

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
RIVERSIDE

Melchiorre Cafà and Camillo Pamphilj:
The Art of Patronage in Seventeenth-Century Rome

A Thesis submitted in partial satisfaction
of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts

in

Art History

by

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June 2015

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Acknowledgements

This thesis would not have been possible without the guidance, patience, and support of many people. I am unendingly grateful to Drs. Kristoffer Neville, Jeanette Kohl, and Malcolm Baker, who gave their knowledge, advice, and time to my project. While any and all faults or omissions within this thesis are of my own doing, their thoughts and expertise ensured that many other errors were averted. I would also like to thank Drs. Catherine Hess and Naoko Takahatake, who generously donated their time and counsel during my preliminary research. I wish to acknowledge the instrumental help of Dr. Keith Sciberras, who spoke with me at length about Cafà while I researched in Malta, and put me in connection with select churches and museums that provided invaluable information. I am particularly grateful to Dr. Philine Helas, who graciously opened her home to me while I conducted research in Rome, and acted as my guide and support system while I used the indispensable resources at the Bibliotheca Hertziana.

I would also like to thank the institutions that provided funds for my education at University of California, Riverside, including the UCR Dean's Distinguished Fellowship and the Gluck Fellows Program of the Arts. My very greatest appreciation goes to Alesha Jaenette, who tirelessly worked to make sure each graduate student in the UCR History of Art Department was financially and academically prepared. A special thank you as well to Theresa Knopp, who took the time to take perfect and vital photographs of Cafà's *Santa Rosa da Lima* while she pursued her own studies in Lima, Peru.

I would like to thank my partner, Miles Patton, who most certainly felt the weight of graduate school and thesis writing as much as I did, and who selflessly read through

and proofread many, many drafts of this work. Finally, my utmost thanks to my family, who have always been my greatest support and encouragement.

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Introduction

In approximately 1658, a young Maltese sculptor named Melchiorre Cafà arrived in Rome, with no known acquaintances or connections to allow for any particular advances or advantages in his career. Upon his arrival he was immediately admitted into Ercole Ferrata's artist workshop, or *bottega*, and within two years he secured one of the most prestigious and sought-after commissions in Rome at the time—a large marble relief altarpiece for the newly constructed Pamphilj family church of Sant'Agnese in Agone in Piazza Navona. Within four years, he was admitted into the Accademia di San Luca, and within six, he had acquired his own small team of sculptural assistants, despite the fact he was still technically an assistant himself in Ferrata's workshop.¹ Prince Camillo Pamphilj, who commissioned Cafà for the Sant'Agnese altarpiece, continued to patronize Cafà, choosing him over more established sculptors to produce an altarpiece for the Pamphilj Chapel in the church of Sant'Agostino, and allowing him special privileges customarily denied to all other artists he employed. What motivated Camillo to commission such significant works from such an inexperienced sculptor? What are the implications of Camillo's prominent patronage of the Maltese artist? This thesis addresses these questions by investigating the nature of the artist-patron relationship between Melchiorre Cafà and Camillo Pamphilj. Before constructing any arguments, however, it is necessary to discuss Cafà's biography and define key terms.

¹ Keith Sciberras, "Melchiorre Cafà: Maltese Genius of the Roman Baroque," in *Melchiorre Cafà: Maltese Genius of the Roman Baroque*, ed. Keith Sciberras (Valletta, Malta: Midsea for the History of Art Programme, University of Malta, 2006), 6, 8.

Who is Melchiorre Cafà?

Marcello Gafa was born in approximately 1636 in the small harbor town of Vittoriosa, a hub for artisans and craftsmen.² It was here Gafa, more commonly known by his Italianized name, Melchiorre Cafà, first began his sculptural training in the Casanova workshop, or *bottega*, where he produced works exclusively in limestone.³ However, his career truly began when he moved to Rome around 1658.⁴ Cafà executed most of his works here, and he quickly cultivated his name and artistic reputation by producing exquisitely distinctive sculptures for elite patrons, including Cardinal Flavio Chigi, ex-Cardinal Camillo Pamphilj, and the Knights of the Order of Malta. Camillo Pamphilj took a special interest in the Maltese sculptor, and after only two years of training he commissioned Cafà to execute a monumental marble relief of *Sant'Eustachio tra i leoni* in the Pamphilj family church of Sant'Agnese in Agone—a huge undertaking for any sculptor, but perhaps particularly challenging for Cafà, as he had never produced any marble works before this project (figure 1). By 1665, Cafà was working on numerous high-profile projects, and in early 1666, Cafà accepted a prestigious commission from the Knights of the Order of Malta, and travelled to his native country for a few months to develop his designs for the high altar sculptural group of the *Baptism of Christ* in St. John's Co-Cathedral.⁵ He returned to Rome a few months later, his career growing ever more successful and his artistic reputation in the city flourishing.

² Ibid., 1.

³ Ibid., 2.

⁴ Ibid., 3-4.

⁵ Ibid., 9.

Unfortunately, Cafà never truly saw the fruition of his labors, as he unexpectedly died at the peak of his career in September 1667, approximately thirty-one years of age.⁶ Thus, while scholars recognize his talents and sculptural contributions in seventeenth-century Rome, not much is known about his life and works simply because he lived for such a short time and produced so little, especially in comparison to other sculptors of the time who we know much more about, such as Gianlorenzo Bernini and Alessandro Algardi. Still, although Cafà's *oeuvre* is relatively small because of his short life, his works remain outstanding due to their aesthetically brilliant and unique qualities; Keith Sciberras considers Cafà to have created a "distinctive style [of sculpture] within the span of a single decade."⁷ In fact, it is remarkable how many works Cafà managed to create while he was working in Rome, a career spent exclusively in Ferrata's workshop. He produced a number of terracotta *bozzetti* and *modelli*, no less than five marble altarpieces, two wooden processional sculptures, a bronze bust, and at least three designs for various engravings.

Cafà's immediate entry into Ercole Ferrata's *bottega*, his rapid admittance to the Accademia di San Luca, and his string of high-profile commissions both in and out of Rome demonstrates his prolific rise as a sculptor. However, this swift rise was not solely of Cafà's doing; in fact, the Maltese sculptor would have certainly faded into obscurity were it not for the patronage of Camillo Pamphilj early on in his career. The former cardinal nephew envisioned Cafà as a superstar of his own making, allowing Camillo to

⁶ Fra Francisque de Seytres-Caumons, "Letter to Nicolas Cotoner: 10 September, 1667," in "Melchior Gafà: Maltese Sculptor of the Baroque," by Edward Sammut, *Scientia* 23 (1957), 136-137.

⁷ Sciberras, "Melchiorre Cafà," 1.

connect the Pamphilj name to that of Cafà's works and reputation. By supporting Cafà from the very beginning of his career—indeed, giving him his “big break” as an artist with the commissions for *Sant'Eustachio tra i leoni* in Sant'Agnese in Agone and *San Tommaso da Villanova* in Sant'Agostino (fig. 2), Camillo hoped to be remembered and engrained in Roman history as the benefactor of this great artist. Additionally, Camillo's excessive involvement with the projects he commissioned almost guaranteed his contributions would be remembered, thus adding to his prestige as a highly connoisseurial patron. This idea is supported with Camillo's early and tremendous patronage of Cafà from the very beginning of his career in Rome, and the extent to which Camillo allowed Cafà to revise sculptural projects after the original design had been agreed upon and set in contracts; a rare singularity, as Camillo seldom allowed his commissions to change in any way after the contract was completed. And yet, Camillo supported Cafà's artistic decisions. Unfortunately, both Camillo and Cafà died before any of these ambitions were realized, and although Cafà contributed significantly to the artistic history of Rome during his lifetime, his career ended entirely too soon.

The concept of patronizing an artist to benefit one's social and political status had been entirely common in Rome, and the benefits of securing a high-profile artist revealed themselves in public ways. In his book *Le Vite de' più eccellenti architetti, pittori, ed scultori italiani*, Giorgio Vasari praises Lorenzo de' Medici for discovering Michelangelo as a youth, and for supporting him and his entire family.⁸ It was not only the public works that commemorated the men and their family names, but the high status and talents of the

⁸ Giorgio Vasari, *The Lives of the Artists*, trans. Julia Conaway Bondanella and Peter Bondanella, (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 420.

artists they employed eternalized their legacies. Therefore, if Camillo's gamble on the inexperienced Cafà paid off, the patron would greatly benefit socially and potentially politically, as exposure in the form of public art enhanced and solidified the implied power of the patron.

Creating a Superstar

By the mid-seventeenth-century, the cycle of patrons creating and supporting the career of superstar artists was soundly established, particularly in cities such as Rome and Florence.⁹ Well known artists, including Raphael, Michelangelo, and of course Bernini, are evident of these progressions. One can draw numerous parallels between Bernini and Cafà in relation to the support patrons offered them at the beginning of their careers, such as Cardinals Scipione Borghese and Maffeo Barberini for the former, and Camillo Pamphilj for the latter. Patrons like Maffeo and Camillo used their privilege and wealth to financially invest in artists they found most promising in their talents.

The idea that a patron's name and legacy would be linked and preserved through the works of the artists they patronized was a familiar one. In a 1569 letter penned by sculptor-architect Guglielmo della Porta, he states,

There will be a short discussion about some of the illustrious princes who, with their great generosity, brought many of our profession to true excellence, such as the Magnificent Giuliano, the great Michelangelo; Duke [Ludovico il] Moro, Leonardo da Vinci; Pope Leo [X], Raphael of Urbino; [Pope] Julius II, Bramante; [Pope] Paul III, Antonio da Sangallo; Signor Jeromino Morone, Amadeo; the Prince of Orja [Andrea Doria], Perino del Vago;...the most illustrious [Cardinal Antoine Perrenot de] Granvela, Lione [Leoni] Aretino...and others.¹⁰

⁹ Jonathan K. Nelson and Richard J. Zeckhauser, *The Patron's Payoff: Conspicuous Commissions in Italian Renaissance Art* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008), 47-48.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 46-47.

Therefore, it behooved the patron to choose his artists with care; both present and future audiences associated the grand, well known, and “illustrious” works with the patrons who commissioned them.

By providing particular and exclusive opportunities for artists to create high profile or public works, patrons could essentially control the circumstances in which an artist’s career was formed. A patron’s rising or already high political and social status, combined with a talented artist with an affinity to produce popular and public works, could produce what could be called a “superstar,” or an artist whose works and persona have become immensely popular and well-known among his community at large, and beyond. As stated before, Bernini’s career exemplifies this development of the superstar: plucked from a relatively inconspicuous background at a young age by a prominent ecclesiastical aristocrat, Maffeo Barberini, who mentored and guided the artist through his early career, then used his advancing social status to further support and patronize Bernini after Maffeo became Pope Urban VIII. Indeed, various accounts report that soon after he became pope in 1623, Maffeo supposedly said to the sculptor, “It is your great good luck, Cavaliere to see Maffeo Barberini Pope; but we are even luckier in that the Cavaliere Bernini lives at the time of Our Pontificate.”¹¹ For Bernini and Maffeo, all of these conditions lined up rather serendipitously; situations like this rarely escalated as quickly and publicly as Bernini’s rise to fame and stardom.

¹¹ Filippo Baldinucci, “Cavaliere Gio. Lorenzo Bernini: scultore, architetto, e pittore,” in *Notizie de Professori del Disegno da Cimabue in qua*, (Florence: Eurografica S.p.A., 1974), 284. “*Brevi furono i giorni di questo pontefice: dopo il quale su assunto il Barberini, che su Urbano VII, il quale subito avuto a sè il cavaliere, gli parlò in questa form: È gran fortuna la vostra, o Bernino, di veder papa il cardinal Maffeo Barberino; ma assai maggiore è la nostra, che il cavaliere Bernini viva nel nostro pontificato.*”

However, as Bernini and Maffeo were the most recent instance of this enormously successful artist-patron relationship, the prospect of another patron honing in on and elevating the status of a talented artist may have seemed entirely possible, if not probable, to contemporary patrons and artists. Indeed, this would have been the most prominent and obvious example for Camillo to follow, as his uncle succeeded Urban VIII, and Bernini's wild successes under the Barberini pope were duly unappreciated by the Pamphilj family—however, this did not mean they were unaware of his rise to social and artistic prominence, and thus during Innocent X's reign, the Pamphilj actively sought to combat Bernini's increasing status as an artist.

The Problem of the “Roman” “Baroque” “Genius”

Many prominent scholars on the sculptor, including Keith Sciberras and Jennifer Montagu, have all referred to Cafà at some point as a “genius” of the “Roman Baroque.”¹² At first glance these labels seem rather straightforward and harmless; Cafà was a supremely gifted sculptor, and he created works in the baroque style during the Baroque period in Rome. However, upon closer examination, these terms become murky and ill-defined, as their definitions and functions fluctuate depending upon the contexts in which they are used. Therefore, it is necessary to discuss and define how the terms “Roman,” “Baroque,” “baroque,” and “genius,” will be used in this thesis.

¹² Jennifer Montagu, “Bernini and Others,” *The Sculptural Journal* 3 (1999): 106. Keith Sciberras, *Melchiorre Cafà: Maltese Genius of the Roman Baroque*, (Valletta, Malta: Midsea for the History of Art Programme, University of Malta, 2006).

“Roman” art of the seventeenth-century is a difficult notion to define for many reasons, not the least of which is that a large number of artists who produced works in Rome were not Romans at all, but immigrants from other cities in Italy and Europe who came to the Eternal City to work.¹³ While there is no such thing as a seventeenth-century “Roman style” of art, art historical texts tend to depend upon this expression, as it neatly references a general and assumed type of aesthetic typically associated with art produced in Rome at this specific time. In these instances, large, well known, and exceptional works are singled out, and then tasked with representing the art of an entire city or time period as a whole. For example, Cafà’s *Santa Caterina da Siena a Monte Magnanapoli* (Fig. 3) has been described as a “superb manifestation of the Roman Baroque,” not because of the period in which it was created, but because of its bold, graceful, and dramatic composition that is then held as exemplary of the “Roman baroque.”¹⁴ Paintings by Michelangelo Merisi di Caravaggio and Annibale Carracci are now seen as quintessentially representative of the “Roman baroque,” even though the two artists’ painting styles had very little stylistic overlap, neither artist was Roman, and Caravaggio’s paintings were perceived by many of his contemporaries as “an affair for eccentrics, connoisseurs, and foreign artists.”¹⁵ It appears seventeenth-century “Roman” art is a fairly vague term when describing artistic or architectural aesthetics and styles,

¹³ Indeed, as the center of the Catholic Church, there was no shortage of work in Rome, as ecclesiastical patrons were constantly commissioning, building, and supplying works for the Church.

¹⁴ Edward Sammut, “Melchior Gafa’: Maltese Sculptor of the Baroque,” *Scientia* 23 (1957): 123.

¹⁵ Beverly Louise Brown, “The Birth of the Baroque: Painting in Rome 1592–1623,” in *The Genius of Rome: 1592–1623*, ed. Beverly Louise Brown (London: Royal Academy of Arts, 2001), 16.

and is thus used in this thesis only to describe works created in or for the city of Rome at this time. Various, frequently referenced scholars in this paper use the phrase “Roman baroque” quite liberally, and therefore their terminology is repeated when citing or discussing their specific scholarships. However, as this classification of “Roman” art has a multiplicity of definitions, this thesis does not assume any type of visual or stylistic connotations of this phrase unless otherwise explicitly stated.

The term “Baroque” is used frequently in this thesis, although its meanings are somewhat ambiguous as well. Firstly, the term can reference a period of time: the seventeenth-century “Baroque period.” Cafà is typically grouped in the “Late Baroque” generation due to the visual qualities of his works, although his early demise chronologically places him amidst the sculptors of the “High Baroque.”¹⁶ Secondly, “baroque” can refer to a type of visual aesthetic, or a “baroque style” of art: typically a dramatic and opulent manner that diverts from the more classical varieties of the fifteenth- and sixteenth-centuries, and instead moves towards a “painterly” effect (that is, subjects and scenes that emphasize or imply movement) in all artistic mediums.¹⁷

Both of these understandings of the word are contestable, as it is almost impossible to define an entire century of art with simply one word. For example, Rudolf Wittkower splits the definitions of “Baroque” and “baroque,” not only using it as a label for a specific time period, but also as not one, but multiple manners of aesthetics, from

¹⁶ Rudolf Wittkower, *Art and Architecture in Italy 1600–1750* (Norwich: Fletcher & Son Ltd., 1982), 307.

¹⁷ Anthony Colantuono and Steven F. Ostrow, “Introduction: Rome as the Center of Early Modern Sculpture,” in *Critical Perspectives on Roman Baroque Sculpture*, ed. Anthony Colantuono and Steven F. Ostrow (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2014), 12-13.

Bernini's "grand baroque manner," to Alessandro Algardi's "baroque classicism."¹⁸

Wittkower also argues that the "qualities of deep and sincere religious feeling...[is baroque art's] most characteristic aspect."¹⁹ Certainly, the religious factors at play in seventeenth-century Italian art cannot be overlooked, specifically concerning the art of Rome, the epicenter of the Catholic Church. Indeed, the artistic manifestations of the religious and political agendas of the Catholic Church are addressed in the second chapter of this thesis.

Jennifer Montagu offers a completely different definition of "baroque," writing that true baroque art "combines architecture, painting and sculpture within a unity."²⁰ This requirement complicates how one evaluates a single work of art: can a sculpture, then, be a true "baroque" work, if it does not synthesize all three of these elements? Surely it can, yet reconciling these various understandings of the term "baroque" is an enormous task, and cannot be fully addressed in this introduction, much less in this thesis as a whole. In order to avoid any confusion as to what is meant in using the term "Baroque," this thesis only employs this word as a referent to the seventeenth-century, unless otherwise explicitly stated. While this simplifies the use of the word, it also clarifies its function to the reader, and avoids semiotic semantics that may distract from the arguments presented.

¹⁸ Rudolf Wittkower, "Melchiorre Caffà's Bust of Alexander VII," *The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin* 17.8 (1959): 197.

¹⁹ Rudolf Wittkower, *Bernini: the Sculptor of the Roman Baroque* (London: Phaidon Press Limited, 1997), 159-160.

²⁰ Jennifer Montagu, *Roman Baroque Sculpture: The Industry of Art* (Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 1989), 77.

The term “genius” is not used to label or describe any artist in this paper, unless quoted or used by other scholars or sources. “Genius” in a sixteenth- and seventeenth-century context is entirely different than what is considered a “genius” according to twenty-first century definitions; instead of high intelligence or an unparalleled skill in a certain field, an artistic “genius” of the seventeenth-century is a concept retroactively applied to the time period during the nineteenth-century, when an “artistic genius” was understood as a person who had been divinely bestowed with a natural gift in the arts, and whose personalities reflected their graceful and virtuous talents.²¹ This general notion, also known as the “cult of genius,” is really more of an ideological reading of the term, rather than a label or title that depends on economic, social, or historical elements.²² Therefore, as this work does not take a semiotic approach, the nuances of the word “genius” remain unexplored and unexploited. Although Cafà was acknowledged as an extraordinarily gifted sculptor with great skills in *invenzione*, to describe him as a “genius” seems fraught with certain implications that, while perhaps may be interesting to investigate, does not pertain to the arguments presented here.

Invenzione and Disegno

Although *invenzione* (invention) and *disegno* (design) have distinctive contemporary definitions, seventeenth-century understandings of these terms are intertwined with one another. *Invenzione* describes an artist’s work as more than a

²¹ Joseph Anton Koch, *Neoclassicism and Romanticism, 1750–1850: An Anthology of Sources and Documents*, ed. Lorenz Eitner (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1989), 118-120.

²² Peter M. Lukehart, “Carving Out Lives: The Roles of Sculptors in the Early History of the Accademia di San Luca,” in *Studies in the History of Art* 70 (2008): 185.

physical object; rather, it refers to the artist's capability to create singular, quality works that exhibit the originality of the artist. Similarly, while *disegno* could simply refer to the tangible, drawn design of a sculpture or other artwork, it could also refer to the notion of an artist's comprehensive ability to conceive of innovative ideas and compositions, and then translate these ideas into the appropriate mediums, such as painting, sculpture, and architecture.²³ Therefore, when biographers like Giovanni Baldinucci write, "In invention and design he [Cafà] was very talented," it does not simply mean that he had an aptitude for producing new works of art; rather, Cafà exhibited all the natural skills of an artist by creating and executing novel and inventive designs.²⁴

Thesis Structure

The first chapter presents the literature and scholarship consulted in this thesis, as well as the methodology employed in researching and forming conclusions. As Melchiorre Cafà is an under-researched seventeenth-century sculptor, and Camillo Pamphilj is an under-researched patron of the arts, it is necessary to provide a complete as possible historical foundation for these two men and the Rome they lived in, as this allows the reader to fully appreciate and understand the arguments presented in the second and third chapters.

The second chapter investigates the patron-artist relationship between Camillo and Cafà, including the social, economic, and political elements that gave Camillo cause

²³ Montagu, *The Industry of Art*, 91-92.

²⁴ Filippo Baldinucci, "Ercole Ferrata da Pelsotto," in *Notizie de Professori del Disegno da Cimabue in qua*, (Florence: Eurografica S.p.A., 1974), 391-392.

to patronize Cafà to such a great extent, and what benefits each man stood to gain through this collaboration. As the nephew of a former pope, Camillo wished to continue his family's legacy in Rome by emphasizing their power through commissioning public goods, and building public churches that promulgated the wealth and power of the Pamphilj. These types of works were particularly effective when executed by well-known artists and architects, as audiences would be more familiar with the works by artists who had an exceptionally public *oeuvre*. Additionally, it was especially beneficial for patrons to personally discern the excellent sculptors from the mediocre at the beginning of their careers, as the patron could then claim he discovered the artist, and was thus credited for their future fame and success. This, in combination with Camillo's unique tendencies as an art patron, and Cafà's motives for training and working in Rome, illuminates the nature of this patron-artist relationship, as well as the ways in which Camillo intended to groom Cafà as a sculptor worthy of surpassing the "exalted" Bernini.

This is further tied into Camillo's relationship with Alessandro Algardi during Innocent X's papacy, as the Pamphilj prince had extensively supported and favored Algardi over other sculptors, including Bernini. Ercole Ferrata had been one of Algardi's primary assistants before the master sculptor's death in 1654, and afterwards he continued to have a close professional relationship with Camillo. Ferrata's associations with Camillo not only set up an easy and immediate connection between Camillo and Cafà, but also provided Camillo with the opportunity to singularly support a capable and talented sculptor, as he had done with Algardi. The added benefit for Camillo here is, while Algardi had a previously established career before Camillo's patronage, Cafà was

unknown to the Roman scene, allowing the Pamphilj prince to claim that he discovered the Maltese sculptor from the very start of his career.²⁵

The third chapter focuses on two prestigious altarpiece commissions Camillo gave to Cafà: *Sant'Eustachio tra i leoni* in the church of Sant'Agnese in Agone in 1660, and *San Tommaso da Villanova* in the church of Sant'Agostino in 1663. The Sant'Agnese commission further illustrates Camillo's steadfast support of Cafà's sculptural career, and how Camillo used this project to jumpstart his singular patronage of Cafà as an artist primarily associated with the Pamphilj family.

The majority of the third chapter is dedicated to investigating the intriguing and somewhat opaque manifestation of *San Tommaso da Villanova* by examining the relationships between three works of art: Cafà's *bozzetto* of *San Tommaso* (fig. 23), the marble *San Tommaso* begun by Cafà and completed by Ercole Ferrata after the Maltese sculptor's death, and a print after Cafà's *San Tommaso bozzetto* (fig. 24), designed by Cafà and engraved by Pietro del Po. The print offers a new look at how the composition of the altarpiece was constructed and reconstructed, and further emphasizes the strong patron-artist relationship between Camillo and Cafà; a richly complicated history, explained in full detail in this chapter.

Overall, this thesis aims to contribute to the general scholarship on Melchiorre Cafà by examining vital facets of Cafà's life and career; that is, the patron-artist relationship between Camillo and Cafà, what motivated each man to encourage and

²⁵ Jennifer Montagu, *Alessandro Algardi* (New Haven and London: J. Paul Getty Trust by Yale University Press, 1985), 90, 94.

proliferate this relationship, and how these motivations are revealed in Camillo's patronage of Cafã.

Chapter 1

Reviewing Literatures and Methodologies

This chapter outlines the literary and scholarly sources consulted in this thesis. Much of the chapter is devoted to exploring the research and findings concerning Melchiorre Cafà, as his status as a Roman sculptor is generally unknown and under-researched in the art historical field. Furthermore, the sculptor's overall career in Rome and Malta must be thoroughly presented in order to understand the presented arguments. Currently, a monograph on Cafà does not exist. Consequently, many of the sources mentioned below are articles or essays that examine only specific works by the sculptor, or discuss his works in comparison to other sculptors at the time, including Alessandro Algardi and Gianlorenzo Bernini. Additionally, the nature of this thesis necessitates an understanding of the social and political structures of Roman artistic patronage. Therefore, integral sources concerning these topics and will be discussed at length in order to establish an historical foundation on which to build the arguments presented in this thesis.

This chapter is presented chronologically, beginning with early biographical sources on Cafà, and then reviewing twentieth- and twenty-first-century scholarship on the artist. The research conducted for this project primarily revolved around Cafà and his works, the Pamphilj family, specifically Camillo Pamphilj, and the nature of seventeenth-century Roman patronage. Unfortunately, there are a number of scholarly gaps in art historical research within these three areas, particularly concerning sculptural patronage

at this time. There are, of course, an abundance of texts concerning the patronage of painters. As well, there are few resources that investigate seventeenth-century Roman patronage as a whole, although texts on Italian Renaissance patronage, particularly in Florence, exist in droves. Therefore, most of the information presented on sculptural Roman patronage during Cafà's lifetime was collected from multiple sources that indirectly address these two subjects.

Additionally, this chapter will discuss the methodologies employed in forming arguments, and why certain methodologies commonly used when writing about Melchiorre Cafà remain unexploited here. In general, the conclusions reached in this work come through a social-historical approach, examining the current scholarship on seventeenth-century Roman sculpture and patronage, as well as consulting letters, contracts, and biographies from the same time period.

Early Biographical Accounts of Melchiorre Cafà

In seventeenth- and eighteenth-century primary sources and biographical accounts, Melchiorre Cafà is mentioned only in passing or under the umbrella of his *maestro*, Ercole Ferrata. Although Ferrata is repeatedly and readily admitted as a technically inferior sculptor to Cafà with little *invenzione*, he did possess his own studio, had an extensive *oeuvre*, and worked directly with Alessandro Algardi and Gianlorenzo

Bernini, thus garnering more attention in artist biographies, including those written by, Filippo Baldinucci, Lione Pascoli, and Filippo Titi.¹

The seventeenth-century biographer Filippo Baldinucci is the first to mention the Maltese sculptor in print. He references Cafà in his lengthy biography on Ercole Ferrata in *Notizie de' professori del disegno da Cimabue in qua*, a six volume set of biographies published from 1681–1728.² He briefly lists the highlights of Cafà's artistic career in Rome, including his sculptures of *Santa Caterina da Siena a Monte Magnanapoli* in the church with the same name (fig. 3), *San Tommaso da Villanova* in Sant'Agostino (fig. 2), *Sant'Eustachio tra i leoni* in Sant'Agnese in Agone (fig. 1), and the *Alexander VII* terracotta portrait bust housed in the “casa Chigi” (fig. 4).³ Baldinucci describes Cafà as Ferrata's “best” student and an “outstanding modeler” who possessed great talent in invention and design, but often needed Ferrata's assistance in completing marble projects, “...because of his [Cafà's] great spirit, by which he worked, he wanted always to finish [marble sculptures] in one fell swoop, so he had need of some restraint so as to not make mistakes.”⁴

Baldinucci also records Cafà's sojourn to Malta in 1665, and that “he was called by the past Grand Master,” which signifies the sculptor's rapidly rising artistic reputation,

¹ Lione Pascoli, “Di Melchiorre Cafà,” in *Vite de' pittori, scultori, ed architetti moderni*, ed. Mariella Pedrolì (Perugia: Electa Editori Umbri, 1992), 354. Pascoli writes, “*Poco ebbe a faticar con lui il maestro; perchè era tale, e tanta l'abilità sua, e l'apertura di sua mente, che appena aveva veduta fare una cosa, che così ben l'apprendeva, che avrebbe potuto insegnarla agli altri.*”

² Filippo Baldinucci, “Ercole Ferrata da Pelsotto,” in *Notizie de Professori del Disegno da Cimabue in qua*, (Florence: Eurografica S.p.A., 1974), 375-395.

³ *Ibid.*, 391-392.

⁴ *Ibid.* “...perchè pel grande spirito, col quale operava, avrebbe voluto il tutto finire in un sol colpo, onde avea bisogno di qualche ritegno per non errare.” The nature of Cafà and Ferrata's relationship will be examined in the following chapter.

indicative in the commissions and summons he received from prestigious patrons like the Grand Master of the Knights of the Order of Malta.⁵ These implications in Cafà's career, and his appeal as a sculptor to wealthy patrons, will be discussed at length in the following chapter. For now, it is important to note Baldinucci's significant, albeit brief mention of Cafà in his biographies, as this indicates the sculptor's works were noteworthy and familiar to seventeenth-century viewers.

A few years later, in 1730, Lione Pascoli published a collection of biographies titled *Vite de pittori, scultori, ed architetti moderni*. Pascoli's biographies are by no means comprehensive, and he borrowed and plagiarized from previous biographers, including Baldinucci and Giovanni Baglione.⁶ However, Cafà is included in his list of over ninety entries, and it is the first biography devoted to the sculptor in his own right. Pascoli describes a number of Cafà's marble works, as well as his terracotta models, including the bust of Alexander VII, indicating that Cafà's *bozzetti* and *modelli* were greatly admired by contemporaries. Indeed, the immediate value conferred on his *bozzetti* not only reflects Cafà's talents, but also a growing appreciation from art patrons and viewers for works that express sketchy, inventive qualities that exhibit an artist's *disegno*—an appreciation largely connected with the tremendous popularity of Bernini's

⁵ Ibid. “[Cafà] Viaggiò a Malta, chiamato dal passato gran maestro, per ricever gli ordini per fare il battesimo di Gesù Cristo, dico la figura del Signore e di san Giovambatista, di tutto rilievo, per poi far l'opere in Roma; ma dopo averne condotti i modelli in piccolo ed in grande, fini di vivere: e fino a questo anno veggonsi gl'istessi modelli nella fonderia di san Pietro.”

⁶ Joseph Connors, “Review,” Review of *Vite de' Pittore, Scultori, ed Architetti Moderni*,” by Lione Pascoli. *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, 57, No. 4 (Dec. 1998), 471.

works and successes in Rome.⁷ How this trend affected Cafà and Camillo Pamphilj's artist-patron relationship will be discussed at length in the following chapter.

Besides Cafà's works, Pascoli also describes Cafà's artistic talents, specifically praising his skills in drawing and modeling. Of his drawings, he writes, "...and if he could not use the chisel, he took the *matitatojo*, and drew. He drew so excellently, and excellently also imitated the natural, and he used to say, that one could not draw too much."⁸ Cafà's natural talent for design seems to extend beyond terracotta *bozzetti* and *modelli*. Cafà's patrons, specifically Camillo Pamphilj, were undeterred by his lack of experience in sculpting marble and his short attention span, possibly because of the enormous promise he showed in drawing and modeling, and the aesthetic appeal of the portion of works he did complete *in sua mano*, such as the figure of St. Eustace in the *Sant'Eustachio tra i leoni* relief.

⁷ Francis Haskell, *Patrons and Painters: A Study in the Relations Between Italian Art and Society in the Age of the Baroque* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1980), 159-160. On Bernini's role: Tomaso Montanari, "Creating an Eye for Models: The Role of Bernini," in *Bernini: Sculpting in Clay*, ed. C.D. Dickerson III, Anthony Sigel, and Ian Wardropper (Newhaven: Yale University Press, 2012), 47.

⁸ Pascoli, *Vite*, 354-355. "*Stava dunque continuamente al lavoro applicator; e qualora adoperar non poteva lo scarpello, prendeva il matitatojo, e disegnava. Disegnò perciò eccellentemente, ed eccellentemente altresì imitò il naturale; ed era solito dire, che non si poteva mai tanto disegnare, che disegnar si potesse abbastanza.*"

Pascoli also lends us descriptions of Cafà's appearance and demeanor, painting a picture of an affable yet melancholic man:

He was of good nature and custom, completely detached from presumption, and was of interest; and exceeded with the kindness of the soul a something of innate roughness, which was seen in his appearance. He was of short stature, of olive color, rather thin, rather than fat, thoughtful, and of melancholic humor. He had a small face, black and sunken eyes, frizzy hair, short, thick and dark; and enjoyed good health.⁹

While this information does not provide much insight into Cafà's works or career, it does align with seventeenth-century tropes of the artist's demeanor, particularly in his thoughtful and melancholic nature.

Although Pascoli is remarkably accurate in identifying which works are by Cafà and which are completed by Ferrata after his death, his inclusion of Cafà's *Baptism of Christ* altarpiece for St John's Church in Valletta, Malta, is more biographical than artistically investigative; Cafà met his death working on a full-sized clay *modello* of the altarpiece that fell and crushed him. Pascoli writes that Cafà died in 1680 from a fever caused by the work accident; however, this date and ultimate cause of death is incorrect.¹⁰ Correspondences between Fra Francisque de Seytres-Caumons, the Grand Ambassador of the Order to the Holy See, and Nicolas Cotoner, the Grand Master of the Knights of the Order of Malta, record the incident and correct date of Cafà's death, as they had commissioned him for the *Baptism of Christ* altarpiece and were thus plagued by

⁹ Ibid., 355. “*Fu d’ottimo naturale, e costume, tutto staccato dalla presunzione, e dall’interesse; e superava colla gentilezza dell’animo un non so che d’innata rozzezza, che gli si vedeva nell’aspetto. Era di bassa statura, di colore olivastro, magro piuttosto, che grasso, pensieroso, e d’umo malinconico. Avea piccolo fronte, occhi neri, ed incavati, capelli crespi, corti, folti, e morati; e godeva buona salute.*”

¹⁰ Ibid., 354. “*Ma mentrecchè finiva quello del’arme di S.E. si stucco dal muro, ove attaccato l’aveva, ed essendogli caduto addosso, fece cadere anche lui, che non istette più bene, non poté più lavorare, ed indi a pochi mesi negli anni 1680 morì di febbre, che sopraggiunta gli era non molto prima.*”

numerous financial complications as a result of Cafà's early demise.¹¹ Their letters date Cafà's death to September 1667, a date further supported by the problems that immediately arose after that time concerning payments of Cafà's sculptures, and when Ferrata took up the task of completing Cafà's projects.

As artist biographies of this time period had different priorities and notions of recording "accurate" information, Pascoli's biography of Cafà must be cautiously approached in its historical exactness. However, although the text has some imprecisions, it generally aligns with other seventeenth- and eighteenth-century writings on Cafà and his works. While these later biographers certainly relied on Baldinucci and Pascoli's writings for their own texts, further investigative and historical scholarship in the twentieth- and twenty-first centuries based on letters between patrons, contractual documents, and in-depth analyses of his sculptures supports these biographies on Cafà.

Published in five different editions from 1674–1763, Filippo Titi's *Nuovo studio di pittura, scoltura ed architettura nelle chiese di Roma* is not a collection of artists biographies.¹² Rather, it was intended as a guidebook for those unfamiliar with the city, and the emphasis of the text focuses on including brief descriptions of every church in Rome, instead of lengthy and extensive accounts on a few churches.¹³ Titi's book includes entries for each church that houses Cafà's works: Sant'Agnese in Agone, Santa

¹¹ Fra Francisque de Seytres-Caumons, "Letter to Nicolas Cotoner: 10 September, 1667," in "Melchior Gafà: Maltese Sculptor of the Baroque," by Edward Sammut, *Scientia* 23 (1957): 136-137.

¹² Filippo Titi, *Nuovo studio di pittura, scoltura ed architettura nelle chiese di Roma, Palazzo Vaticano, di Monte Cavallo, ed altri* (Bologna: Forni, 1974).

¹³ Jennifer Montagu, "Review: Filippo Titi: Studio di pittura, scoltura ed architettura, nelle chiese di Roma (1674–1763). Edizione comparata by Bruno Contardi: Serena Romana," review of *Studio di pittura, scoltura ed architettura, nelle chiese di Roma (1674–1763)*, by Bruno Contardi and Serena Romana, *Burlington Magazine*, 130.1025 (1988): 637.

Caterina da Siena a Monte Magnanapoli, and Sant'Agostino, in which Titi gives a brief history for each church, including when it was erected and consecrated, who commissioned and paid for it, and the artists who contributed their works and talents to the structure. The information presented in these entries paints general yet fairly cohesive narratives, allowing the reader to visualize what the church might look like without actually seeing it in person.

It is significant that Titi mentions Cafà and his contributions in the three churches listed above, particularly with *San Tommaso da Villanova* in Sant'Agostino and *Sant'Eustachio tra i leoni* in Sant'Agnese in Agone, especially considering that these are not high altar sculptures. Yet, Titi considered Cafà's works important enough to include in his guidebook, praising his works as "*ricca e maestosa*."¹⁴ Additionally, Titi provides biographical information for Cafà, recording his early death and the resulting circumstance of Ferrata's involvement in completing the sculptures.¹⁵ Therefore, while the information presented on these three churches in Titi's guidebook does not describe Cafà's sculptures in depth, the historical background is invaluable, as it provides an historical context and foundation by describing who was involved in constructing and contributing to the churches before Camillo Pamphilj and/or Melchiorre Cafà.

While minor details vary between Baldinucci, Pascoli, and Titi's writings, most of the information of Cafà's sculptures remains consistent. While the manner in which the biographies agree indicates some accounts drew heavily from others, particularly

¹⁴ Titi, *Nuovo studio di pittura*, 427-428.

¹⁵ Ibid. "...scolpito in marmo da Melchior Gafar Maltese, e finite per causa di morte il tutto da Ercole Ferrata...".

between Pascoli and Baldinucci, other types of evidence, including letters, contracts, and the sculptures themselves, show that most of their writings and attributions are correct.

Twentieth-Century Scholarship

Cafà remained in relative academic obscurity until the mid-twentieth century, when Maltese scholar Edward Sammut published an article in *Scientia* on Cafà in 1957, titled “Melchior Gafa’: Maltese Sculpture of the Baroque, Further Biographical Notes.”¹⁶ This article focused mainly on Cafà’s Maltese works, although he briefly addressed some of the sculptor’s Roman works, including *Santa Caterina da Siena a Monte Magnanapoli*, and the *Gloria* of Santa Maria in Campitelli (fig. 6). The information about the letters sent between Nicolas Cotoner and Fra-Francisque de Seytres-Caumons, Grand Ambassador and Grand Master of the Knights of the Order of Malta, respectively, constitute the most valuable aspect of his article, as it provides a contextual foundation that pieces together bits of Cafà’s narrative and sculptural works. In addition to his own research, Sammut published a number of these letters in their original Italian from the Archives of the Order of Malta, which have been instrumental to the research presented in this thesis.¹⁷

As with most Baroque art historical subjects, the scholarship on Cafà is indebted to the work of Rudolf Wittkower, who was the one of the first since Pascoli to address

¹⁶ Edward Sammut, “Melchior Gafa’: Maltese Sculptor of the Baroque, Further Biographical Notes” *Scientia* 23 (1957). Although Sammut’s article did not skyrocket Cafà into art historical research, it did open the door for future scholars to investigate the sculptor and his works in both Rome and Malta.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 131-137.

Cafà in his own right as a sculptor. In his monumental text *Art and Architecture in Italy 1600–1750*, Wittkower weaves Cafà into the narrative of seventeenth-century art, grouping him with Ercole Ferrata (1610–1686), Antonio Raggi (1624–1686), and Domenico Guidi (1625–1701), three other sculptors whom Wittkower considers exceptional based on their works and role within their studios.¹⁸

By grouping Cafà with these men, Wittkower argues that Cafà’s status was equal to other top sculptors of the time, and thus had some sort of notable, substantial authority as an artist. This authority is key in understanding the constructs in place at this time in Rome, particularly considering the ways in which the sculptor Gianlorenzo Bernini redefined how well sculptors could be socially lauded, *and* financially rewarded, for their work, particularly in comparison to painters. After the death of Alessandro Algardi in 1654, Bernini had relatively little competition for this authority, creating an ideal environment for the superstar sculptor and his unparalleled career.¹⁹ However, this “hole” left in the wake of Algardi’s death did not go uncontested; indeed, Cafà may be considered one of the few who attempted to fill this role.²⁰ These social relationships between Algardi, Bernini, and Cafà are discussed at length in the following chapter.

¹⁸ Rudolf Wittkower, *Art and Architecture in Italy 1600–1750* (Norwich: Fletcher & Son Ltd., 1982), 307.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 317-318.

²⁰ While there is no way of knowing, considering how quickly Cafà’s career and reputation grew in his short career in Rome, it is possible he may have eventually overcome Bernini as the superstar in Rome during the seventeenth-century. Also, the idea that there *was* a sculptural vacancy to fill is first presented by Wittkower, although seventeenth-century writings from prominent art collectors, such as Vincenzo Giustiniani, supports and argues for the social and artistic ideal that there was only enough space for one sculptor to be considered the “top sculptor” at a time. This method of thinking will be discussed at length in the second chapter.

Wittkower also examines certain works by Cafà, such as *Santa Caterina da Siena a Monte Magnanapoli* and *San Tommaso da Villanova*, linking the former to Bernini's *Ecstasy of Santa Theresa* (fig. 7) and the latter to Algardi's *Beheading of St Paul* (fig. 8)²¹ However, he concludes that Cafà's work is ultimately "Berninesque" rather than "Algardesque" in nature; that is, the visual aesthetic of Cafà's sculptures follows the dramatic, theatrical manner pioneered and typically associated with Bernini, especially compared to the more classical type of sculpture associated with Algardi's work.²² As a result of this deduction, Wittkower distances Cafà from the sculptural aesthetic of his teacher Ercole Ferrata, as the latter sculptor is typically noted to work in a "classicism of Algardian derivation."²³ Although Wittkower clearly delineates these conclusions, they are instead cautiously approached and evaluated in this thesis.²⁴

Wittkower is not the only scholar to use the terms Berninesque and Algardesque; Jennifer Montagu, Rudolf Preimesberger, Mark Weil, and others use these labels in their visual analyses.²⁵ The program of art historical research often results in some type of comparison, whether it is between artworks, artists, mediums, or subject matters. This is especially true of the early- to mid-seventeenth-century in Rome, a time generally agreed upon as a period dominated by the art and authority of Bernini and his workshop.

²¹ Wittkower, *Art and Architecture*, 307-308.

²² Rudolf Wittkower, *Bernini: The Sculptor of the Roman Baroque* (London: Phaidon Press Limited, 1997): 159-160, 194. On the term "Berninesque": Rudolf Wittkower, *Art and Architecture*, 307. Wittkower does not define what he means by the term "Berninesque," thus the definition provided above is of my own device.

²³ Wittkower, *Art and Architecture*, 307-308.

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ Jennifer Montagu, *Alessandro Algardi* (New Haven and London: Published in Association with the J. Paul Getty Trust by Yale University Press, 1985), 216-217. Rudolf Preimesberger and Mark Weil, "The Pamphili Chapel in Sant'Agostino," *Römisches Jahrbuch für Kunstgeschichte* 15 (1975): 195.

Because of Bernini's impact on the artistic topography of Rome, he becomes a natural point of comparison with any other sculptor who lived and worked in Rome during his lifetime. Indeed, any discussion of a sculptor in Rome contemporary to Bernini that does *not* compare the two artists may appear to be incomplete: Bernini and his art have become a measuring stick to which all seventeenth-century sculptors are compared.

This thesis does not condemn this type of approach; certain conclusions concerning these types of comparisons can be valuable, especially in determining relationships between artists and how artist workshops were structured at this time in Rome. However, the potential to limit critical research through terms like Berninesque and Algardesque are high, particularly in studying an artist like Cafà, who produced a relatively small, yet significantly developed *oeuvre*. The temptation to label his early works as Algardesque and his later works as Berninesque (as Sciberras and Wittkower do) is understandable and not without merit, as there is a noticeable development in Cafà's sculptures that *could* indicate an affinity for the Bolognese artist's classicism at one end of his career, and an appreciation for Bernini's more fluid and dramatic aesthetic in his later works.²⁶ However, these visual comparisons do not aid the research presented in this paper, as this thesis is not concerned with the aesthetic similarities or differences between Cafà and his contemporaries, but instead in the social implications at play in the relationships between elite patrons and the sculptors they employed, particularly the

²⁶ Keith Sciberras, "Melchiorre Cafà: Maltese Genius of the Roman Baroque," in *Melchiorre Cafà: Maltese Genius of the Roman Baroque*, ed. Keith Sciberras (Valletta, Malta: Midsea for the History of Art Programme, University of Malta, 2006), 4-5.

potential benefits for each party involved as the social status and artistic notoriety of the sculptor increased.

Current Scholarship

Contemporary scholarship on Melchiorre Cafà has yet to approach the artist in monographic form; scholars instead focus on specific aspects or works that are then pieced into the artist's life or *oeuvre*. Much of the recent scholarship (i.e., in the last twenty years or so) revolves around determining whether certain bozzetti are or are not by Cafà, and how one can determine what he created by recognizing his technical methods. Furthermore, the literature on Cafà tends to approach the artist in an oblique fashion; Cafà is mentioned in passing or granted only a small section of investigation within the context of a study on another artist (typically Algardi, Ferrata, or Bernini), or the churches in which his works are housed. Despite scholars' roundabout tactics of discussing Cafà, there is an interesting and overwhelming consensus among academics concerning the prodigious talents and superior works created by Cafà in his short lifetime; the Maltese sculptor is greatly admired and respected in the art historical community, despite his moderately small *oeuvre*. It is as if scholars since Wittkower have desired to devote significant time and research to Cafà, yet the artist seems to continually slip through the cracks of academic research. It is only in the last fifteen years or so that art historians have begun to publish significant research on Cafà.

Keith Sciberras has contributed much of this current scholarship. In 2003, Sciberras published a collection of essays, *Melchiorre Cafà: Maltese Genius of the*

Roman Baroque, in which various scholars examine Cafà's works and/or methods.²⁷ This is the first anthology on the sculptor, yet there is no attempt to connect all of the essays into a type of monographic work. That said, the introduction written by Sciberras is the most recent and complete biography of the artist, presenting general, yet essential information on the artist's early life in Malta, training in Rome, a brief overview of his major commissions and works, and the conclusion of his career in his untimely death.

Scholars tend to approach Cafà using a case-study method; that is, researching individual commissions or works, and then placing these works in context to Cafà's life and career in Rome or Malta. This information is valuable, as it provides an historical foundation and a sense of chronology for the artist and his works, especially considering Cafà's relative lack of recognition in comparison to other seventeenth-century sculptors in Rome. This historical information greatly contributes to the research presented in this thesis, as it allows for the opportunity to establish new thoughts and ideas concerning topics peripheral to Cafà, such as what his relationship with Camillo Pamphilj reveals about art patronage objectives and patterns in mid-seventeenth-century Rome.

While case studies on Cafà may not be the most comprehensive form of research, the alternative of cohesively examining Cafà's life and *oeuvre* is fraught with problems. Firstly, he lived such a short life that he did not leave many completed works; Ercole Ferrata completed most of his sculptures after his death. This creates issues of authorship: which parts of a sculpture were completed by Cafà's hand, and which segments were completed by another? While there is value in answering these questions, this

²⁷ Ibid.

conversation can quickly devolve into an exhaustingly minute technical study that examines each chisel mark of marble, or each indentation on a *bozzetto*, which ultimately provides little information besides determining common patterns and techniques that may or may not be attributable to Cafà. Therefore, while the third chapter of this work employs a case-study approach, it does so to illustrate and comment on the relationship between Camillo and Cafà, rather than to determine whether a certain sculpture or *bozzetto* is or is not by Cafà's hand.²⁸

Jennifer Montagu has also written a considerable amount concerning Cafà and his works, particularly examining his *bozzetti* in comparison to sculptures by Bernini and Ferrata. In addition to publishing "The Graphic Works of Melchior Cafà," the only study on the sculptor's graphic works (a somewhat interesting statistic, considering Pascoli's rave reviews of Cafà's prodigious drawing skills), she has also studied his *bozzetti* for Ferrata, as well as his artistic relationship to both his teacher and to Bernini (perhaps slightly begrudgingly to the latter artist, if only to dispute claims that Cafà was solely inspired by the superstar artist of the seventeenth century).²⁹

²⁸ Anthony Sigel, "The Clay Modeling Techniques of Melchiorre Cafà: a Preliminary Assessment," in *Melchiorre Cafà: Maltese Genius of the Roman Baroque*, ed. Keith Sciberras (Valletta, Malta: Midsea for the History of Art Programme, University of Malta, 2006), 161-234. Although a minutely detailed visually analytical case-study is not necessarily useful in this thesis, conservator Anthony Sigel's in-depth look at thirteen *bozzetti* by Cafà does exactly this type of study, and while the majority of his findings are scientific in nature (determining what type of tools the sculptor used, how long each *bozzetto* took to create, and how clay has been broken/repared over time), his research confirms Sciberras' and Montagu's conclusions concerning Cafà's artistic techniques and style, particularly his tendency to elongate his figures, and his paradoxical use of frame to break down barriers between the work and the viewer, both aspects that will be discussed in following chapters.

²⁹ Jennifer Montagu, "The Graphic Works of Melchiorre Cafà," *Paragone* 413 (1982): 50-61. On Cafà's *bozzetti*: Jennifer Montagu, "Bernini Sculptures Not by Bernini" review of *Gianlorenzo*

In general, scholarship on Cafà tends to focus on his works and career in relation to either Malta or Rome. It is atypical for a scholar to discuss Cafà's works and legacy in both locations in depth. While scholars like Jennifer Montagu and Rudolf Wittkower focus on Cafà's career in Rome, others, including Keith Sciberras, focus primarily on Cafà's Maltese connections: Cafà's works created in or for Malta, works commissioned by Maltese patrons, and Cafà's role in introducing a "Roman baroque" aesthetic to Malta. For instance, Sciberras' books, including *Baroque Painting in Malta*, *Roman Baroque Sculpture for the Knights of Malta*, and *Caravaggio: Art, Knighthood, and Malta*, concentrate on the Knights of the Order of Malta in the seventeenth-century, and examines the relationship between the Order and other seventeenth-century artists, including Caravaggio and Mattia Preti.³⁰

Cafà's involvement in creating sculptures for Malta intertwines with the politics of the Knights of the Order of Malta, a subject Sciberras thoroughly investigates in his book *Roman Baroque Sculpture for the Knights of Malta*.³¹ Before Cafà, the Knights had established only a "timid" connection with Roman Baroque sculpture; although there was a brief surge of interest in commissioning Roman art for Malta during Cafà's short

Bernini: New Aspects of His Art and Thought, ed. Irving Lavin. *The Sculptural Journal* 3 (1999): 102-108.

³⁰ Keith Sciberras and David M. Stone, *Caravaggio: Art, Knighthood, and Malta* (Valletta: Midsea for the History of Art Programme, University of Malta, 2006). Keith Sciberras, "The Brush for the Cross, the Cross for the Brush: Mattia Preti, Knight of Malta," in *I Cavalieri Di Malta E Caravaggio: La Storia, Gli Artisti, I Committenti*, ed. Stefania Macioce (Rome: Logart Editore, 2010).

³¹ Keith Sciberras, *Roman Baroque Sculpture for the Knights of Malta* (Sta Venera: Midsea, 2012). For more information on the internal political hierarchies of the Knights of Malta, see chapter 2 of Sciberras' text.

career, the connection between the two places remained timorous until the end of the seventeenth century.³²

While this thesis does not extensively explore Cafà's Maltese connections and works and instead focuses on Cafà's career in Rome, it is important to recognize the value in considering the ways in which Cafà's complicated relations with the Knights of the Order of Malta affected his works and commissions in Rome.³³ For instance, in his essay "Melchiorre Cafà's *Baptism of Christ* for the Knights of the Order of Malta," Sciberras discusses the grandiose commission for a marble altarpiece for St. John's Church in Valletta (fig. 9, now commonly referred to as St. John's Co-Cathedral), and how this commission eventually fell through not only because of Cafà's untimely death, but also because of the Order's ultimate refusal to invest in instituting a Roman baroque aesthetic into the Maltese artistic agenda—the key word here is *invest*; the Order did not merit spending huge amounts of money to implement certain arts in their churches at this time.³⁴ It was not until later on in the century that the Order began seriously supporting a Roman baroque type of art and architecture in what Keith Sciberras calls the "stylistic backwater" that was Malta at the time.³⁵

³² Ibid., 2.

³³ Cafà's complex relations with the Knights of the Order of Malta will be discussed in further detail in chapter two. While the Knights were not the "key" to Cafà's success, their presence played an integral part in the development of Cafà's career, particularly from 1665–1667.

³⁴ Keith Sciberras, "Melchiorre Cafà's *Baptism of Christ* for the Knights of the Order of Malta," in *Melchiorre Cafà: Maltese Genius of the Roman Baroque*, ed. Keith Sciberras, (Valletta: Midsea for the History of Art Programme, University of Malta, 2006), 108. Sciberras writes, "Scared by financial considerations they unexpectedly opted for an easy way out; the commission was thus abruptly [sic] dropped and Cafà models were abandoned in Rome. Following Cafà's death, the Knights of Malta, ironically, were the only patrons not to conclude a project that had been commenced by the brilliant Maltese sculptor."

³⁵ Sciberras, "Melchiorre Cafà," 3.

It is tempting to assume that the Order had a hand in Cafà's career from the beginning, perhaps grooming him to fill the position of a resident sculptor the Knights of the Order of Malta. Cafà had only been in Rome for approximately seven years before he received the commission for the *Baptism of Christ* at St. John's Co-Cathedral, and during his time in Rome he created and sent two wooden processional statues back to Malta (figs. 11 and 12), indicating he maintained ties with Maltese patrons even while he trained and worked in Rome. Additionally, there are many documented correspondences between Caumons, the Grand Ambassador to the Holy See, and Cotoner, the Grand Master of the Knights of the Order of Malta, discussing the *Baptism of Christ* commission and the logistics of bringing Cafà to Malta as soon as possible so he could execute the work on site.³⁶

However, one must be cautious in evaluating Cafà's affiliation with the Order. Sciberras readily admits to the lack of evidential information concerning Cafà's move from Malta to Rome, a crucial element in understanding how the artist's career developed so quickly.³⁷ While it is approximately known when Cafà departed from Malta for Rome, it remains unclear whether he was brought or sent by a benefactor, or who/what may have motivated him to leave his small home for the "big city." While it is likely that *someone* of some importance assisted Cafà in his geographic relocation, especially considering his almost immediate admittance into the *bottega* of Ercole Ferrata, there are no documents

³⁶ Sciberras, *Roman Baroque Sculpture*, 43, 68.

³⁷ Sciberras, "Melchiorre Cafà," 3.

that indicate *who* this benefactor might have been, or whether he or she was Roman or Maltese.³⁸

Pamphilj Scholarship

Camillo Pamphilj is an extraordinarily interesting figure, yet comprehensive scholarship on Camillo as a patron of the arts is quite sparse. He is of course discussed at length in conjunction with various projects he funded, particularly large architectural projects like Sant'Agnese in Agone and Sant'Andrea al Quirinale. For instance, Joseph Connors' article "Bernini's S. Andrea al Quirinale: Payments and Planning" successfully demonstrates Camillo's inclinations as a patron, from his extensive interest and involvement in his projects, to his tendency to not pay his artists or projects in full (if at all).³⁹ However, the majority of the scholarship on the Pamphilj concerns his uncle, Pope Innocent X (r. 1644–1655), the pope's sister-in-law, the infamous Donna Olimpia Maidalchini, or Benedetto Pamphilj, Camillo's youngest son, great patron of Baroque music, and eventual Grand Prior for the Knights of Malta.⁴⁰ In comparison to his family

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 3-4.

³⁹ Joseph Connors, "S. Andrea al Quirinale: Payments and Planning," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 41 (1982): 15-37.

⁴⁰ Stephanie Leone's anthology, *Pamphilj and the Arts: Patronage and Consumption in Baroque Rome* (Boston: McMullen Museum of Art, Boston College, 2011). Although Benedetto's position of Grand Prior seems like it would hold some importance in connecting the Pamphilj family to Cafà, and Malta in general, it is not as significant as one might assume. Benedetto was more interested in hosting banquets in the Knights villa on the Aventine hill than in cultivating any significant relationships with Malta or its artistic constituents. (However, he was always fond of Malta, and came to its aid politically to provide funds and support to ward of Turkish intimidations to the island). Benedetto's role as Grand Prior will be further explored in the second chapter. On the lack of scholarship on Camillo Pamphilj: Leone's anthology, *Pamphilj and the Arts: Patronage and Consumption in Baroque Rome* has an unfortunately misleading name, as the essays are not about the Pamphilj family in general, but instead focus on both the Pamphilj's

members, scholarly research for Camillo Pamphilj as an art patron is woefully incomplete.

However, this is not to say the prince is wholly absent from art historical scholarship. Francis Haskell addresses Camillo as a patron of the arts in his book *Patrons and Painters: A Study in the Relations Between Italian Art and Society in the Age of Baroque*, providing significant information on Camillo's social standing in the city, and how his ecclesiastical and political connections allowed him a position of power unique from other Roman patrons. However, Haskell's critical analysis of Camillo seems tainted by his personal affectations, noting, "...despite all this [Camillo's projects], neither now nor later did Prince Pamfili prove a satisfactory art patron. He was an amiable man, but very lazy and uncultivated and much more interested in riding than any other activity."⁴¹ This rather subjective conclusion casts Camillo in a light that indicates he had no real political or social motivations behind the works he commissioned, which, considering the types and quantities of projects he funded and was involved with, seems extremely unlikely. Camillo had much to gain in cultivating an aristocratic and prestigious image for himself and for his family, a topic that will be discussed in detail in the following chapter.

By far, the most instrumental text used in this thesis concerning Camillo Pamphilj's artistic projects is Rudolph Preimesberger and Mark Weil's article, "The

support of French painting, and the patronage of Benedetto Pamphilj. Camillo Pamphilj as a patron of the sculptural arts is scarcely mentioned throughout the anthology.

⁴¹ Haskell, *Patrons and Painters*, 148-149.

Pamphili Chapel in Sant'Agostino.”⁴² Despite the rich history of the chapel and the church, very few publications on the chapel and its artworks exist. Preimesberger and Weil's article investigates the development of the Pamphilj chapel, as it had an extensive history before Camillo took on the project to redecorate the entire structure in 1660.⁴³ This article is the only piece of scholarship that examines the *San Tommaso da Villanova* altarpiece in detail, and discusses Melchiorre Cafà's role in designing the sculpture. The third chapter of this thesis examines the findings presented in the Preimesberger and Weil essay, and offers alternative arguments and historical possibilities based on evidence from other commissions between Camillo and Cafà that indicate the relationships between the sculptor, the patron, and the altarpiece are significantly more complicated than most scholars believe.

This article also explicitly addresses the *Chapel of San Tommaso da Villanova* print designed by Cafà; a vital source, as the print's significance has not been addressed in scholarly study. Keith Sciberras briefly mentions the existence of the print, but no questions or conclusions have been raised concerning the relationship of the print to Cafà's *bozzetto* of the altarpiece, and the final marble sculpture begun by Cafà and completed by Ercole Ferrata. Therefore, this article is invaluable in presenting even the most basic information concerning the print, such as who created the print, and transcriptions of the inscriptions in the work. Using Preimesberger and Weil's findings, the third chapter of thesis forms novel arguments and conclusions concerning the fruition

⁴² Rudolf Preimesberger and Mark Weil, "The Pamphili Chapel in Sant'Agostino," *Römisches Jahrbuch für Kunstgeschichte* 15 (1975).

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 186-187.

of the *San Tommaso da Villanova* altarpiece in Sant'Agostino, and what this altarpiece reveals about the relationship between Camillo and Cafà.

The majority of Preimesberger and Weil's article sources derive from archival evidence from the Archivio Doria Pamphilj (ADP), specifically, contracts concerning the chapel and the altarpiece between Camillo Pamphilj, his architect Giovanni Maria Baratta, and Melchiorre Cafà, most dated from 1660–1663. Unfortunately, access to the ADP is particularly limited, and therefore entire transcripts of the contracts were unavailable for this thesis. However, the 1972 publication *Quellen aus dem Archiv Doria-Pamphilj zur Kunsttätigkeit in Rom Unter Innocenz X*, edited by Jörg Garms, provides vital transcriptions of letters, payments, and contracts for many of Camillo's projects, including the construction and decoration of Sant'Agnese in Agone and the Pamphilj Chapel of Sant'Agostino.⁴⁴ Although complete contracts for the Pamphilj Chapel are not listed in Garms' text, the included extracts are monumentally significant, as they provide historical evidence and accounts that are largely quite reliable.

Roman Patronage in the Seventeenth-Century

As stated in the introduction to this chapter, the scholarship on seventeenth-century Roman patronage is woefully lacking. Therefore, research on this subject consists of multiple sources that address the nature of this topic only as a result from the findings of other conclusions. However, a few notable texts proved invaluable in gaining understanding in the dynamics of patronage at the time when Cafà was in Rome. For

⁴⁴ Jörg Garms et. al, *Quellen aus dem Archiv Doria-Pamphilj zur Kunsttätigkeit in Rom unter Innocenz X* (Rom-Wein: Des Österreichischen Kulturinstituts in Rom, 1972), 26-185.

instance, Jennifer Montagu's monumental book *The Industry of Art* thoroughly describes how artist workshops were structured, and how the sculptural works within them functioned.⁴⁵ Additionally, her expertise regarding the sculptor Alessandro Algardi established connections between Algardi, Ferrata, and Cafà, thus linking the Maltese sculptor to the legacy of Algardi and his workshop.⁴⁶

Another vital text, *The Patron's Payoff: Conspicuous Commissions in Italian Renaissance Art* by Jonathan K. Nelson and Richard J. Zeckhauser, establishes an essential social and historical foundation for artistic patronage in Italy.⁴⁷ Although the book focuses on Renaissance works, many of the arguments and conclusions drawn are equally applicable to the nature of patron-artist relationships in seventeenth-century Rome. Most importantly, Nelson and Zeckhauser demonstrate the social constructs in place that, in turn, illustrate the political and social gains that motivated patrons to bring up, refine, and support popular and successful artists by commissioning numerous and/or high-profile works from them, in the hopes that the patron's name and legacy would live on through the artist's works.⁴⁸

Additionally, *Critical Perspectives on Roman Baroque Sculpture*, a collection of essays edited by Anthony Colantuono and Steven F. Ostrow, provides a strong historical foundation of seventeenth-century Roman patronage of sculpture—a rare gem indeed.⁴⁹

⁴⁵ Jennifer Montagu, *Roman Baroque Sculpture: The Industry of Art* (Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 1989).

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 69-94.

⁴⁷ Jonathan K. Nelson and Richard J. Zeckhauser, *The Patron's Payoff: Conspicuous Commissions in Italian Renaissance Art* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008).

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 46-39.

⁴⁹ Anthony Colantuono and Steven F. Ostrow, ed. *Critical Perspectives on Roman Baroque Sculpture* (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2014), 1-20.

Published in 2014, these essays offer new understandings on this subject by investigating specific works, examining relationships between sculpture and other arts and concentrations, and determining in which ways sculpture was cultivated as art in Rome. In this collection, Damian Dombrowski's essay "The Sculptural Altarpiece and Its Vicissitudes in the Roman Church Interior, Renaissance Through Baroque," is especially relevant to this thesis.⁵⁰ Dombrowski examines the ways in which sculptural altarpieces functioned in ecclesiastical spaces, and the historical reasoning as to why their role changed from the sixteenth- to the seventeenth-century, particularly in comparison to painted altarpieces. These changing operations of sculpture are interrelated with the Catholic Church defending its practices against the newly established and growing Protestant Church, as well as the developing aesthetic preference of ecclesiastical patrons, which ultimately relates to expectations placed upon a sculptural altarpiece in its interactions with viewers and congregations. This understanding of sculpture supports many of the arguments made in the third chapter of this work, and further emphasizes the reasons why Camillo so ardently supported Cafà, which will be discussed at various points throughout this thesis.

⁵⁰ Damian Dombrowski, "The Sculptural Altarpiece and Its Vicissitudes in the Roman Church Interior," in *Critical Perspectives on Roman Baroque Sculpture*, ed. Anthony Colantuono and Steven F. Ostrow (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2014), 117-140.

Conclusions

Much of the scholarship on Melchiorre Cafà and his works are helpful in providing a general historical foundation. However, it does not speak to the questions and arguments brought to light in this thesis, which addresses the social and political components implicit in the patron-artist relationship between Camillo Pamphilj and Melchiorre Cafà—a subject not academically researched until now. Additionally, while numerous sources discuss Camillo Pamphilj and Roman artistic patronage (both separately and in conjunction with one another), these topics are typically discussed indirectly, and in relation to other matters.

Therefore, the research presented in this thesis draws from multiple sources and bodies of literature in order to establish a comprehensive understanding of Melchiorre Cafà, Camillo Pamphilj as his patron, the nature of seventeenth-century Roman patronage, and how these elements are all connected with one another.

Chapter 2

Roman and Pamphilj Art Patronage: Creating a Superstar

Politics, economics, and social hierarchies all played a role in the process of early- to mid-seventeenth-century art patronage and production. During this time, social rules and artistic opportunities were changing for Roman artists, particularly sculptors. The combination of the vastness of Bernini's workshop, and the relatively small number of sculptors in Rome during the seventeenth-century (especially compared to the number of painters in the city), contributed to these changing social hierarchies.¹ Furthermore, the close connections between politics, religion, and art meant that as one of these institutions changed, so did the others, and thus these three elements fluctuated in seventeenth-century Rome.

¹ Anthony Colantuono and Steven F. Ostrow, "Introduction: Rome as the Center of Early Modern Sculpture," in *Critical Perspectives on Roman Baroque Sculpture*, ed. Anthony Colantuono and Steven F. Ostrow (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2014), 5. Colantuono and Ostrow provide an indispensable look into exactly how many sculptors were in Rome during the early modern period; that is, how many were registered in the census. They write, "How many sculptors were there in Rome during the early modern period? The answer is uncertain, but clearly the painters outnumbered the sculptors. Among the slightly more than 200 artists discussed in Baglione's *Vite*, which cover the period 1572 to 1642, 140 were painters and only 28 were sculptors (a ratio of 5:1). According to the census records from the time of Paul V's papacy for the parish of S. Andrea delle Fatte, in which artists congregated painters outnumbered sculptors 125 to 29 (a ca. 4:1 ratio), and for the parish of S. Lorenzo, in which artists also figured prominently, there were 231 painters and only 9 sculptors (a ratio of ca. 26:1). Of the approximately 400 French artists who were recorded in Rome between 1600 and 1700, 78 percent (or 312) were painters and 14 percent (56) sculptors, a ratio of ca. 6:1. If we discount the aberrational figures from S. Lorenzo and rely on Baglione's numbers and the other data, we arrive at an average ratio of painters to sculptors of just under 5:1. And based on the fact that there were about 200 painters in Rome in 1665, we can estimate that there were about 40 sculptors in the city—a number that accords with Jennifer Montagu's statement, concerning the team assembled to decorate the pilasters in Saint Peter's, that 'just about every sculptor was rounded up and set to work.'"

However, a certain type of social expectation persisted in Rome due to the acknowledged artistic social model at this time, which conformed to the idea that there could only be one true “top” sculptor in any given city at a time.² In his book *Discorso sulle arti e sui mestieri*, Vincenzo Giustiniani writes,

...[one] can conjecture that the sculptor who is more than mediocre needs to know not only the four expounded exercises, but to have particular grace and talent of the natural that he succeeds in this particular sculptural profession; and [as a] sign [of this] one sees very few to arrive to the exquisite preeminence of the other [previous sculptors], and almost only one per century.³

Bernini filled this role during Urban VII’s pontificate, only to watch his reputation crash down along with his failed bell towers while Innocent X was pope. During this time, Alessandro Algardi was the favored sculptor of the papal family, and his work was highly popular during and after his lifetime.⁴ However, when Algardi died on 10 June 1654, one year before Innocent X passed away, it created an artistic void in which it remained unclear who would fill the role of the “top sculptor” in Rome—at least,

² Vincenzo Giustiniani, *Discorsi sulle arti e sui mestieri*, ed. Anna Banti (Firenze: Sansoni Editore Nuova, 1981), 71. Written in the late-sixteenth to early-seventeenth-century.

³ Ibid. “*Ho veduto all’incontro un Francese, chiamato David, giovane di anni 20, fare statue di nuovo, e ristorare antiche senza modello alcuno, che riuscivano proporzionatissime, e con molta vivacità e grazia, con imitare la buona maniera antica; dal che, e dale cose suddette, si può far coniettura che lo scultore più che mediocre è necessitate a sapere non solo li quattro esercizi esplicati, ma aver particolar grazia e talento dalla natura che lo faccia riuscire a questa particular professione della scultura; e per segno si vedono molti pochi arrivare alla squisita preeminenza degli altri, e quasi solo uno per secolo.*”

⁴ Francis Haskell, *Patrons and Painters: A Study in the Relations Between Italian Art and Society in the Age of the Baroque* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1980), 148. Although Algardi is not as well known today as Bernini, his works were highly admired during his lifetime, and many considered his talents equal to Bernini. To see more on his seventeenth-century reputation and legacy, see Jennifer Montagu, *Alessandro Algardi* (New Haven and London: Published in Association with the J. Paul Getty Trust by Yale University Press, 1985), 205-229.

until Alexander VII won the papacy in 1655, bringing Bernini once again to the forefront of Roman sculpture and architecture.⁵

While historians often paint a picture of Bernini's incontestable artistic power and clout in seventeenth-century Rome, the reality is much more complicated. Bernini's role in Rome was negotiable, clearly seen during the pontificate of Innocent X. As nephew to the pope who denied Bernini as the chosen sculptor and architect of the pope, Camillo Pamphilj recognized that Bernini's artistic authority was unstable and could be challenged by a sculptor who possessed great talent, had elite connections, and was given the opportunity to showcase his works to wealthy patrons as well as to the city as a whole. Indeed, this chapter demonstrates how Camillo clearly favored and supported Cafà over Bernini, despite the fact the Pamphilj prince commissioned significant works from Bernini, including the church Sant'Andrea al Quirinale. While it is possible that Camillo simply could not afford to habitually commission works from the high-profile artist, the general animosities between Bernini and the Pamphilj family suggests that Camillo *chose* not to employ or support the sculptor, instead pursuing other sources of artistic talents.

Thus, although Cafà arrived in Rome at least five years after Innocent died, Camillo's unique social and political status within Rome make his patronage of Cafà extremely significant, as he had the monetary and social means to mold Cafà into one of,

⁵ While Bernini enjoyed certain privileges as a sculptor-architect during the pontificate of Innocent X, such as the *Fontana dei Quattro Fiumi* commission given to him by the Pamphilj pope, he did not experience the unilateral support and favor he received while under the patronage of Urban VIII and Alexander VII. The strained relations between Bernini and Innocent X denied Bernini the same affectations and privileges rewarded to him at other points in his career.

if not *the*, top sculptor in Rome. Specifically, with changing political powers and an increase of wealth for Camillo Pamphilj, it is possible Cafà was intended as Camillo's own artistic superstar to compete with Bernini, as well as to fill the artistic and social "hole" left by the death of Alessandro Algardi.

Patronage

These political, economic, and social factors were perhaps more at play than ever in relation to commissioning and executing sculptural works, as the explosion of Bernini's workshop and career radically changed the trajectory of Roman Baroque sculpture. However, before examining each factor in detail, one must inspect the term "patronage," particularly concerning art in the seventeenth-century. What does it mean to be a patron of a work, or of an artist? While perhaps one might consider any person who purchases a piece of artwork to be an art patron, it is not quite so simple. The economist Richard A. Goldthwaite succinctly addresses the way in which historians use the term "patronage," pointing out the social and cultural connotations that are attached to the word, and how the term is often implicit in considering what type of boundaries existed in the art marketplace, as well as how specific patrons shaped or extended these boundaries based on their commissions.⁶ Essentially, the term "patronage" is a fluid one,

⁶ Richard A. Goldthwaite, "Economic Parameters of the Italian Art Market (Fifteenth- to Seventeenth-Centuries)," in *The Art Market in Italy: 15th-17th Centuries*, ed. Marcello Fantoni, Louisa C. Matthew, and Sara F. Matthews-Grieco (Modena: F.C. Panini, 2003), 438. "Historians generally find demand the most attractive side of the market equation precisely because exploration of needs and taste leads into so many realms of human behavior. Here, under the rubric 'patronage,' they have identified a veritable crowd of buyers of art whom they have studied in order to understand better the broader social and cultural context in which artists produced their art. Their insistence on using the loaded term 'patronage' when treating the demand for

and the institution itself is determined by multiple factors, not the least of which were the patrons themselves, who almost always had ulterior motives in commissioning works, particularly works intended for public spaces.

Of course, a patron's reasons for commissioning a work were rarely one-dimensional. Ecclesiastical patrons, especially, exhibited a desire to "spend virtuously," contributing their funds and position to beautify their city and, by extension, provide a "public good" for the common people to use for religious reflection.⁷ Leon Battista Alberti addresses this concept of patrons providing public works for citizens to increase the beauty and pride of a city and its citizens, writing,

When you erect a wall or portico of great elegance and adorn it with a door, columns, or roof, good citizens approve and express joy...because they realize that you have used your wealth to increase greatly not only your own honor and glory, but also that of your family, your descendants, and the whole city.⁸

Thus, the relationship between Camillo and Cafà is not just of a wealthy benefactor ordering works of art from a producer; the connection between the two men is much more complex. As Camillo was a particularly involved patron, his artistic and architectural commissions were just as much aesthetic pleasures as they were political tools. Therefore, Camillo's choice to commission Cafà to produce altarpieces for the Pamphilj family church in Piazza Navona *and* for the Pamphilj Chapel in Sant'Agostino is highly significant, as privately funded chapels were the most public and appropriate

Renaissance art would in fact suggest a certain prejudice against considering buyers of art as operating within the normal parameters of the marketplace. Attempts have been made to subject 'patronage' to economic analysis by assessing art for its value as symbolic capital, but this takes the discussion out of the realm of economics strictly speaking and into that of sociology and culture."

⁷ Ibid., 71.

⁸ Ibid.

place for patrons to communicate their wealth and status, as they could defend their extravagant spending as done in the name and honor of God and the Church.⁹

Also, Cafà's social status and artistic reputation were at stake as an artist creating high-profile works for a high-profile patron, especially considering his recent arrival in Rome and his relative lack of training. Cafà did not work for Camillo "for the money." In fact, Camillo had a suspicious history of neglecting to pay his artists the full amount they were originally promised, if he paid them at all.¹⁰ Rather, Cafà's benefits from Camillo's patronage included a more prestigious and respected reputation as an artist, as well as a more substantial role in Ercole Ferrata's workshop. Essentially, Cafà gained more in name than in finances, which tended to be a more valuable asset to any budding artist in Rome anyways, particularly for an artist who arrived with no prior substantial social or political connections.¹¹

Indeed, social and political connections were integral to the manner in which Roman social classes were composed and defined. Due to Rome's unique government that produced no heirs and necessitated a complete overhaul of power and office each time the pope died, families could potentially work their way to the pontificate by rising

⁹ Ibid., 113-114.

¹⁰ Michael Walsh, *The Cardinals: Thirteen Centuries of the Men Behind the Papal Throne* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2011), 216-217. However, there are no records or documentations to indicate that Cafà did not receive payments from Camillo.

¹¹ Jonathan K. Nelson and Richard J. Zeckhauser, *The Patron's Payoff: Conspicuous Commissions in Italian Renaissance Art* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008), 1. Discussing the mutual benefits of a successful patron-artist relationship, Nelson and Zeckhauser write, "Personal promotion through art was highly effective, largely accepted, and extremely widespread in Renaissance Italy, as in many other locales and eras. The ways in which artists met their patrons' needs for self-promotion dramatically affected the nature, appearance, and content of paintings, sculptures, and buildings. Consciously or intuitively, they worked in alliance with patrons to produce value for patrons as well as themselves."

through the ranks of the clergy, and forging alliances that would benefit them economically and politically, as these types of relationships were particularly valuable during conclaves. Alternatively, there existed a number of ways in which families or individuals could increase their status in Rome besides securing the papacy, as there was no defined, airtight social hierarchy people were “locked” into at birth. In the words of Cardinal Giovanni Francesco Commendone, “Rome was a place of opportunity and anyone could hope to attain the most exalted position.”¹²

The Changing Role of bozzetti

It is important to note the differences between the *bozzetto* and the *modello*; although their present usage is mostly straightforward, their definitions in the seventeenth-century were more fluid. The word *bozzetto* derives from the Italian verb *abbozzare*, which means to sketch, outline, or roughen.¹³ Typically, *bozzetti* are small, quickly executed terracotta or wax “sketches” used to work out ideas for a larger marble or bronze project, and thus sculptors were not usually prone to include fine details in their *bozzetti*, instead opting for a more natural and sketchy look.¹⁴ *Modelli* are generally larger and more detailed than *bozzetti*, used as guides for workshop assistants, or as a more complete model to present to patrons.¹⁵ In the seventeenth-century, the term *bozzetto* was

¹² Jill Burke and Michael Bury, introduction to *Art and Identity in Early Modern Rome*, ed. Jill Burke and Michael Bury (Aldershot, Burlington: Ashgate, 2008), 4-5.

¹³ Czapski Hemingway, “Of Clay, and the Initial Stages of Sculpture,” in “Sketches in Clay for Projects by Gian Lorenzo Bernini: Theoretical, Technical, and Case Studies,” ed. Ivan Gaskell and Henry Lie (Harvard University Arts Bulletin 6.3, 1999), 31-32.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

not frequently used; rather, most documents and contracts refer to models as either *modelli piccoli* or *modelli grandi*. The *modelli grandi* typically refers to a large, full-sized model made of a mixture of clay, “plaster, horse dung, twigs, and twine over a metal or wooden armature.”¹⁶ The *modelli piccoli* can refer to either a *bozzetto* or a *modello*, or the term *modello* could be used as a universal term for any type of *modelli piccoli*.¹⁷ Both *bozzetti* and *modelli* were used in artist workshops, serving as practical guides for assistants and visual aids in designing large sculptural projects.

By the mid-seventeenth century, however, *bozzetti* gradually came to be seen as more than workshop tools. While clay models had held some market and aesthetic value through the Renaissance, collecting and displaying terracotta models as art objects was generally seen as a trivial hobby.¹⁸ Beginning in the 1620s, however—not coincidentally, at the start of Bernini’s career—art patrons and collectors began to value *bozzetti* for their aesthetic components, particularly for their sketchy, spirited look that illustrated the

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Andrea Bacchi, “The Role of Terracotta Models in Bernini’s Workshop,” in *Bernini: Sculpting in Clay*, ed. C.D. Dickerson III, Anthony Sigel, and Ian Wardropper (Newhaven: Yale University Press, 2012), 47.

¹⁸ Tomaso Montanari, “Creating an Eye for Models: The Role of Bernini,” in *Bernini: Sculpting in Clay*, ed. C.D. Dickerson III, Anthony Sigel, and Ian Wardropper (Newhaven: Yale University Press, 2012), 667. Quoting Galileo: “When I turn to consider the knights and their actions and adventures as well as the other stories in [Tasso’s] poem, it seems I have entered the study of some little man with a taste for curios who has taken delight in fitting it out with things that have something strange about them, either because of age or because of rarity or for some other reason, but are, as a matter of fact, nothing but bric-a-brac—a petrified crayfish, a dried-up chameleon; a fly and a spider embedded in a piece of amber; some of those little clay figures that are said to be found in the ancient tombs of Egypt; and as far as painting is concerned, some little sketches by Baccio Bandinelli or Parmigianino and other such things. But on the other hand, when setting foot into the *Orlando Furioso* [by Ariosto] I behold, opening before me, a treasure room, a festive hall, a regal gallery adorned with a hundred classical statues by the most renowned masters, with countless historical pictures (and the very best ones by the most excellent painters), with a great number of vases, crystals, agates, lapis lazulis and other jewels, in fine, full of everything that is rare, previous, admirable and perfect.”

artist's faculty for *disegno*.¹⁹ By the 1660s, this slow, but steadily developing appreciation for *bozzetti* was largely due to two factors: First, the public sculptural agenda of Alexander VII's Rome (r. 1655–1667), in which contemporary sculpture came to increased prominence through his abundant patronage of sculptural projects.²⁰ Secondly, Bernini's career and successes as a sculptor greatly contributed to this heightened desire for *bozzetti*. Bernini conferred great value and worth to *bozzetti* as a display of an artist's skill, and as he was the most well known artist in Rome by the mid-seventeenth-century, his opinions helped mold the public views of clay models—particularly the views of upper class patrons, as these were Bernini's primary clientele.²¹ Admittedly, this process was a slow one, however, it is important to note that certain patrons most enthusiastic about collecting *bozzetti* were connected to Cafà: for example, by 1666 Cardinal Flavio Chigi had a sizeable collection of small statues and bas-reliefs in unaltered terracotta, meaning they were not painted or gilded to imitate bronze.²² A year later, Flavio commissioned Cafà for a bronze bust of Pope Alexander VII (figs. 4 and 5), after which he kept the terracotta model as a prized piece of his collection.²³

While it cannot be said that the aesthetic appeal of *bozzetti* unilaterally surpassed the functionality of the clay models, the significance of Cafà's arrival to the Roman sculptural scene coinciding with this peak in the value of *bozzetti* cannot be overlooked.

¹⁹ Haskell, *Patrons and Painters*, 159-160. C.D. Dickerson III, "Bernini at the Beginning: The Formation of a Master Modeler," in *Bernini: Sculpting in Clay*, ed. C.D. Dickerson III, Anthony Sigel, and Ian Wardropper (Newhaven: Yale University Press, 2012), 21.

²⁰ Montanari, "Creating an Eye," 71-72.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 73.

²² *Ibid.*, 71.

²³ The Chigi family's relationship to Cafà is richly fascinating, and will be returned to at a later part in this chapter.

This placed Cafà in a fortuitous position in his artistic reputation and career, as his sculptural talents were quickly acknowledged based almost exclusively from his skills in modeling *bozzetti*, as this was increasingly seen as a reliable indicator of a sculptor's overall talent and aptitude.²⁴ Camillo quickly recognized his exceptional aptitude for *disegno* and *invenzione* in his *bozzetti*, entrusting him with significant marble commissions based solely on the appreciation for his work as a model maker.

The Significance of the Bottega

As Rome had no guild system, any artist working in the city would encounter difficulties in receiving adequate training, finding work, and initiating their career without joining the *bottega*, or workshop, of an established artist. Sculptural workshops were governed by a hierarchical system, with the workshop's owner/master sculptor at the top, artist assistants in the middle, and apprentices, or "*giovani*," at the bottom.²⁵ As their name suggests, apprentices typically joined an artist's workshop as young as seven or eight years of age. As they gained more experience and grew into adulthood, these *giovani* would become assistants, although whether they became successful independent artists or remained a subordinate to the master sculptor within the workshop depended largely on their talents.²⁶ Assistants in a sculpture workshop did not typically design the sculptural projects, but instead executed works designed by the master sculptor. (Some artists provided more design content than others; for example, Bernini often gave his

²⁴ Montanari, "Creating an Eye," 64.

²⁵ Jennier Montagu, *Roman Baroque Sculpture: The Industry of Art* (Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 1989), 126.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

assistants vague designs for large projects indicated only by a few swift lines in a sketch, as in the case of his design for the St. Peter's Baldacchino, fig. 10).

The head of the workshop might have a few favored assistants that eventually become household names in their own right, some even breaking away and founding their own workshops.²⁷ Most artists, including sculptors, began their training at a young age, and it often took them years to establish themselves as master sculptors in their own right. Cafà was not one of these men—his legitimate sculptural training did not begin until he arrived in Rome, already in his twenties.²⁸ Although he had received some training in Malta in the Casanova sculpture workshop, Cafà's experience lay in carving minor decorative works in limestone, and did not include the processes of learning how to sculpt in marble.²⁹ While Cafà was not an accomplished, fully trained sculptor in the Casanova workshop, payment receipts indicate that he was a significantly contributing

²⁷ Alice Jarrard, "Inventing in Bernini's Shop in the Late 1660s: Projects for the Cardinal Rinaldo d'Este," *The Burlington Magazine* 114.1192 (2002): 410. For example, Bernini apparently had three assistants he considered to be of "equal esteem": Mattia de' Rossi, Giovanni Battista Contini, and Carlo Fontana. However, their collaborations were less than harmonious: "Far from confirming the picture of Bernini's dominance of the artistic profession given by biographers such as Passeri, Muzzarelli gives the impression that early in Clement's pontificate Bernini was struggling to maintain the integrity of his shop as his most talented collaborators defected to embark on independent careers."

²⁸ Keith Sciberras, "Melchiorre Cafà: Maltese Genius of the Roman Baroque," in *Melchiorre Cafà: Maltese Genius of the Roman Baroque*, ed. Keith Sciberras (Valletta, Malta: Midsea for the History of Art Programme, University of Malta, 2006), 4-5.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 2. Cafà has been linked to the Casanova family workshop in Malta. Only a young teenager, he is documented to have worked with three Casanova men on a sculptural project for the decorative carvings for the Cathedral of Syracuse in Sicily. Payments to "Marcello Gaffar" (Melchiorre Cafà) indicate his works included: "the twelve putti and six heads of seraphim figures placed on the columns...and the four larger putti placed on the portals leading to the two sacristies."

sculptor by the age of sixteen, suggesting that his talents were already manifesting in an obvious way.³⁰

Despite his lack of training and “old” age, when Cafà arrived in Rome he was quickly accepted into Ercole Ferrata’s *bottega*.³¹ Perhaps due to the combination of Cafà’s talents and Ferrata’s self-acknowledged lack of “*invenzione*,” Cafà quickly rose through the ranks, with no indication that he spent a significant amount of time as one of Ferrata’s assistants.³² It is unclear the exact nature of Cafà and Ferrata’s relationship—did Cafà remain the subordinate student to the elder teacher during his tenure in Rome, or did his role and status within the workshop rise to equal Ferrata’s? Primary sources do little to shed light on this situation; Pascoli writes, “Little did the master [Ferrata] teach him [Cafà]; because it was such, and he had more ability, and the opening of his mind, that as soon as he had seen him do such a thing, so well that he learned that he could

³⁰ Ibid., 2-3.

³¹ Ibid., 3-4. On Ferrata’s workshop: Maria Giulia Barberini, “Base or Noble Material? Clay Sculpture in Seventeenth- and Eighteenth-Century Italy,” in *Earth and Fire: Italian Terracotta Sculpture from Donatello to Canova*, ed. Bruce Boucher (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001), 45. It is possible the position in Ferrata’s workshop was waiting for Cafà when he arrived in Rome; however, there are currently no documents or evidence that suggests who or what connections may have opened this door for Cafà, only that it seems likely that *someone* of some importance allowed Cafà easy access into the sculptural scene of Rome.

³² Jennifer Montagu, “Bernini and Others,” *The Sculpture Journal* 3 (1999): 106. Montagu translates a passage by Baldinucci, who writes, “*Nell’invenzione [Ferrata] non ebbe gran felicità; ma conscendo egli in questo il suo debole, procure di supplire a tal difetto con far fare, per aperture della propria mente, a’suoi giovani, per ogni opera invenzione diverse, alla quali egli poi togliono il difettoso o cattivo, e l’ottimo aggiugnendo dava compimento di suo gusto.*” (He [Ferrata] was not very happy at invention; but, being aware of this weakness, he made up for it by getting his assistants to provide various inventions for each work he undertook, so as to give him an idea. From these he would then remove what was defective or bad, and add improvements, adjusting them to his own taste.)

teach it to others.”³³ However, Baldinucci writes that Cafà often needed Ferrata’s assistance in completing sculptures, as he had a tendency to rush through their execution in order to finish them more quickly.³⁴ Baldinucci’s account infers that Ferrata seems to act as Cafà’s assistant, adding the finishing touches and details to Cafà’s sculptures. However, outside of Pascoli and Baldinucci’s texts, there is little substantial evidence to indicate Cafà’s status in Ferrata’s workshop, or the extent to which Ferrata taught Cafà.

However, it has been determined that within only a few short years, Cafà was receiving commissions from the upper echelon of Roman society, and executing these commissions “*di sua mano*,” or by his own hand. He eventually acquired assistants of his own, including Pietro Papaleo (1642–1718), and Giuseppe Mazzuoli, the latter of whom would go on to complete the *Baptism of Christ* sculpture intended for the high altar of St. John’s Co-Cathedral (it was this work that killed Cafà when the scaffolding for the model he was preparing fell on top of him).³⁵

The necessity for well-executed *bozzetti* and *modelli*, combined with Cafà’s brilliant talents at creating exactly these objects, allowed him to gain some recognition within Ferrata’s workshop, attracting the attention of Camillo Pamphilj and reaching the heights of artistic eminence only two years after his arrival in Rome.

³³ Lione Pascoli, “Di Melchiorre Cafà,” in *Vite de’ pittori, scultori, ed architetti moderni*, ed. Mariella Pedrolì (Perugia: Electa Editori Umbri, 1992), 354-355. “*Poco ebbe a faticar con lui il maestro; perchè era tale, e tanta l’abilità sua, e l’apertura di sua mente, che appena aveva veduta fare una cosa, che così ben l’apprendeva, che avrebbe potuto insegnarla agli altri.*”

³⁴ Filippo Baldinucci, “Ercolo Ferrata da Pelsotto,” in *Notizie de’ Professori del Disegno da Cimabue in qua*, (Florence: Eurografica S.p.A., 1974), 391-392. “*Fu nell’inventare e disegnare bravissimo; ma nel lavorare il marmo ebbe talvolta bisogno dell’assistenza del maestro, perchè pel grande spirito, col quale operava, avrebbe voluto il tutto finire in un sol colpo, onde avea bisogno di qualche ritegno per non errare.*”

³⁵ Rudolf Wittkower, “Melchiorre Cafà’s Bust of Alexander VII,” *The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin* 17.8 (1959): 198. Sciberras, “Melchiorre Cafà,” 6.

The (Changing) Role of the Sculptor in Rome

Rome was a distinctly popular and accessible place for foreign (that is, non-Roman artists) to begin their careers, due to the combination of the plethora of ancient inspiration, a lack of any type of guild regulations, and the possibility to “make it big.”³⁶ Yet, despite this increase in opportunity for all types of artists, there remained a strong favor among the majority of patrons to commission painted works over sculpture, for reasons of aesthetic preference, cheaper production, ease of display, and faster production time.³⁷ Although Bernini’s contributions enhanced the art of sculpture at this time, painting was still considered the nobler art on the whole. Seventeenth-century art patron and collector Vincenzo Giustiniani writes, “I have observed, that the noblemen reflect more upon paintings than sculpture,” implying that sculptors naturally remained at a lower level than painters.³⁸

Yet, while painting was still considered the nobler art, at the time of Cafà’s arrival in Rome there was a shift in how sculptural altarpieces were considered in the Catholic Church. The Catholic Restoration that followed the Counter-Reformation in Rome resulted in a heightened importance on a type of dramatic aesthetic exemplified in the art of the High Baroque.³⁹ Indeed, it has been argued that sculpture was a “weapon” the

³⁶ Peter M. Lukehart, “Carving Out Lives: The Roles of Sculptors in the Early History of the Accademia di San Luca,” in *Studies in the History of Art* 70 (2008): 193.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 200-201.

³⁸ Giustiniani, *Discorsi*, 74-75. “...ho osservato, che i signori nobili fanno maggior riflesso nella pittura, che nella scultura.”

³⁹ Rudolf Wittkower, *Art and Architecture in Italy 1600–1750* (Norwich: Fletcher & Son Ltd., 1982), 138. On the rise of sculptural altarpieces: Damian Dombrowski, “The Sculptural Altarpiece and Its Vicissitudes in the Roman Church Interior,” in *Critical Perspectives on Roman Baroque Sculpture*, ed. Anthony Colantuono and Steven F. Ostrow (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2014), 119. Sculptural altarpieces were commonplace

Catholic Church used against its Protestant critics in the seventeenth century, allowing the church to emphasize Catholic tradition and the legitimacy of “Baroque piety.”⁴⁰ It was thought that a sculpted altarpiece of marble or bronze had a greater physical presence than a painted one—an especially significant factor when an altarpiece depicted a saint or an event from a saint’s life, as the opportunity for spiritual connections between sculptures and viewer in this subject matter was crucial.⁴¹ The three-dimensionality of the sculptural medium could not be replicated in painting, and is thus more successful in placing the representation of an event or saint “in the reality of the faithful.”⁴² By creating this type of reality within the church, an experience of conspicuous interaction is forged between the churchgoer and the sculpture. Thus, it is natural that Camillo commissioned sculpted rather than painted altarpieces in both the Pamphilj church of Sant’Agnese in Agone, and the Pamphilj Chapel in Sant’Agostino. These extremely public areas of art display gave Camillo the opportunity to demonstrate his superior skills in commissioning works that complemented the shifting artistic agendas of the Catholic Church.

during the early Cinquecento in Rome, with some notable works by artists such as Michelangelo or Andrea Sansovino ranked similarly to painted altarpieces. However, after the Sack of Rome in 1527, this sculptural tradition swiftly ended. While sculpted individual figures were commissioned for church spaces, they were rarely intended for altars. Yet, by the end of the century, sculpted figures were working themselves back onto the altars of Rome, reaching a height in popularity by the mid- to late-seventeenth century.

⁴⁰ Bruce Boucher, *Italian Baroque Sculpture* (New York: Thames and Hudson, 1998), 12-13.

⁴¹ Dombrowski, “Sculptural Altarpieces,” 133.

⁴² *Ibid.*

Camillo Pamphilj: Patron of the Arts

Prince Camillo Pamphilj was a man on a mission to establish a Pamphilj legacy in Rome, a task he worked towards long after the death of his uncle, Pope Innocent X. He chose his commissions carefully and strategically, thinking ahead to the posterity of his family name. This can be seen in the churches Camillo built, including Sant' Agnese in Agone and Sant' Andrea al Quirinale. These churches fall into two separate categories: the former was the Pamphilj family church built directly next to the family palace, thus propagating strong connections between the church and the Pamphilj family; the latter was a completely new and “decadent” church that boasted of Camillo’s wealth and prestige by adding to “...the splendour of Rome.”⁴³ These two categories of churches served as a means for noble families to establish themselves; Sant' Agnese drew upon the inherent authority antiquity offered, as its foundations sat upon the ancient Roman martyrdom site of the saint, and Sant' Andrea displayed the simple power of wealth at a time when a royal or noble pedigree was not necessary to become a leader in Rome.⁴⁴

⁴³ Haskell, *Patrons and Painters*, 5.

⁴⁴ Ibid. On how the Pamphilj used the authority of antiquity: Susan Russell, “A Taste for Landscape: Innocent X and Palazzo Pamphilj,” in *Art and Identity in Early Modern Rome*, ed. by Jill Burke and Michael Bury (Hampshire and Burlington: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2008), 162-163. The legacy of the power of ancient Rome was strongly felt in seventeenth-century Rome; traces of their authority were left in art, architecture, and literature. Noble families in Rome almost always capitalized on this authority by laying claim to their rights to “inherit” Rome and her powers, both ancient and modern. They did so by “proving” their lineage from ancient Roman gods and goddesses, and ancient Roman Emperors. Russell writes, “where references to the ancient Roman past sought to confirm the authority of a papacy that aimed at providing the same security, prosperity, peace and civic virtue that were associated with the Golden Age of Imperial Rome, as well as a sense of continuity for traditional institutions, especially the papacy, in a period of social and religious instability. At the same time, these Augustan themes made reference to the presumed antiquity of the Pamphilj family, whose legendary ancestress was the goddess Venus (from whom the Emperor Augustus also alleged descent), and who claimed

Camillo was also highly involved in the projects he commissioned, a somewhat unusual characteristic at the time. He addressed his commissions seriously, and required artists to submit sketches, models, and/or designs for his approval before the actual work could begin.⁴⁵ After a particular design was approved, the artist was not to change the design in any way unless the change was specifically sanctioned by Camillo (which makes Cafà's *San Tommaso da Villanova* sculpture all the more interesting, as his *bozzetto* was actually a redesign of what he thought the work should look like—a fascinating sequence of events that will be discussed in greater detail in the following chapter). Camillo's involvement with his commissions continued even after the designs or models were approved; while the Palazzo Pamphilj was being built he would often oversee the work, ordering artists and builders to perform specific tasks in order to complete the decoration precisely to his liking.⁴⁶

Camillo held a unique position in Roman society that allowed him to contribute to the artistic culture of Rome and support artists like Cafà, even after his uncle was no longer pope. The Pamphilj's ascension to the papal throne was a familial effort (as most often were), with Camillo's mother Donna Olimpia Maidalchini using her personal fortunes to further Giovanni Battista Pamphilj's political career.⁴⁷ This paid off for both Donna Olimpia and Camillo, for as soon as Giovanni Battista was elected Pope Innocent

descent from Rome's second king, Numa Pompilius, as recorded in Niccolò Angelo Cafferri's genealogy of the family."

⁴⁵ Haskell, *Patrons and Painters*, 12.

⁴⁶ Stephanie C. Leone, "Cardinal Pamphilj Builds a Palace: Self-Representation and Familiar Ambition in Seventeenth-Century Rome," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, 63.4 (2004): 455. "Cardinal Pamphilj again expressed his interest in the decoration: while checking the work in one anticamera he ordered the painter to retouch the putti in the frieze, and in the other he ordered the gilder to return to work on the ceiling."

⁴⁷ Walsh, *The Cardinals*, 216.

X in September 1644, he promoted her son to the secular position of captain of the papal armies.⁴⁸ Two months later, however, Innocent instead decided to bring Camillo into the fold of ecclesiastical privilege, making him a cardinal deacon, and increasing the Pamphilj power in the papal office.⁴⁹ However, much to Donna Olimpia's frustration and disapproval, Camillo resigned as cardinal in January 1647, and less than a month later married the extravagantly wealthy niece of Prince Borghese, Olimpia Aldobrandini, princess of Rossano.⁵⁰

Camillo's previous wealth and status, combined with the immense wealth he amassed from his marriage to Olimpia Aldorandini, insured that the Pamphilj prince never fell from the graces of Roman nobility after Innocent died. Thus, this wealth allowed Camillo to commission artistic and architectural projects that worked to establish and promulgate the Pamphilj family name, such as the Palazzo Pamphilj, Sant'Agnese in Agone, Sant'Andrea al Quirinale, and San Nicola da Tolentino.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Cristina Strunck, "Old Nobility versus New: Colonna Art Patronage during the Barberini and Pamphilj Pontificates (1623–1655)," in *Art and Identity in Early Modern Rome*, ed. Jill Burke and Michael Bury (Hampshire: Ashgate Publishing Limited, and Burlington: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2008), 146. On cardinal deacons: Mary Hollingsworth and Carol M. Richard, introduction to *The Possessions of a Cardinal: Politics, Piety, and Art, 1450–1700*, by Mary Hollingsworth and Carol M. Richard (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2010), 3. "Cardinal deacons... were not attached to churches but to the welfare centers (*diaconae*) set up in each district of the city, though many had chapels attached. By the end of the twelfth century the number of titles had been fixed at fifty-two—six bishops, twenty-eight priests (divided into groups of seven attached to each of Rome's four principal churches) and eighteen deacons."

⁵⁰ Walsh, *The Cardinals*, 216. At one point Camillo supposedly said, "Much as I admire the virtue of chastity, I find myself unable to practice it without a wife."

Camillo's Motives as Cafà's Patron

Despite the changing role of sculpture in the Catholic Church in the seventeenth-century, Camillo Pamphilj's decision to entrust Cafà with such a large commission as *Sant'Eustachio tra i leoni* in Sant'Agnese in Agone is an interesting anomaly. Camillo commissioned the work from Cafà without having previously seen any marble work completed by the sculptor; indeed, there were no works of this nature he *could* have seen, as Cafà had never executed a marble sculpture before, nor had he produced any type of full-sized model.⁵¹ While Cafà had completed two larger-than-life sized wooden statues by this point in his career (figs. 11 and 12), there is no evidence to suggest that Camillo saw or evaluated the two works before they were sent off to their patrons in Malta. However, Cafà's work as a *bottega* sculptor was "extremely precocious," and his teacher, Ercole Ferrata, immediately recognized his talents.⁵² Keith Sciberras suggests that Ferrata himself introduced Cafà and his work to Camillo, and that the latter was so impressed with Cafà's *bozzetti* he offered the Sant'Agnese commission to the sculptor despite his lack of experience—a bold and potentially risky endeavor for Camillo that supports the notion that the Pamphilj prince intended to bring up Cafà from the start of his Roman career.⁵³ This hypothesis is entirely plausible, considering Ferrata's close working relationship with Camillo, and the patron's elevated involvement and interest in the

⁵¹ Sciberras, "Melchiorre Cafà," 4-5.

⁵² *Ibid.*

⁵³ *Ibid.*

artists he hired, and the projects he commissioned.⁵⁴ Unfortunately, no evidence of any kind exists to support or refute this possibility; it is unclear how Camillo was introduced to Cafà, and in what manner the sculptor was offered the *Sant'Eustachio* commission.

As stated, Ferrata had a prior working relationship with Camillo before Cafà joined his workshop; as Algardi's pupil and part-inheritor of his workshop, Ferrata most likely closely knew the Pamphilj prince and was familiar with the patron's preferences.⁵⁵ Preceding Cafà's arrival in Rome, Ferrata worked for Camillo in the church of San Nicolò da Tolentino, and later the prince would commission Ferrata to complete a relief in Sant'Agnese in Agone, and as we know, would also have Ferrata complete Cafà's relief after the young sculptor's death in 1667.⁵⁶

Camillo's close relationship with Ferrata almost certainly extended from Camillo's strong preference for Alessandro Algardi during Innocent X's pontificate. Jennifer Montagu goes so far to say that, while Algardi was most likely not recognized as Innocent X's sculptor, as Innocent was largely unconcerned with the "*belles lettres*," (particularly in comparison to his predecessor, Urban VIII), he was undoubtedly considered the sculptor of Camillo Pamphilj.⁵⁷ Camillo employed Algardi on a number of sculptural and architectural projects, although Algardi's precise role as "architect" versus

⁵⁴ Ferrata's close relationship to Alessandro Algardi allowed him privileged access to the Pamphilj family, and Camillo commissioned Ferrata a number of sculptural projects, including works for Sant'Agnese in Agone, and the church of San Nicolò da Tolentino.

⁵⁵ Jennifer Montagu, *Alessandro Algardi* (New Haven and London: Published in Association with the J. Paul Getty Trust by Yale University Press, 1985), 207-209. In his will, Algardi divided his workshop among his four leading assistants: Ercole Ferrata, Domenico Guidi, Paolo Carnieri, and Girolamo Lucenti. Ferrata ended up with a large bulk of Algardi's *bozzetti*, models, and casts.

⁵⁶ Wittkower, *Art and Architecture in Italy*, 307-308.

⁵⁷ Montagu, *Alessandro Algardi*, 81, 110.

“architectural director” is questionable, as he was quite the inexperienced architect.⁵⁸ As Ferrata had been one of Algardi’s primary assistants, inheriting a fourth of the master sculptor’s workshop after his death in 1654, Ferrata was primed to take over Algardi’s unfinished projects for Camillo, and to continue working for the Pamphilj prince through the 1660s. Indeed, Camillo continued working with Algardi’s other assistants, including Domenico Guidi, who completed the high altarpiece in Sant’Agnese in Agone.

While it perhaps follows that Camillo would hire an artist within the circle of Algardi and Ferrata, his choice in employing Cafà remains somewhat problematic, considering the Maltese sculptor’s lack of experience, particularly in comparison with the other sculptors commission to create reliefs for Sant’Agnese. Algardi, Ferrata, Guidi, Bernini, Rainaldi—all of these men were fairly established, high profile artists. It was quite the uncommon thing for Camillo to handpick an inexperienced artist who began training at the late age of twenty-two years.⁵⁹ What might have sparked Camillo’s initial interest in Cafà, besides perhaps Cafà’s inherent talents and Camillo’s personal preferences?

One possibility is the changing appreciation for the effect sculpture could have as a visual medium. By the mid-seventeenth-century, the classical types of sculptures that artists like Algardi produced were becoming less preferable than the sketchy, “baroque”

⁵⁸ Ibid., 94. On Algardi’s role as architect of the Villa Belrespiro: “Bellori writes of the support and patronage Algardi received from Camillo from the very beginning of his uncle’s reign, and this much indeed be correct, for no sooner had the Pope been elected than the piece of ground which the family already owned on the site was extended, and by 1645 work and started on building Belrespiro, according to the plans of Algardi. Whether Algardi really was the architect had been heatedly debated since the seventeenth century, and seldom can so much ink have been spilled over a matter....”

⁵⁹ Sciberras, “Melchiorre Cafà,” 4-5.

aesthetic, the latter of which moved away from pure classical forms and styles in favor of an artistic sense of “spontaneity.”⁶⁰ This shift in aesthetic tastes was largely related on the effect of Bernini’s works in Rome; since many existed in public spaces, this allowed other artists and architects to study and implement his artistic mannerisms.⁶¹ This development contributed to the growing appreciation for actual sketches and preparatory works, including *bozzetti* and *modelli* (although collecting sketches did not become “fashionable” until later on in the eighteenth century).⁶² Cafà’s mastery and excellence in modeling *bozzetti*, while not a definitive promise of his talents in sculpting marble, impressed Camillo all the same. His *bozzetti* expressed an aptitude for *invenzione* and *disegno*, two artistic qualities highly appreciated in the seventeenth-century, particularly by Camillo Pamphilj.

Another possible factor in Camillo’s patronage decisions might be found in his ambition to cultivate and maintain his reputation as an art connoisseur. Camillo is often credited as the “connoisseur of the Pamphilj family.”⁶³ His most well known interests were French landscape paintings by artists such as Claude Lorrain and Gaspard Duguet.⁶⁴ However, it is important to note that while the attributes of the art connoisseur were recognized in the seventeenth-century, and terms such as *cognoscenti* or *virtuosi* indicate an acknowledgement among the upper classes of the value in expertly judging the quality

⁶⁰ Haskell, *Patrons and Painters*, 12. Rudolf Wittkower, *Bernini: the Sculptor of the Roman Baroque* (London: Phaidon Press Limited, 1997), 193-194.

⁶¹ Montanari, “Creating an Eye,” 71-73.

⁶² Haskell, *Patrons and Painters*, 12.

⁶³ Russell, “A Taste for Landscape,” 156.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

of artwork, the term “art connoisseur” did not exist at this time.⁶⁵ According to Jill Burke and Michael Bury, “Good judgment, knowledge of what was fashionable, and awareness of how and where the materials and workmanship could be found were essential to ensure successful art patronage.... Artistic knowledge could be used as a social currency in this period.”⁶⁶

Indeed, Camillo exploited this type of “social currency,” navigating around delicate social and political circumstances affecting the Pamphilj family, specifically his uncle, Pope Innocent X, and his mother and the pope’s closest advisor, Donna Olimpia. After he returned from a brief exile from Rome in the early 1650s, Camillo immediately began building and commissioning large artworks in order to establish himself in the city.⁶⁷ Francis Haskell writes, “...after his return to the city artistic life notably revived,” indicating Camillo’s contributions as a patron were almost immediately recognized as significant to the *oeuvre* of Rome’s cityscape.⁶⁸

Still, these events occurred during the reign of Innocent X, a time in which Bernini was far from favor, yet there were no sculptors talented enough (or well-connected enough) to replace Bernini as the “top sculptor” in Rome. The closest sculptor to achieve this status at this time was Algardi, although he never reached the same height of stardom as Bernini did. However, circumstances were different a decade later, when the Pamphilj were no longer in papal office, Algardi had passed away, and Bernini was once again the leading artist of the city with no apparent artistic competition. To reiterate,

⁶⁵ Burke and Bury, introduction, 7-8.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Haskell, *Patrons and Painters*, 148-149.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

seventeenth-century artists and patrons were well aware of the artistic pecking order in Rome, and recognized when one artist stood out above the rest: examples include Raphael, Michelangelo, and Bernini. Thus, Camillo was conscious of the implications in so greatly supporting a new and inexperienced sculptor. He recognized the *potential* in Cafà's talents; if Cafà's marble sculptures carried the same aesthetic qualities as his highly detailed *bozzetti*, Camillo's gamble on Cafà would "pay off" in more ways than one: not only would Camillo possess a high quality work of art, but he would also be credited with discovering a brilliantly new sculptor as talented, or perhaps even more talented, than Bernini himself.

The (Inevitable) Discussion on Gianlorenzo Bernini

As stated in the previous chapter, this thesis will not discuss the stylistic intricacies that might lead one to determine whether Cafà's sculptures are more "Berninesque" or "Algardesque" in nature.⁶⁹ However, Bernini's contributions to seventeenth-century sculpture, architecture, and art production cannot be overlooked. While the argument that Bernini's driving force as an artist shifted the entire disposition of Roman Baroque patrons to prefer and value sculpture over painting is somewhat overwhelming, it is perhaps more accurate and workable to suggest that Bernini's work

⁶⁹ As a firm believer in the exquisite skill and novel compositions by Cafà, I would suggest using the term "Cafà-esque" when discussing his work; however, this term negates my refusal to label sculptures as "-esque" in the first place, so perhaps this issue is better tabled for another research paper.

and high status in Rome significantly contributed to the gradual shift that allowed sculpture more prestige and respect as an art form, especially in comparison to painting.⁷⁰

Indeed, during the pontificate of Innocent X (r. 1644–1655) Bernini was held in low esteem and rarely employed by the pope, especially after the disaster of his failed bell towers for St. Peter's, which marked the end of his reign as top architect in Rome.⁷¹ Fortunately for the artist, however, following Innocent X's death in 1655 Bernini emerged from his artistic exile in Rome and resumed his position as the city's top architect under the newly elected Alexander VII (r. 1655–1667).⁷²

Although Bernini retained his position as the architect of St. Peter's, Innocent clearly preferred employing other artists during his reign, including Francesco Borromini, Bernini's fiercest competition.⁷³ While both Borromini and Carlo Rainaldi may have unofficially been the Pamphilj's replacement architects for Bernini during Innocent's reign, there was no such "replacement" to stand in for Bernini as sculptor. So although Cafà arrived in Rome during Alexander VII's pontificate, the Pamphilj's aversion to Bernini may have prompted Camillo to continue searching for someone to contend with Bernini as the reigning sculptor in Rome, despite the fact the elder artist was once again

⁷⁰ Wittkower, *Bernini*, 193. Perhaps unsurprisingly, Rudolf Wittkower argues that Bernini was responsible for the "supremacy" of sculpture over painting in the early- to mid-seventeenth-century. He writes, "Already with his early works, Bernini had reversed the existing pre-eminence of painting over sculpture. Sculpture now took the lead and for the next fifty years it maintained its supremacy. Taking a bird's-eye view of events, we see Bernini surprising the world with ever new, unexpected and immensely fertile ideas, while painters often refurbished the old fare." While this conclusion can be argued to a certain extent, there remains a substantial amount of evidence that painting was still considered the nobler and favored art form, although sculpture definitely increased in popularity and preference during the seventeenth century.

⁷¹ Jake Morrissey, *The Genius in the Design: Bernini, Borromini, and the Rivalry that Transformed Rome* (New York: W. Morrow, 2005), 167.

⁷² Wittkower, *Art and Architecture*, 138.

⁷³ Morrissey, *The Genius in the Design*, 90.

the papal favorite. Additionally, Bernini was out of favor for such an extended period of time that it must have seemed entirely possible for a young, capable sculptor like Cafà to rise to the top of the artistic pecking order. Bernini was in his sixties when the young twenty-something Cafà arrived in Rome, and there was of course no way of knowing that Bernini would live into his eighties. Perhaps Camillo intended for Cafà to simply take over as the superstar top sculptor after Bernini's death, with both patron and artist playing a somewhat morbid waiting game.

However, Camillo did not avoid Bernini completely; three years after Innocent's death, the Pamphilj prince agreed to help fund the building of the Jesuit church Sant'Andrea al Quirinale, designed by Bernini.⁷⁴ Despite the Pamphilj contributions to the church (over 35,000 *scudi* between Camillo and his son, Giovanni Battista), Camillo had no substantial jurisdiction over Bernini's design.⁷⁵ Alexander VII hired the architect for the project in 1658, a project that had been previously immobilized by Innocent X, as he did not want a "large church rising across from the Quirinal Palace," a sentiment clearly not shared by his nephew.⁷⁶ However, Camillo did control certain aspects of the execution of the interior, and in 1659 he hired his master *scarpellino* Giovanni Maria Baratta to do the *cottonella* columns, as well as to oversee the marble quarrying and shipments of Sicilian jasper.⁷⁷

⁷⁴ Joseph Connors, "S. Andrea al Quirinale: Payments and Planning," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 41 (1982): 17. Haskell, *Patrons and Painters*, 67.

⁷⁵ Connors, "S. Andrea al Quirinale," 37.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 16-17.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 19-21.

All this is to say, while Camillo contributed to a significant work by Bernini, his actual interaction and collaboration with the artist is questionable, as in this situation Bernini was much more the preferred artist of Alexander VII rather than the architect begrudgingly employed by Camillo. However, Camillo's choice to invest vigorously in Sant'Andrea al Quirinale is telling, as it reveals his affinity for large, grandiose endeavors that came with a certain amount of risk. The Pamphilj's lavish preferences were consistently at odds with the Jesuits' more ascetic tastes during the mid-seventeenth-century, and as a consequence the Jesuits paid for the majority of the masonry body of the church, while the Pamphilj paid for the "ornamental skin."⁷⁸

Why Camillo Pamphilj?

Camillo Pamphilj's reasoning for supporting Cafà and his works are complexly multi-layered, as they are integrated within the social and political circumstances at the time. Similarly, Cafà's choice to work on multiple commissions for Camillo are multifaceted, as the sculptor's talents were sought after by many other elite patrons, including cardinals and the Knights of Malta. Cafà also had strong connections with the Dominican church; his brother was a Dominican friar and allowed Cafà "privileged access" to the denomination's patronage, allowing Cafà to create exquisite works for

⁷⁸ Ibid., 21. While Camillo donated a significant amount of funds towards building Sant'Andrea, there remained a number of payments that he did not follow through with, instead relying on loans from the Jesuits. Connors writes, "More specifically, when the foundations came to be laid, the walls built, and the vault closed all this work was carried out on the basis of Jesuit loans. Camillo often promised to cover the debts but apparently never did. He correctly assumed that, with enough prodding, the Jesuits could put up the fabric by themselves."

Dominican churches in and out of Rome.⁷⁹ What factors contributed to Cafà continually accepting commissions from Camillo, rather than for other willing and available patrons in Rome?

Cafà had a natural connection to the Dominican denomination and its patronage through his brother, Giuseppe, who was a Dominican friar. Indeed, the Maltese sculptor created a number of works for the Dominican church early on in his career, including two wooden processional statues: *The Virgin of the Rosary* for the Church of San Domenico (fig. 11) and *St. Paul* for the Collegiate Parish Church of St Paul's Shipwreck (fig. 12), both located in Malta. He also created a marble sculpture of *Santa Rosa da Lima* in 1665 (fig. 13), which was, according to Lione Pascoli, "[His] principal work, and the most valued..."⁸⁰ He completed the work in 1665 for the Dominican church in Lima, Peru, where it was received with "more than Spanish pomp," carried in a procession, and welcomed to the church with fireworks.⁸¹

Despite Cafà's easy access to Dominican patronage, and their clear favor of the sculptor's works, a certain issue persists that accounts for Cafà's hesitancy in working primarily for the denomination. That is, the majority of his works for the Dominicans were exported out of Rome for churches in smaller cities with smaller congregations, thus doing little to further Cafà's reputation in Rome. His one major work for the Roman

⁷⁹ Louise Rice, "Cafà's Conclusion," in *Melchiorre Cafà: Maltese Genius of the Roman Baroque*, ed. Keith Sciberras (Valletta, Malta: Midsea for the History of Art Programme, University of Malta, 2006), 140-141.

⁸⁰ Lione Pascoli, "Di Melchiorre Cafà," in *Vite de' pittori, scultori, ed architetti moderni*, ed. by Mariella Pedroli (Perugia: Electa Editori Umbri, 1992), 354-355. "Ma l'opera principale, e la più stimata, che sia stata fatta da lui fu la statua di santa Rosa, che fece per Lima."

⁸¹ Rice, "Cafà's Conclusion," 140-141. On the reception of *St Rosa da Lima*: John Fleming, "A Note on Melchiorre Caffà," *The Burlington Magazine for Connoisseurs* 89.529 (1947): 86.

Dominicans was his exquisitely theatrical high relief altarpiece for the small convent of Santa Caterina da Siena a Monte Magnanapoli (fig. 3), a work typically dated around 1667.⁸² This work is frequently discussed among scholars, although this has little to do with its prominence in the seventeenth-century; rather, this work (along with Cafà's *Santa Rosa da Lima*) are the only two sculptures that can be safely attributed as made by Cafà's hand alone.⁸³ This autonomous authorship allows scholars to form more definitive conclusions regarding Cafà's visual style and practices, but does not typically address Cafà's extended working relationship with the Dominican church. However, the church's pattern in commissioning works from Cafà for churches outside of Rome suggests that they were more concerned with implementing a Roman baroque aesthetic in non-Roman churches, as opposed to decorating the interior of their churches in the city.

Other patrons, however, were keen to maintain their legacy within the city of Rome, which fostered a nearly tangible sense of competition among the upper classes of Roman society. The Chigi family were such patrons, particularly Cardinal Flavio Chigi.⁸⁴ Prior to his pontificate as Alexander VII, Fabio Chigi served as the Apostolic Delegate of Malta from 1634–1639, and he lived in Vittoriosa, Cafà's hometown.⁸⁵ It is tempting to assume that because of this direct connection Chigi somehow had a hand in bringing Cafà to Rome; however, so little is known of Cafà's activities on Malta that it is impossible to determine if Chigi even knew of the sculptor before he arrived in Rome. This lack of

⁸² Rudolf Preimesberger and Mark Weil, "The Pamphili Chapel in Sant'Agostino," *Römisches Jahrbuch für Kunstgeschichte* 15 (1975): 196.

⁸³ Fleming, *Note*, 86.

⁸⁴ Montagu, *Industry of Art*, 69-70.

⁸⁵ Keith Sciberras, *Roman Baroque Sculpture for the Knights of Malta* (Sta Venera: Medisea, 2012), 36.

evidence to connect Chigi and Cafà, combined with an absence of any type of notable patronage of Cafà after he began work in Rome, indicates that Chigi most likely did not know or support Cafà in any significant way, particularly while Cafà was still in Malta.

Yet, Edward Sammut postulates that in 1659 Alexander VII directly commissioned Cafà for a *Gloria* for high altar of the Church of Santa Maria in Campitelli (fig. 6), a church built by the pope in 1657.⁸⁶ However, there are no documents or accounts that support this argument, and this commission would have been given to Cafà only a year after he arrived in Rome with virtually no sculptural works to substantiate his talents as an artist. More likely, it is possible Cafà was brought onto the project later on in his career by the architect of the church, Carlo Rainaldi, who gave him guidelines for the basic invention of the altar, which Cafà then expanded upon.⁸⁷ This possibility is supported by Rainaldi's sectional drawings for the church, which illustrates the profile of the altar *before* Cafà was asked to create a clay model for the structure.⁸⁸ Jennifer Montagu suggests the probable likelihood of Rainaldi providing Cafà with a frontal drawing of the desired design of the altar, although "everything which makes this altar remarkable" derives from the *disegno* of Cafà.⁸⁹ Furthermore, it is possible Cafà came recommended from Ercole Ferrata or Camillo Pamphilj himself, as Rainaldi worked with both men on Sant'Agnese in Agone. Thus, there are no indications that Cafà had any type of developing artist-patron relationship with Alexander VII.

⁸⁶ Edward Sammut, "Melchior Gafa': Maltese Sculptor of the Baroque," *Scientia* 23 (1957), 120.

⁸⁷ Jennifer Montagu, "Architects and Sculptors in Rome," in *Bollettino del Centro Internazionale di Studi di Architettura, Andrea Palladio: Andrea Palladio e l'Architettura Italiana del Seicento* (Vicenza: Palazzo Valmarana, 1981), 78-79.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

After approximately eight years in Rome (and unbeknownst to Cafà, towards the end of his life), Cardinal Flavio Chigi commissioned a bronze bust of Alexander VII from the sculptor.⁹⁰ Interestingly, the terracotta model Cafà created was preserved after the bronze casting, and shown in the princely Chigi collection.⁹¹ The decision to not only preserve, but exhibit Cafà's terracotta model speaks to how his talents were valued, as well as the contemporary popularity of his work. As Cafà did not cast the bronze himself, it was his skills in terracotta modeling that were so highly prized by the cardinal.⁹² Yet this appears to be Chigi's first commission from Cafà; no known documents or works exist to indicate any previous commissions between the two men. Cafà was at the height of his career at this point, thus in this sense it is unsurprising a that wealthy patron like Cardinal Chigi would be interested in commissioning a high-profile work from him; by this time, Cafà was an admired and well-recognized sculptor.

Cafà's fame soon spread from Rome, and by 1665 the Order of the Knights of Malta was interested in commissioning the sculptor to create works for his native country, specifically, the *Baptism of Christ* high altarpiece for St. John's Co-Cathedral. The Order was an organization only marginally related to the Pamphilj family—while Camillo's son, Benedetto, was appointed Prior for the Knights in 1678, his interests in Malta revolved primarily around social and academic benefits that accompanied the position, including the decoration of the Knights' villa on the Aventine hill, and hosting

⁹⁰ Montagu, *Industry of Art*, 69-70.

⁹¹ Wittkower, "Cafà's Bust," 198. The terracotta sculpture remains in Chigi hands, and is currently exhibited in the Palazzo Chigi at Ariccia.

⁹² Montagu, *Industry of Art*, 69-70. The bust was set to be cast by Giovanni Artusi before Cafà died.

elaborate banquets.⁹³ While Benedetto came to Malta's aid politically during his tenure as Prior, this relationship between the Knights of Malta and the Pamphilj family came *after* Camillo's relationship with Cafà, negating the notion that any prior relations between the two groups pre-determined Camillo's support of the Maltese sculptor.⁹⁴

The Order was in the process of decorating one of the largest and most important churches in Malta, St. John's Co-Cathedral (fig. 9), with the goal of transforming the interior of the church to having a more "Roman baroque" aesthetic, meaning they desired a more lavish, grand, and theatrical design to resemble some of the newly built/redecorated Roman churches that exhibited similar qualities.⁹⁵ Although Cafà never completed the *Baptism of Christ*, this commission helped pave the way for the Order to invest in bringing a more opulent, decorative aesthetic resembling much of the art and architecture of the Roman Baroque period to Malta, an endeavor they began to fully support in the late seventeenth-century.⁹⁶

⁹³ James M. Weiss, "Too Much a Prince to be but a Cardinal: Benedetto Pamphilj and the College of Cardinals in the Age of the Late Baroque," in *Pamphilj and the Arts: Patronage and Consumption in Baroque Rome* (Boston: McMullen Museum of Art, Boston College, 2011), 98, 143.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

⁹⁵ Keith Sciberras, "The Brush for the Cross, the Cross for the Brush: Mattia Preti, Knight of Malta," in *I Cavalieri di Malta e Caravaggio: la storia, gli artisti, I committenti*, ed. Stefania Macioce (Roma: Logart Editore, 2010), 127.

⁹⁶ Keith Sciberras, "Roma fuori Roma: Roman Baroque Sculpture for the Knights of Malta," in *I Cavalieri di Malta e Caravaggio: la storia, gli artisti, I committenti*, ed. Stefania Macioce, (Roma: Logart Editore, 2010), 159. Evident from the letter sent from Grand Master Gregorio Carafa (1680-90) to his Ambassador in Rome, which, "shows the enthusiastic response generated by the first viewing of Ciro Ferri's (1634-89) magnificent *Reliquary throne for the hand of St John the Baptist*, which had just arrived in Malta from Rome in 1689."

Although the Knights were successful in bringing Cafà to Malta for a few months in early 1666, he went begrudgingly, and returned to Rome as soon as possible.⁹⁷ Cafà's reluctance to travel to Malta was most likely two-fold: Firstly, he preferred working from Ferrata's studio in Rome, and no doubt cultivating his name in the opportunistic city of Rome; there was only so much one's career could grow on the small island of Malta.⁹⁸ Secondly, it is also possible Cafà wished to avoid becoming too involved with the Knights; they were not necessarily known for treating commissioned artists with particular kindness or affinity. Artists would always have a subsidiary role, as talent could not replace the noble lineage required to obtain a full membership within the Order.⁹⁹ For instance, the painter Mattia Preti was openly unhappy with his role in the Order, despite the fact he *had* been made a Knight, and was their resident painter.¹⁰⁰ Regardless, Preti was deeply unsatisfied, writing in a letter in March 1667, "...in order to keep me [Preti] at his [Grand Master Nicolas Cotoner] feet, he never assigned me what had been promised."¹⁰¹ Sciberras contends Cafà had similar fears, which may account for his uneasiness in leaving his increasingly successful career in Rome to work for the seemingly undependable Order in Malta.¹⁰²

⁹⁷ Sammut, "*Melchior Gafa*," 125-126.

⁹⁸ Sciberras, "Melchiorre Cafà," 3. To quote Sciberras once again, "It is surprising how, in a stylistic backwater like Malta, Melchiorre Cafà showed such a prodigious outburst of talent in a context where Malta had no great master in sculpture who could nurture such up and coming talent."

⁹⁹ Sciberras, *Roman Baroque*, 75-76.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 72-74. During the years Cafà begrudgingly worked for the Order, Preti was "...harbouring the idea of leaving or rather, escaping from Convent."

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 73-74.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*

Additionally, while the Order eventually commissioned the *Baptism of Christ* from Cafà, the specifics of the commission complicate the patron-artist relationship between the Order and the sculptor. Cafà was not the Order's first choice; rather, he was a secondary choice after Bernini, who was unable to accept the project because of his sojourn to Paris at the time of the Order's interest in commissioning the work.¹⁰³ Indeed, there is no indication that the two men who negotiated the commission and Cafà's travel to Malta, Caumons, the Grand Ambassador to the Holy See, nor Cotoner, the Grand Master of the Knights of the Order of Malta, were familiar with him or his work at all; apparently Caumons appealed to Cafà only after hearing that Bernini himself confirmed that the young artist had surpassed him in the art of sculpture.¹⁰⁴ This further supports the improbability of any supposed long-term goal to groom Cafà as an official sculptor for the Order; otherwise, they would most likely know of Cafà and his career as more than simply "*un certo Maltese*," as he is recorded in documents prior to the commission of the *Baptism of Christ*.¹⁰⁵

Furthermore, the Order had to negotiate with Camillo Pamphilj in order to bring Cafà to Malta, as the sculptor had no desire to leave his unfinished works and flourishing career in Rome. Cafà eventually agreed, albeit reluctantly, to travel to Malta, and only

¹⁰³ Ibid., 2. The parallels between Cafà and Malta, and Bernini and Paris, are quite interesting: Bernini had no desire to travel to Paris and had to receive papal permission to even consider accepting the commission to design the new Louvre façade; Cafà had no desire to return to Malta as his career in Rome was going so well, and he similarly had to receive permission from his patron, Prince Camillo Pamphilj. However, it took a number of years and considerable negotiations between Paris and Rome to allow Alexander VII to release Bernini from his obligations in Rome to travel to France; it is improbable Bernini would have travelled to the "stylish backwater" of Malta for any commission, no matter how grand.

¹⁰⁴ Fra Francisque de Seytres-Caumons, "Ambassador Caumons to Grand Master Cotoner; 23rd May, 1665," in "Melchior Gafa': Maltese Sculptor of the Baroque," *Scientia* 23 (1957): 108.

¹⁰⁵ Sciberras, "Melchiorre Cafà," 3-4.

after the Grand Master guaranteed that he would not be kept on the island any longer than necessary, thus allowing him to return to Rome as soon as possible to complete his pending works for the Pamphilj family.¹⁰⁶

Conclusions

Considering all of these factors, it is unsurprising that Cafà chose to benefit from the patronage of Camillo Pamphilj. In addition to quickly gaining prestige and distinction by producing works in public places for an elite patron, Cafà simultaneously navigated around getting too involved with patrons and commissions that may have eventually slowed the trajectory of his career. Camillo's patronage allowed Cafà to foster a type of career that would have most likely set him up in competition with Bernini. Cafà's contemporaries certainly thought this likely; evident by correspondences between Caumons and Cotoner, in which the former writes:

...having that it has been reported that Bernini has expressed many times that a certain young Maltese man would pass him in the profession as he has shown great judgment and activity in the many works he made, therefore I summoned this Maltese, and given him one of the designs in the utmost secrecy...¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁶ Keith Sciberras, "Melchiorre Cafà's *Baptism of Christ* for the Knights of the Order of Malta," in *Melchiorre Cafà: Maltese Genius of the Roman Baroque* (Valletta, Malta: Midsea for the History of Art Programme, University of Malta, 2006), 101.

¹⁰⁷ Caumons, "23rd May 1665," 131. "*Sin dal principio che arrivai in questa Corte, feci la diligenza per li disegni cotesta Chiesa Conventuale, et havendo lo Saputo che il Bernini doveva portarsi in Francia chiamato da quella Maestà Cristianissima, come poi è seguito, perciò lasciai di parlargline, si come ho fatto col Baratta Architetto del Signor Principe Panfilio, già che si é scusato con dire che non poteva attendervi per li molti imbarazzi che tiene per adesso, si che essendomi stata data notitia che il Bernini si è sentito più volte a dire che un certo Giovane Maltese lo havrebbe passato nel mestiere per haver mostrato gran giudizio et attivita in molti lavori da lui fatti, perciò feci chiamare detto Maltese, e datoli uno dei disegni con tutta segretezza....*"

While Bernini did not want the St. John's commission—it is unlikely he would have even considered accepting, considering his high profile career in Rome—this does not subtract from the significance that Cafà was considered an acceptable and attractive alternative for the Knights of Malta. Additionally, while it is possible Caumonts exaggerated Bernini's exultations for the Maltese sculptor, the simple fact that Cafà was the most desirable candidate after Bernini indicates Cafà's respected and recognized status as an artist. Furthermore, biographies written by authors such as Lione Pascoli and Filippo Baldinucci lamented the loss of his talent and promise, writing the declamatory statement, "Rome expected great things from this craftsman, and he would have done great things, if the enemy death had not taken him too immature in age from the world..."¹⁰⁸ These possibilities for Cafà's career would not have been possible without Camillo Pamphilj's patronage, a fact that did not escape Camillo, who recognized the social and political potentials in providing the means for the sculptor to succeed. With Cafà's success came social and economic opportunities for Camillo, and further means for the Pamphilj name to live on in Rome through the works of the artist. Unfortunately for both Camillo and Cafà (more so for the latter), Cafà's life ended too soon for Camillo's intentions to come to fruition.

¹⁰⁸ Pascoli, "Di Melchiorre Cafà," 354-355. "*Gran cose aspettava Roma da questo artifice; e gran cose fatto avrebbe, se morte nimica tolto nonl'avesse in età troppo immatura dal mondo...*"

Chapter 3

Melchiorre Cafà's Sculptures for Camillo Pamphilj

This chapter examines two sculptures commissioned by Camillo Pamphilj from Melchiorre Cafà: *Sant'Eustachio tra i leoni* in the church of Sant'Agnese in Agone (fig. 1), and *San Tommaso da Villanova* in the Pamphilj Chapel of Sant'Agostino (fig. 2). Both of these churches were significant to Camillo, and the works Cafà sculpted were large, prominent marble sculptures that provided him an opportunity to display his talents in public settings. In addition, Camillo's patronage of Cafà exhibits his intentions in supporting the sculptor as a superstar of his own making, particularly by giving him prestigious and coveted commissions without any prior indication that Cafà could produce a large scale marble work that the church spaces required.¹

The first section of the chapter will examine the marble relief *Sant'Eustachio tra i leoni*, and how, in commissioning Cafà to execute this large and high-status sculpture, Camillo fostered a competitive environment between Cafà and four other sculptors producing marble reliefs of similar size and display for Sant'Agnese. By overtly displaying Cafà's sculpture in competition and public comparison with works by accomplished and established sculptors, Camillo created a high-stakes situation that ultimately favored Cafà.

A few years after receiving the *Sant'Eustachio* commission, Cafà was chosen among the Sant'Agnese sculptors to execute the *San Tommaso da Villanova* altarpiece in

¹ Lione Pascoli, "Di Melchiorre Cafà," in *Vite de' pittori, scultori, ed architetti moderni*, ed. by Mariella Pedrolì (Perugia: Electa Editori Umbri, 1992), 354-355.

the Pamphilj Chapel in Sant'Agostino, another one of Camillo's projects. The second section of this chapter addresses this work, and the fascinatingly rich and complicated layers of historical events surrounding the design and execution of the marble altarpiece. Finally, the various preparatory works produced in anticipation of the design for the altarpiece reveal Camillo's favor and support of Cafà as an explicitly Pamphilj sculptor.

Sant'Eustachio tra i leoni in *Sant'Agnese in Agone*

As stated in the previous chapter, Sant'Agnese in Agone in Piazza Navona was the Pamphilj family church, built directly adjacent to the Palazzo Pamphilj. In 1652, Innocent X pulled down the existing small church of Sant'Agnese in Agone, and commissioned a new, opulent structure to replace it.² Rebuilding the church was part of a greater plan to revamp the entire expanse of Piazza Navona and the nearby Piazza Pasquino, areas recognized as Pamphilj territory in the city.³ Projects begun by Innocent X and continued by Camillo Pamphilj, including Sant'Agnese, the Palazzo Pamphilj, and the *Fontana dei Quattro Fiumi* (fig. 14), all contributed to this beautification.

Sant'Eustachio tra i leoni is a one of four marble relief altarpieces located in the large, circular center of the church of Sant'Agnese in Agone. The reliefs: *Il transito di S. Cecilia* by Antonio Raggi (fig. 15); *Lapidazione di S. Emerenziana* by Ercole Ferrata and Leonardo Reti (fig. 16); *Il transito di S. Alessio* by Francesco Rossi (fig. 17); and *Sant'Eustachio tra i leoni* by Melchiorre Cafà (finished by Ercole Ferrata)—oppose one

² Jake Morrissey, *The Genius in the Design: Bernini, Borromini, and the Rivalry that Transformed Rome*, (New York: W. Morrow, 2005), 214.

³ *Ibid.*, 183-184.

another in four corners of the church. At the apex of the church sits the high altarpiece, a fifth relief by Domenico Guidi titled *Le due sacre famiglie* (fig. 18). The four reliefs in the center are positioned in their own shallow niches and are all slightly concave, following the shape of the church, allowing the natural light from the cupola to brightly illuminate the reliefs.⁴ The sculptures are quite large, each approximately twelve feet tall and framed in pink and green marbles.

Cafà's *Sant'Eustachio tra i leoni* illustrates the moment in which St. Eustace and his family are spared from death by heavenly intervention after being thrown into a lion's den by the Emperor Hadrian for refusing to worship the pagan gods.⁵ The marble relief develops a dramatic narrative in using only a few emotive figures, rather than relying on a multitude of figures that seem to spill out of the frame of the relief. Cafà's design is by far the least "crowded" of the four sculptures, with only four central figures in medium to high relief, two background figures in low relief, and delicately placed cherubs and angels above the saint. Despite Cafà's lack of training in marble, the expertly carved figure of St. Eustace articulates a baroque predisposition towards the dramatic, including emotive expressions, non-static figures, and billowing clothes to indicate movement. He stands in the center, his arms gesturing towards the heavens and his gaze fixed upwards towards the dome, in which Christ, Mary, and the heavenly hosts are painted. He is

⁴ Domenico Guidi's relief is excluded here for two reasons: Firstly, because the architectural layout of Sant'Agnese does not allow for an equidistant relationship with the four reliefs surrounding the center of the church, and thus the act of physically viewing the sculpture varies in comparison to the others. Secondly, the 1661 contract stipulates that the *San Tommaso* sculptor would be chosen from the sculptors who completed the four "*bassi rilievi*" in Sant'Agnese, which definitively excludes Guidi's high altarpiece.

⁵ Colum Hourihane, *Insights and Interpretation: Studies in Celebration of the Eighty-fifth Anniversary of the Index of Christian Art* (New Haven: Princeton University Press, 2002), 61.

carved in extremely high relief, with only his cape, left foot, and the back of his right calf attached to the panel. The saint stands in an exaggerated *contrapposto*, with the weight of his body resting on the right foot and the left knee bending forward towards the viewer, which creates a subtle twisting motion between the right hip and the torso.

However, for a number of reasons, the relief seen in Sant'Agnese is somewhat varied from Cafà's original designs and plans. Firstly, Cafà did not live to see the sculpture through to its completion; so although he began *Sant'Eustachio* in 1660, Ercole Ferrata completed the sculpture after the Maltese sculptor's death in 1667.⁶ Additionally, the commission was taken over by Camillo Pamphilj's son, Giovanni Battista, after Camillo's death in 1666.⁷ Giovanni Battista was less interested in the arts than his father, and took over the commissions with the intention to have the works finished as quickly and inexpensively as possible. Thus, the combination of a change in artist and patron resulted in a significantly different final product than Cafà envisioned, evident in surviving *bozzetti* of the relief.

Most of these existing *Sant'Eustachio bozzetti* are fragmentary, although not always as a result of time and lack of care. Rather, Cafà's *bozzetti* often illustrate only a small section of the sculpture as a whole, a method he employed in order to work through and perfect specific parts of his sculptures. A number of these fragmentary *bozzetti* survive, illustrating Cafà's creative processes and developments in design. The Museo Nazionale del Palazzo di Venezia owns a complete *bozzetto* of the entire *Sant'Eustachio*

⁶ Keith Sciberras, "Melchiorre Cafà: Maltese Genius of the Roman Baroque," in *Melchiorre Cafà: Maltese Genius of the Roman Baroque*, ed. Keith Sciberras (Valletta, Malta: Midsea for the History of Art Programme, University of Malta, 2006), 4-5.

⁷ Ibid.

relief that demonstrates Cafà's intended design (fig. 19), although it is unclear whether the changes from the *bozzetto* to the final product were sanctioned by Cafà himself from an unknown/lost model, or if they were a result from the change in artist and patron after Camillo and Cafà's deaths in 1666 and 1667, respectively.⁸

For instance, there are more figures in the *bozzetto* than the marble relief: more people, more lions, and more putti, and these figures are grouped closer together than in the marble version. Additionally, the secondary figures surrounding St. Eustace in the *bozzetto* are positioned in such a way as to allow their features to be highlighted by the natural light that shines down from the cupola in the center of Sant'Agnese. In comparison, the marble figures either lie flat against the background of the relief, or peer down at the viewer, their faces cast in almost complete shadow. However, despite these differences, the *bozzetto* resembles the marble version in its basic composition. Therefore, the minor changes from the *bozzetto* to the marble relief most likely indicate a series of sanctified developments between the two works.⁹

⁸ Maria Giulia Barberini, ed., "Bozzetto per il bassorilievo di Sant'Eustachio," in *Sculture in terracotta del barocco romano: bozzetti e modelli del Museo Nazionale del Palazzo di Venezia* (Roma: Fratelli Palombi Editori, 1991): 43.

⁹ While these differences between the *Sant'Eustachio bozzetto* and marble relief are fascinating, in this instance these visual and stylistic nuances do not contribute to the arguments presented in this thesis. As stated in Chapter 1, to delve into this topic would almost certainly develop into an exploratory investigation of which sculptor created which part of the work, whose hand carved which section, etc., ultimately revealing little of the patron-artist relationship between Cafà and Camillo.

Commissioning Cafà

Camillo commissioned Cafà for the *Sant'Eustachio* relief in 1660. Despite Cafà's lack of experience, status as an artist, and limited *oeuvre*, the greenhorn sculptor was hired alongside Domenico Guidi, Antonio Raggi, Ercole Ferrata, and Francesco Rossi—an impressive lineup of experienced and established artists who had already proven their capabilities. Indeed, this selection of sculptors seems too strategically precise to be a random collection of artists, as all of these men were extremely prominent in Rome at this time. Ferrata and Guidi had their own workshops, and Raggi was closely associated with Bernini.¹⁰ Interestingly, in an almost too-coincidental-to-be-true way, Rudolf Wittkower singles out Ferrata, Raggi, Guidi, and Cafà as leading sculptors in the mid-seventeenth-century, confidently grouping Cafà with these men despite his early death and relatively small *oeuvre*—perhaps Camillo's choice in sculptors prompted Wittkower to group this men together almost three-hundred years later. Nevertheless, Camillo's decision to commission Cafà along with these artists is significant, as it illustrates that he thought Cafà was as talented and able a sculptor as his better known counterparts.¹¹

In fact, Cafà's talents in technique and *disegno* are easily compared to the other reliefs in the church due to the unique architectural layout of Sant'Agnese (fig. 20). The circular design allows the four reliefs to “interact” with one another, as each relief can be simultaneously viewed from a single vantage point in the center of the church. As the architectural design and floor plan determined the placement of each relief, the sculptors

¹⁰ Rudolf Wittkower, *Art and Architecture in Italy 1600–1750* (Norwich: Fletcher & Son Ltd., 1982), 307.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

and the patron must have realized the inevitable elements of comparison and competition between the works.¹² In comparing the ways in which the architectural layout of the central interior of the church developed, it appears that the visibility of the four relief sculptures was considered in the layout. The floor plan developed from a sharp ovular shape, placing two out of the four reliefs closer to one another, and creating an unequal viewing space between the sculptures, to a circular space, placing the four sculptures in their own equidistant niches (fig. 21).

Indeed, one distinct factor supports the notion that Camillo was aware of these interplays between the works. The interior space of Sant' Agnese had previously served as a stage set for religious plays and performances sponsored by the Pamphilj family.¹³ As a theatrical setting, the space of the church would be not only be observed in an ecclesiastical context by congregations and friends of the Pamphilj, but by *theatrical audiences*, whose purpose in this context is to simply watch and observe. It would be almost unthinkable to believe that Camillo did not know and understand that the entire interior space of the church would be under stringent observation. Therefore, it naturally

¹² Gerhard Eimer, *La Fabbrica di S. Agnese in Navona: Römische Architekten, Bauherren und Handwerker im Zeitalter des Nepotismus, Band II* (Almquist & Wiksell, Stockholm, 1971), 627. These changes almost certainly stemmed from a variety of factors, as Sant' Agnese in Agone has one of the most complex and convoluted architectural histories, largely due to the number of architects who worked on the project, and the frequency to which the head architect changed. However, it cannot be denied that the development of the layout encouraged a comparative relationship between the marble reliefs in the church. This comparison between the marble reliefs has the potential to ignite a discussion about the difference in style and execution between the works. While this type of study would yield interesting results, this thesis is not concerned with stylistic similarities or differences between various artists of the seventeenth-century, and thus this avenue of research will not be explored here.

¹³ Daria Borghese, "Cardinal Benedetto Pamphilj and Roman Society: Festivals, Feasts, and More," in *Pamphilj and the Arts: Patronage and Consumption in Baroque Rome*, ed. Stephanie Leone (Boston: McMullen Museum of Art, Boston College, 2011), 141.

follows that he would desire an engaging, dynamic and aesthetically pleasing space, in which the interactions between the four marble reliefs and the high altarpiece play a crucial role: inviting the viewer into the architectural space, and to engage with the works, both separately and as a collective group.

This is not to say that the ecclesiastical audience was unimportant in this context. Sacred art functioned under the expectation to inspire people from *all* levels of society to lead righteous and honorable Christian lives.¹⁴ Public altarpieces, especially, held this particular purpose, and thus both patron and artist needed to consider how an altarpiece would function and interact with congregations within the church. Additionally, the architectural layout of Sant' Agnese necessitated a consideration in how the four reliefs would interact with one another, as congregations had the unique viewing opportunity to compare the works directly.

It was vital a patron considered his/her audiences, particularly for ecclesiastical projects open to the public. If the audience found fault in a work (ranging from a distaste for the aesthetic qualities, to disdain for a patron over exalting their family name), the patron's social status and respectability as a connoisseur of the arts may be drastically tarnished. To quote Jonathan K. Nelson and Richard J. Zeckhauser, "If the three prime elements of real estate are location, location, location, those for patronage are audience, audience, audience."¹⁵ Camillo appeals to his audiences by commissioning large,

¹⁴ Pamela M. Jones, *Altarpieces and Their Viewers in the Churches of Rome From Caravaggio to Guido Reni* (Burlington: Ashgate, 2008), 1-2.

¹⁵ Jonathan K. Nelson and Richard J. Zeckhauser, *The Patron's Payoff: Conspicuous Commissions in Italian Renaissance Art* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008), 28-29.

fantastic works from well known and accomplished artists—the exception lies with Cafà, who had not produced any marble works prior to *Sant’Eustachio*.

Cafà’s Career and Camillo’s Ulterior Agendas

Under both Innocent X and Prince Camillo Pamphilj, most of Rome’s top artists and architects contributed to Sant’Agnese, including Francesco Borromini, Carlo Rainaldi, Pietro da Cortona, Alessandro Algardi, Domenico Guidi, Antonio Raggi, Ercole Ferrata, and others. Amidst these established artisans lies Cafà, a young sculptor who had never attempted a work as ambitious or conspicuous as *Sant’Eustachio*. What circumstances brought Cafà into this group of established sculptors and architects, besides Camillo’s admiration of his modeling skills? Clearly there is more than meets the eye in this situation; Camillo must have had a more ambitious goal in mind when he hired Cafà. There are two likely possibilities that might have prompted Camillo to place Cafà within this collection of sculptors—one invested, long-term reason, and one practical, short-term reason.

The long-term possibility has been discussed at length in the previous chapter; that is, Camillo envisioned that his early patronage of a young, immensely talented sculptor would allow Cafà’s career to take off, creating an opportunity for Camillo’s social status to also increase—as Cafà’s name became well-known, Camillo would receive significant credit for finding and cultivating Cafà’s talents into such a great success. More immediately, however, Camillo was narrowing down his selection for another sculptural project he was commissioning, that is, the *San Tommaso da Villanova*

altarpiece for the Pamphilj Chapel in the church of Sant'Agostino, practically around the corner from Sant'Agnese and Piazza Navona, and right in the middle of Pamphilj territory. Indeed, the 1661 contract for Camillo's architect Maria Giovanni Baratta states that the *San Tommaso* altarpiece was to be carved by one of the sculptors that had been hired for the central reliefs in Sant'Agnese.¹⁶ While it is possible Camillo insisted on these requirements after he had already hired the sculptors for Sant'Agnese, his involved nature and connoisseurial pride makes this highly unlikely. Instead, it is more likely that Camillo commissioned the relief sculptors for Sant'Agnese with the intention of evaluating each sculptor and their work for the honor to win the Sant'Agostino commission. The large Pamphilj Chapel in Sant'Agostino sits directly to the left of the high altar, and is thus an extremely high-profile religious and artistic space.

Of course, as the Pamphilj family church, Sant'Agnese is justifiably the more prestigious church in which to create an altarpiece. However, this does not discount the elements of competition fostered in Sant'Agnese, particularly as this competition pointedly excluded the dominant sculptor Bernini. In fact, the closest Bernini came to participating in the artistic projects for Sant'Agnese is in the piazza outside of the church, with his *Fontana dei Quattro Fiumi* (fig. 14). A monumental work, to be sure, yet commissioned from Innocent X, not Camillo, of whom there are no records or indications that he pursued Bernini to create any works for the interior of Sant'Agnese. Therefore,

¹⁶ Jörg Garms et. al, "Roma 1660–1864. Cappella di San Tommaso da Villanova in San Agostino di Roma. Scaff. 88, N. 5, Int. 8., 440," in *Quellen aus dem Archiv Doria-Pamphilj zur Kunsttätigkeit in Rom unter Innocenz X* (Rom-Wein: Des Österreichischen Kulturinstituts in Rom, 1972), 99. "...e di far fare le statue principali da uno delli *Quattro chef* anno el avorano li 4 bassi rilievi che vanno nel tempio di S. Agnese...."

the competitive elements cannot be discounted simply because Sant'Agostino was a "lesser" prize for the Sant'Agnese sculptors—and certainly, the *San Tommaso* project was prestigious in its own right, and at the very least, guaranteed a few years of work for the sculptor who won the commission.

Indeed, bringing together a group of top sculptors that omits Bernini is significant, particularly as Camillo intended to choose one of the chosen artists to execute the *San Tommaso* altarpiece. While no conclusive arguments on this matter can be determined, as we have no written documentation concerning Camillo's precise reasoning for Bernini's exclusion, it seems to suggest not only that Camillo intended to foster a competitive environment *without* Bernini, but that, in fact, the presence of the ubiquitous sculptor was entirely unnecessary to produce works of the highest quality.

However, Camillo did not have the opportunity to compare the four works in their completed state, as *Sant'Eustachio* was completed after both Cafà's and Camillo's death. Yet, something in Cafà's design appealed to Camillo, as the young sculptor was chosen to execute the *San Tommaso* altarpiece. Whether Camillo was motivated by personal gain or aesthetic preference, Cafà won the commission between three other talented and established sculptors—no small feat for an unproven newcomer to the artistic scene in Rome.

The Chapel of San Tommaso da Villanova

The construction and decoration of the *San Tommaso da Villanova* chapel (fig. 2) was not a novel addition dreamed up by Camillo Pamphilj and the Augustinian order, as the chapel to St. Thomas had been consecrated approximately forty-five years earlier, when the saint was beatified in 1618.¹⁷ A new altar was dedicated to the saint when he was canonized in 1658, and a painted altarpiece by Giovanni Francesco Romanelli depicting St. Thomas distributing alms to Charity was placed in the chapel.¹⁸ However, the altar must have been unsatisfactory in some way, as the Augustinians were ordered to destroy and rebuild the altar after an Apostolic visit in January 1660.¹⁹ Instead of asking Pope Alexander VII for funds to accomplish this very expensive task, the prior of the order turned instead to Camillo Pamphilj, a proven patron of the Augustinians through his financial support in decorating the church of S. Nicola da Tolentino in 1651.²⁰

This chapel was particularly significant to the Augustinians for a number of reasons. Firstly, by the sixteenth-century, Sant'Agostino was an established church on the pilgrimage route through Rome.²¹ The church received a high volume of pilgrims, particularly during Jubilee years, and was thus held to high standards in its presentation of piety. This included appropriate and accessible interiors within the church; for the Augustinian order this included works of art that emphasized their core beliefs of

¹⁷ Rudolf Preimesberger and Mark Weil, "The Pamphili Chapel in Sant'Agostino," *Römisches Jahrbuch für Kunstgeschichte* 15 (1975): 186.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 186-187, 189.

²¹ Jones, *Altarpieces and Their Viewers*, 79, 108.

humility, poverty, and charity.²² Thus, St. Thomas was particularly significant to the Augustinians, as he lived his life governed by these characteristics.²³ Consequently, the chapel dedicated to St. Thomas had to effectively highlight his importance, a task that was apparently unfulfilled in the pre-Pamphilj Chapel, evident by the Apostolic Order to redesign and redecorate the entire structure. All this to say, a significant amount of pressure rested on Camillo to improve the chapel this second time around, and his choices in architects and artists were absolutely crucial.

Camillo officially agreed to fund the redecoration of the chapel in May 1660.²⁴ By mid-April 1661, a contract with a design for the chapel was agreed upon between Camillo and Giovanni Maria Baratta, the latter of whom was charged with supervising the construction of the entire chapel.²⁵ Baratta's design for the altarpiece included "...to make the base reliefs of the Eternal Father and angels and putti with the statue of St. Thomas, and another figure denoting Charity with two children, one in her arm and the other larger boy by the hand that asks for charity kneeling to the right of the Saint," (fig. 22).²⁶ It is important to note here that this stipulation indicates the basic design of the altarpiece was constructed by Baratta and approved by Camillo *before* Cafà was brought

²² Ibid., 76, 105.

²³ Ibid., 76.

²⁴ Preimesberger and Weil, "The Pamphili Chapel," 186-187.

²⁵ Ibid., 188.

²⁶ Garms, *Quellem aus dem Archiv*, 99. "...far fare i bassi rilievi del Padre Eterno, et angeli e putti con la statua di S. Tommaso et un'altra figura denotante la Carità con due bambini, uno in braccio e l'altro più grandicello per mano, che diedo la Carità à detto Santo in ginocchioni...." On the Rossi engraving: while no physical drawing or model of Baratta's original design exist today, Rossi's engraving is an approximation of what the chapel looked like in the mid- to late-seventeenth-century. As the altarpiece in Rossi's engraving and the marble work installed in the niche today are the same, and they match the textual description set in the 1661 contract, we must assume that this composition reflects Baratta's design.

in to sculpt the work. This was typical for large projects such as the decoration of an entire chapel or church; Cafà also followed the direction of the architect Carlo Rainaldi for the *Gloria* in the high altar the church of Santa Maria in Campitelli.²⁷

Cafà was expected to follow Baratta's specifications precisely, especially as Camillo had already sanctioned the design. However, evidence strongly suggests Cafà *did* change the pre-approved design, most obviously by adding more figures—a richly complicated series of events that will be discussed in detail later on this chapter. For now, it should be recognized that this contract between Camillo and Baratta illustrates Camillo's firm control over the commission. The contract dictated the execution and design of the chapel was to follow two Camillo-approved drawings by Baratta, and that then a wooden model must be made and approved by the patron before any work could begin.²⁸

As stated earlier, Baratta was required to choose an artist from the pool of sculptors who produced the reliefs at Sant'Agnese. While it is unclear if Camillo suggested or required Baratta to choose Cafà, the patron's persistent participation in every aspect of his artistic projects suggests the unlikely possibility that Baratta could have hired Cafà for the altarpiece without some type of prior approval from Camillo.²⁹

²⁷ Jennifer Montagu, "Architects and Sculptors in Rome," in *Bollettino: del Centro Internazionale di Studi di Architettura, Andrea Palladio: Andrea Palladio e l'Architettura Italiana del Seicento* (Vicenza: Palazzo Valmarana, 1981), 78-79.

²⁸ Preimesberger and Weil, "The Pamphili Chapel," 188. Garms, *Quellem aus dem Archiv*, 99. "Arbeit nach disegni Barattas und mettermi le pietre in conformità del modello di legno da farsi dal detto Baratta con le sue statue di creta et angeli di cera rossa,..."

²⁹ Preimesberger and Weil, "The Pamphili Chapel," 188. This theory is supported in a contract dated May 1661, in which Baratta commissioned the sculptor Giuseppe Peroni to carve the statues of God and the angels that adorn the area above altar. Peroni was required to make small and large models according to Baratta's designs, and then these models had to meet the approval

The Pamphilj prince discussed the structure and design of the entire chapel with both Baratta and Pietro da Cortona, the latter of whom most likely acted as Alexander VII's agent.³⁰ In fact, the design and execution of the altarpiece was subject to particularly stringent regulations, and the design required the approval not only from Camillo, but from the pope as well, as the altarpiece depicted a recently canonized saint.³¹ A model for the altarpiece was sent to the pope for approval in July 1661, as the basic composition had to be approved by all parties before Cafà would be allowed to create his own models.³²

The San Tommaso da Villanova bozzetto, modello, and print

By 1663, a full-sized stucco model of the *San Tommaso* altarpiece according to Baratta's design was installed in the chapel niche, although it is unclear who actually created the model.³³ Most likely, Cafà or someone from Ferrata's workshop created the stucco model following Baratta's patron-approved design, which included the figures of St. Thomas, Charity, and two children. Although the stucco model no longer exists, we can assume the model resembles the executed marble altarpiece that can be seen today, as

of Camillo before construction on the altar could begin. If Camillo took such care to approve a work that was to flank the altarpiece itself, it naturally follows that Camillo took particular care and interest in who was charged with the altarpiece, and how he intended to carve the work according to Baratta's designs.

³⁰ Ibid., 191. Pietro da Cortona also worked on Sant' Agnese in Agone, and thus there may be some deeper connections between the architect and Camillo in relation to the Sant' Agostino altarpiece, however, no noticeable links have been discovered that might further explain how these two men interacted in relation to this work. This would be a richly fascinating project to research, however, as it does not directly pertain to this paper, I do not wish to do this topic a disservice by attempting to sum it up in such a small paragraph here.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Ibid.

³³ Ibid., 195.

what currently sits in the niche exactly matches Baratta's descriptions of his design from the April 1661 contract, and evidence suggests the design reverted back to the original composition after the death of Camillo and Cafà—these events leading up to the changes in design will be discussed in detail later on.

For now, it is important to note that it was *after* the full-sized model was sculpted and placed in the chapel that Cafà sculpted a new *bozzetto* with an alternative composition (fig. 23), changing multiple aspects of the sculpture. In Cafà's *bozzetto*, St. Thomas stands in a dynamic contrapposto on a pedestal, offering alms to the allegorical figure of Charity with his right hand, and holds his vestments back with his left. His body turns towards the viewer, and although his head turns towards Charity, his gaze is somewhat ambiguous, as if he is captured in the moment just before he looks up towards the viewer. This ambiguity allows the viewer to connect with the sculpture, as this interaction extends the narrative of the altarpiece directly to the viewer; the work does not exist within itself, but instead includes the viewer in its design.

Cafà's Charity turns her body towards the viewer, allowing the viewer to engage with her body and her actions. As her right hand extends towards the saint distributing alms, her left arm holds a small child to her breast, an iconographic requirement for the allegorical figure of Charity. Two slightly older children are placed next to Charity, with the eldest child extending her arms towards St. Thomas. This action is sculpted in a brilliantly ambiguous way—is the child reaching towards the alms the saint is offering, or is she asking to be held, holding her arms up as toddlers tend to do when they want “up”? In suggesting the child is familiar and playful with St. Thomas, her tender action

humanizes the saint and creates an opportunity for emotional and personal connections between the viewer and the saint. Cafà's treatment of the figures consciously works to create opportunities of interaction between the altarpiece and the viewer. This critical quality is lost in the marble product completed by Ferrata; a beautiful work, but one that exists inclusively within itself, and does not approach or invite the viewer into its narrative.

The composition of Cafà's *bozzetto* leads the eye upwards, emphasizing the saint as the main figure of the altarpiece. The motion of the *bozzetto* begins with the young child sitting on the base and the toddler reaching towards the saint, seamlessly moves through Charity's extended arm to the saint's hand, and concludes at the tip of the his hat. This flowing motion is emphasized in the billowing fabrics on the figures, which balances Thomas's leaning contrapposto with Charity's semi-kneeling position below the saint. The viewer can almost feel the density of the fabrics, from Thomas's heavy vestments to Charity's flowing veil that wisps over her shoulders, effortlessly blending with the loose cloths that wrap around the children and the base of the sculpture. Both St. Thomas and Charity have slightly elongated bodies, a distinctive characteristic of Cafà's figures evident in his other works, including *Santa Caterina da Siena a Monte Magnanapoli* and *Santa Rosa da Lima*.

Cafà's *San Tommaso bozzetto* was admired to such an extent during his own lifetime that the work was preserved and remains in surprisingly remarkable condition, indicating the terracotta was handled with unusual care. As stated in the previous chapter, while *bozzetti* were beginning to be recognized more and more as art objects in this time

period, they primarily persisted as tools for study and creation—a step in the artistic process that typically did not warrant preservation or much value.³⁴ Yet, Cafà's *bozzetti* were regularly preserved.³⁵ Beyond a testament for the respect Cafà earned for his singular talents in sculpting *bozzetti*, this indicates a *purpose* for the *San Tommaso bozzetto*; most likely to serve as a basis for a *modello* for the altarpiece.

Not only did Cafà completely reimagine the sculpture, but he also envisioned a new design for the entire chapel, which is preserved in a print by Pietro del Po of the chapel according to Cafà's visions (fig. 24).³⁶ The print follows the composition of Cafà's *bozzetto* for the altarpiece exactly, and places the sculpture in a more ornate and detailed niche than what can be seen today in Sant'Agostino. In the print, putti holding a banner proclaiming "*In foraminibus petrae fouet viscera caritatis*" adorn the arch of the niche, and garlands most likely made of marble or stucco hang off the edges of the pediments.³⁷ The structural aspects of the niche are fairly simple, with no outstanding architectural elements that might distract from the altarpiece and sculptural details. An inscription dedicating the print to Camillo Pamphilj is written on the base of the sculpture, stating:

³⁴ For more information on *bozzetti* and their uses, see: Maria Giulia Barberini, "Base or Noble Material? Clay Sculpture in Seventeenth- and Eighteenth-Century Italy," in *Earth and Fire: Italian Terracotta Sculpture from Donatello to Canova*, ed. Bruce Boucher (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001).

³⁵ Rudolf Wittkower, "Melchiorre Cafà's Bust of Alexander VII," *The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin* 17.8 (1959): 198. Not only was Cafà's terracotta bust of Alexander VII preserved by the Chigi family, but it was proudly displayed by Flavio Chigi in the Palazzo Chigi at Ariccia, where it can still be seen today.

³⁶ Preimesberger and Weil, "The Pamphili Chapel," 195.

³⁷ This phrase loosely translates to, "In the cleft of rocks supports Charity's ways." The significance of this passage will be discussed later on in this chapter.

*Illustrissimo et excellentissimo Principe D. Camillo Pamphilio Benefactori. In compta hec Thomas effigies si debilis arte est Redditur Auspicij clara Camille tuis. Hanc ut Relligio, et Pietas candoribus augent, Sic refovet radius alma Columba suis.*³⁸

Cafà's name is written below the inscription, and the engraver Pietro del Po's name is inscribed in the bottom right corner of the print. However, despite the seemingly straightforward attributions—Camillo as the benefactor, Cafà the artist, and Po the engraver, the reality of the circumstances are quite murky, leaving many aspects of the work open for discussion and analysis.

The print presents a complicated issue, as there are a number of unknown factors in its commission, patronage, and reception. Firstly, it is important to determine what is known. The identifiable factual elements concerning the *San Tommaso* altarpiece are as follows:

1. Cafà sculpted the *San Tommaso da Villanova bozzetto* between July and October of 1663, after a full-sized stucco model of a different design was installed in the chapel niche.³⁹
2. A contract from October 1663 cites a new design for the chapel. Camillo's agent, Baratta, commissioned Cafà to sculpt this new design, which according to Cafà, would be composed as such: "...to make the statue of St. Thomas of Villanova with all of the figures representing his

³⁸ Preimesberger and Weil, "The Pamphili Chapel," 32n, 195. I am indebted to these authors for deciphering and expanding the Latin inscription on the engraving, allowing me to translate the text: "*Illustrious and most excellent benefactor Prince Camillo Pamphili. The Thomas statue dressed in this art is there crippled if it becomes clear to your auspicious Camillo. To this religion, compassion marked in beauty increased, Thus fosters the spirit of the nurturing ray of the dove.*"

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 195.

charity, made for the most Excellent Prince Don Camillo Pamphili for the altar of the aforementioned saint in the Church of Sant' Agostino, according to the model already made, or in other best forms and manner as will most likely please the aforementioned Excellent Prince....”⁴⁰

3. Pietro del Po engraved a print depicting Cafà's *bozzetto* as the altarpiece placed in an alternate design of the Pamphilj Chapel. This print names Camillo Pamphili as the benefactor, and Melchiorre Cafà as the inventor: “*Melchior Gafa invenit delineavit dicavit.*”

Without the print, Cafà's *bozzetto* might be considered simply an alternate design that was rejected by the patron, as Cafà's composition was not used in the final marble sculpture. However, the print throws a historical wrench in the project, presenting a number of difficult questions to answer about the work, sculptor, and patron. These questions have yet to be asked in any academic capacity, and thus will be addressed here.

The Historical Place of the Print

Preimesberger and Weil argue that in the end, both Cafà and Ferrata were required to conform to Baratta's original design and composition.⁴¹ The basis for this argument rests on the ambiguous wording in the October 1663 contract that required Cafà to follow the “model” provided; however, as has already been discussed, it is unclear

⁴⁰ Ibid. “...di fare la statue di San Tommaso di Villanova con tutte le figure che rappresentano la Carità, che a fare l'Eccellentissimo Signor Prencipe Don Camilo Pamphilio per l'altare di detto Santo nella Chiesa di S. Agostino, conforme al modello già fatto, o in altra miglio forma e modo come più piacerà al detto Eccellentissimo Signor Prencipe....”

⁴¹ Ibid. 197.

whose model the contract refers to—Baratta’s, or Cafà’s? They also argue the cost of Cafà’s design would have been much too great, and Camillo would not have approved the extra expenses. However, Camillo had a history of commissioning works and paying for projects that he did not have the funds for.⁴² While this is not necessarily an attractive quality for an art patron to possess, it does offer something against the argument that Camillo would have considered an increase in cost as a significant deterrent for a sculptural project. In reality, this would most likely be at the bottom of Camillo’s list of priorities in commissioning a work, particularly one that so strongly reflected his reputation as an art patron.

Moreover, the existence of the print once again creates conflict, as it indicates *some* type of significance was found in Cafà’s *bozzetto*. As has already been established, Camillo was an involved and particular patron, with a controlling attentiveness in the projects he commissioned. Therefore, it is highly unlikely Cafà would have been allowed to begin sculpting the full-sized marble altarpiece without Camillo’s explicit approval of every detail. With this in mind, the existence and preservation of Cafà’s *San Tommaso bozzetto*, along with the print dedicated to Camillo Pamphilj as the benefactor of the

⁴² Joseph Connors, “S. Andrea al Quirinale: Payments and Planning,” *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 41 (1982): 20-21. As mentioned in a previous chapter, at times Camillo avoided paying for the construction of San Andrea al Quirinale: “More specifically, when the foundations came to be laid, the walls built, and the vault closed all this work was carried out on the basis of Jesuit loans. Camillo often promised to cover these debts but apparently never did.... Camillo’s gifts were often earmarked for marbles or for the stucco decorations, and when short of funds he sold off silver vessels from the family patrimony, as though his instinct was to finance the creation of one luxury product by the disposal of another.”

altarpiece and chapel, provides substantial support for the argument that Cafà's new design was approved and agreed upon by Camillo.⁴³

Unfortunately for Cafà, Camillo, and the chapel itself, the men passed away before the chapel could be completed. After Camillo died in July 1666, his son Giovanni Battista Pamphilj took over all of his father's commissions and projects.⁴⁴ When Cafà died a little over a year later in September 1667, he had completed the marble figure of St. Thomas, but had only roughed out the figure of Charity, and had not begun any work on the children.⁴⁵ Ercole Ferrata then took over the commission, completing the sculpture by the summer of 1669, when the marble work was finally installed in the niche over the altar.⁴⁶

Because Cafà only completed the figure of St. Thomas, it is difficult to definitively determine whether Cafà followed his own composition based on his *bozzetto*, or if he followed the design agreed upon by Baratta and Camillo. Tellingly, though, the

⁴³ That said, it is important to remember that whether the print confirms that Cafà's composition was definitively chosen as the new design for the chapel can probably never be absolutely determined, at least with the documentation and evidence currently available.

⁴⁴ Preimesberger and Weil, "Sant'Agostino Chapel," 196.

⁴⁵ Ibid. Giovanni Battista Pamphilj's haste to complete Camillo's outstanding projects also accounts for the changes in design in the *Sant'Eustachio* relief, as Cafà had only completed the figure of St. Eustace. Ercole Ferrata finished the relief, only loosely following Cafà's designs evident in existing *bozzetti* and *modelli*. Most likely, Giovanni Battista required Ferrata to complete the relief as quickly as possible to save money, which resulted in fewer figures and details.

⁴⁶ Ibid. Nicola Pio, *Le Vite di Pittori, Scultori et Architetti*, ed. Catherine Engass and Robert Engass (Città del Vaticano: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 1977), 203. "*Et in Sant'Agostino terminò la statua del S. Tommaso di Villanova nella cappella della crociata a mano destra dell'altar principale, de' signori Panfilij, principiata e non finita per causa di morte di Melchior Maltese...*" (And in Sant'Agostino he completed the statue of S. Tommaso di Villanova in the chapel of the cross on the right hand side of the high altar, of Signore Pamphilj, begun but not completed by Melchiorre Maltese because of his death...)

figure of St. Thomas is practically identical in the *bozzetto*, the print, and the marble version; indeed, the variations among them are so small they are most likely due to fluctuations from a change in medium, rather than an intentional change in design. In fact, it seems the marble St. Thomas is derived from the St. Thomas *bozzetto*, indicating Cafà was following his own original design, rather than Baratta's. Cafà considerably changed Baratta's design in his *bozzetto*, evident in the obviously varied figures of Charity and her children. It would follow then, that Cafà would have most likely changed the figure of St. Thomas, as well. However, as the saint remains constant throughout the three works, it is probable that Cafà executed the marble sculpture according to the composition of his *bozzetto*; if he were *not* following his *bozzetto* design, then the figure of St. Thomas would most likely look different from the version seen in the *bozzetto*, the print, and the marble sculpture.

Therefore, considering the timeline of the production of these works, Cafà's unique relationship with Camillo, and the suggestion of a change in design written in the October 1663 contract, there are two likely scenarios that allow for these sequences of events and the existence of all of the artistic works to co-exist: either Camillo commissioned the print, or Cafà himself commissioned his friend Pietro del Po to create the print according to his own design. As we shall see, both of these scenarios illustrate Camillo's strong support of Cafà as a budding sculptor under his direct patronage.

Scenario One: Camillo Pamphilj, Patron Extraordinaire

It has been noted in the previous chapter that Camillo Pamphilj was particularly involved in his artistic projects, habitually checking the work and progress of the artists he hired, and requiring all changes in design or execution to be approved by him first. Therefore, the change in design indicated in the October 1663 contract is extremely significant and quite atypical for Camillo as a patron; not only had Baratta's design already been approved, but a full-sized stucco model following Baratta's design had been created and placed inside the niche in preparation for the creation of the marble sculpture.⁴⁷

Unfortunately, the wording in the contract is ambiguous, requiring Cafà to create the sculpture according to "the model already made," which could refer to either the full-sized stucco model *or* Cafà's *bozzetto*. The next phrase is similarly vague, stating, "...or in another, better form or mode that is more pleasing to the most Excellent Prince...."⁴⁸ Which form might be better and more pleasing to Camillo: the stucco model, or Cafà's *bozzetto*? It is highly unlikely the requirement that the sculpture should be pleasing to Camillo gave Cafà complete artistic freedom to execute the altarpiece as he saw fit; the Pamphilj prince was much too controlling a patron to permit this. Again, were it not for the existence of the print, one could easily assume the "model" and "form" refer to the stucco model executed under Baratta's design. However, Po's print with Cafà's *bozzetto*

⁴⁷ Preimesberger and Weil, "The Pamphili Chapel," 195.

⁴⁸ Ibid., "... o in altra miglio forma e modo come più piacerà al detto Eccellentissimo Signor Prencipe...."

disrupts this narrative, and supports the possibility that the more pleasing model might refer to Cafà's *bozzetto*, instead.

If the contract indeed instructs the altarpiece to follow the design of Cafà's *bozzetto*, then it is possible Camillo commissioned the print himself, allowing him to see Cafà's complete project for the chapel before agreeing to divert from Baratta's original design. Camillo is named as the "benefactor" in the inscription, a rather vague term that offers no concrete suggestion as to what his role was in the production of the print, or if he had any control in its production at all. It might refer to his role as the benefactor of the chapel as a whole, or it could possibly serve to acknowledge his role the patron who commissioned the print.

If Camillo did indeed commission the print, he reaped the benefit of multiple positive consequences. For instance, a print of the Pamphilj Chapel allowed for an easily distributable presentation of Cafà's talents in *disegno*. This would have been an extremely enticing opportunity for Camillo, as it provided an opportunity to circulate the promise of Cafà as his superstar-in-the-making among high-end patrons. Projects like the construction and decoration of chapels often took an extraordinary amount of time, and by commissioning a print, Camillo did not have to wait for the pay-off of the completion of the chapel to showcase his wealth and connoisseurial skills and Cafà as his luminary; with a print he could exhibit those glories quickly and efficiently. More broadly, the print could then be disseminated to a geographically diverse public, and people would not have to travel to Rome in order to view the altarpiece. Keith Sciberras comes to a similar conclusion in his essay "Melchiorre Cafà: Maltese Genius of the Roman Baroque,"

arguing Camillo was so impressed by Cafà's *bozzetto* that he commissioned the print himself, which served to show a "new stylistic approach to the public."⁴⁹ In essence, Camillo used the print as visual proof of his superstar-in-the-making's talents and *disegno*, and to increase Cafà's exposure in the city, as prints were easily circulated.⁵⁰

Additionally, the print explicitly specified Cafà as the artist and Camillo as the patron, details that go largely unrepresented in the chapel itself; the Pamphilj name is not inscribed anywhere, and Cafà's altarpiece remains unsigned. While seventeenth-century viewers, particularly those of a higher class, would most likely know who patronized the chapel, there was no guarantee that viewers would always know or remember who was responsible for the chapel's creation and decoration. Commissioning a print that clearly attributed Camillo as the "benefactor" and Cafà as the "inventor" could potentially greatly speed up the process of Camillo creating a recognized, "name-brand" sculptor attached to his family name, while simultaneously publicizing his grand and generous acts as a patron to both Cafà and the Augustinians.

One must also consider the inscriptions in both the print and the chapel niche, as they indicate Camillo's direct involvement in commissioning the print. The print has two inscriptions; one short superscription fluttering in the banner above St. Thomas' head, and one longer subscription written on the base of the sculpture beneath Charity and her children. The superscription reads, "*In foraminibus petrae fouet viscera caritas,*" which loosely translates to "In the cleft of rocks supports Charity's ways." This phrase serves a

⁴⁹ Sciberras, "Melchiorre Cafà," 5-6.

⁵⁰ There is no data or research that gives any indication to how many prints were made of Po's engraving, nor if the print was intended for a private or public audience.

dual purpose: Firstly, it refers to a verse in the biblical book Song of Solomon: “My dove in the clefts of the rock, in the hollow places of the wall, show me your face, let thy voice sound in my ears, for thy voice is sweet, and thy countenance is comely.”⁵¹ The implied reference to the Pamphilj family reveals itself in the words “O my dove,” as the Pamphilj family symbol of the dove often adorned their art and architectural commissions.

However, in the superscription, “Charity” replaces the dove, implying that the Pamphilj are so charitable that they themselves could stand in for the allegorical figure. Secondly, this phrase may refer to the sculptural altarpiece itself; “In the cleft of *rocks* supports Charity’s ways,” emphasizing St. Thomas’ charitable and humble affectations, while simultaneously implying that Camillo’s commission of the marble altarpiece is a direct form of charity.

Interestingly, the subscription below the figures in the print ends with the phrase, “*Sic refovet radius alma Columba suis,*” which loosely translates to “Thus fosters the spirit of the nurturing ray of the dove,” connecting the two inscriptions together by explicitly referencing the Pamphilj dove, and essentially filling in the implicit reference exhibited in the superscription. These phrases are literary inventions and not Biblical quotes, indicating that significant time and forethought went into devising these original texts. In addition, it adds an intellectual and literary quality to complement the visual components of the print. In short, the connection between the two phrases implies someone involved in the ideological conceptions of the chapel conceived the print at a

⁵¹ Song of Solomon 2:14 (Vulgate). “*Columba mea in foraminibus petrae in caverna maceriae/ Ostende mihi faciem tuam sonet vox tua in auribus meis/ vox enim tua dulcis et facies tua decora.*”

higher level by including this intricate reference to the Pamphilj family. The most likely candidate for this task is, of course, Camillo himself.

What makes this authorship so appealing has to do with the small plaque that sits directly above the marble altarpiece in the Pamphilj Chapel. The plaque reads, “*In foraminibus petrae fouet viscera caritas,*” which exactly matches the superscription in Cafà’s print. The repetition of this phrase in both the print and the chapel strongly supports the theory that Camillo not only aware of and approved of Cafà’s designs for the chapel, but that he was intimately involved with the formation of the print itself, as evidently multiple elements from Cafà’s print survives in the chapel.

Camillo’s literary complement to Cafà’s designs further supports the idea that the Pamphilj prince intended to groom Cafà as a superstar of his own making. Accomplished artists of this time were expected to have some type of intellectual background, including some understanding of Latin, and knowledge of antique art, texts, and philosophies in order to synthesize them with contemporary sources (although this was largely an *ideal* for an artist, rather than a representative reality).⁵² Artists could learn these things by reading canonical ancient texts that often provided the subject matter of paintings and sculptures—works by Vitruvius, Homer, Virgil, Livy, Plutarch, and the Bible.⁵³

⁵² On expectations of the artist: Ann Thomas Wilkins, “Bernini and Ovid: Expanding the Concept of Metamorphosis,” *International Journal of the Classical Tradition* 6.3 (2000): 400. On artists’ education: Heiko Damm, *The Artist as Reader: on the Education and Non-Education of Early Modern Artists* (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 7-8. An artist’s theoretical and literary education came not only from affluent patrons; many artists in this century had libraries of their own from which they educated themselves, including Alessandro Algardi. Of course, there is no way of telling if Cafà had access to Algardi’s books through Ferrata’s inherited workshop—most likely not. The likelihood of Cafà knowing any Latin at all is quite slim, and no evidence exists to suggest that the sculptor was particularly learned in writings on antiquity, art, or religion.

⁵³ Damm, *The Artist as Reader*, 12.

However, not every artist had access to these types of texts, and thus patrons sometimes contributed to the intellectual backbone of an artwork.

For instance, Cardinal Maffeo Barberini, the future Pope Urban VIII, supported Bernini in this way early on in the sculptor's career, notably seen through the epigram on the base of the *Apollo and Daphne* sculpture commissioned by Cardinal Scipione Borghese (fig. 25).⁵⁴ The textual component added to the complexity of the work, balancing the simultaneously momentous and delicate sculpture with a, "reassuring textual definition of the piece that relegated the lifelike excess of the sculpture to the realm of visual experience" (fig. 26).⁵⁵ Maffeo showed clear interest in Bernini's talents from the beginning of his career; indeed, he was not the patron of the *Apollo and Daphne*, yet he became an ardently involved participant in the project. Bernini would go on to continue working for Urban throughout his reign, and the Barberini name would endure through Bernini's works—even in works not commissioned by the Barberini, evident in *Apollo and Daphne*.

Therefore, considering Camillo's involvement in providing the inscriptions for Cafà's print, it seems that the Pamphilj prince intended to invoke the same type of patron-artist relationship of Urban VIII and Bernini. In contributing a complex textual element to Cafà's design, Camillo not only enforced his association with and support of the sculptor, but he also perpetuated the notion that he himself *actively cultivated* the sculptural *and* intellectual components of Cafà's career. Now, whether Camillo actually taught or

⁵⁴ Genevieve Warwick, "Speaking Statues: Bernini's *Apollo and Daphne* at the Villa Borghese," *Art History*, 27.3 (2004): 357-359. The Latin epigram translates to, "The lover, who would fleeting beauty clasp / Finds bitter fruit, dry leaves are all he'll grasp."

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 360.

refined Cafà's literary and theoretical strengths is impossible to determine, as we do not know if Camillo consulted Cafà when writing the inscriptions, or if he developed them on his own and simply handed them off to the sculptor to include in the print. However, it aided both parties for Cafà to *appear* intellectual in his sculptural designs.

Nevertheless, even considering all of these factors that strongly support Camillo's patronage of Cafà's print, certain problems remain. For instance, in commissioning a print of Cafà's designs, Camillo would be going to quite considerable lengths simply to boast of Cafà's talents and the intended grandeur of the Pamphilj Chapel in Sant'Agostino. Is this enough incentive to commission a print from Pietro del Po? Quite possibly, although this would be Camillo's first instance of commissioning a print for this purpose. Additionally, Camillo's choice of engraver adds intrigue, as there seem to be no prior connections between Camillo and Po, save for one—Cafà and Pietro were friends.⁵⁶ While it is possible Cafà suggested Po as a candidate to create the print for Camillo, Cafà's strong connection with Po also presents another scenario, in which Cafà himself commissioned the print from Po.

⁵⁶ Edward Sammut, "Melchior Gafa': Maltese Sculptor of the Baroque," *Scientia* 23 (1957): 129. "A few days before Melchior's death came a final characteristic gesture. The sculptor, then in his thirtyfirst [sic] year, was elected to the *Principata* of the Academy of St. Luke, a much coveted post which had always been held by one of the foremost artists of the day, and refused to accept it. To quote Missirini, historian of the Academy, '*era tutto staccato dalla presunzione e dall'interesse: sprezzatore delle grandezze, degli onori, fugli a grado rinunciare il Principato Accademico*'. As a result, he was ordered to pay a fine, which he did through his friend Pietro del Po on the 14th August, 1667."

Scenario Two: Melchiorre Cafà, Entrepreneurial Self-Starter

There are a number of reasons to believe that Cafà may have commissioned Pietro del Po to engrave his *bozzetto* and chapel design in a print dedicated to Camillo Pamphilj. These reasons are supported through Cafà's friendship with Po, his clear dissatisfaction with the design of the full-sized stucco model, and his unique relationship with Camillo, which may have been more progressive than originally thought.

Beginning most notably with Raphael in the early sixteenth-century, various Italian artists had prints made after their designs for profit, and to promulgate their name, talents, and status.⁵⁷ Often, artists would partner with engravers in mutually beneficial collaborations that brought social and economic benefits to both parties.⁵⁸ Indeed, particularly skilled draftsmen like Cafà were at a distinct advantage in creating designs for prints, as their inventions typically “translated” more easily into an engraved form.⁵⁹ Therefore, it is quite within the realm of possibility for Cafà to partner with his friend and engraver, Pietro del Po, to create the *San Tommaso* print.⁶⁰ In 1663 Cafà was still relatively new to Rome, and working to establish his name as a sculptor in the city. It is unlikely he would have had the funds or social clout to commission a print from a well-established printmaker; besides, with a friend in the business of engraving, it logically follows that Cafà would seek out a partnership with Po.

⁵⁷ Sharon Gregory, *Vasari and the Renaissance Print* (Surrey and Burlington: Ashgate, 2012), 286, 294. Examples of artists who used prints as a means of self-promotion include Raphael, Giulio Romano, Baccio Bandinelli, and Fiorentino Rosso.

⁵⁸ Christopher L.C.E. Witcombe, *Copyright in the Renaissance: Prints and the Privilegio in sixteenth-century Venice and Rome* (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 14. The most notable Italian collaboration of painter and engraver is Raphael and Marcantonio Raimondi, whose relationship was somewhat tumultuous, but ultimately mutually beneficial.

⁵⁹ Gregory, *Vasari*, 289-290.

⁶⁰ Sammut, “Melchior Gafa’,” 129.

Why would Cafà go to the trouble of commissioning a print at all, though, if he had the *bozzetto* to show to Camillo? We have already seen that the sculptor's *bozzetti* were highly admired by Camillo, as he allegedly commissioned Cafà for the *Sant'Eustachio* relief in Sant'Agnese after seeing only his terracotta works. So why would Cafà go to the greater length of designing and commissioning a print? Firstly, the fact that Cafà sculpted a counter-design for the altarpiece after Baratta's Camillo-approved stucco model was created indicates his deep dissatisfaction with how the model looked, possibly even with how it interacted with the architecture and its audiences. If Cafà felt strongly enough to create and propose a new design in his *bozzetto*, then it is equally possible he extended this proposal by commissioning Po to engrave his entire vision for the chapel, including the altarpiece and its surrounding architecture. Additionally, a print of the chapel's design as a whole perhaps might serve as a "failsafe" for Cafà's reputation, as it preserved his designs in a way that the *bozzetto* could not, and could also be used or referenced in the event of Camillo's death.

Moreover, this would not be Cafà's first and last endeavor in designing an engraving, as there are at least two known examples of prints by Cafà's design.⁶¹ The first is a thesis broadsheet, also known as a "conclusion," that Cafà designed for Giovanni Francesco Rota's academic defense at the Dominican college in Rome in 1662 (fig. 27).⁶² Cafà's designs for prints exhibit his skills as a draftsman and as a sculptor; Louise Rice

⁶¹ Louise Rice, "Cafà's Conclusion," in *Melchiorre Cafà: Maltese Genius of the Roman Baroque*, ed. Keith Sciberras (Valletta, Malta: Midsea for the History of Art Programme, University of Malta, 2006), 140-141.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 139, 152. The prints for Antonio Gonzalez and Giovanni Francesco Rota were both Dominican commissions, emphasizing Cafà's strong connections and privileges with the order through his brother Giuseppe, who was a Dominican friar.

calls his conclusion design “a sculptor’s print,” demonstrating his proficiency in working in both two- and three-dimensional arts.⁶³ His conclusion print emphasizes the figures, and shows a considerable lack of interest in abiding inside the structural frames in place within the print. This adds a distinctly sculptural component to the print, as it creates an illusion of multi-dimensionality by implying the existence of elements *beyond* the frame and the image.

Additionally, in 1666 Cafà produced a design for a print for Antonio Gonzalez, a Peruvian Dominican friar in Rome to promote the beatification of St. Rosa (fig. 28).⁶⁴ The print, known as *Madonna and Child with five Peruvian Candidates for Sainthood*, once again exemplifies Cafà’s use of frame as a tool to expand the design beyond its assumed limits as a two-dimensional object.⁶⁵ Putti sit on top of and peak from behind the frame, while holding a large and unwieldy cloth that maneuvers around, behind, and in front of the frame itself. This casual, yet strategic disregard for enframed spaces is consistently seen in Cafà’s works, including *Santa Caterina a Monte Magnanapoli*, *Sant’Eustachio tra i leoni*, and the *San Tommaso* print, in which the figures and the sculptural decorations surrounding the niche seem to ignore implied spatial restrictions, instead spilling over borders and edges of the architecture.

The Chapel of San Tommaso da Villanova may have been the first print Cafà designed, but the rapid escalation of his artistic reputation, combined with his notable skills as a sculptor and draftsman, guaranteed that this print would not be Cafà’s last. As

⁶³ Ibid., 152.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 139.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 139-141.

his skills were already so highly reputable, and he had produced one print design by the time he began work on *San Tommaso*, it is possible Cafà envisioned the *San Tommaso* print as an illustrious and public way to illustrate to Camillo the superiority of his design over Baratta's. Indeed, in dedicating the print to Camillo as the "benefactor," it appears Cafà was bypassing Baratta completely as Camillo's agent, instead appealing directly to the patron. Whether through the *bozzetto* or through the print (or possibly both), Cafà's works seemed to sway Camillo's opinion, according to the implications in the change of design from the October 1663 contract.⁶⁶

Cafà may have been motivated by another, perhaps more pressing incentive to commission a print from Po—a reason of preservation rather than persuasion. Camillo Pamphilj died in July 1666, after which his son, Giovanni Battista, took over all of his father's projects and commissions.⁶⁷ Consequently, Cafà worked on the *San Tommaso* altarpiece under the patronage of Giovanni Battista for approximately one year before the sculptor's death in September 1667. Giovanni Battista was somewhat less devoted to his father's projects, and wanted to have everything completed as quickly and cost-efficiently as possible.⁶⁸ Thus, if Cafà had spent that time under Camillo's patronage designing and sculpting the marble altarpiece according to his own altered designs, it is possible

⁶⁶ There seems to be a missing piece of the artistic process that has not been addressed in academic research—that is, a drawing of the print by Cafà's hand. Of course, its existence is implied simply by the nature of printmaking, however, it is highly unlikely that a drawing of this sort would not have been shown to Camillo Pamphilj before production of the print began. The logic of investing money and resources into commissioning and creating an engraving for a print *without* receiving some type of approval from Camillo is quite improbable; Cafà may have wanted to show Camillo his design for the chapel in all its grandeur, but the chances of Cafà "surprising" his patron with an alternate design are highly unlikely.

⁶⁷ Preimesberger and Weil, "The Pamphili Chapel," 189.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 196.

Giovanni Battista required the altarpiece to *revert* back to Baratta's more cost-efficient plan, as it required less time and material than Cafà's.

As Cafà only completed the figure of St. Thomas before he died, it is difficult to determine where his design ended and Baratta's began. However, if Giovanni Battista began stripping the project down while Cafà was still the sculptor, perhaps the artist desired to preserve his more complex (and in his and Camillo's opinion, superior) altarpiece and chapel in the form of a print. This theory is supported through the Latin inscriptions in the print, which explicitly praises the virtues of Camillo Pamphilj as a generous patron and benefactor: "Illustrious and most excellent benefactor Camillo Pamphilj...Auspicious Camillo...To this religion, compassion marked in beauty increased, thus fosters the nurturing...dove." These commendations specifically link *Camillo* to Cafà's print and design, rather than to the general Pamphilj family/name.

Furthermore, with Camillo gone and Giovanni Battista comparatively uninterested in Cafà, the sculptor suddenly found himself without a patron to support his career. Cafà was at a distinct disadvantage to attract other patrons who might have supported him in the way Camillo did, as nearly all of his works were incomplete, or had been exported out of Rome. He had no promise that a wealthy patron would support him as unilaterally as Camillo. However, if Cafà possessed a print that boasted his sculptural designs *and* showed he held Camillo's full support while he was alive, he might use this to attract new commissions and patrons. This returns to the idea of artists commemorating their own work through prints mentioned earlier, and Cafà certainly had social and financial reasons to do this with his *San Tommaso* altarpiece. In

commissioning this print after Camillo's death while under the patronage of Giovanni Battista, Cafà could advertise his skills and availability to work for patrons looking to commission a sculptor for grand and ambitious projects.

Despite these reasons that support Cafà as patron of the print, certain issues complicate this possibility. The most pressing concern is the inscription—if Camillo did not write it, then who did? The links between the two inscriptions in the print, and the plaque in the Pamphilj Chapel, indicates there was only one author for all three texts. There are a few possible contenders, although none are more reasonable and valid than Camillo. Cafà is an unlikely candidate; no evidence exists to suggest he had any training in Latin or Biblical exegesis. Giovanni Maria Baratta was involved with the project from the beginning, but as Cafà used the print to offer a counter-design to Baratta's, it is unlikely the architect offered any aid to his competitor. Camillo's son, Giovanni Battista, would have undoubtedly had the academic background to think up such a complex and well-developed inscription, yet his general lack of interest in his late father's projects makes his participation unlikely. Camillo could have hired someone to aid Cafà in developing the texts, as Cardinal Scipione Borghese did with Cardinal Maffeo Barberini and Bernini for *Apollo and Daphne*. Yet, no mention of a third party assisting Cafà in this way is mentioned in the *San Tommaso* contracts, making this possibility difficult to prove. In short, Camillo is the most likely candidate as the author of the inscriptions in the print, which problematizes the possibility that Cafà autonomously commissioned and presented the completed print to Camillo as an illustration of his designs for the chapel, and as a show of dedication to his ever supporting patron.

Given the historical evidence available, it is essentially impossible to definitively determine who commissioned the *San Tommaso* print. However, with all of the resources available at this point in time in the scholarship on Camillo Pamphilj and Melchiorre Cafà, it seems most likely that Camillo commissioned the print from Pietro del Po after seeing Cafà's *San Tommaso bozzetto*, and provided Cafà with the inscriptions included in the design.

San Tommaso: *The Aftermath*

Ferrata drastically changed the design of the altarpiece from what Cafà envisioned in his *bozzetto* and the print. In Ferrata's version, Charity turns away from the viewer, and instead looks up at St. Thomas. There are only two children, not three, the younger child in the arms of Charity and the elder standing next to Charity on the lip outside of the niche. Although the elder child's body turns towards the viewer, he is practically enveloped within Charity's garments, with his face covered in shadows cast by Charity and the saint. The change in composition of the figures causes the sculpture to lose the opportunity Cafà carefully crafted in the *bozzetto* for viewers to connect with the altarpiece. As Charity no longer opens her body towards the viewer and instead faces the saint completely, it forms a closed narrative between the figures, denying access to the viewer. Additionally, while in Cafà's *bozzetto* Charity *receives* the alms, in the marble sculpture Charity seems to *ask* for alms, which depersonalizes the saint and reminds the viewer of the saint's role as a heavenly intermediary. Lastly, much of the flowing motion indicated in the figures' garments is lost in the marble sculpture, as Charity has no veil,

and the fabrics fluidly moving around Charity and weaving across the floor are entirely absent.

The niche has no decorative marble elements save for the small plaque above the saint, and a delicate garland set within the frame of the architecture of the niche. The grandiosity of the altarpiece within the chapel that Cafà envisioned is not as pronounced; instead, the chapel relies on the architecture to emphasize the wealth and esteem of the Pamphilj. Double columns in red marble flank the sides of the niche, and opulent green marbles make up the backdrop for the entire chapel space. Although the chapel is quite lavishly beautiful, the chapel as a *whole* emits a sense of opulence, rather than the altarpiece serving as the capstone of the space. In fact, the niche with the altarpiece is the least decorated part of the chapel.

Ferrata seems to have reverted to Baratta's original stipulations after he took over the commission, indicated not only by the changes in Charity's appearance, but in the absence of elements demonstrated in Cafà's designs, such as the decorative garlands surrounding the niche, a third child at the feet of the saint, and the fabrics that wound around Charity and the base of the altarpiece. Baratta's design would have been more practically attractive to Giovanni Battista Pamphilj, as it required less marble and thus cost significantly less. Also, with fewer figures to sculpt Ferrata had less work to complete, which allowed Giovanni Battista to save money in labor costs. For Ferrata this was most likely a welcome relief, as Baratta's design was much more manageable in terms of technical skill than Cafà's. Although Ferrata had a prolific career in Rome, even

in his own time he was second best to Cafà in terms of *disegno* and talent.⁶⁹ While he was almost certainly *capable* of completing the *San Tommaso* altarpiece according to Cafà's lofty ambitions, the easiest solution for the artist and patron, both new to the commission, was to revert to the original design by Baratta—who survived both Camillo and Cafà, and was thus able to direct Giovanni Battista and Ferrata.

Conclusions concerning the bozzetto, the print, and the marble sculpture

The second half of this chapter investigates the possible relationships between Cafà's *bozzetto* of *San Tommaso da Villanova*, the print by Cafà's design of the chapel as a whole with the *bozzetto* composition placed as the altarpiece, and the final marble sculpture begun by Cafà and completed by Ercole Ferrata. While there are potentially other possibilities that explain the connections within the works, the two presented in this chapter seem most probable. That is, either Camillo changed the contract and commissioned the print illustrating Cafà's new intended design, or that Cafà commissioned the print from his friend Pietro del Po in an effort to present an alternative, intentional, and complete proposition for Camillo's consideration. However, given the documents and evidence available, it is presently difficult to determine the exact sequence of events that explains the unique relationship between the three works.

Yet, regardless of who commissioned the print, or the fact that Cafà's *bozzetto* design was never executed in the marble altarpiece, in both scenarios Camillo acts as a diligent and supportive patron to Cafà, giving him opportunities and leniencies he did not

⁶⁹ Pascoli, *Vite*, 354-355.

typically extend to the artists he hired. The vague wording and terminology used in the October 1663 contract for the altarpiece/chapel does not definitively specify which model Cafà should follow—that by his design, or by Baratta’s. This, coupled with the existence of the print by Pietro del Po with Cafà’s *bozzetto* design installed in the chapel supports the possibility that Camillo supported Cafà’s design and significantly revised a previous contract—an act he rarely committed as a patron, as once a contract and design were set, there were no edits or changes allowed, especially after the work had begun. Therefore, if Camillo and Cafà both lived to see the completion of the sculpture by Cafà’s hand, the altarpiece would almost certainly follow the design of Cafà’s *bozzetto* and Po’s print.

Conclusion

Melchiorre Cafà and Camillo Pamphilij illustrate the complex nature of patron-artist relationships in mid-seventeenth-century Rome. Mainly, they exemplify the ways in which both the artist and the patron benefited from a patron “discovering” a young and talented artist, and the social structures in place that allowed for both parties to benefit socially and economically. Camillo recognized Cafà’s sculptural talents, and soon after gave the sculptor the enviable *Sant’Eustachio tra i leoni* commission for Sant’Agnese in Agone, which placed Cafà in an extremely advantageous position. Not only would this work have a large and relatively economically diverse audience, but it placed him on an equal level as four other well known sculptors of that time: Domenico Guidi, Ercole Ferrata, Antonio Raggi, and Francesco Rossi. By comparing Cafà to these established artists, Camillo created an opportunity for the Maltese sculptor to prove himself an artist capable of producing works along the same caliber.

It seems Cafà succeeded in this endeavor, as Camillo chose him among the Sant’Agnese sculptors to sculpt the *San Tommaso da Villanova* altarpiece in Sant’Agostino. While the marble work ultimately reflects Giovanni Maria Baratta and Ercole Ferrata’s composition due to Cafà’s early and unexpected death, the remaining *bozzetto* and print, both by Cafà’s design, allows for certain conclusions to be drawn concerning the altarpiece. Firstly, that Cafà significantly altered the composition of the figures in a way that countered the design set by Baratta and approved by Camillo. Secondly, that the simple existence of the print derived from the *bozzetto*, included with

the subtly complex inscriptions that directly connect the work to the Pamphilj family, not only indicates that Camillo permitted Cafà to change the composition, but that he endorsed it, as the Pamphilj prince is the most likely author of the Latin text within the print.

Camillo's resolute support of Cafà echoes the support Maffeo Barberini extended to Gianlorenzo Bernini, whose partnership would have certainly been the most outstanding example for Camillo to observe and model his own patronage patterns after—while the Pamphilj and the Barberini disagreed on nearly everything, it could not be denied that Maffeo's patronage of Bernini produced an extraordinary number of high quality and public works, benefitting both the patron and the artist. Camillo created the opportunity to increase his status as an art patron, connoisseur, and upper class member of Roman society by relying on Cafà's talents and promise as a sculptor capable of becoming a superstar to rival the rank and status of Bernini. Meanwhile, Cafà stood to benefit immensely from Camillo's patronage, particularly in comparison to other patrons eager to support the young artist. By far, Camillo's already elevated status, his habit of building large and expensive projects in Rome, and his unwavering support of the artist allowed Cafà to swiftly rise within the artistic ranks of Roman society.

Indeed, Cafà created works for a number of other upper class patrons besides Camillo; the most notable being Cardinal Flavio Chigi, who commissioned a bronze bust of Alexander VII from Cafà in 1667.¹ This indicates that Camillo's intentions to prime Cafà as a superstar of his own making was working—a commission for a bust of the pope

¹ Rudolf Wittkower, "Melchiorre Cafà's Bust of Alexander VII," *The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin* 17.8 (1959): 200.

certainly exemplifies Cafà's status as an in-demand and high-profile sculptor. Multiple casts were made from Cafà's terracotta model, and both bronze and terracotta forms of the sculpture were preserved by the Chigi family. Perhaps Cafà might have continued to work for the Chigi, eventually producing works for Alexander VII, placing him in direct rivalry with Bernini, rather than the indirect competition that Camillo implied in Sant'Agnese. Even so, up until his death, Cafà steadily worked on multiple, consistently high profile projects for high status patrons.

Of course, as with any research project, there are ways in which this thesis could be further explored. One of the more pressing matters is how Ercole Ferrata fits into the narrative of Cafà and Camillo's history. Cafà is typically mentioned in relation to Ferrata, and it is clear to see that the Maltese sculptor quickly rose through the ranks of his workshop, to the point where Cafà was bringing in the most prestigious commissions, and the elder sculptor was helping *him* complete his designs and inventions. However, Ferrata's precise role in shaping Cafà's training and career remains unclear. While some scholars have discussed Ferrata and Cafà within the context of Cafà's artistic start in Rome—Jennifer Montagu discusses this briefly in her monograph on *Alessandro Algardi*, and Rudolf Wittkower as well in his book *Art and Architecture in Italy: 1600–1750*—there is a lack in explanation as to *how/why* these two men were connected, only that they were.

Additionally, as with most historical projects, further archival research could greatly enhance supplementary avenues of study, as well as support conclusions already made. For instance, little is known of Cafà's involvement with the Accademia di San

Luca. This topic would most likely yield fascinating information, considering he was swiftly accepted to the Academy, yet he remained hesitant to move up in rank, refusing the invitation to join the *Principata*, for which he was forced to pay a fine.² What was Cafà's relationship with the Academy like? Did Camillo play a part in his quick admittance to the Academy? How did this affect his overall career, if it all? Unfortunately, these questions and more are either too extensive to explore within this project, or simply cannot be addressed until further archival evidence is discovered.

If Cafà had lived to see his Roman career last for longer than eight years, it is almost certain he would be a household name in today's art history textbooks. Camillo's plans for Cafà were lofty, and perhaps a bit precocious, yet Camillo's steadfast support for the artist allowed Cafà to flourish in an entirely unprecedented way in the short time he lived and worked in Rome. Although Camillo died one year before Cafà, his support gave Cafà the opportunity to establish his career under the patronage of a wealthy and powerful Roman nobleman. If Camillo is already connected with Cafà as one of the brief, yet bright lights of seventeenth-century Roman art, one can only guess at how the histories of these men might have changed if Cafà had lived to be as old as Bernini.

² Edward Sammut, "Melchior Gafa': Maltese Sculptor of the Baroque," *Scientia* 23 (1957), 129. "A few days before Melchior's death came a final characteristic gesture. The sculptor, then in his thirtyfirst [sic] year, was elected to the *Principata* of the Academy of St. Luke, a much coveted post which had always been held by one of the foremost artists of the day, and refused to accept it. To quote Missirini, historian of the Academy, '*era tutto staccato dalla presunzione e dall'interesse: sprezzatore delle grandezze, degli onori, fugli a grado rinunciare il Principato Accademico*'. As a result, he was ordered to pay a fine, which he did through his friend Pietro del Po on the 14th August, 1667."

Figures



Figure 1 – Melchiorre Cafà and Ercole Ferrata, *Sant'Eustachio tra i leoni*, marble. 1660–1669. Sant'Agnese in Agone, Rome.



Figure 2 - Melchiorre Cafà and Ercole Ferrata, *San Tommaso da Villanova*, marble, 1663–1669. Pamphilj Chapel, Sant'Agostino, Rome.



Figure 3 - Melchiorre Cafà, *Santa Caterina da Siena a Monte Magnanapoli*, marble, c. 1667. Santa Caterina da Siena a Monte Magnanapoli, Rome.



Figure 4 - Melchiorre Cafà, *Alexander VII*, terracotta, 1667. Palazzo Chigi in Ariccia.



Figure 5 - Melchiorre Cafà, *Alexander VII*, bronze, 1667. Metropolitan Museum of Art.



Figure 6 - Melchiorre Cafà (design), *Gloria*, bronze, stucco, and gilded wood, begun 1666. Santa Maria in Campitelli, Rome.



Figure 7 - Gianlorenzo Bernini, *Ecstasy of Santa Theresa*, marble, 1645–1652. Coronaro Chapel, S. Maria della Vittoria, Rome.

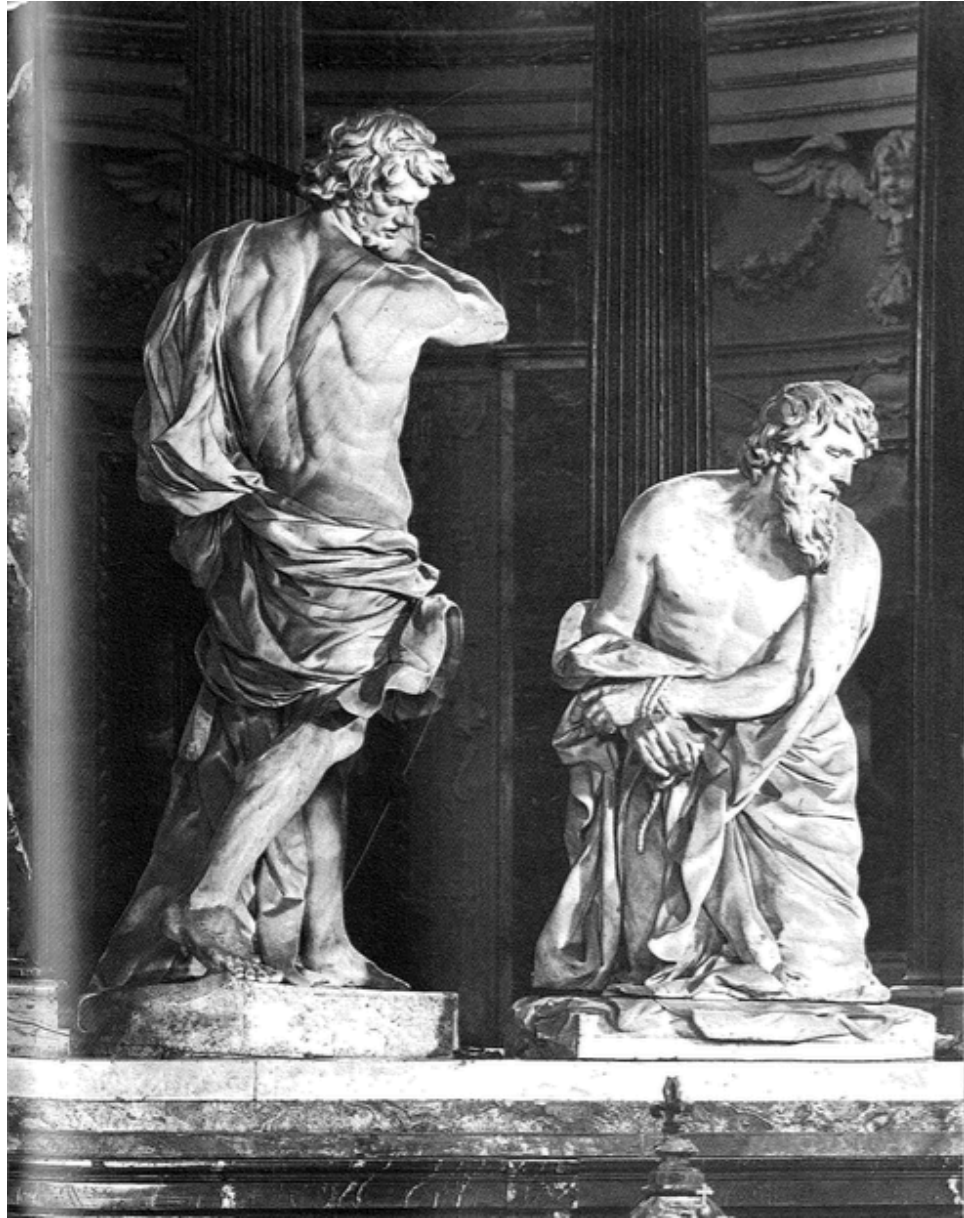


Figure 8 - Alessandro Algardi, *Beheading of St. Paul*, marble, c. 1650. San Paolo Maggiore, Bologna.



Figure 9 - *St. John's Co-Cathedral*. Valletta, Malta. Redecorated in the seventeenth-century.

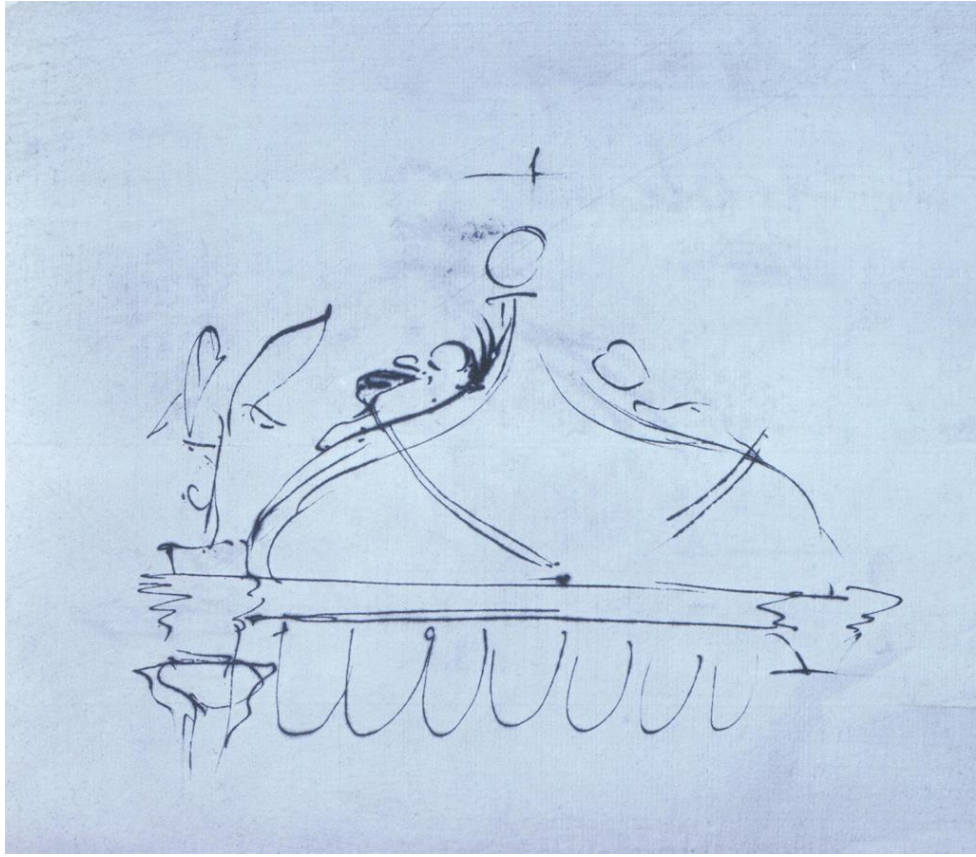


Figure 10 - Gianlorenzo Bernini, *Sketch for the top of the Baldacchino*, pen and ink on paper, c. 1623–1634.



Figure 11 - Melchiorre Cafà, *Virgin of the Rosary*, gilded and painted wood, c. 1658–1660. Dominican Convent in Rabat, Malta.



Figure 12 - Melchiorre Cafà, *St. Paul*, gilded and painted wood, c. 1658–1660. Church of St. Paul Shipwrecked, Valletta, Malta.



Figure 13 - Melchiorre Cafà, *Santa Rosa da Lima*, marble, 1665. Santo Domingo, Lima, Peru.



Figure 14 - Gianlorenzo Bernini, *Fontana dei Quattro Fiumi*, directly in front of Sant'Agnese in Agone, 1648–1651. Piazza Navona, Rome.



Figure 15 - Antonio Raggi, *Il transito di S. Cecilia*, marble, c. 1655. Sant'Agnese in Agone, Rome.



Figure 16 - Ercole Ferrata and Leonardi Reti, *Lapidazione di S. Emerenziana*, marble, c. 1655. Sant' Agnese in Agone, Rome.



Figure 17 – Francesco Rossi, *Il transito di S. Alessio*, marble, c. 1655. Sant' Agnese in Agone, Rome.



Figure 18 - Domenico Guidi, *Le due sacre famiglie*, marble, c. 1655. Sant'Agnese in Agone, Rome.



Figure 19 - Melchiorre Cafà, *Sant'Eustachio tra i leoni*, terracotta mounted on wood, c. 1660. Museo Nazionale del Palazzo di Venezia, Rome.

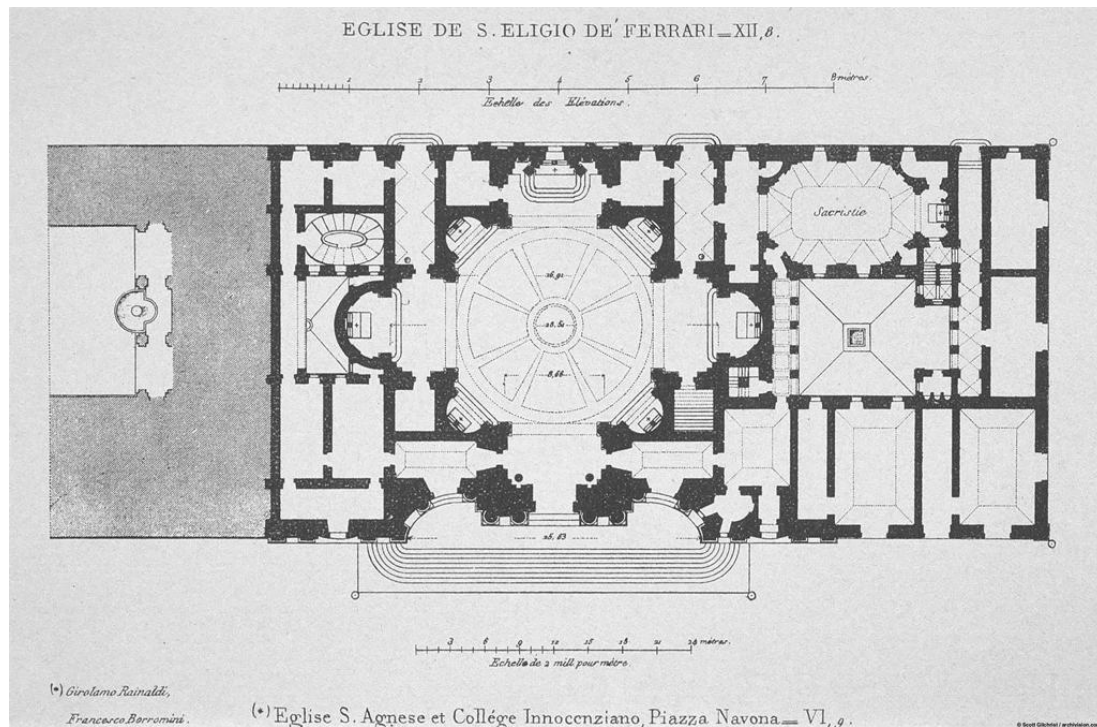


Figure 20 - Giulio Magni, *Complete Plan of Sant'Agnese in Agone*, ink on paper, 1911–1913.

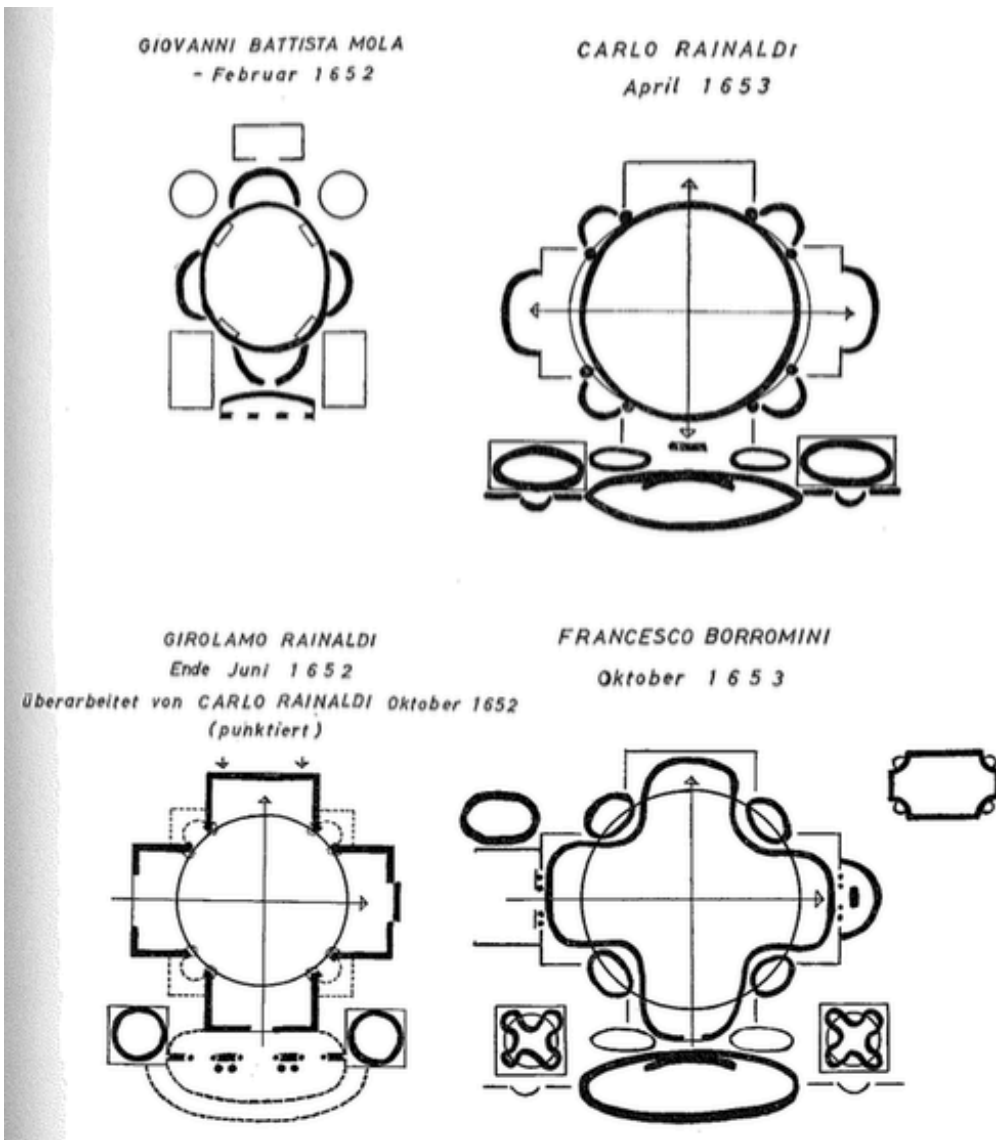


Figure 21 - Gerhard Eimer, *Drawings of the Changing Floor Plans of Sant'Agnese in Agone*, 1971. *La Fabbrica di S. Agnese in Navona: Römische Architekten, Bauherren und Handwerker im Zeitalter des Nepotismus, Band II.*



Figure 22 - Francesco de Rossi, *S. Tommaso da Villanova*, engraving, after 1669.



Figure 23 - Melchiorre Cafà, *San Tommaso da Villanova bozzetto*, terracotta, 1663.
Valletta Museum of Fine Arts, Malta.



Figure 25 - Gianlorenzo Bernini, *Apollo and Daphne*, marble, 1622–1625, Galleria Borghese, Rome.



Figure 26 - Gianlorenzo Bernini, *Apollo and Daphne*, detail of inscription, marble, 1622–1625, Galleria Borghese, Rome.



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Figure 27 - Jean Couvay and Jean Girardin after Melchiorre Cafà, *Thesis Broadsheet of Giovanni Francesco Rota*, engraving, 1662, Bibliotheque Nationale, Paris.



Figure 28 - Albert Clouet after Melchiorre Cafà, *Madonna and Child with five Peruvian Candidates for Sainthood*, print, 1666, Albertina, Vienna.

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