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A Reconsideration of the Development of the Piazza del Popolo in the Reign of
Alexander VII (1655-1667)

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Abstract

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By Jason Thomas Ciejka

During the seventeenth century, the Piazza del Popolo, which was located at the main ceremonial entrance of Rome, was one of the most important public spaces in the city. Yet, at the start of Pope Alexander VII's reign, the space was marred by impoverished domestic structures, common gardens, and laundry fountains. The architectural transformation of the piazza counted as one of Alexander VII's most important urban projects and culminated in the construction of two twin churches, Santa Maria di Montesanto and Santa Maria dei Miracoli. This thesis examines the conceptual development of the Piazza del Popolo and addresses several challenges in the design history of the project. First, it evaluates the evidence for Gianlorenzo Bernini's early participation in an unrealized project to build porticos in the square. A reconsideration of the graphic and documentary sources lends greater support to Bernini's direction of the earliest phase of the project. Second, this thesis considers reasons why Pope Alexander VII abandoned this portico project and assigned responsibility for the twin churches to a new architect, Carlo Rainaldi. Third, the role of the religious orders located in the Piazza del Popolo is reevaluated. The contribution of the Carmelites and Franciscans has been obscured by the emphasis on Alexander VII's urban projects, but both papal initiative and the influence of local institutions are considered in this essay. Finally, this essay offers new suggestions about Rainaldi's presentation drawing for the twin churches (Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Chigi PVII 13 ff. 26v-27r). An analysis of the drawing reveals an elaborate conceit for the twin churches articulated during the planning phase. Considered in tandem with various inscriptions for the twin churches, this drawing points to Alexander VII's literary interests and adds an iconographic dimension to the study of the Piazza del Popolo.

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Table of Contents

I. Introduction to the Problems and Literature of the Piazza del Popolo	1
II. Early Planning: The Role of Gianlorenzo Bernini	8
III. The Emergence of the Twin Churches in the Urban Design	20
IV. The Presentation Drawing of 1657/58: Rainaldi's <i>Concetto</i> and Architectural Sources	26
V. Alexander VII's Chirograph, Carlo Fontana, and the Construction of the Twin Churches	33
Catalog of Drawings	46
Bibliography	60
Figures	

List of Illustrations

1. View of S. Maria di Montesanto and S. Maria dei Miracoli, Rome [Hager, Fig. 182]
2. Gottfried van Schayk, Map of Rome, 1630, Detail [Frutaz, Plate 324]
3. German sketchbook of travels in Rome, View of the Piazza del Popolo, ca. 1600 [Hager, Fig. 135]
4. Plan of S. Maria di Montesanto, Rome [Hager, Fig. 162]
5. Plan of S. Maria dei Miracoli, Rome [Hager, Fig. 190]
6. Exterior view of the Porta del Popolo, Rome [Cozzi, Fig. 27]
7. Interior view of the Porta del Popolo, Rome [Marder, Fig. 269]
8. View of the façade of S. Maria del Popolo, Rome [Cannatà, Fig. 1]
9. Project for stairs at S. Maria sopra Minerva, Rome; Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Chigi P VII 10, f. 27r [Photo: BAV]
10. Elevation of the Porta del Popolo, the Aurelian Wall, and S. Maria dei Miracoli, Rome; Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Chigi P VII 13, ff. 18v-19 [Photo: BAV]
11. Plan of the Porta del Popolo, the Aurelian Wall, and S. Maria dei Miracoli, Rome; Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Chigi P VII 13, ff. 16v-17 [Photo: BAV]
12. Survey of the Piazza del Popolo, Rome; Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Chigi P VII 10, f. 26r [Photo: BAV]
13. “Funnel plan” of the Piazza del Popolo, Rome; Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Vat. Lat. 13442, f. 34 [Photo: BAV]
- 13a. Tracing of the “funnel plan” [Figure 13] by Susan Metros and Dorothy Habel [Habel, Fig. 59]
14. Presentation drawing for the twin churches, Rome; Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana Chigi P VII 13, ff. 26v-27r [Photo: BAV]
15. Ephemeral design for the Palazzo Farnese, Rome; Berlin, Staatliche Museen, Kunstbibliothek, Hdz. 1144 [Kieven, Cat. 51]
16. Project for Piazza S. Pietro, Rome; Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Chigi P VII 9, ff. 40v-41 [Photo: BAV]

17. S. Maria del Suffragio, Rome [Photo: Author]
18. S. Maria di Loreto, Rome [Photo: Author]
19. S. Andrea in Via Flaminia, Rome, from a manuscript by Carlo Rainaldi; Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Barb. Lat 4411, f. 3. [Photo: BAV]
20. Chirograph for the twin churches, 16 November 1661; Archivio di Stato, Rome, Collezione dei Disegni, I, Cartella 81, Nr. 279 [Marder, Fig. 134]
21. Carlo Rainaldi, plan for an elliptical church; Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Chigi P VII 10, f. 127v [Photo: BAV]
22. Carlo Rainaldi, plan for an elliptical church; Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Chigi P VII 10, f. 128v [Photo: BAV]
23. Carlo Rainaldi, Plan for an elliptical church; Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Chigi P VII 10, f. 129r [Photo: BAV]
24. Carlo Rainaldi, Plan for an elliptical church; Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Chigi P VII 10, f. 130r [Photo: BAV]
25. Foundation medal of S. Maria di Montesanto, Rome [Whitman and Varriano, Cat. 100]
26. High altar, S. Maria della Scala, Rome [Kelly, Fig. 10]
27. Carlo Fontana, engraving of S. Maria di Montesanto dedicated to Matteo Orlandi in 1674 [Hager, Fig. 154]

I. Introduction to the Problems and Literature of the Piazza del Popolo

The twin churches, Santa Maria di Montesanto and Santa Maria dei Miracoli, stand at the southern end of the Piazza del Popolo, one of Rome's most important public spaces (Figure 1). During the seventeenth century the Porta del Popolo was the city's main ceremonial entrance as it provided pilgrims, dignitaries, and other visitors their first impression of the glories of Rome. Yet, at the start of Pope Alexander VII's reign (1655-1667) the piazza was sullied by the reality of laundry fountains, common gardens, and large misshapen blocks of impoverished domestic structures. A 1630 map of Rome by Gottfried van Schayk illustrates clearly the modest appearance of the piazza (Figure 2).¹ The Piazza del Popolo bustles with activity as a carriage prepares to leave the city and several figures gather inside the piazza and just outside the walls of Rome. At the northern end of the piazza, the Porta del Popolo provides passage into the city. The church of Santa Maria del Popolo stands in the piazza's northeast corner, and its convent wall stretches south towards the city. The image provided by the piazza's western side is less grand. Small gardens, utilitarian buildings, and a laundry fountain dull the piazza's appearance. At the center of the piazza stands an obelisk. Behind it, three major streets form an impressive perspective with views into the heart of the city, but facing the piazza are ordinary domestic structures. An early seventeenth-century sketchbook by a German artist visiting Rome illustrates the view more clearly (Figure 3).² At the center of the sheet are the base of the obelisk and a fountain. Beyond them, one sees the Via del Corso

¹ Amato Frutaz, ed., *Le piante di Roma*, vol. 3 (Rome: Istituto di Studi Romani, 1962), tav. 324.

² Wolfenbüttel, Herzog August Bibliothek, Cod. Guelf, 136 Extrav., f. 104v. Hellmut Hager reproduces the sketch in "Zur Planungs- und Baugeschichte der Zwillingskirchen auf der Piazza del Popolo: S. Maria di Monte Santo und S. Maria dei Miracoli in Rom," *Römisches Jahrbuch für Kunstgeschichte* 11 (1967/1968): 191 and Fig. 135.

and the Via del Babuino radiating from the piazza. The sketch shows the architecture between the three streets; the two wedges of land are composed of small, dilapidated structures, whose facades are oriented toward the streets and not toward the Piazza del Popolo.

Under the direction of Alexander VII several interventions were made to improve the image of the piazza. Renovations to the Porta del Popolo and Santa Maria del Popolo were important, but the most extensive task was the construction of two, twin churches, dedicated to the Virgin. Santa Maria di Montesanto and Santa Maria dei Miracoli were completed by 1679, over a decade after the death of Alexander VII, and together they formed an impressive entrance to the city as they framed the Via del Corso.

The phrase “twin churches” is somewhat deceptive. The churches give the illusion of being identical, but their facades mask radically different interiors. Santa Maria di Montesanto has an oval plan (Figure 4), while Santa Maria dei Miracoli has a circular plan (Figure 5). Even the apparent similarity of their exteriors is illusory. Upon close inspection, one easily discerns that the dome of Santa Maria di Montesanto is dodecagonal, while that of Santa Maria dei Miracoli is octagonal. Though the churches are different sizes and built on different plans, their similar appearances impress the viewer with an apparently uniform image.

The matching porticoes and large domes are the most visually striking elements of the churches’ architecture (Figure 1). Composite columns form the tetrastyle portico, and the center intercolumniation is noticeably wider than the outer intercolumniations.³ The wider space at the center accentuates the entrance of each church. It also establishes a

³ The biographer, Francesco Milizia, complains about the intercolumniation. He writes, “L’intercolonnio di mezzo sarebbe meglio se non fosse maggiore degli altri laterali.” *Memorie degli architetti antichi e moderni*, vol. 2 (Bologna: 1827), 251.

rhythm of narrow-wide-narrow that echoes the streets of the *trivium* where the Via del Corso is framed by the narrower Via del Babuino and Via Ripetta. The columns support a large, unbroken pediment, classicizing in its simplicity. The outer bays of the façade are concave with side portals, framed on each side by a single Composite column. A small balustrade tops the concave bays, and statues of members of each religious order accentuate the vertical elements of the facades. Above the pediment rises the drum and dome of each church. The large domes, covered in slate tiles, provide major focal points for the visitor upon entering the piazza. Each church has one bell tower placed adjacent to the Via del Corso. Completed in the eighteenth century, the bell towers further emphasize the Via del Corso and disrupt the apparent similarity of the churches.

Previous scholarship has focused on the complicated interaction among the architects of the twin churches: Gianlorenzo Bernini (1598-1680), Carlo Rainaldi (1611-1691), and Carlo Fontana (1638-1714). In his dissertation from 1919 on the architecture of Carlo Rainaldi, Eberhard Hempel argued that Bernini changed the ground-plan of Santa Maria di Montesanto from Rainaldi's circular plan to an oval plan.⁴ Hempel relied on a statement from the second edition of Filippo Titi's *Guida* published in 1686 that Bernini with the assistance of Fontana altered the plan when they took over the project after the death of Alexander VII. Rudolf Wittkower's essay of 1937, "Carlo Rainaldi and the Architecture of the Full Baroque in Rome," proved that this statement was erroneous.⁵ In fact, the first edition of Titi's *Guida* published in 1674 was correct, and a

⁴ Eberhard Hempel, "Carlo Rainaldi: Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des römischen Barocks" (Ph.D. diss., Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität, 1919), 47-54.

⁵ The citations in this paper refer to the republished version of the essay: Rudolf Wittkower, "Carlo Rainaldi and the Architecture of the High Baroque in Rome," in *Studies in the Italian Baroque* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1975), 9-52. It was first published as "Carlo Rainaldi and the Architecture of the Full Baroque in Rome," *Art Bulletin* 19 (1937): 278-293.

1687 edition of *Roma sacra antica e moderna* confirmed that the change in plan at Santa Maria dei Miracoli belonged to Rainaldi. Unfortunately, the attribution to Bernini of the change in plan has remained a misconception in some of the secondary literature. The significance of Rudolf Wittkower's essay extends far beyond this particular argument; his essay remains one of the most important analyses of Rainaldi's architecture as it treats the architect's major works and analyzes the principle of ambiguity often at play in his architecture. With regard to the twin churches, Wittkower analyzed many of the early drawings made during the design phase and ultimately suggested that Rainaldi's assistant, Carlo Fontana, introduced changes to Rainaldi's design. Fontana, in fact, assisted Bernini at Piazza San Pietro, and Wittkower argued that it was through him that Rainaldi came to a "subjective" solution for the ground-plans that was much indebted to Bernini.⁶

Vincenzo Golzio, in an article on the twin churches in 1941, published important documents concerning the construction history of the site in its last phases.⁷ Apparently unaware of Wittkower's essay, he maintained that Bernini had initiated the oval ground-plan. Despite this oversight, his article elucidated the phase of building that followed the death of Alexander VII in 1667 and traced the complicated shifts between Bernini, Rainaldi, and Fontana in managing the project.

Hellmut Hager's account from 1967/1968 of the Piazza del Popolo laid to rest many of the significant questions in the building history of the twin churches. His essay, which considered the entire construction history of the twin churches from the inchoate idea to the completion of the convent buildings and bell towers in the eighteenth century,

⁶ Wittkower, "Carlo Rainaldi," 16.

⁷ Vincenzo Golzio, "Le chiese di S. Maria di Montesanto e di S. Maria dei Miracoli a Piazza del Popolo a Roma," *Archivi d'Italia e rassegna internazionale degli archivi* 8 (1941): 122-148.

remains the definitive account of the twin churches.⁸ Hager confirmed Wittkower's argument that Rainaldi initiated the change in ground-plan but emphasized Fontana's role in modifying the church design. His work also stressed the contributions of the Carmelites of Santa Maria di Montesanto and of the Franciscans of Santa Maria dei Miracoli in the early history of the site.

Subsequent scholarship has modified details of Hager's account of the twin churches, and studies over the past twenty years have looked broadly at questions of Alexander VII's urban projects. For instance, Richard Krautheimer's important study *The Rome of Alexander VII, 1655-1667* connected the Piazza del Popolo with Alexander VII's broad program to transform the city into a "cultural center."⁹ Krautheimer also established links between the Piazza del Popolo and Roman stage design, an idea that has become a common trope in conceptualizing this urban space.¹⁰ Similarly, Dorothy Metzger Habel's study *The Urban Development of Rome in the Age of Alexander VII* emphasized the pope's role in the development of the piazza. Habel attempted to demonstrate a comprehensive architectural program linking Alexandrine Rome to the iconography of the Ancient Imperial East.¹¹ Her work includes detailed studies of several of the most important building sites during his papacy: the Palazzo Quirinale, the Piazza del Popolo, Piazza San Marco, Piazza San Pietro, and the Via del Corso. Her discussion

⁸ Hellmut Hager, "Zur Planungs- und Baugeschichte der Zwillingskirchen auf der Piazza del Popolo: S. Maria di Monte Santo und S. Maria dei Miracoli in Rom," *Römisches Jahrbuch für Kunstgeschichte* 11 (1967-1968): 189-306.

⁹ Richard Krautheimer, *The Rome of Alexander VII, 1655-1667* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985), 145.

¹⁰ Krautheimer, *The Rome of Alexander VII*, 115-118.

¹¹ Dorothy Metzger Habel. *The Urban Development of Rome in the Age of Alexander VII* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

of the Piazza del Popolo emphasized Gianlorenzo Bernini's role in the early design phase of the twin churches.

It is clear from this brief historiography that many important scholars of baroque architecture have contributed to the study of the Piazza del Popolo, and this essay is much indebted to them. Yet, significant areas of study remain. Attempts to untangle the responsibilities of each architect to the design of the twin churches have obscured a full analysis of the project's conceptual development. A good deal remains to be said about Carlo Rainaldi's architectural sources and ideas. Furthermore, inscriptions associated with the churches suggest a more nuanced picture that relates directly to Alexander VII's literary interests.

Surviving architectural drawings, including survey and presentation drawings, comprise much of the evidence for the history of the twin churches. More drawings must have existed than survive, and the attribution of extant drawings is often in question. Nonetheless, these drawings are important guides to the history of the churches.

A second major source of information can be found in the diary entries made by Alexander VII. In 1975 Richard Krautheimer and Roger B. S. Jones published excerpts from Alexander VII's diary that concern art, architecture, and urbanism.¹² These entries reveal Alexander VII's concern with every facet of the city from major building projects to clearing a piazza of vendors. They also document, more specifically, Alexander VII's interest in the Piazza del Popolo as a site for major renovation.

Finally, documents recording purchases and payments during the building of the twin churches, as well as the chirograph issued by Alexander VII at the start of the

¹² Richard Krautheimer and Roger B. S. Jones, "The Diary of Alexander VII: Notes on Art, Artists and Buildings," *Römisches Jahrbuch für Kunstgeschichte* 15 (1975): 199-225.

building campaign, provide firm chronological markers for the construction history. The chirograph records the terms of the contract, commanding numerous property owners to sell their land to the churches and entrusting Carlo Rainaldi with the design, while documents recording construction payments elucidate the subsequent contributions of each architect.

This essay attempts to contribute to the scholarship on the twin churches in a number of ways. First, it evaluates the evidence for Bernini's early involvement in the conception of the twin churches and suggests reasons why Rainaldi eventually took charge of the project. A close examination of the building history in its earliest phases, as well as a reconsideration of the graphic and documentary sources, lends further support to Bernini's direction of the earliest phase of the project. How Rainaldi became involved at the Piazza del Popolo remains one of the most impenetrable puzzles of the building history, and I will make modest suggestions that attempt to resolve this problem.

Second, this essay reevaluates the role of the religious orders located in the Piazza del Popolo. Though Hager's essay stressed the contribution of the Carmelites and Franciscans, studies of Alexander VII's urban projects have obscured their importance. I suggest that any examination of the twin churches must take into account both papal initiative and the influence of local institutions.

Third, this essay offers new suggestions about Rainaldi's presentation drawing for the twin churches (Figure 14; Catalog 6). An analysis of the drawing reveals an elaborate *conchetto* for the twin churches articulated during the planning phase. Considered in tandem with various inscriptions for the twin churches, this drawing points firmly to Alexander VII's literary interests and adds an iconographic dimension to the study of the

Piazza del Popolo. The drawing also provides an opportunity to examine Rainaldi's architectural sources and to consider the project in terms of his contemporaneous production. Though Hager and Wittkower were particularly interested in Rainaldi's architectural sources, this aspect has been overshadowed by the emphasis given to determining the contribution of each architect to the twin churches.

Finally, this essay concludes by reexamining Carlo Fontana's role as Rainaldi's assistant. Little is known about their relationship, yet the construction of the twin churches was completely dependent on their interactions.

II. Early Planning: The Role of Gianlorenzo Bernini

Rome has often been described as a palimpsest; the past makes its presence known in tangible and direct ways. The Piazza del Popolo is no exception to this process of layering. During ancient times, the Porta Flaminia, as the Porta del Popolo was called, provided the major entrance to the city from the North and led into the Campus Martius. The piazza itself lacked a unified, monumental appearance, but its role as an important entrance would extend for centuries.¹³ Not until the end of the eleventh century was significant change introduced at the piazza, then a remote part of Rome's *disabitato*. In 1099 Pope Paschal II (1099-1118) founded the church of Santa Maria del Popolo adjacent to the Porta Flaminia. The church is rich in history and legend: the pope reportedly built it after the Virgin interceded and saved the Roman people from a tree

¹³ For a summary of the ancient site, see Habel, 65-70. Although the piazza lacked a monumental plan, a pyramidal tomb occupied the site of Santa Maria dei Miracoli, and, during the Renaissance, a second tomb was believed to occupy the position of Santa Maria di Montesanto. What influence, if any, this belief had on the future idea of twin churches is unknown. Habel, 66.

plagued by evil spirits, perhaps even Nero's ghost.¹⁴ Sixtus IV della Rovere (1471-1484) renovated the church in the fifteenth century, and in 1586 Sixtus V Peretti (1585-1590) confirmed its importance by naming it one of the seven basilicas of Rome, replacing San Sebastiano.¹⁵

Drastic changes in the sixteenth century altered the urban fabric of the city and determined the future form of the piazza. Most notable was the development of the *trivium*, three streets radiating from the southern end of the piazza that formed an impressive view into the city. In 1518 Pope Leo X Medici (1513-1521) created the Via Ripetta, the westernmost of the three streets, as a passage that led directly to the Tiber's port. Only seven years later, Clement VII (1523-1534), another Medici pope, began the construction of a road to the east, a project continued by Paul III Farnese (1534-1549). The Via Paolina, now the Via del Babuino, cut through the city and led past the slope of the Trinità dei Monti. Alexander VII intended to continue the street as far as the Quirinal Palace.¹⁶ Positioned between the Via Ripetta and the Via Paolina was the Via del Corso, the initiation of the city's major processional and pilgrimage route, which culminated across the Tiber at Saint Peter's. The street comprised the ancient Via Flaminia and Via Lata, and it was renamed the Via del Corso for the races and other carnival festivities that Paul II Barbo (1464-1471) moved here in 1466.¹⁷ One last important change capped the

¹⁴ George and Linda Bauer discuss the legend and link it to Bernini's Alexandrine iconography for the organ in "Bernini's Organ-Case for S. Maria del Popolo," *Art Bulletin* 62 (1980): 116

¹⁵ Habel, 68.

¹⁶ For this uncompleted project see Richard Krautheimer, "'Il porton di questo giardino': An Urbanistic Project for Rome by Alexander VII (1655-1667)," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 42 (1983): 35-42.

¹⁷ Habel, 68, provides a good summary of the urban development around the three streets.

piazza's development in the sixteenth century: in 1589 Sixtus V erected an ancient obelisk here, brought from the Circus Maximus.¹⁸ Standing at the approximate center of the piazza, this monument proved a major consideration for every future project at this site.

With its views into the city, its obelisk, and its revered medieval church, the Piazza del Popolo would appear to have had all the trappings of an important urban space. Yet, van Schayk's map of Rome from 1630 shows otherwise (Figure 2). After ascending to the papal throne in 1655, Alexander VII turned his eye toward the piazza and focused on the church of Santa Maria del Popolo. Alexander VII's interest in the church and ultimately in the entire piazza was rooted in his ancestral ties to the space. In 1651 Fabio Chigi, the future Pope Alexander VII, had returned to Rome from diplomatic ventures in the North and immediately began to reassert his family's rights to its chapel in Santa Maria del Popolo.¹⁹ Raphael had designed the early sixteenth-century chapel for Agostino Chigi, the wealthy banker who led the Sienese family in Rome.²⁰ During the spring of 1652 Fabio Chigi became a cardinal, and Santa Maria del Popolo, quite unsurprisingly, was made his titular church.²¹ He commissioned Bernini to restore the chapel, a project that included new statues of Daniel and Habakkuk, originally planned as

¹⁸ An inscription on the base records the date: SIXTUS. V. PONT. MAX/ OBELIS CUM HUNC/ A CAES. AUG. SOLI/ IN CIRCO MAX. RITU/ DICATUM IMPIO/ MISERANDA RUINA/ FRACTUM OBRUIUMQ/ ERUI TRANSFERRI/ FORMAE SUAE REDDI/ CRUCIQ. INVICTISS/ DEDICARI. IUSSIT/ A. MDLXXXIX. PONT. IV.

¹⁹ Bauer, "Bernini's Organ-Case," 115. According to Pastor, Alexander VII expressed interest in the chapel even earlier in 1626, see Ludwig von Pastor, *The History of the Popes from the Close of the Middle Ages*, vol 31, trans. Dom Ernest Graf (St. Louis: B. Herder Book Co., 1940), 278.

²⁰ For the early history of the chapel, see John Shearman, "The Chigi Chapel in S. Maria del Popolo," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 24 (1961): 129-160.

²¹ Pastor, 278-279.

a joint commission with Alessandro Algardi. On 7 April 1655 Fabio Chigi was elected to the papacy after a tumultuous conclave, and one year later he extended Bernini's restoration of his chapel to the entire church, including its façade. The pope also ordered modifications to the Porta del Popolo to commemorate Queen Christina's entrance in December 1655.

Queen Christina of Sweden, one of the most intriguing political figures of the seventeenth century, abdicated her throne, converted to the Catholic faith, and formally entered the city of Rome on 23 December 1655 with much pomp and circumstance. What is of concern here is not the symbolic power of this momentous act but the significance of the Piazza del Popolo as a stage for that action.²² Although Alexander VII's familial ties to the piazza have already been noted, one must also emphasize that a monumental entrance to the city occupied his thoughts precisely because of the ritual importance of the piazza within the city's processional framework. The ritual of procession began just outside the Porta del Popolo at the Villa Giulia, which housed important guests awaiting ceremonial entrance, while the Porta del Popolo itself marked the formal entrance to the city.²³ The aesthetic disjuncture between the luxurious setting of Julius III's villa and the less impressive piazza must have been apparent to Alexander VII and his architects.

Catalyzed by Queen Christina's entrance, Alexander VII's familial pride and his vision

²² The importance of Queen Christina's conversion for the papacy is underscored by Pastor who includes an entire chapter on this figure in his history of Alexander VII. For Christina's procession into the city, see Rose Maria San Juan, "Entrances and Departures: The Procession Prints of Queen Christina of Sweden in Rome," *Politics and Culture in the Age of Christina*, ed. Marie-Louise Roden (Stockholm: Swedish Institute in Rome, 1997), 107-122.

²³ David Coffin notes that in the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, important visitors to the city lodged at the Augustinian monastery of Santa Maria del Popolo. This practice shifted to the Villa Giulia in the second half of the sixteenth century. See *The Villa in the Life of Renaissance Rome* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979), 150.

for the glorification of the city elided in the Piazza del Popolo and encouraged him to restore the space.

Early changes made to the piazza reveal Alexander VII's initial attitude toward its renovation (Figures 6, 7, & 8).²⁴ On the exterior of the Porta del Popolo Bernini added crenellations to the roofline, topping the gate with the Chigi emblem, six mountains and a star. Two sculptures of Saint Peter and Saint Paul, acquired from Francesco Mochi's widow, were placed at either side of the door.²⁵ Changes to the interior of the Porta del Popolo were also small. Bernini reshaped the roofline to accommodate the Chigi heraldry and new festive architectural details, and Alexander VII penned the inscription "Felici Fausto Q. Ingressui/ Anno Dom. MDCLV" [To a happy and auspicious entrance, 1655] to commemorate Queen Christina's entry.²⁶ Alexander VII also had the small, unkempt buildings on the west side of the piazza razed.

Bernini's work did not stop at the Porta del Popolo; he also supervised changes to the façade of Santa Maria del Popolo. He removed the fifteenth-century volutes, substituting two sides of a broken segmental pediment, and added garlands, which hang along the sides of the upper story. He also altered the shape of the steps in front of the church. The rectangular blocks, which jutted forcefully into the piazza and covered a portion of the Porta del Popolo, were modified into smaller, curved steps, separated from

²⁴ Felice della Greca illustrates the changes to the Porta del Popolo and Santa Maria del Popolo in a drawing preserved in the Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Chigi P VII 10, ff. 24r & 25v. The drawing is published in Giorgio Ciucci, *La Piazza del Popolo: Storia architettura urbanistica* (Rome: Officina Edizioni, 1974), 57.

²⁵ Habel, 77.

²⁶ Cesare D'Onofrio has written a brief essay discussing the literary aspects of Alexander's inscription, "'Felici Faustoque Ingressui' significato e origini dell'epigrafe di Porta del Popolo per l'ingresso della Regina Christina," *Urbe: rivista romana di storia, arte, lettere, costumanze* 38 (1975): 3-6.

the piazza by a series of bollards. Habel notes that this minor change represented an effort to make the Porta del Popolo distinct from the church, thereby separating the two elements from the “conglomerate” that they had become.²⁷ Indeed, this is the effect of the change, but the rounded steps relate not only to the exigencies of the site, they evidently appeared fashionable to Alexander VII. A project for stairs preserved in the Vatican library illustrates this point (Figure 9; Catalog 1). The drawing depicts the profile and plan of three staircases above a plan of the Piazza Santa Maria sopra Minerva. Here the renovated stairs at Santa Maria del Popolo provided an aesthetic and structural model for the new steps at Santa Maria sopra Minerva. Although the point seems minor, it is precisely these small adjustments and alterations that characterized Alexander VII’s attitude in renovating the Piazza del Popolo at this early stage.

Alexander VII’s interest at this point was not confined to the interior of the piazza; a pair of drawings, which can be dated to 1656-1657, illustrates his desire to restructure the ancient wall surrounding the piazza (Figures 10 & 11; Catalog 2 & 3). The first drawing depicts the Aurelian wall in elevation beginning at the Porta del Popolo and continuing west to the Tiber. The Porta del Popolo appears renovated according to the changes made by Bernini in 1656: the Chigi heraldry has been added and two statues fill the exterior niches. The elevation illustrates in detail the various structures lining the wall and demonstrates a concern with their overall appearance. The accompanying plan yields information that is more specific. Nearest the Piazza del Popolo, the plan is only cursorily interested in the interior space as it lists “horti diversi” and “fienili diversi.” More important is the careful rendering of the exterior with its haphazardly placed additions to

²⁷ See Habel, 78, for the restoration of the facade.

the wall and the detailed interiors of the buildings closest to the Tiber, where a church and monastic structures are labeled. The church included in the plan was the original site of Santa Maria dei Miracoli served by a tertiary order of French Franciscans. Because the study includes plans for altering the window and lighting systems of the former church, the drawing must have been completed before the idea to move the church to its present site in the Piazza del Popolo. Otherwise, there would have been no interest in renovating a church that was soon to be transferred. One suspects, therefore, that the attempt here to address the appearance of the original site of Santa Maria dei Miracoli led eventually to the Franciscans' involvement in the project for twin churches.

Alexander VII's initial strategy of small modifications quickly succumbed to desires that were more ambitious. By the fall of 1656 one finds concrete textual evidence that Alexander VII considered a grander plan for the piazza. An entry from his diary reveals that on 6 October 1656 he ordered one of his ministers to investigate who owned the houses "that made the end of the Corso in the Piazza del Popolo."²⁸ Evidently, Alexander VII had recognized that any magnificent project to transform the piazza would necessarily involve the creative transformation of the two wedges of land between the *trivium*. Unfortunately, he was silent about the form of this project, and one can only speculate whether he imagined a specific design at this point. Early graphic evidence corresponds to this diary entry. A plan preserved in the Vatican library depicts the southern end of the piazza and focuses on the two wedges between the *trivium* (Figure 12; Catalog 4). Although many scholars, including Wittkower, have attributed the plan to

²⁸ "Ordiamo (sic!) che s'informi (M. Farnese) di chi siano le case che fanno termine al Corso nella piazza del Popolo." 6 (?) October 1656. Entry from the diary of Alexander VII, Rome BAV Chigi O IV 58 f. 52r. Published by Krautheimer and Jones, 204, n.55.

Carlo Rainaldi, I propose a new attribution of the drawing to Pietro Paolo Drei, soprastante of the Fabbrica of San Pietro.²⁹ The handwriting on the plan is not Rainaldi's but appears to be Drei's. In fact, Drei often conducted surveys of this kind. With Drei as the draftsman, the drawing must date before December 1656 when the plague took his life.³⁰ Alexander VII's command on 6 October 1656 likely occasioned the drafting of this survey of the piazza. The drawing does list some of the property owners at the southern end of the piazza, including the Archconfraternity of the Annunziata on the eastern wedge and the small church of Sant'Orsola on the western wedge. Yet, the plan lacks sufficient detail in this respect as it leaves many other property owners at the site unnoted. It is clear that Drei was not concerned primarily with the acquisition of land; instead, he attempted to solve the problem of regularizing the two plots of land. The drawing presents two solutions. The first solution continues the line formed by the existing structures of the eastern wedge and extends it to the western wedge. The solution requires less land from the piazza but establishes facades that are more oblique to the piazza and less equal in width. Creating wedges of near equal width, the second solution brings both wedges forward into the piazza. This option offers a more aesthetically satisfying solution but requires more land. Neither solution articulates the architecture projected for the wedges. Because the plan depicts the property owners on the faces of the wedges and fails to render the property owners and alleys that existed farther from the piazza, one can assume that a shallow architecture was intended.

²⁹ Wittkower, "Carlo Rainaldi," 15. I wish to thank Sarah McPhee who first pointed out that the inscriptions appear to be in Drei's hand.

³⁰ Sarah McPhee, *Bernini and the Bell Towers: Architecture and Politics at the Vatican* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), 128 and Doc. 40.

Four months later, Alexander VII proved more loquacious when he commanded Bernini on 4 February 1657 to seek out “the owners of the heads between the Ripetta, the Corso, and the Babbuino [sic] in order to make there those porticoes to ornament the [Piazza] del Popolo.”³¹ Perhaps Alexander VII desired information about ownership that was more precise than the survey plan had provided. Whatever the case, the brief remark carries tremendous weight for the early history of the piazza. As Krautheimer, who was the first to publish the diary entry, noted, the project for the wedges was “perhaps stimulated by Bernini.”³² Dorothy Metzger Habel extended Krautheimer’s argument and suggested that Bernini may have developed a portico project for the space.³³ At the very least, the entry demonstrates that Bernini supervised the early project. Given his role directing the restoration of Santa Maria del Popolo and his close relationship to the pope, Bernini was a sensible choice for Alexander VII’s new project. The involvement of Pietro Paolo Drei, who worked under Bernini in an official capacity at Saint Peter’s, adds further support to Bernini’s role in this early phase. The entry also demonstrates Alexander VII’s initiative in developing a project for the piazza and reveals porticoes as the projected architecture of the wedges.

Habel has explicitly linked a second drawing, dubbed “the funnel plan” by Krautheimer, to a portico project for the piazza (Figure 13; Catalog 5); however, the authorship of the drawing remains fraught with difficulties.³⁴ Wittkower first attributed

³¹ “Cav. Bernini cerchi di sapere I padroni delle teste tra Ripetta, il Corso e il Babbuino in ordine a farvi quei portici per ornamento del Popolo — d. Flavio.” 4 February 1657. Entry from the Diary of Alexander VII Rome BAV Chigi O IV 58, f. 69r. Krautheimer and Jones, 204, n. 70.

³² Krautheimer, *The Rome of Alexander VII*, 120.

³³ Habel, 90.

³⁴ Krautheimer, *The Rome of Alexander VII*, 189; and Habel, 86-88.

the drawing to Carlo Rainaldi based on “the character of the work (pencil and heavy sepia lines),”³⁵ and Hager subsequently reaffirmed this attribution.³⁶ Without proposing an alternative draftsman, Krautheimer first cast doubt upon Rainaldi’s authorship; he writes, “Nor can I agree with attributing to Rainaldi the sophisticated funnel plan. It is just not his style.”³⁷ Habel attributed the drawing to Bernini. She writes, “the handling of the lines feels quick and intuitive, but the plan these describe is sure and deliberate, and this combination is signature in Bernini’s graphic work.”³⁸ Though the question of authorship may never be resolved, the project yields a great deal of information about the problems confronted in the designs for the piazza. The draftsman renders the piazza in brown and purple wash. The heavy brown wash illustrates pre-existing structures, while the lighter purple presents construction strategies for the piazza. Again two solutions are presented. The first proposes a wide, symmetrical piazza that encloses the space. A structure on the west mirrors the angle of Santa Maria del Popolo’s façade. The arrangement forms a small, trapezoidal ante-piazza that narrows as the viewer proceeds through the space. The piazza then widens until a point just before the obelisk. From this point, the sides of the piazza run parallel before flaring at the wedges. The plan demonstrates a sophisticated manipulation of space as the viewer is led through the narrow ante-piazza before the space widens. According to Habel, the effect produces an

³⁵ Wittkower, “Carlo Rainaldi,” 15.

³⁶ Hager, 205.

³⁷ Krautheimer, *The Rome of Alexander VII*, 189.

³⁸ Habel, 89.

enclosed space that centers on the obelisk.³⁹ The second proposal, less conspicuous than the first, is indicated by a thin pencil line (see Figure 13a) on the western side of the piazza, which mirrors the convent wall on the east. This solution is more economical as it requires no demolition; however, the piazza is much smaller and somewhat constricted at the obelisk. Ultimately, this solution focuses attention on the *trivium* as the space increasingly widens to emphasize the impressive views into the city. One curious feature of the drawing is the concave façade projected for each wedge. In all the known documentation, this drawing marks the only instance of a solution that involves concave structures.⁴⁰ Though the drawing does not reveal the architectural design projected for the piazza, both Krautheimer and Habel associate it with Alexander VII's portico project.⁴¹ Indeed, the wedges lack any detail to suggest façades for twin churches; rather, the simplicity of the rendering suggests the less involved portico scheme.

The choice of a portico design for the space is not surprising. Constructing porticoes at the wedges would have effectively regularized the piazza in an economically efficient manner. Unfortunately, Alexander VII's diary entries give no precise indication of the form that the porticoes should take, and scholars have been reluctant to define what such a project could entail. Nevertheless, the architectural idiom of the portico was fresh in the minds of both Bernini and Alexander VII. On 19 August 1656 Bernini had presented his first plan for the Piazza San Pietro to the Congregazione della Fabbrica di

³⁹ Habel, 87, argues that this solution presents a "self-contained" space.

⁴⁰ Habel, 88, suggests that the presentation drawing (Catalog 6, Figure 14) by Rainaldi adopts concave facades. She bases her argument on the shadow on the left side of each façade. In my opinion, this assertion cannot be supported. The shadow likely serves to clarify the distinction between the lateral façade and the main façade. The drawing presents no other suggestion of curvature.

⁴¹ Habel, 87; and Krautheimer, *The Rome of Alexander VII*, 189.

San Pietro.⁴² By 17 March 1657 Bernini had revised his plan so that the porticoes at San Pietro were now freestanding, independent structures.⁴³

It is in this environment of dialogue between pope and architect that one must situate the analogous project at the Piazza del Popolo. The discussion was not limited to architectural design but also embraced historical references. One imagines that the study of the ancient porticoes at Chalcis made by the Vatican librarian Lucas Holstenius for Alexander VII sparked interest in an architecture of porticoes and encouraged their deployment throughout the city.⁴⁴ Furthermore, the use of porticoes recalled the construction of the ancient *fora* of Greece and Rome as described by Vitruvius and conformed to Palladio's suggestions for the construction of public squares.⁴⁵

There is no evidence to determine whether Bernini ever made any effort to design this portico scheme, although Tod Marder makes the tantalizing suggestion that Bernini

⁴² Daniela Del Pesco, *Colonnato di San Pietro "Dei Portici antichi e la loro diversità"* (Rome: Università degli Studi di Roma, 1988), 41-45.

⁴³ Based on Alexander VII's reaction to Bernini's first design, Tod Marder surmises that Bernini's original project had functional structures attached to the porticoes, Marder, *Bernini and the Art of Architecture* (New York: Abeville Press, 1998), 136.

⁴⁴ For Holstenius's study, see Del Pesco who dates the work to 1656. Del Pesco, 11.

⁴⁵ Vitruvius relates that "Greeks design fora on a square plan with exceedingly spacious double porticoes," in Book 5, Chapter 1. Vitruvius, *Ten Books on Architecture*, trans. Ingrid Rowland (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 64. In Book 3, Chapter 16 of his *Four Books on Architecture*, Palladio writes, "Porticoes should be arranged around squares." He emphasizes the important role of public spaces: "As well as enabling people to gather to walk, converse, and carry out their business, such ample spaces left open throughout cities embellish them greatly when they are located at the end of a street in a beautiful and spacious place, since from them one may catch sight of a splendid building and, particularly, of a temple." He adds, "Arches that are built at the ends of streets, that is, at the entrance to the square, are the greatest form of embellishment for squares." Palladio's description resonates with the circumstances of the Piazza del Popolo. Porticoes would allow splendid vistas, while the arch of the Porta del Popolo would embellish the square from the perspective of the city. Andrea Palladio, *The Four Books on Architecture*, trans. Robert Tavernor and Richard Schofield (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1997), 193.

used plans for the Piazza del Popolo at Ariccia.⁴⁶ Without solid graphic evidence, however, the thought remains hypothetical.

III. The Emergence of the Twin Churches in the Urban Design

The surviving documentary and graphic evidence illustrates the process through which the transformation of the Piazza del Popolo evolved. Alexander VII's interest first began with his family chapel. Influenced by Roman ceremonies, particularly the entry of Queen Christina, his ambition grew to include larger plans for the renovation of Santa Maria del Popolo and the Porta del Popolo. As the renovation of the piazza unfolded, Alexander VII realized that the piazza could not be complete without addressing the southern end of the space, the two wedges of land between the *trivium*. With Bernini's supervision, plans for porticoes lining the wedges emerged, but this scheme was short-lived as a new project appeared on the horizon.

In the short time between 4 February and sometime in April 1657, a project for twin churches emerged. Carlo Cartari, a jurist who kept an extensive diary, reports on a new plan for the piazza in April 1657. Having just described the restoration of Santa Maria del Popolo, he writes, "it is said that two churches to the Virgin on the two prospects of the said piazza will be built, one to the Most Holy Virgin of the Holy Mountain, the other to the Most Holy Virgin of Miracles, small churches now, nearby here. It is said that edifices will also be built on the site of the gardens of the said

⁴⁶ Tod Marder, "La chiesa del Bernini ad Ariccia," in *Gian Lorenzo Bernini Architetto e l'architettura europea del Sei-Settecento*, vol. 1, ed. Gianfranco Spagnesi and Marcello Fagiolo (Rome: Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana, 1983), 271.

piazza.”⁴⁷ Cartari’s report indicates a radical change in the conception of the piazza.

Where porticoes would have lined the wedges facing the piazza, churches now stand. The report is quite specific and indicates the involvement of both Santa Maria di Montesanto and Santa Maria dei Miracoli. In only two months between February and April, a new idea was generated and two institutions, the Carmelite brothers of Santa Maria di Montesanto, and the tertiary order of Saint Francis of the Congregation of France, entered the planning history. Though Cartari’s report definitively places the conception of the twin churches in the spring of 1657, little else is known about the project. Serious questions about who initiated the project remain.

What role did the orders at Santa Maria di Montesanto and Santa Maria dei Miracoli play in the development of ideas for the Piazza del Popolo? Hellmut Hager argued in 1967/1968 that the idea of twin churches was initiated when the Carmelites of Santa Maria di Montesanto sought to expand their church. The Carmelites had a small church near the Piazza del Popolo on the eastern side of the Via del Babuino as can be seen in the survey plan (Figure 12; Catalog 4). On 3 January 1658 the Carmelites acquired the property of the fratelli Paolucci “necessaria pro constructione templi.”⁴⁸ The Paolucci property was located on the eastern wedge of the *trivium* across the street from the church. The Carmelites’ purchase of this land firmly established the order’s interest in

⁴⁷ “Nel mese di aprile [1657] era quasi compito il restauro della Chiesa del Popolo . . . aggiustati li scalini, acciò resta più spaliar la piazza di quella parte; e rimodernare, e restaurare, che ne havevano bisogno; si dipinge la cuppola . . . si restaura il muro del convento contigua alla chiesa in piazza; si dice si faranno dui chiese alla Vergine M. nelli dui prospetti di detta piazza, una alla SS. Vergine di Monte Santo, l’altro all SS. Vergine de’ Miracoli, chiese piccole hora, ivi vicine. Si dice, si faranno anco edificij nel sito degl’horti di detta piazza.” Rome, ASR, Cartari-Febei, 191, f. 10v., 1657. Transcribed by Gerhard Eimer, *La Fabbrica di S. Agnese in Navona: Römische Architekten, Bauherren und Handwerker im Zeitalter des Nepotismus*, vol. 2 (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1971), 538.

⁴⁸ The purchase is recorded in Rome, Archivio di Stato, Notari del Trib, A.C., Palutius Thomas, vol 4968, f. 6. The quotation is from Rome, Archivio di Stato, Notari del Trib, A.C., Palutius Thomas, vol 4967, f. 632. See Hager, 195 and n.23.

moving this short distance to the eastern wedge of the Piazza del Popolo. The transaction must have been the last opportunity for the Carmelites to acquire land before the chirograph on 16 November 1661, which mentions this purchase, but no other. Because of this transaction, Hager assumed that the Carmelites' desire to build a church on the eastern wedge of the piazza soon elided with Alexander VII's interest in renovating the space, and the project evolved to immense proportions.⁴⁹

In his monograph on Sant' Agnese in Piazza Navona from 1971, Gerhard Eimer published the excerpt from Cartari's account, the earliest mention of the twin churches of the Piazza del Popolo. The account from April 1657 predates the Carmelite brothers' purchase of land on the eastern wedge. Eimer thus dismissed Hager's view that the brothers initiated the idea of building churches on the wedges. Instead, he cited several of Alexander VII's diary entries that documented his walks through the piazza and showed his interest in the space.⁵⁰ Richard Krautheimer also argued that Alexander VII initiated the project,⁵¹ based on the commands in Alexander VII's diary to investigate the property owners at the piazza, a view reinforced by Dorothy Metzger Habel in her study of Alexander VII's urban projects.⁵² It would thus appear that the question of the role of the two religious orders at the Piazza del Popolo is settled. To wit, Alexander VII deserves all credit, and the religious orders deserve none. However, scholarship on Roman urbanism suggests that this course of study is unwise. Joseph Connors's seminal work,

⁴⁹ Hager, 195.

⁵⁰ Eimer, 537-539.

⁵¹ Krautheimer, *The Rome of Alexander VII*, 189.

⁵² Habel neglects any discussion of the potential role of the two orders in her chapter on the Piazza del Popolo, 63-95.

“Alliance and Enmity in Roman Baroque Urbanism,” demonstrates the importance of local institutions in developing urban projects.⁵³ In light of his essay, it is difficult to imagine that three different orders, the Augustinians of Santa Maria del Popolo, the Carmelites of Santa Maria di Montesanto, and the Franciscans of Santa Maria dei Miracoli, played no role in the outcome of this massive architectural project. Rather than conceive of the early building history of the piazza in dichotomous terms of papal initiative versus institutional initiative, one might do better to examine the design history as dialectical. Although the portico scheme developed under Alexander VII’s watchful eye, it is still unclear who developed the idea of twin churches and the circumstances under which the idea blossomed. One wonders whether the orders had any role in selecting the architect or guiding the design. Indeed, the role of the small churches was vital in this early period as they were burdened with the task of acquiring land.⁵⁴

Although Alexander VII played a large role in the development of the Piazza del Popolo, the overwhelming emphasis on his own force, strategies, and will as a builder have preempted an analysis that accounts for the piazza’s local institutions. Further archival research in each order’s archives may begin to explain problems plaguing the history of the twin churches. For instance, the curious pause in the construction history of the churches between 1658 and 1661 may be explained by the role of the two orders. Though Cartari suggested the nature of the future project in April 1657, and the Carmelites purchased property in January 1658, an official design for the twin churches

⁵³ Joseph Connors, “Alliance and Enmity in Roman Baroque Urbanism,” *Römisches Jahrbuch der Bibliotheca Hertziana* 25 (1989): 207-294.

⁵⁴ One should note that the Carmelites and Franciscans were also responsible for acquiring some of the construction material. In 1662 the brothers of both orders acquired columns from Bernini’s dismantled belltower at St. Peter’s. See McPhee, Doc. 39, 258-259.

was not revealed until the chirograph of 16 November 1661. Perhaps the two orders caused the delay. Until Alexander VII's firm intervention in 1661, the task of acquiring property may have been too difficult. One also wonders if the Augustinians at Santa Maria del Popolo protested the erection of two, prominent churches in such close proximity to their own.⁵⁵ Though these thoughts remain speculative, they demonstrate the need for a closer examination of the role of local institutions and of the relationship between monastic orders and the papacy in architectural projects.

Cartari's mention of the two churches at the Piazza del Popolo raises a further question. What design was intended for the two churches? A presentation drawing attributed to Carlo Rainaldi that dates between 1657 and 1658 clarifies this question (Figure 14; Catalog 6). Though Carlo Rainaldi's involvement with the twin churches is not documented until the chirograph of 16 November 1661, this drawing likely provides the first evidence of his presence during the project, and its attribution will be considered below. Within a year between Alexander VII's command to Bernini on 4 February 1657 and the presentation drawing, the construction of the Piazza del Popolo changed hands from Bernini to Rainaldi. Without concrete archival evidence to document the change, scholars have been reluctant to explain the transfer of direction. One can only speculate on the motivation for the change. Perhaps Alexander VII reserved Bernini's attention for other works. In this period from 1656 to 1658 Bernini took charge of numerous projects. He began the Cathedra Petri in 1656, Piazza San Pietro in 1657, and San Tommaso in

⁵⁵ Hager notes that in 1639 the Augustinians filed a grievance against the Carmelites because of the inscription over their door, "Seminarium Carmelitarum Primi Instituti de propaganda Fide." Hager, 194-195.

Castel Gandolfo and Sant'Andrea al Quirinale in 1658.⁵⁶ As the impetus for a grander design emerged, Alexander VII perhaps shifted command of the Piazza del Popolo to the less occupied Rainaldi. Krautheimer even suggests that the Piazza del Popolo may have been “a consolation prize for having failed to win Piazza San Pietro.”⁵⁷

Where did the impetus to select Rainaldi over other architects originate? One wonders if the presentation drawing was an attempt by Rainaldi to persuade the pope to select his design. Indeed, Rainaldi was not averse to insinuating himself into command of a project.⁵⁸ One might also recall Rainaldi's involvement in the decoration for the entrance of Queen Christina. On this occasion Rainaldi designed the ephemeral decoration for the façade of the Palazzo Farnese (Figure 15).⁵⁹ Though this project was not related specifically to work at the Piazza del Popolo, it demonstrates Rainaldi's important position during the festivities and may have garnered him the necessary attention to secure the commission of the Piazza del Popolo. Alessandra Anselmi suggests one further possibility to explain Rainaldi's direction of the twin churches. In an essay on the apse of Santa Maria Maggiore, a project in which Rainaldi superseded Bernini, Anselmi demonstrates the Popolo Romano's long involvement at the basilica. She suggests that the Popolo Romano may have prompted the transfer of the project to Carlo Rainaldi, who served as Architetto del Popolo Romano beginning in 1651 after his

⁵⁶ For a survey of these projects, see Marder, *Bernini and the Art of Architecture*, 123-149, 165-167, 187-209, and 211-223 .

⁵⁷ Krautheimer, *The Rome of Alexander VII*, 43.

⁵⁸ McPhee cites correspondence between Virgilio Spada and Bernardino Spada expressing displeasure when Rainaldi circumvented procedure and showed his drawings for the bell tower of S. Pietro directly to Innocent X. McPhee, 150 and Doc. 18e.

⁵⁹ See Elisabeth Kieven, *Von Bernini bis Piranesi: Römische Architekturzeichnungen des Barock* (Stuttgart: Hatje, 1993), 154, Cat. 51.

father, Girolamo Rainaldi, resigned.⁶⁰ Anselmi hypothesizes an analogous situation at the Piazza del Popolo where Rainaldi again superseded Bernini.⁶¹ However, there is little evidence to suggest the idea that the Popolo Romano had any authority at the Piazza del Popolo. Though her idea may lack support, it attests to one powerful institution that supported Rainaldi during his career. Without the emergence of new archival evidence, however, Anselmi's hypothesis and other suggestions about the transfer of direction from Bernini to Rainaldi remain speculative.

IV. The Presentation Drawing of 1657/58: Rainaldi's *Concetto* and Architectural Sources

The presentation drawing of the twin churches has remained one of the most enigmatic puzzles in the history of the twin churches (Figure 14; Catalog 6). The large sheet depicts the prospect of streets with the obelisk centered on the page in order to emphasize the symmetry of the piazza. Each church has a flat façade divided into three bays that are separated by paired Corinthian pilasters. A straight pediment surmounts the two inner pairs above which an attic story rises. A low, round drum, articulated by paired pilaster strips and windows, carries the rounded dome and lantern. The question of attribution, in particular, has posed great difficulties. Wittkower gave the drawing to Rainaldi but noted the influence of Fontana on the design of the dome. He dated the drawing to 1661. Hager agreed on the collaboration of the two architects. However, he

⁶⁰ Klaus Güthlein, "Der 'Palazzo Nuovo' des Kapitols," *Römisches Jahrbuch für Kunstgeschichte* 22 (1985): 128.

⁶¹ Alessandra Anselmi, "I progetti di Bernini e Rainaldi per l'abside di S. Maria Maggiore," *Bolletino d'Arte* 86 (2001): 53.

dated the work to 1658 based on the absence of a reference to Santa Maria dei Miracoli in the inscriptions. Eimer failed to see the influence of Fontana and attributed the drawing solely to Rainaldi. He dated it to the winter of 1656/1657 before Cartari's mention of the churches in April 1657. Krautheimer offered a radically different suggestion. He believed the drawing was a counterproject by Carlo Fontana and dated the work to 1660/1661. Kieven returned the drawing to Rainaldi with a date of 1658. Most recently, Habel attributed the drawing to Rainaldi and avoided the question of date altogether.

The handling of the wash is characteristic of Rainaldi's oeuvre. The presentation drawing is similar, in particular, to a design produced by Rainaldi for the Piazza San Pietro (Figure 16).⁶² One may note the use of wash for doors and windows, produced with a single stroke of thick wash. Fontana's style, on the other hand, tends towards a more precise use of wash as details are represented with greater clarity.⁶³ The stylistic considerations exclude Carlo Fontana as the primary draftsman of the presentation drawing. They do not, however, preclude his involvement in the design process. As Wittkower notes, "[the drawing] certainly concludes a long series of preliminary drafts and sketches."⁶⁴ Fontana may have assisted Rainaldi in generating the designs for the churches. Indeed, as Wittkower notes, the classicizing domes are reminiscent of Fontana's work. Rainaldi's style, on the other hand, tends to be more complex, and his design for the dome of Santa Maria in Campitelli adopts volutes. Other than the style of

⁶² Kieven, 162, Cat. 55.

⁶³ For Fontana's style of drawing, see Kieven, 167-185, particularly Fontana's view of Civitavecchia and his elevation of the Palazzo Chigi. A more illustrative example is Fontana's drawing of Sant'Andrea della Valle in Rome. BAV, Chigi P VII 0, f. 90. The drawing, produced around 1661 only a few years after the presentation drawing for the Piazza del Popolo, demonstrates the distinct differences between the architects' drafting styles.

⁶⁴ Wittkower, "Carlo Rainaldi," 16.

the domes, however, there is no firm evidence to substantiate Fontana's involvement at this early point. Furthermore, there is little doubt that the facades themselves represent Rainaldi's conception. While his facades of Sant'Andrea della Valle and Santa Maria in Campitelli present a greater plasticity in the use of columns, Rainaldi's later facades, such as Santa Maria del Suffragio, often have a similar severe flatness resulting from the use of pilasters (Figure 17).⁶⁵ Given these considerations, one can be fairly certain of Rainaldi's authorship of the project.

The architectural references of the drawing demonstrate Rainaldi's thoughtful study during the process of design. I would propose that the facades in the drawing relate to the façade of Santa Maria di Loreto in Rome by Antonio da Sangallo the Younger, begun in 1507 and consecrated in 1534 (Figure 18).⁶⁶ Like the facades in Rainaldi's presentation drawing, the façade of Santa Maria di Loreto is composed of three bays divided by paired pilasters. A segmental pediment crowns the central door, while a larger straight pediment, broken at Santa Maria di Loreto, frames the central bay. Obvious differences between the elevations exist. For instance, the newer design replaces niches with doors and adds a large attic story. The proportions and the composition of stories are also distinct. Nevertheless, the formal connection between Rainaldi's design and Sangallo's structure is clear.

One wonders why Rainaldi turned to Sangallo's facade for inspiration. I believe that Sangallo's church provided an important precedent on typological grounds. Santa Maria di Loreto is a centrally planned church dedicated to the Virgin, just as the twin

⁶⁵ Hager, 201.

⁶⁶ For the history of the church, see Gustavo Giovannoni, *Antonio da Sangallo il Giovane*, 2 vols. (Rome: Tipografia Regionale, 1959), Vol 1: 205-210, Vol 2: Fig., 162.

churches are, and therefore it provided a decorous precedent for Rainaldi's design. In *Architectural Principles in the Age of Humanism*, Rudolf Wittkower noted the strong symbolic connections between centrally planned churches and the iconography of the Virgin. He writes, "The martyrium erected over her tomb, the heaven in which she is received, the crown of the heavenly queen and the crown of stars of the *Immacolata*, the roundness of the universe over which she presides— all these interrelated ideas played their part in giving preference to centralized plans of sanctuaries and churches dedicated to the Virgin."⁶⁷ Thus, Rainaldi's reference to Santa Maria di Loreto not only alludes to a Roman precedent but also evokes a host of associations revolving around the Virgin.

The facades in the presentation drawing have another close precedent, namely Vignola's church of Sant'Andrea in Via Flaminia (Figure 19). There the three bay façade is framed by paired Corinthian pilasters for the outer bays, while single pilasters frame the inner bay. Though Rainaldi's twin facades compare more closely to Santa Maria di Loreto than Sant'Andrea in Via Flaminia, Rainaldi's knowledge of Vignola's church is well documented. In 1633 Rainaldi produced a manuscript of measures taken to thwart the plague of 1629-1632.⁶⁸ Likely dedicated to Cardinal Francesco Barberini, the manuscript contains twenty-seven drawings; most are plans of *lazzaretti* and depictions of the gates of Rome. Only one church façade is depicted, Sant'Andrea in Via Flaminia. The manuscript thus documents Rainaldi's study of this façade. It also records his study of the Porta del Popolo and its vicinity, a project to which he would return twenty-five years later.

⁶⁷ Rudolf Wittkower, *Architectural Principles in the Age of Humanism*, 4th ed. (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1988), 40.

⁶⁸ Guglielmo Matthiae, "Le porte di Roma in un codice di Carlo Rainaldi," *Capitolium* 22 (1947): 68-72.

Rainaldi's early manuscript demonstrates the anxiety over the city's entrances during times of plague. Civil authorities scrutinized the gates of Rome and managed these sites of vulnerability through the deployment of guards at the entrances and the erection of *lazzaretti* outside the city wall.⁶⁹ Yet, the construction of *lazzaretti* and the regulation of Rome's gates were not the only steps taken to stop the plague. Spiritual actions were also required, including processions and the erection of magnificent votive churches. Rainaldi was responsible for one such church, Santa Maria in Campitelli, contemporaneous with the planning of the Piazza del Popolo. In the summer of 1656 the plague arrived from Naples, and by January 1657 the planning of Santa Maria in Campitelli as a votive offering for the Virgin had begun.

Rainaldi's earliest design for Santa Maria in Campitelli was a centrally planned church in the form of an ellipse. Klaus Güthlein has demonstrated Rainaldi's engagement with the Venetian plague church, Santa Maria della Salute by Baldassare Longhena, in his plans for Santa Maria in Campitelli. Furthermore, Rainaldi apparently studied the north Italian tradition of domed churches erected as votive offerings for the plague.⁷⁰ The contemporaneous example of Santa Maria in Campitelli demonstrates Rainaldi's study of centrally planned churches dedicated to the Virgin, thus, forming a tangible link to the twin churches. One also wonders if concern over the plague prompted Alexander VII's wishes to build twin churches dedicated to the Virgin just inside Rome's major entrance, providing greater spiritual measures against the plague. Like Santa Maria in Campitelli,

⁶⁹ For the actions taken to prevent the plague of 1629-1632, see Laurie Nussdorfer, *Civic Politics in the Rome of Urban VIII* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), 145-161.

⁷⁰ Klaus Güthlein, "Zwei unbekanntes Zeichnungen zur Planungs- und Baugeschichte der römischen Pestkirche Santa Maria in Campitelli," *Römisches Jahrbuch der Bibliotheca Hertziana* 26 (1990): 185-255.

where a miraculous image of the Virgin from Santa Maria in Portico was transferred, Santa Maria dei Miracoli also held a miraculous image of the Virgin. One must be cautious with this suggestion because no known literary or historical documents attest to the significance of the twin churches as votive offerings. Nevertheless, the form of the churches, centrally planned domed structures dedicated to the Virgin, their placement at one of Rome's most vulnerable sites, and Rainaldi's contemporary work at Santa Maria in Campitelli all suggest a network of iconographic and architectural associations. Clearly, urban planning provided the foremost concern, but why such a great expense would be planned during a plague has never been explained. Nor has the religious significance of the churches, which always must be a primary concern in the erection of ecclesiastical buildings, been examined.

The Marian references in the plan of the church are matched by the thoughtful choice of inscriptions for the entablatures. As Hager noted, Rainaldi took both inscriptions from Psalm 87.⁷¹ The inscription at left reads, "FUNDAMETA EIUS IN MONTIBUS SANCTIS," an obvious reference to Santa Maria di Monte Santo.⁷² The inscription at right reads, "GLORIOSA DICTA SUNT DI TE CIVITAS DEI," thus continuing with a later verse of the psalm.⁷³ It is surprising that the inscription fails to refer explicitly to Santa Maria dei Miracoli. For this reason Hager dated the drawing to a moment before the brothers of Santa Maria dei Miracoli were involved with the project at

⁷¹ Hager, 201.

⁷² Psalm 87:1. "On the Holy Mount stands the city he founded." The translation is taken from *The New Oxford Annotated Bible*, rev. ed., ed. Herbert May and Bruce Metzger (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977).

⁷³ Psalm 87:3. "Glorious things are spoken of you, O city of God."

the Piazza del Popolo.⁷⁴ If one follows his logic, the drawing must date before Cartari's mention of the churches, which acknowledges the involvement of Santa Maria dei Miracoli. The drawing would thus postdate Alexander VII's mention of porticoes in February 1657 and predate Cartari's report of April 1657. However, this method of dating is flawed. It presupposes that each inscription must refer explicitly to each church, but I propose that a different iconographic motivation determined the choice of inscriptions.

The inscriptions of the drawing adopt the first and third verses of Psalm 87, while the Via del Corso provides an interruption in the psalm that corresponds to the ellipsis of the second verse, "the Lord loves the gates of Zion more than all the dwelling places of Jacob." The gate of the second verse, the *portas* in the Latin vulgate, is a specific reference to the function of the Porta del Popolo, the Piazza del Popolo, and ultimately the Via del Corso. The caesura of the psalm, rendered invisible yet present by the Corso, represents a learned conceit, or *concetto*, that emphasizes Alexander VII's building program and the specific function of the piazza. That such an allusion was legible in baroque Rome is supported by the use of the same psalm in other contexts. The inscription "Fundamenta eius in Montibus Sanctis" appears on the series of foundation medals and annual medals struck for the Piazza San Pietro beginning in 1657 and continuing through 1666.⁷⁵ As Krautheimer notes, the choice of this verse for the medals alludes to the six mountains on the Chigi arms and to Alexander VII's initiative in

⁷⁴ Because he believed the brothers of Santa Maria dei Miracoli became involved in 1659, Hager dated the drawing to 1658. Hager, 202.

⁷⁵ See Nathan Whitman and John Varriano. *Roma Resurgens: Papal Medals from the Age of the Baroque* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Museum of Art, 1983) Catalog entries 80-84. The earliest of these medals (Catalog 80) was placed in the foundation on August 28, 1657.

rebuilding the city.⁷⁶ Thus, the inclusion of the psalm for the presentation drawing plays on a host of allusions, simultaneously emphasizing the importance of the Corso, the connections between the projects of Piazza San Pietro and the Piazza del Popolo, and Alexander VII's desire to renovate the city.

Rainaldi must have labored intensely on the drawing with its *concetto* and architectural references. Although the inscriptions do not yield evidence for a precise date, the drawing likely dates after the first foundation medal of Piazza San Pietro when Romans were more conscious of the psalm's iconographic potential. The drawing, therefore, dates to about 1658 and is likely the earliest evidence for Rainaldi's involvement at the piazza. The date conforms to a new period in Rainaldi's career. After a difficult period following the death of his father, Girolamo, in 1655, Carlo Rainaldi reemerged in 1658 as he took charge of Santa Maria in Campitelli and the Piazza del Popolo.⁷⁷

V. Alexander VII's Chirograph, the Role of Carlo Fontana, and the Construction of the Twin Churches

Though planning of the twin churches appears to have slowed after 1658, by 1661 the situation had changed drastically. Alexander VII assumed forceful control of the plans, and on 16 November 1661 he issued a chirograph detailing the exchange of property and the conditions for building the twin churches (Figure 20; Catalog 7).⁷⁸ The

⁷⁶ Krautheimer, *The Rome of Alexander VII*, 72.

⁷⁷ Fasolo alludes to the difficult professional and personal period in Carlo Rainaldi's life. Furio Fasolo, *L'opera di Girolamo and Carlo Rainaldi, 1570-1655 e 1611-1691* (Rome: Edizioni Ricerche, 1960), 147.

⁷⁸ Hager, 299, Doc. 1.

chirograph is the most revealing document in the history of the twin churches, and it is worth reviewing in some detail. The left side of the large sheet (not shown here) provides the contract for the twin churches. It commands numerous property owners to sell their land to the churches, and it establishes Rainaldi as the architect of the project. The right side of the sheet in Rainaldi's hand depicts a plan of the entire piazza stretching from the Porta del Popolo to the *trivium*. It includes in plan and elevation one design for both churches. It is clear from the drawing that the fate of the Piazza del Popolo was now inextricably bound to the idea of twin churches.

The drawing bears an obvious connection to the “funnel project” as the chirograph adopts the solution rendered in pencil on the earlier drawing (Figure 13; Catalog 5). Rainaldi gives symmetry to the piazza by mimicking on the west side of the piazza the angle of Santa Maria del Popolo and its convent wall. The piazza thus consists of a small trapezoidal ante-piazza similar to the Piazza Retta at Saint Peter's. As it approaches the twin churches, the piazza widens. The projected architecture for the piazza is not indicated. The drawing only notes, “the dotted line demonstrates the uniformity of the symmetry of the piazza.”⁷⁹ One imagines that Rainaldi planned a low wall, like that demarcating the convent of the Augustinians, for the west side of the piazza. The drawing confirms Cartari's account four years earlier that alluded to the erection of twin churches *and* to construction on the site of the piazza's gardens.

The southern end of the piazza depicts the development of the churches on the site of the two wedges. Of great concern are the property to be acquired and the property to be returned to the piazza, as indicated by various letters keyed to the text at lower right.

⁷⁹ “La linea punteggiata dimostra l'uniformità della Simetria della Piazza.”

Dotted circles mark the crossing of each church. For the plan of the churches, Rainaldi adopts a modified Greek cross, in which the longitudinal axis is slightly longer than the transverse axis. Two large, apsidal chapels form the transverse axis, while four smaller, rectangular chapels flank the longitudinal axis. Paired engaged columns form the piers of the crossing and support the narrow drum and dome. Rainaldi fails to make use of the entire space provided by the wedges, instead he confines his plan to a rectangular area. In this way, the plan relates to four studies for oval plan churches by Rainaldi.⁸⁰ Guglielmo Matthiae published these plans, which, he argued, represented studies for Santa Maria in Campitelli (Figures 21, 22, 23, & 24). The combination of the elliptical plan with the circular choir amply supports the idea that these served as preparatory drawings for that church, but they are also contemporaneous with Rainaldi's planning of the twin churches. One can discern Rainaldi's engagement with certain architectural forms, such as the side portals, which connect to the main space through long corridors, and his determination to set a central plan within a rectangular space. Furthermore, the plans of the façades, cursorily represented and articulated with pilasters rather than columns, relate in their flatness to Rainaldi's presentation drawing for the twin churches.⁸¹ I would argue that the drawings for Santa Maria in Campitelli demonstrate a series of preoccupations in Rainaldi's architectural ideas in the late 1650s and provide further support for his authorship of the presentation drawing.

The elevation of the church in the chirograph bears some connection to Rainaldi's earlier presentation drawing but is entirely transformed in character. Both designs project

⁸⁰ Guglielmo Matthiae, "Un contributo a Carlo Rainaldi," *Arti figurative* 2 (1946): 49-59.

⁸¹ Matthiae makes this point as he describes that the facades "non sarebbe stato dissimile da quello dei primi progetti per S. Agnese in Agone e per le due chiese gemelle di piazza del Popolo," 51.

three portals framed by eight pilasters (in the presentation drawing) or columns (in the chirograph), but the rhythm established by each design varies greatly. In the chirograph Rainaldi emphasizes the central portal by abandoning the outer pairing of pilasters in the presentation drawing. Other similarities such as the use of an attic story and a large, straight pediment fail to distract from the marked difference between the two designs. The outer bays of the church, now convex instead of flat, jut forcefully into the piazza, and the drum animated by volutes contrasts greatly with the stability of the drum in the presentation drawing. The new design gives an impression of compact energy, but the small dome ultimately proves less impressive than later designs. The conception of the design, so closely related to plans for Santa Maria in Campitelli, belongs to Carlo Rainaldi. Though Fontana may have assisted Rainaldi in earlier drafts, such as the presentation drawing, Rainaldi confidently promoted his own ideas for the chirograph.

Although the chirograph presents a finished solution for the twin churches, the plan was evidently subject to discussion. On 17 January 1662, only two months after Rainaldi's plan for the chirograph, Alexander VII invited Bernini's comments on the designs. In his diary he records, "again [I met] with Cav. Bernini about the designs for the Arsenal, and around the Piazza del Popolo, [to see] if he had something to say."⁸² One can only speculate what Bernini thought of the project; Alexander VII leaves no clues. Perhaps at this moment, Bernini suggested that Carlo Fontana could assist Rainaldi with the construction. Indeed, by the time the foundation medal was cast for Santa Maria di Montesanto on 15 July 1662, the design had changed (Figure 25; Catalog 8).

⁸² "di nuovo col Cav. Bernini sù disegni dell'Arsenale, e circa la piazza del Popolo, se ha che dire qualcosa." 17 January 1662. Entry from the Diary of Alexander VII Rome BAV Chigi O IV 58, f. 430v. Krautheimer and Jones, 216, n. 536.

The foundation medal by Giocchino Francesco Travani depicts the twin churches flanking the obelisk at the center. Above the bustling scene is the inscription, “SAPIENTIA IN PLATEIS DAT VOCEM SUAM,” [Wisdom gives voice in the squares of the city] a quotation from Proverbs 1:20. The proverb continues with a reference to the city’s gates, “in the markets she raises her voice; on the top of the walls she cries out; at the entrance of the city gates she speaks.”⁸³ The choice of proverb demonstrates Alexander VII’s penchant for choosing and writing inscriptions and alludes again to the importance of the city’s gate, the Porta del Popolo, in his urban projects.

More important than the inscription are the discrepancies between the church designs on the medal and on the chirograph. Though both the chirograph and the medal present a façade with four central columns surmounted by a pediment, the four columns of the medal now project forward to form a tetrastyle portico. Furthermore, the outer bays on the foundation medal are concave rather than convex. These two changes, in addition to the absence of the volutes, present a less intricate, but more resolved design that connects clearly with ancient works such as the Pantheon.⁸⁴ Where did such changes originate? It is possible that Bernini, exercising his influence on Alexander VII during conversations such as the one on 17 January 1662, prompted changes to the design. The classicizing porticoes at the twin churches revive the earlier idea for porticoes at the wedges and may have even related to the idea for a tetrastyle portico on the façade of Saint Peter’s.⁸⁵ However, Bernini’s direct influence over the project cannot be

⁸³ Proverbs 1:20-21.

⁸⁴ Wittkower, 18.

⁸⁵ The idea stemmed from Michelangelo and was reexamined by Bernini. See Heinrich Brauer and Rudolf Wittkower, *Die Zeichnungen des Gianlorenzo Bernini*, vol. 1 (Berlin: Heinrich Keller, 1931), 84;

substantiated. Instead, scholars such as Wittkower have sought the impetus for such changes in the presence of Rainaldi's assistant, Carlo Fontana, who was one of Bernini's pupils. Krautheimer even goes so far as to suggest that "the succession of projects for the twin churches from 1661 to 1665 had best be explained as a tug-of-war between Fontana, backed by Bernini, and Rainaldi, in which the latter was forced into ever more 'classical' solutions."⁸⁶ It was precisely during this period, 1661-1662, that Fontana assisted Rainaldi at Sant'Andrea della Valle; Wittkower has demonstrated the influence that the young assistant had on Rainaldi, as Fontana introduced changes to make Sant'Andrea's façade more classicizing.⁸⁷ However, at the twin churches Rainaldi likely initiated the change from convex to concave outer bays. The motif of a central structure flanked by concave wings appears in his own oeuvre as early as 1647 for the high altar of Santa Maria della Scala (Figure 26).⁸⁸

These changes made to the chirograph design bring to the foreground the question of Carlo Fontana's role, and it is worth dwelling on his relationship with Carlo Rainaldi. One must keep in mind that there is little evidence to substantiate Carlo Fontana's role in Rainaldi's workshop prior to 1661. The tenuous assertion that Fontana conceived the domes in the presentation drawing (Figure 14) around 1658 should be treated with caution. Nor is there any reason to suspect that Fontana's assistance was required until

and T. K. Kitao, *Circle and Oval in the Square of Saint Peter's: Bernini's Art of Planning* (New York: New York University Press, 1974), 48-49.

⁸⁶ Krautheimer, *The Rome of Alexander VII*, 190.

⁸⁷ Wittkower, "Carlo Rainaldi," 20-23.

⁸⁸ Furio Fasolo has proven that the high altar of Santa Maria della Scala was constructed in 1647, not in the 1680s as previously believed. See "L'altar maggiore di S. Maria della Scala," *Fede e Arte* 8 (1960): 302-315. Cathy Kelly pointed to connections between this altar and the façades of the twin churches in "Carlo Rainaldi, Nicolo Michetti, and the Patronage of Cardinal Giuseppe Sacripante," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 50 (1991): 65.

Alexander VII's apparent dissatisfaction with the chirograph in January 1662. Fontana's interaction with Rainaldi cannot be confirmed until 1661 when he assisted Rainaldi at Sant' Andrea della Valle.⁸⁹

Regardless of the precise moment that Fontana began to assist Rainaldi, scholars have assumed that the relationship between the architects was fraught with difficulty. Rudolf Wittkower implied that the relationship was difficult noting that Fontana "actually corrected a design by his master" at Sant' Andrea della Valle.⁹⁰ Allen Braham and Hellmut Hager explicitly argued that the relationship between the two was troubled. They write, "In the case of Pietro da Cortona and Bernini, he [Fontana] was the pupil and assistant; to Carlo Rainaldi he became a competitor, who, in connection with the façade of Sant' Andrea della Valle and the twin churches . . . attempted to have the plans of his master modified, actually undermining Rainaldi's scheme by producing counter-projects."⁹¹ This view was reinforced by Richard Krautheimer who saw the twin churches as something of a contest between Rainaldi and Fontana.⁹²

Little evidence exists to suggest the character of this relationship in the earliest phases of design. If, in fact, Fontana did contribute to (or was responsible for) the presentation drawing in 1658 he did so as an apprentice in Rainaldi's studio at the age of only twenty years. Fontana had already served as an assistant in the studio of Pietro da Cortona, but it is difficult to imagine that the young architect attempted to dominate the

⁸⁹ Wittkower, "Carlo Rainaldi," 20-23.

⁹⁰ Wittkower, "Carlo Rainaldi," 23.

⁹¹ Allan Braham and Hellmut Hager, *Carlo Fontana: The Drawings at Windsor Castle* (London: A. Zwemmer Ltd., 1977), 7-8.

⁹² Krautheimer, *The Rome of Alexander VII*, 190.

project with his own ideas.⁹³ It should also be noted that Fontana did not begin assisting Bernini until 1659 at Piazza San Pietro, and, therefore, he could not act as a vehicle to transmit Bernini's influence until the time of the chirograph. Though Fontana's influence cannot be felt in the chirograph design, he likely played a role in the changes to the foundation medal. It was perhaps at this moment between the chirograph and the medal when the relationship between the two men began to sour. Indeed, Braham and Hager's characterization of their relationship appears more accurate as the construction of the churches unfolds.

The addition of porticoes and the change from convex to concave outer bays, though significant, pale in comparison to the drastic transformation of the ground-plans. Rainaldi changed the Greek cross plans to a circular plan at Santa Maria dei Miracoli and to an oval plan at Santa Maria di Montesanto. Rudolf Wittkower described with great clarity the motivation behind the alterations to the plans. The change was prompted by considerations of urban planning. As Wittkower writes, "The idea was to organize the wide thoroughfare in such a way that the line of vision from the Porta del Popolo met an important focus. Its effectiveness would depend on two things, first on absolute symmetry, and secondly on making the chief features in the line of vision, i.e. the two domes, as large as possible."⁹⁴ As Wittkower notes, Rainaldi's Greek cross plans satisfied the first condition. The transepts and chapels could be altered easily at each church in order to mask the fact that the churches were planned on two sites of different sizes. But, the Greek cross plans supported small domes, and their inadequate size could

⁹³ Braham and Hager, 7.

⁹⁴ Wittkower, "Carlo Rainaldi," 14.

not support the overwhelming pressures of urban planning. The need for larger domes prompted Rainaldi, assisted by Fontana, to alter the ground-plan of Santa Maria dei Miracoli. By substituting a circular plan for the Greek cross, the dome could now span the entire space of the church. However, Rainaldi could not use an identical plan at Santa Maria di Montesanto. The site was too narrow, and the dome would have appeared smaller than the dome of Santa Maria dei Miracoli. Instead, Rainaldi designed an oval plan, allowing the diameter of the dome to be placed farther back at a wider point on the site. The domes now appeared to be symmetrical, and their massiveness provided the necessary focal point of the piazza.⁹⁵

Rainaldi's responsibility for the change in ground plan is confirmed in an engraving by Carlo Fontana (Figure 27). Printed in 1674 and dedicated to Cardinal Matteo Orlandi, head of the Carmelite order, the engraving depicts the elevation of Santa Maria di Montesanto accompanied by a small proposal for its ground plan. Here Fontana proposed to thicken the lateral walls of the drum. Such a change would have allowed the dome to appear nearly circular and would "counteract the irregular aspect of the dodecagonal dome . . . which from his classical standpoint he would feel compelled to condemn."⁹⁶ The engraving thus implies that Rainaldi originated the change in plan, which resulted in an irregular, anti-classicizing form that Fontana now sought to correct.

Though Hellmut Hager carefully recounted the construction history of the twin churches, it is worth reviewing briefly the end of this story as a means of conclusion. The foundation stone of Santa Maria dei Miracoli was laid on 9 December 1661, while

⁹⁵ Wittkower, "Carlo Rainaldi," 15.

⁹⁶ Wittkower, "Carlo Rainaldi," 12.

construction officially commenced at Santa Maria di Montesanto on 15 July 1662.⁹⁷ Work began on the facades of the churches and progressed slowly, thus, giving Rainaldi and Fontana time to adjust the plans.⁹⁸ On 22 May 1667 Alexander VII, the major force behind the construction of the twin churches, died, and construction of the twin churches came to a halt. At this point, work at Santa Maria di Montesanto reached the windows in the drum, while at Santa Maria dei Miracoli work stopped on the façade.⁹⁹

Construction of the churches recommenced on 20 March 1671, but it was not until a donation two years later by Cardinal Girolamo Gastaldi that the churches could be finished.¹⁰⁰ Gastaldi served the church in a number of positions during his ecclesiastical career, and on 12 June 1673 Clement X Altieri (1670-1676) named him a cardinal. During Alexander VII's reign, Gastaldi served in two positions that may have been related to the history of the twin churches. In 1656, just as the plague began to threaten Rome, Alexander VII nominated Gastaldi as *Commissario Generale dei Lazzaretti*. One year later he was appointed *Commissario Generale di Sanità per lo Stato della Chiesa*.¹⁰¹ Given these positions, one wonders if Gastaldi played any role in promoting the idea of twin churches during the plague. In fact, Gastaldi was present for the foundation ceremonies of both churches, and his donation supplies further evidence for his profound interest in the twin churches.

⁹⁷ Hager, 206.

⁹⁸ Hager, 238-239.

⁹⁹ Hager, 238.

¹⁰⁰ Hager, 239.

¹⁰¹ For Gastaldi's life, see the *Dizionario biografico degli italiani*, vol. 52 (Rome: Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana, year), 532-533.

Gastaldi's donation made on 27 October 1673 reveals important changes in the direction of the twin churches.¹⁰² According to the donation, Carlo Fontana would complete Santa Maria di Montesanto according to his own design. Despite the stipulation, it appears that Bernini directed the completion of the church.¹⁰³ Bernini altered Fontana's projected dome, returning to the dodecagonal design first proposed by Rainaldi. He also replaced the attic story of the façade with a low balustrade.¹⁰⁴ Work progressed rapidly on the church, and it neared completion for the Holy Year, 1675.¹⁰⁵

One can only imagine the tensions present on the building site. Bernini and Fontana had usurped Rainaldi's project as they worked to complete Santa Maria di Montesanto. After Gastaldi's donation, Rainaldi's name never appears in the extant documents for this church, but he did take charge at Santa Maria dei Miracoli when work recommenced in 1675. By this point, Santa Maria di Montesanto was nearly complete, and the surviving documents specify that Santa Maria di Montesanto was always to serve as the model for Santa Maria dei Miracoli.¹⁰⁶ Thus, Rainaldi was forced to comply with Bernini's interventions to the façade. Carlo Fontana again served as Rainaldi's assistant at Santa Maria dei Miracoli. Rainaldi's name last appears in a *misura* from 2 June 1677, and it seems that he stopped directing the construction of Santa Maria dei Miracoli in that

¹⁰² Hager, 301, Doc. 4.

¹⁰³ Golzio, 128.

¹⁰⁴ Hager, 241-242.

¹⁰⁵ An inscription in the interior above the door reveals that the church was completed in 1675. However, according to the diary of the priest Cervini, the church was not opened until 3 September 1678. Hempel, 48.

¹⁰⁶ Golzio, 127. See especially, Document 24, p. 138.

year, leaving Carlo Fontana to complete the church.¹⁰⁷ Unfortunately, there are no documents to suggest why Rainaldi left the project, and one can only speculate that his difficult relationship with Fontana and Bernini caused his departure. By 1678 Santa Maria dei Miracoli was completed, and on 5 August 1681 it opened for the first time.¹⁰⁸

With the completion and dedication of Santa Maria di Montesanto and Santa Maria dei Miracoli, Alexander VII's vision was finally realized. Two magnificent churches, a testament to the creative solutions of three Roman architects and the will of a ushering visitors and pilgrims down the Via del Corso on their way to Saint Peter's. Like many buildings in Rome, the twin churches were not the product of a single mind, rather they evolved over time with the contributions of several individuals and groups. Their history is complex, and it may continue to generate more questions than answers. Indeed, this essay has raised a number of questions: the nature of a portico design for the piazza, the role of the religious orders, and the reasons for Rainaldi's selection as chief architect. Yet, it has also added important dimensions to the study of the twin churches. The attribution of the survey drawing to Pietro Paolo Drei adds further support to Bernini's involvement in the earliest planning phases. The literary milieu that fostered the presentation drawing's *concetto* and other inscriptions at the Piazza del Popolo has begun to emerge. Furthermore, the connections between the twin churches and Rainaldi's contemporaneous design of Santa Maria in Campitelli have now been considered. At the very least, these new ideas paint a picture of the twin churches that is more profound in

¹⁰⁷ Golzio, 127 and Document 44.

¹⁰⁸ Golzio, 127 and 130n.22.

its significance and that will continue to reveal its complex history as future research continues.

Catalog 1 [Figure 9]

Drawing. Unattributed

Project for renovating the stairs at Santa Maria sopra Minerva

1666

Rome, BAV Chigi P VII 10, f. 27 r

Technique: Brown, pink, purple, blue, green, ochre washes with brown ink and graphite

Inscribed:

Reading from upper left to bottom: “A Profilo, e Pianta della Scala del Popolo/ B Profilo, e Pianta della Sc^a della Minerva com’ è al presente/ C Profilo, e Pianta della Scala della Minerva da farsi/ Scala di palmi cinquanta di proportione/ Scala di palmi Ducento di proportione.”

Bibliography:

Krautheimer, 1985, 89, 180

This drawing depicts in plan and profile the rounded stairs at Santa Maria del Popolo, as renovated by Bernini in 1656, the rectangular stairs at Santa Maria della Minerva before renovation, and a plan to create new rounded stairs. As Krautheimer notes, the renovation was linked to Bernini’s project to erect a statue with an elephant carrying an obelisk at Santa Maria sopra Minerva. Therefore, the plan likely dates to the same year as the project for the statue. The plan demonstrates Alexander VII’s taste for rounded stairs and shows how detailed his interest in urban renewal could be.

Catalog 2 [Figure 10]

Drawing. Unattributed

Elevation of the Aurelian wall from the Piazza del Popolo to the Tiber

1656- Early 1657

Rome, BAV Chigi P VII 13 ff. 18v-19

Technique: Brown and pink wash with brown ink

Bibliography:

Ciucci, 1974, 63

The drawing depicts the elevation of the Aurelian wall from the Piazza del Popolo to the Tiber. It was produced in tandem with BAV Chigi P VII 13 ff. 16v-17r (Catalog 3). The Porta del Popolo appears newly renovated according to the changes made by Bernini in 1656. The Chigi heraldry, six montes and a star, top the gate, and statues, presumably those of Peter and Paul sculpted by Francesco Mochi, are placed in the niches. The drawing is concerned with the exterior appearance of the convent of Santa Maria dei Miracoli next to the Tiber, and, I would argue, must date prior to the order's involvement with the project for the twin churches. A secure *terminus ante quem*, therefore, is Carlo Cartari's mention of the twin churches in April 1657 (see text, note 47). It is likely that interest in renovating the convent eventually led to the order's selection for transfer to the Piazza del Popolo.

Catalog 3 [Figure 11]

Drawing. Unattributed

Plan of the city extending from the Piazza del Popolo to the Tiber

1657- Early 1657

Rome, BAV Chigi P VII 13 ff. 16v-17

Technique: Brown, green, pink, and blue wash with brown ink

Inscribed:

Reading clockwise, lower left to right: “Strada M./ Porta/ PIAZZA DEL POPOLO/
 HORTI DIVERSI/ STRADA/ FIENILI DIVERSI/ CHIESA/ Claustro/ Rifectorio/ A
 Fienili nelli quail vi sono alcune finestre per di fuori/ B Parte del Convento de Frati dove
 vi sone Le Finestre al Piano Terreno et à gl’altri Piani queste ponno liavere (?) il lume
 dall’altra parte/ C D E Altra parte di Convento quale li à le finestri in tutti li Piani, et non
 può haver lume, d’altra parte se non dove sone di prite (?)”

Bibliography:

Ciucci, 1974, 63

The drawing complements BAV, Chigi P VII 13, ff. 18v-19 (Catalog 2) as it provides a corresponding plan of the convent of Santa Maria dei Miracoli and the Aurelian wall. The drawing provides further information about the motivation for their drafting. The inscriptions reveal the draftsman’s concern with lighting the convent and with providing a uniform exterior appearance. The draftsman is also concerned with the street that runs

from the Piazza del Popolo to the convent, and a dotted line on the inside of the Aurelian wall suggests a desire to regularize the wall in order to provide a uniform path. The drawing demonstrates Alexander VII's concern with renovating the entire area around the Piazza del Popolo, not just the wedges of land between the *trivium*.

Catalog 4 [Figure 12]

Drawing. Pietro Paolo Drei (?)

Survey drawing of the Piazza del Popolo

6 October- December 1656

Rome, BAV Chigi P VII 10, f. 26r

27.1 cm x 39 cm

Technique: Brown ink with light brown wash

Inscribed:

Reading clockwise, lower left to right: "Casé delli FP (?) del Popolo/ Casé diverse/ S^{ta} Maria di M^{te} Santo/ p. 53, Strada Paolina, che conduce alla Piazza della Trinità di Monte/ Casé della Nuntiata/ Piazza del Popolo/ Mossa del Corso, p.65/ Strada del Corso, p. 58/ casa del Cappell^{no} d S. Orsola/ cortile de S/ S. Orsola/ p. 46, Strada che guida alla Ripetta (?)/ (?) Strada conduce a S^{ta} Maria d Miracoli et al Porto del Tevertine alla Penna/ Isola d Casette Varié."

Bibliography:

Wittkower, 1975, 15, fig. 10; Krautheimer, 1985, 189; Habel, 2003, 84, fig. 57

The drawing provides a survey of the south side of the piazza and probably relates to Alexander VII's command on 6 October 1656 to seek out the owners of the properties at the head of the piazza (see text, note 28). The drawing lists the owners of properties that surround the piazza. It also provides measurements of the widths of each street of the *trivium*, evidence of the concern for regularizing all aspects of the piazza. The inclusion of measurements and the precise representation of the space call to mind the *licenze* of the *Maestri delle Strade*. The drawing proposes two solutions for regularizing the wedges. Two sets of lines mark the solutions, and the proposal for the wedge at right includes a thin layer of wash to suggest property that would be claimed from the piazza.

Wittkower's attribution of the drawing to Carlo Rainaldi has remained unchallenged, but analysis of the handwriting excludes Rainaldi as the author. Instead, the penmanship appears closer to Pietro Paolo Drei, soprastante of the Fabbrica of San Pietro. Indeed, Drei was often occupied with this kind of work. Drei must have completed the drawing between the papal command in October 1656 and his death in mid-December 1656 resulting from the plague.¹⁰⁹

One cannot exclude definitively, however, Carlo Fontana as the draftsman. In this case, the drawing could relate to Alexander VII's command in October 1656 or his similar command on 4 February 1657 (see text, note 31). However, Fontana's involvement in the project at this early date is unrecorded. Though the penmanship is not unlike Fontana's, it appears closer to Drei's hand.

¹⁰⁹ McPhee, 128.

Catalog 5 [Figure 13]

Drawing. Carlo Rainaldi (?)

Project for regularizing the Piazza del Popolo

c.1657

Rome, BAV Vat.Lat. 13442, f. 34

50.9 cm x 35.4 cm

Technique: Sepia and lavender wash with pencil

Bibliography:

Wittkower, 1975, 15, fig. 9; Hager, 1967/1968, 205, fig. 138; Krautheimer, 1985, 189, fig. 95; Habel, 2003, 86-90, fig. 58

The plan is a study of possible designs for the Piazza del Popolo. Because it incorporates changes made by Bernini to Santa Maria del Popolo (note especially the rounded form of the stairs), the drawing probably dates to a point after the spring of 1656 when the renovation of the church commenced. Furthermore, a secure *terminus ante quem* is established by the regularization of the wedges in February 1658 (see Krautheimer and Jones, 207, entry 173).

The plan offers two possibilities for renovating the piazza. Brown wash indicates the existing structures at the piazza, and purple wash suggests the first design possibility. The drawing defines a small trapezoidal area, which narrows as one moves into the piazza.

After the façade of Santa Maria del Popolo, the piazza flares open until the obelisk at which point both sides of the piazza run parallel until the concave wedges. An alternative project is indicated by a faint pencil line (not visible in reproduction) on the west side of the piazza that mirrors the convent wall of Santa Maria del Popolo.

The attribution is problematic. Based on the character of the heavy lines, Wittkower attributes the drawing to Carlo Rainaldi. Hager supports this attribution and dates the drawing to 1655. Krautheimer disputes the attribution suggesting that the plan is too sophisticated to be the work of Rainaldi, though he offers no alternative. Based on Alexander VII's diary entries, he dates the drawing to the winter of 1656/57. Habel suggests that Bernini authored the drawing and notes, "the handling of the lines feels quick and intuitive, but the plan these describe is sure and deliberate, and this combination is signature in Bernini's graphic work" (89). Though the question of attribution cannot be resolved with certainty, one should note that Rainaldi's design of the piazza for the chirograph of 16 November 1661 adopts the second solution proposed by this drawing (Catalog 7), lending some weight to his authorship.

Catalog 6 [Figure 14]

Drawing. Carlo Rainaldi (?)

Presentation Drawing of the Piazza del Popolo

Summer, 1657- 1658

Rome, BAV Chigi PVII 13 ff. 26v-27r

44.1 cm x 72.4 cm

Technique: Graphite with brown wash

Inscribed:

Left church, “FUNDAMENTA EIUS IN MONTIBUS SANCTIS.” Right church,
 “GLORIOSA DICTA SUNT DE TE CIVITAS DEI.”

Bibliography:

Wittkower, 1975, 16, fig. 12; Hager, 1967/68, 197, 200, fig. 136; Eimer, 538, fig. 299;
 Krautheimer, 1985, 189-190; Kieven, 1993, 164, Cat. 56; Habel, 2003, 88-90, fig. 60

The presentation drawing depicting the twin churches in elevation on the south side of the piazza remains one of the most contested pieces of evidence in the history of the site. The drawing depicts the southern end of the Piazza del Popolo. Matching churches stand at each wedge. Each church has three portals framed by paired Corinthian pilasters. A straight pediment rests above the two central pairs of pilasters. The entablature and attic story break forward *en ressaut* above the pilasters. A round drum with windows supports a dome and lantern. The lateral façades have only one bay with a single portal and are framed by paired pilasters. The obelisk at the center is rendered in wash. Dark strokes suggest the inscription at its base. Great attention is lavished on the three streets leading into the city, and horizontal pencil lines provide an atmospheric effect in the sky.

The attribution and date of the drawing remain controversial. Wittkower gave the drawing to Rainaldi but noted the influence of Fontana on the design of the dome. He

dated the drawing to 1661. Hager agreed on the collaboration of the two architects. However, he dated the work to 1658 based on the absence of a reference to Santa Maria dei Miracoli in the inscriptions. Eimer failed to see the influence of Fontana, and attributed the drawing solely to Rainaldi. He dated it to the winter of 1656/1657 before Cartari's diary entry of April 1657 (see text, note 46). Krautheimer offered a radically different suggestion. He believed that the drawing was a counterproject by Carlo Fontana and dated the work to 1660/1661. Kieven gave the drawing to Rainaldi with a date of 1658. Most recently, Habel attributed the drawing to Rainaldi and avoided the question of date.

Given the handling of wash, characteristic of Rainaldi's oeuvre, Krautheimer's attribution to Carlo Fontana is untenable. However, collaboration between the two architects is possible, and this idea would resolve the problem of architectural style posed by the differences between the dome and the façade. Because of the left inscription, also employed on the foundation medals for Piazza San Pietro, I would argue that the drawing likely dates to 1658.

Catalog 7 [Figure 20]

Drawing. Carlo Rainaldi

Chirograph issued for the construction of the twin churches

16 November 1661

Rome, ASR, Collezione dei Disegni I, Cartella 81, Nr. 279.

52.5 cm x 75 cm

Technique: Pen-and-ink drawing

Inscribed:

Text of the command (not illustrated, transcribed by Hager, 299): “Mons. Gastaldi, volendo Noi, che tanto li Frati della Madonna Sant’ma di Monte Santo Carmelitani del p.mo Istituto, quanto li Frati della Madonna Sant.ma de’ Miracoli, riformati del 3.o Ordine di San Francesco della Congreg.e di Francia, si traferischino nella Piazza del Popolo, rendendosi con le Fabriche, che si faranno, più ornata, cioè li primi nel posto, e sito à man dritta, e l’altri nella Chiesa di S. Orsola à mano manca, all’imboccatura della Strada del Corso, nel fine della d.a Piazza, ad effetto di fabricarvi le Chiese, e Conventi loro, è però necessario, che li sudetti frati aquistino molte case esistenti in detti Siti, oltre la propria de frati Carmelitani, già compra dalli Fratelli de Paolucci. Per tanto habbiamo deliberato forzare li Padroni, e Possessori di esse à uenderle; Di qui è, che di Nostro moto proprio, certa Scienza, e pienezza della nostra Podestà, comandiamo à voi, che senza tela ò figura di giuditio esecutivam.te con mano Regia riguardando solo la verità del fatto, senza propina; e registro astringiate in tante uolte, quanto bisognerà, cioè ad istanza delli Frati di Monte Santo l’Archiconf.ta della Santiss.ma Annuntiata di Roma, e suoi Officiali, e Ministri, e parimento Domenico Seruidei, Carlo de Grassis, Gio:Brandani, Laura Rensi, Gio: Pellegrini, Paula Candelieri, Margarita Lazzarini, Anna Saluietti, Carlo Lera, e Camilla Caluani e similm.te ad istanza deli Frati della Madonna de’ Miracoli, la Confratern.ta di S. Orsola, il Cardinal Colonna, il Cap:to, e Basilica di S. Maria Maggiore, li Frati di SS. Vinc’o et Anastasio, gl’Abbatì Maffei e Marchetti, La Marchesa Pansirola, Antonio Risi, Madalena Gallina, Agostino Ciotti, Luca Contino, Gio:Batta

Leopardi, Baldassare Butti, Lorenzo Bracchi, gl'heredi di Gio:Inghirami, Madalena Stropi, Clementia, et Anna Maria Torsellini, Pietro Ant.o; e Marta Thomassini et altri più ueri Proni pretendenti, e Proprietarij à uenderli le loro Case esistenti nell'Isole sopra delineate con tutti li loro membri, e raggioni, canoni e pertinente, per il prezzo, che risulterà dalla stima da farsi da Due Periti dà eleggersi comunem.te, et in caso di discordia dalla stima da farsi da un Perito da eleggersi da uoi, come Terzo; e per tal' effeto ui diamo facoltà di concedere alli Frati di Monte Santo li dui Vicoli, che sono tra le Case delli sopranom.ti; come anco alli Frati della Madonna de' Miracoli il Sito, che accanto della Chiesa di S. Orsola auanza nella Piazza del Popolo sino al paro, e parallelo del Sito de' Frati di Monte Santo, quale concessione di Sito, e Vicoli uogliamo esser fatta senza pagamento alcuno, con obligo però di lasciare dalle due parti più larga l'imbocatura della Strada del Corso, in tempo di fabrica, in conformità della sopra delineata pianta fatta per Ordine nro dal Cau.re Rainaldi, e da noi uista, et approuata; deputando uoi priuatiam.te quanto ad ogn' altro Giudice in detta Causa, e Cause, con tutti, e singoli loro emergenti, dependenti, Annessi, e Connessi . . .

Volendo però, che li sud.i Frati Carmelitani, e Tertiarij siano obligati, si come noi li oblighiamo, in dette Case da uendersi, et Siti, adornato della Città, e della detta Piazza, fabricauì le soprad. Chiese, e Conuenti, nel modo, e forma contenuta, et eposta nella sopra designata Pianta, e perchè per far d.a Compra, e Fabrica, conceder loro licenza di potere sopra li loro beni rispettiuamente imporre uno ò più Censi, tanto perpetui, come Vitalitij, fino alla Somma di scudi Ventimila, cioè dieci mila per ciascheduno di detti Conuenti; et anco alli Frati sudetti della Madonna de' Miracoli, conceder simil licenza di

uendere, et alienare li fondi, et altre case infritte, cioè il Sito proprio del Conuento Vecchio, e Chiesa da profanarsi . . .

Lu surrogamo le sudette messe perpetue sopra le Botteghe da fabricarsi sotto il nuouo Conuento in conformità delli Frati di Monte Santo respuam.te e per l'effettuat.e, et esecut.e di tutto ciò, come sopra espresso, ui diamo ogni facultà necessaria, et opportuna, anco di profanare le dd. Chiese, e Conuenti . . .

Date nel nostro Palazzo Aplico di Monte Cauallo, questo di 16 Novembre 1661

Alexander Papa VII^s.”

Caption at right: “A Sito da concedersi alli FF del Monte Santo per il Tempio/ B Vicolo da concedersi a I Medemi per far [inserted] parte del Convento/ C Sito che doverà restare al publico/ B Sito da concedersi alli FF della Mad.^a de Miracoli per il Tempio/ C Sito che doverà restare al publico/ La linea punteggiata dimostra l'uniformità della Simetria della Piazza.”

Bibliography:

Wittkower, 1975, 14, fig. 7; Hager, 1967/1968, 204-212, fig. 139, 140, 141; Krautheimer, 1985, 189, fig. 96; Habel, 2003, 90-92, fig. 61

The drawing of the Piazza del Popolo in Rainaldi's hand accompanies a lengthy text detailing the conditions for the construction of the twin churches and specifying Rainaldi as the architect of the project. The left side of the drawing illustrates a project to make the piazza symmetrical by mirroring the line formed by the façade of Santa Maria del Popolo and the wall demarcating the convent and its gardens. Numerous inscriptions mark the

wedges, and letters correspond to a caption at lower right. Rainaldi illustrates clearly the land to be conceded to each church from the piazza. The right side of the drawing includes a single design in plan and in elevation for both churches.

The design is clearly Rainaldi's conception. The central bays consist of paired columns, which support a broken pediment with an escutcheon. The outer bays are convex and framed by single columns. The drum and dome appear to be octagonal, and the drum is buttressed by volutes. The plan of the church is a modified Greek cross as the longitudinal axis is longer than the transverse axis. Side portals with narrow corridors lead into the church from the convex, outer bays.

Rainaldi's design must have been unsatisfactory as changes were introduced less than a year later when the foundation medal was cast (Catalog 8).

Catalog 8 [Figure 25]

Medal. Gioacchino Francesco Travani

Foundation medal for the twin churches

Obverse: Alexander VII

Reverse: The Piazza del Popolo and elevation of the twin churches

1662

66 mm.

Technique: Cast bronze

Inscribed:

Obverse, "ALEX . VII . PONT . MAX. A. VIII."

Reverse, "SAPIENTIA IN PLATEIS DAT VOCEM SUAM/ MDCLXII"

Bibliography:

Whitman, 1983, 118-119, Cat. 100

The medal, cast for the foundation of Santa Maria di Montesanto on 15 July 1662, presents a portrait of Alexander VII facing left on the obverse. The reverse depicts the Piazza del Popolo. Several figures and carriages crowd the foreground, and the obelisk forms a strong vertical accent. The foundation medal records important changes in the design of the twin churches. A tetrastyle portico becomes the chief element of each façade, and the lateral bays are concave rather than convex.

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