

Borromini, the Cavaliere d'Arpino, and Others at Santa Lucia in Selci (with a Note on Santa Maria della Purificazione and the Architect Giovanni Paolo Maggi)

For Joseph Connors

Abstract

This contribution details the history of the church of Santa Lucia in Selci from its sixteenth-century refoundation as a cloistered convent of first Benedictine (1534), then Augustinian (1568), nuns to its seventeenth-century reconstruction and redecoration by a series of artistic luminaries, adducing a wealth of unpublished archival sources. The role of Bartolomeo Bassi, not Carlo Maderno as previously thought, is shown in designing and building the original church and convent (1603–1605). The patronage history of the church's individual chapels is reconstructed and each is analysed cautiously to separate the design roles of Carlo Maderno, his studio, and others. Borromini's work in the church has hitherto not received due recognition, neither for its important place in the earliest period of his independent activity as an architect nor for its relation to his contemporary output. First, the Cappella Landi (1638–39) is analysed, with particular attention to its rich and unexamined Trinitarian symbolism and the role of the Cavaliere d'Arpino. An iconographical program for the chapel's stuccoes is also presented for the first time. Secondly, the *cantoria* (choir loft), built between 1630 and 1640, is analysed with a view to the pivotal role of choral music in the overall design of the church and the life of the convent. Finally, an attempt is made to meticulously reconstruct the appearance of Borromini's lost High Altar (ca. 1636–1643), which was destroyed in the mid-19th century. A sense of its appearance can be gleaned from autograph drawings and an engraving, though careful analysis is necessary to track the phases in its construction and filter out ephemeral elements from the permanent design. A coda to the main article details the origins and demise of the neighbouring and now largely demolished church and convent of the Poor Clares at Santa Maria della Purificazione, its artworks, and its design by the little-known Giovanni Paolo Maggi.

Santa Lucia in Selci is one of Rome’s most obscure and least visited churches (fig. 1). The convent that contains it stands on a side street and remains *in clausura*, its exterior is unexceptional and forbidding, and the unexpectedly delicate church that lies within is only open briefly for Mass on Sunday mornings and important feast days. The whole complex descends the steep Via in Selci, which acquired its present name in the Middle Ages from the ancient basalt slabs (*selci*) that then still paved it. In antiquity this street, then known as the *clivus suburbannus*, had been a busy thoroughfare, but it definitively turned from a highway to a byway in the 1890s, when the Via del Statuto (now Via Giovanni Lanza) cut through the neighbourhood and severed the Via in Selci from its rione (Monti). Even before this, the street had been a backwater, and the convent’s cloistered status still makes visiting the church challenging, entering the convent impossible, and researching the complex daunting.

Although the convent archive does survive in the Archivio di Stato di Roma, there are few documents concerning artists, and unusually arduous sleuthing is necessary to assemble any reliable historical record. Earlier publications hardly help matters. As Howard Hibbard lamented fifty years ago, even where the documentation does survive, “St. Lucy has suffered a second martyrdom” at the hands of some writers, “who have quoted documents without citing sources and given information (sometimes even correctly) that could be checked only by doing the work over again.”¹



1 Rome, Santa Lucia in Selci, view from Piazza San Martino ai Monti down the Via in Selci (photo author)

* Michael Hill read earlier drafts with stimulating comments, as did Martin Raspe and Peter Carl. Unless otherwise noted, all translations are mine.

1 Hibbard 1971, pp. 136–137. He certainly meant Ottorino Montenovese, who first wrote a history of the convent in 1943, based on the convent *fondo* to which he had access as archivist of the Archivio di Stato, but without supplying a single citation, see Montenovese, 1943. Hibbard might also have meant to indicate Paolo Portoghesi, who did adduce new documents for the high altar and Landi Chapel, but again without citations, see Portoghesi 1958a. Portoghesi subsequently discovered two drawings in the Archivio di Stato, republished in Hibbard 1971, which he mistakenly attributed to Carlo Maderno (figs. 7, 8) (see Portoghesi 1958b) and another drawing for the high altar that is now in Berlin (fig. 42), see Portoghesi 1967. Matizia Maroni Lumbroso did little more than repeat the information in Montenovese, see Maroni Lumbroso 1968. Hibbard was first to adduce archival material on the convent’s construction history, although his research in the convent archive was, very unusually for this scholar, far from complete, see Hibbard 1971. Among the documents he neglected were the *buste* “Liti” and “Rito”, which respectively contain the documents on the role of Bartolomeo Bassi and the iconographic program for the Cappella Landi. Marilyn Dunn called attention to Bruzio’s (Italian) manuscript, threw light on convent life, and detailed the implications of artistic iconography for female spirituality, see Dunn 2000, renewed in Dunn 2003, 2012. The history of the church from the 1st century BC until the 1560s was established by Fabio Barry (see Barry 2003), though this was strangely ignored by Lucia Sebastiani, who repeats old errors, but does adduce and mention property documents, and mentions Bartolomeo Bassi (also noted by Montenovese 1943 and Maroni Lumbroso 1968) though without appreciating his role as architect, see Sebastiani 2008. Karin Wolfe discovered an important engraving representing the lost high altar (fig. 43), see Wolfe 2008. Torsten Tjarks repeats Hibbard’s history of the complex, provides a largely formalist analysis of the Cappella Landi and shows no interest in Borromini’s cantoria or his lost high altar, see Tjarks 2015, pp. 108–111. The convent remains closed to secular access, but Bruno Apollonj Ghetti did publish plans, sections, and elevations that appear to have been surveyed, and may be accurate, see Apollonj Ghetti 1961. A meticulous stratigraphic survey of the late-antique façade on the Via in Selci made by Mirella Serlorenzi in 1987 was finally published in Serlorenzi 2004.

Beginnings

Pope Honorius I (625–638) had founded the church by consecrating the audience hall of a grand patrician *domus* (third- or fourth-century AD), whose bricked-up clerestory still towers above the Via in Selci. We also know that by the reign of Leo III (795–816) a *diaconia*, that is a sort of medieval welfare centre for the neighbourhood, was established on the premises. However, the later medieval history of the complex is murky. Although it has been claimed since the seventeenth century that Benedictine and Carthusian monks occupied the church between the ninth and fourteenth centuries, there is no real evidence for this tradition and it is not even clear how it originated. The first reliable notice of a monastic community only dates from 1534, when Donna Vittoria della Molara received the assent of Paul III to establish a convent of Benedictine nuns.²

Although this quarter, the Suburra, had once been one of Rome's most densely populated, the edges of the *habitato* had already receded by late antiquity, stranding the *clivus suburranus* (Via in Selci) on its outskirts. Santa Lucia became an ideal spot for religious seclusion, still within the walls but virtually in the wilds, defended against any brigands yet removed from the temptations of city life. It was particularly suitable for female religious. The last session of the Council of Trent (3–4 December 1563) rushed through ordinances not only to distance all female religious including tertiaries, who had previously taken only simple or private vows, but also to enclose them physically. Enforcing strict enclosure (*clausura*) of monastic women and maintaining their complete separation from the outside world now became curial obsessions.³ With the Bull *Circa pastoralis* (29 May 1566), Pius V obliged all female religious to observe *clausura* and, in 1568, he began to corral the *monache agostiniane della terz'ordine* (or *agostiniane eremitane*), who had hitherto been dispersed about the city, into Santa Lucia.⁴ Still more Augustinian tertiaries, the *Bizoche di Santa Monica* and the *Mantellate di Sant'Agostino*, arrived from houses in the Campo Marzio in 1571.⁵

2 Della Molara moved from S. Maria in Campo Marzio: “Cronica del venerabil monastero di Santa Maria in Campo Martio di Roma dell'ordine di S. Benedetto della Congregazione Cassinense, scritta dal P. Fr. Iacinto de Nobili Romano dell'ordine de'predicatori”, in Martinelli 1653, pp. 196–197; Bruzio 1655/1669, fols. 215v–217r. The Della Molara were a branch of the Annibaldi family and belonged to the Roman civic élite, see Ameyden (1640) 1910, vol. 1, p. 66; vol. 2, pp. 83–85; Cont 2013. Martinelli (1653, p. 164) mentions the Carthusians but not the Benedictines. Sebastiani argues that the Carthusians owned properties adjoining S. Lucia on both sides in the mid-16th century, see Sebastiani 2008, pp. 104, 106, and documents cited at notes 11 and 12. Yet, even if this is true, in the 14th century most of these properties belonged to the Cerroni family and were collectively called the *Contrada de Cerronibus*, see Barry 2003, pp. 136–137 and notes 40–41. The putative history of the church also appears in an inscription painted on the nave wall, probably dating from the 1840s, see Forcella 1869–1884, vol. 10, p. 359, no. 593: *TEMPLUM/MARIAE AUGUSTAE GENITRICI DEI/ET LUCIAE VIRGINI MARTYRI INVICTAE DICATUM/QUOD HONORII I ANNO DC XXVI/ET HONORII II ANNO M CC XVI [sic]/PONT MAX CURA REFECTUM/CARDINALIBUS DIACONIS S E R/IN SEDEM HONORIS CESSIT/POSTEA VETUSTATE FATISCENS/A SIXTO V EA DIGNITATE PRIVATUM/COLLEGIUM VIRGINUM AUGUSTINIANARUM/QUAE IN PROXIMO COENOBIO/A NICOLAO V CONSTITUTAE SUNT/ANTEA A MONACHIS BENEDICTINIS/DEINDE A CARTUSIANIS OCCUPATO/IMPENSA SUA INSTAURAVIT/ANNO M DC IV.*

3 Creytens 1965. For recent discussions of *clausura*, see Zarri 1998; Medioli 2000; Evangelisti 2003; Dunn 2003.

4 *Bulla Translationis*, 1 October 1568: AAV, Camera Apostolica (Diversa Camera), tom. 240, fols. 40v–43v. It specifies they were “moniales domus casae S.^{tae} nuncupatae nec non moniales S. M.^{ae} Felicis de urbe ord.^{is} S. Aug.ⁿⁱ ex ordine [...] et translatae seu traductae fuerint non nullis et ex monialibus dti. Moniales S. Mariae ad mon.^{tiis} [sic] monialium S. Catherinae de Senis ordinis predicatorum.” The reason for moving is given as “ab omni scandalorum periculo removeantur illorumque moniales et personae in locis tam religioni aptioribus tum ab inconvenientium descrimine securioribus constituentur.”

5 Corvisieri 1878, pp. 104–105 (reference kindly provided by Vitale Zanchettin).

Unhappily for the Benedictines already in residence, the Augustinians soon so outnumbered them that the convent was transferred to Augustinian rule and has remained in their hands ever since.⁶ Yet in spite of a major renovation in 1571–1574 and all efforts to keep the building in good repair over the following decade, in 1587 Sixtus V stripped the church of its status as a Cardinalar Deaconry.⁷ The sanctuary (it was said) was now “more a room than a church.”⁸ Regardless of the demotion, the community continued to grow and within the decade it had attracted “a great many members of Rome’s foremost nobility” (Appendix 2). In reality, apart from the odd Colonna or Orsini, the newcomers were neither top-drawer nor particularly Roman, but by the dawn of the next century they had brought enough cash and resolve to remodel the complex decisively

The new church and convent: Bartolomeo Bassi (1603–1605)

Since Howard Hibbard’s magisterial monograph on Carlo Maderno (1971), it has been routinely accepted that church and convent were reconstructed between ca. 1596 and 1604 according to the designs of this Lombard master, an attribution that recurs in all seventeenth- and eighteenth-century guidebooks.⁹

6 Ugonio still calls the convent Benedictine in the 1570s (see BAV, Barb. Lat. 2160, fol. 122v) but a document of 1574 (26 February) calls the church “ordinis S.^{ti} Augustini”, see ASR, SLS, b. 3676, *Privilegi, lettere, congregazioni 1534–1859*, fasc. 1, fol. 1r. In 1878 the Italian state expropriated the convent of the Poor Clares at San Lorenzo in Panisperna, who consequently sought refuge at Santa Lucia in Selci.

7 A few payments document new building works and repairs in the 1570s: regular installments from 30 October–17 November 1572 (∇ 50), to “Bernardino de Pietro de Chastiglione” for “la volta di la chantina et finir lo refetorio”, ASR, SLS, b. 3701, fasc. 3, *Giustificazioni diverse 1561–1570*, loose sheets. Also payments to “Alberto muratore” for miscellaneous repairs (12 November 1571 but for “l’ano passato”), to “Piero Antonio falegname” for works on the choir (1 February 1571), to Bernardino de Pietro de Chastiglione (5 January 1573), to Matteo Simonetti for lime and pozzolana (10 July 1574), to “Bastiano murator [...] acciò possa seguire il cavar la cantina, et pagar li lavoranti” (2 January 1573), to Francesco Radini da Caravaggio “per il legname, che dette per il tetto” (23 December 1574), and to Magistro Santi and Magistro Battista for carpentry (1 July 1575), ASR, SLS, b. 3701, fasc. 4, *Giustificazioni diverse 1571–1580*. The description of works made by “Alberto muratore”, (undated, but after 12 November 1571), suggests comprehensive repairs and new fenestration (perhaps in the domus wall), a new “porta a la strada maistre con la sua intrada”, and for “avere butato il muro dove stava la campanele.” Lionardo Nardini was also paid for carpentry in the refectory and repairing ceilings throughout the convent (30 August 1580; 5 February 1582; 18 March 1582; 4 June 1583) and Nicolo dei Giudici “muratore” and Antonio di Vigni “scarpellino” (12 August 1581; 1 December 1581) for minor, unspecified works, ASR, SLS, b. 3701, fasc. 5, *Giustificazioni diverse 1581–1590*.

8 Franzini 1643, p. 361: “Sisto V [...] vedendola piuttosto ridotta alla forma d’una stanza che di chiesa.” The title had been vacant for ten years, after Cardinal Luigi d’Este left the post in 1577.

9 Hibbard 1971, pp. 136–137. The earliest source is Baglione: “La chiesa, e il Monastero di S. Lucia in Selce ha avuto il Maderno per architetto. Come anche il Monastero vicino di S. Chiara, presso al Palazzo de’ Signori Nari.” See Baglione 1642, p. 309.

10 ASR, SLS, 3678, *Istromenti diversi 1290–1550*, fols. 302r–304v (modern numeration) 20 October 1594: the convent of S. Maria della Purificazione conceded “qual sito che resta contiguo al detto monasterio di Santa Lucia dove al presente dissegnano fabricarsi una chiesa nova qual sito è lungo dal muro che chiude con la signora Maddalena Strozzi [*another document calls her Maddalena Sforza*], cioè di un sito che detta signora dice donarlo a detto monastero, palmi 103 largo palmi 66 che fa cane 120 palmi 78 e più oncie 2, qual per raguagliare il sito dalla signora Madalena che in tanto sono cane 122 palmi 78 [the Latin text adds “sito [...] posito versas scalas d. Monasterij”]. The agreement was witnessed by Giovanni Paolo Maggi, architect of S. Maria della Purificazione, and Bartolomeo Bassi “perito” for S. Lucia. Approximately 200 *canne* of land were exchanged between the two convents, and the house and garden (16 *canne*) belonging to “Maddalena Sforza” were sold to the nuns of S. Lucia in 1596 (contract 28 March; ASR, SLS, 3678, *Istromenti diversi 1290–1550*, fols. 306r–307r); the terms of sale were that they build a wall for *clausura* and desist from any further building on the site (fol. 307r). For Maddalena Strozzi’s property dealings with the nuns, see Sebastiani 2008, pp. 108–110 and notes 32–38.



2 Anastasio Fontebuoni, *Annunciation*, 1606, oil on canvas. Rome, Santa Lucia in Selci, High altarpiece (photo Bibliotheca Hertziana/Enrico Fontolan)

But this is not so. The sisters of Santa Lucia in Selci were certainly looking to rebuild the church and enlarge the convent as early as 1594, when they purchased land from the *Clarisse* (Poor Clares) at the neighbouring convent of Santa Maria della Purificazione, but they did not break ground.¹⁰ Although Maderno did price an expansion of the convent in 1596, this only entailed remodelling an existing house that the nuns had just acquired, and even then Maderno only acted as an arbitrator (*perito*).¹¹

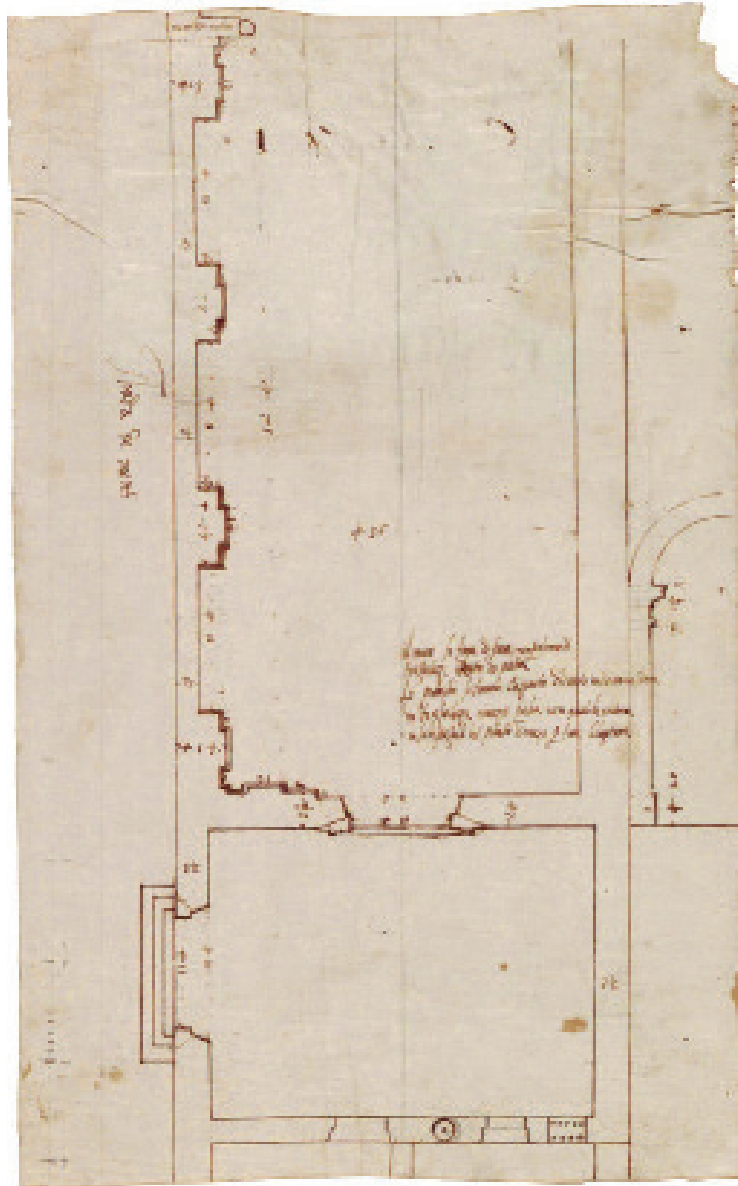
Instead, legal documents detailing a later border dispute between these adjoining convents (Santa Lucia in Selci and Santa Maria della Purificazione) demonstrate that building works at Santa Lucia did not actually begin until 1603 and that the real architect was Bartolomeo Bassi (Settignano ca. 1550 – Rome 1619). As a matter of fact, the documents are exceptionally, almost miraculously, specific on this point. In a legal deposition from October 1606, Bassi recorded that he had made “the plan and designs [...] of the church and the part of the monastery bordering the public street [...] and it must be three years ago that the church, *rota*, and *parlatorio* of the convent of Santa Lucia were built, and a year and a half that they have been finished, and I know because I was their architect.” For good measure, the *muratore* added that “the architect of the said building of Santa Lucia was maestro Bartolomeo Basso, and he put the plan and drawing in my hand.”¹² It is therefore clear that the church was begun in 1603, and evidently completed in time for its first consecration in August

11 ASR, SLS, b. 3701, fasc. 6, *Giustificazioni diverse 1591–1600*: “A di 15 de luglio. Misura e stima de lavori de muro fatti fare de ordine di Monsignor Mendosio Vecegerente fatti per manifattura da maestro Filippo et maestro Bartolommeo de’ Quadri muratori nelle case della signora Madalena Strozi per acrescer il Monasterio delle suddette monache. Misurate per me sotto scritto per tute doi le parte.” (signed by Maderno). Works began on 17 August 1595 and proceeded until at least 1 May 1598, and probably concerned the still extant medieval tower house at the end of the convent farthest down the slope. For further documents, see Guerrieri Borsoi 2004, pp. 11, 12.

12 ASR, SLS, b. 3686, *Atti Giudiziari*, fasc. 21, inserto 1, *Summarium testimonium examinatorum ad instantia Monialium S. Luciae Silicae con[tra] Moniales S.^{mae} Purificat.s Urbis [...]* (22–24 October 1606): “5. Testis qui est d. Bartholomeus Bassus Architectus” (fol. 2v); on 24 October 1606, Bassi attests “che ho fatta la pianta et disegni di quella fabrica da tre anni in qua” (fols. 7v–8r), has made plans of the grounds (fol. 8r), and “io ho notitia del monisterio di S. Lucia [...] che io sono stato lor architetto et ho’ fatto il disegno della chiesa et parte di detto monisterio, il quale confina denanzi la strada pubblica, et dal horto de’ carciofani della purificazione, et altri più veri confini [...] devono essere circa tre anni che sono fabbricate la chiesa, rota et parlatorio del monisterio di S. Lucia sebene deve essere un’anno e mezzo che è finita, et io lo so perché sono stato loro architetto come ho detto” (fols. 8r/v). The “fourth witness” (Filippo Quadri, *muratore*) states “possono essere tre anni in circa che si cominciò a fabricare la chiesa, et l’anno passato fu finita la rota, et il parlatorio et questo lo so che ci ho murato, et sono il mu[rato]re di detto loco [...]. L’architetto di detta fabrica di S. Lucia è stato maestro Bartolommeo Basso, et lui mi ha dato la pianta, et il disegno in mano” (fols. 6v–7r). Bassi had executed *misure e stime* in 1602 (26 March; ASR, SLS, b. 3702, fasc. 1, *Giustificazioni diverse 1601–1605*, loose sheet) but the same *busta* contains a great many payments for deliveries of building materials and payments to the *capomastro* (Bartolomeo Quadri), all countersigned by Bassi from the summer of 1603 onwards. A further *busta* contains numerous payments to Quadri and his crew for work on the dormitory wing, all supervised by Bassi, ASR, SLS, b. 3730, *Entrata e Spese p la Fabrica di un Dormitorio et altro dal 1603 al 1604*. For further details of the legal dispute see Sebastiani 2008, pp. 110–113 and notes 39–46. Maroni Lumbroso at least knew that Bartolomeo Bassi had built the monastery, though she calls him a “pittore di prospettive” and cites no sources. See Maroni Lumbroso 1968, p. 217.

1605.¹³ It had to wait another year to receive its high altarpiece, Anastasio Fontebuoni's *Annunciation* (1606) (fig. 2), a subject chosen because the church had long enjoyed a double dedication to both Saint Lucy and the Madonna, and because the largest Augustinian contingents had arrived in 1568 from the convents of Santissima Annunziata and Santa Maria Felice.¹⁴

Bartolomeo Bassi's reputation as *scarpellino* and *capomastro* in late sixteenth-century Rome precedes him, but his activity as an architect has never been suspected.¹⁵ The commission at Santa Lucia may well have come his way because he had a relative in the convent and had previously acted as the nuns' rental agent.¹⁶ Whatever the route, it is clear that the only contemporary design to survive for the church cannot be by Maderno but must be Bassi's own working drawing, complete with a scrawled annotation on the masonry composition (fig. 3).¹⁷ Moreover, another drawing, a plan of the whole complex, is not a construction document but a land survey drafted by Bassi, probably in 1610 when the sororicidal dispute between Santa Lucia in Selci and Santa Maria della Purificazione was finally resolved (fig. 4).¹⁸



3 Bartolomeo Bassi, plan of new nave and half-section of Santa Lucia in Selci, ca. 1603, from: ASR, *Disegni e Mappe*, collezione seconda, b. 136, f. 1 (photo Archivio di Stato di Roma)

13 Lonigo 1625, fols. 31r/v; Panciroli 1625, p. 216; and Totti 1638, p. 480 all say the church was consecrated in 1604. So do Franzini, Bruzio, Titi, Vasi, and the 19th-century painted inscription in the church, see Forcella 1869–1884, vol. 10, p. 360, no. 593. However, Filippo Quadri (see previous note) says the complex was finished in 1605 and a memorandum records: “Sotto li 20 agosto 1605 primo anno del Pontificato di Paolo quinto fu consagrata la nostra chiesa di S. Lucia da Monsignor Illustrissimo Nicolò Sosonio vescovo di Pola”, ASR, SLS, vol. 5527; *Libro Mastro 1697–1721*, fol. 1r.

14 As previous researchers have noted, Fontebuoni was paid ∇ 25 on 24 March 1606 (ASR, SLS, b. 3702, fasc. 2, *Giustificazioni diverse 1606–1610*), see Montenovesi 1943, pp. 93, 105; Hibbard 1971, p. 137; Di Castro/Peccolo/Gazzaniga 1994, p. 130, doc. 93; Dunn 2000, p. 32 and note 13; Martino 2006, pp. 10 and 14, note 88. However, this can only have been an advance because the sum is too small to constitute full payment and Fontebuoni was later paid ∇ 105. See ASR, SLS, b. 3791, *Giustificazioni diverse*, loose sheet, undated. For the Augustinians, see Barry 2003, p. 130, notes 30, 31; *Bulla translationis 1568* (see above, note 5).

15 Bassi had built most of the façade of the Palazzo dei Conservatori for Giacomo della Porta and executed a string of marble decorations and altars in the Gesù, S. Maria della Vallicella, and elsewhere: Di Castro/Peccolo/Gazzaniga 1994, pp. 26–47, esp. p. 35. He had worked for Maderno as early as 1590 at the Palazzo Salviati, see Hibbard 1971, p. 117.

16 A contract of 28 August 1599 mentions his leasing a house the nuns owned in Vicolo dei Capellari (ASR, SLS, b. 3701, fasc. 6, loose sheet). Bassi says he has a “monacha parente di mia moglie chiamata sor Costanza”, see ASR, SLS, b. 3686, fasc. 21, *Causa Purificazione–Ferri*, ins. 1, fol. 7v.

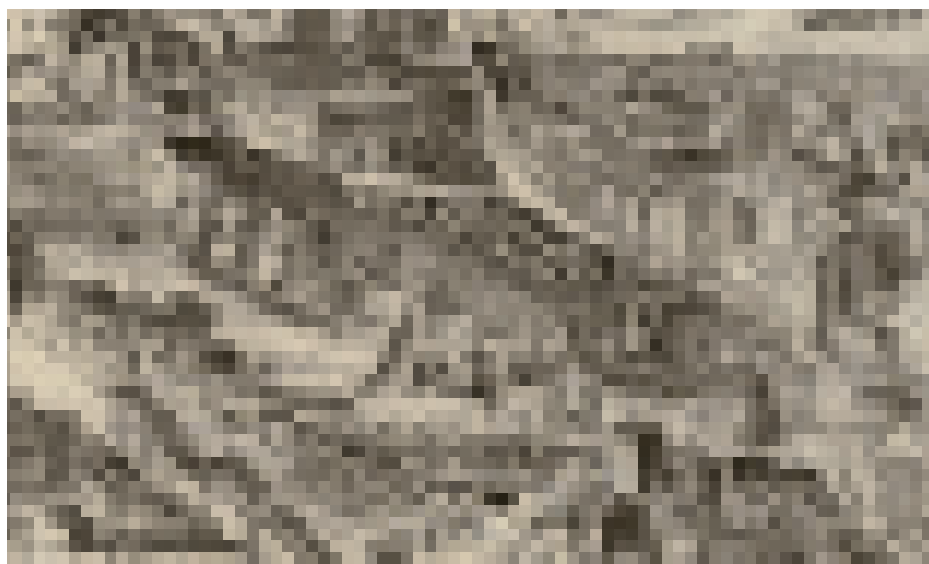
17 ASR, *Disegni e Mappe*, collezione seconda, b. 136, fol. 1: dimensioned plan of nave and half-section, 439 × 273 cm, ink and pencil, pasted down, with the annotation “Il muro si fara di fora un palmo di tegholoze. Resto di pietra. Li pilastri si farano la parte di dentro intorno una fodera di tegholoze cimazo [sic]. Pietra con qualche matone in su li spigholi del pilastro di mezzo per fare le legature.” and “munistero vechio” [not “mattonato vecchio” as Hibbard reads] written at top; verso, “Pianta della fabrica di Santa Lucia in Sil[ice] / Pianta.” On present evidence this drawing must date to ca. 1603. This sheet, and that in the next footnote, were published with attributions to Maderno in Portoghesi 1958b, p. 50, and in Hibbard 1971, p. 136.

18 ASR, *Disegni e Mappe*, collezione seconda, b. 136, fol. 2: plan of properties of S. Lucia in

4 Bartolomeo Bassi, land survey of the properties of Santa Lucia in Selci (at the bottom) and Santa Maria della Purificazione, from: ASR, *Disegni e Mappe*, collezione seconda, b. 136, f. 2 (photo Archivio di Stato di Roma)



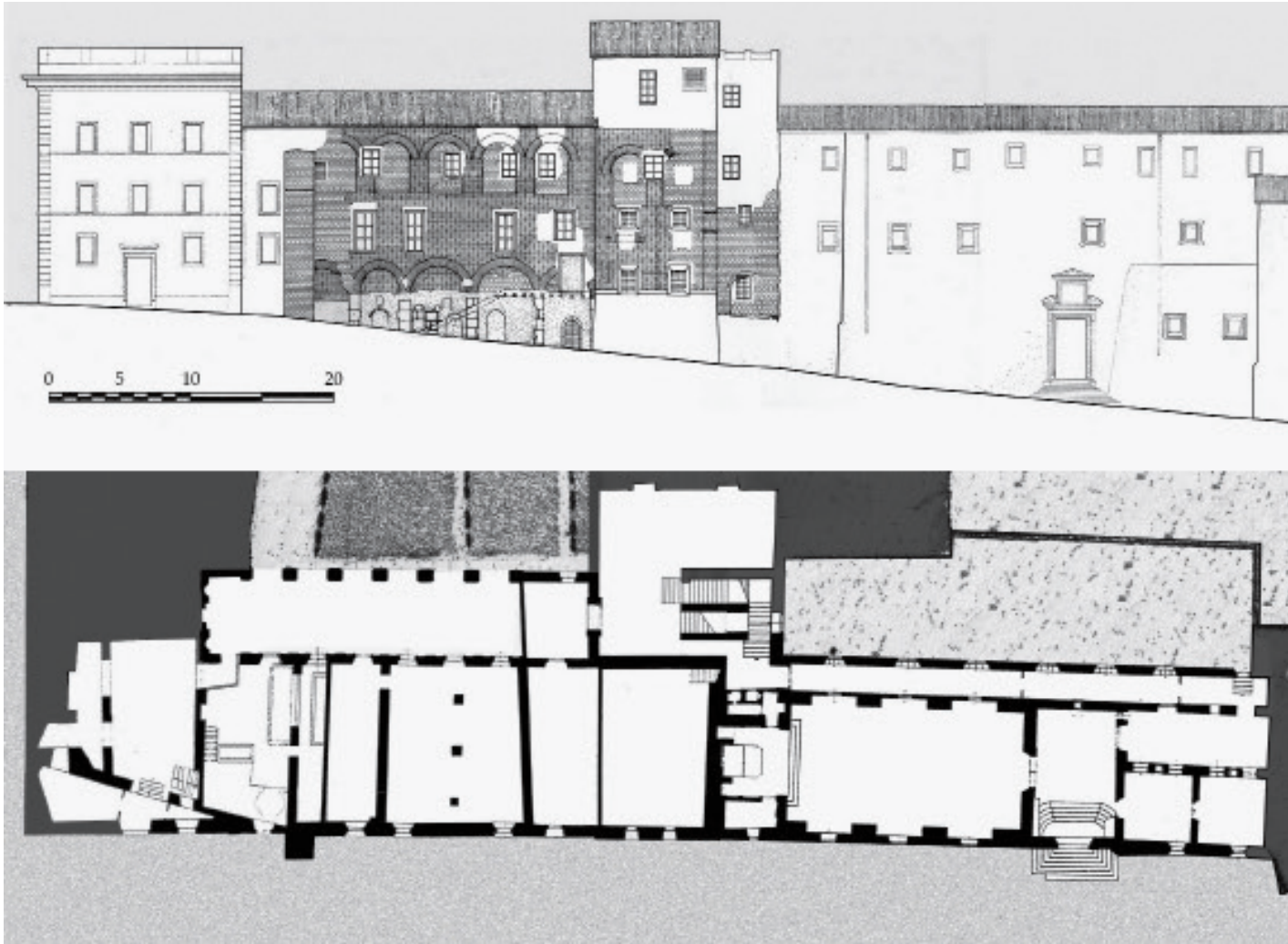
5 Antonio Tempesta, map of Rome, detail of Via in Selci with Santa Lucia in Selci (at right), 1645, etching, 105 × 240 cm (photo bpk/The Metropolitan Museum of Art)



Antonio Tempesta's 1593 map of Rome portrays the medieval complex just before Bassi's interventions (fig. 5).¹⁹ This shows that the old church occupied part of the late-antique *domus*, a full storey above street level, and was reached by climbing a long ramp of donkey steps after making a right-angle turn from the street. It was over this ramp that Bassi built the new nave, making an opening in the medieval wall to communicate with the old structure that was now used for

Selci and S. Maria della Purificazione, 523 × 909 cm, pen and washes, with the main annotation: "Tutto di colore d'aquerello e delle Reverende monache della Santissima Concetione che sarà circha a tremila canne il colore giallo e delle Reverene monache di Santa Lucia che sara circha a 500 canne. Io Carlo Maderno architetto afermo quanto si contiene in ditta pianta." Only the last line, in a different ink, is in Maderno's hand. In 1610 the nuns rationalised their common boundary with an exchange of land parcels. The *perito* for the Purificazione was Giovanni Paolo Maggi, for S. Lucia Maderno, and the independent *perito* was Giovanni Battista Crescenzi, ASR, SLS, b. 3678, *Istromenti diversi 1290-1550*, fols. 338r-343r, fols. 344r-349r (15 May 1610). Maderno reappears on 17 August 1617, as a court appointed *perito* in the division of certain properties (presumably) willed to the nuns, idem, fols. 322r-324r. Two details above all confirm that the plan is a land survey: the washes emphasise two discrete properties and the only dimensions are in canne.

¹⁹ Barry 2003, pp. 130-132, fig. 14. The map was not updated until the 1661-1662 and 1693 editions. See also Pompeo Ugonio's sketch of the façade (BAV, Cod. Barb. Lat. 1994, fol. 204; Barry 2003, fig. 5).



the choir and retro-choir (fig. 6).²⁰ This was the most expedient solution possible. Building a completely new church perpendicular to the street and at street level would have meant hacking away the massive substructures of the antique Porticus Liviae, while raising the church several metres above street level would have necessitated a complex stair arrangement in an already narrow street. The internal access stairs that were actually built are clearly a clumsy compromise.²¹

6 Rome, Santa Lucia in Selci, present condition: Elevation to the Via in Selci; ground floor/basement pla, after Apollonj Ghetti 1961; Serlorenzi 2004; ASC, Fondo Contratti, 1886, Atti pubblici, IV, fols. 647–648; ASR, Catasto Gregoriano, 1817 (compiled by the author)

20 Several licenses from the Maestri delle Strade document the completion of Bassi's works. Hibbard 1967, nos. 31, 36 (ASC, cred. IV, Tomo 83, fol. 160r – not 157v), 16 April 1603, “che possino murare, et fabricare la facciata del loro monastero che vogliono far’ di novo avanti le lor scale, pigliando del publico [...] andando ad unire con le facciate vecchie”; 16 January 1604, that they may “fare una scala avanti la porta del portico della loro chiesa quale riesce in fora nella strada palmi dieci.” However, another license shows that construction was still not complete on 22 February 1606 (Hibbard 1967, p. 136, mistakenly dates it to 1604) when the nuns were allowed to “fare una foderà nella facciata del coro de loro chiesa [...] uscendo infuora nella strada doi palmi” (Hibbard 1967, no. 46). This “foderà” is the brickwork at the base of Krautheimer's ‘Structure II’, see Krautheimer 1937–1977, vol. 2, pl. 14. A *verbale* of 18 August 1604 (ASR, SLS, b. 3676, fasc. 2, *Processi verbali delle Congregazioni*, loose sheet) speaks of the “necessità di finire il parlatorio et la porta grande del monasterio.” Another, of 6 September 1604 (ASR, SLS, b. 3676, fasc. 2, *Processi verbali delle Congregazioni*, loose sheet), records that the deputies of the church “risolsero, che considerato la necessità de finir il parlatorio con il portico che sta fra il parlatorio et la chiesa, et fare anco la porta della [*lacuna, but probably strada*] dinanzi a detto portico con la sua scalinata per poter se conviene serrare il monasterio, che havendo fatto partito maestro Filippo muratore di tutto questo lavoro da stimarsi da maestro Bartolommeo Bassi darcelo finito per tutto novembre prossimo avvenire, et della somma di detta stima pigliarsene scudi dieci il mese, et finito di pagar l’opera sua con l’istessa somma, si dovranno pagar tutti li altri, che havranno havere per tal’ effetto.”

The nuns could hardly afford the construction as it was, and the sliver of site they had wrangled from the nuns of Santa Maria della Purificazione was barely large enough to build a *parlatorio* (a visiting room, where nuns might speak to visitors through a grille), so Bassi's utilitarian façade merely bridged the gap between two medieval blocks.²² Indoors he exploited the most economic church typology available, popularised by Giacomo del Duca at Santa Maria in Trivio (1573–1575) and adopted in many later conventual churches, a barrel-vaulted nave with blind arcades just deep enough to accommodate the chapel altars (figs. 7, 8).²³ The presbytery at Santa Lucia is another barrel-vaulted unit hitched onto the nave, with a small sacristy on one side and a *coretto* on the other, at the level of the dormitories, a place to sing or for *converse* or sickly nuns to pray undisturbed.

Carlo Maderno, Felice Antonio Casoni (ca. 1617–1632)

Carlo Maderno, who also had a relative by marriage in the convent, took over on Bassi's death in 1616 and is recorded as supervising minor works between 1617 and 1620.²⁴ In 1614 Baccio Ciarpi had decorated the nuns' choir loft over the entrance with canvases of various saints in illusionist niches, and Maderno now fitted it out with stalls.²⁵ In 1619 the church was reconsecrated.²⁶

By 1624, with Urban VIII's pontificate barely begun, the convent quarters had once again become so cramped that another campaign of expansion was critical. The pope duly conceded a small parcel of adjoining land (14 December 1624), a generosity that may well have reflected the fact that several of the resident nuns had important curial connections within the Barberini circle.²⁷

21 The awkward dog-leg route into the church that overlaid the pre-existing stairs was originally even more cumbersome, as visitors had to traverse a narrow platform (somewhat like a dock) running alongside the church, to reach the front door. It was replaced by a lastricated, domical ramp (“padiglione”) in 1654, see Bentivoglio 1994, p. 54, no. 452.

22 Filippo Quadri says, “la d.a fabrica di S. Lucia parlatorio, et rota, non si poteva fare in altro loco migliore di quel che è fatta perché non ci era sito”, see ASR, SLS, b. 3686, fasc. 21, *Causa Purificazione-Ferri*, inserto 1; fol. 7r. After one year of construction the nuns were in debt for the sum of ∇ 1200, while the masonry walls alone had cost ∇ 1692:38, see Montenovesi 1943, p. 93. Some of the funding came from pilfering the ruins. Bartolomeo Bassi bought 144 palmi (approx. 32 m, presumably linear) of marble from the nuns in 1605 for the Cappella Barberini in S. Andrea della Valle, see Di Castro/Peccolo/Gazzaniga 1994, p. 126, doc. 10.

23 Benedetti 1973, pp. 155–174.

24 The will of Angela Canina (23 March 1618), Maderno's second wife, mentions that her niece Gertrude was a nun at S. Lucia in Selci see *Ragguagli borrominiani* 1968, p. 189. Filippo Quadri muratore is paid ∇ 202:40 “per resto e saldo della misura fatta dal Signore Carlo Maderno”, see ASR, SLS, reg. 3756, *Libro Mastro 1617–1620*, no. 177 (undated).

25 ASR, SLS, b. 3702, fasc. 3, *Giustificazioni diverse 1611–1615*, loose sheet, see Montenovesi 1943, p. 95. For Ciarpi's paintings see Sricchia Santoro 1975; Dunn 2000, pp. 33–36. Giovanni Aschiero is paid a remaining ∇ 20 “per l'intagli fatti nelle sedie dell novo choro”, ASR, SLS, reg. 3756, *Libro Mastro 1617–1620*, no. 177 (undated).

26 On 17th August 1620 ∇ 2:90 were backpaid for various expenses “per servitio della messa e vespero cantato nella festa della consecratione della chiesa [...]” (ASR, SLS, reg. 3757, *Libro Mastro 1620–1623*, no. 193). A bill from the carpenter Giovanni Aschieri mentions repairing altars in “il mese d'agosto [1619] al monasterio in chiesa per la consecratione [...]” (ASR, SLS, b. 3702, fasc. 4, *Giustificazioni diverse 1616–1620*, loose sheet).

27 Montenovesi cites the papal *breve* of 1624 conceding the land parcel “presso il vicino monastero femminile della Purificazione”, but I have been unable to trace it, see Montenovesi 1943, p. 93. See Appendix 2 for the individual donors. A commemorative inscription of 1684, within the church, states that Maria Diodata Rapaccioli was the sister of Cardinal Angelo Francesco Rapaccioli and that a small urn containing his heart was interred within the church, see Forcella 1869–1884, vol. 10, p. 361, no. 596. Angelo Rapaccioli (Collescipoli, nr. Narni 1608 – Rome 1657), the *Tesoriere Generale della Camera Apostolica*, who was created cardinal (S. Maria in Via) in Urban VIII's last promotion (13 July 1643), was *papabile* in the Conclave of



7 Rome, Santa Lucia in Selci, view of nave and choir towards high altar (photo Bibliotheca Hertziana/Enrico Fontolan)



8 Giacomo del Duca, nave, 1573–1575 and Antonio Gherardi, remodelled high altar and choir, 1677. Rome, Santa Maria in Trivio (photo Wikimedia Commons)

Amongst them was Cleria Mazzarini, the sister of the Barberini protégé Cardinal Mazarin, who had her deposited in the convent for eight years (1635–1643) until she could be married off to a wealthy suitor at the ripe old age of thirty-four.²⁸

Other property acquisitions followed in steady succession and the nuns exploited all of them to enlarge their premises. The Mellini sold them haylofts that

1655 but lost to Fabio Chigi, see Moroni 1840–1876, vol. 56, p. 167. Gigli's character sketch of Rapaccioli indicates he lived up to his suggestive name, see Gigli (1608–1670) 1994, vol. 1, p. 396; Rice 2009. Another memorial (1673) records the presence of Porzia Guidi di Bagno, see Forcella 1869–1884, vol. 10, p. 361, no. 95. The latter was the daughter [*sic*] of Cardinal Nicolò Guidi di Bagno, formerly general of the pontifical army in the March of Ancona (and then Ferrara) under Urban VIII, whose brother, Giovanni Francesco, had been made Cardinal by Urban in 1627, see Moroni 1840–1876, vol. 33, pp. 199–201. Pannunzia Poli entered the convent in 1640, and she was niece to Fausto Poli, whom Urban VIII also elevated to Cardinal in his last election, ASR, SLS, reg. 5637, no. 150. By 1624 there were seventy nuns at S. Lucia, AAV, *Visita Apostolica*, no. 3, fols. 203–203v, cited in Dunn 2000, p. 36.

²⁸ Cleria Mazzarini (1609–1649) is first mentioned on 7 July 1635, ASR, SLS, reg. 5637, no. 64. She married Pietro Antonio Muti in 1643. For a biographical profile see Dethan 1968, pp. 14, 28, 33–37, 43–45, 328, 344.



9 Reconstruction of the overall plan of the Convent of Santa Lucia in Selci after rebuilding of 1603–1604, after: ASR, Catasto Gregoriano, 1817, and ASC, Fondo Contratti, 1886, Atti Pubblici, parte IV, fols. 647/648, plan, 30 November 1886 (reconstruction by the author)

had been in the family's hands since the Quattrocento, and which Maderno then either converted or demolished in 1625.²⁹ By this point, the architect was suffering from both gout and gallstones, so he could only inspect the works in a sedan chair, and found it increasingly necessary to delegate duties to the trusty Filippo Breccioli (1574–1627) and, from at least 1623, the novice Francesco Borromini (1599–1667).³⁰ Plans to extend the convent buildings up the slope towards Santa Prassede were suspended in 1626, when the papal banker (and one of Caravaggio's earliest patrons) Ottavio Costa decided to concede a property next door to Cardinal Giovanni Battista Deti as his lifetime residence, thus blocking the path of the nuns' planned extensions.³¹ Costa had only just revamped an agglomeration of medieval and renaissance buildings, collectively called the "Palazzo di San Martino", which bordered the monastery of San Martino ai Monti on one side

29 A contract from 1478 records a "licentia vendendi Celso de Millinis Can.^{co} Bas. Vat. quamdam partem horti S. Luciae in Silice [...] quae vergit ad miridiem deferta et nudata parietibus formae, quasi pyramidalis difformis cum onere illam ad quadratam reducendi ac muris circumdandi pro Ant. Angelini Rectore et Thedelino Antonii de Tortibus querris clerico Benet.^o d.^{ac} Eccl.^{iae} S. Luciae" (AAV, *Registri Vaticani*, 668, fols. 286v–287v). Cardinal Giovanni Garzia Mellini was Titular Cardinal of the Augustinian motherhouse at SS. Quattro Coronati, which may explain their willingness to sell. A license from the Maestri delle Strade, of April 1625, documents the beginning of expansion works, "che possino reserrare di muro il sito della rupe contiguo a loro Monasterio per ampliare la loro clausura conforme alla donatione, et concessione di esso fattali dalla santità di N. S.re Papa Urbano Ottavo per suo breve et conforme alla sotto pianta", see Hibbard 1967, no. 131.

30 On 28 June 1625, 10:50 ∇ paid "al Carlo Moderni p ricognitione delle spese fatte in un anno, che si è fatto portare in sedia p servitio della nra fabrica" – elsewhere called the "fabrica nova" (ASR, SLS, reg. 3758, *Libro Mastro 1623–1627*, no. 178). Baglione says "parì sì bene nel suo ultimo tempo di male di reni, e di pietra, talche da se non potendo camminare, facevasi portare in seggetta, da per tutto, con sua comodità", see Baglione 1642, p. 309. A bill of 4 June 1625 mentions "Filippo Quadri e Antonio Masetta capi maestri della fabrica del nostro Venerabile Monasterio" (ASR, SLS, reg. 3758, *Libro Mastro 1623–1627*, No. 200); a *misura e stima* of 20 August 1619 is signed by Filippo Breccioli, see ASR, SLS, b. 3702, fasc. 4, *Giustificazioni diverse 1616–1620*, loose sheet. A bill for unspecified works carried out between 12 October 1622 and 25 April 1623 (ASR, SLS, b. 3703, fasc. 1, *Giustificazioni diverse 1621–1625*, loose sheet) is corrected in graphite and, though unsigned, it is my opinion that the handwriting is clearly Borromini's.

31 The *concessio ad vitam* from Ottavio Costa (1554–1639) to Cardinal Deti (1580–1630) is in ASR, NAC, uff. 6, Dominicus Amadeus (in partnership with Franciscus Micenus), b. 192, fol. 385 (5 August 1626) specifying that Costa cedes, "eius domum cum suis appartementis, et portis, et fenestris noviter factis [...] nec non duo viridaria insimul iuncta eidem domi[...] iuxta ab uno latere bona d.ti Monasterij [S. Lucia], ab alio bona RR. Prum St. Martini de Montibus, ante et retro vias pub.cas."

(hence the name) and Santa Lucia in Selci on the other, and which included the massive medieval tower, the Torre dei Capocci, that is the only part of the structure still standing (figs. 5, 9).³² Deti moved in immediately, but within a couple of years (in 1628) the nuns had persuaded Urban VIII to invoke the legal instrument known as *Jus Congruui*, or the *Bolla Gregoriana*, to expropriate his new home.³³ Ostensibly they simply needed more room for their burgeoning community, but the initiative offered the added attraction of ridding themselves of the malign proximity of Deti, a priapic freeloader who kept violent menservants and drank himself into an early grave just two years later. The perpetually itinerant and penurious Deti's reaction to this eviction, his fifth in twenty years (and his second in just three) is perhaps foreshadowed in the implicit theme of the vault frescos he had commissioned at his previous refuge, the Palazzo Colonna: *Woman is the Source of All Evil*.³⁴

Costa's palazzo adjoined the old medieval church and another antique range visible in a 1615 engraving by Alò Giovannoli (fig. 10), all of which was demolished in 1895–1896 to clear the Piazza San Martino ai Monti around the now forlorn Torre dei Capocci.³⁵ Only the rooftops of this destroyed complex are visible in an image captured in the 1860s by the pioneering archaeological photographer Carlo Baldassare Simelli (fig. 11).³⁶ Fortunately, a very detailed plan was made in the 1880s, recording the warren of rooms below these roofs before demolition, when the idea of adding a new wing to the convent was abortively

32 In 1493 Graziano de Fichinellis had sold the house, previously the property of Battista Archioni, to Vannoza Catanei (mistress of Cardinal Rodrigo Borgia, later Alexander VI) and her third husband Carlo Canali; in 1509 Vannoza remodelled the building and built a new front wing, Bianchi 1998, vol. 1, p. 61. For the complex details of the property transmission 1548–1602, see Sebastiani 2008, pp. 107–108 and notes 16–30. Costa acquired the complex in 1601–1602.

33 On 8 September 1626, the nuns were allowed to raise a *censo* to pay Ottavio Costa the ∇ 2,200 they owed him for the property, which had been incorporated “ob iniam eiusdem monrii angustiam easque quendam domum cum horto seu viridario eodem Mon.rio contiguam” (AAV, Arm. XXXVIII, vol. 11, *Urbani VIII Brev. Autografa*), fol. 14: (8 September 1626); AAV, Camera Apostolica, Arm. XLII, fols. 150r–151v; modern numeration fols. 243r–244v; copy in ASR, NCV, uff. 33, Michelangelus Cesium, vol. 123, fols. 1042r–1043v. Costa sold them the property in a contract of 1 December 1628 (ASR, NCV, uff. 33, Michelangelus Cesium, vol. 124, fols. 954r–958v) where it is classified as “eius domum magnam seu palatium Romae in Regione Montium contiguam seu contiguam Ven.lio Monasterio RR. Monialium S.tae Luciae in Silice.” The contract between the nuns and Deti is in ASR, NCV, uff. 33, Michelangelus Cesium, vol. 122, fols. 1002r–1004v (14 April 1628) to reimburse him the ∇ 2,200 he had paid Costa. Deti's last will and testament (9 August 1630) still names the convent as a creditor of “scudi duimila e docento che mi si devono dalle RR. Monache di S. Lucia in Selice per il prezzo di tanti miglioramenti ch'ho fatto nel giardino che m'hanno levato in virtù della bolla Juris Congruui” (ASR, 30 NC, uff. 10, *testamenti*, Ascanius Barberinus, fols. 332ff). A *stima* from 27 April 1628 lists the various works in the garden for which Deti wished compensation (ASR, NCV, uff. 33, Michelangelus Cesium, vol. 122, fols. 1109r–1110v). Two licenses from the Maestri delle Strade document construction: 28 June 1628, “che possino renserrare di muro un pezzo di sito posto dietro al loro giardino nella strada che da S. Pietro in Vincoli va a S. Martino de Monti”; 1 August 1629, “che possono fondare, et fare il muro della clausura nell'angolo tra il pilastro antico che fa agetto nella strada, et facciata di S. Lucia et palazzo compr[at]o dal Costa”, see Hibbard 1967, nos. 152, 161. For Ottavio Costa (1554–1639), though nothing on the property at S. Lucia in Selci, see Costa Restagno 2004, with bibliography.

34 On Deti's unsaintly life, see Lefevre 1971. See also the harsh judgement by his contemporary, Cardinal Bentivoglio, see *Cardinale Guido Bentivoglio* 1934, p. 81. Deti had been given an apartment *ad vitam* in the Palazzo Chigi al Corso in 1626 and it has been hitherto assumed that he lived out his days there. For the Galleria Deti in the Palazzo Chigi, see Lefevre 1964–1965.

35 Giovannoli 1615, vol. 2, no. 36. I interpreted this range as a canted but flat wall (see Barry 2003, p. 123), whereas Serlorenzi (Serlorenzi 2004, p. 359) argued it was the remains of an apse.

36 Parker 1867, p. 33, no. 245. A slightly earlier engraving represents the same view: Rome, Palazzo Venezia, Biblioteca di Archeologia e Storia dell'Arte, Fondo Rodolfo Lanciani, Roma XI.51 – Palazzi, loose sheet.



10 Alò Giovannoli, Santa Lucia in Selci, 1615, from: Alò Giovannoli, *Roma antica di Alò Giovannoli da Cività Castellana, Libro secondo*, Rome 1615, no. 36

planned (fig. 9).³⁷ In 1628–1632, perhaps due to Maderno’s increasing infirmity (he died on 30 January 1629), the convent specialist Felice Antonio Casoni took over works at Santa Lucia and added a refectory and service quarters on the back of the convent, some of it within Costa’s old house.³⁸ This accomplished, Casoni himself died in 1634. The net result of three decades of transformations was a functional and ample convent.³⁹

Inside the church: the Vannini, Melchiorri, and Cerri Chapels (ca. 1725, 1620s–1630s)

While it is possible to document the transformation of the convent during the early seventeenth century quite precisely, the same cannot be said for the church, nor is it possible to identify the architects and stuccatori involved with certainty, or determine how and why they were chosen. Marilyn Dunn’s brief study of the nuns’ patronage at Santa Lucia attributes all artistic initiatives to the nuns, rele-

37 ASC, *Fondo Contratti*, 1886, Atti Pubblici (30 November), parte IV, fols. 647/648; Barry 2003, fig. 8.

38 The building “nel giardino comprato dal S. Ottavio Costa” was built in July 1628 – December 1629 (the contract was made on 7 May 1628; ASR, SLS, b. 3678, fasc. 6, *Instromenti 1601–1649*, f. 486r; b. 3678/2, fol. 480). The builder was Gregorio Quadri, the mason Daniele Guidotti, the carpenter Paolo Bertoldo, the ironmonger Mariano Martani (ASR, SLS, b. 3689, fasc. 2, *Ordini di pagamento per la fabbrica del giardino*, fols. 1r–90v, *passim*) and the “pittore”, Alessandro Vaiani for “lavori di pittura fatti in accomodamento delle pitture della sala nel palazzo comprato” (ASR, SLS, b. 3689, fasc. 2, *Ordini di pagamento per la fabbrica del giardino*, fols. 60v–61r); Casoni is first mentioned at fol. 85v and the total expenditure was ∇ 7246:87. The refectory was built by the same team in January 1630 – May 1632 (ASR, SLS, b. 3689, fasc. 2, *Ordini di pagamento per la fabbrica del giardino*, fols. 91v–165r) for a total of ∇ 8639. Numerous *misure e stime* and *conti* signed by Casone, and starting on 29 May 1626, are in SLS, b., 3703, fasc. 2. The *capitoli e patti* with Quadri for the refectory (27 May 1628: ASR, SLS, b. 3678, fasc. 6, *Instromenti 1601–1649*, fols. 480r–482v; ASR, NCV, uff. 33, Michelangelus Cesium, vol. 123, fols. 448r–451v) again specify Casoni as the architect. The refectory almost collapsed in 1649 and the nuns took action against Quadri for “fraudulent construction” (ASR, SLS, b. 3678, fasc. 6, *Instromenti 1601–1649*, fols. 576r–577v; b. 3705, fasc. 1, *Gustificazioni diverse 1648–90*, for the *perizia* of Giovanni Chelli and Antonio del Grande). Casoni (1559–1634) had previously built the convent of S. Marcello al Corso (1616–1624), the church and convent of S. Isidoro degli Irlandesi (1622–1626), the convent of S. Agostino (1623) and had a hand in the construction of the Capuchin convent of the Immacolata Concezione (1626–1631). He had also built the Fontana delle Orse in the Palazzo di Montegiordano for Paolo Giordano II Orsini (1618), and worked for him at Bracciano and elsewhere. Giovanna Ippolita Orsini was abbess of S. Lucia in 1643, see Montenovesi 1943, p. 96.



11 Carlo Baldassare Simelli, view of the Torre dei Capocci from the Via Equizia, 1864/1866, albumen print glued onto cardboard, 38 × 31.6 cm. Rome, British School at Rome, John Henry Parker Collection, no. 245 (photo British School at Rome)

gating any men involved to a purely advisory role. Although this idea of “sisters doing it for themselves” holds a certain attraction, it also risks retroactively empowering the nuns, who had, after all, been virtually imprisoned at the pleasure of their patriarchal nearest and dearest. Even the meetings with their notary had to be conducted “ad crates ferreas parlatorii” (through the bars of the visiting room) and it is hard to see how they could have kept abreast of architectural fashions in the city: they flaunted no such interest when selecting Bartolomeo Bassi as the architect of their church. In any case, the archival evidence points in the opposite direction. While all communal commissions and the construction or refurbishing of the various wings are meticulously documented in the convent papers, with the contributions of individual nuns often noted, payments for the chapels themselves are, with little exception, conspicuously absent.⁴⁰ The logical conclusion is that such funds were disbursed directly by the nuns’ families on their behalf, and it must therefore have been the families who contracted the artists as well. While the nobility avoided depleting the dowry pool by committing their daughters to religious spinsterhood, they were still apt to see the convents as extensions of their households, and they acquired the patronage of chapels as opportunities for public piety. When Giovanni Antonio Bruzio’s late seventeenth-century description of the church (Appendix 2) ascribes the various altars to the largesse of particular nuns, he must be acknowledging them as the promoters of re-

newal and name-bearers of their clan. For a community that teetered on the brink of destitution for most of its existence, stylish frippery was not a financial priority, but external funds were always welcome.⁴¹

Bartolomeo Bassi had designed a nave with absolutely no frills, a plain architrave and only Tuscan pilasters between the chapels, the simplest order available and the right choice for humble religious like the Franciscans, Carmelites, and in this case Augustinian tertiaries. However, from the 1620s, new campaigns of works softened this grim simplicity with all manner of florid and ornamental delicacies. As post-Tridentine strictures meant that the nuns could only enter the church in very exceptional circumstances, the renewed vessel of Santa Lucia now

39 “Ha un claustro con archi, cortili 3. Un giardino con orto, fontana, et un giardinetto [...]. Ha 3 dormitorij nella casa superiore dove sta il novitiato, e la torre con l’archivio con celle 24. Altro dormitorio a paro del novitiato con celle 12. Altri dormitori per le converse. La spetiarina con 3 stanze sopra. Ha l’infermeria, refettorio, cucina, cantina, 3 grotte, dispensa, stanze per carbone e legna.” (*Relatione dello Stato temporale del mon.sto di S. Lucia in Selce data alla Sacra Visita all’8 di giugno 1662*, AAV, Misc. Arm. VII, 28, Tomo secondo, fol. 337 r/v). An annotated plan of the convent grounds, dating from 1820, is in ASR, SLS, b. 3686, fasc. 9, *Causa Montelluzzo–Martinez 1464–1820*.

40 E.g. ASR, SLS, b. 3706, fasc. 2, *Giustificazioni diverse 1665–1672*, loose sheet (probably 1672): “Si notifica come gli abbellimenti dell’incolonnato sono stati fatti da Signore Monache particolari, cioè: La Signora Sor Anna Maria già priora had fatto tutto l’adornamento della fontana, et ancora a sue spese tutto il legname per chiudere l’arco dove e situata la fontana, per guardar il cortile dal freddo et in queste cose ha speso passa cinquanta scudi [di] moneta. Sor Maria Deodata ha speso di ▽ diciotto [di] moneta per far le due porte nove alle due archi più vicini alla fontana. Una monacha della quale si tace il nome per suo comandamento, ha speso di ▽ quindici b[aiocchi] 50 [di] moneta per far due invetriati a due archi, havendo fatto di novo telari e vetri. Alcune altre monache hanno contribuito chi più chi meno per far li telari alli altri quattro archi, e pagato il vetraro per agiustarvi li vetri che stavano alle fenestre del Novitiato quali tutti andavano in pezzi.”

41 The grim state of the convent’s finances is detailed in Dunn 2000, pp. 36–37, esp. note 35.



12 Cavaliere d'Arpino, *Saints Monica and Augustine beholding the Trinity*, 1638–1639, oil on canvas, with architecture by Francesco Borromini. Rome, Santa Lucia in Selci, Cappella Landi (photo Bibliotheca Hertziana/Enrico Fontolan)



13 Giovanni Lanfranco, *Martyrdom of Saint Lucy*, 1632, oil on canvas, with altar stuccoes, early eighteenth century. Rome, Santa Lucia in Selci, Cappella Vannini (photo Bibliotheca Hertziana/Enrico Fontolan)

became a prism of expectations. For the public it offered an image of cloistered virginity with all the lacy frailty of a wedding dress. For the closeted sisters who enjoyed prison-barred views from the retrochoir and choir loft, it was a glimpse of the eventual heaven that would repay their present privations.⁴²

As for the individual chapels, over sixty years ago Paolo Portoghesi attributed every one of them to Borromini, although only the Cappella Landi (fig. 12) is securely documented as his design, and it cuts quite a different figure from the rest.⁴³ The chapel directly opposite, the Cappella Vannini (first chapel on the

42 In the 1960s one could still see this cartiglio besides the vestibule rota: “O celeste prigion, o ferri amati. In voi la libertà gode il cuor mio, / vivo in pace, contenta godo Iddio / lontana da’ piaceri e da’ peccati”, see Maroni Lombroso 1968, p. 214.

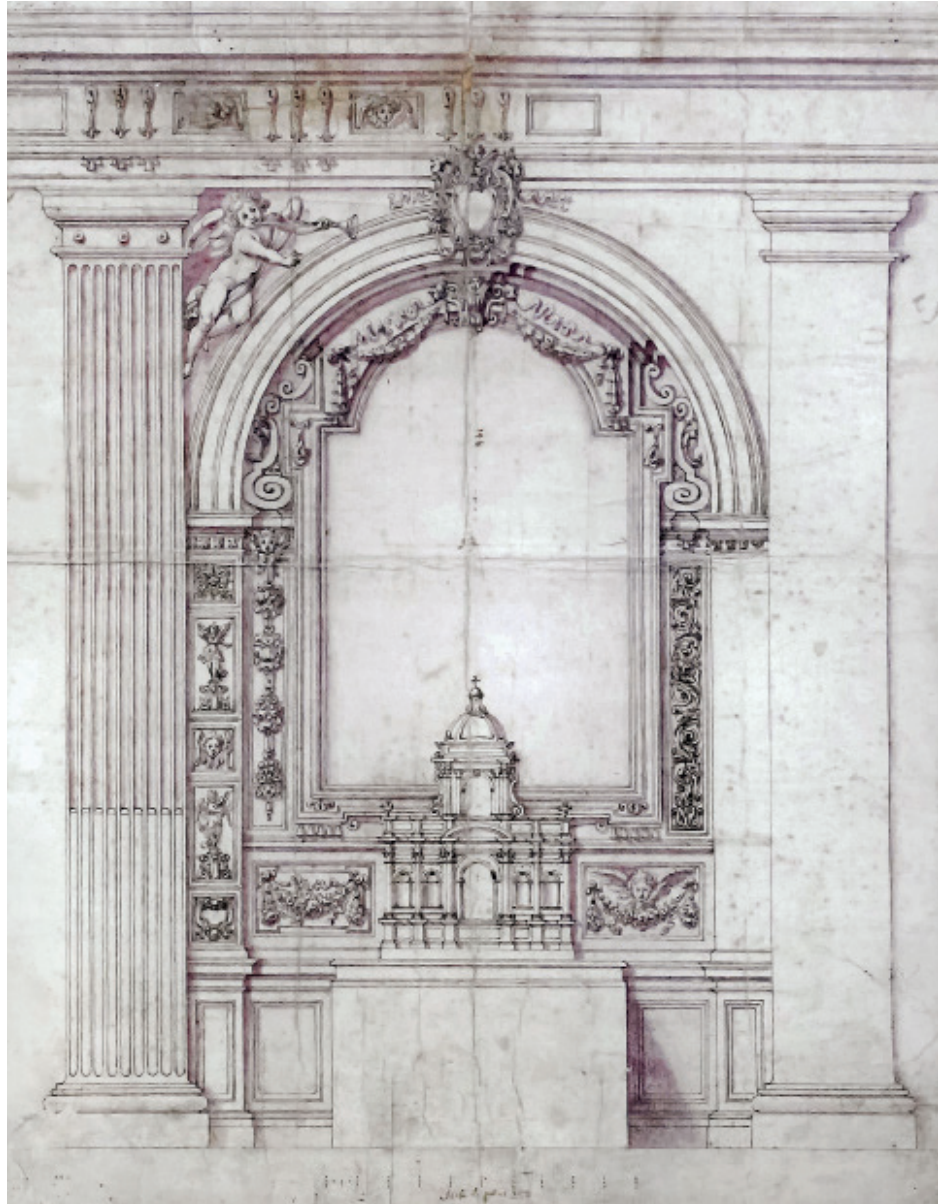
43 Portoghesi 1958a, republished in Portoghesi 1982, pp. 261–280, 453–456 (edition used here). Borromini is however documented (1639) as overseeing the gilding and designing the consecration crosses (“per la croce della consacrazione della chiesa posta nel pilastro scannelato commessa nel marmo bianco e con listello negro a torno e con la croce di marmo rosso”), Portoghesi 1982, p. 455. The latter are simplified versions of the one he had designed for the Porta Santa of Saint Peter’s in 1623, which has been recently rediscovered, see Thelen 1967, I, C23; II, pp. 28–30; Di Buono 2016; Seifert 2016.



14 Andrea Camassei, *St John the Evangelist Administering Communion to the Virgin*, ca. 1628, oil on canvas, with architecture by Carlo Maderno and associates. Rome, Santa Lucia in Selci, Cappella Melchiorri (photo Bibliotheca Hertziana/Enrico Fontolan)

right) bears no resemblance to anything ever designed by Borromini, and its stucco decorations should certainly be dated to the early eighteenth century (fig. 13). In 1632 Giovanni Lanfranco filled the entire bay with an altarpiece of the *Martyrdom of Saint Lucy*, for nuns from a Pistoiese family (the Vannini), perhaps partially in lieu of a dowry for Lanfranco's own daughter who entered the convent some time before 1635.⁴⁴ However, the altarpiece's stucco envelope was obviously added much later. The deflated cartouche and sagging impostes seem to have been made no earlier than the 1680s, and the angels bursting out of their spandrels are distinctly post-Bernini. Equally, the gilt stucco frame immediately

44 On the painting, see Schleier 1983, cat. nos. 30, 30a; figs. 144–145; Bomba 1987, pp. 35–41. Cleaning has revealed the date 1632. Lanfranco's daughter Flavia is mentioned as resident by 1635 (ASR, SLS, reg. 5637, no. 12). Suora Raimonda Vannini was resident by 1633 and Vincenza Vannini entered in 1641 (ASR, SLS, b. 3678, fasc. 6, *Instromenti* 1601–1649, fol. 499v; reg. 5520, no. 55). Portoghesi (1982, p. 277) claims that the scudo contains a palm and is allegorical, whereas it represents a fern and is heraldic. Cartari 1670/1680, fol. 80v: "VANNINI di Pistoia e di Roma. D'azzurro con una pianta di felce diradicata d'oro sormontata di tre stelle dell'istesso [...]". Vive oggi di questa famiglia un canonico della Basilica Vaticana." Capponi mentions a Monsignor Tommaso Vannini and Monsignor Bartolomeo Vannini. It seems that the Van(n)ini were based in the Pistoian *contado* at Lizzano, see Capponi 1874, p. 384.



15 Carlo Maderno (?), presentation design for the Cappella Melchiorri, ca. 1629, ink and wash on paper, 51.5 × 41.5 cm. Private collection (photo author)

surrounding the painting, with its encrusted and tooled surfaces, is not derived from architectural mouldings at all, but rather from picture frames (the so-called “Salvator” or “Maratta” frame that became established by about 1715).⁴⁵ Finally, the delicate reliefs of candelabra that fill the pilaster strongly recall the work of the *stuccatori* Carlo and Pietro Porciani, who were active during the first two decades of the eighteenth century.⁴⁶

The two remaining chapels nearest the choir were designed as pendants, but their dating is difficult to nail down. The left altar, the Chapel of the Holy Sacrament (fig. 14), does not seem to have entered the hands of the Melchiorri family,

45 Montenesi claims that the altar was enlarged in 1700 but I have found no archival evidence for this, see Montevesi 1943, p. 106. Giacomo Moraldi was likely the nuns’ architect in 1700: ASR, SLS, reg. 3689/3, *Registro dei mandati 1698–1709*, unnumbered folios (11 November 1701 for unspecified works carried out the previous year). Giovanni Pietro Minelli had taken his place by 1715, see *In Urbe architectus* 1991, p. 404.

46 San Francesco di Paola: Valeriani 1993 (this article is based on only a partial reading of the archival documents and is reliable for the authorship of the stuccoes, but not the architecture). See also the Cappella Odescalchi at SS. Apostoli (1719–1723), see Kelly 1980, pp. 80–103, 277–286.



16 Rome, Saint Peter, nave, vault lunettes and window hoods, stuccoes of sirens, ca. 1614 (photo author)

whose stemma adorns its arch, before 1628.⁴⁷ Moreover, the altarpiece of *St John the Evangelist Administering Communion to the Virgin* was painted by Andrea Camassei (1602–1649), who is not documented in Rome before 1626, nor known to have executed an altarpiece there before 1629.⁴⁸ A hitherto unknown presentation drawing for the chapel’s design must therefore have been provided to the nuns or their family before this date (fig. 15).⁴⁹ In fact, because the stemma in

47 The chapel was endowed with a perpetual daily Mass for the soul of Suora Helena Lancellotti by Lorenzo Lancellotti on 27 September 1625 (ASR, 30 NC, uff. 13, Ioannes Baptista Octavianus, vol. 229, fols. 717r–718v; ASR, SLS, b. 3678, fasc. 6, *Istromenti 1601–1649*, fols. 414r–426r); Lena Moni established a chaplaincy for the chapel on 20 September 1627 (ASR, SLS, b. 3678, *Istromenti diversi 1290–1550*, fol. 428r); Lorenzo Lancellotti instituted another Mass on 27 May 1628 (ASR, NCV, uff. 33, Michelangelus Cesium, vol. 123, fols. 445r–447v). Bruzio (Appendix 2) gives the patron as Suora Isabella Melchiorri who was resident by 1628 (ASR, SLS, b. 3678, fasc. 6, fol. 419r). Anna Maria Melchiorri professed by June 1635, becoming Suor Anna Paola (ASR, SLS, reg. 5637, no. 71). Caterina Melchiorri entered the convent on 29 March 1639 “hora chiamata Maria Candida” (ASR, SLS, reg. 5637, no. 151). All were daughters of the Marchese Pietro Paolo Melchiorri (d. 1650) and Isabella Camajani. A “Notizia del matrimonio fra Isabella di Antonio Camajani e Pietro Paolo Melchiorri di Roma” (20 August, 1611) is in the Archivio Barbolani da Montauto, Serie 50 (*Contratti matrimoniali e affari dotali*), b. 37 (1611–1619). This marchese was portrayed (1615) by Ottavio Leoni, see Primarosa 2017, p. 456, cat. no. 333. One of his brothers, Tommaso, became a priest and died in Rome in 1650; another brother, Marcello, was ordained in 1634, and became a Referendary, Lateran Canon, and Lieutenant of the Auditor of the Camera Apostolica before dying in 1657, see Calcagni 1711, pp. 185, 219. A third brother, Girolamo, married Sulpizia Spada and was *conservatore* in 1662, and his granddaughter (also Isabella) married Ottavio Maffei, see Ameyden (1640) 1910, vol. 2, p. 72. The scudo bears their heraldic arms, a gold log below three silver fleurs-de-lis on a red ground: Ameyden (1640) 1910, vol. 1, p. 71.

48 Sutherland Harris 1970, pp. 50, 68 (doc. 1). Barroero (1979, pp. 68–69, 75 at notes 16–19) dates Camassei’s altarpieces in S. Lucia in Selci to 1636/39 only on the assumption that they are coeval with the Cappella Landi, an opinion uncritically repeated in Nessi 2005, pp. 89–90. A preparatory sketch held in Stuttgart is for a painting with a virtually square format, see Thiem 1977, p. 214, cat. no. 397 (as Giacinto Gimignani); Barroero 1979, p. 75, note 16 (as Camassei); Nessi 2005, p. 220 and fig. 95.

49 Private collection. Sold at auction, The Canterbury Auction Galleries, 2–3 December 2014, Lot 436 (2 drawings; the second, which may or may not have come from S. Lucia, is a design ca. 1700 for a metal Carta Gloria frame). Enquiries about the provenance with the vendor have not been fruitful. Although the nave entablature in the drawing differs completely from that executed, this is nonetheless inconclusive for dating the sheet, because Mellini says the entablature was still incomplete in the middle of the century; Appendix 1.



17 Rome, Santa Lucia in Selci, Cappella Melchiorri, detail of stemma and keystone (photo Bibliotheca Hertziana/Enrico Fontolan)

the drawing is blank, it is also possible that the drawing was made when the chapel was yet to be assigned, and so some years earlier still. That this sheet was made for presentation is clear from its large size (51.5 × 41.5 cm), its quality, and the fact that the left and right halves propose alternative solutions for the stuccos. The executed chapel follows the general lines of this design faithfully. The design for the large, marble tabernacle for the Eucharist also differs little from the version executed, and plainly belonged to the scheme from the beginning. Indeed, this tabernacle substituted a wooden one held aloft by two angels that was in place by 1618, and repaired in 1621.⁵⁰

While Lanfranco simply filled the entire Vannini Chapel with his altarpiece (fig. 13), in the Melchiorri Chapel architecture intervenes. The designer resolved the problem of fitting an adequate aedicule into an arched bay by adapting the type of window frame and hood that is normally encountered in the lunette of a vault, like those that Maderno had designed for the nave of Saint Peter's (1614–1615) (fig. 16). In the case of the Melchiorri Chapel, this frame negotiates the interstices between altarpiece and bay with a dextrous and delicate cascade of arcs, “ears,” and volutes. The chapel is a product of the Maderno firm and, as Portoghesi recognised, the rich filigreed stuccoes particularly resemble those designed for Saint Peter's under Paul V (1605–1621).⁵¹

However, who exactly designed it and who did the drawing? Was it Maderno himself (who began works at Santa Lucia in 1616 and died in 1629), or perhaps Borromini (who had worked for Maderno since 1619)? Borromini's nephew, Bernardo, recounts that his uncle's drafting skills were so good that Maderno soon had him making finished drawings, and that by the time the Palazzo Barberini was begun (1627), Maderno left virtually all design and drawing in Borromini's hands.⁵² Some early pen and wash drawings by Borromini do survive, one of which has a violet wash (very unusual) that recalls the drawing for the Melchiorri Chapel.⁵³ However, the Melchiorri drawing, although lovely, is not as fastidious and refined as Borromini's other known drawings and

50 *Conto dei lavori*, 11 April 1619, of Giovanni Aschieri *falegname*: “Questo dì 8 di Decembre [1618] a Santa Lucia per la festa ho fatto doi altari di nuovo, cioè del mio legname, et poi me l'ho ripigliato, et a una de' detti altari ci ho agiustato il tabernacolo in aria, et ho agiustato sotti doi angeli che lo regono”: ASR, SLS, b. 3702, fasc. 1, *Giustificazioni diverse 1471–1536* [sic], loose sheet. On 5 September 1621 Aschieri was paid “per haver fatto una giunta al tabernacolo della chiesa dove si tiene la custodia”: ASR, SLS, reg. 3757, *Libro Mastro lett. C 1620–1623*, no. 198. The marble tabernacle, made by an unknown artist, is decorated with gilded bronze figures of Saints Elizabeth of Hungary, Augustine, Lucy, and Monica, all placed in the niches.

51 Nave (1614–1615), portico (1618–1620), choir (1620–1623), see Hibbard 1971, pp. 164–165, 178–180, 184–185.

52 Florence, Bibl. Naz. Centrale, Cod. Magliab. II II 110, fol. 170r; transcribed in Connors 1980, p. 158: “atendeva a disegnare con grandissima diligenza e polizia et accorgendosi di ciò Carlo maderni suo parente per via di donna, li daua da fare e da tirare di segni in polite per lui [... Carlo Maderno] conosiendolo molto diligente e acutto di ingenio et per la grande sua atione che nel disegnare haveva fatto – et per la grande pratica del fabricare che in si longo tempo haveva praticato che diventò peritissimo dove che il maderni essendo assai vecchio lassìò tutta la Cura dell detto palazzo [Barberini] et delli altri lavori di s. pietro al boromino – godendo di haver un gioine simile suo parente che facesse li disegni et l[?] opere in suo luogo nella sua vecchiaia[...] et per misuratore si serviva del Breccioli [...]”

53 Thelen 1967. Borromini's design for S. Andrea della Valle: Oxford, Ashmolean Museum, Largest Talman Album X, fol. 19 (ca. 1623).



18 Andrea Camassei, *Saint John the Evangelist Administering Communion to the Virgin*, ca. 1628, oil on canvas, with architecture by Carlo Maderno and associates. Rome, Santa Lucia in Selci, Cappella Cerri (photo Bibliotheca Hertziana/Enrico Fontolan)

the single inscription (“Scala di palmi”) is not in his hand. The drawing might instead be by Filippo Breccioli, Maderno’s nephew-in-law and *misuratore*, but we know little about his drawing style, and he died in 1627.⁵⁴ The architectural intelligence with which all the parts of the chapel interlock is reminiscent of Borromini, as are some idiosyncracies like the triplet of volutes that make up the keystone, a triplet repeated in Borromini’s choir-loft (figs. 39, 40), and the cherubim that surround the stemma (fig. 17). However, since the presentation drawing does not look to be by Borromini, we may infer that either Maderno (or Breccioli) incorporated some of his ideas, or that these were seeds sown in Borromini’s later imagination by Maderno.

For the chapel directly opposite, Bruzio (Appendix 2) identifies the patrons as Suora Maria Antonia and Suora Maria Celeste Cerri, daughters of the Cavaliere Antonio Cerri (1569–1642), whose arms the chapel bears (fig. 18).⁵⁵ Cerri

54 Breccioli had married Orsolina Tartaglino, the niece of Maderno’s second wife Angela Calina. He died at some point after 2 August 1627: Tafuri/Corbo 1972. The drawing does not resemble his wash drawing for the façade of S. Maria in Aquiro (ca. 1602), though this is earlier and smaller: (Albertina, Az. Rom., apparently numberless) in Giovannoni 1913, fig. 10.



19 Rome, Santa Lucia in Selci, Cappella Cerri, chapel soffit (photo Bibliotheca Hertziana/Enrico Fontolan)

had four daughters (and at least two sisters) in the convent from 1620, one of whom, Maria Celeste, is recorded as a novice in 1627.⁵⁶ Antonio Cerri, a famous consistorial lawyer whose shrewd character shines through in Algardi's disquieting bust of him, was one of the 'new men' advanced by the Barberini and it was with their backing that he eventually became rector of the Sapienza (in 1634).⁵⁷ When Cerri built himself a new palace around 1627, opposite Borromini's future Oratory of the Philippines, the architect he chose was Francesco Peperelli (1587–1641) and the painter who decorated it was the Florentine Giovanni Antonio Lelli (ca. 1594–1640).⁵⁸ Cerri certainly re-employed Lelli to decorate the nave vault of Santa Lucia with a *Saint Lucy carried to Heaven by Angels*, which was heavily overpainted in the 1840s.⁵⁹ It would therefore be reasonable to expect that Cerri employed Peperelli at the church as well, especially as Cerri was the godfather of Peperelli's second-born child (June 1629), and given that Virgilio Spada (writing in 1630) also emphasises Cerri's absolute professional faith in Peperelli "with whom he has done business at other times, and with nobody else."⁶⁰ However, the altar resembles nothing from Peperelli's (more tectonic and far less ornate) oeuvre and once again it was Camassei, not Lelli, who executed the altarpiece of

55 The stucco panels in this chapel are as follows. External pilasters, *Prudence* (left) and *Temperance* (right). Inside, left, *Saint Augustine meditating under an oak hears the words from heaven "tolle, lege"*; *Saint Augustine gives his rule to the monks*; inside, right, *Saint Jerome appears to Saint Augustine in his study*, *Saint Augustine meets the child on the beach*.

56 Maria Eleonora Cerri was resident in the convent by 1628 (ASR, SLS, b. 3678/2, *Istromenti 1449–sec. XVI*, fol. 418), Antonia and Celeste by 1633 (ASR, SLS, b. 3678, fasc. 6, *Istromenti 1601–1649*, fol. 499v); Angela Cerri and Maria Leonarda Cerri entered on 1 June 1620 (ASR, SLS, reg. 3757, *Libro Mastro lett. C 1620–1623*, nos. 150, 154); and Maria Celeste Cerri was a novice in 1627 (ASR, SLS, reg. 5519, *Libro Mastro lett. E, 1627–1635*, no. 78). Only Maria Lio-

nora [sic] Cerri is mentioned in the list of nuns witnessing a notarial act on 9 April 1630 (ASR, NCV, uff. 33, Michelangelus Cesium, vol. 128, fol. 1049r). Maria Alessandra Cerri is mentioned as one of several sisters of Antonio in 1627, see Dunn 2000, p. 43 (note 48). For the family arms, see Cartari 1670/1680, fol. 100r.

57 Montagu 1985, vol. 2, cat. no. 144. For Cerri, see Palma 1980. Cerri was first *cubiculario segreto* and *uditore generale alla segreteria di Stato*, thereafter *referendario utriusque Signaturae* and Rector of the Sapienza.

58 Connors 1980, pp. 87, 133 (note 21), 85; Longo 1990, p. 28. On the palace, see Manfredi 2006. For Lelli, see Baglione 1642, vol. 3, pp. 375–377; Röttgen 1984, p. 320; Mazzetti di Pietralata 2005 (with the most accurate estimate of the birthdate).

59 Martinelli 1969, 80; Baglione 1642, vol. 3, p. 376. The vault paintings were still visible in 1834 and 1838 and were therefore probably overpainted in the restoration of 1840, see Melchiorri 1834, p. 373; Nibby 1839, p. 310.

60 Longo 1990, doc. 7. "Col quale solo ha altre volte trattato e non con altri", letter from Virgilio Spada to his brother Bernardo, 3 April 1630, see Heimbürger–Ravalli 1977, pp. 77 (note 8), 78 (note 13). In 1640 Cerri did commission Cortona for the family chapel in the Gesù but Peperelli had long been incapacitated by illness and died the following year, see Hibbard 1972, pp. 43–44; Montagu 1985, vol. 2, pp. 424–425, cat. no. 144.A.I. Various *misure e stime* confirm Peperelli's occasional activity at the convent in the 1630s, see ASR, SLS, b. 3678, *Istromenti diversi 1290–1550*, fols. 318r–321r (undated, but after 1629): land sale by the nuns of S. Maria della Purificazione to S. Lucia (Peperelli is *stimatore* for both convents); ASR, SLS, b. 3703, fasc. 3, two loose sheets (11 August 1632, 17 April 1633).



20 Rome, Santa Lucia in Selci, Cappella Landi, socle with stemma of an unidentified family (photo Bibliotheca Hertziana/ Enrico Fontolan)

21 Rome, Santa Lucia in Selci, Cappella Landi, socle with stemma of the Landi of Velletri (photo Bibliotheca Hertziana/ Enrico Fontolan)

the *Vision of Saint Augustine*. The chapel stuccoes actually come from the same milieu as the Madernesque ones at Saint Peter's, although the design is less successful than the Cappella Melchiorri. The designer gave himself problems by doubling up the moulding around the canvas, thereby cramping the margins, which he then filled in with rosettes and rinceaux. The scrolled foliage spirals out over the arch soffit where it curls out of the tail of an unusually large, vegetal putto clasping one corner of the altar cornice: these are bold grotesqueries that feel like yet more infill and are quite unknown in the work of Borromini (fig. 19). This motif can again be traced to the stuccoes over the window hoods in nave vault of Saint Peter's (fig. 16).⁶¹ All in all, it seems that this altar was designed by either Maderno or Breccioli.

61 Barry 2020, p. 45: Maderno derived these figures of sirens with bifurcating nether regions from Muziano's lost mosaics (1578–1580) in the Cappella Gregoriana.

62 The construction documents for the chapel have been published more than once, see Montenovesi 1943, p. 105; Portoghesi 1982, p. 265, docs. at 453–456; *Ragguagli borrominiani* 1968, nos. 121–124, p. 127. Also *Capitoli e Patti* with the *indoratore* Vincenzo Costantino; 22 October 1638; *Misura e stima* of Costantino's gilding, 15 January 1639; *Misura e stima* of carving by Guidotti, 24 January 1639; *quietanza* of the stuccatore Giuseppe Bernascone, 18 September 1639; bill of the ironmonger Pietro Speranza, 10 August 1638. Tjarks suggests that Az. Rom. 317r is a draft for the Landi altar elevation. See Tjarks 2015, p. 109, note 390.

63 ASR, SLS, b. 3686, fasc. 1, *Causa Landi*, contains a thick dossier detailing the legal history of the Cappella Landi, see ASR, SLS, b. 3678, fasc. 1, *Suppliche 1508–1585*, fols. 581r–588r. Vittoria Landi, daughter of Fabio Landi, married Tomaso de Bonis in Velletri in 1610, but he died in August the following year leaving Vittoria with one daughter, Faustina, and pregnant with another, Clarice (or Chiara). Clarice, born October 1611, entered the convent of S. Lucia in Selci in 1628, renouncing her possessions in favour of her sister, who married Serafino Cenci (1631) but died without issue having first willed her dowry (1632) in equal halves to her mother and her uncles, Giovanni Battista and Francesco Landi. See Valentinus Valentinus, NCV, 11 May 1629, ASR, 30 NC, vol. 81, fols. 87r–91v. Serafino Cenci did not die until 1676, and

Borromini, the Cavaliere d'Arpino, and the Mystery of the Trinity in the Cappella Landi (1638–1639)

There is no doubt, however, that Borromini was the architect of the Cappella Landi constructed in 1638–1639 (fig. 12), under the will of Vittoria Landi and on the direction of her daughter, Suora Clarice Vittoria Landi.⁶² The Landi family hailed from Velletri, just outside Rome. Suora Clarice Vittoria (1611–1698/1699) had been born Clarice Annunziata Maria de Bonis, but her father had died while she was still in the womb.⁶³ This circumstance may explain why the chapel bears the arms of the Landi family (fig. 20), but not those of the de Bonis, though it does include the arms of another unidentified family, presumably that of Suora Clarice Vittoria's maternal grandmother (fig. 21).⁶⁴

As much as a decade may have separated the Cappella Melchiorri (ca. 1628) from the altogether bolder Landi Chapel (1638–1639) next to it, and Borromini was now entering his maturity (he was thirty-nine when it was begun). The late 1630s were years of rapid evolution in his architectural thought: he was busy designing and revising the Oratory of the Philippines (from 1637); planning San Carlo alle Quattro Fontane (convent begun in 1634, and the church in 1638); and Sant'Ivo alla Sapienza (Borromini was appointed architect in 1632, and building began on the church a decade later). Even on a cramped canvas like the Cappella Landi he could prove his mettle, and its design is the product of an imagination that knows few pauses.

While the earlier altars at Santa Lucia in Selci resemble window-hoods in lunettes, in the Landi chapel it almost seems as if some tre- or quattrocento altarpiece from northern Italy has been shoehorned into the shallow arcade. There was still plenty of Gothic in Milan for the young Borromini to see when he worked there as an apprentice carver in the second decade of the seventeenth century, especially the façade (remodelled in 1370/1380) of S. Maria Maggiore,

meanwhile remarried Cecilia Capotosti, see Bevilacqua 1988, pp. 156–157 (notes 6 and 7), genealogical tree at p. 303. In 1632 Vittoria married Antonio Grifoni, but without issue and bequeathed her possessions to her brothers Giovanni Battista and Francesco (Vittoria Landi apparently made her will on 20 February 1638, and the notary was Domenicus Tullius, but I can find no such document in his papers under that date). Under the terms of Vittoria's will, Giovanni Battista and Francesco Landi paid Suora Clarice Vittoria ∇ 3 a month (i.e. ∇ 36 p/a) to finance the Masses. The agreement was not formalised until 1648, and lasted until 1653 when Lorenzo and Francesco Landi, the guardians of Francesco Landi junior (son of Francesco senior), elected to pay ∇ 40 a year (via Suora Clarice) and provide the necessary suppellectiles. In 1668, the nuns petitioned for Francesco, who had meanwhile attained his majority, to endow the chapel properly, the outcome unclear. Suora Clarice Vittoria died in 1698/1699.

The fortunes of the Landi prospered under the Barberini but came to an abrupt end with the disgrace in 1668 of Suora Clarice's cousin [?] Giovanni Battista Landi, who had married Bernini's daughter, Angelica. ASR, SLS, b. 3677, fasc. 4, *Carteggio e formulari 1564–1859* (including letters to Suora Clarice Vittoria Landi from Giovanni Battista Landi), loose sheet (undated but probably 1668): “Giovanni Battista Landi devotissimo Oratore di Vostra Eccellenza havendo ottenuto dalla somma clemenza di N. S. la carica di Governatore dell'armi di Nettuno in riguardo dell'amicitia grande passata fra la Santità Sua e la buona memoria di Monsignor Landi già nostro nuntio a Turino suo zio, et per haver presente in moglie la figliola del Cavalier Bernini.” A letter from Suora Clarice to Bernini begs him personally to appreciate Giovanni Battista's position and, implicitly, intervene with Clement IX: ASR, SLS, b. 3677/9, pos. 1. Angelica (born 1646) was one of Bernini's eleven children: Panta 1993, 111–118 with bibliography. In 1669 G. B. Landi paid ∇ 178 for “alimenti della Signora Angelica sua moglie, figliola e cameriera” (ASR; SLS, b. 5523, fol. 224). On the Landi, see Theuli 1644, pp. 183–184, 195–196, 200, 316–317, 343, 348–351; Borgia 1723, pp. 500, 501, 528; *Ascanio Landi* 1985, pp. xi–xxxv.

⁶⁴ The *stemma* of the Landi of Velletri adorns the left altar socle: the family arms consist of three *monti* (vert, on a gules field) from the tip of which grows a tree, below a chief (argent) with three eight-pointed stars (or). On the right socle is another *stemma* (a bird with a feather in its beak standing on the peak of three *monti*, ensigned with a knight's helm). These are not the arms of the de Bonis family, a swan argent sinister on an azure field, ensigned with a knight's helm, see Balbieri 1710.



22 Milan, Santa Maria Maggiore, façade (remodelled), 1370/1380 and as standing in 1630. Detail from Carlo Biffi, *Apparato designed by Francesco Maria Richini of Mount Etna, erected in Piazza del Duomo for festival in honour of the birth of Baldassarre, son of Philip IV of Spain*, 1630, pen on paper, 340 × 210 cm (overall sheet dimensions). Comune di Milano, Raccolta delle Stampe “Achille Bertarelli” A.S. m. 51-17 (photo Comune di Milano, Raccolta delle Stampe “Achille Bertarelli”)

which remained standing until 1638, even as the new Duomo was built around it (fig. 22).⁶⁵ It has been suggested several times that the contours of this medieval façade inspired Borromini’s multi-segment pediments, and the Gothic ogive or S-curve was the most radical element that Borromini incorporated into the superstructure (1631–1633) of the famous Baldacchino in Saint Peter’s (begun in 1627), on which he collaborated with Bernini (fig. 23). Despite protracted debate and a wilful attempt to deny Borromini any authorship in the famous Baldacchino, it remains undeniable that ogival arches recur throughout his oeuvre, especially to intimate the symbolic presence of a baldachin, whereas we never find the shape in Bernini’s architecture, not even in his ephemera.⁶⁶

65 The influence of Milanese Gothic has long been acknowledged, and the façade of S. Maria Maggiore has several times been suggested as a model for that of the Oratorio dei Filippini, see Gatti Perer 1997 with historiography.

66 Most recently Tjarks has collected the historiography for the Baldacchino, examined the extant drawings, and analyzed the details, but he avoids the issue of conceptual attribution, see Tjarks 2015, pp. 55–60. Thelen first attributed the design rather than just the execution to a collaboration between Bernini and Borromini, see Thelen 1967. Opinions are divided in subsequent literature (Montagu, Bauer, Marder, Burnbaum, amongst others), which is reviewed by Lavin, who insists that Borromini did no more than execute detailed drawings of Bernini’s light-bulb invention, see Lavin 2008. Lavin’s supposedly cast-iron arguments do not withstand scrutiny. He argues that: 1) there are no payments to Borromini for the design, when in reality none should be expected for someone already on the payroll of the Fabbrica; 2) Borromini is not named “architetto” in the documents, when Bernini was in fact *Architetto della Fabbrica di S. Pietro*; 3) if a concept design drawing by Borromini does not survive, it can never have existed; 4) Bernardo Castelli-Borromini’s record of Borromini’s exasperation with Bernini taking credit for his ideas can be dismissed because it is “biased”, whereas Bernini’s own comments are beyond historical reproach; 5) that Borromini did not specify his design of the superstructure in his annotations to Fioravante Martinelli’s unpublished guide to Rome, which leads Lavin triumphantly to the rhetorical question “Did Borromini forget himself?” However, it is equally true that Borromini never corrected Martinelli’s entry for S. Lucia in Selci, see Martinelli 1969, p. 80, which credits him only with the choir loft and does not even mention the Cappella Landi or the High Altar. Lavin argues that Bernini’s only possible design collaborator would have been his younger brother Luigi, for which there is not a shred of what Lavin considers evidence either. The representational statics of the Baldacchino smacks of tectonic reasoning (not just technical know-how). A core problem, of how to combine the image of a permanent structure (the columns and architrave fragments) with an ephemeral one (a cloth baldachin) was resolved by dividing them into a load-bearing structure and a catenary one (the canopy suspended from garlands by angels atop the columns) respectively; the doubled ogival ribs rise from both col-



23 Giovanni Giacomo De Rossi, *Isolated View of Bernini's Baldacchino*, from: Giovanni Giacomo De Rossi, *Basilica di S. Pietro in Vaticano*, Rome 1653–1691, pl. 39 (photo The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York)

The Landi Chapel is not just the only altar in the church to have columns – they are ensconced too, as if they formed part of a freestanding structure. The architrave fragments over the columns, the angels perching on them, and even the tiny volute that curls back where the rib meets the coved pediment, all make this a baby version of the Baldacchino at Saint Peter's, minus the troublesome fabric canopy that had made it a hybrid of permanent and ephemeral structures.

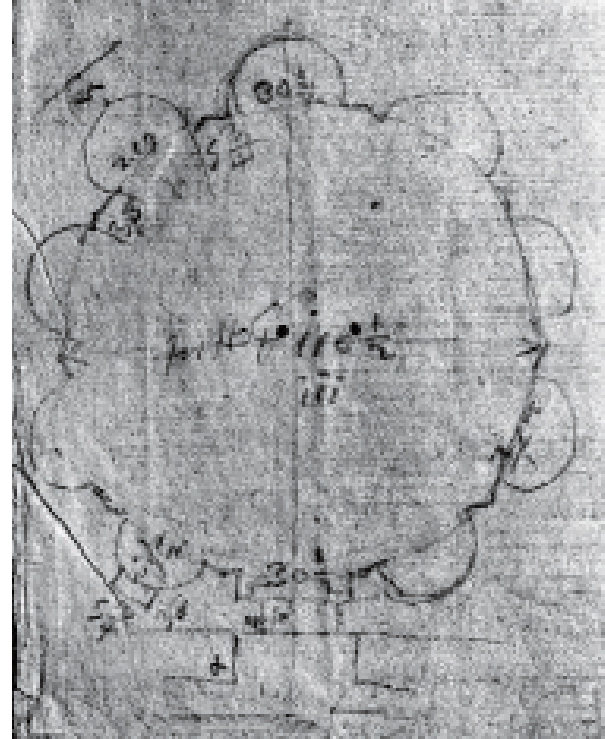
At Saint Peter's, Borromini made several studies of how to assimilate the scale of the Baldacchino, already monumental in its own right, to the truly colossal proportions of the overarching basilica. He could also not help but observe the relationship between the ogival silhouette of the Baldacchino and the true arches that spanned the crossing. In the Landi chapel the ogival 'ribs' of the aedicule also need to work within the confines of a true arch (of the pre-existing nave arcade) and while they follow their own wriggling course they are also attached to the impost mouldings of those same arches. Continuity between the two is maintained thanks to some tectonic gear-shifting: that is, the impost mouldings double as (Ionicised) Tuscan pilaster capitals and because the Corinthian column capitals of the aedicule are the same height, one order seems to be translated into the other. Meanwhile, the ogival 'ribs' are both extruded from the cornice above the columns and belong to the frame around the altar. The first detail arguably took its inspiration from Antonio da Sangallo the Younger's innovative coupling on the *Scalone* of the Palazzo Farnese (fig. 24), while the latter tectonic strip is a device found throughout the work of Michelangelo.⁶⁷

It was all very well for Bellori to dismiss Borromini as a "Gothic ignoramus", but his recondite detailing in the Landi Chapel stands within a tradition that stretched from Donatello to Peruzzi, and on to Piranesi, who all

preferred the rich models found among the ruins over the arid orthodoxies of Vitruvius. To observe how the ancients had improved upon themselves in these so-called *variae* ("variances") made the ruins into a 'thesaurus' of their various architectural idioms. A glimpse of Borromini's archaeological fieldwork while working at Santa Lucia can be found in the dimensioned plan of the so-called Temple of Minerva Medica that he quickly sketched on the back of a carpenter's bill in 1643 (fig. 25). Given the date, as well as the building's typology, scale, and supposed dedication (to Minerva, i.e. the goddess of wisdom), Borromini probably had the rising Sant'Ivo alla Sapienza (begun in 1642) in mind.

umns and canopy to bear the orb-and-cross at the summit. The details are also telling. The pedestal of the orb-and-cross and volutes of the ribs immediately below compose the image of a Corinthian capital, reproduced in the plan of the baldachin itself with its curved-in sides, and this double reasoning ("cagionare due beni" as Borromini would have said), recalls the linguistic fluency typical of Borromini, not Bernini. There remains the incontrovertible fact that the ogival arch recurs throughout Borromini's oeuvre, but it never reappears in Bernini's. So, did Bernini 'forget' himself?

⁶⁷ Borromini more obviously imitated Sangallo's detail on the later stairs of the Collegio della Propaganda Fide. He also duplicated the gradient and size of Sangallo's stairs in the *scalone* of the Oratory, see Connors 1980, pp. 76, 77 and notes 104, 110.



In the same years he was collecting information on Hagia Sophia and San Vitale, evidently to the same purpose.⁶⁸

Many of Borromini's supposedly unorthodox inventions were plucked straight from ancient ruins and entered into a sketchbook, only to be recycled in designs like the Landi Chapel, and they are far from rare, although in every case he 'improved' upon the model.⁶⁹ Column shafts with spear-tipped astragals between the flutes (fig. 26) even appear in the Pantheon on either side of the main niche, where Serlio applauded them as "molto belle et artificose", and they were sufficiently venerable for Juan Bautista Villalpando to incorporate them into his reconstruction of the Solomonic order (1596–1604).⁷⁰ Borromini returned to the motif again and again through the late 1630s and early 40s, his own twist in the Landi chapel being to add the spear-tips at the top of the shafts as well as the bottom.⁷¹ Likewise, when it came to designing the column bases Borromini drew on the various *Schmuckbasen* that he had copied from the Codex Coner, although he reduced the proliferation of mouldings down to a laurel-wreath torus and foliate ogee (*cyma reversa*). It

24 Antonio Sangallo the Younger, *Junction of entablature*, detail of the scalone, 1534/1546. Rome, Palazzo Farnese, from Paolo Portoghesi, *Roma del Rinascimento*, Milan 1970, pl. 177

25 Francesco Borromini, sketch plan of the *Temple of Minerva Medica*, 1643, graphite on paper, ca. 3.6 × 10.2 cm, from ASR, SLS, b. 3704, fasc. 2, loose sheet (photo Archivio di Stato di Roma)

68 ASR, SLS, b. 3704, fasc. 2, *Giustificazioni diverse (1641–1645)*, 12 February 1643. Portoghesi 1982, fig. 154; *Ragguagli borrominiani* 1968, p. 90, no. 128, and pl. XLVIII; Connors 1996a, p. 48 and fig. 15. Hagia Sophia and San Vitale, see Connors 1996b.

69 Pier Leone Ghezzi describes an album belonging to Borromini "in foglio di carta papale. Tutto ripieno di antichi frantumi di cose appartenenti all'architettura di mano sua disegnati con la notitia ad ogni pezzo in che loco fosse ritrovato, e tante belle modinature che si crede esser state da lui inventate io le ho ritrovate in esso libro", BAV, Cod. Ott. 3107, fol. 155; Lanciani 1882, p. 233.

70 Prado/Villalpando 1596, vol. 2, p. 421. Serlio in Scamozzi 1584, Lib. III, pp. 53–54 and figs. A and B. For example, this type can be found in the apse columns of the Pantheon, the cella columns of the Temple of Mars Ultor, the *Piazza d'Oro* at Hadrian's Villa, the Porticus Deorum Consentium in the Forum Romanum, S. Adriano (the Curia Senatus), the Baths of Caracalla, a Paschal candelabrum in the nave of S. Pancrazio, and the naves of S. Maria in Aracoeli and S. Agata fuori le Mura. Spirally fluted versions can even be found in the Cappella di S. Venanzio at the Lateran Baptistery. For a catalogue, though omitting many of the above examples, see Mattern 1995 (esp. "Typus B"). Such fluting also appears on Michelozzo's tabernacle (1448) in SS. Annunziata, Florence, and Giuliano da Sangallo's high altar at S. Maria delle Carceri, Prato (after 1485).



26 Rome, Santa Lucia in Selci, Cappella Landi, column shaft and base (photo Bibliotheca Hertziana/Enrico Fontolan)

27 Rome, Sant' Agnese fuori le mura, nave, spoliated antique column with concentric flutings and spear-tipped astragals (photo author)

was quite radical to sit a torus on a cyma like this, with no intervening fillet, and it therefore looks more like a gothic profile.⁷² The actual fluting of the columns is also *recherché* (fig. 26). At the base the flutings are concentric, that is fluting-within-fluting, which is rare but can be found, for example, on spolia columns reused in the medieval nave of Sant' Agnese fuori le mura (fig. 27). Next Borromini infills this fluting with a cable moulding, which ends a third of the way up the shaft, where its subtraction results in a deepened scoop within the fluting, before the more conventionally shallow fluting of the final third of the shaft.⁷³ In contrast, the capitals debut Borromini's infamous Corinthian-with-inverted-volutes, in this case almost certainly inspired by those in the Water Court of Hadrian's Villa at Tivoli, where the capitals also rest on spear-tipped, fluted columns; Borromini's innovation on the Landi altar was the insertion of a wreath behind the volutes, thereby mirroring the torus on the bases. Such inverse-volute capitals are generally associated with Borromini but they had actually re-entered Roman design around 1600, in the nave of Santa Prassede.⁷⁴ In the Cappella Landi inverting the volutes eases

71 E.g. the Cappella Filomarino (1639–1642), the Chapel of the Madonna (1639–1640) at S. Carlo alle Quattro Fontane, and the pavilion fireplace in the Sala di Ricreazione in the Oratory (1641).

72 Esp. Codex Coner, fol. 95, see Ashby 1904, no. 124. The sketch bears the caption 'a tiburæ' and Borromini's copy of it is published in Thelen 1967, C3; p. 12, 3b; cf. I, C4, C5; II, pls. 1 & 2. Cf. base near S. Angelo in Pescheria drawn in the album of the so-called 'Addenda architect', see Scaglia 1991/1992, p. 128 (fol. 10, 6v, lower right). The laurel wreath torus and foliate cyma *reversa* recur in the antique *Schmuckbasen* drawn by Giuliano da Sangallo in the Codex Barberini (eg. fols. 15r, 16r/v, 17r), which was doubtless available to Borromini, see Borsi 1985, pp. 105, 108, 110. Borromini uses the combination elsewhere, e.g. the pilaster bases of the first courtyard of the Oratory, and the column bases of the courtyard and lantern at S. Carlo alle Quattro Fontane. Portoghesi notes the same cyma *reversa* on gothic bases in the Duomo of Milan, see Portoghesi 1967, p. 461 and pl. 372. Good examples of Borromini's fusion of both mouldings into a continuous profile are his unexecuted pilaster bases for the "libreria verso il cortile" at the Oratory (Az. Rom. 298).

73 A close prototype (now lost?) was copied by Giovanni Battista Montano and Piranesi, see Blunt 1979, p. 29, figs. 31, 32; Piranesi 1748, tav. 14; Piranesi 1761, tav. VIII. See also the shafts recovered in 1875 from the Horti Lamiani and now in the Musei Capitolini.

74 Ancient examples see Beck 1971. S. Prassede's nave capitals are stucco restorations commissioned by either Cardinal Alessandro De' Medici (1594–1600) or Cardinal Filippo Gallo (1600–1605), Caperna 1999, pp. 97, 100 and 106 (note 92). Domenichino also used them in his Cappella Porfiro (1626–1627) at San Lorenzo in Miranda only a decade before Borromini, see Spear 1982, vol. 1, pp. 89–90, 266–268 (cat. no. 97); vol. 2, pls. 315–318.

the trajectory of the columns into the ribs, as at San Carlo alle Quattro Fontane, where only the capitals supporting the pendentives have inverse volutes to express channelled loads and imply a sort of baldachin.⁷⁵

Giuseppe Cesari, the Cavaliere d'Arpino (1568–1640), painted the chapel's altarpiece, *Saints Monica and Augustine beholding the Trinity (at Ostia)*, and it was in place by June 1639 when Suora Clarice Landi gifted or paid him in cutlery, lace, marzipan, and cakes (fig. 12).⁷⁶ The earliest references (ca. 1664) to the painting record the male figure as Saint Nicholas of Tolentino, and this is confirmed by two attributes, the lilies at his feet and the blazing sun on his chest.⁷⁷ Yet, these are later additions. This Augustinian friar (ca. 1246–1305) is customarily depicted as clean shaven, tonsured, and relatively young. Instead, we see a bearded man of advanced years and sunken cheeks. Furthermore, the proximity of Monica and, more particularly, the indoor setting with a view out to a sea on which the sun is setting, firmly indicate that the original composition portrayed a famous episode in the *Confessions*. While lodging at Ostia, the port of Rome, the minds of Augustine and his mother Monica floated up from their bodies, ascending to contemplation of the immensity of God and His heavenly hosts. The reasons for the subsequent conversion of the figure of Augustine into Saint Nicholas of Tolentino are unrecorded. However, the fact that Camassei had already painted a *Vision of Saint Augustine* on the other side of the church may have had some bearing on this revision (fig. 18).

Even so, the subject of Monica and Augustine at Ostia was quite a rarity in Augustinian iconography and had only been popularised by Girolamo Muziano's altarpieces of the same subject at Saint Peter's and Sant' Agostino (1577/1582).⁷⁸ According to Augustine, shortly after his baptism by Ambrose, he and his mother Monica stopped at the port of Ostia, whence he was to sail for Africa and she was to embark on the Life Eternal. Her impending death explains the sombre tone of the painting, set in twilight with a setting sun, as though Monica were about to pass through the portal to some place beyond the horizon. In this sense, the painting presents a paradigmatic condition, not simply an episode from the *Confessions*. At Ostia, Augustine and Monica discussed the mansions of the Blessed, recalling all the miracles of Creation, "traversing all bodily things and even heaven itself", finally to share in an ecstatic contemplation of God "in id ipsum".⁷⁹ Nevertheless, nowhere in this narrative does Augustine mention any vision of the Trinity, nor does any biography of him. The only reference to such a vision comes from the thirteenth-century *Golden Legend*, still the most widely consulted source of saintly imagery in the seventeenth century, which recounts that a woman once happened upon Augustine whilst he was rapt in meditation of the Trinity, while the apocryphal



28 Rome, Santa Prassede, nave capitals, antique restuccoed with inverse volutes, 1594/1605 (photo author)

75 Steinberg 1977, pp. 203–205.

76 The equivalent of ∇ 95: 75, "per regalare il signor Cavalier Giuseppino che ha fatto il Quadro della Cappella": ASR, SLS, b. 3705, fasc. 4; Montenovesi 1943, pp. 105, 116–117; Röttgen 2002, 493, cat. no. 279.

77 Mellini (Appendix 1, 1656/1664) and Bruzio (Appendix 2, 1655/1669) both mention the same saint and a petition of 1668 to Francesco Landi specifies "La Cappella della Santissima Trinità, S. Nicola da Tolentino e S. Monaca"; ASR, SLS, b. 3686, fasc. 1, *Causa Landi*). The figure is first identified as Augustine in Titi's 1686 guide (at p. 217).

78 Tosini 1998; Tosini 2008, pp. 234–236, 438–439 (cat. A 53).

79 Augustine, *Confessions* 9.10.23–26.

80 Cooper 2007.



29 Giuseppe Bernascone, scudo with relief of water coursing down a mountain into a lake, 1638–1639. Rome, Santa Lucia in Selci, Cappella Landi (photo Bibliotheca Hertziana/ Enrico Fontolan)

presence. Crossing the divide between painting and architecture, the angels in the altarpiece are escorted by stucco companions outside the frame: the kneeling putti that venerate the Trinity from the column-tops, the cherubim that watch from the soffit, the two putti that brandish the banderole at the apex, and the tiny angelic faces that peep out of the encircling egg-and-dart archivolt, in imitation of the utmost angelic hierarchies that orbit and adore the Throne of God (figs. 18, 28, 31).⁸²

The mystery of the Trinity, and Augustine’s doctrinal formulation of it, turn out to be the real subject of this richly decorated chapel and it is reflected even in secondary details, like the division of the column shafts into thirds or the tripling of the keystone *en ressault*. A more figurative example is the keystone-scudo at the apex (fig. 29). Borromini’s sketches for this scudo survive in the Albertina (Az. Rom. 478), in three versions, of which the uppermost and largest is virtually identical to the object executed by the stuccatore Giuseppe Bernascone (fig. 30).

episode of Augustine’s vision of the Trinity only enters Italian art in the fourteenth century.⁸⁰ However, this is to split theological hairs. Augustine conceived of God as Triunine, and his mammoth treatise on the subject, *De Trinitate*, was endlessly mined by later theologians. The Cavaliere d’Arpino had simply conflated two different pictorial traditions, one far more recent than the other: *Augustine’s Vision of the Trinity* and *Augustine and Monica at Ostia*.

The Cavaliere also had to make his painting fit into a very unusual shape. A century later the Veronese polymath Scipione Maffei would castigate what he saw as the brood of Borrominesque altars that designs like the Cappella Landi spawned, precisely because they forced painters to contort their compositions into altar frames with “gothic spires.”⁸¹ However, it goes without saying that D’Arpino conferred closely with Borromini because the painter had to cut his canvas to the altar frame. The collaboration resulted in a happy reciprocity, wherein the two pillars of faith, Augustine and Monica, stand rank and file with Borromini’s columns. Moreover, the meandering contours of the frame serve both to harbour the Trinity and reverberate with its

81 Citing Borromini as one of the fuses of architectural decadence, Maffei comments, “sarebbe da considerare, come il guastamento dell’architettura tira seco la trasformazione di tutte l’opere, ov’entra disegno. Nella pittura uso è venuto, figurando architetture, d’operare a caso, e di far ghiribizzi, quali senza magia non potrebbero ma sussistere. I quadri si concludon’ora, e si avvelenano con cornici di stucco ben bianco: le tavole da altare si fanno con punta Gotica in cima, o con trinciature, che all’opera del penello pregiudican molto”, see Maffei 1731, Tom. III, cap. IV, pp. 188–189.

82 *Ezekiel 2:22; Psalms 18:2*; not to mention *On the Celestial Hierarchy* of Pseudo-Dionysius and several Early Modern treatises on angelology. Borromini improvised on the decorative frame that Giacomo della Porta had designed around the altar and door of the chapel in the Palazzo dei Conservatori (1575–1578), in turn inspired by Villalpando, see Pecchiai 1950, pp. 175–178 and pl. 16.



30 Francesco Borromini, design for the scudo in the Landi Chapel, 1638/1639, graphite drawing, 18.2 × 12 cm. Vienna, Graphische Sammlung Albertina, AZRom478 (photo Albertina, Vienna)

In the drawing the cartouche is left blank, but it was eventually filled with a relief of a river that meanders down from a mountain top to debouch into a swollen sea (as we shall see, it is in fact a lake). Eugenio Battisti tentatively associated this image with an arcane “emblem” of princely liberality in Diego Saavedra Fajardo’s highly popular *Idea de un príncipe político cristiano representada en cien empresas*, even though the first edition (1640) postdates the chapel’s completion (1639), and the Italian translation did not appear until 1648 (fig. 31).⁸³ In reality, the

83 *Empresa* 40 at p. 284 (1640 ed.) and p. 142 (1648), with the motto “QUAE TRIBUUNT TRIBUIT”, Battisti 1967, p. 282. Saavedra Fajardo’s book was published in Munich in 1640, Milan in 1642, and the Italian translation appeared in Venice in 1648, see Campa 1990, pp. 84–85. Only the Landi cartouche and the cartouche on the much later Cappella Vannini opposite bear symbolic instead of heraldic images. The Cappella Vannini cartouche bears the inscription, COLUMNA ES



31 Emblem of princely liberality, from Diego Saavedra Fajardo, *L'idea di un principe politico christiano rappresentata con bellissime imprese*, Munich et al. 1642, p. 266

Landi cartouche is not an *emblema* at all but one half of an *impresa*, which is a quite different semiotic device. As a succession of early modern treatises had laid out, an *impresa* combined an image (the “corpo”) with a text (the “anima”) and derived its overall meaning from the *tertium quid*, the counterpoint between the two.⁸⁴ In this case, the “anima” is the Trinitarian motto UNUM SUNT (“they are one”), written on the soffit banderole below, and the “corpo” is the gushing mountain and lake (fig. 32).

This metaphor for the Trinity is derived from Augustine himself, and how fitting it is that it should come from a text entitled *De fide et symbolo*. Here Augustine explains that a spring may flow into a river and a river into a pool, but we do not call one thing by the name of the other, and although one thing flows into the other, each and all remain water. Spring, river, and pool

obviously stand for the three Persons in the Trinity, and water for their common essence.⁸⁵ In the eleventh century, Saint Anselm re-employed the image to explain how each Person in the Trinity, or combination of them, was wholly God and wholly Triune; and he called them collectively “the Nile.”⁸⁶

IMMOBILIS / LUCIA / SPONSA CHRISTI, adapted from the antiphon to the Gospel at Vespers on the Vigil of Saint Lucy: “Columna es immobilis, Lucia martyr Christi, quia omnis plebs te expectat, ut accipias coronam regni, alleluiah” (Saint Gregory, *Liber responsalis*; PL 78, col. 819B).

84 Caldwell 2000; Caldwell 2001 with bibliography. Ironically, Battisti cites Giovio’s *Ragionamento* [actually *Dialogo*] *sulle Imprese* as authority for the “mancaanza di un libretto esplicito” in Borromini’s work, see Battisti, 1967, p. 282.

85 *De Fide et Symbolo* 9.17: “For example, when we are asked about a fountain, we are unable to say that it itself is a river; nor, when we are asked about the river, are we able to call it a ‘fountain’; and, again, we cannot term the draught (taken from the fountain or the river) either ‘river’ or ‘fountain.’ Nevertheless, we name [the things] in this triplet ‘water’; and when asked about the individual parts, we still reply that each of them is ‘water’ [...] and yet, we do not say there are three waters, but only one ‘water.’ [...] Therefore, it is possible here that the same water may be called now ‘fountain,’ now ‘river,’ and now ‘draught’; yet in the case of that Trinity, we have affirmed it to be impossible that the Father should be sometimes the Son, and sometimes the Holy Spirit. [...] But these examples of material things have not been adduced because of their likeness to the divine Nature, but because of the oneness of visible things, so that it can be understood how three certain things, not only severally, but also together, can go under a single name; and so no one may wonder and think it absurd that we should call God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit, and yet we can still say that there are not three gods in this Trinity, but only one God and one substance” (*Nam cum de fonte interrogati, non possumus dicere quod ipse sit fluvius; nec de fluvio interrogati possumus eum fontem vocare; et rursum potionem quae de fonte vel fluvio est, nec fluvium possumus appellare nec fontem; tamen in hac trinitate aquam nominamus, et cum de singulis quaeritur, singillatim aquam respondemus. [...] nec tamen eas tres aquas, sed unam dicimus. [...] Itaque fieri potest ut eadem aqua nunc ad fontis appellationem pertineat, nunc ad fluvii, nunc ad potionis: cum in illa Trinitate dixerimus non posse fieri ut Pater ipse aliquando sit Filius, aliquando Spiritus Sanctus. [...] Sed haec non propter illius divinae naturae similitudinem, sed propter visibilibus etiam unitatem corporalia exempla data sunt, ut intellexeretur fieri posse ut aliqua tria non tantum singillatim, sed etiam simul unum singulare nomen obtineant; nec quisquam miretur et absurdum putet quod Deum dicimus Patrem, Deum Filium, Deum Spiritum Sanctum, nec tamen tres deos in ista Trinitate, sed unum Deum unamque substantiam*).

86 *Epistola de incarnatione verbi* 13; for analysis, see Hughes 1989, chapter 5. A much later *impresa* shows a young child beholding a mountain waterfall, the whole scene encircled by the motto EMANANT OMNIA AB UNO (Paul, *Rom.* 11.5.36: “All things emanate from the one”), Henkel/Schöne 1967, col. 108. Filippo Picinelli instead suggests a rainbow with the motto, ET UNUM SUNT (Augustine, *De fide ad Petrum* lib. I, cap. I), Picinelli 1653, Lib. II, Cap. XVI, p. 53, marg. 174.



In terms of the Cavaliere d'Arpino's altarpiece, the *impresa-scudo* is also perfectly placed to fulfill Augustine's narrative of his joint mystical awakening with Monica at Ostia. Augustine remembers that "we were debating amongst ourselves [...] what the eternal life of the saints would be like, that which 'eye has not seen nor ear heard nor has it entered into the human heart' [*1 Cor.* 2:9]. Yet we gaped open the mouths of our hearts towards those supernal waters streaming from Your spring, the fountain of life [*Ps.* 36:9], which resides in You, such that being sprinkled with it, to the best of our capacity, we might in some way understand such a great matter."⁸⁷ The "great matter" in the altarpiece is the mystery of the Trinity.

The Trinitarian symbolism continues in the other stuccoes of the chapel, and another unpublished document in the convent archive lays out the iconographic program (Appendix 3) (fig. 33). There are a couple of cross-outs and the whole text is in the future tense, so this document is a draft, although it is very unlikely that it was meant for a contract (seventeenth-century contracts that go into so much iconographical detail are unknown to me). As it is the only such program to survive for any work by Borromini, it merits quotation in full:

"In the medallion in the middle: There will be an *impresa* of a mountain, from which will spring a fountain and from said fountain will be formed a stream of water and from the said stream will be formed a lake.

⁸⁷ *Confessions* 9.10.23: "quaerebamus inter nos [...] qualis futura esset vita aeterna sanctorum, quam nec oculus vidit nec auris audivit nec in cor hominis ascendit. sed inhiabamus ore cordis in superna fluenta fontis tui, fontis vitae, qui est apud te, ut inde pro captu nostro aspersi quoquo modo rem tantam cogitaremus."

⁸⁸ "Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God of hosts, the whole earth is full of his glory" (*Isaiah* 6:3).

32 Rome, Santa Lucia in Selci, Cappella Landi, view of soffit with banderole and motto "UNUM SUNT." (photo Bibliotheca Hertziana/Enrico Fontolan)

Figure in the spandrel on the right-hand side: There will be Faith, a beautiful figure with a helmet on her head, dressed with an overgarment; in the left hand she will hold a lighted torch and in the right a heart.

Figure in the spandrel on the left-hand side: There will be Religion, a beautiful figure with a garment in the form of a royal mantle; in the right hand she will carry a cross and in the left a flame of fire.

Figures on the outside at the right side: There will be Wisdom and Strength in the panels one above the other; Wisdom will gaze at a ray in the sky, dressed as though [with a veil?] in the right hand she will hold a lit lamp and in the left an open book; Strength dressed with a stole (?) upon the shoulders, in the right hand will hold two crossed keys and in the left a sceptre.

Figures on the outside at the left side: There will be Fortitude and Justice in their own compartments one above the other; Fortitude will be in armour with an overgarment and with a helmet on her head; she will hold in her right hand a column, and with the left she will keep tethered a lion. Justice will dress in a mantle [and] will have her hair all tousled with a crown on her head and above said crown a Dove surrounded by rays; in the right hand she will hold the sword and in the left the scales.

Scenes on the inside at the right side: 1st scene: there will be two seraphim seeming to fly, one looking at the other, and below there will be written 'Sanctus sanctus sanctus Dominus Deus exercituum plena est omnis terra gloria eius'⁸⁸. 2nd scene: Abraham who is next to a hut and is kneeling to adore three Angels that will be united and with their hands joined.

Scenes on the inside at the left side: There will be four animals, two on one side and two on the other, one the eagle and the angel, that is [the eagle] on the right side [and] the angel on the left. First scene: below the aforementioned [eagle and angel] a calf and a lion, that is the calf on the right and the lion on the left, all with wings spread and below there will be written

33a-b Anonymous, iconographic program for the Cappella Landi, from ASR, SLS, b. 3684, fasc. 1, loose sheet, recto/verso (photo author)

La.
Nel medaglione di mezzo

Si veda un'impresa di un cuore, dal quale scappa una fiamma
e di detta fiamma vengono un uovo di ugnia e la dea che si formano
in lago.

figura nel mezzo a sua destra

Si veda la fede una bella figura con elmo in capo vestita in una sopravveste
nella sinistra mano come una spada accesa e nella destra un cuore
figura nel mezzo a sua sinistra

Si veda la religione una bella figura con una croce e un di mano reale
nella sua destra come una croce e nella sinistra una fiamma di fuoco
figura di fuori al lato destro

Si veda la sapienza e la potenza nelle loro compartimenti una sopra l'altra
la sapienza guardando un raggio nel cielo vestita con di velo, nella
destra mano come una lampada accesa e nella sinistra un libro aperto
la potenza vestita in una stola nella destra mano due chiavi
incrociate e nella sinistra un sceptro

figura per di fuori al lato sinistro

Si veda la fortitudine e la giustizia nelle loro compartimenti una sopra l'altra
la fortitudine vestita in una armatura e con elmo in capo, sopra con
la destra mano una colonna e con la sinistra, come figura un leone.

La giustizia vestita di mano buona i capelli suoi fatti in corona in
testa e sopra a detta corona una colomba circondata di raggi, nella
sua destra mano la spada e nella sinistra la bilancia

Storie di dentro a lato destro

1^a storia Si veda di un serafino sporgendo il volo uno che vola all'altro, e sotto in
latino (causa) 1^o 2^o 3^o Dominus D^o exercituum plena est omnis terra gloria eius

2^a storia Abraham che sta a lato non capanna e ma ingine chioni adorado
tre angeli che si saranno uniti e con le mani giunte
Storie di dentro al lato sinistro

Si veda quattro animali due da una parte e due dall'altra, uno
l'aguzzo e l'angelo come l'aguzzo a sua destra l'angelo alla sinistra
e sopra
uno a destra un uccello e un leone, con il uccello alla destra e il
leone alla sinistra tutti con ali spente e sopra un cuore acceso

Sanctus sanctus sanctus Dominus Deus exercituum, qui erat qui
est et qui venturus est

3^a storia Una scala che sale al cielo e che per detta in quattro angoli,
da parte sopra in capo di dormire Caabele e sopra il capo sopra
in pietra che sono unite e spingono una sol pietra

4^a storia La scala di salire de serafini o dell'animati, si
has de di mostrare molti e splendori di qual che raggio nella
loro campi, visto dove vanno le loro e con il serafino
l'altro campo guardando con l'istoria che vi ha, et il
simile di sopra nelle figure che si dipingono per i lati di fuori



34 Rome, Santa Lucia in Selci, Cappella Landi, left pier with the scene of *Abraham visited by the Three Angels* (below) and *Saint Augustine* (above) (photo Bibliotheca Hertziana/Enrico Fontolan)

‘Sanctus Dominus deus omnipotens, qui erat qui est et qui venturus est.’⁸⁹

Second scene: A ladder that touches the sky and by which angels ascend there, on the side will be Jacob in the act of sleeping, and under his head he will hold three stones that are united and feign a single rock.

It should be noted that in the scenes of the seraphim and Animals, it is necessary to show clouds and some rays of Glories in the backgrounds except where the lettering goes, and the same rule will be followed in the other backgrounds according to what scene goes there, and the same will be done in the figures that have been described for the external faces.”

This is almost exactly how the chapel was executed, though the inscriptions were shortened, two new scenes were added, and any glories in the external panels were scrupulously avoided. The figures of *Faith* and *Religion* in the pendentives and the virtues (*Wisdom, Strength, Fortitude, and Justice*) on the piers are largely abbreviated versions of those found in Cesare Ripa’s *Iconologia*.⁹⁰ These are reason-

89 “Holy, Holy, Holy the Lord God Almighty, which was, and which is, and which is to come” (*Revelation*, 4:6–9).



35 Rome, Santa Lucia in Selci, Cappella Landi, right pier with the scene of *Jacob's Ladder* (below) and *Saint Monica* (above) (photo Bibliotheca Hertziana/Enrico Fontolan)

ably generic allusions. The Trinitarian symbolism instead reappears in the choice and characterisation of the biblical scenes, as well as the choice of inscriptions.

The banderoles bear the legend “Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus [...]” which is familiar to all Catholics from the Ordinary of the Mass, where it completes the Preface to the Eucharistic Prayer. More pertinently, this triple invocation also appears in the antiphon *Te invocamus (...te adoramus, te laudamus: O beata Trinitas)* sung on Trinity Sunday, whose final stanza apocalyptically intones, “Sanctus, sanctus, sanctus, Dominus Deus Omnipotens: qui erat, et qui est, et qui venturus est” (“Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty: Who was, and Who is, and Who is to come”).⁹¹

The choice of pilaster scenes, *Jacob's Ladder* (fig. 34) and *Abraham visited by the Three Angels* (fig. 35), which seem at first sight extraneous to the Trinitarian theme, actually reinforce it. It was an exegetical reflex of Christian theology to seek out any hint of the foreshadowing of Christian orthodoxies in the Old Tes-

90 E.g. left pilaster (face), *Authority or Power*; right pilaster (face), *Fortitude*. See Ripa 1624, pp. 61, 253.

91 Sung along with Psalms 46, 47, and 51 in the second nocturn at Matins on the Feast of the Trinity (the first Sunday after Pentecost).

tament, beginning with its very first book. *Genesis* 18:1–2 says that when “the Lord” (singular) visited Abraham at Mamre the latter looked up and saw *three* men approaching; as the chapter progresses the narrative continues to alternate between singular and plural, and the three men seem to speak with one voice (the speaker is always identified as “the Lord”; but three men are always present). From these discordant facts Augustine concluded that the three men must be the three persons of the Trinity.⁹² For the same reason the author of the iconographic program of the chapel specified that Abraham must be “kneeling to adore three Angels that will be united and with their hands joined.”

The specification made for the scene of *Jacob’s Ladder* proceeds along analogous lines, instructing that the three stones under Jacob’s head be “united and feign a single rock”; advice that was followed in moulding the final stucco relief.⁹³ *Genesis* (28:10–22) merely recounts that Jacob had slept in a field with some “stones” (28:11, “lapidibus”) for a pillow, whilst having his famous dream of angels bustling up and down a ladder to Heaven, but erected “a stone” (28:18, 22, “lapidem,” “lapis”) as a memorial when he awoke the next morning. The change from plural to singular was enough for some medieval commentators to imagine that there had originally been three stones, to indicate the Trinity of course, and that these stones had fused overnight into a singleton, which therefore represented either Christ or the Triune God. This interpretation was even known to and accepted by Martin Luther (who had been an Augustinian himself).⁹⁴

All these knowing details raise the question of exactly who wrote the programme and knew scriptural commentary well enough to specify these nuances, let alone come up with the device on the scudo. It could have been Suora Landi, who was, after all, an Augustinian, so it is reasonable to expect that she pored over the saint’s writings, or simply heard the metaphor used in some sermon, especially on Trinity Sunday. But then the Cavaliere d’Arpino or Borromini might just as easily have profited from the same source, for sermons were a habitual form of extramural religious education. Indeed, the instructions in the programme concerning the attitudes of the putti and glorias of light suggest the author was someone with experience in executing such scenes. In any event, two major changes were made to the iconographic programme: two tondi on the reveals of the piers are afterthoughts that show a kneeling matron in prayer with a fuming censor, and a bare-chested orant, arms akimbo, below a drizzle of divine light (figs. 34–35). These figures can only represent Monica and Augustine, with Monica’s incense wafting her words of prayer heavenwards, while Augustine basks in the divine grace that he likened to a summer shower.⁹⁵ Monica was a personal referent for the nuns, not only because she was the prototypical female Augustinian but also because her Berber name, Monica, sounded like the Italian word for “nun” (“monaca”).

The iconographic program is unsigned and not in Borromini’s hand. The borrowings from Ripa’s *Iconologia*, the stipulation of an “impresa”, and overall

92 *De Trinitate* 2.IV.19; Hill 1991, p. 111. Augustine’s explanation was repeated by Molanus. see Molanus 1594, p. 19.

93 Scenes in the pilaster reveals, from bottom up. Left pilaster: *seraph; Abraham and the three angels; praying woman in a habit kneeling beside a smoking censor (Monica?); putti with legend SANCTUS SANCTUS SANCTUS amid clouds and putti*. Right pilaster *seraph; Dream of Jacob; Young, barebreasted, male orant kneeling below a sky raining light (tongues of fire? And Manna?); symbols of the four evangelists among clouds and a banderole with the legend “S. S. S. DOMINUS / DEUS OMNIPOTENS.”*

94 Steinmetz 1986, p. 188.

95 “et hic igitur eadem Scripturarum nube, pro suo cuiusque merito et peccatore pluvia laqueorum, et iusto pluvia ubertatis infusa est” (*PL* 36, col. 137) based on Isaiah 45:8, “et nubes pluant iustum.” The figures seem once again to have been loosely adapted from Ripa 1624, p. 285 (“*Gratia di Dio*”) and pp. 481–483 (“*Oratione*”). At first glance the male figure seems to be holding a cornucopia, but actually one arm has snapped off, thereby giving undue prominence to what was a background tree.



36 Giuseppe Bernascone, *Three interlocking rings of clematis blossom over a radiant sun and between seraphim*, 1640–1641. Rome, San Carlo alle Quattro Fontane, old sacristy, *lavabo* niche-head (photo author)

the Cavaliere d'Arpino's input seems assured in the Cappella Landi. The larger question is what enduring influence the painter, who shared Borromini's passion for Michelangelo's architecture and whose palace was the venue for academic discussions, had on the architect, whose architecture, especially of San Carlo alle Quattro Fontane, is so steeped in emblematics.⁹⁸

Borromini was designing San Carlo (from 1634) even before he set to work on the Cappella Landi (1638–1639) and the same crew of artisans worked on both.⁹⁹ San Carlo alle Quattro Fontane is, of course, the church of the Trinitarian Order, primarily dedicated to the Trinity (San Carlo Borromeo is its secondary dedication), and therefore replete with Trinitarian symbolism. As Leo Steinberg originally posited, in an analysis recently expanded and modified by Michael Hill, the palimpsestic geometries of the plan and its projection into volume amount to a geometric unfolding of the mystery of the Trinity, in which fragments of the articulating geometries surface volumetrically, like soloists in a choral symphony.¹⁰⁰

However, the most legible and figurative sample of this Trinitarian symbolism at San Carlo is in the niche-head of the sacristy *lavabo*, where the officiating priest would ablute before the Mass (fig. 36).¹⁰¹ Adoring seraphim set the scene,

familiarity with pictorial iconography do, however, suggest the Cavaliere d'Arpino, as do the newly invented scenes of Monica and Augustine. Although the old tradition that the Cavaliere illustrated one edition of Ripa's *Iconologia* appears to be unfounded, he did compose at least one *impresa*, for the Roman *Accademia degli Umoristi*, which shows a cloud streaming rain into the sea and bears passing resemblance to that in the Cappella Landi.⁹⁶ Such aqueous imagery was well known to him, and reappears in a sonnet dedicated to him by one of the academicians in his own household, where the imagery of mountain and sea extol the painter's own protean gifts.⁹⁷ Whoever the scribe of iconographic program,

96 Ripa was first published in Rome in 1590, the second edition (Rome, 1603) was illustrated. The seventh edition (Padua, 1630) attributes "a large part" of the illustrations to the Cavaliere d'Arpino, but Chiara Stefani and Stefano Pierguidi instead attribute them all to Giovanni Guerra, see Stefani 1993; Pierguidi 1998. The *Accademia degli Umoristi* was founded ca. 1602, see Ważbiński 1992. Because the Humourists' name derived from "umore" (i.e. "vapour"), the *impresa* expressed an inventiveness as protean as cloud formations, see Ważbiński 1992, pp. 333–336 and doc. 3. The Cavaliere presumably designed an *impresa* for his own *Accademia degli Uniti*, established in his palace along with a theatre in 1608, but it has yet to come to light.

97 "Giovanni Briscio Romano Pittore" (1619), cited in Ważbiński 1992, doc. 7.

98 The Cavaliere d'Arpino had established an Academy in his palace by 1608. For praise of Michelangelo's Campidoglio, see the comments of the Cavaliere's associate Matteo Pagani, see Ważbiński 1992, pp. 317–364.

99 The dormitory was built 6 July 1634–August 1635; the cloister February 1635–June 1636; the church was begun on 23 February 1638 and consecrated 26 May 1641 (San Buenaventura [1660s] 1999). The earliest plan of the monastery (Az. Rom. 171) shows the church, chapels, sacristy, and cloister already plotted. Borromini even scrawled "si ricorda di Sta Lucia" – "remember Santa Lucia" – across a study for the coffering of the four apses in S. Carlo (Az. Rom. 208r). For the *stuccatori*, see Giovannone 2020.

100 Steinberg 1977.

101 Giuseppe Bernascone 1640/1641, see Pollak 1928, vol. 1, p. 107.

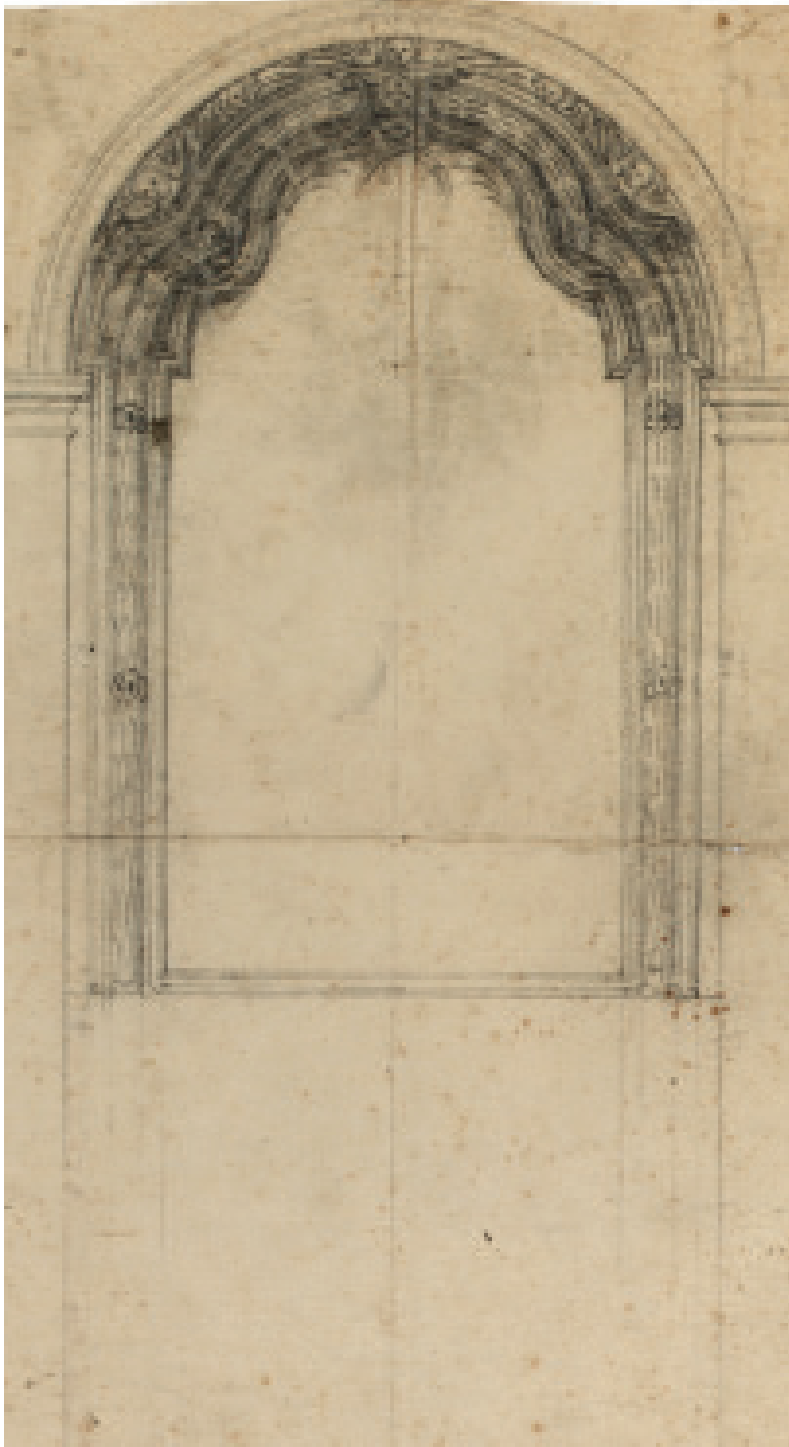


37 Pierre Mignard, *San Carlo Borromeo, Jean de Matha, and Felice di Valois adore the Holy Trinity*, 1645–1646. Rome, San Carlo alle Quattro Fontane, high altar (photo Bibliotheca Hertziana/Arnaldo Vescovo)

gazing through three circlets of clematis buds that interlock and overlay the rays spreading from the face of the sun, which is contained in the Reuleaux triangle at the centre. Michael Hill has shown that a similar Venn diagram (though only double, not triple) was the first step in generating the geometrical armatures that blossom into the complexity of the finished building. This geometrical scheme (often called a *vesica piscis*, though its correct name was a *biangolo*) helped proportion the church to the site and determine its own ratio of width to length, as well as to generate the oval of the dome and a host of other vectors, coordinates, and attendant geometries.¹⁰²

The image of three interlinked rings ('Borromean rings') had long been familiar to both theology and art. In the very last canto of the *Divine Comedy*

102 Hill 2013.



38 Francesco Borromini, drawing for high altar frame of San Carlo alle Quattro Fontane, graphite drawing, 39.5 × 19.1 cm. Vienna, Graphische Sammlung Albertina, AZRom210 (photo Albertina, Vienna)

Dante had envisioned the Trinity as three rings inhering in a single place, but without describing their interconnection. Michelangelo, who was an accomplished Dante scholar himself, chose three interlinked circles as his personal *impresa*, which his contemporaries interpreted as representing his equal command of the three canonical arts. The wheel comes full circle when the satirist Anton Francesco Doni (1547) jokingly claims that an inept preacher resorted to evoking Michelangelo's threefold mastery in order to explain the Trinity. Vasari had the device carved on Michelangelo's tomb in S. Croce, Federico Zuccari copied it to vaunt his own gifts, and in 1597 the Florentine *Accademia del Disegno*, founded in 1563 on Vasari's impulse, adopted it as an inclusive symbol of their diverse membership.¹⁰³

So the device was well known in academic circles. Yet, because the image of three interlocking rings has its origins in Augustine's writings too, one wonders whether it was another explanation Borromini had heard at Santa Lucia in Selci. Likening the Trinity to the sun, and the sun's indivisibility from its double effluences of heat and light, became a commonplace of Trinitarian metaphor, but Augustine specifically visualised the three Persons as interlinked, golden rings:

“These three, therefore, must necessarily be of one and the same essence; and for that reason, if they were blended together into one mix-

103 Dante *Paradiso*, Canto 33, vv.115–120 (although he does not say they were interlinked), see Saiber/Mbirika 2013. Doni, *Lettere* (1547) in *Scritti d'arte del Cinquecento 1971–1977*, vol. 2, p. 1909 “Un teologo predicando, e forse non era de' valenti ma doveva esser dell'arte, perché disse per esempio della Trinità: ‘La fiamma ha tre parti in sé: luce, fuoco e fiamma; e perché voi l'intendiate meglio’ disse il predicatore ‘pittura, scoltura e disegno, che son tutte in Michelagnolo equali.’” In his funeral oration of Michelangelo, Benedetto Varchi explains, “Gl'Altri [...] sono unici in una cosa sola [...] ma il Buonarrotto era in

tutte; e specialissimamente in tre. il che interpetrano Alchuni di sottile intelletto che volessero significare que tre cerchii, che egli faceva per sua impresa; immaginando que tre cerchii, non cerchii semplicemente, ma corone. [p. 43] [...] Ne mancano di coloro che dicono che, come il tondo è la più perfetta figura, che si ritruovi; così quei tre furono fatti per dover significare le tre perfezioni principali, che erano perfettissime nel Buonarrotto.” Vasari (1568), describing the catafalque in S. Croce he comments that, “erano tre corone o vero tre cerchi intrecciati insieme, in guisa che la circonferenza dell'uno passava per lo centro degl'altri due scambievolmente. Il quale segno usò Michelagnolo, o perché intendesse che le tre professioni di scoltura, pittura et architettura fussero intrecciate et in modo legate insieme [...]. Ma gl'accademici, considerando lui in tutte e tre queste professioni essere stato perfetto, e che l'una ha aiutato et abbellito l'altra, gli mutarono i tre cerchi in tre corone intrecciate insieme, col motto: ‘Tergerminis tollit honoribus’, volendo perciò dire che meritamente in dette tre professioni se gli deve la corona di somma perfezione”, see Varchi 1564, pp. 42–43. Michelangelo's tomb was designed by Vasari and Vincenzo Borghini in 1564 and built 1572–1578. On the *Accademia del Disegno* see Barzman 2000, p. 42. For Zuccari, see Waźbiński 1992, pp. 344–345.

ture, they could not be in any way three [separate things] nor could they be mutually referred to each other. As, for instance, if you were to make three similar rings from one and the same gold and interlinked them, they would be referred to each other as similar; for everything similar is similar to something, and it would be a trinity of rings, and one gold. Yet, if they were blended with each other, and each dispersed through the whole of their own mass, then that trinity would perish and not exist at all; and not only would it still be called one gold, as it used to be called in those three rings, but now it will not be called three gold things as well.”¹⁰⁴

Certainly, Borromini’s experience of working alongside the Cavaliere d’Arpino in the Cappella Landi (1638–1639) must have shaped his instructions to Pierre Mignard on how to embed the high altarpiece of San Carlo alle Quattro Fontane (1645–1646) within its complex architectonic setting (fig. 37).¹⁰⁵ The task was necessarily collaborative. The painters had to accommodate their compositions to the unusual shape of the frames, which the architect could not devise without considering the subject of the painting. Both the Cavaliere d’Arpino’s and Mignard’s altarpieces have Trinitarian subjects even though the cast changes: in the Cavaliere’s version Monica and Augustine behold the Trinity, and in Mignard’s it is San Carlo Borromeo, Jean de Matha, and Felice di Valois who adore Him/It/Them. In the case of San Carlo, we are also lucky enough to have Borromini’s drawing for the frame (fig. 38). More disembodied cherubim peer into the scene from between the frame and the soffit, and the same miniscule cherubim lock wings to form an egg-and-dart archivolt. The altarpiece frame is an ingenious three-things-in-one as well, its triple mouldings meandering and eventually interweaving at the apex to be in one accord, separate but united. The three different mouldings begin their journeys at the base as concentric frames, but they stray from their paths beyond the springing points; the central wreath becomes a trilobe arch, the outer frame acquires “ears” at the bend, and the inner frame crosses over the other two to insinuate the profile of a baldachin.

The cantoria (1630/1640) and music at Santa Lucia

The Cavaliere d’Arpino looms larger over another commission given to Borromini at Santa Lucia, a new choir loft for the nuns (figs. 39–40). “He who sings well prays twice” (“bis orat qui bene cantat”) is an old adage, one still used to open the section on “The Importance of Singing at Mass” in the *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*.¹⁰⁶ For the nuns it was gospel. The convent was famed for its choral music throughout the seventeenth century and by happy coincidence its old medieval toponym of Santa Lucia *in Orphea* (so-called because a fountain with a figure of Orpheus had existed nearby in antiquity) was never forgotten.¹⁰⁷ The nuns were active singers, musicians, and even lyricists. As early as 1617 the

104 *De Trinitate* 9.IV.7: “Unius ergo eiusdemque essentiae necesse est haec tria sint, et ideo si tamquam commixione confusa essent, nullo modo essent tria nec referri ad invicem possent. Quemadmodum si ex uno eodemque auro tres anulos similes facias quamvis connexos sibi, referuntur ad invicem quod similes sunt; omnis enim similis alicui similis est, et trinitas anulorum est et unum aurum. At si misceantur sibi et per totam singuli massam suam conspergantur, intercidet illa trinitas et omnino non erit, ac non solum unum aurum dicitur sicut in illis tribus anulis dicebatur, sed iam nulla aurea tria.”

105 The contract for the painting dates from 21 June 1645 (*Pierre Mignard* 1997, p. 33) and the church was consecrated on 14 October 1646 (San Buenaventura [1660s] 1999, pp. 56, 58). For a fruitful (and rare) analysis of Mignard’s composition, see Hill 2013, pp. 572, 579.

106 *Institutio Generalis Missalis Romani*, Proem., Cap. II, Sec. 2, no. 39.

107 Barry 2003, p. 113.



39 Rome, Santa Lucia in Selci, cantoria, view from nave (photo Bibliotheca Hertziana/Enrico Fontolan)

composer and organist Paolo Quagliati (ca. 1555–1628) dedicated his *Affetti amorosi spirituali* to Suor Anna Maria Cesi, a distinguished soloist in the convent, because these spiritual madrigals “were first cherished and favoured by her, whenever she deigned to sing and embellish them with her artful style and most dulcet voice.”¹⁰⁸ Quagliati also held his accompanists at the convent in such regard that he eventually bequeathed the nuns his spinet, while the composer and harpist Orazio Michi (1594–1641) would follow suite with his own bequest of three harps to an equally gifted soloist, Suor Caterina Baroni.¹⁰⁹ The nuns had a portable organ too, which they would play in the choir loft or bring down to the retrochoir as the occasion demanded, when, for example, they were hosting the *Quarant’ore* (Forty Hours’ Devotion of the Sacrament).¹¹⁰ Towards mid-century Pietro della Valle acclaimed the convent in his *Della musica dell’età nostra* (1640), noting that “everyone knows how great is the fame in music of the nun at Santa Lucia in Selci” (probably the aforementioned Caterina Baroni), while Richard Lassels, visiting Rome in 1654, included it among four convents whose choral

108 Quagliati 1617, dedication: “componimenti accarezzati prima, et favoriti da lei, quando tal volta s’è compiaciuta cantarli et abbellirli con le sue artificiose maniere et soavissima voce.” For the culture of music in Roman convents, see Montford 2006.

109 Burke 1984, p. 38; Durante/Martellotti 1982, p. 103; Montford 2006, p. 1016.

110 ASR, SLS, reg. 3757, no. 192: on 21 June 1620, ▽ 40 were paid to four porters “per haver portato l’organo dal choro di sopra a quello da basso e di poi riportatolo di sopra con l’occasione delle quarant’hora”.



40 Rome, Santa Lucia in Selci, *cantoria*, lateral view from nave (photo Bibliotheca Hertziana/Enrico Fontolan)

“music [...] is the best in the world without dispute.”¹¹¹ In 1647 the Neapolitan Suor Caterina Costanza di Gesù set words to music with a collection of hymns dedicated to the *Blessed Virgin, the Hope and Guide of the Sinful Soul*, although the manuscript never saw the presses.¹¹²

However, serious obstacles beset the nuns when a series of prohibitions on religious music were instituted under Alexander VII. Regulation began in 1657 with the Bull *Piae sollicitudinis* that banned the singing of texts not prescribed by the church and generally disparaged “anything ostentatious, and especially choirs of music and symphonies in which anything indecorous or divorced from ecclesiastical rite is mixed in.” However, in 1664, when the pope convened the Sacra Congregazione della Visita Apostolica to assess the state of liturgical institutions in Rome, this body showed itself suspicious of allowing nuns to indulge in any form of music at all. Eventually, Alexander VII himself instructed the Congregazione to approve the idea that nuns might sing music, as long as they made no use of polyphony, whose sensuous sounds made sirens of the sisters and sullied their souls. The nuns pleaded with the vicariate at least to allow a music master (a priest) to enter the convent so they could maintain their high standards.¹¹³ Denied this indulgence, they continued to devise meticulous arrangements even when they could muster no more than six or seven voices.¹¹⁴ Indeed, during the Holy Year of 1675 they would still incite admiration when they “sang the Vespers and accompanied the chant of the Mass with their own voices and instrumental music.”¹¹⁵

In better times, in the 1630s, the number of songsters needed to sing the innovative arrangements, and the musicians and instruments needed to accompany them, had burgeoned to the point that the old choir loft could no longer contain them. Borromini therefore gave bold voice to their growing prowess

111 Valle 1640, p. 166: “la monaca di Santa Lucia in Silice ognun sa di quanta fama sia nella musica.” Lassels 1697, vol. 1, p. 50. Hill 1997, vol. 1, pp. 279–281 (kind reference of Joseph Connors) identifies the nun as Anna Maria Cesi, although it is more likely to be Suor Caterina Baroni given the date.

112 Marracci 1648, vol. 1, pp. 271–272: “Catharina Constantia, a lesu, natione Itala, patria Neapolitana, licet Mantuae nata, habitatione autem Romana; Ordinis Eremitanum S. Augustini, in praeclarissimo S. Luciae in Silice de Urbe Caenobio Sanctimonialis; cuius egregias animi dotes, virtutumque ornamente (ne singularem ipsius adhuc supersitit modestiam, laudum veritatem offendam) in praesentia reticeo; scripsit pro Bibliotheca nostra Mariana *Ad Beatissimam Virginem, peccatricis animae spem & ducem, Carmina Italica*; quae luce digna extant apud me M. S.” This is presumably the same Suor Caterina Costanza for whom the sculptor Antonio Giorgetti made a crib in 1661, see Montagu 1970, p. 280, note 19.

113 On the Bull *Piae sollicitudinis* and later versions, see Lionnet 1983. On Alexandrine reforms, see Montford 2006, pp. 1018–1022 with references. The letter from Sisters Anna Teresa Testa, Silvia Vittoria Testa, and Prudenzia de Signoribus to the Vicariato di Roma (AAV, CSVA, 7:5lv) is cited in Montford 2006, p. 1021.

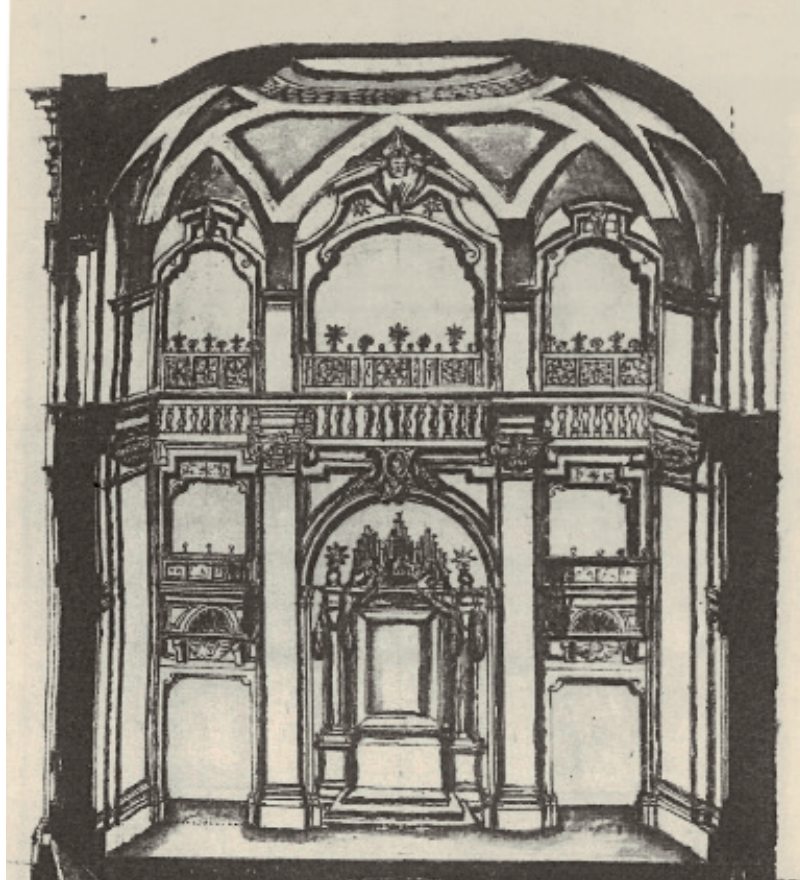
114 Bruzio 1655/1669, fol. 215r: “Si solennizzano qui la festa della Nunziata li 25 di marzo, di S. Lucia li 13 di Xbre, di S. Agostino li 28 di agosto, di S. Monaca il 4 di maggio e della Sacra la domenica tra l’ottavo dell’Assunta con sonori musiche di queste religiose.” The Prioress records choral arrangements for the Feast of S. Lucia: “Primo e secondo Vespero. Antifone in contrapunto doi salmi e tre in canto fermo falso bordone a coro pieno doi salmi concertati in canto figurato senza versi a solo doppio li Salmi replicno le antifone in concertino a doi o tre voci per ciascheduna et anco una a coro pieno et in loco di una di dette Antifone quatro botte de istrumenti l’inno in canto figurato a versi, il cantico Magnificat in canto figurato come sopra la Salve in Canto figurato concertata a coro pieno la messa in canto figurato compartita in concertino a coro pieno; doppo l’epistola quatro botte de istrumenti All’offertorio un Concertino á quattro voci all’elevatione concertino a tre voci” (AAV, Misc. Arm. VII., 36, fol. 442r [modern numeration]; undated the position in the archival busta suggests 1660/1662).

115 Caetano 1691, p. 440; Montford 2006, pp. 1016–1017. According to the diary of Giuseppe Vecchi (BAV, Cappella Sistina, Diari, n. 4), on 13 December there was a “festa con apparato, cori e sinfonie delle monache”: Franchi/Sartori 2004, p. 282.

with a new *cantoria* (choral balcony) that projected out into the nave towards the high altar. Through the grilles, the disembodied voices of the nuns trilling the Lauds and Plaints of the Virgin travelled across the vault and bridged the gulf between them. One musicologist has pleasingly compared the appearance of the new grated choirloft to an aviary, and the nuns to caged songbirds, though baroque ears heard the angelic voices of choirs invisible.¹¹⁶

Borromini not only projected the choir loft but (almost certainly) cut windows through the counter-façade on either side of it as well, attempting to make the wall as skeletal as the galleries at both ends of the contemporary Oratory (1637–1640) (fig. 41).¹¹⁷ The underlying structure of the cantoria is probably straightforward, a timber framework braced with some iron straps and bars projecting off masonry corbels. However, once it was stuccoed and painted, Benedetto Mellini mistook it for marble (Appendix 1). Indeed, in a fiction of stereometric masonry, the arches vault from massive brackets that sprout in three directions and an oval saucer dome scoops out the central soffit. Below this lies the Cavaliere d’Arpino’s swansong, a quadri-lobal canvas he painted of *God the Father*.¹¹⁸

The now septuagenarian Cavaliere rented a house in the nearby Via dei Serpenti in 1635, which he bought two years later, and Bruzio informs us that the patron of the choir loft was one Suora Agnese (actually Agata) Margherita Cesari d’Arpino, who had entered the convent back in 1618 and who was the daughter of the Cavaliere’s brother Bernardino.¹¹⁹ The family stemma of a shining sun over an anchor (emblems which reappear separately on the beam-ends) confirms the relation.¹²⁰ However, the same stemma also makes clear that the Cavaliere d’Arpino must have paid for the loft in person, because the arms vaunt two ennoblements that were his alone. In fact, the only reason that Giuseppe Cesari of Arpino could call himself a knight at all was because Clement VIII had made him a *Cavaliere di Cristo* (the supreme Pontifical order of knighthood) in 1600, while in 1630, just a few years before commissioning the choir loft, Louis XIII had made him a *Chevalier de Saint Michel*. The heavy chain linking the twen-



41 Francesco Borromini, Oratorio dei Filippini, view of the high altar, 1638 but destroyed 1652, from: Borromini (ca. 1647) 1998, tav. 12

116 Monson 2007, p. 123. For a historical survey of early modern Roman choirlofts and organs, see Morelli 1994. A permanent organ was only installed in the cantoria in the nineteenth century.

117 Connors 1980, pp. 28–29. Borromini also anticipates the choir loft at S. Ivo alla Sapienza (1642–1645, blocked up in 1658), Smyth-Pinney/Smyth 2014.

118 Baglione 1642, vol. 3, p. 375; Röttgen 2002, p. 494, cat. 280.

119 The Cavaliere d’Arpino (Arpino 1568 – Rome 1640) married Dorotea Maggi in 1618, and their daughter Flavia Domitilla was born in 1620; in 1637 he bought a large house at 157 Via dei Serpenti. See Röttgen 2002, p. 191; see also ASDR, *Stati d’anime*, S. Salvatore in Monti, anno 1636, fol. 4v; 1638, fol. 9v; 1641, fol. 6r. Agata Margherita was the daughter of his brother, Bernardino Cesari (Arpino 1571 – Rome? 1622) see Röttgen 1980. Röttgen assumes that Bernardino’s daughter entered the convent in 1629, but actually Agata Cesari “figlia del Signore Belardino Cesari” had entered on 8 April 1618 and professed on 2 September 1619 under the name of Agata Margherita (ASR, SLS, reg. 3756, *Libro Mastro 1617–1620*, no. 146, “Alimenti di Agata Cesari”). She was still living in 1651 (ASR, SLS, b. 3679, fasc. 1, *Istromenti 1650–1697*, loose sheet).

ty-three pilgrims' shells of the Chevalier de Saint Michel encircles the Cavaliere d'Arpino's arms while the cross of the papal order overlies the medallion of the French one.¹²¹

The cantoria was therefore executed after 1630, perhaps after 1635, and certainly before the Cavaliere d'Arpino passed away in 1640. Perhaps the ageing artist felt the hand of death upon his shoulder, for above God the Father a stucco angel blows the final trumpet. Its unusual form (reminiscent of stadium speakers), with a single flute but a triple bell, may be one more Trinitarian flourish. Alternatively, it may allude to the "three woes", that final fanfare at the end of time announced by "an angel flying through the midst of heaven, saying with a loud voice, 'Woe, woe, woe, to the inhabitants of the earth by reason of the other voices of the trumpet of the three angels, which are yet to sound!'" (*Revelation* 8:13). Whichever the case, the composition of *God the Father* adjacent to a horn-blowing angel comprises a metonym of the Apocalypse, located in its traditional position on a counter-façade. It is a metonym that responds to another, at the other end of the church, the beginning of the story of Christian redemption announced in the high altarpiece, the *Annunciation*.

Finally, it was from this very loft that the Cavaliere d'Arpino's own daughter Flavia Domitilla, who entered the convent five months after his death under the name of Maria Margarita, would have sung at his requiem or during the *Ottavario dei Morti*. Her fame as vocalist spread throughout Rome and outlived both of them, for when all else had been forgotten Nicola Pio would still record that Flavia Cesari "sang like an angel."¹²²

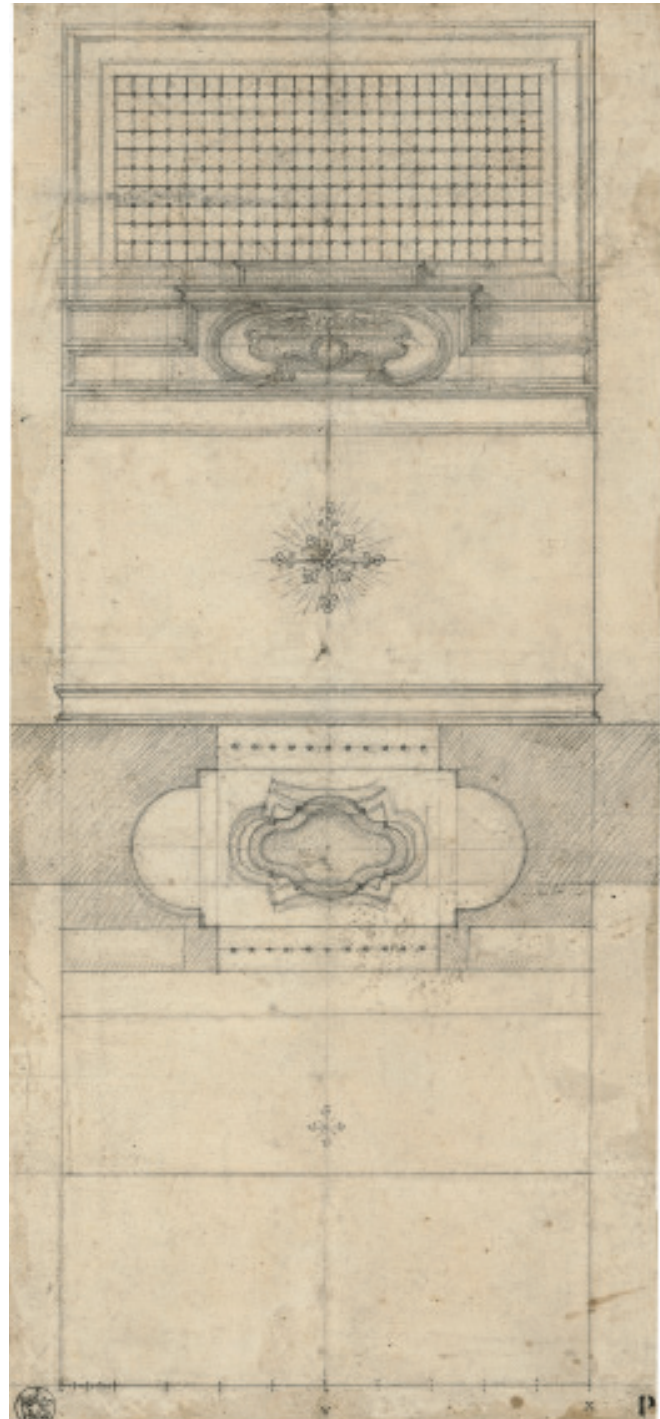
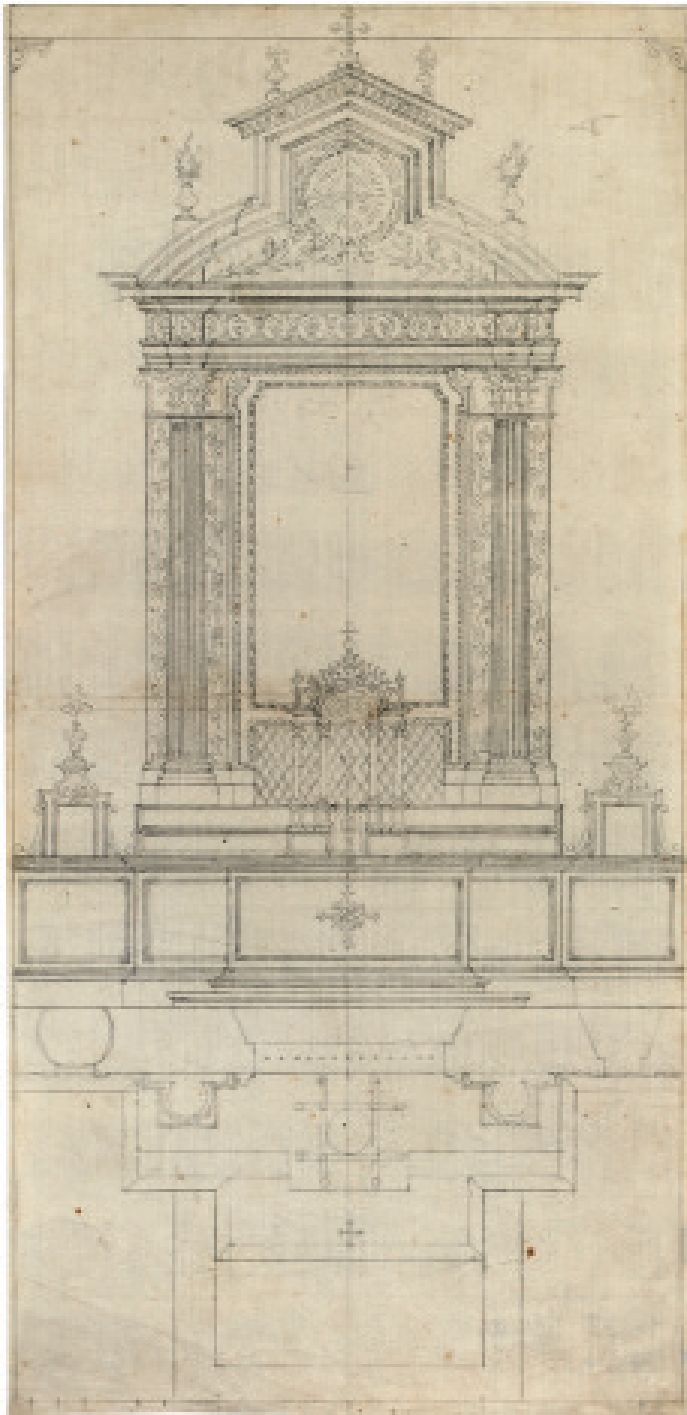
The high altar (finished 1643)

No document records when Borromini began work on the high altar of Santa Lucia, only that he made modifications to it in 1641–1643. Unfortunately, a disastrous 'restoration' in the 1820s or 1840s replaced Borromini's unfashionable design with a stolid Ionic aedicule, as well as scrubbing the chancel of every other ornament (fig. 7). Contemporary descriptions rescue some of these lost decorations from oblivion (Mellini, Bruzio; see appendices), but they are frustratingly silent about the high altar itself. We must therefore rely on three pieces of graphic evidence to reconstruct its appearance: an autograph drawing that may show an early design; an autograph drawing that certainly records the modifications made in 1641–1643; and an anonymous engraving that records the altar's appearance during a staging of the *Quarant'ore* in 1651. Unfortunately, the drawings for the high altar and the engraving of it look nothing like each other,

120 The arms appear on his palace at Arpino (largely demolished in 1910) and tomb in S. Giovanni in Laterano, see Quadrini 1940, pp. 25, 29. Modified as a sun over a bar containing the *Croce di Cristo* with an anchor below, they figure on the frontispieces of works by Matteo Pagani (1619, 1623, 1633) and Francesco Miedelchini (1627), see Waźbiński 1992, figs. 5 and 6, docs. 5, 8, 13 and 10 respectively.

121 Baglione 1642, vol. 3, p. 375. Van Mander, on information from Floris van Dyck, states that the Cavaliere d'Arpino's mother Giovanna was the daughter of a Spanish noble, see Röttgen 2002, p. 2. Cesari's decorations in the Lateran transept earned him the "habito di Cristo, & il Cardinal Pietro Aldobrandini nepote di Clemente nella sua Cappelletta privatamente in Vaticano glie lo diede", see Baglione 1642, vol. 3, p. 371. For the *Cavaliere di Cristo and Chevaliers de Saint Michel*, see Giustiniano 1672, pp. 347–348 and 20–24 respectively; Bander van Duren 1995, pp. 64–74 and pp. 333–336 respectively. The Cavaliere d'Arpino's pride in both decorations is recorded by Matteo Pagani, see Waźbiński 1992, docs. 9, 13.

122 Nicola Pio in Pio 1977, p. 107 (fol. 46): "una sua figliola che angelicamente cantava." Flavia Domitilla Cesari, who is named on the Cavaliere d'Arpino's epitaph, entered the convent on 15 November 1640 (ASR, SLS, reg. 5637, no. 159), professed as a nun in 1644, and died in 1700, see Röttgen 2002, p. 196, note 291.



so some careful analysis of the evidence is necessary to explain my conclusion that the engraving most accurately reconstructs its original appearance.

In 1993 an autograph drawing in Vienna was published as Borromini's design for the altar (fig. 42).¹²³ The design is certainly for a cloistered convent, as it includes the grating over the altar necessary for the Eucharistic elevation to be visible to sisters in the retro-choir, as well as two apertures on either side of the altar: a *rota* through which the nuns could pass out vestments to the celebrant, and a window through which he could administer the Sacrament back to them.¹²⁴ By the same token, this drawing omits the doors that have flanked the altar since

42 Francesco Borromini, design for a high altar of Santa Lucia in Selci (?), graphite on paper, 39.5 × 19.1 cm. Vienna, Graphische Sammlung Albertina, AZRom843 (photo Albertina, Vienna)

43 Francesco Borromini, design for modifications to the lower part of the high altar of Santa Lucia in Selci, graphite on paper, 35.4 × 16.2 cm, 1641. Berlin, Staatliche Museen, Kunstbibliothek, Hdz 1044 (photo Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Kunstbibliothek/Dietmar Katz)

123 Albertina, Az. Rom. 843, see Kieven 1993, pp. 58–59, cat. 8. Borromini's authorship is inexplicably questioned in Kahn-Rossi/Franciulli 1999, cat. 177.

at least the 1650s (Appendix 1), and it shows two puzzling brackets at the top of the side walls, with two parallel lines drawn between them, as though they supported a tie-beam spanning the face of the choir. In addition, the ciborium on the altar indicates that the Eucharist was to be housed here, whereas we know that the Cappella Melchiorri fulfilled this function from at least 1625, and still does. Finally, the choir depicted is a good metre wider than that at Santa Lucia (25 *palmi* or 5.57 metres, rather than the actual 20.5 *palmi* or 4.57 metres at Santa Lucia).¹²⁵ In short, this drawing is either an early design for Santa Lucia, or a design for a completely different church.

The drawing would have to predate 1641, because we know from another autograph drawing held in Berlin (fig. 43) that the altar was modified when the nuns decided to install a reliquary urn above the mensa, in an oval oculus open towards both the church and the retro-choir.¹²⁶ The tiered plinths (for candlesticks, reliquaries, *cartaglorie*, etc.) that cascade around this oculus are those for which a carpenter was paid (February 1643), “for having made anew the step of the high altar with three steps open in the middle, and a removable panel [...] just as the architect wanted it.”¹²⁷ The new opening allowed both the public and the nuns behind the grille to view a white marble urn that was carved in 1641–

124 In compliance with Carlo Borromeo’s stipulations in the *Instructiones fabricae*, see Borromeo 1577, Lib. I, cap. 32. A similarly symmetrical scheme, in reality quite rare, can be found in the choir of S. Caterina dei Funari (1561–1565).

125 It is called “cappella Santissimi Sacramenti” in 1625 (endowment of Lorenzo Lancellotti, ASR, 30 NC, uff. 13, Ioannes Baptista Octavianus, vol. 229, fol. 717r: see above at note 48). The stucco reliefs on the external pilasters are, left and right: *Angel with symbols of the Passion*. Internal pilasters: (left, top) *Last Supper*, (left, bottom) *Abraham and Melchisedek*; (right, top) *King David plays the harp as he walks before the Ark of the Covenant*, (right, bottom) *Manna from Heaven*. In Camassei’s altarpiece – *St John giving communion to the Virgin* – the host and patten lie axially over the tabernacle door. For an iconographic analysis of the altarpiece, see Dunn 2000, pp. 33–36.

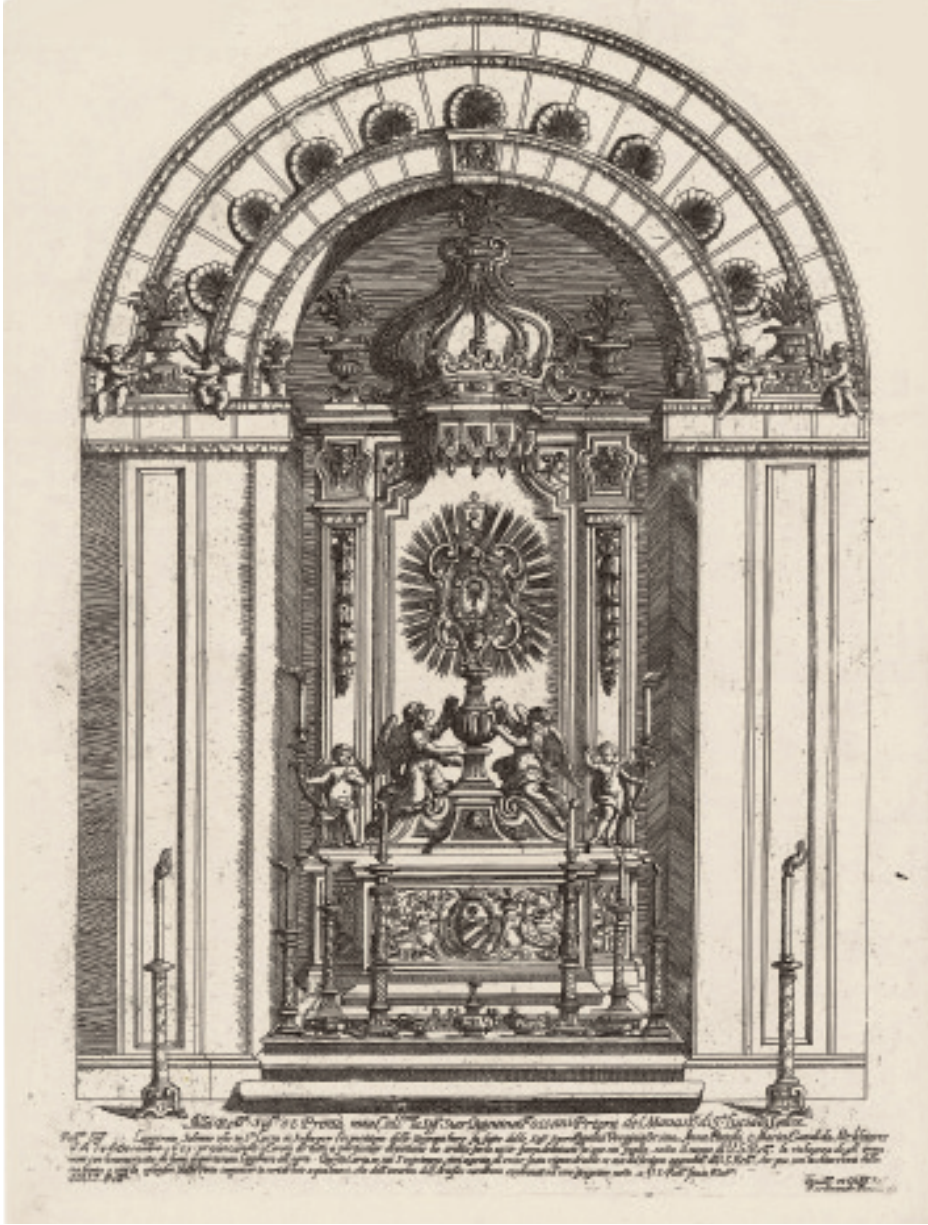
126 Berlin, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Kunstbibliothek, Hdz 1044, see Portoghesi 1967, p. 61 and pl. 26; Jacob 1975, pp. 68 and 75, cat. 331; Kahn–Rossi/Francioli 1999, cat. 176. Compare the description of the choir in Bruzio’s Latin version (BAV, Vat. Lat. 11874, *Regio Montis tom. 2 lib. 7*, fols. 238r–238v: “Aedem Camera tegit, et sacella qinque decorant maximum quod in Abside Annunciatae Virgini sacrum est. Hi enim [fol. 238v] antiquus flagitubat titulus, quo a Deipara vocabatur, et a S. Lucia tela picta sanctissimum refert mysterium, eamque ornat coronis è glarea, auratisq. e ligno foliis. Telae subiectus Clathrus ferrens, qui extimam Aedem ab intima dividit. Clathro subest Arca è [marmore?], quae corpora servat SS. Ioannis, et Pauli [sic] martyrum, et Candidae Virginis et martyris. In Absidis camera coloribus egregie cernitur expressa Augustissima Virgo Regno per Deum filium intigui evincta, inque lateribus, quae marmorato eleganter interstincta alia multa ad Beatissimam ipsam Virginis pertinentia. Haec adeo conspicua ornamenta Virginis liberalitate in acceptis referuntur Sylviae Victoriae, Annae Teresiae, et Angelae Constantiae Testiis Romanis, mariae, mariae Hieronymae, et mariae Victoriae de Signoribus, nobiliumque arca picta et inaurata mariae franciscae Columnae, et mariae Deodatae Rapaccioliae.”

127 ASR, SLS, b. 3704, fasc. 2, *Giustificazioni diverse 1641–1645*: series of loose sheets which begin with the inscription “Ricevute della spesa di ∇ 200 d 10 moneta fatta da S.^a M.^a Francesca Colonna e S.^a M.^a Diodata Rapacioli p deposito delli tre Corpi Santi sotto l’Altar Maggiore nella nostra l’anno 1642.”

a) “Santa Lucia in Selci. Io infrascritto faccio fede, come maestro Giulio Cianchi ho ricevuto in doi volte dalla nostra Reverenda Madre Priora scudi venticinque [di] moneta quali sono per saldo et in pagamento della ferrata fatta sopra l’altari per li Corpi Santi et l’ornato messa a oro di ferro di spadaro con suoi occhietti et in fede per questo di 20 settembre 1642. Lutio Agoni mano propria. Io Giulio Cianchi a [...] come sopra mano propria.”

b) “Io infrascritto confesso avere ricevuto dall’Illustrissima Signora Priora di Santa Lucia in Selci ∇ dicasete et baiocchi 40 sono per resto et finale pagamento di ∇ 29 di lavori fatti da me atorno a la casa de Corpi santi quali sono altar maggiore dela ciesa et in fede questo di 7 di ottobre 1642. – 17. 40. Daniele Guidotti mano probria.”

c) “Io Ignantio Costantini ho Ricevuto dalla Signora Priora scudi dieci moneta quali sono per a bon conto delli lavori fatti di indoratura nella chiesa di Santa Lucia in Selci questo di 5 di luglio 1642. ∇ – 10”; there is another payment of 8 scudi for other, unspecified works (on 5 September 1642) and 14 scudi 40 baiocchi (on 22 October 1642) “per resto e saldo di tutti i lavori



44 Anonymous, *Quarant'ore* at high altar of Santa Lucia in Selci on 14 December 1651, engraving, 55 × 42 cm. Private collection (photo author)

1642 and which was still *in situ* in 1825, and therefore may still be somewhere on the premises. This contained the relics of Saints John Martyr, Justus Martyr, and Saint Candida.¹²⁸

d'oro fatti al altar maggiore per servitio delli Corpi Santi cioè indoratura pitture” altogether totalling ∇ 32: 40.

d) “Io Giosepe Bernascone e riciuto scudi vendue moneta de la Reverenda Madre Priora di Santa Lucia in Selchi per il lavoro fato soto l’altar magore di stucho et fede Jo Giosepe Bernascone”

e) “Io infrascritto ricevuto da la Illustrissima Signora Priora di S. Lucia in Selci ∇ dodici [di] moneta sono a bon conto de’ lavori di marmi fati da me al altare maggiore dove sono le santissime reliquie et in fede questo di 25 giugno 1642. Guidotti.”

f) ASR, SLS, b. 3704, fasc. 2, *Giustificazioni diverse 1641–1645*: loose sheet, unnumbered, 12 February 1643; bill for woodwork by Paolo Bertolli: “per aver fatto di novo lo scalino del atare maggiore co tre scalini aperti in nel mezzo e messo una tavola da levare e metere tuta di un pezo e detto scalino e tuto scornicato e riquadrato coforme lo volse l’architetto e meso dua occhietti ingiesati co doi rapini che tegano la tavoletta di nussi [= noce?]. Mi cotento che mi sia pagato quanto quello che ciera prima che fu pagato da sette scudi – ∇ 7

Per aver fatto li dui sportelli da servare li corpi santi fatti in telaro e scornicati di nocie e messo quatro cancanetti ingiesati e in bandera a roba mia mossa – ∇ 1:50.”

Urns above altars are virtually unknown in Rome, since martyrs' remains should lie *below* the altar in order to activate it and recall its origins as a communion table over a tomb.¹²⁹ However, Borromeo's *Instructiones* did sanction the use of a two-way reliquary cupboard above a communion window, and perhaps the nuns exploited this liturgical allowance to stage a permanent ostension of the relics.¹³⁰ Yet Borromini's solution is so unusual that it seems consciously archaizing. Behind the wrought-iron grille of palms and lilies, the urn and its venerable relics occupy an elevated *confessio* that looks back to columbaria and catacombal loculi. This was fitting as Santa Lucia housed an army of utterly obscure (if not completely fictitious) martyrs disinterred from the catacombs of Saint Callixtus (Appendix 2). By chance or design, the elevated urn also evokes the medieval reliquary arca, like that of Saint Augustine himself in Pavia. What is certainly true is that in upgrading the church, the nuns took their best relics, of John, Justus, and Candida, early martyrs from the catacombs, and gave them pride of place. From now on they would celebrate the feasts of this sainted trinity as well.¹³¹

But this is by no means the end of the story. An engraving of 1651 puts quite another face on the high altar in Santa Lucia in Selci (fig. 44).¹³² Since the purpose

128 ASR, SLS, b. 3704, fasc. 2, *Giustificazioni diverse 1641–1645*, unnumbered folios:

a) “A di 19 dicembre 1641. Io Fausto Vivenzi scultore confesso di haver ricevuto dalla M[ol]to Reverenda Madre Priora di Santa Lucia in Selici scudi vinticinque moneta per a bon conto dell'urna di marmo che deta P.^{ra} fa fare per meter li Corpi Santi al altar maggiore. Fausto Vivenzi mano propria.”

b) “Io Fausto Vivenzi soprascritto ho ricevuti scudi vinti moneta et quest a bon conto del'opera che si notifica sopra et questi li di 24 febraro 1642. Io Fausto Vivenzi scultore mano propria.”

c) “A di 28 april 1642. Io Fausto Vivenzi sudetto ho ricevuto dala M[ol]to Reverenda Madre Priora scudi trentacinque che con li sudeti di sopra fano in tutto scudi otanta monete quali sono per resto saldo et compimento [...] marmo fata da me per ordine di sudetta madre et questo si intende comprende il costo per marmaro et solaro [?] et altre spese. Io Fausto Vivenzi mano propria.”

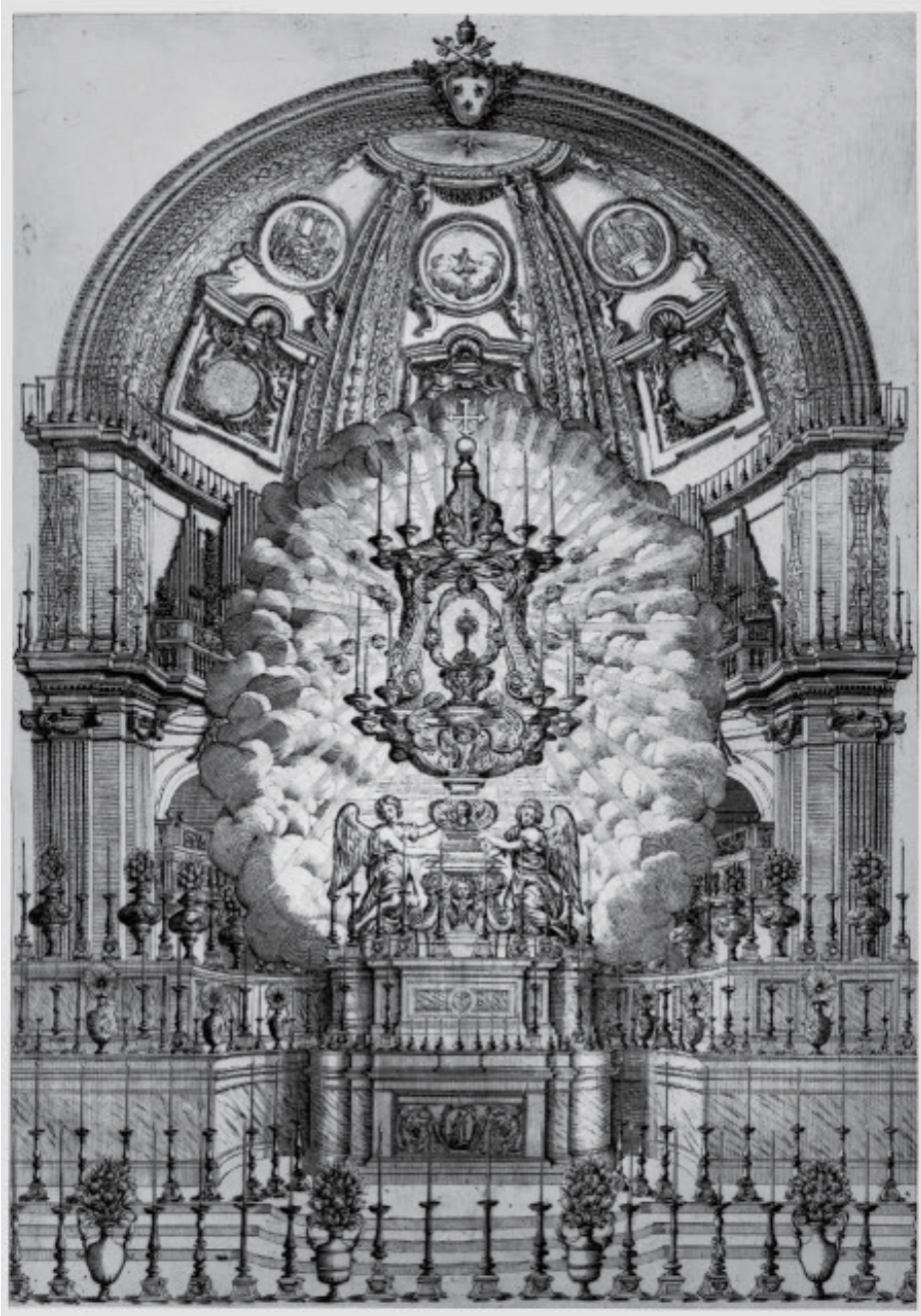
The urn was still in situ in 1825 (AAV, SCVA, no. 179, anno 1825, unnumbered folio). The identities of the saintly remains are given in Bruzio (Appendix 2) and convent documents.

129 Borromeo 1577, Lib. I, cap. 16 (“De locis, vasis loculisve, quibus sacrae reliquiae reconduuntur”). Cf. “gl'altari nelle chiese come dice il Baronio nell'anno 275 n.º 2 non sono altri che sepolcro de martiri e però non si può erigere altare che non vi si ponghi reliquie de santi martiri nella pietra santa, i quali essendo gloriosi meritano anche sepolcro glorioso conforme che fù detto di Christo *et erit sepulcrum eius gloriosum*” (Memorandum of Virgilio Spada concerning the Cappella Spada in S. Andrea della Valle, undated but 1631, ASR, *Fondo Spada Veralli*, tom. 490, fol. 21r).

130 Borromeo 1577, Lib. I, cap. 16. A good contemporary example is provided by the left aisle of SS. Quattro Coronati, arranged in ca. 1630–1632 by Cardinal Vidoni. The aisle altar (with an altarpiece by Giovanni da S. Giovanni, over the grating to a retrochoir) is flanked by a rota (for communion) on the left, and a two-way reliquary cupboard (with its own altarpiece, Baglione's *St Sebastian aided by Irene and Lucina*, and altar) on the right. The scheme was not possible at the high altar of SS. Quattro Coronati because there was no retrochoir.

131 “Johannes” is too vague to identify, but for Justus and Candida: *Bibliotheca Sanctorum* 1963–1987, 7: cols. 22–54, 3: pp. 732–737 respectively. Their relics had come from S. Biagio della Fossa in 1597: AAV, SCVA, n. 114, fasc. 5; cited in Dunn 2000, p. 48 (note 62). See also ASR, SLS, b. 5520, *Libro Mastro lett. G 1641–1647*, no. 174: miscellaneous payments for the masses on the feast days of Justus (14 July) and Candida (1 December).

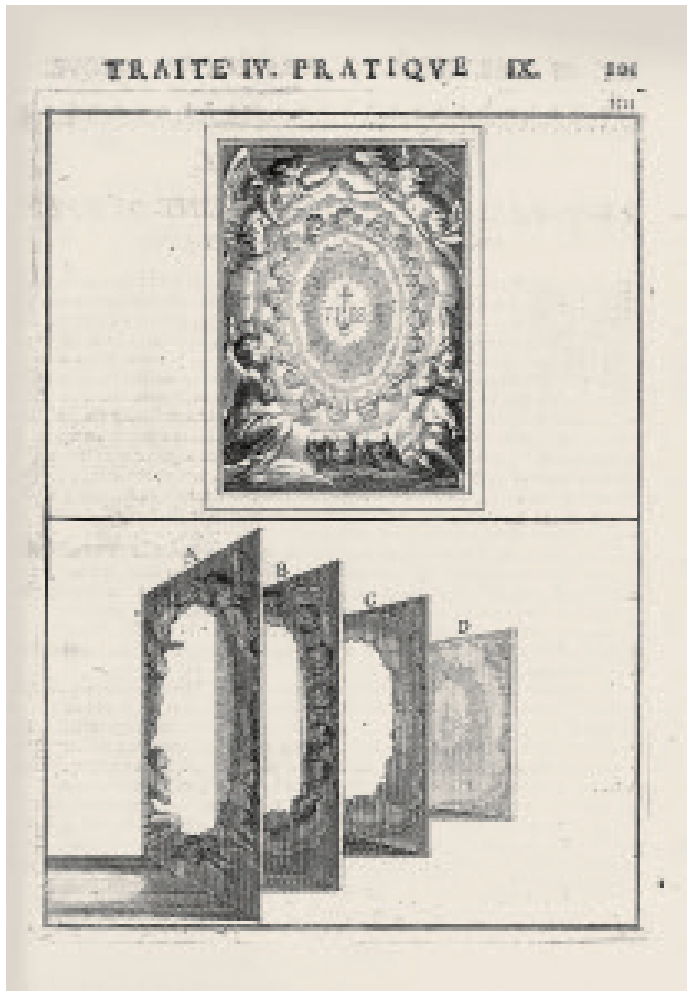
132 Wolfe 2008, pp. 73–75 and fig. 9. The engraving bears the legend: “Alla Rev.^{ma} Sig.^{ra} et Pr.ora mia Coll.^{ma} la Sig.^{ra} Suor Quintina Fossani Priora del Monast.^{to} di S.^a Lucia in Selice / Rev.^{ma} Sig.^{ra} l'apparato solenne che in S.^{ta} Lucia in Selice per l'espositione delle Quarant'hore fu fatto dalle Sig.^{re} Suore Ippolita Verginia Orsina, Anna Pauola e Maria Candida Melchiorre / al di 14 di Dicembre 1651 provocando i Cuori di tutti a particolar devotione ha ardito farlo uscir fuori delineato in questo foglio, sotto il nome di V. S. Rev.^{ma} la ricchezza degli orna/menti col numerosità de lumi, acquistarono l'applauso all'opra. Questa carta in cui s'esprimono, non aspetta di essere fatta riguardevole se non dal benigno aggradim.^{to} di V. S. Rev.^{ma}, che può con la chiarezza della sua bontà e con lo splendor delle Virtù comunicar tesori di luce a questi lavori che dall'oscurità dell'artefice sarebbero condannati ad una perpetua notte: a V. S. Rev.^{ma} faccio Riv.^a –di V.S. Rev.^{ma} Dev.^{mo} et Oblig.^{mo} Ferdinando Benedetti.”



45 Pietro da Cortona, *Apparato* for the *Quarant'ore* in San Lorenzo in Damaso, 24 February 1650, engraving. Rome, Istituto Centrale per la Grafica, Calcografia Nazionale, from Jörg Martin Merz, *Pietro da Cortona and Roman Baroque Architecture*, New Haven et al. 2008, p. 58

of this print was to record the *apparato* (ephemeral decorations) that the nuns commissioned for the *Quarant'ore* of 14 December 1651, the crucial question is how much of what is represented was temporary ornament, and how much permanent structure. The bulk of the ephemera are easy to spot, especially once the observer realises that the *apparato* follows the example of a far larger one that Pietro da Cortona had built a year earlier (24 February 1650) in the apse of San Lorenzo in Damaso (fig. 45).¹³³ Thus we can subtract the bulbous monstrosity flanked by candle-bearing putti, the fringed pelmets covering the proscenium arch, the *paliotto* embroidered with the arms of Suora Virginia Orsini, and probably also the various other angels and putti. On the other hand, the curious shells overlying the arch may have been permanent, since the same ornaments reappear below the choir loft mensoles at the other end of the church and, as noted, below the Landi scudo (figs. 40, 29). The seashell was an instantly recognisable emblem of Augustine thanks to the familiar legend (represented in the stuccoes of the

133 Fagiolo dell'Arco 1997, pp. 343–344.



46 Jean Dubreuil, Design for *Quarant'ore* with a radiant glory of clouds and angels around the *Name of Jesus* (above) and the same as files of stage-flats (below), from Dubreuil 1642, vol. 3, p. 101

Cappella Cerri) that the saint, walking along the beach at Hippo, had met a child who warned him that he could more easily empty the sea with a shell than fathom the mystery of the Holy Trinity.

The altar aedicule represented in the 1651 print is altogether more problematic, for it has the spatial illogic of an Escher figure. At the top, the superstructure looks nearly flush with the proscenium arch, as if it were a temporary screen thrown across the chancel mouth; at the bottom, the whole frame plants its feet on the solid altar that survives to this day. While the ambiguity can be put down to an engraver with a rather shaky ability to represent space, we can still analyse the image further to determine how much of the structure he represented was permanent.

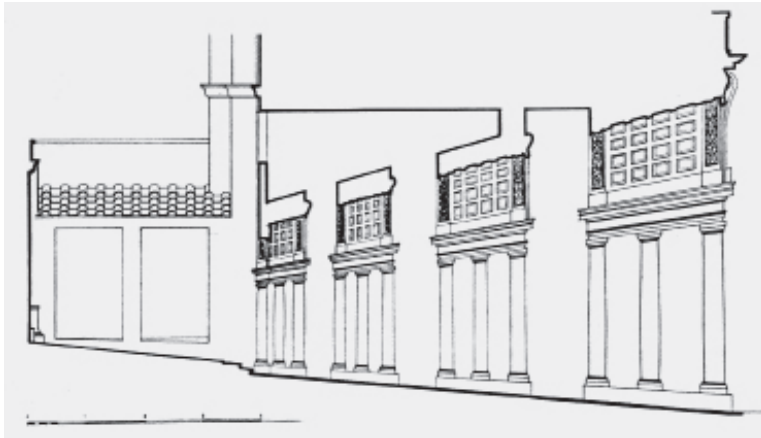
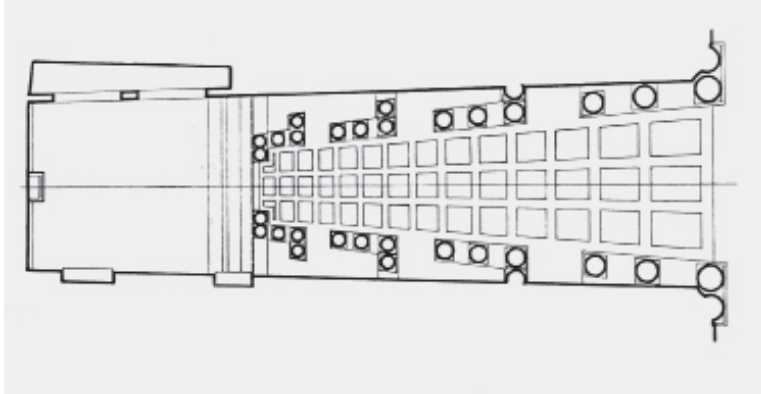
The engraving clearly states that it represents an *apparato* for the *Quarant'ore*. Here it is crucial to remember that the purpose of the *Quarant'ore* was an extraordinary staging of the Eucharist for forty hours, in effect prolonging the momentary elevation of the Host during the Mass for that symbolic duration. The event of the *Quarant'ore* entailed no liturgy: rather it simply lured the public to veneration of the Host through a spectacle of light and otherworldly scenography.¹³⁴ By the 1630s, at the latest, these stagings had developed into elaborate architectural installations or figural tableaux (sometimes both) that almost always featured a radiant glory around a monstrance, often with banks of clouds and angels. The illusion was achieved with multiple ranks of stage-flats, all back-lit by concealed lamps, which grew in number the further back they lay (fig. 46). Accordingly, the monstrance, which often glittered with jewels and radiated golden spokes, was placed at the back of the *apparato*.

It was the very fact that the most intense light occupied the same recesses that created the illusion of light emanating from its core, and that the Host was therefore the Real Presence of Christ, the “Light of Light”, issuing from some parallel dimension. Borromini himself is hardly known as a practitioner in this branch of architecture, but he was also no stranger to it. He purportedly designed a *Quarant'ore* display for the papal palace, and his famous *prospettiva* at the Palazzo Spada (1652–1653) clearly derives its own means of concealed illumination from the *Quarant'ore* (figs. 47a–c).¹³⁵ Yet, it looks nothing like the image in the engraving.

If the aedicule represented in the Santa Lucia engraving were simply a screen across the proscenium to the choir, then several metres of empty space would have been left available for some perspectival backdrop, but none is illustrated. The only discernable aperture is a lunette of space above the altar, which the engraver has hatched in a different stroke to suggest a darkened space beyond. Conversely, if the putative *apparato* were simply flat, that is a painted panel

134 Bjurström 1972; Weil 1974; Noehles 1978; Imorde 1997. *Apparati* reached colossal proportions but the same illusions could be achieved at a far more modest scale. For the altar shown in fig. 44, Dubreuil specifies two or three pairs of wings and a backdrop, all within a depth of only two or three feet, see Dubreuil 1642, 3: pp. 8–9.

135 Sinisgalli 1981. Cardinal Bernardino Spada cites “una prospettiva di maniera conforme che haveva veduto per opra del Cavaliere Borromini architetto nell’oratione delle quarantore di Palazzo [del Quirinale?]”, see ASR, Archivio Spada, vol. 463, cap. XXII, par. 15; Heimbürger–Ravalli 1977, p. 132, note 75. Borromini collaborated with the Augustinian Giovanni Maria Bitonti on the *prospettiva*.



or hanging, which would have been an unfruitful deviation from expected practice, there was no good reason to place the structure so far forward of the altar wall. We must remember that in Cortona's impressive *Quarant'ore* from one year earlier (fig. 45), only the colossal monstrance, the glory, and the lamps were ephemeral, while the backdrop was the real and permanent apse of San Lorenzo in Damaso that Bernini had reconstructed a decade earlier (1638–1640).¹³⁶

These are already reasons to conclude that the print of S. Lucia in Selci shows a permanent altar with only temporary trappings. The profuse floral imagery strongly signals a Marian theme, appropriate to the altarpiece of an *Annunciation* (fig. 2) and because this represents the moment of the Incarnation it also made a good backdrop to the *Quarant'ore*, which made manifest the presence of Christ incarnate in the sanctified Host.¹³⁷ However, for the symbolism to be obvious, Fontebuoni's altarpiece would have to remain visible and not be screened off by an *apparato*. One must also note that regal crowns like the one crowning the altar in the print are rarely found over monstrances in the *Quarant'ore*, suggesting it too belonged to a permanent structure. Moreover, if the structure we see in the print were really an *apparato* it is doubtful whether a small convent like Santa Lucia could even have afforded it, as such elaborate contraptions were normally funded by rich patrons or resourceful orders, and in altogether more prominent churches. Poorer orders like the Augustinians at Santa Lucia content-

47a–c Francesco Borromini and Giovanni Maria Bitonti, Section, plan, and view of the *prospettiva*, 1652–1653. Rome, Palazzo Spada (photo author, photo montage author)

¹³⁶ Pollak 1928, vol. 1, p. 164; Valtieri 1982, p. 25 (appendix); Valtieri 1984, pp. 49–58.

¹³⁷ The Annunciation theme was uncommon, but by no means unknown, as the *Quarant'ore* had no fixed date and could be hosted in all liturgical seasons except during Passion Week: e.g. an *apparato* built by the Confraternita della Buona Morte in Bologna on 3 March 1597, complete with a tableau of the Annunciation, drapes, candles but also reflecting mirrors: Black 1989, pp. 99–100. See also the drawing of unknown authorship and date, but certainly 17th-century, in the Kunstmuseum at Düsseldorf: Weil 1974, p. 235 and pl. 54b.

ed themselves, as had been the practice in the early days of the *Quarant'ore*, with placing the monstrance on the main altar, flanking it with candelabra and the odd putto, and draping the surrounding architecture in velvet or damask, all or most of which was hired for the occasion.¹³⁸

Despite all this, even if the entire ensemble illustrated in the Santa Lucia print were actually just an ephemeral installation, it would still be necessary to assess whether it was designed by Borromini, who remained the nuns' architect in 1651 and upon whom they would call only two years later for some structural ingenuity to underpin their failing refectory.¹³⁹ However, the engraver does not commend Borromini for the design but instead congratulates himself for throwing "light on these works which otherwise would have been condemned to a perpetual night by the obscurity of their artificer." Nobody would have spoken about Borromini this way in 1651, at the height of his powers, only a year after he had restored Rome's cathedral, Saint John in Lateran, and shortly before he was to be invested as Cavaliere di Cristo by Innocent X. By the same token, it is difficult to imagine who else might have designed such an idiosyncratic contraption in the mid-seventeenth century, especially one that so manifestly quotes Borromini's design idioms. Borromini delegated run-of-the-mill maintenance at Santa Lucia to Francesco Righi, whose devotion was so strong that he even imitated his master's handwriting, but Righi's only known designs (the Palazzo dello Spirito Santo, 1661) are little more than workmanlike.¹⁴⁰ All this leads to the

138 E.g. ASR, SLS, reg. 3757, *Libro Mastro lett. C 1620–1623*, no. 192: on 21 June 1620, ▽ 20 were paid to the *festarolo* "per haver fatto attaccare e di poi staccare li panni di razza nell'arco della tribuna della chiesa per le dette 40 hora." The bills of Galletti, the sisters' regular carpenter, from 3rd October 1651 to 31st May 1652, make no mention of the extraordinary carpentry works necessary for a full-scale *apparato*.

139 ASR, SLS, b. 3705, fasc. 1, *Giustificazioni diverse 1648–1690*, loose sheet, a *misura e stima* of 20 March 1654, details the elaborate reinforcing that had been effected by this date as a result of structural lesions in the refectory and notes "sono state fatte in conformità della misura e stima della relatione data in actis dal Signor Cavaliere Francesco Borromino architetto delle suore di ottobre 1652" (cf. ASR; SLS, 5522, fol. 89, "per riparatione della rovina del n.ro refettorio e celle si come per conto tassato dal S.r Borromino"). Cf. the accounts of Gregorio Quadri, 16 Sept 1653: ASR, 30 NC, uff. 33, Sebastianus Cesium, vol. 211, fols. 734–735.

140 On Righi, see Ricci/Roca de Amicis 2005, esp. pp. 93–97; Zanchettin 2006. Gaspare de' Vecchi was perhaps Borromini's deputy in May 1638, as he countersigns a bill for works carried out in the cells above the refectory: *Ragguagli borrominiani* 1968, pp. 87–91, 210–211 (doc. 120). However, Righi signs virtually all building documents from 1644 until 1662, when he died and Antonio del Grande took over the post: ASR, SLS, b. 3704, *passim*. In particular Righi signs a *misura e stima* of 3 March 1648 "per lavori di scarpello fatti per restaurare la facciata della casa [...] posta nella Piazza di Borghese" of Danielle Guidotti; he also countersigns the *capitoli e patti* between the nuns and the capomastro Antonio Fontana for the construction of houses between the Piazza di Trevi and the Salita di Montecavallo on 8 June 1652 (ASR, 30 NC, uff. 30, Sebastianus Cesium, vol. 206, fols. 798, 1007; Piazza, ed., *Ragguagli borrominiani*, 210–211); ASR, SLS, 3706/2, *Giustificazioni diverse 1665–1672*, all loose sheets: *stima* for *selciata* (1662); "nuova fabbrica delle 3 casette unite e separate per affittarle ognuna da se [...] nella strada, che da Monte cavallo va a fontana di Trevi" (15 November 1659). Del Grande countersigns small works in stone by Gabriele Renzi (2 June 1663); the bill of Francesco and Ludovico Baggi, *scalpellini*, for installing granite columns in the kitchen (8 June 1663); repairs to the fabric by Giovanni Marazza and Antonio Fabbri *muratori* (14 March – 17 July 1663). ASR, SLS, 3706/2, *Giustificazioni diverse 1665–1672*, all loose sheets: Gabriele Renzi paid by Suor Maria Pulcheria Incoronati for "lavori di scarpello nella sua cappelletta nel Boschetto del monastero" (7 October 1665), etc. Antonio del Grande took over in 1662 (*misura e stima* of 23 June: ASR, SLS, 3706/1, *Giustificazioni diverse 1661–1663*, loose sheet). ASR, 30 NC, uff. 33, Sebastianus Cesium, vol. 161, fol. 413 (8 June 1652) contract between nuns and the capomastro Antonio q. Giovanni Maria di Cademario, for building houses on a property between piazza di Trevi and the Salita di Montecavallo, countersigned by Francesco Righi; ASR, 30 NC, uff. 33, Sebastianus Cesium, vol. 206, fols. 798, 1007; vol. 211 (6 Sept 1653), fol. 732 payment to Fontana for these works (*Ragguagli borrominiani* 1968, pp. 210–211). On Borromini's award of the Cavaliere dell'Ordine Supremo del Cristo, see Passeri 1772, p. 386.

conclusion that the “artifice” in question refers only to the drapery, lamps, angels, and monstrance.

Let me conclude this line of reasoning with two later structures by two other architects, which suggest that the vanished altar was permanent and not an *apparato*. The first was designed by Camillo Arcucci (ca. 1617–1667), a precocious but clumsy imitator of Borromini, the second by the far more accomplished *borrominista* Antonio Gherardi (1638–1702). Arcucci seems to have borrowed from the altar frame at Santa Lucia when designing the portal of San Giuliano dei Fiamminghi (1661–1663), especially the seraphic, canopic-jar capitals that abbreviate the inverse-volute species (fig. 48).¹⁴¹ Later, in 1677, Gherardi virtually simulated the entire choir of Santa Lucia when remodelling that of the sixteenth-century church of Santa Maria in Trivio, including a similarly bulbous crown (fig. 8).¹⁴²

If we look again at Santa Lucia, once we have skimmed off the ephemeral trappings, what we are left with is an aedicule capped by a baldachin-cum-crown (fig. 50). This confederation would do double duty over the image of the Virgin Annunciate, with the baldachin sheltering the descent of the Holy Spirit at the moment of the Incarnation, and the jewelled crown signifying the Virgin’s destiny as Queen of Heaven. The ensemble therefore comprised her entire sacred history from A to Z. Such a crown would also amplify the practice of adding golden coronets to proven miracle-working icons of the Virgin, a practice that became official in Rome in 1631, and annual from 1636. It is no coincidence that Gherardi’s own over-scaled crown in Santa Maria in Trivio hovers above an ancient miraculous Madonna and was erected in the same year that she received her coronet (1677) (fig. 8).¹⁴³

There are still more reasons to think that the engraving actually depicts a permanent altar at Santa Lucia designed by Borromini, for it is crammed with some of his signature motifs and symbolic quirks. The crown culminating the altar has a cage of sinuous ribs above and tasselled lappets below (which perform as an architrave, as on the Baldacchino at Saint Peter’s) that allow it to impersonate a baldachin. Crowns and baldachins abound in Borromini’s oeuvre, and are even fused in the small ciborium in the other altar design, said to be for Santa Lucia (fig. 33). A coronet crowns the high altar (1640–1641) at San Carlo alle Quattro Fontane (fig. 37), and Borromini devised some images of a baldachin as a façade before the high altar at Sant’Anastasia (1644). His fireplace at the Oratory is a more tent-like variation of this, (1641) originally sprouting its own symbolic flowers (fig. 50).¹⁴⁴ The rest of the altar is designed in the “floral style” that Borromini was cultivating at exactly the same time in the Barberini chapel of the Madonna in San Carlo alle Quattro Fontane (1638–1641) – which Joseph Con-



48 Rome, San Giuliano dei Fiamminghi, façade by Camillo Arcucci, 1661–1663 (photo Bibliotheca Hertziana/Enrico Fontolan)

141 Barry 1998, pp. 131–133. For Arcucci’s date of birth, see ASDR, S. Nicola ai Cesarini, *Stati d’anime*, vol. 10 (1652–1694). In 1664 Arcucci is recorded as being 47 years old (fol. 304v), 48 in 1665 (fol. 324v), and 49 in 1666 (fol. 344r).

142 Lange 1981, pp. 337–339; Pickrel 1984, pp. 90–94, 302–310. Another high altar with a crown canopy, but here placed over a baldachin, was in the demolished church of S. Dionigi alle Quattro Fontane, apparently designed by Domenico Legendre either in 1653/1658 or ca. 1664: Vidal 1934, p. 85, photo opposite p. 86, and p. 87.

143 Dejonghe 1967, p. 25. The S. Lucia crown also recalls quattrocento altarpieces like Carlo Crivelli’s Demidoff Altarpiece (1476), now in the National Gallery, London, and Antonio Vivarini and Giovanni d’Alemagna’s *Madonna and Child with Four Saints* (1446) now in the Accademia, Venice.



49 Rome, Santa Lucia in Selci, Reconstruction of Borromini's destroyed high altar (photomontage author)

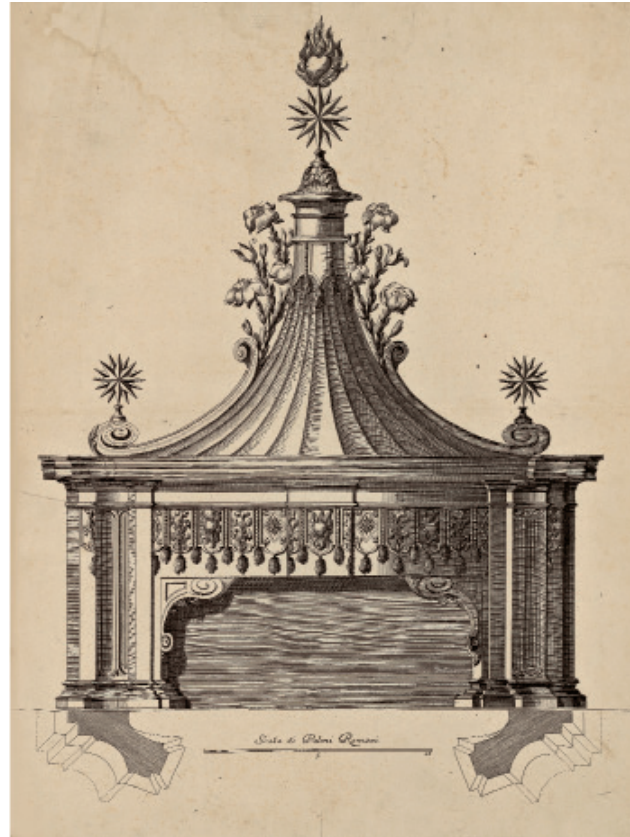
nors memorably called “an essay in allegorical botany” – and on the Filomarino altar in Naples (1639–1642), which was also dedicated to the Virgin Annunciate and also has its own freestanding crown (fig. 51).¹⁴⁵ At Santa Lucia, the vases

144 Sant'Anastasia, see Barry 1999, pp. 49–55. The S-curve baldachin is also the *Leitmotiv* for the unexecuted loggias on the Palazzo Pamphilj at Piazza Navona (BAV, Cod. Vat. Lat. 11258, fol. 176); the profile of the cherubic wings sheltering Raggi's statue of San Carlo in the lower niche of S. Carlo alle Quattro Fontane; the first design for S. Giovanni in Oleo (Az. Rom. 466ar); the fireplace in the Oratory's Sala di Ricreazione; the counter-façade of S. Maria dei Sette Dolori; the central window of Palazzo di Propaganda Fide and quite possibly the unexecuted superstructure of S. Andrea delle Fratte.

145 Schütze 1989; Lorizzo 2002; Lorizzo 2006, pp. 64–81; Antinori 2019. The bases for the polyhedra on this altar resemble those under the vases of flowers on the S. Lucia altar. These tapering pedestals capped by Ionic volutes also reappear above the drum of S. Ivo alla Sapienza and are derived from Michelangelo's merlons on the Porta Pia. Connors 1995, p. 595.

above the altar cornice brim over with the lilies of the Virgin Annunciate, while her irises and roses reappear in the spandrels between the capitals and the border of the altarpiece. Even the crown looks like a huge lily bulb.¹⁴⁶

In the cross-pollinated world of Catholic symbolism Borromini's flower arrangements tell a story that couples the Assumption of the Virgin Mediatrix with the resurrection of the martyrs. The trajectory of vertical symbolism from urn and altarpiece to crown-cum-baldachin culminated outside the choir on the nave vault, where Lelli had earlier painted *Saint Lucy carried to Heaven by Angels* (with a change of cast from Virgin to Lucy). The pictorial and architectural iconography of the choir of Santa Lucia was therefore uncannily close to that of the wooden altar that Borromini built during the same years at the Oratory of the Philippines (1638–1644; destroyed 1652) (fig. 41). As Connors has explained, this altar was the architectural pivot of a multimedial display wherein “the crown raised by angels above the altarpiece of the *Assunta* [was] part of an iconographic procession terminating in the *Coronation* of the vault.”¹⁴⁷ At Santa Lucia, the procession eventually became rather more crowded, as, around 1657, unknown artists expanded the implications of the altar architecture by adding bas-reliefs with *Scenes from the Life of the Virgin* on the choir walls and painting a *Coronation of the Virgin* and *Glory of Angels with the Holy Spirit* on the choir vault. Yet another scene on the proscenium arch, depicting *St Lucy Adoring the Most Blessed Sacrament Surrounded by Angels* (see Appendices 1 and 2), bridged the iconographical leap from Fontebuoni's Madonna to Lelli's vault of Saint Lucy, equating the virgin martyr with the Virgin Herself.¹⁴⁸ Borromini's wooden altar at the Oratory was jointly dedicated to the Virgin and Saint Cecilia and therefore surmounted by a pediment of nested organ canes “that terminates, appropriately, in the place of music.”¹⁴⁹ These are the words of Virgilio Spada and what he meant, as a glance at the original section of the Oratory confirms, is that the lunette behind the altar (blocked up in 1659)



50 Francesco Borromini, Fireplace in the Sala di Ricreazione. Rome, Oratorio dei Filippini (1641), from: Borromini (ca. 1647) 1725, pl. LXVI

146 The flowering urns are close to the gilt bronze ones which G. B. Della Porta placed around the pseudo-loculus of S. Cecilia, and the sprouting vase at the altar cusp recalls Borromini's analogous motif over the matyrium of S. Giovanni (S. Giovanni in Oleo, 1658). Cortona's urn of Santa Francesca Romana (destroyed, April 1638) follows suite, see Fagiolo dell'Arco 1997, p. 303.

147 Connors 1980, p. 226.

148 A *visita apostolica* records that “Monsignor Antonio Cerri di bona memoria in riguardo de quattro figliole che egli haveva nel Monastero di S. Lucia in Selici fece dipingere molt'anni sono la volta della chiesa, ma non la tribuna, la quale è stata in quest'anno da altri, e con tal'occ[asi] one ha patito un poco la pittura della volta, che per ristorarla vi bisognaranno scudi dodici in circa, e già li figlioli et heredi del detto Monsignore havevano fatto ponere li ponti da' muratori per l'effettuazione in quel punto, ch'è uscita la Bolla della Santità Nostra con la proibitione delle spese de' parenti, li quali perciò hanno sopraceduto, e sebene pare che non sii caso compreso nella Bolla, della quale non sono prohibiti li parenti di dare mentre non sia a contemplatione d'officij, restitutioni, o professioni, che qui non concorrono supp.^{no} nond.^o la Priora, e Monache la Santità Nostra, quando ce ne sij bisogno, di benigna licenza che il tutto” (AAV, Misc. Arm. VII., 36, Sac. Cong. Vis. Apost., fol. 443r). Dunn (2000, 48, note 64) points out that the passage probably refers to Alexander VII's bull of 1657 limiting superfluous expenditures in churches and convents. There is a discrepancy between Mellini's location of the *Coronation of the Virgin*, which he locates above the *Annunciation* “in the façade” (*di sopra nella facciata*, which probably means a lunette) above the altar and Bruzio who specifies it was on the vault.

149 Connors 1980, pp. 226–227, 228, 255–256, cat. nos. 85a, 85c. See also Connors 1989, pp. 79–80.

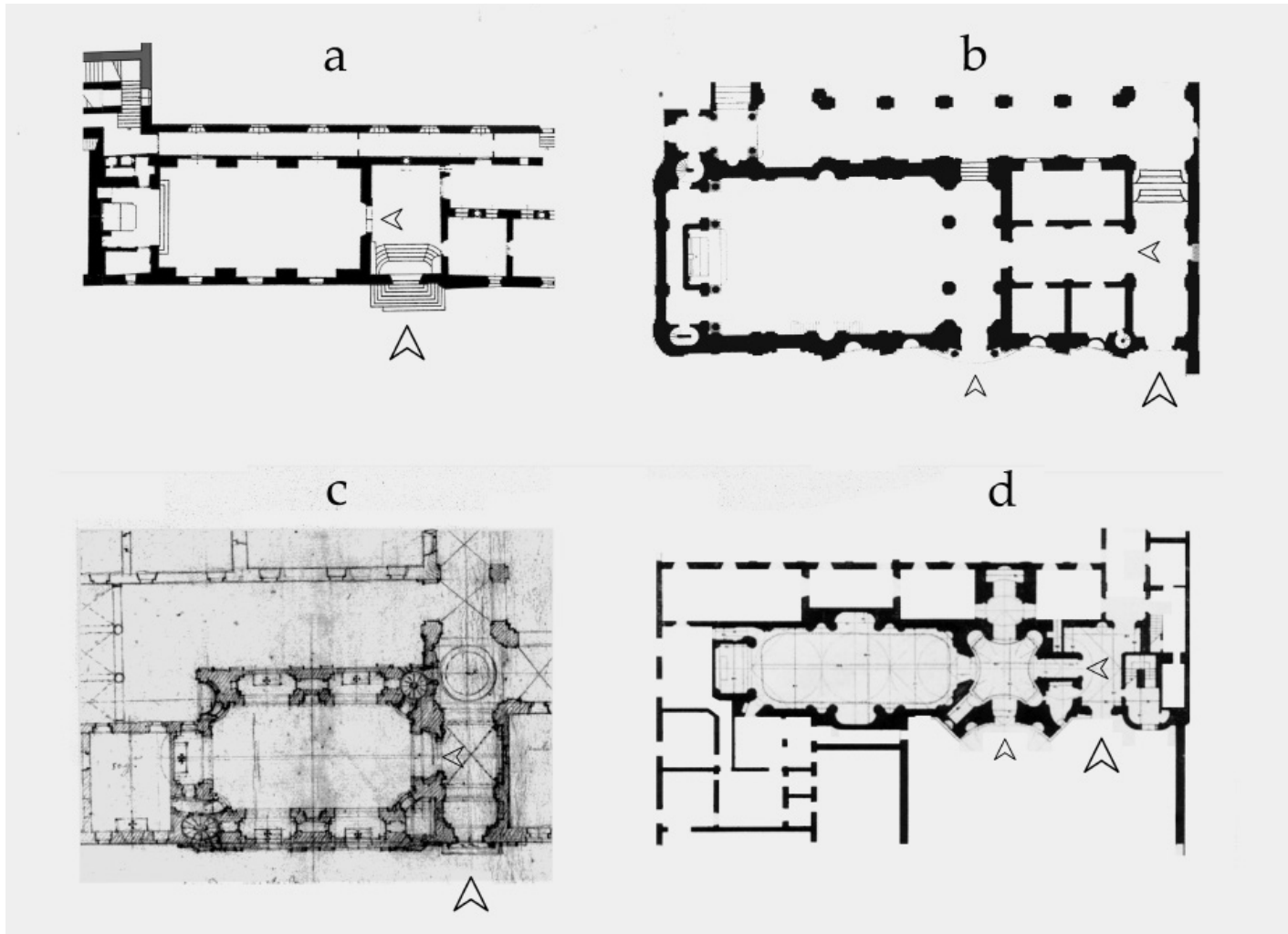


51 Francesco Borromini, Filomarino altar, 1639–1642. Naples, Santissimi Apostoli (photo Wikimedia Commons)

was originally open to allow the choristers to be audible but remain hidden, truly a ‘choir invisible’ (fig. 41).¹⁵⁰

If we look again at the dark lunette that our anonymous engraver hatched behind the baldachin-cum-crown in the Santa Lucia print, we may hypothesise that Borromini devised the same solution, hacking out the back wall of the choir to make a generous and elevated retro-choir (figs. 44, 49). A large room does in fact lie behind the altar wall at this height, one that could perhaps have func-

¹⁵⁰ Long and cross sections: Anonymous draughtsman, *Piena relazione della fabbrica* (written 1646–1647, illustrations ca. 1652–1653), Archivio della Congregazione dell’Oratorio di Roma a Santa Maria in Vallicella, ms. c. II. 6, fols.: Borromini (ca. 1647) 1998, pp. 50–51, 59, pls. 10 and 12. As Borromini or Virgilio Spada writes, “e perche si è costumato alcuna volta nei giorni feriali di cantare un’inno, ò la Salve Regina nel fine degl’essercitij della sera, feci fare doi choretto bassi che sporgessero anche in fuori, e sopra di essi e dell’Altare una spatiosa loggia p[er] gl’oratorij della feste capace d’ogni gran num[er]o de cantori [...] non è, però, ancora fatto, mà solo vi è il modello di legno, ch’hà, p[er] termine e finimento, un ‘organo, che allude à S.ta Cecilia, al cui nome è dedicato il d[ett]o Oratorio, e termina à punto nel luogo della musica”, see Borromini (ca. 1647) 1998, pp. 55–56.



tioned as a choir loft, though there is not a single document to confirm it.¹⁵¹ However, in Santa Maria in Trivio, Borromini's acolyte Antonio Gherardi did hack out the wall above the earlier altar to make an organ loft behind the miraculous crown of the Madonna to make the music audible and 'see' it too (fig. 8). Gherardi had only arrived in Rome in 1658, six years after the destruction of Borromini's altar at the Oratory, so if he was copying Borromini the model it could only have been his choir at Santa Lucia in Selci.

Conclusion

Santa Lucia was not created in one campaign and the decorations were never completed. The first two bays of the nave lack altars to this day. We must wonder, then, what provoked the flurry of activity when Borromini overhauled the church from 1637 on; not just the Landi altar, but the high altar and choir loft as well. Given the timing, it is just conceivable that the campaign was incited by the miraculous appearance of a very loquacious Madonna to a paralytic nun in January 1637. The diarist Giacinto Gigli recounts that the nun recovered virtually all her motor functions only after being "transported into the church, and anointed with oil from a lamp that burned before an image of Her" and only after protesting that she had no intention of healing "unless by the action of the Most Holy Trinity, as well as the intercession and merit of the Most Blessed Vir-

52 Comparative plans: a) Rome, Santa Lucia in Selci (1603–1605), b) Oratorio dei Filippini (begun 1637), c) the Collegio della Propaganda Fide (begun 1646), d) Santa Maria dei Sette Dolori (begun 1642) (compiled by the author from various sources)

151 See the section and plan in the endpapers of Apollonj Ghetti 1961.

gin.”¹⁵² The nuns lost no time in pronouncing her recovery a miracle (the Holy See did not agree) and perhaps the short-lived celebrity earned by the apparition prompted the restoration of the two altars that seem to have been most involved in the events.

If Borromini’s intervention at Santa Lucia seems more timid and less exhilarating than what we have every right to expect of him, we must remember that he worked within the constraints that others had left him and that what remains today is also mutilated. He could not alter the volume of the church but he did make the ebullient choir loft, high altar, and Cappella Landi resonate through its fabric. At the same time Borromini evidently found Bassi’s pragmatic solution to dealing with an awkward site a cunning plan, for he adopted the scheme in three buildings contemporary with his tenure at Santa Lucia: the Oratory of the Philippines (begun in 1637), the Augustinian convent and church of Santa Maria dei Sette Dolori (begun in 1643), and the Collegio della Propaganda Fide (taken over by Borromini in 1646) (fig. 52).¹⁵³ In each of these cases Borromini layered the architectural volumes parallel to the street, so these collegiate buildings were not bisected by the nave and their façades and interiors operated in full autonomy of each other. Whereas Bassi’s Santa Lucia had only a large and laconic stone portal to mark the entry, Borromini instead unfurled highly articulate façades across the frontages of his buildings. Nonetheless, and just as at Santa Lucia, the vestibule remained the hinge between the temple of the cult and the house of religious observance, between church and convent (or college).

After the spate of construction in the first half of the seventeenth century, Santa Lucia in Selci relapsed into obscurity, attracting only treasure-hunters, whose burrowing undermined the refectory almost to the point of collapse.¹⁵⁴

152 Gigli (1608–1670) 1994, pp. 289–290: “Circa li 15. di Gennaro 1637. Nel Monasterio di S. Lucia in Selce occorse un miracolo fatto dalla Beata Vergine in una Monaca di d.o Monastero. Questa non essendo ancora professa, si ammalò di maniera che molti anni stette persa della persona senza potersi muovere niente, et in particolare teneva una mano con il pugno serrato, di modo, che il Cerusico, volendogli tagliare l’unghie vi pose dentro un falzoletto, e non fu possibile di tirarlo fuori: non gli giovorno mai rimedii di sorte alcuna, et era tenuta per incurabile. Hora circa lo 15. di Gennaro una notte gli apparve (come lei disse) la Madonna SS.ma con habito molto bello, et gli disse qualmente lei sarebbe per suo mezzo guarita. Riferì la mattina la visione alla Infermiera, ma non per questo vi fu alcuno, che credesse, che ciò dovesse essere. Ma ecco che un’altra volta gli apparve la Madonna, ma in habito molto differente da quello della prima visione perché dice, che gli apparve vestita di negro con un velo bianco, et un vezzo fatto a modo di Rosario, et disse, che quello era l’habito come quando ella stette a piedi alla Croce, et gli disse che voleva renderli la sanità, ma che non voleva, che facesse professione in quel Monasterio, dove si trovava, ma voleva che lei si vestisse un habito simile a quello, et facesse un Monasterio novo, dove le Moniche si occupassero sempre in contemplare la passione del suo figliolo, et per segno di ciò disse, che si facesse portare in Chiesa, et si facesse ungero con l’oglio della lampada, ché ardeva avanti una sua Imagine, et che così sarebbe guarita for che di un braccio, quale gli sarebbe restato libero allora quando ella si fusse vestita dell’habito mostratoli. Come fu giorno l’Inferma raccontò alle Monache la visione, et finalmente fu da quattro Monache portata in Chiesa, dove si protestò, che lei non intendeva di guarire, se non per opera della SS.ma Trinità, et per intercessione, et merita della Beatissima Vergine. Così fu da un Sacerdote cominciata ad ungero l’oglio di quella lampada, et di mano in mano, che era unita veniva ricuperando la sanità, aprì la mano benissimo, et lasciò il fazzoletto che vi era, et finalmente si levò in piedi da sé stessa, con perfetta sanità di tutto il corpo, forché di un braccio, quale gli è restato impedito, si come dice che gli disse la Madonna. Li Superiori hanno fatto il processo, et approvato il Miracolo per vero; ma circa le visioni vi sono difficoltà per certificare che siano vere visioni venute da Dio: et non possono predicarsi per vere se non sono approvate dalla Sede Apostolica.”

153 Pacini 1967–1970, p. 320 and figs. 1–4.

154 When the nuns sued its builder Gregorio Quadri in 1649, he replied that “è miracolo non sia venuto a basso, essendo stato percosso, e lacerato, con andar rompendo ogni giorno, fra fondamenti e caverne, per trovar quelle cose, le quali non sono mai state né possono esservi” (ASR, SLS, b. 3705, fasc. 1, *Gustificazioni diverse 1648–1690*, loose sheet). See also Quadri’s declaration of 19 May 1650: ASR, 30 NC, Sebastianus Cesium, vol. 198, fols. 505–509.

Giovanni Pietro Minelli's restoration of the church for the Holy Year of 1750 simply added marble frontals to the chapel altars.¹⁵⁵ The convent escaped the Napoleonic occupation relatively unscathed, and was somewhat restored in 1822, possibly to the designs of Giuseppe Valadier. It was subsequently repaved and profusely gilded in 1840, possibly by the architect Pietro Camporese the Younger, and patched up again in 1859–1869.¹⁵⁶ Meanwhile the nuns quietly sold off valuables, including Rome's only surviving medieval altarpiece, of Saint Lucy herself (now held in the Musée des Beaux-Arts, Grenoble).¹⁵⁷ When new roads were driven through the neighbourhood in 1887–1891, the Via in Selci became a backwater. If the street is known to Romans today it is more likely because it includes the HQ of Italy's secret services. Clerics might know that the convent is used for housing the Vatican's surplus of relics. The church is only open for Sunday morning Mass and major festivals. The convent remains cloistered, so the many questions the complex still poses will only be answered with a change of use, or a change of outlook.

155 Pompei 2000.

156 Ferraris 1997, p. 250; Montenovesi 1943, p. 94. ASR, SLS, b. 3676, fasc. 4, *Congregazioni dell'Ven. Mon. di S. Lucia in Selci*, 30 April 1822: "si sono ottenuti dalla R.C.A. ∇ 300 per erogarsi nelle riparazioni della porzione di Fabricato interno di nostro monastero dopo lunghe insistenze." The 1822 restoration is mentioned in Barbier de Montault 1877, p. 83. A painted inscription in the church specifies it was "INIURIA TEMPORUM SQUALENS ET PROFLUENTIBUS AB EXQUILLINO AQUIS HUMESCENS", see Forcella 1869–1884, vol. 10, p. 362, no. 598. The patron of the 1840 restoration was the Prioress Maria Petisson, see Parati 1847, p. 95; Montenovesi 1943, pp. 107, 120 (letter of Camporese, 4 January 1842, when he was the convent's architect); "manifestate gravi lesioni anche nell'ala sinistra del monastero [...] e per essere caduta [...] in prossimità del noviziato buona porzione del soffitto" at the huge expense of ∇ 6,500, with 3,000 more allocated between 1863 and 1869: ASR, Computisteria generale R.C.A. 1835–1870, *Affari per luoghi*, b. 224, fasc. 2241.

157 Barry 2003, pp. 132–139 and fig. 15.

Appendix 1

Benedetto Mellini, *Dell'Antichità di Roma*, BAV, Ms. Vat. Lat. 11905, fols. 318r–319v, 1656/1664¹⁵⁸

[fol. 318r] In questa chiesa tenuta da' Certosini sino all'Anno M.CCCLXX, che allora la lasciorono per andare a S. Croce in Gierusalemme n'andorono poi alcune monache sotto la Regola di S. Agostino dalle quali fu rifatta da' fondamenti, e fu consecrata l'anno M.D.C.LV [*sic*]. Ma di che tempo n'andassero esse monache siccome chi prima de' certosini la tenesse; non se n'è potuto haver notitia. Questa chiesa è rinchiusa nel monasterio per fianco del parlatorio, guarda ad occidente, e per fianco nella strada a settentrione, è a volta a lunette: ha una sola nave con tre archi per lato de' quali i due primi non sono per ancora messi in opera, negl'altri quattro sono gli altari. [fol. 318v] In cima della nave la tribuna, sopra gli altari ricorre per tutta la chiesa una cornice non ancora finita d'ornarsi, ha tre finestre quadre messane a mezzogiorno e tre a settentrione. La porta è quadra di tevertino larga palmi 13. Ha dalle bande un pilastro ritirato et uno intero d'ordine ionico [*sic*] come tutta la chiesa. Sopra essa porta è alzato un coro di marmo con gelosia indorata, orbiculato in fuori con quattro piedi di marmo che lo reggono, architettura del cavalier Borromino. Sotto il choro in un ovato Dio Padre in atto di benedire con ornamenti di stucco commessi a oro. La volta della nave è dipinta tutta a fresco, ha nel mezzo S. Lucia portata in cielo con una ghirlanda d'angeli. Intorno i quattro altari sono tutti ornati con figure e storie di basso rilievo messi a oro, a man destra il primo altare ha un quadro di S. Lucia quando il carnefice la ferisce nella gola pittura di Giovanni Lanfranco. Nel secondo altare il quadro di S. Agostino in estasi del Camassei. [fol. 319r] A man sinistra il primo altare ha un quadro di S. Nicola di Tolentino e di S. Monaca figure in piedi e di sopra la Trinità con due angeli sotto le nuvole del Cavaliere Gioseppo. Nel secondo altare S. Giovanni Evangelista che comunica la Vergine del Camassei. Questi quattro altari sono tramezzati da quattro pilastri dorici scannellati. La tribuna è piana: ha su la facciata dell'arco S. Lucia con molti angeli in atto di adorare il Santissimo. Dalle bande due finestre ornate. L'arco è in mezzo a' due pilastri scannellati. La volta è a botte dipinta con una gloria d'angeli, et in mezzo lo Spirito Santo. L'altare ha un quadro dell'Annunziata e di sopra nella facciata la coronatione della Vergine, dai lati dell'altare due porticelle quadre e di sopra due busti finti di getto di S. Agostino e di S. Tommaso di Villa Nova. A piè della tribuna due altre porticelle simili una in faccia all'altra, una delle quali a man sinistra serve alla sagrestia [fol. 319v] Questa chiesa è larga palmi 37 e lunga sino alla tribuna palmi 94 cioè i vani alle teste palmi 34, quattro pilastri palmi 3.10 l'uno sol. [*sic* = sono] palmi 15 : 4, tre archi per gli altari palmi 18.6 l'uno, sono palmi 55.6, la tribuna è lunga palmi 22 e larga palmi. 20.6.

158 This transcription was made before that published by Federico Guidobaldi and Claudia Angellesi (2010), so the punctuation differs. Mellini had finished one version of the Ms by 1656 and seems to have added nothing after 1664, see Mellini 2010, pp. 40–41. Mellini died in 1667 and his description cites a bust of S. Tomaso di Villanova, who was canonised on 1 November 1658.

159 For Bruzio (Sant'Angelo in Vado 1642 – Rome 1692), see Neveu 1972. Bruzio compiled his guidebook between 1655 and 1679, when he requested the imprimatur for his Latin version (never published). This Italian draft must predate 1669 as Carlo Cerri is referred to as monsignore rather than cardinal, the Latin version after that year (see following note). The full text on S. Lucia begins at fol. 213v. Extracts from the Italian, but not the Latin, version were published in Dunn 2000.

Appendix 2

Giovanni Antonio Bruzio, *Theatrum Romanae Urbis sive Romanorum sacrae aedes Chiese, conservatori e monasteri di monache della città di Roma, Tom. XV, BAV, Ms. Vat. Lat. 11884, tol. 220*, fols. 218r–219v (modern numeration). 1655/1669¹⁵⁹

[fol. 218r] Cresciuto et ampliato in tal guisa quale venerabile monastero et essendovi state accettate assai persone della primaria nobiltà Romana si diedero a ristorare da' fondamenti la chiesa, e finita che fu nella vaga e bella forma presente, fu consecrata l'anno 1604 nella domenica tra l'ottava dell'Assunta del mese d'agosto, [...] è stata arricchita et abbellita di capelle e pitture e di sacra suppellettile che potrebbero i Sommi Pontefici con lode loro restituire alla medesima la tolta prerogativa d'antica diaconia de' cardinali, perché se bene non è tanto ampla, non è ne meno tanto piccola, che compressovi il portico non ha capace di qualche bona qualità di popolo, essendo essa di lunghezza palmi 73³/₄, di larghezza 34¹/₂ con la tribuna in'oltre è lungo palmi 21 e larga 20¹/₂. La chiesa è fatta a volta e contiene cinque capelle, la maggiore che sta dentro la tribuna dedicata alla Santissima Annunziata, essendo così pacto [?] l'antico titolo che haveva anche prima questa chiesa di Santa Maria con quello di Santa Lucia, questo divinissimo mistero si rappresenta ivi nel quadro attornato di cornice di breccia e da diversi fogliami di legno indorati sotto del quale è una ferrata che divide la chiesa esteriore dal choro, o chiesa interiore, e sotto questa vi è un'urna di -bianco marmo dentro la quale si conservano i corpi de' Santi Giovanni martire, Giusto martire e Santa Candida Vergine. e su la volta di questa tribuna e di nobil pregio ornata rapresentante l'incoronazione della Beatissima Vergine con una gloria del paradiso, e da ambi i lati numero dui [due] capa[....]te di stucco dentro sono dua diverse bassorilievi della vita della Beatissima Vergine. È stata questa nobil cappella ridotta ai così conspicui ornamenti dalle madri Suore Silvia Vittoria, Anna Teresa e Sor' Angela Costanza [Testi?] romane, e dalle madri Suore Maria, Girolama e Maria Vittoria de' Signori e dell'urna marmorea con la nobil cassa pinta e dorata, che la ricopre dal[le] [fol. 218v] madri Suore Maria Francesca Colonna e Maria Diodata Rapaccioli. Fuori della tribuna sono quattro capelle, due da un lato, e due dall'altro, dentro sfondati semicircolari, fuori ornate nell'istesso modo, cioè con due pilastri scanellati di stucco messi a oro, e con altre statue, o pitture, che riempiono i vanni, che sono a miraviglia vaghe.

La seconda capella in ordine di San Giovanni Evangelista che comunica la Beatissima Vergine è opera del Cavalier Camassei provenuta dalle spese della madre Sor Isabella Melchiorre, e anche quest'istessa dedicata al Santissimo Sacramento, che vi si conserva in un ricco e nobile ciborio di diverse pietre intarsato, cioè di breccia, bianco e nero antico, verde antico, e brocatello, sostenuto da sei colonne con capitelli d'ordine corinthio, quattro delle quali sono di verde antico, due di breccia e due di bianco e nero antico.

La terza capella che fece fare sì magnificante la madre Sor Felice [sic] Vittoria Landi è dedicata alla Santissima Trinità, che vi è pinta nel quadro con le immagini di Santa Monaca e San Nicola da Tolentino [written in margin: dal celebre penello del Cavalier Gioseffo d'Arpino] ornate di due colonne di stucco scanellate e d'ordine corintho, messe a oro come i pilastri di fuori, ne' vanni sono due statue di bassorilievo, cioè l'amore, o diciamo la carità, e la fede.

Il choro sopra la porta tutto dorato fu fatto fare dalla Madre Sor Agnesa Margareta Cesari d'Arpino.

La quarta capella dedicata a Santa Lucia vergine e martire siricusana pinta dall'insigne pittore Cavalier Giovanni Lanfranchi è stata eretta dalla liberalità delle madri Suore Raimonda e Caterina Vanini.

La quinta finalmente dedicata a Sant'Agostino, vescovo d'Hippona e dottore di Santa Chiesa, patriarca e fondatore di questo ordine, opera del Cavalier Ca-

masei fatta con istessi de' sudetti ornamenti dalle madri suore Maria Antonia e Maria Celeste Cerri, figlie del celebre Giurisconsulto Cavavlier Antonio Cerri che tanto tempo con somma sua lode, tanto di sapienza e prudezza legale, quanto d'integrità essercitato la carica d'uditore dell Eminentissimo Barbarino quand'era nipote di Papa Urbano, dal quale adoperato fu in molte principali congregazioni e consulte, e sorelle di Monsignore [*Carlo Cerri*¹⁶⁰] decano della Sacra Rota, i cui meriti già un tempo |fol. 219 r| lo fanno degno della Sacra Porpora, che del C [?] Francesco Cavaliere [di buona?] memoria è degno della Curia che essercita di maestro di camera del Eminentissimo Signor Cardinale Francesco Barberino opp[ure] degnatissimo Decano del Sacro Collegio.

E poi la chiesa illuminata da sei fenestre quadre che stanno tra il cornigione e la volta, tre delle quali a mezzo giorno, e tre a tramontana, guardando la porta d'essa che è dentro al portico occidentale.

È arricchita, oltre i detti tre santi corpi de' martiri Giovanni, Giusto e Candida, di molte reliquie di santi, cioè di San Biagio Vescovo, di Santa Vittoria vergine e martire, di Santa Giulia vergine e martire, di San Simplicio Papa e martire, di San Lucio Papa e martire, de' Santi Placido e Compagni, di Santa [Carbenna?] vergine e martire, di Santa Paula Romana martire, di un certo martire insigne, di Santa Casandra vergine e martire. Sta del sangue de' pii martiri di San Bonifacio martire, e di Santa Cabilla, di San Normano martire, di Sant'Eulalia vergine e martire, di Santa Benedetta, di San Mario martire, di San Gimignano martire, di Santa Hilaria vergine e martire, di Santa Sothera vergine e martire, di San. Renato vescovo, di Sant'Ausonio martire, e di Santa Capsanaria suora, di Sant'Ourio fanciullo, di Santa Petronilla vergine. e martire, di Santa Valeria martire, de' Santi Abondio Costanzio, Cosmo, et Orsola vergine e martire, di Santa Pelagia, di San Lustatio martire, di San Simphoriano martire, di San Quisonio fanciullo martire, un dente d'un certo santo martire, di San Delianora martire, di Sant'Ouxulimio martire, di San Socle martire, e della legione tebea, di San Romuleto martire, di San Martino prete, de' quaranta martiri, di Sant'Egidio Abbate, di San Felice fanciullo martire, di San Simpronio, di Santa Laura vergine, de' Santi Valerio, Urbea e Depasore, e di Santa Leona martire, molte delle quali sono del cimitero di San Callisto.

Appendix 3

Anonymous, ca. 1639: program for the stucco decorations in the Cappella Landi (ASR, SLS, b. 3684, fasc. 1, *Arredi sacri 1486–1709, busta 9*, loose sheet)

|recto| Nel medaglione di mezzo

Vi sarà un'impresa d'un monte, dal quale sorgerà una fontana e di detta fontana [*cancelled: sorgerà*] si formerà un rivo d'acqua e da detto rivo si formerà un lago.

Figura nell'angolo a man destra

Vi sarà la fede, una bella figura con elmo in testa vestita con una sopravveste nella sinistra mano terrà una facella accesa e nella destra un cuore.

Figura nell'angolo a man sinistra

160 There is a lacuna here, but the Latin version reads: “ac Sororores [sic] Emin.^{mi} Card.^s Cerri, cuius meritis adhuc esset Sacrae Rotae Decanus Roma praenunciaverat Vaticanum manicem, et Fran.^{ci} clarae memoriae Equitis Degnissimi, qui cum esset Praefectus a Cubiculo eiusdem Em.ⁿⁱ Principis Barberini plara in me contulit sua benevolentiae testimoniam ut propterea bene ei comprecet apud superos” (BAV, Vat. Lat. 11874, fol. 239r). Antonio Cerri's son, Carlo (Rome 1611–1690), was appointed Deacon of the Sacra Rota by Alexander VII, became cardinal in 1669, was almost elected Pope in 1689, but lost to Alexander VIII Ottoboni, see Moroni 1840–1876, vol. 11, p. 101.



Vi sarà la religione, una bella figura con veste a uso di manto reale, nella man destra terrà una croce e nella sinistra una fiamma di fuoco.

Figure per di fuori al lato destro

Vi sarà la sapienza e la potenza nelli scompartimenti una sopra l'altra, la sapienza guarderà un raggio nel cielo, vestita come di velo, nella destra mano terrà una lampada accesa e nella sinistra un libro aperto, la potenza vestita con traversa nelle spalle, nella destra terrà dui chiavi incrociate e nella sinistra un scetro.

Figure per di fuori al lato sinistro

Vi sarà la fortezza e la giustizia nelli loro scompartimenti una sopra l'altra, la fortezza sarà armata con sopraveste e con elmo in testa, terrà con la destra mano una colonna, e con la sinistra terrà legato un leone. La giustizia vestirà di manto, haverà i capelli tutti sparsi con corona in testa e sopra a detta corona una colomba circondata di raggi, nella man destra terrà la spada e nella sinistra le bilance.

Istorie di dentro a lato destro

Prima Istoria: Vi saranno doi serafini fingendo il volo, uno che volti all'altro, e sotto vi sarà scritto Sanctus Sanctus Sanctus Dominus Dominus exercituum plena est omnis terra gloria eius.

|verso| Seconda istoria: Abram che stia a canto una capanna e stia inginocchio adorando tre angeli che vi saranno uniti e con le mani giunte

Istorie di dentro al lato sinistro

Prima istoria: Vi saranno quattro animali, doi da una parte e doi dall'altra, uno l'aquila e l'angelo, cioè l'aquila a man destra, l'angelo alla sinistra, sotto a' detti un vitello e un leone, cioè il vitello alla destra et il leone alla sinistra tutti con ale sparse e sotto vi sarà scritto Sanctus sanctus sanctus Dominus deus omnipotens, qui erat qui est et qui venturus [*cancelled: este*] est.

Seconda istoria: Una scala che tocchi il cielo e che per detta vi ascendino angeli, da parte starà in atto di dormire Giacobbe, e sotto il capo terrà tre pietre che siano unite e finghino una sol' pietra. Si avverta che all'istorie de' serafini e dell'animali, si ha da dimostrare nuvole e splendori di qualche raggio nelli loro campi ecetto dove vanno le lettere, e così si osserverà l'altri campi governandosi con

53 Rome, Santa Maria della Purificazione, from: Giuseppe Vasi, *Vedute di Roma nel '700. Chiese, conventi, ville, giardini*, Rome n.d. (Vedute d'Italia 8), pl. 155



54 Rome, former church of Santa Maria della Purificazione, present remains of the façade (foto author)

l'istoria che vi va, et il simile si farà nelle figure che si descrivono per i lati di fuori.

Appendix 4

Santa Maria della Purificazione and Giovanni Paolo Maggi

The convent of the Poor Clares at Santa Maria della Purificazione is even more obscure than Santa Lucia, and all that now remains of the complex is the lower half of the church façade (figs. 53, 54). Since both the convent and its architect have only received glancing attention, I will supply as many reliable facts about them as available.

The convent was founded in 1589. It was not built, as is so often said, on the ruins of a much older church (Santa Maria in Monasterio), but rather on a plot with a house and vineyard that the Carthusians of S. Croce in Gerusalemme had sold to Roberto Strozzi in 1563.¹⁶¹ In 1588 the land was acquired in turn from Roberto's son, Leone, by Mario Ferro Orsini (1508–1591). Orsini was determined to found a church and convent dedicated to Santa Maria della Purificazione, the dedication recalling the day on which he had been born, 2 February, which was also the feast of the Purification of the Virgin Mary (Candlemas). Orsini had origi-

nally planned the convent within properties he owned (and which are still extant) at Piazza Barberini, but acquired the site near Santa Lucia in Selci when he realised that the recently finished Strada Felice (now Via delle Quattro Fontane) would arrive at the convent door and immerse it in the hubbub of city traffic. The new foundation next to Santa Lucia was confirmed by a bull of Gregory XIV (8 February 1591).¹⁶² According to Mellini's description (see below) and Pompilio Totti's guide, construction was complete in time for the Holy Year of 1600 and the first intake of nuns began immediately.¹⁶³ These included Orsini's widow Giulia Cinquini, who retired there after his death and remained until her own demise in 1607.

The architect documented as representing the Clarisse in 1594–1612 was Giovanni Paolo Maggi (Rancate ca. 1561 – Rome 1613) and he is therefore the most likely designer of their church.¹⁶⁴ Giovanni Paolo should not be confused with his namesake, the even more obscure painter and etcher Giovanni Maggi (Rome, ca. 1566 – Rome, ca. 1630).¹⁶⁵ Giovanni Paolo is otherwise known to have been “Architetto dello Studio” (chief architect of the University of Rome) under Gregory XIII and Paul V; he designed an ephemeral arch on the Campidoglio for the election of Leo XI (1605); submitted abortive plans to complete Michelangelo's project for Saint Peter's; built the apse, dome and internal cornice of Santa Maria della Scala (1607–1610); made an unexecuted design for the façade of

161 Santa Maria in Monasterio: e.g. Fedele 1906. Sebastiani 2008, p. 110.

162 Will (3 April 1588) in SCVA, I, 1650–1670, fols. 515v–516, AAV, Misc. Arm. VII, 36, fols. 515–524; codicils and *Bulla foundationis* (8 February 1591) at fols. 524v–528v and fols. 530–531 respectively. Panciroli 1600, p. 558; Felini 1610, p. 179; Vasi 1756, p. XXXV and pl. 155; Colini 1977, pp. 131–143; Masetti Zannini 2005, pp. 467–468.

163 Totti 1638, p. 419.

164 ASR, SLS, 3678, *Istromenti diversi 1290–1550*, fols. 302r–304v (20 October 1594) and fols. 338r–343r, fols. 344r–349r (15 May 1610). In 1612 he is mentioned as a *misuratore*, see Crocco 2002, p. 241.

165 Laura Di Calisto, “in *DBI*, vol. 67 (2006).



55 Giovanni Baglione (attr.), *Presentation of Jesus in the Temple*, date unknown, fresco and tempera on plaster. Rome, Palazzo Ferro Orsini, lunette, from Colini 1977, p. 119

Santissima Trinità dei Pellegrini; and acted as “Architetto del Tevere” (architect in charge of the waterworks of the city) 1610–1630.¹⁶⁶

In 1642 Giovanni Baglione records that he himself had painted the high altarpiece of Santa Maria della Purificazione, a now lost *Presentation of Jesus in the Temple*, so Mellini (see below) must be mistaken when he claims that the altarpiece was instead the *Purification of the Virgin* by Passignano (Domenico Cresti, 1559–1638).¹⁶⁷ Moreover, a painting of the same subject was painted in a lunette within the Orsini properties (“L’isola della purificazione”) at Piazza Barberini, and is attributed to Baglione, though he never mentions it himself (fig. 55). It seems entirely likely that this lunette is therefore a reduced copy of the high altarpiece of Santa Maria della Purificazione.

Mellini’s description (1656/1664) of the lost church is the only one that has come down to us and, as such, merits full quotation:

“[fol. 142 r | [...] della presente Badia [*Santa Maria in Monasterio*] non vi essendo restato altro che questo sito d’intorno già dato a certosini, essi lo venderono a Mario Ferro Orsini, il quale vi fabricò questa chiesa e ’l monasterio contiguo sotto la regola di S. Chiara. Fu questa fabrica finita l’anno MDC, et all’hora vestendovisi alcune monache vene vennero due dal monasterio di S. Marta per istruire le altre, e dar buona forma di governo per esso monasterio.

Questa chiesa è rivoltata ad occidente non ha ancora la facciata finita, ha una sola nave colla tribuna piana piglia il lume da due finestre quadre a mezzo giorno settentrione, e da una ad occidente è a volta a lunette vien ornata con pilastri d’ordine ionico colla cornice, che gira per tutto. Ha nella nave due altari, uno in faccia all’altro, e l’altar maggiore nella tribuna. Nell’altare a man destra la copia d’un quadro antico di S. Francesco con cappuccio simile a quello, che portano i marinari. L’altare in faccia ha un quadro della Vergine con Christo in baccio [*sic*], e d’abbassio S. Agnese, e S. Chiara. Questi due altari hanno modelli simili di tabernacoli grandi con due colonne finte d’ordine composto, e con frontespitij acuti.

La tribuna vien divisa dal resto della chiesa da un | fol. 142 v | arco grande, ha una cuppola imbiancata nell’altare un quadro della Purificazione, pittura a olio del cavalier Passignano, in mezzo a due colonne, una di giallo brecciato, l’altra di breccia antica d’ordine ionico; le quali reggono un frontespitio acuto di marmo bianco con fregio di porta santa. Il basamento delle colonne e di verde antico scorniciato di marmo bianco.

Dalle bande della tribuna sono alzati due depositi di marmi mischi, in cima un frontespizio rotto coll'arme; sotto il frontespizio in un tondo ovato scorniciato di marmo giallo il busto de defonto, sotto l'ovato un frontespizio aperto con Architrave, e fregio, e sotto il frontespizio in una tavola di marmo scorniciata di porta santa le seguenti memorie.

D. O. M.

Mario Ferreo Orsino Rom:
Huius Templi Coenobijque Fundatori
Qui Sacras hic Virgines Alendas
Ex Asse Reliquit Haeredes
Administratores ex Testamento
Sepulcrum quod sibi statuit Posuerunt
Obijt An: Dom: MDLXXXXI

Aetatis suae LXXX [sic]

Dell'altro Deposito in faccia

|fol. 143 r| D. O. M.

Juliae Cinquinae Romanae
Marij Ferrei Orsini Coniugi
Foeminae Pietate singulari
Administratores huius coenobij
Monumentum a viro Decretum
Posuerunt

Obijt An: Dom: M.D.C.VII

Aetatis suae LVIII

Questa chiesa è lunga sino all'altare palmi 21.6. L'altare è palmi 20, dopo l'altare altri palmi 21.6. Siché sino all'arco della tribuna è lunga palmi 63. La tribuna è lunga palmi 40, in tutto lunghezza è di palmi 103. La larghezza è di palmi 62, de' quali ne occupano dodici la porta.¹⁶⁸

Vasi (1756) says that “ultimamente essendo stato riattato il monastero, è stata ancora rinnovata la chiesa con il prospetto”, though this may have occurred in the 1720s as Benedict XIII Orsini reconsecrated the church in 1726. Other embellishments were made right up until the dissolution of the convent during the Napoleonic occupation (1808–1815), when it was also looted by French troops.¹⁶⁹ Only the lower storey of the church façade (which has a recognisably eighteenth-century portal) survived the demolition of the entire complex by an entrepreneur (Francesco Pagani) who bought it from the Napoleonic government in 1810, and then quarried it for building materials.¹⁷⁰ The fate of the funerary monuments and their portrait busts is, for the moment, unknown.

166 What is known of Maggi's career (except S. Maria della Purificazione) is collected in Guerrieri Borsoi 2018 with bibliography.

167 Baglione 1642, vol. 3, p. 403: “Le Monache della Purificazione hanno sopra l'altar maggiore della Chiesa un suo quadro a olio della Presentatione al Tempio del fanciullo Giesù.” Filippo Titi (1686, p. 217) simply says, “ha nell'altar maggiore un bel quadro, che non vi è memoria di chi sia.” The discrepancy in subject matter is less troubling as the Feasts of the Purification of the Virgin and the Presentation of Jesus in the Temple occur on the same day and could be combined in the same image.

168 BAV, Ms. Vat. Lat. 11905, fols. 225r/v; Mellini 2010, p. 247.

169 Suor Maria Luisa De Magistri, on retiring as Prioress in May 1797, “fece fare a sua spese il paliotto di marmo dell'altar maggiore” and two “paliottini” below the Communion window and the other the holy oil, spending ∇ 130 altogether ASR, Congregazioni Religiose Femminili, Clarisse Francescane, Monastero della Purificazione, b. 1 at the date, cited in Masetti Zannini 2005, 476.

170 Armellini 1891, p. 214. Montenovesi puts the name to the entrepreneur though I do not know where he found the information, see Montevesi 1943, p. 94. This must be the same Francesco Pagani who is documented as making an inventory of the monastery of Sant'Egidio for the French authorities on 6 July 1810, see Sturm 2015, p. 56.

Abbreviations

30 NC

Trenta Notai Capitolini

AAV

Archivio Apostolico Vaticano

ASC

Archivio Storico Capitolino

ASDR

Archivio Storico Diocesano di Roma

ASR

Archivio di Stato di Roma

b.

busta

BAV

Bibliotheca Apostolica Vaticana

DBI

Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani

fasc.

fascicolo

NAC

Notai Auditor Camerae

NCV

Notai del Cardinale Vicario

reg.

registro

SCVA

Sacra Congregazione della Visita Apostolica

SLS

Congregazioni Religiose Femminili, Agostiniane S. Lucia in Selci

uff.

ufficio

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