, more specifically,
that the criticisms challenge the cinquecento wisdom – exemplified by Michelangelo the
sculptor-architect and perpetuated by Bernini – that sculptural excellence translated into
architectural aptitude. Two examples point to this change.

In 1685 Bernardo Castelli-Borromini, the nephew of Bernini’s erstwhile
architectural assistant, Francesco Borromini, wrote a scathing appraisal of the two
architects’ working relationship at St. Peter's. Castelli-Borromini begins his invective
against Bernini by praising Borromini’s talent as a sculptor, particularly the numerous
“spirited and lively” cherubs he contributed to various parts of the church. Turning his
attention to Bernini, Castelli-Borromini complains that Urban appointed the “famous
sculptor” as Architect of St. Peter’s simply because the pope, while still a cardinal,
admired Gianlorenzo’s sculpture. But Bernini, untrained in architecture and unable to

intact; and, that by constructing a spiral staircases within the previously excavated space of each piers,
665 Castelli-Borromini’s text is a mini biography of Francesco Borromini composed in response to a
questionnaire circulated by Baldinucci in preparation for the Notizie. The full text is transcribed and
discussed within the context of the rivalry between Bernini and Borromini and regarding questions of
authorship by Burbaum, Rivalität, 17, 65-72, 277-82. See also, Lavin, “The Baldacchino,” 290-1.
fulfill the responsibilities of his post, requested Borromini’s assistance. Conversant in work at the site, Francesco, as Castelli-Borromini claims, undertook all of the architectural work, while Bernini attended to sculptural issues alone. It was through this arrangement, writes Castelli-Borromini, that Bernini pretended to the role of architect, “though he was innocent in the profession during that period.” Castelli-Borromini concludes with Francesco’s purported lament over Bernini’s deception: “it does not bother me that he took the money, but it does displease me that he enjoys the honour of my labours;” Though Castelli-Borromini’s text should not be misconstrued as a document of Francesco’s attitude towards Bernini, his diatribe does have implications for the reception of the concept of a sculptor-architect. By claiming that the untrained Bernini gave over complete architectural control to Francesco, Castelli-Borromini implicitly casts architecture as an autonomous art requiring specialized expertise of which the sculptor (purportedly of his own admission) is ignorant. Rather than see the activity of an architect as partly indebted to the knowledge possessed by the sculptor, his praise of Borromini’s dabbling in the art of sculpture suggests, instead, that it is sculptors (and sculpture) that benefit from the specialized training of the architect. In other words, the relationship between sculpture and architecture is not a two-way street. According to Castelli-Borromini’s appraisal, it is possible for the architect to dabble in sculpture but not the other way around.

The ills of the untrained architect are also articulated in Fontana’s Tempio Vaticano. If, in a chapter of the text Fontana reiterated Baldinucci’s vindication of

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666 “et il Bernini attendeva alla sua scoltura et per l’architettura lassiaua fare tutte le fattiche al boromino et il bernino faceua la figura di architetto di s. Pietro e del Papa, et infatti il bernino in quel tempo in tal professione era inocentissimo.” As transcribed in Burbaum, Rivalitài, 279.
667 Ibid: “E udendosi il boromino deluso e deriso lasiò et abandon il Bernino – con questo detto: non mi dispiacie che abbia auto li denarij, ma mi dispiacie che gode l’onor delle mie fatiche.”
Gianlorenzo’s interventions on the crossing piers, he was nonetheless happy to point out in a different chapter on the bell towers that Bernini’s lack of specialized expertise in construction practices made him culpable (along with Maderno who had constructed faulty foundations) for causing cracks in the façade. As for Bernini’s culpability, Fontana stated Bernini’s flaw was in not examining the state of the edifice on top of which he planned to erect his towers before proceeding with his plans. Had he done so, “he would have discovered and... secured those defective parts which, only after raising [the tower] did he agree to investigate.” Fontana further marvels that Bernini, like the blind following the blind, was not suspect of the foundations laid by Maderno, who had “abandoned his true profession of handling stucco and mortar, and was assigned the name of Architect.” By identifying Maderno’s true calling as that of someone who works with binders and decorative media, and who falsely took up a profession in which he had no training, Fontana intimates that a lack of technical expertise in architecture disqualifies one as an architect. Though Fontana does not make the same claim of Bernini, as Giovanna Curcio has argued, for all Fontana’s praise of his former employer’s beautiful designs and triumphs over difficulty, numerous passages in the text on Bernini’s contributions to St. Peter’s reveal that he did not think the latter lived up to the requisite demands (technical, practical and aesthetic) of the profession of architecture. In short, by the end of Fontana’s discussion of the tower episode, Bernini, however tacitly, begins

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668 “Onde, se avesse il Bernino, prima di dar principio al Campanile, ricercato lo stato dell’Edifizio sopra il quale doveva quello essere eretto, avrebbe palpabilmente scoperto & insieme assicurate quelle parti difettose che, dopo l’inalzamento, gli convenne ricercare…” Fontana, “Il Tempio Vaticano,” 161.
669 Ibid., 161: “Si sa che questo aveva lasciato il suo proprio esercizio di maneggiare lo stucco e la calcina, & erasi attribuito il nome d’Architetto.” Though Fontana notes that Bernini typically operated with greater caution and precision, with his bell towers he failed to put faith in either the “meager intelligence of Maderno” or the reports created at the time detailing the flaws in the foundations.
to resemble Maderno, a false architect and agent of the most egregious formal and structural offenses against Michelangelo’s church.

Fontana, unlike many of his architectural predecessors at St. Peter’s, Bramante (about whom he said little), Michelangelo (who he esteemed above all), Maderno (who he unabashedly reviled) and Bernini (towards whom he expressed ambivalence), was not a sculptor-architect but an engineer architect, trained in the mechanics of construction as well as design. His writing in the *Tempio Vaticano* suggests that he believed it was not enough for an architect to have a good eye for proportion; the true architect must also master the technical and constructional aspects of his trade. In light of Fontana’s own architectural sensibilities and professional training, it is perhaps not surprising that he dedicated a lengthy discussion to Michelangelo’s engineering of the double-shell dome of St. Peter’s in order to demonstrate his remarkable expertise in the technical side of architecture. Fontana concluded his encomium of Michelangelo’s dome by exclaiming: “Thus that Great Artificer deserves to live eternally, having demonstrated a genius beyond that which is human in the invention of an edifice of such miraculous understanding, of which there has never been an equal in the whole world.”

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above all, Buonarroti’s technical achievement. As a proponent and product of increasing architectural professionalism in the seicento, Fontana saw the paradigm of the sculptor-architect as one that could no longer hold sway; an architect’s technical skill and construction of a work was as important as issues of proportion, so much so that the former now depended on the latter. The implications for Bernini are significant. For while it was still possible (through papal will) to boldly promote an untried sculptor for the role of architect at the outset of the seicento, as the century progressed and Michelangelo’s vision of St. Peter’s was continually transformed and structurally undermined, and as architects were increasingly trained in building practices as well as design, the tables had turned. Architecture, no longer sculpture’s dependent, was perceived an autonomous pursuit. And from Fontana’s perspective at the end of the seicento, placing faith in anything other than professionally trained architect was too great a risk.

It is in view of the criticisms leveled against Bernini by Castelli-Borromini and Fontana that we might better understand the second aspect of what is at stake in Bernini’s inheritance of St. Peter’s, that is, his identity and authority as an architect vis-à-vis Buonarroti. By way of the Baldacchino, Bernini promisingly defined himself as a sculptor-architect after the example of Michelangelo, who had taken up the art without prior training and harnessed his sculptor’s eye for proportion to satisfying architectural ends. Yet his subsequent architectural interventions to the basilica, particularly his failed bell towers, dimmed this initial potential as well as the authority it conferred (no matter

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how frequently he reasserted it) and blurred his likeness to Buonarroti. Thus rather than become the seicento paradigm of the sculptor-architect (as Michelangelo was for the cinquecento), the evidence of Bernini’s conflict-ridden tenure as Architect of St. Peter’s demonstrates that his adoption of this architectural practice became fodder against the very persistence of this modern tradition. Despite demonstrating a michelangesque sense for proportion in each contribution to this site, Gianlorenzo’s equivocal success as heir to St. Peter’s ultimately put Buonarroti’s singularity and inimitability as an architect into greater relief.

675 This position is intimated by Bauer, “Bernini and the Baldacchino,” 165: “The nature of the practice that Bernini established for the Baldacchino therefore documents in quite paradigmatic terms the great value attached to the specifically visual in the seventeenth-century conception of architecture. For his contemporaries whose work had to pass that same test, Bernini’s architectural practice offered itself both as a way of doing so and an end to be emulated.” Although I do not dispute the significance of visual perception for the conception and reception of seicento architecture, Bernini’s practice was increasingly understood as worth emulating only if it was accompanied by sound training in the technical and structural demands of architectural practice.
Chapter Four

Bernini’s Ornament and Michelangelo’s Modern Order

In a diary entry from 20 August 1665, Chantelou recounted a conversation he purportedly had with Bernini’s assistant, Mattia de Rossi, regarding the most recent design for the elevation for the Louvre façade, particularly Bernini’s employment of a colossal order [fig. 122]. Mattia justified his master’s use of these giant pilasters by referring to Michelangelo, who, he claimed, “was the first to use [the colossal order] in this way, there being no example of it in classical buildings.” Mattia’s claim stimulated a lengthy retort from Chantelou about Michelangelo’s unorthodox architectural vocabulary:

Michelangelo had done great things, but it was he who introduced license into architecture because of his ambition to be original and not to imitate his predecessors; it was he who was the inventor of cartouches, of masks and of broken cornices, which he had used to his advantage for he had a profound sense of design. Those who had wanted to imitate him had not

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676 Though the specific design under discussion was likely Bernini’s final, third version of the Louvre façade, each of the Italian architect’s previous designs included Michelangelo’s colossal columns. See Askew, “The Relation of Bernini’s Architecture,” 51-3; Marder, Bernini and the Art of Architecture, 261-72; Sabine Frommel, “Les projets du Bernin pour le Louvre, tradition italienne contre tradition française,” Le Bernin et l’Europe: du baroque triomphant à l’âge romantique, edited by Chantal Grell and Milovan Stanić (Paris: Presses de l’Université de Paris-Sorbonne, 2002), 43-76. For a recent study that introduces a newly discovered design for the Louvre façade that does not include the colossal order, see Michael Hall, “Gian Lorenzo Bernini’s Third Design for the East Façade of the Louvre of 1665, Drawn by Mattia de Rossi,” Burlington Magazine 149 (2007): 478-82.

677 Chantelou, Diary, 133; idem, Journal, 129 (20 August). Though it was a commonly held belief throughout the modern period that Michelangelo invented the colossal order [Borromini, for example, also referred to Buonarroti as the inventor of the giant order in his Opus architectonicum, see Connors, Borromini and the Roman Oratory (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1980), 75], he was not the first to employ it. Giant columns were first used in ancient temples and later applied to sacred and secular façades by Renaissance architects. Leon Battista Alberti was the first quattrocento architect to use the colossal order, which he applied to the façade of Sant’Andrea in Mantua. Antonio da Sangallo and Raphael similarly employed it in their designs for palace façades. Michelangelo’s innovation was to use the colossal order as the dominant organizing motif of an entire façade. See Charles Burroughs, “Michelangelo at the Campidoglio: Artistic Identity, Patronage and Manufacture,” Artibus et Historiae 14 (1993): 92, 101.
had the same success for they had lacked his basic knowledge.\textsuperscript{678} Chantelou’s appraisal of Michelangelo’s license as a mode of originality, of novel grotesque creation governed by the architect’s faculty of design as well as his assessment of its effect on the subsequent generation is rooted in Vasari’s appraisal of the fallout from Buonarroti’s new architectural paradigm: “The license he allowed himself has served as a great encouragement to others to follow his example; and subsequently we have seen the creation of new kinds of fantastic ornamentation containing more of grotesque than of rule or reason.”\textsuperscript{679} In other words, while Michelangelo gainfully departed from the norm, his followers failed to break the rules advantageously. Though Chantelou here avoids any overt criticism of Bernini’s architectural ornament, his censure of Michelangelo’s imitators on the heels of Mattia’s revelation that Gianlorenzo had employed Buonarroti’s colossal order on the façade of the Louvre can be read as either implicitly critical or purposefully ambiguous. At the very least, Chantelou’s passage raises a significant question: Is Bernini’s quotation of Michelangelo nothing more than the derivative work of an hapless epigone or does it point to something more innovative, a creative act that is, if not as licentious or as assertive as Michelangelo’s example, at least ambitious and individuated?

\textsuperscript{678} Chantelou, \textit{Diary}, 133; idem, \textit{Journal}, 130 (20 August): “Je lui ai reparti que Michel-Ange avait à la vérité fait de grandes choses, mais que ç’a été lui qui a introduit le libertinage dans l’architecture par une ambition de faire des choses nouvelles et de n’imiter aucun de ceux qui l’ont précédé, étant auteur des cartouches, des mascarons et des ressautements de cornices, don’t il s’est servi avec avantage, lui, possédant un dessin profound, ce que n’ont pas fait les autres qui l’ont voulu imiter et n’avaient pas ce même fondement de science.”

\textsuperscript{679} Vasari/Bull, \textit{Life}, 366; Vasari/Barocchi, \textit{Vita}, 1:59: “La quale licenzia ha dato grande animo a quelli che hanno veduto il far suo, di mettersi a imitarlo, e nuove fantasie si sono vedute poi alla grottesca, più tosto che a ragione o regola, a l’oro ornamenti.”
Scholars have long identified Bernini’s numerous wholesale borrowings of ornament from Buonarroti’s distinctive repertoire. Yet there has been no study devoted exclusively to Bernini’s architectural ornament or to his indebtedness to Michelangelo’s novel vocabulary. This is perhaps because studies of Bernini’s buildings have demonstrated that his geometries are generally indebted to normative architectural principles and that his plans are often specifically linked to classicizing architects of the previous generation, like Palladio, Peruzzi and Serlio, rather than to Michelangelo. It is also likely that Bernini’s references to Buonarroti’s ornament have eluded sustained investigation because his quotations are frequently read as mere surface effects, that is, as signs of Bernini’s desire to associate with Michelangelo that ultimately remain extrinsic to his own manner. For example, in an article on Bernini’s church of Sant’Andrea al Quirinale, Joseph Connors described the exterior of the architect’s most distinctive edifice as “almost a façade without a signature.” Although he noted that the architect’s “personal touch” was apparent in the manner Bernini arranged the ornament, the “syntax” as he called it, his analysis emphasized the apparent absence of a “distinct personality” in

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682 “In what one might call the rules of syntax it is easy to detect Bernini’s personal touch. But on the other hand it is much harder to see his distinct personality in any of the smaller details of the architectural vocabulary. The capitals could have been carved in the sixteenth century; the semicircular portico could be taken for a bay of Michelangelo’s Palazzo dei Conservatori, swung suddenly outwards; the accordion folds of the giant order come from Michelangelo’s curtain wall around the apses of St. Peter’s. There is no attempt at a new order, few eccentricities of detail, and no obvious trademarks. It is almost a façade without a signature.” Connors, “Bernini’s S. Andrea al Quirinale: Payments and Planning,” JSAH 41(1982): 25.
the visual language itself. Similarly, in Christof Thoenes study of Bernini’s relationship to Michelangelo’s architecture, he characterized Gianlorenzo’s citations as “the use of an extraneous element, that is not absorbed into the author’s language, but remains more or less unaltered,” so that the identity of the referent is immediately apparent to the viewer.\footnote{Thoenes, “Bernini architetto tra Palladio e Michelangelo,” 122. Citation is one of four briefly outlined categories that Thoenes suggests Bernini actively expressed his approval of and identification with Michelangelo.} For Thoenes, like Connors, Bernini’s architectural self is invariably subsumed by the obvious origins of his ornament in Michelangelo’s distinctive oeuvre.

In this chapter I argue that Bernini’s individuality is disclosed by his open citations of Buonarroti. Rather than privilege a quote’s otherness, which marginalizes the authorial act of selecting and arranging borrowed motifs, I focus on its self-reflective possibilities, situating Gianlorenzo’s practice of quotation within positive categories of imitation. Although Bernini’s citation of Michelangelo’s ornament, unlike his emulation of his predecessor’s sculpture, is often associated with slavish, retrospective copying, Loh’s model of self-aware repetition in painting, wherein the repetitive work instantiates a dialogue with the original to the reciprocal benefit of imitator and imitated,\footnote{Loh, Titian Remade.} makes it possible to see Gianlorenzo’s derivations as productive, self-confident and forward looking. Loh outlines a seicento culture of quotation and repetition in painting and in poetry as well as in theories of art and of writing,\footnote{Loh, “New and Improved”; idem, Titian Remade.} which parallel and complement Bernini’s recycling of motifs from Buonarroti’s architectural vocabulary. But while my perspective is informed by Loh’s study of Padovanino and Titian, I employ early modern architectural theory, which articulates its own strategy of repetition, as the lens through
which to see Bernini’s quotations as purposeful and creative remakes of his predecessor. Alina Payne has demonstrated that writers on architecture like Sebastiano Serlio, Antonio Labacco, Benvenuto Cellini, Daniele Barbaro and Gian Paolo Lomazzo, maintained that by disassembling the stock parts of the classical orders and recombining them into new wholes, architects could give novel expression to ancient typologies, and demonstrate their individuality in the process. Deeply indebted to contemporary discourses on literary imitation, these architectural writers asserted that judicious culling and recombining of one or more orders was the essence of a productive dialectic between tradition and innovation. Originality, within this particular modality of imitation, depended upon the architect’s ability to create fresh compositions out of a familiar kit of parts. Transformation was thus achieved through the act of re-contextualization and bricolage, which rendered the familiar, new. The cinquecento practitioner par-excellence of this art of architectural license was none other than Michelangelo, whose composite ornament derived from unorthodox mixing of the classical vocabulary was, as Vasari suggested, the means by which he broke from tradition. I demonstrate that Bernini’s quotation and re-composition of Michelangelo’s ornament engaged in a strategy of repetition and transformation founded in the cinquecento practice of architectural bricolage and adapted in the seicento to accommodate Buonarroti’s discrete modern contribution to the vocabulary of architecture.

Tod Marder recently argued that overt referentiality underlies Bernini’s entire architectural practice, functioning broadly as Gianlorenzo’s “modus operandi” with

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paradigms both antique and modern. Though Marder does not apply early modern theories of imitation to his study of the architect’s work, his formal analysis of various projects, like Bernini’s remake of the Pantheon in his church of Santa Maria dell’Assunzione, demonstrates that transparent imitation was at the heart of Gianlorenzo’s novel engagement with a plurality of sources. Michelangelo is mentioned as one source among many from which Bernini derived ornamental and structural forms. By not privileging any one of Bernini’s referents over the other, Marder effectively neutralizes the scholarly debate regarding Bernini’s allegiance to any one architect or style. If this impartial approach rightly encourages us to focus on Bernini, it nonetheless ignores the specific theoretical and polemical values associated with the architect’s choice of sources that are essential to appreciating their newly composed meaning.

Part one of this chapter examines the reception of Michelangelo’s license – as a mode of operating, as a model for imitation and as a vocabulary to be quoted – as it unfolds in late sixteenth- and seventeenth-century architectural treatises. Fuelled by the

689 The question of which cinquecento predecessor Bernini most identified with and to whom his architecture is most indebted is frequently explored, yet with little consensus among scholars. Palladio, Michelangelo and, of late, Baldassare Peruzzi are the sixteenth-century architects with whom Bernini is most frequently aligned. Rudolf Wittkower first proposed Palladio as the predominant source for Bernini’s work and style, see Wittkower, “Palladio e Bernini.” And, following Wittkower, it is Palladio’s classicizing influence on Bernini has been most fully developed in the scholarship, see M. and M. Fagiolo dell’Arco, Bernini, 126-32; Marder, “Palladio, Bernini, e la Rotonda di Ariccia,”17-26; Gabriella Cartago Scattaglia, “Palladio e Bernini scrittori,” Bollettino del Centro Internazionale di Studi di Architettura Andrea Palladio 23 (1981): 203-22; Antinori, “Sulla prima formazione di Bernini architetto,” 3-11. For arguments in favour of Michelangelo as Bernini’s foremost architectural inspiration, see Askew, “The Relation of Bernini’s Architecture to the Architecture of the High Renaissance and of Michelangelo,” Marsyas 5 (1947): 39-61; Thoenes, “Bernini architetto tra Palladio e Michelangelo”; Marcello Fagiolo, “Introduzione alla ‘toscanità’ di Bernini (e alla ‘romanità’ di Michelangelo e di Buontalenti),” in Bernini e la Toscana: da Michelangelo al barocco mediceo e al neocinquecentismo, eds. Oronzo Brunetti, Silvia Chiara Cusmano and Valerio Tesi (Rome: Gangemi, 2002), ix-lix. On Bernini’s imitation of the work of Peruzzi, see Boucher, “Bernini e l’architettura del Cinquecento,” 27-43.
evidence of writings on architecture from Italy and France, which reveal a decidedly unfavorable attitude towards Buonarroti’s unconventional repertoire, his method of mixing, and his influence on a generation of followers, scholars have reconstructed a largely negative picture of the early modern response to Michelangelo’s unorthodoxies. By introducing the hitherto overlooked seventeenth-century re-editions of Vignola’s *Regola delli cinque ordini d’architettura* into the discussion of Buonarroti’s reception, I hope to demonstrate that the theoretical fortune of Michelangelo’s architectural vocabulary is much more complex than the current scholarship suggests. I argue that in the wake of perennial condemnations of Buonarroti’s unorthodox practice and/or paternity of epigones, a specific strand of editions of Vignola’s *Regola* that emerged at the outset of the seicento and continued to be produced into subsequent centuries argue in favour of imitating Buonarroti and rebut critiques of Michelangelo’s license.

The second part of this chapter offers a close formal analysis of Bernini’s candid remakes of Michelangelo’s ornament, from its origins in his earliest works under Urban VIII through to the height of his architectural career under Alexander VII. I argue that Gianlorenzo engaged in a practice of bricolage that featured borrowed parts from Buonarroti’s architectural vocabulary as the vehicle by which he asserted his filiation from Michelangelo and through which expressed his own individuality and creativity. One rarely speaks of “filiation” in architecture, largely because this metaphor for

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imitation is rooted in resemblances of form, character and/or style that are most often revealed by the attitude in which an artist represents the human figure (whether in paint or in stone). Yet I would argue that the architect, despite working in a discipline largely divorced from figuration, constructs genealogies by way of the architectural vocabulary he adopts (particularly in the period after Michelangelo) as well as in the manner he arranges that vocabulary.

Gianlorenzo’s quotations of his predecessor’s architecture are here understood as mute participants in the theoretical debate over Michelangelo’s license and that of his progeny. And although I focus on Bernini’s citations from Michelangelo, my aim is not to suggest that Gianlorenzo’s practice and its implications were unique. Indeed, particularly in Rome, where Buonarroti’s architecture could be studied first hand, architects regularly culled from and reassembled Michelangelo’s idiom. On the one hand, this prevalent integration of Buonarroti’s vocabulary into Roman architectural practice created a *lingua franca* among a host of architects that complicates a discussion of Bernini’s sources. On the other hand, it is possible to understand many architects’ use of ornament rooted in Michelangelo as creating lively, sometimes competing re-conceptions of their predecessor’s legacy of innovation in architecture. This is especially apparent when Bernini’s repetitions of Buonarroti are juxtaposed to those of his contemporary and erstwhile collaborator, Francesco Borromini. Select comparative analyses show that an important part of the rivalry between the two artists was grounded in their shared, yet antithetical, identification with Buonarroti’s unorthodox ornament.⁶⁹¹

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⁶⁹¹ Though the literature on the rivalry between Bernini and Borromini is copious, their shared engagement specifically with Michelangelo’s architectural vocabulary has been largely ignored. For the most recent and
perhaps unexpected in an examination of their respective remakes of Michelangelo’s repertoire, is that Bernini sometimes emerges as more, rather than less, unorthodox than previously imagined.

**Vignola’s Regola and the Reception of Michelangelo’s License**

Michelangelo’s identity as cinquecento architecture’s master of quotation and re-assemblage was enshrined in Vasari’s description of the decoration of the Medici Chapel in his 1568 edition of the *Life* of the artist and in his discussion of architecture in the preface to the whole text of the *Lives*. According to the biographer, the interior of the chapel showcased “a different order of ornamentation” composed of cornices, capitals, bases and doors that eschewed common usage. In Vasari’s estimation, Buonarroti had created “composite ornament” more varied and original than any ancient or modern precedent and this new mixture of the orders marked, in turn, a positive rupture from the past. Borrowing from Sebastiano Serlio’s codification of the composite order, a type that was produced by way of recomposing and mixing, the biographer suggested that...
Buonarroti used bricolage to transcend the rules governing the Vitruvian orders. Through these means Buonarroti “broke the bonds and chains that had previously confined [artists] to the creation of traditional forms.” If, with his claim, Vasari casts Michelangelo as the liberator of architecture, in a subsequent passage he codifies Buonarroti’s act of emancipation by granting his novel version of the composite order – an ancient type that, by its very nature, was open-ended, mutable and authorless – a fixed, singular and authorial status. By claiming that “no one can deny that this new composite order, which has attained such perfection through Michelangelo, may be worthily compared to the others,” Vasari, as Summers noted, makes Buonarroti’s unorthodox vocabulary the modern standard for composite practice as well as the canon of a new composite type, a veritable sixth order.

Despite celebrating Michelangelo’s architectural novelties, Vasari’s enthusiasm for license was sharply circumscribed. While the biographer wrote positively about Buonarroti’s unorthodoxies in both editions of the Lives, he was careful to differentiate between good and bad license in the second edition. This change was likely in response to the recent wave of writings by orthodox architects and critics resistant to...

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696 “…the composite has no stable origin, author or format and is characterized precisely by its open-endedness.” Payne, “Creativity and ‘Bricolage’,” 32.
697 Vasari/Bettarini-Barocchi, Vite, 1:64: “Per che niuno può negare che questo nuovo ordine composto, avendo da Michelagnolo tanta perfezione ricevuto, non possa andar al paragon degli altri.”
698 Vasari’s characterization of Michelangelo’s unorthodoxies as paradigmatic of a new order was observed by Summers, “Michelangelo on Architecture,” 155, who also notes that Vincenzo Danti’s Trattato delle perfette proporzioni offers similar praise of Buonarroti as a maker of new orders. See ibid., 155n48. I would add that a comparable notion is implied in Bocchi’s guidebook to Florence in which, within his description of the Laurentian Library, he writes: “Yet, because there is no reasonable argument against it [i.e. Michelangelo’s playing with the norms], one can say that, Michelangelo being what he was, he could create another Rule, also commendable, as is that of the ancients, one that has earned the consensus and praise of artists.” Bocchi, Bellezze della citta di Firenze, 283.
699 Vasari/Bettarini-Barocchi, Vite, 1:64-5. See also note 692 above.
Michelangelo’s innovations. Defending his protagonist, Vasari deflected censure away from Michelangelo and onto his imitators by distinguishing the quality of their respective brands of composite license. Vasari claimed that good license – that practiced by Michelangelo – could transgress the rules without violating architectural decorum because his composite creations were grounded in a thorough knowledge of the antique. In other words, he could break the rules because he understood them. Bad license, by comparison, was exercised by Buonarroti’s less skilled followers who engaged in unbridled mixing. The works of these imitators were devoid of judgment, lacking in good design and so far removed from ancient principles that Vasari decried them as “monstrous” and worse than “German [i.e. gothic].”

Vasari’s list of the deficiencies in the work of Michelangelo’s imitators rounds out the qualities that underlie Buonarroti’s successful bricolage; along with knowledge of antiquity, a good architect must also have good judgment and design. While *disegno* was a new addition to the cinquecento discussion of the *composto* (and would, in the hands of some later architectural writers, overshadow it as the essence of architectural invention), it serves here to strategically delimit license within orthodox bounds. Notwithstanding this addition, Vasari’s acknowledgment of the benefits and dangers of

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700 Elam, “‘Tuscan dispositions’,” 63-79.
701 Vasari/Bettarini-Barocchi, *Vite* 1:64-5: “Le quali cose non considerando con buon giudicio e non le immitando, hanno a’ tempi nostri certi architetti plebei prosontuosi e senza disegno fatto quasi a caso – senza servar decoro, arte o ordine nessuno – tutte le cose loro mostruose e peggio che le tedesche.” On the Renaissance vocabulary of bad license – “mostruoso,” “barbaro,” “bizzaria,” “capriccio,” “chimera,” “grottesca,” “goticò,” etc. – and its origins in ancient writing, see Payne, “Mescolare, composti and Monsters.”
novelty ultimately echoed contemporary definitions of license as a perilous virtue.\textsuperscript{703} But his fashioning of Michelangelo into an unparalleled vanguard at the expense of his hapless epigones introduces a paradox that creates a practical and theoretical hurdle for subsequent generations to overcome: Buonarroti is an exemplar whose licentious example should, if not be wholly avoided, at least pursued with the utmost caution. His exemplarity as an architect is inimitable.\textsuperscript{704} With good license as the purview of Michelangelo alone, Buonarroti’s emulators are thus invariably consigned to ignominy.

Decades after Vasari, defenders of Michelangelo continued to see him as a figurehead of originality in architecture, to celebrate his composite practice and to see him as a model for contemporaries, however fraught the enterprise. An unstinting fan of Buonarroti in all the arts, Lomazzo championed architectural license in his \textit{Trattato dell’arte della pittura, scoltura et architettura} (1590), asserting that the superior architects armed with design (and here we implicitly read “Michelangelo”) “are those who are granted the faculty of varying the orders and composing that which they want.”\textsuperscript{705} Francesco Bocchi’s \textit{Le bellezze della città di Fiorenza} (1591), by comparison, justified Buonarroti’s licentious play with antique canons by claiming that Michelangelo’s unorthodoxy would, over time, be rightly recognized as orthodox, a rule

\textsuperscript{703} For Vasari’s assessment of license within the context of cinquecento writings on good and bad license in architecture, see Payne, “Creativity and Bricolage”; idem, “Mescolare, composti and Monsters.”

\textsuperscript{704} This contradiction is fundamental to the concept of exemplarity, see John Lyons, \textit{Exemplum: The Rhetoric of Example in Early Modern France and Italy} (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989), 15-6; Timothy Hampton, \textit{Writing from History. The Rhetoric of Exemplarity in Renaissance Literature} (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990), ix-xiii. In his study of imitation, Greene, \textit{Light in Troy}, 38-9, described reverence for a model whose greatness can only be reproduced, not equaled, as “sacramental imitation.” By “sacramentalizing” Michelangelo, Vasari constructs a bar that cannot be surpassed, an attitude that was perpetuated by many later, pro-Michelangelo writers.

\textsuperscript{705} Lomazzo, \textit{Trattato}, 410: “E questi sono quelli à quali è concessa la facoltà di variar gli ordini e comporre ciò che vogliono.”
in and of itself.\textsuperscript{706} And, at the outset of the seicento, the architect-painter Lodovico Cigoli wrote a letter to Galileo that revisited Vasari’s distinction between good and bad license by asserting that Buonarroti’s imitators, not the master himself, were responsible for marring architecture.\textsuperscript{707} Cigoli was troubled, however, by an impasse in contemporary practice: those who sought to be original, but did not possess Buonarroti’s design skills, were as foolish as Apuleius’ ass, while those who imitated older, simpler practices, created buildings that appeared “crude” (triviali). Though Cigoli does not mention Buonarroti’s composite practice, he gives renewed emphasis to Vasari’s strategic positioning of disegno as the glue that holds together a good collage of architectural parts.

Michelangelo’s late-cinquecento critics, on the other hand, did not distinguish between good and bad innovation, but deemed all license a fallacy. Whether they censured Buonarroti directly or reproached a broader situation in which Michelangelo’s precedent was tacitly acknowledged, they shared the belief that the novelties created by quoting and reassembling classical parts opened the door to all manner of corruption.\textsuperscript{708}

In a chapter on architectural abuses in Andrea Palladio’s \textit{Quattro Libri dell’Architettura} (1570), for example, the architect inveighed against unsightly and non-functional broken pediments, fantastic cartouches and the breaches of orthodox vocabulary common to

\textsuperscript{706} Bocchi, \textit{ Beauties of the City of Florence}, 242; idem, \textit{Bellezze della citta di Firenza}, 262-6. On Bocchi’s “orthodox defence of Michelangelo’s unorthodoxy” within the specifically Tuscan reception of Buonarroti’s innovations, see Elam, “‘Tuscan Dispositions’,” 79-80.


\textsuperscript{708} Payne, “Mescolare, Composti and Monsters,” 291-3.
Michelangelo’s oeuvre without, however, mentioning Buonarroti’s name. Pirro Ligorio, on the other hand, decried outright Michelangelo’s licentious ornament as an affront not only to necessity and function, but above all, to religious decorum. In various unpublished manuscripts from around 1570-80, Ligorio criticized all manner of transgressions, especially the broken pediments used by Buonarroti and his followers, as better suited to edifices dedicated to pagan deities of the underworld than those constructed in honour of the “immortal” and “eternal” God. Ligorio saw Michelangelo’s architectural bricolage as an act of violence, a breaking of architectural wholes that, in turn, was an affront to the timeless and perfect nature of God. If the immutability of the orders was sacrosanct, then in Ligorio’s schema, Michelangelo and his followers were nothing less than architectural heretics.

These cinquecento criticisms of Michelangelo and license resonated deeply in the seicento. The most damning Italian critique came in the first quarter of the century with Teofilo Gallaccini’s Trattato sopra gli errori degli architetti, an unpublished treatise from circa 1625 that circulated in Rome in manuscript form throughout the century.

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709 Andrea Palladio, I quattro libri dell’architettura (Venice: Domenico de’Franceschi, 1570), Book 1, chapter XX.
710 Likely influenced by Palladio and fueled by contemporary moralizing writings on art and religious decorum, Pirro Ligorio’s unpublished manuscripts are rife with criticisms Michelangelo and, more broadly of architectural ills engendered by his unorthodox practice, see Coffin, “Pirro Ligorio,” 200-6.
711 “There have been such broken orders from the fine ingenuity of Messer Michelangelo Buonarroti of Florence without another thought of reason. He has filled his architecture with these broken things and that which was given by the pagans to the gods of death, he has given and introduced to the temples of the eternal and immortal God to whom they have always dedicated, and should dedicate, whole things with whole pediments…. Other followers of Michelangelo imitate him in architecture; everything has broken members, with fittings of gloomy and ugly effect….“ As translated in Coffin, “Pirro Ligorio,” 201.
712 Gallaccini’s manuscript did not appear in print until 1767 when it was published in Venice by Antonio Visentini: Teofilo Gallaccini, Trattato sopra gli errori degli architetti. Ora per la prima volta pubblicato. (Antonio Vicentini, Venezia, 1767). This text is bound with an expanded commentary on Gallaccini’s treatise by Visentini entitled, Osservasioni che servono di continuazione al Trattato di T. Gallaccini di Antonio Visentini. I reference the published version of Gallaccini’s text, which is a faithful transcription of the manuscript now held at the British Library. On Gallaccini’s criticism of abuses in the ornamentation of buildings, his attitude towards Michelangelo and his imitators, see Payne, “Architectural Criticism, Science, and Visual Eloquence: Teofilo Gallaccini in Seventeenth-Century Siena,” JSAH 58 (1992): 146-69;
Aimed at combating contemporary abuses in architecture, Gallaccini’s text offers lengthy illustrated discussions of potential and actual errors committed by architects. Like his predecessors, he is averse to broken pediments, to mixing the orders and to any novelty that thwarts the demands of structure, utility and decorum. And while he praises Buonarroti on a few occasions by name, he avoids naming him when he censures the latter’s egregious flaws at St. Peter’s and at the Porta Pia. Identifying the ornamental window and niche surrounds at St. Peter’s as defying the tectonic logic of the cornice, column and pilaster, Gallaccini deems them “trite” and “ignoble” more like “works of wood and of stucco than of stone.” The structural illogic of the Porta Pia is similarly offensive, particularly the broken pediment, which he describes elsewhere as “a defective manner never used by the ancients,” and a “most notable error” perpetuated by indiscriminate architects who, even worse, blindly employ “il Divino’s” example.

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713 Gallaccini, Trattato, 45, 49, 58-9.
714 Ibid., 45: “Diciamo adunque, che allora succede uno degli abusi degli ornamenti delle fabbriche, quando s’aggiungono per ornamento alcune membra non necessarie alle fronti loro, né per reggere alcune membra, né per corrispondenza alle parti. E per dirla chiaramente, quando tutto il corpo dell’ornamento é perfetto, senza d’esse; come, quando, ai pilastri s’aggiungono, o termini, o ribaltamenti di cornici, o nuove membra posticce, e riportate, che rendono il lavoro troppo secco, troppo trito, ed ignobile, e non corrispondente alla sodezza, e alla magnificenza del rimanente, come si vede in Roma nel second’Ordine della faccia, e de’fianchi di S. Pietro, e negli ornamenti fra le colonne. Dove si mostrano gli ornamenti, più d’opera di legname, e di stucco, che di pietra....”
715 Ibid., 41: “Finalmente è notabilissimo errore, quando sopra gli ornamenti de’Templi, delle Cappelle, degli Altari, e delle Porte, in luogo di farvi i fastigi, e i frontespizi interi, accomodarvi i rotti, credento con la rottura di dar grazia all’ornamento.... Né si trovò mai, che gli Antichi usassero di fare il frontespizio rotto, ma lo formarono sempre intiero, o tondo, o angolare con due pendenze.... Né perché ne sia stato inventore Michelangliolo Buonarrotti detto il Divino, ed essendo eccellentissimo nella Scultura, nella Pittura, e nell’Architettura, mosso da necessità, si dee trasportare somigliante uso in ogni proposito, e in ogni luogo, senza necessità, e grazia alcuna; imperciocché quello, che una volta, e per accidente è stato usato, non può né dee servire per regola di bene operare; che gli accidenti violentano gli Artefici a partirsi dalla rettitudine dell’arte loro; e tal violenza non forza sempre, ma qualche volta, e però non può farci regola: che la regola è sempre buona.” Gallaccini is here at pains to justify Michelangelo’s use of the broken pediment as an unfortunate necessity, even an error, suggesting a reluctance to accuse Buonarroti directly of any affront to architectural norms. Mattia de Rossi similarly excused Michelangelo’s use of
Resistance to architectural license and composite creation reached an extreme in French architectural writings from the middle and latter part of the seventeenth century. In the *Parallèle de l’architecture antique de la moderne* (1650), Roland Fréart de Chambray reacted against the degenerate caprices of modern architects wishing to create composite novelties by espousing, instead, complete fidelity to the three original Greek orders – Doric, Ionic and Corinthian. De Chambray’s eschewal of the Tuscan and Composite orders from the canon was strategic. By rejecting the Tuscan order he omitted the single, definitively Italian (Etruscan) typology of the group; by denying the Composite order, he closed the door to the model that encouraged licentious mixing. Chambray perceived bricolage as inimical to originality; rather, it was in the correct use of the orders exemplified by normative practice that invention was revealed. Though Chambray spared Michelangelo explicit censure, he nonetheless identified Italian architects as those who made the most egregious use of this kind of license. André Félibien, on the other hand, was more direct when it came to placing blame. In his *Des principes de l’architecture* (1676), Félibien collapsed Vasari’s distinction between the broken forms following Chantelou’s charged assessment of Michelangelo’s license in Chantelou’s diary. According to Mattia, Buonarroti only employed broken cornices “in places where blocks were too long and would otherwise have resembled a fortification.” Chantelou, *Diary*, 133; idem, *Journal*, 130 (20 August).


718 Chambray devotes the second part of his text to a discussion (mostly on the ills) of the Composite and Tuscan Orders. And though he sees some merit in their use, he separates them unequivocally (both through their placement in the text and in their form) from the original Greek Orders.

719 On the nationalist identity of the Tuscan order and interpretations of the order from Vitruvius to Scamozzi, see James Ackerman, “The Tuscan/Rustic Order: A Study in the Metaphorical Language of Architecture,” *JSAH* 42 (1983): 15-34. Elam, “‘Tuscan dispositions’,” 61-82, has also demonstrated that the Tuscan order is richly embedded in the *Accademia Fiorentina* debates about the Tuscan language.

720 “Enfin on peut dire que la pauvre Architecture est mal traitée. Mais il ne faut pas en imputer le plus grand reproche à nos ouvriers Français; car les Italiens sont maintenant encore plus licencieux, et font bien voir que Rome a présentement ses modernes aussi bien que ses antiques.” Chambray, *Parallèle*, 82. On Chambray’s attitude toward Michelangelo’s license, see Mignot, “Michel-Ange et la France,” 525-6.
license practiced by Michelangelo and that of his inferior followers by suggesting that epigones only ever gravitate to that which in of itself is flawed. Félibien observed that many “workers,” emboldened by only one example, will engage in all sorts of license that is often bad and contrary to reason. As evidence, he pointed to those who disfigured architecture by simply transposing Michelangelo’s cartouches into their own work, which, he suggested “demonstrates that that those who do not study the depths of Art, and, strictly speaking, are only copyists or like the monkeys of others, almost never imitate them except in what they did badly. Therefore it is not in [license that] Michelangelo appeared an excellent architect.”

Thus for Félibien, Buonarroti’s followers did more than just practice bad license – in doing so, they revealed the ills of their master.

The recurrent attack on Michelangelo’s paradigm and its progeny provides the lens through which we can appreciate a passage from Pietro Testa’s academic imaginary about a gathering of artists on Mount Parnassus in which he envisions Buonarroti lamenting his role in the flourishing of barbarous architecture by contemporaries seeking to emulate his novelties. Testa visualizes Michelangelo instructing “various famous” architects on how to “enrich the mantle of Architecture, by now worn and shabby” without offending Vitruvius and the ancients. As Buonarroti’s famed pupils dutifully attempt to imitate one of his examples, the master is awakened to the danger that they might “create monsters.” Michelangelo thus determines that it would have been better to

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721 "Il ne faut aux ouvriers qu’un seul exemple de nouveauté pour les autoriser et leur faire prendre toute sorte de license souvent mal à propos et contre raison, comme plusieurs ont fait à l’égard des cartouches, dont on peut dire qu’ils ont défiguré l’architecture, depuis qu’ils virent que Michel-Ange s’en était servi. Ce que fait voir que ceux qui n’étudient pas le fond de l’Art, et qui ne sont à proprement parler que des copistes, et comme les singes des autres, ne les imitent presque jamais que dans ce qu’ils ont fait de plus mal; car ce n’est pas en cela que Michel-Ange a paru un excellent architect.” André Félibien, Des principes de l’architecture, e la sculpture, de la peinture, et des autres arts qui en dépendent (Paris: Chez la Veuve & Jean Baptiste Coignard, 1676), 22. On Félibien’s assessment of Michelangelo’s license, see Chastel, “Michel-Ange en France,” 268-9; Mignot, “Michel-Ange et la France,” 525-6.
722 Cropper, Ideal of Painting, 116, 257.
leave Lady Architecture in her tattered robes than to have introduced his path of innovation to anyone, because at least this way people would be able to appreciate her noble proportions. In Testa’s text, it is Michelangelo himself, burdened by the evidence that his revitalizing and beneficent example engendered a malignant scourge, who posthumously renounces license.

In contrast to later cinquecento texts on architectural license in which supporters of Michelangelo equal, if not outnumber, his critics, Buonarroti’s detractors dominate seicento writings on innovation and creativity in architecture. Outside of sundry references in art theoretical texts, theological writings and biographies, Michelangelo’s compositional practice and its effects merited little sustained discussion. Yet this does not mean that the once polarizing debate was now replaced by widespread agreement. A brief survey of what I would characterize as “michelangelized” versions of Vignola’s Regola degli cinque ordini d’architettura shows that there was a hitherto little examined visual rebuttal to the censures of Buonarroti’s licentious use of ornament.

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723 “Ma dandomi a contemplare i particolari, veggo di primo sotto un degl’archi di questo loggiato appoggiato quel gran Michelangelo che vinse la Grecia e Roma con tanta felicità di questo secolo; sta mostrando come si possa senza offendere il gran Vitrivio e tutti gli antichi ampliare e arichiar ilmonito del’Architettura, ormai logro e una sua pari troppo fruisto e sproportionato. Vari famosissimi architetti lo sentono e ne pigliano il mode che esso in un de’pilastri dove s’apporrà con tanta faciltà gli’uva m(o)istra[n]do, averti[n]do con [cose?] oltra non passar però que segni che si pericolava di generar de’mostri; documento che da poche è stato penetrato e tenuto in sé; sicché molto meglio era non dar questo campo a nuno, essendo che molto meglio era lasciar quellaSignora colla sua antichissima vestevendo non nascondeva le unibilissime sue proporzioni…” As cited in ibid., 257.

724 For the seventeenth-century editions of Vignola’s text with an inventory of their contexts as well as the international publication history of Vignola’s Regola from its first printing in 1562 through to early twentieth-century editions see, Maria Walcher Casotti, “Le edizioni della Regola,” in Trattati, eds. Elena Bassi and Maria W. Casotti (Milan: Polifilo, 1985), 539-77, which updates the earliest inventory made by A.G. Spinelli, “Bio-bibliographia dei due Vignola,” in Memorie e studi intorno a Jacopo Barozzi (Bologna: Antonio Monti, 1908), 15-51, esp. 24-34. Scholarly interest in the Regola’s afterlife (beyond cataloguing its various re-editions) is a recent phenomenon, focusing largely on the French versions of the manual. Frédérique Lemerle, for example, tracked the dissemination of the Regole into France by examining the affinities and changes among the plates in seventeenth-century European editions; Bettina Köhler examined Charles D’Aviler’s transformation of Vignola’s manual into a copiously expanded treatise with images that included biographies of Vignola and Michelangelo; Claude Mignot examined the reception of Vignola over two centuries in France. See, respectively, Frédérique Lemerle, “Les versions Française de la Regola de
The first re-edition of Vignola’s treatise to include Buonarroti in its pages was published in Rome at the outset of the seicento. In 1610, Giovanni Battista Montano, founding member of the Accademia di San Luca, architect and admirer of Buonarroti, appended engravings of Michelangelo’s innovative Roman gates to a 1607 re-edition of Vignola’s Regola. Montano’s Nuova et ultima aggiunta delle porte d’architettura di Michel Angelo Buonarroti, was prefaced by a frontispiece that featured a portrait of Michelangelo holding a compass and gazing out from a niche flanked by allegorical figures representing Theory and Practice [fig. 123]. The formal and iconographic parallels between this frontispiece and the title page to Vignola’s Regola some pages before it [fig. 124] imply that Michelangelo’s novel architecture (represented metonymically by the subsequent images of gates) was founded upon the same rules that underlie Vignola’s typologies for Tuscan, Doric, Ionic, Corinthian and Composite, even though the gates do not resemble any one of the orders illustrated in the pages before them. Rather, Michelangelo’s gates feature creative re-assemblages of Vignola’s canon,
composed by mixing stock elements culled from each of these orders into new wholes [figs. 125 and 126]. Separated from the images of the orders by their own frontispiece, these gates not only represent the modern example for re-making an antique legacy, but also intimate that Buonarroti’s practice of quotation and re-assemblage constitutes a virtual order unto itself. Ultimately, by uniting the Michelangelo appendix with Vignola’s original manual on the orders, a text possibly used as the basis for architectural instruction at the Accademia di San Luca, Montano sanctioned a new generation of architects to emulate Buonarroti’s example.

Although Montano’s new appendix transformed the Regola into a vehicle for promoting Michelangelo’s inventions and imitative practice, a purpose not intended by Vignola, the addition did not violate the latter’s “theory” of architectural composition, but developed those implications. Far from a rigid set of rules, Vignola’s treatise encouraged variation within each order. In his preface and in the captions accompanying the individual orders, Vignola indicates that he developed his architectural rule in a manner similar to Zeuxis’s composition of the perfect woman, judiciously selecting the best parts from ancient examples of each order and mixing the components into representative models. As Payne has demonstrated, Vignola’s composite approach to each order in the canon was deeply embedded in cinquecento writings that espoused the mixing of

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727 Of the five Roman gates and doors illustrated in Montano’s 1610 appendix – the Porta Pia, a door from the Campidoglio, the Porta del Popolo, the Porta Grimani, the Porta Carpensius, the Porta Sermonetta – only the first two can be definitively attributed to Michelangelo.
730 “A talché, non come Zeusi delle vergini fra’ Crotoniati ma come ha portato il mio giudizzio, ho fatta questa scelta del tutti gli ordini, cavendogli puramente dagli antichi tutti insieme.” Giacomo Vignola, Regola dell’ordini d’architettura (Rome: s.n., 1562), plate III. For the theoretical significance of Vignola’s statement, see Payne, “Mescolare, composti and Monsters,” 273-7.
architectural types as a fundamental strategy of architectural invention. Montano’s 1610 re-edition of Vignola makes this kinship explicit: Vignola’s culling of parts within each order is a microcosmic version of the mixing among the orders exemplified by Michelangelo’s gates. In an century during which the writing espousing bricolage as a form of originality in architecture was increasingly subsumed to arguments that located architectural creativity in universal concepts of disegno or the idea, Montano’s michelangelized version of the Regola gave new purchase to the cinquecento theory and practice of quotation and reassemblage as a mode of expressing innovation and individuality through imitation.

Montano’s appendix was one of a handful of initiatives undertaken by pro-
Michelangelo circles in the first decades of the seicento to celebrate and defend the master’s embattled architectural legacy. Yet it was the only endeavor among them that had polemical currency beyond the Tuscan nationals who fervently promoted the cult of Michelangelo at the outset of the century. After 1610, Michelangelo’s gates became a standard part of seventeenth-century editions of the Regola. Between 1617 and 1690, eight editions of the augmented Regola were printed in Rome alone and another thirteen issued by publishers in major Italian cities. Numerous translations of the expanded

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731 Payne, “Mescolare, Composti and Monsters”; idem, “Creativity and ‘Bricolage’.”
732 On this shift in perspective on architectural creativity, see Payne, “Creativity and ‘Bricolage’,” esp. 30-8.
733 According to Aloisio Antinori, these initiatives include: the efforts by cardinals Francesco Maria del Monte and Maffeo Barberini to defend Michelangelo’s centralized plans in the face of the Fabbrica’s decision to extend the nave of St. Peter’s in 1605; Jacques Lemercier’s 1607 engraving of Buonarroti’s model for S. Giovanni dei Fiorentini, possibly at Maffeo’s request; and the construction of the Strozzi family chapel in S. Andrea della Valle (1605-16) according to plans legendarily ascribed to Michelangelo. See Antinori, “Sulla prima formazione di Bernini architetto,” 1-5.
734 cf. Antinori, “Sulla prima formazione di Bernini architetto,” 4, who sees the 1610 edition of the Regola with the appendix of Michelangelo’s doors as an isolated instance, rather than the start of a widespread phenomenon. He argues, instead, that the Palladianism that swept Rome and France in the seventeenth-century (evinced by many re-printings in various languages of Palladio’s treatise) quelled any pro-
Michelangelo efforts from the early part of the seicento.
735 For a catalogue of these seicento editions, see Casotti, “Le edizioni della Regola,” 544-50.
text were also published in France, Germany, Spain, England and Holland. Its international appeal was even marked on five occasions by polyglot editions which presented the michelangelized *Regola* as Europe’s architectural *lingua franca.* Many of these seicento re-editions of the manual simply duplicated the Montano version, others expanded upon it by adding commentary, different title-pages and, more commonly, engravings of buildings, gates, altars and all manner of inventions by seventeenth-century architects that emulated Michelangelo’s licentious practice. Whatever its appearance or origin, each michelangelized version of Vignola’s text acted as a visual rebuttal to the treatises that denounced the license practiced by Michelangelo and offspring.

While michelangelized re-editions of the *Regola* were united in their support of Buonarroti, they nonetheless offered competing images of filiation. In 1646, for example, a polyglot edition of the *Regola* published in Amsterdam offered the most inclusive portrait of descent from Michelangelo. Not only was the text printed in Italian, Dutch, French, German and English, thus embracing virtually all western European architects, but the engravings of Michelangelo’s gates were here followed by another, more copious appendix, illustrating seventeenth-century Roman buildings and architectural inventions with a smattering of Dutch designs all prefaced by a new title-page paying explicit homage to Montano’s own michelangelism [fig. 127]. This frontispiece, entitled “La II parte dell’architettura del vignola e altri famossi architetti” (with Dutch translation

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736 Casotti lists 60 European editions, see ibid., 544-51. For an annotated catalogue of the re-editions of Vignola’s *Regola* in France alone, see Köhler, “Architecture ist di Kunst,” 196-219.
738 Giacomo Vignola, *Regole dell’cinque ordini d’architettura, con la nuova aggiunta di Michelangelo* (Amsterdam: Jan Jansz and Jan van Hiltien, 1646).
739 While Montano’s few known buildings as well as his various architectural books attest to his respect for Michelangelo, there is no evidence indicating that Montano ever worked with or studied under the master. He did, however, work alongside Guglielmo and Giacomo della Porta (heir to Michelangelo’s unfinished Roman architectural projects).
below written in another hand), pictures a polemical, if anachronistic, architectural lesson.\textsuperscript{740} In the right foreground [\textbf{fig. 128}], an aged Michelangelo holding glasses and a compass supervises Montano as the latter designs a monumental gate. Standing behind Montano is his pupil, Giovanni Battista Soria, who witnesses the lesson as it unfolds. Vignola is presented gazing out at the viewer from the far left. He is separated from the architectural lesson by an allegorical figure that I here identify as Minerva (note the suggestion of a breast prudently shielded by her right arm), holding her shield adorned with the face of Medusa.\textsuperscript{741} Minerva points to the background where, beyond an architectural frame, the gate drawn by Montano in the foreground is being erected under Michelangelo’s (?) watchful eye [\textbf{fig. 129}]. The frontispiece, a happy portrait of succession from one generation to the next and so on, asserts that Buonarroti’s architectural practice, one endorsed by Vignola’s rule, grounded in \textit{disegno} and reflecting the composite mode exemplified by Michelangelo’s gates, was imparted to Montano firsthand and subsequently bequeathed to Soria.\textsuperscript{742} Flying in the face of long-held perceptions that Buonarroti’s license spawned corrupt architects, the frontispiece proclaims that Michelangelo’s good license can be imitated and advantageously practiced by worthy sons. And, in keeping with the seicento desire to explain innovation by way of universal concepts that cut across all the arts, the cinquecento rhetoric of mixing

\textsuperscript{740} This title page seems to have been created in lieu of Montano’s title-page of 1610, which is not included in this 1646 version of the \textit{Regola}.

\textsuperscript{741} Cf. Fairbairn, “Giovanni Battista Montano,” 552, who identifies the figure as Mercury, “the patron of artists.” I believe, by contrast, that in light of the apparent emphasis on knowledge and intellect (as represented by the practice of \textit{disegno}) in this frontispiece, that the image of Minerva, goddess of wisdom (as well as the arts), is more fitting. As a goddess conceived and born of the mind of Zeus, she is a particularly apt symbol for the concept of \textit{disegno}.

\textsuperscript{742} Though the text was published in Amsterdam, the rhetoric of the title-page (as well as the Roman bias evident in the illustrated buildings that follow) suggest that it was conceived in Rome, likely by Soria (at the time, the only living architect among those represented) who wanted to honor his master and perpetuate his own identity as a follower of Michelangelo. On Soria’s relationship with Montano and his publication of Montano’s drawings after the master’s death, see Fairbairn, “Giovanni Battista Montano,” 541-53.
espoused in the pages of the Regola that precede this title page is here wed to the orthodoxy of disegno. In the pages that follow this title page, illustrations of numerous Roman buildings and Dutch architectural inventions suggest that there are many healthy branches growing from Michelangelo’s architectural family tree.

Italian re-editions of the Regola, whether printed in Bologna, Siena, Venice or Rome, typically constructed more exclusive lineages. Sometime after 1648, a Venetian printer added only three monuments to a michelangelized version of Vignola’s manual, all from the interior of St. Peter’s: Guglielmo della Porta’s Tomb of Paul III, Bernini’s Baldacchino and his Cathedra Petri. Here, Michelangelo’s example is presented as the purview of two of his well-known followers who worked under select pro-Buonarroti popes. By comparison, a 1690 Roman printer offered an even narrower line of filiation, with Bernini as the only “son” of Michelangelo. Beyond the manual’s usual pithy explication of the orders, this printer offered an extensive repertoire of works by Vignola and Michelangelo punctuated by one additional exemplar at the end of the text: Bernini’s Baldacchino [fig. 130]. Since its creation, the Baldacchino was regarded by many of Bernini’s Italian contemporaries as a composite creation of the most unorthodox order – a “chimera” – which elicited both favourable and negative reactions. As Delbeke has

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743 Giacomo Vignola, Li cinque ordini di architettura et aggiuntade lopere del ecc[...mo] M. Giacomo Barocio da Vignola: con un ragionamento alli architetti di M. Ottaviano Ridolfi ... ; con la noua aggiunta di Michiel Angielo Bonarotta Fiorentino (In Venezia: nel negotio Remondini, [1648?]).
745 The characterization of Bernini’s baldachin as chimera was recorded by Borromini in the margins of Fioravante Martinelli’s unpublished guide to Rome: “…e diceva che li Baldacchini non si sostengono con le colonne, ma con l’haste, et che il baldacchino non ricorra assieme con la cornice dele colonne,et in ogni modo coleva mostrare che lo reggono li Angeli: e soggiongeva che era una chimera.” As cited in Lavin, “The Baldacchino,” 292n32, with significant additions to earlier transcriptions of Martinelli’s text and its marginalia. According to this passage, Bernini’s unorthodoxy lay in combining two forms that were otherwise separate and, through this act of mixing, violating the tectonic rules that governed each. On the reception of Bernini’s Baldacchino as a chimera, see Lavin, Bernini and the Crossing, 11-3; Delbeke,
shown, Bernini’s advocates – especially Lelio Guidiccioni in a dialogue of 1633 and Gianlorenzo’s two biographers, Baldinucci and Domenico, in lengthy passages from their respective *vite* of 1680 and 1713 – wrote about the architect’s capacity for invention in this monument using language that implicitly called to mind Michelangelo’s rule-breaking paradigm.\(^746\) Just as this positive literary reception insisted a kinship was forged between Bernini and Buonarroti through the former’s novel Baldacchino, so too the 1690 edition of the *Regola* identifies Gianlorenzo’s monument explicitly with his predecessor’s license.

Among French detractors of license, however, it was not Bernini’s *composto*, but his spiraling columns that signaled an affront to antique practice. Immediately following Félibien’s aforementioned critique of Michelangelo’s “monkeys,” the French theorist censured twisted columns as the most conspicuous of many “ridiculous ornaments” not rooted in ancient architecture.\(^747\) He supported his argument by referring to the authority of Palladio, who “claims only to have observed a small Temple close to Trevi, whose Corinthian columns have grooves that turn around the shaft, *but the stem of the column is not twisted like those made today*, whose appearance and manner of execution is described by Vignola.”\(^748\) In other words, Félibien preferred twisting as surface treatment to a twisting columnar structure. In opposition to this view, the 1690 Roman edition of

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\(^746\) Delbeke, *Fenice degl’ingegni*, 33-40, 51-7, 155-60; idem, “Gianlorenzo Bernini’s *Bel Composto*.” On Guidiccioni’s dialogue, see also D’Onofrio, “Note berniniane I: Un dialogo-recita.”

\(^747\) “Mais pour ces sortes d’ornemens pesante tout a fait ridicules, on ne les trouvera point dans les anciens Edifices, non plus que les Colonnes Torses.” Félibien, *Conférences*, 22.

\(^748\) Ibid., 22-3: “Palladio dit seulement avoir observe un petit Temple pres de Trevi, dont les Colonnes d’Ordre Corinthien ont des cannelures que tournent autor du Fust, mais la tige de la Colone n’est pas torse comme celles qu’on fait aujourd’hui, dont Vignole a decrit la veritable figure, e donne la maniere de les faire.”
the *Regola* not only reproduces Vignola’s original description of how to create twisting columns [*fig. 131*], thus insisting on their presence within the architectural canon, but also celebrates Bernini’s twisting Baldacchino as the seicento exemplar of this particularly unorthodox ornament. It is worth further noting that in Montano’s title page to the 1610 appendix, Michelangelo is flanked by a twisting Solomonic column [*see fig. 123*], suggesting that he was, if not the inventor of the form, then closely associated with its application.

In 1691, the French architect Charles D’Aviler published his treatise entitled the *Cours d’architecture qui comprend les ordres de Vignola*, a copiously annotated and expanded version of the *michelangelized Regola* (that includes a brief biography of Michelangelo) with a decidedly French bias. Though critical of the unbridled, bad license that plagued Italian architects (especially Borromini), D’Aviler intimates that French architects are the heirs to good license. Michelangelo’s architecture, in turn, is not something to shun, but “an accomplished model of virtue” worthy of emulation.

Though a believer in the superiority of the antique, D’Aviler, unlike Chambray, was not averse to including the Tuscan and Composite orders in his theory. For in D’Aviler’s estimation, it was only by way of variation rooted in the kind of architectural mixing

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750 This statement about Michelangelo’s status as a virtuous model comes from the introductory paragraph of D’Aviler’s mini-biography of the architect, the “Preface sur la vie e sur les ouvrages de Michel’Ange” where he also makes note of the affinity between Vignola and Michelangelo that is implicated in seicento re-editions of the *Regola*: “Le rapport qu’il y a entre les Ouvrages d’Architecture de Michel-Ange & ceux de Vignole, fait que dans plusieurs Editions on voit des desseins de ces deux Architectes joints ensemble; c’est dans cet esprit qu’j’ay cru ester obligé de donner au public quelques Batiments de Michela-Ange avec des explications, ce qui n’avoir point esté fait jusques à present, & comme par la vie de Vignole j’ay fait connoitre son merite, je me suis aussi essorcer en donnant un idée de celle de Michel-Ange, de la proposer comme un modelle accompli de vertu, à ceux qui se meslent du dessein.” D’Aviler, *Cours*, 261.
underlying the Composite order and practiced by Buonarroti, that French architects could create a national form of architecture. D’Aviler takes Michelangelo’s exemplarity one step further by suggesting that emulating Buonarroti encompassed more than just adopting his composite practice – it included appropriating his signature architectural vocabulary. For example, in the commentary accompanying the illustrations of Michelangelo’s gates, to which D’Aviler added a lengthy section on the ornamentation of the Campidoglio, the author notes the various motifs from Buonarroti’s architectural repertoire that had been quoted in French buildings. The Porta Pia’s broken pediment is repeated at the Chateau de Chilly, the Hotel de Condé and the Jesuit College in Paris; a pilastered window from the Capitoline is reprised on a door of the Hotel d’Effiat; and the Ionic capital from the Palazzo dei Conservatori [fig. 132] reappears in the Vestibule du grand Pavillon du Louvre [fig. 133] and the Chasse de Sainte Genevieve.

Highlighting the motifs borrowed from Michelangelo’s architecture is unique among the various seventeenth-century editions of the Regola, yet it is the outcome in architecture of the 1610 edition with appendix. By representing Michelangelo’s architecture as paradigmatic of an authoritative new order created by mixing, it becomes possible not only to imitate his method of bricolage but also to quote its results. Just as Michelangelo demonstrated his creativity and individuality by culling from the five orders and reassembling the parts into a new modern order, so too D’Aviler’s texts suggests that good modern architects mined his architecture and remade it in their own unique

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751 On Michelangelo’s as the model of good invention in D’Aviler’s text, see Köhler, “Architecture ist di Kunst,” 128-9.
752 D’Aviler, Cours, 270.
753 Ibid., 288
754 Ibid., 292.
compositions. It is by historicizing Michelangelo through the act of citing his distinctive idiom, that seicento architectural bricolage here differs from its cinquecento forerunner.

The French culture of appropriating Michelangelo that is both acknowledged and praised in D’Aviler’s expanded Vignola is rarely discussed from a positive perspective (recall, for example, Félibien’s derisive christening of those who quoted Buonarroti as “monkeys.”) Yet by the end of the cinquecento and throughout the seicento, Michelangelo’s architecture, along with that of the ancients, had become an essential model in the course of study undertaken by any architect working in or visiting Rome.

Various sources suggest that within Bernini’s circle, the Campidoglio was considered the most edifying of Michelangelo’s works for the novice architect. When Bernini was asked by Nicodemus Tessin the Younger, the Swedish architect who studied in Italy from 1673-77, which architectural models were best to follow, he recommended that architects look to Michelangelo’s niches, doors and windows at the Capitoline.⁷⁵⁵ When a neophyte Filippo Juvarra moved to Rome in 1702, Bernini’s pupil, Carlo Fontana, advised him to study Michelangelo’s Palazzo dei Conservatori.⁷⁵⁶ The fruits of Bernini’s own study of this site were even laid bare in Chantelou’s diary, when Mattia de Rossi apparently disclosed to his French audience that Michelangelo’s colossal order at the Palazzo dei Conservatori was the source for Bernini’s two-story order in designs for the Louvre.⁷⁵⁷ While Chantelou’s response to this revelation cast Bernini’s quotation in a problematic light, it is unlikely that either de Rossi or Bernini shared their hosts’ disparaging attitude.

⁷⁵⁷ Chantelou, Diary, 133; idem, Journal, 129 (20 August).
towards Michelangelo’s imitators. Nonetheless, in the wake of aspersions cast upon those seeking to imitate the cinquecento master, it is plausible that Bernini cited Michelangelo with both purpose and apprehension.

Though Bernini did not theorize his citation of Michelangelo at the Louvre (or at any other site), his contemporary, Borromini, explicitly addressed the practice of architectural quotation and the anxiety associated with the accusation of copying that underlies it. At the outset of his *Opus architectonicum* (written in 1647 though not published until 1720), Borromini invokes Michelangelo’s dictum that “he who follows others never surpasses them” and claims that “he did not take up this profession with the goal of being merely a copyist.” This does not mean, however, that he avoided citing Buonarroti. On the contrary, later in his text he highlighted his debt to the master with the purpose of demonstrating how to reconcile repetition and originality. In a discussion of his work at the Lateran, Borromini pointed to his appropriation of Michelangelo’s colossal order from the Palazzo del Campidoglio. Yet, contemptuous of copyists, he was careful to note that since the colossal order had never been employed by anyone for the decoration of an interior loggia, his reprise of Michelangelo’s order was innovative. This kind of claim was only possible in the wake of Buonarroti’s authorship of an idiosyncratic vocabulary of architectural ornament. And Borromini’s emphasis on the novel re-contextualization of a much-recognized motif is fundamental to appreciating the fine line between similarity and difference attending quotation. The borrower’s aim is to

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759 Ibid., 163: “Non ci è cosa in questa fabrica della quale io resti maggiormente sodisfatto che dell’havere con un ordine solo di pilastri abraciata tutte le loggie, che se bene fu inventato tal modo da Michel’Angelo nel Palazzo del Campidoglio, tuttavia non è stato praticato da alc(un)io nelle loggie.”
present what is familiar in a new light. Borromini’s prescriptions add another dimension to the discussion of bricolage as originality in early modern architectural practice. If the popularity of Vignola suggests that the method of judiciously culling and recombining ornament to create new wholes continued into the seicento with a newly historicist perspective, Borromini’s attitude suggests that even the citation of one of Michelangelo’s architectural parts, rather than the recombination of many, can be understood as an act of transformation.

Borromini’s appraisal of transformative citation, as well as his implicit acknowledgment of the danger associated with recycling motifs, resonated across the arts in the seicento. As Loh and Cropper have shown with regard to the painting and poetry, although the imitative practices of artists/poets in the sixteenth- and seventeenth-centuries were based on the same principles, expectations changed in the latter era. Whereas it was possible to create openly derivative works in the cinquecento without being impugned for plagiarism, in the subsequent century unabashed appropriations became polemical and the subject of new discussions about imitation and originality, tradition and novelty. The poet Giambattista Marino, for example, justified his own overt reuse of literary tropes and motifs, by way of the metaphor of architectural bricolage; comparing his own novel juxtapositions of borrowed material in writing to the despoiling of buildings, he stated that if he pilfered columns, cornices and statues, he arranged them in fresh ways. Although Marino’s claim gives new relevance to an established strategy for architectural imitation, it is Poussin’s defence of Domenichino’s purported “theft” of Agostino Carracci’s conceit for his own Last Communion of St. Jerome, in which he

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760 Loh, “New and Improved”; idem, Titian Remade; Cropper, Domenichino Affair.
761 On Marino’s use of this architectural metaphor, see Cropper, Domenichino Affair, 140. On marinist invention, more broadly, see ibid., 135-55; Loh, Titian Remade, 137-48.
averred that “novelty in painting does not principally exist in a subject never seen, but in
good and new disposition and expression, and in this way the subject from being ordinary
and old becomes special and new,”
that more closely resonates with Borromini’s
statement about appropriation and originality.
It is against this context that Bernini’s
repetition of Michelangelo’s ornament, as much as that of Borromini, should be
understood.

Bernini’s Bricolage

Bernini’s earliest architectural commission outside Saint Peter’s marks the origins
of a virtually lifelong practice of repeating, reassembling and recontextualizing
Michelangelo. In 1624, Urban VIII commissioned the untried architect to refurbish the
medieval church of Santa Bibiana with a new porticoed façade and altar decoration.
It is likely that the pope and his architect saw the façade project, in particular, as a repeat
performance of the commission that inaugurated Michelangelo’s own architectural career
a century earlier: the unrealized façade of San Lorenzo in Florence designed upon the
request of Leo X.

762 For Poussin’s defence of Domenichino, see Cropper, *Domenichino Affair*, 4-5, 117-9.
763 Also relevant here is the seventeenth-century poet/theorist Emanuele Tesauro’s contention that “true
imitation does not mean usurping metaphors and witty expressions exactly as you hear or read them; that
way you would not be praised as an imitator but blamed as a thief.” As cited with discussion in Loh, *Titian
Remade*, 62.
764 On the history of this church, the political-religious aims of Urban VIII’s initial patronage (which was
eventually taken up by Marcello Sacchetti, fellow Florentine and friend of the pope) and Bernini’s
architectural contribution, see Carlo Baggio, Renato Ramina and Paolo Zampa, “Considerazioni sulla
Marder, *Bernini and the Art of Architecture*, 47-57. For a discussion of Bernini’s commissions within the
context of the multi-media restoration of Santa Bibiana, see Vitaliano Tiberia, *Gian Lorenzo Bernini,
765 In 1515, Leo X visited Florence and decided to hold a competition for the San Lorenzo façade. Though
Michelangelo was among the competitors (including Antonio and Giuliano da Sangallo, Jacopo Sansovino,
Baccio d’Agnolo and Raphael), he seems to have been initially entrusted only with the sculptural decoration
of the façade, which, in turn, was to be designed by Jacopo Sansovino. But by the fall of 1516, Leo X
two projects, Bernini’s façade evokes a formal affiliation with Michelangelo’s Florentine example [figs. 134 and 135]. Santa Bibiana’s semi-autonomous palace-style porch, its two-story elevation with an emphasis on the central bay and its monumental attic extending the width of the building between the first and second story, are indebted typologically to Michelangelo’s precedent as it was disseminated throughout Rome by Buonarroti’s followers in the late cinquecento and well into the early seicento. Though many times removed from Michelangelo’s original and reinterpreted through Bernini’s experience of other Roman iterations of Buonarroti’s model, particularly San Luigi dei Francesi, Bernini’s façade is nonetheless a thoughtful rethinking of his predecessor’s vocabulary.

In the Santa Bibiana façade, Bernini transforms Michelangelo’s plastic, highly sculptural conception of ornament, into ornament that engages in a spatial play of mass and volume. He achieves this effect by looking to Michelangelo’s later Roman architectural idiom, which emphasizes layering and recession. While Buonarroti’s San Lorenzo façade created relief by means of its heavy the entablature, pilasters and almost

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766 The formal relationship between the two façades has been noted by Cesare Brandi, *L’Attività Giovanile di Gian Lorenzo Bernini: appunti tratti dalle lezioni* (Rome: Bulzoni, 1969), 105; Baggio, Ramina and Zampa, “Considerazioni,” 64; Marder, *Bernini and the Art of Architecture*, 54. Scholars have also noted the façade resembles Giovanni Battista Soria’s San Gregorio al Celio, see M. and M. Fagiolo dell’Arco, *Bernini*, 126, 238, and Giacomo della Porta’s Oratorio del Santissimo Crocifisso, see Marder, *Bernini and the Art of Architecture*, 54.

767 Baggio, Ramina and Zampa, “Considerazioni,” 64; Marder, *Bernini and the Art of Architecture*, 57.

768 Baggio, Ramina and Zampa, “Considerazioni,” 64.
freestanding columns, Gianlorenzo created a greater illusion of depth through superimposition and a lively interplay of projecting and receding planes that paraphrases Michelangelo’s layering of columns at the Palazzo Farnese [figs. 136 and 137].

Where Buonarroti attempted to diminish the heavy horizontality of his façade by setting a pediment atop entablature of the central bay, Bernini conceived of a means to further activate the center with pilasters that rise beyond the continuous entablature and support a double broken pediment high above it. This broken pediment is, in turn, an allusion to the recessed central window of the Palazzo dei Conservatori [figs. 138 and 139], thought in the eighteenth-century to be by Giacomo Del Duca, one of Michelangelo’s assistants and followers. Though it is not clear whether seicento architects saw this window as the work of Buonarroti or his imitators, Bernini’s rethinking of its essential form reveals his desire to align himself with Buonarroti’s lineage. By marryng the broad outlines Michelangelo’s classicizing Florentine façade with hallmarks of his Roman, often unorthodox ornament, Bernini subtly unites his predecessor’s early, more classically bound architecture with his later unorthodoxies.

If Bernini’s Santa Bibiana façade is ultimately not transparent bricolage, but an allusive paraphrase of his predecessor’s example, his ornamentation of the principal

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769 Pane, Bernini architetto, 13, first noted Bernini’s use of the layered columns from Palazzo Farnese.
770 A few years after creating the Santa Bibiana façade, Bernini employed a similar broken and recessed pediment on his façade for the now destroyed chapel of the Re Magi at the Propaganda Fide and the decoration of the benediction loggia on the façade of the Palazzo Quirinale, both also commissioned by Urban. Recalling the upper story of Santa Bibiana, the focal point of the façade is a monumental portico with a massive broken pediment supported by receding Doric columns. However sober Bernini’s choice of architectural order or minimal his execution in either project, his breach of classical rules broadly signals a desired affinity with Michelangelo. On the Re Magi façade and the history of this commission, see Marder, Bernini and the Art of Architecture, 63-7; Bösel and Frommel eds., Borromini e l’universo barocco, 2;279-305; Burbau, Rivalità, 232-7. On the Benediction Loggia of the Palazzo Quirinale and the evidence for its attribution to Bernini, see Borsi, Bernini architetto (Milan: Electa, 1980), 306-7.
771 The window is frequently attributed to Giacomo del Duca. Del Duca assisted Michelangelo with the Porta Pia, work at St. Peter’s, the Campidoglio, Cappella Sforza and San Giovanni dei Fiorentini – many of which remained unfinished at the time of Buonarroti’s death. On Del Duca’s “michelangiolosmo,” see Sandro Benedetti, Giacomo del Duca e l’architettura del Cinquecento (Rome: Officina, 1973), 17-76.
entrance to the church and tabernacle on the main altar declare the novice architect’s taste for Michelangelo’s distinctive repertoire as a source to be mined and creatively reassembled [fig. 140]. Just inside the portico of Santa Bibiana Bernini framed the central passage into the nave with motifs culled from columns, windows and door surrounds at the Palazzo dei Conservatori. Bernini’s debt to Michelangelo is most conspicuous, however, in the grimacing faces on the grotesque volutes flanking the inner frame. Supporting impost blocks and terminating in a fan pattern, this motif is a reference to a distinctive window inside the Conservatori courtyard [figs. 141 and 142]. Bernini’s invention of different grimacing faces for each volute follows the example of Michelangelo’s array of grotesque visages adorning the Ionic capitals throughout the Capitoline palace, the motif of which was circulated in a popular print of 1619 by Francesco Villamena. Vague echoes of Buonarroti’s window and door surrounds at the Conservatori are also present in the graphic quality of Gianlorenzo’s doorframe, which also doubles as lintel, on top of which Bernini places a broken pediment framing his own grotesque cartouche [figs. 143 and 144].

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772 While numerous scholars have suggested Michelangelo’s Capitoline architecture loosely inspired Bernini’s use of large and small orders on the façade of Santa Bibiana, none have considered the influence of the Capitoline on other aspects of this building.

773 In early modern theory, grotteschi were considered emblems of artistic license and invention, which makes Bernini’s play with grotesques yet another indication of his desire to assert his originality. On Renaissance notions of the grotesque as an exercise of pure fantasy or imagination and the expression of inspired genius, see Summers, Michelangelo, 103-63; idem, “The Archaeology of the Modern Grotesque,” in Modern Art and the Grotesque, ed. Frances S. Connelly (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 20-46. Though Summers’ discussion of monstrous forms focuses on disegno and fantasia, Payne, “Mescolare, Composti and Monsters,” demonstrates that the metaphor of the grotesque was also used in discussions of architectural bricolage. The two definitions collide in Bernini’s doorframe. On Villamena’s print of Michelangelo’s Ionic column capital, which was included in various editions of Vignola’s Regola from 1648 onward, see Harmen Thies, Michelangelo, das Kapitol (Munich: Bruckmann, 1982), 116; Bösel and Frommel eds., Borromini e l’universo barocco, 2:18.

774 I am grateful to Steven Ostrow who opened my eyes to Bernini’s grotesques during a visit to Santa Bibiana and Santa Prassede.
While Bernini’s doorframe is a pastiche of Michelangelo’s Capitoline ornament, his vocabulary for the altar tabernacle looks to Buonarroti’s idiom at St. Peter’s. The aedicula surrounding Bernini’s statue of the martyr saint [fig. 145] cites his predecessor’s window on the second story on the south exterior of St. Peter’s [fig. 146]. The figuration on the Ionic capitals [fig. 147], the grotesque keystone above the arch [fig. 148] and the cartouche at the center of the entablature [fig. 149] that decorate Bernini’s tabernacle mimic the smallest ornamental details of his precedent. Yet where Michelangelo embellished each with ghoulish masks, Gianlorenzo conceived of a triad of cherubs appropriate to the sacred setting. Bernini’s use of cherubs identifies his altar niche not only as a rethinking of Michelangelo stock repertoire but also as a reflection upon Maderno’s own citation of Buonarroti, since Maderno had already remade the same window type on the second story of St. Peter’s façade with his own subtle changes to his predecessor’s grotesques [figs. 150 and 151]. The angel decorating Gianlorenzo’s Ionic capitals, in particular, looks directly to Maderno’s capitals on the first story of St. Peter’s [fig. 152] which, in turn, are reinventions of Michelangelo’s much-admired Capitoline precedent.

The Ionic capital with volutes connected by a garland and surmounted by a grotesque head was invented by Michelangelo for the Palazzo dei Conservatori [fig. 153] and appropriated by Roman architects who demonstrated their own capacity for invention by remaking Michelangelo’s grotesque element with all manner of hybrid flora, fauna and expressive visages. According to Herrera’s unpublished life of Urban VIII,

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775 For a brief survey of uses in religious and secular contexts, see Börje Magnusson, “Giovanni Maggi Romano on Architecture: A Treatise of 1614,” in Docto Peregrino: Roman Studies in Honour of Torgil Magnusson, eds. Thomas Hall, Börje Magnusson and Carl Nylander (Rome: Istituto Svedese di studi
Maderno’s angelic version of this Ionic capital was not the architect’s invention; rather, it was conceived by the pope (while still a cardinal) in the interest of religious decorum. The biographer claims that during Maffeo’s involvement in the planning of the façade decoration of St. Peter’s the future pope criticized Maderno’s original appropriation of Michelangelo’s Ionic capital, for whose grotesque face he substituted an acanthus flower. In the cardinal’s view, Maderno’s capital was inappropriate not only because it employed the flower of the Corinthian order for the Ionic, but also because a cherub was better suited to the religious context. When the cardinal asked Maderno “with what rule did he make that capital” the architect replied that he “had taken it from that master who he greatly admired, that is Michelangelo at the Palazzo di Campidoglio, but in the place of a mask he made a flower.” The cardinal replied that Maderno “had erred, because the [acanthus] belongs exclusively to the Corinthian order and that in exchange for a mask, since it was a church, he could have made a cherub.” Whether the cherub-adorned Ionic capitals at St. Peter’s were conceived by Maderno or Maffeo Barberini, Bernini’s take on this angelic model at Santa Bibiana and elsewhere attends creatively to the decorum demanded by his sacred context. And though Maderno was the first to use it at St. Peter’s, within the context of Santa Bibiana, a church otherwise decorated with

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776 The passage is from an excerpt of Herrera’s unpublished Vita of Urban VIII as cited in Pastor, History of the Popes, 26:476: “Portò una volta Carlo Maderno un modello di un pezzo di colonna col capitello che doveva farsi nella facciata di San Pietro, il quale, mostrando di essere di ordine Ionico per le volute, haveva nel mezzo il fiore dell’acanto che appartiene solo all’ordine Corintio. Dimandò il card. Barberino con che regola haveva fatta quel capitello. Rispose Carlo che l’haveva cavato da quel maestro ch’egli tanto stimava, cioè da Michelangelo nel palazzo di Campidoglio, ma che in luogo di maschera haveva fatto il fiore. Riplicò il cardinale che haveva fatto male, perché il fiore è solo dell’ordine Corintio, e che in cambio di maschera, per esser chiesa, si poteva fare un cherubino e si fece in alcune; in altre volsero porre il fiore.”

777 In 1634-36, Bernini revisited Michelangelo’s Ionic capital in the four apsidal columns of his high altar tabernacle for San Paolo Maggiore in Bologna. Each column is accented with a different angelic face. On the architectural setting for the San Paolo altar, see Lavin, Bernini and the Unity, 63-5; Marder, Bernini and the Art of Architecture, 67-9.
spoliated Corinthian and Composite ancient capitals, Bernini’s angel-clad capital explicitly reframes Michelangelo’s/Maderno’s modern Ionic order as a licit, new Christian successor to the antique [fig. 154].

It was around the same time Bernini was fashioning this initial expression of allegiance to Michelangelo’s unorthodox ornament and Maderno’s remakes of it that Teofilo Gallaccini’s Degli errori degli architetti was circulating in the Barberini court. Dedicated to Urban’s physician, Giulio Mancini, and apparently read aloud to the pope and his entourage,778 among whom we might reasonably include Bernini, the text censured the kind of ornament that the novice architect was employing in the martyr church. While Gallaccini condemned broken pediments and “trite” and “ignoble” ornament among the most egregious architectural errors followers of Michelangelo could make, Bernini’s work at Santa Bibiana advocates Michelangelo’s unorthodoxies and the licit reapplication of his transgressions by a new generation of architects. While we might see the altar decoration, with its cherubim and unbroken entablature as a partial concession to the kind of decorum demanded by Gallaccini, the ornamental idiom used throughout Bernini’s additions to the church nonetheless strays from the strict adherence to rules espoused by the writer. Indeed, in the 1767 published edition of the text, the passage following Gallaccini’s tirade against imitators of Michelangelo’s broken pediment, which, he claims, the architect “used once and by accident” and thus “cannot, nor should be used as a rule for good practice,” includes illustrations of bad pediments that might easily have been furnished by Santa Bibiana [fig. 155].

778 Payne, “Architectural Criticism, Science, and Visual Eloquence,” 164n34, notes that at the outset of the manuscript Gallaccini claims that in 1625 the work was presented to Urban and read aloud to the pope by Giulio Mancini. According to an entry in the diary of Alexander VII, a copy of the text was also presented to the Chigi pope on 26 September 1665, see Krautheimer and Jones, “Diary of Alexander VII,” 224, no. 887.
Bernini’s first church was not an isolated venture into unorthodoxy, for even in the few commissions subsequently undertaken by Bernini at Urban’s behest he repeatedly mined and reassembled Michelangelo’s vocabulary, conferring a kind of papal-sanctioned legitimacy on a fraught architectural legacy. When Bernini was appointed architect of the Barberini Palace upon Maderno’s death in 1629, only a month into construction, he continued to follow the latter’s plans relatively faithfully, particularly on the exterior where his most significant alterations were limited to ornament.

Maderno’s own plans for decoration are illustrated in Borromini’s drawing of the façade [fig. 156], wherein the arcaded central section is framed by three-story elevations with windows and an intermediate bay that looks directly to Michelangelo’s decoration on the exterior of St. Peter’s [fig. 157]. Bernini, together with his assistant and likely collaborator, Borromini, maintained this latter aspect of Maderno’s design and made the central arcaded portion more michelangesque by including references to Buonarroti’s

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779 Though most of the construction of Palazzo Barberini was carried out after Maderno’s death, scholars generally agree that Bernini imposed few major structural changes to his predecessor’s plan. It has been more difficult, however, to distinguish Borromini’s role in the final appearance of the palace from that of Bernini. Indeed, the extent of each architect’s contribution to the structure and ornament of the building was the topic of conflicting opinion throughout the seicento. For discussions of the genesis of the Palazzo Barberini designs, from Maderno’s through Bernini’s architectural tenure on the site, and the seicento debates about authorship, see Blunt “The Palazzo Barberini: The Contributions of Maderno, Bernini and Pietro da Cortona,” JWCI 21 (1958): 256-80; Hibbard, Carlo Maderno, 80-84, 222-30; Portoghesi, Rome of Borromini, 32-6; Patricia Waddy, Seventeenth-century Roman palaces: Use and the Art of the Plan (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1990), 173-271; Burbaum, Rivalitàt, 84-108; Laura Caterina Cherubini, “La facciata di palazzo Barberini,” in Strinati and Bernardini, eds., Gian Lorenzo Bernini: regista, 19-26; Christoph Luitpold Frommel, “Palazzo Barberini e la nascita del barocco,” in Bonfait and Coliva, eds., Bernini dai Borghese, 93-103.

780 This highly resolved drawing at Windsor Castle illustrates what was likely Maderno’s final scheme for the western façade of the Barberini Palace. Attributed to Borromini while under Maderno’s direction, the third floor is articulated with a simple Doric pilaster and an almost negligible molding separating the pilaster capital from the roof. Since the rest of the façade decorations in this drawing correspond closely to what was ultimately executed, scholars have reasonably assumed that change was stimulated by Bernini. On the drawing, see Thelen, Francesco Borromini. Die Handzeichnungen, 1:54-78, 95-7; Blunt, “The Palazzo Barberini”, 274; Bösel and Frommel eds., Borromini e l’universo barocco, 2:98-9. On Maderno’s designs for the façade, see Hibbard, Carlo Maderno, 81-83, 223-225; Blunt “The Palazzo Barberini,” 268-71, 274-80.
ornament from the interior courtyard at the Palazzo Farnese [fig. 158]. On the third story of the façade, where Maderno had envisioned a single Doric pilaster, Gianlorenzo and Francesco Borromini quoted Michelangelo’s tripartite Corinthian pilasters from the third story of the Farnese inner court [figs. 159 and 160]. The creativity of their self-conscious citation of Buonarroti’s example was further announced by way of the grotesques that enliven the architrave [figs. 161 and 162]. Where Michelangelo had carved a continuous row of grimacing faces, Bernini and Borromini placed one large mask and above the Corinthian capitals and pairs of smaller masks in the molding thus re-imagining their predecessor’s rhythmic arrangement.

The collaboration between Bernini and Borromini at Palazzo Barberini, particularly vis-à-vis their engagement with Michelangelo, was not without a competitive edge. Two windows executed by Borromini and Bernini, respectively, further suggest that Buonarroti’s vocabulary furnished the basis for an on-site dialogue with the cinquecento master and with each other. Scholars generally agree that the window on the third story of the principal façade [fig. 163], a dynamic interpretation of Michelangelo’s distinctive shell-window types at St. Peter’s [figs. 164 and 165], is by Borromini. Just as Maderno had appropriated and re-imagined this motif for his windows on the façade of St. Peter’s [fig. 166], so too Borromini mined the possibilities of bricolage. His window takes the shell with triglyph and the dentils, which are separate elements in Michelangelo’s example, and arranges them in a new and dynamic formal relationship.

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781 The affinity between the ornament of the third story of Palazzo Barberini and that of the interior courtyard of Palazzo Farnese was noted by Askew, “The Relation of Bernini’s Architecture,” 42; M. and M. Fagiolo dell’Arco, Bernini, 129, 273, and its implications developed by Thoenes, “Bernini architetto tra Palladio e Michelangelo,” 115, 122.
782 Askew, “The Relation of Bernini’s Architecture,” 42.
783 On the relationship between Borromini’s window and the Petrine windows of Michelangelo and Maderno, see Portoghesi, Rome of Borromini, 34-5; Blunt, Borromini, 31-4.
Abandoning Buonarroti’s broken pediment, Borromini capped his shell motif with a curved and winged pediment that flares outward at the lateral ends. The sweeping movement is echoed in the festoons, borrowed from Maderno’s own take on Michelangelo’s windows, which Borromini subsequently loops through canted “ear-shaped” volutes. The whole is a composite that creates new transgressions out of Michelangelo’s and Maderno’s old heterodoxies.

Bernini’s own window frame on the piano nobile of the garden façade, if a less animated version of Michelangelo’s prototype, engages in a similar act of quotation and reassemblage [fig. 167]. Frommel has suggested that this window dates to 1632, after Borromini decided to quit working as Bernini’s assistant and seek patronage as an independent architect. If this date is correct, then unlike the collaborative façade and even the door frames created inside the palace, where, as Sabine Burbaum recently argued, Borromini oversaw the architectural problems and Bernini contributed figurative elements, this window might be understood as Gianlorenzo’s challenge to his former assistant’s deft manipulation of Michelangelo’s architectural surrounds. Bernini’s

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785 Until recently, scholars have attributed this window to Borromini, an identification that seems to rest on a 1702 inscription on an engraving of the window from Domenico de Rossi’s *Studio d’architettura civile*, 1:50. While distinguishing Bernini’s hand from that of Borromini at Palazzo Barberini is difficult, Christoph Frommel has convincingly argued that this window is Bernini’s design, see Frommel, “Palazzo Barberini,” 102.
786 Frommel, “Palazzo Barberini,” 102.
787 Burbaum’s meticulous re-examination of the longstanding debate over authorship, particularly as it pertains to the decoration of the doorframes on the interior of Palazzo Barberini, draws attention to the creative dialogue between Bernini and Borromini. She imagines a number of instances where Borromini created architectural drawings based on sketchily stated instructions from Bernini. Borromini, in turn, may have tried to translate the sculptor’s decorative instructions into his own architectural language. On other occasions, Borromini seems to have worked with greater freedom of design. Though her distinction between Borromini as contributor of the purely architectural components and Bernini as supplier of the sculptural details is perhaps too strict, her analysis makes evident both architects’ fertile engagement with Buonarroti’s vocabulary. See Burbaum, *Rivalità*, 95-102.
citation of the shell and triglyph motif and the festoons invites comparison with Borromini’s iteration. However close Bernini’s shell arrangement is to that of the latter, his festoons resist the oscillating motion of Borromini’s projecting ear shaped volutes. Rather, he takes the sweeping volutes and ear forms and flattens them against the wall, rendering the motif more graphic than plastic (as was appropriate to the corner site). The very lintel of this window appears to be bracketed by these graphic volute and ear forms, the tops of which, as Frommel notes, rise above the lintel in order to support the segmented pediment (even though they do not actually touch it – it is implied). As with the volutes, so too with the pediment Bernini eschews Borromini’s undulating conception. Whereas the latter employed the pediment as if it were a niche for the shell, the former conceived of the shell as another a-tectonic support for a double-pediment, segmented below and triangulated on top. This particular pairing of these two particular forms was borrowed directly from the pediment on Michelangelo’s doorway into the Capitoline courtyard, where Buonarroti also employed volutes between the lintel and pediment (albeit oriented differently) [fig. 168]. Bernini’s window thus mines the ornamental vocabulary of both Michelangelo and Borromini, in order to engage in a clever and self-aware play with tectonic logic. It also announces, in particular, a competitive response towards his contemporary and soon to be rival.

In their treatment of ornament at the Palazzo Barberini, Bernini and Borromini might be described as fraternal twins, born, as it were, of the same father. Both look to

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788 The graphic or illustrated quality of this window is discussed by Shawe-Taylor, “Walls Have Ears,” 32, 35, who developed his reading from cues offered by Hempel’s discussion of Borromini’s ornament. While Hempel and Shawe-Taylor see this graphic quality as characteristic of Borromini’s later style, the recent reattribution of this window to Bernini suggests that Borromini’s later graphic ornament is a response to or development from his earlier dialogue with Bernini at Palazzo Barberini. See Burbaum, Rivalität, 101, recognizes a similar flattening of Borromini’s plastic ear shaped volutes in Bernini’s preparatory drawing for another window on the garden façade.

789 Frommel, “Palazzo Barberini,” 102.
Michelangelo’s vocabulary as a kind of architectural spolia to be mined and assembled into new composites, but the results of their bricolage reveal different kinds of identification with their predecessor’s radical idiom. It has been commonplace to suggest that Bernini’s ornament, exemplified by the less dynamic re-conception of Michelangelo’s window type here, betrays a caution that stands in contrast to Borromini’s less conventional, animated forms. However unanimated Bernini’s form, he, like Borromini, creatively re-imagines Michelangelo’s novelties: whereas Borromini engaged in bravura plays with kinetic disposition and interconnectivity of parts, Bernini subverted tectonic expectations, making ornament structure and structure ornament (a mode of operating often associated by scholars with Borromini).

From 1632 to 1634, concurrent with his window at Palazzo Barberini and probably independent of Borromini’s technical guidance, Gianlorenzo executed a doorframe for the chapel of the Crucifix at St. Peter’s [fig. 169] (still extant but best

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790 For a characteristic claim about Bernini’s lack of dynamism as an expression of his conservativism, see, for example, Frommel, “Palazzo Barberini,” 102: “Già nel progetto [Bernini] avvicinò la facciata ancora di più ai prototipi antichi, aprendo anche le campate laterali in archi e con ciò semplificandola e dedinamizzandola considerevolmente. Nella realizzazione questa tendenza berniniana ad unificare, ma anche a diminuire il dinamismo del crescendo sono ancora più ovvie, mentre Borromini nei suoi primi progetti autonomi procederebbe in modo più dinamico e meno antichizzante.” Shawe-Taylor, “Walls Have Ears,” 33, similarly points to the conventional quality of Bernini’s window and door frames by characterizing them as “correct.”

791 It should be noted that it is Borromini who is typically regarded by scholars as an architect who plays with tectonics. Bernini’s play with structure here is likely informed by observing and working alongside Borromini. On Borromini’s tectonics, see especially Portoghesi, Rome of Borromini, 373-92; Blunt, Borromini, 26-34.

792 The attribution to Bernini is based on the contract for the chapel door, which is signed in his hand, see Oskar Pollack, Die Kunstätigkeit unter Urban VIII, vol. II. Die Peterskirche in Rom (Vienna: B. Filser, 1931), 200, as well as the ascription to Bernini in the engraving of the door from de Rossi’s Studio d’architettura civile, 1:21. On Bernini’s door and the decoration of the Chapel of the Crucifix, see Rice, Altars and Altarpieces, 182-6. The attribution has recently been challenged by Marcello Fagiolo, who posits that the inverted volutes (a variation on which was used in the superstructure of the Baldacchino) point to Borromini’s possible collaboration in Bernini’s design. Fagiolo, “Introduzione alla ‘toscanità’ di Bernini,” xiv-xv. However, given the competitive tenor of Bernini contemporary window frame at Palazzo Barberini (also a recent attribution that has yet to be contested), I would suggest that if this door has echoes of Borromini those reverberations represent Bernini’s response to the later rather than his active participation.
seen in an engraving) that is a composite of the distinctive tapered pilasters from Buonarroti’s doors at the Palazzo Conservatori [fig. 170].\textsuperscript{793} the volutes from the Porta Pia [fig. 171].\textsuperscript{794} here inverted and framing the shell motif echoing that on the exterior windows of S. Peter’s [fig. 172]. Within the context of St. Peter’s, where Maderno had similarly remade Michelangelo’s shell model in his own windows, Bernini’s innovative bricolage must be further understood as an assertion of allegiance and of succession.

Indeed, the kinship among Michelangelo, Maderno and Bernini’s door and window vocabulary at St. Peter’s was articulated by Domenico de’ Rossi who, at the outset of the settecento, illustrated Gianlorenzo’s doorframe in the first volume of the \textit{Studio d’architettura civile} immediately following engravings of his two predecessor’s shell windows at St. Peter’s [\textit{figs. 173, 174 and 175}].\textsuperscript{795}

While the pontificate of Innocent X did not offer Bernini any architectural commissions, under Pope Alexander VII Gianlorenzo designed numerous buildings that continued to showcase his citations of Buonarroti. In his first project for Bernini outside St. Peter’s, Alexander called on the architect to complete the unfinished Porta del Popolo, originally commissioned by Pius IV and popularly ascribed to Michelangelo throughout the seventeenth century.\textsuperscript{796} According to two “before and after” drawings of the gate in

\textsuperscript{793} D’Aviler observes, in particular, that the distinctive pilasters from Michelangelo’s Capitoline windows and doors were cited in the Hotel d’Effiat in Paris. See D’Aviler, \textit{Cours}, 288.

\textsuperscript{794} Two recent studies on the role of the architect-designer, Bernardo Buontalenti, as vehicle for the transmission of michelangesque ideas to Rome have proposed that Bernini’s use of the inverted volutes is indebted to Buontalenti’s repertoire, particularly his doorframe for the Uffizi in Florence. But given the Petrine context, coupled with Bernini’s apparent desire to recall and remake Michelangelo, the Porta Pia inverted volutes seem the more likely source for the motif on the Cappella del Crocifisso door. See Corinna Vasić Vatovec, “Buontalenti e Bernini: due temi per un’ipotesi di ricerca,” in Spagnesi and Fagiolo, eds., \textit{Gian Lorenzo Bernini architetto}, 1:149-57; Fagiolo, “Introduzione alla ‘toscanità’ di Bernini,” xiv-xviii.

\textsuperscript{795} De Rossi, \textit{Studio}, 1:18-21.

\textsuperscript{796} Though the original gate is now generally ascribed to Nanni di Baccio Bigio, numerous seventeenth-century texts perpetuated the attribution to Michelangelo. For example, the gate is always attributed to Michelangelo in the michelangelized versions of Vignola’s \textit{Regola} as well as in select seicento Roman guidebooks. On Bigio’s rapport with Michelangelo, see Rudolf Wittkower, “Nanni di Baccio Bigio and
the Chigi archives [figs. 176 and 177], only the uppermost register needed completing. Bernini finished these by turning to his predecessor’s distinctive repertoire. On the inner gate, Bernini quoted the broken volutes and garland supporting Pius’s inscription on the Porta Pia, which he reused to cradle Alexander’s family emblem, the Chigi monti [figs. 178 and 179]. Bernini crowned the outer gate [fig. 180], in turn, with the distinctive orb and scroll motif that Michelangelo employed on his gate – but significantly rethought as a running cornice of sorts. Bernini’s repetition of the Porta Pia motifs in this new context might be understood as a respectful acknowledgement of the gate’s original author by means of allusions to Michelangelo’s completed gate at Porta Pia. Though the Porta del Popolo is no longer ascribed to Michelangelo, Bernini’s contemporaries believed that the seicento architect worked from Buonarroti’s designs to which he added his own creative flourishes. According to the biographer of Queen Christina of Sweden, “The Porta del Popolo, by order of the pope, had been nobly completed by Bernini according to Michelangelo’s old design, with various embellishments from the imagination (ingegno) of the same Cavaliere.” Though it is unclear whether the writer recognized that Bernini’s attic ornaments were the product of mixing the Porta Pia motifs, his stress is on the originality of the inheriting architect’s contribution. Similarly, in D’Aviler’s French re-edition of Vignola, specific reference is made to Bernini’s


797 These drawings [Biblioteca Vaticana, Chigi P VII 10 f. 24 and Biblioteca Vaticana, Chigi P VII 10 f. 25] were made by Felice della Greca, likely in preparation for an engraving, see Gramiccia, Bernini in Vaticano, 185-7.

798 The affinity between Bernini’s volute-garland motif and that at the Porta Pia has been observed by M. and M. Fagiolo dell’Arco, Bernini, 70, 223; Thoenes, “Bernini architetto tra Palladio e Michelangelo,” 122.

799 “La Porta del Popolo per ordine del papa era già dal cavalier Bernino stata nobilmente compiuta su l’antico disegno di Michel Angelo Buonarrot, con alcuni abbellimenti propri dell’ingegno del medesimo Cavaliere.” From Gualdo Prioriato, Historia della sacra real maesta di Christina, as cited in Montanari, “Bernini e Cristina di Svezia,” 335. There is no evidence that Michelangelo created drawings for this gate, thus the issue of whether or not Bernini knew of his predecessor’s intentions must remain a moot point.
innovative reworking of this gate: “the arms and cornucopia set on a brick field are of white marble, artistically worked after the model of Michelangelo.” This description also draws attention to another form of citation: Bernini’s material allusion to the brick and marble combination at Porta Pia.

Bernini’s michelangesque intervention at the Porta del Popolo should also be understood in conjunction with his designs, only partially executed, to renovate the façade of Santa Maria del Popolo. According to a workshop drawing of the façade [fig. 181], Bernini intended to break the large volutes flanking the upper central bay of the church into smaller volutes, mimicking those on the gate. Though the rest of Bernini’s design was not implemented, the workshop drawing indicates that the whole façade was conceived as a surface for re-composing Michelangelo’s stock motifs: the arrangement of square window above pedimented doors in the outer bays repeats the composition of the Porta Pia, the articulation of small and colossal orders of pilasters mimics the Palazzo dei Conservatori and the tripled colossal orders framing the entrance look to the Palazzo Farnese.

In 1661 Alexander commissioned Bernini to apply his unrealized design for the façade of Santa Maria del Popolo to the church of San Galloro in Ariccia [fig. 182].

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800 “Les Armes & les Cornets d’abondance posez sur un champ de brique sont de marbre blanc, artistement travaillez d’aprè le modelle de Michel-Ange.” D’Aviler, Cours, 268.
801 Habel has demonstrated that Bernini’s transformations of the Porta del Popolo and the façade of Santa Maria del Popolo marked the modest beginnings of a monumental transformation of the spatial, formal and political dynamics of Piazza del Popolo, see Habel, Urban Development of Rome, 78-83. On Bernini’s renovations to the façade of Santa Maria del Popolo, see Borsi, Bernini architetto, 320-2; Claudia Conforti and Maria Grazia D’Amelio, “Gian Lorenzo Bernini e Alessandro VII Chigi a Santa Maria del Popolo,” in Santa Maria del Popolo: storia e restauri, eds. Ilaria Miarelli Mariani and Maria Richiello (Rome: Istituto poligrafico e Zecca dello Stato, Libreria dello Stato, 2009), 576-97.
803 On Bernini’s renovations to the church and Alexander’s commission, see Vincenzo Antonelli, “La facciata del Santuario di Galloro,” in Spagnesi and Fagiolo, eds., Gian Lorenzo Bernini architetto, 1:135-44; Marder, Bernini and the Art of Architecture, 241-3.
As Vincenzo Antonilli has noted, the façade renders in high relief the arrangement of colossal and ionic orders on a bay of the Palazzo dei Conservatori [fig. 183]. The triple superimposition of the colossal order that cuts the ionic columns and capitals in half is similarly seen in the entranceway to the Palazzo dei Senatori [fig. 184] and enhances the impression of recession. Bernini’s whole façade, in fact, gives the overall effect of a deep porch compressed into two dimensions as Michelangelo’s ionic columns here become sandwiched pilasters. Further playing with the formal possibilities of the overlapping pilasters, Bernini’s layered colossal order ultimately resolves into a receding pediment. Though the façade transgresses few rules, the transposition of Michelangelo’s secular façade onto Bernini’s sacred building, recalls Borromini’s identification of novel re-contextualization as a form of originality. The result is a work that is at once like and unlike Michelangelo. And in this instance of virtually wholesale repetition, which is slightly different than the previous examples of bricolage, Bernini’s overt reference both affirms and denies Michelangelo’s authority; as Loh might suggest, each author’s individuality is here accentuated by the viewer’s knowledge of the other.

In Joseph Connors’ view, one unorthodox gesture in Bernini’s remaking of Michelangelo in this façade evinces the architect’s lack of architectural training: “by some slip, the Tuscan capitals in S. Maria di Galloro, which should be the lowest order, ride higher than their Ionic neighbors. A draftsman’s mistake or a foreman’s incompetence? Possibly, but on the other hand these are exactly the kind of errors that we have come to expect from Bernini himself.” What Connors is referring to is the Tuscan pilaster that rises above the partly cut ionic columns and capitals. Against this

805 Loh, Titian Remade, 62.
806 Connors, “Bernini’s S. Andrea al Quirinale,” 32.
reading of Bernini’s higher placement of the ionic capital as an error, I would argue that we should see this as a conscious breaking of expectations.

In 1665 Bernini designed a palace façade, this time for the residence of Cardinal Flavio Chigi in Rome [fig. 185], which was a hybrid of Michelangelo’s ornament from the Palazzo Farnese and the Palazzo dei Senatori, as if he superimposed the narrower façade of the latter on top of the broad face of the former. The central portion of Bernini’s façade mimics the horizontal division of the Capitoline palace, with its distinctly articulated and modest base, supporting two ornate upper stories of seven bays that are defined by colossal Corinthian pilasters [fig. 186]. Like its civic prototype, the Chigi Palace is also topped with a figurative balustrade. By contrast, the utilitarian kneeling windows of Bernini’s ground story, with alternating rounded and triangulated pediments on the piano nobile that flank a central loggia framed by distinctively recessed columns, look directly to the rhythmical arrangement on the Farnese Palace [fig. 187].

As Patricia Waddy has noted, Bernini’s architectural bricolage on the façade of Palazzo Chigi created something new out of Michelangelo’s old paradigm, an innovative rearrangement of familiar vocabulary that he revisited in his various designs for the Louvre and which was subsequently emulated in Rome and throughout Europe.

Bernini was not alone in mining Michelangelo’s architectural repertoire for palace façades. In 1664 Francesco Borromini, completed the façade for the Propaganda Fide [fig. 188], an eccentric composite of the ornament from and elevation of St. Peter’s as

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809 Askew, “The Relation of Bernini’s Architecture,” 51-3; Marder, Bernini and the Art of Architecture, 261-72; Sabine Frommel, “Les projets du Bernin pour le Louvre.”
810 Waddy, Seventeenth-Century Roman Palaces, 315, 415n147.
well as motifs from the Capitoline and Palazzo Farnese. At the Propaganda Fide, the seven bays of the first two stories are divided by colossal pilasters, as are those at the Palazzo dei Conservatori, are surmounted by an attic derived from St. Peter’s. Borromini’s alternation of paired pilasters and windows in the attic also mimics this sacred prototype [fig. 189]. The bays of the piano nobile, by contrast, revisit the arrangement of columns around the central window of the Palazzo Farnese. Atop each window Borromini designed pediments that, as in his Palazzo Barberini window, re-conceive the rhythm of alternating curved and triangular pediments as miniature niches. Borromini thus not only creates a novel whole out of Buonarroti’s parts, he couples his overt citations, like the alternating segmented and pedimented piano nobile windows, with architectural motifs that are dynamic transformations of the original. The overall result is a highly idiosyncratic ensemble that goes beyond novel bricolage and into the realm of license and of the creation of new form.

Borromini completed his façade for the Propaganda Fide just as Bernini commenced his planning for the Chigi Palace. The Propaganda Fide was a particularly charged building for Bernini, who not only endured seeing his chapel of the Re Magi destroyed in order to accommodate Borromini’s new edifice, but also suffered the insult of having his enemy’s exuberant remaking of Michelangelo face his own residence. As early as their collaboration at the Palazzo Barberini, one aspect of Bernini’s and Borromini’s relationship asserted itself in their competitive use of Michelangelo’s vocabulary. It is possible to imagine that in light of the longtime rivalry between Bernini

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812 On Borromini’s original desire to preserve Bernini’s Re Magi chapel and the largely practical reasons behind its eventual destruction, see Portoghesi, Rome of Borromini, 281-4; Blunt, Borromini, 183-9; Marder, Bernini and the Art of Architecture, 63-7; Bösel and Frommel, eds., Borromini e l’universo barocco, 2:298, 305-6; Burbaum, Rivalità, 231-61.
and Borromini, the Palazzo Chigi façade responds directly to the Propaganda Fide’s challenge; that is, Bernini’s restrained, unexaggerated assemblage of Michelangelo’s ornament can be understood as a mute criticism of his adversary’s boundary breaking quotations.

The terms of Bernini’s visual criticism are best understood within the context of Borromini’s critical reception in Alexander VII’s increasingly Vitruvian Rome. The pope himself, for example, repeatedly censured Borromini’s use of ornament in the decade preceding the completion of the Propaganda Fide. At the Lateran on 1656, Alexander first expressed his distaste for the architect’s ornament when he demanded that Borromini remove the “gothic” elements from upper and lower portion of the columns on the memorial to his namesake, Pope Alexander III. According to the diary of Carlo Cartari (archivist and librarian of the Altieri library), on 16 March 1660, during the papal inauguration of the church of Sant’Ivo, Alexander criticized Borromini for his use of “superfluous ornament” and his lack of “sincere operations” (non operava francamente) in the face of an established vocabulary. The pope summed up his impression of Borromini’s corrupt and eccentric ornament by exclaiming: “The style of Cavalier

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814 “…ma essergli dispiaciuto, che il Cavaliere nelle colonne di quell deposito vi haveva facti certi ornamenti da capo e da piedi all’usanza gotica che queste per hora si sollevavrebbero ma poi si farebbero levare per mettervele lisie.” As cited and discussed in Burbaum, Rivalità, 265-6, 265n15.
Borromini [is] Gothic, nor is this surprising since he was born in Milan where the Cathedral is Gothic.”

Alexander’s characterization of the architect’s ornament as gothic was unambiguously derisive, an epithet with connotations that placed the Borromini in implicit opposition to Michelangelo. Since the fifteenth century, the term “gotico” had been applied to architecture with features perceived as inimical to the ordered and proportioned anthropomorphic foundations of the classical tradition. After Vasari, however, the word became inextricably linked to the injudicious bricolage exemplified by Michelangelo’s degenerate followers whose works were “monstrous and worse than the German (i.e. the gothic).” By further linking Borromini’s gothicism to his Lombard origins, Alexander’s criticism barred the architect and his work from any claim to good license. In the eyes of the pope, Borromini’s architecture is irrevocably plagued because the architect himself is gothic by nature and by nurture.

Around the same time Borromini acquired the epithet “gothic,” Michelangelo was being remade as a classicist. In his 1664 lecture to the Accademia di San Luca on the “Idea,” Gian Pietro Bellori characterized the difference between cinquecento and seicento architects, respectively, as akin to the difference between the “proportioned” and

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815 “dice che si sfuggissero gl’ornamenti superflui, che ordinariamente che non operava francamente, proventuta di far comparire le sue opere con gl’ornamenti: biaserò una bussola di quella camera, tutta intagliata. Disse che lo stile del Cavalier Borromini era gotico, ne esser meraviglia, per esser nato in Milano, dove era il domo di architettura gotica.” From the diary of Carlo Cartari as cited in Gerhard Eimer, La fabbrica di S. Agnese in Navona: Römische Architekten, Bauherren und Handwerker im Zeitalter des Nepotismus (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1970-71), 2:446. See also, Portoghesi, Rome of Borromini, 11-12; Scotti and Soldini, “Borromini Milanese,” 53; Burbaum, Rivalität, 265.

816 See, for example, Vasari’s description of the proportions of German (i.e. gothic) architecture from the preface to his Lives. Vasari/Bettarini-Barrochi, Vite, 1:67: “Ècci un’altra specie di lavori che si chiama tedeschi, i quali sono di ornamenti e di proporzione molto differenti dagli antichi e da’ moderni; né oggi s’usano per gli eccellenti, ma son fuggiti da loro come mostruosi e barbari, dimenticando ogni lor cosa di ordine – che più tosto confusione o disordine si può chiamare – avendo fatto nelle loro fabbriche, che sono tante ch’anno ammorbatto il mondo, le porte ornate di colonnine sottili et attorte a uso di vite, le quali non possono aver forza a reggere il peso di che leggerezza si sia.”

“beautiful” architecture of Greece and Rome and the “monstrous” and “hideously disordered” works of barbarian builders. Bellori identified “Bramante, Raphael, Giulio Romano and, lastly, Michelangelo,” as virtuous exemplars who, “laboured to restore [ancient architecture] from its heroic ruins to its original Idea and appearance, selecting the most elegant forms of ancient buildings.” He contrasts these worthy architects of the immediate past to the architects of “today” who “fabricate nonsense of angles, broken elements, and distortions of lines, deforming buildings and the very cities and monuments: they break up bases, capitals, and columns with fakery of stuccoes, fragments and disproportions. And, yet, Vitruvius condemns such novelties and offers us the best examples.”

This assessment of contemporary barbarisms takes into account both definitions of gothic as disproportioned and as bricolage run amok. For Bellori, treating architecture like a kit of parts results in mangled wholes. His distaste for the anti-Vitruvian proportions, in particular, is echoed in Carlo Dati’s 1664 Lodi of the antiquarian Cassiano del Pozzo, who apparently claimed:

> It is the disgrace of our age that though it has before it such beautiful ideas and such perfect rules in venerable, old buildings, nonetheless it allows the whim of a few artists who wish to break away from the antique to bring back architecture to barbarism. This was not the way of Brunelleschi, Buonarroti, Bramante, Serlio, Palladio, Vignola and the other restorers of this great art, who took true proportions of those perfectly regular orders from Roman buildings.

If Bellori and Cassiano differ slightly on what constitutes barbarism, both reinsert Michelangelo into a Vitruvian canon that does not attempt to justify the master’s license as Vasari did, but to disregard it. Likely responding to the increasing French criticism of

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819 Ibid., 62.
820 Ibid.
821 This passage from Carlo Dati’s Lodi is cited in Francis Haskell, Patrons and Painters (London: Chatto & Windus, 1963), 103-4.
Buonarroti’s license and that of his imitators, these writers shelter Michelangelo from any wrongdoing by placing the blame for architecture’s ruin entirely on contemporary architects. While it is tempting to isolate Borromini as the target of these critiques, it is worth noting that neither Bellori nor Cassiano singled him out; rather, they impugned the whole age.

Notwithstanding the adverse implications for innovative seicento architects of this reframing of Michelangelo’s image as an architect, Buonarroti’s “classicism” was used by one writer in Alexander’s court to Bernini’s advantage. In Sforza Pallavicino’s *Arte della Perfezion Cristiana* (1665), a guide to Christian living, this intimate of the pope and friend to Gianlorenzo drew a parallel between the method of forming a virtuous individual and the licit rules of ancient architecture, positing a direct line of filiation from Vitruvius through Michelangelo to Bernini. In an introductory passage, Pallavicino stated that the lessons his text imparts can be learned and passed on in the same way good architectural knowledge has been transmitted since antiquity: “as the great numbers of excellent buildings were fabricated in an efficacious manner by Vitruvius and continue to be fabricated by Buonarroti or Bernini.”

The author’s equation of religious orthodoxy with ancient architectural canons evades the issue of license, thereby sanctioning both Buonarroti’s and Bernini’s work as licit and steadfast descendants of the antique.

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822 “Pertanto vennemi in cuore, che ove Iddio mi degnasse ch’io con l’aiuto speziale della sua grazia, con la scorta della scienze a me non del tutto ignote, e con l’applicazione di un fisso studio, potessi rivenire e insegnare a’ fedeli quest arte celestiale d’introdurre in sè o in altrui la perfezion cristiana; avrei ottenuto di formar in ogni età maggior moltitudine di perfetti cristiani; e con più di cooperazione, che non fanno i più infaticabili e zelanti allevatori dell’anime; come più quantità d’eccellente edifici, è in più efficace maniera ha fabbricati e va fabbricando ad ogni ora Vitruvio, che’l Bonarroto o’l Bernino.” As cited in Montanari, “Gian Lorenzo Bernini e Sforza Pallavicino,” 59, with a discussion of Bernini’s relationship with Pallavicino and the theologian’s frequent reference to the artist in his writings. See also Delbeke, *Fenice degli ingegni*, 120-21. On Pallavicino and his relationship with Bernini more broadly, see Montanari, “Gian Lorenzo Bernini e Sforza Pallavicino,” 42-68; Delbeke, *Fenice degli ingegni*, 87-102.
Borromini and his defenders, by contrast, sought to fashion himself after a very different image of Michelangelo. In Borromini’s address to readers of his *Opus architettonicum*, co-authored in 1646-47 with Virgilio Spada (his friend and authority on architecture), the architect claimed an affinity not only with Michelangelo’s pursuit of new forms and novel ornament but also with the persecution that Buonarroti faced as a result of his innovations. In 1656 and 1657, Spada, who was also Borromini’s most ardent defender, endorsed the architect’s much criticized inventions at the Lateran and the Casa dei Filippini, respectively, by deferring to Michelangelo’s precedent as an unappreciated trailblazer. And, in his guidebook of 1658, Fioravante Martinelli defended the architect against “those ignorant in the profession” who believed that Borromini transgressed the rules and worked according to caprice, by asserting that he always worked according to thoroughly Vitruvian ideals. As for Borromini’s

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823 On Borromini’s admiration for Michelangelo and the various writings that draw an explicit affinity between the theory and practice of the two architects, see Blunt, *Borromini*, 26-34; Connors, “Ars Tornandi”; Howard Burns, “‘La necessità, che ha havuto d’imitare… più gli antichi, che i moderni’”: Innovazione e l’antico nell’architettura del Borromini,” *Cenobio* 48 (1999): 283-300; Connors, “Poussin detrattore di Borromini.”

824 “Prego dun(que) chi leggerà queste mie dicerie à riflettere, che ho havuto à servire una Cong(gregatio)ne di animi così rimessi che nell’ornare mi hanno tenuto le mani, e conseguentem(en)te mi è convenuto in più luoghi obbedire piu al voler loro che all’arte, e pregoli à ricordarsi, quando tal volta li paia, ch’io m’allontonai da i communi disegni, di quello che diceva Michel’Angelo Principe degl’Architetti, che, chi segue altri, non li và mai inansi, et io al certo non mi sarei posto à questa professione col fine di frutto della fatica, se non tardi, siccome non lo ricevette l’istesso Michel’Angelo quando nel riformare l’architettura della gran Basilica di S.Pietro, veniva lacerato p(er) le nuove forme et ornati, che da suoi emuli venivano censurate, à segno che procurorno più volte di farlo privare della carica di architetto di S. Pietro, ma’indarno, et il tempo poi ha chiarito, che tutte le cose sue sono state reputate degne d’imitatione, et ammiratione.” Borromini, *Opus*, 7.


826 “…e per l’alunni, con vaga architettura del Cavaliere Borromino, quale operando sempre con li veri fondamenti dell’architettura, et imitando li antichi, pare à chi è malfondato nella professione, ch’esca qualche volta dalle regole, et operi con capriccio fuori d’esse, come è successo nella facciata fatta à questa chiesa, essendosi servito della colonna dorica, fatta dagl’antichi sensa base, come testifica Andrea Palladio nel suo libro dell’Architettura, libro primo cap. 15 et altri….” D’Onofrio, *Roma nel Seicento*, 201-2.
occasional departures from the norm, Martinelli invoked Lomazzo who “esteemed Buonarroti because he worked as he wanted, but with reason, by order and measure.”\(^{827}\)

While these writings characterize Bernini and Borromini as diametrically opposed types of Michelangelo – Bernini becomes a type of Michelangelo “Classico” and Borromini plays the role of a Michelangelo “Licenzioso,” so to speak – it would be wrong to suggest that seicento viewers perceived the work of these two architects as wholly antithetical. As a brief statement in a 1661 letter from Lodovico de Vecchi (a Sienese prelate) to Leopoldo de Medici suggests, it was possible to see Bernini and Borromini as similarly unorthodox. On the heels of disparaging remarks regarding Bernini’s departure from Michelangelo’s designs for St. Peter’s, de Vecchi claims: “I believe that certain of [Bernini’s] extravagances (bizzarrie) and departures from the good rules of architecture, should not be followed, even less so those of Borromini.”\(^{828}\)

According to de Vecchi, the license of Bernini and Borromini is distinguished only by degree.

Just as contemporaries characterized Bernini and Borromini as differing types of Michelangelo (from wholly contrasting to loosely comparable), so too the architects themselves engaged in a dialogue about their likeness to their predecessor by way of discrete performances of Buonarroti using the shared modality of quotation and assemblage. Their differences are nowhere more apparent than in their respective façades for Sant’Andrea al Quirinale and San Carlo alle Quattro Fontane. It is often acknowledged that Bernini’s oval plan for the church sought to rival that of Borromini.

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\(^{827}\) Ibid: “Tal [Lomazzo] fu stimato il Buona Rota perché operava come voleva ma con ragione per ordine et misura come scrive il detto Lomazzi nell’istesso luogo.”

\(^{828}\) “Alcune sue bizzarrie, e discostamenti dalle buone regole d’architettura, non credo voglino esser seguite; e molto mento quelle del Borromino.” The full letter is published in Butzek, Il duomo di Siena al tempo di Alessandro VII, 137-38, no. 118.
down the street, what is less frequently considered, however, is that the competitive and
critical nature of Bernini’s architectural dialogue with Borromini begins at the façade
where his ornament engages directly the undisguised michelangelism of the latter’s
church front.\textsuperscript{829}

Each story of Borromini’s sinuous façade (only the lower portion of which was
completed before the architect’s death in 1667)\textsuperscript{830} is composed of three bays culled from
the Palazzo dei Conservatori divided horizontally by a monumental undulating
entablature that follows the concave and convex alternation of each bay [figs. 190 and
191].\textsuperscript{831} Borromini’s re-imagining of Michelangelo’s colossal pilasters as virtually free-
standing columns further complements the façade’s plastic curves. Even the modest
entablature that runs along the first story behind Michelangelo’s pilasters here becomes
an active element that wraps around the columns, swelling outward and inward about
them. Though Borromini’s patrons praised the façade, it nonetheless provoked the
criticism of Bellori who around 1667 wrote in the margins of his copy of Baglione’s \textit{Vite}
that the church was “ugly and deformed” and that Borromini was a “gothic ignoramus
and corruptor of architecture, disgrace of our age, Lombard.”\textsuperscript{832} Bellori’s private
criticism of Borromini’s church was likely known in the architectural community.

\textsuperscript{829} Marder, \textit{Bernini and the Art of Architecture}, 205, is a notable exception.
\textsuperscript{830} The first story of the façade was constructed between 1665 and 1667. The upper story was realized after
his death, from 1669 through 1677 under the supervision of his nephew Bernardo Borromini. On the
evolution of Borromini’s designs for the façade and its eventual construction, see Blunt, \textit{Borromini}, 73-80;
Bösel and Frommel, eds., \textit{Borromini e l’universo barocco}, 2:107-11, 125-6; Christoph Frommel and
internazionale Roma 13 - 15 gennaio 2000}, eds. Christoph Luitpold Frommel and Elisabeth Sladek (Milan:
\textsuperscript{831} Blunt, \textit{Borromini}, 74; Marder, \textit{Bernini and the Art of Architecture}, 205; Huemer, “Borromini and
\textsuperscript{832} As cited in Connors, “Poussin detrattore di Borromini,” 198.
Bernini completed his façade for Sant’Andrea in 1672, five years after Borromini’s death and four years before the second story of San Carlino was executed. As scholars have noted, Bernini’s façade remakes one bay of the Palazzo dei Conservatori into a dynamic monumental porch [figs. 192 and 193]. Though he had already looked to this same source in his San Galloro façade, where he exploited relief to create the illusion of a deep porch collapsed into relief, Bernini here produced tension by extruding elements of the prototype rather than flattening them. This play is best appreciated by examining his departures from Michelangelo’s model: instead of placing the colossal Corinthian order and the small Ionic order along the same plane, as at the Campidoglio, Bernini’s offers two versions of the Ionic order – one in the form of a pilaster, another as a freestanding column – in differing spatial relation to the colossal pilasters. Bernini’s paired Ionic pilasters sit along the same plane as the doorway and are framed by giant pilasters, thus transforming the arrangement of Michelangelo’s bay into relief. Two freestanding Ionic columns stand well in front of this plane, creating a deep porch. These columns, in turn, support a convex entablature decorated with dentils like that on the first story of the Conservator’s palace.

Tod Marder has noted that the curved elements of Bernini’s façade were introduced into the design around 1668 at the insistence of the patron, Cardinal Camillo Pamphili, who wanted the church front to surpass Borromini’s undulating design at San Carlo. We can thus understand the convex entablature as a response to Borromini.

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834 Bernini’s façade evolved over four phases. The earliest design was for a simple, planar two-story front. His second design was still planar, but in keeping with alterations to the church plan, he conceived a more monumental façade articulated with colossal pilasters. It is at the third stage in design that Bernini introduced the concave portico in light of his patron’s desire to rival Borromini’s façade. The concave
Yet Bernini’s façade is as much an attempt to rival Borromini’s curving ornament as it is a criticism of his extravagant mobilization of Michelangelo. By using the same vocabulary as his adversary and, with it, designing a largely planar façade with a segment of a round porch, Bernini makes an argument in favour of antique convention \([\text{figs. 194, 195 and 196}]\). It is in light of Bernini’s preservation of the plane that we might understand his purported response, as recorded in Baldinucci, to an unknown individual’s claim that “a certain person (i.e. Borromini) who had been his assistant was a very able architect.” Bernini allegedly replied, “You are quite right, because he cut corners.”\(^8\)

For the knowing reader, Bernini’s double-entendre is aimed at Borromini’s rule-breaking architecture which included a professed disdain for squared corners, which he rounded at every opportunity. Though Gianlorenzo offers a restrained curve, he plays with the tectonic logic of this form: is this convex segment simply a portion of the first story entablature that swells out to rest on two columns, or, is it to be understood as the marble that was cut away from the façade to create the semi-circular window above, now folded down and transformed into a porch? And while Bernini also violates rules by placing dentils under the broken scrolls of the porch decoration, on the whole, Bernini’s michelangesque façade visualizes a return to some orthodoxy.

Bernini looked with less frequency to Michelangelo’s vocabulary in the few major commissions that he received after completing Sant’Andrea and by the mid-1670s his architectural projects had slowed considerably. Yet during the last year of

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wings of Sant’Andrea represent the last alteration to Bernini’s designs. On Bernini’s development of the Sant’Andrea façade, his patron’s desires and documents related to the church commission and construction, see Kitao, “Bernini’s Church Façades,” 277-9; Christoph Frommel, “S. Andrea al Quirinale: genesi e struttura,” in Spagnesi and Fagiolo, eds., Gian Lorenzo Bernini architetto, 1:211-53; Marder, “The Evolution”; idem, Bernini and the Art of Architecture, 203-7.

\(^8\) Baldinucci/Enggass, Life, 82; Baldinucci, Vita, 148: “Dissegli una volta non so chi, che un tale, che era stato suo discepolo, che era un bravissimo architetto: ‘Voi dite molto bene’ rispose ‘perché egli è tagliacantone.’” This comment is followed by a discussion of Borromini’s gothic style.
Alexander’s life, the pope envisioned a project that would once again stimulate Bernini to look to his predecessor’s idiom. In the spring of 1667, the pope expressed his desire to erect a “fountain gate” flanked by the Dioscuri on Monte Cavallo, and to place this gate opposite the Porta Pia, which was also to be finished as its attic was still incomplete. Krautheimer associated the plans for this unrealized project with a drawing from Bernini’s studio, of a concave gate dominated by the Chigi monti situated at the terminus of an unidentifiable building-lined street [fig. 197], presumably the manica lunga of the Apostolic palace. Dorthy Metzger-Habel has argued against Krautheimer’s claim that the gate would have faced Michelangelo’s earlier project along the Via Pia by underscoring the ambiguity of the pope’s note and suggesting instead that the monument was better suited to a garden entrance or best positioned against a wall. Regardless of the intended location, the grimacing mask at the apex of the arched passage announces a relationship to the Porta Pia. Though the details of the drawing are difficult to decipher, the gate’s ornamentation, beyond that of the grotesque, appear to recycle Michelangelo’s Ionic Capitoline type. And though the double volutes with garlands that terminate the architrave are unorthodox terminuses, the sweeping single curve of the gate and overall restraint in ornament are unlike Michelangelo’s gate designs. Bernini’s gate offers a measure of orthodoxy that chastens even Buonarroti, a gesture that would have been

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836 “I cavalli [that is the Dioscuri situated infront of the Quirinal Palace] portarli di qua e di là il portone di acqua desegnato con tagliar il canto di quel muro. Rifinire Porta Pia e che in faccia sia l’acqua predetta.” As cited by Krautheimer, who first published and discussed this note from Alexander VII’s papers, in Richard Krautheimer, “‘Il porton di questo giardino’: An Urbanistic Project for Rome by Alexander VII (1655-1667),” *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 42 (1983): 40; idem, *Rome of Alexander VII*, 93-9. The project is a revision of his 1657 urban plans to link the Porta del Popolo through the newly proposed Quirinal gate to the Porta Pia. On the building chronology of the Porta Pia, the attic of which was unfinished in the seventeenth century, see Paola Pontani and Rocco R. Tramutola, “Fasi e trasformazioni della fabbrica di Porta Pia,” *Quaderni dell’Istituto di Storia dell’Architettura* 14 (1989): 69-84, esp. 74.

837 Krautheimer, “‘Il porton di questo giardino’,” 41-2.

emphatic had the gate indeed been designed to stand at the end of the long street that connects the Quirinal to the Porta Pia, that is, opposite Michelangelo’s own gate [fig. 198].

Ultimately, Bernini’s citations of Michelangelo’s ornament are less self-assertive than his emulation of his predecessor in sculpture, where the ‘son’ distinguished himself from his adopted ‘father’ by creating a new paradigm. Yet he reprised Buonarroti’s architectural vocabulary in ways that offered an increasingly restrained interpretation of the latter’s example (especially compared to the work of his ‘fraternal twin,’ Borromini) and shaped his identity as the disciplined heir to a tamed Michelangelo. Bernini’s repetition of Michelangelo’s ornament openly recalls the cinquecento master, and yet, cannot be easily assimilated to anything Buonarroti created, producing what Loh would characterize as a reciprocal effect in which father and son are engaged in a cross-generational interchange.

Bernini’s use of ornament testifies to the possibility that an architect’s creativity, identity and agency are fruitfully negotiated through the quotation and reassembly of Michelangelo’s distinctive idiom. It also demonstrates that Bernini and Borromini kept a keen eye on the other’s imitation of Michelangelo and employed his ornament as a vehicle through which they offered rival iterations of their predecessor’s modern order. Whereas Borromini used Michelangelo’s vocabulary as a launching pad for further license, Bernini increasingly tempered Buonarroti’s idiom and/or married it with explicitly classicizing forms. Bernini’s use of Michelangelo’s ornament suggest that the rules broken by the latter were not to be shattered anew; rather, the vocabulary resulting from Buonarroti’s innovations was to be remade within the confines of licit practice.
It is from the vantage of Bernini and Borromini’s discrete and competitive use of Michelangelo’s ornament that we might gain new purchase on the aphorism recorded in his biographies by which Bernini professedly characterized the difference between his architecture and that of his rival: “I deem it better to be a bad Catholic than a good Heretic.” Bernini here casts himself and his rival as two faces of the same coin – both are licentious, but each falls on different sides of the spectrum of acceptable rule breaking. Bernini’s unorthodoxy or “badness” is circumscribed within the bounds of “Catholic” orthodoxy, while Borromini’s unorthodoxy, by comparison, is unbound, relishing in the limitlessness of “Heresy” that invalidates any effort at “goodness.” What is perhaps more striking is the manner in which both Filippo Baldinucci and Domenico Bernini used Gianlorenzo’s aphorism in order to reframe the history of the two architects’ working relationship. Rather than present Bernini and Borromini as contemporaries who both drank from the same architectural font yet developed in opposing directions, the biographers characterize Borromini as a pupil of Gianlorenzo’s school, a novice who studied under the latter’s prudent direction only to later adopt an affected gothic manner. This polemical characterization is likely a response to mounting claims that


840 Borromini is described as Gianlorenzo’s pupil once in Baldinucci’s biography and twice in Domenico’s *Vita* and in each instance he is characterized as a student who ended up pursuing a misguided path. Baldinucci/Enggass, *Life*, 88; Baldinucci, *Vita*, 154-5: “Molti anni impiegò il cavaliere Borromino in casa del nostro artefice per apprendere l’arte dell’architettura, e divenne uno assai pratico maestro. Senonché, per voler nell’ornato degli edifici, troppo innovare, seguendo il proprio capriccio, talvolta uscì tanto di regola, che s’accostò alla gottica maniera.” See also, Bernini, *Vita*, 32, 76: “Frà questi uno fù, e il principale,
Borromini was the architectural mastermind behind their early collaboration (both at St. Peter’s and at the Palazzo Barberini). Though neither Baldinucci nor Domenico mention Michelangelo in their respective passages on Bernini’s architectural “school,” it is Vasari’s characterization of Buonarroti’s innovative manner, particularly in Domenico’s text, that furnishes the central conceit for Bernini’s aphorism. Domenico begins by asserting that Bernini claimed the antique was the foundation of all architecture and that even though Borromini followed the example of Gianlorenzo’s school and was a good designer, he nonetheless “affected the Gothic manner, rather than the ancient Roman and the beautiful modern mode.” It is on the heels of this assessment that Domenico has Bernini, smiling, deliver his punch-line about bad Catholics and good Heretics. This differentiation between good license and bad license consciously echoes Vasari’s distinction between Michelangelo’s laudable license as compared to monstrous creations of his followers. In Domenico’s textual parallel, however, Vasari’s conceit is restaged with new actors. Bernini, playing the part of Michelangelo, practices good license by departing from the rules without violating ancient canons. Borromini, presented in the text as Bernini’s pupil, personifies the chorus of Michelangelo’s gothic followers who ineptly corrupt license. Although Domenico’s account offers an

il Cavalier Borromino, che stimando, come tolta a sè, ogni grandezza del Bernino, dalle buone regole di Architettura apprese nella Scuola di lui, havendo degenerato in una maniera affatto diversa, si rendeva nel medesimo tempo molto ingrato al Maestro, e poco benemerito a molti Virtuosi della Professione.”

According to Borromini’s biographer and nephew, Bernardo Castelli-Borromini, Borromini himself lamented doing all of Bernini’s architectural work at St. Peter’s and Palazzo Barberini and getting none of the credit: “non mi dispiacie che abbia auto li denari, ma mi dispiacie che gode lonor delle mie fatiche.” As cited in Burbaum, Rivalità, 279. For a recent analysis of the various claims that Borromini was responsible for the design of Bernini’s early projects, see ibid., 87-93. A survey of the various attributions of the Palazzo Barberini to Maderno, Bernini and Borromini, respectively, is offered by Hibbard, Carlo Maderno, 228-30.

Bernini, Vita, 32: “Tuttavia, diceva, che la vera base dell’Architettura era lo studio dell’Antica; E perciò ad un Personaggio illustre, che non potea soffrire, che il Borromino havesse tanto traviato dai documenti appresi nella sua Scuola, e da buon Disegnatore, ch’egli era, più tosto havesse affettata la maniera Gotica, che l’antica Romana, e il bel modo moderno, rispose sorridendo: Io stimo meno male essere un cattivo Cattolico, che un buon’Heretico.”
interpretation of Borromini’s relationship to Bernini, it should not be understood as a
description of the actual difference between the two architect’s works, which, as I have
suggested, might be best characterized as an ongoing competitive dialogue or sibling
rivalry that emerged from early collaborative contexts. Rather, we might see Domenico’s
unsubstantiated account as an indicator of the anxiety about Bernini’s less assertive
engagement with Michelangelo in architecture than that of his contemporary.

**Imitators as Exemplars**

The economy of citation explored in the previous section was both codified and
historicized at the outset of the settecento in Domenico de Rossi’s *Studio d’architettura
civile*, particularly volume one (1702), a compendium of ornament illustrating a selection
of doors, windows, gates and porticoes from modern Roman edifices. Created as a
reference work for a new generation of architects, the *Studio* gave cogent expression to
the culture of repeating Michelangelo that was at the core of architectural practice in the
previous century. The book (which is composed almost entirely of visual material with
little commentary) opens with detailed engravings of ornament from nearly all of
Michelangelo’s Roman monuments – the Campidoglio, St. Peter’s, Palazzo Farnese and
Porta Pia – followed by examples of work by architects in Rome, especially Bernini and
Borromini, that employ motifs rooted demonstrably related to Buonarroti’s precedents

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843 De Rossi’s three volume book was published in 1702, 1711 and 1721, respectively. Each volume is
devoted to a specific type of decoration: volume one is dedicated to designs of windows, doors, gates,
porticos and porches and stairs; volume two highlights designs for chapels, tombs, altars and decorated
niches; volume illustrates the façades and plans of Roman churches. For an insightful introduction to De
Rossi’s book, the circumstances of its making and the academic context to which it was responding, see
Simona Ciofetta, “Lo *Studio d’architettura civile* edito da Domenico de Rossi (1702, 1711, 1721),” in *In
214-9.
The reader quickly becomes aware that the repetition of Michelangelo’s motifs was de Rossi’s primary criterion for inclusion. As one scholar aptly noted, the Studio’s presentation of modern ornament makes it appear “as if the sources for Baroque innovation were entirely to be found in the corpus of Michelangelo.”

But while the compendium highlights the explicit formal relationships between Buonarroti’s idiom and that of his seicento successors, the aim is not to expose their architecture as derivative. Rather, the persistent reuse of form encourages the viewer to notice variation. Repetition here underscores the notion that the best seicento architects appropriated Michelangelo’s architectural vocabulary in a manner that calls to mind Buonarroti’s use of the antique as presented in the expanded editions of Vignola’s Regola, that is, as an authoritative example to be mined and reassembled, even re-contextualized, in novel ways. Ultimately, De Rossi’s Studio offers a portrait of Rome’s most famous seicento architectural rivals, Bernini and Borromini, as similarly dissimilar.

Although the engravings in the Studio are neither annotated nor accompanied by any theory of architecture, a didactic purpose is apparent not only in the citation culture the illustrations celebrate, but also very in the manner in which the ornament is represented on the page. Each façade, door or window is shown according to plan, elevation and section, and wherever possible, accompanied by precise indications of scale. In some instances, details are presented with their own measurements. These precise illustrations furnish a repertoire of examples that might then be easily reproduced by contemporaries. In the brief preface to his readers, de Rossi justifies the absence of any

844 Bernini’s ornament is represented in various engravings of his work at St. Peter’s, the Palazzo Barberini, the Chigi Palace, Sant’ Andrea al Quirinale and the Porta Santo Spirito. Engravings of Borromini’s ornament, which outnumber those dedicated to Bernini’s oeuvre, represent his work at the Lateran, the Propaganda Fide, the Oratorio, San Carlino and Sant’Ivo.

845 Shawe-Taylor, “Walls Have Ears,” 42.
explanatory text by suggesting that his manual is intended for those already well versed
in the profession who “aspire to perfection.” Thus for the skilled user of the Studio,
the pursuit of perfection was contingent upon conscientiously imitating the ornament
created by Michelangelo, Bernini and Borromini (the former’s two sons, as it were) that
is so meticulously documented in its pages.

The emphatic focus on Michelangelo’s work and that of his progeny in the
Studio’s modern Roman ornament should be understood as a regional expression of
architectural identity and practice at its best. Though all three volumes of the text present
a Buonarrotian image of contemporary Rome, with Bernini and Borromini consistently
presented as the chief perpetuators of Michelangelo’s idiom, the concentration on
ornament in volume one attends implicitly to developments in the perennial debate about
Michelangelo’s license and that of his imitators. In opposition to those who censured
Buonarroti’s innovations, de Rossi argues for the licit and creative repetition of
Michelangelo’s paradigm as the process by which one achieves perfection. But within
this schema, Bernini and Buonarroti are no longer mere imitators – they have attained the
status of models to be imitated. This new ranking resonates with contemporary writings
on architecture in which Bernini and, to a greater extent, Borromini are presented as
Michelangelo-like exemplars whose laudable architectural vocabulary is despoiled by the
current generation of imitators. The didactic format of the Studio engravings seeks to
counteract such corruption.

846 “mà come il suo studio hà da suporre una cognizion e, almeno oltre alla mediocrità, di chi aspira alla
perfezione dell’arte, s’è colentieri lasciato indurre ad astenersene, e lasciare all’altrui intendimento il
formare quelle consierazioni, che non devono essere ascose à chi prime questo camino.” De Rossi, Studio, 1:3.
847 Eugenio Battisti, “La rivalutazione del ‘Barrocco’ nei teorici del settecento,” in Bernardo Vittone e la
Though de Rossi’s *Studio* is not a direct product of the Accademia di San Luca, the layout of the illustrations conforms to the method of drawing architecture employed at the academy, and the manual was soon adopted by academic institutions in Rome, France and other European countries. Its effects are apparent in the proliferation of ornament throughout Italy and Europe that looks directly to motifs represented in its pages. Furthermore, many of the windows, niches and doors engraved in volume one became the subjects of drawing competitions in the Concorsi Clementini, conceived by the pope to whom the book is dedicated. If the very act of creating the *Studio* can be understood (like the re-editions of Vignola) as an attempt to reframe Michelangelo’s ornament as orthodox and that of his imitators as normative practice, then the use of the manual in Rome’s academy and beyond is an endorsement of this new orthodoxy. An article praising the *Studio* that published in the *Giornale de’Letterati* in 1711 suggests that this is precisely how the endeavor was received by some. The unknown author of the entry claims that de Rossi’s engravings are a “school” for modern architects, its images furnishing a guide for practitioners seeking to achieve immortality through the

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848 Ciofetta, “Lo Studio d’architettura civile,” 216. The didactic engravings were based on drawings by Alessandro Specchi, an architect in his own right, who had collaborated with de Rossi on previous publications.
849 Ibid., 217.
850 The 1702 publication of volume one of the *Studio* (which includes a dedicatory page to Pope Clement XI) coincides with the inauguration of the Clementine Concorsi. The subject of the first concorso was a niche from San Giovanni in Laterano (illustrated in the Studio, 1:63); in 1705, the competitors drew the main door of Palazzo Sciarra Colonna (illustrated in the Studio, 1:115); in 1710, the competition focused on the doors of the convent of San Carlino (illustrated in the Studio, 1:101); and in 1711, the subject was the door of the cloister of the Oratorio (illustrated in the Studio, 1:94). Ibid., 216. It is possible that the dedication of this book to Clement XI was a strategic attempt to gain popular acceptance in the Roman Academy, since the pope envisioned the institution as the vehicle through which Rome’s artistic dominance might be renewed in the face of increasing ascendancy by the French. On Clement XI’s use of the academy to further his cultural policy with respect to painting, see Christopher M. S. Johns, “Papal Patronage and Cultural Bureaucracy in Eighteenth-Century Rome: Clement XI and the Accademia di San Luca,” *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 22 (1988): 1-23.
“most correct rules, and with imitation.” In the pages of the *Studio*, the once illicit work of Michelangelo and his progeny is no longer the route to corruption but its antithesis. Here, Buonarroti, Bernini and Borromini together exemplify architectural decorum and correctness, the imitation of which, in turn, is now the corrective to the errors of a new generation. And by way of their own individuated repetitions, Bernini and Borromini defined themselves while making Michelangelo’s distinctive precedent resonate more forcefully.

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851 "Quantunque tra le stampe di Domenico de Rossi molte, e molte cose fossero, che o sciolte in carte particolari, o unite in libri potessero a i moderni Architetti server di scuola, e di regola al ben operare nell’esercizio dell’arte; mancavano tutta volta di vedervisi varie opera d’eccellente maestria, da le quai si dimostrasse il vero buon gusto, e la finezza della medesima arte, su cui potessero egliino perfezionarsi, e servendosi della scrota di professori celebratissimi eternare anche essi il nome loro colle più giuste regole, ed anche coll’imitazione. Pensò dunque egli di dare alle stampe un nuovo studio d’Architettura moderna....” From the *Giornale de’Letterati d’Italia* 5 (1711), 1:338-9, as cited in Ciofetta, “Lo Studio d’architettura civile,” 214.
Chapter Five

Parallel Lives: Bernini’s Biographies and Textual Imitatio Buonarroti

In 1632, an *avviso* praising the liveliness of Bernini’s bronze portrait of Urban VIII reported that the pope “rejoices in the excellence of Bernini who is being called by him the second Michelangelo.” The earliest-known record identifying Bernini as a Michelangelo redivivus, this *avviso* is one of numerous seicento documents, poems and texts that originated in the court of Urban VIII and continued to flourish in Alexander VII’s pontificate that underscored parallels between the two artists. In the year following the above *avviso*, Fulvio Testi (agent to the Duke of Modena) wrote a letter to Count Francesco Fontana that elaborated on this *paragone* of artists, declaring that “the Cavalier Bernini… is the Michelangelo of our century as much in painting as in sculpting and does not cede to any of the ancients in the excellence of art.” Calling an artist a new Michelangelo was not unprecedented, yet the frequency and variety with which contemporary writings brought Bernini into his predecessor’s ambit, and vice-versa, reveal a conscious and persistent effort by members of Urban VIII’s and Alexander VII’s courts to complement Bernini’s own artistic *imitatio Buonarroti* with rhetoric that used Michelangelo’s art and persona to constitute a textual image of Gianlorenzo.

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852 "...gioisce dell’eccellenza del Bernini che viene chiamato da lui il secondo Michelangelo,” from 12 October 1632, as cited in Fraschetti, *Bernini*, 147n3.
853 “…il cavalier Bernino... ch’è il Michelangelo del nostro secolo, tanto nel dipingere quanto nello scolpire e che non cede a nesuno degli antichi nell’eccellenza dell’Arte,” from 29 January 1633, as cited in Fraschetti, *Bernini*, 108n1.
854 In the latter part of the cinquecento and into the seicento, various painters, sculptors and architects were celebrated in sundry writings with the epithet “new Michelangelo” (or similar monikers), among them: Giambologna, Prospero Fontana, Vincenzo Danti, Francesco Borromini, to name a few. For a case study of the reception of an early seicento sculptor dubbed a “new Michelangelo,” see Steven F. Ostrow, “The Discourse of Failure in Seventeenth-Century Rome: Prospero Bresciano’s Moses,” *Art Bulletin* 88 (2006): 267-91.
While these writings are united by their likening of Bernini to Michelangelo, the terms and aims of the *paragoni* they described varied according to author. Recall that as early as the mid 1620s, Francesco Bracciolini drew an implicit *paragone* between the two artists in a poem inviting Bernini to take another look at the animated sculpture of Michelangelo so that Gianlorenzo, too, like the cinquecento master, might enjoy eternal fame. The comparison was extended beyond work in stone and the above hierarchy between the two artists overturned in a Roman guidebook of 1637, wherein Gianlorenzo’s mastery of four disciplines – sculpture, painting, architecture and bronze casting – surpasses Buonarroti’s three-fold artistic universality. Decades later, Giovanni Andrea Borboni’s *Delle statue* (1661) included a chapter on modern sculpture in which Bernini is cast as Michelangelo’s heir who “made clear the reverberations of Buonarroti’s splendor in his most stupendous works.” In Pietro Sforza Pallavicino’s *Arte della perfezione cristiana* (1665), Gianlorenzo is the descendant of Vitruvius and Buonarroti. And in Francesco Fulvio Frugoni’s *Accademia della fama tenuta nel gran Museo della Gloria* (1666), Bernini and Michelangelo, alone among moderns, display the

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855 Soussloff, “Imitatio Buonarroti,” 594-5, 601-2, for a discussion and transcription of the poem. See also Chapter One of this dissertation.
856 Totti, *Ristretto*, 5. See also Chapter Three of this dissertation.
857 The statement comes at the transition between his lengthy account of Michelangelo’s contribution to the art of sculpture (he devotes 13 of the chapter’s 32 pages to Buonarroti’s work and patrons) and his subsequent praise of seicento artists, particularly Bernini (who receives second ranking among moderns with 5 pages devoted to his art and life, while Duquesnoy and Algardi share one page), whose extraordinarily animate marbles perpetuate (but do not surpass) Michelangelo’s legacy. The full passage reads: “Ma quando anche quie Vecchioni Aristarchi non si arrendesseno; metterò loro Avanti a gli occhi uno [i.e. Bernini], a cui essendo toccata in forte di segnare la Metà della sua carriera; riuscirà facile di far loro vedere chiari i riverberi delli splendori del Buonarrota nelle sue Opre piu stupende. E per dire il vero, chi puo rappresentare la Proserpina rapita da Pluton che non la vegga piu al vivo scolpita dallo scarpello del Bernino; che descritta dalla penna di Claudiano?” Borboni, *Delle statue*, 81. On Borboni’s *paragone* between Bernini and Michelangelo, see Neri, “Bernini, Michelangelo e il *Delle statue.*”
858 “…come più quantità d’eccellente edifici, è in più efficace maniera ha fabbricati e va fabbricando ad ogni ora Vitruvio, che’l Bonarrot o’l Bernino,” as cited in Montanari, “Gian Lorenzo Bernini e Sforza Pallavicino,” 59. See also Chapter Four of this dissertation for a discussion of this passage. For a broader analysis of Pallavicino’s artistic writing, his friendship with Bernini and his influence upon Domenico’s biography, see Montanari, “Gian Lorenzo Bernini e Sforza Pallavicino”; Delbeke, “The Pope, the Bust”; idem, *Fenice degli ingegni.*
skill in making animate sculptures previously achieved only by the ancients.\textsuperscript{859} This is not to say that the frequently touted affinities between the two artists were universally accepted. In a letter of 1674, Paolo Falconieri (agent to Leopoldo de Medici) praises Bernini’s works as beautiful with the proviso that they “will never be things comparable to those of Michelangelo, even if [Bernini] claims to have surpassed him.”\textsuperscript{860} In the wake of decades-long comparisons between the two artists, Falconieri’s skepticism paradoxically draws attention to the importance of the Michelangelo-Bernini \textit{paragone} to the latter’s reputation. And it was around the time of his report that the vision for what would ultimately result in two texts that fully enshrined Bernini’s relationship to Michelangelo in history – Filippo Baldinucci’s \textit{Vita del Cavaliere Gio:Lorenzo Bernini, Scultore, Architetto e Pittore} (1682) and Domenico Bernini’s \textit{Vita del Cavaliere Gio:Lorenzo Bernini} (1713) – was born.

Bernini’s \textit{vite} are the products of a biographical campaign begun in the last decade of the artist’s life as an effort to rehabilitate his faltering reputation. Possibly spearheaded by the aging artist, with the significant assistance of his family, the initial project envisioned not two Italian biographies, but one French \textit{life} to be written by Pierre Cureau de la Chambre and one Italian \textit{life} overseen by Bernini’s oldest son, Monsignor

\textsuperscript{859} “Meglio si seppero Eglino esprimere colle lor Geste, che sono le Statue sempre viventi in quel Maestoso Teatro, di quello, che haverebbe saputo far Fidia, od Alcamene, Lisippo o Callimaco, il Buonarroti o ‘l Bernino, perche questi rinomati Maestri, o pur morbidi, non perciò loro comminciarono la Venusta di quegli Animi, che solo colle Opre loro nell’Eternità si scolpiscono,” Francesco Fulvio Frugoni, \textit{Accademia della Fama tenuta nel gran museo della gloria sopra la magnificenza dell’A.R. di Carlo Emanuele II, duca di Savoia} (Torino, per Bartolomeo Zavatta, 1666), 35. I am grateful to Professor Philip Sohm for this reference.

Pier Filippo Bernini. The French project, which resulted in little more than a lengthy panegyric, was the first to appear in print. The “Éloge de M. le cavalier Bernini” was published in the *Journal des sçavans* in 1681, three months after the artist’s death, and republished in an expanded version that was appended to La Chambre’s “Préface pour server à l’histoire de la vie et des ouvrages du Cavalier Bernini” of 1685. However short, the combined “Éloge”/“Préface” concluded with a passage on the parallels between Bernini and Michelangelo. In the last paragraphs of both iterations of the “Éloge,” the author hails Bernini as the “Michelangelo of our day,” further noting the two artists’ mastery of painting, sculpture and architecture, their unique favour among pontiffs and kings and, as discussed in chapter two, their similar characters. The first version of the “Éloge” ends with La Chambre’s assertion that it is no wonder, given the lifelong parallels between Gianlorenzo and his predecessor, that “Bernini is no more lacking for

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862 For a transcription of these texts as well as a brief analysis of their themes and context, see Montanari, “Pierre Cureau de la Chambre.” See also idem, “Bernini e Cristina di Svezia,” 400-1, 410, 417-9; idem, “At the Margins,” 91-2.

863 There is a slight difference between the tones of this claim in the two editions. The 1681 version reads: “Enfin on peut dire qu’il a esté le Michel-Ange de nos jours.” In the 1685 edition, the possibility that Bernini is the new Buonarroti becomes a certainty: “Enfin on doit le considerer comme le Michel-Ange de nos jours.” See Montanari, “Pierre Cureau de la Chambre,” 126, 132n127.

864 Ibid., 126: “ayant excellé autant que luy dans la pratique de tous les beaux arts pendant prés d’un siècle. Ils ont esté tous deux chers et extrêmement considérée des Souverains Pontifes et de Rois, tous deux forte reglez dans leurs moeurs et vivement persuadez de la verité de nostre religion, infatigables au travail, également appliquez, et avec beaucoup de succès, à la poësie Italienne. L’un et l’autre, à dire le vray, d’humeur un peu austere, farouche, vive, prompte, brusque et impetuese, principalement le dernier.”
historians than Michelangelo.” 865 In the second edition, the author appends to this statement a long list of the writers who have celebrated the artists with their pen. He notes, in particular, that Bernini (like Michelangelo) was the subject of two separate Italian biographies, one by Filippo Baldinucci (already in print) and another by Giovan Pietro Bellori (about which Le Chambre was mistaken). 866 Le Chambre thus implies that being like Michelangelo depends upon more than just the activity of the artist himself; it requires that one’s achievements be immortalized in print in a comparable manner. The honour of being the subject of an independent *vita* (let alone two independent *vite*) had been the purview of an elite few, Michelangelo most notable among them. 867

Though only one of the biographies of Bernini to which La Chambre referred was ever written, two deeply interrelated Italian lives were ultimately penned and published, those by Filippo Baldinucci, Florentine art writer, and Domenico Bernini, Gianlorenzo’s younger son. Montanari has suggested that both biographies are rooted in a lost “archetype” written around 1674 by Bernini’s eldest son, Pier Filippo, and based on the utterances of Gianlorenzo himself. 868 Though Bernini may have shaped the content of such a text, Delbeke, Levy and Ostrow have argued that the full-blown biographies that ultimately resulted from the artist’s hypothetical recounting of stories and sayings to his

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865 Ibid: “Il est à presumer que pour l’entiére conformité de ces deux grands hommes, qui n’auront de long-temps leurs pareils, le Cavalier Bernin ne manquera pas d’historiens, non plus que Michel-Ange.”

866 Ibid: “Il y a déjà deux auterus celebres qui y travaillent separemment: le sieur Baldinucci à Florence et le sieur Bellori à Rome...que si Michel-Ange a esté assez hereux d’avoir pour amis et pour panegyristes Annibal Caro, Pietro Vittori [sic] et Benedetto Varchi, les plus elegans ecrivains de son siécle, le Cavalier Bernin ne luy cède en rein de ce costé-là, aprés toutes les lootanges dont l’ont bien voulu honorer des personnes d’un plus grand poids, ed des melliueres plumes d’Italie....” There is no evidence, other than La Chambre’s reference, that Bellori wrote or even intended to write a *life* of Bernini. On Bellori’s possible authorship of a Bernini *vita*, see Montanari, “Bernini e Cristina di Svezia,” 418-9.

867 As has been noted by Delbeke, Levy and Ostrow, “Prolegomena,” 52.

868 Montanari, “Bernini e Cristina di Svezia,” 402-7, 412, 416-7, 419; idem, “At the Margins,” 76-8. Cf. Delbeke, Levy and Ostrow, “Prolegomena,” 22-3, who argue that although Pier Filippo was at the helm of the biographical project (which included a catalogue of Bernini’s works with engravings), there is no evidence that he actually wrote an *ur* text or, if he did, what form it may have taken.
son resembles, at best, the collaborative nature of authorized biography, not autobiography.\textsuperscript{869} Though no “archetype” has been found, two anonymous manuscripts among the sundry Bernini papers at the Bibliothèque nationale de France – a three page birth-to-old-age narrative and an extended account of Gianlorenzo’s work on the \textit{Baldacchino} – have been identified as material related directly to the autobiographical campaign.\textsuperscript{870} Both manuscripts link Bernini to \textit{topoi} associated with Michelangelo’s life, art and reputation.\textsuperscript{871}

Beyond the basic foundational material provided by the anonymous manuscripts (and there may have been more), Baldinucci and Domenico share an enormous debt to one other group of writings. As Soussloff and, more recently, Delbeke, Levy and Ostrow have demonstrated, both biographers looked to Michelangelo’s \textit{vite} – particularly Ascanio Condivi’s 1553 \textit{Vita di Michelangelo Buonarroti} (a response to Giorgio Vasari’s 1550 edition of the \textit{Life of Michelangelo}) and Giorgio Vasari’s revised and expanded \textit{Vita di Michelangelo Buonarroti} of 1568 (a response to Condivi’s response)\textsuperscript{872} – more than

\textsuperscript{869} Delbeke, Levy and Ostrow, “Prolegomena,” 37-8; idem, introduction, xxiii. On Baldinucci and Domenico’s vivid use of quotation as a rhetorical tool that blurs the distinction between biography and autobiography, see Ostrow, “Bernini’s Voice” 132-6.

\textsuperscript{870} These manuscripts (ms. Italien, 2084, cc. 132-135 and ms. Italien, 2084, cc. 130-131) are transcribed in Audisio, “Lettere e testi,” 41-3. On the relationship of the birth-to-old-age narrative to the biographical campaign, see Montanari, “Bernini e Cristina di Svezia,” 402-3. Though Montanari sees only the birth-to-old-age manuscript as part of the biographical material, the extended description of the making of the \textit{Baldacchino} (thought significantly altered in both Baldinucci’s and Domenico’s narratives) should, as Audisio, “Lettere e testi,” 38-40, suggested, be understood as part of the corpus of early biographical writings. For the competing arguments regarding the as yet uncertain authorship of these texts, see Audisio, “Lettere e testi,” 28n1; Sandrina Bandera Bistoletti, “Lettura di testi berniniani: Qualche scoperta e nuove osservazioni: Dal ‘Journal’ di Chantelou e dai documenti della Bibliothèque nationale di Parigi,” \textit{Paragone} 36 (1985): 62n1, 67n50; Montanari, “Bernini e Cristina di Svezia,” 402.

\textsuperscript{871} Michelangelo is named once in the birth-to-old-age narrative, and twice in the manuscript about Bernini’s work on the \textit{Baldacchino}. The michelangesque themes include: privileged papal relations; \textit{difficoltà}; artistic perfectionism; sculptors as the best architects; and, youthful maturity.

any other texts, let alone biographies, for material with which to shape their versions of Bernini’s life. Their studies of the dialogue among these lives begin from the premise that biographies are artful constructions that embellish, invent or even borrow – as opposed to faithfully document – the “facts” of a subject’s life and shape it into a meaningful narrative. By way of close comparative readings of sections of Bernini’s vite against each other and against portions of Michelangelo’s biographies, Delbeke, Levy and Ostrow, in particular, have shown that Buonarroti is inscribed differently into Baldinucci’s and Domenico’s lives. For example, upon witnessing a performance of the young Gianlorenzo’s talents, Baldinucci’s Pope Paul V prognosticates, tentatively: “We hope this youth will become (debba diventare) the great Michelangelo of his century.” In Domenico’s text, Bernini’s display of skill elicits an absolute declaration: “This youth will be (sarà) the Michelangelo of his time.” Paul V’s prophecy is the only instance in which the biographers’ invocations of Buonarroti bear any resemblance and its presence in the two texts, more authoritatively than any other reference to Michelangelo, invites the reader to measure Bernini against his predecessor. More


875 Baldinucci/Enggass, Life, 10; Baldinucci, Vita, 75: “Speriamo, che questo giovanetto debba diventare il gran Michelagnolo del suo secolo.” The hesitation expressed in his account of Paul V’s prophecy follows the wording in the brief birth-to-old-age manuscript: “speriamo che questo giovinetto debba diventare il Michel Angelo del suo secolo,” as cited in Audisio, “Lettere e testi,” 41. This is the only time Michelangelo is named in the birth-to-old-age narrative.

876 Bernini, Vita, 9.

877 Buonarroti’s is named on six occasions in Baldinucci’s Vita and five times in the Life written by Domenico. Baldinucci/Enggass, Life, 8, 9, 10, 15, 43, 77; Baldinucci, Vita, 73, 74, 75, 80, 109, 143; Bernini, Vita, 9, 11-2, 13, 14, 44.
importantly, as Delbeke, Levy and Ostrow have noted, the biographers’ variation on the prophecy – Baldinucci’s equivocation and Domenico’s certainty – signals distinct portrayals of Bernini’s likeness to Michelangelo. By identifying individual perspectives in Baldinucci’s and Domenico’s textual versions of Bernini’s *imitatio Buonarroti*, they have also demonstrated that how each biographer frames Gianlorenzo’s relationship to Michelangelo reveals as much about his attitude towards the former as it does his opinion of the latter.

My aim is to offer a fuller picture of how the textual Michelangelo’s art and persona comprise the substance of Gianlorenzo’s own life on the page by reading Buonarroti’s and Bernini’s *vite* against each other. 

Focusing on the narratives of Bernini’s formation as a sculptor, I begin by considering the discrete modes of imitation Baldinucci and Domenico employ to characterize their subject’s artistic practice and, by extension, the process by which he defined himself. My examination of Baldinucci considers how his emphasis on Bernini’s practice of “selective imitation” and his version of Michelangelo’s relative presence within that selective mix responds to Buonarroti’s critical reception, specifically his misfortune in Bellori’s *Vite de’ pittori, scultori et* 

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878 Delbeke, Levy and Ostrow, “Prolegomena,” 52-3, and, Levy, “Chapter 2,” have done the most to offer a picture of the significant overlap between Michelangelo’s and Bernini’s lives, focusing in particular on episodes from Condivi’s text that are restaged in Domenico’s biography. I cast a more comprehensive (though not exhaustive) net by examining the stories from both Vasari and Condivi that Bernini’s biographers selected to constitute their subject’s life. An unexpected finding in this process was that Baldinucci and Domenico culled opportunistically and impartially from Michelangelo’s two biographies.

879 While I am not suggesting that Baldinucci engaged in the sophisticated stylistic, theoretical and historical analysis practiced by contemporaries like Bellori, I nonetheless disagree with Montanari, who has characterized Baldinucci as insensitive to Bernini’s place within baroque aesthetics as well as to Bernini’s connection to Renaissance traditions and, in turn, of “impoverishing” the theme of *imitatio Buonarroti*. See Montanari, “At the Margins,” 100: “Baldinucci does not attempt to insert Bernini into the history of Italian art, and he never for a moment analyzes the problematic and controversial dialogue with the grand tradition of the Renaissance or the early seventeenth-century revolutions in painting. The theme of the *imitatio Buonarroti*, for instance, is not only a self-mythologizing notion of Bernini’s own… but also an instrument that would theoretically have been very well suited to the purposes of Baldinucci as a Florentine and follower of Vasari; yet it is omitted or, what is worse still, implied and impoverished.”
architetti moderni (1672). In my analysis of Domenico’s “filial” metaphor for Bernini’s imitation, in turn, I engage in a comparative reading of Baldinucci and Domenico, particularly around the paired themes of originality/copying and naturalism/artfulness, in order to shed light on the different ends to which the biographer alludes to Michelangelo’s critical reception and distances his Bernini from his predecessor. These two sections thus present biographical counterpoints to my discussion of Bernini’s emulation of Buonarroti in chapters one and two of this dissertation. Although there are many other parallels among the biographies of Bernini and Michelangelo that merit investigation (such as the artists’ religiosity or the artists’ spiritual relationship with women), the rest of this chapter pursues two biographical themes that either complement or extend my study of Bernini’s artistic engagement with his predecessor: Bernini’s employ at the papal court (which offers a literary perspective on the papal fashioning of the new Michelangelo) and the princely nature of his art and person (which takes up the themes of disegno and ingegno discussed in chapter two). What thus emerge more clearly are the competing constructions of what it means to be the seicento Michelangelo.

**Baldinucci’s Selective Bernini**

Baldinucci establishes Gianlorenzo’s practice of imitation upon the youth’s arrival in Rome, where, amidst ancient and modern masterpieces it was “made easy for Bernini, through close and continuous study of the most praiseworthy works, especially those of the great Michelangelo, and of Raphael, to make in himself an extract of everything exquisite and most choice,” in order to “measure up to the lofty ideas of those
sublime minds.”

Composed of a judicious mix of exemplars, predominantly Michelangelo and Raphael, Bernini embodies the practice of selective imitation. As Levy has observed, Baldinucci subsequently offers various examples of Bernini’s selective method in practice, and conjoins it with his own mode of life writing, which he encapsulates with the motto: “gathers only the most beautiful flower” (IL PIU BEL FIOR NE COGLIE). Montanari further argues that Baldinucci’s emphasis on selective imitation sought to inscribe Bernini into a Bellorian framework (from which he was excluded) that celebrated Raphael’s eclectic practice as the paradigm adopted by the best of the new generation of moderns. Indeed, Baldinucci’s selective Bernini echoes not only Raphael, who, later in the text is praised for having “collected in himself waters
from all the springs,” but also Bellori’s hero, Annibale Carracci, a Raphael reborn, who reformed painting in the wake of mannerist artificiality with a style that “consisted in uniting the idea and nature, while he accumulated in himself the worthiest virtues of past masters.”

Although we can understand Baldinucci’s emphasis on selective imitation, in part, as a response to Bellori, we should not interpret it as a wholesale endorsement of the latter’s views on art. His identification of Raphael in tandem with (even faintly subordinate to) “the great Michelangelo” as the models intrinsic to Bernini’s artistic identity is polemical in the wake of Bellori’s criticism of Buonarroti’s multi-disciplinary talents, especially in the realm of sculpture where his single-minded quest for perfectly contoured forms “left us with the desire for [sculpture’s] other parts rather than the example” thus rendering him inferior to the ancients. By championing Michelangelo

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885 (italics mine) Baldinucci/Enggass, *Life*, 79; Baldinucci, *Vita*, 145; “Fra’ pittori più celebri poneva i seguenti con tal’ordine. Il primo e principalissimo diceva essere stato Raffaello, il quale chiamava un recipiente smisurato, che raccoglieva in sé l’acque di tutte l’altri fonti, cioè ch’e’ possedeva il più perfetto di tutti gli altri insieme.” Similar praise is found in Domenico’s biography, see Bernini, *Vita*, 29: “Fra’ i primi Pittori riponeva egli sempre Raffaello, e l’assomigliava a un gran Mare, che raccoglieva in sé l’acque di tutti i fiumi cioè il perfetto di tutti gli altri insieme.”


887 Baldinucci’s version of Bernini’s selective imitation is notably at odds with Bellori’s schema in the discussion of Gianlorenzo’s portrait practice. Gianlorenzo apparently thought the story of the Zeuxian maiden an outright fable, arguing that parts were not beautiful in of themselves but in relation to each other – a principle that carried through to creating portraits, an art that required one to see beyond anything unattractive and to use one’s judgment to identify and capture something inherently beautiful in his subject. See Baldinucci/Enggass, *Life*, 77; Baldinucci, *Vita*, 143. I would suggest that these passages, which are only found in Baldinucci’s biography, seek to counter an argument in Bellori’s discussion of the importance of Zeuxis’ precedent that not only precludes portraitists from engaging in selective imitation but also deems the genre of portraiture itself as one in which the pursuit of beauty is compromised by the necessity to resemble the subject: “From this it appears that Castelvetro was not just in his criticism of Aristotle on tragedy, for he holds that the virtue of painting consists not in making the image beautiful and perfect but in making it similar to nature, whether beautiful or deformed; as though excess of beauty takes away the likeness. Castelvetro’s argument applies only to strictly representational artists and makers of portraits, who cherish no idea and are at the mercy of ugliness of the face or body, being unable to add beauty or to correct the deformities of nature without taking away the likeness, else the portrait would be more beautiful and less like.” Bellori, *Lives*, 60.

888 Bellori, *Lives*, 227: “If ever in modern times sculpture came nigh rising again and renewing its ancient form, it truly appeared that with Buonarroti’s inspiration it might rise to its former honors; but because this sculptor did not consummate the art in its entirety, achieving perfection only in grandeur of lineaments, he
as a model worthy of imitation, Baldinucci overturns Bellori’s hierarchy, one that challenged Buonarroti’s efficacy and thereby implicated the “new Michelangelo.”

Although the reader would not have been aware of it, Baldinucci’s statement about Bernini’s artistic self-composition also emends a passage from the foundational birth-to-old-age manuscript that unexpectedly excludes Michelangelo from a comparable inventory of artistic models. But Baldinucci was not satisfied with simply asserting Michelangelo’s exemplarity. In a passage that precedes his statement about Bernini’s selective imitation, the biographer explicitly redresses Buonarroti’s relationship to the antique in all artistic disciplines while underscoring the centrality of this achievement for Gianlorenzo: “thanks to Bernini, these three most noble arts [are] maintained in rightful possession of their ancient dignity, which after their almost total degradation and ruin were restored by the never sufficiently praised Michelangelo.”

left us with the desire for its other parts rather than the example.” The comment is made at the introduction to the life of Duquesnoy. Bellori makes a similar claim in his address to the reader, stating that “sculpture to date lacks a sculptor, because it has not been raised to the level of painting, its companion, and the marbles remain deprived of narrative, boasting only some few statues such as those of Michelangelo, which are inferior to ancient works.”

Although Bellori does not write about Bernini, Soussloff, “Imitatio Buonarroti,” 596, 598-600, has suggested that references to Michelangelo in the Lives can function simultaneously as allusions to Gianlorenzo, since the identities of the two artists were so frequently conflated. Bellori’s omission of Bernini is thus meant to be read as twofold, that is, as overtly critical of Michelangelo and mutely accusatory of Bernini. While this is not to suggest that the two artists are interchangeable, it is possible that just as Michelangelo provides a lens through which to understand Bernini, so too Bernini provides a framework for thinking about Michelangelo anew. The specific passage from Soussloff’s text reads: “Virtually contemporaneous with Baldinucci’s 1682 biography, the publication of another work in the same genre reveals that Bernini’s reputation was read as synonymous with Michelangelo’s. It may seem surprising to assert that Bernini’s public persona can be discovered in Giovanni Pietro Bellori’s Vite de Pitori, Scultori ed Architetti Moderni (1672) because it contains no Life of Bernini. If the work of Jacques Derrida and other post-structuralists has shown us anything, it has made us sensitive to the nuances of omission and suppression in literary and historical texts.” See also Montanari, introduction, 20-2.

Baldinucci/Enggass, Life, 8; Baldinucci, Vita, 73: “che invidieranno alla nostra la fortuna che ha di vedere, mercé del Bernino, mantenute queste tre nobilissime arti nel possesso legittimo dell’antica lor
Vasari’s *Lives*, Baldinucci’s Michelangelo represents absolute perfection. Although the biographer does not mention a period of artistic degradation following or owing to Buonarroti that has now been overcome (as had Bellori), his gratitude for the continuity achieved by Bernini alone, signals, at the very least, that Gianlorenzo is unique among Michelangelo’s followers. But even so, Bernini can here only equal his precursor by “maintaining” that which the latter had already established; Michelangelo’s example is the qualitative (if not also the quantitative, as we shall see) limit for Bernini’s potential. By reclaiming Buonarroti’s artistic supremacy in the present and distinguishing Bernini as his heir, Baldinucci underscores the primacy of Michelangelo to his subject’s place in history, in spite of Gianlorenzo’s purportedly composite self-definition. Such tensions in the text underscore how Baldinucci’s selective Bernini both harnesses and confronts Bellori’s agenda to Michelangelo’s – as much as Bernini’s – advantage.

Parallels between Bernini and Michelangelo shape the latter’s persona as well as his three-fold mastery of art, especially his early artistic training and formation as a sculptor, which Baldinucci casts in a Florentine mold by way of Pietro, Gianlorenzo’s father. On the heels of his claim that Bernini “maintained” Michelangelo’s legacy, Baldinucci introduces Pietro as a native of Florence and “man of no small acclaim in painting and sculpture.”

This sequence is strategic. Named at the transition between the aforementioned praise for Michelangelo’s achievement and the account of Bernini’s birth, Pietro functions as intermediary between the two artists and provides a Tuscan pedigree for his Neapolitan-born son (who would not set foot in Tuscany until late in life). Though he was not a “follower” of Buonarroti in the strict sense, Pietro nonetheless plays

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*dignità, alla quale dopo un quasi totale abbasamento e ruina, l’aveva il non mai abbastanza lodato Michelangelo restituitae.*

a constitutive part in Bernini’s subsequent fashioning as the new Michelangelo of sculpture, assuming the role of the diligent father who facilitates his son’s progress. Upon the news of Gianlorenzo’s birth we are told that “nature made it easy for him to acquire his father’s skills.”

Bernini’s education thus begins with Pietro’s example. After he learns the lessons of his father and following the family move from Naples to Rome, Bernini embarks on his studies of the best works by ancients and moderns. Baldinucci makes clear that even these studies – also effortless – are somehow indebted to Pietro, for it was the fame of the father that we must thank for the family’s Roman residence, where “it was made easy for Bernini,” the best of ancient and modern art. The repeated ease with which Bernini assumed the relative perfections of his models – first Pietro, then the antique as well as Michelangelo and Raphael – again highlights, in part, Baldinucci’s bias in favour of Buonarroti. If, as Condivi and Vasari tell us, Michelangelo was born to remedy the deficiencies of his age and toiled to smooth away the difficulties of art, Baldinucci’s Bernini was born to take up the path made smooth by his forebears. And it is in Rome, under the Florentine Pietro’s guidance, that Bernini’s patently michelangesque virtues are revealed.

During his first years in Rome, Baldinucci’s Bernini studies antiquities at the Vatican and, after carving his first sculpture, the youth is called before Paul V and asked to design a head. Impressed by Gianlorenzo’s drawing and wishing to ensure his progress, the pope places the artist into the care of Cardinal Maffeo Barberini, “the guarantor of the brilliant result” that was expected of the youth. Upon giving Maffeo his

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893 Baldinucci/Enggass, Life, 8; Baldinucci, Vita, 73: “E di vero gli fu di tanto ella cortese nell’apprendimento delle paterne arti, di cui egli oltre modo era vago....”
894 (italics mine) Baldinucci/Enggass, Life, 9; Baldinucci, Vita, 74. It should also be noted that nowhere in the birth-to-old-age manuscript that provided a foundation for Baldinucci’s statement about Bernini’s study of exemplars is the youth’s progress made “easy,” whether by nature or by past examples.
new charge, the pontiff makes his prophetic statement that he “hopes [Gianlorenzo] will become the Michelangelo of his century.” No sooner does the pope utter these words than Pietro re-enters the picture and assumes the role of pedagogue (though Maffeo, also a Florentine native, continues to witness virtually all of Bernini’s early artistic milestones). After a line of praise regarding Bernini’s indefatigable and uninterrupted study of all things new, Baldinucci exclaims, “But what cannot a gifted nature accomplish when it is accompanied by wise and prudent guidance!”

Bernini’s shrewd mentor is Pietro, who criticized his son’s drawings and encouraged him to further heights by goading him with doubts that he could achieve the same result a second time. As a consequence of the father’s “clever device” Bernini “was in constant competition with himself.” Thus, having assimilated the lessons of his father and of the best ancients and moderns, Bernini is now urged by Pietro to rival, with each new drawing, his own new standard of perfection.

John Lyons has argued that anecdotes such as this, which define Bernini as his own referent, are employed by both biographers to neutralize time and change in the life of their subject, making him an absolute artist, fully formed in youth. What distinguishes Baldinucci’s self-reliant and timeless Bernini from Domenico’s, however, is that he was not born possessed of consummate perfection but instinctively acquired it by assimilating the best of his predecessors. In Baldinucci’s account, Pietro’s strategic cultivation of his son’s talents also engendered in the youth perceptibly buonarrotian perfectionism and discernment, as henceforth Gianlorenzo “was forever filled with such

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zeal and desire to always do better and that when he was old he confessed that he had
never done anything that completely pleased him if he compared it with whatever he had
later worked on or, at least... according to new ideas he had conceived that he would
have wanted to do." Similarly, Vasari claimed that Michelangelo’s “judgment was so
severe that he was never content with anything he did,” and that his “imagination was so
powerful and perfect that he often discarded work in which his hand found it impossible
to express his tremendous and awesome ideas.”

Bernini’s exacting standard is further explored by Baldinucci in subsequent
anecdotes about Annibale Carracci’s prophecy (during which Bernini’s desire to create
two great monuments in St. Peter’s is born), the Montoya bust (wherein the liveliness of
the bust rivals that of the sitter) and the two Scipione busts (in which Bernini surpasses
himself by carving a second bust after a defect appeared in the first), and a culminates in
a statement about the artist’s early maturity: upon seeing the two Scipione busts as an old
man Bernini lamented, “How little progress I have made in the art of sculpture through
these long years becomes clear to me when I see that as a boy I handled marble in this
manner.” The sculptor’s humble reflection echoes the aging Michelangelo’s thoughts
upon seeing one of his early drawings: “he said modestly that as a boy he had known how

897 Baldinucci/Enggass, Life, 10; Baldinucci, Vita, 75: “Onde non è gran fatto che il Bernino fin da quel
tempo si vestisse di un tal gusto e di una così grande avidità di far sempre meglio che egli medesimo,
venuto poi in età, confessava di non aver giammai fatta cosa, che interamente gli piacesse, a confronto
dell’altra, ove ei metteva dipoi la mano; o almeno corrispondentemente a quello, che secondo le nuove idée,
ch’egli concepiva in se stesso desiderava di fare.” For the biographical Michelangelo’s exacting stand ards
and severe criticism of his own art, see Condivi/Wohl, Life, 107; Condivi, Vita, 64; Vasari/Bull, Life, 404,
418-9; Vasari/Barocchi, Vita, 1:99, 116-7.
899 Baldinucci/Enggass, Life, 12; Baldinucci, Vita, 77: “Oh quanto poco profitto ho fatto io nell’arte della
scultura in un si lungo corso di anni, mentre io conosco che da fanciullo maneggiava il marmo in questo
modo!”
to draw better than he did now as an old man."  The statements again underscore unchanging nature of these two masters. By switching the medium in Vasari’s anecdote from drawing to sculpture, Baldinucci sets the stage for his ekphrasis of the David, a work Lyons has suggested is the sculptural showpiece of Bernini’s youthful maturity and timelessness. But before the biographer discusses this work, he introduces the Aeneas and with it Bernini’s debt to Pietro.

Rather than embodying the perfection and self-reliance of the previous works, the Aeneas represents a moment of influence, development and transition. Baldinucci here diverts from his narrative of Bernini’s flawless constancy so as to inscribe his subject into time. The biographer identifies the Aeneas as Bernini’s “first large work” and observes that it reveals both the influence of the father and something of son’s nascent style: “In it, although something of the manner of his father, Pietro, is discernible, one still can see, through the fine touches in the execution, a certain approach to the tender and true toward which from then on his excellent taste led him. It appears most clearly in the head of the old man.” The Aeneas here represents a coexistence of styles – that of the father (in the body), which is apparently identifiable though not described, and that of Bernini (evident in the head), characterized by a fine touch and a sensitivity for the tender and true. (That Bernini’s style should reveal itself in the head is little surprise, since heretofore in Baldinucci’s biography his sculptural work was limited to portraits.) As Montanari has suggested, Baldinucci here seems to have distinguished in Bernini’s

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900 Vasari/Bull, Life, 328; Vasari/Barocchi, Vita, 1:7. On the theme of the “old man as child” and vice-versa in Michelangelo’s biographies, especially the story of the faun, see Barolsky, Michelangelo’s Nose, 30.
901 Lyons, “Plotting Bernini,” 149-51.
902 Baldinucci/Enggass, Life, 12; Baldinucci, Vita, 78: “e fu questa la prima opera grande, ch’egli facesse, nella quale quantunque alquanto della maniera di Pietro suo padre si riconosca, non lascia però di vedersi, per le belle avvertenze ch’egli ebbe in condurla, un certo avvicinarsi al tenero e vero, al quale fino in quell’età portavalo l’ottimo gusto suo, ciò che nella testa del vecchio più chiaramente campeggia.”
sculpture an emergent style that summons to mind the Carracci emphasis on neo-
Venetian and neo-Correggesque handling in painting.  

Baldinucci’s assessment of the *Aeneas* is now implicitly critical of Pietro, as it
distances his style from what he sees as a future of greater excellence in Gianlorenzo’s
tender and true manner. Bernini’s nascent style also subtly alienates him from Buonarroti,
since tenderness was the quality most prized by seicento classicists who opposed what
they saw as Michelangelo’s excessively muscular and contoured manner. Bellori, for
example, ranked Duquesnoy’s tender sculpted infants above Buonarroti’s brawny
“Herculean” children. He went one step further toward dethroning Michelangelo (and,
indirectly Bernini) by identifying Duquesnoy and Algardi as the seicento sculptors who
came closest to restoring the art of marble carving to its ancient glory with their soft and
animating touches. Baldinucci’s ascription of tenderness to the *Aeneas* serves, in turn,
to assimilate Gianlorenzo into contemporary classicist taste. The biographer even refers
directly to Bellori (and implicitly to his critique of style) in the list of Bernini’s pupils at
the end of the *Vita*, where he makes the polemical assertion that the “marvelous
tenderness” of Duquesnoy’s infants was indebted to the lesson of none other than

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903 Montanari, “At the Margins,” 98.
904 Bellori, *Lives*, 233: “Michelangelo fashioned them in marble and in painting all bulging with muscles
like Hercules, without any tenderness…. Francois the Fleming restricted himself more to tender forms of
infants, and in this type of likeness he advanced admirably in the style that is followed today.” On Bellori’s
assessment of Michelangelo and Duquesnoy, see Lingo, *François Duquesnoy*, 42-3. On the seicento
reception of Duquesnoy’s tender putti and, more broadly, his soft touch, see Anthony Colantuono, “Titian’s
905 Bellori, *Lives*, 295: “Although sculpture up to this time lags far behind that of the ancients, with a paltry
number of statues deserving fame, for it has not attained the perfection of painting, nor has it given us a
sculptor as painting has demonstrated a painter to us, nevertheless in our era it has been reinvigorated and
has regained its forces through the studious application of two most illustrious artists, Francois the Fleming
and secondly, Alessandro Algardi, whose life we are about to write and through whose hands the spirit was
restored to marbles.”
Bernini. In an earlier passage Baldinucci also writes that the tenderness Bernini gave to his works was subsequently learned by many contemporary artists working in Rome. Baldinucci’s stylistic assessment of the *Aeneas* group thus re-attributes to Gianlorenzo the sculptural origin one of the fundamental aspects of seicento aesthetics. And if Baldinucci’s Bernini is Michelangelo’s equal, and maintains his predecessor’s achievements, might it be said that through Bernini Buonarroti here possess the quality of tenderness *post-facto*, too?

On the heels of his praise for Bernini’s display of tenderness, Baldinucci turns to the *David*, an eminently Florentine subject and a statue in which the artist eschews delicate animation for a heroic vigour appropriate to the biblical hero and more akin to Michelangelo’s own manner. Although Baldinucci does not mention style explicitly, his description of the work calls to mind Testelin’s categorization of the “strong and powerfully expressed” Athenian sculptural style adopted by Michelangelo and the Carracci.

In this work Bernini overwhelmingly surpassed himself…. from youth, as he was wont to say, he devoured marble and never struck a false blow, an accomplishment of those who are superior to art itself, rather than of those

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906 Baldinucci/Enggass, *Life*, 88; Baldinucci, *Vita*, 154: “Anche stette appresso di lui e presene la maravigliosa tenerezza ch’egli ebbe nell’operar suo, Francesco di Quesnoy, detto il Fiammingo, che tanto si segnalò in far figure di piccoli fanciulli ed altre… di cui molto eruditamente al suo solito ha scritto Giovan Pietro Bellori nel suo libro de’pittori, scultori e architetti moderni.” Soussloff, “Imitatio Buonarroti,” 596, 598-600, first suggested that here Baldinucci was responding to Bellori’s critique of Michelangelo as well as his praise of Duquesnoy and Algardi. She does not, however, connect Baldinucci’s discussion of Bernini’s tenderness to Bellori’s assessment. On the relationship (or rather disparity) between the styles of Bernini and Duquesnoy in contemporary art theory, see Marion Boudon-Machuel, “L’antithese Bernini-DuQuesnoy dans la littérature artistique francaise des XVIIe et XVIIIe siecles,” in Grell and Stanič eds., *Le Bernin et l’Europe*, 325-49.

907 Baldinucci/Enggass, *Life*, 74; Baldinucci, *Vita*, 141: “Diede all’opere sue una tenerezza maravigliosa, dalla quale appresero molti grandi uomini, che hanno operato in Roma ne’ suoi tempi.”

908 Henri Testelin’s categorization of ancient sculptural styles is recorded in his lecture on proportions given at the French Academy in Paris on 2 October 1678: “The first is called the strong and powerfully expressed, such as followed by Michelangelo, the Carracci, and the whole of the Bolognese school, and this manner was attributed to the city of Athens.” On this passage and its implications, see Cropper and Dempsey, *Nicholas Poussin*, 39-40.
who are merely expert in art. He modeled the beautiful face of this figure after his own countenance. The powerful knitted brows, the terrible fixity of the eyes, and the upper jaw clamped tightly over the lower lip wonderfully expresses the rightful wrath of the young Israelite in the act of aiming his sling at the forehead of the giant Philistine. The same spirit of resoluteness and vigor is seen in all parts of the body, which lacks only movement to be alive.\footnote{Baldinucci/Enggass, \textit{Life}, 13; Bal- dinucci, \textit{Vita}, 78.}

As I argued in Chapter Two, the explosive action of the \textit{David} is here a metaphor for the vehemence of Bernini’s execution, the forcefulness of his style as well as the vigour of the artist himself. These connections among style, character and process can be further developed by examining the connotations specifically of the “terrible fixity” of Bernini’s eyes, which, together with his powerfully knitted brows and clamped jaw suitably express David’s “rightful wrath.”

Throughout Baldinucci’s text, the “terrible fixity” of Bernini’s eyes serves as a metonym for the artist’s own irascible disposition, his power of execution and his innately forceful spirit.\footnote{On Bernini’s terrifying gaze, choleric temper and his spirited art in the two biographies as allusions to contemporary metaphysical theories of heat and light, see Fehrenbach, “Bernini’s Light.”} In the passage on Bernini’s physiognomy and character, for example, the eyes are given particular attention: they are “spirited,” “lively” and “with a piercing gaze.”\footnote{Baldinucci/Enggass, \textit{Life}, 72; Baldinucci, \textit{Vita}, 138.} Here we are also told that Gianlorenzo is a demanding master “inclined to anger” and “quickly inflamed,” and when he issues orders he “\textit{terrifies by his gaze alone.”}\footnote{(emphasis mine) Baldinucci/Enggass, \textit{Life}, 72; Baldinucci, \textit{Vita}, 138: “Nel comandare, con nulla più che col solo sguardo atterriva.”} Baldinucci even introduces the \textit{Vita} with Bernini’s ocular terror, claiming that his subject’s “strong and noble vitality of nature” is epitomized by his spirit, which “flashes forth from [Bernini’s] eyes in such abundance and so blazingly that the strongest
pupils cannot sustain the light or even its reflection.”

(The characterization evokes Vasari’s description of Michelangelo’s Moses, the “terribilissimo principe,” whose aria is so “dazzling and resplendent” that “one cries out for his countenance to be veiled.”)

And near the end of his narrative, Baldinucci tells us that Bernini seemed to be in ecstasy when at work and concentrated so intensely that “it appeared from his eyes that he wanted his spirit to issue forth and give life to the stone.” In the David, the terrible gaze and the fearsome countenance shared by Bernini and the biblical hero are echoed in the rest of the statue: “the same spirit of resoluteness and vigour is seen in all parts of the body, which lacks only movement to be alive.”

Michelangelo did not, like Bernini, possess a terrible gaze, yet his paradigmatic terribilità lurks behind this vigorous self-portrait (although Baldinucci does not use the word). Terribilità (a multivalent term much like furia) is the fearsome nature of the artist, a muscular and vehemently animated style, an awe inspiring and terror inducing power, the product of absolute technical mastery and a sign of supernatural creativity.

According to Vasari, Buonarroti’s terribilità represented the supreme achievement in art and was most evident in the Sistine Ceiling, a work in which Michelangelo “smoothed

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913 Baldinucci/Enggass, Life, 6; Baldinucci, Vita, 71: “veggonsi talvolta alcuni, che sul primo romper dell’alba degli anni loro le scintille dell’animo in tanta copia e con sì fatto sfolgoramento tramandano fuori degli occhi, che appena vaglion le pupille più forti a sostenere non che la luce, i riverberi.”

914 Vasari/Bull, Life, 345; Vasari/Barocchi, Vita, 1:30. On this passage, see also Barolsky, Michelangelo’s Nose, 41-3.

915 Baldinucci/Enggass, Life, 72; Baldinucci, Vita, 139: “pareva che dagli occhi gli volesse uscir lo spirito per animare il sasso.”

916 Although Michelangelo was not the only artist to possess terribilità (Brunelleschi, Donatello and Tintoretto are just a few of the other artists to whom Vasari applied the term), he is the artist who most epitomizes its many characteristics.

away” the difficulties of art for his contemporaries. Vasari, as Summers has demonstrated, associated *terribilità* with virtuosity, facility, variety and force of motion, all of which reveal the triumph of art over nature. Baldinucci points to his subject’s terrifying artifice when he writes that with the David Bernini showed he was “superior to art itself rather than merely expert in art.” The David also reveals the other essential qualities of *terribilità*: Gianlorenzo and his sculpture are vigorous and fearsome (though we are not told, in turn, if the David terrifies the viewer); by never striking a false blow Bernini demonstrates command over *difficoltà*; the resoluteness and vigor of the form offer the illusion of forceful animation; and, the terrible fixity of his gaze, defined variously in the text as an awesome and inspiring power, places his invention and facture in an otherworldly category. While all of these meanings of *terribilità* cohere in Baldinucci’s description of the David, I would like to underscore the implications of this term – however veiled – for Bernini’s sculptural manner, particularly since the biographer’s discussion of this sculpture immediately follows his stylistic assessment of the Aeneas.

If, within the context of Baldinucci’s biography, Bernini’s vehement and forceful manner favourably likens him to Michelangelo, within the context of seicento aesthetics, cultivating a sculptural style resembling that of Buonarroti was, for some, no longer the summit of achievement. For example, although Testelin praised Michelangelo’s (Athens’) powerful manner in sculpture, he ranked it lower than the “Syconian” style, which was achieved “through selecting and joining together [the perfections] of the other styles” that

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919 This is perhaps best expressed in Sistine *Jonah*, whose “terribilitâ” resided in the illusion “by force of art” through which the dynamically bending figure made a curved vault appear straight. Vasari/Bull, *Life*, 360; Vasari/Barocchi, *Vita*, 1:51-2.
is, by mixing strong “Athenian” contours with “Corinthian” effeminacy and “Rhodian” tenderness.  

Similarly, Bellori’s own taste for the tender was counterbalanced by his appreciation of Herculean vigour, as attested by his praise of Annibale’s own throwing figure, the Farnese Polyphemus whose “impetus is animated with the grandest and most vehement style, in which the terrifying act is given form.”

Within a passage on the Polyphemus that celebrates the painter’s reforming mixture of the best styles, Bellori establishes paragoni between Annibale and ancient sculptors as well as between Annibale and Michelangelo:

Which statues of Agasius or Glycon would you set above those fictive chiaroscuro ones by him in the models of the terms in the Farnese Gallery? Which Herculeses or, if you will, giants by Michelangelo would you put before the figures of Hercules and Polyphemus that he painted? He showed the way to profit from Michelangelo as others had not succeeded in doing, a way that has now been completely abandoned; because, passing over the style and the anatomies of the Last Judgment, he turned and looked at the very beautiful male nudes on the partitions on the ceiling above, and the displayed them in the Gallery with equal merit.

Bellori’s claim that Annibale eschewed the Last Judgment (criticized by contemporaries for its forced, artificial and/or excessively anatomical figures) in favour of imitating Michelangelo’s earlier Sistine work (which, later in the text, Bellori intimates was based on a study of the Belvedere Torso), is a novel contribution to early modern writing on

920.. The second, weak and effeminate, which was followed by Etienne Delaulne…and also Giovanni da Bologna, was considered to come from Corinth. The third, filled with tenderness and the various graces, especially regarding delicate details, was said to be followed by Apelles, Phidias, and Praxiteles in their design. This manner was highly esteemed, and was said to come from Rhodes. But the forth is both sweet and correct, and indicates great contours, smoothly flowing, natural and fluent. This style develops from the Peloponnesian city of Sicyon, the birthplace of Herodotus, the sculptor of the Belvedere Torso [sic]. It achieved perfection through selecting and joining together those things that were most perfect in each of the other styles.” From Testelin’s lecture on proportions of 2 October 1678, as cited in Cropper and Dempsey, Nicholas Poussin, 39.

921 Bellori, Lives, 90.


923 “the example and perfection of painting is contained in good statues, together with good imitation selected from nature; for to tell the truth, Michelangelo was never acclaimed for anatomy, in which he had advanced so far that instead he is criticized for having exaggerated it in many of his figures; rather he owes
Buonarroti’s reception by artists. By looking to Michelangelo’s antique-inspired Ignudi, Bellori’s Annibale (apparently alone among artists) escapes the stilted manner that critics like Armenini saw as the inevitable result of trying to imitate the complexities of the Last Judgment, and which they claimed Michelangelo himself lamented: “Oh how many clumsy artists this work of mine wishes to make.”\(^{924}\) Annibale’s strategic circumvention of the fate that plagued Buonarroti’s followers is all the more remarkable in that it occasions a triumph for painting over sculpture.\(^{925}\) (One wonders, to this end, if Bellori had a specific “giant by Michelangelo” in mind, namely his David which was referred to popularly as “il gigante”.)

Baldinucci’s ekphrasis of Bernini’s David implicitly counters Bellori by granting modern sculpture that which the latter had deprived it: praise comparable to that given modern painting.\(^{926}\) Following on the heels of the softly modeled vitality of the Aeneas, which represented a “tender and true” manner that Baldinucci claims Bernini continued to follow, the forcefully executed and terrible David subsumes tenderness and truth (to nature?) within its vehemently animated form. This sequence shelters Bernini from criticism, and furnishes his David with a combination of qualities thought to be lacking in

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\(^{924}\) Armenini, True Precepts, 138; idem, De veri precetti, 83: “vedute un dì da Michelangelo, nell’entrar che fece in Capella [Sistina] in compagnia d’un vescovo, credo per altre sue faccende, par che con quello dicesse, ‘O quanti quest’opera mia ne vuole ingoffire’.” Baldinucci later appropriated this passage for his definition of the maniera legnosa, although he substituted the more general “manner” for “work” (which in Armenini’s text referred specifically to the paintings in the Sistine Chapel). Baldinucci, Vocabolario, 89: “Questo accidente fu dall’alto ingegno di quel sublime Artefice preveduto; quando ebbe dire una volta: Questa mia maniera vuol fare dimolti goffi Artefici.”


\(^{926}\) According to Montanari, introduction, 20-2, Bellori’s claim that modern sculpture had not reached the heights of ancient art and was thus inferior to modern painting, signals a new moment in the paragone between the two figural arts from a basis in theory to an apparent foundation in historical reality.
contemporary sculpture. Baldinucci description of Bernini’s *David* thus reconciles Michelangelo’s style and critical fortunes with seicento aesthetic tastes, without openly acknowledging any need for reform or differentiating between an early or late manner.

In order to understand how Bernini’s early display of tenderness might also be harmonized with his subsequent demonstration of forceful animation, it is useful to look at a passage from Baldinucci’s *Life of Cigoli* in the *Notizie dei Professori del Disegno da Cimabue in Qua*. According to the biographer, the greatness of the Florentine painter’s drawings was defined not in his “symmetry of the parts,” or in his “sweetness and softness of touch,” or even his “perfection of the contours and intelligence of the muscles” but in a “*vivacity and spirit*” that Baldinucci had only known in the work of Michelangelo. He writes further that: “the spirit of one and of the other [i.e. Cigoli and Buonarroti], particularly in their sketches, is such that the first sight reveals a vivacity resulting from the whole, not the parts, that terrifies he who sees it.”

Here, the terror stimulated by vigorously animated work is greater than the sum of all of its component excellences, including tenderness. *Terribilità*, in short, is the consequence of a selective practice. If we apply the logic of this passage to Baldinucci’s discussion of Bernini’s style, it becomes evident that the aggressive liveliness of the *David* expresses a spirit akin to that of Michelangelo. And as with Cigoli, Bernini’s performance is a michelangesque inheritance.

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*Filippo Baldinucci, Notizie dei Professori del Disegno da Cimabue in Qua* (Florence: Studio per Edizioni Scelte, 1974-75), 5:276-7: “isegno senza termine o misura, ed hanno i suoi disegni (fatti d’una maniera che fu sua propria) oltre alla simetria della parti, oltre alla dolcezza e morbidezza del tocco, oltre alla perfezione del dintorno e intelligenza de’ muscoli, una certa *vivacita e spirito*, che io non seppi mai ravvisare, se non in quegli del gran Michelagnolo; non dico gia, ‘che la maniera del disegnare del Cigoli sia la stessa con quella di Michelagnolo, giacche e molto diversa, ma che lo spirito degli uni e degli altri, particolarmente nelli schizzi, e tale, che a primo aspetto scuopre una vivacita risultante dal tutto e non dalle parti, che mette terrore a chi gli mira.’"
On the one hand, Baldinucci’s ekphrasis of the *David* coupled with his decision to dedicate more lines to this work than to any other sculpture underscores the strategic place the work occupies in highlighting Bernini’s proximity to Michelangelo. Though it is not the only sculpture discussed in the narrative of his early formation, this self-portrait defines the artist’s identity more fully than previous or later works. In the *David*, Bernini is distinctively himself and palpably reminiscent of another. On the other hand, Baldinucci’s description of the statue carefully preserves the status of Buonarroti’s *David* (at least in Vasari’s terms) as unsurpassed. In Vasari’s estimation, the Florentine *David* was the work that “established Michelangelo’s reputation as a sculptor” and which represented the apex of art by “put[ing] in[to] shade every other statue, ancient or modern.” Bernini’s *David* represents no such triumph; rather, it is his subsequent work, the *Apollo and Daphne* that is sculpture’s “standard of excellence” and which makes Bernini’s reputation, so much so that “when he walked about the city the young artist…attracted everyone’s eye” and “people watched him and pointed him out as a prodigy.” By concluding his discussion of Bernini’s sculptural formation with the *Apollo and Daphne*, Baldinucci suggests the possibility that his subject’s *David* has supplanted Michelangelo’s *David* without, however, eschewing Bernini’s new stature as an exemplary sculptor.

Baldinucci’s selective Bernini effectively reduces the historical gap between the styles of Bernini and Michelangelo. The consequence of his strategy in the narrative of Bernini’s early formation is that in the process of celebrating the new Michelangelo’s talent as a sculptor he also reaffirms old Michelangelo’s contemporary relevance. In

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essence, just as Buonarroti’s *Vite* inflect the biographer’s *Life* of Gianlorenzo, so too Baldinucci writes about Michelangelo through Bernini. And as with Vasari’s Masaccio, his Brunelleschi and his Donatello, which Paul Barolksy and Barbara Watts have suggested can be read retrospectively as types of Buonarroti, in the hands of Gianlorenzo’s first biographer, Michelangelo can also be seen in hindsight as a type of Bernini.

Baldinucci’s michelangesque and Florentine bias must be understood within the specific context of the author’s work as an art historian. In the years prior to embarking on Gianlorenzo’s *Vita*, Baldinucci was engaged in writing a comprehensive, multi-volume work on the lives of Italian artists spanning from 1260 to 1680, the *Notizie dei Professori del Disegno da Cimabue in Qua*. Casting himself as a new Vasari, Baldinucci had a Tuscan agenda (in opposition to Carlo Cesare Malvasia’s recent anti-Tuscan perspective and Bellori’s implicitly Roman “forth age” of art) and reasserted Vasari’s claim to the Florentine hegemony in art. Though Baldinucci’s biography of Bernini was a wholly separate endeavor from the *Notizie*, as Soussloff has argued, the

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930 On the typological affinity between the textual Michelangelo and his quattrocento predecessors, see Barolksy, *Michelangelo’s Nose*, 56-9. Donatello’s prefiguration of Michelangelo, in particular, has been sensitively explored in Barbara Watts, “Giorgio Vasari’s *Vita di Michelangelo Buonarroti* and the Shade of Donatello,” in Mayer and Wolfe, eds., *Rhetorics of Life Writing*, 63-96.

931 Baldinucci may have been selected by the Bernini family to write Gianlorenzo’s biography precisely because of his reputation as a pro-Tuscan art writer who could situate the new Michelangelo solidly within a Florentine tradition, see Soussloff, “Critical Topoi,” 83-5; idem, “Imitatio Buonarroti,” 588-91; Montanari, “Bernini e Cristina di Svezia,” 418; idem, “At the Margins,” 94-103; Delbeke, Levy and Ostrow, introduction, xviii-xx.

932 The *Notizie*, published in six volumes, offers mini-biographies of each artist with attention to their character and style. In the preface to his first installment of the *Notizie*, Baldinucci claims that the project grew out of his work indexing the enormous drawing collection of the Cardinal Prince Leopoldo de Medici: “my index grew into a literary opus, and my chronology into a chronicle, that is to say, a voluminous collection of notizie de’professori di del disegno,” Baldinucci, *Notizie dei Professori del Disegno da Cimabue in Qua*, 1: unpaginated. On the genesis of Baldinucci’s multi-volume biographies, see Edward L. Goldberg, *After Vasari: History, Art and Patronage in Late Medici Florence* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988), 44-5, 55-68, 72-3.

933 On Baldinucci’s polemical Tuscan bias and his self-fashioning after Vasari’s literary model, see Goldberg, *After Vasari*, 69-72, 100-5; Brian Tovey, “Baldinucci’s Apologia and Florentine Claims to be the Cradle of the Renaissance,” *Renaissance Studies* 16 (2002): 548-60.
Tuscan bias of Baldinucci’s Notizie is also a subtext for Bernini’s Life. I would suggest further that the Life was likely perceived by Baldinucci’s contemporary readership as part and parcel of his multi-artist project.

The coincidence of the publication of the first volume of the Notizie and the issuing of Bernini’s independent Vita in 1682 likely resonated with the 1568 publication of Vasari’s multi-artist Lives and his concurrent offprint of a separate Life of the Great Michelangelo. An erudite seicento reader of art writing, cognizant of the precedent set by Vasari, which cast Buonarroti simultaneously as the preeminent artist of a multi-artist history and as a singular artist outside of historical narratives, might also have inferred that Bernini’s biography was the climactic life within the narrative of development of the Notizie (especially since the Bernini vita was appended to the second volume of the Notizie published in 1682 and covering decades 1300-1340) as well as an independent example. Baldinucci ultimately recreates the prototype set by Michelangelo so that the affinities between

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936 The posthumously published Volume 5 of the Notizie also includes a reduced version of Bernini’s vita.
937 The six volumes were divided chronologically as follows: Volume 1 (decades 1260-1300); Volume 2 (decades 1300-1340); Volume 3 (decades 1400-1550); Volume 4 (decades 1550-1580); Volume 5 (decades 1580-1610); Volume 6 (decades 1610-1670). The volumes were published out of sequence over the course of 50 years. Three volumes were published during Baldinucci’s lifetime: Volume 1 was published in 1681; Volume 2 in 1682; and Volume 4 in 1688. The remaining volumes were completed, edited and published in by Baldinucci’s son, Francesco Saverio: Volume 3 in 1728; Volume 5 in 1702; and Volume 6 in 1728. It should be noted that Baldinucci did not write a life of Michelangelo to include in this multi-biography Notizie. Even though the posthumously published volume three of the Notizie (covering artists from 1400 to 1540) includes a preface wherein the publisher intimates that Baldinucci had a manuscript of the life of Buonarroti (and other artists not represented in the volume) well underway before his death, there is no evidence that he even intended to write such a vita. Goldberg, After Vasari, 175, has conjectured that the biographer’s omission of a Life of Michelangelo (as well as a handful of other artists) suggests that he did not want to repeat biographies by artists who were already the subject of comprehensive vite.
Buonarroti and Bernini are as palpable in the publication patterns of their respective vite as they are in the content of their lives.

**Shades of Michelangelo in Domenico’s Bernini**

Whereas Baldinucci attempts to draw Bernini closer to Michelangelo, Domenico seeks to underscore their differences. Michelangelo is thus like a “shade” in Domenico’s biography, more fully occupying the narratives that unfold between the lines in excess of the lines themselves.\(^938\) To this end, as Levy has argued, Domenico adopts a Senecan/Christian portrait of filial imitation, in which the relationship between father (here Michelangelo) and son (Bernini) is more subtly perceptible.\(^939\) Perhaps what Bernini and Michelangelo share most in this biography is that they are alike in their uniqueness. An anecdote at the end of Domenico’s first chapter sets the scene for his take on imitation throughout whole text:\(^940\) while Pietro was overseeing Gianlorenzo’s early studies he gave his son a drawing to copy, the contours of which Bernini altered in order to make the figure look more natural and lively. When Bernini was asked why he departed from the model, he replied “that avidity in working made him go beyond, and perhaps pass further than he should have, but that if he always had to follow others he

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\(^{938}\) I borrow the term from Watts, “Giorgio Vasari’s *Vita di Michelangelo Buonarroti,*” whose reading of a latent dialectic between Vasari’s biographies of Michelangelo and Donatello demonstrated that even though the latter artist is mentioned infrequently in the *Life* of the former, Donatello is a constant, if veiled, precedent throughout Michelangelo’s biography. The strategy permits the biographer to acknowledge Michelangelo’s debt to Donatello without undermining the rhetoric of autonomy that is a commonplace of art biography in general and Buonarroti in particular.

\(^{939}\) Levy, “Chapter 2.” Vasari similarly casts the relationship between Michelangelo and Donatello as a filial bond, see Watts, “Giorgio Vasari’s *Vita di Michelangelo Buonarroti,*” 70-1.

\(^{940}\) As first observed by Levy, “Chapter 2.” 161.
would never have passed easily before them.” Bernini’s youthful utterance recalls one of Michelangelo’s most famous detti: “No one who follows others can ever get in front of them, and those who cannot do good work on their own account, can hardly make good use of what others have done.” Without mentioning Michelangelo by name, Domenico here establishes the terms of Bernini’s affinity to his predecessor as well as the means by which he distinguishes himself from him.

The first master Bernini exceeds, however, is his father, just as Michelangelo surpassed his first teacher, Ghirlandaio. Though it has not been noted, Gianlorenzo’s considered emendation of his father’s drawing – “in copying a drawing he changed the foreshortening of a figure, but in a more natural and spirited action, and presuming the variation was more by chance than a stroke of mastery, [Pietro] called attention to it as lacking and inattentive to the exemplar he was to copy”– evokes Vasari’s account of Michelangelo’s own revision of the contour lines of a sketch by Ghirlandaio – “using a thicker pen, he went over the contours of one of the figures and brought it to perfection;

941 Bernini, Vita, 5: “Gio:Lorenzo modestamente rispose, che l’avidità dell’operare l’haveva fatto trascorrere, e forse passar oltre al suo dovere, ma che s’egli doveva sempre andar dietro altrui, non sarebbe giammai arrivato a passar facilmente avanti ad alcuno.”

942 Vasari/Bull, Life, 426-7; Vasari/Barocchi, Vita, 1:127-8: “Domandato da uno amico suo quel che gli paresse d’uno che aveva contrafatto di marmo figure antiche delle più celebrate, vantandosi lo immitatore che di gran lunga aveva superato gli antichi, rispose: ‘Chi va dietro a altri, mai non li passa innanzi; e chi non sa far bene da sé, non può servirsi bene delle cose d’altrì.’” On the parallel between Bernini’s and Michelangelo’s purported statements on imitation, see Delbeke, “Gianlorenzo Bernini’s Bel Composto,” 257; Levy, “Chapter 2,” 161-2; Williams, “‘Always Like Himself’,” 189. Another likely subtext for Domenico’s characterization of Bernini’s desire to follow his own path (if not precisely his use of Michelangelo’s famous ditto) is Lelio Guidiccioni’s dialogue of circa 1633 in which the poet and Bernini debate about imitation, specifically the merits of following tradition (championed by Guidiccioni) versus the virtue of pursuing novelty outside of established paths (advocated by Bernini). The line Guidiccioni gives to Bernini to define his position is: “Più glorioso stimavo il caminare per nuova strada che andando per l’antica, perderla trà la moltitudine che v’ondeggia per entro,” as transcribed in D’Onofrio, “Note berniniane I: Un dialogo-recita,” 129. On Guidiccioni’s dialogue and the michelangesque tenor of Bernini’s position, see D’Onofrio, “Note berniniane I: Un dialogo-recita”; Kirwin, Powers Matchless, 213-8; Delbeke, Fenice degli ingegni, 33-9; Bellini, “From Mascardi to Pallavicino,” 300-1.

943 Bernini, Vita, 5: “Accortosi un giorno, che nel ritrarre un disegno haveva mutato uno scorcio di una figura, in atto però più naturale, e spiritoso, e supponendo la variazione più tosto colpo di forte, che tiro di maestria, lo ripigliò come mancante, e poco attento all’esemplare propostogli.”
and it is marvelous to see the difference between the two styles and the superior skill and judgment of a young man so spirited and confident that he had the courage to correct what his teacher had done.”

Pietro, in turn, mirrors Vasari’s Ghirlandaio by humbly recognizing that Bernini’s sole master is his own ingegno. Thus, unlike Baldinucci’s portrait of the engaged Tuscan father whose example and pedagogy was constitutive of the young sculptor’s development into the new Michelangelo, Domenico’s Pietro is promptly surpassed. His vital contribution to his son’s formation, as Levy demonstrated, was to step aside and leave him free to be his own master.

Before concluding his first chapter, Domenico revises two of Baldinucci’s fundamental premises, the first of which is the effortlessness with which Bernini acquired his skill especially vis-à-vis Michelangelo. Having established Gianlorenzo’s desire not to follow others, Domenico claims that henceforth Bernini is infatuated with the most “difficult of art, which consists only in learning what is easy to nature.” Bernini’s imitation of nature, the most difficult task, is here the antithesis of Baldinucci’s insistence on the ease with which Gianlorenzo mastered art as a result of being born after Michelangelo had already conquered all of the difficulties in art. The young Bernini already knew “so well how to imitate the most perfect of nature without affectation,” that Domenico leaves it up to the reader to determine which was the greater of his virtues.

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944 Vasari/Bull, Life, 328; Vasari/Barocchi, Vita, 1:7: “Avvenga che uno de’ giovani che imparava con Domenico [Ghirlandaio], avendo ritratto alcune femine di penna, vestite, dalle cose del Grillandaio, Michelagnolo prese quella carta e con penna più grossa ridintornò una di quelle femmine di nuovi lineamenti, nella maniera che rebbe avuto a stare perché istessi perfettamente; che è cosa mirabile a vedere la differenza delle due maniere e la bontà e giudizio d’un giovane così animoso e fiero che gli bastasse l’animo correggere le cose del suo maestro.” Compare to Condivi/Wohl, Life, 9-10; Condivi, Vita, 9-10, who claimed that a jealous Ghirlandaio gave his pupil no help whatever, thus casting Michelangelo’s autonomy in a less subtle shade than Vasari. Whereas the genius of Condivi’s Michelangelo exists in a vacuum (like that of Domenico’s Bernini), Vasari’s Michelangelo demonstrates his independence against the example of others. On the interdependence between influence and autonomy in Vasari’s Life of Michelangelo, see Watts, “Giorgio Vasari’s Vita di Michelangelo Buonarroti,” 69-70, 72-8.

945 Levy, “Chapter 2,” 162.
whether the aptitude for art or the mastery in hiding it.” Gianlorenzo’s love for the difficult here approaches the *difficoltà* that characterized Michelangelo’s heroic mastery over art — but with one significant difference. Whereas Buonarroti delighted in (and was amply criticized for) showcasing his artifice and making the viewer aware of his hand, Bernini not only imitated nature “without affectation,” but also mastered art so profoundly that he was able to conceal his artifice, thus eliding the distinction between art and nature. Bernini’s *difficoltà* is thus like Michelangelo’s, only bettered by *sprezzatura*.

Domenico’s second reconsideration regards Bernini’s and Michelangelo’s shared Florentine identity. In contrast both to Baldinucci’s portrait of a Florentine Bernini and especially to Vasari’s assertion that “God chose to have Michelangelo a Florentine,” Domenico credits the “Heavens, which destined a Theatre proportionate to the virtue of this man” for arranging the Bernini family’s move to Rome. Domenico’s Roman Bernini, as has been noted, here more fully resembles Condivi’s repatriated Roman Michelangelo. By liberating Gianlorenzo from any *fiorentinità*, the biographer makes room for a man of more expansive talents to develop in a city and among princely patrons that recognize more than just artistic virtue. If, in Domenico’s account, “Bernini is made for Rome and Rome for him,” then it is Gianlorenzo, the city and its noble patrons – not any previous artist – that most resemble each other.

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946 Bernini, *Vita*, 5-6: “Ed in fatti fin dall’hora seppe così ben conoscer, e tanto innammarossi ancora di quel più difficile dell’arte, che solo consiste nell’apprender il facile della natura, che maraviglia non è, ch’indì a pochi anni nell’opere, ch’ei fece nella Reggia di Roma, sapesse così bene senza affettazione imitare il più perfetto di essa natura, che lasciò in dubbio a chi volle considerarle, se maggiore in lui fosse ò l’attitudine nell’arte, ò la maestria nel celarla.”


949 Bernini, *Vita*, 71.

950 Though Bernini’s princely resemblance to his patrons will be discussed below, the implications of Domenico’s equation of Bernini with the virtuous theatre of Rome itself have yet to be examined.
Chapter Two of Domenico’s vita might effectively be identified as the primary *imitatio Buonarroti* chapter, for even though Bernini’s emulation of Michelangelo functions throughout the biography as a subtext for many anecdotes and themes, all but one of the five references to Michelangelo in the text are isolated to this chapter. Not only is Buonarroti’s name frequently invoked in these pages, his *vite* finds an echo in almost every line. Each major anecdote or topic – the Paul V encounter, Bernini’s precociousness, his Scipione busts, Maffeo Barberini’s mentorship, Bernini’s study of antiquity, his Saint Lawrence and his Montoya bust – tacitly engages with central events and themes in Michelangelo’s biographical precedent(s) while altering the michelangelism alluded to in anecdotes from Baldinucci’s *Vita*. What Domenico ultimately sets out to do in his narrative is to define the distance between Gianlorenzo’s and Michelangelo’s approach to the two virtues introduced in the first chapter, that is, pursuing originality over copying and practicing unaffected naturalism over artfulness.

Bernini’s outstrips Michelangelo at the outset of this chapter. His fame quickly spreading throughout Rome, Bernini is brought before Pope Paul V who commands the youth to draw a head. Before dashing off a drawing Bernini asks what type of head the pope would like, “whether of a man, or of a woman, of a youth, or of an elder, or even one of the pope himself, and in what act he desired, whether sad, or happy, whether

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951 My classification of Chapter 2 as the “imitatio Buonarroti” chapter modifies Levy’s characterization of the same section as the “mimesis” chapter. However, it was Levy’s study itself that first underscored the pervasive presence of Michelangelo within the chapter. See also Delbeke, “Gianlorenzo Bernini’s *Bel Composto*,” esp. 252-8, who observes “a clear parallel between chapters two and five,” of Domenico’s text, especially regarding Bernini’s likeness to Michelangelo. I would add that the last chapter of Domenico’s text, which addresses Bernini’s late-life assessment of his work, the quantity of his output, his artistic errors, his unquenched perfectionism and, ultimately, his desire to destroy his own art, is also rife with allusions to Michelangelo’s example and worthy of further consideration.

952 Bernini, *Vita*, 9, 11-2, 13, 14, all from chapter two, and, ibid., 44, from chapter six.
disdainful or pleasant?”

Impressed by the scope of Gianlorenzo’s repertoire, the pope declares that the youth knows how to do everything and requests a St. Paul. Upon receiving the drawing the pope exclaims that Gianlorenzo “will be the Michelangelo of his age.” This anecdote, punctuated by the first naming of Michelangelo in the whole text, brings to mind the story of the faun, Buonarroti’s own carving of a head for Lorenzo de’ Medici, only remade to Bernini’s advantage. Consider that Michelangelo’s faun is a copy of an existing work of art, whereas Gianlorenzo’s St. Paul is an original drawing created from the young artist’s already vast knowledge of nature, which, in turn, has furnished him with greater powers of invention than his predecessor. At just 10 biographical years old, compared to Michelangelo’s biographical 13 years, Bernini’s repertoire already includes a sophisticated mastery of portrait types and expressions – man, woman, youth, elder, sad, happy, disdainful, pleasant – that are the purview of the mature artist. Buonarroti, by comparison, exhibits a naïve understanding of types, so much so that when faced with the opportunity to invent a mouth for his statue (a feature that was missing in the original) he misguidedly gives the aged faun a full-toothed grin, rather than a more appropriate toothless smirk.

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953 Ibid, 9.
954 Levy, “Chapter 2,” 164-5, first noted the allusion to Michelangelo’s Faun story. Building upon Barolsky’s analysis of the anecdote, which he reads as Buonarroti’s expression of his youthful Silenic self-image (abject on the outside, good on the inside) and a precursor to the artist’s late-life identification with St. Paul, Levy suggests that Domenico used Paul V encounter “to establish Bernini’s identification, through St. Paul, with Michelangelo and the entire Tuscan tradition.” For the story of the Faun in Michelangelo’s biographies, see Condivi/Wohl, Life, 10-2; Condivi, Vita, 10-2; Vasari/Bull, Life, 330-1; Vasari/Barocchi, Vita, 1:10-11. On the self-reflexive implications of Michelangelo’s Faun, see Barolsky, Michelangelo’s Nose, 27-34. The significance of the story to seicento notions of Michelangelo’s development as a sculptor is underscored in Borboni’s Delle statue, which includes the episode of the faun (along with a brief biography of Michelangelo as a sculptor) in the chapter on modern sculpture. See Borboni, Delle statue, 73-4. The relationship between Borboni’s text and Bernini’s biographies merits further consideration.
Baldinucci tells the same anecdote, minus the enumeration of types that underscores Bernini’s comprehensive study of nature. While the latter may seem a minor elaboration on Domenico’s part, it points to a significant difference in the two biographers’ attitudes toward Gianlorenzo’s precocity. Whereas Bernini’s youthful mastery in Baldinucci does not compromise Michelangelo’s, in Domenico it is, if not superior to that of his predecessor, then better suited to the priorities of his artistic (post-Tridentine) times in its emphasis on expressive range and naturalism. The biographers’ nuanced perspectives are further underscored by comparing Domenico’s account of the attitude with which Paul V engaged with so young an artist to that given by Baldinucci. In Domenico’s version, the pope affects a _terribilità_ that is uncharacteristic of Paul V’s “venerable” nature (though reminiscent of Julius II) and, with a grave voice, challenges Bernini to demonstrate his fearlessness by drawing a head. Baldinucci’s Paul V, by comparison, makes the request in jest, just as Condivi’s Lorenzo de’ Medici “joked with [Michelangelo] as with a child” before noting that the faun had too many teeth. Whereas Baldinucci presents the pope as heedful of the artist’s youth and, like the Medici prince, cautious not to intimidate him, Domenico has Paul V challenge Bernini aggressively, almost as if he were an adult Michelangelo confronting Julius’ wrath. Bernini’s precociousness is further developed in the subsequent paragraph, wherein, after performing so commendably for the pope, Gianlorenzo is acclaimed throughout Rome as a youth of extraordinary promise. His first Roman sculptures – all

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955 Baldinucci/Enggass, _Life_, 9; Baldinucci, _Vita_, 74.
956 Bernini, _Vita_, 8: “Il Pontefice, Venerabile per natura di aspetto, volle provar l’intrepidezza del Giovane, con affettargli ancora il terrore, e a lui rivolto con suono grave di voce gli mandò, che quivi in sua presenza disegnasse una Testa.”
957 Baldinucci/Enggass, _Life_, 9; Baldinucci, _Vita_, 74: “e fattoselo condurre davanti, gli domandò, come per ischerzo, se avesse saputo fargli colla penna una testa.”
958 Condivi/Wohl, _Life_, 12; Condivi, _Vita_, 11.
portraits – even demonstrate such talent that, upon seeing them, Annibale Carracci purportedly remarked: “Bernini, at that tender age, arrived at a level of art that others could only glory in reaching in old age.” Michelangelo’s biographers, too, claimed their subject possessed knowledge beyond his years. In Vasari, Ghirlandaio is astonished at seeing Michelangelo “doing things quite out of the ordinary for boys his age” and the biographer himself echoes Ghirlandaio’s awe by claiming that Michelangelo “showed all the qualities to be expected of an artist with years of experience.” Though both Vasari and Domenico defer to an authoritative witness to the youth’s display of artistic maturity, the status accorded to these artists in the respective texts is significant.

Whereas Ghirlandaio is Michelangelo’s teacher and his praise represents the approval of a respected educator, Annibale, who had no hand in Bernini’s education, voices the endorsement of a whole new generation in art. By way of Annibale’s approbation, Domenico (like Baldinucci) transfers the qualities of Carracci’s renewal of painting to Bernini’s pursuit of “nature without affectation” that was introduced in the biographer’s first chapter. Thus in contrast to Baldinucci, who used Bernini’s mastery of

959 Bernini, Vita, 10.
960 Vasari/Bull, Life, 328; Vasari/Barocchi, Vita, 1:7: “Cresceva la virtù e la persona di Michelagnolo di maniera che Domenico stupiva, vedendolo fare alcune cose fuor d’ordine di giovane.”
961 Vasari/Bull, Life, 329; Vasari/Barocchi, Vita, 1:8: “che in vero era tanto quanto più desiderar si potesse nella pratica d’uno artefice che avesse operato molto anni.”
962 By way of this anecdote, Domenico also creates the impression that the young Bernini and the aging Annibale had a master-pupil relationship (highly implausible since Annibale died when Bernini was 12). On Bernini’s purported studies under and identification with Annibale’s artistic practice as recounted in Chantelou’s diary, see Montanari, introduction, 20-1; idem, “At the Margins,” 100-1; Ostrow, “Bernini’s Voice,” 125-8.
963 Annibale’s praise is not present in Baldinucci’s account of Bernini’s youthful progress in sculpture, which includes, instead, Annibale’s prognostication that a prodigious genius would create magnificent works at the altar and apse of St. Peter’s (an anecdote which comes much later in Domenico’s biography). In this anecdote, however, Annibale does not name Bernini. Rather, it is Bernini who expresses his desire to be the artist to fulfill Carracci’s prognostication. However positive the story, Baldinucci’s inclusion of Annibale’s prognostication alone in his narrative does not give nuance to his assessment of Bernini’s activity as a sculptor. The difference brings into greater relief Domenico’s use of Annibale to situate Bernini solidly within a seicento aesthetic defined, in part, by its naturalist remaking of Michelangelo.
tenerezza and, subsequently, of forcefulness that underscored an unwritten terribilità, to overwrite Buonarroti’s negative reception and bring him into the baroque fold, Domenico implies that Michelangelo’s example was imperfect, and, by extension, in need of improvement not reaffirmation.

As Levy has demonstrated, the subsequent anecdote about the two Scipione portrait busts celebrates Gianlorenzo’s abilities to overcome, not just equal nature but also to surpass himself and better Michelangelo in the process. During the polishing of Bernini’s first version of the bust a crack is discovered that notably alters the likeness of the portrait. After failed efforts to “amend that mark which was, by the way, natural in the marble,” Bernini requests a new marble and “eager to convert to his glory the defects of Nature herself,” he secretly carves a new, more lifelike bust. Bernini here surpasses Nature by indirectly correcting her material flaws in an unblemished second bust. In the ensuing passage, the theme of the anecdote shifts from Gianlorenzo’s triumph over nature to the artist’s triumph over himself. When Scipione sees the second bust he shrewdly notes the increased vitality of the work over the original, thus exposing Bernini’s clandestine feat of re-carving and his victory over the faulty stone. The first bust is subsequently placed alongside the second whereupon the court applauds Bernini as they compare the original and copy and laud the artist’s ability to surpass the vitality of his first work in his second bust. As Levy argued, Domenico’s anecdote mirrors Michelangelo’s own carving of an original and a copy of the Minerva Christ after a vein was discovered in the first. Though Vasari glosses over this work and Condivi says nothing of it, the story of Buonarroti’s carving of the first Minerva Christ, his

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965 Ibid., 168-70.
abandonment of the work and his carving of a second sculpture was known through documents and letters. And whereas Bernini’s second portrait surpassed the liveliness of his first iteration, Buonarroti’s second Christ was regarded by at least one seicento critic, Vincenzo Giustiniani, as devoid of life and, by extension, a copy that fell short of the much esteemed original. Through Domenico’s narrative, Michelangelo’s failure becomes the subtext of Bernini’s accomplishment – by successfully rivaling nature and himself, he surpasses Michelangelo.

Although Domenico’s Bernini did not need Pietro’s encouragement in order to rival himself, he was not without the kind of noble mentors that took a keen interest in Michelangelo’s progress. Among the members of court present during the display of Bernini’s Scipione portraits is Maffeo Barberini, who, like a modern-day Lorenzo de Medici, marvels at the youth’s talent and immediately develops a desire to foster his career. Paul V grants the cardinal his wish by placing Gianlorenzo into Maffeo’s custody, exclaiming once again that he would be Michelangelo of his age. By repeating the pope’s prophecy, Domenico not only reminds his reader that the yardstick against which Bernini’s accomplishment should be measured is Buonarroti, but also emphasizes the cardinal’s role in Bernini’s becoming a new Michelangelo. Unlike Baldinucci’s single reference to the pope’s prophecy, wherein Maffeo is entrusted with

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967 Vincenzo Giustiniani deemed the second version of the Christ void of “vivacity and spirit.” For a discussion of Giustiniani’s critique, see Baldriga, “The First Version of Michelangelo’s Christ”; Squarzina, “The Bassano ‘Christ the Redeemer’.” See also Chapter One of this dissertation.
968 On Maffeo Barberini’s real-life neo-Medician court and self-fashioning after Lorenzo il Magnifico, see Schütze, Kardinal Maffeo Barberini, 226-32.
969 Though the second iteration of the prophecy is slightly different from the first, its meaning is the same. Rather than use the future tense “sarà,” Domenico uses the past conditional “ch’ei sarebbe stato il Michel’Angelo del suo tempo” Bernini, Vita, 11-2. This less frequent use of the past conditional, colloquially known as the ‘future-in-the-past’, does not translate to “he would have been,” but to “he would be.”
Gianlorenzo’s care because he happened, fortuitously, to be present, Domenico has the cardinal choose to foster the youth just as Lorenzo de Medici adopts Michelangelo by design. The biographer writes that Maffeo’s spirit was so disposed to Bernini that he “appropriated him as his own,” thus recalling Il Magnifico, who, with little variation from Condivi to Vasari, asked Michelangelo’s father “whether he would be willing to let him have his son for his own.”

Under the cardinal’s guardianship, Bernini begins studying antiquity and, over the next three years, he visits the Vatican daily to draw its collection of antique sculptures, an experience that echoes Michelangelo’s own apprenticeship in the sculpture garden at San Marco around the time of his Medician residence. (In Baldinucci, Bernini’s Vatican studies precede his introduction to Paul V and are unconnected to his rapport with Maffeo. In his Roman sculpture garden, Bernini worked with little food or drink, nourished only by the statues themselves: “He took no other refreshment in all those days, than a little wine and food, saying that the mere taste of the living lesson of those dead statues made his body abound with a certain sweetness, that was sufficient to maintain him in strength for whole days.” Michelangelo, by comparison, famously claimed to have ingested the tools of his trade from the milk of his wet-nurse, the wife a Tuscan

970 Condivi/Wohl, Life, 13; Condivi, Vita, 12. Vasari/Bull, Life, 331; Vasari/Barocchi, Vita, 1:11. Lorenzo asked Michelangelo’s father, Lodovico, “whether he could have the boy, adding that he wanted to keep him as one of his own sons.”
971 Baldinucci/Enggass, Life, 9; Baldinucci, Vita, 74.
972 Bernini, Vita, 12-3: “Nè altro rifriggerio prendeva in tutti quei giorni, che di poco vino, e cibo, dicendo, che il solo gusto della viva lezzione di quelle morte Statue gli faceva ridondare nel Corpo ancora una non sò qual dolcezza, ch’era sufficente a mantenerlo in forze gl’interi giorni.”
stonecutter. While nurture made Michelangelo into a sculptor, Bernini’s internalization of ancient Roman statuary bound him intimately to sculpture itself.

Bernini’s internalization of ancient sculpture, as the subsequent anecdote suggests, also makes him a more discriminating connoisseur of the antique than Michelangelo. Domenico writes that Gianlorenzo alone was able to appreciate two of the most ruinous antiquities in Rome: the Belvedere Torso “recognized by Buonarroti as his master,” and the Pasquino, which “Bernini was the first to hold in high regard.” If Michelangelo and Gianlorenzo share a unique admiration for the most ruined ancient statues, Bernini distinguishes himself by establishing a new – even more ruined – antique paragon for a new age. Domenico further asserts that notwithstanding the state of both the Belvedere Torso and the Pasquino, what Bernini ultimately recognized in them was the “most

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973 Condivi/Wohl, Life, 6-7; Condivi, Vita, 8-9; Vasari/Bull, Life, 326; Vasari/Barocchi, Vita, 1:5.
974 Levy, “Chapter 2,” 171-2, 179n47, 179n48, suggests that by partaking directly of these statues, Gianlorenzo enacts a kind of mimetic ingestion that symbolizes his assimilation of their essential qualities into his own unique being. She also associates Domenico’s ingestion metaphors with theories of imitation as well as the language of Christian mysticism. The slippage between Bernini and his statues is developed at the end of the vita when an ailing, voiceless Bernini is nonetheless able to communicate in the same manner as his vivid sculpture, that is, through gesture alone. See Bernini, Vita, 175.
975 Bernini, Vita, 14. By comparison, Baldinucci’s passage on Bernini and the ruinous torsos comes at the end of his narrative and does not mention Michelangelo. Baldinucci/Enggass, Life, 79-80; Baldinucci, Vita, 146. Domenico’s claim that Bernini was the first to appreciate the Pasquino’s ruinous beauty may have been a polemical response to mounting appreciation of the torso among seicento sculptors and, purportedly, Michelangelo before them. According to Federico Borromeo’s undated notes, Michelangelo admired both the Belvedere Torso and the Pasquino: “Michelangelo il suo maggior studio sopra le statue lo fece intorno al Pasquino, e intorno ad un torso di Belvedere che [è] veramente divino. Il Pasquino è una delle più belle statue di tutta l’antichità. Da quanto poco, ma eccellente, si può arrivare al perfetto. Un valente scultore me lo disse.” In another notation, Borromeo qualified Buonarroti’s preference for the Belvedere Torso: “Michel’Angelo si valse di due torsi, solo per la maniera, cioè del Belvedere et di Pasquino. Una sola segui delle maniere, perché non può altri servire a due ss.ri. Et se bene il poco è di quello dell’idea, niented.no si studij tanto da se, sino che si cavi il rimanente, simile al poco. Tanto si faccia sin che l’arte si converta in natura.” As transcribed in Alessandro Rovetta, “Federico Borromeo, Raffaello, Michelangelo e l’antico,” in Studi Borromaica 18 (2004): 201-2, 203, with analysis and contextualization within Borromeo’s involvement in the establishment of the Ambrosiana.
976 In the first quarter of the seicento, a Roman guidebook celebrated the Pasquino as a statue on par with the Belvedere Torso, which suggests that the work was already well on its way to exemplary status when Bernini was in his youth. See Pietro Martire Fellini, Trattato nuovo delle cose maravigliose dell’alma città di Roma (Roma: Per Andrea Fei, 1625), 241.
perfect from nature without the affectation of art, again summoning to mind Bernini’s own un-michelangesque *sprezzatura*.

With the story of the *St. Lawrence*, Domenico moves from the perfection of art to the perfection of the artist as revealed through his use of the human body. In order to capture the pain of martyrdom in the saint’s expression and the effect of the flames on his flesh, Gianlorenzo submits himself to fire and observes the consequence in a mirror. He burned his own flesh, we are told, out of a “desire not to err.” This perfectionist impulse, though not the means by which perfection is achieved, is echoed in Michelangelo’s obsessive examination of cadavers, which his biographers characterize as his source for knowledge of the body outside the lessons of the antique. The first time the young Michelangelo studied a dead body was for his wooden *Crucifix* at S. Spirito for which he flayed corpses given to him by the prior of the church. According to Vasari, this dissection set Michelangelo on the path to “perfect [his] great powers of design” (a claim echoed at the end of the *Life* when the biographer wrote that the artist studied anatomy “in order to be entirely perfect”). While both Vasari and Domenico see their subjects’ extreme behaviour as manifestations of a desire for perfection, Bernini’s

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978 On Domenico’s description of the making of the St. Lawrence, see Levy, “Chapter 2,” 172-3; Damm, “Gianlorenzo on the Grill,” 226-40.

979 My comparison of Bernini’s self-study to Michelangelo’s anatomical study differs slightly from Levy’s analysis, which does not consider Michelangelo’s anatomies, but rather looks episodes like Michelangelo’s study of nature for his painting of St. Anthony and to Chantelou’s diary, wherein Bernini claimed that Michelangelo forced his servant to make grotesque faces as the source for his mask in the Porta Pia. Levy, “Chapter 2,” 172, 180n50.


empathetic act of self-martyrdom distances him from Michelangelo’s dissection of the 
dead and externalized study of his subject, which prohibits him from immediate 
sympathetic engagement. The means by which Bernini aspired to the perfect again 
situates him concretely within the artistic ideals of his times.

Domenico’s anecdote about the *St. Lawrence* is staged similarly to Baldinucci’s 
anecdote about the *David* – both revolve around Bernini’s reflection in a mirror, before 
which he forms what his biographers characterize as the essential aspect of his identity as 
a sculptor.\textsuperscript{982} Whereas the vehement process of the *David*’s creation as well as the 
forceful style and subject reveal Bernini while simultaneously recalling Michelangelo, 
the empathetic process that went into creating the *St. Lawrence*, a subject Bernini carved 
“out of devotion for the saint whose name he bore,” points to no artistic referent other 
than Bernini himself. Levy has argued that Bernini’s process of self-formation also 
resembles the Christian process of mimetic reform, giving to Bernini’s self-image as *St. 
Lawrence* a devotional tenor\textsuperscript{983} that further distances him from the reverence to 
Michelangelo’s artistic tradition implicit in Baldinucci’s description of the *David*. The 
autonomy with which Bernini’s self-images are made also varies from Baldinucci to 
Domenico. Gianlorenzo’s self-formation as the *David* was performed before the 
expectant eye of Maffeo Barberini, the “guarantor of the brilliant result that was expected 
of Bernini,” that is, his formation into a new Michelangelo.\textsuperscript{984} As if urging the artist to 
fulfill a contract, Maffeo visits Bernini’s studio frequently during the creation of this

\textsuperscript{982} In light of the weight each biographer gives these respective identity-forming works, it is perhaps no 
surprise that Domenico writes only one line about the *David* in a different chapter (Bernini, *Vita*, 19) and 
Baldinucci offers a single statement on the *St. Lawrence* (Baldinucci/Enggass, *Life*, 12; Baldinucci, *Vita*, 
78). On the *St. Lawrence*, creative process and identity formation in Domenico’s biography, see Levy, 
“Chapter 2,” 172-3; Damm, “Gianlorenzo on the Grill,” 223-49.


\textsuperscript{984} Baldinucci/Enggass, *Life*, 9-10; Baldinucci, *Vita*, 74-5.
work – the only such instance in the text – where he repeatedly holds the mirror for his charge. By contrast, the mirror Bernini held in order to capture his own tortured reflections for the St. Lawrence, even if inadvertently witnessed by Pietro, was not held for an audience inclined to observing preordained result, but motivated by his own desire for perfection outside artistic example – that of Michelangelo or otherwise. This Bernini was not fashioned into the image of his predecessor with the assistance of interested parties; rather, he made himself into the new Michelangelo by carving out his own unique identity.

The chapter culminates with the Montoya bust anecdote and a final statement on the relationships between Bernini’s attention to the original and the copy, to art and nature which might also be seen in a michelangesque light. Domenico claims that the portrait is so “spirited and lifelike” that when the “original” (Montoya the man) and the “copy” (Montoya the bust) are compared one can only assert that either “both were fake or both real.” As evidence Domenico recounts an anecdote about Maffeo Barberini and his entourage standing before both the portrait bust and Montoya himself, when someone exclaims that the bust is the image of the man become stone. Maffeo hears this and betters the compliment by turning to Montoya, touching the man and saying “this is the portrait of Monsignor Montoya” and turning to the statue proclaiming “this is Monsignor Montoya.” Bernini’s portrait is so vivid that it not only elides the

985 Bernini, Vita, 16: “E condusse a fine il lavoro con tale spirito, e somiglianza, che chi volea prendersi diletto di raffigurare attentamente l’Originale, e la Copia, gli era d’vuop di dire, ò che ambedue fosser finti, ò ambedue veri.”
986 Similar anecdotes are found in Baldinucci/Enggass, Life, 11; Baldinucci, Vita, 76, and Chantelou, Diary, 125-6; idem, Journal, 123-4 (August 17). For a comparative reading of the theme of imitation in the Montoya anecdotes as recounted in Domenico, Baldinucci and Chantelou, see Rudolf Preimesberger, “Bernini’s Portraits, Stolen and Nonstolen, in Chantelou’s Journal and the Bernini Vite,” in Delbeke, Levy and Ostrow, eds., Bernini’s Biographies, 210-8.
987 Bernini, Vita, 16.
distinction between original and copy, but also, since the real Montoya fails Maffeo’s test of touch, makes the man himself inferior to his stone counterpart. The cardinal’s sleight of hand – he touches the man, not the statue – is a trick that makes the reader think that the bust itself must, in turn, feel like flesh. Domenico’s metaphorical use of the original and the copy, the fake and the real, to describe Bernini’s portrait and its referent has a subtext in Michelangelo. Creating copies that are mistaken for originals is central theme in Michelangelo’s early career, best affirmed by the forged cupid which is so convincing counterfeit of antique statuary that it remains undetected for some time. By transposing the vocabulary of connoisseurship onto the genre of the portrait, Domenico subtly recalls Michelangelo’s precedent to Bernini’s advantage. Notwithstanding both artists’ ability to compete with the original, Buonarroti’s feat of making modern art indistinguishable from ancient art is surpassed by Bernini’s ability to obscure the boundaries between art and life. Where Michelangelo rivaled art, Bernini surpassed nature with his art.

It is striking that every episode that revolves around the creation of a work (whether drawn or sculpted) in chapter two of Domenico’s vita elicits a subtextual association with Michelangelo in order to establish Bernini’s mastery of portraiture, a genre which Buonarroti famously eschewed. From the head for Paul V, to the self-portrait as St. Lawrence through the Scipione and Montoya busts, Bernini makes portraits by way of processes that perceptibly recall and then emphatically distance him from his

predecessor’s art and practice. While Michelangelo habitually avoided portraying subjects from life because the degree of resemblance to the model required by the genre compromised his artistic imagination, Gianlorenzo delighted in the challenge of creating portraits so lifelike they rivaled the original. Buonarroti’s dismissal of portraiture, which would have been as well-known to a learned reader as it was to Bernini, furnishes another subtext for Domenico’s biography, providing Gianlorenzo with a deficiency in his predecessor’s example that his own embrace of portraiture has overcome. Domenico’s version of Bernini’s imitatio Buonarroti thus forges a new path out of the old, making of the seicento Michelangelo an artist whose identity was fundamentally tied to his un-michelangesque success as a portraitist.

Bernini’s continual remaking of and frequent improvement upon Michelangelo’s precedent throughout chapter two of Domenico’s vita makes of the cinquecento artist a manifestly outdated, if not imperfect, model. In this account, it is Buonarroti’s reputation as a sculptor who set the standard for his own time that Bernini as a living Michelangelo must, in turn, rival during his own lifetime. And even if some of the events and conditions through which Michelangelo and Bernini arrived at greatness are similar, the means by which each artist achieved it remain distinct. Like the son to the father, the resemblance of Bernini to Michelangelo does not obscure his unique identity, but underscores it by enabling the reader to see beyond the traces of the parent that are visible

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989 On Michelangelo’s eschewal of portraiture and its implications for subsequent theories of the genre, especially regarding issues of resemblance and imitation, copying and originality, see Pommier, Théories du portrait, 137-43; Rudolf Preimesberger, “Niccolò Martelli: Michelangelo über Ähnlichkeit (1544),” in Porträt, eds. Rudolf Preimesberger, Hannah Baader and Nicola Suthor (Berlin: Reimer, 1999), 247-53.

990 According to Chantelou’s Diary, Bernini purportedly remarked frequently upon his predecessor’s avoidance of the genre, yet the diarist only records Bernini’s specific comments on two occasions. In both cases, Bernini mentions Michelangelo’s disengagement from portraiture as a foil to his own investment in portraying the monarch: “…on the subject of the bust [of Louis XIV] the Cavaliere repeated what he had said many times, that Michelangelo never wanted to undertake a portrait.” Chantelou, Diary, 115, 135; idem, Journal, 116, 132 (August 12 and August 21).
in the offspring. This is a markedly different attitude toward Michelangelo and regarding Bernini’s relationship to him from that expressed in Baldinucci, which sought to smooth over Buonarroti’s imperfections and mitigate some of the historical distance that separates him from the seicento through Bernini. Baldinucci is thus substantially more invested in perpetuating Michelangelo’s legacy into the future than Domenico, who circumscribes Buonarroti in the past and makes Bernini’s achievement unique to the present. In other words, in the biographical Bernini’s sculptural formation (as in the rest of the content of his textual life) Michelangelo’s shadow looms less restrictively and assertively over Domenico’s Bernini than it does over that of Baldinucci.

**Bernini and Michelangelo as Artists of the Papal Court**

In his *Life of Michelangelo*, Giorgio Vasari proclaims Pope Paul III “doubly fortunate and happy, seeing that, by allowing [the *Last Judgment*] to come into existence under his protection, God ensured future renown for his Holiness and for Michelangelo. How greatly are the merits of the pope enhanced by the genius of the artist!”\(^991\) The reciprocal benefits that Vasari claims unite papal patron and his preferred artist are similarly celebrated by Urban VIII in Gianlorenzo Bernini’s two biographies. Upon succeeding to the pontificate, the pontiff shrewdly declared: “It is your great fortune, Cavalier, to see Cardinal Maffeo Barberini pope, but our fortune is greater in that Cavalier Bernini lives during our pontificate.”\(^992\) These characterizations of artist and

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992 Baldinucci/Enggass, *Life*, 15; Baldinucci, *Vita*, 80; Bernini, *Vita*, 24. Montanari, by contrast, sees Urban’s remark to Bernini as corresponding directly to Francis I’s praise for Cellini (as recounted in the latter’s autobiography): “My friend…I don’t know which is the greater pleasure, for a prince to have found a man after his own heart, or for a talented man to have found a prince who provides him with such comfortable conditions that he is able to express his great virtuoso ideas.” Baldinucci obtained a copy of Cellini’s manuscript around 1675 and, as Montanari notes, the autobiography may have influenced the
princely patron as mutually supporting individuals that embellish the virtue of the other are *topoi* of the rhetoric attending court artists\(^993\) and they identify the biographical Bernini and Michelangelo, specifically, as artists of the papal court.

In the only study of Bernini as a court artist, Tomaso Montanari culled from the biographies, documents and visual evidence to offer a single, composite portrait of Bernini as a providentially destined favorite of the papal court.\(^994\) Yet his synthetic version of Bernini’s papal employ more closely resembles the biographical Bernini(s) than the real man, who, though a fixture at court was nonetheless punished for disobedience, forced to pay for the dismantling of his failed bell towers at St. Peter’s and virtually shunned by popes in the last decade of his life. By extracting Bernini’s biographies from Montanari’s mix of discordant evidence and reading these two accounts of the artist’s court employ comparatively and as biased textual constructs informed by yet distinct from life, I demonstrate that the biographical Bernini is an artist with two discrete identities as a member of the papal court.

Bernini’s biographies are rife with *topoi* that highlight the privileges and esteem known to the most famous court artists (like Raphael, Titian and Rubens), yet his longstanding intimacy with the papal court, rather than any secular equivalent, set him apart from all but one artist – Michelangelo Buonarroti. Indeed, Bernini’s privileged relations with popes, like those of Michelangelo before him, is a central theme of his biographies, so much so that Lyons (only half facetiously) asked whether the *vite* are not

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“histories of the papacy from a highly specific point of view, that of papal employee?”

Lyons’ use of the phrase “papal employee,” while on the surface more mundane than “court artist,” perhaps better points to what I hope to demonstrate is Bernini’s extraordinary extra-artistic involvement in the smooth functioning of the institution itself, particularly as it pertains to the well-being of the pope.

Montanari has cited Urban’s proclamation noted above in order to underscore the interdependence between prince and artist as a fundamental characteristic of actual court life. But within the context of artistic biography, such passages have largely unidirectional benefits that move from patron to artist. As Lyons has noted, the “principle event” in Bernini’s lives is the “recognition of the artist,” a point made explicit in the dedications prefacing Michelangelo’s and Bernini’s vitae, which assert that it is the duty of the princely patron to honor and acknowledge the virtuous artist. The content of these biographies, in turn, attest to the ways in which the popes (among others) fulfilled this obligation. What follows examines how the pontiffs in Bernini’s lives re-stage (sometimes exactly, other times approximately) the gestures of recognition and esteem bestowed by pontiffs in Michelangelo’s vite and the implications of these actions for fuller characterization of Bernini’s papal employ.

Like the most esteemed of court artists, neither Bernini nor Michelangelo solicited a position at the Vatican court; instead, fame thrust open the doors of papal patronage. At 29 years of age, according to Vasari, the cumulative acclaim for Michelangelo’s Pieta, David and Battle Cartoon had reached such a height that the newly elected Julius II

995 Lyons, “Plotting Bernini,” 143.
996 Montanari, “‘Dar todo a uno es obra del diablo,’” 92.
997 Lyons, “Plotting Bernini,” 149.
998 Warnke, Court Artist, 85-90, 123-4, on fame and court patronage.
called the artist to Rome and paid his travel expenses so that he might design his tomb. Though the artist’s entry into Rome and the papal court are unceremonious, the effects of his drawings for the tomb are literally monumental. According to Vasari, it was as a result of finally seeing the tomb designs, which are “eloquent testimony to Michelangelo’s genius,” that Julius was emboldened to rebuild all of St. Peter’s.\textsuperscript{999} This encounter marks the beginning of Buonarroti’s engagement with his first of many papal patrons.

Both Baldinucci and Domenico tell us that the young Bernini’s fame resulted in his introduction to the papal court at scarcely 10 years of age. According to Baldinucci, soon after Bernini carved his first Roman work, a marble head for the church of St. Potenziana, he was proclaimed an “incredible marvel” and “never before seen” by Roman academicians, so much so that Paul V, “greatly impressed by the acclaim aroused by such merit,” summoned him and requested a sketch of a head.\textsuperscript{1000} Baldinucci’s version of Paul V’s prophecy, “We hope this youth will become the Michelangelo of his century,” quickly follows. Domenico presents a far more hyperbolic picture with Bernini’s extraordinary talent already affirmed by the head of a putto carved while still in Naples. Merely upon hearing of the Bernini clan’s arrival in Rome, Scipione Borghese summons Gianlorenzo “whose fame had already been presented in that Court as more superior in spirit to his apparent age.”\textsuperscript{1001} The cardinal is so impressed by Bernini’s “modesty, reverence and readiness” – personal, not artistic virtues – that he presents Bernini to Paul V, wherein the youth “intrepidly” kneels before the pope, kisses his feet


\textsuperscript{1000} Baldinucci/Enggass, \textit{Life}, 9; Baldinucci, \textit{Vita}, 74.

\textsuperscript{1001} Bernini, \textit{Vita}, 8: “quale già la fama haveva rappresentato in quella Corte molto superiore di spirito all’età, che dimostrava.”
and “devoutly requests a benediction” as if he were innately disposed to life at the papal court. Paul V’s more antagonistic request for a head follows with Bernini rising to the challenge and stimulating the pope’s certainty that he “will be the Michelangelo of his age.” Both anecdotes imply that it is at court where a new Michelangelo will be made, but only Domenico’s passage establishes both Bernini’s artistic merit and his instinctive behaviour at court.

Although both biographers introduce Bernini to the papal court with Paul V, they differ on when the artist fully entered pontifical employ. In Baldinucci’s account, the Paul V encounter merely prefigures Bernini’s eventual position at court under Urban VIII. After entrusting the artist to Maffeo Barberini and addressing his prophecy to the cardinal, we hear almost nothing of Paul V again. Likely closer to the artist’s actual entry into court, it is only upon the Barberini’s succession to the papacy that “a vast range of opportunities open up for Bernini.” Baldinucci’s claim that Urban VIII “had conceived the lofty ambition that in his pontificate Rome would produce another Michelangelo,” ties Bernini’s self-fashioning to Barberini patronage, as Soussloff has observed, and further situates Bernini’s new position as artist of the papal court in explicit relation to his predecessor who also entered papal employ as an adult, after the cumulative praise for his sculpture prompted Julius II to call him to Rome and ultimately

1002 Ibid., 8. This ingratiating act of submission (absent in Baldinucci’s account) which, paradoxically, also displays Gianlorenzo’s fearlessness before supreme power, is repeated at the beginning of each pontificate in Domenico’s narrative. (According to Vasari, the first and only time Michelangelo kissed the feet of a pope was with Paul IV. Vasari/Bull, Life, 401; Vasari/Barocchi, Vita, 96.)

1003 Bernini’s easy performance before an intently trying pope even reads as a correction of Michelangelo’s notoriously difficult papal relations. Recall that when Bernini first met Paul V, the pope affected a kind of terribilità that was uncharacteristic of his “venerable” nature, though reminiscent of Julius II and, with a grave voice, challenged Bernini to demonstrate his fearlessness. The passage makes Paul V, in his own right, as a new kind of Julius II based on a temperamentally affinity. “Il Pontefice, Venerabile per natura di aspetto, volle provare l’intrepidezza del Giovane, con affettargli ancora il terrore, e a lui rivolto con suono grave di voce gli commandò, che qui in sua presenza disegnasse una testa.” Ibid., 8.

1004 Baldinucci/Enggass, Life, 10; Baldinucci, Vita, 74-5.

purse other arts. Within this parallel structure, Urban VIII is implicitly cast as a new Julius II.\textsuperscript{1006}

Domenico, by contrast, immerses the young Bernini fully into court life with Paul V’s pontificate. It is thus significant that Maffeo Barberini is not present at Bernini’s first encounter with Paul V; the cardinal only appears after the Scipione busts episode, which Domenico has rewritten so that it culminates in a second encounter with the Borghese pontiff (who is not present in Baldinucci’s account of the busts). Bernini’s display of skill in this second meeting leads to Paul V’s commission of a portrait (a significant change from Baldinucci, who had the pope request a bust before Bernini embarked on the Scipione busts). It is only subsequent to this commission that the pope places Bernini into Maffeo’s care and reiterates his prophecy that Bernini will be the Michelangelo of his age. Paul V is mentioned little hereafter, yet the title to this chapter (Chapter II) – “Gianlorenzo’s first entrance into the Papal Palace, his audience and interactions with Paul V”\textsuperscript{1007} – and the next (Chapter III) – “Some works by Gio: Lorenzo made at the request of Paul V and the accolades he received”\textsuperscript{1008} – nonetheless situate Bernini’s work in direct relation to the pope, if not always at his service. Domenico even begins Chapter III with the pope’s inquiries into Bernini’s progress and admiration for his new bust (which Paul “keeps in his room until his death”), thus framing the subsequent discussion of Bernini’s sculptures for Paul’s nephew, Scipione Borghese, within the context of the

\textsuperscript{1006} This tacit affinity between the two popes may have been inspired by Baldinucci’s reading of a line from the manuscripts of the birth-to-old-age narrative which likens Urban VIII’s recognition of Bernini to Julius II’s gesture of esteem towards Michelangelo. The line reads: “Ricevè con l’esempio di Giulio II l’hono re d’esser venuto Urbano VIII con 13 cardinali in casa sua,” as transcribed in Audisio, “Lettere e testi,” 41.

\textsuperscript{1007} Bernini, Vita, 7: “Prima entrata di Gio. Lorenzo nel Palazzo Pontificio, suo abboccamento, e successi con Paolo Quinto, e alcuni Cardinali di quella Corte, e suoi primi studii in Roma.”

\textsuperscript{1008} Ibid., 17: “Alcune Opere di Gio: Lornezo ad istanza di Paolo V, e applausi, ch ne ricevè.”
pope’s patronage.\textsuperscript{1009} The last mention of the Paul V comes at the beginning of Chapter IV, when Gianlorenzo weeps at the news of the pope’s death, because he “recognized the pope as his first Benefactor (and it was his habit henceforth to always call him by that name).”\textsuperscript{1010} Thus, unlike Baldinucci, Domenico makes Paul V into Gianlorenzo’s first significant papal patron. And by commencing Bernini’s court employ with a papal bust, Domenico not only emphasizes his role as maker of the prince’s image (the principle task of a court artist), he makes this pursuit a constitutive element of his eventual identity as a universal artist and as a man with extra-artistic virtues.

These accounts of Bernini’s and Michelangelo’s initial employment by one pope (whether Julius II, Urban VIII or Paul V) inaugurate a lifetime of virtually uninterrupted service to a succession of popes that is unparalleled among court artists. According to their biographers, both artists were summoned before each new pontiff, either on or within days of their coronation, in effect renewing the court position the artist held with the previous pope. This perennial favour is remarkable for any court employee. Continuity across rulers is as anomalous at the pontifical court as in its secular counterpart, where the death of a sovereign or shift in power typically annulled all job security.\textsuperscript{1011} Yet the biographers present Michelangelo and Bernini (both with one exception) as largely immune to the instability, disruption and shifts in power, nepotism and privilege that followed such an event.\textsuperscript{1012}

\textsuperscript{1009} Ibid., 17.
\textsuperscript{1010} Ibid., 21: “Gio:Lorenzo, che riconosceva quel Pontefice come suo primo Benefattore (che con tale nome fu solito poi chiamarlo)...”\textsuperscript{1011} On the relationship between the fate of the court artist and the life of his ruler, see Warnke, \textit{Court Artist}, 111-2, 122-4, 138.
\textsuperscript{1012} For example, though both Baldinucci and Domenico gloss over the personal and profession turmoil Bernini faced after the death of Urban VIII recent documents suggest that the artist’s home, his art and his personal safety were endangered by the outbursts of angry mobs. See Karen Lloyd, “Bernini and the Vacant See,” \textit{Burlington Magazine} 150 (2008): 821-4.
The continuity of papal employ that is narrated by Bernini’s and Michelangelo’s biographers is made more exceptional by their accounts of the intimate relations between the artists’ and their popes. Numerous stories of privileged access to pontiffs cast the artists implicitly as *familiari*, a rank in actual court life that conferred influence within a prince’s household (in which the artist often resided) and underscored the elevated status of the artist’s work and person.\(^{1013}\) While the ranking meant that the artist was professionally bound to represent (artistically and otherwise) the court and its prince, it also ensured a position of privilege and esteem, accompanied by material rewards and social advantages.\(^{1014}\) Though the young Michelangelo lived with Lorenzo de Medici, a secular prince,\(^ {1015}\) his most intimate papal encounters occur outside of the court proper. For example, Julius II secretly visited Michelangelo’s home, conversing with him there says Condivi, “no differently than with his own brother.”\(^ {1016}\) Paul III made this privilege public, calling upon Buonarroti while attended by 8-10 cardinals.\(^{1017}\) And Julius III so

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\(^{1013}\) In the real life of an artist, especially before the seventeenth century, courtly membership was customarily designated by the title *familiaris* (or *continus familiaris*). A *familiaris* is a member of a courtly household, a *famiglia*, comprised of an extended family of blood relations and select employees of various professions who serve the needs of a single lord, the *pater familias*. Warnke, *Court Artist*, 6, 9, 22-3, 57, 111-6, 155, on the title *familiaris* and its implications for the court artist. For an analysis of the title *familiaris* as it pertained to cardinals (and other members) of the papal court in Rome, see Guido Guerzoni, “Between Rome and Ferrara: The Courtiers of the Este Cardinals in the Cinquecento,” in *Art and Identity in Early Modern Rome*, eds. Jill Burke and Michael Bury (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008), 59-61. According to De Maio, *Michelangelo e la controriforma*, 356, Michelangelo was appointed *continus familiaris* by Paul III in 1535 and retained the title until the pontiff’s death. Bernini, as far as I know, was never bestowed such a title though by his generation they were typically given out with less frequency even if he ostensibly performed the role of *familiaris* to the Barberini clan and even to Alexander VII.

\(^{1014}\) Warnke, *Court Artist*.


\(^{1017}\) Condivi/Wohl, *Life*, 43; Condivi, *Vita*, 36. The significance of this visit is aggrandized in the seicento by Borboni: “E chi potrà ridire le dimostrazioni di stima che gli fecero i Sommi Pontefici? Basta a dire, che Paololo Terzo, per palesarle al Mondo tutto, andò in persona a visitarlo a Casa sua propia, accompagnato da Cardinali. Che pronostichi devette fare il Mondo medesimo a Michelagnolo allhorache il Sole corteggiato dalle Stelle gli entrò in Casa? …. Ma Paololo Terzo, fra le cui glorie immortali, se questa di esser’andato a visitare il Buonarotta, non è la prima, almeno è sola, e senza esempio; non seppe come meglio far crescere insieme con la Virtù, i suoi Gigli all’innaffio de’ pretiosi sudori di Michelagnolo, che col far diventare la Casa di quello, Casa dei Pontefice, lasciando in cio un’ammaestramento sicuro a i Prencipi, e a tutti suoi
loved the artist’s company that he invited him to the Villa Giulia and insisted that Michelangelo sit adjacent him in the presence of 12 cardinals (by which time Buonarroti was an old man).  

Bernini’s papal ties are even closer, evoking a high-ranking cardinal attending the pope’s personal needs like a *familiaris domesticus et commensalim*. Though courtiers of this rank ate with the *pater familias* and slept under his roof, as Baldinucci and Domenico tell it, Bernini virtually co-habited with popes without actually living in the papal palace. Bernini’s quotidian relations with pontiffs were not only more frequent but also originated much earlier, especially according to Domenico’s account where the level of the artist’s domestic access increased with every pontificate, as if each new pope was compelled to outdo his predecessor’s example. Compare Baldinucci’s Bernini, who was first immersed in life at a papal court with Urban VIII, to Domenico’s Bernini, who was on familiar terms with Paul V and, by the time of Gregory XV’s pontificate, was dining with the pope on Sundays alongside illustrious courtiers. Domenico’s Bernini was even at Gregory’s bedside when he took his last breath. Both biographers write that, Urban VIII gave Bernini free access to his quarters, conversed with him from dinner through bedtime, and bestowed on him the job of nightly drawing his curtains. Such intimacies would have been the exclusive purview of an elite few. Domenico further cast

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1018 Julius III, in the company of twelve cardinals near the Acqua Vergine, placed Michelangelo’s noble genius above nobility of rank by insisting that the artist sit by his side as they dined, see Vasari/Bull, *Life*, 397; Vasari/Barocchi, *Vita*, 1:93.  
1021 Ibid., 23.  
Urban’s extension of privileges as a quasi-institutional imperative, writing that the pope “promoted [Bernini] to an unalterable and strict familiarity subsequently held with other popes, without them ever having given the order, such that even [Urban’s] first minister admitted that when he was with Bernini, there was not anyone, either among the Blood Kinsmen to the Popes, or of the Confidents of the Court, for whom this close communication caused a shade of displeasure or suspicion….”

Even Innocent X, upon reconciling with Bernini, desired that for the rest of his pontificate the artist should visit him at the palace every eight days (and often sooner). Alexander VII, among many other intimacies, gave the artist his own rooms during a sojourn at Castel Gandolfo, the papal retreat. And, Clement IX, “following the example of his predecessors, admitted [Bernini] to familiar conversation at dinnertime, with the difference that [the pope] typically wanted no one but him….”

Add to these the three occasions when popes and their entourages visited Bernini’s house (compared to the one public papal visit bestowed upon Michelangelo) where the pontiffs sometimes engaged with his family and you have a portrait of extraordinary domestic intimacy with the pater familias that transcends the stratified hierarchies of court culture (and palpably surpasses

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1023 Bernini, *Vita*, 25: “benche promosso ad una inalterabile, e stretta domestichezza, successivamente ancora con altri Sommi Pontefici, fin con dar ordine alcun di essi, che nè pur fusse ammesso il suo primo Ministro, quando con lui trovavasi il Bernino, tuttavia non vi fu alcuno, ò de’ Congiunti di Sangue a i Papi, ò de’ Confidenti della Corte, a cui questa stretta comunicazione recasse nè pur ombra di dispiacere, ò di sospetto, riconoscendo tutti in lui non sò che di singolare, che lo rendeva superiore ad ogni sinistro concetto, e percì tanto maggiormente meritevole di quell’honore.”

1024 Ibid., 87: “Ed indi in poi, e per quanto durò quel Pontificato, fu non solo havuto in pregio, anzi a tanta grazia giunse, che ogni otto giorni, e molte volte ancor prima volevalo il Papa a Palazzo….”

1025 Ibid., 98-9: “Fù poi solito Alessandro ne’ tempi confacevoli dell’Autunno portarsi per commu divertimento all’amena Villeggiatura di Castel Gandolfo, e benche il Bernino in que’ tempi fosse tanto occupato nelle opere, che siamo hor hora per soggiugere, volle tuttavia il Papa, che lo seguitasse, assegnandogli a suo compiacimento stanze separate in Palazzo.”

1026 Ibid., 156: “Poiché ad esempio de’ suoi Predecessori l’ammesse a’ familiari discorsi nel tempo del desinare, con questa differenza però, che Clemente non voleva per ordinario altri, che lui, quasi che in lui solo trovasse tutto quell’erudito trattenimento, che sapeva desiderare.”

1027 Bernini, *Vita*, 50-1, 105-6, 160.
Domenico’s Bernini is presented as indispensable to the person of the pope, over and again, as if he were an essential component of the very office itself. Bernini’s immersion within the institution of the papacy itself is underscored in the structure and content of Domenico’s Vita. While Condivi, Vasari, Baldinucci and Domenico recount lives that unfold across successive papacies, only the latter divides his narrative into chapters that frame Bernini’s achievements according to individual pontiffs. From the moment Gianlorenzo sets foot in Rome in Chapter II through to his death in Chapter XXIV, he is the intimate of one or another papal court. Even Chapter I, which revolves around Gianlorenzo’s youth in Naples, is adorned with a statement by Alexander VII praising the ingegno of the artist. Domenico also offers transitions from one pontiff to the next by introducing the soon-to-be pope and his favorable perception of Bernini in the last pages of the chapter that anticipates his pontificate. Once a pope is elected, Bernini is given immediate, intimate and constant access to his person and the artist retains this privileged proximity until the pontiff takes his last breath. Upon hearing of the bedside vigil Gianlorenzo undertook during Gregory XV’s illness, Maffeo Barberini declared that “anyone who becomes pope needs to love Bernini per force if he does not want to do injustice to himself, [to Bernini] and to anyone who merits being virtuous.” The soon-to-be pontiff essentially asserted that the popes are bound by their very office to worthily honor the artist. And by immersing Bernini into court

\footnotesize{\begin{itemize}
\item\textsuperscript{1028} Delbeke, Levy and Ostrow, “Prolegomena,” 35, have noted, though not fully explored, the “institutional dimension” that underlies Bernini’s biographies (particularly that by Domenico).
\item\textsuperscript{1029} Paul V’s pontificate frames two chapters; Gregory XV, one; Urban VIII, six; Innocent X, two; Alexander VII, eight (though Bernini is in France at the court of Louis XIV for three of these chapters); Clement IX, one; and, Innocent XI, two.
\item\textsuperscript{1030} As noted in Delbeke, Levy and Ostrow, “Prolegomena,” 42.
\item\textsuperscript{1031} Bernini, \textit{Vita}, 23-24.
\end{itemize}}
activity with Paul V, Domenico writes Gianlorenzo’s biological relations out of the picture at the outset of his text, substituting them with the artist’s virtually congenital ties to the popes. With Bernini’s long biographical lifespan thus juxtaposed to the chapter-bound existence of each pontiff, Gianlorenzo emerges most palpably as constitutive component of the *famiglia Pontifica* at large: his timeless longevity transcends their transience.  

If Bernini and Michelangelo both enjoy the rare privilege of having their position within the pontifical court renewed with each new pope, their biographers suggest that they do not share the same attitude towards this honour. Condivi and Vasari present Michelangelo as a reluctant court artist, whose employ by the popes is both the boon and the bane of his existence; while it presents him with opportunities that challenge his ability and consolidate his fame, it conflicts with his desire to pursue his devotion to art with autonomy. Michelangelo’s first response to a pope’s request that he enter into his service, and to virtually any new papal commission, was to object. When, for example, Paul III requested his service at the outset of his pontificate, Buonarroti’ declined, citing his obligation to complete the Julius tomb as an excuse. According to both biographers, on hearing this news, the enraged pope exclaimed, “For thirty years now I have had this wish and now that I am Pope, can I not gratify it? Where is this contract? I want to tear it up?” It was only after Paul III paid Michelangelo the honor of a visit to his home where he “begged him with great insistence” to enter his service.

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1032 On Bernini’s timelessness from an artistic perspective outside of his position at the papal court, see Lyons, “Plotting Bernini.”
1033 On Michelangelo’s resistance to working for the papacy as an expression of his desire for artistic autonomy, see De Maio, *Michelangelo e la controriforma*, 354-75.
that Buonarroti finally submitted to the pope’s will. In light of Michelangelo’s habitual protestations against the renewal of his services by each new pope, it is not surprising that Condivi celebrates Julius III for having done the artist “more honour than any other pope did” simply because “he spare[d] him any burden beyond what he [took] up himself.”

In his biographers’ view, Bernini’s compliance with papal will is the antithesis of Michelangelo’s obstinacy. Not only does he graciously accept the invitation to work with each new pope, but also he managed to win over Innocent X, the only new pope to have scoffed at Bernini’s court position. Though this pope excluded Bernini from competing for a fountain commission, upon seeing a model that artist secretly submitted and recognizing it as Bernini’s, Innocent becomes a convert and exclaims: “it is necessary per force to serve oneself of Bernini in spite of those who do not want to, because for those who do not want to put his things into use, need not look at them.” Bernini also surpasses Michelangelo when it comes to fulfilling papal requests that he pursue arts other than sculpture. When Julius asked Michelangelo to painting the Sistine Ceiling, the artist “made every effort to get out of it… refusing to such an extent that the pope almost lost his temper.” Similarly, when Paul III decided to give Buonarroti the superintendence of New St. Peter’s, the artist “refused, saying, to excuse himself, that architecture was not his vocation…. to his intense dismay and completely against his will, Michelangelo was [ultimately] compelled to embark on this enterprise.”

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1035 Vasari/Bull, Life, 376; Vasari/Barocchi, Vita, 1:72.
1036 Condivi/Wohl, Life, 95; Condivi, Vita, 55.
1037 Bernini, Vita, 87: “bisognerà per forza servirsi del Bernino a dispetto di chi non vuole, perché a chi non vuol porre in opera le sue cose, bisogna non vederle.”
1038 Condivi/Wohl, Life, 39; Condivi, Vita, 30; Vasari/Bull, Life, 350; Vasari/Barocchi, Vita, 1:36.
1039 Vasari/Bull, Life, 385; Vasari/Barocchi, Vita, 1:83.
Buonarroti’s repeated hesitation to take up new arts, both Baldinucci and Domenico tell us that when Urban III informed Bernini that he wanted the artist to study painting and architecture “so that he could unite with distinction these disciplines to his other virtues. The youth did not hesitate in agreeing with the council of his friend, the pontiff.”

Though Michelangelo made a habit of rejecting the popes’ invitations, in the end, he always obliged them out of “fear.” He agrees to paint the Sistine Ceiling, because “being the hot-tempered man [Julius] was, his holiness was all ready to fly into a rage” and when the pope threatened to throw Michelangelo from the scaffold if he did not finish the ceiling quickly, the artist, “who had good reason to fear the pope’s anger, lost no time in doing what he wanted.” Buonarroti concedes to undertake the Medici chapel commission for Clement VII “impelled more by fear than love.” And, thought he initially declines to enter Paul III’s service, it is fear and obligation that keeps Michelangelo from an unconditional refusal “since he could hardly do otherwise.” In short, the textual Buonarroti is the subject of a succession of Machiavellian popes who take seriously the premise that it is better to be feared than loved.

Yet the popes’ fearsome conduct is frequently tempered with expressions of love for the artist. Condivi, for example, tells us Julius II visited Michelangelo frequently at his studio at Castel Sant’Angelo via a secret drawbridge in order to discuss the project

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1040 Baldinucci/Enggass, Life, 15; Baldinucci, Vita, 81; Bernini, Vita, 26.
1041 Vasari/Bull, Life, 350; idem, Vita, 36.
1042 Vasari/Bull, Life, 353; idem, Vita, 40.
1043 Condivi/Wohl, Life, 67; Condivi, Vita, 43.
1045 Niccolò Machiavelli devotes Chapter 17 of The Prince (1513) to a discussion of whether it is better for a ruler to be loved than feared. On the political dynamics of clemency and cruelty, love and fear in Machiavelli’s writing, see Haig Patapan, Machiavelli in Love: The Modern Politics of Love and Fear (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2006).
1046 For comparative reading of Michelangelo’s biographical relations, both intimate and turbulent, with popes as a fiction contrived by the artist himself to aggrandize his self-image, see Paul Barolsky, The Faun in the Garden: Michelangelo and the Poetic Origins of Italian Renaissance Art (Pennsylvania: Penn. State University Press, 1994), 128-37.
“no differently than he would have done with his own brother.” But such familiarity was a double-edged sword. As Vasari writes, Michelangelo himself excused Julius II’s wrathful behaviour by asserting that “if sometimes, arising out of their great intimacy, the pope did him some hurt, he would heal it with extraordinary gifts and favours.”

When Julius struck Michelangelo with a staff, the artist “laughed it off” because he not only “understood the pope’s nature and, after all, loved him dearly” but also “the pope would do anything to keep his friendship.”

Paul III, in turn, “felt for Michelangelo such reverence and love that he always went out of his way to please him” and, finally, the love that his successor, Julius III, had for Buonarroti “grew almost boundless.” Even if Michelangelo’s biographers characterized his papal patrons, not the artist, as the difficult ones, this portrait of love/hate patronage falls short of ideal.

Whereas Michelangelo was depicted by his biographers suffering the capricious affections of fearsome popes, Bernini’s biographers show him basking in papal love. Baldinucci sets the tenor for Bernini’s intimate relations with popes at the outset of Urban VIII’s papacy when the pontiff expresses his “[wish] that Bernini treat him always with the same intimacy as when he was a cardinal.” In Domenico’s biography, Bernini’s intimacy with popes begins with Paul V and is affirmed with Gregory XV, who establishes a paradigm of closeness between artist and patron that commences immediately upon the pope’s inauguration. Gregory is also the first pope who insists on maintaining the informal relationship he and Bernini enjoyed before his elevation.

1047 Condivi/Wohl, Life, 30; Condivi, Vita, 23.
1048 (italics mine) Vasari/Bull, Life, 361; Vasari/Barocchi, Vita, 1:52.
1049 Vasari/Bull, Life, 361; Vasari/Barocchi, Vita, 1:53.
1050 Vasari/Bull, Life, 378; Vasari/Barocchi, Vita, 1:74.
1051 Baldinucci/Enggass, Life, 27-28; Baldinucci, Vita, 27.
Virtually every other pontiff thereafter, whether he had prior relations with Bernini (like Urban VIII and Alexander VII), or not, maintains this familiarity.

Other expressions of love and friendship abound in Domenico’s (and to a lesser extent, Baldinucci’s) text: Urban decreed that the popes, per force, had to love Bernini; Innocent X, after seeing the model for the Four Rivers Fountain, experienced a change of heart and offered Bernini “a thousand signs of esteem and love, almost apologizing”; Alexander VII, whether at the Quirinal or at Bernini’s house, was never without the artist by his side and was “affable” towards Bernini and “majestic” towards others; and, Clement IX offered parting “words of love and esteem” to Bernini so habitually, that on the one occasion the pope forgot to express his affection, the artist politely alerted the pontiff of his omission and Clement immediately remedied his oversight. As Delbeke, Levy and Ostrow have noted, these expressions of love and friendship are “a complex rhetoric for closeness and esteem, position and privilege,” not love or friendship, per se. Domenico even offered the key to understanding the language of affection in his biography in a line from an anecdote about Urban’s visit to Bernini’s house: “this honour left the Cavaliere in greatly in his debt… for an indescribable propensity toward him, that he [Bernini] regarded as affection, but in reality was for Urban his esteem of his virtue.”

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1052 Baldinucci/Enggass, Life, 36; Baldinucci, Vita, 102; Bernini, Vita, 87.
1053 Bernini, Vita, 105.
1054 Ibid., 156.
1056 Bernini, Vita, 50: “Il Cavaliere, a quest’honore restò tanto maggiormente obbligato, quanto che scorgeva nel Papa non solo il desiderio di honorarlo, mà una non sò quale particolare propensione verso di lui, ch’ei stimava affetto, mà in sostanza era in Urbano stima della sua Virtù.”
model for artist-patron relations rooted in Alexander the Great’s informal relations with Apelles.  

Bernini’s ease with his papal patrons, his innate sociability and the favour it elicits, distance him from the virtually anti-courtly Michelangelo and draw him closer to Raphael, the cinquecento incarnation of Apelles, whose affable nature fulfilled a social need wanting in Michelangelo. At the outset of his *Life of Raphael*, Vasari writes that “nature gave him to the world having been conquered by art at the hand of Michelangelo and desirous of being conquered by both art and manners through Raphael.” The paradigmatic courtier-artist whose social graces and artistic skill made him the intimate of the early sixteenth-century papal court that consolidated his fame, Raphael established a general model for Titian (the itinerant courtier-artist), Rubens (the courtier-artist-diplomat) and Bernini (the papal courtier-artist) alike. Even if Bernini was not

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1060 On Titian and Rubens as courtier-artists, see Charles Hope, “Titian as a Court Painter,” *Oxford Art Journal* 2 (1979): 7-10; Fiona Donovan, “Envoy and Artist 1629-1630: Rubens in England,” in idem, *Rubens and England* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004), 61-77; Gregory Martin, “The Diplomat at Work,” in idem, *Rubens in London: Art and Diplomacy* (Londo: Harvey Miller, 2011), 79-86. While Bernini’s biographies are linked to the published lives of Raphael and Titian by way of familiar topoi about the virtues (artistic and otherwise) of these courtier-artists, my comparative readings of the biographies of Bernini, Raphael (by Vasari) and Titian (by Vasari and Ridolfi) yielded few instances of textual overlap. It is noteworthy that soon after Bernini’s death, the artist was compared to Titian. An anonymous avviso dated 30 November 1680, announced that “The Titian of our times, Cavaliere Bernini, expired last Saturday evening.” Although the writer of the avviso does not expand on this paragone, Francesco Petrucci has argued that the notice offers evidence of the high regard in which people held Bernini’s skill as a painter. See Petrucci *Bernini pittore*, 23. I would suggest, alternatively, that the parallel implied in this avviso is in regard to their roles as celebrated court artists.
praised for the grace or gentility possessed by Raphael, his decorous comportment and extraordinary talent encouraged similar princely favour and affection. And although Bernini’s biographers did not mine Raphael’s life for stories to constitute the life of their subject at court, Vasari’s praise for the cinquecento artist’s ability to offset the social failings of his contemporary makes the new Michelangelo’s almost infectious appeal among popes, coupled with his professional propriety, read as corrective of the old Michelangelo. But this does not make of Bernini a new Raphael. As a court-artist, Bernini evokes qualities of both cinquecento predecessors: like Michelangelo he is inclined to fits of rage, particularly in his private life, in which his indiscretions were met with impunity (on one occasion Bernini’s fiery passions engulfed him in a personal scandal so offensive that it necessitated papal absolution), yet he is savvy enough to curtail his temper in his professional life and effect a pleasant and ingratiating demeanor, like Raphael, in all of his dealings with patrons.

Though the court lives of the biographical Bernini and Michelangelo are often diametrically opposed – Michelangelo resisted court membership, Bernini embraced it; Michelangelo bore the capricious affections of fearsome pontiffs, Bernini basked in papal love – I am especially interested in moments of explicit overlap. By restaging anecdotes culled directly from Michelangelo’s *vite*, Baldinucci and Domenico cast many of Bernini’s papal encounters as episodes of *déjà vu*, though with a different outcome for the artist. In one of Michelangelo’s most infamous acts of professional impropriety he flees the service of Julius II in Rome and refuses all efforts at reconciliation. Soon thereafter Buonarroti encounters Julius in Bologna, whereupon the offended pope notes the unusual inversion of power relations: “instead of your coming to meet us, you have

1061 Bernini, *Vita*, 27.
waited for us to meet you.” Hearing Michelangelo’s pleas for forgiveness, a cardinal
interjects on his behalf and advises the pope to forgive the artist because he “offended
through ignorance.” According to Condivi, Julius redirected his anger towards the
 cardinal and replied, “You are saying insulting things about [Michelangelo] which we do
not say. You are the ignoramus and the wretch, not he.”

Baldinucci puts some of the
same words into Urban VIII’s mouth when he criticizes a cardinal for foolishly
suggesting that the pope visit his nephews rather than act on his desire to call on Bernini
at home: “You really are an ignoramus…,” exclaimed Urban, “not to realize that for us to
go in person to see the children would be puerile, whereas to render honor of this sort to
the home of a virtuoso of such caliber would be an act of magnanimity in which virtue
would be both honored and increased in him as in others.” Whereas Michelangelo
made Julius unwillingly visit him, Baldinucci’s Urban eagerly seeks out Bernini, as does
Domenico’s Urban though the anecdote is told not quite verbatim: he changes “you are
the ignoramus” to “you are in error,” thereby making the parallel between his version of
Urban VIII and Condivi’s Julius II slightly less apparent.

In contrast to Baldinucci, who ends his story with one line telling us that Urban proceeded immediately to Bernini’s
house, Domenico narrates various exchanges of mutual esteem between pope and artist,
including Urban’s encouragement that Bernini marry and have children, advice the artist

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1062 (italics mine) Condivi/Wohl, Life, 38; Condivi, Vita, 29. See also, Vasari/Bull, Life, 347-8;
Vasari/Barocchi, Vita, 1:33: “Al Papa venne collora e con una mazza che avea rifrustò il vescovo,
dicendogli: ‘Ignorante sei tu che gli di’villania, che non gliene diciàn noi.’”
1063 (italics mine) Baldinucci/Enggass, Life, 28; Baldinucci, Vita, 94: ‘‘Siete ben voi ignorante’ rispose il
papa ‘a non conoscer, che l’andar noi in persona a vedere i nostri fanciulli, sarebbe una vera fanciullaggine,
laddove il portar un onore di questa sorte a casa d’un virtuoso di quella riga sarà un atto di magnanimità col
quale resterà onorata ed accresciuta insieme la virtù, ed in esso e negli altri’.”
1064 Bernini, Vita, 50: “Rispose allora il Papa, Siete in errore, a non conoscere, che l’andar Noi in persona
a ricrearcì con que’figliuoli, con ragione sarebbe una vera fanciullaggine, dove che il portar l’honore di
questa sorte ad un Virtuoso di questa riga, sarà un’azione da Principe, con la quale resterà ugualmente
onorata la Virtù, e il Cavalier Bernino in esso, e negli altri’.”
dismisses by exclaiming “his works alone should be his children.” Michelangelo had uttered the same rejoinder when a priest (not a pope) lamented that he never married or procreated: “I have always had only too harassing a wife in this demanding art of mine, and the works I leave behind will be my sons.” Though Baldinucci puts virtually the same words into Bernini’s mouth, his version of this exchange precedes the pope’s visit by many pages. Furthermore, compared to Domenico’s account, the circumstances under which Baldinucci’s artist concedes to the pope’s request are unremarkable.

Whereas Baldinucci has Bernini simply “[give] way to the pope’s council,” Domenico has Gianlorenzo concede to Urban’s wishes only after Urban persisted, “not with the authority of a Prince, but with the persuasion of a friend.” By making this the culminating line of an extended anecdote that began with Urban’s desire to visit Bernini, Domenico remakes Michelangelo’s (and Baldinucci’s) story about subverting customary hierarchies into a narrative about a meeting between (rhetorical) equals.

Over and again, Domenico rewrites anecdotes from Michelangelo’s *vite* to Bernini’s benefit. Contrast, for example, Vasari’s account of Paul III’s visit to Michelangelo’s house with ten cardinals wherein the pope “again begged him with great insistence to enter his service,” to Domenico’s description of Alexander’s visit to Bernini’s residence accompanied by a rare and impressive entourage of twelve cardinals, twenty prelates and the most respected nobles in Rome, “for no other motive than

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1065 Ibid., 51: “Rispose il Cavaliere, che l’Opere sue esser solo dovevano i suoi figli.”
1068 Bernini, *Vita*, 51: “Mà Urbano, che non à caso l’haveva promosso, mandòllo a chiamare doppo alcuni giorni, e non con autorità di Principe, mà con persuasione d’amico procurò di farlo risolvere a prender moglie…..”
honouring Bernini’s virtu, and in this act that of all Virtuosi, with a visit no less
considerable than rare."\textsuperscript{1070} In another instance, Domenico looks to Condivi who claimed
that Julius III had such respect for Michelangelo’s age that he refrained from engaging
him on the Villa Giulia, seeking Buonarroti’s opinion on painting and architecture instead
by sending “artists right to his house to see him.”\textsuperscript{1071} Alexander VII demonstrated similar
regard for Bernini’s precious time (as the artist had been so bombarded by visitors at his
home that he had to turn people away) and restraint with his own needs, that the pope
eschewed middle-men entirely in favour of writing the artist many notes “in his own
hand” that were signed with Alexander VII’s name, sealed with his coat of arms and
hand-addressed to “the Sig. Cavalier Bernini.”\textsuperscript{1072} Though both popes demonstrate their
respect by refraining from requesting the artist’s presence, Alexander nonetheless betters
Julius by demonstrating his extraordinary closeness through a personal letter rather than
designated emissaries.

One anecdote from Condivi’s biography that resurfaces in Domenico’s text merits
more sustained consideration as it pushes the theme of intimacy between patron and artist
so far as to blur bodily (and, thus, social) distinctions. Condivi’s Julius III so loved the
elderly Buonarroti, he offered to “give up some of his own years and blood to add to
Michelangelo’s life,” as the artist approached the end of his days. Should Buonarroti
predecease the pope, Julius wanted him “embalmed and kept near him so that his remains

\textsuperscript{1070} Bernini, \textit{Vita}, 104-5: “Non andò lungi due Mesi da questo fatto, che volle il Papa portarvisi ancor ei di
persona, non solamente col motivo di rendere honorata la virtù del Bernino, mà in essa quella di tutti li
Virtuosi con visita non men riguardevole, che rara.” Delbeke, Levy and Ostrow, “Prolegomena,” 52-3,
have noted the affinity between these two anecdotes.
\textsuperscript{1071} Condivi/Wohl, \textit{Life}, 95; Condivi, \textit{Vita}, 55.
\textsuperscript{1072} Bernini, \textit{Vita}, 98: “Questa medesima avvertenza hebbe più volte l’istesso Pontefice, che per non
distraerlo, con farlo a se chiamare per qualche grave bisogno, volle honorarlo spesso con molti Viglietti
scritti di sua propria mano col lapis, sottoscritti col nome di Alessandro VII., e sigillati con una piccola
sua Arme Pontificia, la cui soprascritta medesimamente di sua mano in lapis era di questo tenore, \textit{al Sig.
Cavalier Bernino}.”
would be eternal like his works." Urban VIII made similar offers during Bernini’s mid-life illness. Hearing of the artist’s failing spirits he sent to Gianlorenzo an elixir so powerful, the mere brush of the bottle against his lips was sufficient to rejuvenate him. Domenico writes that Urban’s affection was so great that were it possible “he would have wanted to embalm him, and render Bernini eternal.” The parallels in these anecdotes have been noted, but the ritual medical practice associated with the care of the pope’s body that underlies these stories has gone unmentioned. From the middle ages onward, medicine at papal and monarchial courts was harnessed to realize ancient beliefs in the possibility of prolonging the life of the ruler. Magical elixirs were recommended by papal doctors and imbibed by popes in hopes of delaying old age and revitalizing the body. When these efforts failed and a pope died, embalming was customary. If one of the benefits of court membership included the access to the ruler’s physician, the extension of privileged services intended for the care of the pope’s body to any member of the court, let alone an artist, would have been rare. By seeking to prolong the lives of Michelangelo and Bernini as well as desiring to preserve them bodily, the biographical Julius and Urban, respectively, bestowed on them a privilege reserved only for the highest of sacred and secular rulers. But whereas Julius promised an elixir, Urban delivered, curing Bernini with a death defying serum fit for a prince.

1073 Condivi/Wohl, Life, 95; Condivi, Vita, 56.
1074 Bernini, Vita, 49.
1075 Delbeke, Levy and Ostrow, “Prolegomena,” 52.
1078 Ibid., 133-6. See also John-Peter Pham, Heirs of the Fisherman: Behind the Scenes of Papal Death and Succession (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 10-39, who traces the continued use of medieval papal funeral ritual through the early modern period and into contemporary papal obsequies.
1079 Warnke, Court Artist, 130-1.
If, in the above anecdotes, Michelangelo and Bernini are the beneficiaries of the best medical attention the papacy can offer, only the latter returns the favour by repeatedly prolonging the lives of popes through his art. While these episodes engage more loosely with the Michelangelo/Bernini paragone, I examine them in order to elaborate on Domenico’s construction of an extraordinary domestic intimacy between Bernini and the popes. In order to assuage fears that Urban had succumbed to a grave illness in the days before his coronation, the court decided that the pontiff should appear at the window of his bedchamber and give a benediction. When Urban presented himself, the incredulous crowds exclaimed: “That was not their Pope Urban, but the body of Urban, which, through Bernini’s artifice, was preserved intact and moved,” as only through his invention was it possible to “give life to a body that was already dead.”

This statement summons to mind Vasari’s praise for his subject’s marble statue of David, in which “Michelangelo worked a miracle in restoring to life something that had been left for dead.” But while Michelangelo resurrects marble, Bernini restores life to man. The slippage between the (mistaken) portrait and the portrayed, between (mistaken) effigy and pope, is a topos that casts Bernini as a kind of magician with God-like powers of animation. But the elision between the representation and the represented in Domenico’s anecdote points also to a significant strand of meaning from papal burial ritual. From the middle-ages onward, it had been customary to display the embalmed and robed body of a pope to the masses during the novena (nine days of mourning) so that the

1080 (emphasis mine) Bernini, Vita, 36: “Quello non esser il loro Pontefice Urbano, mà il Corpo di Urbano, che per artificio del Bernino si manteneva intatto, e si moveva: Haver’ essi veduto poco prima in quell’istessa finestra il Cavaliere, e altra che sua non poter essere l’invenzione di dar moto ad un Corpo già morto.”

1081 (emphasis mine) Vasari/Bull, Life, 338; Vasari/Barocchi, Vita, 1:21: “E certo fu miracolo quello di Michelagnolo, far risuscitare uno che era morto.”

1082 Kris and Kurz, Legend, Myth and Magic, 61-84.
people might authenticate his death. The crowd’s mistaken authentication of Urban’s living body as Bernini’s embalmed corpse would have resonated with their experience of papal ceremonial. This anecdote thus has Bernini, the papal artist become the papal physician. While Bernini’s and Michelangelo’s court employ and papal relations extend beyond the creation of art, only Bernini, especially the one authored by Domenico, assumes the role of attending to the well being of the popes themselves in both the quotidian and extraordinary moments of their lives.

Bernini’s medical services for pontiffs ranged from the extraordinary to the quotidian. In tandem with the rejuvenating elixirs papal doctors administered to typically short-lived pontiffs, water was deemed essential to restoration of an aging pope’s body. Court physicians thus recommended frequent visits to suburban thermal baths and springs. Bernini’s pontiffs did not require such excursions, for according to Baldinucci and Domenico, the artist’s waterworks brought the vivifying effects of $H_2O$ directly to the popes. When, for example, the artist surprised Innocent X by opening the water ducts to the Fountain of the Four Rivers after telling the pope it was not yet functional, the pontiff marveled: “by giving this unexpected exhilaration, you have added ten years to our life.” Contrast this to Michelangelo who, rather than enliven popes, has Julius III willing to give up his own years to prolong the artist’s life. On another occasion, Clement IX asked Bernini to clear the obstructions inhibiting the flow of water to the fountain beneath his window, so that the sound of the falling fluid might relieve his

1083 Paravicini-Bagliani, Pope’s Body, 132-3. This papal burial practice is loosely related to obsequies in medieval secular courts, where, upon the death of the ruler his valet de chambre was required to make a life-sized effigy of the deceased. The effigy was subsequently robed and displayed until a successor was named. As Warnke has suggested, the task of creating the effigy on these occasions likely fell to the court artist, see Warnke, Court Artist, 214.

1084 Bernini, Vita, 90-1; Baldinucci/Enggass, Life, 39; Baldinucci, Vita, 105.
insomnia. When attempts to clear the blockage were foiled, Bernini secretly invented a machine that mimicked the sound of falling water and placed it adjacent the pope’s bedroom. Upon waking from an unusually good-night’s sleep and hearing of Bernini’s invention, Clement marveled that he had been “tricked” by the artist. Bernini’s artistic trick was an act of medical magic. Possessed with the re-animating and restorative powers of the papal physician, the artist here is as much a papal employee as he is the court’s most vitalizing member, after the person of the pope.

While Bernini’s biographers portray their subject as much more unambiguously immersed in the papal court than do Michelangelo’s biographers, only Domenico makes Gianlorenzo into an essential organ of the papacy and constitutive element of papal existence. He presents the artist’s domestic intimacy with the popes from Paul V onward both as an obligation of the office itself and as Bernini’s intrinsic birthright. Domenico thus writes the history of a man whose destiny was enabled by popes who recognized (some faster than others) the role that providence had entrusted them. Baldinucci’s Bernini, by comparison, is a privileged associate of the papal court who, though predisposed to fraternize with popes, underwent a period of incubation before entering into a life of exceptional papal confidences under Urban VIII. Whereas Domenico’s courtly “new Michelangelo” was born, Baldinucci’s had to be made. And though the fate of the biographical Michelangelo is also intertwined with the papal court, his lives furnished Baldinucci and, to a greater extent, Domenico with raw material which they adopted, restaged and bettered in order to constitute histories of an artist of the papal court who is, paradoxically, without compare.
Bernini, the “grand’Huomo” as Prince

In a letter from the Jesuit Gian Paolo Oliva to the Marquis of Lionne published in both of Bernini’s biographies, Oliva writes that “although in the glorious splendor of art [Bernini] is the prince among all … he possesses many other aspects of understanding and wisdom… which might almost eclipse that excellence for which the world admires him.”

Bernini, in short, possessed two kinds of universality: comprehensive mastery of art and compendious knowledge beyond art. Baldinucci and Domenico both address the artistic and extra-artistic merits of their subject, yet as Delbeke and Williams have demonstrated, each ultimately champions predominantly one kind of universality as the essence of Gianlorenzo’s identity: Baldinucci’s first few pages define Bernini explicitly by way of his professional mastery of the three arts in which he “was not only great, but extraordinary” in contrast to Domenico’s introduction of Bernini as a man whose spirit is equipped with a “marvelous mixture of the most precious gifts, each of which in itself could make any man admirable and great” and such that his excellence in art is the least of his merit. What remain unexplored are the princely implications of the biographical Berninis’ discrete universalities as they are manifest within the papal and monarchial courts in which the artist was employed.

Oliva’s characterization of...

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1088 Bernini, *Vita*, 2: “Poiche egli con un maraviglioso composto di pregiate simme doti, ciascuna della quali in se stessa poteva rendere ammirabile e grande ogni huomo, seppe così ben di tutte forni il suo animo, che non fu il maggior pregio il lui l’essere acclamato per eccellente nella professione che fece: Tanto in se habbe con eccellenza ancora tutte quelle parti, che posson formare un’huomo d’idea grande, e virtuoso.”
1089 On the court as the site that consolidated the intellectual virtue and nobility of art and of the artist himself, particularly in life-writing, see Warnke, *Court Artis*, 210-4. Campbell has recently noted that Warnke’s historical image of the courtier-artist who is both literally and metaphorically ennobled by the power of the early modern court is achieved at the expense of an artist’s identity as a specialized worker.
Bernini as the “prince” of all arts not only echoes Vasari’s claim in the preface to part three of his Lives that Michelangelo “holds the principate” over the three arts⁹⁰ but also introduces “the image of artist as prince” (to use Barolsky’s phrase for Michelangelo)⁹¹ as a lens through which we might understand Baldinucci’s celebration of Bernini’s artistic universality. Domenico’s vita, in turn, responds with a discrete version of Bernini’s princely nature as embodied in his extra-artistic merit and in this, too, the biographer takes his cue from Michelangelo.

Bernini’s princely identity is signaled visually by the portrait frontispiece that introduces both Baldinucci’s and Domenico’s vite [fig. 200]. Created by Arnold Van Westerhout in 1681 for Baldinucci’s text and reused in Domenico’s, the engraving portrays an aged Bernini within an oval frame above a plaque with a Latin inscription indicating his name, birth and death dates.⁹² Eschewing established typologies of artist portraits, for example, Vasari’s which presented the subject with personifications of his profession and an inscription articulating the same [fig. 201],⁹³ or even the allegorical

with a mind of his own: “gone, for example, is any sense of the artist having an experience… different from that of the feudal aristocrats who surround him at court…. Gone too is any sense of the artist as a skilled worker who did what courtiers or nobles could not do, who commanded technologies and forms of knowledge that allowed him to lay claim to a social identity finally disparate from that of a gentleman.” Stephen J. Campbell, introduction to Artists at Court: Image-Making and Identity 1300-1550, ed. Stephen J. Campbell (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 13-4. Though Campbell here does not point to a distinction between real court life and that represented in writing, I would suggest that the slippage of social identities he observes is rooted largely in literary constructions of the court-artist. And while Bernini’s biographers do indeed blur the boundaries between the artist and his princely patrons, they did not do so at the expense of Bernini’s unique identity, but as an advantageous means of crafting his singular persona as a universal artist and a universal man.

⁹⁰ Vasari/Bettarini-Barocchi, Vite, 4:10: “Ma quello che fra i morti e’ vivi porta la palma, e trascende e ricuopre tutti, è il divino Michelagnolo Buonarroti, il qual non solo tien il principato di una di queste arti, ma di tutte tre insieme.”
⁹² On Westerhout’s engraving and the circumstances of its production, see Goldberg, After Vasari, 114-5; Montanari, “Bernini e Cristina di Svezia,” 424; Delbeke, Levy and Ostrow, “Prolegomena,” 40.
⁹³ For the portraits in Vasari’s Lives, see Julian Kliemann, “Le xilografie delle Vite del Vasari nelle edizioni del 1550 e del 1568,” in Giorgio Vasari, eds. Charles Davis and Margaret Daly Davis (Florence:
portrait type used by Bellori, which juxtaposed the artist’s image to emblems that
represented one of their characteristic virtues. Bernini’s portrait looks to an
aristocratic type. As Delbeke, Levy and Ostrow have observed, the format of Bernini’s
portrait resembles a contemporary series of cardinal portraits [fig. 202], a visual
association that situates the artist, like Princes of the Church, at one remove from a
pope. Although Bernini’s portrait lacks the coat of arms that identify a cardinal as a
man created by a specific pope, he is nonetheless presented as a Christian ennobled by
the papacy itself; just visible on his mantle is the insignia of the highest papal order
bestowed on laymen, the Cavalierato di Giesu Christo (a detail absent in Baccicio’s
portrait upon which the engraving is based), hence the “EQVUS” (knight) in the text
below. But unlike the heralds adorning cardinal portraits, the emblem of the order
does not visually connect the artist to one papal famiglia, but to them all. Bernini, a
Knight of Christ, is here represented as a creature of the famiglia pontifica itself.

1095 Delbeke, Levy and Ostrow, “Prolegomena,” 40.
1097 In a study of the ennoblement of artists in early modern papal Rome, Schütze has observed that popes
increasingly awarded medals (particularly of the Order of Jesus Christ or the Order of the Golden Spur) in
order to acknowledge the nobility of artistic virtuosi. Such noble titles elevated the person as much as his
art. Sebastian Schütze, “Arte Liberalissima e Nobilissima: die Künstlernobilitierung im päpstlichen Rom -
ein Beitrag zur Sozialgeschichte des Künstlers in der frühen Neuzeit,” Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte 55
1098 This same privileged ranking within the pontifical realm is inscribed into Bernini’s tomb, a family plot
discretely placed in the pavement just to the right of the steps leading to the main altar of Santa Maria
Maggiore. The apparent humility of the floor marker is undermined by its location adjacent the main altar,
which, in this patriarchal basilica is a pontifical altar where popes alone could conduct Mass. In 1625,
Pietro Bernini was give the rights to a tomb for himself and his family in the church, see Romolo Artioli
Studi Romani (1935): 321-34.
This portrait of a princely Bernini notably omits visual or textual references to his profession. Whereas Baldinucci compensates for the later with his title, *Vita del cavaliere Gio. Lorenzo Bernino scultore, architetto e pittore*, Domenico underscores it with a title that eschews a list of his subject’s professions: *Vita del Cavaliere Gio. Lorenzo Bernino*. The biographers’ accounts of Bernini’s official ennoblement as a Knight of Christ further nuance this distinction. Baldinucci has Gregory XV’s nephew knight Bernini in recognition of his papal works. By contrast, Domenico writes that on the day of his elevation Gregory himself bestowed the title on the artist, not in recognition of services rendered, but in acknowledgment of previous merit and general regard for his virtue. Gianlorenzo’s papal ennoblement is thus of a different order in each biography: in Baldinucci’s it points to his nobility as an artist, whereas, in Domenico it further underscores his nobility as a man.

In Baldinucci’s narrative, Bernini’s three-fold artistic talent is presented explicitly as Michelangelo’s bequest, a legacy that Soussloff and Williams have demonstrated is grounded in the principle of *disegno*. Michelangelo’s princely identity as master of *disegno*, the foundation of all the arts, is enshrined in the dedication to Condivi’s life where he correlates Julius III and the artist by calling “one the prince of Christianity and

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1099 On the similarities between the two titles and the implications, see Delbeke, Levy and Ostrow, “Prolegomena,” 40.
1100 Baldinucci/Enggass, *Life*, 14; Baldinucci, *Vita*, 80; Bernini, *Vita*, 22. The differing tenor of these remarks has been noted by Delebeke, Levy and Ostrow, “Prolegomena,” 42. On the origins of the Order of Jesus Christ, its significance as a title of honour and the circumstances under which it was conferred in Papal Rome, see Schütze, “Arte Liberalissima e Nobilissima,” 324-6.
1101 Soussloff, “Critical Topoi,” 76-84; Williams, “‘Always Like Himself’,” 182-85. Michelangelo’s identity as the master of *disegno*, the principle governing painting, sculpture and architecture, was not only enshrined in his biographies, his obsequies and in various cinquecento art writings, but also literally institutionalized when in 1563 he was made *capo* (a title he shared with Duke Cosimo I de’Medici) of the newly created *Accademia del Disegno* in Florence. On Michelangelo’s *disegno*, the flexibility of cinquecento theories of *disegno* and design the Florence Accademia, see Williams, *Art, Theory and Culture in Sixteenth-Century Italy*, 29-72, 127, 135-50; Barzman, *Florentine Academy*, 143-57; Jacobs, “(Dis)assembling,” 434-46; Cole, *Cellini*, 118-48.
the other the prince of the art of *disegno*.“1102 *Disegno’s* presence at the core of Bernini’s own triple mastery of art is intimated in his encounter with Paul V, wherein the pope, upon seeing the youth’s drawing, perceived in Bernini the possibility of a Michelangelo reborn.1103 Baldinucci confirms Bernini’s possession of specifically neo-buonarrotian design near the end of his birth-to-death narrative, identifying the “Cavaliere” as “most singular in the arts he pursued because he possessed in high measure skill in drawing. This is clearly demonstrated by the works he executed in sculpture, painting and architecture and by the infinite number of his drawings of the human body.”1104 As if the conspicuous inclusion of the artist’s figure drawings alongside his mastery of the three arts was not enough to conjure associations with the “prince of *disegno,*” Baldinucci adds that he “would be at a loss to name a contemporary of Bernini who could be compared with him in that skill [i.e. design].”1105 In the biographer’s estimation, Bernini even owes his “excellent and ingenious” work as a dramatist to *disegno*1106 (just as we might imagine Michelangelo’s poetry was an extension of his design), which as Williams has

1102 Condivi/Wohl, *Life*, 1; Condivi, *Vita*, 3.
1103 Though the same anecdote is also in Domenico’s text where it similarly revolves around the theme of *disegno*, the fundamental role that drawing plays in Baldinucci’s strategy of equating Bernini with Michelangelo is diminished in Domenico’s version by way of the biographer’s narration of a second Paul V encounter, in which the pope repeats his prophecy in the context of a different theme associated with Buonarroti’s art. 1104 Baldinucci/Enggass, *Life*, 73; Baldinucci, *Vita*, 140: “Potiamo primieramente con ogni ragione affermare, che il cavalier Bernino sia stato nell’arti sue singolarissimo: conciossiacosché egli abbia posseduto in eminente grado l’arte del disegno, ciò che dimostrano assai chiaro l’opere, che egli ha condotto in scultura, pittura e architettura, e gl’infiniti disegni di figure di corpi umani, che si vedono di sua mano…” Montanari, “Un Bernini Giovane,” 33, has noted the neo-buonarrotian tenor of Baldinucci’s claim. He focuses on Baldinucci’s assertion that Bernini was a master of the human body and, implicitly, a follower of Michelangelo’s figural style. Montanari sees this as a reductive aesthetic assessment of Bernini’s more versatile, carraccesque drawing style. I am more interested here in Baldinucci’s allusion to the hallmarks of Buonarroti’s *disegno* as a construct within the larger narrative of the biography, than whether Bernini’s graphic style actually mirrored that of Michelangelo. 1105 Baldinucci/Enggass, *Life*, 74; Baldinucci, *Vita*, 140: “ed io non saprei dire chi mai nel suo tempo gli fusse stato eguale in tal facoltà.” 1106 Baldinucci/Enggass, *Life*, 83; Baldinucci, *Vita*, 149.
argued, expands the concept of design beyond the visual arts to encompass broader aspects of rational thought and activity.

Baldinucci summarizes the fundamental role *disegno* plays in Bernini’s art in his discussion of the artist’s last work, the bust of the Savior [fig. 203].

According to the biographer, the aged Gianlorenzo infused the “divine simulacrum” with “all the force of his Christian piety and of art itself” and, in doing so, proved his own axiom that:

*the artist with a truly strong foundation in design need fear no diminution of vitality, tenderness or other good qualities in his technique when he reaches old age; for thanks to his sureness in design, he is able to make up fully for those defects of the spirits which tend to cool under the weight of years. This he said he observed in other artists.*

According to Bernini’s precept, design (as ideation) compensates for any lack of life or softness in the artist’s technique that is caused by the physical feebleness associated with the maker’s advanced age. Strong *disegno* thus offers him a similar assurance to Christ’s promise of eternal life: it guarantees the undying liveliness of his art. The anecdote also offers a subtle contrast to Michelangelo, who made use of an assistant for his last architectural work “since his old age meant that he could no longer draw clear lines.”

By wedding Bernini’s *disegno* so forcefully to the execution of the bust of the Savior, Baldinucci does more than ennoble Bernini’s vitalizing design – he sanctifies it.

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1107 Williams, “‘Always Like Himself’,” 183-5. See also Williams, *Art, Theory and Culture*, 135-50.
1108 On the role of the bust of the Savior as a summa of artistic and religious virtue in Bernini’s biographies, see Irving Lavin, “Bernini’s Death,” *Art Bulletin* 54 (1972): 159-86, who situates the sculpture within the context of Bernini’s preparations for death and the Jesuit practice of “Ars Morendi” (without, however, considering the difference between Baldinucci’s and Domenico’s accounts). See also Soussloff, “Old Age and Old Age Style,” 116-21, who discusses the bust within the context of ancient tropes about aging.
1109 (italics mine) Baldinucci/Enggass, *Life*, 66-7; Baldinucci, *Vita*, 132: “In questo divino simulacro pose egli tutti gli sforzi della sua cristiana pietà e dell’arte medesima, e fece conoscere in esso quanto fusse vero un suo familiare assioma, cioè, che l’artefice, che ha grandissimo fondamento nel disegno, al giunger dell’età decrepita, non dee temere di alcuno scemamento di vivacità e tenerezza e dell’altre buone qualità dell’operar suo, mercedè una tal sicurezza nel disegno possa assai bene supplire al difetto degli spiriti, i quali coll’aggravar dell’età si raffreddano, ciò che egli diceva aver osservato in altri artefici.”
Domenico recounts a similar anecdote, and it is in his version of the bust, which brought “to a close [Bernini’s] practice of the profession he had conducted, by which a man would be happy to end his days,” that the limitlessness of disegno as an enlivening form of knowledge is made most apparent.

This was the image of our Savior in half figure, but larger than life-size, with the right hand slightly raised in the act of blessing. In it he summarized and condensed all his art: and although the weakness of his wrist did not correspond to the boldness of the idea, yet he succeeded in proving what he used to say, that ‘an artist excellent in design need not fear a want of vivacity or tenderness on arriving at the age of decrepitude, because the practice of design is so efficacious, that it alone can make up for the defect of the spirits which languish in old age.’

Domenico prefaces Bernini’s axiom with a line that frames the relationship between disegno and old age in an explicitly epistemological light. The product of a weak wrist that executed a bold idea, Bernini’s bust defines design as the activity of the feeble hand obeying the powerful mind. This notion is rooted in early modern art literature which promoted disegno as permitting the aging artist to transcend physical deterioration with an incorruptible intellect. Domenico’s note on the appearance of the bust itself (absent in Baldinucci’s account), with the gentle motion of the Savior’s “slightly raised” hand subtly mirrors the artists own hand, casting Bernini’s diminished dexterity in a more positive light. Christ’s effortless gesture suggestively overwrites the difficoltà of carving,

\[1111\] (italics mine) Bernini, Vita, 167: “Questa fù l’Immagine del nostro Salvadore in mezza figura, mà più grande del naturale, colla man destra alquanto sollevata, come in atto di benedire. In essa compendiò, e ristrinse tutta la sua Arte, e benche la debolezza del polso non corrispondesse alla gagliardia dell’ Idea, tuttavia gli venne fatto di provare ciò, che prima ei dir soleva, che Un’Artefice eccellente nel Disegno dubitar non deve al giunger dell’ età decrepita di alcuna mancanza di vivacità, e tenerezza, perche è di tanta efficacia la prattica del Disegno, che questo solo può supplire al difetto degli spiriti, che nella vecchiaia languiscono.”

if not also the physical process itself. When Domenico turns to the axiom itself, he also omits the words “or other good qualities of his technique” that are present in Baldinucci’s version. By removing this allusion to the bust’s facture, Domenico transfers Baldinucci’s emphasis on art onto the artist himself and makes Bernini, not the bust, the beneficiary of the rejuvenating qualities of design. By way of the vitality of *disegno*, Bernini and his intellect, like Christ, are immortal.

Bernini is a master of design in both biographies, but only in Baldinucci’s *Vita* does *disegno* function as the essential principle of his artistic greatness. Baldinucci’s emphasis on *disegno* is likely the result of his sensibilities as an art writer and his pro-Florentine professional agenda. In keeping with this regional bias, Baldinucci grants Bernini more than mere mastery of *disegno* – he gives him manifestly Florentine design. Bernini’s command of drawing and, by extension, of the three arts is overseen exclusively by Florentines, especially Pietro Bernini and Maffeo Barberini/Urban VIII: Maffeo is present when Bernini draws for Paul V (he is not present in Domenico’s version of the anecdote); Maffeo is entrusted with the care of the youth just before the pope makes his prognostication (this happens after the Scipione busts in Domenico); Pietro Bernini supervises his son’s drawing practice (the father steps aside in Domenico). When Baldinucci mentions that the “most famous galleries in Italy and elsewhere” collected Bernini’s works, he makes special note of a group of drawings in the collection

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1113 It is not a coincidence that the title of his dictionary of art terms, *Vocabolario toscano dell’arte del disegno*, and that of his multi-volume lives of the artists, *Notizie dei professori del disegno*, so conspicuously celebrate the principle at the core of Florentine artistic practice as well as Tuscan claims to artistic hegemony. On Baldinucci’s publications and his Tuscan biases, see Delbeke, Levy and Ostrow, introduction, xv.
of Cardinal Leopoldo de Medici.\footnote{Baldinucci/Enggass, Life, 73; Baldinucci, Vita, 140.} And it is Maffeo/Urban, above all, who witnesses that which defines Baldinucci’s Bernini – dominion over art as organized by \textit{disegno}.

Bernini’s identity as princely artist and master of \textit{disegno} is most intimately connected to Maffeo in Baldinucci’s description of the \textit{David}, the likeness of which was achieved by gazing into a mirror held for the artist by none other than the cardinal himself. The mirror in this anecdote is an instrument of instruction and self-reflection by which Bernini, at the culminating point of his studies, fully becomes the new Michelangelo of sculpture. This same mirror, held by a Prince of the Church, also functions symbolically as a \textit{Speculum Principum} (Mirror for Princes), a genre of texts employed to educate young rulers about exemplary models of rulership and comportment upon which to fashion their own governance.\footnote{The genre of texts known as Mirrors for Princes originated in the middle ages and flourished in the early modern period. Though these didactic writings take various forms, they share a common purpose as political and religious models of governance and behavior for secular and sacred rulers and their subjects (Machiavelli’s \textit{The Prince} is among the better-known examples). The subject of Mirrors for Princes is vast and varied. For an overview of origins and aims of this genre of writing, see Lester K. Born, \textit{The Education of a Christian Prince by Desiderius Erasmus} (New York: Octagon Books, 1965), 44-130; Allan H. Gilbert, \textit{Machiavelli’s Prince and its Forerunners} (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1968), 3-15.} The “rightful wrath” captured in the sculptor’s Davidian expression and action suggests that Maffeo held up the mirror of a Machiavellian prince for Bernini’s reflection, a theme wholly in keeping with his image of the artist as a new Michelangelo whose \textit{terribilità} was, in turn, the mirror image of Julius II’s ire.\footnote{On Michelangelo and Julius II as twin Machiavellian princes, see Barolsky, \textit{Michelangelo’s Nose}, 121-30; idem, “Michelangelo and the Image of the Artist as Prince,” 31.} Within the context of Baldinucci’s ekphrasis of the \textit{David}, it is also significant that such texts were often composed at the accession of a new king. Baldinucci defines the \textit{David} as the moment at which Bernini claims his dominion not just over the realm of sculpture but over the whole principate of art, just as the biblical hero that is the subject of his sculpture was on the verge of taking up his kingly destiny.
With this work, Baldinucci tells us, Bernini “devoured marble and never struck a false blow, an accomplishment of those who have made themselves superior to art itself, rather than of those who are merely expert in art.” This display of mastery over art – with an emphasis on unerring and vigorous process – is subtly underscored by Bernini’s mastery of disegno, the essence of vitality, and thus prefigures the bust of the Savior in which, despite his loss of physical vigour, the artist placed “all the force… of art itself.”

Baldinucci’s description of Bernini self-portrait before the princely mirror as combination of action and virtue also makes it possible to see Baldinucci’s whole text as a kind of mirror for artistic princes, a model for emulation rooted in Michelangelo’s design and mastery of the three arts.

Whereas disegno is at the heart of Bernini’s professional universality and princely identity in Baldinucci, in Domenico’s vita the principle that underscores Gianlorenzo’s prodigious skills in art, theology, philosophy and any other discipline is ingegno (innate brilliance). This distinction plays itself out in Domenico’s brief mention of the David. Though he, too, notes that Maffeo held the mirror while Bernini worked on his David, he tells us nothing of the sculpture; rather, his reference to the work follows Domenico’s claim that his father’s Borghese sculptures were so widely praised by professors and nobles that people began to single the artist out as a “Mostro d’ingegno,” a monster genius. Ingegno distinguishes teachable knowledge from inborn talent and ultimately

1117 Baldinucci/Enggass, Life, 13; Baldinucci, Vita, 78.
1118 Williams, “‘Always like Himself,’” 185. On the role of ingegno in Baldinucci, which functions as a complement to disegno, that is, as a principle that underscores Bernini’s three-fold mastery of art (in contradistinction to Domenico’s broader usage), see Delbeke, Levy and Ostrow, “Prolegomena,” 42-5; Delbeke, “Gianlorenzo Bernini’s Bel Composto.”
1119 Bernini, Vita, 19: “e in fine, siccome succede ne’ casi di gran stupore, era da tutti mostrato a dito per un Mostro d’ingegno. Nel lavorar egli la faccia del David sopra nominato, ritrasse allo specchio la sua con una espressiva in tutto veramente maravigliosa, e il Cardinal Maffeo Barberino, che sovente nella di lui stanza si ritrovava, con le sue proprie mani gli tenne spesse volte lo Specchio.”
points to the singularity of its possessor and the vastness of his intellect.\textsuperscript{1120} The term not only appears with much greater frequency in Domenico’s text than it does in Baldinucci’s, but also the former biographer employs it as Bernini’s most essential and innately ennobling attribute. The differing ways the biographers make use of the concept is was demonstrated by Delbeke, who, through a comparison of the two biographers’ \textit{bel composto} passages has shown that Baldinucci uses \textit{ingegno} to define the composite of artistic excellences that go into Bernini’s work and Domenico uses it to characterize the composite virtues of Bernini the man.\textsuperscript{1121}

The image of Bernini as a great man possessed of a host of virtues beyond art has a precedent in Michelangelo, whose biographers also celebrated his wide-ranging talents beyond art.\textsuperscript{1122} According to Condivi’s astrological reading of Buonarroti’s birth date, “such a birth must be of noble and lofty genius, destined to exceed universally in any undertaking,” if principally in the three arts.\textsuperscript{1123} Vasari also introduced his subject’s extra-artistic skills in the first paragraph of the \textit{Vita}, asserting that with Buonarroti the heavens not only produced a prodigious universal artist, but also a man possessing “the knowledge of true moral philosophy and the gift of poetic expression, so that everyone might admire and follow him as their perfect exemplar in life, work, behavior and in every endeavor.”\textsuperscript{1124}

\textsuperscript{1121} Delbeke, “Gianlorenzo Bernini’s \textit{Bel Composto}.”
\textsuperscript{1122} As has been signaled, but not developed, by Williams, “‘Always like Himself’,” 187, and, Delbeke, “Elevated Twins,” not paginated.
\textsuperscript{1123} Condivi/Wohl, \textit{Life}, 6; Condivi, \textit{Vita}, 8: “che tal parto dovessi essere di nobile e alto ingegno, da riuscire universalmente in qualunque impresa, ma principalmente in quelle arti che dilettano il senso, come pitura, scultura, architettura.”
\textsuperscript{1124} Vasari/Bull, \textit{Life}, 325-6; Vasari/Barocchi, \textit{Vita}, 3-4.
In Domenico’s biography, the chief testimony to Gianlorenzo’s composite virtue is Alexander VII. The pope’s preeminence is established in the first chapter where, following an anecdote in which a Neapolitan abbot, a “great assessor of geniuses,” observed that the young Bernini would succeed in whatever profession he pursued, Domenico invokes the Alexander’s assessment of the mature Bernini to affirm the *a posteriori* truth of the abbot’s prediction. Much practiced in observing Bernini through their years of friendship, Alexander claims that “the Cavalier Bernini would have been superior to all in every sphere of knowledge (*scienza*) had he applied himself to any one of them, just as, by Divine will, he applied himself to the profession he did.”

Baldinucci also praised Bernini’s extra-artistic virtues and even conjoined them explicitly with the Chigi pope’s reign: “nature… had given him great genius and extraordinary wisdom and that painting, sculpture and architecture were the lesser part of his excellence and in this regard it was sufficient to say that he lived during the pontificate of Alexander VII.” But unlike Domenico, Baldinucci’s reference to Bernini’s universality beyond art and its association to Alexander is an isolated anecdote, not a central theme.

In keeping with the biographer’s emphasis on the Chigi pope’s idea of Bernini, Domenico develops the princely nature of Bernini the ingenious man in the chapters associated with Alexander’s reign. At the outset of his pontificate, Alexander invites the artist to sit at his table and converse with the pope and other “qualified personages.”

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1125 In this respect, Domenico has Alexander VII and the members of his court affirm what Warnke, in his foundational study of court artists, defines as a fundamental role of the court patron, that is, to advance the early modern artist’s increasingly noble social status and identity by recognizing their art as the product of extraordinary intellectual ability.

1126 Bernini, *Vita*, 4: “E fu comprovato con il corso del tempo ciò, che disse questo grand’Esaminatore d’ingegni, da quell’altro massimo del Pontefice Alessandro Settimo, che per la lunga prattica ch’egli hebbe col Cavalier Bernino, havendo per ciò tanto maggiormente scoperto il di lui grand’ingegno, era solito dire, che il Cavalier Bernino sarebbe stato superiore ad ogni altro in ogni scienza, se havesse applicato a qualche una di queste, come poi applicò per voler Divino alla professione, che fece.”

whereupon the pope is “stupefied” by the way in which Bernini, through the “force of his innate brilliance (ingegno) alone, could reach a level of discourse in any subject that others could only reach after long study.”1128 Upon hearing Bernini’s witty remarks on the greater resemblance of a fly to Alexander than any painted portrait,1129 the pope celebrates Bernini’s wide-ranging skills in words reminiscent of those Domenico invoked in the first chapter. In imitation of Alexander’s example, the Court and dignified Personages subsequently “received [Bernini’s] words like oracles.”1130 Michelangelo’s biographers frequently note the great esteem nobles and learned men had for Buonarroti’s intelligence in extra-artistic matters, especially his knowledge of literature and theology, but the only person to have clung to “the living oracle of [Michelangelo’s] speech” was Condivi himself.1131 Henceforth a succession of illustrious members of Alexander’s court attest to the various extra-artistic manifestations of Bernini’s rare ingegno – Cardinal Sforza Pallavicino claimed that no professional of his age, neither a great orator, great doctor or great captain reached the heights of Gianlorenzo’s perfection;1132 the same cardinal called the artist a “phoenix of the ingenious ones (fenice degli ingegni)”1133 an epithet that characterized Bernini’s talent as singular, exemplary and epoch defining;1134 Queen Christina of Sweden claimed Bernini’s “genius (ingegno) was so elevated that

1128 Bernini, Vita, 95: “Volle, che assistesse alla sua Tavola in compagnia di altri qualificati Personaggi, che con virtuosi discorsi empievano l’orecchia allora del Principe, e era solito dire del Bernino, Rimaner stupito, come a sola forza d’ingegno potesse in qualunque materia di discorso giungere, dove altri con lungo studio appena erano pervenuti.” See also Baldinucci/Enggass, Life, 42; Baldinucci, Vita, 108.
1129 On this anecdote, see Delbeke, “The Pope, the Bust”; Bellini, “From Mascardi to Pallavicino,” 300-6.
1130 Bernini, Vita, 97: “che come più volte disse, Se si fosse il Bernino in qualunque scienza o professione raffinato colo studio, e coll’ezercizio, haverebbe in tutte avvantaggiato ogni altro di questo Secolo per illustre, che fosse. Et in questo medesimo grado di stima, in cui l’haveva il Papa, lo teneva tutto il rimanente della Corte, e Personaggi di gran dignità lo riguardavano con un distinto trattamento, e ne ricevevano come Oracoli le sue parole.”
1131 Condivi/Wohl, Life, 4; Condivi, Vita, 6.
1132 Bernini, Vita, 97-8.
1133 Ibid., 97.
1134 On Bernini and the epithet “fenice degli’ingegni” in the context of the seicento economy of praise, see Delbeke, “Gianlorenzo Bernini as ‘La fenice degli’ingegni’.”
painting, sculpture and architecture were the minor parts of his excellence”; Rome’s nobility clamored to visit the exalted genius at his home; so many people seek the privilege of conversing with Bernini that Pietro Ottoboni (later Alexander VIII) claimed that the artist was a “rare man and worthy of the conversation of great princes”; and, Cardinal Decio Azzolino asserted that his “every word, not just the works of Bernini, are worthy of recording for the memory of future generations.” Finally, Alexander VII so valued the artist’s rare ingegno that he employed it in service of St. Peter’s, Rome and the State.

Bernini’s excellence beyond art also attracted the attention of secular princes. Having established his subject’s compendium of virtues in the first few lines of his biography, Domenico writes that it is “no wonder therefore that the major potentates of Europe began almost running in a race to admire his valour and repay the effects with magnificent gifts.” Though a significant emendation of Baldinucci, who claimed that the greatest rulers of Europe competed “with one another to gain possession of his works,” rather than honour his virtue, the conceit of a contest over the artist in both

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1135 Bernini, Vita, 104: “un’ingegno così elevato, e di un giudizio così perfetto, che la Pittura, Scultura, e Architettura possedute da lui in eminenza, erano le minor parti d’eccellenza.” Cf. Baldinucci’s narrative, in which these words came from Alexander’s mouth. Baldinucci/Enggass, Life, 61; Baldinucci, Vita, 127: “Fino a due volte andò alla casa del Bernino in persona, ed era tale la stima ch’e’ faceva di lui, ch’e’ soleva dire che la natura per renderlo del tutto singolare avealo dotato di grande ingegno e di straordinario guidizio, e che la pittura, la scultura e l’architettura, erano le minori parti d’eccellenza, ch’egli avesse, e tanto basti per aver detto intorno a ciò, che appartiene a tempi del pontificato di Alessandro.”

1136 Bernini, Vita, 98.

1137 Ibid., 99: “soleva chiamare Huomo raro, e degno della conversazione de’gran Principi.”

1138 Ibid: “Ogni parola, non che opera del Bernino esser degna di registrarsi alla memoria de’Posteri.” Given the numerous occasions Domenico cites Bernini’s speech directly in his biography, this passage reads as conspicuously prophetic and betrays a wholly self-reflective, self-legitimating tone.


1140 Ibid., 2: “Onde maraviglia non è, che quindi mossi quasi a concorrersero a gara i maggiori Potentati dell’Europa per ammirarne il valore, e con magnificenza di doni contracambiarne ancora gli effetti.”

1141 Baldinucci/Enggass, Life, 23; Baldinucci, Vita, 88: “onde non fu gran fatto che i maggiori potenziati d’Europa incominciassero a gareggiare, per così dire, fra di loro per chi sue opere aver potesse.”
biographies is to be found in Condivi who asks his reader what “clearer sign of
Michelangelo’s] preeminence can there ever be than the competition among the princes
of the world for his services?” Apart from his papal patrons, continues Condivi,
Michelangelo was sought out by the Grand Turk and the King of France, only to be
outdone by the Venetian Doge, who promised the artist money “without committing him
to anything, but simply so that he would honour the republic with his presence.”

The image of Michelangelo engaged by princes attracted to his extra-artistic
virtue was not only celebrated by Condivi and Vasari, but also specifically highlighted in
his painted biography in the Galleria Buonarroti at the Casa Buonarroti [fig. 204].
Created in the 1610s-30s under the purview of Michelangelo Buonarroti il Giovane (the
artist’s great nephew), the Galleria cycle was unique in the period among decorations for
artists’ houses. As Marc-Joachim Wasmer demonstrated, the biographical cycle of
paintings is not only closer to that created for poets, humanists and philosophers but also
celebrates Michelangelo’s relations with princes thereby glorifying the virtue and nobility
of his person above that of his art. In the central cycle, aside from the five paintings

1142 Condivi/Wohl, *Life*, 94; Condivi, *Vita*, 54: “Ma che segno maggiore e più chiaro può mai essere della
eccellenza di questo uomo, che la contenzione c’han fatta i principi del mondo per averlo?” A similar claim
is made by Borboni in his *Della statue*, which includes a mini-biography of Michelangelo within his
chapter on the achievements of modern sculptors: “Fu [Michelangelo] ravvisata palesemente in tutt’i
Prencipi d’Europa, che sono i Pianeti benefici della Terra, allhorache fecero a gara insieme co i Pontefici,
a honorarlo, e a premiarlo”; “Ma che gare non passarono fra i Prencipi d’Europa, per tenere appresso di
loro il Buonarrotta?” Borboni, *Delle statue*, 71, 78.
1144 Wasmer, “Casa Buonarroti a Firenze,” 120-30. Though the Michelangelo cycle in the Casa Buonarroti
represents the first instance of an artist being glorified in this manner in a residential cycle, the precedent
had been established in Michelangelo’s lavish funerary decorations which included five paintings (hung in
the chapels of S. Croce) representing scenes from the artist’s life that show him as the equal of sacred and
secular princes. These were repeated in the text of the Esequies published soon after the funeral
celebrations. On the Casa Buonarroti, the history and meaning of the Michelangelo cycle and its sources,
Vliegenthart, *Galleria Buonarroti*. 
representing Buonarroti’s engagement with popes, \(^{1145}\) which, with two exceptions, show him in the role of privileged court artist (whose pose echoes that of the popes) [fig. 205]. The three paintings of the artist’s encounters with secular princes not only omit any reference to his profession but also dress him in princely attire and put him on the same (or better) footing as his dignified hosts. In the scene of the *Turkish ambassadors inviting Michelangelo to the East*, the lavishly dressed artist stands taller than the members of the envoy who are in the process of presenting him a formal invitation [fig. 206]; the painting of *Doge Griti of Venice receiving Michelangelo* portrays the artist and the ruler clasping hands as equals [fig. 207]; and, in the *Meeting of Michelangelo and Prince Francesco de Medici*, the artist sits in the prince’s own chair while the latter remains standing as he listens to Michelangelo [fig. 208]. What makes this Michelangelo worthy of such honors is not his artistic universality per se, which is celebrated in a scene of his apotheosis [fig. 209], but his identity as philosopher, a master of all liberal arts and embodiment of composite intellectual virtues, represented in the same room by a sculpted portrait of the artist seated and dressed in the robes of a thinker whose pose loosely echoes his own princely portrait of Duke Giuliano de Medici [fig. 210].\(^{1146}\) By

\(^{1145}\) These paintings include: *Michelangelo before Julius II at Bologna*; *Michelangelo presents the model for San Lorenzo to Leo X*; *Paul III and various Cardinals in Michelangelo’s Studio*; *Michelangelo presenting the model for St. Peter’s to Paul IV*; *Buonarroti seated next to Julius III as the pope’s entourage remains standing*. Two other paintings not mentioned in my analysis represent: *Michelangelo and the Commissioner General of the Florence Fortifications*; *Michelangelo and Poetry*. The latter is the only painting that does not represent Michelangelo interacting with noble patrons (though a pair of noblemen appears to be waiting in the background for an audience with the artist). On these paintings, see Vliegenthart, *Galleria Buonarroti*, 109-56.

\(^{1146}\) Vliegenthart, *Galleria Buonarroti*, 227, has noted the affinity between the sculpted portrait of Michelangelo as philosopher (by Antonio Novelli) and Michelangelo’s portraits of the dukes in the Medici Chapel. Included among Michelangelo Buonarroti il Giovane’s biographical notes on his great-uncle is a brief statement about Michelangelo as philosopher: Ms. 87iv c. 13v: “Per la Vita di Michelangelo. Che è filosofo che specula e imita gli affetti che opera di filosofo. Perche il filosofo non è chi studia gli altrui scritti ma gli contempla e chi si puo egli dire che habbia meglio e piu contemplato che colui che referisce e sa la contemplazioni delti altri, o pur colui che spiiana le sue contemplazioni proprie conla penna o pennello o scarpello.” On il Giovane’s biographical note and on the sculpted portrait of Michelangelo as philosopher,
enthroning Michelangelo’s extra-artistic intelligence, a motif echoed in numerous paintings, Galleria cycle celebrates intrinsically princely nature of Buonarroti himself.

The Casa Buonarroti cycle likely inspired the late seventeenth-century frescoes at the Casa Bernini that represent *Urban VIII Visiting Bernini at His Home* and *Bernini Receiving the Keys of Lyon* [figs. 211 and 212].\(^\text{1147}\) Painted in a contemporary style that Wasmer suggests was reserved for princes and high ranking churchmen,\(^\text{1148}\) these images are most probably the remnants of a lost decorative cycle that more fully celebrated instances of princely patrons recognizing Bernini’s extra-artistic virtue. Whether conceived in association with the biographical campaign overseen by Bernini’s sons or created much later by the artist’s family, who presumably knew of the Galleria Buonarroti, it is, ultimately, Domenico’s written life that most resembles the painted biography of Michelangelo.

Notably absent in the Casa Buonarroti cycle is any direct reference to Buonarroti’s princely origins, an aspect of Michelangelo’s identity underscored by the artist’s biographers, especially Condivi, who stressed the noble blood-lineage of his subject. The first pages of Condivi’s *Life* are devoted to laying out Michelangelo’s links to the imperial Canossa line, an aristocratic heritage further ennobled by Leo X’s granting to the Buonarroti clan the privilege of adding the Medici coat of arms to their own family crest.\(^\text{1149}\) Concurrent with the designs for Michelangelo’s painted biography, Buonarroti

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\(^\text{1149}\) Wasmer, “Casa Buonarroti a Firenze,” 128.

il Giovane was in the process of writing a new vita of Michelangelo in which he planned to discredit the belief that the artist’s family descended from the Canossa line and, possibly, to establish the nobility of the Buonarroti line in of itself.\textsuperscript{1150} Though this biography was never completed, the Galleria imagery fulfills part of its aims by presenting Michelangelo not as high-born, but as a man disposed to princely behavior – small grisaille panels below the central scenes represent the artist’s princely virtues, among them, magnificence, prudence, charity and liberality\textsuperscript{1151} – and extraordinarily familiar with princes.\textsuperscript{1152} While the Galleria’s painted image of Michelangelo is closer to Domenico’s low-born Bernini who transcends social barriers customarily dictated by birth through his remarkable extra-artistic virtue, the biographer’s text was likely composed with and read against the noble Michelangelo of Condivi and Vasari in mind.

Unable to chart a noble genealogy for his subject, Domenico compensates by

\textsuperscript{1150} Michelangelo Buonarroti il Giovane’s fragmentary biography of Michelangelo and his notes against the notion that the Buonarroti family were connected to the Canossa line are among the manuscript material in the Casa Buonarroti in Florence. The following notes, in particular, demonstrate that il Giovane conducted archival research to disprove the connection: Ms. 98 c.61r.-61v.: “Questo è quanto piu di fondamento si trova che l’origine nostra venga da i Conti di Canossa... Però che in quanto al paterno mi pare per quello che io ho veduto delle scritture a Firenze che quello signor Simone di Canossa, se pure vi fu, come ne persuade, la lettera del Conte Alessandro, non ci fosse nel mille dugencinquanta altrimenti come dice il Ripatransone. Perche veduti da me i Podestà che chi furono in quei tempi e in quell’anno preciso massimamente, non si trova altrimenti stato onda manifesta cosa sarrebbe che da questo signor Simone di qui favela la lettera del Conte Alessandro (e) il Ripa Transone, benche senza palesare onde cio si così fosse vero che egli fusse stato podesta di Firenze nel anno 1250. Il che non è senza fortissima controversia, mentre che osservati da me per diverse istorie e manuscritti antichi pubblici in quell’anno 1250 si trova essere stato altro Podestà cioè ... (sic) e non signor Simone de Canossa, e similmente pigliandosi piu anni avanti e dopo il 1250 di lui non si vede fatta mai alcuna memoria.” Ms, 98 c. 55r. E 55v.: “Ma trovandosi la nostra famiglia essere in Firenze molto più anteriore, come mostrero, del 1250 si trova essere stato altro Podestà... (sic) e non signor Simone de Canossa, e similmente pigliandosi piu anni avanti e dopo il 1250 di lui non si vede fatta mai alcuna memoria.” There is some indication, however, that Buonarroti il Giovane intended to argue that the Buonarroti line itself was both ancient and noble. For commentary on Buonarroti il Giovane’s argument against a familial connection to the Canossa line, see Vliegenthart, \textit{Galleria Buonarroti}, 12-5. I also consulted the original manuscripts in the Casa Buonarroti archives.

\textsuperscript{1151} Vliegenthart, \textit{Galleria Buonarroti}, 206-17; Wasmer, “Casa Buonarroti a Firenze,” 124-5.

\textsuperscript{1152} The Galleria’s visual narrative of Michelangelo’s fundamental interactions with and likeness to princes is reiterated later in the seicento in Borbori’s \textit{Delle statue} (1661), though with a slightly different aim. Borbori devotes a portion of his discussion on modern sculpture to Michelangelo’s princely patrons (particularly Lorenzo de Medici, Julius II and Paul III) and the essential role their enlightened patronage played in cultivating the artist’s extraordinary talent and helping to fulfill his destiny. See Borbori, \textit{Delle statue}, 72-3, 78-80.
characterizing Bernini’s universal talent as innately princely. Ingegno is the very vehicle of the artist’s class mobility.

Although both Baldinucci and Domenico record Innocent X’s remark that Bernini was “a man born to associate with great princes,” only the latter biographer represents the artist as a man whose virtues parallel those of princes. Unlike Baldinucci, who suggests Bernini’s is a prince of art through his michelangesque mastery of disegno and the princely self-portrait as David, Domenico underscores the princely virtue of Gianlorenzo himself by way of his likeness to two princes who recognize the artist’s ingegno, as Williams and Delbeke have noted, as kindred to their own. The theme is signaled by two anecdotes that suggest immediate recognition of an other is self-reflective. When Queen Christina makes her entry into Rome, she is eager to meet Bernini and recognizes him among the worthy personages gathered to greet her without ever having met him: as if she had already “imagined (raffigurasse) his features, [Christina] indicated him and said, ‘That is Bernini.’” Henceforth Christina finds what Williams characterizes as “fellowship” for her own “ingegno sublimissimo” in the company of Bernini’s “elevated ingegno.” Similarly, when Bernini first arrived in Paris, Louis XIV was so eager to see him that he peeked through a door so that he might

1153 Warnke, Court Artist, 155.
1154 Baldinucci/Enggass, Life, 37; Baldinucci, Vita, 102-3; Bernini, Vita, 87.
1155 Williams, “‘Always Like Himself,’” 187, 190, notes the “spiritual kinship” between Bernini and Christina and Bernini and Louis in Domenico’s biography. Delbeke, “Elevated Twins,” argues that Domenico describes a “fundamental parentage” between Bernini and Louis that casts them as equals, whose sublime composite of virtues are not only unique to each other but also rare among princes. See also, Delbeke, Levy and Ostrow, “Prolegomena,” 44. For the intellectual and cultural fraternity among princes and their artists, more broadly, see Gosman, “Princely Culture”; Burke, Changing Patrons, 85-98.
1156 Bernini, Vita, 103: “Era già noto alla Regina il nome nel Cavaliere, che ne’ suoi remoti Regni risuonava celebre, e glorioso: Onde se desiderosa tanto maggiormente di vederne la persona, le venne fatto adocchiarlo, framschiato fra la moltitudine di riguardevoli Personaggi, che empievano in quella funzione le Anticamere di Palazzo, e come se già ne raffigurasse le fattezze, accennnòlo, e disse, Quegli è il Bernino.”
1157 Williams, “‘Always Like Himself,’” 187. As Delbeke, “Elevated Twins,” (unpaginated) n40, has noted that Bernini, like his princely patrons (Cardinal Richelieu, Christina of Sweden, Louis XIV and Alexander VII), possess a sublime ingegno.
identify the artist among the knights. Bernini noted the slight movement in the doorway and, beating the King to the punch line, exclaimed: “That is the King.” In response to those who marveled at his feat of identifying Louis without ever having seen him, Bernini claimed that at first glance he recognized in that face “a grandeur and majesty” that only a great King could possess.\(^{1158}\) Louis, in turn, claimed that Bernini surpassed his expectations since he appeared to be manifestly more than how he had been described or even how he had imagined.\(^{1159}\) When, without prior meeting, Christina recognizes Bernini and, under the same conditions, Bernini recognizes Louis, what they are seeing in the unknown other is a reflection of themselves, a trope of Aristotelian friendship defined as a reciprocal bond among individuals of likeminded character (not station)\(^{1160}\) and a theme most fully developed in Domenico’s account of Bernini’s and Louis’ mutual regard.

The mirroring of qualities between social unequals that characterizes the relationship between artist and King, not only echoes the model established by Apelles and Alexander the Great, but also is essential to underscoring the princely nature of the

\(^{1158}\) Ibid., 127-8: “Il Rè non potendo partir l’indulgio di vederlo, affacciassi quanto sol colla testa ad una portiera, e cogli occhi andò cercando fra la moltitudine di que’ Cavalieri, ove fosse, e quale fosse il Bernino: Mà questi, che avvisato da quel piccolo movimento dell’accennata Portiera là cogli occhi ancor ei era corso, subbito disse, Questi è il Rè; e al Marescial di Murena, che meravigliandosi, come conoscìer lo potesse, non avendolo per l’addietro il alcun tempo giammai veduto, rispose, Haver conosciuto in quella faccia al primo gittarvi d’occhio, una gradezza, e una Maestà tale, che di altri, che di un gran Rè esser non potea.”

\(^{1159}\) Ibid., 128: “Io trovo il Cavaliere Bernino Maggiore di quello, che mi era stato figurato, ech’io credevo.”

artist’s *ingegno* as a composite of virtues.\textsuperscript{1161} Upon seeing the design for the Louvre façade at their first meeting as patron and artist, Domenico says that Louis immediately recognizes Bernini as his intellectual equal by claiming that it is no wonder that the pope is “jealous” of Gianlorenzo, “for truly he was a man of lofty ideas, and born with the ability to correspond with the most vast thoughts of a sublime monarch.”\textsuperscript{1162} Here, the very sight of Bernini’s drawing reveals to the king qualities of the man that transcend his artistic excellence – and they reflect those attributes possessed by Louis himself. The equivalence of their virtues is developed in subsequent anecdotes in which artist and king express their shared love for one another – Louis, for example, exclaims, “this great man loves me, but I am more enamoured of him,”\textsuperscript{1163} – as well as their reciprocal admiration for the others’ *ingegno*.\textsuperscript{1164} When the King tells Bernini that “until now he has not known a man of such genius as yours,” the artist responds in kind, saying that “he has never known a mind more disposed to recognizing the beautiful.”\textsuperscript{1165} Both Bernini and Louis even define each other as men possessed of an extraordinary aggregate of qualities that emanate from a remarkable *ingegno*. Bernini exclaimed that Louis “appeared grand in the vastness of his intellect, the fecundity of his genius, the magnificence of his court and in all that which can render remarkable a great Prince, that was similar to him.”\textsuperscript{1166}

\textsuperscript{1161} Bernini’s and Louis’ shared composite virtues have been most fully explored in the forthcoming, Delbeke, “Elevated Twins.” Our parallel interests in this subject were developed independently.

\textsuperscript{1162} Bernini, *Vita*, 129: “E mostròllo al Rè, che in vederlo gli disse, che molto ben ragione havevano i Papi di tenere in gelosia la sua persona, perché Veramente gli era un’Huomo di alte Idee, e nato con capacita di corrispondere ad ogni più vasto pensiere di sublime Monarca.”

\textsuperscript{1163} Ibid., 140: “Questo grand’Huomo mi ama, mà Io sono maggiormente innamorato di lui, di quanto dimostrò.”

\textsuperscript{1164} Ibid., 134, 140.

\textsuperscript{1165} Ibid., 134: “Piaque incredibilmente al Rè questa ragione, e quanto sol disse, Io non hò fin’ora conosciuto Huomo di quell’ingegno comme Voi, al che soggiunse il Cavaliere, Ed io, Sire, non hò giammai conosciuto un’ingegno, che più si accommodi alla cognizione del Bello, quanto quello di V. Maestà.”

\textsuperscript{1166} Ibid., 144: “Tanto ei grande appariva e nella vastità dell’Intelletto, e nella fecondità dell’Ingengo, e nella magnificenza della Corte, e in tutto ciò che può renderire riguradevole un gran Principe, che fosse simile ad esso.”
Louis, in turn, identified Bernini as an “elevated genius and composite of excellent gifts.”  Bernini even quantified the king’s *ingegno*: “I believed that your majesty was great in large things, now I recognize you as most great (*grandissima*) even in small things.” This praise is subtly mirrored much later in the text, not by Louis, but by Clement IX who marveled that Bernini’s genius “whether in things big or small was always similar to himself.” However self-reflective Bernini’s works, by revealing his genius in things great and small he is analogous to the King. For Bernini and Louis, engaging with each other is like looking into a “human mirror” that reflects the other as an individual with all the princely characteristics they possess themselves.

Although Michelangelo’s and, especially, Bernini’s extra-artistic composite of qualities likened them to princes, neither artist acquired the title of prince. Rather, the extraordinary nature of the artists’ *ingegno* earned them the moniker “Divine” and “Grand’Uomo,” respectively: at the outset of his *vita* Vasari offers a list of Michelangelo’s innumerable qualities punctuated by his statement that Buonarroti “would be acclaimed divine,” and Domenico, in the last chapter of his *vita* summarizes Bernini’s composite virtues before ending his text stating, “Thus we can conclude that in every operation the Cavalier Bernini was UN GRAND’HUOMO.” Yet given Baldinucci’s and Domenico’s continual likening of Bernini to Michelangelo, the absence

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1167 Ibid., 130: “Mà il Rè, che in lui conosceva un’Idea d’ingegno elevate, e un composto di doti tutte eccellenti…..”
1168 Ibid., 131.
1169 Ibid., 157.
1170 On these two passages, see also Williams, “‘Always Like Himself’,” 190.
1171 The phrase “human mirror” is Cooper’s from his analysis of Aristotelian friendship, see Cooper, “Aristotle on Friendship.”
of the epithet “divine” to characterize Gianlorenzo’s *ingegno* is striking. This lacuna is readily explained, however, by the historical context. In the wake of the Counter-Reformation anxieties about the demonic origins of art and the hubris of pretending to godliness, the use of “divine” to characterize an artist’s *ingegno*, his inspired creative, intellectual and manual powers as well as the nobility and sanctity of his art and person lost much of its cultural currency. As Patricia Emison has demonstrated, the notion of the divinely-guided genius had a short lifespan: *ingegno* was christened “divine” in the thirteenth century and used with increasing frequency in subsequent centuries, reaching a peak in Michelangelo’s generation only to fall out of favour quickly thereafter. And even though Michelangelo continued to be referred to as “Il Divino,” contemporary writers increasingly problematized the slippage between god-like and human artifice. As Emison suggests, in the latter cinquecento and into the seicento, tempering the claim to god-like inspiration, involved placing new emphasis on the artist’s humanity, on celebrating the remarkable *ingegno* of men, not Gods, who transcend the norms of their profession. Genius thus reemerged as an increasingly mortal, if still ennobling, condition.

By defining Bernini as successor to Michelangelo in all but his title as “Divine,” Baldinucci and Domenico reveal the anxiety of their age. This does not mean, however, that they authored texts in which their subject’s art and persona lacked the qualities of “Il Divino.” Rather, they wrote *lives* in which Bernini’s michelangesque divinity – whether

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1172 On the Renaissance divinization of *ingegno*, particularly as it relates to Michelangelo’s reputation, see Emison, *Creating the “Divine” Artist*. On the absence of the epithet for Bernini, see Delbeke, “The Pope, the Bust”; Delbeke, Levy and Ostrow, “Prolegomena,” 36-7.


1174 On seicento writers who sought to distinguish between divine creation and human artifice, see Delbeke, “The Pope, the Bust”; Bellini, “From Mascardi to Pallavicino,” 298-307.

1175 Emison, *Creating the “Divine” Artist*, 255-301.
of his ingegno, the focus here, of his creative power or even of his devout conduct, went unspoken. Baldinucci, for example, subtly inscribes the divinity of Bernini’s ingegno into his richly metaphorical first paragraph wherein the artist comes to earth as if a gift of heaven, just as Vasari’s Michelangelo was sent to earth by the “benign ruler of heaven” to grace Florence with a perfect exemplar in all things, such that “he would be acclaimed as divine.” Baldinucci tells us that Bernini, “almost like a miracle,” is the virtuous harvest of heavenly seeds sown into optimal and carefully chosen ground. The unique circumstances of this generative process make of the artist a divinity on earth: “inasmuch [as these seeds] are of a heavenly line and united to our nature, [they can] by virtue of the place where they originated and their heritage of immortality, also vaunt the most intimate affinity to heaven.” Never fully assimilating with earth, the divine spirit of these seeds flashes forth from Bernini’s eyes, “disdaining to mingle with matter and revealing, notwithstanding the body, a hint of its most secret beauties by signs, glances, words and motions.” Shortly after this introduction, Baldinucci explicitly states that Bernini “was born by divine plan.”

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1176 As Delbeke, Levy and Ostrow, “Prolegomena,” 36-7, have noted, both Baldinucci and Domenico describe a life guided by divine plan, though they differ in the degree to which they use language of sanctity, virtue and devotion to celebrate Bernini’s art and person. Delbeke et al also draw a distinction between the Christian life of a practicing Catholic and that of a holy man. Bernini’s divinity subtly underscored in Domenico’s biography by what Levy has demonstrated is a persistent use of Christian and Incarnational metaphors to underscore Bernini’s religiosity, Levy, “Chapter 2.” On the Incarnation theory of Vasari’s Life of Michelangelo, see Barolsky, Michelangelo’s Nose, 69-72.

1177 Vasari/Bull, Life, 325; Vasari/Barocchi, Vita, 1:3-4. Fehrenbach, “Bernini’s Light,” 33n45, has noted that Vasari’s introduction to the Life of Michelangelo is the model for Baldinucci’s account of Bernini’s heavenly origins. On Vasari’s introduction, see Barolsky, Faun in the Garden, 139-41; idem, Michelangelo’s Nose, 67-8.


1179 Baldinucci/Enggass, Life, 6; Baldinucci, Vita, 71.

1180 Baldinucci/Egnnass, Life, 8; Baldinucci, Vita, 73.
Much like the artist of Baldinucci’s biography, Domenico’s Gianlorenzo is “born by divine plan,” “destined by heaven to a theatre [Rome] proportionate to his virtue,” “gifted by God,” the creator of works deemed “miracle[s] of art,” and even blessed with a wife that is a “gift from heaven” saved expressly for him, but this Bernini is also categorically human. Domenico christens him a “grand’Huomo” and in his narrative, virtually every major prince – Urban VIII, Innocent X, Alexander VII, Louis XIV, to name a few – identifies the artist using this moniker or, less frequently, the appellation “rare man.”\footnote{B ernini, \textit{Vita}, 2, 4, 26, 27 (x2), 61, 73, 97, 99, 104, 140, 175, 177, 180. On “grand’Huomo” as an epithet in Domenico’s text, see Delbeke, Levy and Ostrow, “Prolegomena,” 45-7; Delbeke, “Gianlorenzo Bernini’s \textit{Bel Composto},” 263} Employed often throughout Domenico’s text (compared to Baldinucci’s single use),\footnote{On Baldinucci’s limited use of the epithet “grand’huomo,” see Montanari, “Bernini e Cristina di Svezia,” 424; Delbeke, Levy and Ostrow, “Prolegomena,” 47.} the phrase “grand’Huomo,” as Delbeke has argued, indicates that Gianlorenzo is endowed with virtues that extend beyond his profession. At the outset of the text, for example, Domenico writes that Bernini “would have been a grand’Huomo in whatever profession he chose.”\footnote{Bernini, \textit{Vita}, 4.} After Queen Christina visits Bernini at his home where he receives her dressed in a humble smock, she publicly attest that in the artist she had “discovered a genius so elevated, and a judgment so perfect, that painting, sculpture and architecture were the minor parts of his excellence, from which that grand’Huomo was gifted by God.”\footnote{Ibid., 104: “scoperto di un’ingegno così elevato, e di un giudizio così perfetto, che la Pittura, Scultura, e Architettura possedute da lui in eminenza, erano le minor parti di eccellenza, di cui quel grand’Huomo era stato dotato di Dio.”} The distinction between “divine” and “gifted by the divine” is subtle, but significant. Bernini is a man with human defects,\footnote{On Bernini and the defect in Domenic’s \textit{Vita} as it pertains to the artist’s humanity, see Levy “Chapter 2,” 163-4.} who, for instance, when motivated by a jealous rage ordered his servant to attack his unfaithful lover. Yet Urban
VIII absolves Bernini of sin not only because he is excellent in art, but also, and more importantly, because he is a “rare man, sublime genius and born by divine order and for the glory of Rome to bring light to the age.” In other words, his human foibles are not to be allowed to derail his divinely appointed destiny. Sforza Pallavicino makes a point of stating “before the pope [Alexander VII]” and “at every gathering of Virtuosi” that Bernini was “not only excellent in his profession, but simply speaking a grand’Huomo.” As this passage suggests, the phrase, like “virtuosissimo,” “nobilissimo” and “famosissimo” which were used increasingly after the fall of the epithet “divino,” also underscores something of the artist’s elevated social and cultural status among men without obscuring his essentially human nature. An epithet characterizing Bernini as godly may have been wanting, but like “il Divino,” behind the moniker “grand’Huomo” is a man divinely graced with the ingegno of a prince.

1186 Bernini, Vita, 27: “Poiche in essa veniva assoluto non con altro motivo, che, per che era Eccellente nell’arte, nè con altri Titoli era quivi nominato, che con quelli di Huomo raro, Ingengo sublime, e nato per Disposizione Divina, e per gloria di Roma a portar luce a quel Secolo.”
1187 Bernini, Vita, 97.
1188 Emison, Creating the “Divine” Artist.
Conclusions on Bernini’s Identities as the Seicento Michelangelo

By distinguishing between Gianlorenzo’s actual imitatio Buonarroti and the literary imitatio Buonarroti of the vite, and by treating the biographies of Baldinucci and Domenico as discrete texts, this dissertation revealed multiple constructions of Bernini’s identity as the Michelangelo of his age. These versions of the new Michelangelo are the result, in part, of the many old “Michelangelos” from which Bernini, Baldinucci and Domenico could choose. Buonarroti was defined on the one hand by his singular historical existence, which, by the seventeenth-century was remote, and, on the other hand, by the more accessible and manifold representations of him, his work and his practice that existed in critical, biographical, theoretical and pictorial sources. It was by engaging with one or more of these constructions of Buonarroti that “new michelangelos” were made. By reconstituting the respective prisms through which Bernini, Baldinucci and Domenico regarded the work and life of Buonarroti, I have shown that each perceived Michelangelo differently. But whereas the biographers adopted a single perspective of the latter through which they fashioned separate and unchanging identities for Gianlorenzo across disciplines and through his lifetime, Bernini’s attitude toward Michelangelo varied and he employed differing strategies to imitate his predecessor in the figural arts and in architecture, thus constituting a shifting sense of identity – one that was always self-conscious, though not consistently self-assertive – in relation to Buonarroti.

In positing a filial model as the framework for examining Bernini’s complex and life-long relationship to Michelangelo in art and architecture, I have suggested that the son’s resemblance to the father changed by degree and in demeanor over time, according
to discipline and, sometimes, from subject to subject. My analysis of the imitative works in chapters one through four demonstrated that Gianlorenzo saw Buonarroti as a widely relevant and readily assimilable model. Although many of Bernini’s re-imaginings of his predecessor’s strongly individuated art and practice were manifestly self-reflective, some revealed a level of interdependency that was as denotative of Michelangelo’s identity as it was of his own self. In sculpture, Bernini fashioned himself as the “son” who engaged respectfully, critically, rivalrously, collaboratively and/or defensively, with an adopted “father” whose works he subtly, yet perceptibly, chose to resemble. His emulation of Buonarroti in sculpture instantiated a dialogue with the form and symbolism of his predecessor's representation of motion that firmly established his identity as Michelangelo’s adopted heir. Gianlorenzo’s allegorical self-portraits played with constructs about the relationship between style and character, self-fashioning and self-revelation, in order to overturn paradigms rooted in Michelangelo’s artistic persona to his own advantage. In architecture, Michelangelo’s paternal imprint on Bernini left a deeper, more perceptible impress than in sculpture. If, with the Baldacchino, Gianlorenzo demonstrated that he was capable of working according to the same principles that were thought to have guaranteed Buonarroti’s practice and success, his identity as a sculptor-cum-architect ultimately compromised his reputation and, ironically, diminished his resemblance to Michelangelo. Yet his work on the exterior of St. Peter’s showed him to be a perceptive posthumous collaborator who understood Buonarroti’s concetto and endeavored to re-instate it under new conditions without compromising his own originality. In his architectural ornament, Bernini virtually mirrored his predecessor, making Michelangelo almost as present in his work as he was himself. Ultimately,
Bernini’s filiation from Michelangelo was not fixed, but the subject of continual negotiation and becoming (and, with regard to the reception of his identity as a sculptor-architect, of unbecoming) through different practices of imitation, from emulation through repetition (whether of form, style and/or concept), that placed the inimitable Buonarroti into an imitable past while asserting Gianlorenzo’s own historical contingency.

Whereas Bernini’s living relationship to Buonarroti was characterized by a variety of imitative strategies, the posthumous biographical narratives by Baldinucci and Domenico cited one model of imitation, selective and filial, respectively, to define their version of Gianlorenzo’s artistic practice and his identity as the new Michelangelo.

Chapter five demonstrated that although Baldinucci’s Bernini culled from the best of ancient and modern tradition, it was Buonarroti’s legacy and identity that his seicento subject most forcefully perpetuated in the present. Because the Florentine Baldinucci used Bernini, in part, to make his historical understanding of Michelangelo (that is, an unsurpassed exemplar in all three arts) resonate more fully, his Gianlorenzo at best equaled the cinquecento master’s precedent. Baldinucci’s grounding of Bernini’s universality in the principle of *disegno*, which he linked implicitly to Michelangelo, also structured any discussion of his subject’s imitative practices according to a more general and universal tenet that, like *idea*, was employed often at the expense of articulating the differences between various types of artistic production. But by making Bernini a michelangesque master of *disegno*, Baldinucci raises a significant question not addressed in this dissertation: how significant was *disegno* to Gianlorenzo’s practice? In the future, I intend to pursue an answer to this question. What I would like to highlight for the moment, is that although the biographer uses *disegno* to underscore his subject’s likeness
to his predecessor, one wonders if Baldinucci’s use of this principle was not also compensatory in that it drew attention away from the specific aspects of Bernini’s art and practice that may not have measured up to Michelangelo.

In contrast to Baldinucci, Domenico presented Bernini as an artist whose art and selfhood not only existed largely outside artistic tradition, but also was exemplary in and of itself/himself. Domenico’s Michelangelo, in turn, is more subtly inscribed into the text as an historically distant, outmoded and sometimes imperfect model. Bernini’s filial resemblance to Buonarroti thus served to underscore his singularity. And Domenico’s use of ingegno as the principle driving his subject’s artistic and extra-artistic virtue, rather than any specifically art theoretical premise (like disegno), further sheltered Bernini from any hazards or benefits that might be associated with imitating Michelangelo, other than, perhaps, eliciting parallels with the cinquecento artist’s own remarkable ingegno. In the end, both Baldinucci’s and Domenico’s narratives gloss over the ebb and flow of Bernini’s likeness to Michelangelo, offering perspectives that too uniformly circumscribe a fluctuating and constantly re-negotiated relationship.

It is sometimes difficult to separate a modern interpretation of Bernini’s imitation of Michelangelo from a seventeenth-century explanation. When the modern scholar agrees with either Baldinucci or Domenico, as I have on occasion, the overlap should not be construed as confirming the veracity of the former’s argument (as is sometimes the case). Rather, these correspondences simply demonstrate that the reading of the work put forward by the modern scholar was also plausible during the period in which the biographer was writing. Baldinucci’s ekphrasis of the David, for example, which likened the biblical hero’s force and vehemence to Bernini’s process and character and which
also privileged the sculpture as central to the artist’s self-definition vis-à-vis Michelangelo, parallels my reading of the work. What this suggests is that here Bernini and Baldinucci likely shared art historical and art theoretical perspectives on how to represent the bearing and disposition of this biblical personage. Alternatively, Domenico’s anchoring of the genesis of the St. Lawrence in Bernini’s self-martyrdom denies the possibility that the work is rooted in any artistic example, let alone that of Buonarroti which I argued was of foremost significance, and situates the sculpture within the context of Christian reform. And although the biographies might drive modern readings of Bernini’s art, as in my analysis of the processes behind the Baldacchino’s design, which takes a cue from Domenico’s subtle casting of the work as a challenge of literally buonarrotian proportions grounded in the “giudizio dell’occhio,” I use the visual and documentary evidence directly related to the monument’s production to make an argument independent of the biographical material. In other words, I demonstrate that Bernini’s process and the process ascribed to him by Domenico, though analogous, are separate instantiations of a theoretical concept linked to Michelangelo. The affinities among my readings of Bernini’s works and their representation in the two vite that are highlighted here should not encourage us to collapse art and text or to understand one through the lens of the other, but rather to treat each as a independent entities in order, subsequently, to identify and more fully contextualize their continuities and discontinuities.

It is also sometimes difficult to distinguish between when Bernini’s biographers are inserting a topos from Michelangelo’s life and when they are referring to an event that may actually have happened. When anecdotes are repeated almost verbatim in both
artists’ lives, such as when Michelangelo and Bernini aver that their works are their children or when individuals who do not recognize their virtue are called “ignoramuses,” the task of separating the reality from fiction is perhaps possible, especially when the repetition points to a common textual source. More problematic is determining whether the living Bernini, like one or the other of the biographical Berninis, actually echoed Michelangelo by correcting flaws in the works of others, by working so intently that he would neither sleep nor eat, or by claiming that “if it were up to him he would have smashed into little pieces everything he had made.” What these parallels in the biographical lives imply is that even though there is ample evidence that numerous stories from Condivi’s and Vasari’s vite constituted Baldinucci’s and Domenico’s vite, we cannot discount the possibility that the same stories about Michelangelo also structured Bernini’s real life.

In the last paragraph of their foundational Legend, Myth and Magic in the Image of the Artist, Ernst Kris’ and Otto Kurz’ proposed that biography shapes real life as much as it configures the genre of biography. According to Kris and Kurz, recurring biographical themes established models that, on the one hand, were perpetuated in biographical writing and, on the other hand, were re-lived by artists who (consciously and unconsciously) patterned their lives on previous types, what they called “enacted biography.” Within this system, a paradigm established by extant biographies is transmitted through successive biographers as well as ensuing generations of artists, and

1189 Bernini, Vita, 180: “Onde diceva non con affettazione vana di modestia, mà con verità fondata, perche tanto sentiva, che Se in sua bailà rimanesse, quanto fatto haveva, tutto lo riderebbe in minutissimi pezzi.” On this passage within the context of Bernini’s zealous commitment to his art, see Williams, “‘Always Like Himself’,” 189.
1190 Kris and Kurz, Legend, Myth, and Magic, 132.
1191 Ibid.
just as it functions constitutively so too it changes and creates new biographical models to be repeated in literature and enacted in life. Though Kris and Kurz focused upon the perpetuation of ancient biographical formula in early modern artistic biography, this dissertation has raised the possibility that a similar relationship exists between Bernini and Michelangelo wherein the latter’s biographies, which established their own formulae, were subsequently propagated in Gianlorenzo’s *vite* and in his life itself.

Although Chantelou’s diary must be understood as a mediated text that framed his subjects words and actions, numerous passages suggest that Bernini had not only committed to memory Michelangelo’s biographies and other oral tales about the artist, but also frequently recounted anecdotes about Buonarroti when they corresponded to his own circumstances at the French court.\(^{1192}\) For example, on more than one occasion while discussing architecture with his hosts, Gianlorenzo purportedly and with strategic self-reflectivity mentioned Michelangelo’s claim “that in matters of architecture, the sculptor was to be preferred to the painter.”\(^{1193}\) Similarly, following Colbert’s compliment that the bust of Louis XIV was so extraordinary a likeness that “even when the king was [next to it] one could not imagine a closer resemblance,”\(^{1194}\) Bernini recounted how Michelangelo was able to make Daniele Volterra see the lifelikeness of his own art by distancing the painting from the real “original” it was imitating. In another anecdote about Michelangelo offering advice to Volterra who was grappling with

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\(^{1192}\) According to Chantelou, Bernini mentioned Michelangelo master more than any other artist, regularly discussing Michelangelo’s achievements in painting, sculpture and architecture, peppering his conversation with anecdotes about Buonarroti and frequently quoting the latter’s views on art. Bernini refers to Michelangelo 24 times. The next most frequent references are to Annibale Carracci, mentioned 15 times, and Raphael, mentioned 13 times. Bernini’s knowledge both of Michelangelo’s “art theory” and his life was likely culled from various cinquecento textual sources on Michelangelo as well as oral accounts passed down through workshops.  

\(^{1193}\) Chantelou, *Diary*, 58, 71; idem, *Journal*, 74, 84 (July 12, July 22).  

\(^{1194}\) Chantelou, *Diary*, 146; idem, *Journal*, 139 (August 24).
various architectural problems, Bernini purportedly told his audience that Buonarroti stated: “to remedy these little things something big must be done and one must do like a man who is forced to cross a ditch wider than he expected – go back some way and get a better jump.” Bernini allegedly added a witty gloss that demonstrated his allegiance to Michelangelo’s mode of thinking and brought the anecdote into the present: “To do this you have to have a basis of knowledge; it cannot be done by someone with gout in his legs.”  And upon telling the French court of Michelangelo’s high opinion of Titian’s Danaë, Bernini apparently used language that resonated with Buonarroti’s estimation of Ghiberti’s doors as “worthy to be the gates of paradise” by claiming that Guido Reni’s Magdalene was “from paradise.” These are just a few examples from Chantelou’s account that might underscore living parallels between Bernini and his predecessor. Their veracity is perhaps indicated by the architect Charles Perrault who was so irritated by Bernini’s apparent penchant for invoking Michelangelo that he characterized him as a parrot of Buonarroti: “he very often quoted Michelangelo, and was most continually heard to say, ‘si comme diceva il Michael Angelo Bonarrotta.’”

More broadly, and notwithstanding the numerous differences between the two artists (like character, social comportment and even marital status), it is possible that Bernini knowingly and instinctively (and with the ample aid of his patrons) enacted Michelangelo’s biography, to use Kris and Kurz’s term. It is difficult to imagine Bernini’s mastery of sculpture, his carving of a David, his subsequent practice of painting and, especially, architecture without formal training, his receipt of the Baldacchino

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1195 Chantelou, Diary, 84; idem, Journal, 92 (July 26).
1196 Chantelou, Diary, 108; idem, Journal, 110-1 (August 9).
commission as a sculptor-cum-architect to fill the spot originally intended for Michelangelo’s Julius tomb, followed by his official installment as the Architect of St. Peter’s and his long-standing favour at the papal court, without Buonarroti’s precedent in mind. Though all of this would likely have been possible without Michelangelo, in the wake of the cinquecento artist’s achievement, these fundamental parallels cannot be understood as merely coincidental.

In demonstrating that Michelangelo was a rich source of the self for Bernini and his biographers, I have mostly emphasized Bernini’s relationship to Michelangelo. But my hope is that a sense of Bernini’s constitutive impact on Michelangelo has also emerged, even if faintly, from aspects of my analysis. For Bernini and his biographers Baldinucci and Domenico not only gave new relevance to Michelangelo, but also reshaped him in an image more accessible to the present. If the historical Michelangelo was a man fixed in time, the idea of Buonarroti’s art and person was not static or bound by temporal constraints but subject to transformation by way of his imitator’s art and life. By becoming the Michelangelo of his age, Bernini made it possible for his predecessor to live anew.


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