

# **Pompeo Batoni (1708–1787) and Religious Painting in Eighteenth-Century Rome**

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## I. Introduction: Text, Concetto, and Meaning

Discussing a distinctly secular eighteenth-century subject, the operas of Antonio Vivaldi, the musicologist Reinhard Strohm has noted:

‘The intentions of our forerunners in transmitting their products, and the aura of remoteness which these products then acquire through our historical appreciation, may even be opposite sides of the same coin: the more meaning has been entrusted to the artefacts, the stranger they seem today.’<sup>1</sup>

Strohm’s statement could apply to eighteenth-century history painting – particularly to religious painting – just as much as it does to opera.<sup>2</sup>

Vivaldi’s instrumental music is vastly more popular today than his operas because the former can be enjoyed without a grasp of the poetry of the libretti and the narratives drawn from classical history that is required to appreciate the operas. This state of affairs finds a parallel in the reception of the works of Pompeo Batoni, with the portraits playing the role of Vivaldi’s violin concerti and the history paintings equalling the remoteness of operas such as *Tito Manlio* or *Catone in Utica*.

The two recent exhibitions of Batoni’s work have attempted to partly rectify this situation through a balanced selection of works, yet their

<sup>1</sup> Strohm 2008, vol. I, p. 6.

<sup>2</sup> For an overview of the development of the terminology and concept of history painting, see Gaehtgens 1996 and Schalhorn 2000, pp. 195–202.

critical reception was still dominated by the perception of Batoni as, first and foremost, a portraitist, and the deeper analysis of Batoni's history paintings in the associated publications has focused largely on subjects from mythology and ancient history.<sup>3</sup>

In investigating the meaning that was entrusted to a selection of religious paintings by Batoni, this study aims to overcome some of the remoteness, to bridge the gulf of that separates us from the eighteenth century's own understanding of a key aspect of its artistic production, namely works of art with sacred subjects. It is still far from universally acknowledged that 'religion remains fundamental to any accurate understanding of eighteenth-century European societies',<sup>4</sup> and historians of the period such as Jonathan Clark have identified a hesitancy to engage with eighteenth-century religion, especially south of the Alps, on its own terms: 'A nineteenth-century secular construct, "the Enlightenment", still dominates research strategies to a far greater degree than that undoubted eighteenth-century reality, the Roman Catholic Church'.<sup>5</sup> According to Tim Blanning, 'the eighteenth century has as good a claim to be dubbed "the age of religion" as "the age of reason"'. Not only were the Churches flourishing, but both public and private discourse were dominated by

<sup>3</sup> See Bowron and Kerber 2007; Lucca 2008.

<sup>4</sup> Aston 2009, p. 10.

<sup>5</sup> Clark 2007, p. 63.

religion.’<sup>6</sup>

In order to recover the contents and currents of the religious discourse in eighteenth-century Rome, this study analyses a range of theological and exegetical literature that was available to artists and patrons. While the identification of visual precedents has always been a fundamental part of art history’s scholarly arsenal, the engagement with the textual sources for sacred subjects has often been limited to naming the corresponding biblical, apocryphal, or hagiographic text, supplemented by the convenient conjecture of the ever-ready ‘theological advisor’ standing by to divulge to the artist how to depict a certain scene. Fundamental questions regarding physical and intellectual access to these textual sources and their central role in shaping artists’ *concetti* have usually remained unanswered.

This method permits a reconstruction of the works’ contemporary reception – a crucial undertaking, as Frank Büttner has pointed out:

‘Für die Barockforschung kann es keinen anderen Weg geben, als den einer Interpretation im Rahmen einer historischen Rekonstruktion der ursprünglichen Rezeptionsbedingungen. Sie muß sich, wenn sie wirklich verstehen will, in die Vorstellungswelt derer hineindenken, die die Werke geschaffen haben und für die sie geschaffen worden sind.’<sup>7</sup>

In the case of religious commissions, the line between those who

<sup>6</sup> Blanning 2007, p. 475. See also Beales 2000, p. 133.

<sup>7</sup> Büttner 1989, p. 72.

created the works and those who commissioned them is often blurred. Ecclesiastical patrons almost inevitably possessed more knowledge of sacred subject matter than artists did.<sup>8</sup> Considering themselves experts, usually with some justification, patrons of altarpieces in particular could participate in the development of a *concetto* either by orally passing on knowledge that they had themselves derived from books or by recommending or lending books to the artist. It was also customary to vet an artist's composition for accuracy by reviewing a drawing or *bozzetto*, which would have entailed further discussions between the two sides.

Unlike in the case of a portrait or a cabinet picture, a clerical client's role in the conception of an altarpiece was not merely one of private taste and prestige but one of public responsibility, part of the *munus docendi*, the priest's obligation to instruct. This duty or office of teaching is one of the *tria munera*, the three offices of teaching, sanctifying and governing, that a priest exercises. The *munus docendi* is rooted in Mark 6:34, a passage that occurs immediately before the story of the multiplication of the loaves and fishes, underscoring the notion that the pastoral function of teaching nourishes the soul just as food nourishes the body. The didactic and evangelical functions that were assigned to paintings with sacred subjects in the understanding of the eighteenth century heightened the burden to correctly represent textual sources and the teachings of the

<sup>8</sup> See Savignac 2002, p. 229: 'Commander un tableau pouvait être un acte mondain, mais en définir avec soin le sujet devenait un acte de foi.'



Church.

The question of the author of a *conchetto* for a religious painting is therefore an ambivalent one. In a letter to his parents, Batoni's pupil Johann Gottlieb Puhlmann noted that he had attended a performance of the opera "Artaserse" by Metastasio' at the Teatro Argentina on 4 February 1777 without even mentioning the name of the composer, Pietro Alessandro Guglielmi (1728–1804).<sup>9</sup> Just as an opera was considered first and foremost a *dramma per musica*, a literary text set to music, a history painting was valued as much for the intellectual achievement of its *conchetto* as for its execution in oil on canvas.<sup>10</sup>

It is neither the aim of this study to compile a catalogue of Batoni's religious paintings nor to offer exhaustive explorations covering every aspect of particular works. The limited number of case studies presented here have been chosen with a view to addressing larger questions of intellectual history and understanding the intentions and degrees of agency of the authors – those who wielded a brush and those who held a pen – who determined meaning. The selection of works is focused on the 1730s through the 1750s, the period of Batoni's career when the production of portraits did not yet dominate his output and he worked chiefly as a history painter. This period includes the pontificate of Pope

<sup>9</sup> Puhlmann 1979, p. 125.

<sup>10</sup> For an overview of art-theoretical discourse in eighteenth-century Rome, see Mariani 1998, pp. 33–39, and Grassi and Pepe 1995.

Benedict XIV (reigned 1740–1758), whose role in thinking about, writing about, and shaping the religious commissions of his time has been deeply undervalued and will also be considered in this context.

In the last two decades, the appreciation of eighteenth-century religious painting has been significantly expanded by a group of studies focused on specific aspects such as its relationship with the French Enlightenment;<sup>11</sup> altarpieces painted for Parisian churches;<sup>12</sup> paintings of newly canonised saints;<sup>13</sup> the religious works of Giambattista Tiepolo<sup>14</sup> as well as their relationship with secular philosophy;<sup>15</sup> and the role of art in the development of new forms of popular piety.<sup>16</sup>

However, a subject that is vital to the understanding of the period's religious paintings has received scant attention so far: the contemporary exegesis of the Bible and related textual sources such as the Apocrypha. This concerns especially the impact that changes in interpretation in the eighteenth century had on depictions of the corresponding episodes. If John Richardson advised history painters to depict the most telling moment of the narrative while 'keeping within the bounds of probability',<sup>17</sup>

<sup>11</sup> Schieder 1997.

<sup>12</sup> Savignac 2002.

<sup>13</sup> Casale 1989; Schalhorn 2000.

<sup>14</sup> Barcham 1989; Whistler 1997.

<sup>15</sup> Fassel 2010.

<sup>16</sup> Seydl 2003.

<sup>17</sup> Richardson 1725, p. 41.

then locating those boundaries, especially when they were moved, is essential to our comprehension of the decisions made by artists and patrons.

In the field of biblical reception history, eighteenth-century Catholic exegesis remains, for the most part, a terra incognita. The reasons are twofold: Firstly, it occupies a position in a no-man's land between the disciplines of biblical exegesis and ecclesiastical history. Secondly, the few studies that do exist are shaped by a positivistic model of continuous progress and consider only those scholars who are seen as steps on the ladder leading to the present state of biblical studies. Thus Henning Graf Reventlow, in his treatment of the early modern period in *Epochen der Bibelauslegung*, explains that he aims to consider the Western European countries 'entsprechend ihrer Bedeutung für die Entwicklung des Bibelverständnisses'.<sup>18</sup>

Most modern studies approach seventeenth- and eighteenth-century exegesis from a purely Anglo-German Protestant perspective, with the Catholic contribution presented as 'durch dogmatische Schranken gehemmt' and therefore irrelevant.<sup>19</sup> However, this perceived irrelevance may be a self-fulfilling prophecy, since scholarship has barely scratched the surface of eighteenth-century Catholic exegesis. For example, the chapter 'The Bible in the Roman Catholic Church from Trent to the

<sup>18</sup> Reventlow 2001, p. 9.

<sup>19</sup> Reventlow 2001, p. 9.

Present Day’ in the *Cambridge History of the Bible* does not consider any authors between Richard Simon (1638–1712) and John Henry Newman (1801–1890).<sup>20</sup> Simon, the one Catholic author who is discussed regularly, came into conflict with Church authorities, which may heighten his appeal to modern scholars but severely curtailed his influence in the Catholic world of his own time.<sup>21</sup>

The Anglican scholar John Sandys-Wunsch has pointed out that until the end of the seventeenth century, ‘Roman Catholic commentators were as esteemed as their Protestant counterparts, and not just in Roman Catholic areas. [...] It is only because histories of exegesis tend to be written by Protestants that this important fact appears to have been forgotten.’<sup>22</sup> Moreover, it would be difficult to argue that the Church closed its ‘dogmatische Schranken’ only after 1700. On the contrary, controls became so loose that in 1752, Benedict XIV lamented that ‘fuori Roma è difficile il far capire che uomini di simil calibro scrivano quello che scrivono senza permissione o espressa, o tacita del Papa’.<sup>23</sup> Sandys-Wunsch concedes that early modern Catholic exegesis ‘needs investigation’ and ‘deserves its own treatment’, but does not provide that treatment

<sup>20</sup> *Cambridge History of the Bible* 1963, pp. 199–237.

<sup>21</sup> See Cotoni 1984, pp. 14–30; Reventlow 2001, pp. 87–92, 406; Müller 2004, esp. pp. 84–88; Sandys-Wunsch 2005, pp. 154–60.

<sup>22</sup> Sandys-Wunsch 2005, p. 98.

<sup>23</sup> Benedict XIV to Pierre Guérin de Tencin, 27 December 1752. Transcribed in Morelli 1955–84, vol. II, p. 535.

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because he believes that ‘it was to be mainly within a Protestantism with the burr of Judaism under its saddle in which modern biblical studies were worked out’.<sup>24</sup> Once more, a present-day yardstick of influence is applied retroactively, and the question of which authors and biblical commentaries were influential in the eighteenth century itself remains unanswered.

Italy in particular is the elephant in the room of the history of eighteenth-century biblical interpretation. The volume *Le siècle des Lumières et la Bible*, the most comprehensive recent treatment of the subject, discusses France, Germany, England, Portugal, Romania, North America, China, and islands in the Indian Ocean, but not Italy.<sup>25</sup> The current state of engagement with the history of exegetical scholarship across confessional boundaries could be considered a regression. The Pietist Johann Jacob Rambach (1693–1735) named the Benedictine abbot Dom Augustin Calmet (1672–1757) as a noteworthy ‘Papist theologian’,<sup>26</sup> while Benedict XIV referenced numerous Protestant authors in his treatises. They are usually described as ‘eretico’ or ‘eterodosso,’ not in a pejorative sense but to indicate a difference in doctrinal viewpoints, and their Protestantism did not prevent the Pope from approvingly citing their historical scholarship.<sup>27</sup>

<sup>24</sup> Sandys-Wunsch 2005, pp. 228–29, n. 15.

<sup>25</sup> Belaval and Bourel 1986.

<sup>26</sup> Rambach 1738, p. 44.

<sup>27</sup> Benedict XIV 1740, passim; Benedict XIV 1747a, passim; Benedict XIV 1747b, passim.

A similar concentration on the Protestant world at the expense of Rome characterises many synthetic studies of eighteenth-century religious art. In a recent volume on the subject, only one out of 110 illustrations shows a work of art made in Rome, while forty-seven are British.<sup>28</sup> A centre of spiritual and temporal power sitting at the hub of a vast cultural network, Rome was a voting citizen of the Republic of Letters, and the tourists, secular and ecclesiastical diplomats, scholars, cardinals, bishops, and heads of religious orders flowing into and out of the city ensured a constant exchange of ideas, books, and works of art with the rest of Italy and Europe.<sup>29</sup> The availability of foreign and especially French books was further enhanced by booksellers specialising in their importation, and while the paintings examined here are Roman, the tools necessary to understand them were as often originally written in French or Latin as in Italian.

Batoni's profound personal piety fascinated contemporary observers such as Johann Heinrich Wilhelm Tischbein (1751–1829): 'Jeden Morgen um vier Uhr, es mochte schon Tag oder noch dunkel sein, ging er zur Kirche, um die Messe zu hören, im Winter mit einem Laternchen'.<sup>30</sup> It is the intent and hope of the present study to provide such a little lantern in

<sup>28</sup> Aston 2009.

<sup>29</sup> See Barroero and Susinno 2000, esp. pp. 67–69; Caffiero, Donato, and Romano 2005, esp. pp. 173, 196–97.

<sup>30</sup> Tischbein 1956, 246. See also Puhmann 1979, p. 27.

order to illuminate some of the sacred works that he loved more than any of his other artistic children.

Biblical passages are quoted from the Douay-Rheims translation in the version edited by Richard Challoner in 1749–52, since this version, being translated directly from the Vulgate, offers the greatest proximity to the Latin text in use in eighteenth-century Rome.





## **II. Painting as Visual Exegesis: Reading, Interpreting, and Depicting the Bible**

### **II.1 Chickens and Doves: Misreading the Gospel**

At some point in 1735 or 1736, Pompeo Batoni had what must have been a highly embarrassing meeting with Cardinal Angelo Maria Querini (1680–1755), the bishop of Brescia and one of his earliest and most loyal supporters. They had known each other since 1731, when the young artist had found himself in a dire predicament: At short notice, he was asked to vacate the space he had been occupying in Palazzo Pamphili to work on his first altarpiece, *The Virgin and Child with the Blessed Castora, Forte, Pietro, and Saint Rodolfo* for the Camaldolese monastery church of San Gregorio al Celio in Rome.<sup>31</sup> The Venetian cardinal, a benefactor of the monastery, stepped in and granted the painter the free use of a large room in Palazzo di San Marco (now Palazzo Venezia), his official residence. Batoni gratefully accepted and was not only allowed to set up a temporary studio, he also exhibited the finished canvas in Palazzo di San Marco on 30 August 1733. As a token of his gratitude, Batoni presented the cartoon for the altarpiece to Querini, who hung it in his apartments.<sup>32</sup>

The cardinal was an active and enthusiastic patron of the arts who donated altarpieces and statues to churches and monasteries in both Rome

<sup>31</sup> 1730–33, oil on canvas, 378 x 214 cm, Rome, San Gregorio al Celio. See Clark and Bowron 1985, pp. 209–10, cat. no. 2, fig. 6; Pedrocchi 1993, pp. 161–69, fig. 133.

<sup>32</sup> See Benaglio 1894, pp. 48–57.

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and his episcopal see.<sup>33</sup> For the high altar of Brescia's new cathedral, he commissioned an altarpiece of the Assumption of the Virgin from Giacomo Zoboli.<sup>34</sup> Announcing the commission in a 'Lettera a' Parochi sopra la Fabbrica del nuovo Duomo' in August 1732, he emphasised that he had already been shown a bozzetto and that it met with his approval:

'Ordinammo nell'istesso tempo pure a Roma il gran quadro, che ha da occupare tutta la facciata di mezzo del Coro, avendo scelto a tal fine uno de' più eccellenti, ed accreditati Pennelli di quella Città, e l'abbozzetto, che ci fu fatto vedere prima di partire, non ci lascia dubitare, che sia per riuscire anche questo un lavoro degno del Tempio.'<sup>35</sup>

Querini was a demanding client who closely followed his commissions. When Zoboli's altarpiece had been installed in Brescia and the cardinal celebrated Mass in front of it for the first time, he pointed out in his sermon that the 'altare, candellieri, e quadro, abbiamo avuto a cuore di far lavorare in Roma sotto gli occhi nostri'.<sup>36</sup>

There can be little doubt that Querini took the same hands-on approach when he awarded his next major commission to a far less experienced and established painter than Zoboli was in the mid-1730s, namely the young

<sup>33</sup> See Guerrini 1950; Baroncelli 1961; Fusari 2009.

<sup>34</sup> 1732–35, oil on canvas, 650 x 350 cm, Brescia, Duomo Nuovo. See Noack 1991.

<sup>35</sup> Querini 1746a, pp. 42–43.

<sup>36</sup> Querini 1746b, p. 78.

Batoni. This altarpiece, the *Presentation in the Temple* (fig. 1),<sup>37</sup> was a donation from the cardinal to Santa Maria della Pace in Brescia.<sup>38</sup> The new Oratorian church was designed by the Venetian architect Giorgio Massari (1687–1766), under construction from 1719 onwards, and consecrated in 1746.<sup>39</sup> Setting out to create the enormous canvas (505 x 257 cm) required to fill the back wall of Massari's sanctuary, the ambitious young painter was well aware that this was a make-or-break moment in his emerging career. He worked hard, making 'disegni, modelli, studi senza fine, e tutto dal vero', as his early biographer, Francesco Benaglio (1708–1759), recorded.<sup>40</sup>

<sup>37</sup> 1735–36, oil on canvas, 505 x 257 cm, Brescia, Santa Maria della Pace. See Clark and Bowron 1985, p. 211, cat. no. 5, fig. 11; Begni Redona 1995, pp. 111–16; Lucca 2008, pp. 226–27, cat. no. 16.

<sup>38</sup> See Sambuca 1745, pp. 23–24: '[...] loro maestoso Tempio [Santa Maria della Pace], dove S.E. [Cardinal Querini] ha fatto fare a sue spese l'Altar Maggiore, e vi ha donato il Quadro rappresentante la Purificazione di M.V. Titolo della Chiesa, e lavoro del celebre pennello di cotesto Pompeo Battoni Lucchese.' Antonio Sambuca (1690–1764) was Querini's secretary.

<sup>39</sup> See Volta 1995, esp. p. 79: Massari submitted his design for the high altar on 22 September 1734.

<sup>40</sup> Benaglio 1894, p. 59. A sketch, 70 x 41 cm, now untraced, sold as Francesco Trevisani in the Bossi sale, Munich, Galerie Hugo Helbing, 29 September 1917, lot 55, may have been a sketch, in reverse, for the composition of the *Presentation in the Temple*. This possibility is supported by a study for the legs of the Christ Child and the head of the acolyte (Edinburgh, National Gallery of Scotland, inv. no. D 2146), which shows the

In his choice of visual sources, Batoni paid an expected homage to the Roman Seicento by reversing the kneeling acolyte in Domenichino's *Last Communion of Saint Jerome* (fig. 2)<sup>41</sup> and putting him on his feet at the left of the composition. More importantly, he acknowledged a prominent model in the Oratorian mother church in Rome, Santa Maria in Vallicella: Federico Barocci's *Presentation of the Virgin* (fig. 3).<sup>42</sup> In a generational shift, Batoni's Virgin Mary inherits her mother's head and hairstyle, while his Saint Joseph borrows the head of Saint Joachim. The high priest follows Barocci less closely but is still recognisable.

While such carefully chosen references were likely to please the work's knowledgeable patron, the young painter must have felt some trepidation when meeting with him to present the modello (fig. 4), probably around late 1735 or early 1736.<sup>43</sup> Running his eye over the composition, Cardinal

child's legs in a position suggesting that Mary is presenting the Christ Child from the left to the priest at right, reversing the final composition, with the acolyte's head also reversed. For an illustration of the drawing, see Bowron 1982, p. 85, cat. no. 59. For an additional drawing (Besançon, Musée des Beaux-Arts et d'Archéologie, inv. no. D 1421), see Legrand 1990, p. 503, fig. 4.

<sup>41</sup> 1614, oil on canvas, 419 x 256 cm, Vatican City, Musei Vaticani, Pinacoteca. See Spear 1982, vol. I, pp. 175–78, cat. no. 41.

<sup>42</sup> 1593–1603, oil on canvas, 383 x 247 cm, Rome, Santa Maria in Vallicella. See Emiliani 2008, vol. II, pp. 249–51.

<sup>43</sup> 1735–36, oil on canvas, 97 x 48 cm, private collection. See Clark and Bowron 1985, p. 211, cat. no. 4, fig. 9, pl. 2.

Querini would have been puzzled when he discovered an iconographic incongruence, followed by an eruption of laughter when he realised its origin: At the bottom of the steps, Batoni had placed two chickens, which the woman at far left wearing a headscarf is pointing out to her sitting companion with her back to the viewer.

In his diligent preparation, Batoni had obviously consulted the biblical source for the episode of the presentation of the Christ Child in the temple. The description in Luke 2:22–38 refers to two Old Testament precedents for this event, the presentation of the firstborn son in the temple in 1 Samuel 1:25 and the postnatal purification of the mother in Leviticus 12:6–8.<sup>44</sup> The former source stipulates a calf and the latter a lamb as the offering, but the Virgin Mary and Joseph were able to avail themselves of a concession to the poor granted in Leviticus 12:8 and substitute two turtle doves or pigeons for the usual sacrificial animals:

‘And when the days of her purification are expired, for a son, or for a daughter, she shall bring to the door of the tabernacle of the testimony, a lamb of a year old for a holocaust, and a young pigeon or a turtle for sin, and shall deliver them to the priest: Who shall offer them before the Lord, and shall pray for her, and so she shall be cleansed from the issue of her blood. This is the law for her that beareth a man child or a maid child. And if her hand find not sufficiency, and she is not able to offer a lamb, she shall take two

<sup>44</sup> See Bovon 1989, p. 138.

turtles, or two young pigeons, one for a holocaust, and another for sin: and the priest shall pray for her, and so she shall be cleansed.’

(Leviticus 12:6–8)

The episode of the Presentation in the Temple therefore comprises two distinct rituals, the presentation of the child and the purification of the mother, each requiring its own sacrificial offering.<sup>45</sup> In Batoni’s composition, the Virgin is shown in the act of presenting her infant to the priest, who is about to receive it in his arms. Behind her, a boy holds a basket with two white doves, the sacrifice for the presentation of the child. With a gesture of his right arm, Joseph instructs the boy to deliver the basket to the entrance of the temple in accordance with Leviticus 12:6, since only the priest is authorised to perform the sacrifice.

It was the offering for the second ritual, the purification of the mother, that caused Batoni to stumble and earned him Querini’s mirth. In the Latin of the Clementine Vulgate, the only Bible text that would have been available to him in the Rome of the 1730s (see section II.2), the choice of words emphasises that the purification in Leviticus 12 is the prefiguration of the Purification of the Virgin in Luke 2: the sacrifice is described as ‘duos turtures vel duos pullos columbarum’ in Leviticus 12:8 and as ‘par turturum, aut duos pullos columbarum’ in Luke 2:24. Later in his career, as an established artist with a circle of clerical friends, Batoni had easy

<sup>45</sup> For a comparison between the practice described by Luke and the stipulations of Mosaic law, see Shorr 1946, p. 17.

access to books and advisers that could help him interpret a Latin text correctly. At this point, however, he had to rely on homemade exegesis and misunderstood the text, reading *pullos* as chicken (his confusion presumably due to the word's closeness to the Italian *pollo*), not as the modifier designating the *columba* as young and female. Thus the Virgin Mary's two companions, who are waiting for the second part of the ceremony at bottom left and are looking after the required offering while the child is being presented, were given a pair of chickens instead of doves (fig. 5). The erudite cardinal, an excellent Latinist who served as prefect of the Vatican Library in addition to his episcopal duties, would doubtlessly have been greatly amused by Batoni's linguistic faux pas.

Though creating considerable embarrassment for an artist keen to prove himself, the mistake was easily rectified and in the finished altarpiece, the chickens were duly replaced by doves in a wooden cage (fig. 6). Further changes to the composition that Querini appears to have requested include advancing Joseph in age. In the final altarpiece, the saint has lost hair, and what remains has gone from salt-and-pepper to light grey. The modello also shows a major pentimento of an arch above the figure of Joseph, suggesting a completely different architectural background that cannot have included the round *tempietto*. This last modification was so significant that the cardinal seems to have asked Batoni for a revised sketch, with the artist altering his modello and re-submitting it.

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## II.2 The Reception of the Bible and the Role of Latin versus the Vernacular

The greater significance of Batoni's scriptural gaffe lies in the light it sheds on the role of the Bible text as a source for eighteenth-century artists' concetti, and the questions it raises about the accessibility of Scripture and exegesis to artists. In the creation of religious pictures with biblical themes, painters drew – explicitly or implicitly, consciously or subconsciously – upon a variety of sources: The visual tradition of depicting a particular subject; the biblical passage itself; the prevailing interpretation of the biblical passage; and the wider intellectual context of how the biblical text was perceived and received. It was also far from rare for some of these sources to contradict each other.

Modern notions of the degree of access to the Bible available to the laity in eighteenth-century Rome seem to have evolved little since a British satire of 1745: With anti-Catholic sentiment running high during the Jacobite invasion of Scotland, a procession in the English town of Deptford, in addition to effigies of the Pope and the Pretender to be burnt later in the day, included the figure of a Capuchin friar carrying a standard with the inscription 'Indulgences cheap as dirt, viz. murder, 9d. Adultery, 9½d. Reading the bible, 1000£. Fornication, 4¾d. Perjury, 0.'<sup>46</sup>

This view of a Church that considered the reading of the Bible by laymen a severe, punishable transgression has its roots in the ten rules of

<sup>46</sup> See Haydon 1993, p. 134.



the Index promulgated in the aftermath of the Council of Trent by Pius IV in the bull ‘*Dominici gregis custodiae*’ of 24 March 1564.<sup>47</sup> The fourth rule stipulated that it was left to the judgement of the bishop, in consultation with the local parish priest, to grant permissions for reading the Bible in the vernacular (reading it in Latin, while impossible for the large majority of the population, was not in fact proscribed), with the stated goal of strengthening the reader’s faith and piety. The rule also mandated that translations must be prepared by Catholic authors.<sup>48</sup> In a short-lived tightening of restrictions, Alexander VII added all Bible translations in any language to the Index of prohibited books in 1664.<sup>49</sup> This included texts that paraphrased, summarised, or re-narrated Scripture, but the ban seems to have been silently dropped around 1700, triggering a wave of new publications in this genre in the early decades of the eighteenth century (discussed below).

<sup>47</sup> See Malou 1846, vol. I, pp. 16, 40; Wolf 2006, pp. 31, 34. For a chronologically broader analysis, see Fragnito 2005.

<sup>48</sup> *Enchiridion symbolorum* 1991, p. 585, no. 1854: ‘Cum experimento manifestum sit, si sacra Biblia vulgari lingua passim sine discrimine permittantur, plus inde ob hominum temeritatem detrimenti quam utilitatis oriri, hac in parte iudicio episcopi aut inquisitoris stetur, ut cum consilio parochi vel confessarii Bibliorum a catholicis auctoribus versorum lectionem in vulgari lingua eis concedere possint, quos intellexerint ex huiusmodi lectione non damnum, sed fidei atque pietatis augmentum capere posse.’

<sup>49</sup> See Wolf 2006, p. 32.

By the middle of the Settecento, prominent scholars in the Roman Curia and elsewhere in Italy advocated the liberalisation and wider distribution of Bible translations.<sup>50</sup> Giovanni Gaetano Bottari (1689–1775), who served as Consultor to the Congregation of the Index from 1741 and to the Holy Office from 1751, argued that preventing those who did not read Latin from reading the Bible amounted to ‘o si vuol far sì che la moltitudine non conosca la legge di Dio o si pretende di saperle spiegare questa legge in modo migliore di quello, che abbia fatto lo Spirito Santo’.<sup>51</sup> When the Savoyard cardinal Carlo Vittorio Amedeo delle Lanze (1712–1784) asked Benedict XIV for a blanket permission for the House of Savoy, the Pope readily granted ‘la licenza a tutta la famiglia di Savoia Carignano, alla Contessa di Buonfalcone, governatrice delle Principesse della detta famiglia, di leggere in lingua francese la Bibbia d’un’edizione ben purgata e non sospetta’.<sup>52</sup>

In a decree of the Congregation of the Index dated 13 June 1757, Benedict XIV implemented a new interpretation of the fourth rule of the

<sup>50</sup> See Stella 1967, p. 329. See also Stella 2008, p. 55, on parallels between the availability of the Bible in the vernacular and the simultaneous increase in publications of patristic texts translated into Italian in the second half of the eighteenth century.

<sup>51</sup> Rome, Biblioteca Corsiniana, ms. Cors. 1878, ‘Se si debba tradurre in volgare gli Evangelii di Gesù Cristo e qualche altra parte della S. Scrittura’. Transcribed in Jemolo 1928, p. 253. See also Calabrese 1998.

<sup>52</sup> Benedict XIV to Carlo Vittorio Amedeo delle Lanze, 29 November 1749. Transcribed in Cibrario 1861, p. 265.

index, allowing anyone to read Bible translations that had been approved by the Holy See or included annotations that were either drawn from the church fathers or by qualified Catholic authors.<sup>53</sup> This decree amended only the application of the fourth rule of the Index; the rule itself was unchanged and its wording remained identical in the edition of the Index published in 1758 compared to the previous edition of 1752 (and earlier editions).<sup>54</sup>

Still lacking, however, was an approved translation. The only other significant Italian-language version in existence was unacceptable, having been published by the Calvinist Giovanni Diodati in Geneva in 1607.<sup>55</sup> In connection with the decree permitting Bible translations, Benedict XIV suggested to Cardinal delle Lanze in 1757 that a new translation should be undertaken, and the abbot of the Superga monastery in Turin, Antonio Martini (1721–1809), later archbishop of Florence, was recruited for the task, but was not able to begin the translation in earnest until 1765, when he resigned his duties at the Superga and received a benefice.<sup>56</sup> In July 1767, Martini revealed to Antonio Niccolini (1701–1769):

<sup>53</sup> *Codicis iuris canonici fontes* 1923–39, vol. VII, p. 724, no. 5145: ‘Quod si huiusmodi Bibliorum versiones vulgari lingua fuerint ab Apostolica Sede approbatae, aut editae cum annotationibus desumptis ex Sanctis Ecclesiae Patribus vel ex doctis catholicisque viris, conceduntur.’

<sup>54</sup> *Index librorum prohibitorum* 1752, p. iv; *Index librorum prohibitorum* 1758, p. ii.

<sup>55</sup> See Stella 1967, p. 326.

<sup>56</sup> See Stella 1981, pp. 107–8; Stella 1967, p. 327.

‘Io voglio cominciare a farle confidenza di un segreto, che finora tengo molto custodito qua tra alcuni pochi amici e padroni. Io lavoro a una Versione del Nuovo Testamento collazionato col testo originale, e arricchita di note e di riflessioni, ma brevi quanto si può, essendo questo lavoro fatto non per i dotti ma per il popolo. L’idea di questo lavoro venne dalla santa memoria di Benedetto XIV.’<sup>57</sup>

The six volumes of Martini’s *Nuovo Testamento del Signor Nostro Gesù Cristo secondo la Volgata tradotto in lingua italiana, e di annotazioni arricchito*, translated from the Vulgate with reference to the Greek text, appeared in Turin in 1769–71.<sup>58</sup> The Old Testament followed in seventeen volumes in 1776–81. Within a few years, further editions were published in Naples, Turin, Catania, and Florence. The translation was officially sanctioned by Pius VI in 1778.<sup>59</sup> Martini’s rendering ‘Venga il tuo regno, sia fatta la tua volontà’ remains in use in the Italian version of the Our Father today.

By the end of the century, the Martini translation had found its way into the hands of history painters such as Antonio Cavallucci, whose post-mortem inventory included ‘Il Vecchio Testamento secondo la Volgata tradotto in Lingua Italiana, ed illustrato con Note, Tomi sedici, opera

<sup>57</sup> Antonio Martini to Antonio Niccolini, July 1767. Transcribed in Guasti 1899, p. 736.

<sup>58</sup> *Nuovo Testamento* 1769–71.

<sup>59</sup> See Malou 1846, vol. I, p. 66.

anonima / Altri Tomi Sei del novo Testamento dell'istessa Edizione Napolitana'.<sup>60</sup>

But prior to the 1770s, the only alternatives available to Batoni and other Roman artists who wanted to have an Italian text at hand in the studio consisted of so-called biblical paraphrases. This genre had developed primarily in seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century France,<sup>61</sup> and as soon as the restrictions on vernacular paraphrases instituted by Alexander VII were no longer enforced, Italian presses began producing these books in considerable numbers. While the originals were not always acknowledged and sometimes deliberately disguised, most of the texts were translations of French publications.

The paraphrases became so numerous that they warranted their own section in the Biblioteca Corsiniana in Rome, as a description of the library's holdings by Giuseppe Querci, Bottari's successor as librarian,

<sup>60</sup> Rome, Archivio di Stato, 30 Notai Capitolini, ufficio 7, Bernardino Aloisio Poggioli, 1795, vol. 456, fols. 627r–671r, post-mortem inventory of Antonio Cavallucci, 12 December 1795, fol. 657v, 'Nota dei Libri esistenti nel descritto Credenzino dello Studiolo'. Transcribed in Roettgen 2011, p. 279.

<sup>61</sup> Italian examples published prior to the prohibition imposed by Alexander VII in 1664 include Giovanni Stefano Menocchio's *Historia sacra della vita, attioni, doctrina, miracoli, passioni, morte, risurretione e salita al cielo del n. Redentore, Salvatore Gesù Cristo* (Rome, 1653) and his *Historia sacra degi Atti degli Apostoli* (Rome, 1654).

records.<sup>62</sup> Among the most popular books of this type were accounts of the life of Christ, which collated information from all four Gospels into a chronological narrative. Since their titles were all variations on the same theme, it is impossible to determine which precise publication is recorded in Pier Leone Ghezzi's library, inventoried after the death of his widow in 1762, as 'Vita di G. Cristo latina, e volgare'.<sup>63</sup>

Among the first to be translated from the French were the works of Augustin Calmet. His *La storia della vita e de' miracoli di Gesu Cristo, tratta dalla storia del Vecchio e Nuovo Testamento*, in a translation by 'Selvaggio Canturani', a pseudonym for Arcangelo Agostini (c. 1660–1746), who had previously translated books by Bossuet and Fleury, appeared in Venice in 1723. This was followed two years later by Calmet's paraphrase of the entire Bible, *La storia dell'Antico e Nuovo Testamento*, also translated by Agostini.<sup>64</sup> While publications of this nature were now

<sup>62</sup> *Novelle letterarie*, 16 (1755), no. 10, 7 March 1755, pp. 151–52. The categories concerning Scripture include Bibles in multiple languages, concordances, interpretations, commentaries, and paraphrases.

<sup>63</sup> Rome, Archivio di Stato, 30 Notai Capitolini, ufficio 25, Pietro Placenti, 10 October 1762, fols. 285r–330r, at fol. 310v, no. 1110. Transcribed in Dorati da Empoli 2008, p. 438. For another similar publication, see p. 418, no. 428: 'Modo facile per imparare La Storia della Sacra Bibbia' (i.e., *Modo facile per imparare tutta la storia della Sagra Bibbia tradotta dal francese in italiano per utile della gioventù*, published in multiple editions in the first half of the eighteenth century).

<sup>64</sup> Calmet 1725.

tolerated, the fourth rule of the index regarding the reading of Bible translations was still in force, and the so-called paraphrases were able to skirt the ban even though they contained direct translations from the Vulgate.<sup>65</sup> In practice, therefore, the restrictions applied less to reading the Bible in the vernacular than to reading the Bible without a commentary explaining ambiguous passages or contradictions between passages.

Probably the most successful of the life of Christ paraphrases was the *Istoria della vita, dottrina, e miracoli di Gesù Cristo Signor Nostro Secondo il Testo de' quattro Evangelisti con note diverse sopra le principali difficoltà dell'Evangelio*, first published in 1730 in Urbino. A second edition, dedicated to Benedict XIV, appeared in Rome in 1748, followed by third and fourth editions in Naples in 1757 and 1767.<sup>66</sup> Neither author nor translator are named, and the preface muddies the waters by claiming that the text is a compilation of translated excerpts from foreign-language works, none of which are identified. It goes on to explain that

<sup>65</sup> For example, Calmet 1725, vol. II, p. 270, John 4:16–18: 'Gesù le disse: Andate, chiamate vostro Marito, e qui ritornate. Ella rispose: Io non ho Marito. Gesù replicolle: Avete ragione di dire che non avete Marito; perché cinque ne avete avuti, e quello che di presente avete, non è vostro Marito.' The passage is translated almost word for word from the Vulgate: 'Dicit ei Iesus: Vade, voca virum tuum, et veni huc. Respondit mulier, et dixit: Non habeo virum. Dicit ei Iesus: Bene dixisti, quia non habeo virum: quinque enim viros habuisti, et nunc, quem habes, non est tuus vir: hoc vere dixisti.'

<sup>66</sup> *Istoria della vita* 1730; 2nd ed. Rome: Pagliarini, 1748; 3rd ed. Naples: Gessari, 1755; 4th ed. Naples: Gessari, 1767.

‘questa [opera] consiste primieramente nel ridurre il Testo Evangelico di tutti quattro gli Evangelisti in un sol corpo d’Istoria [...]. Secondariamente consiste nell’agevolare l’intelligenza del Testo con diverse Note; le quali contengono il sentimento de’ Padri, e de’ più celebri Interpreti sopra le principali difficoltà dell’Evangelio.’<sup>67</sup>

These extensive annotations make up more than half the text. The uncredited French original is *La Vie du Sauveur du monde Jésus-Christ, tirée du texte des quatre évangélistes, réduits en un corps d’histoire* by the Jesuit Bernardin de Montereul (1596–1646), first published in Paris in 1637, in one of its later editions revised by Jean Brignon (1626–1712).<sup>68</sup>

The impetus and presumably also the funding for the *Istoria della vita, dottrina, e miracoli di Gesù Cristo Signor Nostro* came from Cardinal Annibale Albani (1682–1751), who had it published in his hometown of Urbino.<sup>69</sup> His coat of arms decorates the title page. In 1747, one year before the second edition appeared in Rome, Albani initiated the publication of the *Atti degli apostoli con note dal francese*, dedicated to

<sup>67</sup> *Istoria della vita* 1730, unpaginated preface.

<sup>68</sup> Paris: Camusat, 1637. Further editions: Paris: Camusat, 1639; Paris: Camusat, 1651; Lyon: Devenet, 1660; Paris: Roulland, 1694. A different Italian translation, which does credit Montereul as the author and follows the French original more closely, was published as *La vita di Gesù Cristo, tratta dai quattro Evangelj, e ridotta in un corpo di storia*, Venice: Occhi, 1748; 2nd ed. Venice: Occhi, 1759.

<sup>69</sup> See Stella 2006, pp. 157–58.



Benedict XIV.<sup>70</sup> The two-column layout, Latin on the inside, Italian on the outside, effectively drops the fig leaf of the ‘paraphrase’ and acknowledges that the text is in fact a verse-by-verse translation from the Vulgate. The notes are sparse, accounting for around ten per cent of the text, and are derived (without crediting the source) from the *Réflexions morales avec des notes sur le Nouveau Testament traduit en françois et la concorde des quatre évangélistes* by the Jesuit Jacques-Philippe Lallemand (1660–1748).<sup>71</sup> The book, which carries an imprimatur, demonstrates that at this point in the 1740s, in part due to the support or at least the acquiescence of Benedict XIV, the emphasis had shifted from commentary and explanation to giving the reader direct access to the words of the Bible. The preface is addressed to the Pope and signed by ‘Il Traduttore’, who remains anonymous, but a copy formerly owned by the eighteenth-century Oratorian librettist Gregorio Giacomo Terribilini (dates unknown, active mid-eighteenth century) is inscribed on the title page in an eighteenth-century hand, directly below the printed ‘con note’: ‘Tradotti dal Cardinale Annibale Albani’.<sup>72</sup> The preface emphasises the connection with Albani’s previous projects, the *Istoria della vita, dottrina, e miracoli di Gesù Cristo*

<sup>70</sup> *Atti degli apostoli* 1747. See Stella 1981, p. 105.

<sup>71</sup> 12 vols., Paris: Montalant, 1714–25. The commentary on Acts appears in vol. V (1716). See Stella 2006, p. 158. For Lallemand, see Ceysens 1981, esp. pp. 777–85 on the *Réflexions morales*, written in response to – and deliberately using the same title as – Quesnel’s *Réflexions morales* and published soon after the bull *Unigenitus*.

<sup>72</sup> Rome, Biblioteca Vallicelliana, shelfmark S.Borr. M. I. 52.

*Signor Nostro and the Brevissima parafrasi de' salmi di David, interpretati seguitamente con il loro senso proprio e letterale, e con l'argomento di ciaschedun salmo:*<sup>73</sup>

‘V. S. anche in altro stato [i.e., as archbishop of Bologna] si è degnata di gradire, e di approvare altre simili fatiche di chi ha intrapresa questa, e ne ha date pubbliche testimonianze nelle sue Opere stampate, così proffitevoli al Pubblico; e perciò merito compatimento, se mi persuado, che ancor questa non sarà da Lei disapprovata, anzi che crederà, che possa molto giovare, in specie agli Ecclesiastici, per i quali la S. V. ben sà, che prima di ogni altra cosa si è stampata la Vita di Gesù Cristo, secondo il Testo de i quattro Evangelii, colle sue note, e tutto il Salterio’.<sup>74</sup>

This statement also served to elegantly remind the reader that Benedict XIV himself had been in the forefront of making the Church’s Latin texts more accessible to those with limited Latin skills, in an area that closely paralleled and influenced the efforts to liberalise the reading of the Bible in the vernacular, namely the language of the liturgy. At the very end of his tenure as archbishop of Bologna, Lambertini had published the *Annotazioni sopra gli atti d’alcuni Santi, de’ quali si celebra l’Offizio, e la Messa [...] nella Diocesi di Bologna, secondo il Calendario della*

<sup>73</sup> Rome: Salvioni, 1725; 2nd ed. Rome: Pagliarini, 1749.

<sup>74</sup> *Atti degli apostoli* 1747, unpaginated preface.

*medesima, e sopra il S.to sacrificio della Messa.*<sup>75</sup> In the preface, he explained that ‘si è eletto di scrivere in lingua Italiana, e non in lingua Latina, per essere la lingua Italiana più usuale, e più proficua all’intento.’<sup>76</sup> The Pope’s preference for the vernacular was doubtlessly also shaped by his own working methods: He drafted and edited his texts in Italian, even if the large majority of them were immediately translated into and published only in Latin.<sup>77</sup>

In 1745, Benedict XIV asked Jacopo Facciolati (1682–1769)<sup>78</sup> in Padua to prepare a second Italian edition of the work, at the Pope’s own expense.<sup>79</sup> The author’s pastoral remit having grown substantially since

<sup>75</sup> *Annotazioni sopra gli atti d’alcuni Santi, de’ quali si celebra l’Offizio, e la Messa, per lo più senza la Lezione proprie nella Diocesi di Bologna, secondo il Calendario della medesima, e sopra il S.to sacrificio della Messa*, published as vol. II of Benedict XIV 1740. See Brandolini 1974, pp. 450–58; Hermans 1979, pp. 164–72; Anzuini 2011; Sodi 2011, pp. 190–204.

<sup>76</sup> Benedict XIV 1740, vol. I, pp. xxii–xxiii.

<sup>77</sup> See Benedict XIV to Pier Francesco Peggi, 14 December 1746: ‘Le nostre Notificazioni sono già tradotte in latino ad un Padre delle Scuole Pie’. Transcribed in Benedict XIV 1888, p. 37. See also the testimony of the French ambassador in Rome, Étienne-François, Comte de Choiseul-Stainville, in Boutry 1895, pp. 289–90.

<sup>78</sup> See Boscaino 1994.

<sup>79</sup> Benedict XIV to Jacopo Facciolati, undated [c. 1745], Padua, Biblioteca Antica del Seminario Diocesano, ms. 244, fols. 34r–35v, at fol. 34r: ‘[...] desiderarsi da Noi che a spese nostre si faccia in Padova sotto la sua direzione la ristampa della nostra Opera delle Feste, e del Sacrificio della Messa colle aggiunte, quali cose sono state tutte sotto

the publication of the first edition while he was still archbishop of Bologna, the notes on local saints venerated in the city were dropped and the liturgical treatise, which accounted for more than three quarters of the text but had previously been mentioned only at the end of the long-winded descriptive title, now became the book's primary purpose. Reflecting the shift in focus, this revised Italian edition, published in Padua in 1747, was given the new title *Della S. Messa trattato istruttivo*, which was retained for the subsequent editions published in Venice and elsewhere throughout the second half of the eighteenth century.<sup>80</sup> Its principal section is devoted to a detailed commentary on the Order of Mass, offering a description and explanation of the historical development and theological significance of each prayer, gesture, and symbol of the rite and providing Italian translations of the Latin prayers. Nonetheless, quotations from Scripture and the church fathers are given in Latin, which is justified in the preface

il suo occhio, quando accudì alla stampa che si fece in Padova della medesima opera latina. Da questo discorso potrà inferire, che ora si tratta di ristampare in Padova l'Opera scritta in lingua italiana [...].’ Transcribed in Fattori 2011, p. 252. In another undated letter, written soon after the previous one, Benedict requested further additions: Padua, Biblioteca Antica del Seminario Diocesano, ms. 244, fols. 30r–31r, at fol. 30v: ‘Pensiamo intanto di far qualche aggiunta al Trattato del Sacrificio della Messa, e fatta che sarà, sul che però nemmeno possiamo impegnarci quanto al tempo, manderemo le aggiunte a Padova’. Transcribed in Fattori 2011, p. 252.

<sup>80</sup> Benedict XIV 1747a; described on the title page as ‘presa dall’esemplare dell’autore, illustrato e accresciuto in tutte le sue parti’.

as standard practice.<sup>81</sup>

In his stance on the vernacular, Benedict XIV drew a clear distinction between the clergy and the laity. The former were required to be proficient in Latin; as archbishop of Bologna, he insisted that seminarians lacking Latin skills should not be ordained to the priesthood because the Church did not permit the translation of many liturgical texts.<sup>82</sup> For the latter, he firmly believed in the power of teaching and explanation, declaring that he had written his *trattato istruttivo* primarily as a catechetical tool for priests: ‘L’unico nostro scopo si è di porre sotto l’occhio de’ nostri Sacerdoti alcune cose, che è bene, ch’essi sappiano, per istruire il Popolo, come sono obbligati di fare, sopra i Riti, le Cerimonie, e molte altre cose risguardanti il Sacrificio della Messa, e per celebrarlo anch’essi come debbono.’<sup>83</sup>

The middle decades of the eighteenth century saw a lively debate in ecclesiastical circles – in Italy and elsewhere – over the possibility of using the vernacular in at least some parts of the Mass. Most significantly, Lodovico Antonio Muratori (1672–1750) examined the question in his *Della regolata divozion de’ cristiani* of 1747. In agreement with Benedict XIV, he affirmed the use of Latin for the prayers of the Mass, ‘le quali per

<sup>81</sup> Benedict XIV 1740, vol. I, p. xxiii: ‘[...] avendo portati i testi Latini delle Divine Scritture e de’ Padri, quando è stato d’uopo citarli.’

<sup>82</sup> Benedict XIV 1733–40, vol. III, p. 6.

<sup>83</sup> Benedict XIV 1747a, vol. I, p. 1.

giusti riguardi la Chiesa continua a recitare in essa Lingua: a gloria di Dio, e in beneficio de gl'ignoranti, voglio io quì esporre la stessa Messa, e le sacrosante sue mirabili Orazioni, a chi non ne capisce il linguaggio.' To this end, Muratori offered his own explanation of the liturgical prayers and additionally referred readers to a similar endeavour by the French Oratorian Pierre Lebrun (1661–1729), published as *Explication littérale, historique et dogmatique des prières et des cérémonies de la Messe suivant les anciens auteurs* in 1716–26 and in an Italian translation by Antonio Maria Donado as *Spiegazione letterale, storica e dogmatica delle preci e delle cerimonie della messa* in 1735–42.<sup>84</sup>

Addressing the same question in *Della S. Messa*, Benedict XIV forcefully rebutted demands for the celebration of Mass in the vernacular: 'Passando all'Idioma, si celebra nella Chiesa Occidentale la Messa in lingua Latina; ed è un'infame calunnia di chi ha preteso, o pretende, ciò farsi, ad effetto che il Popolo ignori i Misterj della medesima.'<sup>85</sup> Considering the eighty-sixth of Pasquier Quesnel's 101 Jansenist propositions condemned in the bull *Unigenitus* of 1713, Lambertini scrupulously distinguished between Quesnel's own words and the interpretation they had been given by a group of French bishops arguing for the celebration of Mass in the vernacular. In his counterargument, Benedict quoted the twenty-second

<sup>84</sup> Muratori 1747, p. 204; Lebrun 1716–26; Lebrun 1735–42. See also Anzuini 2011, p. 109.

<sup>85</sup> Benedict XIV 1747a, vol. I, p. 123.

session of the Council of Trent as well as the Augustinian scholar Fulgenzio Bellelli's *Mens Augustini* of 1711<sup>86</sup> against Quesnel and the French bishops.

Having given the other side's arguments an extensive hearing,<sup>87</sup> his response was not an enforcement of existing doctrine but a careful distinction between the understanding of words and the comprehension of their meaning: 'il Popolo, tradotta la Messa in lingua volgare, ne intendesse le parole, non ne capirebbe però il senso, il che sarebbe una sorgente continua d'infiniti errori.'<sup>88</sup> Comprehension, in his view, would primarily be achieved through catechesis.<sup>89</sup> For the Mass, this meant explanation in situ, chiefly during the sermon; for the study of Scripture, the Pope felt that the catechetical function would best be fulfilled when access to the text in the vernacular was combined with annotations drawn from the church fathers or written by Catholic scholars, as he later mandated in his decree liberalising the reading of the Bible in translation.<sup>90</sup>

The questions of the vernacular Bible and the vernacular Mass

<sup>86</sup> See Stella 2006, pp. 270–94, esp. p. 273.

<sup>87</sup> Benedict XIV 1747a, vol. I, pp. 124–32.

<sup>88</sup> Benedict XIV 1747a, vol. I, p. 128.

<sup>89</sup> See Fattori 2007, pp. 443, 445, for Lambertini's insistence, as archbishop of Bologna, that parish priests were obligated to teach their parishioners at least the fundamentals of the Catholic faith and doctrine.

<sup>90</sup> See note 53.

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intersected in the Bible readings during the Mass. In *Della regolata divozion de' cristiani*, Muratori employed an anecdote to make his case for the Gospel to be read in the vernacular after it had been read in Latin:

‘Trovandomi io in viaggio pel Tirolo una Domenica mattina, e passando per un Villaggio, andai alla Parrocchiale per udire, o per celebrar Messa. Cominciava appunto il Parroco la sua coll’ intervento di Popolo numeroso. Recitato ch’ egli ebbe il Vangelo, scese dall’Altare, e venuto a i cancelli o balaustri del Presbiterio, quivi ad alta voce lesse da un Libro quello stesso Vangelo in Tedesco, perchè tale era la Lingua natia del suo Popolo. [...] Giusti motivi ha la Chiesa Occidentale di celebrare i sacri Misteri in Lingua Latina, come si faceva ne’ primi Secoli; ma da che più non intende il Popolo quella Lingua, che intendeva una volta, sembra pure, che sarebbe di consolazione, ed anche di profitto a i Fedeli ignoranti, che sono i più del Popolo, il ricevere per altra via l’intelligenza di quelle sante parole e de i celesti insegnamenti, che contiene il Vangelo.’<sup>91</sup>

In a letter to Cardinal Fortunato Tamburini (1683–1761) asking him to comment on the book’s initial draft, Muratori added: ‘Deh perchè mai non s’è introdotta e non s’introduce anche in Italia e nel rimanente del

<sup>91</sup> Muratori 1747, pp. 218–19.



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cattolicesimo sì pio costume?’<sup>92</sup>

### **II.3 Paintings as Didactic Instruments, Hindering and Helping Advances in Exegesis**

The young Batoni’s misreading of the Latin Gospel narrative of the Presentation in the Temple could have served as a textbook example to strengthen Muratori’s and Benedict XIV’s case for making the Bible in translation as well as related didactic resources widely available. If the painter of a prominent altarpiece committed an error that went unnoticed by the patron, the resulting work had the potential to disseminate the false understanding more widely and enduringly than any book. In the wake of the Council of Trent (1545–63), the responsibilities of artists as well as the overall concept of sacred art as a didactic tool had been described by Cardinal Gabriele Paleotti (1522–1597) in the *Discorso intorno alle imagini sacre e profane* of 1582.<sup>93</sup> Paleotti exhorted ‘i pittori dell’imagini sacre, che sono taciti predicatori del popolo, come più volte si è detto, ad affaticarsi con ogn’industria per conquistare più che potranno l’animo di ciascuno et apportare utilità universale a tutti.’<sup>94</sup>

Christian thought had long maintained that the most effective and enduring method of preaching and teaching was to engage the emotions,

<sup>92</sup> Lodovico Antonio Muratori to Fortunato Tamburini, c. 1743. Transcribed in Cattaneo 1977, p. 49.

<sup>93</sup> See Hecht 1997; Baumgarten 2000; Steinemann 2006.

<sup>94</sup> Paleotti 1961, pp. 496–97.

first and foremost in Saint Augustine's *De Doctrina Christiana*, where the church father cites Cicero (who is left unnamed and credited merely as 'a certain orator') with the dictum 'To teach is a necessity, to delight is a beauty, to persuade is a triumph.'<sup>95</sup> The triad of instruction, delight, and persuasion was progressively recognized as being applicable not only in the field of rhetoric but also in literature, theatre, and the visual arts. The third of these objectives, *flectere* in the Latin original, is inadequately rendered by the commonly used translation 'to persuade'; its literal meaning, 'to bend', is retained in the English adjective 'flexible', while the figurative sense in which Cicero and Saint Augustine use the verb implies that the members of the audience are won over by the orator because he successfully engages their emotions – 'to sway' is perhaps the closest approximation.

In order to persuade an often reluctant populace of the merits and necessity of virtuous behaviour, the repertoire of means that employed this technique toward the end of moral improvement was expanded to include the fine arts, thus ennobled by their enlistment in the service of social virtue. The direct analogy between the arts of rhetoric and painting as

<sup>95</sup> Saint Augustine, *De Doctrina Christiana*, IV:12:27: 'Dixit ergo quidam eloquens, et verum dixit, ita dicere debere eloquentem ut doceat, ut delectet, ut flectat. Deinde addidit: Docere necessitatis est, delectare suavitatis, flectere victoriae.' Augustine quotes two passages from Cicero, *De Oratore*, 21: 'Est igitur eloquens qui ita dicet, ut probei, ut delectet, ut flectat' and 'Probare, necessitatis est; delectare, suavitatis; flectere, victoriae.'

profitable means of instruction was also drawn in Paleotti's *Discorso*:

‘Intorno a che dicemo che, solendosi nell’arte oratoria assignare tre principali, che sono il dilettere, l’insegnare et il commovere, non è dubbio che i medesimi cadono ancor notabilmente nella pittura.’<sup>96</sup> In a note after this statement, Paleotti referred his readers to a passage from Saint Thomas Aquinas’ *Summa Theologica* that invoked the same principles of persuasion.<sup>97</sup> Further along in the treatise, he pointed to a similar parallel between writers and painters:

‘Quello poi che abbiamo detto chiamarsi ufficio del pittore, che è il mezzo per conseguire questo fine, pare a noi che da nissun altro luogo meglio si possa cogliere, che dalla stessa comparazione degli scrittori, a’ quali per ufficio dell’arte è imposto che debbano dilettere, insegnare e muovere. Parimente dunque ufficio del pittore sarà usare li stessi mezzi nella sua opera, faticandosi per formarla di maniera, che ella sia atta a dare diletto, ad insegnare e muovere l’affetto di chi la guarderà. E se bene tutti questi tre mezzi sono

<sup>96</sup> Paleotti 1961, p. 148.

<sup>97</sup> Saint Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiæ*, II-II, q. 177, a. 1, ad 1: ‘Primo quidem, ad instruendum intellectum, quod fit dum aliquis sic loquitur quod doceat. Secundo, ad movendum affectum, ut scilicet libenter audiat verbum Dei, quod fit dum aliquis sic loquitur quod auditores delectet. Quod non debet aliquis quaerere propter favorem suum, sed ut homines alliciantur ad audiendum verbum Dei. Tertio, ad hoc quod aliquis amet ea quae verbis significantur, et velit ea implere, quod fit dum aliquis sic loquitur quod auditorem flectat.’

importanti e necessari per sodisfare a quello che si deve, nientedimeno non si può negare che tra essi non siano i suoi gradi et alcuno più eccellente dell'altro, come disse quel gran Padre [i.e., Saint Augustine], parlando dell'ufficio dell'oratore: Delectare est suavitatis, docere necessitatis, flectere victoriae.'<sup>98</sup>

Like Benedict XIV two centuries later, Paleotti had occupied the post of archbishop of Bologna, and the former was extremely familiar with his celebrated predecessor's writings, referring to them repeatedly. His private library included a copy of the *Discorso* in Latin translation.<sup>99</sup> In discussing, supporting, and leveraging the visual arts as an educational and catechetical instrument, he consciously walked in Paleotti's footsteps. Benedict XIV's *Annotazioni sopra le feste di Nostro Signore e della Beatissima Vergine* appears to be a liturgical work only at first sight. While organised according to the liturgical calendar, the extensive entries for each feast day provide not only a thorough historical and exegetical analysis of the source texts, they also discuss existing works of art and give recommendations for the correct depiction of a scene.

Since the treatise's primary intended audience were priests, the future (and, at the time of the revised edition of 1747, present) Papa Lambertini

<sup>98</sup> Paleotti 1961, pp. 215–16.

<sup>99</sup> Bologna, Biblioteca Universitaria, Ms. 425, Giandomenico Giampedi [?], 'Catalogus bibliothecae domesticae SS.mi Domini Nostri Benedicti XIV P.O.M.', 1750, vol. II, p. 575; Paleotti, *De Imaginibus Sacris et profanis*, Ingolstadt, 1594.

clearly expected clerics to take an active interest in the iconographies of altarpieces commissioned for their churches, to discuss the *concetto* with the artist at an early stage, and to review a *bozzetto*, as Cardinal Querini had done with Batoni.<sup>100</sup> In another parallel with sixteenth-century ecclesiastical authors such as Johannes Molanus (1533–1585) and Paleotti, the Pope was not concerned with questions of style but with content.<sup>101</sup> Paleotti had described the idea formed in the artist's mind as the '*concetto interiore*', which found its visible expression in a '*dissegno esteriore*',<sup>102</sup> and his eighteenth-century successor's goal was to ensure historical and theological accuracy at both of these stages in the creative process.

Benedict XIV's preferred resource in the area of sacred imagery was the *Pictor Christianus eruditus*, a work written in Latin by the Spanish Mercedarian monk Juan Interián de Ayala (1656–1730)<sup>103</sup> and published in Madrid in 1730.<sup>104</sup> The inventory of the Pope's private library shows that he owned a copy of this book.<sup>105</sup> Benedict XIV cited Interián frequently in

<sup>100</sup> For the role of the *bozzetto* in the development of an altarpiece composition, see Roettgen 2009.

<sup>101</sup> See Hecht 1997, pp. 210, 405, 410.

<sup>102</sup> Paleotti 1961, pp. 134, 136.

<sup>103</sup> See Sanz Sanz 1991, esp. pp. 107–8; Mestre Sanchis 2002.

<sup>104</sup> Interián 1730. See Monterroso 1998; Zuriaga Senent 2000. For an extensive summary of the treatise, see Tello and Sanz Sanz 1980, pp. 44–138.

<sup>105</sup> Bologna, Biblioteca Universitaria, Ms. 425, Giandomenico Giampedi [?], '*Catalogus bibliothecae domesticae SS.mi Domini Nostri Benedicti XIV P.O.M.*', 1750, vol. II, p.

the treatises written as archbishop of Bologna and continued to do so in papal documents of the 1740s, for example in the bull ‘Sollicitudini nostrae’ of 1745 regarding the correct depiction of God the Father, Christ, and the Holy Spirit, in which he is singled out as an ‘eruditus auctor’.<sup>106</sup> The Pope’s esteem for Interián is especially evident in his corrections to a draft of the bull, where he crossed out a reference to ‘praecitatus Ayala’ and replaced it with ‘laudatus Ayala’.<sup>107</sup> In his *magnum opus* on the canonisation of saints, *De Servorum Dei beatificatione et Beatorum canonizatione*, published as archbishop in 1734–38 and with the added weight of a papal author in an extended edition of 1743, Benedict XIV endorsed Interián’s book as the definitive work instructing painters on the depiction of God the Father, Christ, the Virgin Mary, angels, and saints.<sup>108</sup>

Interián’s text also discusses two types of sacred images that he wishes to prevent: firstly, those directly contradicting the faith or showing a false

575: ‘Pictor Christianus eruditus a Joanne Interian de Ayala Matrity 1730 in fol.’

<sup>106</sup> Benedict XIV 1746–57, vol. I, p. 564. For ‘Sollicitudini nostrae’, see Boespflug 1984.

<sup>107</sup> Draft: Vatican City, Archivio Segreto Vaticano, Fondo Benedetto XIV, Bolle e Costituzioni, vol. VI, fol. 347r. Final version: Benedict XIV 1746–57, vol. I, p. 567.

<sup>108</sup> Benedict XIV 1743, vol. IV/2, p. 145: ‘Est & celeberrimum Opus Patris Magistri Joannis Interiani de Ajala [...], cui titulus, Pictor christianus eruditus [...], in quo mira sane pietate & eruditione Pictores instruit, quomodo Deum, Angelos, Christum, Beatissimam Virginem, eorumque Acta, & Mysteria, et Sanctos pingere debeant, ad quod Opus lectorem remitto, cum nihil solidius hac de re afferri posse videatur.’

doctrine; secondly, those containing errors of representation.<sup>109</sup> His recommendation for the scene of the Presentation in Temple falls into the latter category: Simeon should not be shown wearing the vestments of a high priest because he was a virtuous and just man but not a priest, and the Gospel account does not refer to him as a priest.<sup>110</sup> Batoni's altarpiece for Brescia, begun five years after the publication of the *Pictor Christianus eruditus*, commits what Interián brands as 'error & ineptia':<sup>111</sup> Simeon is depicted wearing the distinctive two-horned hat of the high priest (fig. 1). The reason this had gone uncorrected – or was perhaps even preferred – by Cardinal Querini was that until recently, the question had not been quite as clear-cut as Interián would have it, and Batoni's composition could be said to reflect an archaism rather than an outright error of the kind that the sacrificial offering of chickens instead of doves had been.

In the biblical exegesis of the early modern period, the episode of the Presentation in the Temple had given rise to an intense debate over Simeon's identity. In Luke 2:25, he is described merely as 'a man in Jerusalem named Simeon, and this man was just and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel; and the Holy Ghost was in him.' The traditional understanding, put forward by scholars including Cesare Baronio (1538–1607) and Juan de Maldonado (1533–1583) in his *Commentarii in*

<sup>109</sup> See Monterroso 2001, p. 246.

<sup>110</sup> Interián 1730, p. 91.

<sup>111</sup> Interián 1730, p. 91.

*quatuor evangelistas* of 1597, was that Simeon and the high priest receiving the Christ Child in the temple were one and the same person.<sup>112</sup> But by the first half of the eighteenth century, the weight of scholarly opinion had shifted; Simeon was defrocked and considered a layman distinct from the high priest. This revised view was reflected in Bible editions, annotated paraphrases, and Bible commentaries.

In the fields of Bibles and Bible commentaries as in other subject areas, Venetian rather than Roman publishers dominated the book trade of eighteenth-century Italy.<sup>113</sup> A typical, widely-used Bible edition issued by Pezzana in Venice in 1723 illustrated the passage describing the Presentation in the Temple in the Gospel of Luke with an engraving showing the high priest, Joseph (identified with a nimbus and his rod), plus a third, elderly man: Simeon (fig. 7).<sup>114</sup>

The *Istoria della vita, dottrina, e miracoli di Gesù Cristo Signor Nostro* of 1730, the most important of the biblical paraphrases, presented the argument against Simeon's priesthood as follows:

[Simeone] lo pigliò nelle sue braccia. Alcuni Interpreti hanno concluso da questo, che Simeone era Sacerdote, e che in questa qualità pigliò Gesù per presentarlo al Signore. Ma tutto il progresso della narrazione mostra provare il contrario, nè vi è

<sup>112</sup> See Stella 1967, p. 340.

<sup>113</sup> See Pasta 1997; Pasta 2005.

<sup>114</sup> *Biblia Sacra* 1723, p. 827.



apparenza alcuna, che l'Evangelista, che rapporta esattamente tutto ciò, che riguarda il santo Vecchio, avesse omessa questa circostanza.<sup>115</sup>

Discussing the feast of the Purification of the Virgin in the *Annotazioni sopra le feste di Nostro Signore e della Beatissima Vergine*, the future Benedict XIV acknowledged both sides of the coin. Citing Interián, he pointed out that while scholarly opinion had moved towards a lay Simeon, painters continued to depict him as a priest:

‘Fra gli Eruditi si va disputando, se Simeone fosse Sacerdote, o Laico, e non parlando S. Luca del di lui Sacerdozio, la più comune opinione si è, che fosse Laico, ancorchè comunemente da’ Pittori si dipinga cogli Abiti Sacerdotali, come diffusamente va dimostrando il Padre Ayala nella sua Opera intitolata *Pictor Christianus Eruditus* stampata in Madrid l’anno 1703. [sic for 1730] al lib. 3 cap. 4.<sup>116</sup>

In naming painters as the reason why the amalgamation of Simeon with the high priest continued to persist, Benedict XIV drew not only on the *Pictor Christianus eruditus*, his preferred resource in artistic matters, but also on the Bible commentary he valued more than any other, the *Commentaire littéral sur tous les livres de l’Ancien et du Nouveau*

<sup>115</sup> *Istoria della vita* 1730, p. 21.

<sup>116</sup> Benedict XIV 1740, vol. I, p. 481.

*Testament*, the eighteenth century’s exegetical standard work by Augustin Calmet. It was first published in Paris in 1707–16, followed by a significantly enlarged edition appearing in Paris in 1724–26. Two different Latin translations appeared in Venice and Lucca respectively from 1730 onwards. It was reissued in Augsburg in 1734–35 and in numerous editions on both sides of the Alps for the remainder of the century. Even though Calmet is acknowledged in the modern literature as the eighteenth century’s most influential biblical scholar<sup>117</sup> and his commentary has been praised for its ‘scrupuleuse érudition’,<sup>118</sup> his role in the history of Biblical interpretation remains as neglected as the rest of eighteenth-century Catholic exegesis.<sup>119</sup>

Just like the *Pictor Christianus eruditus*, Calmet’s comprehensive Bible commentary was regularly cited by Benedict XIV as an authoritative reference work in official documents he issued as Pope, including the bull

<sup>117</sup> Sandys-Wunsch 2005, p. 271.

<sup>118</sup> Cotoni 1984, p. 61.

<sup>119</sup> A representative example is the cursory treatment Calmet is afforded in Sandys-Wunsch 2005, pp. 216–17. For a brief introduction to Calmet’s exegetical thought, see Schwarzbach 2002. The best study to date is Marsauche 1989; Marsauche’s unpublished doctoral dissertation, ‘Historiographie et histoire des mentalités. Étude du “Commentaire littéral” et des “Dissertations” de Dom Augustin Calmet (1672–1757)’, Université de Paris X, 1983, was not accessible to the author. Martin and Henryot 2008, a recent volume of conference proceedings, is largely devoted to Calmet as a local historian of Lorraine.

‘Sollicitudini nostrae’, as well as in the *Annotazioni sopra le feste di Nostro Signore e della Beatissima Vergine*. Written before Interián’s (who is likely to have consulted it), Calmet’s own discussion of the Presentation in the Temple admonished painters for privileging visual effect over historical accuracy:

‘D’autres ont prétendu que Siméon étoit Prêtre de la Loi. Baronius, & après lui Allatius, ont cité un grand nombre d’anciens Auteurs Chrétiens qui l’ont crû. Les nouveaux Grecs ont encore beaucoup enchéri sur les Anciens: & nos Peintres ont suivi cette opinion, comme plus propre à donner du relief, & de la grandeur à leur tableau. Mais ni l’Ecriture, ni les plus anciens, & les meilleurs Interprètes ne nous le représentent que comme un simple Laïc. S’il prend Jesus-Christ entre ses bras, ce n’est point comme Prêtre: mais dans le transport de joie, il embrasse son Sauveur, pour lui rendre un témoignage plus public, & plus solemnel de son amour.’<sup>120</sup>

Another of Benedict XIV’s favoured sources, the sixteen-volume *Mémoires pour servir à l’histoire ecclésiastique des six premiers siècles*,

<sup>120</sup> Calmet 1724–26, vol. VII, p. 458. A note after the initial ‘D’autres’ cites Juan de Maldonado’s *Commentarii in quatuor evangelistas* (1597). For the Latin version of this passage, see Calmet 1730–32, vol. VII, pp. 407–8. Since the French and Latin editions were both available in Rome, the *Commentaire littéral* is henceforth cited in the original French.

*justifiez par les citations des auteurs originaux* by the Jansenist Louis-Sébastien Le Nain de Tillemont (1637–1698), which had appeared in Paris in 1693–1712 and was republished in Venice in the original French in 1732, took a slightly more circumspect view: ‘Divers auteurs soutiennent que Simeon estoit plutost un simple laïque. Il est certain qu’il ne paroist point dutout par l’Evangile qu’il fust autre chose.’<sup>121</sup>

Among the Pope’s revisions for the second edition of the *Annotazioni sopra le feste di Nostro Signore e della Beatissima Vergine* in 1747 was the addition of a paragraph to the analysis of the Presentation in the Temple with further evidence concerning Simeon’s status:

‘Alcuni gravi Testimonj si portano pel Sacerdozio di Simeone, Atanasio, Epifanio, e Cirillo: ma le Opere, dalle quali sono estratti, sono apocrife. Teofilatto bensì, ed Eutimio espressamente dicono, che non era Sacerdote. E parlando S. Luca delle virtù di Simeone, e nulla motivando del Sacerdozio, sembra più verisimile, che non fosse Sacerdote: e quantunque dica, che benedisse: *benedixit eis Simeon*, ciò però non prova, che fosse Sacerdote: essendo frequenti gli esempj nella Divina Scrittura di alcuni, che benedissero, e non erano Sacerdoti; non essendo altro il benedire, che pregare pel bene altrui.’<sup>122</sup>

Benedict XIV’s cautious statements in 1740 and 1747 – ‘fra gli Eruditi si

<sup>121</sup> Le Nain de Tillemont 1732, p. 424.

<sup>122</sup> Benedict XIV 1747b, vol. II, pp. 289–90.

va disputando’, ‘sembra più verisimile’ – exemplify a trait he shared with Calmet: the refusal to pronounce definitive, positivistic opinions on ambiguous Scripture passages. He had explained his stance in the preface of the 1740 edition: ‘Alcune questioni si sono proposte, e non risolte, non avendovi veduto fondamento da poterle risolvere, ed avendo creduto, che l’unica utilità delle medesime consista nel saper, che vi sono, e che fra gli uomini dotti alcuni aderiscono ad una parte, altri ad un’ altra.’<sup>123</sup>

This pluralistic approach to biblical scholarship parallels (and may in fact have been inspired by) Calmet’s philosophy, as outlined in the preface to the first volume of the *Commentaire littéral*: ‘Quelquefois après avoir rapporté les divers sentiments, on laisse la chose indécise, parce qu’on ne trouve pas de quoi se déterminer à prendre un parti.’<sup>124</sup> As in the case of Benedict XIV, the multiple readings of a passage provided by Calmet might include the interpretations of Protestant or Jewish scholars in addition to the church fathers and more recent Catholic authors, including those affiliated with Jansenism.<sup>125</sup>

To painters, however, the luxury of weighing contrasting opinions without coming to a decision was not available. When preparing his *concetto* for the Presentation in the Temple altarpiece in 1735, Batoni is unlikely to have been aware of the scholarly discussion about Simeon’s

<sup>123</sup> Benedict XIV 1740, vol. I, p. xxii.

<sup>124</sup> Calmet 1724–26, vol. I, p. ii.

<sup>125</sup> See Marsauche 1989, pp. 239–40.

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status and would have relied on his clerical patron to guide him. Benedict XIV's *Annotazioni sopra le feste di Nostro Signore e della Beatissima Vergine*, which made the gist of Calmet's and Interián's French and Latin works accessible in Italian for the first time, was not yet published, and the biblical paraphrases were not yet widely disseminated.

Since Cardinal Querini preferred to carefully vet compositions by requesting a modello, he does not appear to have raised any objections to Batoni's depiction of Simeon as a priest, and it is even possible that he expressed a preference for the traditional interpretation. In matters of ecclesiastical policy, Querini could often be found fighting a conservative rearguard action against the forces of change.<sup>126</sup> At the time of his seminary education in the Benedictine order in Florence from 1696 until 1702, Maldonado's *Commentarii in quatuor evangelistas* was still the authoritative reference work. Having distinguished himself in his studies of Greek and Hebrew and served as professor of Scripture in his seminary from 1705 until 1710, Querini probably felt qualified to decide questions of biblical interpretation without recourse to the latest exegetical scholarship.<sup>127</sup>

In order to find a case where there was a demonstrable change from Simeon the priest to Simeon the layman, one has to reach beyond Roman

<sup>126</sup> For example regarding the reduction in the number of feast days advocated by Muratori; see Schöch 1995.

<sup>127</sup> See Castelli 1920.

painting to the Florentine artist Anton Domenico Gabbiani. His altarpiece of the *Presentation in the Temple*, painted in 1716–19 for the Benedictine convent church of Santa Maria degli Angeli ('di Sala') in Pistoia, includes Simeon as a bare-headed layman about to receive the Christ Child from the Virgin Mary (fig. 8).<sup>128</sup> Gabbiani was evidently asked to make this change while developing his composition: An early preparatory drawing of c. 1710 shows Simeon, in the same position and pose, as a priest wearing the two-horned hat. (fig. 9).<sup>129</sup>

Almost fifty years later, Stefano Pozzi painted the same subject for the private chapel of Cardinal Flavio Chigi *juniore* (1711–1771) in Palazzo Chigi in Rome (fig. 10).<sup>130</sup> This canvas exemplifies the extent to which the new understanding of Simeon's identity had now been absorbed by artists. When Gabbiani modified his composition, he turned the priest into a layman. The two figures behind him wearing hooded cloaks may be temple elders, but neither of them wears the distinctive priestly vestments and headgear. Simeon is present, but the temple's high priest has disappeared. Pozzi's solution, by contrast, distinguishes clearly between two equally prominent figures. The bare-headed Simeon, holding the Christ Child in

<sup>128</sup> Oil on canvas, 220 x 165 cm, Pistoia, Museo Civico. See Florence 2009, pp. 80–81, cat. no. 9 (with erroneous title 'Presentazione di Maria al Tempio').

<sup>129</sup> Florence, Gabinetto Disegni e Stampe degli Uffizi, inv. 3839 F. See Florence 2009, p. 80, fig. 1.

<sup>130</sup> 1765, oil on canvas, 118 x 90 cm, Chicago, Art Institute, inv. 1972.1133. See Pacia and Susinno 1996, pp. 124–25, 221, cat. no. 4, fig. 4.

his arms, wears ‘civilian’ attire similar to that of Joseph, who stands behind the Virgin Mary. The high priest, raised by the altar steps, extends his arms in a gesture of prayer or blessing over the Holy Family and Simeon. In accordance with Interián’s recommendation for his costume, he wears a belted tunic in addition to the customary headdress.<sup>131</sup>

By placing a strong emphasis on the separate identities of the two men, Pozzi not only demonstrated his own knowledge of the episode’s correct interpretation; the lucidity and legibility of his *concetto* promoted a better understanding of the biblical narrative, thus fulfilling the didactic function of religious painting.

<sup>131</sup> See Interián 1730, p. 93.



### III. Navigating Biblical and Unbiblical Narratives

#### III.1 An Unfamiliar New Saint

Batoni's first altarpiece for the church of Santa Maria della Pace in Brescia, the *Presentation in the Temple* (see chapter II), commissioned and paid for by Cardinal Querini and installed in early 1737, was extremely well received.<sup>132</sup> When the decoration of their new church was nearing its completion, the Oratorians accepted a proposal from a local nobleman, Pietro Emanuele Martinengo, Marchese di Pianezza (1687–1746). A contract between the congregation and Martinengo signed in February 1741 stipulated that in exchange for the right to be buried in the left transept chapel, Martinengo would underwrite the costs of the erection of its altar and commission an altarpiece for it. Whereas the paintings over the other side altars show the Oratorian founder Saint Philip Neri and saints connected to him, such as Charles Borromeo and Francis de Sales, the left transept altar was to be dedicated to Saint John Nepomuk, described in the contract as Martinengo's 'singolar protettore'.<sup>133</sup> The nobleman's personal devotion to the saint had been encouraged by a priest in his family, Monsignor Francesco Martinengo Palatino (1668–1746), who had attended the canonisation of Saint John Nepomuk in Rome in 1729 and served as provost of the nearby church of Santi Nazaro e Celso.

<sup>132</sup> See Brescia 1981, pp. 112–17, cat. no. 38.

<sup>133</sup> See Ruggeri 1995, pp. 382–83.

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In order to promote the cult of the Bohemian saint in Brescia, the priest had erected an altar dedicated to Saint John Nepomuk in his church, decorated with a marble statue of the saint by Antonio Calegari.<sup>134</sup>

Pietro Emanuele Martinengo decided to commission the altarpiece for the new Saint John Nepomuk altar in Santa Maria della Pace from Pompeo Batoni, a choice undoubtedly influenced by the critical success of Batoni's *Presentation in the Temple* on the high altar. The minutes of the meetings of the Oratorian congregation record that in August 1742, the members of the Oratory of Santa Maria della Pace expressed a strong preference for the saint to be shown venerating the Virgin Mary, rather than just the saint on his own. Two reasons were cited: firstly, Saint Philip Neri's personal devotion to the Virgin; secondly, the fact that the other canvases already installed or under way also followed this format, for example the altarpiece of *The Virgin and Child with Saint Charles Borromeo* painted in Venice by Giovanni Battista Pittoni in 1738 (fig. 11).<sup>135</sup> The congregation was concerned, however, that forcing Batoni to include the Virgin in his *concetto* might result in an awkward composition, and in the end it was decided to leave the choice to the artist.<sup>136</sup>

At the same time, the congregation was engaged in negotiations with

<sup>134</sup> See Prestini 1995, pp. 256–57, n. 125.

<sup>135</sup> Oil on canvas, 380 x 190 cm, Brescia, Santa Maria della Pace. See Begni Redona 1995, p. 125.

<sup>136</sup> See Ruggeri 1995, p. 384.

Sebastiano Conca for an altarpiece for the right transept chapel, opposite the location that Batoni's canvas was to occupy. Conca rejected an offer of 300 scudi and demanded 450 scudi, causing the commission to be switched to Giacomo Zoboli, who was content with 320 scudi.<sup>137</sup> There is no record of the amount Batoni was paid, but his prices for comparable altarpieces in the late 1730s and early 1740s range from 200 to 350 scudi. (See Appendix A for an analysis of the prices charged by Batoni and other Roman eighteenth-century painters as well as the impact of payment schedules on the financial situation of the artist.)

The years 1743–45 therefore saw Batoni and Zoboli working in parallel on the two transept altarpieces that were to face each other across the nave.<sup>138</sup> Zoboli's painting, *The Virgin and Child with Saint Philip Neri*, was finished in June 1745 (fig. 12).<sup>139</sup> Batoni's *The Virgin and Child with Saint John Nepomuk* followed twelve months later (fig. 13).<sup>140</sup> The comparison shows that the two artists, both based in Rome, were clearly aware of each other's projects and may even have been asked to synchronise their designs. In both compositions, the saint is kneeling at left, looking up to the Virgin and Child elevated on a pedestal decorated

<sup>137</sup> See Ruggeri 1995, pp. 383–85.

<sup>138</sup> See Ruggeri 1995, pp. 385–86.

<sup>139</sup> 1742–45, oil on canvas, 447 x 223 cm, Brescia, Santa Maria della Pace. See Begni Redona 1995, pp. 130–32.

<sup>140</sup> 1743–46, oil on canvas, 447 x 222 cm, Brescia, Santa Maria della Pace. See Clark and Bowron 1985, p. 238, cat. no. 106, fig. 101.

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with a sculptural relief, while two angels at top left and bottom right form the second diagonal, and a putto displays one of the saint's attributes: a heart ablaze with love of the Virgin for Philip Neri and a phylactery (prayer ribbon) reading 'cultus iustitiae silentium', 'to remain silent is to preserve justice' (or, literally, 'silence is the cult of justice'), for John Nepomuk, a reference to his status as the protector of the seal of the confessional. Moreover, the legs of the angel kneeling at bottom right are arranged in an identical pose in both paintings. The same basic composition as well as a correspondingly posed angel had already appeared in Pittoni's 1738 altarpiece for the third altar on the left (fig. 11).

The Oratorian congregation had very specific thoughts about the compositions. In 1735, when the cycle of side altars was begun, the members debated whether to allow two saints to be shown adoring the Virgin Mary together in one altarpiece, but decided that each painting should include only a single saint with the Virgin.<sup>141</sup> This strongly suggests that that in spite of their professed hesitation to ask Batoni to include the Virgin, the Oratorians did in fact send each of the painters producing altarpieces for Santa Maria della Pace a set of detailed instructions.

As it turned out, the congregation need not have been concerned about a possible absence of the Virgin Mary from Batoni's altarpiece. The painter was unfamiliar with the iconography of the recently canonised Saint John Nepomuk, a fourteenth-century Bohemian priest venerated primarily

<sup>141</sup> See Ruggeri 1995, p. 378.

north of the Alps. He therefore decided to follow an existing model much more closely than he did when devising compositions for subjects he was more familiar with. In 1732–35, Sebastiano Conca had painted an altarpiece for the archbishop of Salzburg showing the Virgin and Child with Saint John Nepomuk.<sup>142</sup> Conca's modello remained in Rome and Batoni availed himself freely of this prototype, especially of the angel at bottom right holding the palm branch of a martyr saint and making a gesture of silence signifying the seal of the confessional (fig. 14).<sup>143</sup>

Another of Saint John Nepomuk's key iconographic attributes is a halo of five stars, which appeared above his head when his body was thrown off the Charles Bridge in Prague into the Vltava river. Both Conca and Batoni depicted this scene behind the saint in their compositions. Unfamiliar with the new and foreign saint, Conca had mistakenly given Saint John Nepomuk a halo of eight stars in his modello, and when Batoni prepared his own modello for Brescia in c. 1743, he followed the older artist's example and error faithfully (figs. 15, 16).<sup>144</sup> He may have looked in vain to the biography of the new saint published in Rome on the occasion of his canonisation in 1729 for guidance; while the text mentions the stars that

<sup>142</sup> See Munich 1993, p. 142.

<sup>143</sup> 1732–35, oil on canvas, 103 x 69 cm, Rome, Galleria Borghese. See Gaeta 1981, pp. 202–3, cat. no. 58. For a smaller bozzetto by Conca of the same composition but showing only seven stars, see Groschner 1993, p. 183, fig. 83.

<sup>144</sup> Oil on canvas, 120 x 64 cm, Vatican City, Musei Vaticani, Pinacoteca. See Clark and Bowron 1985, p. 238, cat. no. 105, fig. 99.

were visible when John Nepomuk's body was floating in the river as well as those surrounding his head in early images of the saint, it remains silent regarding their number.<sup>145</sup>

Ignazio Stern, a German painter, appears to have had better access to information about the Bohemian saint, perhaps for linguistic reasons. In his canvas painted in 1740 for the German church of Santa Maria in Camposanto Teutonico, the saint's head is surrounded by the correct number of stars (fig. 17).<sup>146</sup> Another Roman church, San Lorenzo in Lucina, could have offered Batoni two further five-star representations to consult: Onofrio Avellino's *Virgin and Child with Saint John Nepomuk and the Archangel Michael* of c. 1732 and Gaetano Altobelli's statue of the saint of 1737 (figs. 18, 19).<sup>147</sup> Whether Batoni was unaware of or deliberately disregarded these models is unclear. Francesco Martinengo, the local promoter of the cult, must have noticed the mistake when the modello arrived in Brescia. The information did reach Batoni and the final altarpiece in Santa Maria della Pace shows the correct number of five stars (fig. 20).

With her right hand, Conca's Virgin points to Saint John Nepomuk's

<sup>145</sup> See Valenzuela Galvez 1729, pp. 42, 50.

<sup>146</sup> Oil on canvas, 275 x 170 cm, Rome, Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Antica, Palazzo Barberini. See Mochi Onori 2007, p. 175, cat. no. 252; Petrucci and Marignoli 2012, p. 5, fig. 3.

<sup>147</sup> See Briganti 1990, vol. II, p. 607.

halo of stars, whereas in Batoni's composition, her right hand holds the Christ Child's right foot. In a tender gesture, she supports the weight of his leg with the palm of her hand while touching the top of the bare foot with her thumb (fig. 21).<sup>148</sup> This motif originated with Coppo di Marcovaldo's *Madonna del bordone* of 1261 in Siena (fig. 22)<sup>149</sup> and appears in a limited but diverse number of representations of the Virgin and Child. (For a critical catalogue of these representations from the thirteenth through the eighteenth century, see Appendix B.) Since Siena was a regional centre of the goldsmith's trade, it is more than likely that the young Batoni would have travelled there with or on behalf of his father Paolino Batoni (fl. 1700–1752) during his apprenticeship as a goldsmith in the family workshop in Lucca. As a devout Catholic and budding artist, he would not have missed the opportunity to visit the *Madonna del bordone*. His passion for drawing may well have resulted in a sheet recording the celebrated image, since he is known to have copied another Siennese work during this period.<sup>150</sup>

The gesture's primary significance lies in drawing attention to the future

<sup>148</sup> For the pictorial expression of tactility as an aspect of this gesture, see Quiviger 2007, p. 181.

<sup>149</sup> Tempera on panel, 220 x 125 cm, Siena, Santa Maria dei Servi. See Wilde 2004, esp. pp. 77–82 for a discussion of the foot motif.

<sup>150</sup> A Madonna by Ventura Salimbeni; see Benaglio 1894, p. 23. For Batoni's youthful activity as a draughtsman, see Pascoli 1981, pp. 179–81.

position of the nail of the Crucifixion.<sup>151</sup> In the context of the destination of Batoni's new altarpiece, this association allowed him to create a thematic connection between his two works for Santa Maria della Pace. By alluding to Christ's wounds, the painter referred to the Crucifixion as the fulfilment of Simeon's prophecy to the Virgin Mary (Luke 2:35) in the scene of the Presentation in the Temple, the subject of his first altarpiece (see section II.1).<sup>152</sup>

Given how closely Batoni adhered to the wishes of his Oratorian patrons and to Conca's prototype, the areas in which he decided to depart from the established models are all the more significant, and can be safely assumed to be his deliberate choices. In total, five altarpieces of the Virgin and Child venerated by a saint were commissioned for Santa Maria della Pace in the 1730s and 1740s. In addition to those by Pittoni, Zoboli, and Batoni, Antonio Balestra supplied a canvas of *The Virgin and Child with Saint Francis de Sales* in 1736 and Francesco Monti completed *The Virgin and Child with Saint Maurice* in 1746 (figs. 23, 24).<sup>153</sup> In four of them, as well as in Conca's modello with Saint John Nepomuk, the Christ Child is shown naked with a piece of drapery placed across his loins (fig. 25). The white

<sup>151</sup> See Cannon 2010, p. 10, citing Corrie 1990, p. 70, n. 9. See also Wilde 2004, p. 80.

<sup>152</sup> For additional layers of meaning of the foot motif in connection with the supplication and submission (*proskynesis*) before Christ, see Büttner 1983, p. 30, n. 27; Belting 1990, p. 439.

<sup>153</sup> See Begni Redona 1995, pp. 120–21, 128.



strip of fabric is intended to represent Christ's swaddling clothes. From antiquity into the early modern period, children were unswaddled forty to sixty days after birth.<sup>154</sup>

Batoni's Christ Child, by contrast, is no longer in his swaddling clothes but wears a tunic. As in the case of the foot motif, a recollection from the artist's youth may have provided the initial inspiration. Until its recent transfer to a museum following a reattribution to the workshop of Donatello, a terracotta sculpture of the Virgin and Child from the first quarter of the fifteenth century stood in a niche in a covered passage leading from Corte Campana to Piazza Sant'Alessandro in Lucca (fig. 26).<sup>155</sup> In addition to the tunic, the Christ Child's age, facial type, hair, and pudgy legs in Batoni's altarpiece all correspond to this terracotta. Like the gesture of holding the infant's foot, the standard function of the tunic is an allusion to the Passion, when the soldiers cast lots over Christ's garments (see section III.2).

There are numerous other precedents for depicting the Christ Child in a tunic as opposed to swaddling clothes. (For a critical catalogue of these precedents, see Appendix C.) Probably the most prominent among the canonical models that Batoni would have looked at is Annibale Carracci's

<sup>154</sup> See DeMause 1974, p. 38.

<sup>155</sup> Terracotta, 87 x 62 cm, Lucca, Museo Nazionale di Villa Guinigi. See Lucca 1988, p. 17, cat. no. 1.

lost painting of *The Virgin and Child with a Swallow*,<sup>156</sup> known through an engraving produced by Carle Vanloo between 1728 and 1732 during his stay in Rome (fig. 27).<sup>157</sup> The tunic worn by Carracci's Infant Christ is a loose fit, but it is evident from its neckline that it has been tailored for a child, whereas the tunic painted by Batoni is far too large (fig. 21). Its neckline is so wide that it has slipped off both shoulders and hangs diagonally across his chest. The right sleeve has fallen off the arm entirely, the left sleeve is rolled up, and most of the tunic's fabric is bunched up underneath the left arm. Since the face and hair of Batoni's Virgin closely resemble the engraving, he appears to have known Carracci's composition but consciously decided to depart from the model in this particular aspect.

Christ's tunic was believed to have been made by his mother (see section III.2). The scene of the Virgin Mary working on garments for her son was given one of its most prominent expressions in Guido Reni's fresco of the *Virgin Sewing* in the Cappella dell'Annunziata in the Quirinal Palace in Rome of 1609–11 (fig. 28).<sup>158</sup> Modern scholarship has suggested that this fresco illustrates the Virgin's youth in the temple, prior to the

<sup>156</sup> For an eighteenth-century copy of the painting at Kassel, Schloß Wilhelmshöhe, Gemäldegalerie, inv. no. GK 1004, see Schnackenburg 1996, vol. I, p. 78; vol. II, pl. 314.

<sup>157</sup> 188 x 145 mm, inscribed at lower left: 'Anibal Carrac pinxit'; at lower right: 'Charle Vanloo'. See Sahut 1977, p. 183, cat. no. 625.

<sup>158</sup> See Pepper 1984, pp. 224–25, cat. no. 33; Mann 1993, pp. 118–19, fig. 9; Roettgen 2007, pp. 70, 78, pl. 6.

birth of Christ.<sup>159</sup> A description of the chapel by Giovan Pietro Bellori (1613–1696) in his biography of Guido Reni, however, records the prevailing interpretation of the scene in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries: ‘una bellissima imagine della Vergine che servita da tre angioletti, intenta a cucire una camiciola al Bambino’.<sup>160</sup>

A few years before the fresco, Reni had depicted the same scene in a small oil on copper painting, known in several versions (fig. 29).<sup>161</sup> When engraving the composition in the late seventeenth century, Gérard Edelinck added the Christ Child lying in a crib, thus settling the question of whether the scene takes place in the temple or after Christ’s birth (fig. 30).<sup>162</sup> Around 1700, the connection between the Virgin’s handiwork and her son’s sartorial requirements was made clear in a small copper by Francesco Trevisani, painted for Cardinal Pietro Ottoboni (1667–1740), whose coat of arms appears on the vase of flowers at left (fig. 31).<sup>163</sup>

<sup>159</sup> Mann 1993, p. 118.

<sup>160</sup> Bellori 1976, pp. 502–3.

<sup>161</sup> 1606, oil on copper, 29 x 22 cm, London, Simon Dickinson Ltd.; c. 1606, oil on copper, 29 x 22 cm, Sotheby’s New York, 26 January 2012, lot 49. See also Pepper 1984, pp. 219–20, cat. no. 22.

<sup>162</sup> 429 x 320 mm, London, British Museum, Department of Prints and Drawings, inv. U.3.119.

<sup>163</sup> Oil on copper, 38 by 31 cm, Sotheby’s London, 6 December 2007, lot 276. For another autograph version (Florence, Galleria degli Uffizi), see DiFederico 1977, p. 46, cat. no. 30, pl. 24.

Trevisani went even further than Edelinck in demonstrating what the Virgin is working on by placing the Christ Child next to her in a tunic similar to the one she is making.

### III.2 Christ's Seamless Tunic

In the decade between painting the *Presentation in the Temple* in 1735–36 and devising the concetto for the *Virgin and Child with Saint John Nepomuk* in 1743–46, the circumstances of Batoni's life and career had changed drastically. He was now one of the most sought-after artists in Rome, patronised by the nobility, the Roman Curia, and the Pope himself. In 1741–42, Benedict XIV had a three-room pavilion constructed in the gardens of the Quirinal Palace. Designed by Ferdinando Fuga, the so-called Caffeaus was a private retreat removed from the strictures of court protocol and the most personal of the artistic projects he undertook.<sup>164</sup> The Pope chose Batoni to supply one of the main ceiling paintings for the Caffeaus, *Christ Delivering the Keys to Saint Peter* (fig. 32), as well as four ovals depicting the *Four Evangelists*, in 1742.<sup>165</sup> Painter and Pontiff came to know each other well and Batoni accompanied the Lambertini pontificate as one of its artistic standard-bearers until its very end (see chapter IV).

Batoni is known to have received the commission for *The Virgin and*

<sup>164</sup> See Stoschek 1999, pp. 10–17, 55–63, 148–59.

<sup>165</sup> See Clark and Bowron 1985, p. 228, cat. nos. 62–66, figs. 59, 62–65.

*Child with Saint John Nepomuk* from Brescia by August 1742 at the latest,<sup>166</sup> precisely at the time when he was working on the papal commission. In early September, he explained to a Florentine patron that the painting for the Caffeaus ‘si ricerca con fretta dalla S.tà S. che ha tutta l’autorità di comandare in questo Paese, onde ho dovuto lasciare in dietro tutt’altro per servire il Principe Regnante’.<sup>167</sup>

Since the Pope had a strong interest in painting, did not stand on ceremony, and was as gregarious and communicative as the artist working for him, it does not seem far-fetched to think that Batoni would have had a chance to discuss his next major religious project with Benedict XIV during this period. The Pope was also in correspondence with the patron who commissioned the altarpiece, Pietro Emanuele Martinengo, and his friendship with Monsignor Francesco Martinengo, the promoter of the cult of Saint John Nepomuk in Brescia, reached back to 1711. The letters between Benedict XIV and the Martinengos have not survived, but are mentioned in 1745 in his correspondence with Cardinal Querini.<sup>168</sup>

<sup>166</sup> See Ruggeri 1995, p. 384.

<sup>167</sup> Lucca, Archivio di Stato, Archivio Sardini, filza 143, no. 889, Pompeo Batoni to Lodovico Sardini, 7 September 1742. Transcribed in Lucca 1967, p. 276.

<sup>168</sup> Fresco 1909–10, p. 281, no. 85; pp. 288–89, no. 92; p. 299, no. 106, 30 April 1746: ‘Noi tant’anni sono ottenemmo al defunto Cardinale Badoero [Gianalberto Badoero (1649–1714), bishop of Brescia 1706–14] il titolo in partibus per il Martinengo [Francesco Martinengo, appointed titular bishop of Martira in 1711]’; Lambertini also obtained an annuity of 500 Roman scudi from the Brescian *mensa vescovile* for

The Pope may also have presented Batoni with a copy of the *Annotazioni sopra le feste di Nostro Signore e della Beatissima Vergine*, if he did not already own one. The artist would have found the descriptions and explanations of all major events in the life of Christ and the Virgin Mary extremely useful. Judging from the concetti of a number of his religious paintings, he appears to have consulted the work regularly. No inventory of Batoni's library survives to document his ownership of the book, but there is a hitherto unnoticed piece of visual evidence showing that he not only knew it, he even became involved in the production of its second edition. The engraved frontispiece of the 1747 edition, published under the Pope's direct supervision (see sections II.2–3), bears the inscription 'P. G. Batoni invenit et delineavit' (fig. 33).<sup>169</sup> Engraved by Antonio Pazzi, this previously unknown composition is a visual synthesis of the book's contents.

Providing further confirmation of the meeting of minds that occurred when Batoni created a sacred concetto for – and, to some degree, with – Benedict XIV, the engraving shows a pope, two bishops, a canon regular, a nun, a soldier, an elderly woman, and two young martyrs, all in adoration of Christ and the Virgin Mary enthroned on clouds. Several of the figural types are familiar from Batoni's altarpieces of the 1740s. The terrestrial group represents the universality of the faithful of all ages and from all

Martinengo.

<sup>169</sup> Benedict XIV 1747b, frontispiece.

walks of life. By providing a deeper historical, theological, and devotional understanding of the events of Christ's and the Virgin Mary's lives commemorated on their feast days, *Delle feste di Gesù Cristo Signor Nostro e della B. Vergine Maria trattato istruttivo* (its amended title on the page opposite the engraving) aids the members of the Church in giving expression to their veneration through the conscious celebration of these occasions.

In the book's chapter on Good Friday, Benedict XIV considered the subject of Christ's tunic:

‘E’ pia opinione, che questa Tunica inconsutile fosse fatta dalla Vergine Santissima, e data a Cristo ancor fanciullo; e l’opinione non è nuova, ma antica, parlandone Eutimio: e per quanto si può congetturare, questa Tunica era la veste, che dopo la camiscia, se pure Cristo la portava, era la più attaccata e prossima al corpo, e lo copriva tutto da capo a fondo’.<sup>170</sup>

The textual source is the narration of the soldiers casting lots over Christ's garments in John 19:23–24:

‘The soldiers therefore, when they had crucified him, took his garments, (and they made four parts, to every soldier a part,) and

<sup>170</sup> Benedict XIV 1747b, vol. I, p. 431. Benedict XIV 1740, vol. I, p. 231, gives a shorter version of this passage and refers the reader to Calmet's *Commentaire littéral* (see below).

also his coat. Now the coat was without seam, woven from the top throughout. They said then one to another: Let us not cut it, but let us cast lots for it, whose it shall be; that the scripture might be fulfilled, saying: They have parted my garments among them, and upon my vesture they have cast lots. And the soldiers indeed did these things.’

In using the term ‘*tunica inconsutile*’, Benedict XIV followed the Vulgate’s wording of ‘*tunica inconsutilis*’ in John 19:23. He credited a passage from Calmet’s *Commentaire littéral* as the basis for his discussion of the seamless tunic:

‘C’est une ancienne tradition que la sainte Vierge elle-même avoit tissu la tunique de notre Sauveur. Il est sûr qu’anciennement les femmes faisoient la toile, & l’étoffe, & le tissu de leurs propres habits, de ceux de leurs époux, & de leurs enfans. [...] Anne mère de Samuël, fit elle-même la tunique de son fils. [...] C’est une autre tradition populaire, & sans fondement, que la tunique de notre Seigneur étoit la même qu’il avoit reçûe de la sainte Vierge, étant tout enfant, laquelle avoit crû avec lui, sans s’user jamais, de même que les habits des Hébreux dans le désert.’<sup>171</sup>

Calmet refers to two Old Testament prototypes regarding the tunic. In 1

<sup>171</sup> Calmet 1724–26, vol. VII, p. 785. For the Latin version of this passage, see Calmet 1730–32, vol. VII, pp. 643–44.



Samuel 2:19, Samuel's mother Anna makes a garment – called *tunica* in the Vulgate – for her son, and Deuteronomy 29:5 mentions the garments that have not worn out after the forty years in the desert. The latter passage is also cited in the *Pictor Christianus eruditus*, which devotes an entire chapter to Christ's garments. Interián's examination is considerably broader than those provided by Calmet and Benedict XIV but essentially covers the same three claims made about the seamless tunic: that the Virgin Mary made the tunic for Christ when he was a child; that it did not wear out; and that it grew with him and still fit him as an adult.<sup>172</sup>

The three authors differ in the degree of their acceptance of the claims; Calmet is the most, Interián the least sceptical. The ever-moderate Benedict XIV endorses the first, implicitly accepts the second (if the tunic worn by Christ on Good Friday was made when he was a child, it must have been durable), and remains silent on the problem of the third claim. The first and the second had what the third one lacked: a biblical validation in the form of an Old Testament prefiguration.

If this was also the guidance Benedict XIV provided to Batoni in a conversation about his *concetto*, the painter (or perhaps even the Pope) came up with an idea to resolve the contradiction between the tunic having been made for a child and still being worn by a grown man, a way to

<sup>172</sup> Interián 1730, pp. 109–10, esp. p. 110: 'Illam nempe tunicam factam esse Christo a Virgine Deipara, dum adhuc ipse Christus Dominus esset infans, cum eo tamen crescente crevisse usque ad virilem etiam aetatem.'

eliminate the need for the unbiblical miracle of a growing garment: The seamless tunic the Virgin Mary had made for her son is depicted as large enough to fit an adult, with a neckline that would be suitable for a grown man and was therefore wider than the Christ Child's entire torso (fig. 21).

Batoni's solution thus parallels Benedict's written statement. The first claim is affirmed by showing the Christ Child in a tunic instead of swaddling clothes; the second one, regarding the garment's durability, can be inferred but does not need to be overtly stated; the third, unbiblical one is refuted by emphasising that there was no need for the garment to grow.

Having successfully circumnavigated the shoals of unbiblical miracles in the Saint John Nepomuk altarpiece, the same problem would prove to be intractable when Batoni was asked to produce an altarpiece for Saint Peter's, a commission that was to cause him the greatest setback and humiliation of his career.

### **III.3 Painting Saint Peter for Saint Peter's**

For a painter in eighteenth-century Rome, receiving a commission for an altarpiece for Saint Peter's was 'die größte Ehre, auf die ein Künstler bey seinem Leben Ansprüche machen kann', as Johann Dominik Fiorillo (1748–1821) put it in the *Geschichte der zeichnenden Künste*.<sup>173</sup> Having completed the Caffeaus project to Benedict XIV's great satisfaction, Batoni was able to petition his papal client for an even bigger prize. Time was of

<sup>173</sup> Fiorillo 1798–1808, p. 221.

the essence: His main rival, Pierre Subleyras, had already received a commission for an altarpiece for the Vatican Basilica, and nearly all of the available altars were already spoken for. A cryptic note in the manuscript draft of a biography of Batoni written by his friend Francesco Benaglio around 1750–53, based on information he received directly from the painter, reads:

‘Il papa fabbrica il Caffehaus. Gli sovviene di Battoni. Mons. Olivieri va a trovare Merenda. Capita Pompeo: aspetta, s’impazienta: vuol partire, per un certo presentimento incoccia di aspettare. Merenda il presenta a Olivieri; questo lo loda, e lo anima. Battoni si raccomanda a lui per fare un quadro di S. Pietro, e ne ottiene la promessa. Porta un disegno al maggiordono. Chiede per prezzo che presenti il memoriale al papa da essere rimesso a Monsignore. Ottiene questo pure’.<sup>174</sup>

In addition to the Pope and Batoni, the cast of characters comprises Monsignor Giovanni Francesco Abbati Olivieri (c. 1700–1752), Cardinal Girolamo Colonna (1708–1763), and Count Cesare Merenda (1700–1754). Olivieri served as the treasurer (*Economo*) of the congregation of the Reverenda Fabbrica di San Pietro, the commission responsible for building and refurbishing work in the Vatican Basilica.<sup>175</sup> Cardinal Colonna, the papal pro-maggiordomo, supervised all construction, renovation, and

<sup>174</sup> Benaglio 1894, p. 66.

<sup>175</sup> See Dorati da Empoli 2008, pp. 298, 312.

decoration projects in the papal palaces as well as the renovation and decoration of Santa Maria Maggiore.<sup>176</sup> In this role, it fell to him to pay daily visits to the painter's studio when the completion of *Christ Delivering the Keys to Saint Peter* for the Caffeaus fell behind schedule:

‘E’ piaciuto a Sua Santità ordinararmi un quadro per suo servizio da collocarsi in una volta del Palazzo quirinale di grandezza 21 palmo in circa, e copioso di 13 figure per cui mi si fà una somma fretta da Mons.re Mag.r Domo della Santità Sua, che ogni giorno viene à vederlo à casa’.<sup>177</sup>

Benedict XIV gratefully acknowledged Colonna's efforts for the Caffeaus project: ‘Le due camere del casino sono ornate colla dovuta magnificenza, il merito della quale si deve al cardinale Girolamo Colonna promaggiordomo.’<sup>178</sup> In the eighteenth-century sources, Girolamo Colonna is variously referred to as maggiordomo or pro-maggiordomo. Officially, he held the post of maggiordomo only under Pope Clement XII and during the first three years of the Lambertini pontificate. In September 1743, Benedict XIV created him a cardinal and promoted him to pro-

<sup>176</sup> See Moroni 1840–61, vol. XIV, p. 307.

<sup>177</sup> Pompeo Batoni to Andrea Gerini, 15 September 1742. Transcribed in Lucca 2008, p. 383. See also Pompeo Batoni to Lodovico Sardini, 19 May 1742. Transcribed in Lucca 1967, p. 274.

<sup>178</sup> Benedict XIV to Paolo Magnani, 7 November 1744. Transcribed in Prodi and Fattori 2011, p. 326.

maggiordomo. At the same time, his nephew Marcantonio Colonna (1724–1793) was given the title of maggiordomo. However, the younger Colonna was still studying for his doctorate *in utroque iure* and theology, which he received in 1745, and was effectively a coadjutor. Until his uncle's resignation in his favour in 1758, he had no practical role and the responsibilities of the office were carried out by Girolamo Colonna, who is therefore often referred to as maggiordomo even after 1743.<sup>179</sup>

Benaglio also recorded how Colonna had arranged for Batoni to be received by Benedict XIV after he had admired the artist's *Saint Mary Magdalene*: 'Benedetto XIV va a vedere i quadri. Mons. maggiordomo si congratula della Maddalena col pittore. Poi lo fa venire innanzi al Papa che lo loda.'<sup>180</sup> This painting was owned by the third member of the group, Count Merenda, a lawyer from Forlì who had been working for the Borghese family in Rome since 1723. Together with his brother Giuseppe Merenda (1687–1760) in Forlì, he was Batoni's most important patron during these years other than the Pope, commissioning more than thirty works from the artist.<sup>181</sup>

Benaglio reports that it was through Merenda that Batoni received the

<sup>179</sup> See Benedict XIV to Pierre Guérin de Tencin, 4 October 1743. Transcribed in Morelli 1955–84, vol. I, p. 116. See also Moroni 1840–61, vol. XLI, p. 271; Cotta Stumpo 1982. Pane 1957, p. 54, nn. 12, 13, erroneously reverses the positions.

<sup>180</sup> Benaglio 1894, p. 66. For *Saint Mary Magdalene*, c. 1742, formerly Dresden, Gemäldegalerie Alte Meister, see Clark and Bowron 1985, pp. 226–27, cat. no. 60.

<sup>181</sup> See Bowron 1987.

opportunity to make his case for an altarpiece commission to the man who held the purse strings, Olivieri. The Fabbrica's treasurer was able to encourage the artist but the ultimate decision lay with Benedict XIV himself. Batoni wrote a petition and, sweetening his request with the gift of a drawing, asked Cardinal Colonna to present it to the Pope. The petition, which dates to August or September 1745, reads:

‘B.mo Padre. / Pompeo Batoni O.re U.mo della Sn.tà V.ra, che attualmente esercita qui in Roma l’Arte Liberale della Pittura, come è ben noto a V.ra Beatitudine per aver’ avuto l’Onore di servirla in quelle Opere, che hebbe la benignità fargli commettere per adornamento delle Stanze nuove fatte nel Giardino di Montecavallo per comodo della S. V.; ardisce umilmente supplicarla della grazia di fargli assegnare qualcheduno de i Quadri, che far si devono in S. Pietro; dove molt’altri Professori hanno sin qui havuta la Sorte d’impiegare il loro sapere: promettendo l’O.re d’usare tutta l’attenzione, e diligenza per non restare a verun’altro inferiore, ne mostrarsi, per quanto potrà, affatto immeritevole della presente grazia, che viene umilissimamente ad’implorare dalla paterna Clemenza della Sn.tà V.ra / Quam Deus &c.’<sup>182</sup>

Both Batoni and his biographer were clearly familiar with the

<sup>182</sup> Rome, Archivio di Stato, 30 Notai Capitolini, ufficio 38, Francesco Maria Righi, vol. 183, fols. 122r, 175v.

procedures followed at the Papal court for petitions of this nature, with Benaglio reporting that the petition needed to be presented to the Pope ‘da essere rimesso a Monsignore’, i.e., to be forwarded to Monsignor Olivieri, the *Economo*. This is confirmed by the papal rescript on the original petition, ‘A Monsignor Economo della Fabbrica che ne parli.’<sup>183</sup> As instructed, Olivieri requested an audience to discuss the petition and recorded the Pope’s approval below the rescript: ‘Ex audientia Ss.mi die 18. 7bris 1745 / Ss.mus annuit, et ad E.mus Prefectum pro destinatione Operis P. / J. F. Oliverius Econ:mus et Secret:us’.<sup>184</sup>

Being a conscientious administrator, Olivieri also noted the next step: The prefect of the Fabbrica di San Pietro, Cardinal Annibale Albani, was to designate a ‘work’, i.e., a subject for the altarpiece. When the agreement between Batoni and the Fabbrica was notarised on 17 January 1746, the notary scrupulously recapitulated the proceedings:

‘Essendo che Il Sig.e Pompeo Batoni Pittore dasse supplica alla Santità di N.ro Sig:e Benedetto XIV felicemente Regnante, ad ogetto di ottenere la grazia di potere anch’esso fare qualche opera di pittura nella Basilica Vaticana, nella forma apunto, che altri Virtuosi di pittura hanno avuto l’onore d’impiegare anch’essi la di

<sup>183</sup> Rome, Archivio di Stato, 30 Notai Capitolini, ufficio 38, Francesco Maria Righi, vol. 183, fol. 175v.

<sup>184</sup> Rome, Archivio di Stato, 30 Notai Capitolini, ufficio 38, Francesco Maria Righi, vol. 183, fol. 175v.

loro virtù, et opera nella predetta Vaticana Basilica, et in essa supplica, nascesse rescritto “à Monsig.e Economo della Fabrica che ne parli” et indi poi atteso l’Udienza avuta da Monsig.e Ill.mo Economo, da N.ro Sig.e, fin sotto li 18 7bre 1745 in pie della supplica predetta, ne emanasse il seguente rescritto “SS.mus annuit, et ad E.mus Prefectus pro destinatione operis”, e come meglio legesi dal memoriale originale, quale si consegna à Me. Not.o, ad effetto d’inserirlo nell presente Istr.o del ten.&c.; In esecuzione dell quale l’E.mo, et Ill.mo Sig:e Cardinal S. Clemente Prefetto della Sagra Congregazione della Rev. Fabrica dasse tutte le facultà à Monsig.e Ill.mo Economo, acciò procedesse alla destinatione di qualche opera di Pittura da farsi dal predetto Sig:e Batoni nella detta Vaticana Basilica, e precisamente il quadro rappresentante la caduta di Simon Mago’.<sup>185</sup>

Cardinal Albani, referred to by his original titular church, San Clemente (which he had retained *in commendam* when translated to the suburbicarian sees of Sabina in 1730 and Porto e Santa Rufina in 1743),<sup>186</sup> and Monsignor Olivieri had very limited options when it came to choosing a subject for the altarpiece. If the assignment of the Fall of Simon Magus to Batoni was to prove fateful, it was not so much that he drew the short

<sup>185</sup> Rome, Archivio di Stato, 30 Notai Capitolini, ufficio 38, Francesco Maria Righi, vol. 183, fols. 121r–v. See Appendix D.1 for a full transcription of the document.

<sup>186</sup> See Ritzler 1952, p. 27.



straw but that there was only one straw left.

Batoni's composition was intended as a replacement for a painting of the same subject by Francesco Vanni (fig. 34).<sup>187</sup> The existing altarpiece dated from 1603 and had been part of a cycle created for the so-called *navi piccole* in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries.<sup>188</sup> Located at the sides of the four giant pillars supporting the basilica's dome, the *navi piccole* connect the arms of the crossing with the corner chapels. Painted on slate, this first group of altarpieces had quickly deteriorated due to the high humidity in Saint Peter's. From the 1720s onwards, the Fabbrica undertook a campaign of replacing them with new altarpieces executed in the humidity-proof medium of mosaic.<sup>189</sup>

Some of these mosaics were based on existing canonical works such as Raphael's *Transfiguration* of 1517–20 and Domenichino's *Last Communion of Saint Jerome* of 1614.<sup>190</sup> Two mosaics reproduced seventeenth-century altarpieces, Cristoforo Roncalli's *Death of Sapphira* of 1599–1604 and Lanfranco's *Navicella* of 1627–28.<sup>191</sup> For the other four

<sup>187</sup> See Rome 1995, pp. 521–23, cat. no. 78; Pinelli 2000, vol. II, p. 1067, cat. no. 1514.

<sup>188</sup> See Chappell and Kirwin 1974.

<sup>189</sup> See DiFederico 1983, p. 28.

<sup>190</sup> For the mosaic after Raphael, 1759–67, see DiFederico 1983, p. 77, cat. no. 17, pl. 138; Pinelli 2000, vol. I, p. 487, cat. no. 610. For the mosaic after Domenichino, 1730, see DiFederico 1983, p. 75, cat. no. 10, pl. 131; Pinelli 2000, vol. II, p. 723, cat. no. 960.

<sup>191</sup> For the mosaic after Roncalli, 1725–27, see DiFederico 1983, pp. 76–77, cat. no. 16, pl. 137; Pinelli 2000, vol. I, p. 497, cat. no. 624. For the mosaic after Lanfranco, 1721–26,

altars, the Fabbrica commissioned Rome's leading history painters to create new canvases to be translated into mosaic. Most of the canvases were later transferred to Santa Maria degli Angeli.

The new commissions were awarded between 1736 and 1746, Batoni's being the last. Their subjects were determined by the iconographies of their predecessors. For the Cappella Gregoriana, Pierre Subleyras was asked to provide a *Mass of Saint Basil*.<sup>192</sup> Placido Costanzi's *Raising of Tabitha* (fig. 35) and Francesco Mancini's *Saint Peter Healing the Cripple at the Gate of the Temple* also replaced altarpieces of the same subjects.<sup>193</sup> Today, the final altar, opposite Bernini's tomb of Pope Alexander VII, is occupied by a *Christ of the Sacred Heart Appearing to Saint Margaret Mary Alacoque* from c. 1920.<sup>194</sup> This was the intended site for Batoni's *Fall*

see DiFederico 1983, p. 75, cat. no. 12, pl. 133; Pinelli 2000, vol. II, p. 665, cat. no. 874.

<sup>192</sup> 1743–47, Rome, Santa Maria degli Angeli. See Paris 1987, pp. 333–34, fig. 2. For the mosaic after Subleyras, 1748–51, see DiFederico 1983, p. 75, cat. no. 11, pl. 132; Pinelli 2000, vol. II, p. 711, cat. no. 948.

<sup>193</sup> For Costanzi's painting, 1736–40 (but modified by the artist in 1757), Rome, Santa Maria degli Angeli, see Clark 1981a, fig. 65; DiFederico 1983, pp. 75–76. For the mosaic after Costanzi, 1758–60, see DiFederico 1983, pp. 75–76, cat. no. 13, pl. 134; Pinelli 2000, vol. II, p. 651, cat. no. 857. For Mancini's painting, 1745–49, Vatican City, Saint Peter's Basilica, northern antechamber to benediction loggia, see Sestieri 1977, pp. 71–72; Pinelli 2000, vol. II, p. 1041, cat. no. 1472 (erroneously catalogued as a copy after Ludovico Cardi). For the mosaic after Mancini, 1751–58, see DiFederico 1983, p. 76, cat. no. 14, pl. 135; Pinelli 2000, vol. I, p. 575, cat. no. 743.

<sup>194</sup> For the mosaic, 1920–25, see DiFederico 1983, p. 76, cat. no. 15, pl. 136; Pinelli 2000,

of *Simon Magus*, which the artist began to work on in 1746 (fig. 36).<sup>195</sup>

Under Pope Clement VIII (reigned 1592–1605), Cardinal Cesare Baronio had devised a programme of six scenes from the life of Saint Peter for the altars of the *navi piccole*.<sup>196</sup> One of them, the *Crucifixion of Saint Peter*, was replaced by Raphael's *Transfiguration*, but the remaining five subjects were preserved in the eighteenth-century successor altarpieces. It is notable that the two most important themes of papal iconography were absent from Baronio's programme. The reason was that the original plan included a *Christ Delivering the Keys to Saint Peter* by Antonio Pomarancio (Circignani) to the left of the apse, which was destroyed at the end of the seventeenth century to make way for the tomb of Alexander VIII,<sup>197</sup> and a *Pasce oves meas* by Andrea Sacchi foreseen for the other side of the tribuna, in the space now occupied by the tomb of Clement X, which was never executed.<sup>198</sup>

In its designated location on the south side of the south-west pillar, Batoni's composition would have completed a subgroup of four altars with

vol. I, p. 551, cat. no. 711.

<sup>195</sup> 1746–55, oil on canvas, 550 x 400 cm, Rome, Santa Maria degli Angeli. See Clark and Bowron 1985, pp. 261–62, cat. no. 184, fig. 173; Bowron and Kerber 2007, pp. 33–35, fig. 35. Batoni received a total of 1,200 scudi in instalments plus 300 scudi for expenses. See Belli Barsali 1973, pp. 368–70.

<sup>196</sup> See Chappell and Kirwin 1974, esp. pp. 130, 136–38, 159.

<sup>197</sup> See Rice 1997, pp. 123–24.

<sup>198</sup> See Harris 1977, p. 82, cat. no. 50; Rice 1997, p. 275.

Petrine themes on the sides of the basilica's two western pillars, together with Lanfranco's *Navicella* on the north side of the north-west pillar, Costanzi's *Raising of Tabitha* on the west side of the north-west pillar, and Mancini's *Saint Peter Healing the Cripple at the Gate of the Temple* on the west side of the south-west pillar. Three of these four miracles performed by Saint Peter are described in the Gospel of Matthew and the Acts of the Apostles, whereas the source for the confrontation between Saint Peter and Simon Magus is not the Bible but the apocryphal Acts of Peter.

Nonetheless, the Simon Magus episode had been accepted as factual by authorities including Saints Jerome, Augustine, and Cyril of Jerusalem. Baronio himself had emphatically endorsed it in the *Annales ecclesiastici*, a new edition of which had just been published under the editorship of Giovan Domenico Mansi (1692–1769), a prolific scholar and friend of Batoni's who lived in their shared home town of Lucca but regularly visited Rome, in 1738–46.<sup>199</sup>

If the painter decided to consult one of the biblical paraphrases available in Italian, Calmet's *Storia dell'Antico e Nuovo Testamento*, he would have found an account reporting the episode as factual:

‘Molti Antichi hanno anche attribuite la prigionia e la morte de i due Appostoli alla vittoria che riportarono contro Simone il Mago. Quest'empio pretendendo di esser Cristo, e volendo mostrare che

<sup>199</sup> See Baronio 1738–46, vol. I, p. 614: ‘Verum enimvero Simonem magum haec ausum, sed Petri Apostoli precibus esse prostratum, quae dicemus, facile demonstrabunt.’

come Gesucristo poteva ascendere al cielo, si fece alzar nell'aria da due Demonj in un carro di fuoco, servendosi de' segreti di sua magia. Tutto il Popolo ch'era presente, lo considerava già come una Divinità, e lo seguiva cogli occhj fra grand'acclamazioni; ma gli Appostoli San Pietro e San Paolo essendosi posti in orazione, costrinsero i Demonj ad abbandonar l'Impostore, che cadette a terra, e spezzossi le gambe.<sup>200</sup>

The widespread acceptance that the story of Simon Magus still enjoyed in the initial decades of the eighteenth century is also exemplified by one of the period's standard accounts of early church history, Le Nain de Tillemont's *Mémoires pour servir à l'histoire ecclésiastique des six premiers siècles* of 1693–1712, a work regularly cited by Benedict XIV in spite of the author's affiliation with Jansenism. A new edition, in French, had appeared in Venice in 1732. Tillemont roundly rejected many of the legends in Saint Peter's biography but insisted on the veracity of the Simon Magus episode, presenting it on a par with the events narrated in the Acts of the Apostles and citing a barrage of patristic authors in support. Fully aware of the criticisms, he concluded:

'Il y en a aujourd'hui qui veulent contester [...] tout ce qui se dit de la chute de Simon; non qu'ils alleguent rien de positif pour le combatre, mais parceque cela vient, disent-ils, originairement des

<sup>200</sup> Calmet 1725, vol. II, pp. 555–56.

apocryphes, ou pour d'autres raisons qui sont encore moins considerables. Mais quand il seroit vray que cette histoire seroit une fiction, nous aimerions mieux, tant qu'on n'aura point de preuve claire & convaincante de sa fausseté, nous tromper en ce point avec [...] un grand nombre des plus illustres & des plus graves maistres de l'Eglise latine & greque, sans autre raison, sinon qu'il n'est pas absolument certain qu'ils disent vray.<sup>201</sup>

According to the apocryphal tradition, the confrontation between Saint Peter and Simon Magus took place in the Roman Forum, in front of a large audience that included the Emperor Nero. In order to prove that his magic was superior to the Christian faith, Simon announced that he would fly through the air. He took off from the Velia, a ridge that in antiquity ran along the eastern side of the Forum and connected the Palatine and Esquiline hills but was later levelled by successive construction campaigns. Because he was held by winged demons, Simon succeeded in staying aloft until Saint Peter prayed that the demons release their hold, and the magician fell to his death.<sup>202</sup>

On what remains of the Velia stands Santa Francesca Romana, a church Batoni would have known well because the monastery attached to it belonged to the Olivetans, an order for which he had just painted an

<sup>201</sup> Le Nain de Tillemont 1732, vol. I, pp. 176, 178.

<sup>202</sup> See *Neutestamentliche Apokryphen* 1989, pp. 185–86, 217. See also Ferreiro 2005, pp. 9–26, 55–81.

altarpiece of their founder, *The Blessed Bernardo Tolomei Attending a Victim of the Black Death*.<sup>203</sup> The church houses a special relic, the *silices apostolici*.<sup>204</sup> One of Batoni's pupils, Johann Gottlieb Puhmann, noted that 'in der Kirche [ist] ein Marmorstein zu sehn, worauf St. Petrus gekniet, wie er den Zauberer Simon aus der Luft herunterfallen läßt.'<sup>205</sup> According to popular belief, Saint Peter's knees had left imprints in the stone in the form of two hollows.

In most depictions of the Simon Magus episode, including Vanni's version painted in 1603 for Saint Peter's, the praying Apostle is shown standing (fig. 34). Batoni, however, decided to depict him kneeling on off-white stone, matching the *silices apostolici* relic in Santa Francesca Romana (fig. 36). While Batoni was developing his concetto, his friend Mansi was in the process of preparing a new edition of Noël Alexandre's *Historia ecclesiastica Veteris Novique Testamenti*, which appeared in 1748–52 and specified in its discussion of the Fall of Simon Magus: 'Sancti Petri oratione prostratus est'.<sup>206</sup>

<sup>203</sup> 1745, oil on canvas, 262 x 173 cm, Milan, San Vittore al Corpo. See Clark and Bowron 1985, p. 249, cat. no. 141 (as c. 1750); Bowron and Kerber 2007, p. 8, fig. 8.

<sup>204</sup> See *Roma Sacra* 1995, pp. 40, 44.

<sup>205</sup> Puhmann 1979, p. 122.

<sup>206</sup> Alexandre 1748–52, vol. III, p. 19: 'Denique Simon Magus Romam se conferens, Neronem Imperatorem, Romanumque populum solitis praestigiis delusit; qui volatum pollicitus, cum in sublime elatus esset, Sancti Petri oratione prostratus est, con fractisque cruribus extinctus, ut testantur Arnobius lib. 2. adversus Gentes,

Batoni's efforts to shore up the story's credibility by emphasising the existing material evidence in Rome amount almost to a *Legitimationsbild*, 'die bildliche Darstellung, welche eine legendäre, apokryphe oder gewohnheitsmäßige Traditio, die dokumentarisch nicht verbürgt ist, in die Sphäre des Realen hebt und somit durch das Bild als historisch verbürgt und legitimiert'.<sup>207</sup> The painter worked on the monumental altarpiece over a period of nine years, making hundreds of preparatory drawings and at least one oil sketch. The finished canvas was temporarily installed on its altar in Saint Peter's and unveiled at Easter 1755:

'Nella sudetta Basilica Vaticana in questi giorni delle feste di Pasqua è stato esposto alla pubblica vista un Quadro grande rappresentante la caduta di Simon mago, dipinto dal virtuoso Sig. Pompeo Batoni Lucchese, situato propriamente nell'Altare dirimpetto al deposito della san: mem: di Papa Alessandro VII. Chigi, per esser poi trasportato in mosaico, e collocato nel medesimo altare.'<sup>208</sup>

Sanctus Cyrillus Hierosolymitanus Catechesi 6. Illuminatorum, Eusebius lib. 2.

Historiae Ecclesiasticae, cap. 12. Sanctus Epiphanius haeresi 21. Sanctus Augustinus lib. de haeresibus, [...].'

<sup>207</sup> Lechner 1988–94, p. 76.

<sup>208</sup> Chracas 1716–1836, no. 5886, 5 April 1755.



### III.4 The Shifting Sands of Historicity

By August 1755, the Fabbrica's workshop had begun the laborious and expensive process of creating the scale mosaic copy. Over the next nine months, disbursements of 1,696 scudi were recorded in the account books as 'A Spesa del Quadro di Musaico rappresentante la Caduta di Simon Mago pag.ti a diversi Musaichisti a conto'.<sup>209</sup> But on 29 March 1756, the Fabbrica abruptly decided to abandon the project:

‘Essendo il Quadro del Vanni, che rappresenta la Caduta di Simon Mago in molto buono stato, bramerebbero molti, che non si proseguisse l'incominciato lavoro del Battoni, l'opera di cui da qualche intendente vien reputata troppo inferiore all'altra applaudita del sud.o Vanni.

Sia sospeso il lavoro moderno del Pittore Battoni, il quale penserà con suo comodo di studiare, e perfezionare il suo originale: e intanto non si pensi a rimuovere il Quadro del Vanni.’<sup>210</sup>

Vanni's painting, a patchwork consisting of twenty-three pieces of slate

<sup>209</sup> Vatican City, Archivio della Fabbrica di San Pietro, Armadio 27 D, 412, Giornale [ex I° piano, Armadi, vol. 412], p. 645, 26 August 1755, 368:04 scudi; p. 646, 23 December 1755, 503:48 scudi; p. 649, 12 April 1756, 824:81 scudi (the final payments still occurred after the decision to abandon the project because payments to the mosaic workshop were made in four-month intervals).

<sup>210</sup> Vatican City, Archivio della Fabbrica di San Pietro, Armadio 16 A, 170, Liber Decretorum [ex I° piano, serie 3, vol. 170], fol. 25r.

and described by Antoine-Joseph Dézallier d'Argenville (1680–1765) as 'tout gâté par l'humidité',<sup>211</sup> had undergone a healing worthy of Saint Peter's miracles and was suddenly 'in molto buono stato' again. Since the rest of the explanation given by the Fabbrica was equally unconvincing – weaknesses in Batoni's composition would have been evident when the painting was exhibited on the altar at Easter 1755, not after nine months in the mosaic studio and enormous expenditures – the volte-face gave rise to multiple theories regarding the real, unstated reasons.

Batoni's pupil Puhlmann was later told by the artist that he had been the victim of an intrigue, but provides no further details.<sup>212</sup> When Philip Yorke, later 3rd Earl of Hardwicke (1757–1834), visited Rome in 1778, he was conducted around the city by James Byres (1734–1817), a close friend of Batoni's and later executor of the artist's will. Yorke also sat to Batoni for his portrait,<sup>213</sup> so his account may come either from Byres or even, with Byres translating, directly from Batoni:

'There is a picture of Battoni, of the fall of Simon Magus, the colouring is fine, but many faults may be found with the composition; one principal defect is the figure of Nero being so far off that it is difficult to discover him, & St Peter at once in the attitude of praying & commanding, two ideas diametrically

<sup>211</sup> Dézallier d'Argenville 1745–52, vol. II, p. 440.

<sup>212</sup> See Puhlmann 1979, p. 82.

<sup>213</sup> See Clark and Bowron 1985, p. 347, cat. no. 411.

opposite. This picture is however vastly superior to that of Costanzi which has been perpetuated in mosaic at St Peters. The reason of the preference being given to the picture that has the least merit was this; the Prelate who had the direction sent to the two painters to desire the sketches of their pictures. Battoni sent word that he had unfortunately just sold his for 500 crowns; but Costanzi with a degree of cunning pretended to be much flattered by such a request, & begged a little time to finish his sketch, which he had in reality disposed of as well as Battoni. He however drew another immediately & presented it to the Prelate, the consequence of which was that his [was] preferred to Battoni's and copied in mosaic for St Peter's.<sup>214</sup>

After its completion in 1740, Costanzi's *Raising of Tabitha* (fig. 35) had experienced a fate similar to that which Battoni's painting was to suffer, as Pier Leone Ghezzi's inscription on a caricature he made of Costanzi in 1740 recounts:

‘Il d.o Placido a fatto il Quadro per S. Pietro in Vaticano, con un Miracolo che S. Pietro risuscita una Donna morta e S. Pietro che gli da la Mano e la donna sta' a sedere nel Cataletto, con alcune altre figure che annunciano il Miracolo e lo Mise in opera il Sabato

<sup>214</sup> Belfast, Public Record Office of Northern Ireland, acc. no. D2433/D/5/156, Philip Yorke's journal of visits and excursions in Rome, 23 October 1778. The author is indebted to Aidan Weston-Lewis for this transcription.

Santo del Mese di Aprile del 1740 per haverlo da far poi di  
 mosaico, La detta opera glela fece havere il V. Cardinal Spinolone  
 a S. Agnese, il d.o Quadro ha' havuta una Canizza incredibile  
 [cancelled:] e Sono molta raggione perche è cattiva [...] è assai  
 stroppiata'.<sup>215</sup>

The minutes of the meeting of the Fabbrica on 29 March 1756 lend credence to the version of events provided by Yorke. After the proposal to reject Batoni's altarpiece had been approved, the congregation resolved:

'Nell'altro altare, in cui si ammirava quanto mirabilm.te il Baglioni esprimeva il miracolo, che in persona della Tabite operò S. Pietro appena vi è più vestigio di Quadro. Compose Placido Costanzo sopra lo stesso sogetto il suo quadro, che per varj anni fu tenuto alla Certosa, quasi in dimenticanza: ora lo stesso Professore, che il Quadro a suo genio ricomponè, per riparare a quel torto, col quale fu trattato, chiede alla Rev: Fabbrica un Sito opportuno, ed un Sussidio proporzionato.

Si lascia al pieno arbitrio di Mons.r Economo di risolvere ciò che

<sup>215</sup> Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Codice Ottoboniano Latino 3117, fol. 102. Transcribed in Dorati da Empoli 2008, p. 266. The cancelled lines at the end, 'e Sono molta raggione perche è cattiva [...] è assai stroppiata', are transcribed only in Bryan 1994, p. 248. Cardinal Giorgio Spinola (1667–1739) had been titular cardinal of S. Agnese fuori le mura from 1721 until 1734 and presumably helped Costanzi obtain the commission for the altarpiece.

conviene con Placido Costanzo.’<sup>216</sup>

The prelate who, according to Yorke’s story, received a freshly painted modello from Costanzi would have been the Fabbrica’s new *Economo*, Marcantonio Marcolini (1721–1782).<sup>217</sup> It can hardly have been an accident that he presented Costanzi’s rather audacious petition to be allowed to modify his altarpiece and be paid an additional honorarium for reworking his deficient composition in the same meeting that decided the fate of Batoni’s canvas. The Fabbrica had an established procedure for judging flawed paintings and giving artists the opportunity to remedy them, but at their own expense, which is laid out in the contract for Subleyras’ *Mass of Saint Basil* notarised on 13 September 1743:

‘Sig.e Subleiras sia tenuto, et obligato fare conforme promette, e s’obliga a tutte sue proprie spese, senz’alcun incomodo o dispendio d’essa Rev. Fabrica il trasporto del quadro a detta Basilica, e quello ponere [insertion: in opra] nell altare, [...] e ridurre à sua perfezione detto quadro conforme portano le regole della pittura perche cosi &c. et in caso di qualche difetto, o mancanza correggerlo, et in evento di differenza farlo riconoscere da uno, o più Periti Pittori da destinarsi dall E.mo Sig:e Cardinal Prefetto,

<sup>216</sup> Vatican City, Archivio della Fabbrica di San Pietro, Armadio 16 A, 170, Liber

Decretorum [ex I° piano, serie 3, vol. 170], fols. 25r–v.

<sup>217</sup> See Moroni 1840–61, vol. LX, p. 223.

overo da sua Sig.ria Ill.ma, o altro Economo pro tempore'.<sup>218</sup>

The congregation's decision that 'sia sospeso il lavoro moderno del Pittore Battoni, il quale penserà con suo comodo di studiare, e perfezionare il suo originale' adheres to the same principle. Nevertheless, Costanzi's stratagem succeeded. He received a further 450 scudi in addition to the standard price of 1,200 scudi that had already been paid out to him in 1740, and his reworked composition was translated into mosaic in 1758–60 and installed in Saint Peter's.<sup>219</sup> A further corroboration of the connection between the rejection of Battoni's and the resurrection of Costanzi's abandoned canvas is provided by Fiorillo, who arrived in Rome as a teenager in 1761. He describes a second public exhibition of Battoni's painting, an event that is not otherwise recorded:

'Gegen das Jahr 1761 war es vollendet, und wie vortrefflich auch dieses Gemählde von Seiten der Richtigkeit der Zeichnung und des schönen Kolorits, und wegen tausend andrer Vorzüge, seyn mochte, so überhäuften es doch die vielen Feinde und Neider Battoni's mit den bittersten und ungerechtesten Kritiken. Man behauptete: die Hauptfigur sey ein gemeiner Mensch vom Pöbel, der erschrocken davonläuft, als er den Zauberer herabstürzen sieht, und die ganze Aufmerksamkeit des Betrachters auf sich

<sup>218</sup> Rome, Archivio di Stato, 30 Notai Capitolini, ufficio 38, Francesco Maria Righi, vol. 176, fol. 80r. See Appendix D.2 for a full transcription of the document.

<sup>219</sup> See DiFederico 1983, pp. 75–76.

lenken müsse; der h. Petrus, der die wichtigste Rolle bey der Begebenheit spielen sollte, sey im Hintergrunde unter dem Gedränge des Volkes versteckt, und was dergleichen mehr ist. Man beschuldigte den Künstler sogar, er habe dieß und jenes Versehen gegen die Proportion gemacht. Batoni nahm das Gemählde noch einmahl zu sich, und arbeitete ungefähr ein Jahr daran. Allein es war nicht möglich, die ganze Komposition und Anordnung der Figuren zu verändern; er konnte nur einige Fehler verbessern, die er selbst dadurch entdeckt hatte, daß ihn die Ausstellung Gelegenheit gegeben, sein Werk in einer gewissen Entfernung zu betrachten: eine Sache, die in seiner Werkstätte nicht thunlich war. Allein Neid und Kabale waren bey dieser zweyten Ausstellung (wobey der Verfasser dieser Schrift sich gegenwärtig befand) nicht weniger geschäftig als bey der ersten, so daß das Werk nicht zu seiner ursprünglichen Bestimmung gebraucht ward. Es blieb in der Karthause, wo man es auch jetzt noch bewundert, und an seine Stelle wurde eines von Placido Costanzi gewählt: ein Werk, daß nach meinem Bedünken tief unter dem des Batoni steht, aber der Urheber desselben lebte nicht mehr.<sup>220</sup>

In October 1757, a year and a half after the painting's initial rejection, the anonymous Roman agent of the Elector of Bavaria reported in his 'Avvisi': 'Giacche il singolar quadro della caduta di Simon Mago dipinto dal

<sup>220</sup> Fiorillo 1798–1808, pp. 221–22.

celebre Sig. Battoni non è potuto essere riuscibile a porsi in Mosaico, com'era l'Ida, e stato da nostro Signore fatto portare in dono alla Chiesa della Madonna degli Angeli de PP. Certosini per porlo in una delle nicchie restate vacanti.<sup>221</sup> Unless the painting was subsequently moved from Santa Maria degli Angeli back to Batoni's studio to be reworked, this contradicts Fiorillo's account at least in terms of the dates.

Fiorillo also mentions that the painting was censured for not giving enough prominence to Saint Peter, a point that was echoed by Batoni's contemporary biographer Onofrio Boni (1739–1818): 'ad alcuni non piace la figura di S. Pietro in ginocchio, sembrano loro, che in piedi sarebbe rimasta più nobile, e svelta.'<sup>222</sup> This problem had been caused by Batoni's decision to both invoke the *silices apostolici* relic and follow the text by depicting the praying Apostle on his knees. His fidelity to his textual and physical source material backfired on the artistic level.

Ironically, that source material itself had become increasingly discredited in the decade that had passed since Batoni received the commission in 1746. While few commentators were willing to openly contradict the patristic endorsements of the Simon Magus episode, doubts began to be voiced. The *Atti degli apostoli con note dal francese* that had been dedicated to Benedict XIV in 1747 explained in an annotation to Acts 8:9:

<sup>221</sup> Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Cod. ital. 199, 'Avvisi', fol. 749r, 15 October 1757.

<sup>222</sup> Boni 1787, p. 45.



‘Oltre quello che S. Luca c’insegna in questo capitolo toccante Simon Mago, i Santi Padri, e gli antichi Istorici ci raccontano molti fatti particolari; per esempio, [...] che avendo ardito di farsi alzare in aria con il soccorso del Demonio, e S. Pietro essendosi posto a fare orazione, i Demonj furono obbligati ad abbandonare questo Impostore, che cadde e morì di questa caduta. Questi fatti, benchè appoggiati ad autorità assai riguardevoli, per non esser temerariamente rigettati, non sono parsi così incontrastabili ad alcuni Critici, che non abbiano creduto di poterli rivocare in dubbio.’<sup>223</sup>

Among those whose position had shifted was Augustin Calmet. Having completed the paraphrase of the entire Bible as well as his comprehensive Bible commentary, he continued to add dissertations and *prolegomena* to the commentary. A collection of these pieces was published separately in an Italian translation as *Il tesoro delle antichità sacre e profane*, first in Lucca in 1729–1742, then in Venice and Verona in 1741–50. In a ‘Dissertazione sopra Simon Mago’, Calmet recapitulated the story and paid the usual obeisance to the church fathers but concluded that ‘il più sicuro partito è di sospendere il giudizio senza decidere della verità, o della falsità del fondo dell’Istoria’.<sup>224</sup>

The mounting criticism of the Simon Magus episode reached a

<sup>223</sup> *Atti degli apostoli* 1747, p. 130.

<sup>224</sup> Calmet 1741–50, vol. V, pp. 519–22.

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crescendo in a treatise published by the prominent scholar Scipione Maffei (1675–1755) in 1749 under the title *Arte magica dileguata*. It quickly became an influential and successful book; by 1754, it had already been reprinted three times. In this text, Maffei unleashed a ferocious attack on the authenticity of the Simon Magus story and maintained that the authors of the apocryphal text, in exploiting the gullibility of their audiences, were no better than Simon Magus himself:

‘Nelle età a’ tempi Apostolici prossime, i componitori d’opere apocrife, e di storie inventate, avidamente si approfittarono della profession di Mago, fatta già con tanta astuzia da Simone; e poichè l’arte Magica condisce a maraviglia, e rende curiosi, e gustosi i racconti, prodigi attribuirono a costui senza fine; e specialmente, che in un publico quasi duello di S. Pietro e lui disputanti, volasse per l’aria, e fosse poi fatto da S. Pietro precipitare.’<sup>225</sup>

Maffei went on to describe the story as it was recounted in an apocryphal source, the *Costituzioni Apostoliche*:

‘Si fa dire a S. Pietro, che Simone andato di mezzo giorno nel Teatro in Roma, ordinò al popolo, che ci tirasse dentro me ancora, promettendo di volar per aria. Segue, che costui volò sublime portato da i diavoli, dicendo che andava al Cielo con applausi di tutto il popolo, e che S. Pietro con sue orazioni lo fece cadere a

<sup>225</sup> Maffei 1749, p. 32.

terra, avendogli prima parlato, come fossero un presso l'altro. Veggasi il racconto, ch'è chiaramente mal' inventato, e falso. Vera cosa è, che questi ed altri antichi scritti, ingannarono alcuni Padri, e Cristiani autori, i quali senza maggior' esame ebbero fede al volgar grido: sopra di che però più cose potrebbber dirsi, ma troppo lungo sarebbe il trattar di queste partitamente. Come si può senza titubazione credere a cagion d'esempio, che scrivesse S. Girolamo, essere andato S. Pietro a Roma, non per piantare nel Capo del Mondo la Fede, e la prima Cattedra, ma *ad expugnandum Simonem Magnum?*<sup>226</sup>

The phrase *ad expugnandum Simonem Magnum* is a citation from the life of Saint Peter in *De viris illustribus* by Saint Jerome.<sup>227</sup> Since Maffei did not want to call the authority of a church father into question, he speculated that Jerome's text must have been corrupted by a later addition: 'come si può non sospettare, che quelle [...] parole passassero anticamente nel testo per nota malamente aggiunta nel margine?' Maffei

<sup>226</sup> Maffei 1749, pp. 32–33.

<sup>227</sup> Saint Jerome, *De viris illustribus*, ch. 1: 'Simon Petrus, filius Joannis, provinciae Galileae, e vico Bethsaida, frater Andreae apostoli, et princeps Apostolorum, post episcopatum Antiochensis Ecclesiae, et praedicationem dispersionis eorum qui de circumcisione crediderant, in Ponto, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, et Bithynia, secundo Claudii imperatoris anno, ad expugnandum Simonem magum, Romam pergit, ibique viginti quinque annis Cathedram Sacerdotalem tenuit, usque ad ultimum annum Neronis, id est, decimum quartum.'

concluded emphatically that the stories such as the Fall of Simon Magus were ‘finzioni e novelle popolarmente invalse’.<sup>228</sup>

The episode’s damaged credibility is also evident in the selection of the scenes for the first entirely new apostolic cycle to be installed in the Vatican Basilica since Baronio had devised the programme for the *navi piccole* altars. Nine stucco medallions in the vaults of the apse and both transepts, designed by Michelangelo, were still empty. As part of the preparations for the Holy Year of 1750, Benedict XIV had them decorated with reliefs executed in gilded stucco by Giovanni Battista Maini in 1749.<sup>229</sup>

The scenes, drawn from the lives of Saints Peter and Paul, could be chosen freely because there were no iconographic precedents to be followed. The Fall of Simon Magus was expunged. Seven of the nine reliefs show episodes from the New Testament, such as the Miraculous Draught of Fishes and the Liberation of Saint Peter from Prison. The only unbiblical events in the cycle, the martyrdom scenes of Saints Peter and Paul, which appear in the semi-dome above the tribuna, were beyond reproach.<sup>230</sup>

<sup>228</sup> Maffei 1749, p. 33.

<sup>229</sup> See Michel 1998, pp. 44–45.

<sup>230</sup> See Pinelli 2000, vol. I, p. 528, cat. nos. 681–83; vol. II, pp. 636–37, cat. nos. 842–44; vol. II, p. 694, nos. 929–31. The central relief in the tribuna apse, described as *Christ Delivering the Keys to Saint Peter* in Pinelli 2000, cat. no. 843, and Perissinotti Rossi 2001, p. 66, shows the Risen Christ in a toga that exposes the wound on the right-hand

When the congregation of the Fabbrica di San Pietro convened in 1756 to determine the fate of Batoni's composition, it was faced with the dilemma of approving or rejecting for public exhibition in the mother church of Catholicism not so much a painting as an expression of the authenticity, or lack thereof, of the Church's foundational history.

In terms of the group making that decision, Batoni could have expected his painting to be given a sympathetic hearing, with one of Benedict XIV's administrative reforms working in his favour. In the Apostolic Constitution 'Quanta curarum' promulgated on 15 November 1751, Benedict XIV had established a 'Congregatio Particularis super rebus oeconomicis' to reform the Fabbrica's tangled financial affairs. The supervision of the mosaic workshops was specifically identified as one of the new group's responsibilities.<sup>231</sup> It consisted of four members: Cardinals Henry of York (1725–1807), Silvio Valenti Gonzaga (1690–1756), Prospero Colonna di Sciarra (1707–1765), and Girolamo Colonna, Batoni's old acquaintance. All four men had either already commissioned paintings from Batoni or were to do so later.

The group that met in March 1756 was, according to the minutes, this 'congregazione particolare economica'. In attendance were Cardinal York and the two Colonna cardinals plus Marcolini and his deputy, Bernardino

side of his chest, pointing to a flock of grazing sheep, and is in fact a *Pasce oves meas*.

<sup>231</sup> See Benedict XIV 1746–57, vol. III, pp. 414–15.

Giraud, with Cardinal Valenti Gonzaga absent due to illness.<sup>232</sup> It would be impossible to argue that these three cardinals were unsympathetic to Batoni and his art. Nonetheless, they made the decision, under a transparently feeble pretext, to abandon the project to translate *The Fall of Simon Magus* into mosaic, in spite of the mosaic already having cost considerably more money than the painting. The following day, Marcolini was received by Benedict XIV, another patron and supporter of Batoni's, and obtained his approval.<sup>233</sup>

Lanzi's *Storia pittorica della Italia* points out the irony that when, in 1772, another new altarpiece was commissioned to replace Vanni's painting on slate, it was not only the artist who was changed out but also the unbiblical subject:

‘Il mosaico, qual che si fosse la ragione, non si eseguì. Spiacque forse la storia non evangelica: onde riassumendosi l'idea di torre di là il quadro del Vanni, fu cangiato soggetto; e fu data al Mengs la commissione di esprimere la Potestà delle chiave conferita a San Pietro.’<sup>234</sup>

<sup>232</sup> Vatican City, Archivio della Fabbrica di San Pietro, Armadio 16 A, 170, Liber Decretorum [ex I° piano, serie 3, vol. 170], fol. 23v.

<sup>233</sup> Vatican City, Archivio della Fabbrica di San Pietro, Armadio 16 A, 170, Liber Decretorum [ex I° piano, serie 3, vol. 170], fol. 26r: ‘A di 30 Marzo 1756: Riferita, ed approvata da Sua Santità / M. A. Marcolini Econ.o Segr.o’.

<sup>234</sup> Lanzi 1968–74, vol. I, p. 421. See also Boni 1787, p. 47.

For the first time, the sixteenth-century selection of Petrine subjects, binding for every one of the altarpieces previously commissioned during the eighteenth century, was ignored.<sup>235</sup> Baronio's ecclesiastical history had been overruled by the historicity of the Bible.

<sup>235</sup> See Roettgen 1999–2003, vol. II, pp. 315–16.

## IV. Saints, Doctrine, and the Pontiff

### IV.1 ‘Sopra le nostre azioni’: A Benedictine Cycle of Paintings

In December 1757, Pope Benedict XIV Lambertini wrote to Filippo Maria Mazzi, his agent in Bologna and *Soprintendente generale della mensa arcivescovile*:

‘Il Cardinale Orsini con somma gentilezza ha fatto fare un Quadro rappresentante l’affare da Noi trattato e conchiuso colla Francia. Il celebre Pittore Battoni è quello che lo ha fatto, ed è della misura de’ passati fatti da altri sopra le nostre azioni, e mandati a Bologna. Qui è stato molto piaciuto, e specialmente nel nostro Ritratto. Il Cardinale l’ha pagato ottocento scudi [...]. Si mandarà quanto prima il nuovo Quadro a Bologna’.<sup>236</sup>

This letter confirms the – previously assumed – role of Cardinal Orsini in commissioning the painting *Pope Benedict XIV Presenting the Encyclical ‘Ex Omnibus’ to the Comte de Choiseul* (signed and dated 1757; fig. 37) and presenting it as a gift to the Pope.<sup>237</sup> Domenico Amedeo Orsini

<sup>236</sup> Bologna, Biblioteca Universitaria, ms. 4331, vol. VIII, fol. 401r–v, Benedict XIV to Filippo Maria Mazzi, 28 December 1757. See also Folli Ventura and Miani 1987, p. 190, no. 199.

<sup>237</sup> Oil on canvas, 129 x 180 cm, Minneapolis, The Minneapolis Institute of Arts. See Clark and Bowron 1985, p. 269, cat. no. 200, fig. 185: ‘It is probable that the Minneapolis picture was a gift [from Orsini] to Benedict XIV before the Pope’s death in 1758’; Philadelphia 2000, p. 312, cat. no. 168.



d'Aragona, Duke of Gravina (1719–1789), had been among the first group of cardinals created in the Lambertini pontificate.<sup>238</sup> Among the twenty-five recipients of a red hat in the consistory of September 1743, he stood out by virtue of his age, clerical status, and family situation. While the average age of the other new cardinals was fifty-six, the Neapolitan nobleman was only twenty-four years old.<sup>239</sup> He was also a layman who, along with three others, had to be granted a dispensation to be created a cardinal without having received minor orders. Finally, he was a widower with two children; his wife, Anna Paola Odescalchi Orsini, had died in childbirth the previous year.<sup>240</sup>

It was from a sense of loyalty and gratitude to the Orsini family that Benedict XIV decided to elevate the young father to the cardinalate in spite of these impediments. A few weeks after the consistory, the Pope wrote to Domenico Orsini's uncle, Mondillo Orsini, Patriarch of Constantinople *in partibus* (i.e., titular patriarch of an extinct episcopal see 'in the lands of

<sup>238</sup> For Orsini, see Moroni 1840–61, vol. XLIX, pp. 171–72; Rudolph 1998, p. 22; Parretti 2012.

<sup>239</sup> The next youngest two were both thirty-five years old and owed their red hats to their service to the Holy See: Giorgio Doria, nuncio extraordinary to the Diet of Frankfurt for the election of Emperor Charles VII, and Girolamo Colonna di Sciarra, prefect of the Apostolic Palace.

<sup>240</sup> For a posthumous allegorical portrait by Marco Benefial of Anna Paola Odescalchi Orsini with her children Filippo and Giacinta, 1746, oil on canvas, 202 x 150 cm, Rome, Museo di Roma, see Barroero 2005, p. 22, pl. 22.

the unbelievers’, *in partibus infidelium*) and Archbishop of Capua:

‘Accusiamo la sua lettera, nella quale ci ringrazia della Promozione di Suo Nipote al Cardinalato. Ci riconoscevamo in obbligo di far comparire la nostra gratitudine verso la Santa memoria di Benedetto XIII: non potevamo farla in altro modo, che o dando a Lei il Cappello di Cardinale, o a suo Nipote. Abbiamo poi pre[di]letto il Nipote, perchè probabilmente dovendo esser più lunga la vita del Nipote di quella del Zio’.<sup>241</sup>

Pope Benedict XIII Orsini (reigned 1724–30), Domenico’s great-uncle, had created Prospero Lambertini a cardinal in 1726.

After his elevation, Domenico Orsini kept a low profile. He moved in the philo-jansenist circles around Giovanni Gaetano Bottari (1689–1775) and the cardinals Domenico Passionei (1682–1761) and Fortunato Tamburini (1683–1761). It was reported that because of his humility, he preferred to remain a deacon, without wishing to receive major orders,<sup>242</sup> while another interpretation claimed he had only accepted the cardinalate on condition

<sup>241</sup> Rome, Archivio Capitolino, Fondo Orsini, I serie, pacco 71/1, fol. 164, Benedict XIV to Mondillo Orsini, 1 October 1743.

<sup>242</sup> Paris, Bibliothèque du Séminaire de Saint-Sulpice, Fonds Clément, ms. 1293, unknown author to Augustin-Jean-Charles Clément, 1 December 1754: ‘Ses [Giovanni Gaetano Bottari’s] liaisons sont principalement avec les cardinaux Passionei, Tamburini et Orsini, et il a élevé celui-ci dont on dit beaucoup de bien; car ce cardinal est resté diacre, sans vouloir être prêtre, et cela par humilité.’ Transcribed in Rogister 1997, p. 109.

that he would not have to be ordained to the priesthood lest his children should die and a second marriage might become necessary in order to produce an heir.<sup>243</sup>

When Orsini's name appeared in Chracas' Roman newspaper in January 1752, it was not in any political or administrative role, but as an art patron.<sup>244</sup> To celebrate the Pope's successful resolution of a long-running diplomatic conflict, Cardinal Orsini presented Benedict XIV with a history painting by Placido Costanzi, *Benedict XIV Settling a Dispute between Austria and the Republic of Venice* (fig. 38).<sup>245</sup> One of the thorniest conundrums of the Lambertini pontificate, the disagreement between the Serene Republic of Venice and the Habsburg empire concerned the ecclesiastical jurisdiction of the patriarchate of Aquileia, a diocese based on the Venetian *terraferma* but extending into Austrian territory.<sup>246</sup> Venice was unwilling to cede a substantial portion of the ecclesiastical domain of the ancient patriarchate, while Vienna was equally unwilling to tolerate within its borders the provision of pastoral care administered by a diocese governed from foreign territory. In June 1750, at the height of the trilateral negotiations among Venice, Austria, and the

<sup>243</sup> Jones 1992, p. 220. Orsini was not ordained a priest until 1768.

<sup>244</sup> See Chracas 1716–1836, no. 5382, 15 January 1752.

<sup>245</sup> 1752, oil on canvas, 112 x 175 cm, formerly Livorno, private collection. See Clark 1981a, p. 64, fig. 71.

<sup>246</sup> See Seneca 1954; Trebbi 1982; Frankl 2003, p. 49; Tavano 2003, p. 227.

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Holy See, the Pope wryly observed that ‘se mangiamo, mangiamo Aquileja, se dormiamo, ci sognamo Aquileja, se vogliamo leggere qualche cosa, ecco un biglietto sopra Aquileja, una rappresentanza con spedizione a posta sopra Aquileja.’<sup>247</sup>

The solution was decreed in July 1751 in the papal bull ‘Iniuncta nobis’: The patriarchate of Aquileia was suppressed and two new archdioceses were erected in its place, one in Udine for the Venetians and one in Gorizia (Görz) for the Austrians. This compromise is the subject of Costanzi’s allegorical depiction. Under the auspices of a personification of Religion hovering on a cloud, Benedict XIV, flanked by allegories of Peace (holding an olive branch) and Justice (holding scales and the fasces), presents the mitres and double-transomed processional crosses of the new archbishoprics to female personifications of Austria and Venice. His identity as a specific, present-day pope, rather than a generic personification of the papacy, is clarified not only through his facial features but also through the Lambertini coat-of-arms carved into the back of the throne. By keeping the two mitres and the two crosses close together, Costanzi emphasised their identical design as a metaphor for the equal status of both archdioceses. Just as significantly, the personifications of Venice and Austria were given equal rank, as designated by the similarity of their ermine-lined bejewelled cloaks and sceptres.

<sup>247</sup> Benedict XIV to Pierre Guérin de Tencin, 24 June 1750. Transcribed in Morelli 1955–84, vol. II, p. 285.

Distinguished from one another only by a doge's hat and imperial crown, they have joined their right hands to symbolise the end of the dispute.

Benedict XIV's decision is characterised not only as divinely inspired by the dove of the Holy Spirit, but also as wise and just through a visual reference to the Judgement of Solomon – in pose and gesture, the seated Pontiff on the throne quotes the Hebrew monarch in Agostino Masucci's *Judgement of Solomon* of 1738 (fig. 39).<sup>248</sup> A speculative interpretation might even equate the female personifications of the combative secular powers of Austria and Venice with the two squabbling harlots, while remaining wisely ambiguous on the question of which party's culpable intransigence had endangered the (spiritual) welfare of the population, the unseen equivalent of the innocent infant.

Costanzi's composition translates a contemporary historical event into the idiom of allegorical history painting while treading carefully on sensitive political terrain. Given the fact that the Pope himself was the painting's intended recipient, the decision to render him as a real-life figure is only logical and appears to have been well received. Like the Batoni painting five years later, it became a rare exception to Benedict's usual practice of passing on nearly every gift he was given to a Bolognese church (especially the metropolitan cathedral),<sup>249</sup> religious order, or the

<sup>248</sup> Oil on canvas, 190 x 210 cm, Turin, Galleria Sabauda (formerly in Palazzo Madama).

See Clark 1981b, p. 95, fig. 112; Turin 1996, pp. 146–47, cat. no. 306.

<sup>249</sup> See Johns 2009, pp. 153–54.

Istituto delle Scienze: ‘quando i regali non possono servire per la chiesa, o per l’istituto, o per la libreria, non devono stare 24 ore appresso di Noi’.<sup>250</sup> Costanzi’s canvas remained in the Pontiff’s possession and was put on display in the Lambertini family palace in Bologna. Marcello Oretti’s catalogue, ‘Le pitture che si ammirano nelli Palazzi, e Case de’ Nobili della Città di Bologna’, compiled between c. 1760 and c. 1780,<sup>251</sup> lists a painting showing ‘La Pace stabilita nell’Elezione del Patriarca d’Aquileia e la Corte di Vienna’ in Palazzo Lambertini (‘rincontro la Chiesa di S. Biagio’). In this as in other cases, Oretti – writing half a generation later – was only partly accurate in his descriptions of the subjects and in his attributions of the works he catalogued. He attributed Costanzi’s canvas to Batoni, probably on the basis of the fact that it was displayed as a pendant to the latter’s *Pope Benedict XIV Presenting the Encyclical ‘Ex Omnibus’ to the Comte de Choiseul*.<sup>252</sup>

<sup>250</sup> Benedict XIV to Paolo Magnani, 14 May 1746. Transcribed in Prodi and Fattori 2011, p. 485.

<sup>251</sup> See Perini 1996.

<sup>252</sup> Bologna, Biblioteca dell’Archiginnasio, ms. B. 104, ‘Le pitture che si ammirano nelli Palazzi, e Case de’ Nobili della Città di Bologna’, no. [a] 41/8: Batoni, ‘Benedetto XIV su il trono dà la Bolla Vingenti [sic] all’Ambasciatore del Re di Francia [...] / P. Lambertini, incontro la Chiesa di S. Biagio / Compagno del quadro citato in [a] 41/12’; no. [a] 41/12: Batoni, ‘La Pace stabilita nell’Elezione del Patriarca d’Aquileia e la Corte di Vienna / P. Lambertini, ibidem / Compagno del quadro citato in [a] 41/8’. Transcribed in Calbi and Scaglietti Kelescian 1984, p. 36.

The paintings by Costanzi and Batoni have often been described as showing the two main diplomatic efforts of the Pope and Cardinal Orsini, who has been characterised as one of the principal diplomats of the Lambertini papacy.<sup>253</sup> However, the special congregation of ten cardinals convened by Benedict XIV in May 1750 to advise him on the Aquileia question did not include Domenico Orsini.<sup>254</sup> He was neither a member of the congregation of six cardinals charged with examining the drafts for the encyclical ‘*Ex Omnibus*’ in 1755–56<sup>255</sup> nor was he involved in the negotiations in any other capacity.<sup>256</sup> Instead, the motivation of the independently wealthy Orsini for commissioning the paintings as gifts appears to have been gratitude for the trust the Pope placed in him as a still relatively young and inexperienced member of the Holy See’s administration. In early 1757, when Orsini must have ordered the *Ex Omnibus* painting, Benedict XIV appointed him to two important, if non-

<sup>253</sup> Clark and Bowron 1985, p. 269; Philadelphia 2000, p. 312.

<sup>254</sup> See Trebbi 1982, pp. 681–82. See also Benedict XIV to Pierre Guérin de Tencin, 13 May 1750. Transcribed in Morelli 1955–84, vol. II, pp. 272–73.

<sup>255</sup> This congregation consisted of the cardinals Valenti Gonzaga, Spinelli, Landi, Passionei, Tamburini, and Galli; see Choiseul to Rouillé, 2 December 1755. Transcribed in Boutry 1895, pp. 60–63.

<sup>256</sup> The negotiations are documented in great detail in the letters of Benedict XIV to Cardinal Pierre Guérin de Tencin (Morelli 1955–84, vol. III, *passim*) and in the correspondence between Choiseul and the French foreign ministry (Boutry 1895, *passim*). Neither source mentions any involvement of Cardinal Orsini.

diplomatic, curial posts in the congregations of the *Consulta* and the *Buon Governo*, as the ‘Avvisi’ sent by an anonymous Roman agent to the Elector of Bavaria record: ‘Essendo state conferite da N.o Sig.e le due deputazioni vacanti nella Consulta e nel Buon Governo all’E.mo Orsini. L’Em.za Sua ne hà preso Possesso.’<sup>257</sup>

Instead of giving the commission to the elderly but still active Costanzi again, the cardinal now chose Batoni, who also painted a portrait of Orsini’s daughter, Giacinta, to mark her wedding in April 1757, showing that he was now the patron’s favoured artist.<sup>258</sup>

The two paintings for the Pope by Costanzi and Batoni have hitherto been considered a pair of pendants rather than part of a larger series.<sup>259</sup> Yet in the letter of December 1757, Benedict XIV expressly referred to the Batoni as being ‘della misura de’ passati fatti da altri sopra le nostre azioni, e mandati a Bologna’, i.e., at least two other paintings by different artists had previously been shipped to his native city. Oretti’s catalogue of Palazzo Lambertini lists two further depictions that could have been described as

<sup>257</sup> Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Cod. ital. 199, ‘Avvisi’, fol. 735r, 19 February 1757.

<sup>258</sup> 1757–58, oil on canvas, 136 x 99 cm, Rome, Museo Fondazione Roma. See Clark and Bowron 1985, p. 272, cat. no. 207; Rome 1999, p. 92, cat. no. 26; Milan 2002, pp. 462–63, cat. no. VII.6; Rome 2005, p. 183, cat. no. 65; Parretti 2009. For Giacinta Orsini’s wedding to Antonio Buoncompagni Ludovisi, Duke of Arce, on 25 April 1757, see Chracas 1716–1836, no. 6210, 30 April 1757.

<sup>259</sup> Clark and Bowron 1985, p. 269; Philadelphia 2000, p. 312.



‘le nostre azioni’:<sup>260</sup> ‘La apertura della Porta Santa’ by Giovanni Paolo Panini and ‘La chiesa di S. Pietro di Roma col Pontefice Benedetto XIV quando benedice la rosa d’oro’ by Vittorio Bigari (1692–1776).<sup>261</sup>

Giovanni Paolo Panini’s *Benedict XIV Opening the Porta Santa* (fig. 40),<sup>262</sup> dated 1750, also appears in Benedict’s letters to his agent in

<sup>260</sup> Bologna, Biblioteca Universitaria, ms. 4331, vol. VIII, fol. 401v, Benedict XIV to Filippo Maria Mazzi, 28 December 1757.

<sup>261</sup> Bologna, Biblioteca dell’Archiginnasio, ms. B. 104, ‘Le pitture che si ammirano nelli Palazzi, e Case de’ Nobili della Città di Bologna’, no. [a] 41/3: Bigari, ‘La chiesa di S. Pietro di Roma col Pontefice Benedetto XIV quando benedice la rosa d’oro’; no. [a] 41/6: Panini, ‘La apertura della Porta Santa [...] Compagno del quadro di V. Bigari citato in [a] 41/3’. Transcribed in Calbi and Scaglietti Kelescian 1984, pp. 40, 147.

<sup>262</sup> 1750, oil on canvas, measurements unknown, Rome, private collection. See Piacenza 1993, p. 48; Arisi 1986, p. 433, cat. no. 406, as ‘commissionato probabilmente dal Card. Silvio Valenti Gonzaga per donarlo al Papa, Benedetto XIV’, without offering any supporting evidence. – A drawing in the Museo di Roma, bearing the later inscription ‘Disegno originale del cavaliere Gio’ Pavolo Panini dal Quadro da esso eseguito dell’apertura della Porta Santa nel Portico della Basilica Vaticana dal pontefice Benedetto XIV nell’anno del Giubileo 1749 nel giorno 24 dicembre / Il C[av.]e Algarotti dice essere in Casa Lambertini / a Bologna il quadro cavato da questo disegno / v. vol. 8 delle sue opere pag. 151’ (see *Museo di Roma* 2002, p. 108, cat. no. I D.15) differs from the painting in its composition and viewpoint; an attribution to Panini may be excluded. – The two sketches (Paris, Musée du Louvre, Département des Arts graphiques, inv. 6708, 6709) described in Arisi 1986, p. 433, as Panini’s ‘prima idea’ are by Pier Leone Ghezzi; their compositions match neither the painting nor the Museo di Roma drawing.

Bologna:

‘Quando il tempo lo permetterà, mandaremo anche a Bologna un Quadro colla sua cornice rappresentante la nostra apertura della Porta Santa. È stato fatto dal celebre Pagnini [sic], che in simili soggetti è mirabile, e che con essi ha fatto un bel capitale di sessanta mila scudi in tanti Luoghi di Monte, andando pazzi l’Inglesi di queste sue opere. Il Quadro vogliamo, che resti in Casa, e se per la Festa di S. Pietro crederà di poterlo esporre in Chiesa, lo facci, acciò sia veduto da tutti.’<sup>263</sup>

Cardinal Orsini had been present at the opening of the Porta Santa for the jubilee year of 1750, but played no particular role during the ceremony, and is not called out in any way by Panini.<sup>264</sup>

The painting remained in the Lambertini family palace in Bologna after the Pope’s death, where it was singled out in 1760 by Francesco Algarotti (1712–1764) when discussing a number of Panini’s works in a letter to a Bolognese friend: ‘il più bel quadro in tal genere è senza dubbio la loggia di san Pietro col Papa che apre la porta santa; il quale non è lungi da casa sua nel palagio Lambertini, e a cui potrebbe dare qualche occhiata.’ A year later, Algarotti again praised the ‘quadro del Pannini in casa Lambertini, il quale rappresenta l’aprimiento della Porta Santa fatto da Benedetto decimo

<sup>263</sup> Bologna, Biblioteca Universitaria, ms. 4331, vol. V, fol. 199r, Benedict XIV to Filippo Maria Mazzi, 20 March 1751.

<sup>264</sup> See *Distinta relazione* 1750, p. 5.

quarto, cosa veramente rara ed eccellente nel gener suo'.<sup>265</sup> At the end of the century, it was mentioned by Fiorillo in his *Geschichte der zeichnenden Künste*, but he confused the works in the series and assigned Panini's canvas to Batoni.<sup>266</sup>

Bigari's depiction of the *Benedict XIV Blessing the Golden Rose in Saint Peter's Basilica*,<sup>267</sup> mentioned by Oretti as the pendant to the Panini, is a highly questionable candidate for inclusion in the series of the Pope's history-making 'azioni'. The blessing of the Golden Rose was an annual event, taking place on the fourth Sunday of Lent, as well as a custom that popes had practised for centuries.<sup>268</sup> Benedict XIV had mentioned his intention to send a Golden Rose to the cathedral in Bologna, in emulation of a previous Bolognese pope, as early as 1743: 'Gregorio XIII mandò a regalare la rosa d'oro alla chiesa di S. Pietro di Bologna. Noi vogliamo far lo stesso, ma allora la rosa d'oro si faceva con cinquanta, o sessanta scudi, ed ora si fa con tre mila.'<sup>269</sup> It was only in March 1751 that the plan was

<sup>265</sup> Francesco Algarotti to Prospero Pesci, 12 March 1760, and Francesco Algarotti to Gaspero Patriarchi, 7 April 1761. Transcribed in Algarotti 1792, pp. 122–123, 161.

<sup>266</sup> Fiorillo 1798–1808, vol. I, p. 223: 'Für Benedict den vierzehnten mußte er ein kleines Gemählde machen, welches die Ceremonie der Öffnung des heiligen Thores vorstellte: es ist im Palast Lambertini zu Bologna befindlich, und das einzige Werk von Batoni, das man daselbst bewundert.'

<sup>267</sup> Untraced.

<sup>268</sup> See Baldassari 1709.

<sup>269</sup> Benedict XIV to Paolo Magnani, 28 September 1743. Transcribed in Prodi and Fattori

carried out.<sup>270</sup> A yearly routine occasion in Rome, the gift of the golden rose to the cathedral of Bologna had special significance only in the local context, and it would have been perfectly reasonable for the cathedral canons, for example, to commission a visual record from a local painter such as Bigari and present it to the Lambertini pope, who retained the role of archbishop of Bologna until 1754, in appreciation of the gift. Had the commission originated in Rome, it would almost certainly have gone to Panini, who enjoyed a near-monopoly of interior views of Saint Peter's Basilica.

A much stronger contender to complete the series – though the documentary evidence links it only to Cardinal Orsini rather than directly to Benedict XIV – is Panini's recently rediscovered *Benedict XIV Visiting the Trevi Fountain* (fig. 41), signed and dated 1747 and similar in size to the three other canvases by Batoni, Costanzi, and Panini.<sup>271</sup> It depicts the inauguration of the fountain in July 1744. Chracas noted at the time that the Pope 'osservò con piacere quella magnifica Fabrica del tutto terminata,

2011, p. 114.

<sup>270</sup> See *Lettera al Capitolo* 1751. The golden rose sent to Bologna is untraced; see Bologna 1997, p. XXIV.

<sup>271</sup> Oil on canvas, exact measurements unknown, private collection; possibly identical with Arisi 1986, p. 416, cat. no. 371 (fig. 371 erroneously illustrates cat. no. 441). A secondary version, oil on canvas, 104 x 167 cm, is in Moscow, State Pushkin Museum of Fine Arts. See Arisi 1986, p. 449, cat. no. 441; Pinto 1986, pp. 185–86; Turin 1999, p. 550, cat. no. 445; Markova 2002, pp. 233–34, cat. no. 203.

alla riserva delle Statue [...]; e vi si trovo a ricevere, ed inchinare Sua Bne Monsignore Caracciolo di Santobono [...] Presidente delle Acque, con il Sign. Nicola Salvi Architetto, a quali il S. Padre dimostrò di tutto l'operato molto gradimento.<sup>272</sup> The visit is also described in a detailed diary kept by the Pope's private secretary during the first four years of the Lambertini pontificate.<sup>273</sup>

In the painting, Giovanni Costanzo Caracciolo di Santobono (1715–1780), in charge of the Roman waterworks,<sup>274</sup> and the Trevi Fountain's architect Nicola Salvi are seen kneeling before Benedict XIV. A single cardinal is present; rather than Orsini, only twenty-five years old at the time and without any involvement in the event, this is more likely to be the Pope's maggiordomo, Cardinal Girolamo Colonna. (Cardinal Silvio Valenti Gonzaga, the secretary of state, would be another possibility; however, in his numerous depictions by Panini, he is invariably shown wearing a powdered wig, whereas the cardinal in the present painting wears his own black hair, as Girolamo Colonna did.)

This canvas can probably be identified with the 'veduta di Fontana di Trevi, opera di Gio: Paolo Panini' shown at an exhibition organised by the Congregazione dei Virtuosi al Pantheon in 1750 and listed in the catalogue

<sup>272</sup> Chracas 1716–1836, no. 4206, 11 July 1744.

<sup>273</sup> Bologna, Biblioteca Universitaria, ms. 1063, box III, doc. XXI, Giandomenico Giampedi, 'Alcune particolarità del Pontificato di Benedetto XIV', fol. 36v.

<sup>274</sup> See Pastina 1987.

as belonging to Cardinal Orsini.<sup>275</sup> Would Benedict XIV have welcomed this painting as a gift? On the one hand, he was critical of his predecessor's enormous expenditures for construction projects, drawn especially from the funds generated by the reintroduced and controversial state lottery, which he memorably described as 'un pajo di milioni vinti al lotto, ed impiegati in sassi'.<sup>276</sup> On the other hand, he would have considered the Trevi Fountain not an urbanistic extravagance but a necessary public infrastructure project, a significant aspect at a time when the Papal States were widely criticised for neglecting the welfare of its populace.

The Pope's priorities are underscored by the fact that he completed the Trevi Fountain's architecture and waterworks, but left the purely decorative part of the structure, namely the statues, to his successor. Firm in his belief that the Petrine office as a timeless institution should always take precedence over the preferences of its current holder as an individual,

<sup>275</sup> Waga 1968, p. 6: [belonging to Cardinal Orsini] 'Altri due detti [quadri], uno rappresentante la veduta di Fontana di Trevi, opera di Gio: Paolo Panini' [the other a van Wittel of Palazzo de Carolis].

<sup>276</sup> Benedict XIV to Pierre Guérin de Tencin, 16 August 1743. Transcribed in Morelli 1955–84, vol. I, p. 101. See also Benedict XIV to Paolo Magnani, 10 August 1743: 'la montagna de' debiti che abbiamo sin'ora appianata, non fatti da Noi, ma dal nostro antecessore, non essendosi potuto, né dovuto dir tutto, come sarebbe che oltre un paio di milioni guadagnati nel lotto, e spesi mal a proposito di qua e di là, oltre settecentomila scudi di vacabili spesi nella stessa maniera'. Transcribed in Prodi and Fattori 2011, p. 93.

he completed a number of unfinished construction projects inherited from his predecessors. As Olivier Michel has pointed out: ‘Benoît XIV est le pape de la continuité. Il mène à terme des projets abandonnés, il œuvre dans la tradition dont il est le gardien.’<sup>277</sup>

In the context of the series, it was natural for Panini, Rome’s foremost architectural painter, to be chosen to record those events in which physical structures played a key role. Benedict XIV held the artist in great esteem: ‘Esso in quel genere [view painting] è un’Uomo singolare.’<sup>278</sup> Whether or not it was originally intended for him, it is not unlikely that the Pope saw and admired the painting when visiting the Virtuosi al Pantheon exhibition held to celebrate the jubilee year, in which case protocol would have dictated that it be presented to him as a gift. This hypothesis is supported by the fact that *Benedict XIV Visiting the Trevi Fountain* is not listed in any of the subsequent inventories of the Orsini family collection.<sup>279</sup>

None of the later authors who visited Palazzo Lambertini in Bologna – Algarotti, Oretti, and Fiorillo – mention a painting of this subject. Benedict XIV, ‘non volendo che la nostra famiglia, dopo la nostra morte, sia più di quello che era, quando partimmo da Bologna per venire al Conclave’,<sup>280</sup>

<sup>277</sup> Michel 1981–82, p. 1169.

<sup>278</sup> Bologna, Biblioteca Universitaria, ms. 4331, vol. V, fol. 233r, Benedict XIV to Filippo Maria Mazzi, 26 May 1751.

<sup>279</sup> See Rubsamén 1980, p. 154, *passim*.

<sup>280</sup> Benedict XIV to Pierre Guérin de Tencin, 1 July 1750. Transcribed in Morelli 1955–84, vol. II, p. 289.

did not allow his nephew Egano Lambertini (c. 1700–1771) and the rest of the family to join him in Rome, nor did he grant them a stipend to support the expenditures they (but not he) felt decorum necessitated for the immediate relatives of a reigning pontiff. In the second edition of the *Annali d'Italia* published in 1753, Muratori noted: ‘Anzi all’osservare la tanta sua munificenza verso de gli altri, solamente ristretta verso d’esso suo Nipote, parve a non pochi, che l’animo suo per troppo abborrire gli eccessi de gli antichi Nepotismi, cadesse poi nel contrario eccesso, o sia difetto.’<sup>281</sup>

It is therefore quite possible that the family would have been forced to sell works of art in order to satisfy creditors after the Pope’s death in 1758. If they did, the Panini canvas of the Trevi Fountain, being primarily an attractive view painting of one of Rome’s most famous monuments – the figure of Benedict XIV is not even particularly conspicuous in the midst of a rich pageant of dozens of spectators – would have been far more marketable, perhaps to an English nobleman on his way back from Rome at the end of his Grand Tour, than the other three paintings by Costanzi, Batoni, and Panini with their depictions of papal ceremonies and bulls, redolent with Catholic ritual and Petrine supremacy.

The probability that Cardinal Orsini commissioned all four paintings as a series recording key events in the reign of the Pope who had created him a cardinal and advanced his career is strengthened by the existence of a

<sup>281</sup> Muratori 1753, p. 326.



comparable series in the collection of the cardinal's own family that may have served as a model for the project. Remarkably similar to the Lambertini series in their amalgamation of history and vedute painting, they depict four milestones in the papacy of Benedict XIII Orsini: *The Lateran Council Held by Pope Benedict XIII* by Pier Leone Ghezzi; *The Consecration of the Basilica of Saint John Lateran by Pope Benedict XIII* by Panini, with figures by Ghezzi; and *Eight Saints Canonised by Pope Benedict XIII* and *The Restitution of Comacchio*, both by Giovanni Odazzi. Their status as a series is confirmed by their consistent measurements of 10 1/2 x 13 *palmi*, their matching 'Salvator Rosa' frames, their consecutive inventory numbers, and (with one exception) their display together in the 'stanza del camino'.<sup>282</sup>

#### **IV.2 The Denial of Sacraments Controversy and the Comte de Choiseul-Stainville's Embassy to the Holy See**

A few years after the resolution of the Aquileia dispute, Benedict XIV found himself engaged in a second political fracas involving a major Catholic European power keen to assert its authority in the ecclesiastical realm. In France, the long-running tensions between Jansenists and

<sup>282</sup> Los Angeles, University of California, Los Angeles, Charles E. Young Research Library, Orsini Archive, collection 902, box 241, 'Nota de' mobili esistenti nel palazzo di Roma, che si soggettano al fidecommissso', 15 October 1782, fols. 64–65. See also Rubsamén 1980, pp. 123, 126, 129, nos. IX-136 (1794 inventory), X-73 (1817 inventory); IX-137, X-74; IX-138, X-75; X-28.

Molinists had erupted into a bitter controversy over the denial of the sacraments to those unwilling to accept the bull ‘Unigenitus’.<sup>283</sup>

In October 1755, the two factions had reached a stalemate in the general assembly of French bishops.<sup>284</sup> The party of the archbishop of Paris, Cardinal Christophe de Beaumont (1703–1781), known as the ‘Théatins’, considered a refusal to submit to the anti-Jansenist bull a mortal sin that automatically incurred a denial of the sacraments of the Eucharist and the last rites. Several dioceses, led by Paris, therefore mandated a confession certificate attesting that deathbed recipients of these sacraments had recently made confession to and received absolution from a priest who accepted the bull.<sup>285</sup>

The opposing party, led by Cardinal de la Rochefoucauld and called the ‘Appellants’, regarded non-acceptance of the bull only as a venial sin and favoured a more conciliatory approach, a stance that also enjoyed the tacit support of Louis XV.<sup>286</sup> At the same time, the French foreign minister, Antoine-Louis Rouillé (1689–1761), noted ‘les scrupules de S.M. [Louis XV]

<sup>283</sup> On the case that ignited the controversy, see Kley 1996, pp. 135–36, 142.

<sup>284</sup> A decision would have required a two-thirds majority in an assembly that was divided into two hardened factions of equal strength. See Patuzzi 1758, p. 13.

<sup>285</sup> See Kley 1984, pp. 107–8. On the role of Cardinal de Beaumont, see Chaunu, Foisil, and de Noirfontaine 1998, pp. 278–87, 305–9.

<sup>286</sup> *Collection des procès-verbaux* 1778, cols. 555–59. See also the report on the general assembly from a Jansenist perspective in the *Nouvelles Ecclésiastiques*, 6 February 1756, p. 25, cited in Nau 1956, p. 235.

et la crainte qu'elle a d'empiéter sur la juridiction ecclésiastique en prescrivant des règles pour ce qui concerne l'administration des sacremens.<sup>287</sup>

With the King's consent, the episcopate appealed to the Pope for adjudication.<sup>288</sup> For the Gallican Church, which jealously guarded its independence from the Holy See, this represented a political about-face from its previous stance that 'nos maximes veulent que l'on recoure le moins qu'il est possible aux jugements de Rome', as the then foreign secretary, the Marquis d'Argenson (1694–1757), had formulated it in an instruction of 1745.<sup>289</sup> The French ambassador in Rome, Étienne-François, Comte de Choiseul-Stainville (1719–1785), was given similar instructions: 'Son intention n'est pas de donner la plus légère atteinte aux maximes et aux libertés de l'Eglise gallicane, et Sa Majesté ne souffrira jamais que la

<sup>287</sup> Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, ms. 215–216, fol. 1494, Antoine-Louis Rouillé to Guillaume-François Joly de Fleury, 22 April 1753. Transcribed in Kley 1982, pp. 316–17, n. 26.

<sup>288</sup> See Kley 1984, p. 141. For the text of the general assembly's letter to Benedict XIV, see Boutry 1895, pp. 58–59, n. 2. See also the contemporary assessment by Innocenzo Nuzzi, 'Giunta compendiosa degli eventi posteriori alla metà del secolo', in Lafitau 1757, pp. 230–32, esp. p. 231. According to McManners 1998, p. 503, 'it was a testimony to Benedict XIV's greatness that a Gallican assembly could unanimously agree to consult him.'

<sup>289</sup> Paris, Archives des Affaires Etrangères, Correspondance politique, Rome, vol. 797, fol. 128. Transcribed in *Recueil des instructions* 1913, p. 205.

cour de Rome forme aucune entreprise qui leur soit contraire.’<sup>290</sup>

Choiseul, who later became the country’s foreign secretary (as Duc de Choiseul),<sup>291</sup> recorded in his memoirs that ‘jusqu’à ce moment, d’après mes instructions, je n’avais été occupé qu’à empêcher la cour de Rome de se mêler de nos disputes ecclésiastiques; j’étais obligé tout d’un coup de changer de langage en lui demandant de les décider.’<sup>292</sup> Louis XV’s goal, however, was not French recognition of a policy pronounced by the Holy See, but papal affirmation of French royal policy.<sup>293</sup> Versailles also demanded that the resulting encyclical must emphasise the fact that the Pope had become involved in domestic French affairs only at the specific request of the King and the French bishops.<sup>294</sup>

Benedict XIV had been eager to intervene as early as 1752. Being forced to passively observe the deteriorating situation in France, he explained, ‘ci sembra d’esser diventati Nerone, che colla cetra in mano stava alla finestra

<sup>290</sup> Paris, Archives des Affaires Etrangères, Correspondance politique, Rome, vol. 815, fol. 341, ‘Mémoire pour servir d’instruction au Sieur Comte de Choiseul-Stainville’, 22 September 1754. Transcribed in *Recueil des instructions* 1913, p. 310.

<sup>291</sup> He did not receive the title of Duc de Choiseul until 1761, but is frequently referred to under his later title in the secondary literature on the denial of sacraments controversy.

<sup>292</sup> Choiseul 1987, p. 128.

<sup>293</sup> See Kley 1984, pp. 142, 149.

<sup>294</sup> Antoine-Louis Rouillé to Étienne-François de Choiseul, 19 December 1755. Transcribed in Boutry 1895, p. 68, n. 1.

quando Roma abbruciava: e lasciando le profane similitudini, nulla facendo, temiamo nel nostro imminente sindacato comparir rei di gravissima omissione al Tribunale di Dio.’<sup>295</sup> In October 1754, he addressed his concerns regarding the role of the French lay magistrates, the *Parlements*, directly to Louis XV: ‘Nella dichiarazione [on the administration of the sacraments] fatta dalla Maestà Vostra con somma, e consueta saviezza, s’impone silenzio sopra l’eccitate controversie. E benchè non abbia certamente la M. V. con ciò preteso di levare alla Chiesa ciò, che Iddio le ha dato, e di sottoporre le chiavi del Santuario ai magistrati laici’.<sup>296</sup> A second missive of protest, reiterating the demand that sacramental questions be reserved to ecclesiastical authorities alone,<sup>297</sup> provoked the King’s retort that his own authority outweighed that of the Church: ‘Je suis le Protecteur et le Père commun des ecclésiastiques et des magistrats, et je ne dois pas permettre que l’un de ces deux ordres puisse faire aucune entreprise au préjudice de l’autre’.<sup>298</sup>

In the intense negotiations that ensued, Louis XV expected Choiseul to convince the Pope to come down on the side of the moderate party led by

<sup>295</sup> Benedict XIV to Pierre Guérin de Tencin, 14 June 1752. Transcribed in Morelli 1955–84, vol. II, pp. 483–84.

<sup>296</sup> Benedict XIV to Louis XV, 30 October 1754. Transcribed in *Benedicti XIV. acta* 1894, vol. II, p. 213.

<sup>297</sup> Benedict XIV to Louis XV, 26 February 1755. Transcribed in Boutry 1895, pp. 30–31, n. 2.

<sup>298</sup> Louis XV to Benedict XIV, 18 March 1755. Transcribed in Boutry 1895, pp. 37–38, n. 2.

Rochefoucauld.<sup>299</sup> Initially, the appointment of Choiseul to represent France in the discussions did not bode well. Benedict XIV pointed out that the new ambassador was preceded by ‘una fama poco vantaggiosa per lui; il che veramente ci aveva conturbato, non essendovi qui assolutamente bisogna d’incentivo al libertinaggio e nell’operare e nel credere.’<sup>300</sup> The Pope also harboured doubts regarding Choiseul’s intellectual prowess.<sup>301</sup>

The Jansenist party’s hopes for a revocation of key stipulations of the bull ‘Unigenitus’ were disappointed.<sup>302</sup> Benedict XIV remained conciliatory in tone and flexible about wording but firm on substance.<sup>303</sup> The French side, albeit in a secret memorandum that Choiseul was not permitted to communicate to the Pope, also acknowledged that Rome needed to stand by its previous decisions regarding ‘Unigenitus’:

‘Un acte de Benoît XIV qui détruirait ou du moins affaiblirait beaucoup tout ce qui a été fait depuis plus de quarante-deux ans [i.e., since the promulgation of ‘Unigenitus’ in 1713] par le Saint-Siège, n’augmenterait-il pas les doutes, les incertitudes et les divisions? Le pape, en favorisant le parti des opposants à la

<sup>299</sup> See Kley 1975, p. 72.

<sup>300</sup> Benedict XIV to Pierre Guérin de Tencin, 16 January 1754. Transcribed in Morelli 1955–84, vol. III, p. 110.

<sup>301</sup> See Butler 1980, p. 1040.

<sup>302</sup> See Maire 1998, p. 454.

<sup>303</sup> See Pastor 1931, p. 199.

Constitution, aigrirait et révolterait le parti contraire, et Rome ne remplacerait ses anciens défenseurs que par des amis au moins fort équivoques.’<sup>304</sup>

After further negotiations lasting more than a year,<sup>305</sup> the Pope sent a final draft directly to Louis XV on 18 July 1756, declaring that ‘il ne Nous a pas été et il ne Nous est pas possible de rien faire de plus’ because the episcopal power to administer the sacraments was divinely ordained and could not be usurped by a secular authority such as the magistrates.<sup>306</sup> Choiseul’s report sent to Versailles on the same day confirmed that ‘Sa Sainteté [m’a] déclaré qu’elle ne ferait plus aucun changement’.<sup>307</sup>

The resulting encyclical ‘Ex Omnibus’ was presented to the French ambassador on 16 October 1756. It reiterated the mandatory acceptance of the bull ‘Unigenitus’, but – crucially – did not define it as a rule of faith<sup>308</sup>

<sup>304</sup> Antoine-Louis Rouillé to Étienne-François de Choiseul, 19 December 1755.

Transcribed in Crousaz-Crétet 1893, p. 147.

<sup>305</sup> See Benedict XIV to Étienne-François de Choiseul, 30 November 1755; Benedict XIV to Louis XV, 20 March 1756. Transcribed in Boutry 1895, pp. 65, n. 1; 113, n. 1.

<sup>306</sup> Benedict XIV to Louis XV, 18 July 1756. Transcribed in Boutry 1895, pp. 163–64, n. 1.

<sup>307</sup> Étienne-François de Choiseul to Antoine-Louis Rouillé, 18 July 1756. Transcribed in Boutry 1895, p. 165, n. 1.

<sup>308</sup> On this question, see Paris, Archives des Affaires Etrangères, Correspondance politique, Rome, vol. 820, fols. 6v-7r, Étienne-François de Choiseul to unnamed recipient at Versailles, 2 January 1756: ‘Il [Benedict XIV] me dit que les évêques de France l’embarrassaient; que la qualification de “dogmatique”, qui à proprement dit

and limited the denial of sacraments to those who were in notorious, public opposition to the bull. The final text emphasises the King's and the French bishops' reverence and respect for the Holy See, applauds the bishops for following historical precedents by placing the dispute before the Pope as the ultimate arbiter, and defines the Crown's role as being the guarantor of the Church's complete freedom in the administration of the sacraments.<sup>309</sup>

The 'Déclaration du Roi par rapport à l'observation de la bulle Unigenitus', addressed to the *Parlement* on the occasion of a *Lit de Justice*

était, selon le style de la Cour de Rome, la même chose que "Règle de foi", était donnée à la Bulle "Unigenitus" par tous les évêques de France; que c'était un Décret du Saint-Siège, qu'il ne pouvait pas ne pas caractériser des titres reconnus. [...] Comme je savais que le Pape avait été un des secrétaires du Concile de Rome et que nommément dans ce temps il avait été opposé à la qualification de "Règle de foi", je pris la liberté d'interroger le St. Père et de lui demander s'il croyait la Bulle Unigenitus une règle de foi; dans le premier mouvement, le Pape me répondit: "Moi non". – "Eh bien", lui dis-je, "Saint Père, le Roi ne demande que le sentiment de Votre Sainteté". – "Allons", répliqua le Pape, "nous pouvons contenter le Roi sur cet article". (As a bishop, Prospero Lambertini had participated in the Roman synod of 1725 that had, against his objections, decided to characterise 'Unigenitus' as a rule of faith.) Transcribed in Appolis 1960, p. 243.

<sup>309</sup> For the original Latin text, see Lafitau 1757, pp. 235–38, and Patuzzi 1758, pp. VII–XV. For the French text, see Boutry 1895, pp. 319–27. For a modern edition in Latin and Italian, see *Enchiridion delle encicliche* 1994, pp. 840–51. For a contemporary commentary, see Patuzzi 1758, pp. 40–41.



convened on 13 December 1756 in order to register ‘Ex Omnibus’ as French law, similarly describes the King’s will as ‘rendre à l’autorité de l’Eglise l’obéissance qui lui est due’.<sup>310</sup> The historian Dale van Kley has characterised the encyclical as a ‘papal sanction for French royal policy’,<sup>311</sup> which is correct as far as the practical outcome of strictly limiting the denial of sacraments – thereby defusing most of the day-to-day disputes and mitigating the hardships – is concerned. In this pastoral area, the positions of the King and the Pope, the latter of whom was always inclined towards moderation and pastoral sensitivity, were never very far apart to begin with. On the political questions, however, Benedict XIV retained the upper hand in the negotiations, especially with regard to upholding papal authority vis-à-vis the Gallican bishops and the *Parlements*. With the benefit of almost a decade of hindsight, Cardinal Carlo Vittorio Amedeo delle Lanze (1712–1784) was to describe ‘Ex Omnibus’ as the ‘digne monument de la sagesse de ce grand Pape’.<sup>312</sup>

### **IV.3 A Synthesis of Reportage and Religious Allegory**

In July 1757, Cardinal Orsini commissioned a painting from Batoni to commemorate ‘l’affaire da Noi trattato e conchiuso colla Francia’, as

<sup>310</sup> For the complete text of the ‘Déclaration’, see Lafitau 1757, pp. 239–40 (cited passage on p. 239). A degree of ambiguity remains with regard to the ‘autorité de l’Eglise’, which could refer either to the Universal/Roman or to the Gallican Church.

<sup>311</sup> Kley 1982, pp. 314–15, n. 20; 317, n. 28. See also Kley 1984, pp. 141–42.

<sup>312</sup> *Procès-verbal* 1773, p. 1155.

Benedict XIV, its intended recipient, described the subject.<sup>313</sup> For the ‘quadro per traverse in tela di Pmi 7 e 5 rapp.te il Reg.te Sommo Pontefice Papa Benedeto XIV che presenta la lettera Enciclica all’Amb.re di Francia’, the painter received a total of 380 scudi in three instalments. Underneath his approval for the final payment on 28 August 1757, Orsini noted: ‘Da Noi detto quadro regalato al Papa istesso Ben.to XIV Reg:te’.<sup>314</sup>

<sup>313</sup> Bologna, Biblioteca Universitaria, ms. 4331, vol. VIII, fol. 401r, Benedict XIV to Filippo Maria Mazzi, 28 December 1757.

<sup>314</sup> Rome, Archivio Capitolino, Fondo Orsini, vol. 1474, ‘Giustificazioni attinenti all’azienda di Roma dell’E.mo e Rev.mo Sig.r Card. Orsini, da Genn.o 1757 a tt.o . Xbre d.o anno’, no. 93: ‘Il n.ro comp.a spedisca m.to di S. cento = m.ta pag.e al S. Pompeo Battoni Pittore per conto di due quadri che il medesimo sta dipingendo per n.ro servizio. Che di N.ro Palazzo 19 luglio 1757 / Dom:co Card:e Orsini / S 100=ma’; no. 140: ‘Il n.ro comp.a spedisca m.to di S. cento = m.ta pag.e a Gaspare Livaldini N.ro M.ro di casa colla sola dichiarazione che sono per spendere in n.ro servizio, e rendercene conto; e sono ad effetto di pagarli al S. Pompeo Battoni Pittore per conto de’ due quadri che sta dipingendo per n.ro servizio. Che di N.ro Palazzo 25 Ag.o 1757 / Dom:co Card:e Orsini / S 100=ma’; no. 141: ‘Il Sig.e Pompeo Battoni Pittore hà dipinto un quadro per traverse in tela di Pmi 7 e 5 rapp.te il Reg.te Sommo Pontefice Papa Benedeto XIV che presenta la lettera Enciclica all’Amb.re di Francia qual quadro ordinatale dall’E.mo S.re Card.le Orsini e ne fù concordato il p.zo nella soma di scudi trecentottanta [...] Il n.ro comp.a spedisca m.to di S. centoottanta= m.ta pag.e al S. Pompeo Battoni sud.o per resto e saldo al sud. conto. Che di N.ro Palazzo à 28 Ag.o 1757 / S. 180 =m.a / Da Noi detto quadro regalato al Papa istesso Ben.to XIV Reg:te / Dom:co Card:le Orsini’. The author is indebted to Cristiana Parretti for these transcriptions.

Batoni's canvas, *Pope Benedict XIV Presenting the Encyclical 'Ex Omnibus' to the Comte de Choiseul* (fig. 37), shows the enthroned Benedict XIV flanked by two allegorical personifications, handing the encyclical (inscribed with the beginning of its original text) to Choiseul. His hat placed on the step beside him, the kneeling ambassador has just kissed the red velvet slipper that emerges from beneath the folds of the Pope's lace-trimmed alb.

The underlying format recalls Costanzi's precedent of five years earlier: The figures in the lower register are set off from a heavenly register by a layer of clouds. Saints Peter and Paul, protectors of the Roman church, survey the scene from above, accompanied by the dove of the Holy Spirit in an aureola. This group is a deliberate visual reference addressed at the painting's recipient, since it invokes an engraved vignette used on the opening pages of two of his publications – the 1748 edition of *De sacrosancto Missae sacrificio*, Benedict XIV's treatise on the Mass, and the *Acta Canonizationis Sanctorum Fidelis a Sigmaringa, Camilli de Lellis, Petri Regalati, Josephi a Leonissa, et Catharinae De Ricciis*, a collection of documents related to the canonisation of 1746, published in 1749 (fig. 42).<sup>315</sup> The latter volume also reproduces the design of a painted banner that decorated the façade of Saint Peter's during the canonisation

<sup>315</sup> Benedict XIV 1748, p. 1; *Acta Canonizationis* 1749, p. 1. Neither book indicates who designed the vignette, but on the basis of the apostles' physiognomy, Batoni can be excluded as its author.

ceremonies of 1746 (fig. 43). It depicts the five new saints in glory looking up towards Saints Peter and Paul, on whose feast day of 29 June the canonisation took place. From this source, Batoni took details such as Peter's angled right leg, Paul's bare left foot placed forward, and Paul's sword handle with its pommel and tilde-shaped cross-guard.<sup>316</sup>

The key to the composition's deeper meaning lies in the identity of the two female personifications accompanying the Pope. The pose of the figure at left derives from Stefano Pozzi's depiction of Saint Peter in the church of San Silvestro al Quirinale in Rome of 1736 (fig. 44).<sup>317</sup> Batoni replaced the Apostle's keys with a triple-transomed papal processional cross and tilted the book towards the viewer in order to make its important inscription visible (discussed below). In all recent studies, this personification has been described as Religion, even though two scholars in the 1930s had already correctly identified her as Ecclesia.<sup>318</sup> An allegory of Religion, such as the one shown in Costanzi's painting (fig. 38), would typically be holding a plain cross, whereas the tiara and *tempietto*-style sanctuary held

<sup>316</sup> *Acta Canonizationis* 1749, pl. II.

<sup>317</sup> Pacia and Susinno 1996, pp. 141, 169, cat. no. 33, fig. 2.

<sup>318</sup> See Schaffran 1931, p. 94 (Ecclesia and Divine Wisdom); Emmerling 1932, p. 130, cat. no. 178 (Ecclesia and Divine Wisdom); Waterhouse 1971, p. 19 (Religion and Divine Wisdom); Brigstocke 1983, p. 214 (Religion and Divine Wisdom); Clark and Bowron 1985, p. 269, cat. no. 200 (Religion and Divine Wisdom); Philadelphia 2000, p. 312, cat. no. 168 (Religion and Divine Wisdom); Collins 2004, p. 291 (Religion and Prudence).

by the putti here are the attributes of Ecclesia. In her dress and attributes of sanctuary, tiara, and processional cross, Batoni's Ecclesia matches the personification shown in an engraving on the title pages of all four volumes of the first edition of Benedict XIV's *Bullarium* published in Rome between 1746 and 1757 (fig. 45).<sup>319</sup>

There are a number of other Roman eighteenth-century precedents for Batoni's depiction of Ecclesia, ranging across media as varied as canonisation banners, maps, and liturgical silver. One of the medallions for the decoration of Saint Peter's for the canonisation of 1746, recorded in an engraving in the same *Acta Canonizationis* publication of 1749, shows a young female figure wearing a pluviale and tiara (fig. 46). In the description, she is identified as 'Ecclesiae in Sanctorum suorum gloria lætitiaque triumphantis imaginem praeferens'.<sup>320</sup>

A similar allegory of the Church, attended by putti holding some of her attributes, also appears at bottom right in the *Pianta Grande* published by Giambattista Nolli (1701–1756) in 1748 (fig. 47). This figure, drawn by Stefano Pozzi (the steps directly below bear the inscription 'Stefano Pozzi pit. inv. e delin. '), is closely related to one appearing in Panini's *Modern*

<sup>319</sup> Benedict XIV 1746–57, vols. I–IV, title pages. In the engraving, the processional cross is only double- rather than triple-transomed. The image shows the Church triumphing over heresy and the Turks, each represented by several figures writhing on the ground, the former with snakes in their hair and holding books, the latter identified by a turban and scimitar.

<sup>320</sup> *Acta Canonizationis* 1749, p. 590, pl. V.

Rome (fig. 48), the first version of which was commissioned by Choiseul and painted by Panini in 1757, when Batoni was working on his ‘Ex Omnibus’ canvas. In the centre of the composition, a young man in red crouching near the seated Choiseul examines a grisaille painting of Ecclesia that reverses Pozzi’s figure (fig. 49).<sup>321</sup>

Among the liturgical objects the Portuguese Crown commissioned from Roman artists for the chapel of Saint John the Baptist in the church of São Roque in Lisbon in 1744 is a silver and silver gilt altar card (*cartagloria*) with the canon of the Mass, made by Antonio Vendetti after a design by Luigi Landinelli and Lorenzo Morelli (fig. 50). It is decorated at top left with a seated figure of Ecclesia holding a *tempietto*-style sanctuary and wearing a pluviale and tiara, while her pendant on the right is a figure of Religion holding a plain cross. The entire chapel and its furnishings were publicly exhibited in Rome before being shipped to Lisbon.<sup>322</sup>

A further confirmation that the figure would have been readily understood as Ecclesia by eighteenth-century observers is offered by a contemporary account of a later painting by Batoni. In 1781, the *Gazzetta Universale* published a detailed description of Batoni’s recently completed

<sup>321</sup> Oil on canvas, 170 x 245 cm, Boston, Museum of Fine Arts. For the figure of Ecclesia in Nolli’s *Pianta Grande* and Panini’s *Modern Rome*, see Paris 1992, p. 81; Bevilacqua 1998, p. 38 (with a divergent view on its original authorship); Ceen 2010, p. 32.

<sup>322</sup> 1744–49, silver and silver gilt, 49 x 53 x 9.5 cm, Lisbon, Museu de São Roque, inv. MPr 18. See Montagu 1996, p. 167, fig. 246; Vale 2010, p. 532, fig. 24.

altarpiece for the high altar of the Basilica of the Estrêla in Lisbon, the *Allegory of the Universal Devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus* (fig. 51).<sup>323</sup> The text points out the processional cross and *tempietto* as the attributes of Ecclesia:

‘Roma 25 luglio. Non si mancò già di avvisare la commissione, che S. M. la Regina Fedelissima dette al celebre Pittore Cav. Pompeo de Batoni, del Quadro, che la M. S. desiderava, rappresentante il *Sacro Cuore di Gesù*. Questo superbo lavoro è rimasto ora compito, e fa l’ammirazione di tutti gl’intendenti. Il Quadro è grandissimo, dovendo servire di tavola all’Altar Maggiore della nuova Chiesa fattasi espressamente erigere in Lisbona per questa devozione. Ciò che più si rende in esso mirabile è, di avere il Professore molto arricchito il soggetto di sua natura sterile, mentre si vede in primo luogo in aria il Sacro Cuore risplendente, adorato dagli Angeli, e poco più sotto vien rappresentata sopra le nuvole un’Ara, o sia Altare, a dritta del quale stà situata la figura della Chiesa in atto maestoso, che riguardando verso noi, e tenendo colla destra la Croce, ci addita con la sinistra il Sacro Cuore, quasi invitandoci a prestargli il culto, ed ha presso di se due putti, che con bizzarria sostengono un piccolo Tempio, simbolo di essa

<sup>323</sup> 1781, oil on canvas, 513 x 257 cm, Lisbon, Basilica of the Estrêla. See Clark and Bowron 1985, pp. 354–55, cat. no. 430. Modern scholarship has consistently misidentified the figure of Ecclesia as Pope Pius VI, most recently in Seydl 2008, pp. 123–24.

Chiesa.’<sup>324</sup>

The second allegorical figure in *Pope Benedict XIV Presenting the Encyclical ‘Ex Omnibus’ to the Comte de Choiseul*, standing to the right of the throne, has hitherto been described either as Divine Wisdom or as Prudence.<sup>325</sup> The canonical depiction of Divine Wisdom in Andrea Sacchi’s Palazzo Barberini ceiling fresco of 1629–31 holds a similar mirror and sun-topped sceptre,<sup>326</sup> but her most important attribute, the prominent sun on her breast, is not present in Batoni’s picture (fig. 52). That the established iconography of Divine Wisdom was well understood by the painting’s patron, Cardinal Orsini, is demonstrated by a design for Benedict XIV’s tomb in Saint Peter’s. Having made by far the largest contribution to its budget, Orsini assumed responsibility for the delayed project in 1763 and immediately commissioned a new design.<sup>327</sup> Probably at Orsini’s request, Pietro Bracci replaced the traditional allegories of Faith and the Church appearing in his previous proposal with ‘sapienza sacra’ and ‘disinteresse’,

<sup>324</sup> *Gazzetta Universale* [Florence], 1781, no. 61, p. 487.

<sup>325</sup> See note 318.

<sup>326</sup> See Scott 1991, pp. 38–44, fig. 36, pl. 1.

<sup>327</sup> Orsini paid 500 scudi, whereas most of the other cardinals created by Benedict XIV contributed between 100 and 200 scudi. Rome, Banca di Roma, Archivio Storico Santo Spirito, Libro mastro 1759, 1760, 1763, 1764, ‘Pia Contribuzione per la Formazione del Deposito da farsi in S. Pietro in Vaticano per la collocazione del corpo della S.M. di Papa Benedetto XIV’. Transcribed in Kieven and Pinto 2001, pp. 64–65, n. 3. See also Goldhahn 2004, p. 235.



as the sculptor described them in his workshop records.<sup>328</sup> Both in Bracci's drawing and in the finished monument, the figure of Divine Wisdom is identified by a large sun on her chest (fig. 53).<sup>329</sup>

Rather than Divine Wisdom, the figure on the right in Batoni's painting is a personification of *Doctrina*, as the inscription 'IN OMNIBVS ECCLESIIIS DOCENS' ('Teaching for all Churches') in the open book held by *Ecclesia* on the left indicates. In addition to alluding to the encyclical's title, 'Ex Omnibus', the statement refers to Benedict XIV's diplomatic victory – the affirmation of the validity of his teaching for *all* Churches, a fact that even the recalcitrant Gallican Church had to accept. The expression 'ecclesiis docens' is brought to life by placing personifications of *Ecclesia* and *Doctrina* on either side of the Pope. The description of the latter allegory in Cesare Ripa's *Iconologia* explains that 'lo scettro con il Sole è inditio del dominio che ha la Dottrina sopra li horri della notte dell'ignoranza.'<sup>330</sup> A comparable personification of *Doctrina* in Placido Costanzi's ceiling fresco in Palazzo Chigi-Zondadari in Siena of c. 1727 shows the same attributes of sceptre and mirror used by Batoni.<sup>331</sup>

Not coincidentally, *dottrina* was one of the Pope's defining qualities, which was acclaimed by numerous prominent contemporaries. In the final

<sup>328</sup> See Kieven and Pinto 2001, pp. 67, 277, no. 35; Goldhahn 2004, p. 237.

<sup>329</sup> See Kieven and Pinto 2001, p. 222, fig. 46, pl. 15.

<sup>330</sup> Ripa 1603, p. 113.

<sup>331</sup> Roettgen 1994, p. 344–45, fig. 8 (the mirror is held by *Doctrina*'s attendant).

volume of his *Annali d'Italia*, published in 1749, Lodovico Antonio Muratori (1672–1750) wrote that Benedict XIV ‘per la somma Pietà [...], per la penetrazion della mente, e per la singular Dottrina può ben gareggiare co’ più rinomati ed illustri Successori di San Pietro.’<sup>332</sup> Earlier in the Lambertini pontificate, Muratori had praised him as ‘un Pontefice di tanta dottrina [e] di mente si illuminata’ in a letter to Bottari.<sup>333</sup>

Marco Foscarini (1696–1763), Venetian ambassador to the Holy See, characterised Benedict XIV as ‘un Pontefice de costumi santissimi e di insigne dottrina’.<sup>334</sup> Evaluating the likely candidates for the Throne of Saint Peter during the conclave, Foscarini reported to the Venetian Senate in May 1740 that Cardinal Lambertini was a ‘soggetto di squisita dottrina’.<sup>335</sup> In a pastoral letter circulated shortly after the Pope’s death, the archbishop of Milan, Cardinal Giuseppe Pozzobonelli (1696–1783), eulogised the ‘gran Sacerdote massimo per dignità ed altresì per dottrina e virtù Benedetto XIV’.<sup>336</sup>

Taken together, the flanking allegories of *Doctrina* and *Ecclesia* define the pontiff between them as a *Doctor Ecclesiae*, a doctor of the Church or church father. Having personally conducted the intense negotiations about

<sup>332</sup> Muratori 1749, p. 457.

<sup>333</sup> Lodovico Antonio Muratori to Giovanni Gaetano Bottari, 17 February 1741.

Transcribed in Muratori 1854, p. 540.

<sup>334</sup> Cited in Morpurgo 1880, p. 26.

<sup>335</sup> Cited in Gandino 1894, p. 66.

<sup>336</sup> Cited in Castiglioni 1932, p. 84.

the encyclical with Benedict XIV, Choiseul recounted that ‘dans toutes les matières de doctrine et de théologie, le Pape croyait être un Père de l’Eglise’.<sup>337</sup> In his ‘Varie memorie sopra Benedetto XIV’, written around 1800 and often severely critical of the Pope, Count Marco Fantuzzi (1740–1806) acknowledged that ‘egli fu senza dubbio un Dottore della Chiesa’.<sup>338</sup>

The only one of the four Western church fathers to occupy the Chair of Saint Peter was Saint Gregory the Great, whose attribute, the dove of the Holy Ghost that inspired him, is seen here rendering the same service to Benedict XIV, thus equating a great scholar pope of the past with one of the present. In his correspondence, Benedict XIV repeatedly paid tribute to Gregory the Great as a personal role model and pointed out that he was able to recite his predecessor’s writings from memory.<sup>339</sup> Writing to his Bolognese relative Elisabetta Bentivoglio Magnani (1698–1767), he expressed his idea that ‘da S. Gregorio Magno in qua non vi sia stato un pontificato travagliato come è il nostro’,<sup>340</sup> and when struggling with the

<sup>337</sup> Choiseul 1987, p. 115.

<sup>338</sup> Rome, Biblioteca Casanatense, cod. 3177, fols. 29–67. Transcribed in Pane 1957, pp. 51–82, at p. 76.

<sup>339</sup> Benedict XIV to Pierre Guérin de Tencin, 19 April 1743: ‘non avendo posto cosa veruna in carta, ma avendo detto tutto a memoria’. Transcribed in Morelli 1955–84, vol. I, p. 67.

<sup>340</sup> Bologna, Archivio di Stato, Ospedali 973, Strumenti Magnani 1750–59, Benedict XIV to Elisabetta Bentivoglio Magnani, 1 December 1745. Transcribed in Prodi 1981–82, p. 450, n. 5.

effects of the gout, he was hopeful that ‘ci potesse riuscire ciò che riuscì a S. Gregorio, che travagliava, non ostante la podagra.’<sup>341</sup>

Lambertini’s contemporaries often drew the same parallel. In his obituary of the Pope in the *Novelle letterarie*, Giovanni Lami (1697–1770) lauded him as ‘un soggetto sì pieno di dottrina, e di erudizione, che dopo San Gregorio il Grande non altro tale era seduto nella Cattedra di San Pietro’,<sup>342</sup> while Louis-Antoine de Caraccioli (1719–1803) stated in his biography of Benedict XIV published in 1766 that ‘il retraça le zèle & les actions de Grégoire le Grand.’<sup>343</sup>

Batoni’s composition makes a further Gregorian reference by directly invoking Raphael’s *Gregory IX Receiving the Decretals* (fig. 54).<sup>344</sup> The fresco in the Stanza della Segnatura shows the promulgation of the first complete collection of papal decretals, which became the authoritative codex of canon law, in 1234.<sup>345</sup> This event was highly significant for Benedict XIV in several respects: Not only was he among the foremost canonists of his age and himself a prolific author of canon law

<sup>341</sup> Benedict XIV to Pierre Guérin de Tencin, 30 July 1749. Transcribed in Morelli 1955–84, vol. II, p. 187.

<sup>342</sup> Lami 1758, col. 340. Benedict XIV’s ‘dottrina’ is emphasised repeatedly in this text, e.g. cols. 326, 395, 456.

<sup>343</sup> Caraccioli 1766, pp. 56–57; see also p. 33: ‘Rome glorieuse d’avoir un Pontife digne d’être associé aux Grégoires’.

<sup>344</sup> See Emiliani and Scolaro 2002, p. 204; De Vecchi 2002, pp. 170, 226.

<sup>345</sup> See Joost-Gaugier 2002, p. 137.

regulations,<sup>346</sup> he was also proud of the fact that Raymond of Peñafort (c. 1175–1275), shown kneeling before Gregory IX, had compiled the decretals in Bologna, as he emphasised when making an argument for his native city as ‘la vera sede del Diritto Canonico’ in the preface to a treatise published at the end of his tenure as archbishop of Bologna in 1740: ‘Parlasi della Compilazione delle Decretali di Gregorio IX. divisa in cinque libri, della quale oggidì tutto il Mondo si serve nelle Scuole e nel Foro, essendo certo, che fu composta da S. Raimondo di Pennafort, che era stato Lettore nell’Università di Bologna, ed essendo questa pure stata indirizzata ai Maestri ed agli Scolari della nostra Università.’<sup>347</sup>

Batoni’s quotation from Raphael of the seated pontiff raising his right hand in blessing while handing a document to a kneeling supplicant with his left is almost verbatim, except for an invisible directional reversal – Raphael’s pope is the recipient, Batoni’s the presenter of the document. An additional precedent, drawing upon the same source in the Stanza della Segnatura, is Sebastiano Conca’s *Beato Pietro Gambacorti before Urban VIII* (fig. 55) of c. 1730–40, which may have provided the placement of two figures on a cloud at the upper right and the cupola glimpsed through an architectural backdrop.<sup>348</sup> Batoni could have remembered the painting

<sup>346</sup> See Bertone 1977, esp. p. 197 on Benedict XIV’s understanding of canon law ‘come strumento divino-umano di salvezza’.

<sup>347</sup> Benedict XIV 1740, pp. xxiv, xxviii.

<sup>348</sup> Oil on canvas, Pisa, Cattedrale di Santa Maria Assunta. Modello: Oil on canvas, 95 x

from a possible visit to nearby Pisa during his youth in Lucca, or he may have seen Conca's final, squared compositional drawing.<sup>349</sup>

As the setting for the encyclical's presentation, Batoni employed an idealised version of the Caffeaus constructed for Benedict XIV in the gardens of the Quirinal Palace.<sup>350</sup> The dome of Saint Peter's is visible in the background, as it is from the real Caffeaus. Whether the actual presentation of the encyclical did take place in the Caffeaus is uncertain, but it is of great significance that such a presentation, which was highly unusual, did take place at all. That the actual encyclical is being handed to Choiseul is emphasised through the clearly legible opening lines of its original text. In normal cases, encyclicals addressed to foreign bishops were printed in Rome and sent to the nuncio, who had them reprinted locally and then distributed to the country's dioceses.<sup>351</sup> Due to the text's reaffirmation of papal prerogative, however, the French foreign ministry feared an immediate backlash from the *Parlement* and decided to control the dissemination of 'Ex Omnibus' carefully. Choiseul received an instruction insisting that he personally take delivery of the encyclical and

113 cm, Pisa, Museo Nazionale di San Matteo. See Gaeta 1981, pp. 232–33, cat. nos. 73 a–b.

<sup>349</sup> Pen and ink on paper, 151 x 192 mm, London, Courtauld Institute of Art, Courtauld Gallery. See Gaeta 1981, pp. 232–33, cat. no. 73 c.

<sup>350</sup> For the Caffeaus, see Stoschek 1999.

<sup>351</sup> See Benedict XIV to Pierre Guérin de Tencin, 30 June 1756. Transcribed in Morelli 1955–84, vol. III, pp. 364–65.

forward it directly to Louis XV:

‘Le Roi s’attend, Monsieur, que la lettre encyclique du Pape en réponse à celle que les évêques ont écrite à Sa Sainteté vous sera remise pour être directement adressée à Sa Majesté. Il y a lieu de croire que le Pape ayant reçu par le canal du Roi la lettre des Evêques, Sa Sainteté se déterminera d’Elle-même à faire passer sa réponse par les mains de Sa Majesté. Cependant vous devez en faire l’observation et veiller attentivement à ce qu’on ne suive pas une autre méthode.’<sup>352</sup>

Unlike the penetrating portrayal of the aged Benedict XIV, Batoni’s depiction of the French ambassador is not a likeness. By the time Batoni began his painting, Choiseul had already left Rome. Having received the document in accordance with his instructions, Choiseul had successfully completed his diplomatic mission and was soon afterwards transferred to a new post in Vienna.

Traditionally, French ambassadors to the Holy See were rewarded with the Order of the Holy Spirit, the France’s highest chivalric order, after their return to Paris. Choiseul, by contrast, received the decoration while still on his embassy in Rome, even before the conclusion of the negotiations, in January 1756. In the canvas, the order’s cross and blue ribbon are clearly visible at his left hip. Moreover, his mantle is

<sup>352</sup> Paris, Archives des Affaires Etrangères, Correspondance politique, Rome, vol. 820, fol. 456, instruction to Choiseul dated 14 May 1756. Transcribed in Nau 1956, p. 256.

conspicuously embroidered with the cross in silver thread.

Calling out the order so prominently was, in all likelihood, intended as an allusion to the fact that Choiseul owed this exceptional honour, ‘une satisfaction d’amour-propre que sa vanité lui faisait ardemment désirer’,<sup>353</sup> to the painting’s recipient, Benedict XIV. Under a veil of false modesty, Choiseul had first staked his claim to a premature ‘cordon bleu’ in a letter to the foreign minister in February 1755: ‘Je ne vous parle pas des décorations que mes prédécesseurs ont obtenues [...]. C’est à vos bontés pour moi à examiner si, pour le service du Roi, il n’est pas nécessaire de décorer celui qui le représente.’<sup>354</sup>

It was certainly no coincidence that only a week later, Benedict XIV addressed a letter on the same subject to his friend Cardinal Pierre Guérin de Tencin, archbishop of Lyon (1680–1758). Aware that Tencin sent French translations of all his letters to Versailles, he availed himself of this backchannel when he wanted to broach a subject that could not be brought up directly with the French court for reasons of diplomacy or decorum.<sup>355</sup>

<sup>353</sup> Chaussinand-Nogaret 1998, p. 39.

<sup>354</sup> Étienne-François de Choiseul to Antoine-Louis Rouillé, 12 February 1755. Transcribed in Boutry 1895, p. 30.

<sup>355</sup> See Richard 1912, p. 37: By passing on Benedict XIV’s letters to Versailles, Tencin ‘ne faisait d’ailleurs que réaliser les intentions de son correspondant’; Dammig 1945, p. 388, n. 2: The letters ‘dovevano servire ad esplorare l’umore della Corte di Francia’. See also Nau 1956, pp. 238–39, n. 41; Cenacchi 1981–82, p. 1085; McManners 1998, p. 482.



The Pope cannot have been insensitive to the fact that bringing his influence to bear in order to obtain the coveted order for Choiseul would put the ambassador in his debt and give him an advantage in the ongoing negotiations about the encyclical.

In the French translation Tencin forwarded to the foreign ministry, Benedict XIV's letter suggested that 'les ambassadeurs de France à Rome étaient par le passé ordinairement honorés du cordon de l'Ordre du Saint-Esprit [...]. Il nous paraît cependant que [cette distinction] conviendrait fort à [Choiseul].' Since a direct request to Louis XV could have been interpreted as interference in the affairs of the French court, he merely indicated that 'nous prenons le parti de vous faire cette confidence en vous demandant assistance et conseil', safe in the knowledge that Tencin's 'assistance' would consist in immediately forwarding his missive to Versailles.<sup>356</sup> In his direct correspondence with the King, Benedict XIV effusively praised Choiseul – 'c'est un ministre qui mérite tout, rempli de capacité, de zèle pour son service, d'un cœur ouvert et sincère; nous traitons volontiers avec lui' – but did not mention the Order of the Holy Spirit.<sup>357</sup>

At Versailles, Choiseul had another powerful advocate, the Madame de

<sup>356</sup> Benedict XIV to Pierre Guérin de Tencin, 19 February 1755. Transcribed in Heeckeren 1912, vol. II, p. 395. For the Italian original, see Morelli 1955–84, vol. III, p. 215.

<sup>357</sup> Benedict XIV to Louis XV, 3 January 1756. Transcribed in Boutry 1895, pp. 74–75, n.

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Pompadour (1721–1764). She informed the ambassador in May 1755 that ‘on sent très bien ici que c’est à l’amitié que le Saint-Père a pour vous que l’on doit la prompte expédition de ses breffs; vos amis ne le laissent pas ignorer. On paraît satisfait de vos services.’<sup>358</sup> The following month, she declared that she was going to bring her influence to bear in the matter of the Order of the Holy Spirit: ‘Les assurances d’amitié que vous me donnez me font grand plaisir; elles m’en feront encore davantage quand je me serai acquittée envers vous, en vous procurant le Saint-Esprit.’<sup>359</sup>

The unlikely alliance between the Vicar of Christ and the mistress of the Most Christian King proved irresistible. Informing the Pope of his decision to grant the order, Louis XV emphasised that Choiseul owed his decoration to Benedict XIV and subtly implied (‘ayant appris’) that he was quite aware of the backchannel tactic of employing Tencin as a go-between: ‘J’aurais cependant différé encore à lui accorder la décoration de mon ordre du Saint-Esprit, cette faveur étant la récompense que je destine à des services continués depuis longtemps, mais ayant appris que Votre Sainteté désirait de voir le comte de Stainville revêtu de cette distinction, je me suis volontiers déterminé à faire pour lui une exception à mon usage

<sup>358</sup> Madame de Pompadour to Étienne-François de Choiseul, 12 May 1755. Transcribed in Piépape 1917, p. 19. For Madame de Pompadour’s role in the negotiations regarding the encyclical, see Gallet 1985, pp. 161–62.

<sup>359</sup> Madame de Pompadour to Étienne-François de Choiseul, 7 June 1755. Transcribed in Piépape 1917, p. 20.

ordinaire.’<sup>360</sup> In his letter thanking the King for the decoration, Choiseul acknowledged that ‘c’était [...] à l’attention que vous [Louis XV] aviez pour tout ce qu’il [Benedict XIV] désirait que je devais cette grâce’.<sup>361</sup>

When dispatching Choiseul to Rome, the French foreign ministry had assured its new ambassador that ‘la Cour de Rome a perdu l’influence qu’elle avait eue pendant plusieurs siècles dans les affaires générales de l’Europe’.<sup>362</sup> It has been suggested that the inexperienced diplomat was no match for the ‘astuces romaines’ and that ‘Choiseul faisait sans le vouloir le jeu de la papauté; c’était un premier pas vers une intervention pontificale dans les affaires du royaume’.<sup>363</sup> While such a one-sided interpretation is not supported by the surviving primary sources, Benedict XIV and Cardinal Orsini may nonetheless have felt that a declaration once made by Saint Paul had been borne out – that the ‘doctrina Spiritus’ (in the text of the Clementine Vulgate), the teaching inspired by the Holy Spirit, would rise above mere human wisdom: ‘Now we have received not the spirit of this world, but the Spirit that is of God; that we may know the things that are given us from God. Which things also we speak, not in the learned

<sup>360</sup> Louis XV to Benedict XIV, 1 January 1756. Transcribed in Boutry 1895, p. 77, n. 1.

<sup>361</sup> Étienne-François de Choiseul to Louis XV, 15 January 1756. Transcribed in Boutry 1895, p. 78.

<sup>362</sup> Paris, Archives des Affaires Etrangères, Correspondance politique, Rome, vol. 815, fol. 341, ‘Mémoire pour servir d’instruction au Sieur Comte de Choiseul-Stainville’, 22 September 1754. Transcribed in *Recueil des instructions* 1913, p. 307.

<sup>363</sup> Chaussinand-Nogaret 1998, p. 41.

words of human wisdom; but in the doctrine of the Spirit' (1 Corinthians 2:12–13).

On multiple levels, Batoni's composition expresses the Roman side's view – one might even say its satisfaction – that the Church had prevailed: Protected by Saints Peter and Paul, inspired by the Holy Spirit, and guided by the Vicar of Christ's Doctrina, it had prevailed against attempts to leverage the denial of sacraments controversy to further the separation of the Gallican from the Universal Church; prevailed in precarious negotiations that pitched a politically weakened Holy See against one of Europe's major powers; and prevailed in the interpersonal dynamic by putting the ambassador in the Pope's debt.

#### **IV.4 Portrait of a Pontiff, Monument to a Pontificate**

In February 1758, three months before his death, Benedict XIV wrote to his agent Mazzi to announce the imminent shipment to Bologna of *Pope Benedict XIV Presenting the Encyclical 'Ex Omnibus' to the Comte de Choiseul* to Bologna: 'Subito che si potrà, si manderà diretto a lei il consaputo Quadro, che giungendo, come preghiamo Iddio, in buono stato, potrà farlo vedere a tutti.'<sup>364</sup> The Pope, weakened by illness, was well aware that this would be the last painting representing a milestone of his pontificate that the inhabitants of his beloved home town would see, and

<sup>364</sup> Bologna, Biblioteca Universitaria, ms. 4331, vol. VIII, fol. fol. 422v, Benedict XIV to Filippo Maria Mazzi, 4 February 1758.

Mazzi knew from the precise instructions he had been given for previous paintings in the series that he was expected to put the canvas on view in the cathedral on a major feast day, and in the Lambertini family palace thereafter.<sup>365</sup>

There is no documentary record of discussions Batoni or Cardinal Orsini may have had with Benedict XIV regarding the painting's *conchetto*. Given that the previous canvases in the series by Panini and Costanzi had established a pattern, Cardinal Orsini's gift can hardly have come as a surprise to the recipient. Whether or not some aspects of the *conchetto* were indeed suggested by the Pope himself, the manifold embedded references divulge an intimate knowledge of his entire career, his personality, and his professional, theological, and spiritual self-conception.

Batoni's perceptive likeness of Benedict XIV, frail and bowed by age (visibly so in comparison to Costanzi's Aquileia painting, fig. 38) yet dignified and authoritative, won acclaim when the painting was shown in Rome, as the sitter himself happily reported: 'Qui è stato molto piaciuto, e specialmente nel nostro Ritratto.'<sup>366</sup> While *Pope Clement XIII* and *Pope Pius VI* are the only formal papal portraits painted by Batoni,<sup>367</sup>

<sup>365</sup> See Bologna, Biblioteca Universitaria, ms. 4331, vol. V, fol. 199r, Benedict XIV to Filippo Maria Mazzi, 20 March 1751.

<sup>366</sup> Bologna, Biblioteca Universitaria, ms. 4331, vol. VIII, fol. 401r–v, Benedict XIV to Filippo Maria Mazzi, 28 December 1757.

<sup>367</sup> Clark and Bowron 1985, pp. 278–79, 339–40, cat. nos. 227, 391; figs. 209, 353.

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contemporaries such as Luigi Lanzi (1732–1810) and Fiorillo included Benedict XIV in their lists of popes portrayed by the artist.<sup>368</sup> If Batoni followed his established working method for portraits of painting the head from life before creating the remainder of the composition, he would have had ample opportunity to discuss the picture's *concetto* with the Pope during the sittings.

The resulting composition fulfils a triple role as a portrayal of a person, of an historical event, and of a pontificate. It is not an accident that the configuration of an enthroned pontiff flanked by two personifications invokes the standard design of papal funerary monuments in Saint Peter's. But while the characterisation created by a tomb was beyond the control of the pontiff buried therein, Benedict XIV endorsed Batoni's canvas as the final visual representation and record of his pontificate.

The painting's conception when the recipient had entered the winter of his life and its status as the culmination of an ensemble recording key events of the Lambertini pontificate also lie at the root of its seemingly incongruous juxtaposition of an allegorical and a reportorial mode of history painting. The series had begun with Panini creating at least the illusion of providing reportorial eyewitness accounts in authentic architectural settings (figs. 40, 41); it had continued with Costanzi emphasising the allegorical nature of his composition through the pageantry of richly costumed personifications of Venice and Austria

<sup>368</sup> Fiorillo 1798–1808, vol. I, pp. 222–23; Lanzi 1968–74, vol. I, p. 420.

attended by page boys in ahistorical, vaguely Renaissance-style dress, and by setting the scene in front of a view of the Gulf of Venice, which served to locate the newly created dioceses but which Benedict XIV had never visited since ascending to the throne of Saint Peter (fig. 38).

In Batoni's depiction, we find techniques of precise reportage cheek by jowl with allegorical and transcendent elements. A prime example of the former is Choiseul's sumptuous, richly embroidered costume, rendered in meticulous detail. Fantuzzi recalled that during his public appearances in Rome, Choiseul 'usava di un fasto, e magnificenza straordinaria', and his elegant and luxurious attire left a deep impression on contemporary observers.<sup>369</sup> Due to its extremely sensitive political nature, neither Batoni nor any other members of the public would have been permitted to witness the meeting between the Pope and the ambassador for the presentation of the encyclical. Choiseul's extravagance had been on full display, however, when 'tout Rome était au passage de M. l'ambassadeur et l'on ne se laissait point d'admirer et d'applaudir à la magnificence d'une pompe aussi somptueuse'<sup>370</sup> on the occasion of his official reception in public audience at the Vatican, an event recorded in a canvas he commissioned from

<sup>369</sup> Rome, Biblioteca Casanatense, cod. 3177, fols. 29–67. Transcribed in Pane 1957, pp. 51–82, at p. 78. See also Chaussinand-Nogaret 1998, pp. 50–53.

<sup>370</sup> Report by the Marquis de Middelbourg, 4 April 1756. Transcribed in Boutry 1895, pp. 123, 126.

Panini (fig. 56).<sup>371</sup>

‘Tout Rome’ coming out to see Choiseul is more than likely to have included Batoni, and a year later, when depicting the ambassador kneeling in front of Benedict XIV, the painter appears to have recalled aspects of his ‘habit fond d’argent tout brodé d’or, ayant un manteau garni de dentelles d’or d’une magnificence inouïe; son chapeau était surhaussé de plumes et garni d’une agrafe et d’un très gros bouton de diamant’,<sup>372</sup> such as the plumed hat. By lavishing great painterly care on Choiseul’s costume, Batoni may also have tried to compensate for the fact that he was unable to provide a real likeness of the already departed diplomat.

The depiction of contemporary events was one of the key issues in the

<sup>371</sup> Oil on canvas, 152 x 195 cm, Berlin, Gemäldegalerie. See *Gemäldegalerie Berlin* 1985, pp. 390–92; Arisi 1986, pp. 450–51, cat. no. 445. The date of 1754 traditionally assigned to this painting is based on a misreading of the date on the stone block behind the dog at left, the last digit of which is partly illegible and has been read as ‘4’ instead of ‘6’ based on Choiseul’s arrival in Rome in 1754. However, the official reception of a new ambassador in the Vatican was typically scheduled long after his actual arrival, and Choiseul’s reception is known to have taken place on 4 April 1756 (see note 370). Moreover, Choiseul is depicted wearing the Order of the Holy Spirit, which he received in early 1756. Blanning 2007, pp. 355–56, has suggested that the event shown is Choiseul’s departure from the Vatican after his final audience to take his leave in 1757, but a ‘7’ is more difficult to reconcile with what remains legible of the last digit of the date on the painting.

<sup>372</sup> Report by the Marquis de Middelbourg, 4 April 1756. Transcribed in Boutry 1895, p. 123.



evolution of history painting in eighteenth-century Europe.<sup>373</sup> Specifically in Rome, a strong emphasis on historical accuracy had developed in the first quarter of the century.<sup>374</sup> Thematically similar paintings from that period, such as Benedetto Luti's *Pius V and the Ambassador of the King of Poland* of 1712 (fig. 57),<sup>375</sup> do not include any indications of divine intervention. Four decades later, Batoni's solution utilises a similarly high degree of realism for the Pope and Choiseul to validate the event's historicity, but adds personifications and saints to create an additional layer of meaning. Crucially, however, the protagonists of this second, spiritual-theological layer are given a flesh-and-blood lifelike presence that is in no way less convincing than that of the two contemporary personages.

This becomes particularly apparent when contrasting the upper, heavenly register with its equivalent in *Benedict XIV Settling a Dispute between Austria and the Republic of Venice* (fig. 38). Costanzi's allegory of Religion has a pale, recessed, and shrouded quality characterising her as an apparition observing the action from the outside, unnoticed by all other figures, benign but toothless. Conversely, Batoni's two Apostles inhabit the

<sup>373</sup> See Busch 1993, p. 36.

<sup>374</sup> See Johns 1993, pp. 201–2: 'Early Settecento religious art [...] often preferred a reportorial style for the representation of sacred scenes, above all in themes related to ecclesiastical and papal history and in the growing genre of scenes from contemporary religious life', including the 'promulgation of important Bulls'.

<sup>375</sup> Oil on canvas, 161 x 223 cm, Rome, Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Antica, Palazzo Barberini, inv. 4562. See Johns 1993, p. 47; Maffei 2012, pp. 252–54, cat. no. I.23.

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same physical space in the same picture plane as Benedict XIV. They are active participants in the scene, a fact that is further underscored by Ecclesia looking up at them. Their attention intensely focused on the terrestrial proceedings, the saints act as guarantors of the papal decree, with the implication that they are also prepared to become its defenders. In the two visual sources (figs. 42, 43), Paul's sword is merely a casually tucked-away accessory serving to identify him. Here, he wields it as a weapon ready to fight for the Church Militant.

Benedict XIV's decisions in the Aquileia dispute and the denial of sacraments controversy have been characterised as 'témoinnant d'un jugement très sûr et d'une résolution courageuse',<sup>376</sup> but he also knew he needed to be prepared for criticism and resistance, in Rome and abroad, from those who felt that his concessions went too far, and from those who felt they did not go far enough. Costanzi's painting suggests that a just solution will ensure an era of peace and harmony, whereas Batoni's argues that the Pope's human skills – even his exceptional *Doctrina* – do not suffice; only inspiration from the Holy Spirit and the protection of the Apostles make the diplomatic victory possible.

This visual statement, communicating humility and strength in equal measure, mirrors the Lambertini pope's personal philosophy of uniting a readiness for compromise (especially regarding the Church's worldly possessions) with a rigorous defence of theological and doctrinal

<sup>376</sup> Neveu 2005, p. 99.

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integrity.<sup>377</sup> He saw the decline of the papacy's political influence not as a weakness, but as an opportunity to reaffirm its core spiritual mission. In meeting the challenges posed by 'i materialisti, gli ateisti, i deisti, che tirano a svellere la Santa Nostra Religione da' suoi fondamenti',<sup>378</sup> he followed in the footsteps of his role models from the patristic era. That the painting's secular and heavenly spheres act in concert, not in contrast, with each other may also be intended to convey Benedict XIV's hope that he would soon migrate from one to the other. It was against this background that, with at least the tacit approval of the sitter, Batoni could make an aspirational statement about the Pope's legacy. The figures of *Doctrina* and *Ecclesia* visually accomplish what in written form would have been an inconceivable breach of protocol: The proclamation of a reigning pontiff as a church father.

<sup>377</sup> See Pane 1957, p. 34; Raybaud 1963, pp. 28–30.

<sup>378</sup> Benedict XIV to Pierre Guérin de Tencin, 3 May 1752. Transcribed in Morelli 1955–84, vol. II, p. 473.

## V. Conclusion: Doctrina Required

In 1746, the Florentine antiquary Anton Francesco Gori (1691–1757) published an annotated version of Ascanio Condivi's biography of Michelangelo. Even though his character and artistic temperament were polar opposites of Michelangelo's, Gori invoked Pompeo Batoni, not yet forty years old, patronised by the Pope, and about to win the plum prize (to later reveal itself as a poisoned chalice) of an altarpiece commission for Saint Peter's. In his annotations to Condivi's text, Gori wrote:

‘Io son di parere, che tanti eccellenti Pittori, che grande onore anche ai dì nostri si fanno colle loro opere, molto maggior grido e lode avrebbero, e più perfetti, e più singolari diverrebbero, se di proposito, almeno una sol ora del giorno, studiassero le sacre e profane Storie: e se pigliando gusto, e intelligenza della Notomia, e dell'antica Mitologia, empiessero la loro mente delle immagini delle cose belle, e maravigliose, assuefacendosi a una forte immaginativa, a concepir bene, e disporre con fondamento quel che hanno ingegnosamente ideato, e pensato; non si fondando unicamente sopra ciò, che si esponde dal Ripa: in somma io desidero in essi più studio, e meditazione, contraria ai loro bizzarri capricci. Ai miei desideri si uniforma totalmente il Celebre Sig. Pompeo Girolamo Batoni, che meritamente si può dire il Raffaello de' nostri tempi: il nome del quale è presentemente, e lo sarà al

pari delle sue Opere incomparabili, eternamente in altissima  
riputazione.’<sup>379</sup>

Quickly leafing through Ripa’s handbook in search of the right attributes for a allegory was no longer enough. Only an artist who devoted at least an hour a day to ‘studio, e meditazione’ of ‘le sacre e profane Storie’ would be able to ‘concepir bene’. Detailed knowledge of a subject was indispensable in order to satisfy patrons and impress viewers with erudition. In the case of altarpieces and other religious paintings intended for public display, the Tridentine mandate for such works to fulfil a didactic function continued to apply in the eighteenth century. It handed the artist the additional responsibility of being an evangelist and finding the correct visual expression for key theological, spiritual, and doctrinal messages.

Having remained relatively stable in the two centuries that had passed since the Council of Trent, some of these messages turned into quicksand as the eighteenth century progressed, with artists such as Batoni struggling to maintain their footing. The Church had begun to examine its own history and traditions with a critical mindset that impacted the programmatic choices made when works of art were commissioned, approved, and rejected. In the climate of scholarly enquiry prevalent in eighteenth-century Rome, in particular during the pontificate of Benedict XIV, some of the subjects of religious paintings came under intense

<sup>379</sup> Condivi 1746, pp. 116–17.

scrutiny. As a result of the quest for historical truth, unsubstantiated miracles and legends were no longer acceptable.

The new standards were enforced through a process of consultation and review between patrons and artists, with the approval of a modello as a milestone before the full-scale work was executed. An artist who relied too much on purely visual precedents if the information he needed was otherwise unavailable might find himself accused of ignorance when a patron reviewed the modello.

The system was far from foolproof, however. As Costanzi and Batoni learned, even the formalised commissioning process for altarpieces for Saint Peter's offered no safeguards against shifting allegiances and perceptions. When Batoni attempted to counter assessments that the unbiblical episode he had been asked to depict was false, by creating a composition that referred directly to the known material evidence, he must have felt that he was taking out an insurance policy, yet that evidence was thrown out and even the testimony of the church fathers, previously considered unimpeachable, was called into question.

Accepting the commission for a religious painting meant that the artist had to meet the expectations of one or multiple demanding patrons who usually had access to extensive libraries, read Latin, and had studied theology and exegesis during their seminary education. Only a learned painter could hope to succeed in this intellectual environment, and the limited evidence that we have strongly suggests that artists were keen to take advantage of the opportunity to equip their studios with texts

paraphrasing and explaining the Bible, and later the Bible itself, as soon as these were made available in Italian. Learning as a quality was prized in painters, in Pontiffs, and in the works of religious art that gave expression and meaning to their Doctrina.





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## **Appendices**



## Appendix A: Prices and Artist's Finances

The *fortuna critica* of Batoni's history paintings, and especially of his religious paintings, has long been overshadowed by his work as a portraitist. The conventional narrative has Batoni turning away from religious commissions in the wake of the rejection of the *Fall of Simon Magus* (see section III.3) with a mixture of disappointment and resignation and choosing to henceforth privilege a career as a portrait painter.<sup>1</sup>

An analysis of the artist's financial situation, however, reveals that the imperative driving this transition from one primary genre to another was not an artistic but an economic one. As will be shown here, Batoni would in fact have preferred to continue working on history paintings, but financial pressures forced him to harvest the low-hanging fruit of portrait commissions. If Batoni had felt that the style he employed in the *Fall of Simon Magus* (fig. 36) was no longer palatable to patrons of the late 1750s (as Fiorillo implies<sup>2</sup>), he would hardly have repeated many of its traits in the *Martyrdom of Saint Lucy*, finished in 1759 (fig. 58).<sup>3</sup> The composition of the latter altarpiece exhibits the same massing of dramaturgically irrelevant figures, complicated poses, and strong foreshortening with which Batoni liked to demonstrate his mastery of depicting the human

<sup>1</sup> See, for example, Clark and Bowron 1985, p. 29.

<sup>2</sup> See Fiorillo 1798–1808, pp. 221–22.

<sup>3</sup> Oil on canvas, 312 x 220 cm, Madrid, Museo de la Real Academia de Bellas Artes de San Fernando. See Clark and Bowron 1985, pp. 276–77, cat. no. 221.

body. The enthroned representative of the Roman Empire on a raised pedestal placed next to a pagan statue also reoccurs in the *Martyrdom of Saint Lucy*.

It was not the supply side – i.e., Batoni’s willingness and desire to paint large-scale religious works – but the demand side that changed from the late 1750s onwards. After the Holy Year of 1750, the construction and renovation of churches in Rome began to slow down and after the death of Pope Benedict XIV in 1758, it came almost to a standstill. While there were occasional commissions for altarpieces or lateral paintings in renovated side chapels, the rapid escalation of Batoni’s prices since the 1740s meant that he had effectively priced himself out of this market: His asking price for a multi-figured altarpiece increased from 200–250 scudi to 500 scudi and by the end of his career had soared to 3,000 scudi.<sup>4</sup>

Having moved his family and studio into a palazzo in via Bocca di Leone, Batoni was the sole breadwinner for a household of twenty. The Tuscan envoy in Rome, Mathieu-Dominique Charles Poirot de la

<sup>4</sup> Examples: *The Holy Family with Saints Elizabeth, Zacharias, and the Infant Saint John the Baptist*: 200 scudi (Clark and Bowron 1985, p. 217); *The Annunciation*: 250 scudi (Vatican City, Archivio Segreto Vaticano, Sacri Palazzi Apostolici, Computisteria, vol. 997, no. 449); *The Virgin and Child with Saint John Nepomuk*: 500 scudi (Brescia, Archivio Storico, Fondo Martinengo, busta 274, filza Ricevute Colleoni 1707–1746); *The Preaching of Saint John the Baptist*: 500 scudi (Clark and Bowron 1985, p. 342); *The Holy Family with Saint Elizabeth and the Infant Saint John the Baptist*: 3,000 scudi (Clark and Bowron 1985, p. 343); *Allegory of the Universal Devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus*: 3,000 scudi (Clark and Bowron 1985, p. 355).



Blandinier, Baron de Saint Odile (died 1775), noted in 1770 that Batoni was ‘chargé d’une famille de 20. personnes, dont 17 sont le Pere et la Mere de sa femme, et ses enfans, il vit au jour la journée, et laisseroit a peine de quoi l’enterrer, s’il venoit aujourd’hui a manquer’.<sup>5</sup>

In 1776, Batoni’s German pupil Johann Gottlieb Puhmann expressed his astonishment at his master’s impoverished appearance: ‘Sein Stock ist 2 Fuß hohes Rohr mit einem gelben Knopf, den auch der Dümme nicht vor Gold stehlen wird [...]. Die ganze Figur ist in einen weiten Mantel eingehüllt, dem ohngeacht der vielen Öl- und Farbenflecke man dennoch [an]sieht, daß er vor diesem perlfarbig gewesen [ist]. [...] Bei uns glaubt man gewiß nicht, daß ein so großer Mann solchen Aufzug macht.’<sup>6</sup>

The artist’s acute financial difficulties and hand-to-mouth existence were frequently discussed by contemporary observers: ‘His family is in great concern, he has twelve children, & above twenty mouths must daily

<sup>5</sup> Baron de Saint Odile to unnamed recipient at Schönbrunn, 24 March 1770, Vienna, Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv, Alte Kabinettsakten, Ital. Korr. 1769–1770, Ktn. 35. Transcribed in Schmitt-Vorster, Angelika: ‘*Pro Deo et Populo: Die Porträts Josephs II. (1765–1790). Untersuchungen zu Bestand, Ikonographie und Verbreitung des Kaiserbildnisses im Zeitalter der Aufklärung*’, PhD diss., Ludwig-Maximilians Universität, Munich, 2006, Quellenanhang, p. 34.

<sup>6</sup> Puhmann 1979, p. 89. See also Henry Bankes to Margaret Bankes, 24 November 1779, Dorchester, Dorset Record Office, Kingston Lacy Mss.: ‘Battoni happens to be very poor and pressing for his money; he use[d] to be remarkable for never letting anything out of his hands.’

be fed by his hand.’<sup>7</sup> For Christmas 1776, Puhmann gave him ten pounds of chocolate, a dozen bottles of wine, two cakes and a pie. Puhmann recounted to his parents that the warm pie, immediately devoured by Batoni’s family, was doubly appreciated, ‘da es zu einer Zeit ankam, wo der gute Mann keinen Pfennig Geld, denn ob er gleich viel verdient, so kost ihm die Unterhaltung seiner Familie zu viel’.<sup>8</sup>

The need to earn money to put food on the table constantly forced the artist to put aside the painstakingly finished history paintings he preferred to work on in favour of lucrative, rapidly executed portrait commissions, a practice that caused long delays in the completion of the former. A particularly egregious example was *Alexander and the Family of Darius*, commissioned by King Frederick II of Prussia (1712–1786).<sup>9</sup> In September 1763, Batoni received 400 zecchini as a down payment.<sup>10</sup> A year later, the British traveller James Martin saw in the painter’s studio ‘a picture begun by Batoni for the King of Prussia representing Alexander in the tent of Darius.’<sup>11</sup> Visiting Rome in autumn 1766, Frederick’s nephew, Prince Karl

<sup>7</sup> Fr. John Thorpe to Henry, 8th Lord Arundell of Wardour, 19 March 1774, Trowbridge, Wiltshire and Swindon Record Office, Arundell Mss. 2667.

<sup>8</sup> Puhmann 1979, p. 81.

<sup>9</sup> See Clark and Bowron 1985, pp. 335–36, cat. no. 382.

<sup>10</sup> Berlin, Geheimes Staatsarchiv, Brandenburg-Preußisches Hausarchiv, Rep. 113, no. 2781, fols. 47–48, Schatullrechnungen 1763–1765, 28 September 1763.

<sup>11</sup> Ms. journal of James Martin in Italy 1763–65, private collection, 12 October 1764, quoted from excerpts given to Anthony Clark by Brinsley Ford.

Wilhelm Ferdinand of Braunschweig and Lüneburg (1735–1806), sat to Batoni for a portrait.<sup>12</sup> The painting for the King appears to have been at an advanced stage, since the prince wrote to his uncle that ‘Battoni est parmi les peintres celui qui avec justesse jouit à Rome de la première réputation, les tableaux qu’il travaille pour Votre Majesté, réussirantes je crois, sur tout si le temps aura adouçi la très grande fraicheur des couleurs’.<sup>13</sup> But work soon came to a halt, and by November 1770, the Prussian exasperation with the dilatory artist had reached the point where they threatened to sue Batoni.<sup>14</sup> The following January, Frederick personally issued an ultimatum: if the painting failed to arrive within the next twelve months, he would cancel the commission.<sup>15</sup> But these were empty threats, and in spite of a report in May 1772 that Batoni was about

<sup>12</sup> See Clark and Bowron 1985, pp. 308–9, cat. nos. 309–10.

<sup>13</sup> Karl Wilhelm Ferdinand to Frederick II, Venice, 18 December 1766, Berlin, Geheimes Staatsarchiv, I. HA, Rep. 96, no. 100A, fol. 129r.

<sup>14</sup> Berlin, Geheimes Staatsarchiv, I. HA, Rep. 96B, no. 137, Extrakte, vol. 8, fol. 587v, 6 November 1770: ‘Der Gallerie Inspector Österreich schläget allerunterthänigst vor, den Mahler Battoni in Rom, welcher das für 800 ducaten bey ihm bestellte und bereits fertige Tableau zeither, gegen sein Versprechen, an sich behalten hat, solches, nach geschehener Auszahlung dieser 800 ducaten, welche bey dem Splittgerberschen Correspondenten in Rom deponiret sind, verabfolgen zu laßen, durch den Agenten Abbé Ciofani gütlich disponiren, oder, wenn solches nichts verfangen sollte, gerichtlich anhalten zu laßen.’

<sup>15</sup> Frederick II to Matteo Ciofani, 10 January 1771, Berlin, Geheimes Staatsarchiv, I. HA, Rep. 96B, no. 72, Minuten 1771–1772, pp. 13–14.

to finish the canvas,<sup>16</sup> it was only brought to completion in March 1775, when it was acclaimed as ‘a brilliant picture, and one of his best’.<sup>17</sup>

The historian Johann Wilhelm von Archenholz (1743–1812) also identified economic necessities as the reason Batoni kept working on portraits instead of *Alexander and the Family of Darius*: ‘Noch hat Battoni keinen Pinselzug daran gethan, und dürfte auch wohl noch damit warten, weil er seine Rechnung besser bey den Portraits findet, die zu Dutzenden, besonders von reisenden Engländern, bey ihm bestellt werden. Ein solches Bildnis ist ihm eine Arbeit von wenig Stunden.’<sup>18</sup> Frederick II’s gallery inspector Matthias Oesterreich (1716–1778) provided a similar explanation: ‘Seit einigen Jahren hat er sich auf das Bildnismalen gelegt, ohne Zweifel, weil er dadurch mehr gewinnet.’<sup>19</sup> In January 1778, Puhlmann observed that Batoni was hoping to finish two major canvases for Frederick II by the autumn, adding sceptically that ‘wenn’s ihm nicht

<sup>16</sup> Berlin, Geheimes Staatsarchiv, I. HA, Rep. 96B, no. 139, Extrakte, vol. 10, fol. 295v, 19 May 1772: ‘Ubrigens so meldet der Abbé Ciofani, daß der Mahler Battoni das für allerhöchst Se Königl Maj zu mahlen übernommene Tableau, auf sein vielfältiges Erinnern, im Monat Junius fertig haben wird, und bittet der Abbé Ciofani ihm, wegen deßen Absendung, allergnädigst ordre zu ertheilen.’

<sup>17</sup> Fr. John Thorpe to Henry, 8th Lord Arundell of Wardour, 18 March 1775, Trowbridge, Wiltshire and Swindon Record Office, Arundell Mss. 2667.

<sup>18</sup> Archenholz, Johann Wilhelm von: *England und Italien*, Leipzig: Dyk, 1785, vol. II, p. 271.

<sup>19</sup> Oesterreich, Matthias: *Beschreibung der Königlichen Bildergallerie und des Kabinetts im Sans-Souci*, 2nd ed., Potsdam: Voß, 1770, p. 159.

am Gelde fehlt, so glaube ich wohl, daß er Wort hält, sonst muß er Porträts fertig machen, um die Küche zu versorgen'.<sup>20</sup>

The problem existed on the expenditure side as much as on the income side because history paintings caused additional costs for live models, which were indispensable to Batoni's perfectionist working methods not only for figure studies but also while painting the final canvas.<sup>21</sup> For a composition such as *Alexander and the Family of Darius*, which contained sixteen figures, the fees of four to five paoli per model per day (1 scudo equalled 10 paoli) quickly added up to amounts that Batoni could ill afford.<sup>22</sup>

In a letter of July 1779, Puhlmann explained that Frederick II's refusal to pay in regular instalments had been the reason for the twelve-year delay in completing the painting:

‘Denn weil die Gemälde mit vielen Kosten verknüpft und er unterdessen seine Familie erhalten muß, die zahlreich, so verhindert dies, daß die Gemälde, worauf nichts bezahlt wird, so lange stehn, indem er die Engländer und andre fertig macht, die ihm nach dem hiesigem Gebrauch Vorschuß tun. Wenn sich seine

<sup>20</sup> Puhlmann 1979, p. 142.

<sup>21</sup> Pompeo Batoni to Lodovico Sardini, 21 April 1742, Lucca, Archivio di Stato, Archivio Sardini, filza 143, no. 885: ‘il mio costume nell'ultimazione di ogni quadro è tenere sempre il vivo d'avvanti agl'occhi'. Transcribed in Lucca 1967, p. 272.

<sup>22</sup> For the model fees, see Puhlmann 1979, pp. 130–31, 140, 142; 1 paolo equalled 3.6 Groschen (see pp. 179, 181).

Maj. dazu entschließt, so wird das Gemälde bald fertig sein, denn es fehlt dem guten Mann an Geld. Das war die Ursache, daß das erste Bild 12 Jahr dauerte, denn so gern er auch arbeiten wollte, so kann er nicht wegen Geldmangel.’<sup>23</sup>

A reconstruction of Batoni’s financial situation demonstrates the severity of these economic pressures. The artist himself described the expenditure side of the household ledger as follows: ‘le spese di mia famiglia, essendo costituito da io, Padre di dodici Figlioli, e con l’altre persone attinenti alla mia Casa mi conviene spendere cinque scudi il giorno per mantenere diciotto persone il giorno senza la pigione di Casa’.<sup>24</sup>

As Batoni points out, the household expenses of 5 scudi per day do not include the rent for his house, whereas the amount of 12 scudi per day reported by Puhmann does include the rent.<sup>25</sup> The annualised figures of about 1,800 scudi without and 4,400 scudi including the rent point to an annual rent of about 2,600 scudi, which can be compared to a rent of 6,000 scudi paid by Anton Raphael Mengs for the larger and even more prominently located Palazzo Pamphili near the Fontana di Trevi.<sup>26</sup> These

<sup>23</sup> Puhmann 1979, p. 157.

<sup>24</sup> Pompeo Batoni to unnamed recipient, 2 February 1780. Transcribed in Averini, Riccardo: ‘I dipinti di Pompeo Batoni nella Basilica del Sacro Cuore all’Estrela’, *Estudos italianos em Portugal*, 36 (1973), pp. 75–102, at p. 92.

<sup>25</sup> See Puhmann 1979, p. 27.

<sup>26</sup> See Roettgen 1999–2003, vol. II, p. 564.

annual expenditures of 4,400 scudi to maintain a household of eighteenth to twenty persons, or about 240 scudi per person, are in the same region as those recorded for English Grand Tourists, who spent around 800 scudi per year on living expenses, rent, and the cost of a coach, for a household that typically included the aristocratic traveller, a tutor, and a servant.<sup>27</sup>

In order to accurately reconstruct Batoni's income situation independent of the distorting effects of one-off commissions, a ten-year average of his sales between 1770 and 1779 – the decade of his career for which the most comprehensive data is available – was chosen. During this period, Batoni painted 69 portraits. On the basis of the fixed prices he charged for the standard portrait formats as well as payments recorded in primary documents, a total of about 14,600 scudi in sales can be inferred (table 1).

**Table 1: Income from Portraits, 1770–79<sup>28</sup>**

<b>Sitter</b>	<b>Format</b>	<b>Scudi</b>
Udny	half-length	160
Joseph II and Leopold	2 figures	600

<sup>27</sup> See Clark, Anthony Morris: 'Batoni's Professional Career and Style', in *Studies in Roman Eighteenth-Century Painting*, ed. Edgar Peters Bowron, Washington, D.C.: Decatur House Press, 1981, pp. 103–18, at p. 117.

<sup>28</sup> Autograph replicas are valued at 50 per cent of the full price. 'C/B no.' refers to the catalogue number in Clark and Bowron 1985.

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Grimston	half-length	160
James	half-length	160
James (replica)	half-length	80
Damer	half-length	160
Burzynski	bust-length	120
Estcourt	full-length	400
Williams-Wynn	3 figures	900
Hickman	half-length	160
Duke of Gloucester	bust-length	120
Duke of Gloucester (replica)	bust-length	60
Throckmorton	bust-length	120
Gentleman (C/B no. 355)	half-length	160
Gentleman (C/B no. 356)	bust-length	120
Stewart	half-length	160
Wilson	bust-length	120
Eckersall	bust-length	120
Cavendish	3/4-length	200
Cavendish	bust-length	60
Corbet	half-length	160
Smyth	half-length	160
Neville	half-length	160



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Quin	3/4-length	200
Orde	half-length	160
Staples	full-length	400
Talbot	full-length	400
Blagrove	half-length	160
Malvezzi	half-length	160
Gentleman (C/B no. 374)	half-length	160
Monson	full-length	400
Peachey	3/4-length	200
Coke	full-length	400
Scott	half-length	160
Kerrich	half-length	160
Karl Theodor (replica)	bust-length	120
Karl Theodor	full-length	400
Peirse	full-length	400
Haddo	full-length	400
Grey	half-length	160
Hamilton	full-length	400
Fetherstonhaugh	3/4-length	200
Forbes	bust-length	120
Pius VI	3/4-length	500

Pius VI (replica)	3/4-length	100
Pius VI (replica)	3/4-length	100
Floridablanca	half-length	160
Duchess of Gloucester	bust-length	120
Herbert	3/4-length	200
Rankes	3/4-length	200
Hervey	3/4-length	200
Plessen	3/4-length	200
Caarten	bust-length	120
Legge	3/4-length	200
Basset	full-length	400
Basset (replica)	half-length	80
Browne	bust-length	120
Pitt	bust-length	120
Burdon	bust-length	120
Yorke	3/4-length	200
Gentleman (C/B no. 412)	bust-length	120
Herbert	bust-length	120
Swinburne	bust-length	120
Martha Swinburne	bust-length	120
Gascoigne	full-length	400

Santarelli	bust-length	120
Bankes	half-length	160
Grimston	full-length	400
Gentleman (C/B no. 420)	half-length	160
<b>Total</b>		<b>14,640</b>

The prices for Batoni's history paintings were set based on a combination of size and number of figures. Since many of his sales both within and outside of this period are documented, the prices for the other canvases can be estimated with a high degree of confidence. For the twelve history paintings he produced in the 1770s – less than a fifth of the number of portraits – he received a total of about 7,800 scudi, or just over half as much as he earned from portraits (table 2).

**Table 2: Income from History Paintings, 1770–79**<sup>29</sup>

<b>Subject</b>	<b>Notes</b>	<b>Scudi</b>
Thetis		1,000
Scipio		1,000
Bacchus and Ariadne		640
Prodigal Son	estimate	400
Venus Caressing Cupid	estimate	400

<sup>29</sup> 'C/B no.' refers to the catalogue number in Clark and Bowron 1985.

Virgin and Child (C/B no. 371)	estimate	300
Darius		1,600
Virgin and Child (C/B no. 383)	estimate	200
Allegory of Painting	estimate	120
Hagar		400
Peace and War		1,200
St. John the Baptist (Parma)		500
<b>Total</b>		<b>7,760</b>

This calculation shows that Batoni's estimated income of about 22,000 scudi over the course of a decade, or an average of 2,200 scudi per year, covered only half of his annual expenses of 4,400 scudi. To balance the books, he had to rely on occasional, unpredictable gratifications. These were customarily given to artists upon the satisfactory completion of a commission, but they were rarely as generous as the 3,000 scudi he received from Empress Maria Theresa in 1769, and often came in the form of precious snuff boxes and other objects that could not be readily converted into cash.<sup>30</sup>

Unlike a number of his contemporaries, Batoni never accepted a position as a court painter with a regular pension. This was partly due to the fact that such a position did not exist at the papal court, but even when

<sup>30</sup> See Chracas 1716–1836, no. 8096, 30 September 1769.

he was invited to move to Potsdam in 1763 as court painter to Frederick II,<sup>31</sup> he declined the offer because ‘no promises, or any prospect of advantages whatever have hitherto been able to give him an inclination to leave Rome, where he has a family, that can not subsist without him. He now grows in years; it is not likely that he will ever remove. His superior excellency makes him to be sought for, where he is’.<sup>32</sup> Mengs, although living in Rome, was paid an annual salary of 1,000 thalers or approximately 2,200 scudi from Dresden.<sup>33</sup> Corrado Giaquinto was lured from Rome to Madrid by the offer of a pension equalling 4,200 scudi per year plus rent-free accommodation, a coach, two servants, and additional

<sup>31</sup> Frederick II to George Keith, Earl Marischal, 24 [April 1763], Berlin, Geheimes Staatsarchiv, VI. HA, N1 Keith II no. 2, fol. 268: ‘Voudriez vous bien avans Votre Depart [for London] ecrire a Rome, je voudrois pouvoir engager Batoni a venir ici en servisse, mais il faut savoir ce qu’il demande et s’il est Raissonable.’ Transcribed (with modernised spelling) in Frederick II: *Œuvres de Frédéric le Grand*, ed. Johann Preuss, vol. XX, Berlin: Decker 1852, pp. 292–93, no. 44. The King’s offer became known in Rome and was mentioned by Winckelmann in a letter to Heinrich Wilhelm Muzell-Stosch on 8 June 1765: ‘[...] wenn ihm [Mengs] der König in Preußen diejenigen Vortheile antragen läßet, die er, wie man sagt, dem Pompeo Battoni soll haben machen laßen [...]’. Transcribed in Winckelmann, Johann Joachim: *Briefe*, ed. Walther Rehm and Hans Diepolder, Berlin: De Gruyter, 1952–57, vol. III, pp. 101–2.

<sup>32</sup> Fr. John Thorpe to Henry, 8th Lord Arundell of Wardour, 2 October 1768, Trowbridge, Wiltshire and Swindon Record Office, Arundell Mss. 2667; see also 15 April 1769: ‘But nothing can induce the honest man [Batoni] to leave Rome: he will not hearken to any proposals whatever.’

<sup>33</sup> See Roettgen 1999–2003, vol. II, p. 121.

gratifications for each painting completed for the Spanish crown, while retaining the right to accept commissions from other clients.<sup>34</sup>

Furthermore, other artists did not have the burden of maintaining such a large household. As vigorously procreative as a father as he was as an artist, Batoni could not afford neither the dowries necessary to marry off his ten daughters, nor the endowments for those willing to enter a convent, which meant that he had to continue supporting them at home. Only one of his daughters, Caterina, ever married.<sup>35</sup> In 1742, he implored a patron to send him an extra instalment of the price of a painting he was still working on: ‘Prima del fine del mese corrente sono impegnato sborsare altro molto denaro per collocare tre mie figliole in monastero; mi ritrovo in qualche particolare urgenza. Così mi permetta VS. Ill.ma che mi prendo seco la rispettosa libertà di supplicarla, che si degni rimettermi colla più possibile sollecitudine prima del suo ritorno in città qualche somma di contanti’.<sup>36</sup> In 1774, eight daughters were still living under his roof,<sup>37</sup> and as late as 1780, when Batoni had reached the grandfatherly age of seventy-two, he described the impossibility of financing multiple dowries: ‘Ho sei Figlie

<sup>34</sup> See Michel, Olivier: ‘La réussite financière et sociale de Corrado Giaquinto’, in Michel, Olivier: *Vivre et peindre à Rome au XVIIIe siècle*, Rome: École française de Rome, 1996, pp. 297–318, at pp. 304–5.

<sup>35</sup> See Clark and Bowron 1985, p. 17.

<sup>36</sup> Pompeo Batoni to Andrea Gerini, 19 November 1742. Transcribed in Lucca 2008, p. 385.

<sup>37</sup> See Puhlmann 1979, p. 27.

grandi da Marito d’allocare, e vi vuole la dote almeno di due Milla scudi l’una nel mio stato, che fanno la somma di dodici milla scudi.’<sup>38</sup>

Taken together, these manifold economic pressures had two effects on Batoni’s oeuvre: Firstly, against his own artistic inclinations, he was forced to keep churning out the portraits that accounted for around two thirds of his income; secondly, at any given time, he was simultaneously juggling multiple commissions and would abandon a half-finished canvas in order to work on one that promised to alleviate his financial worries.

For example, the unusually rapid completion of *Antiochus and Stratonice*<sup>39</sup> between February 1745 and May 1746 was owed to a method of payment that, as Batoni readily admitted, ‘mi terrà agli fianchi uno sprone continuo per sollecitarne il disbrigo’.<sup>40</sup> At his own suggestion, he received the money not in a lump sum at the end but ‘à conto di esso un dieci zecchini romani al mese’.<sup>41</sup> He asked the patron to nominate a Roman agent who ‘faccia mese per mese l’estorso delli dieci zecchini, e che abbia l’incombenza di veder mese per mese l’avanzam.to dell’opera’.<sup>42</sup>

<sup>38</sup> Pompeo Batoni to unnamed recipient, 2 February 1780. Transcribed in Averini, Riccardo: ‘I dipinti di Pompeo Batoni nella Basilica del Sacro Cuore all’Estrela’, *Estudos italianos em Portugal*, 36 (1973), pp. 75–102, at p. 93.

<sup>39</sup> See Clark and Bowron 1985, p. 237, cat. no. 102.

<sup>40</sup> Pompeo Batoni to Andrea Gerini, 16 January 1745. Transcribed in Lucca 2008, p. 391.

<sup>41</sup> Pompeo Batoni to Andrea Gerini, 26 December 1744. Transcribed in Lucca 2008, p. 390.

<sup>42</sup> Pompeo Batoni to Andrea Gerini, 9 January 1745. Transcribed in Lucca 2008, p. 390.

Such close supervision, Batoni knew, ‘mi servirà di mag.re impulso al travaglio nell’affluenza delle commissioni che mi capitano; potendomi con ciò impegnare di dar l’opera finita in un anno, e mesi, o al più in un anno e mezzo’.<sup>43</sup> This plan was successfully implemented, with the Roman jeweller Giuseppe Boldri acting as the superintendent and paymaster.<sup>44</sup>

Clients willing to heed Batoni’s recommendation to pay in instalments were served swiftly, while others often had to wait years for their pictures. *Susannah and the Elders*, commissioned by the Roman agent Giuseppe Dionigio Crivelli (1693–1782) on behalf of Count Ernst Guido von Harrach (1723–1783), was another case in point.<sup>45</sup> In August 1751, Crivelli wrote to his Viennese patron that the canvas was ‘appena sbozzata’, but by early December, he was delighted to find that ‘Battoni è alla fine del quadro, ch’è riuscito bellissimo’.<sup>46</sup> The agent had obtained prompt attention by means of two intermediate payments, of 25 scudi each, on 15 September and 22 November 1751: ‘Al Pittore Battoni, che mi ha richiesto di denaro ho

<sup>43</sup> Pompeo Batoni to Andrea Gerini, 26 December 1744. Transcribed in Lucca 2008, p. 390.

<sup>44</sup> Pompeo Batoni to Andrea Gerini, 6 February 1745. Transcribed in Lucca 2008, p. 391.

<sup>45</sup> See Clark and Bowron 1985, pp. 251–52, cat. no. 152.

<sup>46</sup> Giuseppe Dionigio Crivelli to Ernst Guido von Harrach, 4 August and 4 December 1751, Vienna, Österreichisches Staatsarchiv, Allgemeines Verwaltungsarchiv, Harrachsches Familienarchiv, Kt. 202, fols. 11, 17. Transcribed in Ferrari, Stefano: *Giuseppe Dionigio Crivelli (1693–1782). La carriera di un agente trentino nella Roma del Settecento*, Trento: Società di Studi Trentini di Scienze Storiche, 2000, pp. 114, 134 (4 August 1751), 138 (4 December 1751).



anticipato a conto in due volte cinquanta scudi, de' quali acchiudo le ricevute'.<sup>47</sup> When commissioning *Pope Benedict XIV Presenting the Encyclical 'Ex Omnibus' to the Comte de Choiseul* in 1757, Cardinal Orsini employed the same method of paying in instalments and was able to take delivery of the completed work before the year was out (see section IV.1).

Other patrons and their agents needed years to understand that Batoni's priorities were directly tied to his financial situation. Father John Thorpe (1726–1792), the Roman agent for Henry, 8th Baron Arundell (1740–1808), had been frustrated for two years because Batoni was making no progress with the *Appearance of the Angel to Hagar in the Desert*.<sup>48</sup> Then, in July 1776, Thorpe grasped the nettle and started making regular payments to the artist: 'Pompeo once again has not kept his promise of finishing Agar before the end of June; however there is strong assurance of his doing it before August be at an end; because now he is to paint some part of it every week, on condition of receiving 30 or 40 Crowns each week that he does so. He hitherto keeps his word, & the picture begins to come

<sup>47</sup> Giuseppe Dionigio Crivelli to Ernst Guido von Harrach, 4 December 1751, Vienna, Österreichisches Staatsarchiv, Allgemeines Verwaltungsarchiv, Harrachsches Familienarchiv, Kt. 202, fol. 17 (4 December 1751); fols. 16, 28 (receipts). Transcribed in Ferrari, Stefano: *Giuseppe Dionigio Crivelli (1693–1782). La carriera di un agente trentino nella Roma del Settecento*, Trento: Società di Studi Trentini di Scienze Storiche, 2000, pp. 115, n. 418 (receipts), 138 (4 December 1751).

<sup>48</sup> See Clark and Bowron 1985, pp. 341–42, cat. no. 396.

on admirably.’<sup>49</sup> Gratiſied that the new ſtrategy worked well, the agent ſoon noted that ‘Pompeo, who has been ſo infamouſly dilatory now maintains his promiſes, & to keep him in this good humour I every week endeavour to be even better than my word to him. His painting will not be the worſe for it, & in all appearance will be finiſhed about the middle of next month.’<sup>50</sup> After leſs than two months of weekly payments, Thorpe was able to report that ‘Agar is at length finiſhed, & admired as one of Pompeo’s moſt pleaſing pictures’.<sup>51</sup>

Another client who uſed weekly payments to jumpſtart a ſtalled commiſſion was Empreſs Catherine II of Ruſſia (1729–1796). Work on the large pair of mythological paintings ſhe had ordered in 1768, *Chiron Returns Achilles to Thetis* and *The Continence of Scipio*, had come to a ſtandſtill.<sup>52</sup> In June 1770, the Baron de Saint Odile obſerved that ‘Mr Battoni ayant reçu de nouvelles ſollicitations pour terminer un ſuperbe Tableau deſtiné pour S.M. l’Imp.e de Ruſſie, qui contient dix figures de grandeur naturelle, il a été obligé de reprendre ce travail, qui étoit interrompu depuis quelques années. Il eſt a bon port et fera un honneur

<sup>49</sup> Fr. John Thorpe to Henry, 8th Lord Arundell of Wardour, 13 July 1776, Trowbridge, Wiltſhire and Swindon Record Office, Arundell Mss. 2667.

<sup>50</sup> Fr. John Thorpe to Henry, 8th Lord Arundell of Wardour, 31 July 1776, Trowbridge, Wiltſhire and Swindon Record Office, Arundell Mss. 2667.

<sup>51</sup> Fr. John Thorpe to Henry, 8th Lord Arundell of Wardour, 21 Auguſt 1776, Trowbridge, Wiltſhire and Swindon Record Office, Arundell Mss. 2667.

<sup>52</sup> See Clark and Bowron 1985, pp. 320–21, cat. nos. 340–41.

immortel a l'artiste.'<sup>53</sup> When the Russian diplomat Count Ivan Ivanovich Shuvalov (1727–1797) was granted an export licence for the completed *Chiron Returns Achilles to Thetis* only two months later, Father Thorpe explained the reason for Batoni's sudden perseverance: 'The Empress of Russia is glad to engage him to finish two or three pieces, at the rate of thirty Crowns a week'.<sup>54</sup>

In the late 1770s, with Britain once again at war with France and Spain, the stream of tourists to Rome slowed to a trickle and Batoni's portrait business began to dry up. For the first time since his youth, he found himself without a backlog of commissions to fulfil and was free to paint any subject of his own preference. Rather than produce a stock of commercially viable, cabinet-sized mythological and allegorical compositions, Batoni chose the least marketable genre, namely an altarpiece: *The Holy Family with Saint Elizabeth and the Infant Saint John the Baptist* (fig. 59), which had no church or chapel to go to.<sup>55</sup> Father Thorpe reported that 'this picture is, as he says, made for his own keeping',

<sup>53</sup> Baron de Saint Odile to unnamed recipient at Schönbrunn, 9 June 1770, Vienna, Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv, Alte Kabinettsakten, Ital. Korr. 1769–1770, Ktn. 35. Transcribed in Schmitt-Vorster 2006, Quellenanhang, p. 37.

<sup>54</sup> Rome, Archivio di Stato, Camerale II, Antichità e Belle Arti, Esportazioni, busta 12, fasc. 286, 4 August 1770; Fr. John Thorpe to Henry, 8th Lord Arundell of Wardour, 4 August 1770, Trowbridge, Wiltshire and Swindon Record Office, Arundell Mss. 2667.

<sup>55</sup> See Clark and Bowron 1985, pp. 342–43, cat. no. 398.

meaning that a prospective purchaser ‘must pay more than a high price’,<sup>56</sup> and Puhlmann noted that the asking price was 1,500 zecchini or 3,000 scudi.<sup>57</sup> It remained unsold until 1782, when Grand Duke Paul of Russia (1754–1801), the son of Empress Catherine II, acquired the canvas as a gift for his mother, paying the full asking price.<sup>58</sup> The altarpiece was never used in a religious context; acquired as an autonomous work of art, as a prime example of the work of Europe’s most famous painter of the day, it entered the collection of the Hermitage in 1789.

Even at the colossal price of 3,000 scudi, the theoretical hourly wage Batoni would have derived from painting *The Holy Family with Saint Elizabeth and the Infant Saint John the Baptist* remained well below his earnings per hour when working on portraits. The latter were produced in a matter of hours, painted directly onto the canvas, without preliminary studies.<sup>59</sup> By contrast, many months of work were lavished upon each history painting, starting with compositional sketches, progressing to figure studies from life, elaborating poses, gestures, draperies, and

<sup>56</sup> Fr. John Thorpe to Henry, 8th Lord Arundell of Wardour, 10 December 1777, Trowbridge, Wiltshire and Swindon Record Office, Arundell Mss. 2667.

<sup>57</sup> Puhlmann 1979, p. 140.

<sup>58</sup> Chracas 1716–1836, no. 754, 23 March 1782: ‘Il nominato Principe ha fatto acquisto ancora dal med. Pittore di un Quadro grande rappresentante la Sagra Familia, già esistente nel di lui Studio, e reputato da tutti gl’intendenti, e nobili Forestieri, che lo hanno veduto il piú bel Capo d’opera che il Sig. Cav. abbia fatto fine al presente giorno, avendone ricevuto dal nobile Personaggio il prezzo di 1500. zecchini’.

<sup>59</sup> See note 18.

costumes in detailed drawings, and concluding the creative process with highly finished oil-on-canvas modelli (see section II.1).<sup>60</sup>

In the final years of his career, Batoni was able to support himself primarily through an arrangement with the Portuguese crown that provided him with a steady income while working on a series of seven monumental altarpieces ordered by Queen Maria I Bragança (1734–1816) for the Carmelite Basilica of the Estrêla in Lisbon. When work was underway on the first canvas, the *Allegory of the Universal Devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus* (fig. 51),<sup>61</sup> Father Thorpe reported that the agreed price of 3,000 scudi was once again disbursed in regular instalments:

‘Old Batoni paints with extraordinary complacency on this picture, because the money is advanced to him weekly or monthly as the work goes on, & because he looks upon it as the accomplishment of what was said to him about twenty years ago, when he was told that Alm: God would give him health & preserve the vigour of his painting to an advanced age in which he should do a work in a special manner inducing to the honour & glory of God. [...] Pompeo was always a good Xtian, very devout & charitable, regards little what they say of himself, if they do but speak well of

<sup>60</sup> See Bowron and Kerber 2007, pp. 151–63.

<sup>61</sup> 1781, oil on canvas, 513 x 257 cm, Lisbon, Basilica of the Estrêla. See Clark and Bowron 1985, pp. 354–55, cat. no. 430.

his painting.’<sup>62</sup>

Batoni’s deep religiosity ultimately determined much of his financial fate, for better or worse. To the artist himself, painting sacred subjects instead of secular history pictures or portraits whenever he could afford to, and sometimes even when he could not, was an expression of his faith. To the pious Portuguese Queen, his reputation as a devout Catholic artist – and one working in papal Rome – was a key factor in choosing him for the multi-year altarpiece commission for the Estrêla. To his acquaintances in Rome, the fact that he maintained a habit of generous almsgiving in spite of his depleted finances was a source of both astonishment and admiration. Johann Heinrich Wilhelm Tischbein observed that while Batoni ‘für seine Bilder bedeutende Summen erhielt, so hatte er doch nichts erübrigt, weil er so mitleidig war und alles an die Armen gab’.<sup>63</sup> Archenholz’s prediction that ‘die Armen werden von ihm so reichlich bedacht, daß seine zahlreiche Familie Gefahr läuft, nach seinem Tode zu darben’<sup>64</sup> was to come true, as Friedrich Johann Lorenz Meyer (1760–1844) reported in 1792, five years after Batoni’s death: ‘Seiner vielen und reichlich bezahlten Arbeiten ungeachtet, lebte er mit seiner lebens-

<sup>62</sup> Fr. John Thorpe to Henry, 8th Lord Arundell of Wardour, 21 October 1780, Trowbridge, Wiltshire and Swindon Record Office, Arundell Mss. 2667.

<sup>63</sup> Tischbein, Johann Heinrich Wilhelm: *Aus meinem Leben*, ed. Kuno Mittelstädt, Berlin: Henschel, 1956, p. 246.

<sup>64</sup> Archenholz, Johann Wilhelm von: *England und Italien*, Leipzig: Dyk, 1785, vol. II, pp. 271–72.

würdigen Familie [...] sehr eingeschränkt und fast dürftig. Bis zur Verschwendung wohlthätig gegen die Armen, Kirchen und Klöster, starb er, ohne von seinem erworbenen großen Vermögen etwas Bedeutendes zu hinterlassen.’<sup>65</sup>

<sup>65</sup> Meyer, Friedrich Johann Lorenz: *Darstellungen aus Italien*, Berlin: Voss, 1792, pp. 132–33.

## **Appendix B: Representations of the Virgin Holding the Christ Child's Foot (before 1730)**

(in chronological order)

Attributed to the Magdalen Master, *The Virgin and Child*, c. 1260–70, tempera on panel, Berlin, Gemäldegalerie.

Nicola Pisano and Workshop, *The Virgin and Child*, 1266–68, marble, Siena, Cathedral, pulpit.

Attributed to Cimabue, *The Virgin and Child Enthroned with Saint Francis and Angels*, c. 1280, fresco, Assisi, San Francesco, lower church, right transept.

Circle of Duccio (Maestro di Città di Castello?), *The Virgin and Child Enthroned with Angels and Suppliant*, c. 1290–1300, tempera on panel, Oxford, Christ Church Picture Gallery.

Attributed to Duccio di Buoninsegna, *The Virgin and Child and Four Saints*, c. 1305, tempera on panel, Siena, Pinacoteca Nazionale.

Simone Martini, *Maestà*, c. 1315–21, fresco, Siena, Palazzo Pubblico, Sala del Consiglio.



Attributed to Ugolino da Siena, *The Virgin and Child and Four Saints*, c. 1325, tempera on panel, Siena, Pinacoteca Nazionale.

Gentile da Fabriano, *The Virgin and Child with Saints Francis and Clare*, c. 1395, tempera on panel, Pavia, Pinacoteca Malaspina (formerly Pavia, Convento di Santa Chiara la Reale).

Fra Angelico, *Madonna of Humility*, c. 1420, Pisa, Museo Nazionale di San Matteo.

Masaccio, *San Giovenale Triptych*, 1422, tempera on panel, Cascia di Reggello, Museo Masaccio.

Masolino, *Madonna Carneseccchi*, 1423, tempera on panel, Bremen, Kunsthalle.

Giovanni di Paolo, *Branchini Madonna*, 1427, tempera on panel, Pasadena, Norton Simon Museum.

Mantegna, *San Zeno Altarpiece* (central panel), 1457–60, tempera on panel, Verona, San Zeno.

Bartolomeo Caporali, *The Virgin and Child with Angels*, c. 1467, oil on panel, Florence, Galleria degli Uffizi.

Hans Memling, *Madonna with Child and Angels*, c. 1480–90, oil on panel, Florence, Galleria degli Uffizi.

Cima da Conegliano, *Madonna and Child in a Landscape*, c. 1496–99, oil on panel, Los Angeles, Los Angeles County Museum of Art.

Andrea Previtali, *The Virgin and Child Adored by Two Angels*, c. 1505, oil on canvas (transferred from panel), London, National Gallery.

Raphael, *The Virgin and Child (Madonna Orléans)*, c. 1505–7, oil on panel, Chantilly, Musée de Condé.

Palma il Vecchio, *The Virgin and Child with Saints Jerome and Helen*, c. 1515, oil on panel, Rovigo, Pinacoteca dell'Accademia dei Concordi.

Federico Barocci, *Madonna di San Giovanni*, 1565–66, oil on canvas, Urbino, Galleria Nazionale delle Marche.

Peter Paul Rubens, *The Holy Family with Saint Anne*, c. 1630, oil on canvas, Madrid, Museo del Prado.

Francesco Gessi, *Madonna di Loreto*, c. 1647, oil on canvas, Fossombrone, Pinacoteca Civica.

Sassoferrato, *The Virgin and Child*, c. 1650–60, oil on canvas, Burghley House.

Luca Giordano, *The Holy Family with Saint Antony of Padua and Apparition of the Cross*, c. 1665, oil on canvas, Milan, Pinacoteca di Brera.

Carlo Maratti, *The Virgin and Child*, c. 1695, preparatory drawing for the clock tower of the Palazzo del Quirinale, Madrid, Academia di San Fernando. – The foot motif is no longer present in the final composition executed in mosaic.

Sebastiano Ricci, *The Guardian Angel Intercedes with the Virgin and Child*, 1718–20, oil on canvas, Venice, Scuola dell'Angelo Custode.

Ludovico Mazzanti, *The Virgin and Child*, c. 1721–25, oil on canvas, Rome, Sant'Andrea al Quirinale.

## **Appendix C: Representations of the Christ Child Wearing a Tunic (before 1730)**

(in chronological order)

Giotto di Bondone, *Ognissanti Madonna*, c. 1310, tempera on panel,  
Florence, Galleria degli Uffizi.

Andrea Mantegna, *The Infant Saviour*, c. 1460, tempera on canvas,  
Washington, D.C., National Gallery of Art.

Andrea Mantegna, *The Adoration of the Magi*, c. 1460, tempera on panel,  
Florence, Galleria degli Uffizi.

Giovanni Bellini, *Madonna Lochis*, c. 1460–65, tempera on panel,  
Bergamo, Accademia Carrara di Belle Arti.

Gerard David, *The Virgin and Child with Two Angels Making Music*, c.  
1490–95, oil on panel, Basel, Öffentliche Kunstsammlung.

Quinten Metsys, *The Virgin and Child*, c. 1495, oil on panel, Brussels,  
Musées Royaux des Beaux-Arts.

Quinten Metsys, *Saint Anne Altarpiece*, 1507–9, oil on panel, Brussels,  
Musées Royaux des Beaux-Arts.

Gerard David, *The Virgin and Child with Four Angels*, c. 1510–15, oil on panel, New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Gerard David, *The Virgin and Child with the Milk Soup*, c. 1515, oil on panel, Brussels, Musées Royaux des Beaux-Arts.

Correggio, *Madonna of the Basket*, c. 1524, oil on panel, London, National Gallery.

Annibale Carracci, *The Virgin and Child with the Infant Saint John the Baptist*, c. 1596–7, oil on copper, Florence, Galleria degli Uffizi.

Annibale Carracci, *The Holy Family with the Infant Saint John the Baptist (The Montalto Madonna)*, 1598–1600, oil on copper, London, National Gallery.

Domenichino, *Virgin and Child with Saints Petronius and John the Evangelist*, 1629, oil on canvas, Rome, Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Antica, Palazzo Barberini.

Simone Cantarini, *Madonna del Rosario*, c. 1637, oil on canvas, Brescia, Musei Civici, Pinacoteca Tosio Martinengo.

Pierre Mignard, *The Virgin of the Grapes*, c. 1640–50, oil on canvas, Paris, Musée du Louvre.

Carlo Maratti, *The Holy Family*, c. 1700–5, oil on canvas, Toledo Museum of Art.

Agostino Masucci, *The Holy Family with Saint Anne*, 1723, oil on canvas,  
Rome, Santa Maria Maggiore.

## **Appendix D: Transcriptions of Archival Documents**

### **D.1: Contract between the Fabbrica di San Pietro and Pompeo Batoni, 17 January 1746**

*Rome, Archivio di Stato, 30 Notai Capitolini, ufficio 38, Francesco Maria Righi, vol. 183 (1746, part 1), fols. 121r–v and 176r–v:*

Obligatio conficien: Tabula picta, emiss: per S: Pompeius Batoni / Pro Rev. Fabrica S. Petri / Die decima septima Mensis Januarij 1746 [...] / Essendo che Il Sig.e Pompeo Batoni Pittore dasse supplica alla Santità di N.ro Sig:e Benedetto XIV felicemente Regnante, ad ogetto di ottenere la grazia di potere anch'esso fare qualche opera di pittura nella Basilica Vaticana, nella forma apunto, che altri Virtuosi di pittura hanno avuto l'onore d'impiegare anch'essi la di loro virtù, et opera nella predetta Vaticana Basilica, et in essa supplica, nascesse rescritto “à Monsig.e Economo della Fabrica che ne parli” et indi poi atteso l'Udienza avuta da Monsig.e Ill.mo Economo, da N.ro Sig.e, fin sotto li 18 7bre 1745 in pie della supplica predetta, ne emanasse il seguente rescritto “SS.mus annuit, et ad E.mus Prefectus pro destinatione operis”, e come meglio legesi dal memoriale originale, quale si consegna à Me. Not.o, ad effetto d'inserirlo nell presente Istr.o del ten.&c.; In esecuzione dell quale l'E.mo, et Ill.mo Sig:e Cardinal S. Clemente Prefetto della Sagra Congregazione della Rev. Fabrica dasse tutte le facultà à Monsig.e Ill.mo Economo, acciò procedesse alla destinazione di qualche opera di Pittura da [fol. 121v] farsi dal predetto Sig:e Batoni nella

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detta Vaticana Basilica, e precisamente il quadro rappresentante la caduta di Simon Mago, con quelle condizioni et oblihi, e mercede più utili, e vantaggiosi per beneficio della Rev. Fabrica da stabilirsi da Monsig.e Economo soprad.o, avuto per tanto discorso, e trattamento sopra quanto si è detto col predetto Sig:e Batoni, e volendo Sua Sig.ria Ill.ma dare la dovuta esecuzione, ed à tal effetto ridurre il tutto in pub.o Istr.o, acciò la verità per sempre apparisca. Quindi è, che / Alla presenza di Me. Not.o, e del Infra.tti Testimonij personalm.te esistente Monsig.e Ill.mo, e R.mo Gio: Francesco Olivieri Economo generale della Rev. Fabrica da una parte, ed il Sig.e Pompeo Batoni del Sig.e Paolino da Lucca dal altra, asserendo, et affermando tutte e singole cose di sopra espresse, esser verissime, e quelle come tali pienamente confermando, in esecuzione dunque delle mede.me, detto Sig:e Batoni di sua spontanea volontà, et in ogn'altro miglior modo hà promesso, e si è obligato à favore della Sagra Congregazione della Rev. Fabrica di S. Pietro, e per essa di Monsig.e Ill.mo, e R.mo Olivieri soprad.o Economo gen.le pn.te, et accettante di fare l'opera, e pittura in quadro, rappresentante la Caduta di Simon Mago nella Basilica Vaticana, secondo le buone regole, e maniera che portare seco la professione di Pittore perche cosi &c. alt.e &c. Et al incontro Monsig.e Ill.mo Economo in vigore delle facultà della Sagra Congregazione, e dall'E.mo, e R.mo Sig.e Cardinal S. Clemente Prefetto d'essa Sagra Congregazione per mercede, [fol. 176r] opera, fattura del quadro sud:o, tela, colori, telaro, et ogni altro bisognevole per l'effetto predetto, hà promesso, e si obligato à nome come sopra pagare al riferito Sig.e Pompeo



Batoni presente scudi mille duecento, cioè scudi mille per la fattura, mercede, et opera di detto Quadro rappresentante la Caduta di Simon Mago, et altri scudi duecento per la tela, colori, telaro, ed ogn'altro bisognevole per ridurre à perfezione detto Quadro, e non altrimenti &c. perche cosi &c. / Qual obbligo, con tutte, e singole cose nell presente Istr.o contenute, et espresse, tanto Monsig.e Ill.mo Olivieri nell nome come sopra, quanto detto Sig.e Batoni promettono vicendevolmente attendere, et inviolabilmente osservare, averle rate, grate, valide, e ferme, contro non fare, dire, opporsi, o venire sotto qualsivoglia pretesto, o quesito colore, altrimenti in evento contrario vogliono esser tenuti a tutti li danni, e per la piena ed inviolabile osservanza di tutti, e singole cose premesse Monsig.e Ill.mo, e R.mo Economo in virtù delle facultà obliga li beni, e ragioni della Rev. Fabrica e detto Sig.e Batoni se stesso, suoi beni, eredi e ragioni nella più ampla forma della Rev. Cam.a Apostolica con tutte le solite, e consuete clausole.

*Rome, Archivio di Stato, 30 Notai Capitolini, ufficio 38, Francesco Maria Righi, vol. 183 (1746, part 1), fols. 122r and 175v:*

B.mo Padre. / Pompeo Batoni O.re U.mo della Sn.tà V.ra, che attualmente esercita qui in Roma l'Arte Liberale della Pittura, come è ben noto a V.ra Beatitudine per aver' avuto l'Onore di servirla in quelle Opere, che hebbe la benignità fargli commettere per adornamento delle Stanze nuove fatte nel Giardino di Montecavallo per comodo della S. V.; ardisce umilmente supplicarla della grazia di fargli assegnare qualcheduno de i Quadri, che

far si devono in S. Pietro; dove molt'altri Professori hanno sin qui havuta la Sorte d'impiegare il loro sapere: promettendo l'O.re d'usare tutta l'attenzione, e diligenza per non restare a verun'altro inferiore, ne mostrarsi, per quanto potrà, affatto immeritevole della presente grazia, che viene umilissimamente ad'implorare dalla paterna Clemenza della Sn.tà V.ra / Quam Deus &c.

[fol. 175v] Alla Sn.tà di N.ro Signore Papa Benedetto XIV. / [in a different hand] A Monsignor Economo della Fabbrica che ne parli. / [in the same hand as 'Alla Sn.tà ...'] Per / Pompeo Battoni Pittore / [in a third hand] Ex audientia Ss.mi die 18. 7bris 1745 / Ss.mus annuit, et ad E.mus Prefectum pro destinatione Operis P. / J. F. Oliverius Econ:mus et Secret:us

**D.2: Contract between the Fabbrica di San Pietro and Pierre Subleyras, 13 September 1743**

*Rome, Archivio di Stato, 30 Notai Capitolini, ufficio 38, Francesco Maria Righi, vol. 176 (1743, part 3), fols. 53r–v and 80r–v:*

Obligatio conficien: tabula picta / Pro' Rev. Fabrica S. Petri / [...] /  
 Essendo si come per verità s'asserisce, che la Rev. Fabbrica Vaticana avesse destinato, e risoluto di far fare un quadro grande in tela per collocarlo in uno degli Altari d'essa Basilica Vaticana situato nella parte del Pilone della Madonna SS.ma detta della Gregoriana rappresentante la Messa Grega, con l'Istoria del Imperador Valente della Setta Ariana, e ciò venuto à

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notizia del Sig.e Pietro Subleiras Pittore, questo ad ogetto di fare tal opera, fecesse supplica alla Santità di Nostro Sig.e Benedetto Papa XIV felicemente Regnante, esponendo nella mede.ma fare ad uso d'arte, e di tutta perfezzione il lavoro, e quadro sopradetto rappresentante la messa grega con l'istoria riferita, perlo che ne facesse l'abbozzo, e per tal effetto ne emanasse rescritto in detta supplica al arbitrio del E.mo Sig.e Cardinal Prefetto della Rev. Fabrica, come appare dalla supplica sud.a, quale si consegna à Me. Not.o ad effetto d'inserirla nell presente Istromento del ten.&c.; In seguela di che l'E.mo, e R.mo Sig.e Cardinal Prefetto si degnasse sin sotto il dì 29 Agosto prossimo scorso scrivere biglietto à sua Sig.ria Ill.ma Monsig:e Olivieri Economo della Rev. Fabrica prescrivendo in esso l'ordinazione del quadro soprad:o, in persona del riferito S.e Sblueiras [sic] Pittore, con ridurre il tutto in publico docu[fol. 53v]mento, conforme costa dal detto biglietto, quale si dà parimente Me. Not.o per inserirlo nell pn.te Istr.o del ten.&c. Volendo in esecuzione di quanto si è detto prontamente effettuare affinche la verità per sempre apparisca, mediante il presente publico Istromento; Quindi è che / [Subleyras si è obligato ...] di fare, pingere, e ponere in opra nella Vaticana Basilica soprad:a un quadro rappresentante S: Basilio, con l'istoria del Imperador Valente della Setta Ariana detto la Messa grega in tela dipinto ad oglio, e quello ridurlo e terminarlo ad uso di buon' professore di pittura dentro il termine d'anni tre da oggi prossimi a venire; perche così &c. altrimenti &c. / Qual opera, o lavoro di quadro rappresentante come sopradetto S.e Subleiras hà promesso parimente farlo e dipingerlo a suo dovere e

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conforme porta la professione [insertion: e regole] di pittura per il prezzo, e nome di prezzo di scudi mille, e dugento m.ta Romana da pauoli dieci per qualsivoglia scudo, cioè scudi mille per lavoro e pittura, e scudi duecento per li colori, tela, telaro, ed altro, così concordato, e stabilito con Mons.e Ill.mo e R.mo Economo, nel modo appunto che si è costumato con altri Professori Pittori per lo passato, e non alt.e &c., qual somma di scudi mille, e duecento m.ta, Mons.e Ill.mo e R.mo Gio Francesco Olivieri come Economo gen.le della Rev. Fabrica [fol. 8or] Vaticana hà promesso, e si è obligato pagare, o far pagare, e con effetto sborsare al detto Sig.e Pietro Subleiras Pittore nel modo seguente, cioè scudi duecento m.ta per la Lista del Mese di Dicembre prossimo à venire tempo solito e determinato nel quale in virtù della Lista sopradetta soglion[?] pagarsi l'emolumenti e mercedi à Professori et Artisti di detta Rev. Fab.a, e ala rimanente somma di scudi mille m.ta di mano, in mano che detto Sig.e Subleiras Pittore andera lavorando, e terminando detto quadro, ad arbitrio pero dell'E.mo, e R.mo Sig:e Cardinal Prefetto, o Monsig.e Economo pro tempore liberamente &c. perche così &c. / Con espresso patto, e condizione, che detto Sig.e Subleiras sia tenuto, et obligato fare conforme promette, e s'obliga a tutte sue proprie spese, senz'alcun incomodo o dispendio d'essa Rev. Fabrica il trasporto del quadro a detta Basilica, e quello ponere [insertion: in opra] nell altare, e luogo come sopra destinato conforme porta lo stile, e consuetudine in simili opere, e lavori, come altresì vuole esser obligato fare e ridurre à sua perfezione detto quadro conforme portano le regole della pittura perche così &c. et in caso di qualche difetto,

o mancanza corregerlo, et in evento di differenza farlo riconoscere da uno, o più Periti Pittori da destinarsi dall E.mo Sig:e Cardinal Prefetto, overo da sua Sig.ria Ill.ma, o altro Economo pro tempore, perche cosi &c. e non altrimenti &c.

*Rome, Archivio di Stato, 30 Notai Capitolini, ufficio 38, Francesco Maria Righi, vol. 176 (1743, part 3), fols. 54r and 79v:*

B.mo Padre / Pietro Subleiras Pittore, Oratore u.mo della S. V. espone, come avendo tempo fa risaputo, che la Rev: Fabbrica di S. Pietro doveva far fare un Quadro grande per uno degli Altari di essa Chiesa, e avendo risaputo ancora, che l'Intenzione del Sig.e Card. Camerlengo sarebbe stata, che il mentovato Quadro dovesse rappresentare la Messa Greca si pose perciò l'O.re con molto studio, e fatica a farne lo sbozzo, che avendo già terminato, supplica pertanto umilmente la S. V. a degnarsi di ordinare, che venga commesso all'Oratore, et ordinato di fare il Quadro sudetto secondo lo sbozzo, e per tal effetto, che venga celebrato secondo il solito l'Istromento d'Obbligo del medesimo. Che della Grazia &c.

[fol. 79v, in the same hand as fol. 54r] 'Alla Santità di N.ro Sig:e Papa Benedetto XIV. / [in a different hand] All'arbitrio del S.e Card. Prefetto / [in the same hand as fol. 54r] Per / Pietro Subleiras Pittore

*Rome, Archivio di Stato, 30 Notai Capitolini, ufficio 38, Francesco Maria Righi, vol. 176 (1743, part 3), fol. 55r:*

Casa 29 Agosto 1743. / Avendo N. S. rimessa all'arbitrio del Card.e [i.e., Annibale Albani] l'istanza del Pittore S.e Pietro Subleiras, che Mons.e

Ill.mo Olivieri osserverà nell'annesso memoriale, cioè che al d.o Pittore venga commesso, ed ordinato il Quadro per uno degli Altari della Basilica Vaticana in conformità dell'Abozzo già fattone, e che ne venga stipulato l'Istr.o d'obbligo, lo stesso Card:le desidera che S. Sig.ria Ill.ma dia con effetto gli ordini opportuni al sud.o fine; e con per.a la stima farlo[?] rassegna.

## **Figures**







Fig. 1: Pompeo Batoni, *The Presentation in the Temple*, 1735–36, oil on canvas, 505 x 257 cm, Brescia, Santa Maria della Pace.



Fig. 2: Domenichino, *The Last Communion of Saint Jerome*, 1614, oil on canvas, 419 x 256 cm, Vatican City, Musei Vaticani, Pinacoteca.



Fig. 3: Federico Barocci, *The Presentation of the Virgin*, 1593–1603, oil on canvas, 383 x 247 cm, Rome, Santa Maria in Vallicella.



Fig. 4: Pompeo Batoni, *The Presentation in the Temple*, 1735–36, oil on canvas, 97 x 48 cm, private collection.

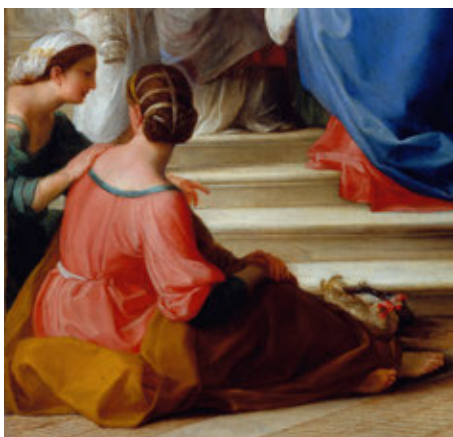


Fig. 5: Pompeo Batoni, *The Presentation in the Temple* (detail), 1735–36, oil on canvas, 97 x 48 cm, private collection.

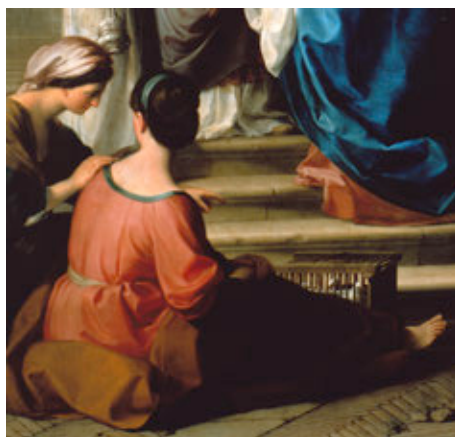


Fig. 6: Pompeo Batoni, *The Presentation in the Temple* (detail), 1735–36, oil on canvas, 505 x 257 cm, Brescia, Santa Maria della Pace.



Fig. 7: Anonymous, *The Presentation in the Temple*, engraving, in *Biblia Sacra Vulgatæ Editionis Sixti V. & Clem. VIII. Pont. Max. Auctoritate recognita*, Venice: Pezzana, 1723, p. 827.



Fig. 8: Anton Domenico Gabbiani, *The Presentation in the Temple*, 1716–19, oil on canvas, 220 x 165 cm, Pistoia, Museo Civico.



Fig. 9: Anton Domenico Gabbiani, *The Presentation in the Temple*, c. 1710, Florence, Gabinetto Disegni e Stampe degli Uffizi.



Fig. 10: Stefano Pozzi, *The Presentation in the Temple*, 1765, oil on canvas, 118 x 90 cm, Chicago, Art Institute.



Fig. 11: Giovanni Battista Pittoni, *The Virgin and Child with Saint Charles Borromeo*, 1738, oil on canvas, 380 x 190 cm, Brescia, Santa Maria della Pace.



Fig. 12: Giacomo Zoboli, *The Virgin and Child with Saint Philip Neri*, 1742–45, oil on canvas, 447 x 223 cm, Brescia, Santa Maria della Pace.



Fig. 13: Pompeo Batoni, *The Virgin and Child with Saint John Nepomuk*, 1743–46, oil on canvas, 447 x 222 cm, Brescia, Santa Maria della Pace.



Fig. 14: Sebastiano Conca, *The Virgin and Child with Saint John Nepomuk*, 1732–35, oil on canvas, 103 x 69 cm, Rome, Galleria Borghese.



Fig. 15: Pompeo Batoni, *The Virgin and Child with Saint John Nepomuk*, c. 1743, oil on canvas, 120 x 64 cm, Vatican City, Musei Vaticani, Pinacoteca.



Fig. 16: Pompeo Batoni, *The Virgin and Child with Saint John Nepomuk* (detail), c. 1743, oil on canvas, 120 x 64 cm, Vatican City, Musei Vaticani, Pinacoteca.



Fig. 17: Ignazio Stern, *Saint John Nepomuk*, 1740, oil on canvas, 275 x 170 cm, Rome, Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Antica, Palazzo Barberini.



Fig. 18: Onofrio Avellino, *The Virgin and Child with Saint John Nepomuk and the Archangel Michael*, c. 1732, oil on canvas, measurements unknown, Rome, San Lorenzo in Lucina.



Fig. 19: Gaetano Altobelli, *Saint John Nepomuk*, 1737, marble, Rome, San Lorenzo in Lucina.



Fig. 20: Pompeo Batoni, *The Virgin and Child with Saint John Nepomuk* (detail), 1743–46, oil on canvas, 447 x 222 cm, Brescia, Santa Maria della Pace.



Fig. 21: Pompeo Batoni, *The Virgin and Child with Saint John Nepomuk* (detail), 1743–46, oil on canvas, 447 x 222 cm, Brescia, Santa Maria della Pace.



Fig. 22: Coppo di Marcovaldo, *Madonna del bordone*, 1261, tempera on panel, 220 x 125 cm, Siena, Santa Maria dei Servi.



Fig. 23: Antonio Balestra, *The Virgin and Child with Saint Francis de Sales*, 1736, oil on canvas, 365 x 174 cm, Brescia, Santa Maria della Pace.



Fig. 24: Francesco Monti, *The Virgin and Child with Saint Maurice*, 1746, oil on canvas, 380 x 180 cm, Brescia, Santa Maria della Pace.



Fig. 25: Sebastiano Conca, *The Virgin and Child with Saint John Nepomuk* (detail), 1732–35, oil on canvas, 103 x 69 cm, Rome, Galleria Borghese.



Fig. 26: Workshop of Donatello, *The Virgin and Child*, c. 1400–25, terracotta, 87 x 62 cm, Lucca, Museo Nazionale di Villa Guinigi.



Fig. 27: Carle Vanloo after Annibale Carracci, *The Virgin and Child with a Swallow*, c. 1728–32, engraving, 188 x 145 mm.



Fig. 28: Guido Reni, *The Virgin Sewing*, 1609–11, fresco, Rome, Palazzo del Quirinale, Cappella dell'Annunziata.



Fig. 29: Guido Reni, *The Virgin Sewing*, c. 1606, oil on copper, 29 x 22 cm, Sotheby's New York, 26 January 2012, lot 49.



Fig. 30: Gérard Edelinck after Guido Reni, *The Virgin Sewing*, late 17th century, engraving, 429 x 320 mm, London, British Museum, Department of Prints and Drawings.



Fig. 31: Francesco Trevisani, *The Virgin Sewing*, c. 1700, oil on copper, 38 x 31 cm, Sotheby's London, 6 December 2007, lot 276.



Fig. 32: Pompeo Batoni, *Christ Delivering the Keys to Saint Peter*, 1742, oil on canvas, 152 x 444 cm, Rome, Palazzo del Quirinale, Caffeaus.





Fig. 33: Pompeo Batoni, engraved by Antonio Pazzi, *The Virgin Mary Presenting an Assembly of Saints to Christ*, frontispiece to *Delle feste di Gesù Cristo Signor Nostro e della B. Vergine Maria trattato istruttivo*, Padua: Stamperia del Seminario, 1747.



Fig. 34: Francesco Vanni, *The Fall of Simon Magus*, 1603, oil on slate, 723 x 427 cm, Vatican City, Fabbrica di San Pietro.



Fig. 35: Placido Costanzi, *The Raising of Tabitha*, 1736–40 and 1757, oil on canvas, 550 x 400 cm, Rome, Santa Maria degli Angeli.



Fig. 36: Pompeo Batoni, *The Fall of Simon Magus*, 1746–55, oil on canvas, 550 x 400 cm, Rome, Santa Maria degli Angeli.



Fig. 37: Pompeo Batoni, *Pope Benedict XIV Presenting the Encyclical 'Ex Omnibus' to the Comte de Choiseul*, 1757, oil on canvas, 129 x 180 cm, Minneapolis, Minneapolis Institute of Arts.



Fig. 38: Placido Costanzi, *Benedict XIV Settling a Dispute between Austria and the Republic of Venice*, 1752, oil on canvas, 112 x 175 cm, formerly Livorno, private collection.



Fig. 39: Agostino Masucci, *The Judgement of Solomon*, 1738, oil on canvas, 190 x 210 cm, Turin, Galleria Sabauda.



Fig. 40: Giovanni Paolo Panini, *Benedict XIV Opening the Porta Santa*, 1750, oil on canvas, measurements unknown, Rome, private collection.



Fig. 41: Giovanni Paolo Panini, *Benedict XIV Visiting the Trevi Fountain*, 1747, oil on canvas, measurements unknown, private collection.



Fig. 42: Anonymous, *Saints Peter and Paul with the Coat of Arms of Pope Benedict XIV*, engraving, in *Benedict XIV: De sacrosancto Missae sacrificio*, Rome: Pagliarini, 1748, p. 1.



Fig. 43: Anonymous, *Five Newly Canonised Saints in Glory with Saints Peter and Paul*, engraving, in *Acta Canonizationis Sanctorum Fidelis a Sigmaringa, Camilli de Lellis, Petri Regalati, Josephi a Leonissa, et Catharinae De Ricciis*, ed. Emmanuel de Azevedo, Rome: Pagliarini, 1749, pl. II.



Fig. 44: Stefano Pozzi, *Saint Peter*, 1736, oil on canvas, 275 x 160 cm, Rome, San Silvestro al Quirinale.



Fig. 45: Anonymous, *Ecclesia*, engraving, in Benedict XIV: *Sanctissimi Domini Nostri Benedicti Papæ XIV. Bullarium*, Rome: Sacra Congregatio de Propaganda Fide, 1746–57, vol. III, title page.



Fig. 46: Anonymous, *Ecclesia*, engraving, in *Acta Canonizationis Sanctorum Fidelis a Sigmaringa, Camilli de Lellis, Petri Regalati, Josephi a Leonissa, et Catharinae De Ricciis*, ed. Emmanuel de Azevedo, Rome: Pagliarini, 1749, pl. V.



Fig. 47: Stefano Pozzi, *Ecclesia*, engraving, detail of Giambattista Nolli, *Pianta Grande*, 1748.



Fig. 48: Giovanni Paolo Panini, *Modern Rome*, 1757, oil on canvas, 170 x 245 cm, Boston, Museum of Fine Arts.



Fig. 49: Giovanni Paolo Panini, *Modern Rome* (detail), 1757, oil on canvas, 170 x 245 cm, Boston, Museum of Fine Arts.



Fig. 50: Antonio Vendetti after a design by Luigi Landinelli and Lorenzo Morelli, altar card (*cartagloria*), 1744–49, silver and silver gilt, 49 x 53 x 9.5 cm, Lisbon, Museu de São Roque.



Fig. 51: Pompeo Batoni, *Allegory of the Universal Devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus*, 1781, oil on canvas, 513 x 257 cm, Lisbon, Basilica of the Estrêla.



Fig. 52: Andrea Sacchi, *Divine Wisdom*, 1629–31, fresco, Rome, Palazzo Barberini.



Fig. 53: Pietro Bracci, *Divine Wisdom*, 1769, marble, Vatican City, Saint Peter's Basilica, Monument to Benedict XIV.



Fig. 54: Raphael, *Gregory IX Receiving the Decretals*, 1508–11, fresco, Vatican City, Apostolic Palace, Stanza della Segnatura.



Fig. 55: Sebastiano Conca, *Beato Pietro Gambacorti before Urban VIII*, c. 1730–40, oil on canvas, 95 x 113 cm, Pisa, Museo Nazionale di San Matteo.



Fig. 56: Giovanni Paolo Panini, *The Duc de Choiseul leaving Saint Peter's Square*, 1756, oil on canvas, 152 x 195 cm, Berlin, Gemäldegalerie.



Fig. 57: Benedetto Luti, *Pius V and the Ambassador of the King of Poland*, 1712, oil on canvas, 161 x 223 cm, Rome, Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Antica, Palazzo Barberini.



Fig. 58: Pompeo Batoni, *The Martyrdom of Saint Lucy*, oil on canvas, 312 x 220 cm, Madrid, Museo de la Real Academia de Bellas Artes de San Fernando.

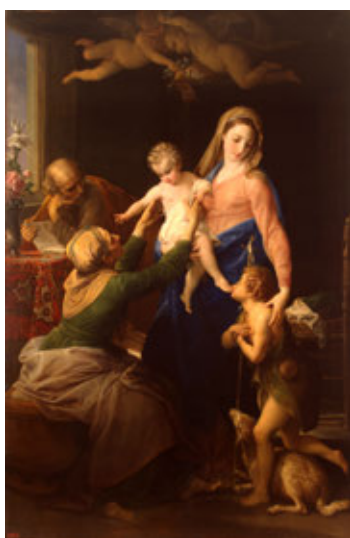


Fig. 59: Pompeo Batoni, *The Holy Family with Saint Elizabeth and the Infant Saint John the Baptist*, 1777, oil on canvas, 226 x 150 cm, Saint Petersburg, State Hermitage Museum.