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SITE SPECIFICITY, CHRISTIAN ARCHAEOLOGY, AND NATURALISM IN
ROMAN ALTARPIECES, CA. 1600-1630

By

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

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This study considers a previously unexplored aspect of what scholars have termed the “Early Christian Revival” in the first decades of the seventeenth century: the site specificity of altar paintings depicting early Christian saints, works intended for a holy site—a tomb, a well, the sewers—associated with that figure. Each of the altarpieces in my case studies (including works by Cigoli, Giovanni Bilivert, and Ludovico Carracci) has been dislocated from its original site in some way, whether through destruction, dispersion, or seclusion. My study focuses on understudied but historically significant altarpieces and placing them within various contexts, including their chapels, their churches, and their places in Rome’s topography. My method to recover the work’s original context combines the close study of surviving artworks, including drawings and prints, alongside contemporary written material like pilgrimage manuals, artistic guidebooks, and martyrologies. I propose that holy sites in Rome could drive specific iconographical and artistic choices in ways heretofore unappreciated—arguing for a holy *site specificity* in early modern art.

My study enhances understanding of the many ways the Early Christian Revival manifested itself, particularly in the early seventeenth century. I offer compelling evidence that the renewed focus on the holy sites in Rome drove artists to create works that allowed contemporaries, whether devout residents of the sacred capital or pilgrims, to imagine or reenact scenes from the church's early history. The case studies presented in this dissertation have demonstrated ways in which sacred painting connected seventeenth-century viewers to Rome's early Christian foundations. Paintings "of the histories of the mysteries of our Redemption," these altarpieces brought to life those mysteries on the same sacred soil the saints themselves once walked. My case studies demonstrate a remarkable interdependence between image and relic that was particular to the sacred topography of Rome, the heart of Christendom since Early Christian times, as embodied by St Peter's location, built over the first pope's tomb. Site-specific altarpieces functioned as essential and active instruments in supporting the agenda of the post-Tridentine Church hierarchy to reaffirm the unbroken descent of church authority from Peter to the present pope, the cult of the saints, and the efficacy of relics.

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137. Antonio Eclissi, *St. Sebastian Thrown into the Cloaca from the life of St. Sebastian fresco cycle formerly in San Sebastiano al Palatino*, c. 1624-30, Vatican Library
138. Gioseppe Giorgetti *St. Sebastian*, 1672, San Sebastiano fuori le mura, Rome, Italy
139. *Portrait medal of Maffeo Barberini*, 1612, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (inv. 36.110.32)
140. Ludovico Carracci, *Virgin with Saints Orso and Eusebio*, 1613, Fano Cathedral, Italy
141. Ludovico Carracci, *Study for St. Sebastian*, 1612, Musée du Louvre, Paris, France (inv. 7720)
142. Giacomo Cavedone, *Study for a male figure*, c. 1612, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, the Netherlands (inv. no. RP-T-1960-112)
143. Cover of Donald G. Kyle, *Spectacles of Death in Ancient Rome* (1999)
144. Book cover of *Rome, Pollution, and Propriety*, edited by Mark Bradley (2012)
145. Niccolò Semitecolo, *St. Sebastian Beaten by Rods, with St. Sebastian thrown into the sewers in background*, 1367, from reliquary cupboard, sacristy, Padua, Cathedral
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147. Detail of Fig. 146
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150. Domenico Passignano, *St. Sebastian*, 1612, Barberini Chapel, Sant'Andrea della Valle, Rome
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158. Ulisse Aldrovandi, *De animalibus insectis libri septem, cum singulorum iconibus ad viuum expressis*, Bologna, 1602, p. 579
159. Agostino Carracci, *Portrait of Ulisse Aldrovandi*, c. 1590, Accademia Carrara, Bergamo, Italy
160. Agostino Carracci, *Harry Hairry, Mad Peter, and Tiny Amon*, c. 1598-1600, Museo Nazionale di Capodimonte, Naples
161. Drawing of insect in letter, by Agostino Carracci
162. Carlo Crivelli, *Virgin and Child*, c. 1480, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, United States (inv. 49.7.5)

163. Francesco del Cossa, *Annunciation* ("La Pala dell'Osservanza"), c. 1470, Gemäldegalerie Alte Meister, Dresden, Germany
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175. Detail of a prophet by Matteo da Lecce, c. 1575-76, Oratory of the Gonfalone, Rome, Italy
176. Gianlorenzo Bernini, *Santa Bibiana*, 1625, Church of Santa Bibiana, Rome, Italy

Introduction

“...while you visit those holy places, you will have occasion to remember the many saints, martyrs, confessors, pontiffs and virgins; considering their lives and some of their particular actions, good deeds and martyrdom about which you will know and which the same memories of those holy places will show you.”¹

-Carlo Borromeo, 1574

“To remove the work is to destroy the work.”²

-Richard Serra, 1985

Richard Serra's declamation came in response to the removal of his 120 foot-long steel sculpture *Tilted Arc*, installed in Foley Federal Plaza in Downtown Manhattan in 1981 (fig. 1).³ *Tilted Arc* was eventually removed and separated into three plates of steel. Today it sits in a storage facility in Maryland. The work has never been displayed again: the artist saw its status as an artwork so intrinsically dependent on its original intended site. Art historians and critics have considered the controversy surrounding Serra's *Tilted Arc* as the defining moment for site-specificity in contemporary art, positing that the phenomenon was a reaction to the commodification of mobile art works seen in interchangeable gallery and museum spaces.⁴ Within this theorization, writers also allowed for a plurality of different types of site-specific art: for example, memorials, land art, performance and installation art.⁵

¹ Carlo Borromeo's "*Lettere pastorali et altre istruzioni per il Santo Giubileo*" (September 10, 1574). Quoted in Ditchfield 2005, p. 192, under note 60.

² Letter of January 1, 1985 from Richard Serra to Donald Thalacker, published in Weyergraf-Serra and Buskirk 1991, p. 39.

³ Serra 1989; see also discussion in Kwon 2002, pp. 12-13, 72-84.

⁴ Melchionne 1997; Kwon 2002; Demos 2003.

⁵ For example, Melchionne 1997, pp. 40-41 lists twelve ways site specificity could be conceived: Occasional or Intentional, Built-in, Site-Adjusted, Formal, Material,

What of the early modern period? Though much of the art produced is site specific in some sense, whether a *spalliera* panel made for a marital bedchamber, a portrait bust sculpted for a tomb, or, as in the premise of this study, an altarpiece executed for a specific altar, the concept has been little considered. Perhaps it seems too inherently self-evident, even tautological. What is a wall fresco if not inextricably tied to its support? The most famous, and original, interrogator of early modern site specificity was Leo Steinberg, who in his inimitable way wrote a series of case studies examining a site's role in an artist's formal and iconographic choices.⁶ In Steinberg's earliest and most well-known example, the 1959 article "Observations in the Cerasi Chapel," he considers the design of Caravaggio's lateral paintings in relation to the viewer's oblique and changing approach, arguing that the unusual qualities of the paintings are part of a new Baroque illusionism beginning around 1600 (fig. 2).⁷

This dissertation concerns a related but ultimately different arena of early modern site specificity, one responsive to the unique conditions in Rome circa 1600. As discussed below, a phenomenon historians have termed the "Early Christian Revival" reflected feverish interest in Rome's sacred topography, its holy sites, its relics, and its early history. In art historical scholarship, one of the most frequently discussed questions is the nature of the relationship between the revival and the art produced in this period. This study considers a previously unexplored aspect of the Early Christian Revival in the first decades of the seventeenth century: the site specificity of altar paintings depicting early

Indexical, Functional or Situational, Subversive-Political, Historical-Political, Accidental or Pseudo-Accidental, Phenomenological, and Entrenchment.

⁶ For example, Steinberg 1959; Steinberg 1973, on Leonardo's *Last Supper*; Steinberg 1974, on Pontormo's Capponi Chapel; Steinberg 1975, on Michelangelo's Pauline Chapel; and Steinberg 1980, on Guercino's *St. Petronilla*.

⁷ Steinberg 1959.

Christian saints, works intended for a holy site—a tomb, a well, the sewers—associated with that figure. Each of the altarpieces in my case studies has been dislocated from its original site in some way, whether through destruction, dispersion, or seclusion. My method to recover the work’s original context combines the close study of surviving artworks, including drawings and prints, alongside contemporary written material like pilgrimage manuals, artistic guidebooks, and martyrologies. I propose that holy sites in Rome could drive specific iconographical and artistic choices in ways heretofore unappreciated—arguing for a holy *site specificity* in early modern art.

Defining the Early Christian Revival

What prompted such intensified focus on Rome’s holy sites in the years around 1600? The answers are varied and fall under the umbrella of the Early Christian Revival, a catchall phrase that encapsulates several diverse phenomena beginning around 1560 and continuing through the first half of the seventeenth century.⁸ Gauvinn Bailey, preferring the term Paleochristian Revival, defines the movement as “an ideological restoration of the era of the Church of late antiquity [that] aimed to return to the perceived purity of Christianity’s first centuries in the wake of Catholic reform.”⁹ Put another way, the early Christian Revival was a response to the Protestant challenge in which the Catholic Church turned to its own past to substantiate its authority and present a continuity that stretched from the earliest days of Christianity to the present.

⁸ For overviews of the Early Christian Revival in Rome, with reference to earlier studies, see Cantino Wataghin 1980; Bailey 2003, particularly pp. 122-125; Ditchfield 2005; Ghilardi 2008; Agosti 2014; and Robertson 2016, pp. 217-230.

⁹ Bailey 2003, p. 123.

There are no clearly defined chronological parameters to the early Christian revival, and its roots can be traced to some of the outcomes of the sessions of the Council of Trent (1545-1563).¹⁰ Many of the initial changes to Rome's landscape were prompted by titular restorations of churches by cardinals: Carlo Borromeo (1538-1584) at Santa Prassede in 1560, for example, or Alessandro Farnese (1520-1589) at San Lorenzo in Damaso, in the 1560s. One of the earliest relevant artistic projects is Taddeo Zuccaro's apse fresco (1559-60) in the church of Santa Sabina that imitated the fragmented and damaged fifth-century mosaics there (fig. 3).¹¹ Cardinals and artists were aided in the study of early Christianity by historians, perhaps none more so in this early period than the antiquarian Onofrio Panvinio.¹² Panvinio's *De ritu sepeliendi mortuos...*, a study of early Christian burial practice, proved fundamental for Cardinal Cesare Baronio (1538-1607) and Antonio Bosio (1575-1629), central figures in the Early Christian Revival at

¹⁰ For an overview of the Council of Trent (1545-1563), see Jedin 1961. Regarding the Council of Trent's decree on religious imagery: the church fathers wrote nothing should be seen "that is disorderly, or that is unbecomingly or confusedly arranged, nothing that is profane, nothing indecorous." Additionally, "in the invocation of saints, the veneration of relics, and the sacred use of images, every superstition shall be removed, all filthy lucre be abolished; finally, all lasciviousness be avoided; figures shall not be painted or adorned with a beauty exciting to lust..." Images were important because people could see the "benefits and gifts bestowed upon them by Christ," as well as see the miracles performed by Saints. With images, people can "live their own life in imitation of the saints; and may be excited to adore and love God, and to cultivate piety." See Waterworth 1848 for the canons and decrees of the Council of Trent, and for the relationship between the Council of Trent and art, see Hall 2011; Hall and Cooper 2013, especially the introduction on pp. 1-20, and John O'Malley's essay "Trent, Sacred Images, and Catholics' Senses of the Sensuous," on pp. 28-48.

¹¹ Taddeo received the commission for the apse-conch fresco of S. Sabina from the church's titular Cardinal, the German Otto Truchsess von Waldburg. See Balass 1999.

¹² For Panvinio, see Ferrary 1996.

the end of the century, who aligned their textual studies with what they could examine firsthand in the catacombs.¹³

The rediscovery of the catacombs in 1578

The rediscovery of the catacombs on Via Salaria in 1578 spurred fervent investigations into the religious practices and art of the early Christians, as well as their martyrs, their persecutions, and those martyrs' relics.¹⁴ The catacombs presented vivid testimony as to the use of sacred images by the early Church, and were explored by theologians and artists alike.¹⁵ Though other catacombs in Rome had been continuously visited since the Middle Ages, the providential timing of the discovery on Via Salaria could be employed as a powerful tool in the Church's arsenal against Protestant attacks.¹⁶

Members of the new religious orders founded in the sixteenth century were at the forefront of the Early Christian Revival.¹⁷ The Oratorians, under the guidance of St. Philip Neri (1515-1595), were instrumental in the study and promotion of the catacombs as central to Christian faith.¹⁸ Neri had visited the catacombs of San Sebastiano on via

¹³ Panvinio 1568. For Baronio and Bosio's sources for the catacombs, see Ditchfield 1997; Herklotz 2012.

¹⁴ The catacombs discovered in 1578 were persistently identified as Catacombs of St. Priscilla, and have only since 1966 been more accurately called "anonima di Via Anapo." For the proper identification of the catacombs, see V. F. Nicolai in Deckers, Mietke, and Wieland 1991, pp. 3-4. See also Giordani 2008.

¹⁵ See Stevenson 1978; Ditchfield 1997; Ditchfield 2005; Magill 2015.

¹⁶ For the continuous history of the catacombs before 1578, see Osborne 1985; Oryshkevich 2003.

¹⁷ For an overview of the Oratorians and the Jesuits, and their different approaches to artistic commissions, with previous references, see Strinati 2014.

¹⁸ For Neri's devotion in the catacombs, see Fiocchi Nicolai 2000; Danieli 2009.

Appia as early as 1533.¹⁹ The Oratorian Antonio Bosio's *Roma Sotteranea*, which he began in the 1590s, and which was published posthumously in 1634 by the Oratorian priest Giovanni Severano (1562-1640), was the most influential text on the catacombs (fig. 4).²⁰ Bosio's completed work contained one section on the burial practices of early Christians and a second describing what he had witnessed in his investigations underground.

Cardinal Baronio, a prominent Oratorian, was another of the main protagonists in the study of the catacombs following their rediscovery.²¹ In the second volume of the *Annales ecclesiastici*, Baronio wrote:

“We can find no better words to describe its extent and its many corridors than to call it a subterranean city... All Rome was filled with wonder, for it had no idea that in its neighborhood there was a hidden city, filled with tombs from the persecutions of the Christians.”²²

Baronio documented the catacombs with antiquarians Alfonso Chacon (1530-1599), a Dominican, and Philip de Winghe (1560-1592), a Jesuit, who produced a collection of drawings recording the ancient paintings found underground.²³

More generally speaking, Baronio is regarded as one of the central figures of the Early Christian Revival, and has been the subject of several studies on his relationship to

¹⁹ The classic biography of Neri is Ponnelle and Bordet 1932. See also Fremiotti 1926, pp. 5-12, and 42-52; and Cecchelli 1938.

²⁰ On Bosio and *Roma Sotteranea*, see Ditchfield 2000; Ghilardi 2009. For a biography of Severano, see Vaccaro 1961.

²¹ For a short biographical sketch of Baronio, see Guazzelli 2012. See also various essays in De Maio et al 1985; see also Ditchfield 1997; Magill 2015.

²² Baronio quoted in Ditchfield 2005, p. 171.

²³ For the copies of paintings in the catacombs, see Wilpert 1891.

the arts.²⁴ Philip Neri commissioned Baronio to write the twelve-volume *Annales ecclesiastici* (1588-1607), a history of the church in its first twelve centuries.²⁵ In 1583, Baronio was tasked by Pope Gregory XIII (r. 1572-1585) to revise the Roman Martyrology, the first edition of which was published in 1586, the fourth and final in 1598. The revised *Martyrologium Romanum* was an authoritative calendar with each saint's feast day, place of martyrdom, and a brief summary of his or her life and death.²⁶

Cardinals' restorations of titular churches continued into the 1590s, overseen by Cardinal Rusticucci at Santa Susanna, Cardinal Giustiniani at Santa Prisca, and Cardinal Sfondrato at Santa Cecilia in Trastevere.²⁷ Baronio notably undertook renovations of several early Christian churches in Rome, including his titular church of Santi Nereo ed Achilleo, as well as San Cesareo and San Gregorio al Magno.²⁸ At Santi Nereo ed Achilleo, he commissioned several scenes in the apse and nave wall showing the sacrifice and triumph of the early Christian martyrs (fig. 5).²⁹ A now-lost grisaille painting depicting instruments of martyrdom decorated the church's facade.³⁰ Baronio famously translated the relics of Saints Domitilla, Nereus, and Achilleus to the church in a 1597 procession, as recounted in the seminal article by Richard Krautheimer.³¹

²⁴ There is as yet no monograph on Baronio, despite his vast importance to the period. For important collections of essays, see Caraffa 1963; De Maio 1985; Tosini 2009; Guazzelli, Michetti, and Scorza 2012.

²⁵ Herklotz 1985.

²⁶ On Baronio's revised martyrologies in the 1580s, see Guazzelli 2005.

²⁷ Bailey 2003, p. 124. On Rusticucci see Jones 2008, pp. 13-74; for Giustiniani, see Zuccari 2001; and for Sfondrato see Kampf 2001.

²⁸ Smith O'Neal 1985b; Herz 1988a.

²⁹ Krautheimer 1967; Zuccari 1984; Herz 1988a; Magill 2015. For attributions of the artists see Zuccari 1981.

³⁰ The work is attributed to Girolamo Massei. See Zuccari 1981; Magill 2015, p. 100.

³¹ Krautheimer 1967.

Baronio has received considerable attention in art historical scholarship in recent decades.³² Equally central to the period but less frequently acknowledged was the historian and professor Pompeo Ugonio (d. 1614). Ugonio's *Historia delle stationi di Roma* (1588) outlines the origins and functions of Rome's station churches and contains information on the saints to whom these churches were dedicated. Ugonio left unfinished at his death a manuscript titled *Theatrum urbis Romae*, today divided between the Vatican Library and the Biblioteca Ariostea, Ferrara.³³ Ugonio's unfinished manuscript surely contains much information left to be mined.

The Jubilee Years and pilgrimage to Rome

The vast number of visitors to Rome spurred even further interest in the city's holy sites and served as catalyst for new decoration to promote those sites. The Jubilee Years of 1575, 1600, and 1625 prompted many artistic commissions beautifying the city and advertising the Catholic Church's dominance, as hundreds of thousands of pilgrims poured into Rome, eager to receive indulgences.³⁴ Guidebooks in Latin and the vernacular were produced in great number.

The Jubilee Years followed upon Philip Neri's institution in 1559 of the Seven Churches devotion, centered on the seven major basilicas of early Christianity.³⁵ Pilgrims

³² See note 24 above.

³³ For Ugonio's influence on Rusticucci's decorative program in Santa Susanna, see Jones 2008, esp. pp. 19, 21, 38. Ditchfield 2005, p. 169. For Ugonio, see Josi 1954.

³⁴ The Jubilee was held every quarter century since 1300, see Kessler and Zaccharias 2000. For the Jubilees of 1575-1625, see Thurston 1949; Wisch 1990; Barberini and Dickmann 2000; San Juan 2001; Strinati et al 1997-2000; Wisch 2012.

³⁵ These were San Pietro, San Paolo fuori le mura, San Giovanni in Laterano, Santa Maria Maggiore, San Sebastiano fuori le mura, San Lorenzo fuori le mura, and Santa Croce in Gerusalemme. Alternative routes were to Four or Nine Churches. For Nine, the

completed the route on foot, sometimes barefoot; additional holy sites could be visited along the sixteen-mile route.³⁶ Chapter 1 of this study focuses on the high altarpiece for the major pilgrimage church of San Paolo fuori le mura. Much of the material is derived from the guidebooks produced for the influx of visitors to direct them to the sites of specific altars and relics. The guidebooks “reclaimed for veneration the material culture of Roman Christians from the first centuries AD in such a way as to make possible a comprehensive mental (and spiritual) re-imagining of early Christian devotional practice.”³⁷

The Jesuit cycles of martyrdom

Along with the Oratorians, the Jesuits were vital participants in the Early Christian Revival movement. The altarpieces in my study present scenes of burial and death that invoke and modernize the Jesuit martyrdom cycles produced in the 1580s at the churches of Santo Stefano Rotondo, San Apollinare, and San Tommaso di Canterbury. These cycles all contained explicit scenes that communicated to the contemporary viewer the horrors of the persecutions the early Christians endured.³⁸ Of these three cycles, the only surviving is the group of thirty-two scenes painted by Niccolò Circignani (1517-1590) with assistance from Matteo da Siena (1533-1588) at the

Abbazia delle Tre Fontane and Santa Maria Annunziata were sometimes added. Santa Maria del Popolo was sometimes substituted for San Sebastiano fuori le mura. See Wisch 2012; Jones 2014, p. 209, note 5.

³⁶ Barberini and Dickmann 2000; Jones 2014, p. 199.

³⁷ Ditchfield 2005, p. 167.

³⁸ The latter two cycles have been lost, but are known through prints. See Magill 2015, p. 113, note 46; see also Herz 1988b; Korrick 1999; Bailey 2003.

German-Hungarian college at Santo Stefano Rotondo in 1582 (fig. 6).³⁹ Circignani's frescoes are seen as landmarks of the late Roman *maniera* style.⁴⁰ Most scenes featured a dominant martyrdom in the foreground with subsidiary episodes in the background, each labeled by a letter and given a didactic caption in both Latin and Italian. Wittkower captured the effect of the gruesome scenes at Santo Stefano, which "invariably have a nauseating effect on the modern beholder."⁴¹ The grisly quality of the imagery, rendered with a didactic clarity, had a purpose: to steel young Jesuits facing dangerous missions abroad.

The sense of rigorous scientific study of the early Christians' martyrdoms is exemplified by the treatise *Trattato de gli instrumenti di martirio...*, published in 1591 by the Oratorian priest Antonio Gallonio (1557-1605).⁴² The tract included forty-seven prints by Antonio Tempesta after drawings by Giovanni Guerra which catalogued various instruments of martyrdoms and methods of execution (fig. 94).⁴³ Though the illustrations shared formal qualities with the Jesuit martyrdom cycles of the 1580s, they were not depictions of specific saints, but rather all of the various ways martyrs could face their deaths, as well as of the various tools and implements of death.

Rome 1600: a period of artistic revolution

³⁹ Monssen 1982; Monssen 1983; Bailey 2003, pp. 133-152; Magill 2015, pp. 96-100.

⁴⁰ Korrick 1999.

⁴¹ Wittkower [1958] 1999, p. 7

⁴² Mansour 2004; Toubert 2014.

⁴³ E. Parma Armani in *Giovanni Guerra* 1978, cat. no. 82, p. 90. On Tempesta, see Bury 1998.

While an important Jubilee Year, 1600 was also a year of revolutionary changes in the Roman art world, as famously discussed by Sydney Freedberg.⁴⁴ Freedberg focused on the stylistic innovations and developments of Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio (c. 1571-1610), Annibale Carracci (1560-1609), and Ludovico Carracci (1555-1619, the subject of Chapter 3). Caravaggio's dramatic approach to religious painting, grounded in figures and settings from everyday life, would have a seismic effect on painting for the next few decades.⁴⁵

Similarly, the reform of painting ushered in by the Carracci Academy in Bologna, and exported to Rome, constituted an equally impactful "school" that focused on the study of nature combined with lessons from antiquity and earlier masters like Raphael and Michelangelo.⁴⁶ In Florence, the reform of painting coincided with the study of natural science, led by the painter Santi di Tito (1536-1603), who with his pupil Cigoli (the subject of Chapter 1), along with several other Florentine painters, ended up in Rome.⁴⁷ The altarpieces in this study, Cigoli's *Burial of St. Paul* for San Paolo fuori le mura (c. 1609-13), Giovanni Bilivert's *Martyrdom of St. Callixtus* for San Calisto in Trastevere (1608-10, fig. 77), and Ludovico Carracci's *St. Sebastian being thrown in the Cloaca Maxima* for Sant'Andrea della Valle (1612, fig. 116), were executed in a short range of years, from roughly 1607 to 1613, and represent the heterogeneous nature of the Roman art world in this era.⁴⁸ The three altarpieces chosen manifest the changes in

⁴⁴ Freedberg 1983.

⁴⁵ The literature on this subject is vast. See, among others, Spear 1971; Nicolson 1979; Brown 2001; Franklin 2011; Vodret 2012; Treves 2016.

⁴⁶ See *Correggio and the Carracci* 1986.

⁴⁷ Spalding 1983; Carofano 2005; Damm 2006.

⁴⁸ Because of its unusual horizontal format and because it was never installed in a liturgical setting, Ludovico Carracci's *St. Sebastian being thrown into the Cloaca*

painting at the beginning of the century, and represent the diversity of types of altar paintings in Rome: in Chapter One, a large-scale high altar painting for one of the early Christian basilicas; Chapter Two, an altarpiece for a side chapel in a small church across the Tiber; and in Chapter Three, a smaller painting for a private, unrealized chapel.

Stefano Maderno's Santa Cecilia (1600) and Cardinal Sfondrato

One of the fundamental premises of this study is that the Early Christian Revival was furthered by artists who employed the new naturalism of the early seventeenth century for religious painting. Developments in sculpture proved equally powerful. Stefano Maderno's marble *Santa Cecilia* for the saint's titular church in Trastevere was a milestone for depictions of early Christian martyrs (fig. 7).⁴⁹ Spearheading this project was the church's titular cardinal, Paolo Camillo Sfondrato (1560-1618), the nephew of Pope Gregory XIV (Niccolò Sfondrato, r. 1590-91) and the "spiritual son" of St. Philip Neri.⁵⁰ In 821, Pope Paschal I had transferred Cecilia's remains from her tomb in the catacombs of San Sebastiano on via Appia to the church in Trastevere.⁵¹ Santa Cecilia in Trastevere was listed among Ugonio's stational churches in his 1588 guide, with indication that the saint was buried underneath the high altar.⁵² Sfondrato carried out a search for the remains of Cecilia and her relatives, leading to the dramatic discovery on

Maxima's status as an altarpiece may never be fully resolved. The hypothesis of this study is that it was intended to hang above the altar in an unrealized, underground grotto chapel, and thus fits the decidedly elastic definition of an altarpiece.

⁴⁹ Smith O'Neal 1985; Lo Bianco 2001; Kämpf 2001; Montanari 2005; Economopoulos 2013, pp. 161-250; Kämpf 2015.

⁵⁰ Kämpf 2001, pp. 11, 18, note 4. Following Kämpf, I use the name Camillo rather than Emilio, as he is frequently called.

⁵¹ Goodson 2007.

⁵² Ugonio 1588, p. 133-34; Kämpf 2001, p. 13.

October 20, 1599, of Cecilia's "incorrupt" corpse in a marble sarcophagus under the high altar.⁵³

Cecilia's body was kept on display for thirty-three days, counting among her visitors Pope Clement VIII, before her subsequent reinterment. In the place of her actual presence, Cardinal Sfondrato commissioned from the sculptor Stefano Maderno (c. 1571-1636) a marble sculpture capturing the supposed appearance of Cecilia as unearthed in her sarcophagus, allowing permanent display of the miracle for the Jubilee Year of 1600 and beyond. Maderno's marble *Cecilia* inspired renditions of the saint in paintings, such as Francesco Vanni's in the same church (fig. 8).⁵⁴ Cecilia became a popular figure in early seventeenth century art, perhaps most prominently in Domenichino's *Poiet Chapel* (1612-1615) in San Luigi dei Francesi. Maderno's recumbent marble also proved extremely influential in subsequent sculptures, including Niccolò Menghini's *Santa Martina* for the church of Santi Luca e Martina in 1635 (fig. 9).⁵⁵

Apart from its impact on later works of art, Maderno's sculpture, installed above the crypt chapel where Cecilia was buried, offered an influential model for site-specific altarpieces like those discussed in this study. More generally speaking, Cardinal Sfondrato's activities at the church of Santa Cecilia involved acts of patronage that incorporated the church's sacred foundations. In the Cappella del Bagno, located down a corridor off the right aisle of the basilica, Sfondrato oversaw the restoration of a small, ancient Roman bath and commissioned leading painters and sculptors to decorate the

⁵³ Kämpf 2001.

⁵⁴ Dated to 1601-02. See Nava Cellini 1969.

⁵⁵ For the sculpture, see Baldi and Porzio 2015; p. 42, and throughout.

holy site.⁵⁶ Among others, Paul Bril frescoed scenes of landscapes with saints for the corridor and Guido Reni provided two paintings, including the altarpiece depicting the Martyrdom of St. Cecilia (c. 1604-5, fig. 10).⁵⁷ Since at least the eleventh century, the site was believed to have been the bath where Cecilia suffered for three days after the decapitation attempt that failed to kill her.⁵⁸ The scene in Reni's altarpiece, then, occurred on the site where the viewer would have been standing.

The painted altarpiece in early modern Italy

This study looks specifically at works classified as painted altarpieces. Generally speaking, an altarpiece is defined by its function and placement, installed behind the altar table as a backdrop for the performance of Mass.⁵⁹ There is no explicit liturgical requirement for altarpieces. As an art form, altarpieces developed in the thirteenth century in relation to changes within the liturgy that emphasized the Mass and the physical presence of the body of Christ through transubstantiation.⁶⁰ Either situated behind the high altar, or placed above the altars in side chapels, its form and medium proved mutable from the beginning of the Renaissance. The altarpiece could be a sculpture or painting, or a combination thereof; it could be sculpted marble, a bejeweled reliquary, a wooden Crucifix, or a triptych.

⁵⁶ See Goodson 2010, pp. 172-76.

⁵⁷ The chapel also contained frescoes by Antonio Circignani. For the decoration, see Pepper 1967; Nava Cellini 1969; and Jones 1988.

⁵⁸ According to a now-lost inscription found in the chapel, cited in Goodson 2010, p. 176, note 42.

⁵⁹ See Nagel 1996 for a working definition of an altarpiece.

⁶⁰ On the codification of church decoration and altar furnishings, see the important work of thirteenth-century French theologian William Durand, the recent *Rationale Divinorum Officiorum* translation in Durand 2007. See also Gardner 1994.

As the backdrop for the Elevation of the Host at the consecration of the Eucharist, the high point of the ritual, imagery in altarpieces often corresponded to themes of salvation or incarnation. As loci for prolonged meditation, paintings that invited a sustained, contemplative viewership were preferred during the early Renaissance, and narrative scenes were potentially distracting or alienating, thus relegated to side panels of polyptychs or *predelle*.⁶¹ The polyptych was the most common form of painted altarpiece: multiple panels (usually of individual figures) placed within an often elaborately sculpted framework.⁶² In the fifteenth century, the form known as the *pala* became popular: a single rectangular field, often vertically-oriented, presenting a unified scene.⁶³ The rise of a unified rectangular format corresponded to the Albertian idea of painting as a window, and contemporaneous developments in the work of Brunelleschi, Donatello, and Masaccio, centered in Florence.⁶⁴ By the second half of the sixteenth century in Rome, the large-scale, rectangular, vertically-oriented panel painting was most commonly used in church decoration.⁶⁵

During the period, which I call the Counter-Reformation, the Catholic Church sought to affirm its use of images for devotion and to communicate church doctrine to the laity.⁶⁶ Altarpieces were the most visible manifestation of this impulse. Simultaneously,

⁶¹ Nethersole 2011, p. 53.

⁶² See Gardner von Teuffel 1983.

⁶³ See Gardner von Teuffel 1982.

⁶⁴ Humfrey 1987, p. 12.

⁶⁵ Most painted altarpieces executed in early modern Rome are completely rectangular, or rectangular on three sides with an arched upper edge. There are some exceptions, though rare: ovals or those with horizontal orientations, as in the subject of Chapter 3, for example.

⁶⁶ The term “Counter Reformation” has its detractors, with some scholars in favor of alternatives: Early Modern Catholicism, Post-Tridentine Reform, Catholic Reformation, etc. For a discussion of this issue in nomenclature, see O’Malley 2002.

altarpiece commissions became instrumental for artists to achieve fame and as such were key opportunities to display bold artistic statements publicly. Churches were the de facto public galleries of the sixteenth- and early seventeenth- centuries, in an era before the advent of such institutions.

At the beginning of the seventeenth century, the body achieved a new prominence in painted altarpieces representing martyrdom, burial, exhumation, and transportation. One reason was the increasing interest in unearthing the relics of early Christian martyrs and enacting the vivid details in these saints' lives. The saints' bodies, buried, exhumed, moved, displaced, and newly displayed, mimicked the situation of many painted altarpieces themselves: produced for a particular chapel, moved or rejected, sometimes bought and placed into private *gallerie*.⁶⁷

My study contributes to the subset within early Modern art history devoted to altarpieces studies, which focus on the altarpiece as a category of artistic production with distinct formal concerns and theological significance. Jacob Burckhardt (1818-1897) was the first to consider the altarpiece as a specific category within the Italian Renaissance. His essay "Das Altarbild" was published in his 1898 *Beiträge zur Kunstgeschichte von Italien* along with "Das Porträt in der Malerei" and "Die Sammler."⁶⁸ Based on his firsthand travels around Italy, the essay considered thematically, rather than chronologically, the altarpiece from 1400 to 1600. Joseph Braun's 1924 study, two volumes on the altar and its furnishings, remains a seminal work on the subject.⁶⁹ Hellmut Hager traced the development of popular iconographies in Medieval altarpieces,

⁶⁷ Richards 2013 studies the movement of altarpieces from chapels to galleries, largely as a response to the wishes of private collectors.

⁶⁸ Burckhardt 1898, pp. 1-139.

⁶⁹ Braun 1924.

such as the Madonna and Child, laying the foundation for studies of the early Renaissance altarpiece.⁷⁰

In the late 1980s, the translation of Burckhardt's essay on the altarpiece into English became the catalyst for a series of important studies on altarpieces, including two separate volumes of collected essays in 1990 and 1994.⁷¹ These studies went far in establishing the types of questions, concerns, limits, and goals in studying the subject of altarpieces as taxonomically distinct from other art forms of the period. Scholars have also considered the nature of altarpieces in specific cities, including Henk van Os on altarpieces in Siena and both Peter Humfrey and Lorenzo Buonanno on altarpieces in Venice.⁷²

The altarpiece in Rome

Rome, as the seat of Catholicism, was also an epicenter of the art world in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. As artists relocated to the Eternal City to make their fortunes, study antiquity, and seek prestigious commissions, they were also tasked with furnishing churches and other sites of devotion with religious imagery that would befit the church during a tumultuous period.⁷³ Though the painted altarpiece as a type proliferated in centers such as Venice and Florence around 1500, in Rome it was not until the aftermath of the Council of Trent that the format witnessed an increase in production. This increase was mainly due to the rise of new religious orders, and a resultant surge in

⁷⁰ Hager 1962.

⁷¹ Burckhardt 1988; Humfrey and Kemp 1990; Borsook and Gioffredi 1994.

⁷² Van Os 1988; Van Os 1990; Humfrey 1993. Buonanno 2014 examined the sculpted altarpiece in Renaissance Venice.

⁷³ For studies of Rome during these years, see Abromson 1976; Macioce 1990; Freiberg 1995; Ostrow 1996; and Robertson 2016.

the construction of new churches, as well as new chapels, new dedications, and the refurnishing of existing spaces.⁷⁴

There have been several studies focusing on specific aspects of Roman altarpieces, but no survey on par with Humfrey's on Venice. Several influential dissertations have provided important foundations for studies of altarpieces in Rome. Milton Lewine's dissertation on the Roman church interior, 1527-1580, meticulously reconstructs chapel decorations in this period, including altarpieces, but ends before the flurry of church decoration under the pontificates of Sixtus V (1585-1590), Clement VIII (1592-1605), and Paul V (1605-1621).⁷⁵ Morton Abromson's dissertation remains the standard resource on artistic patronage under Clement VIII, though it does not focus on altarpieces.⁷⁶ Iris Krick's dissertation offers a useful iconographic study of specific altarpieces in Rome from 1563 to 1605 (the end of Clement VIII's reign).⁷⁷

Pamela M. Jones has written the only book dedicated to Roman altarpieces, with five case studies delving into the reception of paintings by Tommaso Laureti, Andrea Comodi, Caravaggio, Guercino, and Guido Reni.⁷⁸ In a related article, Jones considers the altarpiece as a permanent marker in Rome's sacred topography, using the example of Tommaso Laureti's *Santa Susanna*.⁷⁹ Louise Rice's publication on the altars and altarpieces for St. Peter's Basilica contributes a comprehensive account of the most important church in Christendom, while Damian Dombrowski has recently considered

⁷⁴ For the new orders and their artistic patronage, see two fundamental texts: Haskell 1980; and Wittkower [1958] 1999.

⁷⁵ Lewine 1960.

⁷⁶ Abromson 1976.

⁷⁷ Krick 2002.

⁷⁸ Jones 2008.

⁷⁹ Jones 2014.

aspects of the sculpted altarpiece in the Roman church interior.⁸⁰ A comprehensive overview of the altarpiece in Rome remains to be written.

By their nature, altarpieces make difficult subjects for exhibitions, which is why the monumental exhibition *Roma al tempo di Caravaggio*, held at the Palazzo Venezia, Rome, in 2010, was a major contribution to the field (fig. 11).⁸¹ The exhibition afforded visitors the rare opportunity to see early seventeenth-century altarpieces from Roman churches up close and brought together many obscure and little-studied works, including Giovanni Bilivert's *Martyrdom of St. Callixtus*, the subject of Chapter 2. That the catalogue entry on Bilivert's altarpiece largely studied it outside the context of its chapel demonstrates the limits of such exhibitions. My study aims to contribute to our understanding of the altarpiece in the early seicento by focusing on understudied but historically significant examples like Bilivert's and placing them within various contexts, including their chapels, their churches, and their places in Rome's topography.

Antonio Tanari's Santa Pudenziana altarpiece (1607)

A little-studied painting of 1607 exemplifies the concerns of this study and is a hinge of sorts between the didactic nature of the Jesuit martyrdom scenes of the 1580s and 1590s and the altarpieces presented here. The work is Antonio Tanari's *Saints Prassede and Pudenziana Collecting the Blood of Martyrs* (1607, fig. 12) in the church of Santa Pudenziana, Rome.⁸² Now hanging on the left wall of the nave, the painting was originally installed over an altar in the Caetani chapel. Though mentioned by Filippi Tito

⁸⁰ Rice 1997; Dombrowski 2014.

⁸¹ For the English version of the catalogue, see Vodret 2012.

⁸² Oil on canvas, 275 x 186 cm, Church of Santa Pudenziana, Rome. For this work, see Alessandro Zuccari in Strinati 1995, cat. 17, pp. 515-16; Della Volpe 2005.

as an “*opera creduta del Ciampelli*,” for years the authorship of the painting was uncertain.⁸³ In 1995, Alessandro Zuccari cited a manuscript of 1660-63 that mentions the little known artist Antonio Tanari.⁸⁴ A document published by Lisa della Volpe confirmed the authorship of the mostly unknown artist Tanari, rather than that of Agostino Ciampelli.⁸⁵

Antonio Tanari (active c. 1607-35) is a mysterious figure, though recent documentary research has uncovered additional biographical information. The Cavalier d’Arpino (Giuseppe Cesari, 1568-1640) is documented as the godfather to Tanari’s first son in 1609 and second son in 1611, suggesting that Tanari perhaps trained under the master.⁸⁶ In 1616, none other than Galileo Galilei was named the godfather of Tanari’s daughter, which has led to recent speculation that Tanari had ties to the Medici court in Florence.⁸⁷ He was known as a painter of fruit, registered in the Accademia di San Luca in Rome from 1634-35 (nearly three decades after the Santa Pudenziana altarpiece) and living in the parishes of S. Andrea della Fratte and S. Lorenzo in Lucina.⁸⁸ From 1609 to 1614, he painted still lifes for Cardinal Alessandro Peretti Montalto and Cardinal Scipione Borghese, in addition to sending several paintings of fish and fruit to Florence.⁸⁹

⁸³ Titi 1987, vol I, p. 143. “*Vicino al Pozzo de’ Martiri, che si vede seguitando il giro, vi è l’Altare dove nel Quadro sono figurate S. Pudenziana, e Santa Prassede, che danno sepoltura à Santi Martiri, opera creduta del Ciampelli.*”

⁸⁴ Fioravante Martinelli, *Roma ornate dall’Architettura, Pittura e Scultura*, cited in Alessandro Zuccari’s entry in Strinati 1995, pp. 515-516, cat. 17.

⁸⁵ Della Volpe 2005.

⁸⁶ Vodret 2011, pp. 49.

⁸⁷ Vodret 2011, p. 49.

⁸⁸ Della Volpe 2005; Vodret 2011, pp. 48-50.

⁸⁹ Della Volpe 2005; Vodret 2011, pp. 48-50; For the Montalto commission, see Granata 2012, p. 201.

The fourth-century church of Santa Pudenziana was built on the site where St. Pudens legendarily housed St. Peter.⁹⁰ Pudens was believed to be the father of Prassede and Pudenziana, though the relation is largely based on the similarities of the names.⁹¹ While not technically martyrs themselves, the sisters gained fame during the late sixteenth century because of the pair's signature activity: collecting the blood and relics of martyrs. Tanari's altarpiece was commissioned during Innocenzo Del Bufalo's (c. 1565-1610) brief tenure as titular cardinal of Santa Pudenziana in 1606, lasting a little over a year but overseeing several important renovations. The existing contract specifies very little about the altarpiece's formal requirements. Della Volpe speculated that Tanari would have enjoyed a degree of freedom in his development of the iconography.⁹²

In Tanari's altarpiece, Santa Prassede collects the blood of a martyr in a well at the left of the painting, while her sister Pudenziana uses a sponge to do the same in the bottom right, kneeling over a pile of tangled bodies. Pudenziana's right hand is stretched out, her hand grasping a sponge soaked in blood. Around them are sensitively rendered plants and flowers, whose symbolic nature has been compared to the flora painted by Caravaggio in his various religious scenes.⁹³ The plants hint at Tanari's skills as a still

⁹⁰ See Ugonio 1588, pp. 164-65; Montini 1959; Parlato 2009.

⁹¹ See entry by Basilio Vanmaele in *Bibliotheca Sanctorum* 1963-68, vol. 10 (1968), p. 1062-72.

⁹² Document of June 11, 1607, published in Della Volpe 2005: "*Io Antonio Tanari Pittore Romano confesso p. La [...] et mi obbligo al sup.mo nel Monasto si S.ta Potinza fargli il quadro che va dietro la cornice di noce indorata di l'altario di Sta Potinzna dove a dá essere dipinte due sante Potina et Prassede con altri corpi di morti et gloria et il pozzo et siamo stati d'accordo che lo fo' p. Scudi cinq.ta di m.ta et ho ricevuto a buon conto scudi trenta di m.ta et in fede [...] io sottoscritto fa pitt.ra di mia propria mano et voglia che sia valida quando fosse fatta in forma corretta [...]*"

⁹³ Alessandro Zuccari in Strinati 1995, p. 515, cites Caravaggio's *Rest on the Flight into Egypt* (Doria Pamphili, Rome); *St. John the Baptist* (Capitoline Museum, Rome), and *Entombment* (Pinacoteca Vaticana).

life painter. At the top of the altarpiece is an angel, holding a garland of flowers in each hand.

The middle ground of the painting contains bodies randomly strewn around, as well as the cave-like opening to a catacomb, with two figures carrying a body to its resting place. In the far background, a group of severed limbs and contorted bodies rests among several instruments of martyrdom. The focus on large figures in the foreground with ancillary scenes in the background stylistically aligns the altarpiece with Circignani's frescoes in Santo Stefano Rotondo; the altarpiece also displays the influence of Gallonio's 1591 treatise on the instruments of martyrdom. Tanari may have also looked at the same author's *Historia delle Sante Vergini Romane*, published in Rome in 1591, which included an illustration of the two sisters.⁹⁴ The work functions uneasily, perhaps unsuccessfully, as an altarpiece, however, lacking a focal point or a dramatic narrative. It is not surprising that the work is Tanari's only public commission.

If not a masterpiece, the work emerges as considerably more thoughtful when one reconstructs its original setting. Tanari's panel was intended for a small altar that projected into the left side of the nave, situated between the Caetani Chapel and the Chapel of St. Peter. The altar, destroyed in 1803, was part of the restoration work of the church's influential titular cardinal Enrico Caetani (r. 1586-1599) and contained the relic of the well where the sisters were believed to have collected hundreds of relics.⁹⁵ Documents indicate a second well was conserved in the church, destroyed during the construction of the Caetani Chapel in the 1590s.⁹⁶ Thus the painting would have directly

⁹⁴ Gallonio 1591b.

⁹⁵ For Caetani's activities at the church, see Parlato 2009.

⁹⁶ Cecchelli 1987; Cecchelli 1989; Parlato 2009, pp. 148-151.

related to the well then present near its altar and also memorialized the well recently destroyed. Viewers could have meditated upon the thousands of relics and the large quantities of blood the sisters collected, signified in the painting by the mounting piles of bodies, or the sponge dripping blood, so evocative of a bleeding host (fig. 13). In fact, marble steps to the left of the altar in the Caetani Chapel, marked by two iron grates, conserve the supposed miraculous drips of blood from a bleeding host.⁹⁷ Employing the visual language of the late sixteenth-century martyrdom cycles with a new emphasis on the holy sites of Rome, Tanari's altarpiece offers a small window into the concerns of this study, and sets the stage for the three altarpieces I examine in depth.

Chapter overviews

My first chapter examines the now-lost *Burial of St. Paul* altarpiece by Ludovico Cardi (1559-1613), known as Cigoli. Left unfinished at the artist's death in 1613, Cigoli's *Burial of St. Paul* would have been one of the most monumental and original altarpieces in early modern Rome. Cigoli's painting remained in situ for over two centuries before a fire ravaged the church in 1823. The work has been missing since, either completely destroyed or dismantled and in storage somewhere unknown. Despite Cigoli's immense fame during the early modern period, the artist has been marginalized in modern art historical scholarship and is little known outside of Italy. In 1959, his hometown of San

⁹⁷ Parlato 2009, p. 148, citing Ugonio 1588, p. 165: "à piedi dell'altare si veggone due cratelle di ferro che hanno sotto in su la pietra segnati certi circoletti, I quali segni è fama che siano stati fatti cadendo l'hostia sacra di mano ad un Sacerdote, che al detto altare celebrava."

Miniato held a landmark exhibition devoted to him.⁹⁸ Subsequently, Miles Chappell and Anna Matteoli published several fundamental studies devoted to the artist.⁹⁹ Since his dissertation of 1971, Chappell has elucidated many aspects of Cigoli's design process and is currently compiling a catalogue of the artist's drawings. He has been the dominant—at times only—voice in Cigoli studies over the last three decades. Recently, two important dissertations, by Lisa Bourla and Jasmin Mersmann, have elaborated further aspects of Cigoli's prolific career, while Horst Bredekamp has studied the artistic relationship between Cigoli and his friend Galileo.¹⁰⁰

My chapter examines one of Cigoli's most important commissions and links its unusual iconography to the early Christian roots of the site. The high altar of the fourth-century San Paolo fuori le mura, the second largest basilica in Rome, would have been an extremely coveted commission. The church was believed to have been built over St. Paul's tomb, making it an important pilgrimage site. The location clearly dictated the unusual scene ordered for the high altar: the burial of the apostle. Cigoli's diminished reputation and the work's loss have rendered the important project largely unknown today.

At least fourteen preparatory drawings for the altarpiece exist, providing valuable insight into how the artist developed the unprecedented iconography. In this chapter, I review St. Paul's *vita* and look at Pauline iconography in late Renaissance Rome, which foregrounds the unique nature of Cigoli's invention. I examine the surviving preparatory

⁹⁸ *Mostra del Cigoli* 1959, organized by Mario Bucci, Anna Forlani Tempesti, Luciano Berti, and Mina Gregori.

⁹⁹ For example, see Matteoli 1964-5; Matteoli 1980; Chappell 1971; Chappell 1984; Chappell 1992.

¹⁰⁰ Bourla 2014; Mersmann 2017; Bredekamp 2010.

drawings and look at the reception of the altarpiece, whether in prints, guidebooks, or biographies, to provide additional information about the lost altarpiece's appearance. Cigoli experimented with several different compositions, based on established configurations for Christ's Entombment. Throughout his different compositions, from quick compositional sketches to a squared-for-transfer, highly finished *modello*, Cigoli displays a remarkable, if heretofore unnoticed, attention to specificities of place.

My second chapter is the first in-depth study of the earliest documented work by Cigoli's pupil Giovanni Bilivert, the *Martyrdom of St. Callixtus* altarpiece for the small church of San Calisto in Trastevere. If Cigoli is little studied in North American scholarship, Bilivert is practically unknown.¹⁰¹ In Bilivert's only Roman work, the artist depicts the third-century pope being thrown into a well. Because the actual relic of the well was conserved in the chapel, this dissertation argues that Bilivert conceived his altarpiece as part of what modern commentators might term a site-specific installation. Though Bilivert's work is the only altarpiece in this study still in situ, it has never been considered within its context. Documents recently published by Maria Barbara Guerrieri Borsoi provide invaluable information regarding the reconstruction of the church of San Calisto in 1608, along with a payment record for both Bilivert and his master Cigoli.¹⁰²

My study places Bilivert's work within the framework of the martyrdom scenes produced in Rome in the 1580s and 1590s, as well as within the larger changes occurring in the neighborhood of Trastevere in the early seventeenth century. Additionally, I examine the relic of the well conserved in the chapel and try to resolve inconsistencies

¹⁰¹ Roberto Contini's Italian monograph of 1985 remains the standard resource on Bilivert. See Contini 1985.

¹⁰² Guerrieri Borsoi 2014a.

surrounding two different marble wellheads that have both been considered Callixtus's relic. Though Bilivert's altarpiece was part of the larger restoration plans of the Benedictines for the church of San Calisto beginning in 1608, the project is rarely seen through the lens of the early Christian Revival.

My final chapter focuses on Ludovico Carracci's *St. Sebastian thrown into the Cloaca Maxima* (1612), today in the J. Paul Getty Museum. The work, intended for an unrealized altar in Sant'Andrea della Valle, experienced two decontextualizations in its history: first upon entering the private collection of Maffeo Barberini, and ultimately the public collection of the Getty. My chapter looks at the unusual circumstances around the painting's creation, information of which is contained in letters exchanged between Maffeo Barberini and his brother Carlo. My chapter seeks to reconcile a seeming contradiction in the painting's *fortuna critica*: how could a painting so perfectly suitable for a specific site be seen as ultimately inappropriate for that place?

To further reconstruct how Ludovico's painting was originally intended to be viewed, I consider connections between Rome's ancient sewer system and sacred topography, as well as relationships between natural history, illusionism, and devotional painting. Reading closely the patron's reception of the work allows insight into why certain works may have been considered inappropriate for church settings and deepens—or complicates—our understanding of decorum for religious images in early Modern Rome. Additionally, I place the unusual iconography of St. Sebastian thrown into a sewer within the larger sampling of images of Sebastian in early modern art. Though Ludovico's work is often considered a *sui generis* invention, I identify a tenth-century Roman fresco as a possible source for it.

All three of the altarpieces in my dissertation have been chosen for specific reasons. Each has been dislocated or disconnected from its original site in some way: Cigoli's was destroyed or lost since 1823, and its original altar surroundings demolished; Bilivert's altarpiece is in a church closed to the public, and the chapel has lost its original marble wellhead relic; and Ludovico's painting is in a public collection in Los Angeles, far from its original intended Roman setting. All three artists have been little studied outside of traditional, though foundational, monographic studies focusing on chronology, style, and attribution. Furthermore, the artists, and their altarpieces, have never been seen as actors in the Early Christian Revival moment in Rome. By examining this set of altarpieces, my research offers compelling evidence that the renewed focus on the holy sites in Rome drove artists to create works that allowed contemporaries, whether devout residents of the sacred capital or pilgrims, to imagine or reenact scenes from the church's early history. To return to Carlo Borromeo's 1574 quote that opened this introduction, "while you visit those holy places, you will have occasion to remember the many saints, martyrs, confessors, pontiffs and virgins; considering their lives and some of their particular actions, good deeds and martyrdom about which you will know and which the same memories of those **holy places** will show you."¹⁰³

Chapter 1: Designing site specificity: Cigoli's lost Burial of St. Paul for the high altar of San Paolo fuori le mura

¹⁰³ See note 1.

Installed on the high altar of one of the most important basilicas in all of Rome, Cigoli's *Burial of St. Paul* for San Paolo fuori le mura must have been one of the most spectacular and influential landmarks of painting at the beginning of the seventeenth century. Its impact, both in its day and for the history of art, was severely compromised by several factors. First, that the painting was left with a degree of unfinish at the artist's death in 1613; second, that humidity and the painting's likely surface, slate, left the painting in a ruinous state by the early nineteenth century; and third, that the painting's whereabouts have been unknown since the tragic fire that ravaged the church in 1823. Because of these factors, the artist's original invention and achievement at San Paolo have not been sufficiently recognized. Through a study of the documents related to the commission, the fourteen extant related drawings, Pauline iconography, and the history of the church, this chapter is not only a reassessment of a neglected altarpiece but an examination of how Cigoli developed an unprecedented iconography that responded to the specificities of the site to depict the burial of the saint. St. Paul, along with St. Peter, was an Apostle of Rome and one of the pillars of early Christianity. The Burial of St. Paul was a rarely—practically never—depicted scene, dictated by the specificities of the site. Cigoli's altarpiece, installed above the saint's tomb, enshrined one of the holiest sites in all of Christendom, a prominent stop along the spiritual route for the hundreds of thousands of pilgrims to early modern Rome (fig. 14).

Ludovico Cardi, known as Cigoli (1559-1613)

Ludovico Cardi (1559-1613), known as Cigoli after the town of his birth, was one of the most in-demand painters and architects of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth

centuries.¹⁰⁴ Cigoli trained under Alessandro Allori (1535-1607) in Florence, where he spent most of his career before moving to Rome in the final decade of his life. In addition to his training with Allori, Cigoli entered the Accademia del Disegno in 1578 and studied with Bernardo Buontalenti (1531-1608) in architecture and Santi di Tito (1536-1603) in drawing and painting.¹⁰⁵ He was most ascendant in Florence from about 1590 to 1603, where, for the Grand Ducal Medici court, he painted, created architectural designs, decorations for weddings and other events, and cartoons for tapestries, among other projects.

Cigoli's high altarpiece for San Paolo fuori le mura was one of four major commissions the artist received in Rome during his last decade. In addition to his altarpiece at San Paolo, he worked at two other major basilicas: St. Peter's and Santa Maria Maggiore; details of these commissions are discussed below. During this period, Cigoli enjoyed the patronage and friendship of several key figures, including Cardinals Maffeo Barberini (future Pope Urban VIII, r. 1623-1644), Pompeo Arrigone (1552-1616) and Scipione Borghese (1577-1633) in addition to the prelate, diplomat, and art theorist Giovanni Battista Agucchi (1570-1632). His friendship with Galileo Galilei (1564-1642) is well known and well documented, through copious correspondences and drawings.¹⁰⁶ Along with Caravaggio and the Carracci, Cigoli can be seen as ushering in a reform of art following the excesses of post-Michelangelo *maniera*, espousing a form of art that

¹⁰⁴ For studies of Cigoli, see *Mostra del Cigoli* 1959; Chappell 1971; Carman 1972; Matteoli 1980; Faranda 1986; Bourla 2014; and Mersmann 2017.

¹⁰⁵ Miles L. Chappell. "Cigoli, Lodovico." *Grove Art Online*. *Oxford Art Online*. Oxford University Press (<http://www.oxfordartonline.com/subscriber/article/grove/art/T017762>), accessed June 11, 2017.

¹⁰⁶ See Tognoni 2009.

combined study of nature with the study of classical antiquity and rejected artifice.¹⁰⁷

Had it survived to the present day, Cigoli's *Burial of St. Paul* would have been a monumental example of these naturalistic impulses circa 1600, as the artist's preparatory drawings and sensitivity to site attest.

Timeline of the commission for San Paolo fuori le mura

No contract exists for the commission, but previous scholars have reconstructed certain details based on letters, drawings, and context. Cigoli received the commission for the high altarpiece of San Paolo fuori le mura sometime between the spring of 1606 and the fall of 1607.¹⁰⁸ Matteoli noted that on the verso of a sketch for one of the bearers in the San Paolo altarpiece are figures from the *Deposition* now in the Galleria Palatina, Florence, which Cigoli completed by January 1608.¹⁰⁹ Circumstances in Florence delayed his work on the high altar of San Paolo, which occurred from 1609 until his death in 1613. Though he had spent several years in Rome already, by spring of 1608 Cigoli was back in Florence, working on the decorations for the wedding of Prince Cosimo de' Medici to Maria Maddalena of Austria in October, 1608.¹¹⁰ The Grand Duchess received special dispensation from the Benedictine monks for Cigoli to delay his work for San Paolo in Rome.¹¹¹ Cigoli spent much of 1608 in Florence overseeing the

¹⁰⁷ See note 47 in Introduction.

¹⁰⁸ For the altarpiece and the commission, *Mostra del Cigoli* 1959 nos. 83-84, pp. 146-148; Chappell 1971, p. 120; Carman 1972, pp. 172-77; Chappell 1975, nos. 100-101, pp. 168-171; Matteoli 1980, pp. 211-213, no. 81; Chappell 1984; Faranda 1986, p. 108, note 127; and Mersmann, 2017, pp. 310-314.

¹⁰⁹ Matteoli 1980, p. 212.

¹¹⁰ Chappell 1971, p. 117, 285, note 64, with reference to Bertelà 1979.

¹¹¹ These letters were first published by Chappell 1971. See p. 286, note 65: Letter of February 23, 1608 from Grand Duchess to Cardinal Montalto in Rome: "*Preparandosi*

decorations for the wedding. His designs included ceremonial archways for the couple to pass through as well as floats for a nautical pageant.¹¹² Rivalry and animosity directed towards Cigoli from his fellow Florentine artists apparently motivated him to make his move back to Rome in 1609 permanent.¹¹³

According to his nephew Giovan Battista Cardi, Cigoli returned to Rome to finish his altarpiece at St. Peter's, as well as begin his work for the Benedictine Monks at San Paolo. In addition to the high altar, Cigoli also painted a Christ and St. Bridget.¹¹⁴ Into this series of moves, commissions, and delays can be interwoven a commission at San Calisto in Trastevere (see Chapter 2). The church of San Calisto was given by Paul V to the Benedictine monks of San Paolo in 1608, and the monks naturally turned to Cigoli for the altarpiece depicting the its titular saint. Cigoli was likely involved in the composition of the altarpiece of San Calisto, but it was his student Giovanni Bilivert who ultimately executed the painting.¹¹⁵ Though the majority of seventeenth and eighteenth-century

tuttavia in Fiorenza le Feste che s'havranno da fare nelle nozze del Principe nostro Figliuolo, tutti quelli che per quest'effetto sono stati deputati, giudicano necessario, che Lodovico Cigoli Pittore, il quale ha cominciato alcuni lavori per questo servizio, vi assista continuamente sino alle fine. Ma egli haveva promesso di venire a star due mesi in Roma questa primavera, per abbozzar la tavola dell'Altar Maggiore di San Paolo, et poi ritornandosene la state in Fiorenza, venir di nuova costa al prossimo inverno per finire tutta quell'Opera..." (Archivio di Stato Firenze, Mediceo, MS. 6037, "Corrispondenza," pp. 113 recto and 114 verso).

¹¹² Chappell 1971, p. 117.

¹¹³ Chappell 1971, p. 117, 287 note 68. See Cardi 1913, pp. 33-34.

¹¹⁴ See Cardi 1913, p. 34. This work is now lost, though a painting in the Museo di San Paolo is believed to be a copy after Cigoli's original. See Chappell 1984; Economopoulos 2013, p. 154.

¹¹⁵ See Mancini 1956, p. 304, "*In Fiorenza dicono esserci imitatore di questa maniera ***, che fece nella chiesa di S. Calisto in Trestevere/ quando che detto Santo è tirato nel pozzo, ma pare altra soavità e naturalezza nel scolare che nel mastro.*"

guidebooks that include San Calisto attribute the painting to Bilivert, a 1638 guidebook calls Cigoli its author.¹¹⁶

A series of letters help piece together Cigoli's progress on the high altar of San Paolo during these years. The project was begun by early April, 1609. On the ninth of that month, Cigoli wrote "I have spent all of the week at San Paolo, where I have been given the high altar project."¹¹⁷ By working in situ, Cigoli was repeating a setup that had led to controversy a few years prior at St. Peter's Basilica. According to his nephew, Cigoli's *St. Peter Healing the Crippled Man* had been put on view prematurely while the artist had returned to his native Florence. Upon his return to Rome, he found his altarpiece had received harsh criticism.¹¹⁸ Despite that ordeal, Cigoli would leave his San Paolo altarpiece in situ and unfinished for the last four years of his life, where theoretically it could have been met with similar denigration. Perhaps the relative remoteness of San Paolo, far outside the city's walls, provided Cigoli with a barrier against criticism.

At any rate, a letter of May 22, 1609, describes that during this time Cigoli had sketched most of the composition ("*Io ò fornito di abbozzare... la tavola...*").¹¹⁹ It is unlikely that Cigoli began any earlier than spring 1609 on the altarpiece. Two

¹¹⁶ Totti 1638, p. 118: "Francesco Cigoli...in S. Calisto la Cappella a man manca è sua pittura."

¹¹⁷ Matteoli 1980, p. 211: "*me ne sono stato tutta la settimana a S.o Pagolo, là dove ò dato principio alla maggior tavola.*"

¹¹⁸ See Chappell and Kirwin 1974; Cropper 2005, pp. 131-133, for the whole episode, including a subsequent plot by Gaspare Celio and Cherubino Alberti to accuse Cigoli of plagiarizing from an earlier Northern print. Such were the perils of working in situ: also at St. Peter's, Caravaggio famously trespassed into Domenico Passignano's working space to see his altarpiece before it was finished.

¹¹⁹ Matteoli 1980, p. 211, "*Io ò fornito di abbozzare a S.o Pagolo la tavola, et iermattina me ne tornai a Roma, dove, per isbrigarmi di certe opere di questi Illustrissimi che ò fra mano, credo di volere passare la state, per terminare più presto queste opere e non andarmene in gite, poi che il tempo m'è mancato fra mano.*"

guidebooks, one undated but parts of which were compiled by 1608 and a second dated 1609, both lack mention of the painting, though the altarpieces by Girolamo Muziano (c. 1532-1592), Giovanni de'Vecchi (1536-1614), Orazio Gentileschi (1563-1639), and Lavinia Fontana (1552-1614) are duly noted.¹²⁰ These altarpieces, all destroyed in the 1823 fire of San Paolo, are discussed below.

After this initial period, it is unclear how often Cigoli worked on the painting at San Paolo. Letters of October 1609 and March 1610 record him there.¹²¹ One notice from a 1610 guidebook provides indication that the work was nearly finished (“*quasi finito*”) by the time of that book’s license, on September 3, 1609, as Chappell noted.¹²² There are no mentions of the work from 1611 to 1612 in Cigoli’s copious correspondence. The artist began work on the frescoes in the Pauline Chapel in Santa

¹²⁰ The first, Dorati da Empoli 2001, is based on a manuscript of fifty-four pages found in the Biblioteca Casanatense, Rome. The guide, written by three different anonymous hands, compiles works of art, mostly painting, across eighty-three churches in Rome. Dorati da Empoli has dated the manuscript to circa 1615-22, for several reasons, including the mention of several works by Guercino from 1621 and 1622. However, the same author notes that the entries on other churches seem to be compiled earlier. A timeline can be established for the entry on San Calisto in Trastevere, for example, which notes that it was given to the Benedictine Monks by Paul V (in 1608), but does not mention any of its paintings, which were installed by 1610. The second guidebook, Cherubini 1609, pp. 11-12, discusses the church and its decoration by that year. Camerlenghi 2016, p. 336, note 66 cites the 1609 Cherubini guide as the first mention of Cigoli’s painting, though he was likely referring to Felini 1610, p. 17, which also explains his referring to Cigoli as “Francesco” on p. 334, as Felini did.

¹²¹ Matteoli 1964-65, p. 34, published the October 9, 1609 letter from Cigoli to Michelangelo Buonarroti il Giovane: “*Io me ne tornai da S.o Pagolo tanto tardi che il venire a Firenze per avere a tornare qua a ottobre, era uno andarmene in gite...*” Chappell published a letter from Annibale Primi, Medici envoy in Rome, to the Grand Duke’s secretary: “*io saro lunedì a S. Paolo fuori di Roma dove lavora il Civoli...*” From the Archivio di Stato Firenze, March 21, 1610, Mediceo, MS. 1347, p. 107; see also Chappell 1971, pp. 120, 287, note 71.

¹²² “*Hor’ anco è quasi finite il quadro dell’Altar maggiore, qual dimostra, e rappresenta la sepoltura di S. Paolo, fatto da Francesco Civoli [sic] Pittore Fiorentino celeberrimo.*” F. Pietro Martire Felini 1610, p. 17. See also Chappell 1984, p. 288.

Maria Maggiore by September, 1610, and in a letter of October 19, 1612, he wrote to Galileo that he had finished the cupola.¹²³ On August 11, 1611, Cigoli described commissions that had taken him away from Santa Maria Maggiore, but these did not include his altarpiece at San Paolo.¹²⁴ According to the painter's nephew, the former commission referred to two now-lost paintings on copper of the *Birth of the Virgin* and the *Annunciation*, while the latter was Cigoli's frescoes of Cupid and Psyche for the now demolished garden palace of Scipione Borghese on the Quirinale.¹²⁵

Cigoli finished the Loggetta for Borghese by April of 1613.¹²⁶ The same month, he was reluctantly awarded a nomination to the Sovereign Order of the Knights of Malta after a forceful, nearly year-long campaign by Scipione Borghese.¹²⁷ Cigoli had not much time to enjoy this honor; he fell ill suddenly, sometime around May 1613. The Florentine ambassador wrote on June 8, 1613: "*Hoggi è morto il Cigoli Pittore di singolari qualità 14 giorni di maligna febbre.*"¹²⁸ Cardinal Maffeo Barberini had sent the papal physician and connoisseur Giulio Mancini (1559-1630) to the artist's deathbed. Mancini describes

¹²³ Chappell 1971, p. 126-128. For the October 19, 1612 letter, see Tognoni 2009, no. 43, pp. 111-112.

¹²⁴ ...*et se non avessi di Sua Santità interrompimento di alcuni quadretti et dal Cardinale Borghesi a Monte Cavallo una sua logetta del suo giardino, che mi interrompono, tra due mesi mi sarei spedito della cupola, che mi pare millanni per vedere di che morte io ò da morire.*" Cited in Tognoni 2009, no. 43, pp. 64-66. Also see Chappell 1971, p. 128.

¹²⁵ Cardì 1913, p. 41: "*Nel qual tempo fece per Sua Santità due storie in due rametti...*" For the Cupid and Psyche cycle, see Hibbard 1964. These frescoes were dismantled and are now in the Museo di Roma.

¹²⁶ Chappell 1971, p. 161.

¹²⁷ On the topic, see Stone 2006.

¹²⁸ Chappell 1971, p. 135, 291, note 111. The original document is quoted in Orbaan 1927, p. 283.

how Cigoli caught a fever which quickly weakened him and caused his death in a matter of days.¹²⁹

It is notable that though he was at the artist's side during his death, Mancini did not seem particularly interested in the high altar at San Paolo. In his *vita* of the Florentine, Mancini devotes six paragraphs to Cigoli, but omits the work, though he does mention the other major Roman commissions: the altarpiece at St. Peter's, the loggia for Scipione Borghese, and the frescoes at Santa Maria Maggiore.¹³⁰ He also curiously omits mention of it in his circa 1620 *Viaggio per Roma* while describing San Paolo, noting both the altarpieces by Muziano et al that preceded Cigoli's painting, and Giovanni Lanfranco's paintings for the Chapel of the Holy Sacrament that post-dated the high altar.¹³¹ In all of Mancini's text, the painting is mentioned only once, in a marginal note on folio 43 in the section "*Ruolo delle pitture in Roma*," where he writes "*in S. Paolo l'altar maggiore abbozzato del Cigoli*."¹³² The marginal mention of Cigoli's high altar is in contrast to Mancini's attention given to Bilivert's San Calisto altarpiece, which is mentioned in five different places. Despite its omission by Mancini, the painting at San Paolo was on Cigoli's mind in his last testament, dated June 3, 1613, when he asked his

¹²⁹ "Pigliò senz'ordine del medico non so che seme ricino e malignandosi la febre, in un tratto infiacchendosi la vita, morì in poichissimi giorni." Mancini 1956, p. 229.

¹³⁰ Mancini wrote of the artist: "*Fu huomo di grand'ingegno et, applicandosi/a diverse cose, in tutto mostrò eccesso; perché si diletto della musica, della poesia e dell'architectura e pittura quale fu sua professione e per essa fece grandi studij e fadighe, come si vede da quella sua natomia che va attorno, che non si puol condur se non con gran studij e fadighe*." Mancini 1956, p. 229.

¹³¹ "*Viaggio per Roma per vedere le pitture che in essa si ritrovano*," in Mancini 1956, pp. 267-288, for San Paolo fuori le mura, see pp. 272-273.

¹³² Mancini 1956, p. 81, marginal note 11.

relatives to obtain from the monks at San Paolo 400 *scudi* in addition to the 800 he had already received.¹³³

Reconstructing the lost painting's appearance

The work is discussed by three of Cigoli's major early modern biographers: his nephew Giovanni Battista Cardi (1628), Giovanni Baglione (1642), and Filippo Baldinucci (1702).¹³⁴ As the surviving prints testify, Cigoli's *Burial of St. Paul* was a monumental altarpiece, its composition visible from a great distance down the vast nave of the basilica (fig. 14). Anna Matteoli calculated the probable dimensions using a useful surviving schematic drawing on the verso of one of Cigoli's preparatory drawings (Gallerie degli Uffizi, Gabinetto delle Stampe e dei Disegni [henceforth shortened to GDSU] 972 F, fig. 15).¹³⁵ Under the words "*vano della tavola di S.o P.o.*," Cigoli inscribes a rectangle with the dimensions, in *palmi*, of 33.7 x 18 ½, or roughly 720 x 375 centimeters, that is, more than 23 feet tall.

¹³³ Matteoli 1975.

¹³⁴ Cardi's 1628 vita was published in 1913, see Cardi 1913; for the San Paolo commission, see pp. 34-35. "*Alcuna volta scorrendo fino a S. Paolo, nel medesimo tempo ancor quella finì di abbozzare, la quale è rimasta imperfetta con tanta perfezione, che si crede che quei reverendi non vogliano farvi metter mano da altri.*" Baglione 1642, p. 154: "*Per li Monaci di s. Benedetto di Monte Casino diede principio et a buon termine condusse il quadro grande dell'altar maggiore in s. Paolo fuori delle mura a olio dipinto, et è quando sotterano l'Apostolo con diverse figure, et Angioli, e così mal finito è pieno testimonio della sua virtù.*" Baldinucci 1812, pp. 126-127, pp. 151-152: "*n quel tempo medesimo ridusse il Cigoli a buon termine la bellissima tavola per la Chiesa di S. Paolo fuori delle mura, de' Monaci Benedettini, in cui rappresentò li'istoria della sepoltura dell'Apostolo, con Angeli e più figure, che fu posta all'altar maggiore: opera che, nel suo non esser del tutto finita, fa mostra maggiore del gran sapere del Cigoli. Per l'Abate dell'istesso Monastero dipinse un Cristo e S. Brigida, al quale fu dato luogo nella medesima Chiesa;*" "*Ancora restò imperfetta la gran tavola per la Chiesa di S. Paolo di Roma, per la quale confessò il Cigoli, nel suo testamento, aver ricevuto Ducato quattrocento.*"

¹³⁵ Matteoli 1980, p. 211.

Both Matteoli and Chappell believe the work was likely painted on slate.¹³⁶ That choice of material would have followed Cigoli's use of it for his recently completed St. Peter's altarpiece; his compatriot Passignano had also painted his Vatican altarpiece on slate.¹³⁷ Such a large painting on slate squares with Cigoli's letters, where he stresses that he was working in situ. Painting on stone had been an ancient practice, as described by authors such as Pliny the Elder.¹³⁸ In the sixteenth century, the technique was revived by the Venetian painter Sebastiano del Piombo (c. 1485-1547) during his Roman years.¹³⁹ Sebastiano experimented with new material approaches to painting, first at San Pietro in Montorio, where he painted oil directly onto the wall for the *Flagellation* in the Borgherini Chapel, and then at Santa Maria del Popolo, where he began a monumental altarpiece on slate in the Chigi Chapel. In the August 1, 1530 contract, the artist is advised to "paint it in oils in that new manner and invention that he has found thanks to long labor and experience."¹⁴⁰ Sebastiano also painted smaller devotional pictures on an assortment of different stones, as well as portraits.¹⁴¹

The practice of painting altarpieces on slate gained additional currency at the beginning of the seventeenth century. Around the same time that Cigoli was executing his altarpiece on slate for San Paolo, Rubens was beginning the second version of his high

¹³⁶ Matteoli 1980, p. 211 "*su lastre di lavagna (?)*"; Chappell 1984, p. 288.

¹³⁷ See Rice 1997, p. 158. Rice quotes Passignano describing his *Crucifixion of St. Peter* altarpiece in 1624 as "completely ruined by the cracks between the slates, and by repeated washings which have abraded the colors."

¹³⁸ As discussed in Baker-Bates 2017, pp. 75-85, p. 79 for Pliny the Elder, in Book 35.

¹³⁹ See McHam 2013, p. 232. For Sebastiano, see Hirst 1981, and Wivel 2017.

¹⁴⁰ See Hirst 1961, p. 183, cited in Baker-Bates 2017, p. 79.

¹⁴¹ Sebastiano painted at least nine extant paintings on stone, according to Baker-Bates 2017, p. 82, including three versions of *Christ Carrying the Cross* (the Prado, the Hermitage, and the Szépművészeti Museum), the *Pietà* for Ûbeda now in the Prado, and the *Madonna del Velo* in the Museo Nazionale di Capodimonte, Naples.

altarpiece for Santa Maria in Vallicella, also in oil (fig. 171).¹⁴² The use of slate for support could mean an enhanced vibrancy of color. The Florentine biographer Filippo Baldinucci (1624-1697) wrote that, on slate, “the colors applied...do not sink in as much as on panel or canvas.”¹⁴³ Ultimately, it was its sustainability – the promise of an immortal art – that made slate an attractive support. Vasari wrote of Sebastiano, “by this means [using stone] painting will be eternal, and neither fire nor woodworms will be able to destroy it.”¹⁴⁴ The promise of durability and eternality would elude Cigoli at San Paolo. Through this Vasarian lens, the fate of Cigoli’s painting on slate—damaged first by humidity, then lost in a subsequent fire—can only be viewed as ironic.

The painter and printmaker Giovanni Maggi (c. 1566-1618) recorded the altarpieces of San Paolo as part of his series of the nine churches of Rome (fig. 16).¹⁴⁵ His print is an invaluable record of many of the works that perished during the 1823 fire, including the paintings by Giovanni de’ Vecchi, Girolamo Muziano, Orazio Gentileschi, and Lavinia Fontana (for which, see below), as well as the second painting by Cigoli for the church, which depicted St. Bridget before a crucifix. Unlike these other paintings, however, the reproduction of the high altar includes more of Onorio Longhi’s architectural framework, as well as two of the oval paintings by Avanzino Nucci (c. 1552-1629), diminishing the relative size of Cigoli’s painting. Further adding to its inscrutability, part of the lower half of the high altarpiece is obscured by a host tabernacle

¹⁴² For Rubens’ painting at Santa Maria in Vallicella, see Jaffé 1963; von zur Muhlen 1998; Buttler 2011; Fraiman 2015; also discussed in Chapter 3 here.

¹⁴³ “*Anzi che il colore dato sopra la lavagna non prosciuga tanto, quanto sopra la tela o tavola.*” Baldinucci 1681, p. 80, translation quoted in Baker-Bates 2017, p. 85.

¹⁴⁴ From Vasari/Milanesi, *Vite*, 5, p. 579, quoted in McHam 2013, p. 232. For painting on stone, including slate, see Nygren 2017; Mason 2017; Barry 2017.

¹⁴⁵ See the *vita* of Maggi in Baglione 1642, p. 277: “*Sonvi disegnate di suo le nove chiese di Roma, ma da altri a bulino intagliate, le quali sono assai belle.*”

surmounted by a canopy on the altar before the painting (fig. 17). Still, Maggi's print does provide a general idea of how Cigoli's final composition appeared.

In the foreground of the painting as reproduced in the print, a group of figures, rendered larger-than-life, attends to the burial of St. Paul. A number of bearers lower his body into the earth (the grave obscured by the large monstrance placed before the high altar). One attendant kneels at the bottom left of the painting; another stands, his hands holding Paul's neck. Two bishops preside over the burial, standing at right, and a woman kneels at bottom right. Paul's limp body, his right arm resting across his torso, occupies a diagonal from the middle-left of the panel to the bottom right. In the upper register is a small choir of angels. That Maggi's composition accurately reflects Cigoli's final design can be confirmed from both the preparatory drawings as well as contemporary accounts in guidebooks, both considered below, following a review of San Paolo fuori le mura's history, St. Paul's life and legend, and Pauline iconography.

The basilica of San Paolo fuori le mura

San Paolo fuori le mura (figs. 18 and 19) is the most important pilgrimage basilica in Rome outside of St. Peter's.¹⁴⁶ Writing in 1560, Onofrio Panvino describes it as "the biggest and most spacious of all the others in Rome" and notes its similarities to Old St.

¹⁴⁶ For the church, see Krautheimer, Corbett, and Frazer, 1980, pp. 97-169, entry by Richard Krautheimer and Alfred K. Frazer; Docci 2006. For an earlier monograph of the church before the 1823 fire that destroyed much of it, see Nicolai 1815. For other important studies of the church, see Kirschbaum 1959; de Blaauw 2003; and the recent studies of Nicola Camerlenghi, including Camerlenghi 2007; Camerlenghi 2013; and Camerlenghi 2016.

Peter's.¹⁴⁷ Though its full, complicated history does not concern us here, a brief review of some salient facts permits a better understanding of how Cigoli's altarpiece operated within the larger context, and complex, of the church. A particular focus on the church before its devastating 1823 fire, and in particular the renovations that occurred under Sixtus V (r. 1585-1590) and Clement VIII (r. 1592-1605) around 1600, reveals how Cigoli's altarpiece would have been the cynosure of an important moment when an influx of pilgrims to Rome could visit the church to venerate the tomb of St. Paul.

The origins of the basilica are typically connected with a brief mention in the *Liber Pontificalis*, which states that San Paolo was built by Constantine, following the suggestion of Pope Sylvester (r. 314-335).¹⁴⁸ The location was two miles outside of the walls of Rome, over the shrine, or perhaps small edifice, where Paul's body had been buried.¹⁴⁹ Later in the fourth century, the Constantinian church was rebuilt and expanded under the emperors Theodosius, Arcadius, and Valentinian II, likely because of a growing devotion to the Apostle and problematic flooding from the Tiber.¹⁵⁰ From that point on, the church underwent nearly continuous renovation and decoration. A particular highpoint was during the medieval period: in the twelfth century, the apse was outfitted with impressive mosaic work, while in the thirteenth century Arnolfo di Cambio (c. 1245-1301/10) sculpted a marble ciborium that marked the site of Paul's tomb, and which

¹⁴⁷ Panvinio 1570, p. 93: "*Questa chiesa è la maggiore & più capace di tutte le altre di Roma, lunga piedi. 44. larga. 258.*" See also p. 95: "*Questa chiesa è simile alla Vaticana antica, ma molto maggiore...*"

¹⁴⁸ See Krautheimer 1980, p. 101-102, quoting from Duchesne 1886-92, p. 178: "*Eodem tempore fecit Augustus Constantinus basilicam Sancto Paulo apostolo ex suggestione Silvestri episcopi...*" though there are doubts of the exact date in the fourth century due to the imprecise and concise language of the *Liber Pontificalis*.

¹⁴⁹ See discussion on the tomb below.

¹⁵⁰ For the Theodosian basilica, see Brandenburg 2009.

still stands today.¹⁵¹ The nave wall contained important frescoes, perhaps dating as early as the fifth century: on the left, scenes from the life of St. Paul, and on the right, scenes from the Old Testament. Though now lost and the subject of much art historical discussion in terms of dating, these scenes were copied under the direction of Cardinal Francesco Barberini in 1634.¹⁵² Much of the church and its decoration were ravaged in an 1823 fire, after which the church was rebuilt.¹⁵³ The late-sixteenth- and early-seventeenth-century construction and refurbishments, however, were largely lost, including the paintings by Nucci, Muziano, de' Vecchi, Gentileschi, and Fontana, along with the high altarpiece by Cigoli.

St. Paul: his life and legend

Born a Roman citizen and a Jew, the “Apostle of the Gentiles” Paul was perhaps the figure most influential in spreading Christianity around Europe and Asia Minor in the first century A.D.¹⁵⁴ As author of the Epistles, which provided the foundation for much subsequent theology, Paul was also the most important voice in shaping Christianity after Christ’s death. Though Paul spent most of his life outside of Rome, until the final few years, he had a considerable impact on the city, and is recognized as Prince of the Apostles alongside St. Peter, and as one of the dual founders of the Roman Church. The

¹⁵¹ de Blaauw 2009.

¹⁵² The copies are catalogued, discussed, and illustrated in Waetzoldt 1964, pp. 55-64 and figs. 317-458. See also White 1956; Gardner 1971; Eleen 1985; and Docci 2006, pp. 50-56.

¹⁵³ For the fire, including many accounts of the damage and rebuilding in its immediate aftermath, see Fiumi Sermattei 2013.

¹⁵⁴ The literature on St. Paul is vast. See the entry in Cross and Livingstone 1974, pp. 1046-47, with previous additional bibliography on pp. 1048-49; and the entry by Angela Penna, Dante Balboni, and Mariella Liverani, “Paolo, apostolo, santo martire,” in *Bibliotheca Sanctorum* 1963-68, vol. 10 (1968), pp. 163-228.

pair is recognized on their joint feast day of June 29, which in the pre-Christian era had belonged to the twins Romulus and Remus, the founders of Rome.¹⁵⁵ Additionally, from the seventh century onwards, Paul is celebrated on his own the following day.¹⁵⁶

Paul (or Saul, his pre-conversion name) hailed from the town of Tarsus, in present-day Turkey. Accounts of the saint's life are usually divided into several key periods: his time spent preaching as a Pharisee, pre-conversion, where he was present at the martyrdom of St. Stephen; his conversion on the road to Damascus; the years of missionary work throughout Asia Minor and Europe; and his final two years in Rome before his death. These periods correspond roughly to some of the most frequently depicted Pauline iconographies in early modern art, discussed below.

Paul's Roman years are most germane to the discussion of Cigoli's altarpiece depicting the Apostle's burial.¹⁵⁷ The Acts of the Apostles 28:30-31 simply state that the Apostle remained in captivity in Rome for two years ("He spent the whole of the two years in his own rented lodging. He welcomed all who came to visit him, proclaiming the kingdom of God and teaching the truth about the Lord Jesus Christ with complete fearlessness and without any hindrance from anyone.") All other stories regarding Paul's time in Rome until his death are based on tradition, such as stories found in the Acts of St. Paul, an apocryphal book in Greek that began appearing in the second half of the second century A.D. The account of Eusebius records that he was martyred under Nero's

¹⁵⁵ Wisch 2017, p. 178. I am grateful to Dr. Wisch for sharing an advance version of her article with me.

¹⁵⁶ See Cross and Livingstone 1974, p. 1047.

¹⁵⁷ See specifically Tajra 1994.

persecutions in the year 67 A.D.¹⁵⁸ The tradition that Paul was beheaded derives from Tertullian.¹⁵⁹

Despite scant information from the Acts of the Apostles, Paul's few years in Rome decisively impacted the city's sacred topography and engendered enduring legends around the saint and his importance to the origins of the Roman church. According to the apocryphal Acts of St. Paul, the apostle's martyrdom occurred on the left bank of the Tiber River, about three miles outside of Rome.¹⁶⁰ The place known as Ad Aquas Salvias was renamed Tre Fontane following a supposed miracle: upon Paul's decapitation, his head bounced three times, generating a spring at each site. A Cistercian abbey featuring a complex of churches was eventually built over the site.¹⁶¹ Around 1600, the complex fell under the patronage of the papal nephew, Cardinal Pietro Aldobrandini, who restored several of the complex's buildings, including the church of San Paolo alle tre Fontane, and commissioned from Guido Reni a *Martyrdom of St. Peter* (1604, now in the Vatican Pinacoteca, fig. 20).¹⁶²

Another important legend arose regarding the final hours of both Sts. Peter and Paul, around the sixth century. According to a letter attributed to Dionysius the Areopagite, the two saints were led outside the city's walls and shared a final moment together before being separated by Roman soldiers and led to their separate executions.¹⁶³ The event supposedly occurring along Via Ostiense, near the eventual church of San Paolo fuori le mura. Following decapitation, the body of Paul was taken to the cemetery

¹⁵⁸ Cross and Livingstone 1974, p. 1047.

¹⁵⁹ Tertullian, *De Praescr.* XXXVI.

¹⁶⁰ *Oxford Dictionary...* 1974, p. 1047.

¹⁶¹ Sartorio 1913.

¹⁶² See Salomon 2005; Robertson 2016, p. 108-11.

¹⁶³ See Wisch 2017, p. 179.

belonging to the Roman matron Lucina, where eventually Constantine would erect the basilica of San Paolo fuori le mura. Decapitation was the capital punishment afforded to Roman citizens, unlike the crucifixion suffered by St. Peter.¹⁶⁴

Early modern martyrologies and guidebooks can shed light on what aspects of Paul's legend were believed in Rome around 1600. In reviewing these sources, one can better understand how Cigoli's altarpiece would have been viewed. The *Martyrologium Romanum* of 1586, revised by Cesare Baronio, and one of the Catholic Reform's authoritative texts, for example, confirms that the saint met his fate against the sword and was buried on Via Ostiense.¹⁶⁵ A 1595 guide to the Stations of Rome adds additional details to Paul's *vita*.¹⁶⁶ According to the guidebook, Paul was decapitated by Nero on the same day Peter was crucified, but the guide also adds that the saint's head was thrown in a valley along with many other martyrs, and for a long time could not be found, until a pastor uncovered it and brought it back to his flock. Following three nights, the head revealed a "*grandissima luce*" and a voice told the pastor that this head was the true head of St. Paul, and that he had to bring it to his body to be reunited, where it was, at an altar in the church of St. Paul.¹⁶⁷ The reunification of Paul's head with his body will be

¹⁶⁴ Dante Balboni in *Bibliotheca Sanctorum* 1963-68, vol. 10 (1968), pp. 194-95.

¹⁶⁵ *Martyrologium Romanum* 1586.

¹⁶⁶ *Stazioni delle Chiese* 1595, pp. 151-154.

¹⁶⁷ *Stazioni delle Chiese* 1595, p. 154: "Egli fu el 14.anno di Neroni in quell medesimo giorno, nel quale fu Crocifisso Pietro, decapitato; fu gittato il capo del beato Apostolo in una Valle insieme con molti altri di Martiri, il qual per gran tempo mai si puote trovare, finalmente un Pastore, nettando la cava, dov'era gettato, con gli altri purgamenti, lettò quell capo col suo bastione, & portollo presso la sua greggia. Onde per tre notti continue vedendo egli, & il Padron suo risplendere sopra il predetto capo una grandissima luce, facendi di questo relatione al Vescovo, & a fedeli, dissero: Veramente questo è il Capo di S. Paolo, & venuto quivi con tutta la moltitudine de' fedeli, portorno feco quell Capo, & ponendolo un una tavola d'oro tentavano d'unirlo col corpo...Il quale fu portato nella sua Chiesa, & in un'Altare riposte."

discussed during a review of the preparatory drawings for Cigoli's altarpiece, which appears to depict that event at the apostle's burial.

Since the eleventh century, the heads of both Peter and Paul were believed to be preserved at the Lateran, transferred from St. Peter's and San Paolo, respectively.¹⁶⁸ They were first located in the Lateran Palace in a chapel that would eventually become known as the *Sancta Sanctorum*. On April 15th, 1370, they were transferred to the Lateran Basilica.¹⁶⁹ Cherubini's guidebook of 1609, contemporaneous with the execution of Cigoli's altarpiece, confirms this tradition persisted in the early seicento: "Sopra l'altar Papale in quelle grate di ferro, vi sono le teste de'gloriosissimi Apostoli Pietro, & Paolo."¹⁷⁰

As discussed below, Cigoli's high altarpiece made sure to include the detail of Paul's head being reattached to his body at burial. Of course, the burial of a decapitated body may have been seen as inappropriate, or indecorous; at the least, it may have provided an awkward and ungainly solution to the new iconography Cigoli was presenting. One might compare the decapitated saint as depicted by Spadarino in his *Sts. Martial and Valeria* for St. Peter's Basilica of 1629-1632 (fig. 21).¹⁷¹

Verism could be sacrificed for an elegant and unified composition, but the depiction of the reunification of the head could also reference early histories of Paul's relics and holy sites within the basilica. An excerpt from a German guidebook to Rome written a few years following Cigoli's death, presented here for the first time in

¹⁶⁸ See Grisar 1907, pp. 456-457, discussed in Kirschbaum 1959, p. 200-201.

¹⁶⁹ Kirschbaum 1959, p. 206.

¹⁷⁰ Cherubini 1609, p. 4.

¹⁷¹ For the painter Spadarino (Giovanni Antonio Galli, c. 1585-1651) see Papi 2003, with the St. Peter's altarpiece at cat. 25, pp. 143-145; see also Rice 1997, cat. 15, pp. 246-49 for the painting.

connection to Cigoli's painting, offers valuable insight into how the action of the painting was received. In his 1620 *Underricht und Wegweiser: wie ein Teutscher in und ausserhalb Rom, die siben aufs drei hundert und mehr kirchen....*, (fig. 22) Hermann Bavinck writes: "The painting on the high altar shows how Saint Paul's head, since it miraculously had been found in this church, has been laid to his holy body by the holy Pope Cornelius and Lucina the widow."¹⁷² The passage reveals that one of the key events of the painting was indeed the reunification of Paul's head and body, an important detail discussed below in connection with the related drawings.

In an earlier 1595 guidebook, San Paolo is described chiefly as being built on the place where Paul's head was miraculously found.¹⁷³ There had been an altar since 1330 dedicated to Gregory the Great that commemorated the spot where the head of St. Paul had been rediscovered, located at the visitor's right when one enters the church.¹⁷⁴ The inscription said "*Hic inventum fuit caput S. Pauli Apostoli.*"¹⁷⁵

¹⁷² Bavinck 1620, p. 52: "*Das gemahl im hohen altar bedeutet, wie S. Pauli haupt, da es in diser kirchen wunderbarlich gefunden war, von dem H. Pabst Cornelio und Lucina der wittfrawen zu seinem heiligen leib widerumb gelegt worden.*" Hermann Bavinck's guidebook, *Underricht und Wegweiser: wie ein Teutscher in und ausserhalb Rom, die siben aufs drei hundert und mehr kirchen....*, published in Rome in 1620 is cited by Krautheimer 1980, p. 99 as Bauink 1620 under his list of "*antiche*" descriptions of the church, but has not been pursued by scholars of Cigoli. I am grateful to Linda Müller for discussing this guidebook with me.

¹⁷³ *Cose Meravigliose* 1595, p. 12: "...nel luogo dove fu miracolosamente ritrovata la testa di S. Paolo Apostolo..."

¹⁷⁴ An inscription recorded by Ugonio 1588, p. 238r records this date. See Kirschbaum 1959, p. 202; Camerlenghi 2016, p. 332, 335 no. 41. Severano 1630, p. 385, also records this altar: "...riponendo però la Testa separatamente dove hora è l'Altare di San Gregorio, nell'entrar'in Chiesa per la Porta grande a mano destra."

¹⁷⁵ Now-lost, the inscription was recorded by Nicolai 1815, p. 37.

The church of San Paolo was believed to have been built over this spot where Paul's tomb was located.¹⁷⁶ The first mention of the tomb is circa 200, attributed to the Priest Gaius, cited by Eusebius discussing a "*tropaia*" or trophy in Rome dedicated to St. Paul, along the road to Ostia.¹⁷⁷ A marble slab with the inscription "*PAULO APOSTOLO MARTY[YRI]*" was found in nineteenth-century excavations on the side of the structure that housed Paul's tomb (fig. 23).¹⁷⁸ According to Panvinio, it was Pope Callixtus who transported the bodies of Peter and Paul from the destroyed Vatican cemetery to the catacombs on Via Appia, where they rested until Pope Cornelius and the noblewoman Lucina, in the middle of the night, brought the bodies of Paul and Peter to be buried near their respective martyrdoms. For Paul, this meant he was buried behind Lucina's property near Via Ostiense.¹⁷⁹ From 2002 to 2005, Giorgio Filippi, archeologist at the Vatican Museums, conducted archaeological research of the tomb in San Paolo, and presented the finding of a marble sarcophagus that dated to the fourth century and belonged to St. Paul.¹⁸⁰ His findings were breathlessly reported by the popular media.¹⁸¹

¹⁷⁶ For the discussion of St. Paul's tomb, especially in regards to nineteenth-century archaeological research, see Kirschbaum 1959, pp. 165-194. See also Eastman 2011, especially pp. 35-42.

¹⁷⁷ Eusebius quoted in Krautheimer, Corbett, and Frazer 1980, p. 101.

¹⁷⁸ See Kirschbaum 1959, pp. 165-194.

¹⁷⁹ Panvinio 1570, p. 45. "*chi mi concederà ora, ch'io possa, abbracciare il corpo di Paolo ch'io possa esser affisso all sepoltura sua, vederla polve del corpo di colui, che le sue stimmate portava, che per tutto la predicatione dell'evangelio seminava.*" p. 89.

¹⁸⁰ Filippi 2007-8, pp. 321-324.

¹⁸¹ See for example the report "Tomb of St. Paul to be Visible for Pilgrims," in *Catholic News Agency*, dated December 12, 2006.

Pauline iconography in Rome

The burial of the St. Paul was almost never depicted, either as an independent painting or within a cycle devoted to the saint's life, an important fact that cannot be overemphasized with regard to Cigoli's invention. However, St. Paul, along with St. Peter, was depicted with increasing frequency in Roman art throughout the sixteenth century, not least of all because of contemporaneous Protestant attacks on the apostolic founding of the Roman church. As will be seen, into the seventeenth century, several important fresco cycles, tapestry designs, altarpieces and other devotional *quadri* presented Paul with great frequency. A review of these visual precedents both confirms Paul's popularity and significance to the period, and underlines Cigoli's singularity.

There were several important examples of Pauline iconography in Rome that testify to the saint's long-running visual depiction. Perhaps the earliest was the fourth-century sarcophagus of Junius Bassus in St. Peter's. Relief scenes on the side of the sarcophagus depict the arrest of St. Paul, leading to his martyrdom, a scene that was shown in tandem with the arrest of St. Peter (fig. 24).¹⁸² Giotto's triptych for the old St. Peter's, commissioned by the Cardinal Giacomo Gaetani Stefaneschi (the Stefaneschi triptych, c. 1315, now in the Vatican Pinacoteca), shows on its reverse of the right wing a scene of Paul's beheading (fig. 25). This martyrdom is balanced on the left side by a scene of St. Peter crucified upside-down. The topos of the beheading would appear more frequently in later sixteenth and seventeenth century art. For example, Alessandro

¹⁸² For an overview of the Sarcophagus of Junius Bassus and its iconography, see Malbon 1998.

Algardi (1598-1654) sculpted the scene in a dramatic marble figural group for the high altar of the church of San Paolo in Bologna around 1650 (fig. 26).¹⁸³

Though cycles devoted exclusively to the life of St. Paul were rare in Renaissance Rome, episodes from his *vita* did occur when paired with images from the life of St. Peter.¹⁸⁴ The most extensive, and prestigious, cycle depicting scenes from the lives of St. Paul and Peter were the ten scenes by Raphael commissioned by Pope Leo X (r. 1513-21) in 1515 to cover the lower walls of the Sistine Chapel; today, the surviving cartoons are housed in the Victoria and Albert Museum.¹⁸⁵ These ten designs showed scenes from the life of both Peter and Paul. The scenes from the life of Paul were *The Stoning of St. Stephen*, *The Conversion of St. Paul* (fig. 27), *The Conversion of the Proconsul*, *The Sacrifice at Lystra*, *St. Paul in Prison*, and *St. Paul Preaching in Athens*. Raphael's cycle, whose compositions were distributed widely in prints and much admired, depicted only scenes that related to the period of or before Paul's long life as an itinerant preacher. In the *Stoning of St. Stephen*, for example, St. Paul is shown in the lower right; this scene, of a Jewish Saul assisting in Stephen's torture, was the only scene usually shown from the saint's life pre-conversion (fig. 28).

The conversion of the saint on the road to Damascus became exceedingly popular in the second half of the sixteenth century, not only because of Raphael's design but perhaps even more so because of the fresco by Michelangelo in the Pauline Chapel at the Vatican. Michelangelo painted the lateral fresco, as well as a *Crucifixion of St. Peter*, on

¹⁸³ See Montagu 1985, vol. 2, no. 68, pp. 369-372.

¹⁸⁴ Balass 2001, p. 179.

¹⁸⁵ Among others, see Pope-Hennessy 1950; Shearman 1972.

opposite lateral walls in the 1540s (fig. 29).¹⁸⁶ The designs were widely copied and disseminated in print.¹⁸⁷ Michelangelo's frescoes enshrined these two scenes as a pair, and the arrangement would be repeated in Caravaggio's lateral paintings for the Cerasi Chapel in Santa Maria del Popolo (1600-1601, fig. 30).¹⁸⁸ Artists enjoyed the scene for its drama: Paul following off his horse, a flash of light appearing to him, the climactic moment of conversion. The scene's message, meanwhile, appealed to the post-Tridentine Catholic Church's renewed interest in conversion and salvation.¹⁸⁹

There were three cycles devoted exclusively to St. Paul executed in the second half of the sixteenth century in Rome: by Giorgio Vasari, in the Cappella del Monte, San Pietro in Montorio; by Taddeo Zuccari in the Cappella Frangipane, San Marcello in Corso (fig. 31); and by Cristofano Roncalli in the Cappella di S. Paolo, Santa Maria in Aracoeli.¹⁹⁰ While none of these cycles depicted the burial of the saint, there was an interest in his martyrdom by decapitation, though often relegated to a subsidiary scene rather than the main altarpiece. For the Frangipane Chapel in San Marcello, designed and begun by Taddeo Zuccaro but finished by his brother Federico upon Taddeo's death in 1566, the altarpiece, on slate, is a *Conversion of Saint Paul* (fig. 32). Paul's martyrdom is painted in the center of the barrel vault above (fig. 33).

¹⁸⁶ For the frescoes in the Pauline Chapel, see Baumgart and Biagetti 1934; Steinberg 1975; De Luca et al 2013; and Paolucci and Squarzina 2016.

¹⁸⁷ Alberti, Rovetta, and Salsi 2015.

¹⁸⁸ See Steinberg 1959, as discussed in Introduction here, for a discussion of the Cerasi Chapel in Santa Maria del Popolo. For a recent entry on the two lateral paintings by Caravaggio, see Maria Grazia Bernardini in Vodret 2016, vol. 2, pp. 426-29, with previous bibliography. See also Puglisi 1998, pp. 145-149.

¹⁸⁹ Balass 2001, p. 179.

¹⁹⁰ For a general discussion of Pauline cycles, and for Taddeo Zuccaro's altarpiece specifically, see Balass 2001, especially p. 198, note 31. For the Roncalli, see Chiappini di Sorio 1983, pp. 116-117, no. 44.

In the seventeenth century, individual images of St. Paul, particularly those featuring him writing his epistles, or in ecstasy (in the “third state” or “sky”) became popular. Examples of the latter include paintings by Domenichino (c. 1606-08, Musée du Louvre, Paris), Gerard von Honthorst (1617, Santa Maria della Vittoria, Rome, fig. 34) and Nicolas Poussin (c. 1649-50, Musée du Louvre, Paris).¹⁹¹ A review of the no-longer extant paintings commissioned for the saint’s titular basilica provides insight into what were considered the most important episodes in Paul’s life for post-Tridentine Rome.

Interior decoration and the new altarpieces in San Paolo circa 1600

Before the nineteenth century, the interior of San Paolo was frescoed with Old Testament scenes on the nave’s right side and a St. Paul cycle on the left. The dating of these has been the subject of much debate. The Old Testament scenes have been connected to the original fifth-century decorations of the church, while the Pauline cycle either to that period, or later, in the thirteenth century, with the possible involvement of the Pietro Cavallini (1259-c.1330) workshop.¹⁹² By any measure, the frescoes would have suffered much damage and repainting over the centuries, with evidence pointing to a variety of stylistic periods and authors. The scenes were in a state of ruin by the early seventeenth century, when watercolor copies were made by Antonio Eclissi under the

¹⁹¹ Honthorst’s altarpiece was originally commissioned in 1617 for Santa Maria della Scala, Rome, and is now in the sacristy of Santa Maria della Vittoria. Before the document of 1617 was published in 2003, Honthorst’s altarpiece was believed to have been commissioned for Santa Maria della Vittoria, which had been built on the site of an earlier church dedicated to St. Paul. See Judson and Ekkart 1999, cat. No 72, pp. 92-93. The document was published in Megna 2003, p. 90.

¹⁹² See Eleen 1985, p. 2 for summary of positions, including White 1956, for Cavallini’s involvement.

supervision of Cardinal Francesco Barberini.¹⁹³ Of interest here are the subjects depicted in the Pauline cycle, which contained forty-two scenes. The cycle largely included scenes portraying Paul's life before arriving in Rome; only one, his separation from St. Peter just before their respective martyrdoms, relates to his brief but important time in Rome.¹⁹⁴ Thus, this most salient example of early Christine Pauline imagery contained very little related to the site of San Paolo itself, and little for early modern artists to reference.

What of the new altarpieces commissioned at the end of the sixteenth century? The presbytery of San Paolo featured four altarpieces following the renovations of Sixtus V (r. 1585-1590). Their subjects are important in understanding how Cigoli's burial scene would be incorporated. The four altars, richly outfitted based on designs by Onorio Longhi or his team, were part of a "homogenizing" impulse of the monks of San Paolo around 1600.¹⁹⁵ Two altars were placed along the northern wall of the transept and two along the south; these included old altars that were rededicated as well as new constructions (fig. 43).¹⁹⁶

These altarpieces, now all lost, included a *Stoning of St. Stephen* by Lavinia Fontana in the southwest corner, an *Assumption of the Virgin* by Girolamo Muziano in the southeast corner, a *Conversion of St. Paul* by Orazio Gentileschi in the northwest, and a *Communion of St. Benedict* by Giovanni de' Vecchi in the northeast. The Muziano was not intended for this location, but rather for the high altar of San Luigi dei Francesi; a

¹⁹³ See Waetzoldt 1964, pp. 55-61, and Amado 2007.

¹⁹⁴ For the subjects see Waetzoldt 1964, pp. 58-61. For these final scenes and the *Separation of Peter and Paul* copy, see entry by Umberto Utro in Donati 2000, no. 56, pp. 211-212.

¹⁹⁵ Camerlenghi 2016, p. 334.

¹⁹⁶ Camerlenghi 2016, p. 334.

dispute over price led the artist to sell it to the monks of San Paolo.¹⁹⁷ All four of these altarpieces were reproduced in Giovanni Maggi's circa 1618 print from his series *Le dieci basiliche del Giubileo*, produced for the 1625 celebrations (fig. 16).

The altarpiece by Fontana of circa 1603-4 was a rare example of the Bolognese artist's work in Rome, though the large canvas was received negatively by critics.¹⁹⁸ The contract for the painting was dated February 19, 1603, with an expected delivery date of March 1604, though it was likely finished several months later.¹⁹⁹ In his life of Fontana, Baglione writes:

"There had to be painted a big work in San Paolo fuori le mura, and despite that there were many good masters.... the work was fully given to Lavinia. She painted the *Stoning of St. Stephen* with a great quantity of figures and a glory above which represents the open Skies. It is true, however, that because she had to make the figures larger than nature, she got confused, and she was not successful, because there is a great difference between an ordinary painting and a machine of that size which scares every great genius. But she continued to make her portraits, to which her genius was inclining and very easily she was able to make them well..."²⁰⁰

¹⁹⁷ Muziano's altarpiece was the only one of these works not executed in the 1590s, but rather dates to 1573-74. See Tosini 2008, cat. D44, pp. 476-477.

¹⁹⁸ For the altarpiece, see Cantaro 1989, pp. 208-209, no. 4a. Fontana also executed works for the churches of Santa Sabina (altarpiece of the *Vision of Saint Hyacinth*, see Cantaro 1989, pp. 194-195, no. 4a 88) and Santa Maria della Pace (four paintings on the pilasters at the entrance of the high altar: *Sant'Agnese*, *Santa Cecilia*, *Santa Caterina da Siena*, and *Santa Chiara*, Cantaro 1989, pp. 216-219, no. 4a 101). Fontana's lost painting for San Paolo is mentioned in many early modern sources: Felini 1610, p. 17; the anonymous guidebook from the second decade of the seventeenth century, Dorati da Empoli 2000, p. 96; Mancini 1956, p. 66; Baglione 1642, p. 144; Titi 1763, p. 68; Malvasia 1841, p. 179.

¹⁹⁹ Galli 1940, pp. 31, 85-86.

²⁰⁰ "Dovessi dare a dipingere un quadro grande in S. Paolo fuori delle mura su la via Ostiense, e benchè vi fosser molti buoni maestri, furono lasciati indietro I migliori soggetti, che in quel tempo esercitavano, e fu l'opera solamente conceduta a Lavinia, e vi dipinse la *Lapidazione di S. Stefano Protomartire con quantità di figure, e con una Gloria nell'alto, che rappresenta i Cieli aperti; ben'egli vero, che, per esse le figure maggiori del natural, si confuse, e si felicemente, come pensava non riuscisse; poichè è gran differenza da quadro ordinario amacchire di quella grandezza che spaventano ogni*

Baglione's words—the idea that a woman was better suited at portraits than grand altarpieces—are a fascinating piece of gendered art criticism, though beyond the scope of the topic at hand.²⁰¹ Baglione may have also been resentful of Fontana's receiving the commission.²⁰² The subject of the *Stoning of St. Stephen* would have been appropriate, of course, because St. Paul was present at the event, one of the rare episodes of his life as a Pharisee. No preparatory drawings or *bozzetti* survive; in addition to the Maggi print, Fontana's work is also known through an engraving by Jacques Callot (1592-1635) (fig. 35).²⁰³ Based on the extant prints, the composition appears to be a fairly straightforward representation of the scene: Stephen kneeling in the bottom right, his outstretched arms appealing to the glory of angels above; his executioners at center raising large stones above their head. At left, a seated man appears to look out towards the viewer, his right hand outstretched: Paul himself. Angela Ghirardi pointed out that in the same years Annibale Carracci painted the same subject, now in the Louvre, and that several elements of Fontana's painting seem to borrow certain elements: the figures of the executioners, Saul, and the castle in the background (fig. 36).²⁰⁴ Cigoli himself had painted a large altarpiece of the subject for the Convent of Maria Santissima Assunta "di Montedomini" in Florence, today in the Galleria Palatina (fig. 37).²⁰⁵

grand'ingegno. Però attese a fare i suoi ritratti, a' quali col genio inclinava; ed assai comedamente bene li faceva..." Baglione 1642, p. 136.

²⁰¹ For this subject, though not this particular passage, see Sohm 1995.

²⁰² Cantaro 1989, p. 208.

²⁰³ For an example of Callot's print after the painting for his series *Les Tableaux de Rome, Les Eglises Jubilaire*, see the engraving in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, c. 1607-11, second state of three (inv. 59.569.3).

²⁰⁴ Ghirardi 1984.

²⁰⁵ Cigoli, *Stoning of St. Stephen*, 450 x 287 cm., Galleria Palatina, Florence. See *Mostra del Cigoli* 1959, cat. 23, pp. 70-73; Matteoli 1980, no. 86, pp. 219-220.

Orazio Gentileschi's *Conversion of St. Paul* of 1597 is also known through an engraving by Callot (fig. 38). Its nineteenth-century destruction meant also the loss of the sole example of a Gentileschi altarpiece in Rome before his subsequent friendship with Caravaggio and its attendant stylistic change.²⁰⁶ The composition, based on the engravings, reveals a traditional composition in the vein of Taddeo Zuccaro's painting of around 1563 in the Frangipane Chapel at San Marcello al Corso: twisting soldiers at right and left, a flailing horse in the middle ground, and Paul on his back in the middle ground; elements taken from Michelangelo's version of the subject in the Pauline Chapel at the Vatican. R. Ward Bissell, who cites a 1545 engraving by Enea Vico (fig. 39) as the specific source for the painting, called the work "an academic machine" and continued: "[it is] filled with the turmoil of twisted, contrived figures engaged in impetuous and not always explainable actions."²⁰⁷

According to Baglione, Gentileschi, using nefarious but vague means, obtained the commission, as well as the panel, from his former master Cesare Nebbia.²⁰⁸ Gentileschi had worked assisting Nebbia circa 1588-90, and under his supervision on the teams of painters for Sixtus V.²⁰⁹ The account is repeated by Baldinucci, with even more subterfuge implied.²¹⁰ Though the work is lost, the commission played a role in the libel

²⁰⁶ See Bissell 1981, pp. 6-7, 134-135, no. 3.

²⁰⁷ Bissell 1981, p. 6. For the *Conversion of Saint Paul* and *maniera* artists, see Friedlander 1955, pp. 3-28.

²⁰⁸ Baglione 1642, p. 244: "...gli fu concesso un quadro grande nel tempio di S. Paolo, contuttochè a Cesare del Nebbia sosse stato dato, e già consegnatagli la tela grande di un pezzo, e postala in ordine per dipingerla, e metterla in opera a pur'egli tanto con favori adoperossi, che la tela al Cesare fu tolta, e al Gentileschi mandata..."

²⁰⁹ See Zuccari 2003, pp. 39-40.

²¹⁰ Baldinucci 1974, p. 711, 712: "Fece anche vedere fra l'opere pubbliche di suo pennello un gran quadro nel tempio di San Paolo fuori di Roma, in cui egli avea rappresentata la conversione del santo apostolo con gran quantità di figure, opera che

lawsuit Baglione brought against his rivals for spreading salacious verses. The authorities produced a letter Orazio had written to the monks of San Paolo in 1596 regarding the progress of his altarpiece.²¹¹

Despite the intrigue, Orazio's painting must have impressed the monks at San Paolo, as he obtained from them the following year a commission at the Abbazia of Santa Maria in Farfa.²¹² Of particular interest here is his altarpiece of 1597-circa 1599 representing the martyrdom of Sts. Peter and Paul (fig. 40). Peter is represented at a ninety-degree angle to the ground, but inverted, lacking the sense of movement or asymmetricality of Michelangelo's Pauline Chapel fresco of some three decades earlier, or Caravaggio's Santa Maria del Popolo lateral, which would be unveiled a couple of years later. Though Peter is given the majority of the canvas, Paul's beheading is depicted in the middle ground; his head rests beside his severed neck. Three fountains spring forth from the spots where his decapitated head bounced.

In addition to the four altarpieces at San Paolo, the presbytery also featured a series of ovals depicting scenes from the life of Paul by Avanzino Nucci (ca. 1552-

egli avea tolta per via di favori (se non vogliamo dire per via di violenze, che tali appunto io soglio chiamare quei favori, che si fanno all'uomo a ingiusto danneggiamento dell'altro uomo) tolta dico a Cesare del Nebbia buon pittore, al quale già era stata assegnata, con avergli anche mandata in stanza la gran tela, ove dovea dipignerla.....Per lo cenno, che dato abbiamo nel raccontare il poco lodevole atto fatto da costui in procurare, che fusse tolta al Nebbia l'occasione del gran quadro della conversion di san Paolo in Roma, già può avere il nostro lettore compresa la stravaganza dell'umore di lui..."

²¹¹ Samek Ludovici 1956, pp. 153-54, 165-66. The testimony occurred on September 12, 1603, and the letter that referred to the commission was dated June 8, 1596. Orazio's altarpiece was presumed to be dated to 1603 until the publication of the transcript by Samek Ludovici.

²¹² See Bissell 1981, pp. 135-137, no. 4a-e, including the document of January 26, 1598 of a payment to Orazio for 100 scudi "*a nome del monasterio di Farfa et Monaci di San Paolo.*"

1629).²¹³ Though the paintings are now lost, several extant preparatory drawings have been connected to the commission. The four ovals included scenes of: *St. Paul in Malta*, *St. Paul preventing his Jailer from Committing Suicide*, *the Beheading of St. Paul*, and *the Ecstasy of St. Paul*.²¹⁴ The first three subjects correspond to drawings in the Albertina, the Brera, and the British Museum, respectively; the fourth subject is known through Baglione.²¹⁵ A drawing in the British Museum showing Paul being bit by a viper on the Island of Malta was connected to Nucci and the project at San Paolo in 1983 by Gere and Pouncey, who recognized the other sheets as belonging to the same series (fig. 41).²¹⁶ Recently, a squared rectangular sheet with rounded upper corners, which has been seen as a variant of the Brera image of Paul's beheading, appeared on the market (fig. 42).²¹⁷ Though the order and relation between the sheets remains somewhat unsettled without an extant final painting, they possess a number of similarities: Paul's cleanly sliced neck gushes forth a geyser of blood; while the saint's head had pressed into the foreground two indents before coming to rest. In the middle-ground, a soldier waves an SPQR banner, while the background includes the Aurelian wall with the Porta San Paolo and the Pyramid of Caius Cestius just outside of it. There are differences between the two

²¹³ Baglione 1642, p. 300: "*In S. Paolo fuori di Roma, nella cappella maggiore sotto la volta della Tribuna, fece la decollazione dell'Apostolo, e il miracolo della Serpe nell'Isola di Malta seguito; e quando fu rapito al terzo Cielo, e allorchè impedì al Custode delle carceri, che non si uccidesse, ed altre opere del Santo con buona pratica, ed assai diligentemente condotte.*"

²¹⁴ See Gere and Pouncey 1983, no. 228, p. 139.

²¹⁵ Baglione 1642, p. 300. See Albertina S.R. 700; For the *Beheading of St. Paul in Milan*, Brera 428, see Bean 1969, p. 56, reproduced pl. 37; For the *St. Paul in Malta*, see note 213.

²¹⁶ Black chalk, on brown prepared paper, 35.6 x 23.1 cm. (inv. 1952,0830.1). See Gere and Pouncey 1983, no. 228, p. 139.

²¹⁷ From the "Galleria Portatile" – The Ralph Holland Collection sale at Sotheby's, July 5, 2013, lot 262.

drawings, however. In the Brera sheet, an executioner stands prominently behind Paul, bare-chested and proud; Paul kneels on the ground to be beheaded; and the SPQR banner is given great size. All the elements that emphasize the specifically *Romanità* of Paul's beheading, and the architectural details in the background, will be further discussed when considering Cigoli's altarpiece below.

Using digital models, Nicola Camerlenghi has recently recreated the appearance of the presbytery around 1610, following the “revolutionary” changes of Sixtus V and Clement VIII (fig. 43).²¹⁸ The standardization of the altars and the placement of a variety of scenes from St. Paul's life meant that, as visitors moved around the church, they would see the major (and some of the minor) scenes associated with the saint. As one approached the high altar, still at some distance but aligned with the newly open *confessio* to Paul's tomb, she or he would reach Cigoli's scene of burial on the high altar, instead of more typical Pauline scenes, which already occupied subsidiary positions (fig. 44).

The above review of the existing paintings, specifically with Pauline iconography, provides context to Cigoli's composition, which he would begin roughly four years after Fontana's painting was installed. If most of the paintings in the presbytery were indebted to a certain late sixteenth-century Roman *maniera*, Cigoli's unique compositions, and his careful study of live models for his individual figures, must have appeared almost as a shock. The iconography, similarly, must have been dictated not only by the site, as this chapter argues, but also by the options left to the Benedictines to furnish their high altar: with the most popular Pauline scenes—that is, the Stoning of St. Stephen, the Conversion

²¹⁸ See Camerlenghi 2016, Plate XII. Model devised by Camerlenghi and produced by Evan Gallitelli.

of Saul, and the Beheading of St. Paul—already accounted for. The similarities between the burial scene and that of Christ’s Entombment, as discussed below, also made the subject thematically appropriate for the high altar.

Designing site specificity: examining the preparatory drawings

The extant preparatory drawings demonstrate how Cigoli was driven to conceive of the scene ex-novo, and that the artist considered carefully the figures to include, the narrative moments to feature, and the specificities of the setting. He had few, if any, existing examples to turn to in terms of depictions of St. Paul's burial; however, as I discuss below, Depositions/Entombments of Christ were exceedingly common and represented precedents for Cigoli's altarpiece. One of the only precedents for Cigoli's altarpiece was an image of the saint's entombment from the atrium of old St. Peter's, known through a similar painting in San Piero a Grado in Pisa by Deodato Orlandi (fig. 45).²¹⁹ This work, however, is extremely generic in nature, and lacks the specificity of Cigoli's image.

It is unclear if any of the now-lost earlier decoration at San Paolo featured the burial scene. A vague notice in Giovanni Baglione's 1639 *Le Nove Chiese* offers a hint that there may have been a pair of paintings flanking the tomb of St. Paul under the ciborium of Arnolfo di Cambio: “*e da' lati vi sono due quadri dipinti a olio, dentrovi in uno, quando sotterano S. Pietro, e nell'altro S. Paolo, fatti di nuovo.*”²²⁰ Baglione supplies no details as to the paintings' authors, or dates, and his note cannot be

²¹⁹ Active 1285-1315, died 1331 in Lucca. For the frescoes in San Piero a Grado, see Wollesen 1977, pp. 113-116.

²²⁰ Baglione 1990, p. 78, with the editor's comment in note 24 that these two paintings are lost.

substantiated by comparison with contemporary or subsequent guidebooks. Filippo Titi, for example, is silent on these works.²²¹ There are many drawings that record the earlier mosaics and frescoes that were destroyed in the 1823 fire, but none of these features the saint's burial.²²²

Miles Chappell provided the fundamental analysis of the preparatory drawings for the *Burial of St. Paul* altarpiece, first in the 1979 catalogue to the exhibition *Disegni dei Toscani a Roma (1580-1620)*, then in a 1984 article in which he added three additional drawings to the corpus.²²³ Including studies of cherubs for the upper register of the composition, Chappell identified fourteen extant sheets for the altarpiece design, offering an abundance of valuable information otherwise lost without the final painting's existence. Using Chappell's proposals as a foundation, this section considers the drawings in relation to the concerns of this chapter: iconographical inventions and site specificity.

As Chappell demonstrated convincingly, Cigoli developed two compositions simultaneously—what the scholar calls a “*versione commemorativa*” and a “*versione storica*.”²²⁴ These ideas can be seen as quick sketches on two small sheets of paper on the verso of a sheet in the Uffizi (figs. 46).²²⁵ Cigoli develops the “*versione commemorativa*”

²²¹ See Titi 1987 for a modern compendium of the various editions of Titi, with San Paolo on pp. 38-40.

²²² Waetzoldt 1964, pp. 55-63.

²²³ Miles Chappell in *Disegni dei Toscani* 1979, pp. 148-152; Chappell 1984. Dr. Chappell is currently preparing a catalogue raisonné of Cigoli's drawings. I am grateful to him for sharing with me his proposal, presented in 2013, of a previously unpublished drawing for the upper register of the altarpiece.

²²⁴ Chappell 1979, pp. 148-152.

²²⁵ *Studies for the Burial of St. Paul*. Recto: pen, brown, and blue washes, biacca, red and black chalks; Verso: Pen and brown and blue washes; 47.6 x 27.4 cm, Gabinetto dei Disegni e delle Stampe, Gallerie degli Uffizi, Florence (972F). See Chappell 1984.

more fully on the recto of this sheet (fig. 47). The Roman noblewoman Lucina presides over the burial of the Apostle in her *vigna* along via Ostiense, as recounted in the early Acts of the Apostle, as well as early Modern guidebooks, and Cesare Baronio's *Annales Ecclesiastici*.²²⁶ Lucina is a large, imposing presence on the left side of the drawing, elaborately robed, a youth holding up her train so it does not touch the floor. A mourning woman behind her touchingly brings her kerchief to her face; this is likely Plautilla, who played an earlier role in St. Paul's story. Another noblewoman, Plautilla gave Paul her veil at the gate that led to the site of Paul's martyrdom outside the gates of Rome. Paul used the veil to bind his eyes during his beheading, and appeared to Plautilla in a dream after his death and returned the piece of cloth.²²⁷ In his studies for the altarpiece, Cigoli works out various solutions for including both Lucina and Plautilla in the scene.

Importantly, there are no bishops present in this conception for the altarpiece, though they will appear in the eventual design. Instead, on the right side of the same sheet, across from the figure of Lucina, two diggers vigorously shovel dirt out of the earth where Paul will be lowered. As noted first by Anna Forlani, these two figures possess a Caravaggesque quality in their straining, ungainly positions, exposed forearms, and downturned faces.²²⁸ Cigoli ultimately abandoned these *manigoldi*; their inclusion,

²²⁶ Baronio 1593, p. 339: "*Che poi in processo di tempo, in quello stesso sepolcro di San Paolo fù posto, che Lucina, Senatoria gentildonna, in un suo proprio campo, nella via Ostiense gli costruì. E così fù il glorioso fine di questo Santo Apostolo.*"

²²⁷ Baronio 1593, p. 339: "*Paolo, per cominciar da lui, incontrata per i strada Plautilla, Christiana donna, e nobilissima, che un velo gli accomodasse la pregò, co'l quale nel l'atto del supplicio si imbandasse gli occhi. Et essa, avventurata, come conveniva, reputandosene, il proprio velo gli diede: ma con promessa, che ricamato di quell sangue, più pretioso di qual si voglia gioia, le dovesse esser reso... Apparve egli medesimo la notte seguente à Plautilla, & il suo velo gli restituì.*" For the depiction of this in earlier Italian panel paintings, see Bauman 1977, pp. 2-11.

²²⁸ Anna Forlani in *Mostra del Cigoli* 1959, p. 147.

perhaps, was seen as too indecorous for the high altar of San Paolo, or even illogical.

Why would the figures be lowering Paul into his grave before the digging out process is complete?

The open grave itself would have been a novel feature of the painting, one to which Cigoli paid close attention. In the same Uffizi sheet, he lays down a uniform area of brown wash, and then carefully uses parallel hatching to delineate the back wall of the grave from the viewer's point of view (fig. 48). In this section of his drawing, Cigoli is working out one of the fundamental issues of such burial scenes—how to represent where the body will end up. In this instance, he seems to have considered Caravaggio's *Entombment* for Santa Maria in Vallicella (1602-03, fig. 49), but with an important change.²²⁹ Though Caravaggio's Christ is being lowered into the tomb, symbolically represented outside the picture by the altar itself, Cigoli depicts the actual open grave in which Paul will be lowered, the very earth on which stands the viewer in San Paolo.

More generally speaking, Cigoli was working in a site-specific way, confronting common issues in Entombments/Depositions of Christ. Altarpieces are about salvation due to their placement on the altar where the Eucharist is celebrated. Scenes of Christ's deposition or burial were so often placed on altars to depict what occurred during transubstantiation: the host became the body of Christ. Paul suffered and died for Christ; a martyrdom is an imitation of Christ's death. Another important precedent for Cigoli in developing the burial iconography must have been Raphael's *Entombment* (c. 1508, Galleria Borghese, Rome, fig. 50) for the church of San Francesco al Prato in Perugia,

²²⁹ For Caravaggio's *Entombment*, executed for Santa Maria in Vallicella c. 1602-04 and today in the Vatican Pinacoteca, see Alessandra Rodolfo in Vodret 2016, vol. 2, pp. 398-401, with earlier references. See also Puglisi 1998, pp. 173-176.

executed a century earlier for the noblewoman Atalanta Baglioni in honor of her slain son.²³⁰ A figure group on the left of the verso of Uffizi 972F appears to almost be an adapted quick study by Cigoli from Raphael's altarpiece (fig. 51), which the artist further developed in two additional studies (figs. 52 and 53).²³¹ In 1608, Scipione Borghese seized Raphael's painting from the church in Perugia for his collection in Rome, the same moment in which Cigoli was creating sketches for the San Paolo high altarpiece. Though it is unclear when Cigoli and Borghese's relationship began, by 1610 it was firmly established, as the Cardinal commissioned a *Joseph and Potiphar's Wife* from the artist.²³² From 1611 to 1613, Cigoli was at work on frescoes for Borghese's garden loggetta, and in the same years Borghese was involved in an intense push for Cigoli's membership into the Knights of Malta.²³³ It is conceivable that in 1608 Cigoli would have had access to Raphael's painting in Rome via Borghese, if he had not already seen it in Perugia. Additionally, he could have known the composition from prints by Marcantonio Raimondi or Agostino Veneziano.²³⁴

Previously overlooked in discussions of all the preparatory drawings are background details, in the middle register of the design, that demonstrate how carefully Cigoli considered the particular location of San Paolo fuori le mura in inventing his site-specific painting. The details of Rome's topography were carefully ideated and depicted, and establish the remoteness of San Paolo vis-à-vis Rome's center. On the upper left of

²³⁰ For Raphael's altarpiece, see Cooper 2001, with earlier references.

²³¹ The first is executed with pen, black chalk, and brown and blue washes, 28.1 x 20.5 cm, Gabinetto dei Disegni e delle Stampe, Gallerie degli Uffizi, Florence (1014F). The second is in pen, black, chalk, and brown and blue washes, 40 x 38.8 cm, Gabinetto dei Disegni e delle Stampe, Gallerie degli Uffizi, Florence (1015F). See Chappell 1984.

²³² See Matteoli 1980, no. 6, pp. 124-26 for the commission.

²³³ See Hibbard 1964; Stone 2006.

²³⁴ See entries by Stefania Massari in *Raphael Invenit* 1985, p. 168.

Uffizi 972 (fig. 54), Cigoli portrayed Via Ostiense, a diagonal road emanating from the middle of the composition to the upper left. He did this mostly by using the white of the paper in reserve to suggest the road, with some brown wash for the path, and a sketchy outline in ink for the contours of the road. As Chappell has noted, Cigoli included on this sheet, as a subsidiary scene in the background, the separation of Peter and Paul on Via Ostiense (fig. 55). Recent research by Barbara Wisch about a small chapel built on the spot of their parting further stressed the importance of this sacred site for early modern Rome and Pauline iconography.²³⁵ From 1562 on, the Arciconfraternita della SS. Trinità dei Pellegrini e Convalescenti erected a small chapel dedicated to the separation of Peter and Paul, richly decorated by some of the leading artists in late sixteenth-century Rome. Wisch identified a drawing by Giovanni Guerra as preparatory for the chapel's now-lost altarpiece.²³⁶ Though the chapel was demolished in 1910, the chapel was once a prominent stop along the pilgrimage route to the basilica of San Paolo. In another preparatory sheet (fig. 56), one can see how Cigoli first laid out Via Ostiense in light black chalk.

Via Ostiense leads to a number of important monuments in the upper left of the drawing. From left, these include, across the Tiber, St. Peter's Basilica (where St. Peter, and by some sources, half of Paul's body would be buried), Castel Sant'Angelo, the Pyramid of Caius Cestus, Porta Paolo, and a column, perhaps that of Trajan or Marcus Aurelius.²³⁷ These elements recur across Cigoli's various drawings, including in the more hastily drawn compositional sketches on the verso of one sheet (fig. 57), a drawing in

²³⁵ Wisch 2017.

²³⁶ Wisch 2017, pp. 208-210.

²³⁷ On the belief that the halves of Peter and Paul were divided between San Paolo fuori le mura and St. Peter's, see Kirschbaum 1959.

which Cigoli worked out the lower portion of the composition (fig. 56), and the final, squared drawing (figs. 58, 59).²³⁸ Allowing for a degree of artistic license, these topographical features were carefully placed by Cigoli to correspond with the viewer's orientation towards the high altar. An aerial view demonstrates how Via Ostiense leads, in the upper left of the photo, to the Pyramid, for example (fig. 60). The fact that Cigoli carried over these details across his various preparatory drawings shows how instrumental the specifics of site of Rome were for his new pictorial invention.

Another drawing in the Uffizi (8899 F) with, on the recto, a study of a single male figure shows how Cigoli extracted individual figures to study more closely, likely from assistants posed in the studio (fig. 61).²³⁹ In this drawing, the figure tightly grasps the shroud that would wrap St. Paul as he was lowered into the earth. Notably, he holds the fabric and not Paul's head. The verso of this sheet (fig. 62) has not been discussed in the literature, other than a note that it includes "Cigoli" written in a seventeenth-century hand. Though most of the sheet is unused, there is the start of a drawing in blue wash (fig. 63), which I propose is a woman's profile and the outline of her mantle—that is, an aborted study for the figure of Lucina in the final composition, similar to the finished figure study on the verso of the drawing in the Metropolitan Museum of Art (fig. 68). Though summary, the quickly drawn in areas of wash provide insight into Cigoli's rapid working methods, and how often he drew and redrew the pose of Lucina, from the

²³⁸ *Modello for the Burial of St. Paul*, black chalk, pen, and brown and blue washes, on paper squared in pen, 69.1 x 38.1 cm., Gabinetto dei Disegni e delle Stampe, Gallerie degli Uffizi, Florence (1698F). See Chappell 1984.

²³⁹ *Study for a pallbearer*, black and red chalks, pen, white gesso, 41.1 x 20.6 cm., Gabinetto dei Disegni e delle Stampe, Gallerie degli Uffizi, Florence (8899F recto). See Chappell 1984.

sketches on the verso of Uffizi 972 (figs. 64 and 65), to the final squared-off composition (fig. 66). To those can now be added the verso of Uffizi 8899.

The aforementioned study in the Metropolitan Museum of Art (fig. 67) was published by Miles Chappell in 1984 as a late preparatory study by Cigoli for the altarpiece.²⁴⁰ According to Chappell, the drawing confirms that additional details were changed between the squared *modello* and the finished painting (compare figs. 58 and 17).²⁴¹ The drawing, in blue wash with white heightening, features St. Paul's body on the recto (fig. 67) and the figure of Lucina on the verso (fig. 68). The sheet bears in a seventeenth-century hand an inscription to Jacopo Vignali, whose name is also repeated on the mount. Here I tentatively propose that the inscription is correct and that the drawing is not a preparatory study by Cigoli but instead a *ricordo* of the painting from the later seventeenth century by the younger Florentine artist.²⁴² On both the recto and verso, the figures are composed in reserve as though copied from a larger composition, and show no evidence of the searching quality of draftsmanship associated with Cigoli's drawings after studio models. Instead, the studies bear closer resemblance to similar works attributed to Vignali, many of which feature the drier, diagonal white hatchmarks in the highlights, such as the study for Pyramus and Thisbé in the Louvre (fig. 69).²⁴³ The

²⁴⁰ *The Body of St. Paul being lowered into the grave*, point of brush blue wash, white heightening over black chalk on blue paper, 24.9 x 39.1 cm, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (1981.128 recto). See Chappell 1984.

²⁴¹ Chappell 1984, p. 291.

²⁴² I am grateful to Carmen C. Bambach for studying this drawing with me and for sharing her provisional thoughts.

²⁴³ *Study for Pyramus and Thisbé*, black chalk with white highlights, on gray prepared paper, 19.6 x 25.5 cm., Musée du Louvre, Paris (inv. 2246) For Vignali, see the invaluable early biography Bartolozzi 1753; also the modern monograph Mastropiero 1973; entries by Giovanni Pagliarulo in *Seicento fiorentino* [paintings] 1986-1987, pp.

Florentine-based artist Vignali was recorded in Rome in 1625 and may have made additional earlier trips there; Cigoli's altarpiece would have been little over a decade old and an important artistic pilgrimage site for a younger Tuscan artist.

The Metropolitan sheet is therefore an invaluable record of the altarpiece's final appearance. The German author Bavinck's understanding of the painting in 1620, mentioned above, as representing not only the burial of the saint, but also the finding and re-attaching of Paul's head to his body, corresponds to details in the Metropolitan sheet. In the upper left of the recto, a pair of hands delicately holds Paul's head to his neck; notably, these hands are not being used to support the weight of Paul's body. Focusing on the most salient details of the altarpiece, Vignali forcefully draws the line of Paul's decapitation, underscoring the importance of this iconographic motif (fig. 70).

Cigoli's painting in situ

Cigoli's painting is not mentioned in any of the reports of damage that followed the 1823 fire, and one may hold out hope that the painting may still be extant, albeit badly damaged and possibly broken up into small pieces. Such a fate would match several of the artist's other important Roman works, like his frescoes for Scipione Borghese or his St. Peter's altarpiece. Because of the painting's status as missing or lost, and the destruction of the work's early seventeenth-century mise-en-scene, how the painting operated within its original setting has never been considered, and is thus the aim of this section.

246-254. For his drawings, see G. Pagliarulo, "Jacopo Vignali", in *Seicento fiorentino* 1986-1987 [drawings], nos. 2.195 and 2.196, pp. 238-239.

A confluence of factors led to a focus on the high altar area of San Paolo during the second half of the sixteenth century; many of these are the same that affect much of the art discussed in this study: the veneration of relics and saints as upheld in the closing session of the Council of Trent, and the invigorated interest in holy sites to prepare for important Jubilee years of 1575, 1600, and 1625, and the influx of pilgrims. Camerlenghi has called the period between 1560 and 1610 at San Paolo “revolutionary” in terms of the changes in altars and liturgical settings.²⁴⁴

One of the important new features for the presbytery was a *confessio* leading to the crypt of the apostle, replacing an older and difficult to access subterranean space.²⁴⁵ This project was likely begun under Sixtus V (1585-90) and finished by Clement VIII (1592-1605). The *confessio*, as Ostrow has shown, became an important feature in post-Tridentine church architecture, as pilgrimage to holy sites, and particularly tombs, increased. In San Paolo, the *confessio* became instrumental for the influx of pilgrims, attracting the nearly three million said to have visited Rome in the Jubilee year of 1600 who could visit Paul’s purported sarcophagus, and other important relics.²⁴⁶ The *confessio* of San Paolo was likely modeled after the one recently built in Santa Maria Maggiore, featuring a pair of curved steps leading down to the sunken and open crypt.²⁴⁷

In 1597, the architect Onorio Longhi began designing a new high altar for San Paolo, one that would eventually display Cigoli’s *Burial*. The altar was a sumptuous design, including four Corinthian columns with porphyry shafts, as described by

²⁴⁴ See Camerlenghi 2016.

²⁴⁵ See Ostrow 2007, pp. 19-32, with San Paolo discussed on pp. 21-24.

²⁴⁶ Camerlenghi 2013, p. 136.

²⁴⁷ See Ostrow 2007, p. 24.

Baglione in his *Nove Chiese*.²⁴⁸ Angelo Uggeri's print of around 1833 shows the altar, missing Cigoli's painting, before the entirety of Longhi's design was destroyed in 1834 (figs. 71 and 72). The arrangement included a now-lost inscription dedicated to the Jubilee, as well as a *stemma* featuring the emblem of St. Paul: the saint's right hand holding a sword (fig. 73).²⁴⁹ Though, following the 1823 fire, much of the church was rebuilt to match its earlier appearance, the high altar was not: it was seen as too decadent.²⁵⁰ Presumably, to early nineteenth-century eyes, the original high altar looked too opulent in contrast with the prevailing neoclassical style in which the church was renovated.

There were thus two new features of the presbytery of San Paolo around 1600 that worked in tandem: a massive high altarpiece that depicted the burial of St. Paul, and the confessio. The confessio, of course, was already in place when Cigoli began his work, as

²⁴⁸ Baglione 1990, p. 70: "*In mezzo alla tribuna di questo tempio evvi un altare di marmo ricchissimo con quattro colonne di porfido d'ordine corintio che reggono un frontispizio co'suoi membri intagliati ricchi, e di dentro a questo altare v'è un altro frontispizio, che tutto ornato di marmi arriva alla volta.*" For the altar, see Docci 2005 and Docci 2006, pp. 122-123. Though destroyed, Longhi's altar is known through prints; Docci has identified several marble fragments still extant. For the discoveries of fragments, see Docci 2005, with the images on p. 161.

²⁴⁹ Based on the print by Uggeri, the inscription reads, in part: "*DE-O-ET-S-PAVL/CLEMENTIS-PPM/CONGR-CASSINS/AN-IVBILEI-MDC.*" The *stemma* featuring St. Paul's emblem was found and published by Docci 2005, with a location of the Passeggiata Archeologica in San Paolo.

²⁵⁰ The altar was demolished because "*di architettura propria della decadenza delle arti*" according to the *Diario di Roma*, no. 74, 1834; furthermore, according to Pasquali Belli around 1831-33 reported in the 1845 *Diario di Roma*, it was "*condannata dalla ragione e da' sani principe delle'arte.*" For these judgments, see Docci 2005, p. 159, notes 2 and 3. See same source for yet another related reason for the altar's demolition: "*Nel 1600 fu eretto nell'abside una decorazione di altare che copre gran parte dell'antico mosaic. Con questi Danni si fa dunque luogo a doverlo demolire.*"

was the high altar project as designed by Longhi.²⁵¹ One may also note that Cigoli's nearly coeval work at Santa Maria Maggiore meant he would have been intimately aware of this innovation in church architecture around 1600. Thus, Cigoli, painting on site, with scaffolding erected for his monumental painting, was crafting the last piece in this early seicento configuration, one that linked Paul's burial with his tomb below. Though Camerlenghi argues that Clement VIII's projects in the presbytery of San Paolo shifted away the attention from the liturgy towards the direct veneration of relics, thus "abolishing" the coveted connection between apse and altar, the new organization of the high altar with the open confessio meant a direct link between Cigoli's visual program which the throngs of pilgrims could contemplate before descending to the tomb of Paul below.²⁵² The inscription above the painting, celebrating the Jubilee, solidified this link; the *stemma* featuring Paul's sword further activated the painting's iconography.

The painting's fortunes and nonfinito

The last description of Cigoli's altarpiece before the fire of 1823 described it as "nearly lost due to the humidity" ("*questo quadro per l'umidità è quasi perduto*").²⁵³ The subsequent disappearance of the painting renders it impossible to know how much had been lost to the elements and to what degree of finish Cigoli had been able to bring the

²⁵¹ The new confessio must have been underway by February 1597, when it is mentioned by Cesare Baronio in a letter dated February 22, 1597 to Antonio Talpa, first published in Alberici 1759-1770, III, p. 79, and discussed in Ostrow 2007, p. 24. Baronio writes of the gift of stones from the Abbot of San Paolo from the old crypt in San Paolo, which was being renovated in the modern manner and would no longer need them. Baronio mentions the stones in the context of the confessio he was building in his titular church of Santi Nereo ed Achilleo.

²⁵² Camerlenghi 2013, p. 137.

²⁵³ Nicolai 1815, p. 308.

altarpiece before his death in 1613. Though the topic of *non finito* has received considerable attention in recent literature, particularly in regard to works by Michelangelo, the example of Cigoli's altarpiece is especially instructive for several reasons.²⁵⁴ Though Cigoli was actively at San Paolo in 1609 and 1610, he seems to have spent most of the following years until his death in 1613 at work elsewhere in Rome. Despite those distractions, the altarpiece must have been finished enough for it to remain on the altar for two centuries, and for him to have brought up the matter of remaining payment for the project in his last testament, as already mentioned. At the same time, the work's unfinished state was notable enough to become a frequent refrain in the early modern guidebooks to Rome and Cigoli's biographies.

The altarpiece's finish must have been deemed appropriate enough for a devotional painting to maintain its distinguished position on the high altar of the second most important pilgrimage basilica in the Eternal City; allowing for artistic license on behalf of the engravers, prints that show the altarpiece from a distance imply that its state was advanced enough to have been comprehensible from afar, particularly in the gargantuan dimensions of San Paolo.

Felini's 1610 guidebook to Rome, which was the first to mention Cigoli's painting and was likely compiled by September 1609 according to its license, called it almost finished ("*quasi finite*"). Though the artist lived another four years, it is unclear if he ever advanced the painting much further.²⁵⁵ The positive reception of the work is

²⁵⁴ See Baum, Bayer, and Wagstaff 2016, for an overview of the topic and previous biography, particular the essays by Andrea Bayer, "Renaissance Views of the Unfinished," pp. 18-29, and Carmen C. Bambach, "Leonardo, Michelangelo, and Notions of the Unfinished," pp. 30-41.

²⁵⁵ See Felini 1610, p. 17.

recorded, unsurprisingly, by the artist's nephew, Giovanni Battista Cardi. In his 1628 biography of his uncle, Cardi writes that "At the same time [he was finishing his St. Peter's altarpiece], he went down to San Paolo, where he had finished sketching in [*abbozzare*] [the painting], which remained unfinished with such perfection, that it was believed that the reverends did not want other artists to place their hands on it."²⁵⁶

His nephew's comments contain several tropes of early modern biographies. The idea that a work was perfect in its imperfections—that its unfinished state revealed its maker's brilliance—was, of course, employed in descriptions of the work of Michelangelo. Describing the unfinished marble *Medici Madonna* for the New Sacristy at the church of San Lorenzo in Florence, Vasari wrote "[the work] was left rough and showing the marks of the *gradine*, yet with all its imperfections there may be recognized in it the full perfection of the work."²⁵⁷ The use of the verb "*abbozzare*" (to sketch) is also revealing, as it implies that visible passages of Cigoli's brushwork would be present on the high altar. As Carmen C. Bambach has argued, certain words or phrases could be used to refer to a work not brought to full finish, including "*incompiuto*," "*imperfetto*," "*abbozzato*," or "*non fornito*" (meaning, respectively, incomplete, imperfect, sketched, or unexecuted.)²⁵⁸ Indeed, many of these phrases were applied to Cigoli's work during his lifetime and posthumously. The artist himself used such language during the early stages of his work ("*Io ò fornito di abbozzare a S.o Pagolo tavola...*"), and the subsequent

²⁵⁶ Cardi 1913, p. 35. "*Et alcuna volta scorrendo fino a. S. Paolo, nel medesimo tempo ancor quella finì di abbozzare, la quale è rimasta imperfetta con tanta perfezione, che si crede che quei reverendi non vogliano farvi metter mano da altri.*"

²⁵⁷ Vasari 1878-85, vol. 7, p. 195: "*ancora che non siano finite le parti sue, si conosce nell'essere rimasta abbozzata e gradinata, nella imperfezione della bozza, la perfezione dell'opera.*" Vasari's comments echo those by Pliny describing Apelles. See McHam 2013.

²⁵⁸ See Bambach 2016, p. 31.

sources seem to confirm the final work was also noticeably still somewhat sketchy in facture.²⁵⁹ The appreciation of this type of open brushwork places Cigoli's unfinished altarpiece on a continuum that began in the sixteenth century with Titian and continued in the following centuries.²⁶⁰ Though this topic is too large to consider here, it is unfortunate that the loss of Cigoli's altarpiece precludes a fuller understanding of his place within this development of a painterly aesthetic.

The work at San Paolo was often used by subsequent writers to honor Cigoli's talent and lament the shortness of his life. The artist's life tragically cut short, Cigoli's work became both a relic of the genius's touch and a referent to the relics in the church, specifically St. Paul's body buried below. Baglione's *Vita* of Cigoli describes the work as "unfinished but full of testament to his artistic virtue." ("*così mal finito è pieno testimonio della sua virtù.*")²⁶¹ The same author's description of the church in his *Nove Chiese* writes "*per mancamento di vita da lui non in tutto finito.*"²⁶²

The unfinished quality of the work must have been evident enough to be repeated throughout the guidebooks well into the late eighteenth century. In a 1725 guidebook to Rome based on the earlier writings of the theologian Ottavio Panciroli (1554-1624), the work is described as "*al quale mancando in questo metre la vita, manco la perfezzione totale à quella tela.*"²⁶³ The 1675 edition of Filippo Titi's *Studio di Pittura, Scoltura, et Architettura, nelle chiese di Roma* borrows its descriptor from Baglione's *Nove Chiese*,

²⁵⁹ For this letter of May 22, 1609, see above, note 119.

²⁶⁰ See Bayer 2016, Sohm 1991.

²⁶¹ Baglione 1642, p. 154.

²⁶² Baglione 1990, p. 79.

²⁶³ Panciroli 1725, p. 452.

with slight change: “*per mancamento di vita da lui non in tutto fornita.*”²⁶⁴ In a later edition of his guidebook, the phrasing is changed to “but not totally finished, because he died before perfecting it” (“*ma non del tutto finite, essendo morto prima di perfezionarla.*”)²⁶⁵

Baldinucci devotes large sections of his biography of Cigoli to discuss the many unfinished works by the artist, and their effect on his *fortuna critica*. He writes that the San Paolo altarpiece was a work that “though it was not fully finished, it better showed the great knowledge of Cigoli” (“*nel suo non esser del tutto finito, fa mostra maggiore del gran sapere del Cigoli.*”)²⁶⁶ Baldinucci discusses how the artist’s students, specifically Giovanni Bilivert, finished many of the works left unfinished at the time of his death. (“*Restarono, alla morte di Lodovico, molte opere non del tutto finite....Rima anche imperfetto il bellissimo quadro....Ancora restò imperfetta la gran tavola per la Chiesa di S. Paolo di. Roma...*”)²⁶⁷ A century later, Luigi Lanzi, in his *Storia Pittorica della Italia* of 1795-96, echoed the comments about Bilivert: “*Terminò qualche opera rimasta imperfetta per la morte del Cigoli...*”²⁶⁸ It should be noted that Bilivert, despite having an established relationship with the Benedictine monks through his commission at San Calisto, did not step in to finish the San Paolo altarpiece, whether because he had already returned to Florence at that point, or because, as Cigoli’s nephew wrote, the monks did not want any other hands to interfere with what Cigoli had created.

²⁶⁴ Titi 1675 p. 39.

²⁶⁵ Titi 1763, p. 66.

²⁶⁶ Baldinucci 1812 p. 126.

²⁶⁷ Baldinucci 1812, pp. 150, 151-152.

²⁶⁸ Lanzi 1795-96, p. 211.

It is difficult to think of a Roman altarpiece in an equally prominent position that was left incomplete at the artist's death and remained in situ without subsequent interventions.²⁶⁹ Of course, the painting's size and material meant that it likely would have been prohibitively difficult to move; if the painting was on slate, as believed, it would have been comparable in size to Sebastiano del Piombo's *Birth of the Virgin* in the Chigi Chapel at Santa Maria del Popolo, which was finished after the artist's death.

Conclusion: the painting's influence

The silence in the literature on early Baroque painting with regards to Cigoli's altarpiece, while understandable because of its loss, would suggest that it had a negligible impact on subsequent altar paintings in Rome. I argue, however, that the impact of Cigoli's adaption of *Entombment* iconography for an unprecedented site-specific scene can be felt in two altarpieces created some six years later. At San Lorenzo fuori le mura, another of the important early Christian basilicas and a prominent pilgrimage church, the little known Bolognese artist Emilio Savonanzi (1580-1660) painted a series of altarpieces that referenced the basilica's titular saint and the site of his burial.²⁷⁰ Around 1619, Savonanzi was commissioned to paint a set of four altarpieces with the following subjects, which the artist completed by 1625: *Saint Cyriaca burying martyrs* (fig. 74),

²⁶⁹ For example, Michelangelo's *Entombment* in the National Gallery, London, was likely never installed in Sant'Agostino. Raphael's *Transfiguration*, unfinished at his death, was completed by his pupils. Sebastiano del Piombo's *Birth of the Virgin* in the Chigi Chapel of Santa Maria del Popolo was left unfinished but completed by Francesco Salviati in 1555.

²⁷⁰ For Savonanzi, see Malvasia 1841, vol. 1, pp. 228-31; Harris 1968; Schleier 1969; Carloni 1999. Malvasia mentions implausibly many illustrious masters for Savonanzi, including Denys Calvaert, Ludovico Carracci, Guercino (nine years his younger), and Guido Reni. Savonanzi moved to Rome around 1618 and worked alongside Andrea Sacchi at the Collegio Romano. In 1639 he settled permanently in the town of Camerino.

Saints Justinus and Hippolytus transporting the Body of Saint Lawrence (fig. 75), *Madonna and Child with Saints*, and *Saint Lawrence baptizing a neophyte*.²⁷¹ Today, the *Saint Cyriaca* is the only one still in situ, in a side chapel in the basilica. The *Saints Justinus and Hippolytus* is now in the convent attached to the church, while the other two paintings were transferred to the Abbey of Valvisciolo under Pope Pius IX (r. 1846-78).

Savonanzi's *St. Cyriaca burying martyrs*, which has also been called a *Burial of St. Lawrence*, makes explicit reference to the site on which the basilica of San Lorenzo was founded: the burial place of St. Lawrence in the catacombs of the noblewoman and eventual martyr Cyriaca.²⁷² The work was part of the basilica's decorations for the Jubilee Year of 1625.²⁷³ Although Savonanzi's altarpiece is rightly thought to be an imitation of Guercino's *Burial of St. Petronilla* for St. Peter's Basilica (fig. 76), completed in 1623, one can argue that both were equally inspired by Cigoli's *St. Paul* altarpiece.²⁷⁴ Guercino would have had few comparable monumental altarpieces depicting a burial of an early Christian saint for his commission, over 23 feet tall, and Cigoli's would have been a recently installed exemplar by a renowned artist. Both Savonanzi's and Guercino's altarpieces follow Cigoli's *St. Paul* in incorporating local

²⁷¹ See Schleier 1969, no. 4, pp. 3-16; Carloni 1999, pp. 40-3; Paola Castellani in Vodret 2012, vol. 1, no. II.8, p. 42. The paintings have been little studied; the *Saints Justinus and Hippolytus Transporting the Body of Saint Lawrence*, presumed lost by Schleier, was only rediscovered following restoration work in 2011. The entire series deserves further attention.

²⁷² See Ugonio 1588, pp. 149- 154, especially p. 151; Panciroli 1625, p. 156.

²⁷³ The new altars are mentioned by Panciroli 1625, p. 161.

²⁷⁴ Harris 1968, p. 254, and under note 33. Harris believed that the painting was directly inspired by Guercino, and thus must be dated sometime between 1623 and 1625. See Carloni 1999, p. 42, for a discussion of the dating. For the Guercino, among other sources, see Steinberg 1980; Rice 1997, cat. 1, pp. 175-82.

legend and sensitivity to place in presenting little-known scenes from the church's early history.

Chapter 2: Giovanni Bilivert's Martyrdom of St. Callixtus, a site-specific installation

While Cigoli was beginning his commission for the high altar of San Paolo fuori le mura (see Chapter 1), the Benedictine monks turned to him to execute an altarpiece for the order's smaller church in Trastevere, San Calisto. The subject of the painting created for San Calisto, by Cigoli's pupil Giovanni Bilivert (1585-1644), was the martyrdom of the church's titular saint: Saint Callixtus, the third-century pope, thrown into a well (fig. 77). This chapter examines how the young artist, in his first documented work, devised a site-specific installation, one that incorporated into its design the holy site of the church and the physical relic of the well. Bilivert's painting has been little studied, though it has been featured in several important exhibitions; divorced from its setting, it has never been discussed in the context of its chapel where it was installed in 1610 and remains today.²⁷⁵ Additionally, because the church is closed to the public, very few scholars have seen the altarpiece within its original environs.²⁷⁶ Also contributing to its neglect is that Bilivert is best known for his work for the Medici in Florence, where he spent most of his career, and that the San Calisto altarpiece is his sole Roman work. Most discussions of the painting have heretofore focused on questions of style and attribution, particularly the issue of Cigoli's involvement in the work, and the influence of artists like Caravaggio and Rubens upon its coloration, figure types, lighting, and composition. Nevertheless, the work provides the ideal case study for understanding how, in the beginning of the seventeenth century, original iconographies were driven by the renewed interest in certain

²⁷⁵ *Martyrdom of St. Callixtus*, oil on canvas, 200 x 160 cm, church of San Calisto in Trastevere, Rome. The painting was in the following exhibitions: *Seicento fiorentino* 1986-87 vol I, nos. 1.98-99 and vol. II, no. 2.76; Laura Laureati in Vodret and Strinati 2001, p. 117; no. 67; Adriano Amendola in Vodret 2012, p. 56, no. II.15.

²⁷⁶ As of 2017, the church was closed and opens roughly once a week for a local community to hold mass.

holy sites in Rome, and how altarpieces in diverse locations in the city played a role within the early Christian revival in ways that have been little explored. This chapter aims to place the painting within several contexts: within its chapel, and specifically, its relation to the well (*pozzo*) of St. Callixtus; within the neighborhood of Trastevere in the first part of the *seicento*; and within the more general context of the early Christian revival in Rome around 1600.

Bilivert's Martyrdom of St. Callixtus (1610)

Giovanni Bilivert's altarpiece (fig. 77) depicts Callixtus's martyrdom, or, more specifically, an individual moment from the larger narrative surrounding the events of his death.²⁷⁷ The action occurs in what appears to be a paved courtyard, likely that of the house of Pontianus where Pope Callixtus I (r. 218-222) sought refuge, which opens up to a sky and small landscape in the upper right of the painting. Three men carry Callixtus, guiding him towards the well in the lower right. The thug on the viewer's left holds aloft the pontiff's feet and knees, guiding his body towards a vertical position as preparation for his descent down the shaft of the well. Wearing a tunic, this figure is bare-shouldered, his muscular right shoulder and arm in highlight, along with his left leg, its bareness emphasized by the exposed knee above brown leather boots that come to mid-calf. The middle torturer appears dressed in contemporary garb, complete with a daintily plumed hat. One hand grips awkwardly at Callixtus's waist, but he otherwise seems disengaged

²⁷⁷ On the painting, see Hoogewerff 1943, pp 116-7; Gregori 1959, pp. 216-18; Thiem 1977, pp. 324-7; Contini 1985, pp. 11-12, 69-70, 172, no. 2; *Seicento Fiorentino* 1986, nos. 1.98-99 and 2.76; Laura Laureati in Vodret and Strinati 2001, p. 117; no. 67; Adriano Amendola in Vodret 2012, p. 56, no. II.15; Guerrieri Borsoi 2014a.

from the action; his head is the only one whose gaze is not directed towards the well. A bald older man with a full gray beard wrestles with Callixtus's torso, grasping it around the ribs. The man's downturned eyes gaze towards the well's opening. A fourth man assists from beyond the painting's right edge, only his head and hands visible as he holds and maneuvers the chain and stone tied around Callixtus's neck.

The four executioners, plus Callixtus himself, are painted life-sized and pressed to the foreground of the picture plane. There are four witnesses in the background, two men on the left and two women on the right. These figures appear disproportionately small in comparison to the foreground figures, perhaps indicating the young artist's inexperience. Bilibert's portrayal of the two female mourners on the right shows a familiarity with the then recently unearthed fragment of ancient Roman painting called the *Aldobrandini Nozze*, as one scholar has suggested.²⁷⁸ Behind the two more visible men on the left appear three shadowy figures of soldiers in the background holding pikes, and even more such weapons rise behind them, suggesting a large number of such soldiers. With these figures, Bilivert has inserted a reference to both the soldiers involved in Callixtus's captivity, as well as those he baptized. Bilivert has created a composition that is both balanced (four witnesses, four executions), rhythmic (the disposition of the persecutors' bodies creates a cascading effect with their heads mirroring Callixtus's curved body and the trajectory of his descent), and oriented entirely to the main event: Callixtus's imminent death.

²⁷⁸ Adriano Amendola in Vodret 2012, p. 56 pointed out that the fresco, which had been discovered in 1601, was in the same decade installed in Cardinal Pietro Aldobrandini's villa on Monte Magnanapoli in Rome. Amendola posited further that Cigoli could have played a role in accessing the Aldobrandini collection, given their commission of him for the *Healing of the Lamé Man* in Saint Peter's by Clement VIII, Pietro's uncle.

And what of Callixtus himself? The early pointiff's figure is compacted; his body and legs hunched in an S-shaped form, to better hoist him into both the painting's vertically-oriented format and the painted well itself. He wears maroon shoes, a white alb, and an elegant chasuble, embroidered in gold and blue on the outside, with the inside rendered in purple, blue, orange and pink *cangiante* colors. Callixtus is depicted as an old man, with a bushy white beard. His overall demeanor and effect is one of awkward humility and resigned acceptance of his fate. His papal tiara has fallen off, prominently located in the painting's foreground, and, importantly, protected from the thugs by Callixtus's cascading mantle. This detail amplifies the indignity suffered by Callixtus, and by extension, the office of the papacy.

The painting possesses a strong diagonal from the upper left to the bottom right, from the pink hat of the gentleman in the upper right to Callixtus's shoes, his downward-sloping body, and to the well in the bottom right. The well is a cylinder comprised of stone bricks; one is missing from the opening, a picturesque touch that reinforces the martyrdom's putative historical accuracy. But the opening also allows a glimpse into the well, with the chain and heavy stone suspended in time. Bilivert has conveyed the weight of the stone, the precariousness of Callixtus's position, and the inevitability of his death.

The altarpiece is signed and dated on the stone around the titular saint's neck.²⁷⁹ The work was commissioned by the Benedictine monks of San Paolo fuori le mura to decorate the left-hand chapel of the small church dedicated to St. Callixtus in the *rione* of Trastevere. The Benedictines built the church beginning in 1608 on the foundations of an earlier, dilapidated church on the site. The chapel of St. Callixtus was part of the

²⁷⁹ The signature reads "GIO. BILLIVERT F. 1610."

renovation plans carried out by the architect Orazio Torriani (active 1602-1657) under the patronage of the Benedictines, who in 1607 were given the small church, which had by then fallen out of use, by Pope Paul V (r. 1605-21). As part of the new church, the left-hand chapel would include a well that had recently been discovered outside the walls of the previous church. Thus, the new chapel was conceived to contain Bilivert's painting, with its simulated depiction of the well on an altar next to the supposed actual well of Callixtus's martyrdom.

Godefridus Johannes Hoogewerff first published Bilivert's altarpiece in 1944. Later commentators have singled out his view that the work was a pale assimilation of Caravaggio's style: "*Si tratta di una composizione certo audace, ma sgradevole, che rivela l'influsso mal assimilato del Caravaggio, mentre nel colore indeciso e pesante l'artistica cerca invano di conciliare la tavolozza Toscana col principio coloristico del grande Lombardo.*"²⁸⁰ These writers have omitted Hoogewerff's remarks that follow, in which he writes that the work was an important experiment and that Bilivert interpreted the scene in a formal and dignified manner, one that eschewed violent contrasts of lights and darks, and impetuous action, that would remain with him the rest of his life.²⁸¹

Roberto Contini, in his monograph on Bilivert, credited Cigoli with providing the compositional drawing now in the Louvre and overseeing the successful aspects of the painting's composition (as well as noting that the head of the figure on the far right seems based on Cigoli's *Sacrifice of Isaac* in Palazzo Pitti).²⁸² Additionally, Contini sees a debt to both the early Peter Paul Rubens and the Florentine artist Jacopo Chimenti (known as

²⁸⁰ Hoogewerff 1943, pp. 116-17

²⁸¹ Hoogewerff 1960, p. 140.

²⁸² Contini 1985, p. 12

Empoli, 1551-1640). While Contini thoughtfully lays out the stylistic components of Bilivert's altarpiece and its importance for subsequent Florentine painting, he omits, beyond a brief recapitulation of Baglione and Baldinucci, any mention of the painting's surroundings—the well, chapel, and church. Contini does raise the point that, being dated 1610, after Bilivert is recorded on the rolls of the Accademia del Disegno in Florence in 1609, the painting was likely to have been sent to Rome from Florence.

The painting was included in the landmark 1986 exhibition *Il Seicento Fiorentino*, along with its *bozzetto*.²⁸³ The catalogue entries, also by Contini, recorded a copy published by Miles Chappell in the collection of the Muzeul de artă di Bucarest, which Contini describes as non-Florentine, and previously ascribed to Ludovico Carracci, Brescian school (by Roberto Longhi) and to Bilivert himself (in a letter to the museum by Italo Faldi).²⁸⁴ The existence of a copy, which poses several open questions regarding the painting's fame, artistic practices of the period, and the market in the early seventeenth century, deserves further study, though the present author has not yet viewed the copy in person.

More recently, the painting has been exhibited in two exhibitions related to the theme of Caravaggio's Rome. In her entry on the painting for the 2001 exhibition, *Caravaggio e il genio di Roma*, Laura Laureati included a short description of the church's history under Paul V and noted that the iconography is extremely rare.²⁸⁵ In the catalogue for the 2010 exhibition *Roma al tempo di Caravaggio*, Adriano Amendola noted the concordances between the painting and Rubens' work for the Oratorians in

²⁸³ Contini 1986, I. 98 and I. 99, pp. 219-220.

²⁸⁴ For the Romanian painting, see Teodosiu 1974, pp. 29-30.

²⁸⁵ Laura Laureati in Vodret and Strinati 2001, no. 67, p. 117.

Santa Maria in Vallicella, suggesting Bilivert's presence in Rome between October 1608 (when Rubens finished his work on the high altar) and November 1609 (just before he is recorded at the Accademia del Disegno in Florence).²⁸⁶

Details of the commission

Giovanni Bilivert was born in Florence in 1576 (not, as previous sources indicated, in Flanders) to Giacomo di Giovanni Bilivert (Bylevelt), himself born in Maastricht, who worked in Florence as a metalworker for the Grand Duke Ferdinando I (r. 1587-1609).²⁸⁷ After some training in Siena under Alessandro Casolani (1552-1606), the younger Bilivert studied with Cigoli in Florence.²⁸⁸ Following the commission from Pope Clement VIII of an altarpiece for the Cappella Clementina in St. Peter's Basilica, Cigoli brought his pupil to Rome.²⁸⁹ From 1603 to 1609 Bilivert made several prolonged sojourns in Rome, returning to Florence in between. According to a biography written by his pupil Orazio Fidani (1606-1656), Bilivert had fallen in love with a young Florentine woman named Laura, and gave the excuse to Cigoli that the air in Rome was hurting his eyes, and that the fear of blindness necessitated his return to Florence.²⁹⁰ While Anna Matteoli has identified several copies by Bilivert after his master, the San Calisto altarpiece is his first independent work (notwithstanding whatever role Cigoli may have

²⁸⁶ Adriano Amendola in Vodret 2012, p. 56, no. II.15.

²⁸⁷ Hoogewerff 1960, p. 139. For the life of his father, see Baldinucci 1974, pp. 301-320.

²⁸⁸ Contini 1985, pp. 7-8.

²⁸⁹ Contini 1985, pp. 8-9. For the altarpiece, see Chappell 1971, pp. 92-96; Rice 1997, p. 28. See also Chapter 1.

²⁹⁰ Though he never became fully blind, the trope of his weak eye was repeated by biographers including Baglione and Baldinucci. See note 15 in Matteoli 1970, p. 344. For Fidani, see Mojana 1996.

had in it).²⁹¹ After several years between Rome and his native Florence, Bilivert eventually settled in the latter city and forged a successful career as painter for the Medici and other courts.²⁹²

The Benedictines commissioned Bilivert's altarpiece as part of a larger church restoration plan around 1607. We can speculate that the young artist procured the assignment through his master Cigoli, who was busy with the high altarpiece of the *Burial of St. Paul* for the Benedictines at San Paolo fuori le mura.²⁹³ Bilivert began work for San Calisto around 1607 or 1608; the signature and date of 1610 on the stone around the saint's neck likely marks the year it was completed. Roberto Contini proposed that Bilivert may have begun the project in Rome but sent it in its complete state from Florence, where he is recorded in the Accademia del Disegno registers in 1609.²⁹⁴

No contract for the commission survives. A payment record published by Maria Barbara Guerrieri Borsoi from the Benedictines' accounts in the Banco di Santo Spirito indicates a payment dated November 5, 1610 of 50 *scudi* to "*al s. Gio. Bilvitti e per lui al s. Ludovico Cigoli per rest (cioe a saldo) per il quadro di S. Callisto al pozzo fatto nella sua chiesa.*"²⁹⁵ Any previous payments are hard to determine, as the archives are missing the years 1608 and 1609.²⁹⁶

²⁹¹ Matteoli 1988, pp. 27–33.

²⁹² See Contini 1985.

²⁹³ See Chapter 1 of this dissertation.

²⁹⁴ See Contini 1985, p. 69 for the suggestion it was sent from Florence; see Contini 1985, p. 172 for the transcription of Bilivert's name in the Accademia del Disegno register in November 1609, from the Archivio di Stato Firenze, Accademia del Disegno 103, Entrata et uscita dal 1602 al 1624 segnato, novembre 8, 1609: "*Da giovanj di giaches bilivert sta col cigoli 1, tre e s. diecj p. principio di sua matricola reco giulio nostro.*"

²⁹⁵ Published by Guerrieri Borsoi 2014a, p. 164, note 37, from the Archivio Storico della Banca d'Italia, Banco di Santo Spirito, Contabilità, Registri, pezzo n. 2 (II.1.2 Mastro del

The church of San Calisto in Trastevere

San Calisto is a small, aisleless, single-nave church located in the Trastevere *rione* of Rome (figs. 78 and 79). The church is attached to a palazzo that forms the southern axis of Piazza Santa Maria in Trastevere. The palazzo itself is contiguous with the Marian basilica.²⁹⁷ The church of San Calisto was the only one in Rome dedicated to the third-century pontiff, considered by some to be the first martyred Pope following Peter, although there are references to a San Calisto al Celio in early manuscripts.²⁹⁸ The church of San Calisto's early history is obscure and confusing: said to have been built in 741 by Gregory III, possibly on the site of an earlier house church, the church can be securely dated only to the twelfth century; its history is often tied up with that of Santa Maria in Trastevere next door or a no-longer-extant basilica on the Via Aurelia.²⁹⁹ Though the church is mentioned in studies of its architect, Orazio Torriani, its only

1610) f. 1008.

²⁹⁶ See Guerrieri Borsoi 2014a, p. 160, note 23.

²⁹⁷ The palace, which housed the Monastery of San Calisto, also belonged to the Benedictines when they took ownership of the church in 1608. In 1929, the Vatican gained possession of the Palazzo San Calisto. See *Treaty between the Vatican and Italy* 1929, Article 13, p. 191. The architectural history and collections of the Monastery of San Calisto merit further research but fall outside the scope of the present study. The palazzo formerly contained the archives for the church of San Calisto, until most of the documents were destroyed in an 1814 fire. The remains of the archive were transferred to the Archivio di San Paolo fuori le mura in 1851. See Trifone 1908, p. 102, note 2. I am grateful to Don Francesco at the Abbazia di San Paolo fuori le mura for sharing with me the precious few documents that survive from the archive of San Calisto, most from the early nineteenth century.

²⁹⁸ There are references in early sources to a church on the Celian hill that may have existed previously. See Armellini 1891, pp. 517.

²⁹⁹ See Kinney 1975 for the discussion of the church of San Calisto and Santa Maria in Trastevere's early history; for monographic treatments of the church of San Calisto, see Momo 1938 and *San Callisto* 1970.

monographic treatments are a 1938 short publication on its early twentieth century renovation and a 1970 illustrated short guide.³⁰⁰

What is known from the church's often vague history is that in 1458 Pope Callixtus III (r. 1455-58) declared himself titular cardinal, an infrequent practice at the time.³⁰¹ After a long period of neglect, the church was given in 1607 to the Benedictine monks of San Paolo fuori le mura, an announcement recorded in an October 6, 1607, document.³⁰² The monks had owned the small church of San Saturnino da Cavallo on the Quirinale Hill, which as early as the 1580s had been on desired land necessary for the expansion of the papal palace there.³⁰³ Paul V took San Saturnino from the Benedictines in 1607, and in return gave them the structure adjoining Santa Maria in Trastevere, a palazzo then owned by the basilica's titular Cardinal Morone, along with the connecting gardens and lands. The monks would use the site in Trastevere as a summer retreat, from May 15 to November 15, to avoid the infected air of Ostiense.³⁰⁴ They even received a small boat from Paul V to navigate the route on the Tiber between their two churches.³⁰⁵

There is precious little remaining in the church from its original medieval decoration. According to Giuseppe Momo, the architect who oversaw its early twentieth century restoration, there are traces, dateable to the twelfth or thirteenth century, evident of medieval masonry and of remains of a mosaic decoration in strips of marble inserted

³⁰⁰ For Torriani, see Dal Mas 2012.

³⁰¹ Momo 1938, p. 5

³⁰² From the *Avvisi* of October 6, 1607: “*Li frati di San Paulo hanno finalmente fermato a Nostro Signore la loro habitatione di Monte Cavallo col palazzo e giardino di Santa Maria in Trastevere, posseduto dal cardinal camerario come titolare di quella Chiesa.*” published in Orbaan 1920, p. 86.

³⁰³ *San Callisto* 1970.

³⁰⁴ Momo 1938, p. 6

³⁰⁵ Momo 1938, p. 6.

into the walls.³⁰⁶ Writing in 1630, the Oratorian priest Giovanni Severano mentions seeing the remains of medieval frescoes, but there is otherwise nothing known about these works or their subject matter.³⁰⁷

Documents published by Maria Barbara Guerrieri Borsoi in 2014 provide further clarity on the stages of the church's construction, particularly the issue of the dating and of the left hand chapel. On February 12, 1608, the Benedictines produced a written description of the church, pre-renovation, in front of a notary.³⁰⁸ The document provides precious evidence of its state before the interventions of the architect Orazio Torriani. From the description, we learn that the existing church had three altars, but not chapels with any depth. The well in which the saint was martyred is described as “*un pozzale di marmoro vecchio antico e rotto.*”³⁰⁹ In general, the building was small, dank, and humid, with a leaky roof, and close to collapse.

Guerrieri Borsoi also published a plan drawn by Torriani in 1608 of his designs for the church, found in the records of Santa Maria in Trastevere kept in the Archivio Storico del Vicariato di Roma (fig. 80).³¹⁰ According to Guerrieri Borsoi, given the short length of time of the renovations (two years), it was impossible to consider Torriani's work a proper reconstruction, but instead as a re-systematization to reinforce its foundations and make it usable.³¹¹ Torriani enunciated the presbytery and constructed

³⁰⁶ Momo 1938, p. 10

³⁰⁷ Severano 1630, p. 63.

³⁰⁸ Conserved in the Archivio di Stato di Roma, Trenta Notai Capitolini, Uff 33, Mich Cesio, vol 57, ff 148, 165, in data 12 febbraio 1608, see Guerrieri Borsoi 2014a, p. 166.

³⁰⁹ Guerrieri Borsoi 2014a, p. 166

³¹⁰ Plan is conserved in the Archivio Storico Vicariato di Roma, Capitolo di S. Maria in Trastevere, b. 743, parte quarta, no. 2, published in Guerrieri Borsoi 2014a, p. 156.

³¹¹ Guerrieri Borsoi 2014a, p. 155.

protruding small lateral chapels where the altar had been, giving the church more of a cross shape.

The provisions for the consecration of the three altars were announced in a September 23, 1609 document, clarifying their dedications.³¹² The high altar was dedicated to Saints Callixtus and Benedetto, the right to the Madonna and Saint Scholastica, and the left to Saints Callixtus and Paul. The high altar of the church contains an altarpiece by Avanzino Nucci (1552-1629, figs. 81 and 82) of saints, including Callixtus but also Palmatius, Calepodius and Privatus, adoring the Madonna della Clemenza, the important icon housed next door in Santa Maria in Trastevere (fig. 83).³¹³ Though now covered in a fresco from the 1930s by the artist Antonio Achilli (1903-1993, fig. 107), the ceiling originally featured more paintings by Nucci, including scenes from the life of Palmatius (whom Callixtus baptized), which were praised by contemporary writers.³¹⁴ The Benedictines had previously worked with Nucci in the tribune of San Paolo fuori le mura (1599), work destroyed in the 1823 fire.³¹⁵

Several pieces of evidence point to the patronage of Cardinal Alessandro Peretti Montalto (1571-1623) in the church, though that fact has been overlooked in studies of Montalto's patronage.³¹⁶ In Momo's 1938 study, he relayed that the ceiling, prior to modern renovations, had included alongside the aforementioned paintings by Avanzino

³¹² Guerrieri Borsoi 2014a, p. 160.

³¹³ For the Madonna della Clemenza, see Noreen 2016, with earlier bibliography.

³¹⁴ Baglione 1642, p. 301 records the paintings by Nucci in his life of the artist: "*Dentro di S. Callisto in Trastevere è suo il quadro ad aglio dell'altar maggiore con diverse figure, che fanno orazione all'immagine della Madonna; come altresì I tre quadri grandi dipinto nella soffitta di detta Chiesa.*"

³¹⁵ Guerrieri Borsoi 2014a, p. 160; De Mieri 2013, p. 840.

³¹⁶ See Guerrieri Borsoi 2014a, p. 159, note 20, who points out Cardinal Montalto's patronage at San Calisto is not mentioned in Granata 2003 or Granata 2012.

Nucci an inscription recording “*la munificenza della cardinal Alessandro di Montalto.*”³¹⁷ Now lost or covered over, this is the only known early seventeenth-century inscription in San Calisto.³¹⁸

Although Montalto’s patronage at San Calisto has heretofore passed with little comment in the literature, one can make some general observations. Cardinal Alessandro Peretti Montalto, the great-nephew of Sixtus V (r. 1585-90) and an important patron of the arts, was also involved in the Dominican church of San Francesco a Ripa, located at the other end of the newly constructed avenue (c. 1610) that connected that church with San Calisto.³¹⁹ According to legend, when the Shrine of St Francis, a room that the saint supposedly stayed in during his lifetime, was at risk of demolition for the church’s expansion, the saint appeared to Cardinal Montalto in a dream. Montalto intervened and saved the room from destruction.³²⁰ Recorded above the entryway is an inscription memorializing his act.³²¹

Throughout his career, Montalto commissioned works of art from some of the leading artists in Rome, most notably from the Bolognese school.³²² But he was also a

³¹⁷ Momo 1938, p. 12. The inscription read *ALEX. CARD MONTAL. CONGR CAS. PROTECTOR. PAVLV. V. P. M PONTIFICAVS ANNO IIII*. For the inscriptions, see Vincenzo Forcella, *Iscrizioni delle chiese e d’altri edifice di Roma dal secolo XI fino ai giorni nostril*, (Rome, 1877), vol. XI. *Iscrizioni*, 1877, vol XI, no. 754, p. 66 notes that this inscription, dating to around 1608, was seen by Galletti (*Inscr. Picenae*, CL II, no 6, p. 35) on the ceiling and was likely hidden by the paintings following the 1854 restoration.

³¹⁸ Forcella 1877, p. 66. The subsequent inscriptions date to 1671, 1686, 1740, 1771, and 1854.

³¹⁹ For Montalto as a patron of the arts, see Granata 2012. For his involvement in San Francesco a Ripa, see Oliger 1927, p. 94.

³²⁰ Oliger 1927, p. 94.

³²¹ The inscription reads: *ALEX PERETTUS CAR MONTALTUS VICECANC HUIUS SACRAE CELLAE S FRANCISCI DOMINUS ET PROTECTOR*

³²² Granata 2012.

supporter of Cigoli, who provides an important link between the patron and Bilivert. One of Cigoli's biographers, his nephew Giovanni Battista Cardi, mentions tapestries Cigoli designed for Montalto, works never realized but recorded in a group of preparatory drawings.³²³ Though the drawings may date earlier from circa 1593, another important Montalto commission occurred simultaneously with the construction and decoration of San Calisto in Trastevere. This is Cigoli's *Dream of Jacob*, now in Burghley House, Lincolnshire, England.³²⁴ A payment record indicates that the artist was paid by Montalto for the *Jacob* on August 3, 1610, the same year Cigoli's student signed and delivered his altarpiece for San Calisto.³²⁵

The altarpiece is the only artwork commissioned for the saint's chapel, which is otherwise covered in painted marble that mimics the appearance of marble revetment (fig. 84). Such decoration had become popular in Rome around 1600, as witnessed by the sumptuous example of the Pauline Chapel in Santa Maria Maggiore (fig. 85).³²⁶ As Steven F. Ostrow has argued, the interest in marble decoration was a conscious emulation of early Christian aesthetics.³²⁷ The chapel in San Calisto contains a second illusion: in the wall to the right of the painting stands a tall cupboard, whose *sportello* swings open to

³²³ One of the drawings, of a pope receiving divine inspiration for his writings, is catalogued by William M. Griswold in Griswold and Wolk-Simon 1994, no. 36, pp. 41-42. For the designs, Cardi 1990, p. 36 writes that Cigoli did multiple designs for "*far pani di arazzi tocchi con acquerelli, attorno ad essi per ornamento andò scherzando con poetica invenzione secondo che la storia richiedeva.*" The commission is discussed in Granata 2012, p. 136.

³²⁴ Granata 2012, no. 20, p. 185 identifies the one in Burghley House as the one Montalto paid for on August 3, 1610, a copy of the painting signed and dated 1593 now in the Musée des Beaux Arts, Nancy.

³²⁵ See Granata 2012, p. 188

³²⁶ For the Pauline Chapel, see Ostrow 1996.

³²⁷ Ostrow 1990.

reveal a well stretching deep into the earth: the presumed pit where Callixtus was murdered (figs. 86 and 87).

St. Callixtus's life from early Medieval to post-Tridentine sources

Following the previous discussion of the painting and the circumstances of its commission, I now turn to the work's iconography and the early sources related to the subject matter, focusing particularly on the saint's connections to the area of Trastevere. The earliest source for Callixtus's life (though it omits his death), the *Refutatio omnium haeresium*, emerges from an account by his rival Hippolytus, who died in 235.³²⁸ Hippolytus, who became the first anti-pope during Callixtus's reign, fiercely differed with Callixtus in matters of doctrine, but still provides an account that is largely corroborated in terms of facts and events, and thus is seen as reliable.

According to Hippolytus, Callixtus was born a slave to a father in Trastevere, serving the master Carpofores, and was placed in charge of collecting funds to be given to Christians for the care of widows and orphans.³²⁹ One day, after losing the funds, he fled Rome by boat, but was captured and returned to his master, who freed him. After some time working in the mines in Sardinia and elsewhere, he is liberated by Marcia, a concubine of Emperor Commodus (r. 180-192), returns to Rome, is exiled again to Antium, returns once again to Rome, and is appointed deacon by Pope Zephyrinus (r. 199-217). Zephyrinus installed Callixtus as superintendent of the Catacombs on via

³²⁸ The *Refutatio omnium haeresium* is the ninth book of the *Philosophumena*, discovered in 1842 and published in 1851 under the name Origen before being attributed to Hippolytus in 1859. See Verrando 1984, p. 1041. For an overview of St. Callixtus's life and the sources for it, see Giuseppe Ferretto in *Bibliotheca Sanctorum* 1963-68, vol. 3 (1963), pp. 680-689.

³²⁹ Giuseppe Ferretto in *Bibliotheca Sanctorum* 1963-68, vol. 3 (1963), p. 682.

Appia which came to be bear his name. Callixtus succeeded Zephyrinus as Pope in 217. Callixtus and Hippolytus differed over the church's tenets: Callixtus was liberal, seeing doctrine and practice as flexible and allowing those who had not done penance into the church, while Hippolytus was strict and doctrinaire.

Hippolytus's account does not recount a violent death for Callixtus, and thus the saint's status as a martyr is actually somewhat nebulous.³³⁰ He was listed briefly in the fourth-century *Depositio martyrum*, and further details are described in the *Acta Callisti*, the veracity of which has been called into question.³³¹ In the *Depositio martyrum*, the entry states that "On the 14th of October, Callixtus [was buried] at the 3rd mile of the Aurelian way."³³² Callixtus's inclusion in this list only confirms his veneration as a martyr without offering any details into the nature of his death.³³³

The *Acta Martyrii Sancti Callisti* from the end of the fifth century describes the nature of Callixtus's death in more detail.³³⁴ After a fire damaged the Temple of Jupiter on the Capitoline Hill, Emperor Alexander Severus ordered his consul Palmatius to cleanse the area and punish the Christians. Palmatius and his soldiers crossed the Tiber to capture Callixtus and his faithful, who had fled there. After meeting the Priest Calepodius, Palmatius returned to the Capitoline Hill as a believer, and came back to Callixtus, along with many of his soldiers, requesting to be baptized.

According to the *Acta Martyrii Sancti Callisti*, in addition to this group of soldiers, and subsequent other converts, Callixtus had altogether baptized sixty-eight

³³⁰ Handl 2014.

³³¹ See Handl 2014, p. 392, with further references under note 4.

³³² Translation from Handl 2014, p. 393; "*pri. idus Octob. Callisti in via Aurelia. miliario III.*"

³³³ Handl 2014, p. 394.

³³⁴ See Handl 2014, pp. 404-410.

people and attracted the increased fury of the Emperor. The Emperor beheaded the converts and had the priest Calepodius thrown into the Tiber, where his body was recovered by Callixtus and buried in the cemetery on via Aurelia that would bear Calepodius' name. Hiding out in the house of Pontianus, Callixtus was discovered by Alexander, who attempted to starve him out. Callixtus survived, stronger, aided by a vision of Calepodius. During his imprisonment, he baptized his guardian Privatus, again angering Alexander Severus, who had the guardian killed, and had Callixtus thrown out of the window of the house of Pontianus, and into a well with a stone around his neck.³³⁵ The priest Asterius recovered his body seventeen days later and had it buried in the cemetery of Calepodius.³³⁶ The cemetery of Calepodius, which contains the tomb of Callixtus rediscovered in the 1960s, is discussed below.

A review of sixteenth-century sources provides the context for the revival of interest in Callixtus that came along with the renovation of his titular church in the first decade of the seventeenth century. Pope Calixtus I is usually mentioned in the sixteenth-century sources in connection with his founding of Santa Maria in Trastevere, his burial on the Via Aurelia, or his connection to the catacombs he oversaw on Via Appia. The 1587 edition of the Roman Martyrology, edited by Cardinal Cesare Baronio, provides insight into how Callixtus's story was presented during the early modern period. Under Callixtus's feast day of October 14 it is written: "After having suffered slow starvation in prison, and every day beaten with rods, he was finally thrown from a window of the

³³⁵ Handl 2014, p. 406: "*Calixtum vero Episcopum per fenestram domus præcipitari, ligatoque ad collum ejus saxo, in puteum demergi et in eo rudera cumulari.*"

³³⁶ Handl 2014, p. 406: "*in cymeterio Calepodii via Aurelia.*"

house in which he was being kept, submerged in a well, and thus he merited the triumph of victory.”³³⁷

The general revival of interest in early church martyrs would have been supplemented and promoted by the publication in Rome at the end of the sixteenth century of a detailed biography of St. Callixtus by the Carthusian monk Jacobus Mosander (d. 1589, fig. 88).³³⁸ The text was excerpted from the seventh volume of the lives of the saints, an influential series published in Cologne by Laurentius Surius (1522-1578) and carried out after his death by his colleague Mosander.³³⁹ Mosander’s life of Callixtus, published in Rome in 1584, was translated into Italian by Giovanni Francesco Bordini (c. 1536-1609), an important Oratorian priest involved in the promotion of Filippo Neri’s canonization.³⁴⁰ The biography, previously unmentioned in relation to the painting, can be understood within the context of the publication of different martyrologies at the end of the sixteenth century in Rome; many of the details accord with Baronio’s account, for example. The publication also provides evidence of a resurgence of interest in Callixtus’s cult at the end of the sixteenth century, right before the Benedictine monks renovated his titular church.

Additionally, writers at the end of the sixteenth century, like Onofrio Panvinio, promulgated the belief that Callixtus founded the important basilica of Santa Maria in

³³⁷ *Martirologio Romano* 1587, p. 207: “A Roma, nella via Aurelia, S. Callisto Papa, e. Mart. il quale, per ordine d’Alessandro Imp. lungamente tormentato in prigione con la fame, & ogni giorno bastonato; finalmente da una finestra della casa dov’era guardato, giù precipitato, & annegato in un pozzo, merotò il trionfo della vittoria.”

³³⁸ Mosander 1584.

³³⁹ On Mosander, see van der Aa, 1852-78, p. 1072.

³⁴⁰ On Bordini, see Vian 1971.

Trastevere.³⁴¹ Pompeo Ugonio's 1588 *Historia delle stationi di Roma* is a useful resource for understanding the attitudes and beliefs towards Callixtus at the end of the sixteenth century. Ugonio cited Damaso's life of Callixtus as proof he founded the Marian basilica, quoting the phrase "*Hic fecit Basilicam Transtiberium S. Maria.*" He mentioned that in Santa Maria in Trastevere there is an image of Callixtus in the apse mosaic (fig. 89), and that the pontiff's body had been transferred to the church from the catacombs.³⁴² In listing the relics in the church, notably, he omitted the chain and stone tied around Callixtus's neck.³⁴³

Bilivert and the iconography of St. Callixtus

In the first altarpiece to portray Callixtus's martyrdom, Bilivert had to invent an iconography that would emphasize the importance of the well relic contained in the chapel. He did this by combining iconographical prototypes for the saint's martyrdom with an immediacy that suggested his familiarity with related themes interpreted by Stefano Maderno and Caravaggio (figs. 7, 49). The church of Santa Cecilia, which contained the marble sculpture of Cecilia by Maderno was located just a short walk from San Calisto in Trastevere.

According to the *Bibliotheca Sanctorum*, the oldest known depiction of St. Callixtus is considered to be an *imago clipeata* executed in gold glass on a medal dating to the fourth century in the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris.³⁴⁴ Callixtus also appears in a circa sixth-century medallion in a series of popes, badly damaged, in San Paolo fuori le

³⁴¹ Panvinio 1570, p. 82.

³⁴² Ugonio 1588, p. 137.

³⁴³ Ugonio 1588, pp. 134-140.

³⁴⁴ Maria Letizia Casanova in *Bibliotheca Sanctorum* 1963-68, vol. 3 (1968), p. 690.

mura.³⁴⁵ Most subsequent images of Callixtus in Rome belong to this type of context, amid a history of Popes, such as engravings in late sixteenth century papal histories, or in the series of popes in the Sistine Chapel.³⁴⁶ A famous example near the church of S. Calisto is the twelfth-century mosaic next door in Santa Maria in Trastevere, depicting a venerable pontiff standing (fig. 89). The sacristy of the same church possesses an unpublished, undated anonymous painting of the saint (fig. 90). This anonymous painting, which could date anywhere from the early seventeenth to the late eighteenth century, is a notable image of Callixtus that merits further investigation.

Although rare in monumental art, many depictions of St. Callixtus's martyrdom in manuscript illuminations of the *Golden Legend* exist, particularly in France, where the saint enjoyed a certain devotion.³⁴⁷ Though unlikely that Bilivert would have had awareness of these, they do provide context for how other artists chose to represent the scene. Among examples are a late thirteenth-century copy of French origin of the *Golden Legend*, an early fifteenth-century copy of the *Elsässische Golden Legend*, or a mid-fifteenth-century copy from Bruges of the *Golden Legend* in its French-language version by Jean de Vignay (figs. 91 and 92).³⁴⁸

The most immediate precedent for Bilivert's altarpiece in Rome, however, was a scene in Nicolo Circignani's frescoed cycle of martyrdoms for the Jesuit German-

³⁴⁵ Maria Letizia Casanova in *Bibliotheca Sanctorum* 1963-68, vol. 3 (1968), p. 690.

³⁴⁶ Maria Letizia Casanova in *Bibliotheca Sanctorum* 1963-68, vol. 3 (1968), p. 690.

³⁴⁷ Maria Letizia Casanova in *Bibliotheca Sanctorum* 1963-68, vol. 3 (1968), p. 691.

³⁴⁸ See examples of pages in manuscripts from the Huntington Library, San Marino, California (ms. HM 3027, fol. 143v; 1419); the Universitätsbibliothek, Heidelberg (Cod. Pal. germ. 144, fol. 159v; ca. 1445-1465); and the Morgan Library and Museum, New York, (MS M.672-675, vol. IV, fol. 145r.)

Hungarian church of Santo Stefano Rotondo, painted around 1582 (fig. 6).³⁴⁹ The cycle includes thirty-two scenes of gruesome martyrdoms, intended to steel young missionaries for difficult work abroad. One scene features the martyrdom of Pope Callixtus (fig. 93). In the diagrammatic fresco that also represents two martyrdoms occurring in the background, the body of Callixtus is pushed from a portico in the upper register and appears small in scale in relation to the spectators at the bottom who occupy more prominent positions. In the fresco, the well looms large in the foreground.

There is a discordance between Circignani's *Martyrdom of St. Callixtus*, part of a cycle intended to inspire young Jesuit missionaries and instruct them about the horrific sacrifices of the early martyrs as they faced difficult missionary work abroad, and Bilivert's, which presents a more immediate scene for the laity. This discord is perhaps a result of not only the different intended audiences and settings but also discrepancies in the legends regarding the saint's martyrdom. Some of the earliest sources on Callixtus's life claim he died in a popular uprising in Trastevere. This story makes a certain amount of historical sense, as Callixtus lived under the persecution-free reign of Emperor Alexander Severus. Other versions, however, say that Alexander had ordered Callixtus's death, and that he was either pushed from a window, then thrown into a well; or pushed from a window into a well; or simply thrown into the well.³⁵⁰ Both the *Golden Legend* and the Roman martyrology provide the narrative depicted in Circignani's fresco.³⁵¹

For additional iconographical inspiration, Bilivert likely turned to the Oratorian priest Antonio Gallonio's 1591 treatise on instruments of martyrdom, with engravings by

³⁴⁹ On this cycle, see note 39.

³⁵⁰ See Handl 2014.

³⁵¹ De Voragine 1969, p. 623; *Martirologio Romano* 1587, p. 207.

Antonio Tempesta (1555-1630).³⁵² Gallonio's rigorously researched work recorded the myriad ways in which the early Christian martyrs suffered. One of the engravings shows five ways martyrs were drowned: with weights around their feet, tied up in nets, with stones on their right arm, with stones around their neck, and in wells (fig. 94). The engraving offered a template of sorts for Bilivert: though not identical, the disposition of the martyrs' bodies, and how the executioners struggle with them are similar. Within Gallonio's text, Saint Callixtus is listed among the martyrs thrown into wells, part of a larger section of deaths in wells, rivers, and lime-kilns (drowning by well is the third manner of death among those listed).³⁵³

The tomb of St. Callixtus on Via Aurelia

Early sources reveal confusion over the site of Callixtus's tomb. The different sources for Callixtus's *vita*, including the *Depositio martyrum* and the *Acta Callista*, mention he was buried in the Catacomb of Calepodio, located three miles from Rome along via Aurelia.³⁵⁴ It is worth emphasizing that he was buried there on via Aurelia, instead of in the more renowned catacombs that bear his name on via Appia. One scholar has proposed that the prominence of the figure of Calepodius in the *Acta Callisti* can be explained as a way to make sense of this seeming anomaly.³⁵⁵ The tomb on via Aurelia is

³⁵² See Gallonio 1591a; for discussions of Gallonio's treatise, see Mansour 2005; Toubert 2014.

³⁵³ Gallonio 1591a, p. 138.

³⁵⁴ Verrando 1984.

³⁵⁵ Handl 2014, p. 406, note 60.

listed in many seventh- and eighth-century pilgrims' guides, a time when most visitors to his burial place would have been visitors to popular cult shrines.³⁵⁶

The location of Callixtus's burial place was repeated into the first half of the seventeenth century, although by then something curious had occurred: the Catacombs of Calepodio had become conflated with the Catacombs of San Pancrazio, obscuring the location of Callixtus's tomb. A typical example of this conflation is in Ottavio Panciroli, published in 1600, where he writes that the priest Asterius took Callixtus's body to the cemetery of Calepodio, today called San Pancrazio.³⁵⁷

Writing in 1593 (though not published until after his death), Antonio Bosio himself also propagated this error in his *Roma Sotteranea*.³⁵⁸ In 1625, Giorgio Porzio, in his *Specchio overo Compendio dell'Antichita di Roma* writes that “*Fuori della porta di S. Pancratio e il Cimiterio, che si chiama di Calepodio...il quale S. Calepodio prete, e martire fu nell'anno del Signore 280, e vi sono sepelliti moltissimi Santi Martiri.*”³⁵⁹ In his 1650 *L'origine della christiana religione nell'Occidente*, Michelangelo Lualdi notes this seeming discrepancy, writing that a librarian taught him that the cemetery of Calepodio was three miles outside of Rome, but that the church of San Pancrazio does not appear that far, and thus you must count the three miles beginning from the Forum.³⁶⁰

³⁵⁶ Jessop 1999, p. 273, 277.

³⁵⁷ Panciroli 1600, p. 255.

³⁵⁸ Bosio 1650, Book 2, Chap XX, p. 143.

³⁵⁹ Porzio 1625, p. 119.

³⁶⁰ Lualdi 1650, p. 199: “*E pure la Chiesa di S. Pancratio non apparisce distante dalla porta Aurelia, piu di un miglio, si devono pero numerar la miglia, cominciando dal Foro Romano, dove era la Colonna millitaria, donde I Romani le miglia contavano.*”

Only with the 1651 publication of Paolo Aringhi, who updated Bosio's *Roma Sotteranea*, is this situation clarified.³⁶¹

If the location of Callixtus's burial place became clear by the end of the seventeenth century, the actual tomb's contents were unknown until the nineteenth century, when they were published by Giovanni Battista de Rossi.³⁶² Finally, the tomb, and the frescoes it contained, were re-discovered in the 1960s, and published in two articles by Nestori in the 1970s.³⁶³ Nestori's excavations revealed fresco decoration he dated to the eighth century. Some of the fragments depict the martyrdom of St. Callixtus (fig. 95): two men carrying his body in a well with the inscription "*IN PUTEUM IACTANT SANCTUM CALLISTUM*." The cycle is unique within Rome, and, according to John Osborne, "constitutes the first and indeed only evidence for the existence of narrative hagiographic cycles in the Roman catacombs."³⁶⁴ Pope Gregory III had decreed the appointment of a priest to celebrate mass in such sites, and it was likely that on Callixtus's feast day, his *passio* would have been read, the audience following along with the aid of the pictorial cycle.³⁶⁵ It is tempting to view a central image in the martyrdom cycle, which shows two men carrying Callixtus's body towards a well (fig. 95), as a possible source for Bilivert. Both scenes show men grappling with the pope, leading him to his death, in contrast to the flying Callixtus in Santo Stefano Rotondo. Whether

³⁶¹ Aringhi 1651, p. 345.

³⁶² De Rossi 1866, p. 97.

³⁶³ Nestori 1971; Nestori 1972.

³⁶⁴ Osborne 1985, p. 315. Osborne writes that it was possibly the result of eastern influence on the church in the eighth century.

³⁶⁵ Jessop 1999, p. 277.

Bilivert or the Benedictines knew of the tomb must remain speculation, especially because of the early seventeenth-century misprision of Callixtus's tomb.³⁶⁶

Preparatory studies by Cigoli and Bilivert

It is likely, as Guerrieri Borsoi suggested, that the Benedictines had first turned to Cigoli, who was at work on the high altar of San Paolo fuori le mura, and that the busy Cigoli, occupied with many commissions in those years, had passed along the project to his student, with guarantees to the Benedictines of his oversight.³⁶⁷ The similarities between the two commissions—at San Paolo fuori le mura and at San Calisto in Trastevere—has not previously been discussed: master and student, both working for the Benedictines on altarpieces representing scenes from the Church's early history and developing iconographies driven by the holy sites of the respective churches. As was the case with Cigoli's *Burial of St. Paul*, surviving preparatory studies record how the artist, or artists in this case, designed the rarely-depicted scene of the Martyrdom of St Callixtus.

The existence of the payment record mentioning Cigoli together with a preparatory drawing for the *St. Callixtus* altarpiece by the older artist confirms the master's role in the design of Bilivert's altarpiece. The drawing, today in the Louvre, records an early idea for the painting's composition (fig. 96).³⁶⁸ Executed in brown ink with blue wash and white heightening, the sheet is generally attributed to Cigoli, an attribution sustained by the present writer based on the quick notational style in ink,

³⁶⁶ Nestori 1971, p. 206.

³⁶⁷ Guerrieri Borsoi 2014a, p. 162

³⁶⁸ Musée du Louvre, Paris, inv. 11560, 27 x 20.2 cm.

particularly of faces and limbs, which can be compared to Cigoli's nearly contemporaneous drawings for his San Paolo altarpiece (see figures in upper left of fig. 52, for example).³⁶⁹

There are several differences between the drawing by Cigoli and the final composition of the altarpiece as installed in the church of San Calisto. In the drawing, only two figures, not four, are involved in Callixtus's death. The figure holding up the pope's legs is similarly bare-shouldered, but turns his back to the viewer. The second figure is an amalgam of the two central thugs who have been individualized in the final altarpiece: he has his arm around Callixtus' torso and wears a plumed hat. The action here takes place entirely outdoors, against the backdrop of several classical buildings. The onlookers crowd on the left side of the composition in a frenetic swirl of quickly sketched figures; a woman at the far left kneels and prays. The foreground and the depiction of the well are vastly different from the final composition. There is a mound of earth in the bottom right of the drawing, with a few plants sprouting. The ground is otherwise bare, unlike in the final painting, where several of the pope's accessories have been cast away. The well is depicted as a smooth, unified cylinder without the individually articulated bricks in the final version. We can see the chain tied around Callixtus's neck, but not the legendary stone that figures in his *Passio*—both chain and stone are now preserved in Santa Maria in Trastevere (fig. 97), as discussed below.

³⁶⁹ For the drawing, see Monbeig-Goguel and Lauriol 1979, p. 8, who propose Cigoli as the author. The drawing's attribution has gone back and forth from master to student, previously attributed to Cigoli by Philip Pouncey (see Louvre online catalogue notes, <http://arts-graphiques.louvre.fr/detail/oeuvres/7/201620-Martyre-de-Saint-Calixte> accessed February 23, 2018), and to Bilivert by Thiem 1977, no. 84, pp. 325- 327, for example. Miles Chappell originally attributed it to Bilivert and revised his opinion to Cigoli later, see Chappell 1975, pp. 171-172, under no. 102; Chappell 1992, p. 171-172.

Finally, as in the altarpiece, Callixtus's figure assumes a hunched S-shape, but his right arm is shown disappearing into the well itself in marked contrast to the final version where it hangs limply in a manner evoking the pitifulness of Christ's arm in Michelangelo's Vatican *Pietà* (c. 1498-99) or Caravaggio's *Entombment* for the Chiesa Nuova (fig. 49).

There is also a *bozzetto* (fig. 98) in the Arcispedale di Santa Maria Nuova in Florence that is much closer to the altarpiece's final design.³⁷⁰ In the work, executed with loose brushwork by Bilivert himself, the number and placement of both the torturers and the onlookers are nearly identical to their final placement. Only the upper right of the painting is considerably different: the sky has been eclipsed by an archway, perhaps the Arco di San Calisto, visible in a later seventeenth-century map of the area (figs. 100-102). Another notable change in the *bozzetto* that does not appear in the altarpiece is the presence of a hand pointing up of one of the witnesses in the left of the painting (fig. 99). Though the gesture declares Callixtus's ultimate salvation in heaven, ultimately, it perhaps also alludes to the window from which Callixtus was thrown, thus showing the different stages of his martyrdom as discussed in early accounts. I propose that Cigoli's experience designing a site-specific altarpiece at San Paolo, dictated by the location, informed Bilivert's ultimate design for the San Calisto altarpiece.

Guidebooks written contemporaneously with San Calisto's construction offer the earliest citations of the newly restored church (see fig. 103 for a floorplan). One

³⁷⁰ *Bozzetto for the Martyrdom of Saint Callixtus*, oil on canvas, 46 x 36 cm, Florence, Arcispedale di Santa Maria Nuova. The *bozzetto* was discovered by Silvia Meloni Trkulja in the 1980s and first published by Roberto Contini in *Seicento Fiorentino* 1986, cat no I. 98, p. 219. I thank Chiara Bartolini at the Arcispedale Santa Maria Nuova for allowing me access and permission to photograph the *bozzetto*.

published in 1609 mentions that the new church, which featured a beautiful ceiling and paintings, was just restored and was inhabited by the monks of Saint Benedict.³⁷¹ The year of publication meant it was surely written before all the paintings, particularly Bilivert's, were installed on their altars. An anonymous guidebook, dated around 1610, also gives a summary description of the church without further details.³⁷² The *Trattato Nuovo delle cose maravigliose....* of 1615 is one of the first to describe the church in detail. Under an engraving of the façade (fig. 104), the author asserts that the church had been semi-abandoned but now belonged to the Benedictine monks, who have made it splendid again.³⁷³ Among the early modern historiographers of art, Giulio Mancini was perhaps the first to write about the painting, indicating that it gave the Benedictines great satisfaction.³⁷⁴ Giovanni Baglione states that many contemporary viewers mistakenly believed the painting was by Cigoli.³⁷⁵ Filippo Baldinucci, the only Florentine biographer to cite the work, also refers to the painting and the presence of Cigoli's hand in it.³⁷⁶

³⁷¹ Cherubini 1609, p. 22.

³⁷² See Dorati da Empoli 2001, p. 28.

³⁷³ Felini 1615, p. 44-45.

³⁷⁴ Mancini 1956, p. 247: "*mentre che esso [il Cigoli] stava in Roma, fece un quadro nella chiesa di S. Calisto quando il detto Santo vien tirato nel pozzo, che diede gran sodisfattione, poiche il santo morto mostra esser morto e que manigoldi che cosi morto si sforzano tirarlo nel pozzo mostrano cera de manigoldi e di far quella forza d'alzarlo per volerlo tirare con buonissimo colorito e facilita condotto.*"

³⁷⁵ Baglione 1642, p. 154: "...Per li monaci di S. Benedetto opero un quadro, quando S. Calisto Pontefice con un sasso al collo fu gettato in un pozzo della sua propria casa; e questo nella chiesa di S. Calisto vicino a Santa Maria Trastevere si vede; e in eta giovanile egli il compì."

³⁷⁶ Baldinucci 1974, p. 303 "...rappresentò san Calisto, quando con sasso al collo fu gettato in un pozzo della sua propria casa; nel qual opera, che fu posta nella chiesa di San Calisto, vicino a Santa Maria in Trastevere, si portò per modo, che non è chi la riconosca per d'altra mano, che dello stesso Cigoli." Contini 1985, p. 69 suggests that Baldinucci based his ideas on Baglione's comments.

St. Callixtus and the region of Trastevere

Bilivert's altarpiece depicted a subject that had special ties to the specific neighborhood in which the church of San Calisto was located. St. Callixtus had become one of the patron saints of Trastevere following his death in the third century.³⁷⁷ According to Hippolytus's account, Callixtus was born there, in the region known as Ravennatio, or Uberravennatium—the same area to where he fled later in life.³⁷⁸ A 1556 guide to the antiquities of Rome explains that the region of Trastevere was known as Ravennati because Augustus's soldiers held the port of Ravenna there.³⁷⁹ Late sixteenth-century writers, including Pompeo Ugonio, also refer to Callixtus's birthplace as this region known as Ravennati.³⁸⁰

The area of Trastevere was even at times identified with Callixtus's name. A bronze slave's collar dated to the fourth century and housed in the British Museum (fig. 105) is inscribed "*Tene me ne fugia(m) et revoca me ad dom(i)num Viventium in ar(e)a Callisti*" (Hold me, lest I flee, and return me to my master Viventius on the estate of Callixtus.)³⁸¹ Viventius was, in the fourth century, an alternative name for Rome; the collar itself was found in the late seventeenth century.³⁸²

³⁷⁷ Heilmann 1970; Roca De Amicis 1984, pp. 12-13; Petrucci 1995, pp. 11-12.

³⁷⁸ Giuseppe Ferretto in *Bibliotheca Sanctorum* 1963-68, vol. 3 (1963), p. 681.

³⁷⁹ *Antichità* 1556, p. 102.

³⁸⁰ Mosander 1584, n. p.; Ugonio 1588, p. 134.

³⁸¹ Bronze tag for a dog or possibly a slave, 4th century, diameter: 5.8 cm, British Museum, London, inv. no 1975,0902.6. Translation taken from British Museum collection online (http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection_online/) accessed January 18, 2018.

³⁸² Verrando 1984, p. 1044; on the collar see Lefort 1875, p. 106.

Relics of Callixtus and the well through the vicissitudes of time

The chapel's well possessed significance not only as the site of Callixtus's martyrdom, but also as the source of holy water for the baptisms Callixtus performed in his residence, according to tradition.³⁸³ The *Trattato Nuovo delle cose maravigliose....* of 1615 notes that the well of Callixtus's martyrdom is conserved within a chapel inside the church and that the stone tied around his neck is preserved in Santa Maria in Trastevere.³⁸⁴ Thus, the well was revered as the only relic of Callixtus in his titular church: in addition to the stone and chain tied around his neck, his body was in Santa Maria in Trastevere, where it was transferred from the catacombs on Via Aurelia in the eighth century; his arms and other remains are scattered in several other Roman churches.³⁸⁵ Viewers, many of whom would have been devotees of S Callixtus, would have been aware that many of the significant relics were housed in the large basilica next door.

What of the relic of the well itself? First, a note on terminology: the well (or *pozzo*) could refer both to the wellhead (or puteal), or the well itself; that is, the opening into the earth that collected and contained water. Though the well (in a sense that encompassed both these meanings) was a consistent part of Callixtus's *vitae*, it is not included in any of the sixteenth-century guides to Rome's antiquities. Instead, it is only mentioned in guidebooks following the church's restoration in modern times. The wellhead was apparently outside of the church prior to 1608 and only incorporated into its interior, as part of the left-hand chapel, following Torriani's designs (see discussion

³⁸³ Porzio 1625, p. 56: "...una casa, dove S. Calisto Papa si tirava e predicava a fedeli, e battezzava molti con l'acqua di quell pozzo, che si vede in quell luogo..."

³⁸⁴ Felini 1615, p. 44-45.

³⁸⁵ Panvinio 1600, p. 851.

above of the documents published by Guerrieri Borsoi, including the testimony before a notary in 1608, which describes “*un pozzale di marmoro vecchio antico e rotto.*”³⁸⁶)

Today, there is an antique, strigillated marble wellhead in the garden outside of the church (fig. 106a-b). The strigillated wellhead is reproduced in Giuseppe Momo’s 1938 publication regarding the early twentieth-century restoration of the church.³⁸⁷ The earliest appearance of this specific wellhead appears in the 1938 frescoes by Antonio Achilli on the church’s ceiling, where St. Callixtus is shown in glory above a depiction of that very well (fig. 107). Is this wellhead the “*antico e rotto*” marble described by the Benedictines in 1608?

Previously unmentioned in the literature on both Bilivert’s painting and the church of San Calisto is a second wellhead that is the centerpiece of a fascinating episode in the early nineteenth century. In his 1805 study of the antiquities of Rome, Giuseppe Antonio Guattani published a wellhead in San Calisto “next to the altar of the saint still venerated today.”³⁸⁸ He describes it as two-thirds embedded into the wall, overturned “barbarically,” and appearing to contain a Hercules figure and a Bacchanal.³⁸⁹ In the same year, 1805, Caroline von Humboldt (1766-1829), the wife of the Prussian diplomat Wilhelm von Humboldt (1767-1835), purchased for 150 *scudi* from the Benedictines of San Calisto what was then considered to be the puteal in which the saint was martyred

³⁸⁶ Guerrieri Borsoi 2014a, p. 166.

³⁸⁷ Momo 1938, n. p.

³⁸⁸ Guattani 1805, p. 41.

³⁸⁹ Guattani 1805, pp. 41-42: “...*pozzo fu sempre per l’istessa ragione quello, che nella Chiesa di S. Calisto accanto all’altare del Santo si venera ancora; quale io stesso avendo rincontrato, non senza meraviglia lo trovai incastrato nel muro per due terzi, e capovolto barbaramente, sicchè appena ne appariscono due mezze figure; che di Ercole una sembra, e l’altra di una Baccante di assai bella maniera.*”

(fig. 109).³⁹⁰ The wellhead, nearly one meter tall and dated to midway through the first century A. D., was not strigillated but contained a classical relief featuring Mercury presenting the infant Bacchus (fig. 108).³⁹¹ Letters between Caroline and Wilhelm reveal that the marble was damaged, matching the 1608 description of “*rotto*,” and that Caroline turned to the Carrarese sculptor Giuseppe Franzoni (1752-1837), under the supervision of the Danish neo-Classical sculptor Bertel Thorvaldsen (1770-1884), for restoration work.³⁹² The scene of the infant Bacchus (fig. 109) inspired a contemporaneous relief by Thorvaldsen of *Mercury bringing the infant Bacchus to Ino* (fig. 110).³⁹³

The wellhead was sent to Berlin in 1817 where it was installed in front of two Doric columns by 1824 in the vestibule of the Schloss Humboldt in Tegel, a Humboldt residence since 1766 and rebuilt by Karl Friedrich Schinkel from 1820-24.³⁹⁴ The marble can be seen in an old postcard (fig 111) as well as old photographs (fig. 112). In 1821, Wilhelm wrote to his colleague, the classicist Friedrich August Wolf, for help with an inscription on the wellhead.³⁹⁵ Wilhelm sent Wolf a sheet (now lost) containing facts about the wellhead, presumably information he obtained directly from the Benedictines,

³⁹⁰ Golda 1997, pp. 74-75.

³⁹¹ Golda 1997, pp. 74-75.

³⁹² See letters of January 14, 1809 and January 25, 1809, both from Caroline in Rome to her husband in Berlin, published in Sydow 1909, no. 33, pp. 67-68; no. 37, pp. 76-77, respectively. Sydow also includes a photo of the wellhead installed in Schloss Tegel, then used as a plantholder. For Giuseppe Franzoni's role, see Hartmann 1973. Franzoni was the younger brother of the sculptor Francesco Franzoni (1734-1818).

³⁹³ Hartmann 1979, pp. 145-146 first demonstrated the connection between the San Calisto puteal and Thorvaldsen's own work; For Thorvaldsen's work, see entry by Elena di Majo and Stefano Susinno in di Majo, Jørnes, and Susinno 1989, no. 11, p. 146; Grandesso 2010, no. 117, p. 272.

³⁹⁴ Golda 1997, p. 74. For Schinkel and the Schloss Humboldt in Tegel, see Ibbeken and Blauert 2002, nos. 73-76, p. 335.

³⁹⁵ The date of 1821 is published in Mattson 1990, p. 325. The letters were first published as undated (“1824?”) in Brandes 1846, pp. 307-308.

and Wolf sent back a Latin inscription, placed on the wellhead in the Schloss Humboldt, which reads:

Puteal sacra bacchica exhibens idem illud in quo ad martyrium patiendum circa A. CCXXIII S. Calistus immerses traditur ex ejusdem S. Calisti aede romana transtiberina emptionis jure hue devectum.

Though the “Puteal Tegel” has been mentioned in various studies of wellheads containing classical relief scenes, it has never been connected back to the chapel in which it originally resided.³⁹⁶ The wellhead seems to be one of several works from both the church of San Calisto and the basilica of San Paolo fuori le mura that the Benedictine monks chose to sell during the first decade of the nineteenth century.³⁹⁷ By the time of Achilli’s ceiling fresco a century later, it was the strigillated well that was considered Callixtus’s relic; the puteal with the classical reliefs had been forgotten. Here I propose that the wellhead now in Berlin is the relic of St. Callixtus, and the strigillated one either a later substitution or a mistake.

That Bilivert’s well does not resemble either wellhead is immaterial in the end. Bilivert’s composition strongly suggests a familiarity with the site, or at least how the altarpiece would interact with the well in the lower right.³⁹⁸ Of course, painting an exact replica of a well that the viewer would see directly in front of them could have been seen as overly didactic and uninspiring aesthetically. Additionally, other analogous depictions of wells offer models closer to Bilivert’s than to the antique marble cylinder, for example,

³⁹⁶ See Golda 1997, cat. 3, pp. 74-75; Reinhardt 2018.

³⁹⁷ These include the cycle of eight paintings by Giovanni Lanfranco for the Chapel of the Holy Sacrament in San Paolo fuori le mura, which had by then been moved to the convent of San Calisto connected to the smaller church in Trastevere. I will discuss the de-accessioning activities of the Benedictines during the first decade of the nineteenth century in a forthcoming study.

³⁹⁸ See Contini 1985, p. 69, discussed above.

that in the Santo Stefano Rotondo fresco (fig. 93), or in Antonio Tanari's altarpiece in Santa Pudenziana (fig. 12).

Urban renewal in Trastevere around 1610

The larger changes that occurred in the neighborhood surrounding the church of San Calisto at the turn of the seventeenth century can provide additional context for the painting's conception, interpretation, and reception. The *rione* of Trastevere (fig. 113) boasted a storied history as an important settlement across the Tiber, but by 1600 it had become impoverished and depressed.³⁹⁹ Projects spearheaded by Pope Paul V would ultimately revitalize the neighborhood.⁴⁰⁰ Simultaneously with the rebuilding of San Calisto around 1607, Paul V oversaw the restoration of an ancient aqueduct that would bring water to the West side of Rome, including Trastevere and the Vatican.⁴⁰¹ Eventually christened the Acqua Paola (fig. 114), the marvel of engineering invigorated Trastevere, turning it into a productive, industrious zone.

Concurrently, Paul V initiated another project: the construction of an avenue that would cut through a long swath of Trastevere, the Via San Francesco a Ripa (fig. 115).⁴⁰² The project began around 1607, yet plans for its creation had existed as early as the 1580s, during the reign of Sixtus V.⁴⁰³ Though initially intended to connect the two churches of San Francesco a Ripa and Santa Maria in Trastevere, the street instead began

³⁹⁹ Roca De Amicis 1984; Petrucci 1995.

⁴⁰⁰ Petrucci 1995.

⁴⁰¹ Heilmann 1970; Roca De Amicis 1984.

⁴⁰² Petrucci 1995 provides the most comprehensive monographic treatment of this avenue.

⁴⁰³ Petrucci 1995, p. 13.

outside the church of San Calisto, where in 1610 an inaugural procession kicked off.⁴⁰⁴

With the construction of new streets—a second street connecting San Calisto to the church of San Cosimato was also built at this time—and the regularization of the piazza outside San Calisto, focus on the church, its decoration, and the saint’s continued legacy would have intensified. This extraordinary set of circumstances turned the attention of Rome to the neighborhood of Trastevere around 1607, a situation that could not have been lost on the young Bilivert, attempting his first public commission. The painter, with guidance from his master Cigoli, produced an image that incorporated a perceptive sense of place, or rather, places: chapel, church, and neighborhood, and conveyed Callixtus’s sacrifice to Romans, Trasteverini, and pilgrims alike.

Conclusion

This analysis of Bilivert’s altarpiece within the different contexts of early seventeenth-century Rome demonstrates one of many examples of early Christian revivalism that dotted the city during a period of great upheaval, renovation, and renewal. Bilivert’s work presents an iconography both wholly new while also displaying echoes of archaizing, medieval prototypes; artistically, the painting looks both forward and

⁴⁰⁴ Archival document of June 13, 1611 describing the procession, published in Petrucci 1995, p. 99. Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana cod. Urbinate Latino 1079, f. 439 “*Lunedì mattina li signori conservatori di questo popolo si trasferirono alla chiesa di San Callisto in Trastevere, di dove levati dai frati reformati furono processionalmente condotti alla chiesa di S. Francesco ivi vicina et quivi, dopo la messa, presentarono all’altare una patena et un calice d’argento et 6 torcie, offerta che si continuerà poi anco sempre ogni anno in tal giorno, festa di Sant’Antonio da Padova, per la devotione del popolo verso detto santo et per memoria d’una strada larga et bella nuovamente aperta dalla chiesa di San Francesco sino a San Calisto, che’arivarà anco alla piazza di Santa Maria, doppo un gettito di case, che si deve fare.*”

backward. As a devotional image, the altarpiece profoundly incorporates both holy site and relic in a way not usually associated with the Florentine artist.

Standing in front of Bilivert's altarpiece, the viewer can mentally reenact the saint's martyrdom and complete the narrative with the relic of the well at the lower right. The fictive well of Bilivert's painting, missing a stone, is "completed" by the knowledge that the actual well is extant and near. Bilivert's painting functions whether the marble wellhead was present, or, following its removal in 1805, suggested by the cupboard that swings open and reveals the hidden well. The devotee can thus contemplate Callixtus's sacrifice and meditate upon his or her own salvation. Several early sources describe how the chapel was used following the painting's installation in 1610. In a 1690 guide, one writer describes how on Callixtus's solemn feast day of October 14th, Christians would read hymns in front of the well and the "noble paintings representing his martyrdom."⁴⁰⁵ The water derived from the well was considered to have salutary effects; the same writer noted that it was still consumed by contemporary faithful. That fact was repeated in a 1697 guidebook that is not only anecdotally interesting but testifies to the enduring importance of the chapel into the end of the century.⁴⁰⁶ As indicated by Guattani in his 1805 study of antiquities, mentioned above, the well was still venerated into the early nineteenth century; it is unclear what prompted the Benedictines to sell it at that juncture.

Ultimately, Bilivert's altarpiece is an ideal case study for how religious images could be used to foster the cult status of place and relic, while bolstering the authority and veracity of the Church's early martyrs. The degree of site specificity informing a chapel decoration is distinctive, contrasting significantly with the tradition of incorporating a

⁴⁰⁵ Piazza 1690, p. 632.

⁴⁰⁶ Rossi 1697, p. 128: "*la di cui acqua bevono gl'infermi per diviozione.*"

moveable relic into an altar honoring a saint, or constructing a church over a tomb (as at St Peter's) but without visual reference to the tomb or cause of death. Chapel, altar and altarpiece were conceived around a relic that was embedded in the material fabric of the site, similarly to the ideation of the Cappella del Bagno in Santa Cecilia in Trastevere, as discussed in the Introduction.

Chapter 3: Going underground: Ludovico Carracci's St. Sebastian thrown into the Cloaca Maxima

Because of its rare iconography, its site-specificity, and the drama of its conception, Ludovico Carracci's 1612 *Body of Saint Sebastian Being Thrown into the Cloaca Maxima*, today in the Getty Museum, Los Angeles, is well known to seventeenth-century scholars (fig. 116).⁴⁰⁷ Nonetheless, the painting has been little studied since it was rediscovered and related documents were published in the twentieth century. This contradiction is perhaps due to the painting's current location in The Getty Museum in Los Angeles, far removed from its original Roman context (fig. 117). When the museum received a loan request in the mid-1980s, for example, a curator responded that he was happy to lend the painting, but at home it would remain in storage so as not to "inflict it on the public in Malibu."⁴⁰⁸ This comment likely stems from a lingering bias against dark "Baroque" pictures, occurring before wholesale reevaluations of Bolognese painting in the late 1980s and the large monographic exhibition devoted to Ludovico in 1993.⁴⁰⁹ But it likely also related to a fundamentally disturbing aspect of the painting's composition

⁴⁰⁷ Ludovico Carracci, *St. Sebastian thrown into the Cloaca Maxima*, oil on canvas, 167 x 233 cm, J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles, California (inv. 72.PA.14). See Feigenbaum 1984, p. 429-433; Charles Dempsey in Gregori and Christiansen 1985, p. 124; Gail Feigenbaum in Emiliani 1993, pp. 152-54; Brogi 2001, vol. 1, no. 105, pp. 218-19. I thank Davide Gasparotto of the J. Paul Getty Museum for allowing me to study the work's curatorial files and discussing the painting with me.

⁴⁰⁸ August 2, 1985 memorandum from Myron Laskin to John Walsh, Curatorial Files, J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles, California.

⁴⁰⁹ For example, the landmark exhibition *The Age of Correggio and the Carracci: Emilian painting of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries*, held at the National Gallery of Art, D.C.; The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; and the Pinacoteca Nazionale di Bologna. See *Correggio and the Carracci* 1986. The exhibition on Ludovico Carracci was held at the Kimbell Art Museum in Fort Worth, Texas, and the Pinacoteca Nazionale di Bologna, in 1993-1994. See Emiliani 1993.

and conceit, one related to the painting's original seventeenth-century fate, when its patron, Cardinal Maffeo Barberini, deemed it a beautiful depiction of "*forza*" but not devotional enough.

This chapter aims to situate Ludovico Carracci's moving and unusual conception of the saint's death within several different contexts, thus recovering much of its original power, meaning, and setting. Within both Roman *seicento* painting and depictions of Saint Sebastian, the canvas is anomalous, and thus difficult to make sense of. Typical depictions of the saint showed Sebastian tied to a tree, shot full of arrows, or, having survived that ordeal, tended to by the noblewoman Irene. Ludovico's format is also unusual. Despite the canvas's horizontal orientation, the painting can assuredly be categorized as an altarpiece, though, as will be discussed, it was never installed above an altar.⁴¹⁰ The work is a tenebrous, nocturnal scene, and the focus is on Sebastian's pale, luminescent corpse, but as Gail Feigenbaum has eloquently described, it is reductionist to deem it Caravaggesque.⁴¹¹ And though it is technically a Roman picture by virtue of its intended location, its author was a resolutely Bolognese master who spent his long, extremely successful career in that city. Thus the painting is a study in paradoxes: a site-specific work that never made it to its site, an altarpiece never used for devotion, a

⁴¹⁰ As mentioned in notes 48 and 65, the horizontal format for an altarpiece was rare but does not preclude Ludovico's painting from being one. For a similar painting of a few years before, see Francesco Vanni's *Death of Saint Cecilia*, dated 1601-02, for the church of Santa Maria in Trastevere (fig. 8). Today in the monastery of the church, the painting was originally installed over the saint's altar in the crypt of the church, making it a fitting comparison for Ludovico's. For Vanni's painting, see Nava Cellini 1969; and Francesca Profili in Vodret 2012, vol. 1, cat. No. II.12, p. 50. Unless more documents are uncovered, the categorization of Ludovico's panel must require a degree of speculation, though the present author feels the circumstantial evidence points to the installation of the painting as being intended for above an altar.

⁴¹¹ Feigenbaum 1984, p. 429.

quintessentially Roman work by an outsider to the Eternal City, a “rejected work” that was nonetheless prized by its patron’s family for centuries. In this chapter, I review the iconographic precedents that contextualize Ludovico’s invention, and present a newly identified Roman source that reveals an additional import for the artist’s brief sojourn to the city, a trip that is usually dismissed as insignificant. Finally, I consider further aspects of Cardinal Maffeo and the Barberini family’s devotion to the cult of Saint Sebastian which enhance our knowledge of the painting’s circumstances of creation.

Sebastian’s vita through the early modern period

To understand the subject in Ludovico’s painting requires a review of Sebastian’s *vita*. There is no historical evidence that Sebastian was an actual person, but legends recount that he was born in either Milan or Narbonne, France, and that his martyrdom occurred in 303 AD as part of the mass persecutions of Christians under Diocletian. All three of the earliest hagiographical sources—the *Depositio martyrum* of 354, a commentary by Saint Ambrose on Psalm 118 dated to 388, and the *Passio Sebastiani*, often attributed to Ambrose and dating to the fifth century—include the episode of the disposal of his body into the sewers.⁴¹² These texts also formed the basis of his *vita* in the thirteenth-century *Golden Legend* by Jacopo da Voragine, and in the revised Roman martyrology of 1586 by Cardinal Cesare Baronio.⁴¹³

⁴¹² See entry by Gian Domenico Gordini and Pietro Cannata, “Sebastiano, santo, martire di Roma,” in *Bibliotheca Sanctorum* 1963-68, vol. 11 (1968), pp. 776-801. For a discussion of the sewers in these early sources on Sebastian, see Ghilardi 2014, pp. 191-200.

⁴¹³ De Voragine 1969, pp. 104-110; and Baronio 1586, p. 38.

All these sources share a general narrative. Sebastian was a captain in Maximian and Diocletian's Praetorian Guard who actively preached his beliefs, converted fellow soldiers, and destroyed idols, earning a death sentence from Emperor Diocletian. The Emperor's men tied Sebastian to a stake and shot him full of arrows, so many that "he was covered with barbs like a hedgehog."⁴¹⁴ But Sebastian's death actually occurred later in his narrative. Miraculously surviving his sagittation and tended to by the nurse Irene, Sebastian resumed preaching against the Emperor, who again ordered his death. This time the soldiers were successful, clubbing him to death with rods, and received orders to throw his body into the sewer to preclude retrieval of his corpse by Christian faithful. After his body got caught along the sewer drain, he appeared to the Roman noblewoman Lucina in a dream and implored her to collect his body and bury it on the Via Appia, near the remains of Peter and Paul.

Iconography of Saint Sebastian

By the middle of the fifteenth century, the moment featuring a stoic and beautiful nearly nude Sebastian pierced with arrows became the most frequently depicted image of the saint. The reasons for this popularity have been much rehearsed elsewhere in several important studies.⁴¹⁵ The reasons generally relate to an increased interest among Renaissance artists in portraying beautiful male anatomy and, moreover, a fervent veneration for Sebastian as a protector against the plague. Important examples of this type of Sebastian include panels by Andrea Mantegna (c. 1430-1506), Sandro Botticelli

⁴¹⁴ From the *Golden Legend*: "And the soldiers shot so many arrows at him that he was covered with barbs like a hedgehog. " Translation from de Voragine 1969, pp. 108-9.

⁴¹⁵ See Zupnick 1958; Marshall 1994; Ressouni-Demigneux 2000; Barker 2007; Talvacchia 2010 for important studies of St. Sebastian's iconography.

(1445-1510), and Antonello da Messina (1430-1479) (figs. 118-120).⁴¹⁶ In Bologna, the subject was depicted by the master Francesco Francia (1450-1517), one version of which was engraved by Agostino Carracci (fig. 121).⁴¹⁷

The popularity of the image continued through the seventeenth century, perhaps most famously in the versions by Guido Reni (fig. 122), but many other artists as well.⁴¹⁸ Ludovico himself had painted this scene several times before taking up the subject of Saint Sebastian for Maffeo Barberini. There are three versions that Alessandro Brogi accepts as autograph works by Ludovico: a St. Sebastian tied to a column (1599, fig. 123)⁴¹⁹; the saint tied to a tree, with one foot on an antique column (c. 1599, fig. 124) in the Doria Pamphilj Gallery⁴²⁰; and a recent addition to his *oeuvre* showing the saint tied to a column, seen from below against a cloudy sky (Galleria Carlo Orsi, Milan, fig. 125).⁴²¹ A painting in Leipzig in which Sebastian is set within a decaying landscape with

⁴¹⁶ There are at least three paintings of St. Sebastian shot full of arrows by Andrea Mantegna: in the Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna (late 1450s); the Musée du Louvre, Paris (c. 1480); and the Ca' d'Oro, Venice (c. 1490). Botticelli's version of 1474, for the church of Santa Maria Maggiore, is today in the Staatliche Museen, Berlin. Antonello da Messina's of the late 1470s is in the Gemäldegalerie Alte Meister, Dresden.

⁴¹⁷ There is a version attributed to Francia in a private collection, Madrid; the version copied by Agostino is now lost, see engraving of 1580 in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, acc. no. 27.78.1(344). See also Francia's Pala Felicini *Sacra Conversazione* of c. 1490 in the Pinacoteca Nazionale di Bologna, which includes St. Sebastian at right.

⁴¹⁸ See the Dulwich Picture Gallery exhibition catalogue devoted to Guido Reni's depictions, Boccardo and Salomon 2008. Along with Reni, numerous seventeenth-century artists depicted the theme, including Domenichino, Rubens, Van Dyck, and Guercino.

⁴¹⁹ Oil on canvas, 200 x 130 cm, Gravina di Puglia, Museo Pomarici-Santomasi. See Brogi 2001, pp. 175-176, no. 61.

⁴²⁰ Oil on canvas, 156.5 x 113.5 cm, Galleria Doria Pamphilj, Rome. See Brogi 2001, pp. 178-79, no. 64.

⁴²¹ Oil on canvas, 151.5 x 112.7 cm. As of 2016, the work was with Galleria Carlo Orsi, Milan. See Brogi 2016, pp. 55-59, fig. 23.

small figures in the background has been attributed to Ludovico in the past, though Brogi considers it a copy after Annibale (fig. 126).⁴²²

These paintings allowed Ludovico the opportunity to think through various ways of representing the saint over the course of more than a decade. For example, he experimented with presenting the arrows in flight, arriving from different directions. He also set the saint in various settings: tied to a column placed high above the viewer's vantage point, or grounded, at the base of a tree. The antique relief at the root of the Doria Pamphili tree appears to possess some yet unelucidated symbolic significance. Finally, Ludovico experimented with representing the heroic and twisting musculature of the saint. Jacob Hess, for example, compared the pose of the Doria version to Michelangelo's *Dying Slave* (c. 1513-16) in the Louvre, filtered through Titian's famous Averoldi altarpiece of 1555 for the church of Santi Nazaro e Celso in Brescia.⁴²³

A *St. Sebastian* attributed to Ludovico's pupil Giacomo Cavedone (1577-1660) merits discussion in this context.⁴²⁴ Though the work had previously been assigned to Ludovico, Brogi connects it to the younger artist, possibly during his 1609 sojourn in Rome, where he assisted Guido Reni on various projects.⁴²⁵ Brogi suggests that Cavedone could have seen the Doria version by Ludovico, documented in Rome by 1603.⁴²⁶ This work, along with the a drawing by Cavedone of a figure in the Getty painting, discussed below, suggest a dialogue of sorts between master and pupil, a

⁴²² Oil on canvas, 62 x 46 cm, Museum der bildenden Künste, Leipzig. See Brogi 2001, pp. 273-4, no. R53.

⁴²³ Hess 1956, p. 185. For Titian's images of the saint, see Rosand 1994.

⁴²⁴ Oil on copper, 41.9 x 31.8 cm. Formerly at Sotheby's, New York. Present location unknown. See Brogi 2001, p. 274, no. R54

⁴²⁵ Brogi 2001, p. 274. For Cavedone's Roman trip, see Giles 1986, pp. 56-113.

⁴²⁶ Brogi 2001, p. 274.

meditation on the *invenzioni* and variations possible in Ludovico's suite of Sebastian paintings.

The artist Andrea Camassei (1602-1649) had fulfilled a commission for the Barberini related to Saint Sebastian's topography for the high altar of the church of San Sebastiano al Palatino (fig. 127). In Camassei's work, with its vertical composition, Sebastian is shown beaten with rods by the soldiers of the Praetorian Guard. A red-chalk preparatory drawing survives, today in the Metropolitan Museum of Art (fig. 128).⁴²⁷ The altarpiece, which has since been moved to the left nave wall of the church in order to make tenth-century frescoes visible (fig. 135), is another site-specific Barberini commission. In fact, the event depicted in Camassei's altarpiece is depicted with as much infrequency as the event shown in Ludovico's, but was perfectly suited for the site on the Palatine Hill where Sebastian's death was said to have occurred.⁴²⁸

Maffeo Barberini and the commission

Ludovico Carracci's painting of St. Sebastian being thrown into the sewers was commissioned by then Cardinal Maffeo Barberini (1568-1644) (future Pope Urban VIII, r. 1623-44) during his tenure as papal legate to Bologna. The painting and other details regarding its intended destination in Rome were mentioned in letters from Maffeo to his brother Carlo written during the second half of 1612. We can thus assume the painting was commissioned sometime between Maffeo's arrival in Bologna 1611 and December 1612. In 1967, Cesare D'Onofrio published the letters that contained references to

⁴²⁷ Andrea Camassei, *Saint Sebastian Clubbed to Death*, red chalk, over some traces of black chalk, 18 1/8 x 12 in., The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, inv. 65.137.

⁴²⁸ See note 450.

Maffeo's commissioning of the work for a planned subsidiary altar off his family's chapel in the Theatine church of Sant'Andrea della Valle in Rome.⁴²⁹ Further details regarding these letters and the site will be discussed below. In 1972, Marilyn Aronberg Lavin identified this painting, then on the market at Sotheby's London, as one that appears in several of the seventeenth-century Barberini inventories.⁴³⁰ Lenore Street relayed Lavin's findings to Sotheby's, who identified it as by Ludovico in the auction catalogue.⁴³¹ The painting was purchased by the J. Paul Getty Museum.

The church of Sant'Andrea della Valle

Sant'Andrea della Valle, where the painting was originally intended to hang, is located in the Sant'Eustachio *rione* in Rome's center, today occupying a prominent location on the Corso Vittorio Emanuele II (fig. 129). The church belongs to the Theatines, or the Congregation of Clerics Regular, a reform-minded order founded in 1524. Though the austere order, which emerged in the sixteenth century alongside the Jesuits and the Oratorians, "failed to attract a comparable Maecenas" as the Jesuits would with Cardinal Alessandro Farnese, it did count the future Pope Paul IV (r. 1555-59), Gian Pietro Carafa, as a founder.⁴³² The Theatines worshipped at the small church of San Silvestro al Quirinale, then on the outskirts of town, but soon desired a more central position as their numbers grew. In 1582, location and means soon arrived via the largesse

⁴²⁹ For the letters, see D'Onofrio 1967, pp. 418-419. For the chapel, see Hibbard 1961. For a recent monograph on the church, with a chapter on the Barberini Chapel, see Costamagna, Ferrara, and Grilli 2003, especially Cecilia Grilli on pp. 69-88.

⁴³⁰ The Barberini inventories are published by Lavin 1975. For the specific inventories section, see below, note 585. For a discussion of Lavin's making her information available for the identification of Ludovico Carracci's painting, see Lavin 2007.

⁴³¹ Sotheby's London, July 12, 1972, lot 91; Lavin 2007.

⁴³² Hibbard 1961, p. 289.

of Donna Costanza Piccolomini of Aragon (1553-1610), the Duchess of Amalfi, who willed her family palace to the order, locating the order's new edifice between the Oratorians' Santa Maria in Vallicella to the west and the Gesù to the east. Howard Hibbard has delineated the steps of the complicated construction, attributing the building, on the basis of extensive archival material, to Giacomo della Porta (1532-1602), along with the Theatine architect Francesco Grimaldi (1543-1614).⁴³³ The church's celebrated features include the later frescoes in the apse semi-dome and pendentives by Domenichino (executed 1622-28) and in the dome by Giovanni Lanfranco (finished in 1627), as well as a monumental three-compartment fresco of Saint Andrew by Mattia Preti from 1650.⁴³⁴

During the construction of Sant'Andrea, the Palazzo Piccolomini, on the then Piazza di Siena, proved too small for the new church planned by the Theatine Cardinal Alfonso Gesualdo. It then became necessary to raze the small church of San Sebastianello, or San Sebastiano de via Papae (so named for its location on the processional route between St. Peter's and the Lateran).⁴³⁵ Though little is known of San Sebastianello's appearance or decoration, its history as a holy site became significant for the construction of the Barberini Chapel in Sant'Andrea and Ludovico Carracci's painting, under present discussion. The small church dedicated to Sebastian was erected on the site where, according to an altogether unlikely but tenacious tradition, Lucina had retrieved Sebastian's body from the sewers.⁴³⁶ In an 1186 papal bull, Urban III (r. 1185-

⁴³³ Hibbard 1961, pp. 289-292.

⁴³⁴ See Costamagna, Ferrara, and Grilli 2003, pp. 69-88 for a full discussion of the church's decoration, with citations to previous sources.

⁴³⁵ Hibbard 1961, p. 291.

⁴³⁶ Armellini 1982, p. 455.

87) had listed the church as a dependency of San Lorenzo in Damaso.⁴³⁷ Sixtus V (r. 1585-90), when allowing for the destruction of the church for Sant'Andrea della Valle's progression, decreed that the new church must incorporate the high altar of the small church to "perpetuate the cult and memory of the demolished church."⁴³⁸ In a 1600 edition of his guidebook, Ottavio Panciroli (1554-1624), while discussing the various sewers of Rome, wrote "Another is at the church of Sant'Andrea in the Piazza di Siena, where it is said, the body of Saint Sebastian was thrown in contempt."⁴³⁹ A quarter century later, following Sant'Andrea's near completion under the architect Carlo Maderno (1556-1629), Panciroli embellished his description of the site, erroneously calling it the "Cloaca detta Massima," furnishing more of Sebastian's *vita*, and describing that the small church had been incorporated into the bigger one.⁴⁴⁰

The *cappelletta* devoted to the Roman martyr was incorporated into the larger Barberini Chapel, the first on the left-hand side of the nave as one enters the church (figs. 130 and 131). The Barberini were one of several wealthy families who acquired newly built chapels early on in the church's construction, along with the Rucellai and the

⁴³⁷ Hülsen 1927, pp. 460-461.

⁴³⁸ Armellini 1982, p. 455.

⁴³⁹ "Un'altra è alla Chiesa di s. Andrea à piazza di Siena, dove dicessimo, che per disprezzo fu gettato il corpo di S. Sebastiano," in Panciroli 1600, p. 431

⁴⁴⁰ Panciroli 1625, p. 799: "*Quivi essendoci la Cloaca detta Massima, doppo molto tempo vi fu edificata una piccola chiesa in honore di San Sebastiano martire, perche si tiene per antica traditione ch'essendo stato questo Santo in Campi di Fiore luoco poco di qui discosto, crudelmente battuto per ordine dell'empio Diocletiano, havendo sotto le sferzate reso a Dio benedetto lo spirito, in questa Cloaca fece buttaro il suo santissimo corpo, che da Lucina poi ritrovato fu alle Catacombe Sepelito. Hore edificandoli questa chiesa, la chiesetta sudetta, che per la sua picciolezza fo detta S. Bastianello, a questa di S. Andrea fu incorporata, che pero in quella estata destinata una cappella ad ahonore di S. Sebastiano, che sara una della piu magnifiche che vi si veggano.*" See below on the location of the Cloaca Maxima.

Strozzi.⁴⁴¹ Maffeo Barberini oversaw the decoration of his family's chapel using funds set aside by his uncle, the Monsignor Francesco Barberini (d. 1600). The elder Barberini had been an important figure in the church, holding the office of Protonotary, and had indicated his desire for a chapel dedicated to the Assumption of the Virgin to be completed five or six years after his death.⁴⁴² His wishes were fulfilled, and the chapel was officially given to the Barberini on November 29, 1604.⁴⁴³

The decoration of the Barberini Chapel has been amply documented on the basis of letters and documents published by D'Onofrio in 1967, and through studies on the Florentine artist Domenico Cresti, known as Passignano (1559-1638), who oversaw and executed most of the decoration related to the chapel's dedication to the Virgin.⁴⁴⁴ Passignano received the commission soon after Maffeo was given rights to the chapel, though it is notable that at the same time, the patron had requested an altarpiece from Federico Barocci (1535-1612), who was too overworked and ill to fulfill the invitation.⁴⁴⁵ Passignano was engaged with the project intermittently from 1604 through 1617, the year of his final payment for the altarpiece featuring the recovery of Saint Sebastian's body by Lucina, a painting discussed below. Why, if Passignano was the original artist engaged with the project, did Barberini ever look midstream to Ludovico to execute a Saint Sebastian for the site? Though the answer must necessarily remain conjecture, a closer look at several pieces of evidence helps illuminate several aspects of Ludovico's commission for Sant'Andrea, beginning with its patron, Maffeo Barberini.

⁴⁴¹ Grilli 2003.

⁴⁴² D'Onofrio 1967, p. 65.

⁴⁴³ D'Onofrio 1967, p. 67.

⁴⁴⁴ D'Onofrio 1967, pp. 65-75, 404-423; Nissman 1979, cat. 56, pp. 304-12; Thomas 1995, pp. 138-83.

⁴⁴⁵ Pollak 1913, p. 5.

Barberini devotion to Saint Sebastian

The Barberini held a special devotion to Saint Sebastian, who was Rome's third patron saint following Peter and Paul. Prolific as a writer of poetry, Maffeo dedicated a poem to the saint.⁴⁴⁶ The family had important connections to no fewer than three churches connected to Saint Sebastian in Rome: Sant'Andrea della Valle, San Sebastiano fuori le mura, and San Sebastiano al Palatino. As discussed previously, the location for their family chapel in Sant'Andrea della Valle incorporated a holy site associated with the saint. A Latin inscription, written by Maffeo's brother Carlo Barberini (1562-1630) in 1612, marks this site (fig. 132).⁴⁴⁷ Maffeo's first commission to Gianlorenzo Bernini (1598-1680), who would eventually execute the Baldacchino in St. Peter's and other important works for him as Pope Urban VIII, was a sculpture of the saint pierced with arrows, today in the Thyssen collection (fig. 133).⁴⁴⁸ The work likely dates to 1617, soon after the decoration associated with Sebastian had been completed in the Barberini Chapel.

Further evidence of Barberini devotion to Sebastian dates to after the election of Maffeo to the Papacy as Urban VIII, when the family took over the Byzantine church of

⁴⁴⁶ *"In Imaginis Sancti Sebastiani"* published in Barberini 1631, pp. 211-212.

⁴⁴⁷ Schütze 2007, p. 71, fig. 91, includes a photograph of the inscription, and note 172, with reference to November 28, 1612 letter from Carlo Barberini in Rome to Maffeo in Spoleto, published in D'Onofrio 1967, pp. 417-418. Carlo includes the inscription for his brother to correct. The letter reads: "...si metta nel luogo ove si disegnava di mettere una croce con una iscrizione simigliante a quell'ache a V. S. Ill.ma mando, et trovo che il penisero si alli Padri del luogo non che à gl'altri piace grandemente, et che ancora sarà di devotione. Vedrà inclusa l'iscrizione la quale Ella andrà riducendo à perfettione....". D'Onofrio notes that on a *foglietta* attached to the letter is the text of the epigraph that would be carved in the small chapel dedicated to St. Sebastian.

⁴⁴⁸ Wittkower 1966, cat. 4; Coliva 2002, pp. 96-103; and Schütze 2007, pp. 209-23.

Santa Maria in Pallara on the Palatine Hill in 1624, restoring it and rededicating it to Saint Sebastian.⁴⁴⁹ The church, now known as San Sebastiano al Palatino, is situated on part of an ancient complex now referred to as the Vigna Barberini, and considered the site where Sebastian orated against the Emperor and was clubbed to death (fig. 134).⁴⁵⁰ The church's apse still contains medieval frescoes of the Virgin and Saints, but before the 1630s the left nave wall was also frescoed, with a life cycle of Saint Sebastian, the unique example of its kind in Rome.⁴⁵¹ By the beginning of the seventeenth century the frescoes were in a ruinous state; before whitewashing the walls in the 1630s (fig. 135), the Barberini had the little-known draftsman Antonio Eclissi (doc. 1627-1640) make copies of the scenes (figs. 136 and 137).⁴⁵² These valuable records of the cycle are now in the Vatican Library.⁴⁵³ Eclissi's campaign preserved the medieval imagery for the Barberini, even as they were in effect obliterating its material remains.⁴⁵⁴ The move for preservation recalls the activities of Baronio and his contemporaries to preserve, while at times painting over, early Christianity. Below, one of the scenes Eclissi memorialized from San Sebastiano is proposed as a potential source for Ludovico's Saint Sebastian.

Maffeo Barberini's nephew Francesco (1597-1679) was also the patron of a chapel in the basilica of San Sebastiano fuori le mura, where in 1672 he transferred several of Sebastian's relics and commissioned a sculpture of the saint from Giosepe

⁴⁴⁹ For the church, see Uccelli and Giustiniani 1876; Fedele 1903; and Gigli 1975.

⁴⁵⁰ For the site, see Villedieu 1997, vol. 1. For the passage in the *Acta Sebastiani* that specifies the site, see Marchiori 2007, p. 195, note 150.

⁴⁵¹ Marchiori 2007, pp. 188-199.

⁴⁵² Marchiori 2007, pp. 188-199. For Antonio Eclissi and his drawings for the Barberini, see also Amado 2007.

⁴⁵³ The drawings are in the manuscript Vat. Lat. 9071, pp. 240-242. Published in Waetzoldt 1964, nos. 1038-1042, pp. 75-76.

⁴⁵⁴ See Waetzoldt 1964 for the vast number of earlier frescoes Eclissi copied in various churches.

Giorgetti (died 1682) (fig. 138).⁴⁵⁵ As one of the seven major pilgrimage basilicas, San Sebastiano was one of the most important churches in Rome, built over the catacombs on via Appia where, after he had appeared to her in a dream, Sebastian's body was buried by the noblewoman Lucina.⁴⁵⁶

Maffeo's patronage of Bolognese art

When considering site specificity, one must consider the relation between patrons, artists, and biographers to the artistic centers of Rome and Bologna. What explains the choice of the eminent Bolognese master Ludovico Carracci for the commission at Sant'Andrea della Valle in Rome? The relationship of Ludovico to the Eternal City has been a fraught one since Carlo Cesare Malvasia's important biographies of the Bolognese painters, the *Felsina Pittrice*, was published in 1678.⁴⁵⁷ Malvasia (1616-93) intended his opus to be a corrective to the Roman-Florentine focus of Vasari's *Lives*, and in his extensive biography of the three Carracci—Ludovico, the eldest, and his cousins Annibale and Agostino—Malvasia sets up a dialectic between Ludovico, who stayed in Bologna his whole career, and his younger relatives, who found success in Rome. Malvasia has long been considered a biased commentator, unreliable and prone to fabrications, and though recently he has undergone a critical reassessment that has verified many of his claims, his *campanilismo* has influenced most readings of Ludovico

⁴⁵⁵ Francesco's chapel contained a reliquary with Sebastian's remains and was built above the older altar of Sebastian in the catacombs on Via Appia. The marble sculpture of Saint Sebastian is often attributed to Giuseppe's brother Antonio, who died in 1669. See Montagu 1970, especially p. 288.

⁴⁵⁶ For the church, see *S. Sebastiano fuori le Mura* 1960.

⁴⁵⁷ Malvasia 1678; or the 1844 edition, see Malvasia 1844. For the discussion of Malvasia as corrective to Vasari, see Cropper 1987. For the most authoritative translation and critical edition of Malvasia's *vita* for the Carracci, see Summerscale 2000.

as a genius who did not need the example of Rome, with its antiquities and its masters, to be a great painter.⁴⁵⁸

Beginning August 31, 1611, Maffeo Barberini began a three-year appointment as papal legate to Bologna. Maffeo, who returned to Rome definitively in 1617, was a member of the Accademia degli Insensati, a writer and lover of poetry, and a prodigious patron of the arts, even before his elevation to the papacy as Urban VIII in 1623.⁴⁵⁹ Though Maffeo's activities as pope were formidable, including territorial expansion and an artistic campaign that transformed the landscape of Rome, it is his activities around 1612 in Bologna that are of concern here.⁴⁶⁰ Recent studies by Sebastian Schütze on Maffeo Barberini's patronage of the arts shed light on his relationship to Bolognese artists.⁴⁶¹ As mentioned, Maffeo was papal legate to the city from 1611 to 1614, indicating that, in all likelihood, he personally commissioned Ludovico in 1612. A portrait medal in the Metropolitan Museum of Art commemorates both his appearance and his location in that exact year (fig. 139).⁴⁶² After his arrival in Bologna, Maffeo quickly entered the city's learned circles, joining the literary group l'Accademia dei Gelati and developing relationships with Bologna's most learned citizens.⁴⁶³ Schütze has

⁴⁵⁸ For a recent appraisal of Malvasia, see Cropper 2013.

⁴⁵⁹ See Schütze 2007.

⁴⁶⁰ For Maffeo's patronage as Pope Urban VIII, see Haskell 1980, pp. 24-62.

⁴⁶¹ In addition to Schütze 2007, pp. 160-180, see also his earlier article concerning the topic, Schütze 2002.

⁴⁶² The work is by medallist Guillaume Dupré, and inscribed *MAPH[aeus].S[anctae].R[omanae].E[cclesiae].P[raesbiter].CAR[dinalis].BARBERIN[us].SIG[illi].IVST[itiae].PRA[efectus].BONO[niae].LEG[atus]*. (Maffeo, priest of the holy Roman church, cardinal Barberini, chancellor and papal legate to Bologna). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (inv. no. 36.110.32).

⁴⁶³ Schütze 2002, p. 45. For the Gelati, see Perini 1995. For Maffeo's literary activities, see Schütze 2003.

linked this period to his discovery of the “Felsina Pittrice” or the Bolognese painting school.⁴⁶⁴

Maffeo’s early collecting activities can be gathered from two inventories of his collection, dating to 1608 and 1623.⁴⁶⁵ Though the earlier inventory mostly lacks names of artists, it does contain the important *Sacrifice of Isaac*, which Maffeo commissioned from Caravaggio in 1603. The 1623 inventory is more detailed, with some 221 paintings, among these many works by sixteenth-century masters, including Perugino (1446-1523), Raphael (1483-1520), Andrea del Sarto (1486-1530), and Giorgione (c. 1477-1510).⁴⁶⁶ Of contemporary painters, the Florentine school was unsurprisingly well represented in the native Tuscan’s collection, with works by Passignano and Cigoli. Maffeo’s employment of Passignano in Sant’Andrea della Valle will be considered below.

There were also twenty-five paintings from the Bolognese schools, including three paintings by Ludovico Carracci: a “*Placidia Regina*” and a “*Madonnina con un Christo che tiene un’Angeletto*” (both unidentified), and the Saint Sebastian.⁴⁶⁷ This is notable because Maffeo did not collect many of the typical names we associate with

⁴⁶⁴ Schütze 2002.

⁴⁶⁵ For the most up-to-date discussion of Maffeo Barberini’s collection, see the chapter “Die Sammlungen Maffeo Barberinis” in Schütze 2007, pp. 147-174, with the inventory of 1608 discussed on pp. 148-153 and the inventory of 1623 discussed on pp. 154-156. The 1608 inventory was first published in Lavin 1975, p. 64; the inventory of 1623 by D’Onofrio 1967, pp. 423-431, as well as by Lavin 1975, pp. 65-71. For the archival locations of the inventories, today in the Archivio di Stato and the Archivio Barberini, see Schütze 2007, p. 147, note 1, as well as the citations to D’Onofrio 1967 and Lavin 1975 cited above.

⁴⁶⁶ Schütze 2002, p. 43; Schütze 2007, pp. 154-156.

⁴⁶⁷ Schütze 2007 summarizes Maffeo’s patronage of Ludovico; see pp. 161-163, his inventory of 1623 published as Dok. CL, Ludovico’s paintings as no. 111 (*Placidia Regina di Lodovico Caracci senza cornice*), 140 (*Una Madoninna di Lodovico Carraccio con un Christo...*), and 179 (*S. Bastiano quadro grande del Caraccio senza cornice*). The Barberini inventory references to the St. Sebastian are discussed below.

Bologna in those years, as the absence of works by Annibale or Agostino Carracci, Guido Reni (1575-1642), Domenichino, Francesco Albani (1578-1660), and Lanfranco in his inventories attests (other Bolognese artists represented include Denis Calvaert (1540-1619), Cesare Aretusi 1549-1612), Leonello Spada (1576-1622), and Mastelletta (1575-1655)).⁴⁶⁸ Spada, in fact, was Maffeo's most loved Bolognese artist.⁴⁶⁹ Schütze has suggested that the choice of Ludovico for the Sant'Andrea commission over these other local artists perhaps stemmed from the painting's prominent intended destination in Rome.⁴⁷⁰ In 1612, Ludovico was still the *caposcuola* of an enormously successful workshop, with major commissions in both Bologna and in surrounding locales. He was an inescapable presence in the city. And the choice of him for an important Roman commission aligns with the ideals of a young man who would ultimately become Pope and completely transform the art and culture of Baroque Rome. It is noteworthy that a year following the Saint Sebastian commission, Ludovico painted an altarpiece for the city of Fano, where Maffeo had previously been governor (fig. 140).⁴⁷¹

Plans for an underground shrine in the Barberini Chapel

No contract or other documentation exists for Ludovico's painting besides the letters between Maffeo Barberini and others regarding the construction of the Barberini Chapel. Maffeo's absence from Rome meant that a steady stream of communication helped him keep in touch with the chapel's progress from afar, and valuable details

⁴⁶⁸ Schütze 2002, p. 46.

⁴⁶⁹ Schütze 2002, pp. 49-50.

⁴⁷⁰ Schütze 2002, p. 46.

⁴⁷¹ The altarpiece, signed and dated 1613 and measuring 245 x 154 cm, is the *Virgin with Saints Orso and Eusebio* in the Duomo of Fano; see Brogi 2001, no. 108, pp. 221-22.

regarding the project are contained within letters from Maffeo to his brother Carlo.

Within these letters we can glean certain information regarding the site, a proposed grotto chapel dedicated to Sebastian, and Maffeo's reception of Ludovico's painting.

The two letters are dated one week apart. In the first, dated November 28, 1612, Carlo Barberini writes to his brother Maffeo, then in Spoleto. After a brief discussion of the inclusion of the family's arms and *imprese*, as well as the plans for two tombs and a statue of his uncle Francesco, Carlo discusses the possibility of constructing a grotto to house a "chiesetta" for Saint Sebastian:

On the floor you will see we are planning to place the coat of arms and family crest and a stone slab decorated with a skull containing an inscription. Beyond the entrance door we will be positioning two sepulchers and two niches in one of which there will be the statue of Mons. Francesco, and I was told by mr. Bartolomeo Roscioli His Eminence's intention to build a cave to connect with the site where once was the church of Saint Sebastian, but since that idea cannot be done I myself would propose something similar that is, Passignano could make a painting in the same shape and subject of the one he already made for the Cardinal Arrigone, with the episode of the Roman lady who rescued Saint Sebastian's body from the cloaca maxima, and to place the painting where initially we planned a Cross with an inscription similar to the one His Eminence already sent to me, and I think that both the Fathers who govern the place and all the people will appreciate it and that it will bring even more devotion.

You will see attached both the inscription, which now you can finally refine, and the inscriptions will be positioned on top of the doors, and furthermore His Eminence will decide if in the family crests are only including the Bees or also Our Holiness' coat of arms and if so which parts, and if on the top of both the two doors you intend to put your own coat of arms or at least on one of them the Mons. Francesco's ones.⁴⁷²

⁴⁷² "In quell pavimento vedrà che si disegna di far l'arme et le imprese, et nel chiusino una testa di morto con le parole denotatevi. Dentro alla porticella si metteranno dua seplcrj et due nichie in una delle quali si mettera la statua di mons. Francesco, et l'havermi detto ms Bartolomeo Roscioli il pensiero che V. S. Ill.ma harebbe hauto di fare una grotta per andare ove fu la chiesetta di s. Sebastiano, poi che questo effeuar non si può in me ne ha excitato uno che a quello si va avvicinando, et è che il Passignano faccia un quadro in nella forma et andare di quello che fece al S.r Cardinale Arigone, di quando S. Sebastiano è cavato da quella matrona dalla chiavica, et si metta nel luogo ove si disegnava di mettere una croce con una inscrizione simigliante a quella che a V.S.

The second letter is dated December 5, 1612, and is the first mention of the Saint Sebastian by Ludovico:

I decided on a Sebastian for the Cloaca which is connected, and here [Bologna] I ordered a painting by Carracci of Sebastian thrown into the sewer, but will keep it for my own house because the light perhaps would not be favorable. If it is not possible to construct the small staircase to go underground for the site, [Vostra Signoria] let me know. I prefer rather a Sebastian for this site that would be recovered from the sewer, because his disposal by soldiers is a good representation of *forza*, but not devotional enough. Passignano must alter the invention he did for the Card Arrigone, and I would advise you [Vostra Signoria] to change in the inscription of *sagittis transfissus* [...] because he was shot with arrows after he was recovered from the sewers and revived. It can be read in the official acts [of the saint].⁴⁷³

Maffeo's letter of December 5, 1612, to his brother reveals several interesting insights pertinent to the present discussion. He clarified his desire for a painting of St. Sebastian for the cloaca connected to the chapel, and that he had already commissioned a

Ill.ma mando, et trovo che il penisero so alli Padri del luogo non che à gli'altri piace grandemente, et che ancora sarà di devotione. Vedrà inclusa l'inscrizione la quale Ella andrà riducendo à perfettione, come anco le inscrizioni che andranno sopra le porte, et ancora avviserà se nelle arme che si faranno andranno semplicemente le api, o pure vi andrà annessata l'arme della S.ta di N.S. e se pure in parte sì, et parte no, et se sopra ad ambidue le porte andrà l'arme sua, o pure quella di Mons. Francesco sopra una di quelle." Nov. 28, 1612, letter from Carlo Barberini in Rome to Maffeo Barberini in Spoleto, transcribed in D'Onofrio 1967, pp. 417-418. I am grateful to Fausto Nicolai and Mattia Vinco for help with the translations and for discussions of the language used in the letters.

⁴⁷³ "Io ho deliberato un s. Bastiano per rispetto della colaca che è contigua, et ho qui fatto fare un quadro da un Caraccio del detto s. Bastiano gettato nella cloaca ma mi servirà per tener in casa perche li lumi forse non sarebbero à proposito. Se non si possa far la scaletta per andar sotterraneamente V. S. faccia pur la memoria secondo mi scrive. Et mi piace più che s. Bastiano da quella memoria sia levato dalla cloaca perche il gettarvelo de soldati è ben rappresentazione di forza, ma non dà tanta devotione. Deve ben provvedere il Passignano di mutar invention da quella fatta al Sig. Card. Arrigone et per avviso di V. S. nell'inscrizione in cambio di *sagittis transfissus* [...] perche fu saettato doppo d'essere stato levato dalla cloaca perché resuscitò. Et tanto si legge nell'offitio della sua festa." December 5, 1612 letter from Maffeo Barberini in Bologna to Carlo in Rome. Barb. Lat 10.072, c. 102, transcribed in D'Onofrio 1967, p. 419.

painting from a Carracci.⁴⁷⁴ He then indicated that his reasoning for keeping the painting in his household is twofold: that the lighting in the chapel would not be favorable to the work, but also that the patron would find a retrieval of Sebastian's body a more decorous subject. Below, the concept of *forza* will be discussed, especially as in contrast to *devotione*. There is also an indication here that Maffeo had wanted a small staircase to descend to the site of the cloaca, and queried his brother as to the feasibility of such a plan. Ultimately, he writes about his desire to commission a replacement work from Domenico Cresti, known as Passignano (1559-1638), based on an earlier work by the Florentine painter. It is unclear why he did not simply ask Ludovico to paint a new version. To summarize, one can surmise that Ludovico's painting would have been the altarpiece for the unrealized grotto chapel, accessible by a small staircase. When those plans were jettisoned, the Barberini settled on a small niche off the side of their main chapel, with Passignano's painting as the altarpiece.

It must also be noted that in his conclusion to this letter, Maffeo displays possible confusion as to Sebastian's story. The patron indicates that the inscription must be changed not to mention Sebastian's arrows [to take out the "*sagittus transfissus*"], because that incident happened after the moment contained within the Passignano painting: the retrieval of the body. On the contrary, as was well known in the early seventeenth century, Sebastian was shot full of arrows before his second condemnation to death and being thrown into the sewers. This seeming error on Maffeo's part is rather surprising and difficult to explain for such a learned man who possessed such a dedication to the saint. Even he seems to assume there will be textual confirmation for his

⁴⁷⁴ Though Maffeo does not specify which Carracci, by 1612 Ludovico was the only still alive.

view: “It can be read in the official acts.” Perhaps this stems from the ubiquitous earlier image of Sebastian being shot full of arrows being conflated with his death.

Drawings for and after Ludovico’s painting

Ludovico’s scene plays out under the cover of night. Arranged over a precipice, a group of eight men, most in imperial armor, fumble with the white shroud wrapping the pale, lifeless body of a Sebastian. This corpse, strongly bathed in a peaceful light, is suspended mid-air, on the cusp of being unfurled and hurled into a sewer, which startlingly corresponds with the viewer’s space. The action occurs at what appears to be the mouth of the sewers. The figure at upper left clings to a handle affixed to some type of column, while in the background Ludovico includes what might be a tower.

There is one extant preparatory drawing for the painting, today conserved in the Louvre (fig. 141).⁴⁷⁵ The pen-and-ink drawing possesses an illustrious provenance, owned first by Malvasia, then Pierre Crozat, and finally Pierre-Jean Mariette, from whom it was acquired by the Cabinet du Roi in 1775.⁴⁷⁶ Its presence in Malvasia’s collection is remarkably noted in the Bolognese biographer’s vita of the Carracci: “*presso il sig.*

Principe di Palestrina alle Quattro Fontane... [cioè] Il Palinuro sepolto da’ Soldati fatto per un S. Sebastiano, figure quasi del natural, quando non sia però fatto –precisa il

⁴⁷⁵ Paris, Musée du Louvre, inv. no. 7720, pen and brown ink over black chalk with brown wash, 136 x 186 mm. See Bohn 2004, no. 278, p. 429-430; see also Bodmer 1939, p. 153, no. 136 (as “Martyrium eines Heiligen”); Bacou 1961, p. 15, no. 2; Street 1972, pp. 357; Bohn 1987, pp. 219-36; and Loisel 2004, pp. 79-90, no. 44.

⁴⁷⁶ See Loisel 2004, pp. 78-79, no. 44. Provenance: Cardinal A. Santa Croce (?); Carlo Cesare Malvasia; Boschi; Pierre Crozat, sale Paris 1741, no. 427; Mariette, sale Paris 1775; purchased for the Cabinet du roi.

biografo- sul suo disegno, che si trova fra gli altri nella nostra copiosa raccolta.”⁴⁷⁷

Here, it must be noted, Malvasia identifies the subject of the painting as a Palinurus, the helmsman of Aeneas, who fell asleep at the watch and was thrown overboard, brutally murdered, and hurled into the sea.⁴⁷⁸ In earlier Louvre catalogues, the drawing was described as “*Soldats Découvrant deux corps allongé sur un mur*” and dated to the 1590s.⁴⁷⁹ This misidentification probably resulted from the fact that this episode from Sebastian's story was very rarely depicted, and Ludovico's painting had not yet reemerged.

Contrary to Malvasia and subsequent authors, the Louvre sketch is instead a late compositional study for the painting.⁴⁸⁰ Ludovico has focused on four major figures plus Sebastian's corpse, freely sketching the figures in ink and using a delicate wash to block out areas of highlight and shadow. Two members of the Praetorian Guard's faces are obscured, and two are displayed. Though the background has been left almost untouched, Ludovico took special care with suggesting the shadows of the sewer wall. Specks of ink in the lower right suggest markings indicating the scorpion motif (for which, see below).

In the drawing, as in the painting, Ludovico has orchestrated the scene as a ballet of forceful actions operating upon the limp body of Sebastian. Figures in a “spoke-like arrangement” strain with the shroud from which Sebastian tumbles.⁴⁸¹ The figure that

⁴⁷⁷ See Malvasia 1678, p. 496. See also Brogi 2001, no. 105, p. 218. Bohn 2004 suggests the possibility that an inscription at lower right “del Sig.^r Lod.co Carr.” is in Malvasia's hand. The work is one of the few drawings of Malvasia's roughly 300 Carracci drawings that can be identified. See Bohn 1992 for the study of Malvasia's collection of Carracci drawings.

⁴⁷⁸ See entry by Charles Dempsey in Gregori and Christiansen 1985, no. 30, p. 124.

⁴⁷⁹ Bacou 1961, p. 15

⁴⁸⁰ First proposed by Street 1972, p. 357.

⁴⁸¹ Bohn 1987, p. 223.

forms the apex of the composition lifts one corner of the shroud nearly to the top of the paper's edge. Ludovico has precisely indicated how the weight of Sebastian's body would stretch and fold the cloth, and how certain edges would be in shadow, and others in light. Sharply attenuated shapes on the right indicate the endless procession of pikes and spears that characterize the non-specified persecutors within the Praetorian Guard.

A second related drawing has thus far only received passing mention in the literature: a figure study in the Rijksmuseum by Giacomo Cavedone (1577-1660) (fig. 142).⁴⁸² The attribution of the drawing to Cavedone, proposed by Laura M. Giles and published by Carel van Tuyll van Serooskerken, is convincing, based on the figure's pinched nose and the general notation style of the drapery, both of which rule out Ludovico's authorship.⁴⁸³ The drawing shows the figure from the extreme right in Ludovico's painting, a man bent over a rock, his arms outstretched to his right, clasping a piece of drapery. In the Louvre sketch the figure is more sketchily rendered, his face and torso are bent over more dramatically, and his features completely hidden. In the Rijksmuseum sheet, Cavedone renders more of the figure's face, delineating a somewhat pointy, angular nose, lips, and forehead, and more precisely rendered drapery folds. In fact, the figure and his relation to his surroundings are different than in the final painting, suggesting that the figure was posed in the studio and studied from life. The model could have been set up after Ludovico's painting was finished; the drawing could also have been produced during the course of the painting's execution in 1612. By this date,

⁴⁸² Black chalk, 42.5 x 28.6 cm, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam (inv. no. RP-T-1960-112). See entry by Carel van Tuyll van Serooskerken in Meijer 1995, p. 117, no. 28; see also Bohn 1987, p. 232, no. 4. I thank Laura Giles for bringing this drawing to my attention, and Babette Bohn and Carmen C. Bambach for insightful discussions regarding its attribution and purpose.

⁴⁸³ See Carel van Tuyll van Serooskerken in Meijer 1995, p. 117, no. 28.

Cavedone, a Carracci pupil who followed most closely Ludovico's style, was already an independent master, but such studio exercises, of a younger artist posing a model like a figure in a celebrated painting, were common in the early modern period.⁴⁸⁴ As such, the drawing can be seen as a token of the impact of Ludovico's painting on younger artists in Bologna. In fact, it is one of the only pieces of evidence we have in terms of its reception by other artists and of its presence in Bologna before its shipment to Rome. Though we have little insight into the process by which Ludovico completed his work, Cavedone's drawing suggests that it was a major commission underway in the Carracci studio. In fact, the existence of figure study may also suggest Ludovico's collaboration with Cavedone on the altarpiece.⁴⁸⁵

Iconographical precedents for the disposal of St. Sebastian's body

It is common to find Ludovico's painting as a footnote – the outlier – in both art historical and hagiographical discussions of Saint Sebastian's martyrdom.⁴⁸⁶ In fact, Ludovico's image is so singular that it has become something of a commonplace whenever discussions related to Rome and its pollution, sewers, or spectacles of martyrdom arise (figs. 143 and 144).⁴⁸⁷ However, far from being obscure, the episode of Sebastian's body being thrown into the sewer was continuously part of the saint's legend

⁴⁸⁴ For Cavedone, see Giles 1986 and Negro and Roio 2001.

⁴⁸⁵ It cannot be ruled out that the Getty *St. Sebastian* contains workshop assistance; indeed, Carel van Tuyl van Serooskerken in Meijer 1995, p. 117, note 5 cites a letter of September 12, 1993 in the Rijksprentenkabinet's files that does not preclude an active role for Cavedone in the elaboration of Ludovico's canvas.

⁴⁸⁶ See, for example, Kyle 1998, p. 263, note 62.

⁴⁸⁷ To name two examples, the painting is on the cover of both Kyle 1998 and Bradley 2012.

from the earliest written and visual sources through 1612, the year of Ludovico's painting, and beyond.

From the fourteenth century onward, the episode is found with relative frequency throughout Europe, typically as a background scene or as part of a larger narrative cycle of the saint's life. The following scenes are presented to situate Ludovico's painting within a longer history of the theme and to broaden the repertory of Sebastian imagery, though the list is not exhaustive. This context in turn functions to de-emphasize the eccentric nature of Ludovico's work. Examples of the scene by Italian painters include Nicoletto Semitecolo's 1367 panel in Padua's cathedral, in which Sebastian's fully-robed body is discarded in the upper right (fig. 145); the scene in the middle panel of the right wing of Giovanni del Biondo's well-known triptych of circa 1375 in the Museo del Duomo, Florence (figs. 146 and 147); and a now lost series of six panels by Andrea Mantegna.⁴⁸⁸

Mantegna's panels are recorded in a 1713 inventory of Livio Odescalchi (1652-1713), Duke of Bracciano, and once formed part of the collection of Queen Christina of Sweden (1629-1689). Aside from a note under lost paintings in catalogues of Mantegna's oeuvre, these panels have not fully entered the literature on either Mantegna or the iconography of Sebastian.⁴⁸⁹ In the inventory of the collection of Christina of Sweden, they are listed as

Mantegna. I. Vita, e Miracoli, e Martirio di San Sebastiano. Opera perfettissima del Mantegna, che fù Pittore famoso circa il tempo di Pietro Perugino, Maestro

⁴⁸⁸ Semitecolo's painting is one of nine panels he painted for a reliquary cabinet in Padua's cathedral; see Elston 2012. For Giovanni del Biondo's triptych, see Offner and Steinweg 1967, sec. 4, vol. 4, p. 129, 131.

⁴⁸⁹ The panels are referenced under lost works, briefly, in Lightbown 1983, no. 134, p. 469: "The Life, Miracles and Martyrdom of St Sebastian."

*di Raffaeli; e questi sono divisi in Sei Quadri tutti uguali d'altezza di trè palmi, e mezzo, a larghezza due, e mezzo. Con cornice dorate tutte uguali di trè quarti l'una. Questi son sei pezzi tutti del Martirio di San Sebastiano di detto Mantegna maestro di Pietro Perugini maestro di Rafaeli, che per esser rarissimi di gran finitura lavoro, e tenerezza valerebbero assai. Si pone però à prezzo moderato mille luigi l'uno in tutto si pone il suo valore, e prezzo luigi 6000.*⁴⁹⁰

In the Odescalchi inventory, the subjects of the six panels are specified:

Martyrdom of Saint Sebastian, Sebastian declared captain by Diocletian and Maximilian, Sebastian visiting prisoners, Sebastian breaking idols, Sebastian thrown into the Cloaca, and Sebastian in glory.⁴⁹¹

Because the panels are lost, the attribution of these panels to Mantegna cannot be confirmed, and his name was often invoked as a generic byword for a certain type of Northern Italian quattrocento painting. Still, the presence of such panels in prestigious Roman collections in the seventeenth century provides one of the few potential Roman comparanda for Ludovico's *St. Sebastian*. If by Mantegna, an attribution to which the rarefied language with which they are described in Queen Christine's inventory seems to point, perhaps they were a commission for the church of San Sebastiano in Mantua, though this speculation must necessarily remain open-ended. One may also conjecture as to the influence of Semitecolo's panels in Padua's cathedral on the young Mantegna's artistic formation and memory.

⁴⁹⁰ Published in Squarzina 2003, p. 76.

⁴⁹¹ For the panel representing the Cloaca Maxima, the worked is described: "*Altro quadro parimente in tavola dell'istessa grandezza, cornice, e del med.mo Autore [alto di palmi tre, et un terzo, largo palmi due, et un terzo, con cornice liscia dorata, Andrea Mantegni] rappresenta S. Sebastiano quando fu gettato nel Pozzo, proviene dalla sudetta Regina di Svezia.*" The 1713-4 inventory of the Duke of Bracciano, Livio Odescalchi, is published by the Getty Research Provenance Index Database. The inventory is contained in the Archivio di Stato di Roma (Notai Tribunale AC, vol. 5134 (A.C., sez. not. XLII, nn.126, 127, not. S. Paparotius))

Mantegna's panels may be akin to a contemporary polyptych dedicated to Saint Sebastian by the Flemish painter Josse Lieferinxe (active 1493-1508). Lieferinxe's panels originally comprised a large altarpiece of 1497 dedicated to the saint for the church of Notre-Dame-des Accoules in Marseilles, where Lieferinxe worked in collaboration with the Italian Bernardino Simondi (d. 1498).⁴⁹² Its seven panels are now dispersed among various public collections: The Walters Art Museum (*Saint Sebastian Interceding for the Plague Stricken*); Philadelphia Museum of Art (*Saint Sebastian Destroying Idols*, *Saint Sebastian Pierced with Arrows*, *Saint Sebastian Cured by Irene*, *Saint Sebastian Beaten by Rods and Thrown into the Sewers*, figs. 148 and 149); Palazzo Barberini (*Pilgrims at the Tomb of Sebastian*); and the Hermitage (*Saint Sebastian Before Roman Emperors Diocletian and Maximilian*). Melissa Katz has reconstructed a likely configuration for the retable and proposed a missing eighth scene of the finding of Sebastian's body.⁴⁹³

With regard to the iconographic tradition for Ludovico's painting, it is sufficient to note that in multiple cities the artist visited—Mantua and Florence, for example—he could have viewed notable images of Sebastian being thrown into the sewer.⁴⁹⁴ That is not to say any specific one of these served as a precedent, or that he would remember them nearly two decades after his travels, but rather that such imagery was commonly associated with Sebastian and widely painted. In Rome, however, one source stands as a likely model for the artist.

Of the three churches dedicated to Sebastian and associated with the Barberini family (see discussion above), San Sebastiano al Palatino was a Byzantine church

⁴⁹² Katz 2006-7 provides the best discussion and reconstruction of the panels.

⁴⁹³ Katz 2006-7, pp. 60-63

⁴⁹⁴ On the artist's travels, see Brogi 2001, vol. 1, p. 42, who discusses Malvasia's "*studioso corso*" for the painter.

formerly dedicated to the Virgin. As mentioned, the church, renovated in the 1620s, contained a rare cycle devoted to the life of Saint Sebastian, apparently in such poor condition it was whitewashed by the Barberini, who had its contents recorded by the draftsman Antonio Eclissi.⁴⁹⁵ One of the scenes recorded provides a striking analogy to the Ludovico, and, as argued below, a likely precedent.

In this scene, a horde of soldiers stands to the left as four men lift Sebastian's body towards the entrance of the sewer (fig. 137). As in Ludovico's painting, some men wear the soldier's helmets and some do not, and Sebastian extends a limp, lifeless arm. Of course, it is impossible to know with certainty if Ludovico had this image in mind while conceiving his work. The artist visited Rome only once, in the summer of 1602, and it is generally assumed the city had a negligible impact on him.⁴⁹⁶ In a letter of June 8 of that year, Ludovico wrote to his Bolognese pupil Francesco Brizio (1574-1623) that he had seen many beautiful things but unfortunately did not have time to draw them.⁴⁹⁷ However, he ended up staying in Rome for several weeks after the letter was written, and one can assume he continued to visit Roman sites, possibly using the extra time there to sketch. According to Sheila Barker, the Sebastian cycle on the Palatine Hill was open to lay audiences and its scenes were influential in disseminating Sebastian's narrative.⁴⁹⁸ It is likely that the site of the church on the Palatine Hill, famous for its antiquity, its decoration, and its sanctity, was prominent on the itinerary for visitors to Rome in the early modern period, including Ludovico. It is that prominence combined with the

⁴⁹⁵ See note 452 above.

⁴⁹⁶ Gail Feigenbaum in Emiliani and Feigenbaum 1993, p. L: "The impact of what he saw in Rome on his own art was equivocal."

⁴⁹⁷ Perini 1990, letter no. 7, pp. 110-111.

⁴⁹⁸ Barker 2007, p. 94.

Barberini interest in both the site and the saint that make the tenth-century frescoes an attractive iconographic source for Ludovico. In composing the painting, then, Ludovico turned to both established iconographies, including one directly linked to a holy site in Rome, as well as to more original conceptions of Sebastian's narrative, as befitted the specific site.

Passignano's replacement Saint Sebastian's Body Retrieved from the Sewers

During the second decade of the 1600s, the Florentine painter Passignano executed several different paintings with various moments from Sebastian's *vita*, including the work that ultimately replaced Ludovico's for Sant'Andrea della Valle. A review of Passignano's inventions provide additional context for Ludovico's canvas, including a rare seventeenth-century cycle devoted to the saint. The letters of both Carlo and Maffeo Barberini mention Passignano, whose painting of St. Sebastian's body being retrieved from the sewers remains installed in the Barberini Chapel to the present day (fig. 150).

Passignano was among the leading Florentine painters newly arrived to Rome around 1600.⁴⁹⁹ The artist had already established a successful career first in Venice and Florence, before coming to Rome. There, his patrons included some of the most illustrious in the city, including Pope Clement VIII (r. 1592-1605) who commissioned an altarpiece from him for St. Peter's.⁵⁰⁰ In 1604, Maffeo had already engaged Passignano

⁴⁹⁹ The best monograph on Passignano remains the PhD dissertation of Nissman 1979; see also Thomas 1995.

⁵⁰⁰ Passignano painted two altarpieces for St. Peter's Basilica, some two decades apart. The first was the *Crucifixion of St. Peter* for the *navi piccoli*. See Chappell and Kirwin 1974. For the second commission in St. Peter's Basilica for the altar of St. Thomas

to decorate the Barberini Chapel in Sant'Andrea della Valle with a cycle dedicated to the Virgin.⁵⁰¹ Though Maffeo had employed Passignano from the inception of the project, the letters between Maffeo and Carlo Barberini suggest that, in 1612, Maffeo had first reached out to Ludovico Carracci in Bologna for the specific image related to the saint and the site where his body was recovered from the sewers. Ultimately, he turned to Passignano for a painting of Sebastian, with specific instructions in mind.

Maffeo references an earlier *Saint Sebastian* Passignano had painted for Cardinal Arrigone (“*Deve ben provvedere il Passignano di mutar invention da quella fatta al Sig. Card. Arrigone*”), an important patron of Passignano’s beginning around 1602 when the artist moved from Florence to Rome.⁵⁰² The *Burial of St. Sebastian* by Passignano in the Capodimonte Museum, signed and dated 1602 (fig. 151), has been plausibly connected to the Arrigone commission by Joan Nissman, possibly as a trial before being awarded the altarpiece commission by the Fabbrica of Saint Peter’s.⁵⁰³ Arrigone was also responsible for awarding Passignano the title of *Cavaliere di Cristo* following his success in Saint Peter’s. Unfortunately his altarpiece representing the *Crucifixion of Saint Peter* is in fragments, known only through preparatory drawings and subsequent engravings (fig. 152).

It is worth considering what Maffeo desired Passignano to change in his invention from the Arrigone version to his painting now in Sant'Andrea. The 1602 painting presses the figures closer to the picture plane, imbuing them with greater monumentality.

depicting *The Doubting of Thomas* (1624-26), see Rice 1997, cat. 13, pp. 241-244. Only fragments survive of the former, today in the Fabbrica di San Pietro, the latter is in the Sacristy of St. Peter’s.

⁵⁰¹ Nissman 1979, cat. 56, pp. 304-12

⁵⁰² The letter is that quoted in note 445 above dated November 28, 1612.

⁵⁰³ Nissman 1979, pp. 78-110.

Sebastian in particular is given a “Michelangelesque corporeality” in the words of one writer.⁵⁰⁴ The figures attending to the martyr’s body form a strong diagonal from the upper left to the lower right of the painting. Sebastian’s head is turned away from the viewer, directing our vision to the statues of Saints Peter and Paul in the upper right. Rome’s pagan past is represented by Trajan’s Column, not yet surmounted by the statue of St. Peter, which Sixtus V had ordered in 1587, fifteen years before Passignano’s first version of the theme.⁵⁰⁵

In many ways, the latter picture (over a decade later) is very similar to its antecedent. An array of figures attend to Sebastian’s body set against the backdrop of a Roman classical past. The figures are small overall in relation to the size of the canvas, their poses and dispositions more varied. The building in the background, a somewhat generic circular temple, has been suggested to reference the Tempietto, and thus the specific site of St. Peter’s martyrdom.⁵⁰⁶ The Tempietto, in fact, was alongside the church of San Pietro in Montorio, where Maffeo Barberini had been titular cardinal in 1608. Sebastian’s body is not turned to the viewer, allowing it and his body to be the locus of the viewer’s gaze as the work stands on the altar.

Thus far, the comparison of the two works has not yielded visual evidence of the type of alteration in invention that Maffeo had insisted upon in his letter. One possibility is that the change in subject matter fulfilled the patron’s wishes. The Arrigone/Capodimonte picture has been rightfully called a Burial of Saint Sebastian by

⁵⁰⁴ Thomas 1995, p. 190.

⁵⁰⁵ The painting is signed and dated “Dominici Passignani MDCII.”

⁵⁰⁶ Thomas 1995, p. 192.

Miles Chappell, while the Barberini picture a Removal or Retrieval of his body.⁵⁰⁷ The precedents for the former, as in paintings of the Entombment or Pietà by Fra Bartolomeo (1511-12, Galleria Palatina, Florence), Andrea del Sarto (c. 1523-24, Galleria Palatina, Florence), and Pontormo (c. 1525-28, Santa Felicita, Florence) show that the artist was conceiving of his picture along the same lines. The Capodimonte painting, then, presents the episode of Sebastian's burial, and would have been set along the via Appia, the site of the church of San Sebastiano fuori le mura, and the catacombs containing his tomb. Though it must be noted Trajan's Column would not have been visible from Via Appia, that touch was intended as a reference to Rome's pagan past, and the painting was intended for a private collection, not a specific site.

Passignano's Sant'Andrea painting shows a different subject, from an earlier moment in Sebastian's narrative recounting the recovery of his body from the sewers, said to have happened on the specific site where the painting remains to this day, built over the old church of San Sebastianello.⁵⁰⁸ This must be the alteration Maffeo had in mind and even requested. The decoration of the Barberini Chapel in Sant'Andrea dragged on for over more than a decade. Part of the delay was due to Maffeo's travels. His posts in France, Spoleto, Bologna, and elsewhere, meant overseeing much of the endeavor from afar.

During the same years, Passignano was involved with several other prestigious commissions. Of particular note here is a little-studied chapel dedicated to Saint Sebastian at the Villa Aldobrandini in Frascati. The villa was given by Clement VIII to

⁵⁰⁷ See the entry by Miles Chappell in Gregori and Christiansen 1985, no. 46, pp. 164-166.

⁵⁰⁸ See Hülsen 1927.

his nephew, Cardinal Pietro Aldobrandini (1571-1621). Passignano received the commission to fresco both the Saint Sebastian chapel and the ceiling of the Sala d'Apollo, located on the ends of the left and right wings that opened off the celebrated *teatro* of fountains at the Villa.⁵⁰⁹

The Saint Sebastian chapel fell into a state of ruin caused by dampness just a few decades after its completion, when Domenichino was asked to touch up the frescoes.⁵¹⁰ There are also indications of payment to the young Gianlorenzo Bernini for a sculpture of St. Sebastian, possibly for this chapel, but now lost.⁵¹¹ In the nineteenth century, panels by contemporary painters were placed over the original frescoes. Recent research has yielded more insight into the subjects of Passignano's original scenes.⁵¹² These are valuable as a record of a rare cycle devoted to the saint, at a time when the artist was active at Sant'Andrea working closely on a site closely associated with the martyr's *vita*.

Maria Barbara Guerrieri Borsoi was able to view the chapel's altarpiece, which Passignano executed in oil directly onto the wall (thus hastening its deterioration, though the artist had used the technique elsewhere), when the nineteenth-century altarpiece by Alessandro Capalti was removed for restoration in 2005.⁵¹³ The badly damaged fresco by Passignano shows Sebastian tied to a tree, shot full of arrows (fig. 153). Though the work comes from the standard iconography of Sebastian, as discussed above, and was suitable for an altarpiece, Passignano has placed the martyr in the upper-right, and his composition is strangely off-kilter, frenetic, and far from the iconic, centrally-placed,

⁵⁰⁹ Guerrieri Borsoi 2014b.

⁵¹⁰ Salomon 2005, pp. 160-4; Robertson 2016, p. 80.

⁵¹¹ Testa 2002.

⁵¹² Guerrieri Borsoi 2014b.

⁵¹³ Including at Sant'Andrea della Valle and Saint Peter's.

frontal-facing Sebastian as painted in its later replacement. The placement of the main figure in the upper register of the work, somewhat relegated to the background, echoes the treatment of *St. Peter* in Passignano's altarpiece of that figure's Crucifixion, as preserved in the engraving by Jacques Callot (fig. 152).⁵¹⁴

Nissman noted that the lateral frescoes were so badly damaged that it was impossible even to identify the subjects, though she suggested the one on the right could be a disposal of Sebastian's body.⁵¹⁵ Guerrieri Borsoi called the scene on the left wall a Sebastian before a judge – thus an early part of his story, before he is sentenced to the fate he suffers in the chapel's altarpiece.⁵¹⁶ The badly damaged scene on the right, Guerrieri Borsoi suggested, is a recovery of Sebastian's body from the sewers. Despite the illegibility of the scene, she noted two figures on the left, possibly a third with a horse behind them, and on the right a woman indicates Sebastian's strongly foreshortened body lying on the ground. Guerrieri Borsoi wrote that, despite difficulties in making out the scene, it is clear that Passignano's interpretation of this subject here is vastly different from his versions for Arrigone and Barberini. Also of interest is that, of the scenes chosen for a cycle devoted to Sebastian's life, the disposal of his body—subject of Ludovico's painting—was avoided.

Sewers and martyrdom in Rome

⁵¹⁴ For more on the reception of Passignano's *Crucifixion of Saint Peter*, including the artist's rivalry with Caravaggio and malicious poems critiquing the altarpiece, see Chappell and Kirwin 1974; and Robertson 2016, p. 31.

⁵¹⁵ Nissman, 1979, cat. 75, pp. 337-338: "Condition poor; paintings virtually destroyed..."

⁵¹⁶ Guerrieri Borsoi 2014b, p. 460.

Since at least the time of the Roman Republic, the Tiber River had been a convenient and symbolic repository for the disposal of bodies.⁵¹⁷ As cadavers piled up, the result first of casualties of arena spectacles and then, later, of persecutions against Christians, prohibitions on burial within city limits made the river's ability to flush out the city of its corpses extremely useful. Rome had always used its river as a means of cleansing the city of pollution and disease, and flowing water was long associated with such a symbolic lustration, whether the disposal of corpses in the Ganges or the Great Flood washing the earth of man's sins.⁵¹⁸

As persecutions against Christians increased through the second century AD, the river again became a frequent vessel for getting rid of a martyr's body. Such a jettisoning of a Christian's body precluded proper burial or the collection of relics for veneration, making such accounts a common element in Christian martyrologies. As Donald G. Kyle writes, "Use of the Tiber was logistically pragmatic and symbolically reassuring: denial of burial thoroughly extended the process of damnation, and disposal by water cleansed the city and its people of filth and guilt."⁵¹⁹

The sewers were a popular conduit to send a body off to the Tiber. Sebastian represents a famous martyr who met such an ignominious fate, but the list also includes others, like Saints Concordia, Ireneo, Abbondio, or Felicula.⁵²⁰ Cesare Baronio wrote of this phenomenon in his *Annales Ecclesiastici*: "There are still bodies [besides

⁵¹⁷ See Kyle 1998, pp. 213-223.

⁵¹⁸ On water as agent of purification, see Parker 1983, pp. 226-227.

⁵¹⁹ Kyle 1998, p. 214.

⁵²⁰ Ghilardi 2014, p. 195.

Sebastian's] of even more martyrs thrown into the *cloache*, as seen in their legends.”⁵²¹

Other martyrs met similar ends, whether thrown into wells (see Chapter 2 for St. Callixtus), off of bridges, and other means, illustrated in Gallonio's 1591 treatise, for example (fig. 94).

Since at least its sale at Sotheby's London in 1972, the title of Ludovico's painting has specified that the saint was thrown into the Cloaca Maxima.⁵²² Meanwhile, the location of the Barberini Chapel, where the body was supposedly recovered by Lucina, is closer to the so-called “Giuditta” sewer, and not actually near the Cloaca Maxima (fig. 154).⁵²³ It's worth considering the accuracy of the present title with regards to both Sebastian's hagiography and the painting's early descriptions.

The Cloaca Maxima is one of the marvels of engineering of ancient Rome, lauded by Pliny for its design and capabilities.⁵²⁴ The structure began as a canal containing a natural stream, and its water was originally often seen as holy. It collected waters from the Esquiline, Viminal, and Quirinal Hills, went through the forum and Velabrum before emptying into the Tiber.⁵²⁵ As Rome grew, so did its need for practical drainage facilities. The Cloaca Maxima was eventually used for collecting natural runoff and occasional debris from kitchens, though not human waste, for the most part.⁵²⁶ In this way, the translation of *cloaca* to “sewers” is a bit misleading, as their functions differed

⁵²¹ Baronio 1656, p. 689: “*Che ancora i cadaveri di piu altri martiri gettatti sussero nelle cloache, si vede nelle leggende loro.*”

⁵²² See sales catalogue Sotheby's London, July 12, 1972, lot 91.

⁵²³ See “Introduction” in Bradley 2012, p. 5, note 2.

⁵²⁴ For the Cloaca Maxima, see Hopkins 2012, with further bibliography under note 1.

⁵²⁵ See entry “Cloaca Maxima” in Platner and Ashby 1929, pp. 126-127.

⁵²⁶ Hopkins 2012, p. 82.

from our modern-day conception of sewers. The Latin word *cloaca* can perhaps be traced back to the verb *cluere* meaning “to cleanse with running water.”⁵²⁷

The earliest sources for Sebastian’s *vita* mention his body’s disposal in the *cloaca*, with the fifth-century *Passio Sebastiani* specifying it was the Cloaca Maxima (“*Tunc tulerunt corpus eius nocte, & in cloacam Maximum miserunt dicentes, ne forte Christiani eum sibi Martyrem faciant.*”)⁵²⁸ The reference makes sense, not only because of the Cloaca Maxima’s prestige, but that it ran through the forum, where Sebastian was beaten by rods (near the *gradus Heliogabali*, an otherwise unknown palace on the Palatine Hill.) In later accounts, including those closer to the painting’s conception, a generic *cloaca* seems to be used interchangeably with the more precise Cloaca Maxima. The medieval *Golden Legend* states: “*Fecitque corpus eius in cloacam proici, ne a Christianis pro martyre coleretur*” using the more generic noun.⁵²⁹ Baronio’s *Annales Ecclesiastici*, however, states: “*Dapoi presero di note il suo corpo e gittaronlo nella cloaca massima.*”⁵³⁰

This slippage between the generic and the precise (and even Baronio’s designation is not capitalized as a proper noun) is also reflected in how the painting is later inventoried and described. Carlo Barberini’s aforementioned letter of November 28, 1605 refers to the site as a “*chiavica*.”⁵³¹ Throughout the Barberini inventories, the painting is never recorded as an example of Sebastian being thrown into the Cloaca

⁵²⁷ See Hopkins 2012, p. 97.

⁵²⁸ Reproduced in Ghilardi 2014, p. 198.

⁵²⁹ For the English translation of the *Golden Legend*, see De Voragine 1969, p. 109: “And they ordered his body to be thrown in the sewer, lest the Christians preserve and venerate it as the relic of a martyr.” For the Latin, see De Voragine 1998, vol. 1, p. 167.

⁵³⁰ Baronio (1586) 1656, p. 689.

⁵³¹ “...quando S. Sebastiano è cavato da quella matrona dalla *chiavica*.” See note 472 above.

Maxima, but rather as his body being thrown into the “*chiavica*” or “*fossa lunga*,” designating either sewers or a more generic grave or trench.⁵³² Several conclusions can be made here: that the terms for a generic *cloaca* and the Cloaca Maxima were often used equivalently, if imprecisely. Ludovico’s painting was perhaps ultimately deemed inappropriate for the location because the event it depicted did not actually occur on the site.

Such accuracy, however, does not seem as if it was of overwhelming concern to either those connected with the original church of San Sebastianello or to Maffeo Barberini himself. The patron, in fact, in his letter to his brother, betrays some confusion about Sebastian’s story, indicating that arrows would not be warranted in showing a sequence of events that contradicts Sebastian’s actual *passio*.⁵³³ The various editions of Armellini’s description of Roman churches also hint at a vacillation over the topography associated with Sebastian’s *vita*. In the 1887 edition, Armellini describes the story of Lucina retrieving Sebastian’s body at the site where the small church eventually stood as a “*falsa tradizione*.”⁵³⁴ In the 1891 edition, however, the word “*falsa*” is removed.⁵³⁵

It is unlikely Ludovico was deeply attuned to the nuances of nomenclature and the different sewer systems in Rome. Regardless of his awareness of the specific details of the varying hagiographies of St Sebastian, Ludovico endeavored to create an evocative nocturnal scene. In addition to his choice of colors, lighting, and setting, Ludovico

⁵³² See note 588 regarding Barberini inventories.

⁵³³ See note 472.

⁵³⁴ Armellini 1887, p. 607.

⁵³⁵ Armellini (1891) 1982, p. 455: “*Una tradizione vuole che ivi fosse stato da s. Lucina estratto il cadavere del mente Sebastiano, gettato in una cloaca.*”

included one small detail that thus far has escaped notice in the literature: a small scorpion in the lower right of the painting.

Ludovico's scorpion, illusionism, natural history, and site specificity

In the lower-right foreground of Ludovico's painting, a scorpion perches on one of the stones that make up the sewer walls (fig. 155).⁵³⁶ Despite its small stature, this previously overlooked detail conveys immense importance for the painting's iconographical and theological meaning while reinforcing its site-specificity. Against the backdrop of the burgeoning interest in natural history in both Bologna and Rome, this section considers the multiple ways the scorpion functions within Ludovico's painting at the intersection between *trompe l'oeil* traditions and naturalistic reforms in painting circa 1600. The scorpion reinforces the Carracci academy's dedication to close observation of nature, offers a terrifying surprise for the unsuspecting viewer, and evocatively substantiates the underground, unrealized setting in which the painting was intended to be experienced.

The scorpion would have been extremely difficult to notice in the painting's intended location, making its inclusion all the more perplexing. Though the work was never installed, one can reconstruct the anticipated conditions of viewing in order to better understand the painter's invention. In a subterranean grotto chapel, dark, dank and lit by candles, the focus would have been on Sebastian's torso, and Ludovico illuminated the painting with the left side of the saint's face, left arm, ribcage, and left leg. In these conditions, the scorpion would have likely been undetected. As candlelight flickered

⁵³⁶ I thank Gail Feigenbaum for bringing the scorpion to my attention.

around the chapel, a viewer could perhaps momentarily discern the presence of a black scorpion perched upon a stone ledge that forms part of the entrance to the sewer.

With the scorpion, Ludovico emphasizes the painting's site specificity by collapsing the distinctions between the viewer's physical space and the fictive space of the painting. Standing in the purported site where Sebastian's body was recovered by Lucina, the viewer can mentally reenact and meditate upon the event that preceded that retrieval. Central to this experience would have been the sensorial impact of the dark, nocturnal environs, the muscled and menacing soldiers, and the imminent precipitous drop of Sebastian's body. Such appeals to the viewer's senses would have aligned the work with prevalent reform-minded concerns of the church, while the work's site specificity, and the strategies Ludovico employed to emphasize its veracity, including the detail of the scorpion, would have been in concert with a church that emphasized the verifiable historicity of its past.

The scorpion bolsters the painting's verisimilitude beyond simply providing the work with a ghastly *mise-en-scene*. On an iconographic level, the scorpion's inclusion is straightforward. The creature was the symbol of the Praetorian Guard, tasked by Emperor Diocletian with disposing of Sebastian's body. The Praetorian Guard was composed of the elite soldiers who acted as the emperor's bodyguards and had additional administrative as well as military duties.⁵³⁷ Scorpio was the zodiac sign of the Emperor Tiberius, one of the original founders of the guard, and the scorpion often featured on the shields and armor of its members.⁵³⁸ According to his hagiographies, Sebastian was notably the captain of the Praetorian Guard under Maximian and Diocletian. By the time

⁵³⁷ Bingham 2013.

⁵³⁸ Rankov 2006, pp. 25-27.

of the episode presented in Ludovico's painting, then, Sebastian had gone from the highest heights of the army's ranks to the literal depths of Rome.

Ludovico captures certain aspects of the Praetorian Guards' apparel with accuracy. The guards did not wear armor at all times but rather were more likely to wear tunics within the city limits.⁵³⁹ The balance of soldiers in full armor, including elaborate helmets, and more casually attired members concord with the Guards' habits, whether intentional or not. It also substantiates the likelihood that Ludovico was looking at the tenth-century frescoes in Santa Maria in Pallara; the tormentors in that scene are similarly dressed (see above, and fig. 137).

Beyond presenting a straightforward depiction of the soldiers' emblem, Ludovico makes an oblique reference, one informed by his study of nature and his first-hand encounters with the emergent natural history of Ulisse Aldrovandi (1522-1605). The scorpion had long captured both the scientific and folkloric imagination. Aristotle was the first to have studied scorpions in his *Historia Animalium*.⁵⁴⁰ Pliny the Elder memorably wrote about the dangers of the scorpion's sting in his *Natural History*: "Scorpions are a plague and a curse from Africa. Their tails have a sting that is always in motion, ready to strike. Their sting is always fatal to girls and usually fatal to women, but only fatal to men if they are stung in the morning when the poison is strongest."⁵⁴¹

In the early modern period, the first monographic study of the scorpion appeared in 1587, first in Latin, then German, by the Swiss physician Caspar Wolf, a student of the

⁵³⁹ Bingham 2013, p. 76.

⁵⁴⁰ Aristotle 2002, 1:I-X. For a recent monograph on the scorpion in mythology, science, and history, see Pryke 2016.

⁵⁴¹ Pliny 1855, Book 11, p. 30.

important naturalist Conrad Gessner (figs. 156 and 157).⁵⁴² Not long after, the Bolognese Aldrovandi devoted twenty-seven pages to the scorpion in his *De Animalibus Insectis Libri Septem*, the first natural history of insects.⁵⁴³ The ambitious study appeared in 1602, following years of work in which Aldrovandi collected evidence and specimens; he traveled with an amanuensis and a painter to document his findings.⁵⁴⁴ In *De Animalibus Insectis*, Aldrovandi presented the insects not only “scientifically” but also through more symbolic lenses. In the chapter on scorpions, for example, Aldrovandi has sections on the different *genii*, visual descriptions (with four different specimens illustrated, see fig. 158), locations, behavior, venom, symptoms and cures, and reproductive habits, among other scientific concerns. But he also considers its morality, medicinal uses, hieroglyphic and emblematic meanings, examples of medals of scorpions, and proverbs mentioning the species (such as “*Sub omni lapide Scorpius dormit*”: under every stone sleeps a scorpion).⁵⁴⁵

Aldrovandi’s study is of particular importance for understanding the Bolognese *milieu* in which Ludovico created his painting and included the detail of the scorpion. Aldrovandi is often considered the father of natural history, the first to collect, study, and publish comprehensive treatises of the natural world, which he did in thirteen immense volumes dedicated to animals, plants, and minerals (*De Animalibus Insectis* was one of the few of these published before his death in 1605). Aldrovandi was a professor at the hallowed and historic University of Bologna, where he was made chair of Natural

⁵⁴² This is the *Historiae Insectorum Libellus, Qui Est De Scorpione*, published in 1587. See Wolf 1587.

⁵⁴³ For the early modern study of insects, see Ogilvie 2008.

⁵⁴⁴ See Ogilvie 2008, p. 7; Findlen 1994, p. 30.

⁵⁴⁵ Aldrovandi 1602, p. 597.

Sciences in 1561.⁵⁴⁶ Many of the specimens he studied were displayed in the museum he set up in his own house.⁵⁴⁷

Aldrovandi's enterprise was inextricably tied to artistic production in Bologna. He worked closely with the reform-minded Bishop Gabriele Paleotti (1522-1597), who wrote that through painting, one could gather more precise knowledge of "trees, plants, birds, fishes, quadrupeds, serpents, insects, minerals, and other rare species."⁵⁴⁸ Aldrovandi set up a large workshop in Bologna filled with artists specifically devoted to illustrating natural specimens. Aldrovandi was also close with the Carracci family of painters. There are two portraits of Aldrovandi that are typically attributed to Agostino: an oil painting in the Accademia Carrara, Bergamo (fig. 159), and an engraving of c. 1595.⁵⁴⁹ The triple portrait in the Capodimonte Museum, featuring the so-called "Hairy Harry," is often attributed to Agostino, and the figure at the right even suggested to be a portrait of Aldrovandi (fig. 160).⁵⁵⁰

A revealing anecdote and sketch illustrate the type of exchange between Aldrovandi and the Carracci regarding insect specimens. The engraver Pietro Stefanoni wrote to Aldrovandi in 1599 requesting information about an insect he had come across in his travels.⁵⁵¹ He includes a small and crude drawing of an insect (fig. 161) that he

⁵⁴⁶ See Olmi 1994.

⁵⁴⁷ Olmi 1994, p. 65; Findlen 1994, pp. 304-311.

⁵⁴⁸ Olmi 1994, p. 61.

⁵⁴⁹ Olmi and Prodi 1986; Olmi 1994, p. 68.

⁵⁵⁰ Findlen 1994, pp. 311-13.

⁵⁵¹ Olmi 1994, p. 69

indicates is by the hand of Agostino and done “from nature.”⁵⁵² This request, with its accompanying illustration, illuminates the relationship between artists and Aldrovandi.

Thus, despite Aldrovandi’s once declaring “no familiarity whatsoever” with the family of artists, we can reasonably accept the word of Malvasia, who wrote, “The Carracci studio was a most popular gathering place for the men of letters who flourished at the time, among them such men as Aldrovandi, Magini, Zoppio, Dempster, Achillini, and Lanzoni, who would drop in after a demanding day of lecturing at the university...”⁵⁵³ Though recent scholars have doubted the veracity of this sentence, Summerscale suggests that Malvasia is referring specifically to a period when Agostino and Annibale were in Rome, and thus a figure like Aldrovandi would have primarily been in contact with Ludovico.⁵⁵⁴

In addition to its roots within the burgeoning discourse of natural history under Ulisse Aldrovandi, the scorpion’s inclusion places Ludovico’s painting within a larger discourse of illusionism, from Pliny to Giotto and beyond. Though the topic of illusionism, and *trompe l’oeil*, is too large to address here, a few general observations can be made.⁵⁵⁵ A painter’s ability to emulate, and even surpass, nature, was a frequent topos going back to ancient Greek painters like Zeuxis, who painted grapes so realistically they fooled birds. Renaissance artists frequently reenacted such competitions in an attempt at surpassing their ancient rivals, or showing up their masters. Vasari includes such an

⁵⁵² Olmi 1994, p. 69. The drawing, published as fig. 117 in Olmi 1994, is kept in the University Library, Bologna, ms. Aldrovandi 136, XXVII, c. 241v.

⁵⁵³ For Aldrovandi’s denial, see Olmi 1977, p. 165, no. 233. For Malvasia’s quote, Summerscale 272, pp. 271-272.

⁵⁵⁴ See Summerscale, p. 272, note. 427.

⁵⁵⁵ See Ebert-Schifferer 2002. For Pliny and illusionism, see Mitchell 1994. For Pliny and the Renaissance, see McHam 2013.

anecdote in his life of Giotto, where he says “he once painted on the nose of a figure, which Cimabue had completed, a fly so natural looking that the master, returning to continue the work, tried more than once to chase the fly away with his hand, thinking that it was real, before he realized his error.”⁵⁵⁶

According to Norman Land, the fly could represent the devil in religious paintings, like those of Carlo Crivelli (fig. 162).⁵⁵⁷ In Hebrew, “Beelzebub” means “lord of the flies,” and thus, when a viewer was swatting away the illusionistic fly from a painting of the Virgin and Child, the act obtained a theological significance.⁵⁵⁸ Another symbolic creature possessing theological meaning was the snail, often expressing the hermetically pure quality of the Virgin. A famous example of which is Francesco del Cossa’s *Annunciation* of c. 1472 in the Gemäldegalerie Alte Meister, Dresden, in which a snail is prominently placed at the bottom of the panel, situated so it appears to be crawling along the picture frame (fig. 163).⁵⁵⁹ As pointed out by Helen Ettlinger, the *Defensorium inviolatae virginitatis beatae Mariae* of around 1400 connected the reproductive habits of the snail to the Virgin: “If the dew of the clear air can make the sea snail pregnant, then God in virtue can make His mother pregnant.”⁵⁶⁰ Perino del Vaga’s *Nativity* (1534), in the National Gallery, Washington, also features a large snail in the

⁵⁵⁶ Vasari 1966-1987, vol. II (1967), p. 121. For this anecdote, see Barolsky 1978, p. 17, and Land 1996. Land’s article considers Crivelli’s frequent use of the fly in his religious paintings. I thank Sarah Blake McHam for pointing me towards these sources.

⁵⁵⁷ Land 1996, p. 14.

⁵⁵⁸ Land 1996, p. 14

⁵⁵⁹ See Ettlinger 1978. For a deconstruction of a simple iconographical meaning for the snail, see Arasse 2008: “The snail, symbol of Mary’s divine insemination, leads us to perceive that a *representation* of the Annunciation will never make us see the providential reason for *the* Annunciation: the Incarnation of the Savior. Cossa’s stroke of genius was to have pointed to the *limits* of representation by putting his snail at the threshold of this same representation, at its limit.”

⁵⁶⁰ Quoted in Ettlinger 1978, p. 316.

bottom right, alluding to the divine nature of Christ's conception (fig. 164); a snail is placed at the bottom right of Carlo Crivelli's *Virgin and Child with Saints Francis and Sebastian* (1491) in the National Gallery, London, and so on.

Ludovico was evidently aware of the symbolic potential of the snail: he included one in the foreground of his *Apostles at the Virgin's Tomb* (often mistakenly called an Assumption), a panel he painted for the church of the Corpus Domini in Bologna in 1601 (figs. 165 and 166).⁵⁶¹ Thus, his turning to the scorpion for his image of Sebastian is not surprising, if characteristically novel. The scorpion certainly had specific moralizing connotations in late sixteenth-century Italy, as evidenced by the fables published by the Cremonese humanist Gabriele Faerno (1510-1561). In his *Fabulae centum ex antiquis auctoribus delectae et carminibus explicatae*, published in 1563, Faerno includes the story of the *Puer et scorpius*, about a young boy capturing locusts; a scorpion perched nearby cautions the young boy on the importance of staying attentive.⁵⁶²

The Faerno fable has been linked, if unconvincingly, to a specific type of genre scene that began appearing in the late sixteenth century, most famously a drawing by Sofonisba Anguissola (1532-1625) of a boy bitten by a crayfish (fig. 167).⁵⁶³ Sofonisba's drawing was a response to a challenge issued by Michelangelo that it was easier to depict someone laughing than crying.⁵⁶⁴ Such a work with both aesthetic and moralizing overtones had its echoes in the Carracci academy, as in Annibale's *Two Children Teasing a Cat* (c. 1587-88) in the Metropolitan Museum of Art (fig. 168). In this painting, a boy

⁵⁶¹ For the painting, see Brogi 2001, pp. 185-186, no. 71.

⁵⁶² Faerno 1563.

⁵⁶³ Bram de Klerck in *Sofonisba Anguissola* 1994, no. 39, pp. 274-77. The drawing is in the Gabinetto Disegni e Stampe, Museo Nazionale di Capodimonte, Naples, inv. 1039.

⁵⁶⁴ Entry by Linda Wolk-Simon in Bayer 2004, no. 92, p. 199.

dangles a crayfish above a cat's head, to the delight of his younger sister. Keith Christiansen has connected the work to proverbs such as "Let sleeping dogs lie" ("*non andar svegliando il can che dorme*") in a popular 1618 text.⁵⁶⁵

The scorpion in Ludovico's painting probably lacked such an overt moralizing message. However, the scorpion did have a theological meaning of paramount importance to the painting's function as an altarpiece. In an important 1935 study, Marcel Bulard argued that the presence of scorpions in late Medieval and early Renaissance Crucifixions signified Jews' roles as witnesses to Christ's death.⁵⁶⁶ The scorpion was found in many banners and pennants in Crucifixion scenes. Bulard also argued that the images of scorpions were often interspersed with the Roman epigram SPQR to provide a sort of visual pun: the letters could phonetically bring to mind the word "scorpio" [i.e. SQRP]. Bulard presents one example, in a Crucifixion of 1495 by Donato da Montorfano in the refectory of Santa Maria della Grazie, Milan, in which a standard with a double scorpion image is juxtaposed with the letters SCOR.⁵⁶⁷

Bulard's text was largely based on study of a fifteenth-century fresco cycle of Saint Sebastian in the small town of Lanslevillard, France. In the scene of the Crucifixion, a yellow banner with a black scorpion appears half hidden in the upper left (fig. 169). Elsewhere in the small church, a scene features Sebastian's body being thrown

⁵⁶⁵ Annibale Carracci, *Two Children Teasing a Cat*, c. 1587-88, 66 x 88.9 cm, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (inv. no. 1994.142). See online catalogue entry by Keith Christiansen (<https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/435852>) accessed September 12, 2017.

⁵⁶⁶ Bulard 1935. See also Zafran 1973, vol. I, p. 18. Zafran points out the scorpion motif in *Ecce Homo* compositions associated with Hieronymus Bosch. For examples, see those in the Philadelphia Museum of Art, and the Clowes Collection, Indianapolis Museum of Art.

⁵⁶⁷ Bulard 1935, pp. 218-219.

into the sewers (into what appears to be a well, more precisely, fig. 170). Ludovico would not have known this cycle, but the symbol of the scorpion nevertheless fits perfectly into the image, as a witness to Sebastian's sacrifice. In addition to referencing the Praetorian Guard, and evoking the shadowy setting of the sewers, the scorpion as witness reinforces the association between the limp body of Sebastian and the symbolic body of Christ on the altar: Sebastian, tumbling out of his white shroud, as an *alter christus*.

Suitability for site: forza versus devotio

There exists an irony in that the painting's perfect thematic suitability for its site perhaps also contributes to its unsuitability as a devotional altarpiece. Several lines of Maffeo's December 5, 1612, letter offer concise yet invaluable insight into the patron's reception of the work. He writes that he would keep it for his home because it would not be seen favorably in the chapel's light conditions (*mi servirà per tener in casa perche li lumi forse non sarebbero à proposito*).⁵⁶⁸ Maffeo still desired the work—and kept it until his death—but found it more appropriate for his picture gallery than his family's chapel. Thus, Ludovico, in composing a painting meant to commemorate an event that took place in the sewers, had perhaps gone too far in his pursuit of a naturalistic site-specificity. As Gail Feigenbaum wrote in 1993, “It is regrettable that the subterranean chapel was never realized. To have seen Ludovico's picture in the dim light of a grotto on the very spot where it was believed Sebastian's body was discarded would have been a chilling experience.”⁵⁶⁹

⁵⁶⁸ See p. 469 above.

⁵⁶⁹ Gail Feigenbaum in Emiliani and Feigenbaum 1993, p. LXVII.

Illegibility was one reason Peter Paul Rubens (1577-1640) had given a few years prior when the Oratorians rejected his first version for the high altar of the Chiesa Nuova. The canny strategist wrote to his patron Vincenzo I Gonzaga that “the light falls so unfavorably on this altar that one can hardly discern the figures, or enjoy the beauty of the coloring, and the delicacy of the heads and draperies, which I executed with great care, from nature, and completely successfully, according to the judgment of all.”⁵⁷⁰ The word from the Oratorians, just three days prior to Rubens’s letter, was less specific, or verbose: the work had simply not pleased them.⁵⁷¹ Given the radical changes between Rubens’s first and second schemes for the high altar, it was unlikely lighting alone was the only contributing factor to the disfavor incurred by the first painting. Rather, the decision likely had also to do with Rubens’s integration of the church’s miraculous icon, accorded a central spot in the final arrangement (fig. 171).⁵⁷²

Thus, practical and aesthetic considerations could become entwined with devotional concerns, explicitly or implicitly. With regards to the Ludovico, Maffeo himself provides additional rationale for his decision to keep the painting for his own collection. In the letter of 1612, he continues that the work was a “*ben rappresentazione di forza, ma non dà tanta devotione*”: The painting is a good representation of force, but not devotional enough.⁵⁷³ What exactly did Maffeo mean by *forza*, and what would account for the painting’s lack of devotional qualities?

The 1612 *Vocabolario della Crusca*, a dictionary of the Tuscan dialect published the same year the Florentine-born Maffeo commissioned Ludovico’s painting, defines

⁵⁷⁰ See Buttler 2011, p. 27.

⁵⁷¹ “*Quello che ha fatto non è piaciuto*,” quoted in Buttler 2011, p. 36, note 35.

⁵⁷² See Jaffé 1963; von zur Muhlen 1998; Buttler 2011; Fraiman 2015.

⁵⁷³ See note 473 above.

forza as “*gagliarda, robustezza di corpo, potere, possanza*”⁵⁷⁴—“Vigor, robustness of body, power, might.” A century earlier, in his treatise on painting, Leonardo had written of *forza* as a naturally occurring generative force, present in all things.⁵⁷⁵ According to Giovan Pietro Bellori’s *Vite* published in 1672, Annibale Carracci employed Leonardo’s conceit of *forza* while at work on the Farnese Gallery ceiling in Rome.⁵⁷⁶ To depict Polyphemus hurling a large boulder (fig. 172), Bellori writes, Annibale used the “Motion of force described by Leonardo da Vinci and repeated several times in his treatise, discussing the application of force to generate great impact.”⁵⁷⁷ Bellori paraphrases several quotes directly from Leonardo’s treatise.

A study of various seicento biographies and artistic treatises reveals *forza* as a term both multivalent and omnipresent. For example, the word appears within descriptions of works of art in Bellori seventy times; in Baglione’s 1642 *Vite*, twenty-two times, and in Malvasia’s *Felsina Pittrice*, 120 times. “*Forza*” shows up in the biographies of artists as diverse as Jacopino del Conte, Caravaggio, Domenichino, Manfredi, Poussin, and Rubens, and could encompass a variety of meanings. Authors reference the “*forza del colore*,” “*forza del disegno*,” or “*forza del lume*.” *Forza* can be a companion or foil to “*rilievo*,” as in Francesco Scannelli’s descriptions of Caravaggio’s paintings.⁵⁷⁸ Or it can join other terms like “*vaghezza*” “*morbidezza*” or “*unione*” as prized artistic qualities.

⁵⁷⁴ *Vocabolario* 1612, p. 361.

⁵⁷⁵ See Castelfranco 1950.

⁵⁷⁶ Bellori 1672, p. 71.

⁵⁷⁷ Translation from Bellori 2005, p. 90.

⁵⁷⁸ Scannelli 1657 quoted and translated in Hibbard 1983, pp. 356-359: “...he gave his works an extraordinary and truly singular imitation of nature, and an injection of force and relief greater perhaps than any other.” (“...*il quale dava l’opere a vedere una straordinaria, e veramente singolare immitatione del vero, e nel comunicar forza, e rilievo al dipinto non inferiore, e forse ad ogni altro supremo...*”)

A few examples shed light on Maffeo Barberini's use of the term—examples where *forza* is directly linked with strength of body—brute force, power, or movement. Several salient cases are found in Bellori's *vita* of Domenichino alone. Describing the artist's celebrated fresco of the *Flagellation* (1608) for the Oratory of Sant' Andrea at San Gregorio al Celio, Rome, for instance, Bellori writes "One of the executioners ties his feet with the rope, and in the process of drawing the knots tight, he puts his knee against the wood and bends with force [*si curva con forza*] and the bulging musculature of his nude body, and he is straining, for he is depicted as an old man, bald and beardless (fig. 173)."⁵⁷⁹ Regarding Domenichino's prized *Diana and her Nymphs* (1616-17, Galleria Borghese, Rome) Bellori says "Most lifelike is the passion of a dog that leaps to catch the lapwing in the air but is retrained by a nymph who pulls him back, holding fast to his collar and lead: this figure appears in profile and unleashes the strength [*forza*] of her arms and body, dragging the impetuous molossian back as he barks and rises up violently in an effort to escape from her hands (fig. 174)."⁵⁸⁰ In both cases, *forza* is used to describe straining, strength, and pulling; it is allied with violent action.

Maffeo's employment of the term to describe Ludovico's painting evokes similar connotations, making clearly evident the patron's reaction to it. Consider the strong, robust forearms of the members of the Praetorian Guard as they wrestle with the saint's limp body: one soldier strains with the white shroud, stretching it high above his head, others writhe and contort with great effort to hold back, unwrap, and remove the shroud from Sebastian's body. The painting is a study in contrasts emphasizing its *forza*: the oranges, browns, silvers, and vermilions of the soldiers' dress against Sebastian's

⁵⁷⁹ Translation from Bellori 2005, pp. 245-246.

⁵⁸⁰ Translation from Bellori 2005, pp. 269-270.

colorless, pale, pearlescent body and white cloth. The obscured faces of the executioners, hidden behind helmets, elbows, or lost to extreme foreshortening, compared to the saint's peaceful visage. Ludovico seems to delight in creating this type of mirroring or doubling. A shadowed sentry in the upper right beholds the spectator, while Sebastian's closed eyes, bathed in light, can no longer meet our gaze. A muscular, tanned knee is placed in strong highlight above Sebastian's pale, thin leg; arrows seemingly emanating from Sebastian's left foot create a visual repetition of the verticals of the soldiers' pikes in the upper right, and on and on.

A useful comparison between Ludovico's canvas and that of a contemporary painter can be made based on a description by the papal physician and art connoisseur Giulio Mancini (1559-1630) of Giovanni Bilivert's *Martyrdom of St. Callixtus*, installed in 1610 (see Chapter 2). The altarpiece features a group of thugs heaving the third-century pontiff's body into a well. In his *Considerazioni della pittura* circa 1621, Mancini writes:

il Santo morto mostra esser morto e que' manigoldi che così morto si sforzano tirarlo nel pozzo, mostrano cera de manigoldi e di far quella forza d'alzarlo per volerlo tirar,e con buonissimo colorito e facilità condotto."⁵⁸¹

Mancini's comments on the painting are all about the straining of the executioners; the *forza* used to lift and pull the body, and the artist is praised for his color and handling. Here, as elsewhere, *forza* conveys physical action and is considered a positive formal trait, one expressed in the context of Mancini's aesthetic appreciation for the work.

⁵⁸¹ Mancini 1956, p. 247.

That Bilivert's painting was praised and is still *in situ*, while Ludovico's was deemed inappropriate for a church setting is not surprising for an era when standards of decorum were anything but standardized; there is also the difference between an altarpiece for a small church across the river and a work meant for a prominent family's chapel in a new major church of a major religious order located along a visible processional route. There is also, returning once again to the qualities of the work, something inherently unsettling about Ludovico's work.

If one instance of *forza* is the straining and might of the executioners, a larger concern for Maffeo was likely the force behind Sebastian's body itself. Unfurling from its shroud, the body is suspended in midair, threatening to tumble out of the painting's frame. The implicit violence of a tumbling body had serious associations in the early seventeenth century. Shortly before the future Pope Urban VIII commissioned Ludovico's painting, he had begun a long and complicated friendship with Galileo (1564-1642), as various correspondence and testimonies attest.⁵⁸² Maffeo had ruled in favor of Galileo during a debate on the properties of floating bodies held at a dinner at the Grand Duke of Tuscany's in August 1612. Around the same time, the painting would have been underway in Ludovico's studio. Galileo wrote that downward motions – i.e. gravity or sinking—were associated with violent forces.⁵⁸³ Might Maffeo have seen Ludovico's painting, with Sebastian's body just about to freefall into the sewers, as a reflection of Galileo's contemporaneous, and controversial, research on gravity and the force and speed of falling objects? Perhaps the patron had in mind an association between freefalling objects and violence. While Ludovico was certainly not directly conjuring

⁵⁸² See Redondi 1990.

⁵⁸³ See Galilei 2005, with introduction and notes, with references, by Stillman Drake.

Galileo during the creation of the work, it is possible that Galileo's ideas, following his excommunication in 1610, could have prompted associations too fraught with political ramifications for Maffeo to accept the image of Sebastian's falling body for his family's chapel.

Of course, an artist's ability to suggest a figure emerging out of a painting could be seen as a positive feature. To cite one example, Baglione praised the sixteenth-century artist Matteo da Lecce (1547-1628) for his prophet on the counterfacade of the Oratory of the Gonfalone (fig. 175), a figure that, according to Baglione, shows "*grandissima rilievo*" and "*forza*" and that, it seems, wants to spring out of these walls – "*voglia balzar di quei muri.*"⁵⁸⁴ With regards to Ludovico's painting, Maffeo seems to have valued this quality of a vigorous *forza*, of a body that appears to fall from the fictive two dimensions of the painted world into ours—just not for his family chapel.

A rejected altarpiece?

The painting has typically been considered a rejected work. In light of recent scholarship that has reconsidered the concept of rejected altarpieces through a close reading of contemporary sources and contextual evidence, a careful examination of the reception of Ludovico's painting by its patron is merited.⁵⁸⁵ Such an exercise sheds light on proper decorum in religious paintings in the post-Tridentine period and reasons works were deemed more appropriate for altars or private galleries. The most famous examples of Roman altarpieces whose rejection has been called into question are those by Caravaggio: his first *St. Matthew and the Angel* for the Contarelli Chapel in San Luigi dei

⁵⁸⁴ "*Vita di Matteo da Leccio, Pittore,*" in Baglione 1642, p. 30.

⁵⁸⁵ See for example Pierguidi 2011; Richards 2013.

Francesi (1602), his *Death of the Virgin* for Santa Maria della Scala (1605-6), his *Virgin and Christ Child with Saint Anne* for the Palafronieri in St. Peter's (1605-6), and the first versions of his lateral panels for the Cerasi Chapel in Santa Maria del Popolo (1600-1).⁵⁸⁶ Scholars have demonstrated that these paintings never made it to their intended altars, or left after various amounts of time, for different reasons: the Fabbrica of St. Peter's outlawed altars for private sponsors, so the Palafronieri lost their place, for example, or the *Death of the Virgin*, proved too attractive for private collectors, and entered the Gonzaga collection, though not before the Accademia di San Luca mounted a week-long public display.⁵⁸⁷ Instead, such accounts of rejection were sometimes invented years later, by *seicento* biographers like Baglione or Bellori who were writing with a polemical bent.⁵⁸⁸

⁵⁸⁶ For the first *St. Matthew and the Angel* for the Contarelli Chapel in San Luigi dei Francesi (1599), see Puglisi 1998, pp. 179-183; Ebert-Schifferer 2012, pp. 119-123, 129-130 ("Bellori blamed the bare feet and rustic appearance of the apostle for the removal of the first version of *Saint Matthew*. In this he showed himself far removed from the intellectual openness of theological and scientific debate of Counter-Reformation religious renewal around 1600."). For the *Death of the Virgin* for Santa Maria della Scala (1605-6), see Puglisi 1998, pp. 185-188; Ebert-Schifferer 2012, pp. 179-184; Gage 2014; and note 583 below. For the *Virgin and Christ Child with Saint Anne* for the Palafronieri in St. Peter's (1605-6), see Rice 1997, pp. 43-45; Puglisi 1998, 192-196; Ebert-Schifferer 2012, p. 187-190 ("But the removal was not prompted by anything in Caravaggio's painting."); and for the first versions of his lateral panels for the Cerasi Chapel in Santa Maria del Popolo (1600-1), see note 188.

⁵⁸⁷ For the *Palafronieri* altarpiece, see note 586 above. Caravaggio's *Death of the Virgin* (Musée du Louvre, Paris) was commissioned in 1601, though likely not completed until 1606; Giulio Mancini wished to buy it, but was outbid on the part of Rubens for the Duke of Mantua. More generally, see Rosen 2011; Robertson 2016, pp. 276-279 for overview of ideas of rejection and censorship regarding Caravaggio.

⁵⁸⁸ See Robertson 2016, p. 277 for an overview of Mancini's, Baglione's, and Bellori's criticisms of the *Death of the Virgin*, for example, though Mancini was one of the potential buyers. There were paintings that were rejected for various reasons, like Rubens' first painting for the high altar of Santa Maria in Vallicella, see Buttler 2011; or Scipione Pulzone's painting of Arcangels for the Gesu, either replaced or painter over by Federico Zuccaro. See Bailey 2003, pp. 211-214.

Can we call the Ludovico a rejected altarpiece? Inasmuch that the patron concluded that it was inappropriate for its intended destination, the work seems to belong in that category. But in contradistinction to other scenarios – we might think of Caravaggio's works intended for churches that were subsequently purchased by external third parties – here, Maffeo was involved throughout the entire process, both as ecclesiastical patron and private collector. The work always seemed to suit his taste, and it was the work's intended location, not its intrinsic aesthetic value, that concerned him. One gets the sense that Maffeo quickly surmised that the Ludovico was not a work meant for an official church setting, but still valued its singular qualities – its *forza*, in every sense of the word.

Afterword: The painting's collection history

The painting remained in the Barberini collection at least through the eighteenth century and possibly into the twentieth, though previously it has only been traced through 1686. Upon the death of Urban VIII in 1644, the painting passed from his collection to his nephew, Taddeo Barberini, the Prince of Palestrina, and to his son Maffeo from 1647 to 1686.⁵⁸⁹

⁵⁸⁹ See inventories published in Lavin 1975. 1623 inventory: no. 72, “*S. Bastiano quadro grande del Caraccio senza Cornice*” (Lavin L Inv 23, p. 67); Inventory of 1648 to 49: no. 410: “*un quadro grande con S. Sebastiano morto che lo buttonno nella Chiavica con alcuni soldati alto p.mi nove et largo p.mi dodici con cornice d'albuccio tinta di noce con filetti d'oro-*” (Lavin V. Inv 48-49, p. 208); Inventory of 1655: no. 47: “*Un Quadro con un San Bastiano morto che lo gettono nella Chiavica Cornice d'Albuccio tinta di Color di Noce con filetto d'oro longo palmi dodici largo nove.*” (Lavin VII Inv. 55, p. 266); Inventory of 1686: no. 226: *un quadro p longo che rapresenta S. Bastiano morto e' li Manigolti, che Lo gettono un una fossa lunga p.i 11 alto p. 7 incirca, con cornice liscia color di noce filettata d'oro mano del Caracci* – (Lavin VII. Inv. 86, pp. 403-404). Note that the attribution to Carracci is dropped by 1648.

The painting can be plausibly connected to a record in the inventory of Francesco Barberini, Prince of Palestrina, dated August 4, 1730.⁵⁹⁰ Number 3601 lists “*Un Quadro p. longo, che rappresenta S. Sebastiano morto con li manigoldi, che lo gettano un ina fossa longo pmi 11 alto pmi 7 incirca con cornice liscia color di noce filettata d’oro si dice mano del Camassei.*” The record suggests the attribution to Ludovico Carracci had been lost, and was thus attributed to Andrea Camassei. The measurements of eleven by seven *palmi* correspond to the dimensions of the Getty painting. Harris also mentions the presence of this “Camassei” painting in an inventory of 1738-39 (where it is listed as measuring twelve by seven *palmi*) and in the 1844 Casa Barberini inventory (no. 1004).⁵⁹¹ Here I can clarify the painting’s subsequent location even later in time, into the early twentieth century, when a “*Martirio di S. Sebastiano (tavola), Andrea Camassei, Altezza m. 0.25 x 0.20 L300*” is recorded in the circa 1911 collection of the Principessa Anna Corsini Barberini.

Of course, the error could be simply a mistake by someone re-transcribing the contents of an earlier inventory: “Carracci” and “Camassei” could be easily confused. Camassei was an important painter who received extensive Barberini patronage, and his presence in the Barberini inventories – even erroneously, is not surprising. Even if we posit that the mistake may have derived from a transcription error, there are other possible reasons for the attribution. Camassei, in the classicizing circle of Andrea Sacchi (1599-1661) and Pietro da Cortona (1596-1669), seems worlds away from Ludovico and the Bolognese school. As previously mentioned, however, the artist had painted an

⁵⁹⁰ See these additional Barberini inventories published by the Getty Provenance Index Database.

⁵⁹¹ Harris 1970, p. 67, no. 24.

unusual scene of St. Sebastian being beaten by rods for the high altar of the church of San Sebastiano al Palatino (fig. 127). However, there are no extant paintings or documents indicating that Camassei ever depicted the disposal of Sebastian's body, as recorded in later inventories. Thus, the painting mentioned in the eighteenth through early twentieth-century inventories must be Ludovico's.

Conclusion

The case studies presented in this dissertation have demonstrated ways in which sacred painting connected seventeenth-century viewers to Rome's early Christian foundations. These altarpieces could, in the words of the theologian Gabriele Paleotti (1522-1597), "delight, move, and instruct" with their narratives from the first centuries of the Church, whether an elegiac burial scene or a violent martyrdom.⁵⁹² The three examples showcase the variety of early *seicento* religious painting: a high altarpiece for a major early Christian basilica, as in Chapter One; a side chapel's altarpiece in a small church in Trastevere, as in Chapter Two; and a painting executed outside of Rome deemed inappropriate for its intended Roman destination, as in Chapter Three.

My study enhances understanding of the many ways the Early Christian Revival manifested itself, particularly in the early seventeenth century. The altarpieces here, painted in the circumscribed period of 1607 to 1613, were commissioned at a crucial moment during the Post-Tridentine era. The stories of the Church's early martyrs were being freshly appraised, based on the research of historians, antiquarians, and theologians like Ottavio Panvinio, Pompeo Ugonio, and Cesare Baronio. Exploration of the catacombs, sparked by the rediscovery of the "underground city" in 1578, concretized the links between Rome's *terra* and the church's early saints and spiritual practices. These associations could be felt anew by the early modern viewer standing in the restored churches with sacred *historie* furnishing the altars.

The images in the altarpieces discussed here are different from the didactic, bloody scenes of the Jesuit martyrdom cycles of the 1580s, however. Instead, they reflect

⁵⁹² Paleotti 2012, p. 111.

the naturalistic impulse that impacted much of the art of 1600, embodied by the seismic influence of Caravaggio, the Carracci, and the Florentine reformers. The naturalistic style made tangible in a sensory way the martyrdoms, fulfilling Paleotti's "delight and move" directives, and not simply the one to "instruct," the way earlier Counter-Reformation painting may have. Created a few years before these altarpieces, the marble *Santa Cecilia* of 1600 by Stefano Maderno (fig. 7) epitomized a synergistic intertwining of the currents in Christian archeology and artistic production of early *seicento* Rome. At the same time, Rome was beautifying itself in these years with new decorations for holy sites in anticipation of the 1575, 1600, and 1625 Jubilee Years and the multitudes of attendant pilgrims. These altarpieces are the previously unstudied reverberations of these phenomena.

Additionally, this study contributes a link between the late sixteenth-century reforms of an important figure like Cesare Baronio and the concerns of Christian antiquarianism under the pontificate of Pope Urban VIII (r. 1623-1644), who, as Cardinal Maffeo Barberini, commissioned the painting discussed in Chapter 3. Future studies might investigate the relationship between Maffeo Barberini's early patronage at Rome's holy *loci* and his papal projects in the 1620s restoring and commissioning artworks for early Christian sites in Rome. Of great interest here is Urban VIII's renovation campaign at the church of Santa Bibiana, and Gianlorenzo Bernini's activities as architect and sculptor there.⁵⁹³ Restoration of the church began in February 1624, in preparation for the 1625 Jubilee Year.⁵⁹⁴ A month later, St. Bibiana's remains were found on the site,

⁵⁹³ See Marder 1998, pp. 47-57.

⁵⁹⁴ For a contemporary account of the church's restoration, see Fedini 1627.

prompting the commissioning of Bernini to create a new high altar with a marble sculpture of the saint.⁵⁹⁵

Bernini's *Santa Bibiana* (fig. 176) embodies the concerns of this study, as Bernini's statue refers to the then-recent discovery of the saint's relics on the site. The sculptor, in his first public religious commission, symbolically planted the marble saint into Rome's sacred earth with his inclusion of the saint's legendary herbs at her feet. These carved plants recall the flora painted by Antonio Tanari in his *Santa Pudenziana* altarpiece, discussed in the Introduction to this study; as Frank Fehrenbach has written, the marble plants grow towards the light.⁵⁹⁶ Bernini depicts St. Bibiana resting on a marble column, referring to the column—preserved in the church—to which she was tied and beaten with lead rods. Bernini's site-specific *Santa Bibiana* is the artistic heir to Maderno's *Santa Cecilia*, mediated through the commissions discussed in this dissertation.

Chapter One presents the first study of Cigoli's *Burial of St. Paul* (c. 1609-13) for the Basilica of San Paolo fuori le mura within the context of the early Christian revival. Cigoli's altarpiece surmounted one of the holiest sites in all of Christianity, marking the site of the Apostle's tomb. With emphasis on the uniqueness of the iconography, my chapter examined how Cigoli was driven to develop imagery that responded to the specificities of the site. In particular, analysis of the surviving preparatory drawings, a rich font of information, reveals the painstaking measures Cigoli took to describe specific monuments in Rome. The hundreds of thousands of visitors to Rome during the Jubilee

⁵⁹⁵ For Bernini's *Santa Bibiana*, see Wittkower 1966, cat. 20; Marder 1998, pp. 47-57; Tiberia 2000, pp. 47-61; Fehrenbach 2005, pp. 12-13.

⁵⁹⁶ Fehrenbach 2005, pp. 12-13.

Year of 1625 would have seen Cigoli's altarpiece on the desolate outskirts of Rome along Via Ostiense. The artist's vision underscored the remoteness of the ancient basilica to those undertaking the arduous pilgrimage route to the seven churches of Rome. The painted "map" offered the opportunity for the individual pilgrim to cast his or her own walk as retracing Paul's (and Peter's) footsteps along the ancient roads of Rome.

The loss of Cigoli's altarpiece in the nineteenth century, combined with the artist's diminished fame in the modern era, has meant that one of the supreme monuments of painting in seventeenth-century is largely unknown and unstudied, its place within the artistic and geographic topography of Rome forgotten. The altarpiece was carefully adapted from existing *Entombment* scenes, notably Raphael's celebrated canvas now in the Galleria Borghese, but was also completely original in its expansion of Pauline iconography. This study suggests that Cigoli's *Burial of St. Paul* impacted subsequent burial scenes of Early Christian saints, including those by Emilio Savonanzi at San Lorenzo fuori le mura (fig. 74) and Guercino at St. Peter's Basilica (fig. 76).

Chapter Two contextualizes Giovanni Bilivert's *Martyrdom of St. Callixtus* (1610) for the church of San Calisto in Trastevere. The panel served as a site-specific installation together with the church's most important relic, the actual well in which the third-century Pope Callixtus was killed. Painted by an artist known better for his Florentine career, the altarpiece was the centerpiece of a chapel that was constructed on an important, but little understood, holy site in Rome. Bilivert's work has previously only been studied in exhibitions where it was extrapolated from its setting, while the church of San Calisto has received very little scholarly attention because of its longtime closure to the public. Placing the altarpiece within larger changes occurring in the neighborhood of

Trastevere in the early *seicento* offers further evidence for the role of site in the artist's design.

By examining both Cigoli's altarpiece for San Paolo along with Bilivert's at San Calisto, this study uncovers the similarities between the two commissions. Importantly, both were originally given by the Benedictine Cassinese monks to Cigoli, and both incorporated the specificities of site in their designs. In elucidating the links between the two commissions, my discussion amplifies recent research on the patterns of patronage by the Benedictines, the subject of a 2017 conference held at the Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florence.⁵⁹⁷ Though the congregation's earlier patronage is well known, as for example at the church of San Vitale in Ravenna and in the case of Raphael's *Sistine Madonna* for the church of San Sisto in Piacenza, their activities in early seventeenth-century Rome have received little comment.

The third chapter inscribes a work now in Los Angeles, California, within the sacred topography of the Eternal City. Ludovico Carracci's *St. Sebastian Being Thrown into the Cloaca Maxima* (1612), today in the J. Paul Getty Museum, presents an unusual moment in St. Sebastian's *vita*, one previous writers have suggested is unique. My chapter reviews a range of iconographical precedents as well as proposes a new source for Ludovico's individual imagery. Furthermore, my analysis of the painting suggests richer dimensions in the relationships between both Maffeo Barberini and his Bolognese milieu and Ludovico Carracci and Rome. I also delve into Ludovico's strategies for tailoring his work to the intended destination, an unrealized chapel in the sewers beneath

⁵⁹⁷ "The Network of Cassinese Arts in Mediterranean Renaissance Italy," held March 16-18, 2017, Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florenz – Max-Planck-Institut, organized by Alessandro Nova and Giancarla Periti.

the church of Sant'Andrea della Valle. This was accomplished through an exploration of both Rome's ancient waterways and the intersections between *trompe l'oeil* and the burgeoning natural sciences, as encapsulated by the small detail of the scorpion in the painting's bottom right.

Several unanswered questions remain regarding Maffeo Barberini's commission, most notably concerning the grotto chapel alluded to in his letters with his brother Carlo. In the future, clarity may be gained through archeological study of both the chapel and its foundations to ascertain if construction had ever begun. Further archival study in the vast and diverse Barberini archives might furnish information regarding key questions: Was an architect ever hired? Are there existing architectural plans or payment records? How was Ludovico's painting displayed in the Palazzo Barberini, and through its subsequent collection history?

Taken together, these three chapters reveal the richness of early modern Rome contained in its chapels (or, at times, in museums across the globe). So connected to their site, to their interactions with their environs, altarpieces demand contextualization to properly understand their meaning, reception, and use. While focusing on these three case studies, my dissertation provides the foundation for further systematic analysis of Roman altarpieces, a format that flourished in the second half of the sixteenth century and well into the eighteenth century, but one for which the complete account remains to be written.

Beyond that, my case studies demonstrate a remarkable interdependence between image and relic that was particular to the sacred topography of Rome, the heart of Christendom since Early Christian times, as embodied by St Peter's location, built over the first pope's tomb. Site-specific altarpieces functioned as essential and active

instruments in supporting the agenda of the post-Tridentine Church hierarchy to reaffirm the unbroken descent of church authority from Peter to the present pope, the cult of the saints, and the efficacy of relics. It is worth recalling the Tridentine decree on the “Invocation, Veneration and Relics of Saints and on Sacred Images,” an excerpt of which follows:

And the bishops shall carefully teach this, - that, by means of the histories of the mysteries of our Redemption, portrayed by paintings or other representations, the people is instructed, and confirmed in (the habit of) remembering, and continually revolving in mind the articles of faith; as also that great profit is derived from all sacred images, not only because the people are thereby admonished of the benefits and gifts bestowed upon them by Christ, but also because the miracles which God has performed by means of the saints, and their salutary examples, are set before the eyes of the faithful; that so they may give God thanks for those things; may order their own lives and manners in imitation of the saints; and may be excited to adore and love God, and to cultivate piety.⁵⁹⁸

The altarpieces presented in this study were active agents in authenticating church history and creating a spiritual experience for contemporaries—offering “salutary examples” so that people “may order their own lives in imitation of the saints.” Paintings “of the histories of the mysteries of our Redemption,” these altarpieces brought to life those mysteries on the same sacred soil the saints themselves once walked.

⁵⁹⁸ From Session 25, 1563, “Invocation, Veneration and Relics of Saints and on Sacred Images,” published by Waterworth 1848, p. 235.

Figures



Fig. 1 Richard Serra, *Tilted Arc*, 1981, installation view, Foley Federal Plaza, New York City, New York



Fig. 2 Cerasi Chapel, Church of Santa Maria del Popolo, Rome, Italy



Fig. 3 Taddeo Zuccaro, Apse fresco, 1559-60, Santa Sabina, Rome, Italy



Fig. 4 Title page of Antonio Bosio, *Roma Sotterranea*, based on a design by Pietro da Cortona



Fig. 5 Interior, Church of Santi Nereo ed Achilleo, Rome, Italy



Fig. 6 Interior, Church of Santo Stefano Rotondo, Rome, Italy



Fig. 7 Stefano Maderno, *Santa Cecilia*, 1600, Church of Santa Cecilia in Trastevere, Rome, Italy



Fig. 8 Francesco Vanni, *Santa Cecilia*, c. 1601-2, Church of Santa Cecilia in Trastevere, Rome, Italy



Fig. 9 Niccolò Menghini, *Santa Martina*, 1635, Church of Santi Luca e Martina, Rome, Italy

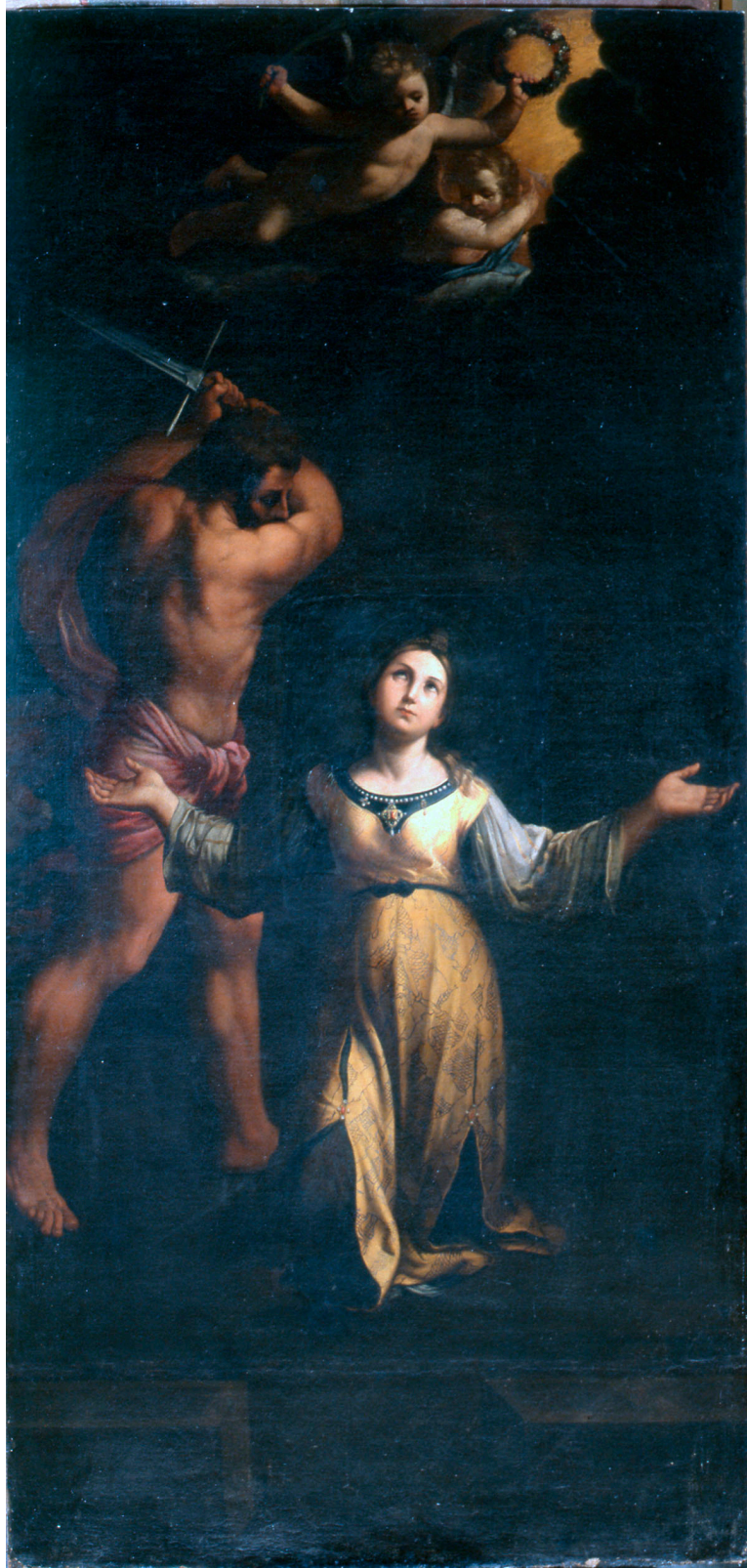


Fig. 10 Guido Reni, *Martyrdom of Santa Cecilia*, c. 1604-05, Cappella del Bagno, Church of Santa Cecilia, Rome, Italy



Fig. 11 Installation view, *Roma al tempo di Caravaggio*, Palazzo Venezia, Rome, Italy



Fig. 12 Antonio Tanari, *Saints Prassede and Pudenziana Collecting the Blood of Martyrs*, 1607, Church of Santa Pudenziana, Rome, Italy



Fig. 13 Detail of Fig. 12

Chapter 1



Fig. 14 Giovanni Battista Piranesi, *Spaccato Interno della basilica di San Paolo fuori delle mura* [View towards altar wall, San Paolo fuori le mura, c. 1749], in *Vedute di Roma...*, vol. II, Paris 1836

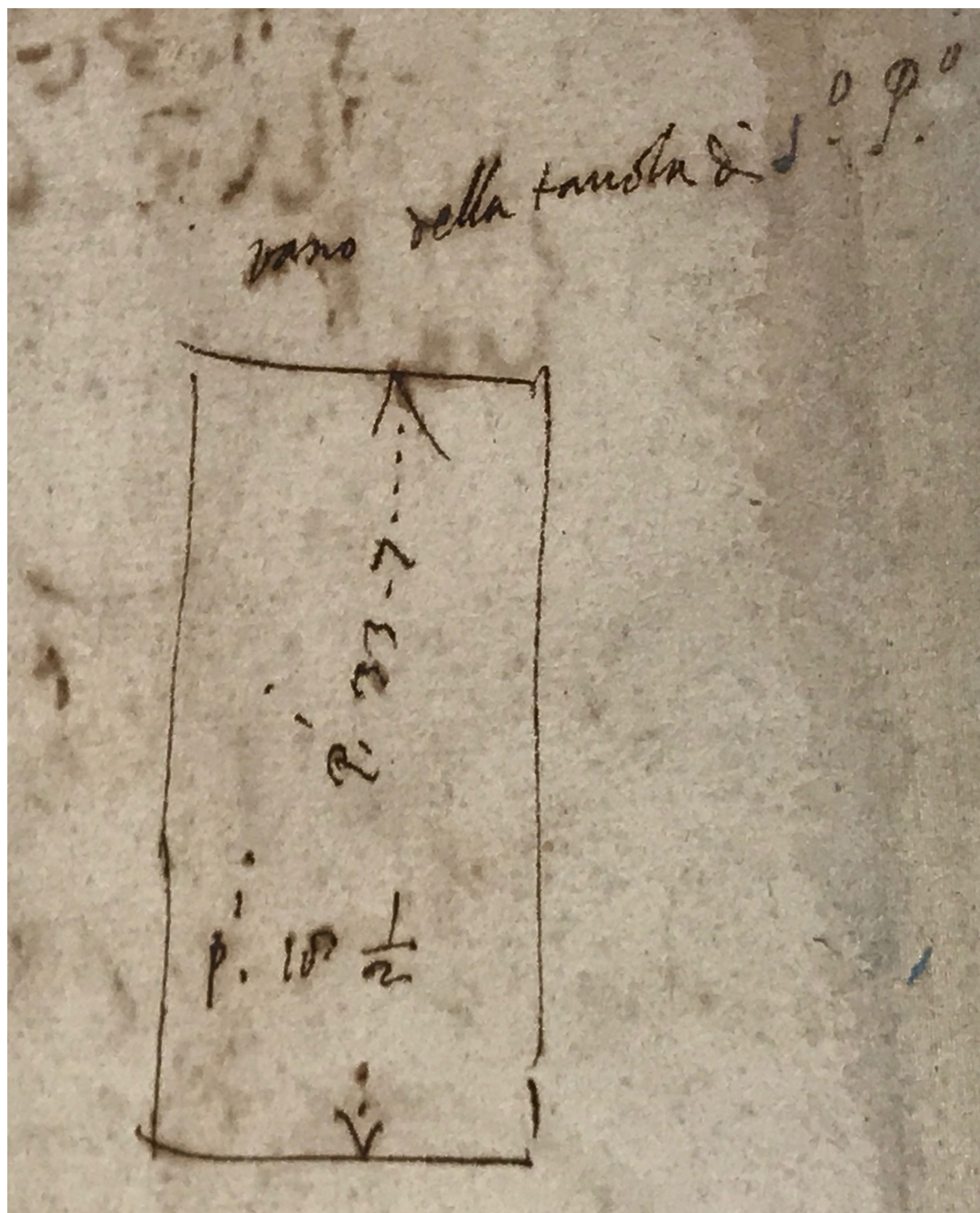


Fig. 15 Detail with dimensions in *palmi* of an altarpiece, from Cigoli, *Studies for a burial of St. Paul*, c. 1606-7, Gabinetto degli Stampe e dei Disegni, Gallerie degli Uffizi, Florence, Italy (inv. 972F verso)

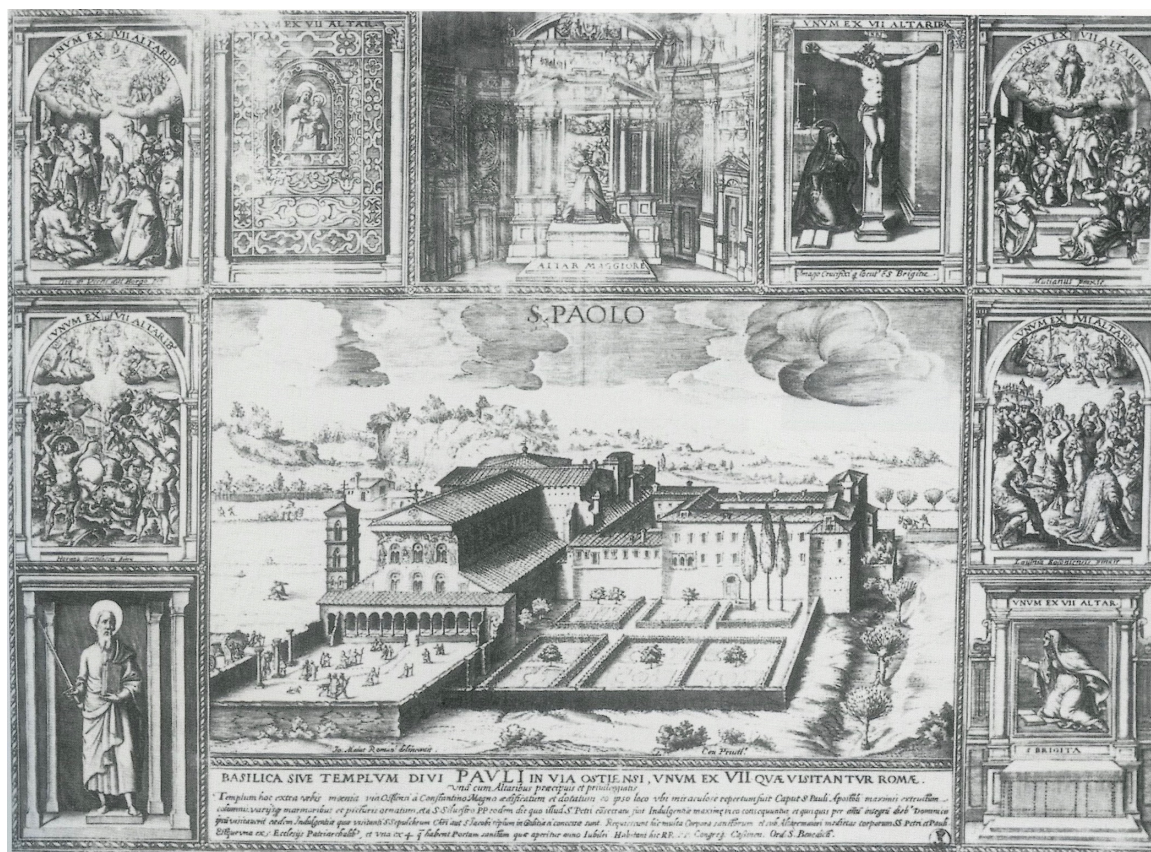


Fig. 16 Giovanni Maggi, *San Paolo fuori le mura*, 1625, from *Visita alle Sette Chiese di Roma*

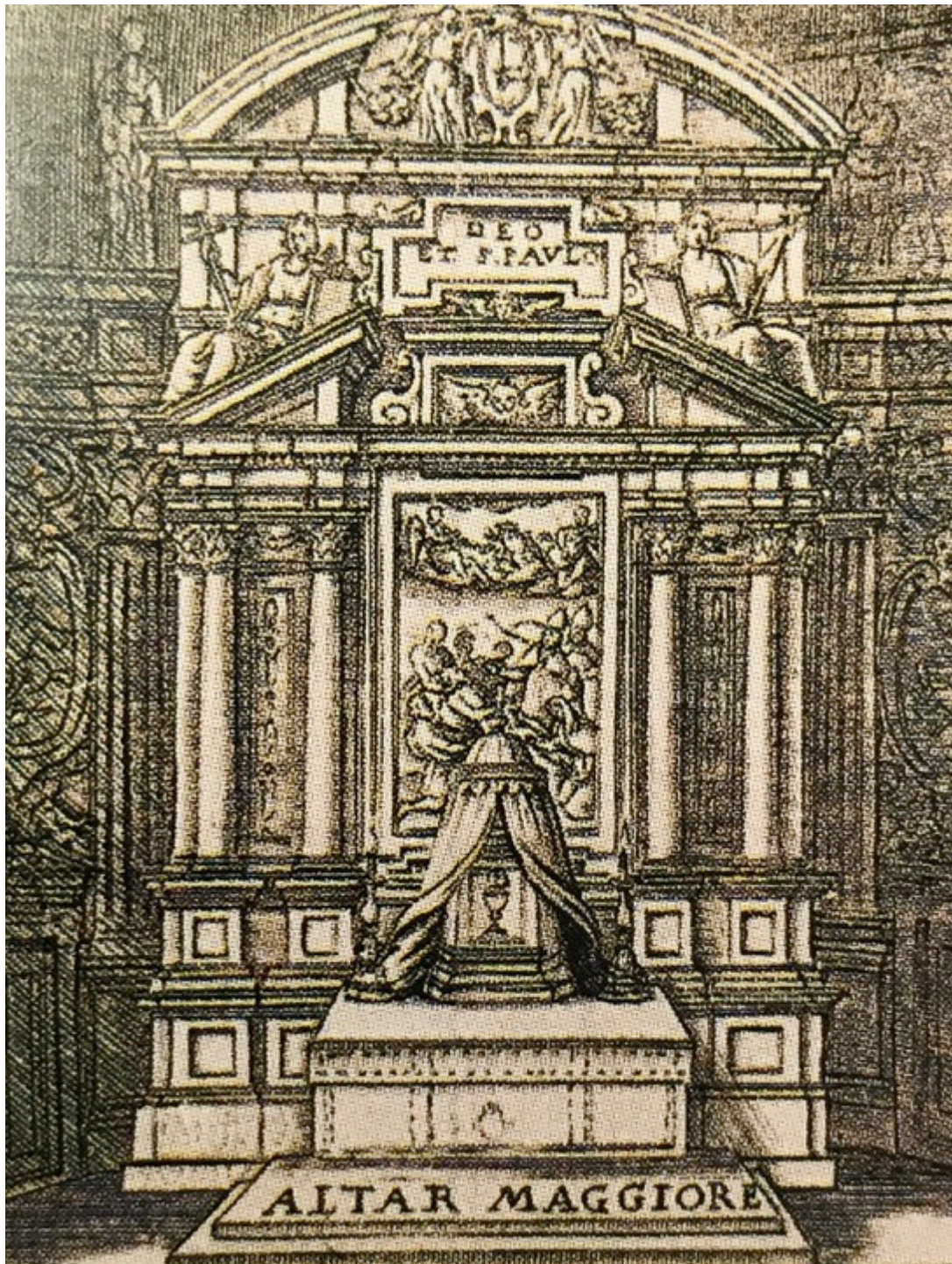


Fig. 17 Detail of Fig. 16



Fig. 18 Basilica of San Paolo fuori le mura, Rome, Italy (exterior)



Fig. 19 Basilica of San Paolo fuori le mura, Rome, Italy (interior)



Fig. 20 Guido Reni, *Martyrdom of St. Peter*, c. 1604-05, Vatican Pinacoteca, Vatican City



Fig. 21 Giovanni Antonio Galli, known as Spadarino, *Sts. Martial and Valerian*, c. 1629, Museo Petriano, Vatican City



Fig. 22 Title page of Hermann Bavinck, *Underricht und Wegweiser: wie ein Teutscher in und ausserhalb Rom, die siben aufs drei hundert und mehr kirchen...*, Rome, Italy, 1620



Fig. 23 Marble slab with inscription, Basilica of San Paolo fuori le mura, Rome, Italy



Fig. 24 Detail of the arrest of St. Paul scene from Junius Bassus relief, fourth century, Museo Storico del Tesoro della Basilica di San Pietro, Vatican City



Fig. 25 Detail of Giotto, *Beheading of St. Paul*, from the Stefaneschi Triptych, 1330, Vatican Pinacoteca, Vatican Museums, Vatican City



Fig. 26 Alessandro Algardi, *Beheading of St. Paul*, 1650, High altar of the church of San Paolo, Bologna, Italy



Fig. 27 after a design by Raphael, *Conversion of St. Paul*, tapestry, Vatican Museums

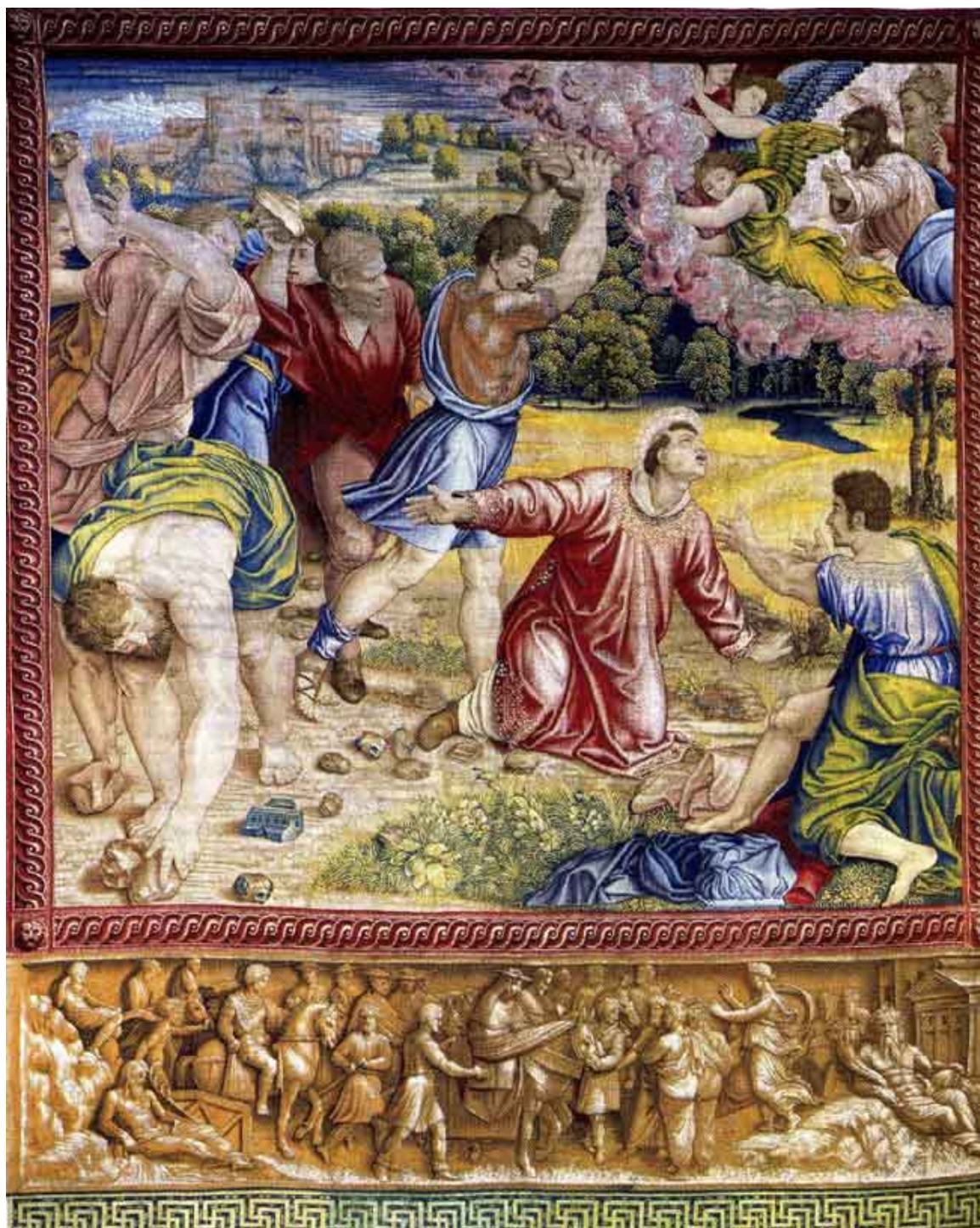


Fig. 28 after a design by Raphael, *Stoning of St. Stephen*, tapestry, Vatican Museums

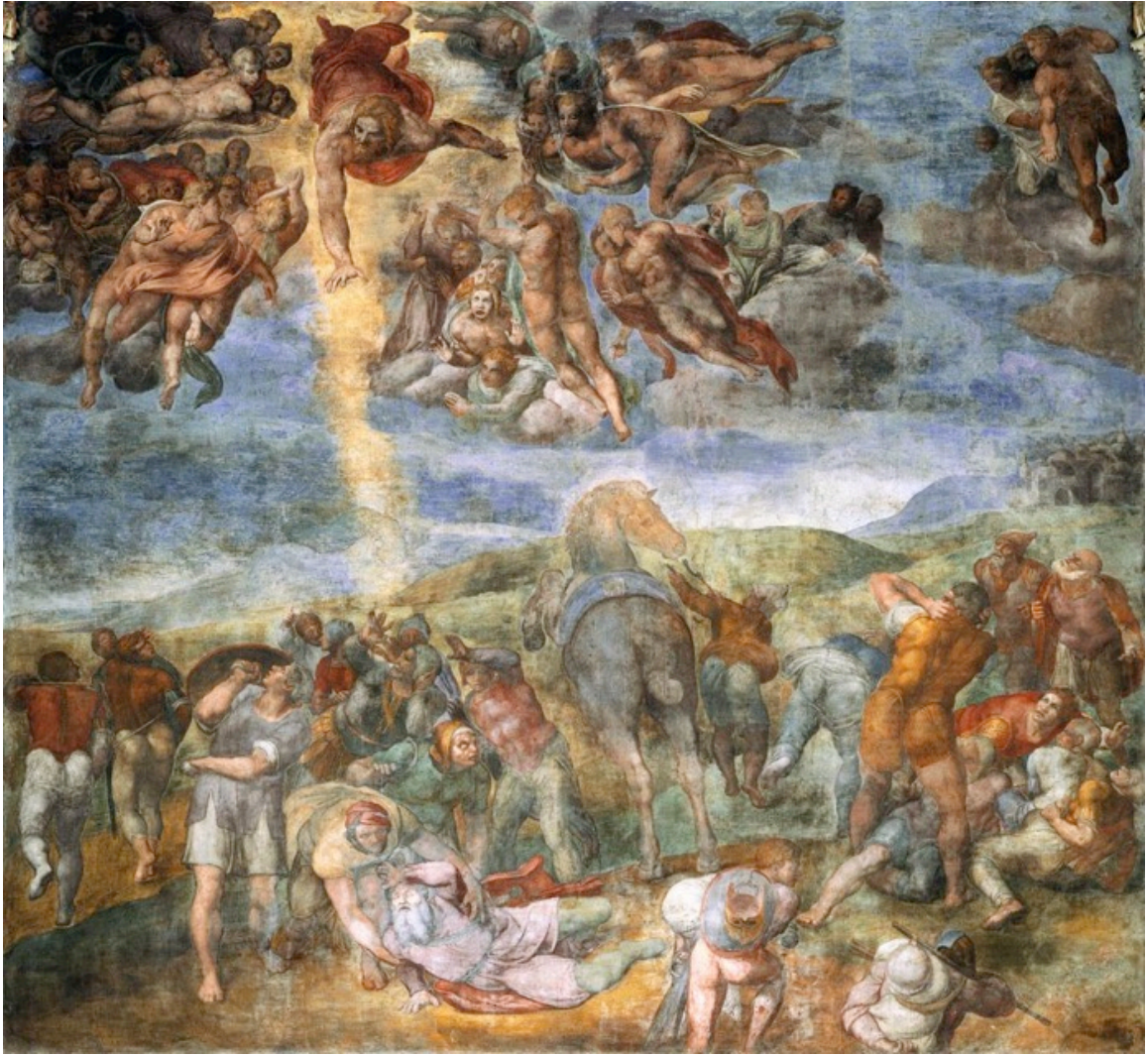


Fig. 29 Michelangelo, *Conversion of St. Paul*, 1541-48, Pauline Chapel, Vatican Palace, Vatican City



Fig. 30 Caravaggio, *Conversion of St. Paul*, c. 1601-02, Church of Santa Maria del Popolo, Rome, Italy

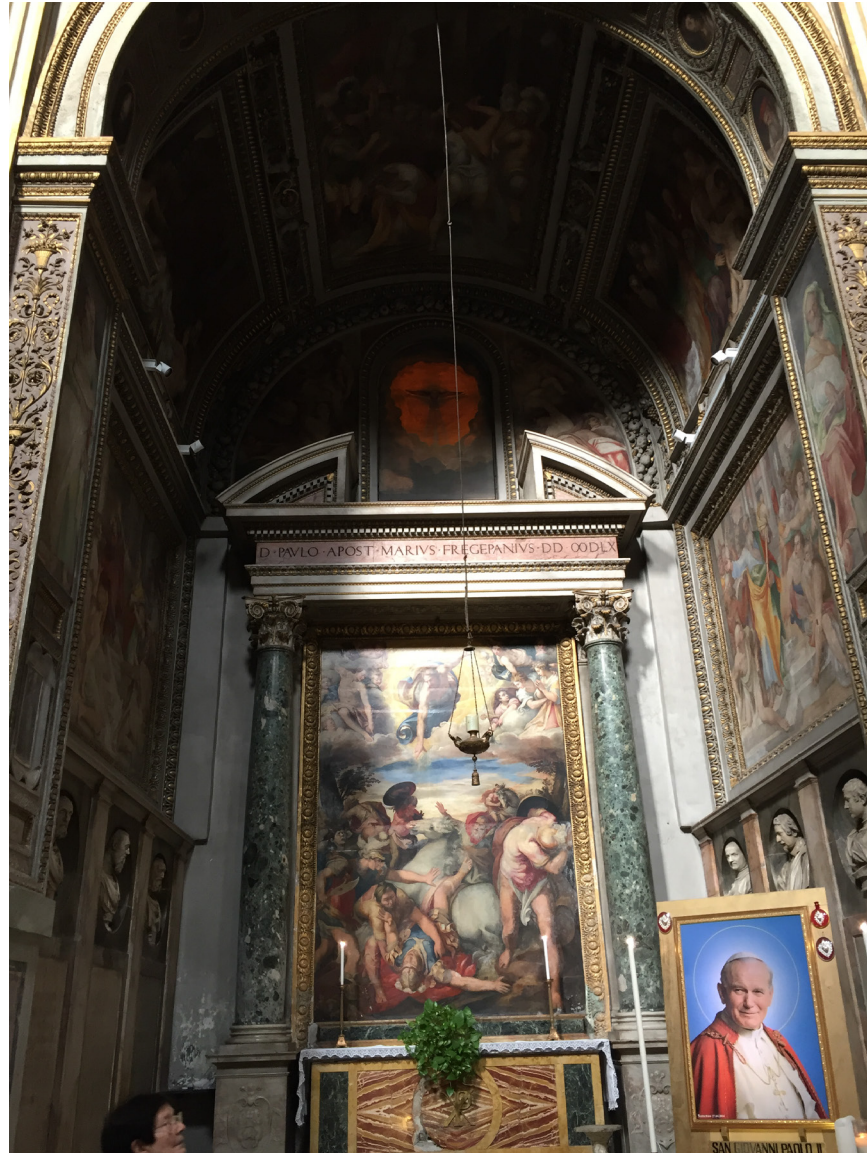


Fig. 31 Frangipani Chapel, San Marcello al Corso, Rome, Italy, with altarpiece and frescoes by Taddeo Zuccaro



Fig. 32 Taddeo Zuccaro, *Conversion of St Paul*, ca. 1558-1564, Frangipani Chapel, San Marcello al Corso, Rome, Italy



Fig. 33 Taddeo Zuccaro, *The Beheading of St. Paul*, ca. 1558-1564, Frangipani Chappell, San Marcello al Corso, Rome, Italy



Fig. 34 Gerard von Honthorst, *Ecstasy of St Paul*, 1617, Santa Maria della Vittoria (sacristy), Rome, Italy



Fig. 35 Jacques Callot, engraving (after Lavinia Fontana), *Stoning of St. Stephen* from the Basilica of San Paolo fuori le mura, in Callot's *Les Tableaux de Rome, Les Eglises Jubilaires*, plate 1, c. 1607-11



Fig. 36 Annibale Carracci, *Stoning of St. Stephen*, ca. 1603-04, Musée du Louvre, Paris, France (inv. 204)



Fig. 37 Cigoli, *Stoning of St. Stephen*, 1593, Galleria Palatina, Florence, Italy



Fig. 38 Jacques Callot, engraving (after Orazio Gentileschi), *Conversion of St. Paul* from the Basilica of San Paolo fuori le mura, in Callot's *Les Tableaux de Rome, Les Eglises Jubilaires*, plate 2, c. 1607-11



Fig. 39 Enea Vico, *Conversion of St Paul*, 1545

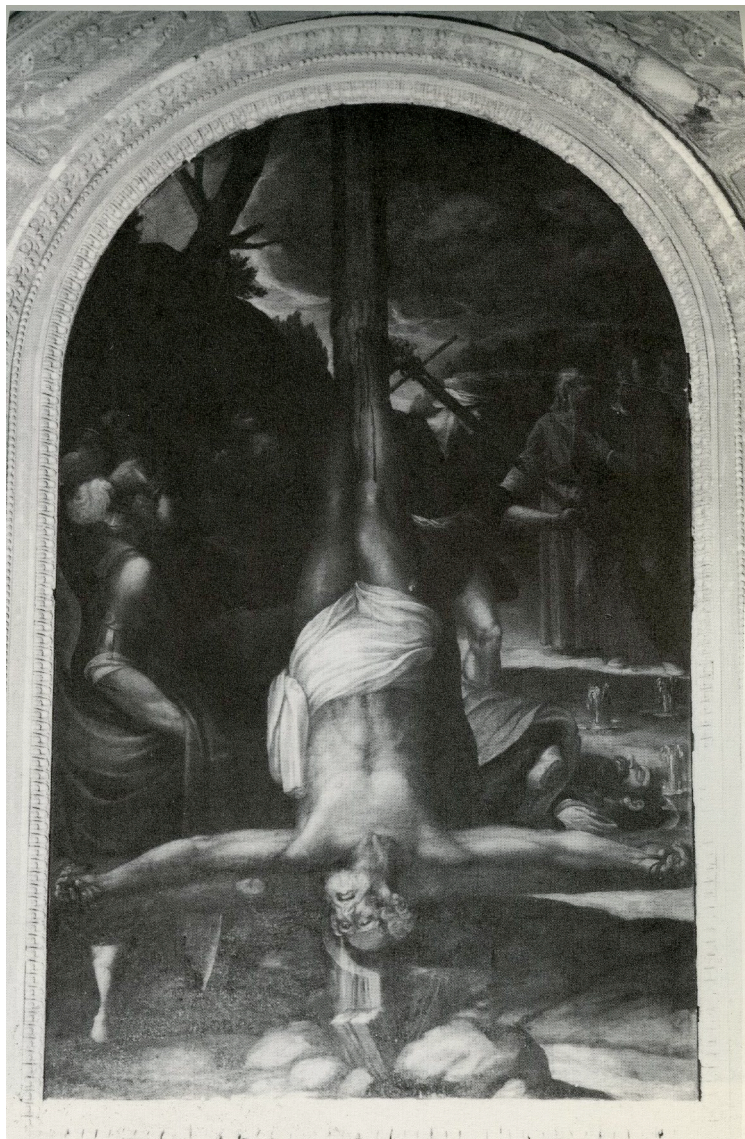


Fig. 40 Orazio Gentileschi, *Martyrdom of Sts. Peter and Paul*, c.1597-98, Abbazia di Santa Maria, Farfa, Italy



Fig. 41 Avanzino Nucci, *St. Paul on the Island of Malta*, c. 1600, British Museum, London, England (inv.1952,0830.10)



Fig. 42 Avanzino Nucci, *The Beheading of St. Paul*, c. 1600, Galleria Portatile

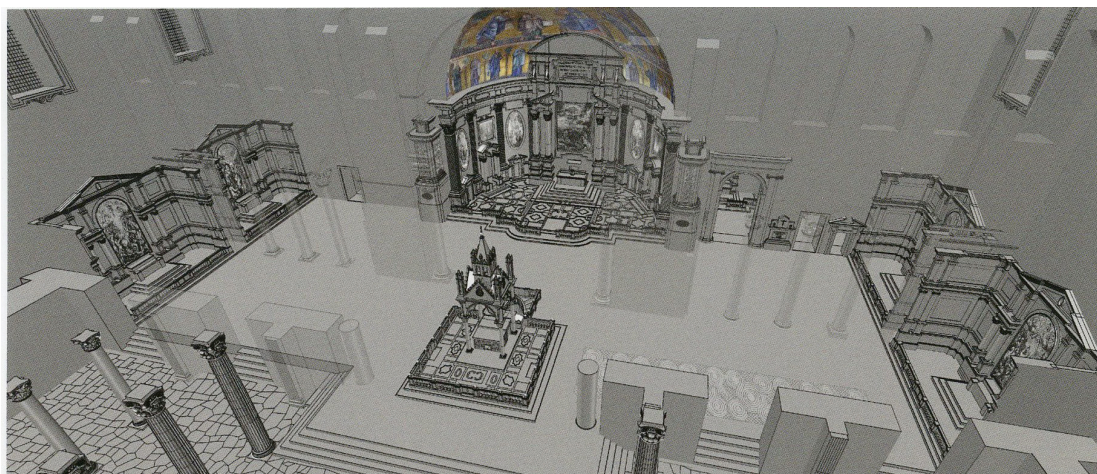


Fig. 43 Model of the presbytery of the Basilica of San Paolo fuori le mura, c. 1610, devised by Nicola Camerlenghi, produced by Evan Gallitelli, from Camerlenghi 2016 Plate XII

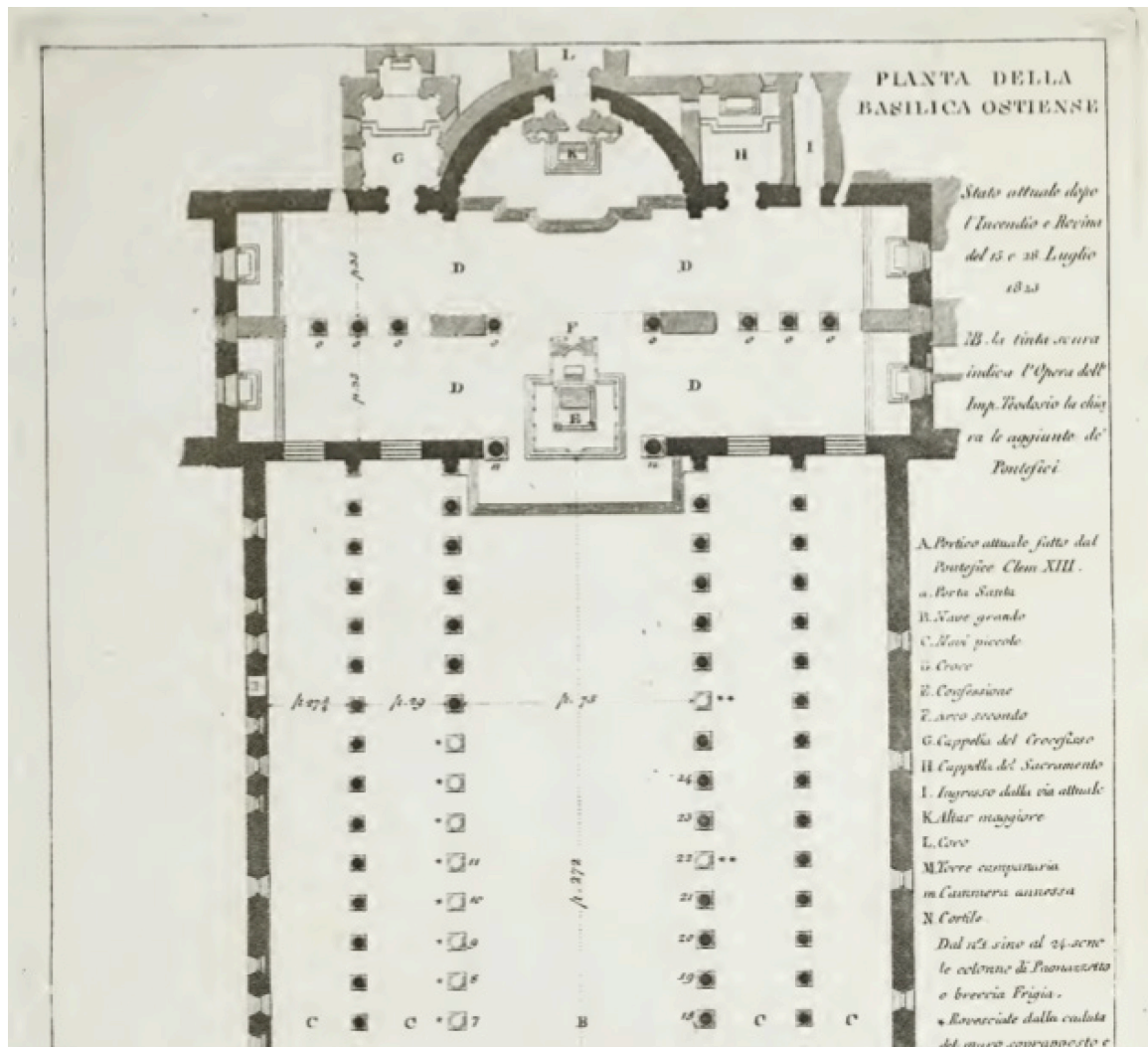


Fig. 44 Detail of floor plan ca. 1754 showing high altar (marked "K") from Angelo Uggeri, *Della Basilica di S. Paolo sulla via Ostiense*, 1823



Fig. 45 Deodato Orlandi, *Burial of St. Paul* (after a fresco in the atrium of Old St. Peter's Basilica), 1310, San Piero a Grado, Pisa, Italy



Fig. 46 Cigoli, *Studies for the Burial of St. Paul*, c. 1607, Gabinetto dei Disegni e delle Stampe, Gallerie degli Uffizi, Florence (972F verso).



Fig. 47 Cigoli, *Study for the Burial of St. Paul*, c. 1606-7, Gabinetto degli Stampe e dei Disegni, Gallerie degli Uffizi, Florence, Italy (inv. 972F recto)



Fig. 48 Detail of Fig. 47



Fig. 49 Caravaggio, *Entombment*, c. 1602-4, Vatican Pinacoteca, Vatican City



Fig. 50 Raphael, *Entombment*, c. 1508, Galleria Borghese, Rome, Italy



Fig. 51 Detail of Cigoli, *Studies for a Burial of St. Paul*, c. 1606-7, Gabinetto degli Stampe e dei Disegni, Gallerie degli Uffizi, Florence, Italy (inv. 972F verso)



Fig. 52 Cigoli, *Study for the Burial of St. Paul*, c. 1607, Gabinetto degli Stampe e dei Disegni, Gallerie degli Uffizi, Florence, Italy (inv. 1014F recto)



Fig. 53 Cigoli, *Study for the Burial of St. Paul*, c. 1607, Gabinetto degli Stampe e dei Disegni, Gallerie degli Uffizi, Florence, Italy (inv. 1015F recto)



Fig. 54 Detail of Fig. 47



Fig. 55 Detail of Fig. 47, showing the Separation of Sts. Peter and Paul



Fig. 56 Detail of Fig. 53



Fig. 57 Detail of Cigoli, *Study for the Burial of St. Paul*, c. 1606-7, Gabinetto degli Stampe e dei Disegni, Gallerie degli Uffizi, Florence, Italy (inv. 972F verso)



Fig. 58 Cigoli, *Modello for the Burial of St. Paul* [squared for transfer], c. 1608, Gabinetto degli Stampe e dei Disegni, Gallerie degli Uffizi, Florence, Italy (inv. 1698F recto)



Fig. 59 Detail of Fig. 58



Fig. 60 Aerial view of Via Ostiense, with the Pyramid in upper left

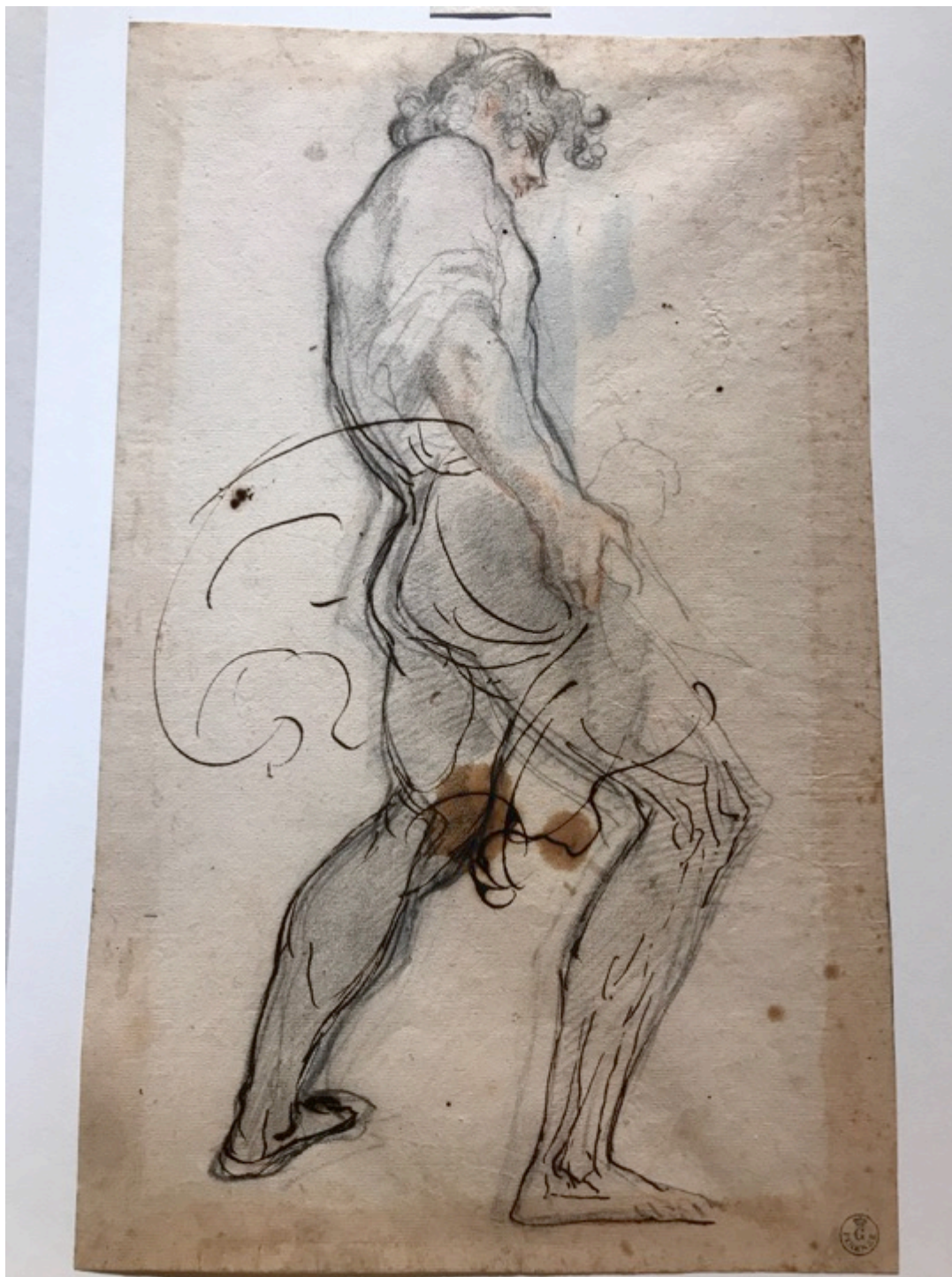


Fig. 61 Cigoli, *Study of a pallbearer for the Burial of St. Paul*, c. 1607-8, Gabinetto degli Stampe e dei Disegni, Gallerie degli Uffizi, Florence, Italy (inv. 8899F recto)



Fig. 62 Cigoli, *Study for Lucina*, c. 1607-8, Gabinetto degli Stampe e dei Disegni, Gallerie degli Uffizi, Florence, Italy (inv. 8899F verso)



Fig 63 Detail of Fig. 62



Fig. 64 Detail of Cigoli, *Study for the Burial of St. Paul*, c. 1606-7, Gabinetto degli Stampe e dei Disegni, Gallerie degli Uffizi, Florence, Italy (inv. 972F verso)



Fig. 65 Detail of Cigoli, *Study for the Burial of St. Paul*, c. 1606-7, Gabinetto degli Stampe e dei Disegni, Gallerie degli Uffizi, Florence, Italy (inv. 972F verso)



Fig. 66 Detail of Fig. 58



Fig. 67 Here attributed to Jacopo Vignali, *study of the body of St. Paul after Cigoli's Burial of St. Paul in San Paolo fuori le mura*, c. 1625, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (1981.128 recto)



Fig. 68 Here attributed to Jacopo Vignali, *study of the Lucina after Cigoli's Burial of St. Paul in San Paolo fuori le mura*, c. 1625, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (1981.128 verso)



Fig. 69 Jacopo Vignali, *Study for Pyramus and Thisbe*, Musée du Louvre, Paris (inv. 2246)



Fig. 70 Detail of Fig. 67

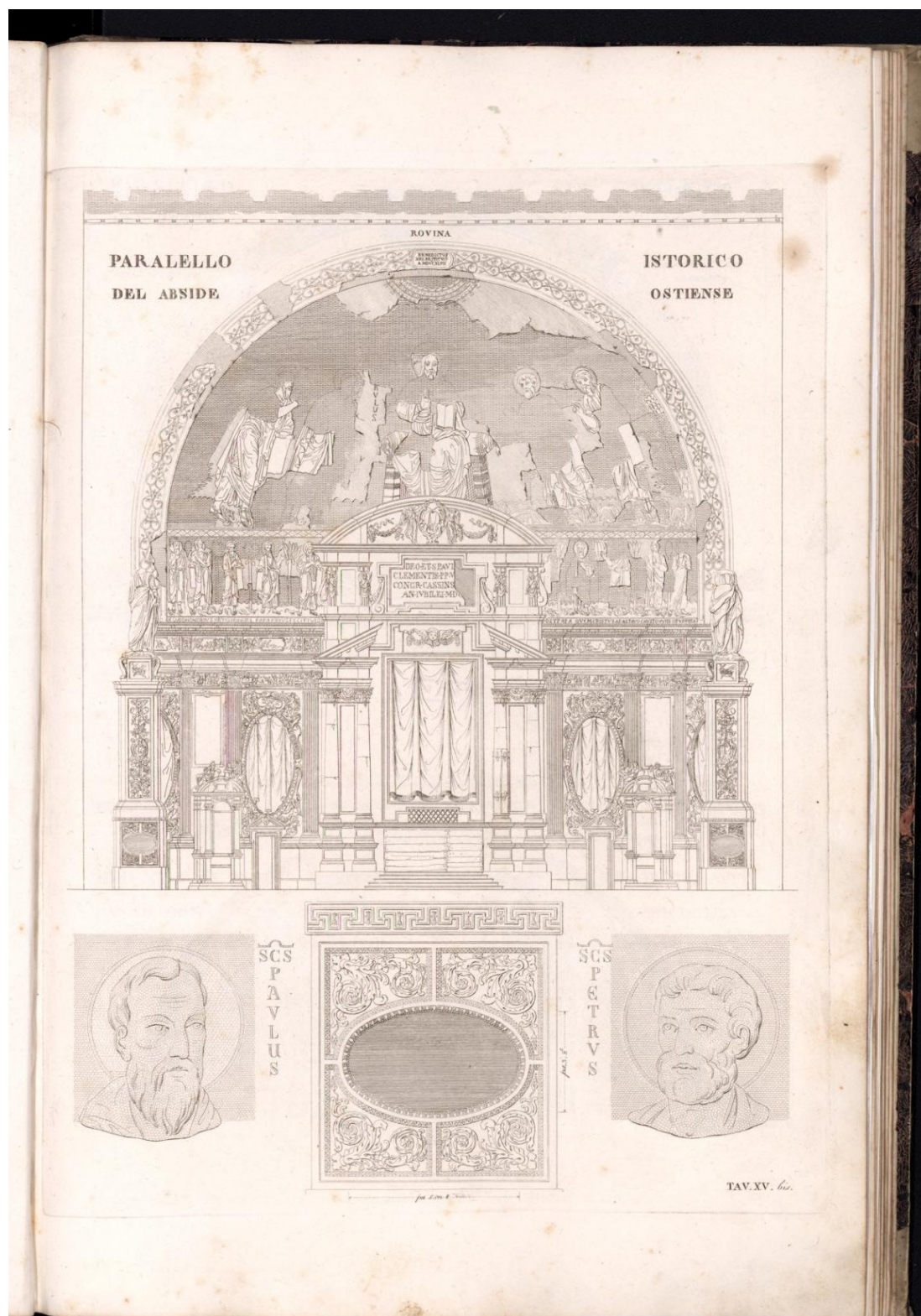


Fig. 71 Angelo Uggeri, *Della Basilica Ulpia nel Foro traiano, istoria e ristaurazione agli amanti delle antichita romane*, Rome, c. 1834 Tav. XV



Fig. 72 Detail of Angelo Uggeri, *High altar of San Paolo fuori le mura* (designed by Onorio Longhi), c. 1823-30, from *Della Basilica Ulpia nel Foro traiano, istoria e ristaurazione agli amanti delle antichità romane*, Rome, c. 1834, Tav. XV



Fig. 73 *Stemma with the sword of St. Paul*, formerly high altar of San Paolo fuori le mura, today in the church's Passeggiata Archeologica



Fig. 74 Emilio Savonanzi, *St. Cyriaca burying martyrs*, c. 1623-25, Basilica of San Lorenzo fuori le mura, Rome, Italy



Fig. 75 Emilio Savonuzzi, *Saints Justinus and Hippolytus transport the body of Saint Lawrence*, c. 1619-25, Convent of San Lorenzo fuori le mura, Rome, Italy (detail)



Fig. 76 Guercino, *Burial of St. Petronilla*, c. 1622-23, Capitoline Museums, Rome, Italy

Chapter 2



Fig. 77 Giovanni Bilivert, *The Martyrdom of St. Callixtus*, 1610, Church of San Calisto in Trastevere, Rome



Fig. 78 San Calisto façade, Rome, Italy



Fig. 79 San Calisto seen from southeast with external view of left-hand chapel

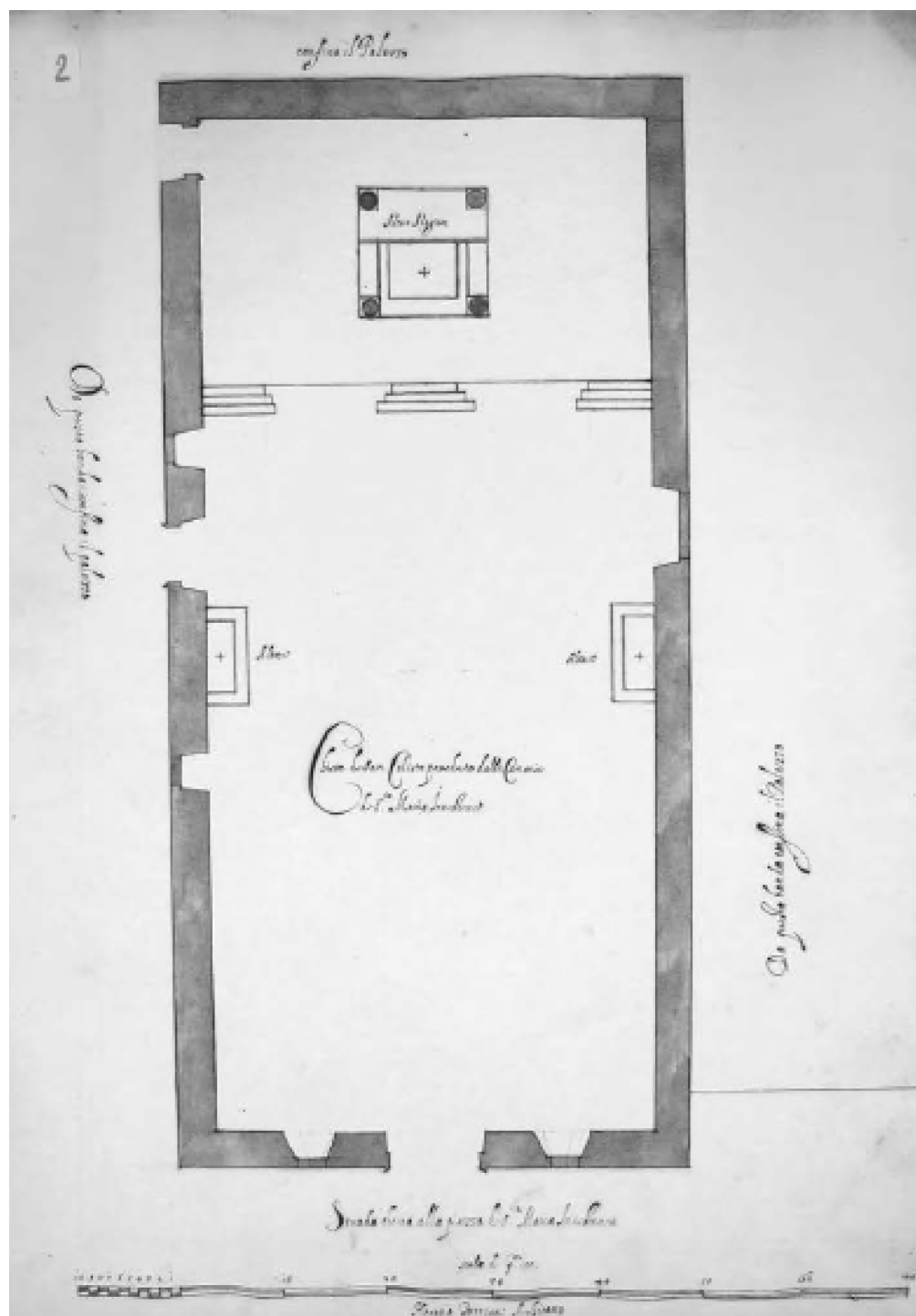


Fig. 80 Orazio Torriani, *Plan of church of San Calisto before restoration*, 1607 published by Guerrieri Borsoi 2014a



Fig. 81 Choir of San Calisto in Trastevere with Avanzino Nucci's altarpiece



Fig. 82 Avanzino Nucci, *Saints Adoring the Madonna della Clemenza*, c. 1610, San Calisto in Trastevere, Rome, Italy



Fig. 83 *Madonna della Clemenza*, Santa Maria in Trastevere, Rome, Italy



Fig. 84 Chapel of St. Callixtus, with Giovanni Bilivert's altarpiece, Church of San Calisto, Rome, Italy



Fig. 85 Pauline Chapel, Santa Maria Maggiore, Rome, Italy



Fig. 86 View into open *sportello* down into the well, Church of San Calisto, Rome, Italy

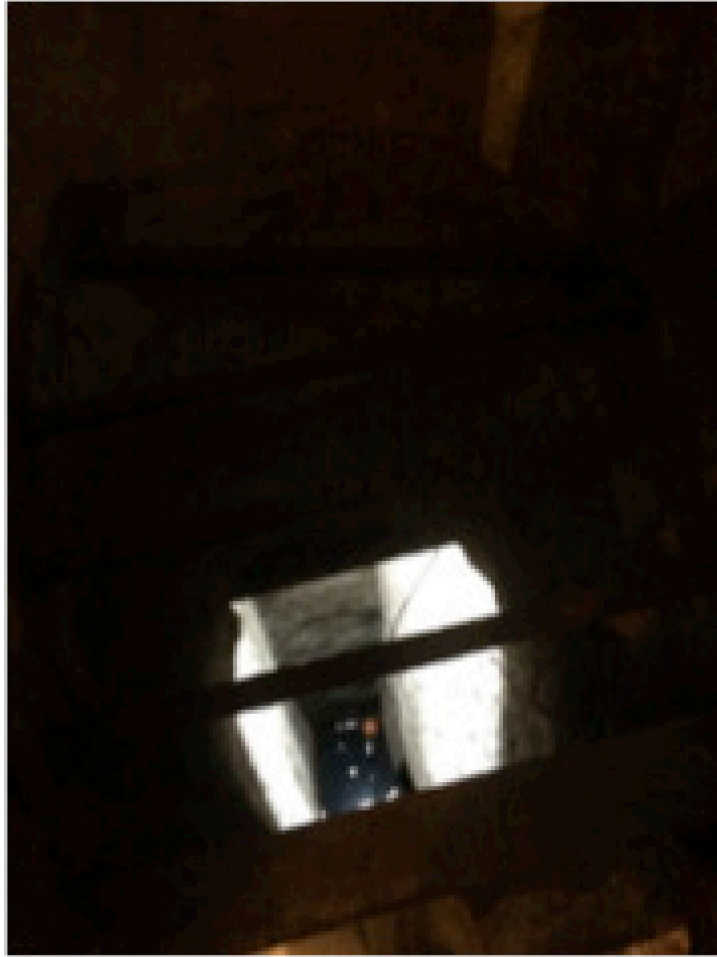


Fig. 87 View into open *sportello* down into the well, Church of San Calisto, Rome, Italy

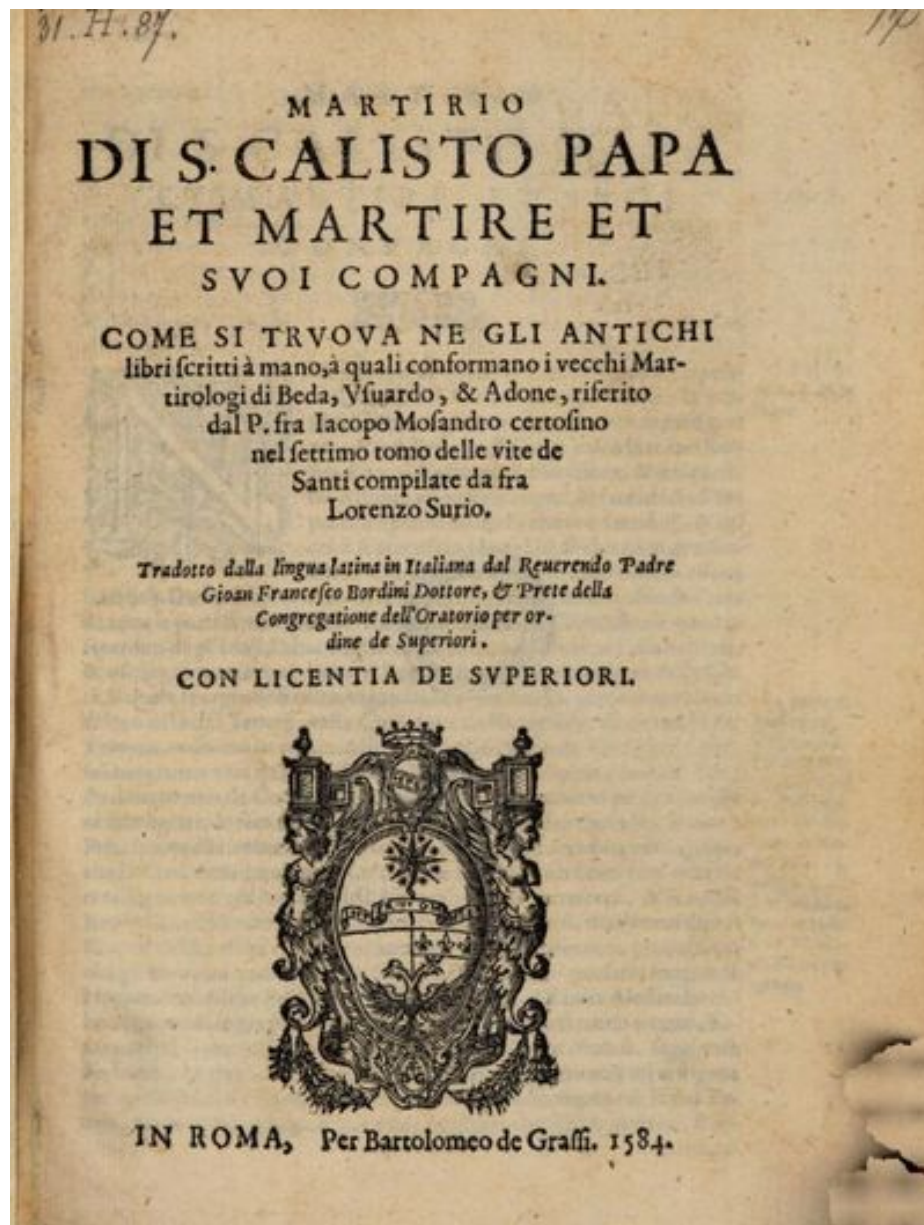


Fig. 88 Title page of Jacobus Mosander, *Martirio di S. Calisto Papa et Martire et suoi Compagni*, Rome, 1584



Fig. 89 Figure of St. Callixtus in apse mosaic in Santa Maria in Trastevere, Rome, Italy (at right)



Fig. 90 *St. Callixtus*, Sacristy, Santa Maria in Trastevere, Rome, Italy



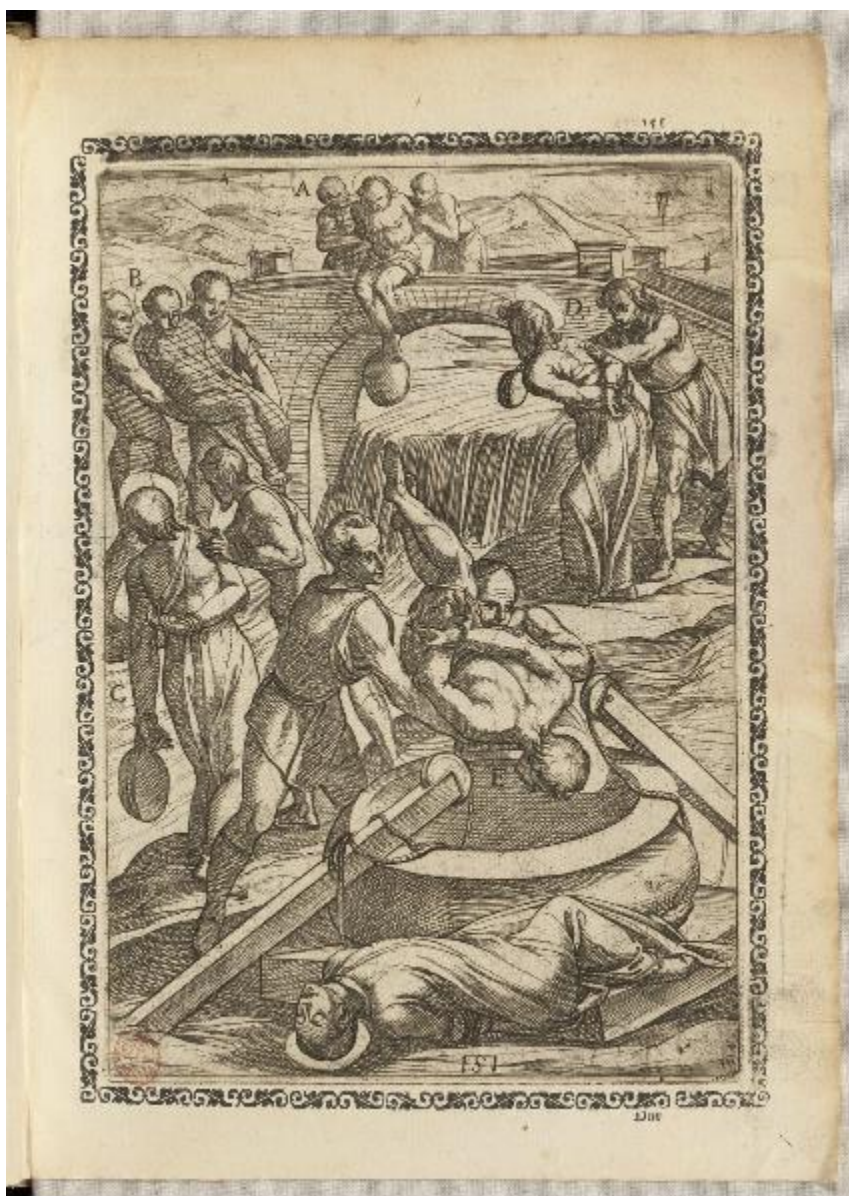
Fig. 91 Detail of St. Callixtus from the *Legenda aurea*, late 13th century French, Huntington Library, San Marino, California (ms. HM 3027, fol. 143v);



Fig. 92 Detail of St. Callixtus from *Elsässische Legenda aurea*, 1419; Heidelberg, Universitätsbibliothek (Cod. Pal. germ. 144, fol. 159v)



Fig. 93 Nicolo Circignani, *Martyrdom of St. Callixtus*, with subsidiary scenes, c. 1582, Santo Stefano Rotondo, Rome, Italy



Source: gallica.bnf.fr / Bibliothèque nationale de France

Fig. 94 Antonio Gallonio, *Trattato de gli instrumenti di martirio e delle varie maniere di martoriare*, 1591 (p. 151)



Fig. 95 Fragment *Martyrdom of St. Callixtus* fresco from tomb of St. Callixtus, Catacombs of Calepodio, Rome, Italy



Fig. 96 Cigoli, *Study for the Martyrdom of St. Callixtus*, 1608, Musée du Louvre, Paris, France (inv. 11560)



Fig. 97 Stone and chain relics of St. Callixtus, Santa Maria in Trastevere, Rome, Italy



Fig. 98 Giovanni Bilivert, *Bozzetto for the Martyrdom of St. Callixtus*, 1608, Arcispedale di Santa Maria Nuova, Florence, Italy



Fig. 99 Detail of Fig. 98

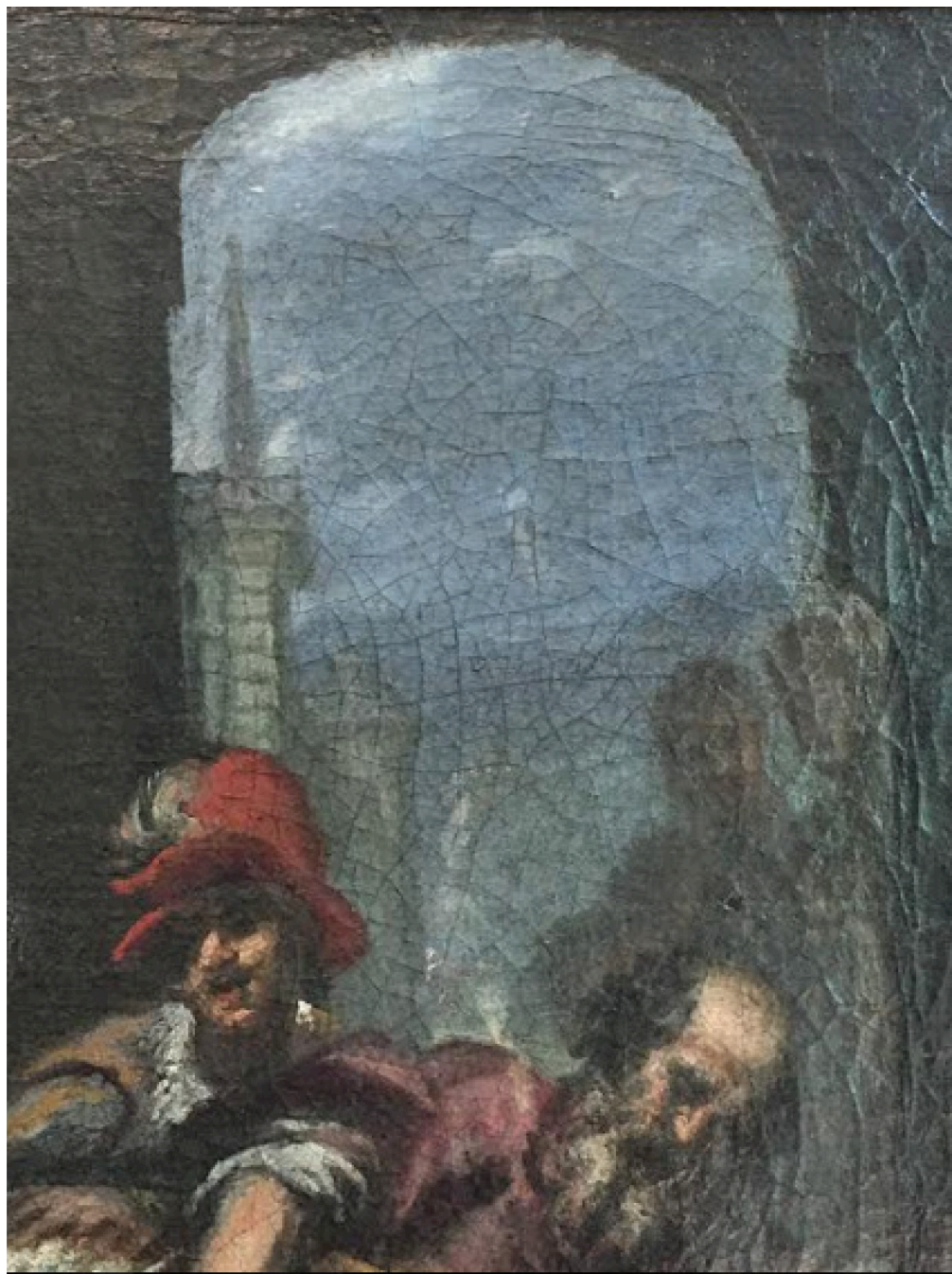


Fig. 100 Detail of Fig. 98



Fig. 101 Detail of map showing Arco di San Calisto, from Giovanni Maggi's
Pianta prospettica di Roma, 1625



Fig. 102 Arco di San Callisto, Trastevere, Rome, Italy (2016)

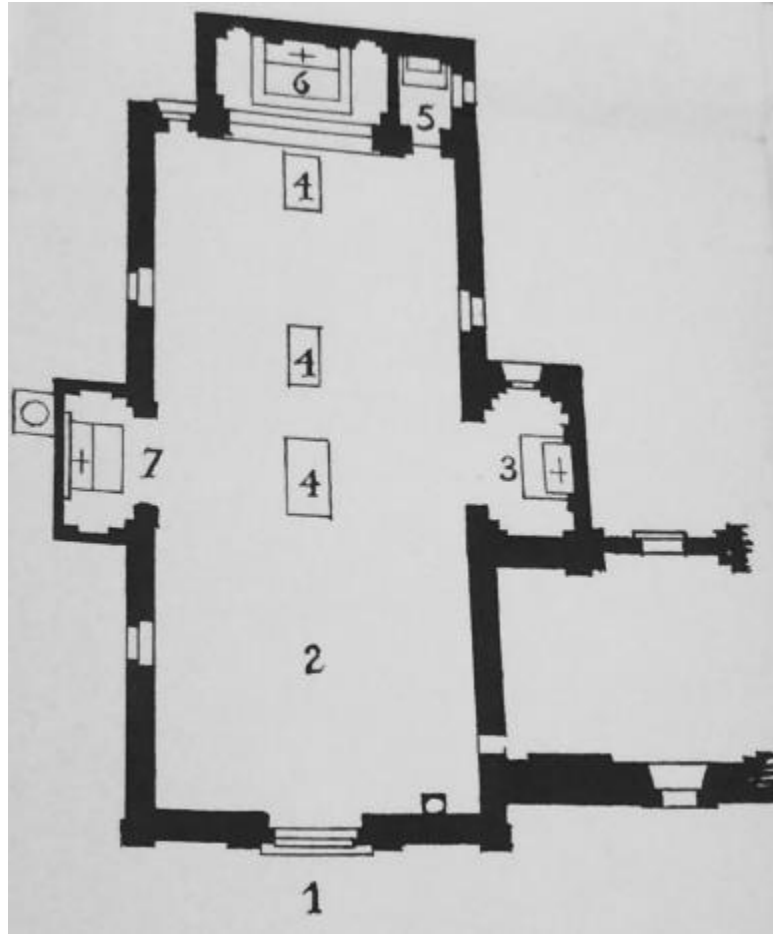


Fig. 103 Floorplan of San Calisto in Trastevere, from *San Calisto* 1970, with chapel of St. Callixtus at 7

La Chiesa di S. Calisto.



SAn Calisto già quasi abbandonato, hora subito che li Monaci di S. Benedetto l'hanno havuto, non hanno mancato di fare

Fig. 104 Engraving of façade of San Calisto from Felini 1615 (*Trattato Nuovo...*)



Fig. 105 Slave collar, bronze, 4th century, British Museum, London, England (inv. No 1975,0902.6)



Fig. 106a Strigillated wellhead, San Calisto in Trastevere, Rome, Italy



Fig. 106b Strigillated wellhead outside San Calisto in Trastevere, Rome, Italy (2016)



Fig. 107 Antonio Achilli, *St. Callixtus in Glory*, 1938, ceiling of San Calisto in Trastevere, Rome, Italy

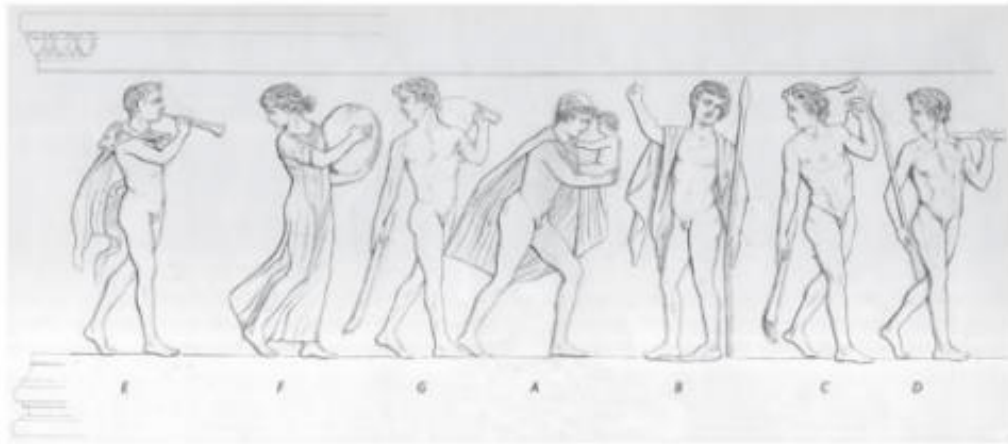


Fig. 108 Design of reliefs on the Puteal Tegel



Fig. 109 Puteal Tegel, Schloss Humboldt, Tegel, Berlin, Germany



Fig. 110 *Mercury Brings Bacchus to Ino*, 1809, Thorvaldsenmuseum, Copenhagen, Denmark (inv. A347)

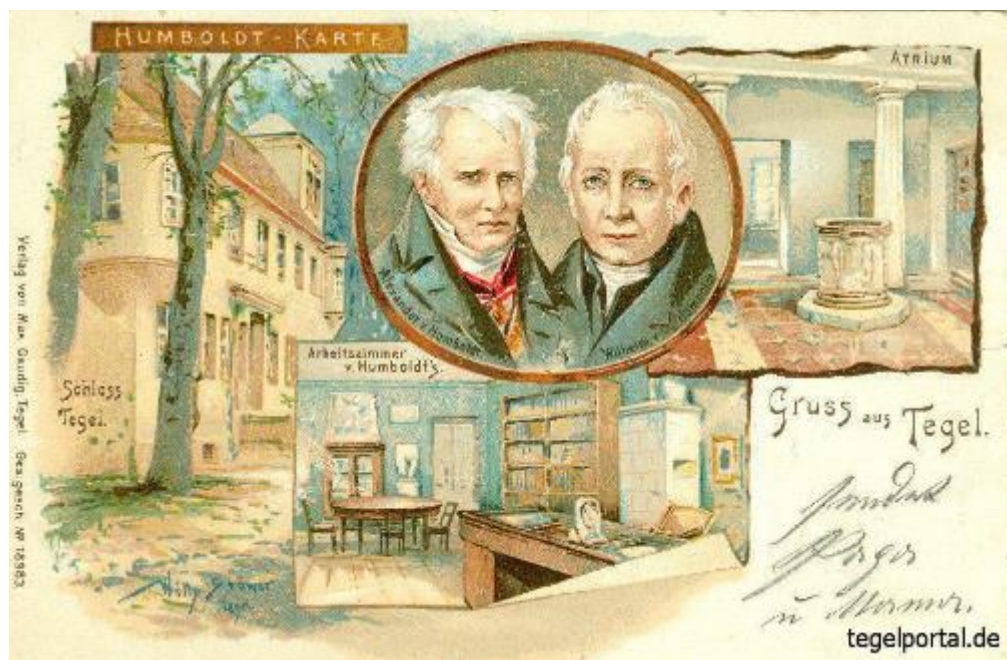


Fig. 111 Postcard by Max Gaudig, with Puteal Tegel in upper right



Fig. 112 Installation view of Puteal Tegel in Schloss Humboldt, Tegel, Berlin

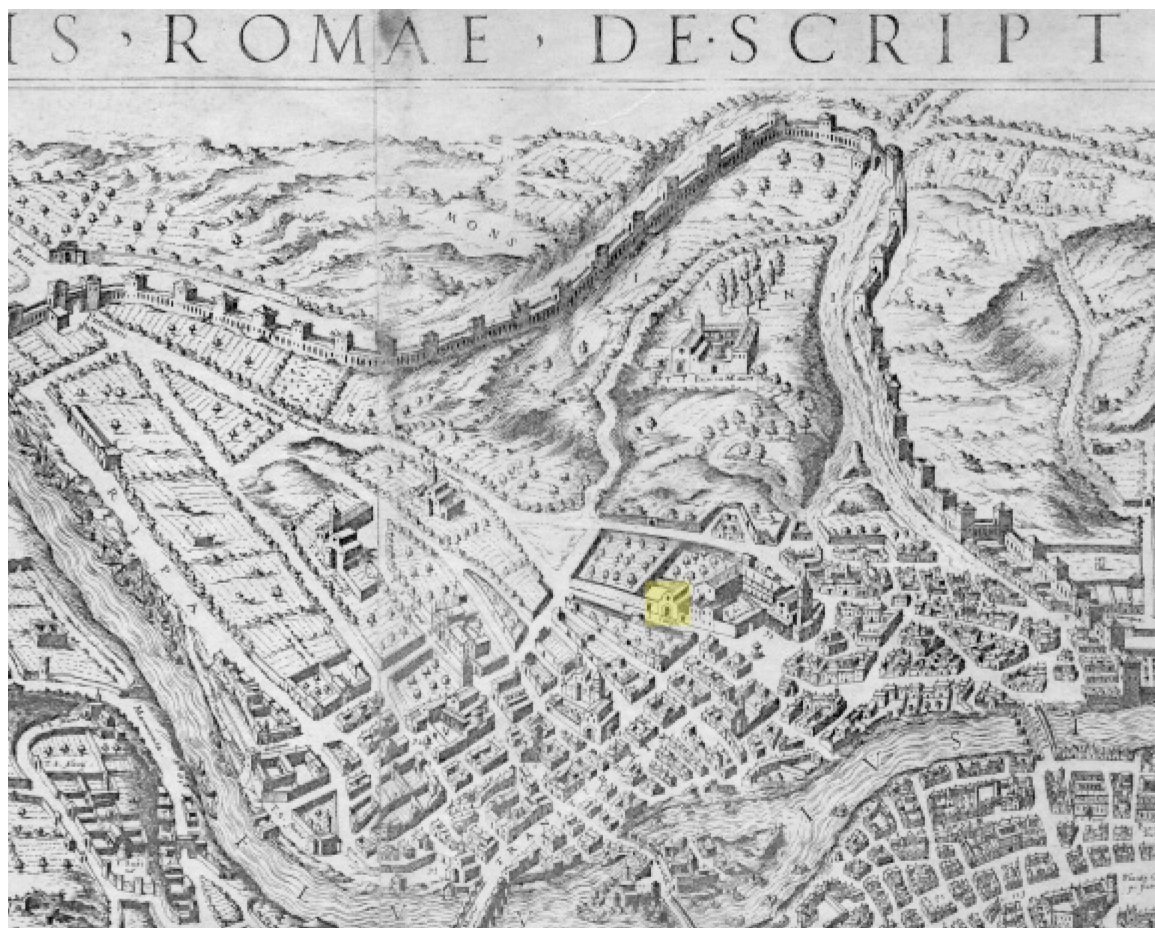


Fig. 113 Map of Trastevere, from Etienne Duperac's 1573 map of Rome



Fig. 114 Fontana dell'Acqua Paola, designed by Giovanni Fontana and Flaminio Ponzio, 1612, Rome, Italy



Fig. 115 Detail of Viale San Francesco a Ripa from Antonio Tempesta's *Nuova pianta di Roma*, 1642

Chapter 3



Fig. 116 Ludovico Carracci, *St. Sebastian Thrown into the Cloaca Maxima*, 1612, J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles, California



Fig. 117 Ludovico Carracci's *St. Sebastian thrown into the Cloaca Maxima*, J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles, California (installation view, 2015)



Fig. 118 Andrea Mantegna, *St. Sebastian*, 1480, Musée du Louvre, Paris, France



Fig. 119 Sandro Botticelli, *St. Sebastian* , 1474, Staatliche Museen, Berlin, Germany

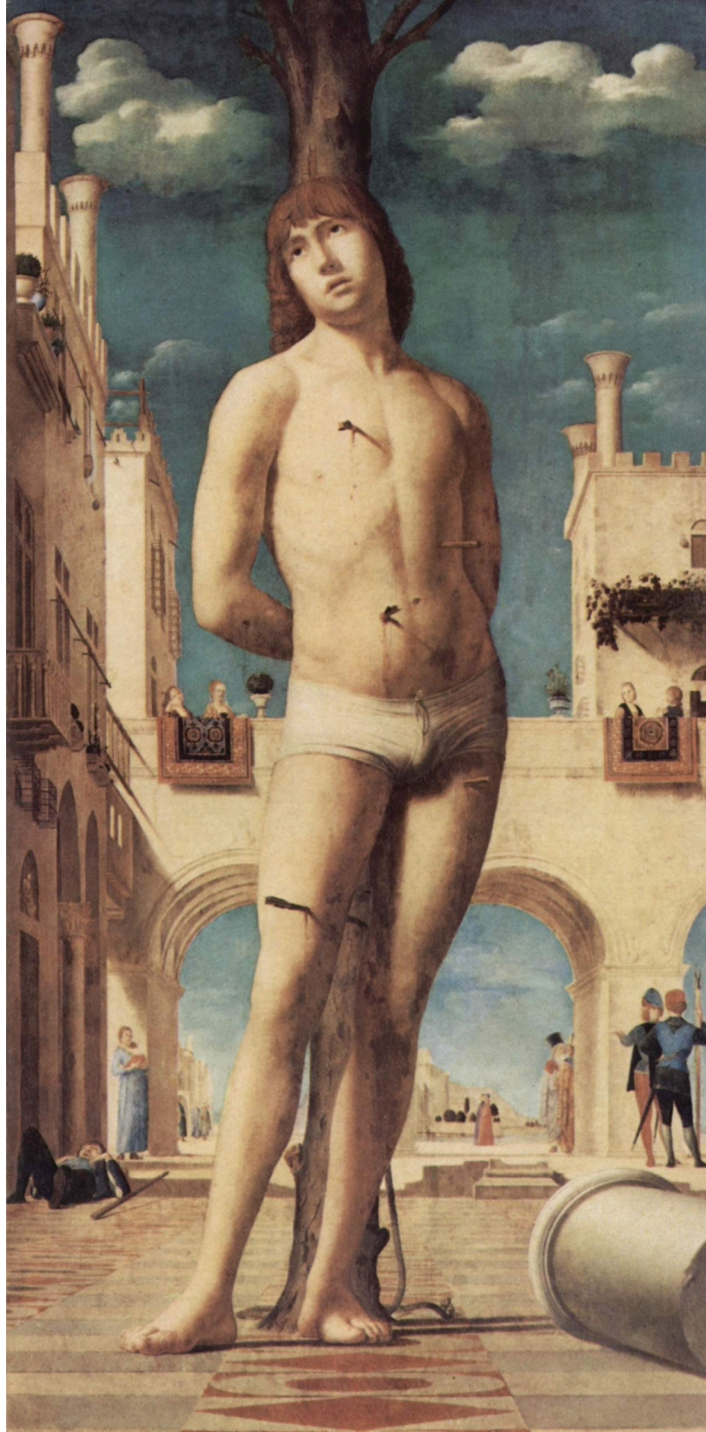


Fig. 120 Antonello da Messina, *St. Sebastian*, c. 1476-77, Gemäldegalerie Alte Meister, Dresden, Germany

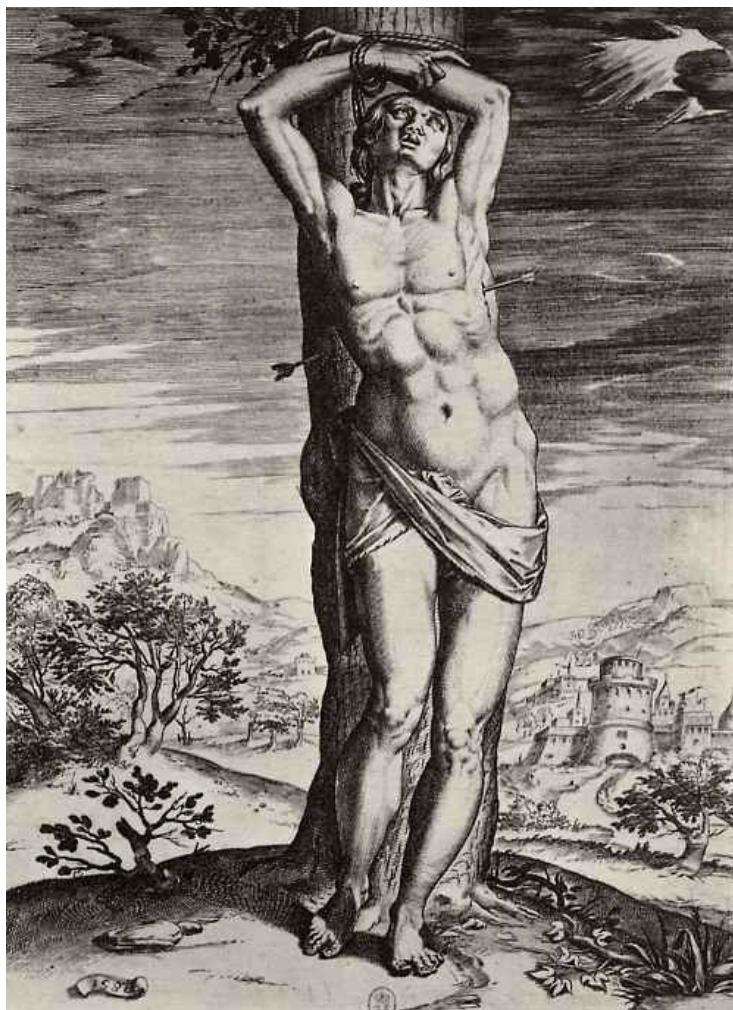


Fig. 121 Agostino Carracci (after painting by Francesco Francia), *St. Sebastian*, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (27.78.1(344))



Fig. 122 Guido Reni, *St. Sebastian*, c. 1615, Musei di Strada Nuova, Genoa, Italy



Fig. 123 Ludovico Carracci, *St. Sebastian tied to a column*, c. 1599, Museo Pomarici-Santomasi, Gravina di Puglia, Italy



Fig. 124 Ludovico Carracci, *St. Sebastian*, 1599, Galleria Doria Pamphilj, Rome, Italy



Fig. 125 Ludovico Carracci, *St. Sebastian*, Galleria Carlo Orsi, Milan



Fig. 126 Attributed to Ludovico Carracci, *St. Sebastian*, Museum der Bildenden Kunst, Leipzig, Germany

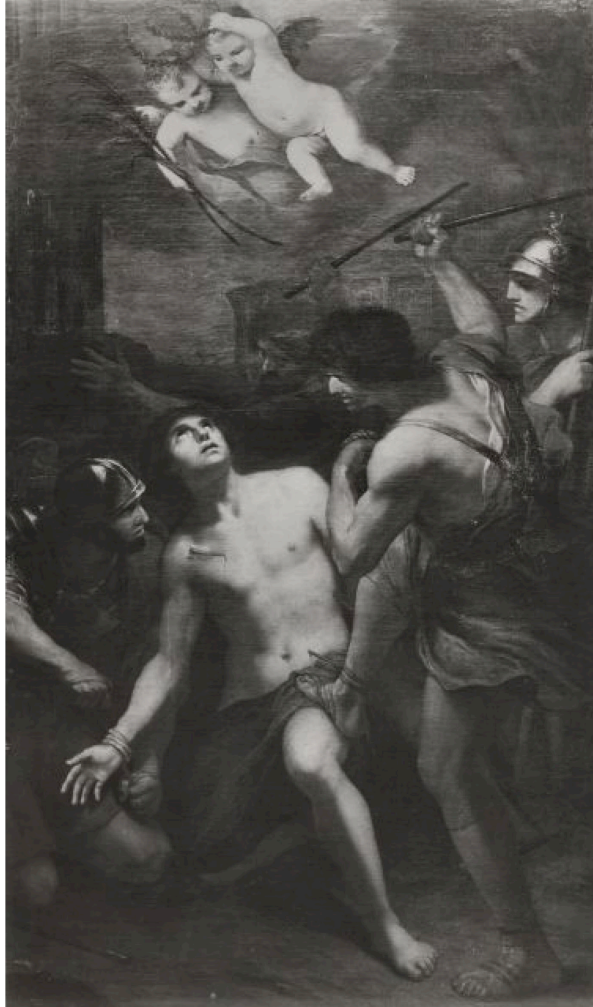


Fig. 127 Andrea Camassei, *St. Sebastian beaten by Rods*, c. 1625-30, San Sebastiano al Palatino, Rome, Italy



Fig. 128 Andrea Camassei, *Study for St. Sebastian beaten by rods for the church of San Sebastiano al Palatino*, c. 1625, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (inv. 65.137)



Fig. 129 Façade of Sant'Andrea della Valle, Rome, Italy



Fig. 130 South lateral wall of Barberini Chapel, with niche opening into *cappelletta* of St. Sebastian, with Passignano's painting visible, Sant' Andrea della Valle, Rome, Italy

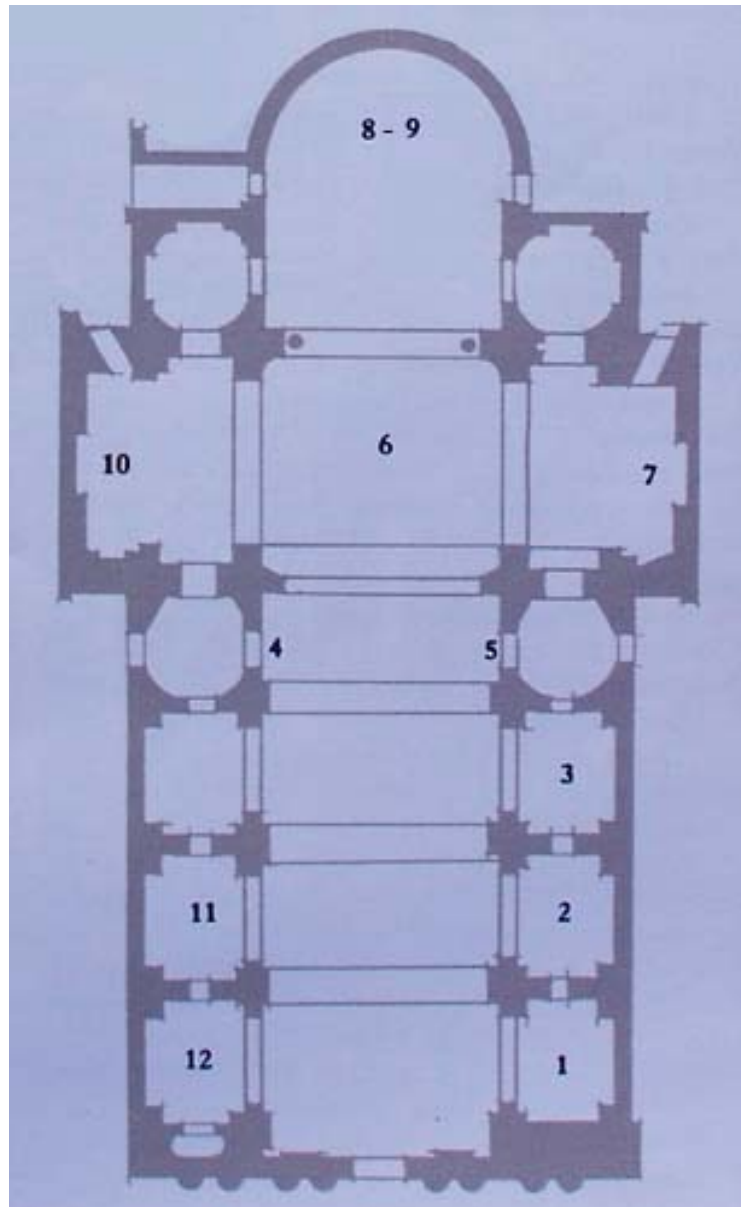


Fig. 131 Plan of Sant'Andrea della Valle with Barberini Chapel marked 12

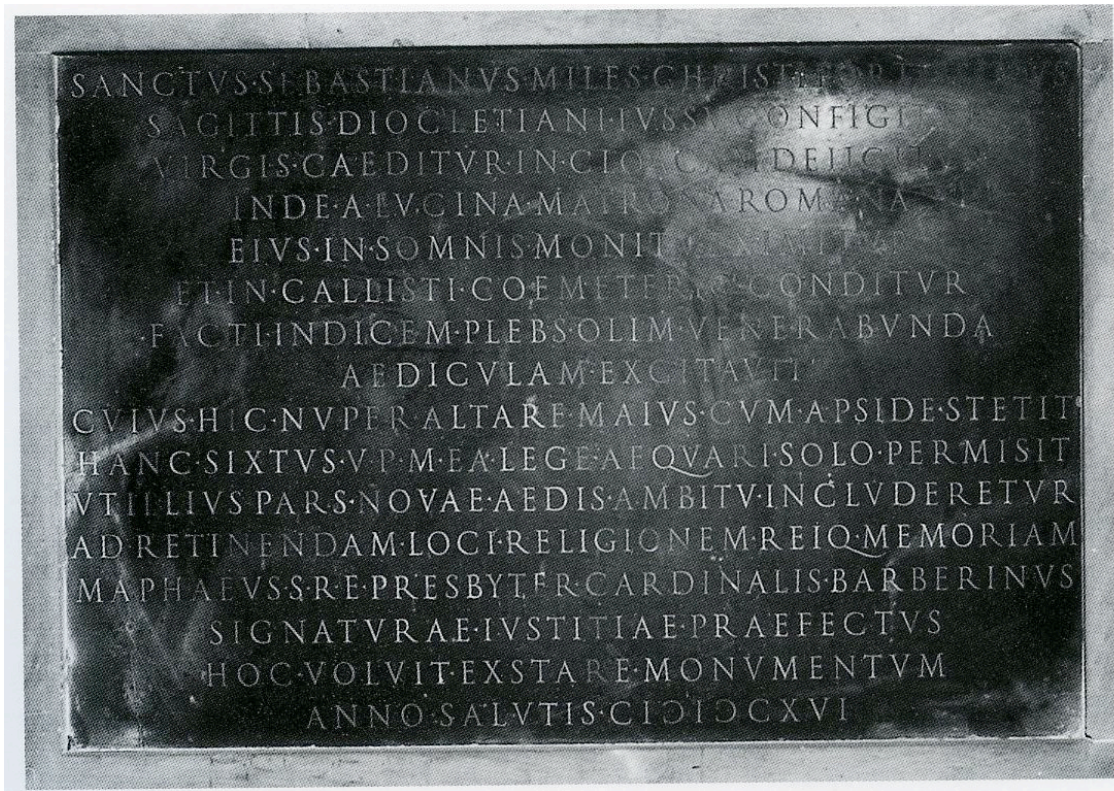


Fig. 132 Inscription, *cappelletta* of St. Sebastian, Barberini Chapel, Sant'Andrea della Valle, Rome, Italy



Fig. 133 Gianlorenzo Bernini, *St. Sebastian*, 1617, Thyssen Collection, Madrid, Spain



Fig. 134 Church of San Sebastiano al Palatino, Rome



Fig. 135 Left wall of San Sebastiano al Palatino, with Andrea Camassei's *St. Sebastian Beaten by Rods*, Rome, Italy



Fig. 136 Antonio Eclissi, *St. Sebastian shot with arrows and St. Sebastian tended by Irene* from the life of *St. Sebastian* fresco cycle formerly in *San Sebastiano al Palatino*, c. 1624-30, Vatican Library

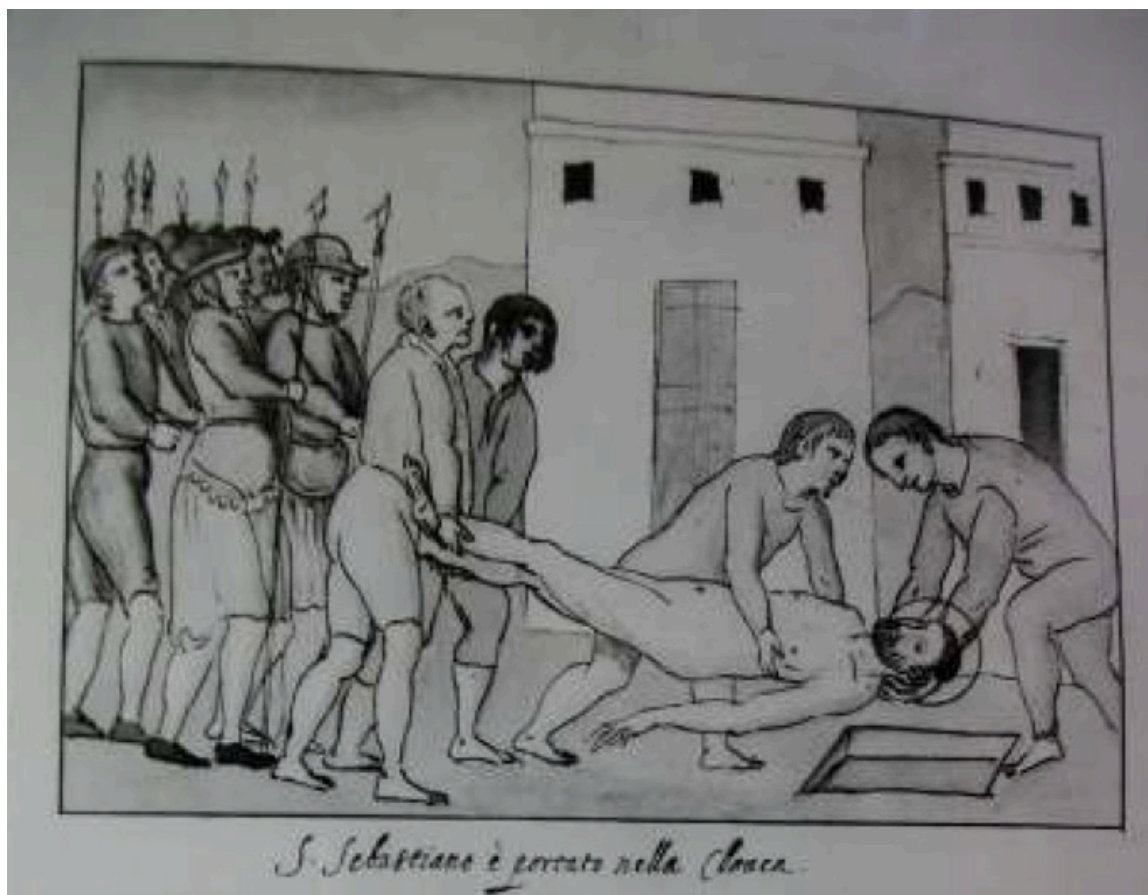


Fig. 137 Antonio Eclissi, *St. Sebastian Thrown into the Cloaca* from the *life of St. Sebastian fresco cycle* formerly in *San Sebastiano al Palatino*, c. 1624-30, Vatican Library



Fig. 138 Giuseppe Giorgetti *St. Sebastian*, 1672, San Sebastiano fuori le mura, Rome, Italy



Fig. 139 *Portrait medal of Maffeo Barberini, 1612*, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (inv. 36.110.32)



Fig. 140 Ludovico Carracci, *Virgin with Saints Orso and Eusebio*, 1613, Fano Cathedral, Italy



Fig. 141 Ludovico Carracci, *Study for St. Sebastian*, 1612, Musée du Louvre, Paris, France (inv. 7720)



Fig. 142 Giacomo Cavedone, *Study for a male figure*, c. 1612, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, the Netherlands (inv. no. RP-T-1960-112)

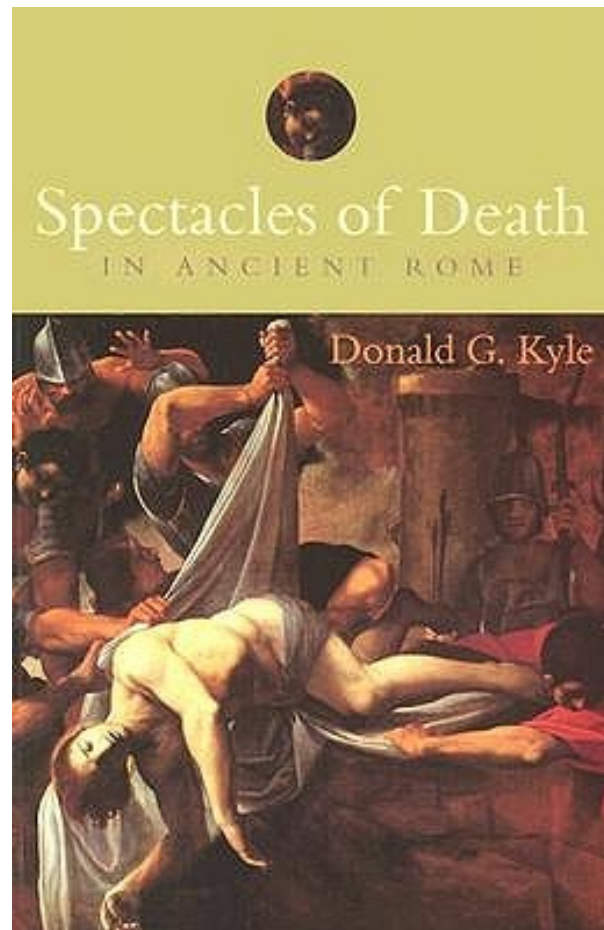


Fig. 143 Cover of Donald G. Kyle, *Spectacles of Death in Ancient Rome* (1999)

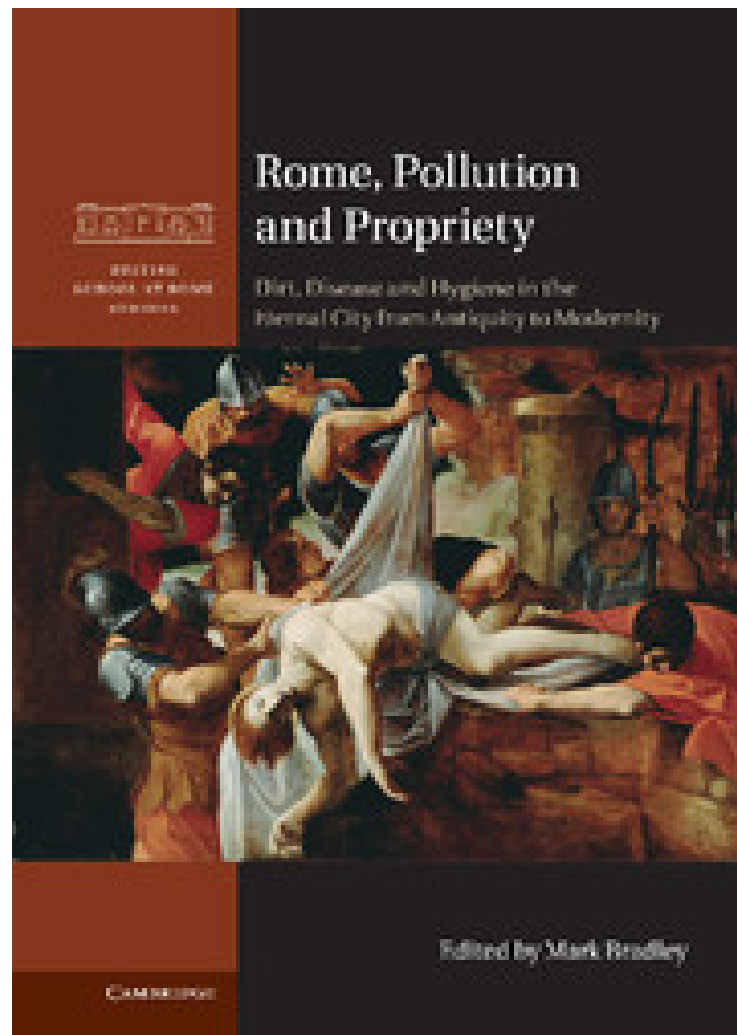


Fig. 144 Book cover of *Rome, Pollution, and Propriety*, edited by Mark Bradley (2012)



Fig. 145 Niccolò Semitecolo, *St. Sebastian Beaten by Rods, with St. Sebastian thrown into the sewers in background*, 1367, from reliquary cupboard, sacristy, Padua, Cathedral



Fig. 146 Giovanni del Biondi, *St. Sebastian Triptych*, c. 1375-80, Museo dell'Opera del Duomo, Florence, Italy



Fig. 147 Detail of Fig. 146



Fig. 148 Josse Lieferinxe, *St. Sebastian beaten by rods and thrown into the sewers*, 1497, Philadelphia Museum of Art, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, United States



Fig. 149 Detail of Fig. 148



Fig. 150 Domenico Passignano, *St. Sebastian*, 1612, Barberini Chapel, Sant'Andrea della Valle, Rome



Fig. 151 Domenico Passignano, *St. Sebastian*, c. 1602, Museo Nazionale di Capodimonte, Naples, Italy



Fig. 152 Jacques Callot, after Passignano, *Martyrdom of St. Peter*, from *Les Eglises Jubilaires*, plate 7



Fig. 153 Passignano, *St. Sebastian Shot Full of Arrows*, ca. 1615-17, Chapel of St. Sebastian, Villa Aldobrandini, Frascati, Italy

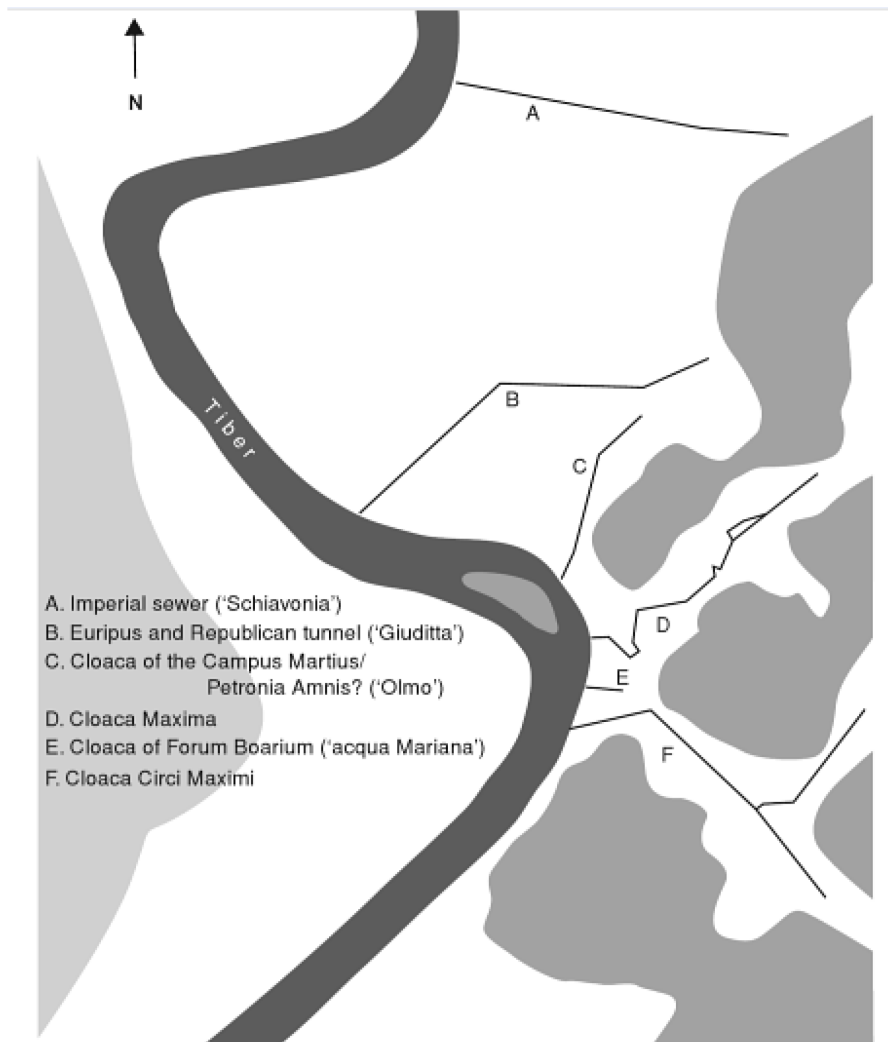


Fig. 154 Map of ancient sewers indicating Giuditta (site of Sant'Andrea della Valle, B) and Cloaca Maxima (D) (from Hopkins 2012)



Fig. 155 Detail of scorpion in Fig. 116

CONRADI GES-
NERI TIGVRINI MEDICI-
NAE ET PHILOSOPHIAE PROFESSORIS
in Schola Tigurina, Historiæ insecto-
rum Libellus, qui est

DE SCORPIONE.

PER CASPARVM VVOLPHIVM TIGV-
RINVM MEDICVM EX RELICTO SCHEDARVM
fascicula methodicè collectis et in lucem editis.



TIGVRI
IN OFFICINA FROESCHOVIANA
M. D. LXXXVII

Cum gratia et privilegio S. Caesaris Maiestatis ad decennium.

Fig. 156 Title page of Caspar Wolf, Conrad Gesner, *Tigurini philosophi et medici clarissimi, physicarum meditationum, annotationum & scholiorum*, Tiguri 1586

3

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Fig. 157 Detail of page 3 from Caspar Wolf, Conrad Gesner, *Tigurini philosophi et medici clarissimi, physicarum meditationum, annotationum & scholiorum*, Tiguri 1586



Fig. 158 Ulisse Aldrovandi, *De animalibus insectis libri septem, cum singulorum iconibus ad viuum expressis*, Bologna, 1602, p. 579



Fig. 159 Agostino Carracci, *Portrait of Ulisse Aldrovandi*, c. 1590, Accademia Carrara, Bergamo, Italy



Fig. 160 Agostino Carracci, *Harry Hairy, Mad Peter, and Tiny Amon*, c. 1598-1600, Museo Nazionale di Capodimonte, Naples

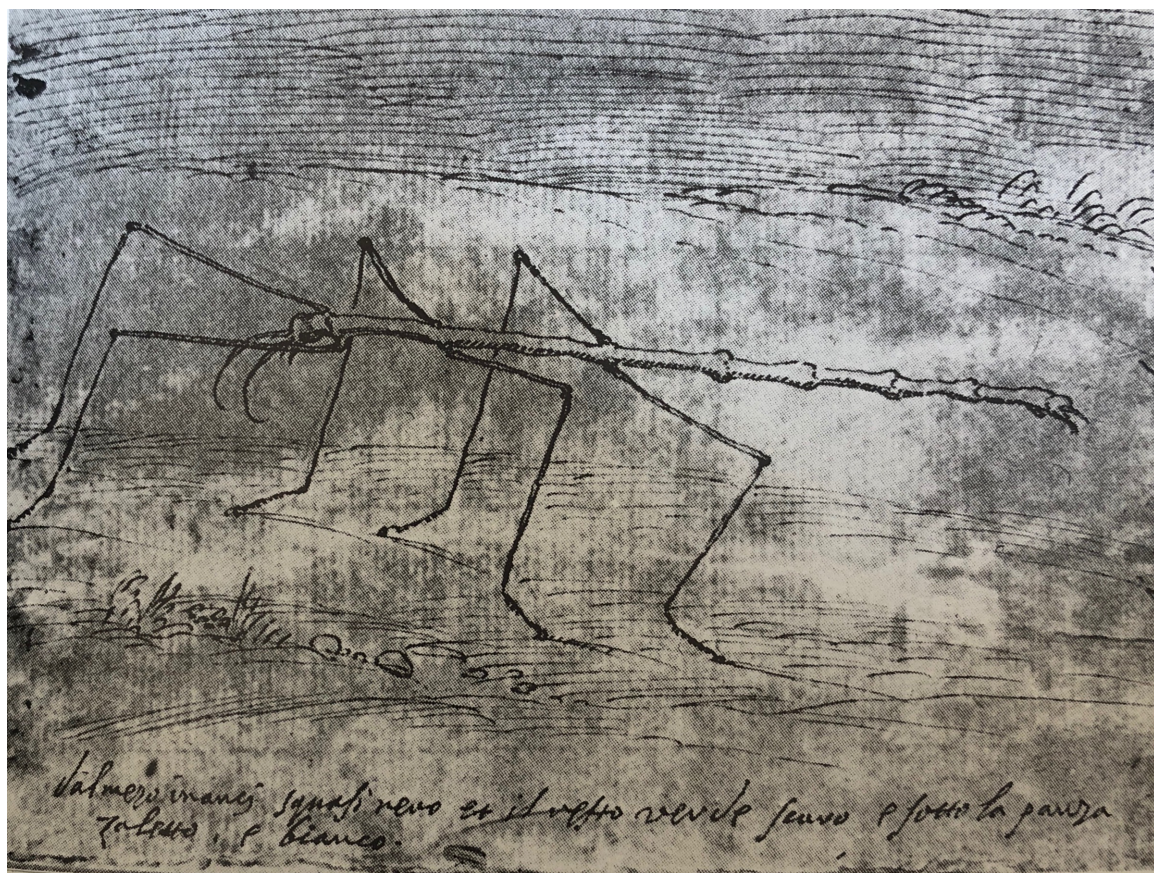


Fig. 161 Drawing of insect in letter, by Agostino Carracci



Fig. 162 Carlo Crivelli, *Virgin and Child*, c. 1480, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, United States (inv. 49.7.5)



Fig. 163 Francesco del Cossa, *Annunciation* (“*La Pala dell’Osservanza*”), c. 1470, Gemäldegalerie Alte Meister, Dresden, Germany



Fig. 164 Detail of Perino del Vaga, *Nativity*, 1534, National Gallery of Art, Washington, D. C., United States



Fig. 165 Ludovico Carracci, *The Assumption of the Virgin*, 1601, Church of the Corpus Domini, Bologna, Italy

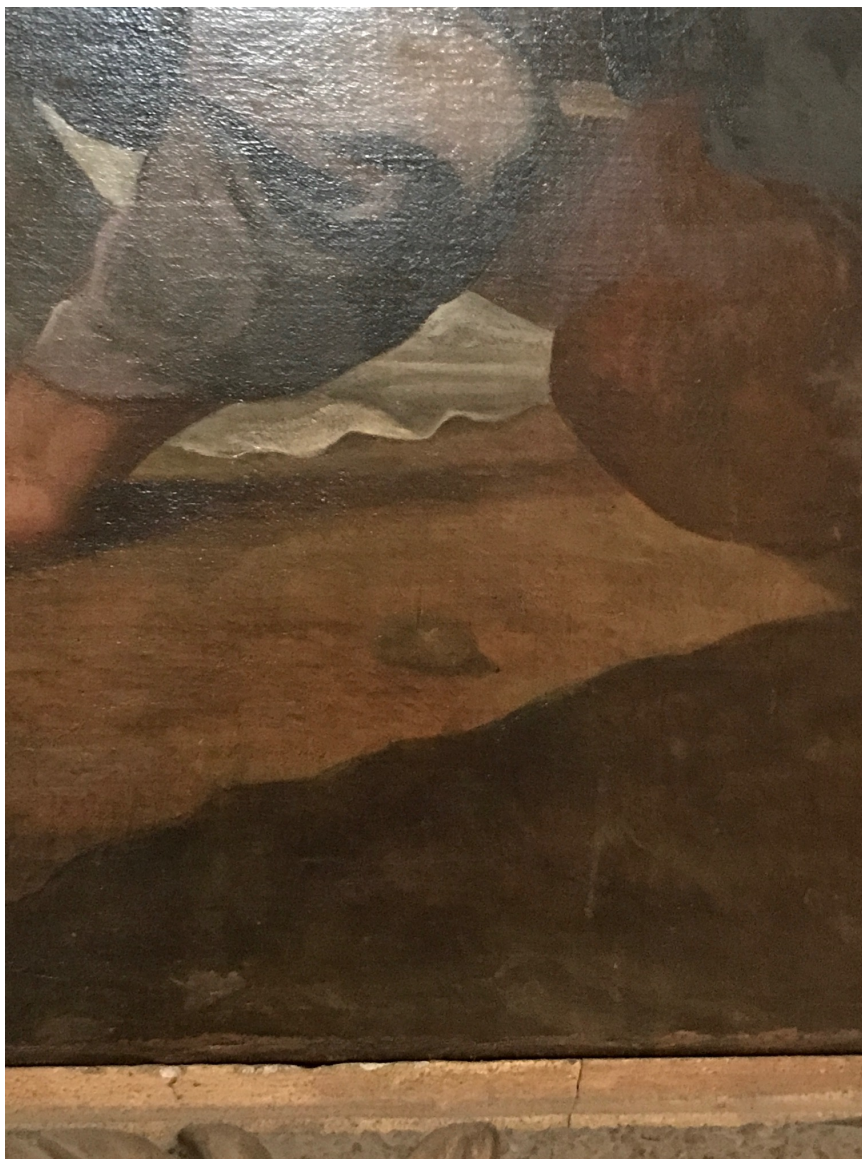


Fig. 166 Detail of Fig. 165



Fig. 167 Sofonisba Anguissola, *Boy Bitten by Crawfish*, c. 1554, Museo Nazionale di Capodimonte, Naples



Fig. 168 Annibale Carracci, *Two Children Teasing a Cat*, c. 1590s, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (1994.142)



Fig. 169 *Crucifixion*, 15th century, Chapel of St. Sebastian, Lanslevillard, France



Fig. 170 *Saint Sebastian thrown into a well*, 15th century, Chapel of St. Sebastian, Lanslevillard, France



Fig. 171 High altar of Santa Maria in Vallicella, Rome, with altarpiece and lateral paintings by Peter Paul Rubens



Fig. 172 Annibale Carracci, *Polyphemus Throwing a Boulder*, c. 1597-1600, Farnese Gallery, Palazzo Farnese, Rome, Italy



Fig. 173 Detail of Domenichino, *Flagellation of St. Andrew*, 1609, Oratory of St. Andrew, San Gregorio Magno, Rome, Italy



Fig. 174 Detail of Domenichino, *Diana and her Nymphs*, c. 1616-17, Galleria Borghese, Rome, Italy



Fig. 175 Detail of a prophet by Matteo da Lecce, c. 1575-76, Oratory of the Gonfalone, Rome, Italy

Conclusion



Fig. 176 Gianlorenzo Bernini, *Santa Bibiana*, 1625, Church of Santa Bibiana, Rome, Italy

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