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BERNINI THE SCULPTOR AND THE CLASSICAL
HERITAGE IN HIS EARLY YEARS:
PRAXITELES', BERNINI'S, AND LANFRANCO'S
*PLUTO AND PROSERPINA**

* Unveränderter Abdruck eines Vortrages, den ich Frühjahr 1980 in der American Academy zu Rom auf einem wiss. Kolloquium "The Art and Influence of Gianlorenzo Bernini" anlässlich von Berninis 300. Todesjahr hielt. Nach mehrjähriger Redaktion wurden die Mss.

der Vorträge von der American Academy an die Teilnehmer des Kolloquiums zurückgegeben, weil sich die Drucklegung der Tagungsakten nicht finanzieren ließ. Deshalb sind in meinem Aufsatz Publikationen nach 1980 nicht mehr berücksichtigt.

The classical heritage as it appears in the early sculpture of Gianlorenzo Bernini is far too vast a subject to be handled briefly. I shall confine my discussion to one statue, the *Pluto and Proserpina* (Fig. 1), which in some respects is the first work of the artist's mature period; it is also the most classifying. Art historians have already identified antique works of sculpture in Rome which could have stimulated Bernini when he chiseled this marble group¹. Though he was inspired by some of the well known ancient statues, Bernini constantly avoided nailing himself down to a specific model. Representations of the Rape of Proserpina on ancient sarcophagi were known in Bernini's Rome (Fig. 2)², but they had no parallels in freestanding sculpture.

In the seventeenth century the artist first had to ponder over an *invenzione* for a figure or group. Baldinucci later claimed that Bernini himself commenced his works by devoting all his strength to the *invenzione*, and then turned his mind to the ordering of the parts³. That the term *invenzione* belongs to the heritage of classical rhetoric Bernini knew quite well, since he refers in this context to the example of the orator. But he held, as we know from other scattered remarks, the traditional conviction that the inventive faculties that produced poetry and painting operated in the same way⁴.

How did Bernini transform the ancient poetical invention of the mythological Rape of Proserpina into a sculptural



1. G. L. Bernini, *Pluto and Proserpina*, Rome, Villa Borghese

- 1 R. WITTKOWER, "The Role of Classical Models in Bernini's and Poussin's Preparatory Work", in *Studies in Western Art: Acts of the Twentieth International Congress on the History of Art* (Princeton, 1963), vol. 3, 47: group of Hercules and the Hydra in the Capitoline Museum, which was restored about 1630, in the Ludovisi collection, by Alessandro Algardi; H. KAUFFMANN, *Giovanni Lorenzo Bernini* (Berlin 1970), 45, 47: Laocoön, Belvedere Torso; S. HOWARD, "Identity Formation and Image Reference in the Narrative Sculpture of Bernini's: Early Maturity-Hercules and Hydra & Eros Triumphant", *Art Quarterly*, n. s., 2 (1979), 140, 163 n. 6: group of Niobids, Gaul and his wife (formerly in the Ludovisi collection; fig. 3), mastiff copy of a fourth-century Lysippian statue, in the Uffizi; fig. 7).
- 2 C. ROBERT, *Die antiken Sarkophagreliefs*, III, vol. 3, pt. 3 (Berlin 1919), 455 ff., pl. 119, fig. 359; G. KOCH, "The Walters Persephone Sarcophagus", *Journal of the Walters Art Gallery*, 37 (1978), 74-83.
- 3 F. BALDINUCCI, *Vita del Cavaliere Gio. Lorenzo Bernino ...* (Florence 1682), 71: "Nel prepararsi all'opere usava di pensare ad una cosa per volta, e davolo per precetto a suoi Discepoli, cioe prima all'invenzione, e poi rifletteva all'ordinazione delle parti finalmente a dar loro perfezione di grazia, e tenerezza. Portava in ciò l'esempio dell'Oratore, il quale prima inventa poi ordina, veste, a adorna, perchè diceva, che ciascheduna di quelle operazioni ricercava tutto l'uomo."

4 See Baldinucci, *Vita*, 75.

one? His achievement as a sculptor will be further clarified when his effort to adapt the same ancient myth to a pictorial *invenzione* is compared with the treatment of the same theme by the contemporary painter Lanfranco.

It is unlikely that Bernini himself was free to choose his classical theme. The first payment by Cardinal Scipione



2. Roman sarcophagus with "Rape of Proserpina", Paris, Louvre (from C. Robert, *Die antiken Sarkophagreliefs* III, 3, Fig. 359)

Borghese, dating from June 1621, is for a "Plutone che rapisce Prosperpina" together with a memorial bust of Paul V.⁵ Italo Faldi has also found a document that proves that the *Pluto* was transported from Bernini's studio near Santa Maria Maggiore to Scipione's villa near Porta Pinciana on September 23, 1622⁶. It can be assumed that the group was given to Cardinal Lodovico Ludovisi before the death of Gregory XV in 1623, and installed in the Villa Ludovisi. There a Latin distich conceived by Cardinal Maffeo Barberini, later Pope Urban VIII, was inscribed on its base: "Quis humi pronus flores legis, inspice, saevi / me Ditis ad domum rapi [oh you who stoop to pick the flowers of the earth, behold how I am abducted to the dwelling of wild Dis]⁷." Cardinal Maffeo uses the Latin name Dis for Pluto, the Greek god of the Underworld; the name turns up in its italianized form, Plutone, in all the payment documents. Dis and Prosperpina were venerated in a sanctuary below ground level, called the *Tarentum*, which the early seventeenth century believed to be located in the neighborhood of the present-day Piazza Nicosia, near the banks of the Tiber⁸. Sueton-

nius and Censorinus relate that the traditional *ludi saeculares* were celebrated here by Augustus in 17 B. C. with a sacrifice to the Moirai at the altar of the gods Dis, Proserpina, and

(1479–1552) located the Ara Ditis in the Campo Marzio near the Tiber in his book *De sacrificiis* (in *Opera omnia*, ed. J. Faes and P. Colomesi, Leiden, 1696), 534: "Romae in Campo Martio Terenti locus fuit, ubi Ditis et Proserpinae ara fuit: locum quidam dictum volunt, quod ibi Tiberis tereret." A. DONATO (*Roma vetus ac recens*, 2nd ed. (Rome, 1648), describes the *Tarentum* as being close to the Tiber, near San Lorenzo in Lucina: "Templum S. Laurentii in Lucina ipso nomine indicat eiusdem Lucinae templum cum luco. Ibi et Terentus, locus eius nominis, quod ibi curvatus Tiberis sinistriorem ripam attereret: sive quod ara Ditis partis sub terra ibi occultaretur, ad quam fiebant sacrificia anno ludisque secularibus." F. NARDINI (*Roma antica* [Rome, 1666], 354) describes the site of the Ara Ditis as follows: "Il luogo, che Terento dicevasi, pur fù nel Campo presso 'l Tevere, di cui così Festo: 'Terentum in Campo Martio locum Verrius ait ab eo dicendum fuisse, quod terra ibi per ludos saeculares Ditis Patris ita leviter teratur ab eius quadrigariis, ut eorum levis mobilitas aequiparet motus rapidos velocis lunae; quod quam aniliter relatum sit, cuius manifestum est' ... Altri vi legge, 'Terentus locus in campo dictus, quod eo loco ara Ditis Patris occultaretur, vel quod profluentis Tiberis ripas aquarum cursus tereret.' Dalla cui seconda etimologia inferirebbesi esser quella ripa del Campo Marzo, ch'è presso Piazza Nicosia e S. Lucia della Tenta dalla curvatura del Tevere sempre battuta; e ben alcuni credono il nome di Tenta da Terento derivato. Quivi esser uscito di nave Evandro nel venir d'Arcadia canta Ovidio nel primo de' Fasti. ... V' era l'altar di Dite, e Proserpina sotterraneo come a' Dij infernali si costumava; fù da Romani fatto (scrive Zosimo) nella guerra contro gli Albani, & acciò ad ogn'altro fuor ch'a Romani fosse incognito, fu ricoperto di terra; ne si scopriva, che ne' giuochi secolari; nel qual tempo vi si celebrava il Trinottio. ... Questo altare come che sepolto fuori del tempo di que' giuochi et incognito, fù trovato venti piedi sotterra da Valerio Sabino, che celebrandovi il Trinottio n'ottenne la sanità de' figli moribondi. La storia o favola ch'ella sia, si narra da Valerio nel 4. del libro 2." C. HUELSEN (*Le chiese di Roma nel Medio Evo* [Florence 1927], 303) states that the etymological derivation of the name of Santa Lucia della Tenta from the *Tarentum* is not justified.

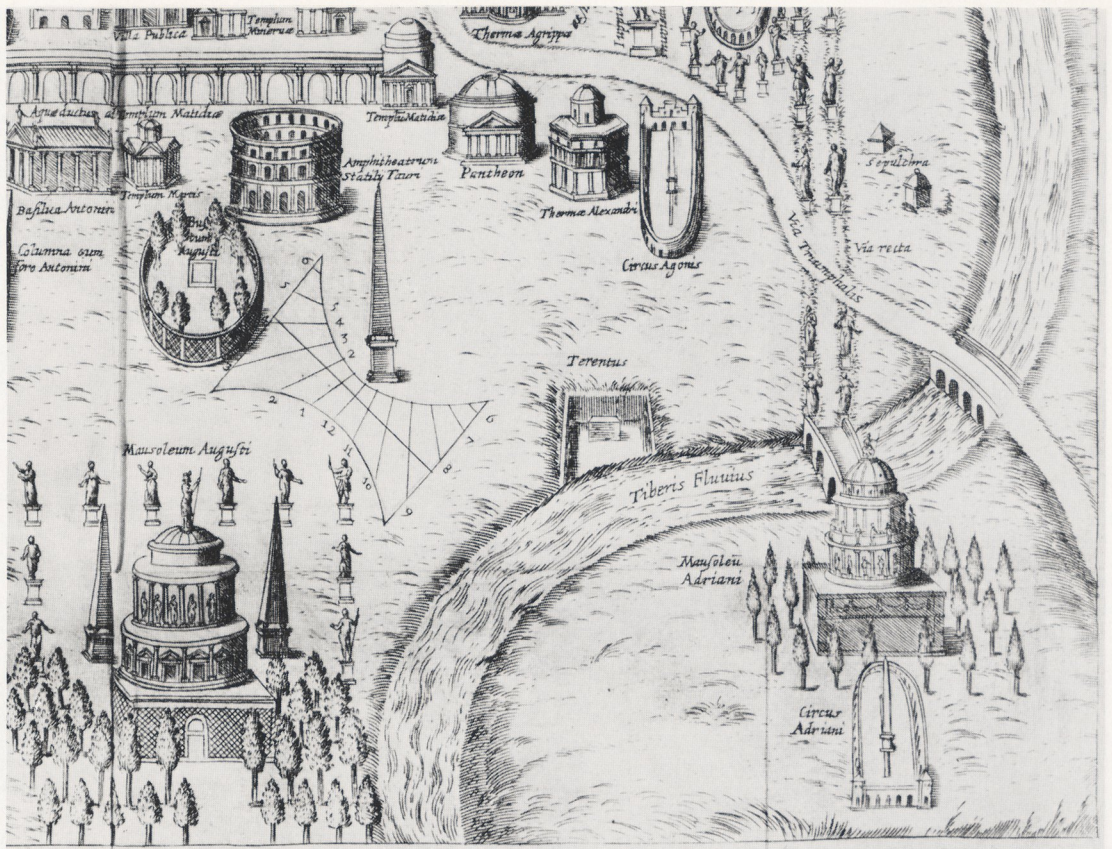
5 I. FALDI, "Note sulle sculture borghesiane del Bernini", *Bollettino d'arte*, 38 (1953), 143, 146 doc. 7; FALDI, "Nuove note sul Bernini", *Bollettino d'arte*, 38 (1953), 314 doc. 2. For the identity of the bust of Paul V, see C. D'ONOFRIO, *Roma vista da Roma* (Rome, 1967), 277–282.

6 Faldi, "Nuove note", 310, 315 doc. 7.

7 F. MARTINELLI, *Roma ricercata nel suo sito*, 2nd ed. (Venice, 1650), 348. See D'Onofrio, *Roma*, 273–277: Barberini may have composed his "dodici distichi per una Galleria" in 1618–1620, in which case the distich is earlier than the sculptural group and may have inspired its subject.

8 Today archeologists locate the Ara Ditis Patris et Proserpinae beneath the Corso Vittorio Emanuele near the Piazza Sforza Cesarini. In 1890 some remnants of the *ara* were found here; see H. A. STÜTZER, *Das Antike Rom* (Cologne, 1979), 270–272. G. G. GIRALDI

3. Map of the Campo Marzio with the supposed site of the Sanctuary of Dis and Proserpina, from Alessandro Donati, *Roma vetus ac recens*, 2nd ed. Rome 1648, p. 284



Ceres⁹. This was the only place in ancient Rome where an altar was consecrated to the subterranean deities. The serious seventeenth-century descriptions of “Roma antica” mention the place frequently and even, as in Alessandro Donati’s *Roma vetus ac recens* (the first edition of which appeared in 1638),¹⁰ illustrate with an etching the supposed site of the subterranean cave in the Campo Marzio (Fig. 3). An anonymous 1628 guide of Rome describes the nearby Palazzo Borghese and extolls the building with the obligatory remark that it is “non . . . inferiore a quelli edifitij Imperiali antichi, che furono in questo nobil Campo Marzo, & essendosi spente quelle belle meraviglie . . . , hoggi si vedono ravnivate in memoria di questa nobil famiglia.”¹¹ But the only relics of classical buildings referred to in ancient literature in the neighborhood of the Borghese Palace were the tomb of Augustus and the Tarentum (or Tèrentum), with the altar of Pluto and Proserpina. After the death of his uncle the pope on January 28, 1621, Scipione Borghese moved from his dwelling place in the Borgo, the Palazzo Giraud-Torlonia,

to the Palazzo Borghese in the Campo Marzio, owned by Marcantonio Borghese, principe di Sulmona, the family’s only living heir¹². Marcantonio had married Camilla Orsini in 1620 but their son Paolo was not born until 1624. The sudden death of the pope had not only deprived the family of its leading member; it also threatened the future of the main branch of the family if the recently married couple,

12 Hibbard, “Architecture”, pp. 72–75. Scipione Borghese moved into the Ripetta wing of the family palace, which had been constructed at his expense. The most interesting feature of this wing, according to Hibbard (p. 67) is the combination casino and hanging garden near the bank of the river. Until 1625 the bulk of Scipione’s collection of antique sculpture could still be found in the Palazzo Borghese. Two hundred loads of statuary were transferred in the subsequent years to the Villa Pinciana (Hibbard, 74). It is not clear whether Scipione commissioned Bernini’s *Pluto and Proserpina* for the Villa Pinciana from the outset. It may be that he originally planned to install it in his new dwelling in the Palazzo Borghese, where most of his sculptures were in 1621. A subterranean chamber similar to the mysterious antique sanctuary of Pluto and Proserpina was certainly conceivable under the hanging garden of the Ripetta wing. The 1618 map of Rome by M. Greuter gives a separate illustration of the Palazzo Borghese. Three statues of antique goddesses in the palace are singled out as especially beautiful (“Statue Antiche de rara beltà et grandezza in questo Palazzo”); they appear in the etching on a large scale. One of them is clearly identified, by her attributes, as Ceres. Should we suspect a Proserpina in one of the other two? For an illustration, see Hibbard, “Architecture”, p. 63.

9 The best survey of the *ludi saeculares* is in PAULY, *Realencyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft*, ser. 2, vol. 1 A, col. 1716 ff.

10 See n. 8.

11 *Grandezze della città di Roma*, quoted by H. HIBBARD, “The Architecture of the Palazzo Borghese”, *Memoirs of the American Academy in Rome*, 27 (1962), 63.



4. Sprouting laurel leaves, Detail of Bernini's "Pluto and Proserpina" (see Fig. 1)



5. Cerberus, Detail of "Pluto and Proserpina" (Fig. 1)

Marcantonio and Camilla, could not produce an heir. The site of the family's palazzo in the neighborhood of Pluto's and Proserpina's sanctuary and the mourning for Paul V may have played a part in Scipione's choice of the antique subject of Bernini's group¹³. Did Bernini himself pay tribute to the allegorical implications of the subject in his *invenzione*?

Scholars have failed to remark on the fact that the hind legs of the marble Cerberus are hidden by sprouting leaves (Fig. 4). This vegetation at the rear of the group is obviously a laurel tree that has been chopped down; the naked stump is bursting into leaves again. If Bernini's group illustrates only the mythical Rape of Proserpina as recounted in the poetry of Ovid and Claudian, we might surely expect some flowers when Pluto tore her away to his gloomy realm, and Cardinal Maffeo's moralizing inscription on the base alludes to flowers¹⁴. The laurel trunk with foliage could refer to Cer-

13 In this connection the augural meaning of the story of Pluto and Proserpina should be kept in mind.

14 The iconographical connotations of Bernini's group have been studied only by Kauffmann, *Bernini*, 48 ff. The literary tradition of the story of Proserpina in Renaissance and Baroque poetry has been investigated by H. ANTON, *Der Raub der Proserpina: Literarische Tradition eines erotischen Sinnbildes und mythischen Symbols* (Heidelberg 1967). The basic literary sources of the myth in antiquity are OVID, *Met.* 5. 376-571; OVID, *Fast.* 4. 393-620; CLAUDIAN, *De raptu Proserpinae*; ST. AUGUSTINE, *De civ. D.* 7. 20-25.

berus, who had been interpreted by Natale Conti as Nature's engendering power; some ancient authors had identified Cerberus with the earth¹⁵. That Bernini wanted to hint at such a connotation for his Cerberus is clear from the leaves and branches that encircle the dog's genitals and even hide his hind legs, so that the infernal animal seems to grow from the earth (Fig. 5). The evergreen laurel tree was the time-honored plant of Apollo. Apollo's Daphne, transformed into laurel, stands not only for virtue, triumph, and glory, but also for eternity¹⁶. A cut-off bough with sprouting laurel branches grows from the bark of Bernini's Daphne, who is on the verge of complete transformation (Fig. 6)¹⁷. In Virgil's *Aeneid* (6. 136–148), Aeneas is instructed by the Cumaean Sybil to pluck the golden bough which is holy to Proserpina, and to dedicate it to her, if he wishes to enter and leave the Elysian Fields in Tartarus. In the words of the poet, "Primo avolso non deficit alter [if the first branch has been plucked another will always grow]." This verse is quoted on a scroll encircling a sprouting laurel stump in Pontormo's posthumous portrait of Cosimo Vecchio¹⁸. The pictorial message is that the virtuous Medici family will never fail to bear offspring.

A similar idea of the renewing power of the bereft family tree of the Borghese may have been in Scipione's mind when he discussed with Bernini the erudite accessories of the *Pluto and Proserpina*. How important the myth of Proserpina must have been for the Villa Borghese and its patron emerges from a close examination of Lanfranco's ceiling fresco in the Loggia upstairs (Fig. 7, 8). As Howard Hibbard has shown, Lanfranco's painting was begun in 1624, just one year after Bernini's group had been given to the Ludovisi¹⁹. Though the painter Domenico Corvi extensively restored the fresco in the eighteenth century, we know from an engraving by Pietro Aquila and from the contract for the restoration that,



6. G. L. Bernini, *Apollo and Daphne*, Detail of the laurel tree, Rome, Villa Borghese

at least in the *quadro riportato* in the center, Lanfranco's original iconography has been meticulously preserved²⁰. In 1650 Iacomo Manilli named this *quadro riportato a Conciglio degli dei*, or "council of the gods"²¹. And to the best of my knowledge no one has tried since to unveil more of the meaning²².

15 N. CONTI, *Mythologiae, sive explicationes fabularum libri X*, 1641 [1st ed. 1568], 201: "Nihil aliud erit Cerberus quam rerum naturalium generatio"; 202: "Qui terram Cerberum esse putarunt . . ."

16 Recent literature on the symbolic meaning of laurel will be found in F. A. GIRAUD, *La fable de Daphné* (Geneva, 1968); an indispensable study is G. B. LADNER, "Vegetation Symbolism and the Concept of Renaissance", in M. MEISS, ed., *De Artibus Opusculi XL: Essays in Honor of Erwin Panofsky* (New York 1961), 303–322.

17 No attention seems to have been paid to this motif of the cut-off bough. The laurel has always been interpreted as such in Bernini's *Apollo and Daphne* group since Maffeo composed his contemporary distich. See H. KAUFFMANN, Bernini, 59 ff.; W. STECHOW, *Apollo und Daphne*, Studien der Bibliothek Warburg 23 (Berlin and Leipzig, 1932).

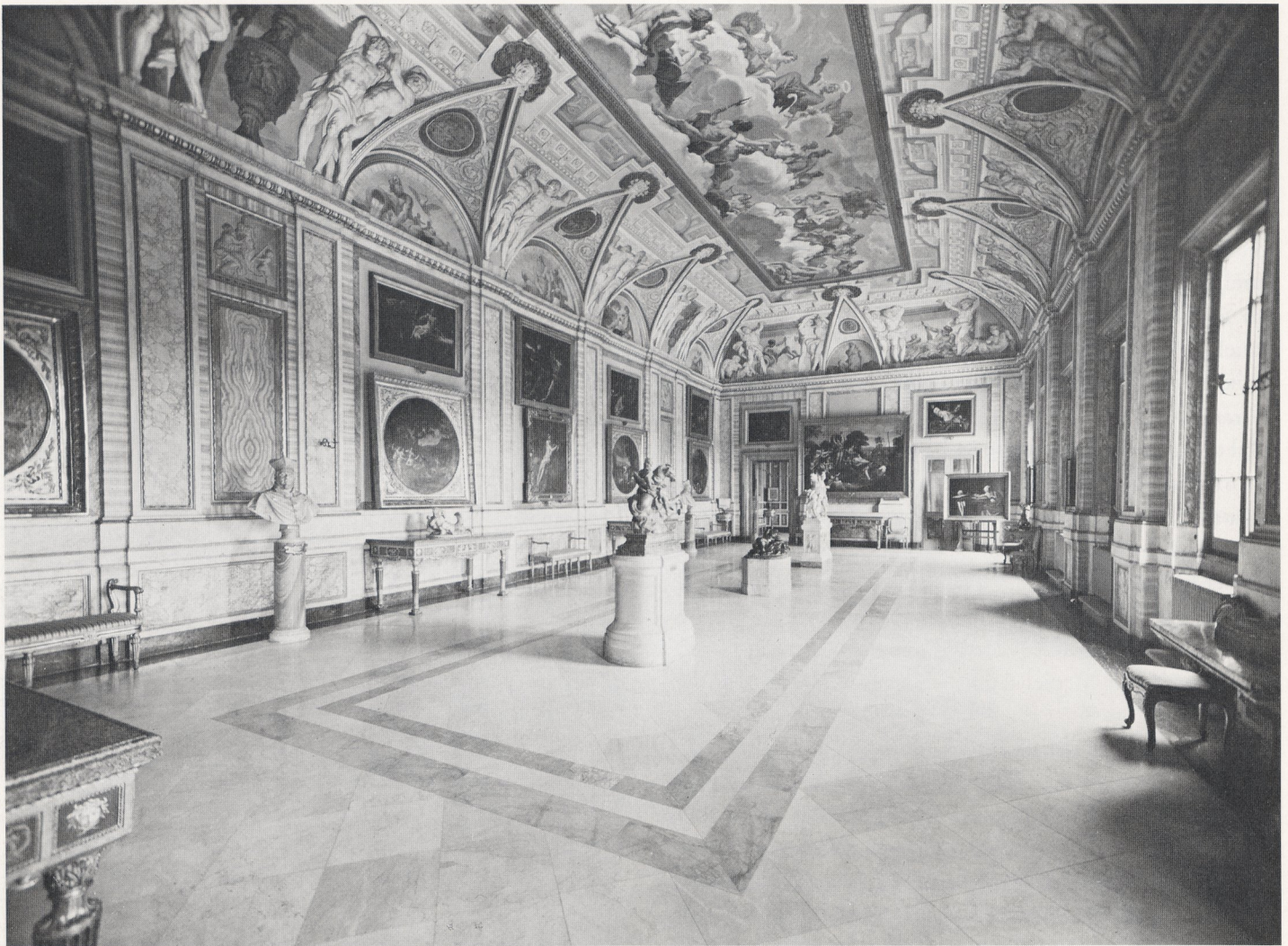
18 M. WINNER, "Pontormos Fresko in Poggio a Caiano", *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte*, 35 (1972), 186.

19 HIBBARD, "The date of Lanfranco's Fresco in the Villa Borghese and Other Chronological Problems", in *Miscellanea Bibliothecae Hertzianae* (Munich, 1961), 356.

20 The engraving is reproduced by Hibbard, "Date of Lanfranco's Fresco", 361, figs. 357–358; the contract for the restoration (Hibbard, 364 doc. 6. a) stipulates that Corvi "debba risarcire quelle Pitture tanto trattandosi de chiari scuri, quanto di Colori al Naturale nel Quadro di mezzo, imitando la Maniera del primo Autore, e fedelmente secondo quel Pensiero, e disegno, senza che sia lecito variarilo in minima parte."

21 I. MANILLI, *Villa Borghese* (Rome, 1650), 95: "La volta della loggia, con le Lunette di sotto, è opera del Cavaliere Giovanni Lanfranchi; il quale v'hà nel mezzo dipinto à fresco il Conciglio degli Dei. Vien questa volta ornata da molte figure finte di pietra in atto di sostenerla; con vasi grandi in mezzo, finti di bronzo, e con medaglioni simili, dentro à cornici di stucco. Nelle Lunette son dipinti undici Fiumi, de' piu famosi del Mondo." G. P. BELLORI (*Le vite de' pittori, scultori e architetti moderni* [Rome, 1672; ed. E. Borea, Turin, 1976], 395) mentions "gli Dei a fresco nella Loggia" by Lanfranco in the Villa Borghese.

22 Only Kauffmann (Bernini, 50) ingeniously tried to connect Lanfranco's ceiling fresco with Claudian. He referred correctly to *De raptu*



7. The “Salone detto di Lanfranco” seen from the left side, Rome, Villa Borghese

Pluto and Proserpina are seated below Jupiter’s cloudy throne on the vertical axis of the fresco (Fig. 9)²³. Proserpina alone looks benevolently down on us. She caresses Cerberus; this may convey the idea that she is specifically an earthbound goddess and hence united more closely with us, the terrestrial

beholders. It is obvious that the gods on Mount Olympus are in attendance as Jupiter pronounces a final judgment; Jupiter points his right hand toward the group of gods to his right while Astraea—Justice—crowns him with stars²⁴. In the groups to either side of Jupiter a female figure – a young

Proserpinae 3. 14ff. in order to explain the presence of the river gods in the lunettes. But he could not solve the riddle of the central painting since he did not find names for the single deities and thus was unable to define the interrelation of the gods.

I confine myself to the central painting alone. I will leave the questions of the river gods in the lunettes, the stories from Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* in the roundels above them, and the four painted vases in the spandrels, for a more detailed study of the Loggia decoration. It seems probable that the prominent vases have something to do with the theme of time: MARTIANUS CAPELLA (*De nuptiis Philologiae et Mercurii* 18) describes Apollo drawing from four vases; these were interpreted by Renaissance mythographers as “varietà de’ tempi”: see V. CARTARI, *Le Imagini de i dei degli antichi* (Venice, 1609), 57.

23 In his preparatory drawing (see A. STIX and A. SPITZMÜLLER, “Die Schulen von Ferrara, Bologna, Parma etc.”, Vol. VI, *Beschreibender Katalog der Handzeichnungen in der Staatl. Graph. Slg. Albertina*,

Vienna 1941, No. 371 ill.), Lanfranco placed Pluto and Proserpina further to the left, where the final version Neptune is found. In the original sketch, the plot of the painted story would have been a dialogue between Jupiter and Pluto, who is wearing a crown. The concentration on the concept of time is already clear in this sketch, all the more so since Saturn is standing and thus has a still more prominent place. But certain decisive details are not yet defined in the drawing.

24 I want to thank Dr. K. Herrmann-Fiore for drawing my attention to S. FRANCUCCI, “La Galleria dell’Ill.mo et Rev.mo Signor Scipione card. Borghese” (ms. in the Archivio Segreto Vaticano, Fondo Borghese IV. 102) where, already in 1613, strophe 42 describes a relief of Astraea above the doorway of Scipione’s palace in the Borgo (the present Palazzo Giraud-Torlonia): “La bell’Astrea sta sopra l’arco in piede/ che pur dal ciel fece alla fin ritorno/ l’amata Pace a destra man le siede,/ versa da l’altra la dea Copia il corno.” See D’Onofrio, Roma, 218.



8. The “Salone detto di Lanfranco” seen from the right side, Rome, Villa Borghese

woman on the left, an old woman on the right – appears, surrounded by male divinities (Figs. 10 and 11). Since neither figure has specific attributes, we shall try to identify them according to the internal evidence of their interrelation with their neighbors.

At the far right of the fresco, double-faced Janus, as god of chaos, the year, time, and eternity, introduces the scene (Fig. 10). To the left of Janus is Bacchus, grapes in hand, with Priapus (or Silenus) and a group of Maenads close to him²⁵. The presence of Faunus – the figure with pointed ears in the lower right corner – reveals that an Olympus of specifically Roman rustic deities has been assembled. The

25 The small fat man should probably be called Priapus rather than Silenus, whose general attributes (fatness, grapes and bowl in hand, vine leaves in the hair, exposed virile member) are also those of the personage in the painting. But since the figure is small and childlike, he may better be identified as Priapus, the son of Bacchus, who has always been regarded as representative of nature’s engendering power, much as his father has been. See Cartari, *Imagini*, 323–325:

“Perchè Baccho era anco creduto da alcuni de gli antichi essere quella virtù occulta, che à tutte le piante dà forza di produrre gli maturi frutti, scrive Herodoto, che egli fu Nume familiare alle Dee Eleusine, et che andava spesso con loro. Queste erano ... Cerere et Proserpina, le quali erano credute fare che lo sparso seme germogliasse. Et leggesi appresso di Pausania [PAUSANIAS, *Description of Greece* 1. 2. 4] parimente, che gli Atheniesi havevano nel tempio di Cerere fra gli altri simulacri quel di Baccho anchora, il quale porgeva con mano un ardente face. Da che venne forse, che le favole fingessero Priapo essere nato di Baccho, per mostrare la intera virtù seminale, che piglia sua forza dal Sole, così negli animali come nelle piante, e nelle altre cose prodotte dalla terra.”

The two female heads looking in different directions in the center of this group may be those of the Roman goddesses Antevorta and Postvorta. See Cartari, *Imagini*, 31: “Adoravano gli antichi Romani Antevorta, e Postvorta compagne della Divinità quella perchè sapeva l’avenire, questa il passato, intendendo perciò che la Divina sapienza sa tutto.” This explanation seems probable to me, since the two female heads correspond to a pair of male heads, which I would identify as those of the Dioscuri on the left side of the fresco. The presence of the Dioscuri obviously alludes to the division of the immortality of Pollux with his mortal brother Castor. By decree of Jupiter, Pollux is alive for one day while Castor is dead, and the next day they reverse their positions (HYGINUS, *Fabu*. 173). CICERO (*Nat. D.* 3. 21) states that the Dioscuri were born of Proserpina.



9. G. Lanfranco, *Ceiling fresco of the former Loggia (center)*, Rome, Villa Borghese



10. G. Lanfranco, *Ceiling fresco of the former Loggia (right half)*, Rome, Villa Borghese



11. G. Lanfranco, *Ceiling fresco of the former Loggia (left half), Rome, Villa Borghese*

nude Apollo holds in his left hand an arrow, symbolizing the warming and burning rays of the sun; his yellow halo also refers to the sun. The three Graces (or Horae) in the background and two Muses at the bottom of his bank of clouds belong to his usual following²⁶. Mercury, with his

26 The three Graces are said to have stood at the right hand of the statue of Apollo. The Graces are identified with the Horae, or Seasons, by some scholars. Cartari (*Imagini*, 409), for example, writes of "imagini delle Hore dette ancora da alcuni Gratie, et di Apolline, intese per le quattro stagioni dell'anno, questo per il Sole che varia le stagioni." He continues, "Ma dice poi ancho il medesimo Pausania, che tutti quelli, li quali posero in Delo con le statue di Mercurio, di Baccho, et di Apollo le Gratie, le fecero tre." Lanfranco's fresco lends itself to all of these interpretations. The three young women next to Apollo may be seen as the three Graces, at

trumpet, appears as a messenger; he flies downward and turns his head, like Apollo-Sol, toward the elderly woman. The woman gesticulates with outstretched arms and looks toward the handsome girl at the opposite end of the fresco (Fig. 11), who seems to stand submissively, acquiescent to Jupiter's will, as she presses her hands to her breasts, holding a laurel branch. The elderly woman is demanding something

his right hand. Since a fourth young woman, close to the couple of Mars and Venus, seems not necessarily to be separated from her female companions, the group may be taken as representing the four seasons. The fourth woman could also be Harmonia, the daughter of the lovers Mars and Venus. In his Albertina sketch, Lanfranco identified her as Diana by means of a crescent moon on her head. Since this crescent has been left out in the fresco, Diana or Luna must be identified with other female Deities.

from Jupiter. And since her place is between Apollo-Sol and Bacchus she may be either Diana-Luna or Ceres – or, possibly, a combination of both deities²⁷. She is indeed clad as mother Ceres was when she wandered restlessly, day and night, through the world and the skies, in search of her lost daughter Proserpina²⁸. The torch that she carried is represented here by Apollo's halo.

Ovid tells us (*Fasti* 4. 580) that Ceres vainly implored the gods and her brother Jupiter, who was the father of Proserpina, to reveal the hiding place of her daughter. The sympathetic Apollo-Sol, who sees all things enacted by day, finally informed her that Proserpina ruled the third realm as the wife of Jupiter's brother Pluto. In Lanfranco's fresco, the three brothers – Jove with Juno, Neptune with his mate (who, strangely enough, is Ceres, represented a second time), and Pluto with Proserpina – sit in the center as representatives of the three realms of nature²⁹.

According to Claudian (*De raptu Proserpinae*, 1. 65–115; 214–229), Pluto had been living without a wife, and he threatened to ravage Heaven with monsters from the deep if his brother Jupiter failed to supply him with a female mate; Jupiter therefore asked Venus to inflame Pluto with love for the beautiful Proserpina. She promptly did so; in the fresco she sits near her lover Mars and points to Pluto, at the same time looking across the composition toward the virgin Proserpina, who is flanked by Vulcan and by Hercules

with his club. The rape of Proserpina took place in Ceres' Sicily, in the shadow of Aetna, Vulcan's forge, where Cupid's arrows of love were produced. Cupid consequently flutters near Proserpina, bearing Vulcan's hammer. Hercules stands for eternal virtue: Proserpina had been virtuous in defending her virginity against Pluto³⁰. But why is Pan, the god of nature in Arcadia, shown here with his pipes, looking toward Ceres? During her search for her daughter, Ceres came to Arcadia and was ravished against her will by Neptune³¹. In her shame she hid in a dark cave and refused to see the light of heaven ever again, thereby causing the destruction of the crops and great evils for the human race. It was Pan who, in his wanderings, discovered the mourning Ceres, and when she finally left her hiding place the earth bore fruit again. Ovid explains in the *Metamorphoses* the means by which Jupiter appeased the wrath of mother Ceres:

But now Jove, holding the balance between his brother [Pluto] and his grieving sister [Ceres], divides the revolving year into two equal parts. Now the goddess [Proserpina], the common divinity of two realms, spends half the months with her mother and with her husband, half. Straightaway the bearing of her heart and face is changed. For she who but lately even to Dis seemed sad, now wears a joyful countenance; like the sun which, long concealed behind dark and misty clouds, disperses the clouds and reveals his face³².

The clue to the subject and the *invenzione* of the fresco seems to be this Ovidian passage. Jupiter subdivides the revolving year into two equal halves. To complete a full sequence of one year's time, Proserpina has to appear twice, once with Pluto and once, on a higher level, with Ceres.

27 The ancient identification of Ceres with Diana-Luna had been represented by Pontormo at Poggio a Caiano about 1520 (see Winner, "Pontormo's Fresco", 162 ff.). See further J. KLIEMANN, "Vertumnus and Pomona", *Mitteilungen des Kunsthistorischen Institutes in Florenz*, 16 (1972), 313 ff.

28 In F. PERRIER's volume of ancient statues in Rome (1638) a matronly "Ceres in Hortis Burghesianis" is illustrated as No. 77.

29 Caravaggio's ceiling in the Casino of the Villa Ludovisi in Rome, painted about 1597–1600, must be considered, in this context, a forerunner of Lanfranco's fresco. See N. C. WALLACH, "An Iconographic Interpretation of a Ceiling Painting attributed to Caravaggio", *Marsyas*, 17 (1975), 101 ff., fig. 1, fig. 24. S. Cantarini's etching associates the three brothers Jupiter, Neptune, and Pluto with the Borghese arms. The gods are paying homage to the Borghese arms by presenting their own crowns.

In his fresco, Lanfranco does not couple the sea god Neptune with his wife, Amphitrite, but rather with Ceres. This combination may be explained by the fact that Ceres had once been loved by Neptune against her will (PAUSANIAS, *Description of Greece* 8. 25. 5). Pausanias tells us (8. 25. 6–7) that at Onkion in Arcadia, where the ravishment took place, there was a sanctuary of Demeter (Ceres) where two different statues of the goddess corresponded to her two surnames "Fury" and "Bather" (Lusia). The figure of Ceres the Fury held a torch in her right hand; in the fresco, Apollo's halo takes the place of the torch. Pausanias does not describe the image of Ceres the Bather, but Lanfranco seems to have expressed the concept by coupling his Ceres with Neptune. For the correct interpretation of the fresco, it may be important that the two figures of Proserpina correspond to the two figures of Ceres, on the two different levels.

30 In a sanctuary of Demeter and Kore (Proserpina) in Arcadia, according to PAUSANIAS (*Description of Greece* 8. 31. 1–3), there were two statues of Ceres (Demeter) and her daughter; "by the side of Demeter there is also a Heracles about a cubit high ... Before it stands a table on which are carved in relief two seasons, Pan with pipes, and Apollo playing the harp" (trans. W. H. S. Jones, Loeb Classical Library ed. [Cambridge, Mass., and London, 1955], 59). It may be that the Hercules at the feet of Ceres' daughter derives from this passage.

31 See note 29. Cartari, *Imagini*, 168–169: "Da che venne, che ella fu chiamata Cerere Nera appresso di certo antro à lei consecrato pure nell'Arcadia; perciocchè quivi era vestita di negro, parte dicono per dolore della rapita figliuola, parte per lo sdegno, che ella hebbe della forza fattale da Nettuno, onde nascostasi nell'antro ... vi stette assai buon tempo, il perchè non produceva più la terra frutto alcuno ... che mosse à pietà tutti gli Dei li quali non potevano però alla miseria humana, non sapendo ove fosse Cerere. Ma avvenne, che il Dio Pan errando, come era suo costume, et andando quà, elà per quei monti cacciando, capitò là dove ella stava tutta mesta: e trovatala subito ne diede avviso à Giove." See CONTI, *Mythologiae*, 517; *Historia de diis gentium*, in *Opera omnia*, vol. 1, 428 f.

32 Ovid, *Met.* 5. 564–567: "At medius fratrisque sui maestaeque sororis / Iuppiter ex aequo volentem dividit annum: / nunc dea, regnorum numen commune duorum, / cum matre est totidem,

Since both Proserpina and Ceres appear twice in the fresco – the latter once as Terra, with Neptune, on a lower level, and once as Luna with Apollo – Lanfranco probably wanted to depict the two halves of the revolving year³³. The pair Ceres-Proserpina on Jupiter’s right represent the first half of the year, winter: Proserpina is in the Underworld with Pluto, and the matronly Ceres is claiming her right to know where her daughter is hiding. The pair Ceres-Proserpina on Jupiter’s left shows the daughter, risen to Heaven, happily united with the gods, above her mother. Ceres, as Terra, has crowned herself with wheat ears and is reconciled with Jupiter because she has recovered her daughter for half of the year as a result of Jupiter’s partition of the year.

Janus initiates the cycle that we call a year. Apollo-Sol is likewise responsible for the revolution of hours, days, and years. Saturn, Father Time, introduces the group that surrounds Proserpina, who represents another subdivision of time according to Jupiter’s sentence. In this context the pair of divinities behind her, at the far left of the fresco, can only be explained as Vertumnus and Pomona. The ancient Romans derived the name Vertumnus etymologically from *vertere*, “to revolve³⁴.” The god’s task was to oversee the growth of grain and fruits as the year completed its cycle. The seasonal implications of Lanfranco’s fresco were apparently made explicit elsewhere in the decoration of the Loggia: as late as 1650, Manilli describes frescoes representing the Four Seasons, by a Flemish painter, above its four doors³⁵.

There are several possible readings of the Mars-Venus pair. Perhaps the position of Mars next to Venus refers to March as the first month of the Roman calendar³⁶. Or perhaps Venus and Mars signify spring, while other divine

couples represent the other three seasons. Mars and Venus may have been given their prominent place because the divine lovers signify peace and – more specifically – *the Pax Romana*. It is even possible that painter and patron meant to hint at the recurrence of the *saecula aurea*, the Golden Age which is bound to return after the Age of Iron just as the shorter periods of time – minutes, hours, months, and years – are eternally revolving. The rhapsodic words of Virgil’s Fourth Eclogue are the basic text for all Renaissance and Baroque imagination about the Golden Age:

Now is come the last age ...; the great line of centuries begins anew. Now the Virgin returns, the reign of Saturn returns; now a new generation descends from heaven on high. ... Thine own Apollo now is king³⁷.

Virgil alludes to the virgin Astraea, or Justice. Astraea sits above Jupiter in the fresco. Because she left the earth and went to Heaven during the Iron Age, her return to earth initiates the new Golden Age in which justice, peace and abundance may flourish.

De Magistris, a court poet of the Borghese family, introduces his *Aetodraconteum*, an encomium written in 1616 and dedicated to Cardinal Scipione, with an interpretation of the family arms: “The ancients consecrated the eagle to Jove and the dragon to Saturn; with both they expressed the idea of the Prince. ... These are the very animals that appear together on the coat of arms of the Borghese.” According to De Magistris, these arms express the reality of the ages: as Jupiter succeeded Saturn, so the dragon is surmounted by the eagle. The present age seems to renew the Golden Age, concludes the author, because the eagle and the dragon are happily united³⁸. Lanfranco’s Mars bears on his helmet a golden dragon, which certainly will have been seen, together with Jupiter’s eagle nearby, as an allusion to the Borghese arms.

The god Faunus, smiling invitingly, reclines on his fleece in the lower right corner, closer to the beholder than the other gods. The skin of a sheep that has been sacrificed to Faunus bestows on those who lie on it dreams, visions, and prophecies. Thus Faunus invites us to regard the picture as

totidem cum coniuge menses. / Vertitur ex templo facies et mentis et oris; / nam modo quae poterat Diti quoque maesta videri, / laeta deae frons est, ut sol, qui tectus aquis / nubibus ante fuit, victus e nubibus exit”; trans. F. J. Miller, Loeb Classical Library ed. (Cambridge, Mass., and London, 1960), 277.

33 See n. 26. The identification of Ceres with Diana-Luna has an old tradition: see Winner, “Pontormos Fresko”, 162–163; Kliemann, “Vertumnus und Pomona”, 313 ff.

34 See Winner, “Pontormos Fresko”, 167 ff.

35 Manilli, Villa Borghese, 95: “Sopra le quattro porte, son dipinte à fresco le quattro Stagioni, opera Fiammenga.” It is interesting to note that there was a statue of Ceres between two doors of the Loggia (Manilli, Villa Borghese, 92).

36 It is highly probable that the strange juxtaposition of Venus and Proserpina refers to a cosmological passage in Macrobius (*Sat.* 1. 21) where the author relates Venus to the upper hemisphere of the earth and Proserpina to the lower: “... quod Sol annuo gressu per duodecim signorum ordinem pergens, partem quoque hemisphaerii inferioris ingreditur, quia de duodecim signis zodiaci sex superiora, sex inferiora censentur: et cum est in inferioribus et ideo dies brevioris facit, lugere creditur dea [Venus], tamquam sole raptu mortis temporalis amisso et a Proserpina retento.”

37 VIRGIL, *Ecl.* 4. 4–10, trans. H.R. FAIRCLOUGH, Loeb Classical Library ed. (London and New York, 1920), vol. 1, 29.

38 De Magistris, cited by D’Onofrio, Roma, 218: “Come Giove successe a Saturno, e l’aquila sovrappose al drago, ed alle sorelle Irene ed Astrea [see our n. 24], figlie di Saturno oppose le proprie sorelle Amaltea e Politica (cioè l’ordine civile), per l’industria e l’interessamento della quali parve che i tempi si rinnovassero e risorgessero quelli antichi dell’oro; così in questi nostri giorni l’Aquila sta in dolce complotto col Drago, e restituisce con verità tutti i beni che un tempo i secoli aurei di Saturno conferivano con splendida menzogna. Di cio e consapevole tutto l’Orbe terrestre.”



Vestigi della Statua di Pasquino.

Pasquino è vna statua antica, per eccellenza reputata pari al famoso Hercole di Belvedere: Se bene all'vna, & all'altra per ingiuria del tempo (ò de Barbari) altro non è restato che il tronco; essendo nelle altre membra del tutto quasi inutile, e guaste.

Credefi

12. Etching, "Pasquino" group from Pampilio Totti, *Ritratto di Roma antica*, Rome 1633, p. 365

a heavenly vision of the return of the Golden Age under the auspices of the Borghese arms.

Another passage in Claudian (*De raptu Proserpinae* 3. 1–66) may have stimulated Lanfranco's imagination. When Pluto raped Proserpina, Jupiter gathered together all gods on Mount Olympus and decreed that nobody should tell Ceres the abode of her daughter or betray the name of the ravisher. In response to the steady complaint of Nature that the race of man had sunk into lethargy because of Saturn's sluggish rule, Jupiter ordered that the arts (*artes*) should give birth to civilization (*sollertia*). "And Ceres ... [shall] wander over sea and land in anxious grief, until, in her joy at finding the traces of her lost daughter, she [shall] grant man the gift of corn³⁹." Saint Augustine (*De civ. D.* 7. 20) derived Proserpi-

na's name from *proserpare*, "to creep forth," and Lanfranco refers to this interpretation of her nature by the painted laurel branch in her hand. Even Ceres had visions of her lost daughter in form of a laurel, as Claudian tells us: "There stood a laurel, loved above all the grove, that used with maiden leaf to o'ershadow the virgin bower of Proserpine. This [Ceres] saw hewn down to the roots, its straggling branches fouled with dust⁴⁰." And it is Vulcan's hammer carried by Cupid toward Proserpina's laurel that illustrates human Art refining Nature's gifts for the duration of Ceres' wanderings in search of her daughter.

Hans Kauffmann suspected that Bernini's *Pluto and Proserpina* was originally to have been placed in the Sala Terrena, beneath the Loggia with Lanfranco's *Conciglio degli dei*⁴¹. He even thought that the idea of the Golden Age in Claudian's *De raptu Proserpinae* was present in Bernini's mind while he was carving the group, because Andrea Borboni, in his *Delle statue* of 1661, suggests that Bernini was guided by Claudian's text⁴². Nonetheless, the iconographical interpretation of the marble group reveals only a few firm classical references. The basic idea was established in Pietro da Barga's bronze *Pluto and Proserpina* in the Bargello⁴³. This group had been cast in Rome in the 1580s for Ferdinando de Medici. Bernini clearly knew the work, since his own version of Pluto and Proserpina as a freestanding group with Cerberus as a support is based on the combination that Pietro da Barga had invented. But did the idea of a freestanding *raptus Proserpinae* really originate with Pietro da Barga? Pliny reports that Praxiteles, better known as a sculptor in marble, also produced bronzes, including a *raptus Proserpinae*⁴⁴. The letter on ancient art by Giovanni Battista Adriani, which Vasari prefixed to the second (1568) edition of the *Lives*, describes Praxiteles as the greatest marble sculptor after Phidias and explicitly mentions the Rape of Proserpina: "Prassitele ancora, avvegnachè nel lavorare in marmo ... fusse tenuto maggior mae-

40 Claudian, *De Raptu Proserpinae* 3. 74–78; trans. Platnauer, 351.

41 Kauffmann, Bernini, 50.

42 Kauffmann, Bernini, 50; A. BORBONI, *Delle statue* (Rome, 1661), 81: "E per dire il vero, chi puo rappresentare la Proserpina rapita da Pluto che non la vegga più al vivo scolpita dallo scarpello del Bernino; che descritta dalla penna di Claudiano?"

43 Kauffmann, Bernini, 44; the group is mentioned in Ferdinando de Medici's "Inventario Guardaroba", of 1587–1591. See G. DE NICOLA, "Notes on the Museo Nazionale di Florence: II", *Burlington Magazine*, 19 (1916), 363 ff.; I. LAVIN, "Five New Youthful Sculptures by Gianlorenzo Bernini", *Art Bulletin*, 50 (1968), 242 n. 126; illustrated in H. ANTON, *Raub der Proserpina* (Heidelberg, 1967), figs. 32.

44 Pliny the elder, *N. H.* 34. 69: "Praxiteles quoque marmore felicior: ideo et clarior fuit. Fecit tamen et ex aere pulcherrima opera: Proserpinae raptum: item Catagusam, et Liberum patrem et Ebrietatem, nobilemque una Satyrum, quem Graeci Perioboeton cognominant."

39 CLAUDIAN, *De raptu Proserpinae*, 3. 48–52; trans. M. Platnauer, Loeb Classical Library ed. (Cambridge, Mass., and London, 1956), 349.

stro, . . . nondimeno lavorò anche in bronzo molto eccessivamente; come ne fece fede la rapina di Proserpina⁴⁵. . .” Pietro da Barga’s bronze could therefore be interpreted as a humanistic reconstruction of the lost Praxitelean bronze group. It may be conjectured that Bernini was as familiar with Pliny’s text, through Vasari, as he was with Barga’s bronze.

Praxiteles, as a sculptor, was more to Bernini than a literary tradition. As the remark quoted in Chantelou’s diary of June 8, 1665, proves, Bernini even attributed the Roman Pasquino group (Fig. 12) to Phidias or Praxiteles, and described it as the most beautiful piece of antique sculpture⁴⁶. Bernini interpreted the Pasquino as the wounded Alexander the Great being carried away by his servant. This traditional assumption probably led Bernini to think that Praxiteles or Phidias was the sculptor responsible for the group. Since the middle ages, the names of these two artists had been associ-

45 VASARI, *Vite*, ed. G. Milanesi, vol.1 (Florence, 1878), 64–65. Adriani goes on to list the other bronzes mentioned by Pliny: “l’Ebrietà, ed uno Baccho ed un Satiro insieme, di sì maravigliosa bellezza, che si chiamò il Celebrato.”

46 P. FRÉART DE CHANTELLOU, *Journal du voyage en France du Cavalier Bernin*, ed. L. Lalanne (Paris, 1885), 26–27: “M. le nonce . . . a demandé au Cavalier laquelle des figures antiques il estimait davantage. Il a dit que c’était le *Pasquin*, et qu’un cardinal lui ayant un jour fait la même demande, il lui avait répondu la même chose, ce qu’il avait pris pour une raillerie qu’il faisait de lui et s’en était fâché; qu’il fallait bien qu’il n’eût pas lu ce qu’on en avait écrit, et que le *Pasquin* était une figure de Phidias ou de Praxitèle et représentait le serviteur d’Alexandre, le soutenant quand il reçut un coup de flèche au siège de Tyr; qu’à la vérité, mutilée et ruinée comme est cette figure, le reste de beauté qui y est n’est connu que des savants dans le dessin.” That Bernini took the Pasquino for the most important sculpture of antiquity has also been noted by Baldinucci (*Vita*, 72): “Diceva però che il Torso, e il Pasquino gli parevano di più perfetta maniera del Laocoonte stesso, ma che questo era intero, e gli altri no. Fra il Pasquino e il Torso esser la differenza quasi impercettibile, nè potersi ravvisare se non da uomo grande, e più tosto migliore il Pasquino. Fu primo il Bernino, che mettesse questa statua in altissimo credito in Roma, e raccontasi, che essendogli una volta stato domandato da un Oltramontano qual fusse la più bella statua di quella Città, e rispondendo, che il Pasquino, il forestiero, che si credette burlato, fu per venir con lui a cimento.” The same story is reported by DOMENICO BERNINI, *Vita del Cavalier Gio. Lorenzo Bernino* (Rome, 1713), 13–14.

It is open to question whether Bernini really was the first to lavish such praise on the Pasquino. POMPILIO TOTTI (*Ritratto di Roma Antica* (Rome, 1627), 365–366) had already compared the beauty of the Pasquino with that of the Belvedere Torso. He uses an etching to illustrate the position of the Pasquino at the corner of the former Palazzo Orsini, at the time the home of Charles, first duc de Créqui, the French ambassador to the Holy See. Since Totti’s Roman guidebook obviously extols the Pasquino’s sculptural qualities in order to flatter the duc de Créqui, Bernini is possibly adopting this tradition of political flattery. The second duc de Créqui was to be French ambassador in Rome during the sixties; he was present at some of the meetings in Paris between Bernini and Louis XIV (Chantelou, *Journal*, 117, 153).



13. *Horse Tamer with the inscription “Opus Praxitelis”*, Rome, Piazza del Quirinale

ated with the monumental Dioscuri of the Quirinale⁴⁷. And in Bernini’s youth the inscriptions that Sixtus V had placed on the bases of the statues defined both horse tamers as portraits of Alexander the Great with his stallion Bucephalus. Phidias was supposed to have sculptured the left-hand group and Praxiteles to have emulated his master in the group on the right (Fig. 13)⁴⁸. In 1638 this legend was demolished, on historical grounds by the Roman guidebook of Alessandro Donato, who correctly interpreted the youths as the twin brothers, the Dioscuri⁴⁹. The attribution to Phidias

47 See the fundamental study by A. MICHAELIS, “Monte Cavallo”, *Römische Mitteilungen*, 13 (1898), 248–274; P. G. HÜBNER, “Die Aufstellung der Dioskuren von Monte Cavallo”, *Römische Mitteilungen*, 26 (1911), 318 ff.; H. EGGER, *Römische Veduten*, vol. 2 (Vienna 1931), figs. 79–84; V. DE FEO, *La piazza del Quirinale* (Rome, 1973), 11–19 (to be used with caution). See also the recent study by H. VON HEINTZE, “Statuae quattuor pedestres, quarum basibus Constantini nomen inscriptum marmoreae est”, *Römische Mitteilungen*, 86 (1979), 399 ff.

48 See E. DUPÉRAC, *Disegni de le Ruine di Roma e come anticamente erano*, ed. R. WITTKOWER (Milan, 1963), fol. 116; C. D’ONOFRIO (*Gli obeliscchi di Roma*, 2nd ed. [Rome, 1976], 256–258) provides an interesting explanation of the curious assumptions of the antiquarians of the circle of Sixtus V.

49 Donato, *Roma vetus ac recens*, 267–268; according to the diarist Giacinto Gigli, cited by C. D’ONOFRIO in *Acque e Fontane di Roma*



14. Bernini Workshop, Unexecuted project for the Piazza del Quirinale with Horse Tamers, Drawing KdZ 15904 Berlin, Stiftung Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Kupferstichkabinett

and Praxiteles was also thoroughly discredited. Bernini himself seems to have been occupied, under Alexander VII, with a new arrangement of the Cavalli, which then, with the papal arms, served as a kind of monumental entrance to the Via Pia (Fig. 14)⁵⁰. Yet the old attribution of the Cavalli must have stuck in Bernini's mind: he mentioned Phidias as the sculptor of one of the two youths in 1665, tacitly implying that the other was by Praxiteles⁵¹. Bernini's Pluto strides

(Rome 1977), 246 ff., the erroneous inscriptions of Sixtus V on the bases of the Cavalli were removed by Urban VIII in 1634.

50 H. BRAUER and R. WITTKOWER, *Die Zeichnungen des Gianlorenzo Bernini* (Berlin, 1931), 134 ff.; M. WINNER, *Zeichner sehen die Antike*, Exhibition Cat., Kupferstichkabinett (Berlin, 1967), no. 57.

51 Chantelou, *Journal*, 235: Bernini "a vu une [medaille] d'Antinoüs qu'il a admirée et fait remarquer qu'elle est de très bas relief, et que c'est le profil de la figure de Phidias de Monte-Cavallo".

forward in much the same way as the youth thought to be by Praxiteles. Is it not conceivable that Bernini's intention was to improve upon an admittedly poor piece of work by a renowned ancient sculptor?

The group of the dying Niobids in the Villa Medici were similarly considered Praxitelean marbles. Since their discovery in 1583, they had been associated with Pliny's mention of such a group, by either Praxiteles or Scopas, in a Roman temple of Apollo⁵². Their facial expressions of terror and

52 Pliny, *N.H.* 36. 28: "Par hesitatio est in templo Apollinis Sosiani, Niobae liberos morientes, Scopas an Praxiteles fecerit." See G. A. MANSUELLI, *Galleria degli Uffizi: Le sculture*, pt. 1 (Rome, 1958), 101 ff., for illustrations and further bibliography concerning the discovery of the group. A reconstruction of the complete group in the first half of the seventeenth century was etched by F. PERRIER, *Icones et segmenta* (Rome 1645), no. 87. Guido Reni is reported by



pain may have prompted Bernini to attempt to surpass the Greek master in the representation of motion and emotion. Pliny tells us, in a statement repeated by Adriani, that Praxiteles made two statues expressing opposite emotions: a matron weeping and a merry courtesan⁵³. Did Bernini hint at the

Bellori (*Vite*, 529) to have made a study of the statues of the Niobids allegedly by Scopas or Praxiteles. As Bernini always refers to Guido Reni with great respect, it seems highly possible that they shared an interest in the expressive values of this group.

53 Pliny, *N. H.* 34. 70: "Spectantur et duo signa ejus diverso affectus exprimentia, flentis matronae, et meretricis gaudentis. Hanc putant Phrynen fuisse, deprehenduntque in ea amorem artificia, et mercedem in vultu meretricis"; Adriani in Vasari-Milanesi, vol. 1, 65: "Vidonsi di lui parimente due bellissime figure, l'una rassemble una honesta mogliera che piangeva, e l'altra una femmina di mondo che rideva." The contrast of emotional expressions in Bernini's

Praxitelean *Weeping Woman* by means of the marble tears on Proserpina's cheek (Fig. 15)? The grin on Pluto's face is certainly the emotional complement to Proserpina's grief. The old idea of the *paragone* gave power to Bernini's chisel when he tried to surpass the greatest ancient marble sculptor in one of his renowned groups, the Rape of Proserpina. The beauty of the Cnidian Venus by Praxiteles had become proverbial: the beauty of Bernini's Proserpina and of his Daphne would also become proverbial. But how Bernini succeeded in modeling and carving a new ideal of beauty goes beyond his conception of *invenzione* and should be treated elsewhere.

early sculptural groups deserves closer study from this point of view: H. Kauffmann (Bernini, 48) first drew attention to the problem.

