

PIOTR KRASNY
Uniwersytet Jagielloński, Instytut Historii Sztuki

EXEMPLA VIVA. THE PRELATES OF THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH AS INSPIRERS OF CHARLES BORROMEO'S INSTRUCTIONS ON SHAPING SACRED ART

The decree on the cult of images promulgated by the Council of Trent on 3 December 1563, which assigned to the clergy a particular responsibility for ensuring 'that there [in the church decoration] be nothing seen that is disorderly, or that is unbecomingly or confusedly arranged, nothing that is profane, nothing indecorous, seeing that holiness becometh the house of God'¹, was for a long time believed – mainly under the influence of the study of Émile Mâle² – to be the turning point in the periodization of the history of religious art of the early modern period.

Yet, the conventional character of this date was noted already long ago by researchers who, on the one hand, realised that a vigorous discussion on the role of art in the Roman Catholic Church and its principles had started as early as in the 1520s³, and, on the other hand, declared that

in order that the, rather general, directives of the Council of Trent could be put into practice on a large scale, they would require a detailed elaboration in writings on art theory and in instructions issued by the Church hierarchs; additionally, model examples of their implementation in specific artistic undertakings would have been needed.⁴ The greatest credit in this regard has been given to Cardinal Charles Borromeo (1538–1584; Fig. 1) who, immediately after the council had ended, with zeal set about to implementing its promulgations in the Archdiocese of Milan he was in charge of, thus fashioning himself consciously and very consistently as the paragon of putting the Tridentine reforms into practice within the local Church. He enthusiastically reformed Church law by organising metropolitan and diocesan synods; he had put in order and consolidated the way that liturgy was celebrated; finally, he instituted numerous perfectly organised priestly seminaries and regularly carried out canonical visitations.⁵ He set much store by shaping sacred art

¹ 'nihil inordinatum, aut praepostere et tumultuarie accommodatum, nihil profanum nihilque inhonestum appareat, cum domum Dei deceat sanctitudo', see *The Canons and Decrees of the Sacred and Oecumenical Council of Trent*, trans. by J. Waterworth, London, 1848 (available at: <<http://www.bible-researcher.com/trent1.html>> [accessed on 20 Oct. 2017]).

² E. MÂLE, *L'Art religieux de la fin du XVI^e siècle, du XVII^e siècle et du XVIII^e siècle: étude sur l'iconographie après le Concile de Trente. Italie, France, Espagne, Flandres*, Paris, 1932.

³ See especially: G. SCAVIZZI, *Arte e architettura sacra. Cronache e documenti sulla controversia tra riformati e cattolici (1500–1550)*, Rome, 1982, pp. 130–273; C. METZGER, 'Die Reue nach dem Sturm. Rekatolisierung durch Rekonstruktion', in *Kunst und Konfession. Katholische Auftragswerke im Zeitalter der Glaubensspaltung 1517–1563*, ed. by A. Tacke, Regensburg, 2008, pp. 267–294; A. NAGEL, 'Architecture as Image', in idem, *The Controversy of Renaissance Art*, Toronto, 2011, pp. 197–220.

⁴ See in particular A.W.A. BOSCHLOO, *Annibale Caracci in Bologna. Visibile Reality in Art after the Council of Trent*, vol. 1, Den Haag, 1974, p. 144; S. KUMMER, "'Doceant Episcopi". Auswirkungen des Trenter Bilderdekrets im römischen Kirchenraum', *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte*, 56, 1993, no. 4, pp. 508–533; J.W. O'MALLEY, 'Trent, Sacred Images and the Catholics' Senses of the Sensuous', in *The Sensuous in the Counter-Reformation Church*, ed. by M.B. Hall, E. Cooper, Cambridge, 2013, pp. 28–48.

⁵ H. JÉDIN, *Il tipo ideale di vescovo secondo la riforma cattolica*, trans. by E. Durini, Brescia, 1959, pp. 92–103; R. MOLS, 'Saint Charles Borromée pionier de la pastorale moderne', *Nouvelle Revue Théologique*, 79, 1957, no. 8, pp. 600–622, no. 9, pp. 715–747; R. CHIACHELLA, 'Il tipo ideale di vescovo e l'applicazione del modello nelle chiese locali. Carlo Borromeo e la sua influenza





CAROLVS BORROMÆVS S. R. E. CARDIN.
ARCHIEPISC. MEDIOLAN.

*Stemmata clarus erat, pius at, rigidusque satelles
Iustitiæ; haud recto flexit auaritia.
In se durus item nimium, nimiumque seuerus:
Dicitur ut ante obitum Sanctus, et acta probant.*

1. Charles Borromeo, copper engraving after a portrait attributed to Ambrogio Figino, before 1602

in the ways that were appropriate to its basic functions, namely, as the physical setting for the spiritual service to God, a teaching tool, and a means of stimulating proper piety in the faithful.⁶ He had already introduced these problems into the decrees of the first and fourth synods of

nella diocesi di Perugia', in *San Carlo Borromeo in Italia. Studi offerti a Carlo Marcora dottore dell'Ambrosiana*, Brindisi, 1978, pp. 85–103; G. ALBERIGO, 'Carlo Borromeo come modello di vescovo nella Chiesa post-tridentina', *Rivista Storica Italiana*, 79, 1967, pp. 1031–1052; J. TOMARO, 'San Carlo Borromeo and Implementation of the Council of Trent', in *San Carlo Borromeo. Catholic Reform and Ecclesiastical Politics in the Second Half of the Sixteenth Century*, ed. by J.M. Headley, J.B. Tamaro, Washington, 1988, pp. 67–84.

⁶ S. HIMMELHEBER, *Bischöfliche Kunstpolitik nach dem Tridentinum. Der Secunda-Roma-Anspruch Carlo Borromeos und die mailändischen Verordnungen zu Bau und Ausstattung von Kirchen*, Munich, 1984; J. ALEXANDER, *From Renaissance to Counter-Reformation. The Architectural Patronage of Carlo Borromeo during the Reign of Pius IV*, Milan, 2007; P. KRASNY, 'Święty Karol Boromeusz a sztuka', in *Święty Karol Boromeusz a sztuka w Kościele powszechnym, w Polsce, w Niepolomicach*, ed. by P. Krasny, M. Kurzej, Cracow, 2013, pp. 11–27.

his ecclesiastical province, summoned in 1565 and 1576⁷, and then expounded on them in his extensive work entitled *Instructiones fabricae et supellectilis ecclesiasticae*, published in 1577.⁸ A year later he outlined the matter again, in the brochure *Libretto dei ricordi al popolo della città e diocesi di Milano*, intended for the laity of his diocese.⁹ Borromeo also had commissioned numerous works of sacred art, and – as testified by his secretary and biographer, Gian Pietro Giussano (1548/1552–1623) – considered them to be exemplary solutions to which he referred readers in

⁷ A. IODICE, 'Influenze del primo concilio provinciale di Milano (1565) nei primi due concili provinciali di Capua (1566–1577)', in *San Carlo Borromeo in Italia*, pp. 144–147 (as in note 5); W. GÓRALSKI, *Reforma trydencka w diecezji i prowincji kościelnej mediolańskiej w świetle pierwszych synodów kard. Karola Boromeusza*, Lublin, 1988, pp. 351–354.

⁸ M.L. GATTI PERER, 'Le "Istruzioni" di San Carlo e l'ispirazione classica nell'architettura religiosa del '600 in Lombardia', in *Il mito di classicismo nel Seicento*, ed. by L. Anceschi, S. Bottari, G. d'Anna, Florence, 1964, pp. 102–123; M.L. GATTI PERER, 'Prospettive nuove aperte da San Carlo nelle sue norme per l'arte sacra', *Atti della Accademia di San Carlo*, 3, 1980, pp. 15–33; I. GRASSI, 'Prassi, socialità e simbolo dell'architettura nelle "Instructiones" di San Carlo', *Arte Cristiana*, 73, 1985, no. 706, pp. 3–16; E.C. VOELKER, 'Borromeo's Influence on Sacred Art and Architecture', in *San Carlo Borromeo. Catholic Reform*, pp. 122–187 (as in note 5); M.A. CRIPPA, 'Carlo Borromeo e l'attuazione della riforma cattolica nell'architettura e nell'arte per la liturgia', in *Trento. I tempi del concilio. Società, religione e cultura agli inizi dell'Europa moderna*, Milan, 1995, pp. 229–236; M. VITTA, 'La questione delle immagini nelle Instructiones di San Carlo Borromeo', in C. BORROMEUS, *Instructionum fabricae et supellectilis ecclesiasticae libri II*, ed. by S. Della Torre, M. Marinelli, Vatican City, 2000, pp. 386–396; R. SÉNÉCAL, 'Carlo Borromeo's Instructiones Fabricae et Supellectilis Ecclesiasticae and Its Origins in Rome of His Time', *Papers of British School of Rome*, 68, 2000, pp. 241–267; J. KOFRŇOVÁ, 'Problematika sakrálního prostoru po Tridentiském konzilu ve světle názorů církevních autorit', *Umění*, 48, 2000, no. 1–2, pp. 41–54; R. SCHOFIELD, 'Architettura, dottrina e magnificenza nell'architettura ecclesiastica dell'età di Carlo e Federico Borromeo', in F. REPISHTI, R. SCHOFIELD, *Architettura e controriforma. I dibattiti per la facciata del Duomo di Milano 1582–1682*, Milan, 2004, pp. 125–249; P. PRODI, 'Ricerche sulla teoria delle arti figurative nella riforma cattolica', in *idem, Arte e pietà nella Chiesa tridentina*, Bologna, 2014, pp. 73–86; J. MARA DE SILVA, 'Piously Made'. Sacred Space and the Transformation of Behaviour', in *The Sacralisation of Space and Behavior in Early Modern World. Studies and Sources*, ed. by J. Mara DeSilva, London, 2015, pp. 1–32.

⁹ C. Di Filippo BAREGGI, 'Libri e letture di Milano di san Carlo Borromeo', in *Stampa, libri e letture a Milano nell'età di Carlo Borromeo*, ed. N. Raponi, A. Turchini, Milan, 1992, pp. 90–95; D. ZARDIN, 'La "perfezione" nel proprio "stato": strategie per la riforma generale dei costumi nel modello borromaico di governo', *idem, Carlo Borromeo. Cultura, santità, governo*, Milan, 2010, pp. 113–122.

his writings.¹⁰ A carefully thought out and very consistent course of actions taken by Borromeo to develop a comprehensive model of bishopric patronage of the arts resulted in the fact that adherence to his theoretical concepts and imitation of the practical solutions proposed by him have been regarded as the key elements of post-Tridentine art of the Roman Catholic Church.¹¹

While totally in agreement with such an approach, Borromeo's achievements, in my opinion, should also be confronted with actions undertaken by the precursors of the Tridentine 'reform' of the arts, and an attempt should be made to find, in their writings and actions, specific inspirations for the artistic patronage of the Archbishop of Milan. After all, Borromeo himself admitted to having followed such examples, stating in the introduction to his *Instructiones* that he was going to present solutions 'which we have seen in frequent use in the churches of our province as convenient and appropriate for their decoration', and which he, after consultation with specialists in the art of architecture, deemed useful as a physical setting for the celebration of the liturgy.¹² It is therefore worthwhile, I think, to closely examine the various activities of the prelates ruling in the metropolitan Archdiocese of Milan and in the neighbouring dioceses who, in the first two thirds of the sixteenth century, attempted to 'reform' sacred art and managed to propagate in their local Churches certain artistic stances and solutions. Attempts aimed at determining the extent of these 'reforms' have hitherto been very scanty, and they concentrated almost exclusively on the problem of Borromeo's reception of regulations stipulating the arrangement of church interiors and on the exemplary artistic solutions developed by bishop Gian Matteo Giberti (1495–1543) in the Diocese of Verona.¹³ Venturing this – in my opinion, much needed – attempt at systematizing the results of previous research, I shall also try to look for inspirations for the Archbishop of Milan's artistic activities in the art patronage of the Church hierarchs who referred to Giberti's ideas and developed them further, underscoring their high rank and usefulness, in the period between the death of the bishop of Verona and Borromeo's ascent to the archiepiscopal throne of Milan.

¹⁰ See P. KRASNY, 'Forma pastoris. Działalność Karola Boromeusza jako wzorzec patronatu biskupiego nad sztuką sakralną', in *Fundator i dzieło w sztuce nowożytnej*, pt 2, ed. by J. Lileyko, I. Rolska-Boruch, Lublin, 2006, pp. 7–36.

¹¹ See especially M.L. GATTI-PERER, "Prospettive", pp. 25–33 (as in note 8); J. ACKERMAN, 'The Aesthetics of Architecture in the Renaissance', in idem, *Origins, Imitation, Representation in the Visual Arts*, Cambridge, 2000, p. 179.

¹² 'quae Provinciae nostrae ecclesiarum frequentiori usui et ornatui opportuna atque accomodata vidimus', C. BORROMEUS, *Instructionum fabricae*, p. 4 (as in note 8).

¹³ See notes 122, 133, and 134.

EXEMPLA VIVA FOR A BISHOP – REFORMER OF THE LOCAL CHURCH

A severe crisis of the Church had been diagnosed very perceptively by the learned Camaldolese monks from Venice, Paolo Giustiniani (1476–1528) and Pietro Querini (1478–1514), who, in 1513, compiled a memorial to Pope Leo X (Giovanni di Lorenzo de' Medici, 1475–1521) in which they appealed for a radical reform of the institution and presented a fairly comprehensive programme thereof.¹⁴ The pope disregarded their work, but it deeply affected many bishops in the Most Serene Republic of Venice and in Lombardy, who had understood from the memorial that every bishop should be an 'exemplum vivum', or a living example, of the renewal of Christian life, in that he should restore Christian purity and Christian order first in his own life and then in all institutions of the diocese managed by him.¹⁵ Certain prelates immediately set about implementing such measures, achieving very promising results, as for example Girolamo Trevisan (d. 1523) in Cremona.¹⁶

Also northern-Italian bishops and cardinals residing in the Eternal City remained under strong influence of the ideas of Giustiniani and Querini. Initially, they tried to persuade subsequent popes to put these ideas into practice. Yet, discouraged by the persistent failure of their efforts, they began to return to their, often small, dioceses in order to 'try out' various reformist solutions there, before disseminating them in the entire Church.¹⁷

A person who enjoyed considerable authority among those men was the Venetian thinker Gaspare Contarini (1483–1542; Fig. 2). He substantially expanded the programme of Giustiniani and Querini, detailing it in his dissertation, *De officio viri boni ac probi episcopi* (1517), into dozens of actions that the prelates should undertake in order to become 'exempla viva' for the renewal of the Church.¹⁸ Among various domains that required episcopal reforms he indicated also the control over sacred art.

¹⁴ S. TRAMONTIN, 'Un Programma di riforma della Chiesa per il Concilio Lateranense. Il Libellus ad Leonem X dei veneziani P. Giustiniani e P. Querini', in *Venezia e i Concilii*, ed. by E. Niero, A. Altan, S. Tramontin, B. Bertoli, Venice, 1972, pp. 67–93; S.D. BOWD, *Reform Before the Reformation. Vincenzo Querini and the Religious Renaissance in Italy*, Leiden, 2002, pp. 149–158.

¹⁵ J. MARA DESILVA, 'A Living Example', in *Episcopal Reform and Politics in Early Modern Europe*, ed. by J. Mara DeSilva, Kirksville, 2012, pp. 1–2.

¹⁶ M. REGAZZONI, 'Cinque e Seicento. L'epoca delle Riforme e Controriforma', in *Storia della spiritualità italiana*, ed. by P. Zavato, Rome, 2002, p. 230.

¹⁷ J.C. OLIN, *Catholic Reform from the Cardinal Ximenes to the Council of Trent*, New York, 1990, pp. 13–22.

¹⁸ S. TRAMONTIN, 'Il "De officio episcopi" di Gaspare Contarini', *Studia Pataviana*, 12, 1965, pp. 292–303; G. FRAGNITA, 'Cultura umanistica e riforma religiosa. Il "De officio boni ac probi episcopi" di Gaspare Contarini', *Studi Veneziani*, 11, 1969, pp. 75–189;



2. Gaspare Contarini, copper engraving by Frans van den Wyngarde, mid-17th century

According to Contarini, one of the most severe and detrimental sins of the Roman Catholic Church was the lack of proper care to ensure that church furnishings and utensils employed in the administration of sacraments had appropriate forms, and that 'the images of our Lord and of the Blessed Virgin Mary, as well as all other images that are painted for churches, should be executed in the most honourable and orderly manner, so that they would encourage the faithful to venerate the only God so resolutely as if they were leading them by the hand'. By neglecting to control these questions through legal regulations and instruction of the faithful, the prelates had precipitated a situation inviting abuses which became the object of rightful criticism and at the same time a fuel for the 'pestis heretica' (heretical plague). Therefore, the bishops should make sure that the artistic aspects of the external cult be wisely regulated through the decrees of diocesan synods or rulings of the ordinary bishops, and by means of the bishops' immediate involvement in the elimination of errors, so that 'the Church of God would be strengthened against this plague'. The bishops themselves should also responsibly shape the physical setting for the worship

E.G. GLEASON, *Gaspare Contarini. Venice, Rome and Reform*, Berkeley, 1993, pp. 93–98.

of God in order to set a proper example for other members of the clergy and the laity.¹⁹

De officio episcopi had been compiled by Contarini still before Martin Luther (1483–1546) proclaimed his ninety-five theses, therefore, while referring to heresiarchs, he must have had in mind either the critics of sacred art from the rather remote past, as for example John Wickliff (1320–1384), or the Hussites, whose influence at the beginning of the sixteenth century was restricted to the Kingdom of Bohemia and the neighbouring areas.²⁰ Soon, however, it turned out that the 'heretical plague' was spreading across most of Europe and, through Venice and Lombardy, started to penetrate into Italy. The local bishops, therefore, could not linger any longer to 'vaccinate' the sacred art produced in their dioceses against Protestant attacks, and to apply it to fortifying the faith of their observant flock.²¹ Thus, the regulations and solutions they had developed had a decisively Counter-Reformational character – many years before the assembly of the Council of Trent, which – according to opinions prevalent in art-historical literature, under the influence of Werner Weisbach – was a decisive factor that pointed the art of the Roman Catholic Church in that direction.²²

Some of those prelates took actions which, as I shall try to demonstrate in what follows, were later developed by Charles Borromeo and, on the strength of his authority, were subsequently imitated in the entire Roman Catholic Church. Therefore, before analysing these undertakings, it would be worthwhile to take a closer look at the reforms introduced by those prelates in their local Churches, in order to get some orientation as to the extent of the role the artistic patronage played in their fashioning themselves as 'exempla viva' of performing the function of a bishop.

Such a stance, at the end of the 1520s, was adopted by Gian Matteo Giberti (Fig. 3), in the title of his first biography called 'a singular example and model of the good

¹⁹ 'imagines Domini et Beatissimae Virginis aliorumque in ecclesiis pinguntur, omnia honestissime ordinateque fiant, illiamque plebem ad Dei unius cultum quemadmodum decet, quasi per gradus manu ducant'; 'protinus tales pestes ab Ecclesia Dei arceatur', G. CONTARENUS, 'De officio episcopi libri II', in *idem, Opera*, Venetiis, 1578, p. 425 (all above quotations are from this page). See also E.G. GLEASON, *Gaspare Contarini*, p. 97 (as in note 18).

²⁰ P. KALINA, 'Cordium penetrativa. An Essay on Iconoclasm and Image Worship around the Year 1400', *Umění*, 43, 1995, no. 3, pp. 247–257; M. BARTLOVA, 'Husitské obrazoborectví', in *Umění české reformace (1380–1620)*, ed. by K. Horníčková, M. Šroněk, Prague, 2010, pp. 63–70.

²¹ M. FIRPO, *Artisti, gioiellieri, eretici. Il mondo di Lorenzo Lotto tra Riforma e Controriforma*, Rome, 2011, *passim*.

²² W. WEISBACH, *Der Barock als Kunst der Gegenreformation*, Berlin, 1921. See also B. TOSCANO, 'Storia dell'arte e forme della vita religiosa', in *Storia dell'arte italiana*, pt 1: *Problemi e metodi*, ed. by G. Previtali, vol. 3: *L'esperienza dell'antico, dell'Europa, della religiosità*, Turin, 1979, pp. 300–304.

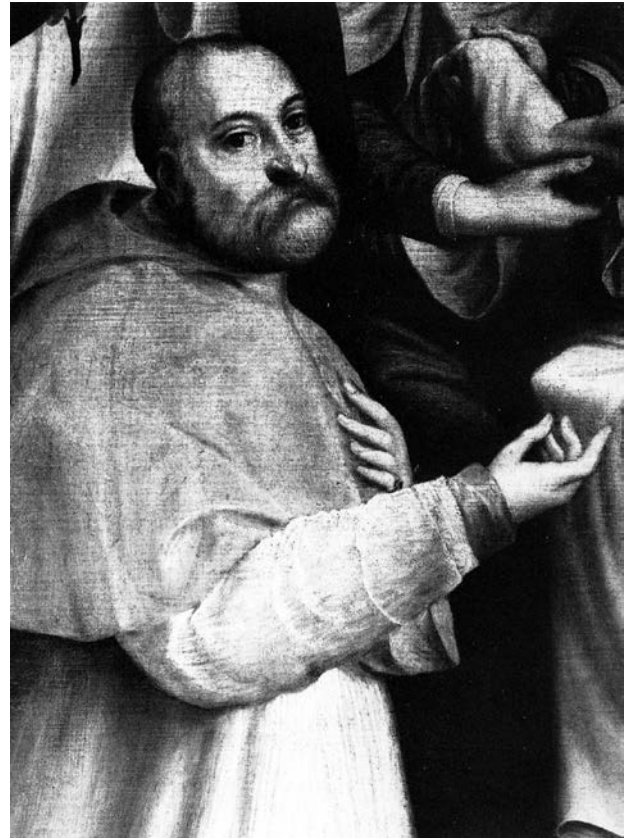


3. Gian Matteo Giberti, copper engraving, in I.M. Gibertus, *Opera nunc primum collecta*, 1733

shepherd.²³ He was preconised bishop of Verona in 1524, but then spent a few years in Rome as a close collaborator of Pope Clement VII (Giulio de' Medici, 1478–1534) who offered him the cardinal's hat. Having experienced a spiritual crisis during the Sack of Rome in 1527, Giberti decided to withdraw to his heavily neglected diocese and to start exercising his duty of the ordinary bishop as best he could. Shortly, he brought order to the administration system and liturgical life of the diocese, and began to carry out regular canonical visitations. He resolutely disciplined dissolute and idle clergymen, propagating, by means of pastoral instructions and an example he set by himself, the ideal of a pastor who lead a moral life, was devoted to his pastoral work, and incessantly deepened his theological knowledge by reading the Bible and works of the Fathers of the Church.²⁴ In 1542, near the end of his life, he compiled extensive constitutions for the diocese of Verona, in order to cement the changes he had introduced

²³ P.F. ZINUS, *Boni pastoris exemplum et specimen singulare*, Venetiis, 1573.

²⁴ M.A. TUCKER, 'Gian Matteo Giberti. Papal Politician and Catholic Reformer', *The English Historical Review*, 8, 1903, no. 70, pp. 277–286; A. PROSPERI, *Tra evangelismo e controriforma. G.M. Giberti (1495–1543)*, Rome, 1969, *passim*; idem, *Riforma pretridentina nella diocesi di Verona. Visite pastorali del vescovo G.M. Giberti 1525–1542*, Vicenza, 1989, *passim*.



4. Ercole Gonzaga, portrait in the *Deposition* altarpiece in San Vincenzo in Mantua, mid-16th century. After *Giulio Romano*, ed. by S. Polano, Milan, 2001

and to provide other bishops with the sense of direction for reforms to be carried out in their local Churches.²⁵

Giberti's actions stirred the reformist zeal of his immediate neighbour, the bishop of Mantua, Ercole Gonzaga (1505–1563, Fig. 4)²⁶, who, at the age of twenty, became cardinal and started a career in the Roman Curia. But in 1537 he returned to his diocese and carried out visitations of his parishes, only to discover that, just as in Verona, a substantial part of the clergy scandalized their parishioners by immoral conduct and poor education.²⁷ Gonzaga, who was known for his gentle disposition, did not want to exercise a harsh discipline towards elderly priests, so he concentrated mainly on reforming the Mantuan cathedral school, so that it could educate priests capable of

²⁵ R. PASQUALI, 'Le "Constitutiones" per il Clero di Gian Matteo Giberti', *Ricerche di Storia Sociale e Religiosa*, 39, 1991, pp. 231–232; Idem, 'Nelle Costituzioni per il clero la riforma della Chiesa veronese per la riforma della Chiesa universale', in *Gian Matteo Giberti (1495–1543). Atti del convegno di studi*, ed. by M. Agostini, G. Baldissin Molli, Verona, 2012, pp. 61–72.

²⁶ P. PIVA, *L'altro Giulio Romano. Il Duomo di Mantova, la chiesa di Polirone e la dialettica col Medioevo*, Quistello, 1998, pp. 109; 112–113; P.V. MURPHY, *Ruling Peacefully. Cardinal Ercole Gonzaga and Patrician Reform in Sixteenth Century Italy*, Washington, 2007, pp. 17, 76, 109.

²⁷ *Ibidem*, pp. 67, 109.



5. Reginald Pole, copper engraving, mid-16th century

collaborating with their bishop in the task of reforming the local Church. Apart from moral formation, the seminarians were provided with a thorough instruction in classical languages, literature, philosophy, theology, liturgics and music, and were not allowed to take the holy orders until they passed a difficult exam.²⁸ The cathedral was to play a key role in the formation of priests also after ordination, providing a model for a proper celebration of the liturgy and preaching sermons on a high intellectual level. Therefore Gonzaga's most important legal regulations were the *Constitutioni per la Chiesa Cattedrale di Mantova* (1558), which obliged members of the cathedral chapter and clergy associated with the cathedral to a continuous self-improvement based on a strictly prescribed schedule accompanied by a reading list.²⁹

Also Reginald Pole (1500–1558, Fig. 5) was moving in the circles of the north-Italian bishops engaged in local attempts at the reform of the Church. Pole, having refused to accept ecclesiastical policy of Henry VIII (1491–1547), left England, found shelter in Rome, and in 1535 was raised to the cardinalate by Paul III (Alessandro Farnese,

1468–1549).³⁰ Having made friends with Giberti, he followed his reforms carried out in the diocese of Verona with admiration and protected them from attacks of the officials of the papal Curia.³¹ He also kept a regular exchange of letters with Gonzaga and visited him in Mantua in order to find out on his improvements in the formation of priests.³² Yet, as an exile, deprived of benefices, Pole was unable to imitate both these prelates for a longer period of time.³³ He was given such an opportunity only upon the accession of Mary I (1516–1558) to the throne of England, who again subjected the English Church to the pope. Having returned to his homeland as a papal legate in 1555, Pole summoned a national synod to Westminster in order to try to pass a programme for the restoration of Catholicism in England. According to the acts of the synod, the key role in this regard was to be played by bishops who were instructed to introduce in their dioceses the solutions that had been earlier 'tested' by Giberti in Verona.³⁴ If these plans had come into effect, the north-Italian model of the renewal of the Church would have been propagated for the first time on an extensive area, and far away from Italy at that.³⁵ After the death of Mary I in 1558, her successor, Elizabeth I (1533–1603), broke with Rome and reinstalled the organisation and liturgy of the English Church established by Henry VIII after the Act of Supremacy.³⁶ But the decrees of the Westminster Synod, edited by Pole with diligence and clarity, were re-published in Rome in 1562. This reprint, undertaken on Gonzaga's initiative, was to demonstrate, in the first place, that the renewal of Catholicism in England was made on the *consensus fidelium* basis, but it also served to disseminate legal regulations intended to initiate thorough reforms of the local Churches, as attested by the fact that two hundred copies of the book were distributed among bishops assembled at the council in Trent.³⁷

²⁸ Ibidem, pp. 76–82.

²⁹ Ibidem, p. 85.

³⁰ T.F. MAYER, *Reginald Pole. Prophet and Saint*, Cambridge, 2000, pp. 13–44; J. EDWARDS, *Archbishop Pole*, Farnham, 2014, pp. 85–88.

³¹ T.F. MAYER, *Reginald Pole*, pp. 44–66 (as in note 30); J. EDWARDS, *Archbishop Pole*, pp. 66–70; 89–95 (as in note 30).

³² T.F. MAYER, *Reginald Pole*, pp. 72, 77 (as in note 30); P.V. MURPHY, *Ruling Peacefully*, pp. 35–36, 122–123 (as in note 26); J. EDWARDS, *Archbishop Pole*, pp. 99, 103–104 (as in note 30).

³³ See T.F. MAYER, 'When Maecenas Was Broke. Cardinal Pole's "Spiritual" Patronage', *Sixteenth Century Journal*, 27, 1996, no. 2, pp. 422–430.

³⁴ R.H. POGSON, 'Reginald Pole and the Priorities of Government in Mary Tudor's Church', *The Historical Journal*, 18, 1975, no. 1, pp. 3–20; J. EDWARDS, *Archbishop Pole*, pp. 144–168 (as in note 30).

³⁵ T.F. MAYER, 'The Success of Cardinal Pole's Final Legislation', in *The Church of Mary Tudor*, ed. by E. Duffy, D. Loades, Oxford, 2016, pp. 149–175.

³⁶ S. DORAN, C. DURSTON, *Princes, Pastors and People. The Church and Religion in England 1500–1700*, London, 2003, pp. 21–22.

³⁷ C.F. BÜHLER, 'Observations of the 1562 Editions of Cardinal Reginald Pole's "Concilio" and "Reformatio Angliae"', *Studies in*

Still more limited were the abilities of Daniele Barbaro (1514–1579, Fig. 6) to engage in similar reforms. This versatile scholar, famous mainly for his pioneering research in the domain of optics and a superb Italian edition of Vitruvius, devoted also much of his attention to the problem of educating future priests. He stated that they were poorly prepared for their pastoral duties as theology was taught to them neither clearly, nor rationally, nor was it organised enough.³⁸ Yet, he was able to do little to change this, because he never reached church offices that were high enough and with which real power was associated. Although in 1550 Barbaro was appointed coadjutor bishop to his uncle, Giovanni Grimani (1506–1593), the Patriarch of Aquileia, it was only a purely titular position at that time, and Barbaro, having predeceased Grimani, had remained ‘patriarca eletto’ until the end of his life.³⁹ Therefore, this editor of Vitruvius restricted his activities to conducting discussions of the Church reforms in the Franciscan friary of San Francesco della Vigna in Venice⁴⁰ and taking active part in a few sessions of the Council of Trent. Yet, his purely theoretical involvement significantly influenced the formulation of a number of important creeds of the Tridentine reform (e.g. the bishops’ obligation to reside in their own sees and promotion of the cult of Christ’s real presence in the Eucharist), and Barbaro recognised by Pope Pius IV (Giovanni Angelo de’ Medici, 1499–1565) who appointed him cardinal *in pectore* in 1561. Also Borromeo, with whom Barbaro intensely collaborated on editing the final documents of the council, appreciated the reformist zeal of the coadjutor bishop to the Patriarch of Aquileia.⁴¹

However, it was the pioneering reformist attempts of Giberti and Gonzaga, aimed at healing the religious life in their dioceses, as well as the comprehensive ‘reformatio Angliae’, undertaken by Pole, that the Archbishop of Milan admired most of all. He considered his own reforms in Milan as a creative continuation of the achievement of the three aforementioned prelates, since he assigned the position of his vicar general to the pupil of Giberti, Niccolò Ormaneto (1515–1577), hoping that he would transplant from Verona the administrative dexterity in the

Bibliography, 26, 1973, pp. 232–234; T.F. MAYER, *A Reluctant Author. Cardinal Pole and His Manuscripts*, Philadelphia, 1999, p. 27.

³⁸ P. PASCHINI, ‘Gli scritti religiosi di Daniele Barbaro’, *Rivista di Storia della Chiesa in Italia*, 5, 1951, pp. 340–349; B. MITROVIĆ, ‘Paduan Aristotelianism and Daniele Barbaro’s Commentary on Vitruvius *De Architectura*’, *Sixteenth Century Journal*, 29, 1998, no. 3, pp. 686–687.

³⁹ P. PASCHINI, ‘La nomina del patriarca di Aquileia e la Repubblica di Venezia nel sec. XVI’, *Rivista di Storia della Chiesa in Italia*, 2, 1948, pp. 63–68.

⁴⁰ F. BIFERALI, *Paolo Veronese tra Riforma e Controriforma*, Rome, 2013, pp. 51–57.

⁴¹ P. PASCHINI, ‘Daniele Barbaro letterato e prelado veneziano nel Cinquecento’, *Rivista di Storia della Chiesa in Italia*, 16, 1962, no. 2, pp. 91–93; F. BIFERALI, *Paolo Veronese*, p. 84 (as in note 40).



RITRATTO DE DANIEL BARBARO, HOMO CONSPICVO

Titianus pinxit. W. Hollar fecit. 1650. ex Collectione Iohannis et Catharinae Uiculi. F. van der Wyngaerde sculpsit.

6. Daniele Barbaro, copper engraving by Wenzel Hollar, after Titian, 1650

organisation of ecclesiastical structures and enormous fervour for making canonical visitations, so characteristic of his master.⁴² And, full of admiration for the curriculum of the priestly instruction introduced in Mantua by Gonzaga, he charged Settimio Borsari (d. 1594), a brilliant graduate of the cathedral school in Mantua, with the organisation of education for seminarists in his diocese.⁴³ Among Borromeo’s closest collaborators was also the one-time Pole’s chaplain, Thomas Goldwell (1501–1585), who had accompanied the cardinal in his mission to England, during which he was appointed bishop of St Asaph. In 1563–1565 Goldwell played a significant role in preparations for the first metropolitan synod in Milan, serving as Borromeo’s suffragan bishop and vicar general.⁴⁴ Also Ormaneto, whom Pole had taken with him to England as

⁴² E. CATTANEO, ‘Influenze veronesi nella legislazione di San Carlo Borromeo’, in *Problemi della vita religiosa in Italia nel Cinquecento*, Padua, 1960, pp. 123–166; D. ZARDIN, ‘Tra continuità delle strutture e nuovi ideali di “riforma”. La riorganizzazione borromaica della curia arcivescile’, in *Carlo Borromeo. Cultura, sanità, governo*, Milan, 2010, pp. 237–238, 288; A. FILIPAZZI, ‘L’influsso di Gian Matteo Giberti attraverso l’azione di Nicolò Ormaneto’, in *Gian Matteo Giberti*, pp. 80–83 (as in note 25).

⁴³ P.V. MURPHY, *Ruling Peacefully*, p. 82 (as in note 26).

⁴⁴ K. CARLETON, *Bishops and Reform in the English Church 1520–1559*, Woodbridge, 2001, pp. 59, 184.



GIULIO ROMANO
*Pittore e Architetto, nacque l'anno
 1492. morì l'anno 1546.*

Gio. Dom. Campiglio del. e. sc.

7. Giulio Romano, copper engraving by Giovanni Domenico Campiglio, after Titian, 2nd quarter of the 18th century

his main advisor for issues related to improving Church institutions, may have contributed to implementing in the Archdiocese of Milan the experiences acquired during the organisation of the synod of Westminster.⁴⁵

It may therefore be stated that the aforementioned prelates were for Borromeo explicit 'exempla viva' of exercising episcopal authority in the difficult times that called for deep reforms. Yet, the Archbishop of Milan adapted their concepts to significantly different circumstances, since all his predecessors had worked in the period of legislative confusion in the Church administration, and thus were able, or had, to solve many problems quite freely, but often at the risk of being accused of heresy or episcopatism.⁴⁶ Borromeo, in turn, undertook to reform the Archdiocese and province of Milan after the pope had signed the promulgations of the Council of Trent, which precisely

⁴⁵ Ibidem, pp. 59–60; A. FILIPAZZI, 'L'influsso di Gian Matteo Giberti', pp. 76–80 (as in note 42).

⁴⁶ D. FENELON, *Heresy and Obedience in Tridentine Italy. Cardinal Pole and the Counter Reformation*, Cambridge, 1972, pp. 1–99; P.V. MURPHY, 'Rumours of Heresy in Mantua', in *Heresy, Culture and Religion in Early Modern Italy. Context and Contestation*, ed. by R.K. Delph, M.M. Fontaine, J.J. Martin, Kirksville, 2006, pp. 53–67.

regulated many aspects of the Church life. So, he could draw only those elements from the experience of his predecessors that were in accord with the current Church legislation.⁴⁷ Therefore, he had (and likely also wanted) to regard these 'exempla viva' in keeping with the principles of classical rhetoric, namely, he isolated in the activities of his predecessors particular motifs that might have been useful in his model of the local Church reform. Only in this way could he have approached also their patronage of sacred art, imitating above all the solutions that, as he had put it in the introduction to his *Instructiones fabricae et suppellectilis ecclesiasticae*, ensured in the church the magnificence of the cult in keeping with its forms prescribed by the decrees of the council.⁴⁸

THE BISHOP'S COLLABORATION WITH THE ARCHITECT IN FORMULATING THE PRINCIPLES OF SHAPING SACRED ART

In the pages of Borromeo's *Instructiones* one can repeatedly find a directive that the bishop should consult with the architect his key decisions related to the appearance of sacred art in his diocese.⁴⁹ This regulation testifies to the fact that Borromeo shared the views of Leon Battista Alberti (1404–1472) that the understanding of architecture, as well as of other arts which serve its decoration, was so difficult a challenge that only a thoroughly trained professional was able to handle it.⁵⁰ According to Borromeo, an experienced artist should be able not only to suggest the prelate an appropriate terminology or verify the feasibility of realising a given idea, but also should see to it that this idea be in keeping with the prevailing artistic conventions, in order to ensure a widespread and unambiguous understanding of the message carried by the artwork. Borromeo instructed to take advantage of the latter kind of consultation, which was preconditioned by the advisor's good orientation in the conventions of religious art, especially when the bishop had to evaluate new and unusual iconographic solutions.⁵¹

Further, Borromeo's instructions seem to suggest that the bishop should not ask advice from various architects, but rather seek help from one trusted specialist, which

⁴⁷ L. PROSDOCIMI, 'Il diritto nella formazione e nell'azione riformatrice di San Carlo', in *Carlo Borromeo e l'opera di "Grande Riforma"*. *Cultura, religione e arti del governo nelle Milano del pieno Cinquecento*, ed. by F. Buzzi, D. Zardin, Milan, 1997, pp. 59–68.

⁴⁸ C. BORROMEUS, *Instructionum fabricae*, p. 4 (as in note 8).

⁴⁹ Ibidem, pp. 8–9, 12–21, 24–25, 70–71, 80–81. See also G. SIMONCINI, *La memoria del medioevo nell'architettura dei secoli XV–XVIII*, Rome, 2017, p. 175.

⁵⁰ See C. WILKINSON, 'The New Professionalism in the Renaissance', in *The Architect. Chapters in the History of the Profession*, ed. by S. Kostof, Berkeley, 1977, pp. 125–126; G. SIMONCINI, *La memoria del medioevo*, p. 139 (as in note 49).

⁵¹ C. BORROMEUS, *Instructionum fabricae*, p. 70 (as in note 8).

was to ensure a consistency of his subsequent directives and decisions in the matters of art. Such an interpretation of theoretical regulations contained in the *Instructiones* seems to be confirmed by the actual deeds of Borromeo who, during his episcopate in Milan, always collaborated with Pellegrino Tibaldi (1527–1596), engaging him, for example, to participate in teams conducting canonical visitations. But, above all, he consistently commissioned him to erect churches⁵² which, as attested by Giussano, served as exemplary solutions which represented the church types described in the decrees of the synod of 1565 and in the *Instructiones*.⁵³ It is impossible to determine the extent of Tibaldi's contribution in the latter work, but there can be no doubt that, through his architectural work, he ensured the compatibility of the archbishop's 'theory of art' with the actual products of his artistic patronage. Therefore, it has been repeatedly emphasised in the literature that, by permanently engaging this outstanding architect, by making him familiar with the most intricate aspects of sacred art, and by assuring him a very high standing in his milieu, Borromeo indicated a successful model of achieving artistic solutions that strictly conformed to the needs of the Church in the period of its renewal after the Council of Trent.⁵⁴ Significantly less attention has been devoted to similar actions of prelates who, while trying to improve the religious life in north-Italian dioceses in the first half of the sixteenth century, resorted to comparable means in order to deploy the talents of Giulio Romano (1499–1546) in the effort of cementing their reforms.



8. Chancel of Verona Cathedral arranged by Giulio Romano, Michele Sanmicheli and Francesco Torbido, after 1531. Photo: P. Krasny

The artist met Giberti, who was then at the head of the Apostolic Datary, at the beginning of the 1520s, while working in the Vatican Palace. The prelate not only ordered a few paintings from Giulio⁵⁵, but also, as noted by Giorgio Vasari (1511–1574), considered him 'his very familiar friend'.⁵⁶ Their friendship bore fruit in the form of an important commission only after 1531, when Giberti received a bequest of the bishop of Bayeux, Lodovico di Canossa (1476–1532), intended for the erection of his tomb chapel at the cathedral of Verona. Having obtained permission from Pope Paul III to use the money for a new arrangement of the chancel of the cathedral (where, in the tomb of the bishops of Verona, he had buried Canossa), the cardinal called Giulio⁵⁷ to be his advisor while the

⁵² S. SCOTTI, 'L'architettura e riforma cattolica nella Milano di Carlo Borromeo', *L'Arte*, 5, 1972, pp. 54–90; S. DELLA TORRE, R. SCHOFIELD, *Pellegrino Tibaldi architetto e il San Fedele in Milano. Invenzione e costruzione di una chiesa esemplare*, Milan, 1984, *passim*; J. ACKERMAN, 'Pellegrino Tibaldi, san Carlo Borromeo e l'architettura ecclesiastica di loro tempo', in *San Carlo e il suo tempo*, vol. 2, Rome, 1986, pp. 573–586; M.L. GATTI PERER, 'Le opere e i giorni. Pellegrino Pellegrini detto Il Tibaldi e il rinnovamento dell'arte cristiana', *Arte Lombarda*, serie nuova 93–94, 1990, pp. 7–11; R. HASLAM, 'Pellegrino Pellegrini, Carlo Borromeo and Public Architecture of the Counter-Reformation', *ibidem*, pp. 17–30; A. ROVETTA, 'Pellegrino Tibaldi e l'idea del Tempio San Sebastiano', *ibidem*, pp. 105–110; D. MOOR, *Pellegrino Tibaldi's Church of San Fedele in Milan. The Jesuits, Carlo Borromeo and Religious Architecture of the Late Sixteenth Century*, Ann Arbor, 1989, *passim*; J. ALEXANDER, *From Renaissance to Counter-Reformation*, pp. 217–225 (as in note 6).

⁵³ G.P. GIUSSANO, *Vita di S. Carlo Borromeo prete cardinale del titolo di Santa Prassede arcivescovo di Milano*, Rome, 1610, pp. 91–94, 624–629, 471–472. See also A. SCOTTI TOSINI, 'La "bella maniera": architetti, committenti, teoria e forma dell'architettura tra Roma e Milano nel Cinquecento', in *Lombardia manierista. Arti e architettura 1535–1600*, ed. by M.T. Fiorio, V. Terraroli, Milan, 2009, pp. 87–88.

⁵⁴ Apart from the works cited in note 52, see in particular: E.C. VOELKER, 'Borromeo's Influence on Sacred Art and Architecture', in *San Carlo Borromeo. Catholic Reform*, pp. 122–187 (as in note 5).

⁵⁵ M. TAFURI, 'Giulio Romano: linguaggio, mentalità, committenti', in *Giulio Romano*, ed. by S. Polano, Milan, 2001, p. 18; C.L. FROMMEL, 'Gian Matteo Giberti e Giulio Romano', in *Gian Matteo Giberti*, pp. 131–134 (as in note 25).

⁵⁶ 'suo domestico amico', G. VASARI, *Le Vite de' più eccellenti pittori, scultori e architettori*, ed. by G. Milanesi, vol. 5, Florence, 1880, p. 532. English translation after: G. VASARI, *Lives of the most Eminent Painters, Sculptors and Architects*, trans. by G. du C. de Vere, vol. 6, London, 1913, p. 151. See also C.L. FROMMEL, 'Gian Matteo Giberti', p. 131 (as in note 55).

⁵⁷ M. LASKIN, 'Giulio Romano and the Cathedral of Verona', in *Essays in Honour of Walter Friedländer*, ed. by W. Cahn, New York, 1965, p. 111; A. SERAFINI, 'Gian Matteo Giberti e il Duomo di Verona. 1: il programma, il contesto', *Venezia Cinquecento*, 6, 1998,



9. Chancel-screen in Verona Cathedral, Michele Sanmicheli architect, after 1531. Photo: M. Kurzej

intended works were being carried out.⁵⁸ The prelate and the painter decided that, in keeping with a practice widespread in north Italy, the chancel would be modernised mainly by means of fresco paintings⁵⁹ depicting scenes from the life of the Virgin Mary, that were to cover the vaulting and walls of the choir, thus concealing its medieval architecture (Fig. 8).⁶⁰

Giulio is known to have designed paintings executed by Francesco Torbido (1482–1562), but it is impossible to determine his share in delineating the forms of the high altar and a large tempietto-tabernacle, and the chancel-screen erected in front of it (Fig. 9). Both these structures were executed by Michele Sanmicheli (c. 1484–1559), the screen in the form of an openwork peristyle with wide intercolumnations⁶¹, which significantly differed from the

early-modern so-called choir-walls, built in Lombardy and the Most Serene Republic of Venice, that is decorated walls with an arcade pierced on the axis, through which the high altar could be seen.⁶² As noted by Paolo Piva, the peristyle in Verona was modelled on the chancel-screen of Old St Peter's, destroyed in 1513–1514.⁶³ But Giulio was perfectly familiar with the forms of that structure, since, after the death of Raphael (1483–1520), it was him who supervised the execution of the fresco paintings in Sala di Costantino in the Vatican Apostolic Palace. In the autumn of 1523 he painted there, in collaboration with Giovan Francesco Penni (1488–1528), the scene of the *Donation of Constantine* (Fig. 10), depicted as taking place in the interior of Old St Peter's, with its chancel-screen rendered in minute detail.⁶⁴ It is therefore highly probable

no. 11, pp. 75–161; C.L. FROMMEL, 'Gian Matteo Giberti', pp. 134–136 (as in note 55).

⁵⁸ G. VASARI, *Le Vite*, p. 549 (as in note 56). See also M. TAFURI, 'Giulio Romano', p. 18 (as in note 55).

⁵⁹ See in particular W. WOLTERS, *Architektur und Ornament. Venezianischer Bauschmuck der Renaissance*, Munich, 2000, pp. 171–180.

⁶⁰ M. LASKIN, 'Giulio Romano and the Cathedral', pp. 111–113 (as in note 57); A. SERAFINI, 'Gian Matteo Giberti e il Duomo di Verona. 2: gli affreschi di Francesco Torbido', *Venezia Cinquecento*, 6, 1998, no. 15, pp. 21–142; K. OBERHUBER, 'Gli affreschi nell'abside del Duomo di Verona', in *Giulio Romano*, pp. 434–437 (as in note 55); C.L. FROMMEL, 'Gian Matteo Giberti', pp. 137–138 (as in note 55).

⁶¹ D. MOORE, 'Sanmicheli's Tornacoro in Verona Cathedral. A New Drawing and Problems of Interpretation', *Journal of the Society of*

Architectural Historians, 44, 1985, no. 3, pp. 221–232; C.L. FROMMEL, 'Gian Matteo Giberti', pp. 138–139 (as in note 55); L. OLIVATO, 'Michele Sanmicheli e il riassetto architettonico della cappella grande del duomo di Verona', in *Gian Matteo Giberti*, pp. 141–146 (as in note 25).

⁶² W. WOLTERS, *Architektur und Ornament*, p. 197, Fig. 188 (as in note 59).

⁶³ P. PIVA, *L'altro Giulio Romano*, p. 105 (as in note 26). See also MOORE, 'Sanmicheli's Tornacoro', pp. 231–232.

⁶⁴ G. CORNINI, A.M. DE STROBEL, M. Serlupi CRESCENZI, 'La Sala di Costantino', in *Raffaello nell'Appartamento di Giulio II e Leone X*, Milan, 1993, pp. 185, 188, fig. on p. 180; S. FERINO PAGDEN, *Giulio Romano pittore e disegnatore a Roma*, in *Giulio Romano*, pp. 86, 88, fig. on p. 89 (as in note 55); I. LAVIN, *Footsteps on the Way Redemption. The Pedestals of Bernini's Baldacchino in St. Peter*, in



10. *The Donation of Constantine*, fresco by Giulio Romano and Francesco Penni in the Apostolic Palace on the Vatican, 1523. Photo: K. Blaschke

that Giulio, as a friend and the most trusted collaborator of Giberti, indicated to Sanmicheli the general forms of the furnishings to be introduced into the chancel of Verona Cathedral. The arrangement of its choir, as we shall see in what follows, became one of the leading patterns for furnishing a Catholic sacred interior, thus making Giulio an important contributor to the Church reform initiated by north-Italian prelates.⁶⁵ It is not known to what degree these actions revealed his personal religious outlook, but the artist obviously appreciated the role in which he was cast by Giberti, as was clearly attested by his later activity.

At the end of his life Giulio was using most of his strength and time working in Mantua for Cardinal Ercole Gonzaga who, as related by Vasari, in 1545 decided to 'avail himself of the advice and assistance of Giulio in renovating, or rather building almost entirely anew, the Duomo of that city'.⁶⁶ All other artistic undertakings of Gonzaga also had religious character (e.g. the paintings of Sts Peter and Paul and a design for wall paintings showing the calling of the first Apostles in the cardinal's private chapel), which seems to attest to the fact that the prelate

aimed at creating a new model of episcopal patronage of the arts, one unaffected by manifestations of his secular fascinations. Significantly, no official portrait of Gonzaga painted during his lifetime survives, and the only likeness of the cardinal executed on his commission shows him kneeling in prayer in the scene of the *Deposition* in a side altarpiece in San Vincenzo in Mantua (later removed to the church of Sant'Egidio in that city).⁶⁷ So, while working for the cardinal Giulio did not have an opportunity to paint, for example, mythological subjects that had secured him earlier a peculiar renown.⁶⁸ But at the end of his life he confessed to Vasari that this collaboration had brought him great satisfaction, while the Mantuan bishop admitted in a conversation with the Florentine historiographer that, as regards art in the Duchy of Mantua, 'Giulio was more the master of that State than he was himself'.⁶⁹ This last statement apparently demonstrated a special position of the artist in the circle of Gonzaga's collaborators, just as

La Basilica di San Pietro. Fortuna e immagine, ed. by G. Morello, Rome, 2012, pp. 245, 347, 260–261, 264, figs. 3, 36.

⁶⁵ M. TAFURI, *Giulio Romano*, p. 18 (as in note 55). C.L. FROMMEL, 'Gian Matteo Giberti', pp. 139–140 (as in note 55).

⁶⁶ 'per servirsi del consiglio ed aiuto di Giulio in rinovare e quasi far di nuovo tutto il duomo di quella città', G. VASARI, *Le Vite*, p. 552 (as in note 56); English translation after: G. VASARI, *Lives*, p. 166 (as in note 56).

⁶⁷ M.G. GRASSI, 'La Deposizione con il cardinale Ercole Gonzaga in S. Egidio in Mantova', *Civiltà Mantovana*, seria 3, 28, 1993, no. 8, pp. 45–61.

⁶⁸ See especially M. JAFFÉ, 'Rubens and Giulio Romano at Mantua', *The Art Bulletin*, 40, 1958, no. 4, pp. 325–329; B. GUTHMÜLLER, 'Ovidübersetzungen und mythologische Malerei. Bemerkungen zur Sala dei Giganti Giulio Romanos', *Mitteilungen des Kunsthistorischen Institutes in Florenz*, 21, 1977, no. 1, pp. 35–68.

⁶⁹ 'Giulio è più padrone di quello stato, come non era egli', G. VASARI, *Le Vite*, p. 553 (as in note 56). For English translation see: G. VASARI, *Lives*, p. 167 (as in note 56).

did the very personal and emotional letter in which the cardinal informed his brother, Ferrante (1507–1557), about the death of the painter who had been renovating his cathedral in Mantua. ‘We lost our Messer Giulio Romano’, he wrote, ‘for which I am very sorry; it seems to me that I have lost my right hand [...]. Like those, who always try to find something good in something bad, I can only pretend that the death of this rarest of men has at least been useful in ruining my appetite for building, for silver and pictures. I no longer have anything made, that is not designed by that handsome genius. Having finished this few that I have in hand, I think as I have said, that I will bury all my desires with him. I knew him as a good and pure man in this world and I hope he is known so to God as well. I cannot hold back my tears while speaking of that, so I shall finish, consoling myself with the fact that also I am approaching the end of my life.’⁷⁰

Giulio Romano must have indeed been Gonzaga’s ‘right hand’ in shaping the proper image of sacred art, since after the artist’s death the cardinal terminated his patronage of the arts, assigning all his means to a prompt conclusion of the renovation of the Mantuan cathedral supervised by Giulio’s pupil, Giovanni Battista Bertani.⁷¹ Thus, there is every indication that Gonzaga’s patronage was among the undertakings that made Borromeo aware of the fact that a bishop attempting a reform of sacred art in his diocese must engage as his advisor an artist able to understand and properly express the bishop’s intentions. Worthy of note is also the fact that under the influence of Giberti and Gonzaga, Giulio – who in 1524 had provoked a widespread outrage by publishing, together with Marc Antonio Raimondi (1489–1534), *I Modi*⁷², a series of pornographic prints presenting complicated lovemaking

poses – at the end of his life devoted himself entirely to discovering the formula of religious art that would assist in the reform of the Church.⁷³ Apart from his work for both bishops, he executed at that time a gothicising design for the façade of San Petronio in Bologna⁷⁴, a stylistic idiom that was aimed to emphasise the antiquity of the building, and did a fresco painting of the *Crucifixion* in Sant’Andrea in Mantua, which propagated the cult of Christ’s Eucharistic Blood.⁷⁵ It is not known whether in this way he had secured himself redemption – as Gonzaga might have hoped for – but, beyond doubt, he was one of the first to have been challenged with the task of creating art for the needs of the ‘Catholic reform’, which, in the second half of the sixteenth century, increasingly captivated the attention of patrons and artists throughout Italy.

EARLY CHRISTIAN BASILICAS AS EXEMPLARY MODELS FOR CHURCH ARRANGEMENT

Daniele Barbaro, in a commentary to his translation of Vitruvius’s treatise, published in 1556, doubted whether the centralised forms recommended by the ancient architect were suitable for widespread use in the construction of churches.⁷⁶ Borromeo, in his *Instructiones*, shared this opinion, not only on utilitarian but also ideological grounds, stating that the circular plan was not particularly appropriate for churches, as it ‘was once used for pagan temples’. He wrote that, conversely, ‘The cruciform plan, going back almost to Apostolic times, and as seen in the major basilicas of Rome built in this way, is to be preferred.’⁷⁷ Therefore, he recommended the imitation not

⁷⁰ ‘Perdessimo il nostro Giulio Romano con tanto mio dispiacere, che in vero pare d’haver perduta la mano destra [...]. Come quelli che dal male cercano cavar sempre qualche bene, mi vò fingendo, che la morte di questo mi averà almeno giovato a spogliarmi dell’appetito del fabricar, degli argenti, delle pitture etc. perchè infatti non mi bastiera l’anima di far alcuna cosa di queste senza il disegno di quel bello ingegno, onde finiti questi pochi i disegni dequali sono apresso di me, penso di seppellir con lui tutti i miei desiderii come ho detto. Dio gli dia pace, che lo spero bene del certo perche l’ho conosciuto homo da bene e molto puro al mondo, e spero anco quanto a Dio. Non mi posso satiar con le lacrime agli occhi di parlar de’ fatti suoi, e pur bisogna finir, essendo piaciuto a chi tutto governa di finir la vita sua’. Quoted after: C. D’ARCO, *Istoria della vita e delle opere di Giulio Pippi Romani*, Mantua, 1842, pp. LII–LIII. English translation (except for the last sentence) after B. FURLOTTI, G. REBECCHINI, *The Art of Mantua. Power and Patronage in the Renaissance*, trans. by L. Jenckes, Los Angeles, 2008, p. 200. See also P.V. MURPHY, *Ruling Peacefully*, p. 41 (as in note 26).

⁷¹ P. PIVA, *L’altro Giulio Romano*, p. 114 (as in note 26); B. FURLOTTI, G. REBECCHINI, *The Art of Mantua*, p. 202 (as in note 70).

⁷² B. TALVACCHIA, *Taking Positions on the Erotic in Renaissance Culture*, Princeton, 1999, pp. 4–19; L. WOLK-SIMON, ‘Rapture to the

Greedy Eyes”. Profane Love in the Renaissance’, in *Art and Love in Renaissance Italy*, ed. by A. Bayer, New Haven, 2008, pp. 54–55.

⁷³ P. PIVA, *L’altro Giulio Romano*, p. 136 (as in note 26); M. TAFURI, *Giulio Romano*, p. 18 (as in note 55).

⁷⁴ R. WITTKOWER, *Gothic vs. Classic. Architectural Projects in Seventeenth-Century Italy*, New York, 1974, pp. 74, 99–100; P. PIVA, *L’altro Giulio Romano*, p. 123 (as in note 26); R.J. TUTTLE, ‘Il progetto per la facciata di San Petronio a Bologna’, in *Giulio Romano*, pp. 548–549 (as in note 55); G. SIMONCINI, *La memoria del medioevo*, pp. 79–81 (as in note 49).

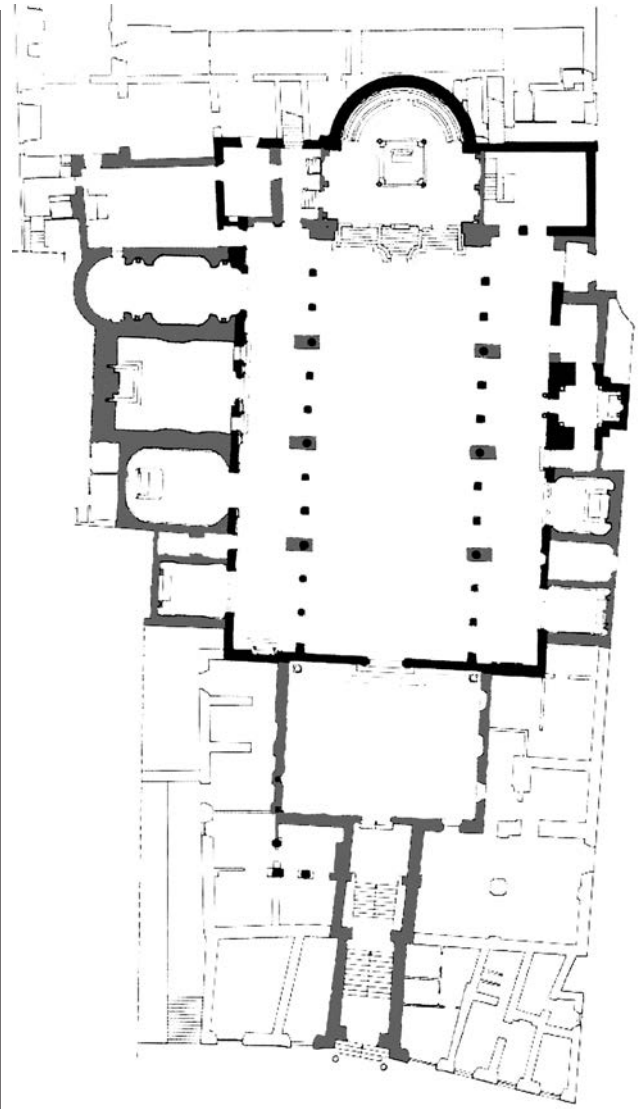
⁷⁵ P. PIVA, *L’altro Giulio Romano*, p. 135 (as in note 26); K. OBERHUBER, ‘Giulio Romano pittore e disegnatore a Mantova’, in *Giulio Romano*, p. 140 (as in note 55).

⁷⁶ M. VITRUVIO, *I dieci libri dell’architettura*, trans. by D. Barbaro, Venice, 1556, p. 125. See also M. MUTHER D’EVELYN, *Venice and Vitruvius. Reading Venice with Daniele Barbaro and Andrea Palladio*, New Haven, 2012, pp. 109, 114.

⁷⁷ ‘idolorum templis in usu fuit; quae crucis formae exhibent, ut plane ex sacris Basilicis Romanis maioribus ad eum modum extractis perspicitur’, C. BORROMEUS, *Instructionum fabricae*, pp. 12–13 (as in note 8); English translation after: E.C. VOELKER, Charles Borromeo’s *“Instructiones fabricae et suppellectilis ecclesasticae,” 1577. A translation with commentary and analysis*, Syracuse

only of the spatial disposition of the basilicas – composed of one, three, or five aisles, transept and chancel – but also of their ‘splendor’. While characterising it, he stated that this feature of ancient churches, which had been ‘eloquently, copiously and practicably treated by writers proficient in the art of architecture’⁷⁸, manifested itself not only in the construction of the churches, but was attested by their centuries-long use as well. ‘Experienced architects’ (‘periti architecti’) had noted that ‘the piety and religiosity of the faithful, excited in them [the churches] incessantly since the Apostolic times, had shone both in those sacred edifices [...] and their furnishings most splendidly’.⁷⁹

Regrettably, the archbishop of Milan did not indicate the means that should be used in order to impart to churches the Early Christian splendour, but it may be inferred that it was precisely his objective when, around 1560, he started his first ‘*fabrica ecclesiae*’, namely, a thorough restoration of Santa Prassede in Rome (Fig. 11), his cardinal titular church. It was built in the fourth century on the site of St Praxedes’s house and the nearby water well in which the saint was believed to have hidden, in the first half of the second century, the remains and blood of several hundred martyrs. In order to recall the ancient roots of the church, Borromeo restored to its interior (that had been significantly revamped in the ninth century and then transformed several times in the later period) features characteristic of early Christian architecture, such as columns bearing an entablature separating the nave and aisles, and wooden ceilings over the nave and aisles (Figs. 12, 13).⁸⁰ He described these features in his *Instructiones*



11. Santa Prassede in Rome, rebuilt c. 1560, plan. After M. Caperna, ‘San Carlo Borromeo cardinale di S. Prassede e il rinnovamento alla sua chiesa titolare a Roma’, *Palladio*, 12, 1993, no. 1

University 1977, p. 16 (*Art & Music Histories - Theses*, 3) (hereafter referred to as Borromeo-Voelker). See also: V. Russo, ‘Architettura nelle preesistenze tra Controriforma e Barocco. “Instruzioni”, progetti, e cantieri nei contesti di Roma e Napoli’, in *Verso una storia dell’restauro. Dall’età classica al primo Ottocento*, ed. by S. Casiello, Florence, 2008, p. 142; G. SIMONCINI, *La memoria del medioevo*, pp. 119–121, 160 (as in note 49).

⁷⁸ ‘architectonicae artis scriptoribus sapienter, copiose utiliterque tractata’, C. BORROMEUS, *Instructionum fabricae*, pp. 6–7 (as in note 8). According to Giorgio Simoncini (G. SIMONCINI, *La memoria del medioevo*, pp. 116–118, 159–160 [as in note 49]), the professionals in the art of architecture who inspired Borromeo were Sebastiano Serlio (*I sette libri di Architettura*, bk V: *I tempi*, compiled between 1547 and 1551), Pietro Cattaneo (*I primi quattro libri di architettura*, 1554), and Cosimo Bartoli (free Italian translation of Leon Battista Alberti’s *L’architettura*, published in 1565).

⁷⁹ ‘Apostolicis usque temporibus excitatam fidelium pietatem ac religionem, quae in iis aedium sacrarum [...] supellectilis apparatu praeclerae eluxit’, C. BORROMEUS, *Instructionum fabricae*, pp. 6–7 (as in note 8).

⁸⁰ M. CAPERNA, ‘San Carlo Borromeo cardinale di S. Prassede e il rinnovamento alla sua chiesa titolare a Roma’, *Palladio*, 12, 1993, no. 1, pp. 45–58; V. RUSSO, ‘Architettura nelle preesistenze’, p. 141 (as in note 77); G. SIMONCINI, *La memoria del medioevo*, p. 121 (as in note 49).

as solutions typical of early Christian basilicas.⁸¹ Consequently, he identified the imitation of the splendour of architecture dating from the ‘Apostolic times’ with a faithful replication of its motifs, so that, as noted by Giussano, ‘other Cardinals followed his example and from that time begun to restore and adorn their titular churches’.⁸² So, in the biography written by his secretary, Borromeo was presented as an important disseminator of the early Christian

⁸¹ C. BORROMEUS, *Instructionum fabricae*, pp. 18–19 (as in note 8); see also, G. SIMONCINI, *La memoria del medioevo*, p. 120 (as in note 49).

⁸² ‘esempio mosse poi altri cardinali e prelati a fare il medesimo nelle loro chiese titolari’, G.P. GIUSSANO, *Vita di S. Carlo Borromeo*, p. 32 (as in note 53). English translation after: J.P. GIUSSANO, *Life of the Saint Charles Borromeo*, ed. by J.H. Newman, vol. 1, London and New York, 1884, p. 50.



12. Santa Prassede in Rome, rebuilt c. 1560, interior towards the high altar. Photo: P. Krasny

revival in architecture⁸³, which should not obscure the fact that such a concept of shaping church architecture had appeared as early as in the first half of the sixteenth century.

The evident reservation with which Borromeo approached the artistic heritage of the pagan antiquity had been manifested earlier by humanists involved in the task of the renewal of the Church. Such a stance was assumed, for example, by Gregorio Cortese (1483–1548), a learned Benedictine abbot at Polirone in the vicinity of Mantua, who in a letter written in 1538 to the Benedictine humanist Luciano Degli Ottoni (c. 1490–1552) declared that, on the one hand, he admired Roman baths, porticoes, basilicas, temples and other ancient ruins, as ‘monuments of power’ (‘*potentiae monumenta*’), but on the other hand, he was unable to forget about the blood of Christian

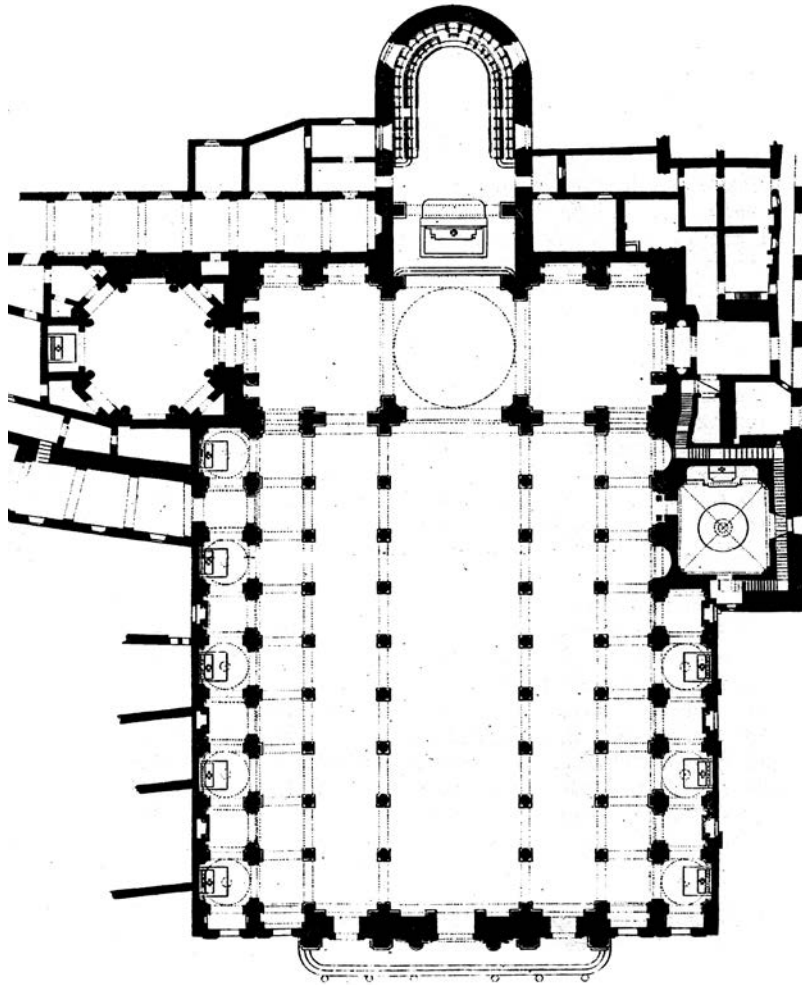


13. Santa Prassede in Rome, rebuilt c. 1560, interior. Photo: P. Krasny

martyrs these monuments were soaked with.⁸⁴ Such a perception of the antique resulted undoubtedly in the focus of Cortese’s research on the earliest period in the history of the Roman Church and on the works of the most ancient Latin Christian writers. As early as 1522 he defended the conviction – questioned by the Protestants who followed Marsilius of Padua (1275–1342) – about St Peter’s stay in Rome. In his treatise, *De romano itinere divi Petri*, he argued that the Apostle was indeed the first bishop of the Eternal City, a fact that should be considered as a rationale for the primacy of his successors in the Church. In this work, dedicated to Pope Hadrian VI (Adriaan Florenszoon Boeyens, 1459–1523), then recently elevated to the Throne of St Peter, Cortese declared that the renewal of the Church must consist in the return of the papacy

⁸³ C. ROBERTSON, *Il Gran Cardinale. Alessandro Farnese, Patron of Arts*, New Haven, 1992, p. 162.

⁸⁴ P. PIVA, *L’altro Giulio Romano*, pp. 54–55 (as in note 26); B.L. BROWN, ‘Veronese and the Church Triumphant. The Altarpieces for San Benedetto Po’, *Artibus et Historiae*, 18, 1997, no. 35, p. 54; M. TAFURI, *Giulio Romano*, pp. 54–55 (as in note 55).



14. Mantua Cathedral, rebuilt after the design of Giulio Romano, from 1545 on, plan. After P. Piva, *L'altro Giulio Romano. Il Duomo di Mantova, la chiesa di Palivona e la dialettica col Medioevo*, Quistello, 1998

and the entire Catholic hierarchy to their Apostolic roots, and be based on a thorough investigation into and revival of the oldest traditions of ancient Christianity.⁸⁵ Among various manifestations of that tradition Cortese did not mention works of early Christian art, but the architectural heritage of that period was tellingly revived and appreciated thanks to Ercole Gonzaga who had maintained regular contact with Cortese and remained under his overwhelming intellectual influence.⁸⁶

This revival took place thanks to the rebuilding of Mantua Cathedral⁸⁷, a task – let us recall – entrusted by Gonzaga to Giulio Romano. As a result, the church emerged as a five-aisled basilica with transept and a relatively shallow

chancel (Fig. 14). The aisles were separated by colonnades supporting an entablature, and the nave and external aisles were covered with coffered ceilings (Figs. 15, 16). These elements, which made the cathedral reminiscent of an early Christian basilica, were underscored by modest, but at the same time conspicuously Classical decoration of the entablature in the form of festoons and intertwining acanthus leaves.⁸⁸

In no document did Gonzaga expressly state that the reconstruction of Mantua Cathedral was aimed at making it resemble early Christian churches. Such an intention was suggested only in the chronicle of Ippolito Donnesmodi (d. c. 1630), written half a century after the rebuilding. The historiographer had noted, namely, that the ‘ancient walls’ of the cathedral, ‘on the outside shaped in the Germanic manner, with merlons and finials, according to an old practice’, were ‘sumptuously’ remodelled in the interior ‘using excellent modern architecture’ that was in keeping with the origins of the church, which reached

⁸⁵ G. CORTESIUS, *De romani itinere gestisque Principis Apostolorum*, ed. by V.A. Constantius, Romae 1777, esp. pp. 1–6. See also M.W. ANDERSON, ‘Gregorio Cortese and Roman Catholic Reform’, *Sixteenth Century Essays and Studies*, 1, 1970, no. 1, pp. 83–85; P. PIVA, *L'altro Giulio Romano*, p. 46 (as in note 26).

⁸⁶ P.V. MURPHY, *Ruling Peacefully*, p. 40 (as in note 26).

⁸⁷ The history of the reconstruction has been discussed in detail by P. PIVA, *L'altro Giulio Romano*, pp. 73–96 (as in note 26).

⁸⁸ M. TAFURI, ‘Il Duomo di Mantova’, in *Giulio Romano*, pp. 550–556 (as in note 55).



15. Mantua Cathedral, rebuilt after the design of Giulio Romano, from 1545 on, interior towards the high altar. Photo: P. Krasny



16. Mantua Cathedral, rebuilt after the design of Giulio Romano, from 1545 on, interior of the aisles. Photo: P. Krasny

back to the times of the Roman Empire.⁸⁹ Such origins of the church were conspicuously manifested by the new interior furnishings of the chancel, which alluded to early Christian models, through the location of the episcopal throne on the axis of the apse, with seats for the clergy on its either side⁹⁰, and the altar installed in the middle of the chancel in such a way that the officiating priest was able to celebrate the mass facing the congregation, a fact that,

⁸⁹ 'mure antiche [...] d'intorno fatte di sopra alla Tadesca con merli e punte, come anticamente s'usava [...] con moderna e eccellente architettura', I. DONESMONDI, *Dell'istoria ecclesiastica di Mantova*, vol. 2, Mantua, 1616, p. 172. The first cathedral, erected in Mantua in the early Christian period, was replaced around 1100 by another church that was thoroughly rebuilt in the fifteenth century. See E. MARANI, 'Una ricostruzione del Duomo di Mantova nell'età romanica', *Bolletino Storico Mantovano*, 7, 1957, pp. 161–185.

⁹⁰ P. PIVA, *L'altro Giulio Romano*, pp. 74, 77, Figs. 30, 31 (as in note 26).

as the Gonzaga historiographer, Giacomo Daino (1480–1560), related, caused a substantial confusion.⁹¹ The conscious and even manifest return to early Christian traditions in the new arrangement of the cathedral was further attested by the choice of subjects for side altarpieces which depicted exclusively saints living in the first centuries AD, namely: the Apostle and Evangelist John; the martyrs: Agatha, Lucy, Thecla, and Margaret; the Father of the Church Jerome, the model pastor of a diocese Martin, and the anchorite Anthony.⁹²

⁹¹ G. DAINO, *De origine et genealogia illustrissimae domus dominorum de Gonzaga*, in P. PIVA, *L'altro Giulio Romano*, p. 141 (as in note 26). See also P. PIVA, *L'altro Giulio Romano*, p. 74 (as in note 26).

⁹² P. PIVA, *L'altro Giulio Romano*, pp. 114–116; B. FURLOTTI, G. REBECCHINI, *The Art of Mantua*, pp. 200–201; F. BIFERALI, *Paolo Veronese tra Riforma e Controriforma*, Rome, 2013, p. 64.

The early Christian solutions employed in the architecture of Mantua Cathedral were borrowed from three major basilicas in Rome⁹³, but it seems that the church was supposed to prompt in the viewer associations mainly with St Peter's Basilica, because it was additionally dedicated to the first bishop of Rome.⁹⁴ Further, it must not be forgotten that in the 1540s Paul III contemplated pulling down the then still surviving front part of the nave of the basilica.⁹⁵ It is therefore very likely that by means of his Mantuan construction site Gonzaga wanted to dissociate himself from the actions of the pope, which were seen as a continuation of the dismantling of St Peter's Basilica initiated by Pope Julius II (Giuliano della Rovere, 1443–1513).⁹⁶ Many humanists considered these procedures as a means of getting rid of the most important architectural symbol of Christian tradition. These actions seemed to attest to the fact that the declining Roman Church severed links with its saintly heritage that for centuries had determined its identity.⁹⁷

The reforms undertaken by Gonzaga were supposed to mend in the diocese of Mantua such errors that the popes were incapable of mending in the entire Church.⁹⁸ It seems therefore highly probable that the bishop intended to recreate in his province an architectural symbol in order to point out – as Cortese had done, using the written word – an exemplary model of renovation of the Roman Catholic Church in tune with its ancient, Apostolic and martyred legacy. According to the bull, *Ad Dominici gregis curam*, promulgated by Paul III in 1536, the council that was intended to conduct such a renewal would take place in Mantua. Although this idea was soon abandoned⁹⁹, it might have been an incentive for contemplating the remodelling of the cathedral in the forms that would clearly

indicate to the council fathers the sense of direction for their reforms. When the works at the reconstruction were already under way, the council, ultimately assembled in Trent, in its fourth session (of 8 April 1546) proclaimed that, 'traditions [...] preserved in the Catholic Church by a continuous succession' 'which, received [...] from the Apostles themselves, the Holy Ghost dictating, have come down even unto us, transmitted as it were from hand to hand' were, next to the Gospels, 'the fountain of all, both saving truth, and moral discipline.'¹⁰⁰ Bishops who wanted to demonstrate, by means of works of art, that – in keeping with the teachings of the council – they fulfilled their pastoral mission by following the 'examples of the orthodox Fathers'¹⁰¹, were presented with an excellent model for such a manifestation – in the form of Mantua Cathedral.

It may be assumed that Giulio Romano was chosen for this task mainly because he had been living in Mantua for over twenty years then, having executed all the most important artistic commissions for the Gonzagas.¹⁰² It does not, however, alter the fact that the artist was particularly well suited for the task of designing a building that would be a model for reintroducing early Christian solutions into sacred architecture of the early modern period. And his fresco depicting the *Donation of Constantine* may be considered the first attempt at reconstructing the appearance of Old St Peter's¹⁰³, executed as 'painted architecture', which enjoyed substantial popularity around 1500 and often (especially in the north of Italy) inspired designs applied in the actual built structures.¹⁰⁴ His familiarity with the forms of the Vatican church, attested by the fresco in the Apostolic Palace and combined with the excellent intuition for the monumental quality of ancient architecture, so characteristic of him, resulted in the fact that the cathedral reconstructed according to his designs must have answered to the expectations of numerous pious humanists searching for artistic solutions that

⁹³ The covering of the aisles, alternately with ceilings and vaulting, was borrowed from the Basilica of San Giovanni in Laterano, and the articulation of the clerestory walls of the nave, carried out by means of pilasters which alternately framed panels with figurative decoration and windows, from the Basilica of Santa Maria Maggiore. See P. PIVA, *L'altro Giulio Romano*, p. 99 (as in note 26).

⁹⁴ P. PIVA, *L'altro Giulio Romano*, pp. 99, 108 (as in note 26); M. TAFURI, *Giulio Romano*, p. 55 (as in note 55).

⁹⁵ L. RICE, 'La coesistenza delle due basiliche', in *L'architettura di San Pietro, storia e costruzione*, ed. by G. Spagnezi, Rome, 1995, p. 258; G.F. SPAGNESI, *Roma, la Basilica di San Pietro, il Borgo la città*, Milan, 2002, pp. 81–82.

⁹⁶ P. PIVA, *L'altro Giulio Romano*, pp. 122–123 (as in note 26); M. TAFURI, *Giulio Romano*, p. 56 (as in note 55).

⁹⁷ For the humanist condemnation of the dismantling of Old St Peter's, see especially: H. GÜNTER, 'I progetti di ricostruzione della basilica di San Pietro negli scritti contemporanei', in *L'architettura di San Pietro*, pp. 143–147 (as in note 95); G. MARELLI MARIANI, 'L'antico San Pietro, demorirlo o conservarlo', in *L'architettura di San Pietro*, pp. 230–232 (as in note 95).

⁹⁸ P. PIVA, *L'altro Giulio Romano*, pp. 99–105 (as in note 26); M. TAFURI, *Giulio Romano*, p. 56 (as in note 55).

⁹⁹ P.V. MURPHY, *Ruling Peacefully*, p. 17 (as in note 26).

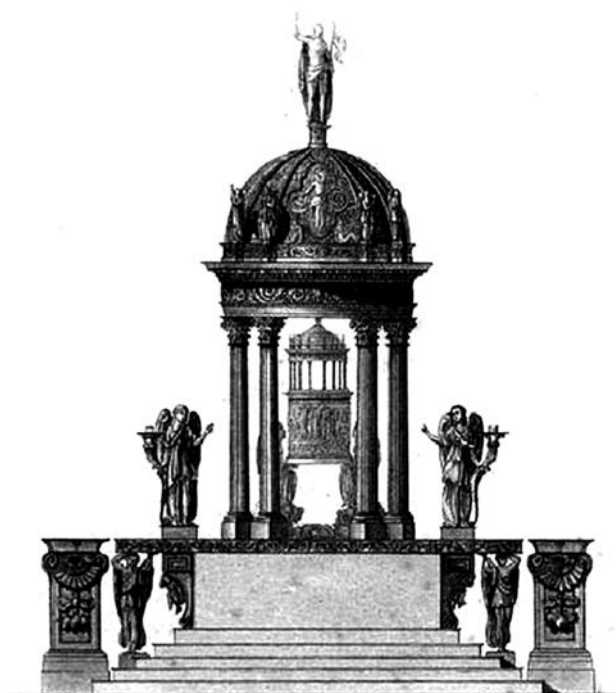
¹⁰⁰ 'traditiones [...] continua successione in Ecclesia catholica conservatas' 'ab Apostolis, Spiritu Sancto dictante, quasi per manus traditae, ad nos usque pervenerunt' 'fontem omnis et salutaris veritatis et morum disciplinae', Sessio Quarta, celebrata die VIII. Aprilis, 1546: Decretum de Canonicis Scripturis; Fourth Session, held April 8, 1546: Decree Concerning the Canonical Scriptures, see P. SCHAFF, *Creeds of Christendom*, vol. II, p. 81 (<<https://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/creeds2.v.i.i.ii.html>> access: 09.12.2017).

¹⁰¹ 'orthodoxorum patrum exempla', *ibidem*.

¹⁰² Such a rationale behind choosing Giulio was given, e.g., by P.V. MURPHY, *Ruling Peacefully*, p. 40 (as in note 26).

¹⁰³ G. VASARI, *Le Vite*, p. 530 (as in note 56); P. PIVA, *L'altro Giulio Romano*, pp. 103, 105 (as in note 26); G. CORNINI, A.M. DE STROBEL, M. SERLUPI CRESCENZI, 'La Sala di Costantino', p. 185 (as in note 64).

¹⁰⁴ See especially M. CERIANA, 'Osservazioni sulle architetture plastiche o dipinte a Milano tra il 1470 e 1520', in *Bramante milanese e l'architettura del Rinascimento lombardo*, ed. by C.L. Frommel, L. Giordano, R. Schofield, Venice, 2002, pp. 111–146.



17. High altar in Milan Cathedral. Measured drawing by Camillo Boito. After C. Boito, *Duomo di Milano*, 1889

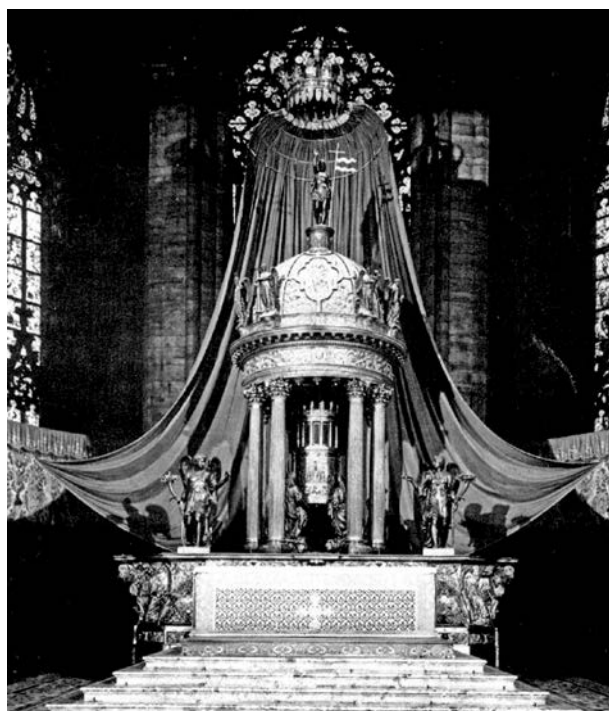
would be at the same time antique and Christian.¹⁰⁵ Therefore, one may only wonder why such an excellent work had to wait for a consistent continuation until Borromeo's reconstruction of his Roman church of Santa Prassede and was given a theoretical and critical treatment only in the pages of his *Instructiones*.

THE TABERNACLE EXPOSED ON THE HIGH ALTAR

In 1581, while setting down the principles for the preservation of the sacrament in the churches of this diocese, the Patriarch of Venice, Giovanni Trevisan (1503–1590), recalled at the beginning of his statement that, 'Cardinal Borromeo recommended, among others, that the Blessed Sacrament be kept on the high altar, being the most honourable place, which, owing to its location in the middle of the church, verily is the most honourable place'. He also noted, following the instructions of the Archbishop of Milan, that 'in the churches of friars and monks the Blessed Sacrament has been kept on the high altar'.¹⁰⁶ The

¹⁰⁵ I. HERKLOTZ, 'Archeologia cristiana e archeologia classica nel XVI secolo. Riflessioni sulla genesi di una nuova disciplina', in *idem*, *I Roma degli antiquari. Cultura e erudizione tra Cinquecento e Settecento*, Rome, 2012, pp. 59–60; G. SIMONCINI, *La memoria del medioevo*, pp. 133, 158–159 (as in note 49).

¹⁰⁶ 'opinione del Cardinal Borromeo fra le altre è che il Santissimo Sacramento sia tenuto sopra l'altar grande, come il loco più honorato, et è vero che l'altar grande, per esser in mezzo le chiese e il



18. High altar in Milan Cathedral. After C. Boito, *Duomo di Milano*, 1889

association of the idea of locating the tabernacle on the high altar with Borromeo was widespread among his contemporary clergymen who, after his death, continued the Tridentine reform of the Church.¹⁰⁷ This conviction was based on solid foundations, since Borromeo began the re-decoration of the interior of Milan Cathedral by erecting an altar with a huge tempietto-tabernacle in the middle of the chancel (Figs. 17, 18)¹⁰⁸, and then recommended

più honorato'; 'nelle chiese dei frati et monache il Santissimo Sacramento si tiene sopra l'altar grande', quoted after S. MASON RINALDI, "Hora di nuovo vedesi ...". *Imagini della devozione eucaristica a Venezia alla fine del Cinquecento*, in *Venezia e la Roma dei Papi*, Milano, p. 171.

¹⁰⁷ See, for example, A. IODICE, 'Influenze del primo concilio provinciale', pp. 153–154 (as in note 7).

¹⁰⁸ S. BENEDETTI, 'Un'aggiunta a Pirro Ligorio. Il tabernacolo di Pio IV nel Duomo di Milano', *Palladio*, 25, 1978, no. 1, pp. 45–64; S. SCOTTI, 'L'architettura e riforma cattolica', pp. 55–90 (as in note 52); S. BENEDETTI, 'Tabernacoli', in *Il Duomo di Milano. Dizionario storico, artistico e religioso*, ed. by A. Majo, Milan, 1986, pp. 596–597; G. DENTI, *Architettura a Milano tra Controriforma e Barocco*, Florence, 1988, pp. 98–99; M.L. GATTI PERER, 'Le "Istruzioni" di San Carlo e l'ispirazione, classica nell'architettura religiosa del 600 in Lombardia', in *Il mito di classicismo nel Seicento*, ed. by L. Anceschi, S. Bottari, G. d'Anna, Florence, 1964, pp. 111–118; R.V. SCHOFIELD, 'Pellegriano Tibaldi e tre cori borromaici', in *Domenico e Pellegriano Tibaldi. Architettura e arte a Bologna nel secondo Cinquecento*, ed. by F. Ceccarelli, D. Lenzi, Venice, 2011, pp. 143–163; A. NAGEL, 'Tabernacle in Matrix', in *idem*, *A Controversy*, pp. 255–265 (as in note 3).

that this solution be imitated in other churches of the city and in the entire Metropolis of Milan. Into the decrees of the fourth synod of the Milan province, summoned in 1576, he introduced a regulation stipulating that in order to enable the faithful to view and venerate the sacrament, it should be 'exposed in the tabernacle located on the high altar or on other altar, if allowed by the bishop'.¹⁰⁹ He repeated this directive a year later in his *Instructiones fabricae et suppellectilis ecclesiasticae*, but this time without suggesting any exceptions to the rule.¹¹⁰ And in one of his Eucharistic homilies he explained, by means of a sequence of rhetorical questions, that the tabernacle must be exposed on the high altar, that is, in the most important place of the church, because it constantly reminds the faithful that the church is a true house of God who comes to his confessors. 'If Salomon was so astonished', he preached, 'that the Lord should make his dwelling in that Temple [that he had constructed] [2 Chr. 6, 18] (which was merely a prefiguration, once the Ark, the Tabernacle and all liturgical vessels, had been placed in it), what, then, should we do, who have the possibility of rejoicing in our church, because the true and saint Body of the Lord is present in our churches, reposing in the tabernacles in the form of the Blessed Sacrament? If Salomon [...] had marvelled so much that his tiny structure was able to accommodate the majesty and power of God, what can we do, who receive Him in a temple not so sumptuous and rich as that of Salomon, but in our unworthy and sinful selves?'¹¹¹

Borromeo's vigorous promotion of locating the tabernacle on the high altar does not mean, however, that it was him who had conceived this method of preserving the sacrament. As early as at the end of the fifteenth century, monumental tabernacles had been erected on the high altars of the cathedrals in Volterra (1471) and Prato (1487)¹¹², and in 1506 the Siena Cathedral Chapter ordered



19. High altar in Siena Cathedral, 1506. Photo: M. Kurzej

to remove Duccio's *Maestà* from the chancel of the cathedral and replace it with an altar table surmounted by a large bronze ciborium moved from one of the lateral chapels (Fig. 19).¹¹³ Regrettably, the initiators of these actions did not comment on the meaning of the new location of the sacrament in the church interior, if not counting the assertion that the measures had been taken in order 'to enhance the decoration of the said church and for greater comfort of the officiating clergy'.¹¹⁴

A more profound substantiation of the Tuscan formula of arranging cathedral chancels was put forward only by Giberti, after transplanting this practice to north-Italian Verona. Having installed a tempietto tabernacle in the

pectore. The Eucharistic Tabernacle Before and After the Council of Trent', *The Sacred Architecture*, 15, 2009, no. 1, pp. 32–34.

¹¹³ F. NEVOLA, *Siena. Constructing the Renaissance City*, New Haven, 2007, p. 205; U.M. LANG, 'Tamquam cor in pectore' (as in note 112); M. BUTZEK, 'Un dibattito sul luogo idoneo del coro dei canonici e sull'altare maggiore nel Duomo di Siena (1492)', in *Honos alit artes. Studi per il settantesimo compleanno di Mario Ascheri*, ed. by P. Maffei, G.M. Varanini, Florence, 2014, pp. 171–172.

¹¹⁴ 'Ad maiorem ornatum dictae ecclesiae et comoditatem cleri pro divinis', M. BUTZEK, 'Un dibattito sul luogo idoneo', p. 172 (as in note 113).

¹⁰⁹ 'tabernaculo expositum in maiori, alioque, si episcopus censuerit, altari propalam collocetur', see 'Constitutiones et decreta condita in Provinciali Synodo Mediolanensi IV', in *Acta Ecclesiae Mediolanensis a Carolo Cardinali Sanctae Praxedis Archiepiscopo condita*, ed. by F. Borromeus, Mediolani 1599, p. 137.

¹¹⁰ C. BORROMEUS, *Instructionum fabricae*, p. 36 (as in note 8).

¹¹¹ 'Se Salomone si stupiva così tanto', he called, 'che il Signore si degnasse di abitare in quel Tempio [2 Krn 6, 18] (che era soltanto una prefigurazione, essendovi collocata l'Arca, il Prepizatorio e tutti gli arredi sacri), che cosa dovremo fare noi, che abbiamo la possibilità di godere effettivamente di questo tempio, perché nelle chiese è presente il Suo Corpo vero e santo, riposto nei tabernacoli e nelle custodie del Santissimo? Se Solomone [...] si meravigliava che quella piccola costruzione potesse racchiudere la Maestà e la grandezza di Dio, che cosa faremo noi che lo riceviamo non in tempio sontuoso e ricco come quello, ma in noi stessi, indegni e pieni di peccati?', C. BORROMEO, *Omellie sull'Eucarestia*, ed. by F. Carnaghi, Milan, 2005, p. 226.

¹¹² H. CASPARY, *Das Sakramentstabernakel in Italien bis zum Konzil von Trient. Gestalt, Ikonographie und Symbolik, kultische Funktion*, Munich, 1969, pp. 52–67; U.M. LANG, 'Tamquam cor in

choir of the local cathedral, he stated in his constitutions of 1542 that during the visitation of the diocese of Verona he had repeatedly noticed that ‘in many places the greatest sacrament, that is, the Eucharist, has not been kept respectably enough and in an as sufficiently honourable place as it should be’. He indicated this honourable place by prescribing that in all parish churches subject to his jurisdiction the sacrament should be kept in ‘a beautiful tabernacle made of wood or other material, locked, and mounted upon the high altar [...], and well and firmly established’.¹¹⁵ He also ordered that an altar lamp be burning in front of the tabernacle for the greater glory of the Blessed Sacrament.¹¹⁶

These actions of Giberti were praised by his biographer Pietro Francesco Zini (1526–1574) who in his life of the bishop (first published in 1555 and repeatedly re-printed) stated that, by having installed the tabernacle in the middle of the church, ‘like the heart in the breast and mind in the soul’, in order to ‘arouse the devout souls of the priests and the faithful alike to worshipping God’¹¹⁷, he had found the best place to expose and venerate the sacrament.

Apparently similar motivations accompanied the actions of other north-Italian prelates who, around 1550, promoted the exposition of the tabernacle on the high altar. The initiatives of the bishop of Verona inspired Gonzaga, among others, who, as attested by Daino, during the remodelling of the Mantuan cathedral had a ‘gilt wooden tabernacle supported by four colonnettes, decorated with various painted figures, in which the Body of Our Lord Jesus Christ is continuously held and in front of which lamps are burning’ installed on the high altar.¹¹⁸

An extraordinary opportunity for disseminating this form of sacrament exposition occurred to Reginald Pole when he was propagating the cult of the Eucharist as the main means of restoring the Catholic identity to the

English Church, at the Westminster synod.¹¹⁹ In the *Reformatio Angliae*, promulgated at the synod at the beginning of 1556, he included a recommendation that in all churches in the Kingdom a ‘tabernacle should be erected on the middle of greater altar, so high as to be easily seen by all, and that it will be so fixed as not to be easily removed by any one’, and the Blessed Sacrament kept inside should be honoured by the burning of the altar lamp.¹²⁰ It is, however, highly probable that this regulation had been enforced only in a few churches¹²¹, before Elizabeth I issued, in 1558, the *Act of Uniformity* that ordered all English clergy to celebrate sacraments in the Protestant rite.¹²²

So, it turns out that it was only Borromeo, a prelate in charge of a vast diocese and exerting a strong influence on the reforms implemented by hierarchs in the neighbouring dioceses, who was the first to have the opportunity to introduce the custom of mounting the tabernacle on the high altar on a large territory.¹²³ However, by the time he set out to putting that task into practice, the formula of a high altar with a sumptuous tabernacle installed on top of it had already been fully developed, and the message carried by such an arrangement thoroughly defined. Therefore, all Borromeo could do was to intensely promote such a location of the tabernacle, which, anyway, was enough for the idea of introducing this solution to be associated in various areas of the Catholic world with the authority of that very cardinal.

THE TAMING OF THE ‘INSOLENCE OF TOMB MONUMENTS’

One of the most crucial changes in the interiors of early modern churches, prescribed in Borromeo’s writings, was that of eliminating from them sumptuous tomb monuments, which, precisely in the north of Italy, were

¹¹⁵ ‘sacramentum magnum, quod est Eucharistia, in multis locis non ita digne atque in loco honorabili, prout decet, repositum sit’, ‘tabernaculum ligneum aut ex alia materia pulchrum cum sua clavi fiat, et super altari magno collocetur et [...] bene et firmiter stabilitatur’, I.M. GIBERTUS, ‘Constitutiones ex Sanctorum Patrum dictis et canonicis institutis collectae’, in idem, *Opera nunc primum collecta*, ed. by I. Bragadenus, Veronae 1733, p. 69. See also M. AGOSTINI, ‘L’altare e il tabernacolo del vescovo Giberti nella cappella grande del duomo di Verona’, in *Gian Matteo Giberti*, pp. 150–151 (as in note 25).

¹¹⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 70. See also A. NAGEL, ‘Tabernacle’, pp. 239–254 (as in note 108).

¹¹⁷ ‘tanquam cor in pectore et mentem in animo’, ‘devotos, et sacerdotum et populi animos (ut aequum est) concitet ad religionem’, P.F. ZINUS, *Boni pastoris exemplum*, p. 8 (as in note 23). See also U.M. LANG, ‘Tamquam cor in pectore’ (as in note 112); M. AGOSTINI, ‘L’altare e il tabernacolo’, p. 150 (as in note 115).

¹¹⁸ ‘tabernaculum ligneum deauratum super quatuor parvis columnis cum aliquibus figuris pictis, in quo continue stat sacramentum Corporis Domini nostri Iesu Christi cum lampadibus ascensis’, G. DAINO, *De origine*, p. 142 (as in note 91).

¹¹⁹ W. WIZEMAN, *The Theology and Spirituality of Mary Tudor’s Church*, Aldershot, 2006, pp. 162–180.

¹²⁰ ‘tabernaculum in medio altaris maioris ita eminenter, ut ab omnibus conspici possit, collocetur et ita affigatur, ne facile a quoquam amoveri possit’, *Reformatio Angliae ex decretis Reginaldi Poli cardinalis Sedis Apostolicae legati*, Romae 1562, fol. 10^v; English translation after: R. POLE, *The Reform of England*, trans. by H. Raikes, Chester, 1839, p. 21. See also U.M. LANG, ‘Tamquam cor in pectore’ (as in note 112); W. WIZEMAN, *The Theology*, pp. 179, 252 (as in note 119); J. EDWARDS, *Archbishop Pole*, pp. 95, 173 (as in note 30).

¹²¹ H. POGSON, ‘Reginald Pole’, p. 16 (as in note 34).

¹²² S. DORAN, C. DURSTON, *Princes, Pastors and People*, pp. 22, 207 (as in note 36).

¹²³ Unlike the tiny dioceses of Verona and Mantua, which counted about 200 churches each, the Archdiocese of Milan had 46 collegiate churches, 753 parish churches and a large number of churches belonging to religious orders. Additionally, 15 bishoprics were subordinated to the Metropolis of Milan. See W. GÓRALSKI, *Reforma trydencka*, pp. 21–24, 55–62 (as in note 7).



20. Tomb monument of Gian Giacomo de' Medici in Milan Cathedral, by Pompeo Leoni, 1560–1564. Photo: M. Kurzej

particularly extensive and had especially sophisticated forms¹²⁴ – a fact that had been noted and criticised by Erasmus of Rotterdam (1466–1536) as early as at the beginning of the sixteenth century.¹²⁵ Borromeo acted vigorously against such monuments at the first synod of the Milan Church province in 1565, introducing in its decrees a directive which stated that, ‘the insolence of tomb monuments, characteristic of our times cannot be accepted, since the putrid cadavers enclosed in them take up elevated and ornate positions in the church, like relics of the saints, around which are suspended elements of armoury, banners, trophies and other symbols of victory, resulting in the churches looking not like temples of the Lord but rather like military camps. Therefore, by condemning this conspicuous propensity to decorating [the resting places of] the bodies of the dead, and caring for the proper appearance of the churches, we order that the monuments – both such that are placed high up and tho-

¹²⁴ See, e.g., J. POESCHKE, *Michelangelo and His World. Sculpture of the Italian Renaissance*, trans. by R. Stockam, New York, 1996, pp. 49–52.

¹²⁵ G. SCAVIZZI, *Arte e architettura sacra*, pp. 254–355 (as in note 3); M. TAFURI, ‘Vos enim estis templum Dei vivi. Anxieties and Architecture from Venice to the Court of Marguerite de Navarre’, in *idem, Venice and the Renaissance*, trans. by J. Levine, Cambridge, 1995, p. 76.



21. The Trivulzio Chapel in San Nazaro in Brolio in Milan, interior. Photo: M. Kurzej

se that are attached to the walls or lean on them in the most prominent places, regardless of whether they are made of marble or bronze, or whether they contain bodies or not [...] – be removed, along with all their decorations and accompanying items, within three months, and the bones and ashes be put down from the high and be interred, so that the tomb does not project [above the floor].¹²⁶ Further, the Archbishop of Milan stated in his

¹²⁶ ‘non est ferenda nostri temporis insolentia sepulcrorum, in quibus putida cadavera, tanquam sacrorum corporum reliquiae, excelso et ornato loco in ecclesiis collocantur, circumque arma, vexilla, trophea et alia victoriae signa et monumenta suspenduntur, ut iam non divina templa sed castra bellica esse videatur. Ambitosam igitur hanc in mortuorum corporibus decorandis arrogantiam detestantes et ecclesiarum decori consulentes, eiusmodi sepulcra excelso loco posita et ea quae parietibus inclusa, vel adiuncta etiam in una parietum parte eminent, nisi marmorea aut aerea sint, sive illis corpora contegantur, sive inania [...] omnis generis ornatum et apparatus ad tres menses amoveri, ac tolli omnino iubemus, ossaque ac cineris in sacro loco altius in terram desodi, ita conditos, ut sepulcrum e solo non emineat’, *Acta Concilii Provincialis Mediolanensis I*, in *Acta Ecclesiae Mediolanensis*, p. 36 (as in note 109). See also K.B. HIESINGER, ‘The Fregoso Monument. A Study of Sixteenth-Century Tomb Monuments and Catholic Reform’, *The Burlington Magazine*, 118, 1976, no. 878, p. 284; H. COLVIN, *Architecture and the After-Life*, New Haven,



22. Coat of arms of Lodovico di Canossa in the chancel floor of Verona Cathedral, after 1531. Photo: P. Krasny

Instructiones that new tomb monuments of lay people could be erected in churches only with the consent of the bishop and prohibited such monuments from being situated in the chancel, adding that they should have the form of slabs in the church's floor which 'will not project in any way from the floor of the church, but will be perfectly level with it'.¹²⁷ According to Giussano, at the beginning of the reconstruction of his cathedral, 'In accordance with the decree of the Council of Trent, he [Borromeo] swept away all the trophies of worldly pomp which filled the Church. Although by the decree, monuments of the stone and metal were allowed, he would not spare even the bronze monument of his uncle, the Marquis of Melegnano [Gian Giacomo de' Medici, 1498–1555, Fig. 20], brother of Sovereign Pontiff Pius IV, but put it away as an example to others'.¹²⁸ Yet, this exhortation was unfavourably received by the faithful. Borromeo's orders to remove the sarcophagi of the members of the Trivulzio family, along with their 'trophies', from the niches in their family tomb

chapel in San Nazaro in Brolio in Milan (Fig. 21), repeated by the cardinal in 1565–1569, caused a widespread outrage which discouraged him from taking further actions to 'purge' the churches of such monuments.¹²⁹ But it also resulted in Borromeo's widespread fame of a prelate who took up uncompromising struggle against 'the insolence of tomb monuments' which undermined the respect befitting God in his churches.¹³⁰

But also in this regard Borromeo had predecessors among north-Italian bishops who were no less radical in criticising the practice of erecting sumptuous memorials in church interiors, and no less resolute in their actions intended to removing such 'decorations' from churches. During the reconstruction of Verona Cathedral in the 1530s, Gian Matteo Giberti 'purged' its chancel of numerous tomb monuments, including the memorial to Pope Lucius III (Ubaldo de Lucca, 1100–1185)¹³¹, and, by marking the resting place of bishop Canossa exclusively by means of a floor inlay of pieces of coloured marble in the form of his coat of arms (Fig. 22), suggested a new, modest way of commemorating the deceased.¹³² In the constitutions issued for his diocese he pithily criticised the custom which allowed the dead from wealthy families to be interred in a 'honourable and elevated mausoleum', and stated that he was scandalised by 'tomb monuments executed with wonderful artistry and at a considerable expense, erected in

1997, p. 220; W. GÓRALSKI, *Reforma trydencka*, pp. 357–358 (as in note 7).

¹²⁷ 'nullo modo emineatve extant, sed illud plane adaequent', C. BORROMEUS, *Instructionum fabricae*, p. 130 (as in note 8). English translation after Borromeo-Voelker, p. 92.

¹²⁸ 'Perchè fece prima in esecuzione del Concilio di Trento, levar tutti quei depositi e vani trofei, ch'erano appesi per la chiesa, e sebbeno sono permessi i sepolcri di pietra, ovvero di metallo, volle nondimeno che fosse levata l'arca ossia deposito di bronzo del Marchese di Melegnano, suo zio e fratello di Pio IV, Sommo Pontifice, e ciò per dare buon'esempio in questa parte', G.P. GIUSSANO, *Vita di S. Carlo Borromeo*, p. 91 (as in note 53). English translation after J.P. Giussano, *The Life*, p. 149 (as in note 82). See also K.B. HIESINGER, 'The Fregoso Monument', p. 287 (as in note 126). According to Giorgio Vasari, the tomb of Gian Giacomo de' Medici, erected in 1560–1564, was designed by Michelangelo. Sculptures in its decoration were executed by Pompeo Leoni. See A. SPIRITI, 'Leone Leoni nel Duomo di Milano. Il mausoleo del Medeghino', in *Leone Leoni tra Lombardia e Spagna*, ed. by M.L. Gatti Perer, Como, 1991, pp. 11–20.

¹²⁹ C. BARONI, 'Un episodio poco noto della vita di San Carlo. La rimozione delle tombe dei Trivulzi nell'edicola Nazariana', *Aevum. Rivista di Scienze Storiche, Linguistiche e Filosofiche*, 9, 1935, no. 3, pp. 430–440.

¹³⁰ G.P. GIUSSANO, *Vita di S. Carlo Borromeo*, p. 91 (as in note 53). See also A. IODICE, 'Influenze del primo concilio provinciale', pp. 166–167 (as in note 7); H. COLVIN, *Architecture*, pp. 220–221 (as in note 126).

¹³¹ J.K. NELSON, R.J. ZECKHAUSER, 'Theories and Distinction. Magnificence and Signality', in *The Patron's Payoff. Conspicuous Commissions in Italian Renaissance Art*, ed. by J.K. Nelson, R.J. Zeckhauser, Princeton, 2008, p. 59.

¹³² D. MOORE, 'Sanmicheli's Tornacoro', p. 227 (as in note 61).

particularly eminent places and often exceeding the altars on which the only-born Son of God has been daily immolated to his eternal Father for the salvation of the humankind'. Giberti recommended that such memorials be removed from churches and the bodies of the dead they commemorated be transferred to simple tombs modestly located in the corners of the church.¹³³

An even more radical attitude towards commemorating the dead in churches was that of Ercole Gonzaga at the beginning of his tenure as bishop of Mantua. In his programme of major reforms of the diocese, compiled in 1537, he decided that all privileges allowing wealthy families to bury their dead in the churches should be revoked. Gonzaga also intended to oblige church rectors to remove tomb monuments from church interiors and transfer the remains of the dead to cemeteries.¹³⁴ He did not manage to put this intention into practice, but during the refurbishment of Mantua Cathedral he ordered, as recorded by Daino, the magnificent tombs of his ancestors (including the tomb of Ludovico Gonzaga, the first captain general from his family) to be removed from the chancel, and the bodies be taken out of the sarcophagi and put in the crypt in wooden caskets. Parts of these monuments were preserved during the refurbishment¹³⁵, yet did not return to their original locations but were dispersed all over the cathedral complex. Gonzaga did not substantiate this 'purging' of the cathedral in writing, considering these steps, so it seems, to serve as an eloquent example, encouraging other church administrators to undertake similar actions.

Apparently also the tomb monument of Cardinal Pole, who was buried in Canterbury Cathedral, was supposed to serve as a similar example. It had the form of a flat inscribed slab, without the likeness of the deceased, incorporated into the church floor, and therefore, following

¹³³ 'honorifico et in altum suspenso mausoleo'; 'mira arte et maxima cum impensa laborata sepulcra in locis eminentibus et plerumque altaria excedentibus, super quibus unigenitus Dei Filius aeterno Patri quotidie pro humani generis salute immolatur', I.M. GIBERTI, 'Constitutiones ex Sanctorum Patrum dictis et canonicis institutis collectae', in idem, *Opera nunc primum collecta*, ed. by I. Bragadenus, Veronae 1733, p. 84. See also K.B. HIESINGER, 'The Fregoso Monument', p. 284 (as in note 126); B. BOUCHER, *The Sculpture of Jacopo Sansovino*, vol. 1, New Haven, 1991, p. 44; H. COLVIN, *Architecture*, p. 220 (as in note 126); P. HUMFREY, 'Veronese's High Altarpiece for San Sebastiano. A Patrician Commission for a Counter Reformation Church', in *Venice Reconsidered. The History and Civilisation of an Italian City State*, Baltimore, 2000, p. 377; Y. ASHER, 'The Two Monuments of Bishop Bartolomeo Averoldi', *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte*, 65, 2002, no. 1, p. 108; J.K. NELSON, R.J. ZECKHAUSER, 'Theories and Distinction', p. 59 (as in note 131).

¹³⁴ P.V. MURPHY, 'Politics, Piety and Reform. Lay Religiosity in Sixteenth Century Mantua', in *Confraternities and Catholic Reform in Italy, France and Spain*, ed. by P. Donnelly, M.V. Maher, Kirksville, 1999, p. 49; idem, *Ruling Peacefully*, p. 74 (as in note 26).

¹³⁵ G. DAINO, *De origine*, p. 142 (as in note 91).

John Edwards, it may be assumed that it conformed to the reformist tendencies in sepulchral art propagated by Giberti.¹³⁶ It is worth noting that the appearance of Pole's monument was known in northern Italy, for example, through a description made by Dominique Lampsonne (1532–1599)¹³⁷, a secretary to the late cardinal, while Borromeo could have learned about the forms of the slab directly from Goldwell who officiated at the funeral of the English cardinal¹³⁸ and was likely involved in commemorating the deceased.

Also Barbaro joined in the choir of critics of the 'insolence of tomb monuments'. In commentaries to his translation of Vitruvius, he polemicised with the pagan writer who indicated benefits for the society from commemorating illustrious men by means of sumptuous monuments. The Venetian prelate wrote passionately that 'monuments and tombs located in churches, which dwarf with their size not only the chapels erected to contain them, but also the most eminent places, are not worthy of such praise. They are often erected taller than the saintly altars, with prominently displayed memorial inscriptions, titles of the dead, epigrams, war trophies and other signs of various dignities. Such vivid portraits hewn out of the finest stones that can be seen in them and such laudatory epitaphs that can be read in them, would be more fitting for markets or other public squares, rather than for churches, and even there exclusively monuments to the most eminent people should be erected, in order to serve as an example for the citizens'.¹³⁹

The main tenor of the criticism of secular appearance of tomb monuments, and especially of decorating them with 'trophies', sounds very similar in both Barbaro's and Borromeo's texts, and it may be assumed that the Archbishop of Milan drew particularly strong inspiration from the writings of the coadjutor bishop to the Patriarch of Aquileia. The firm conviction of the Venetian that such monuments were absolutely inappropriate for a church interior may also have motivated Borromeo to take powerful measures aimed at purging his cathedral and other

¹³⁶ J. EDWARDS, *Archbishop Pole*, s. 240 (as in note 30).

¹³⁷ T.F. MAYER, 'Marcello Who? An Italian Painter in Cardinal Pole's Entourage', *Source. Notes in the History of Art*, 15, 1996, no. 2, pp. 22, 24.

¹³⁸ J. EDWARDS, *Archbishop Pole*, pp. 239–240 (as in note 30).

¹³⁹ 'non è lodevole, che i monumenti ò sepulture siano nelle chiese, pure egli si usa à grandezza nelle capelle à questo con pregio appropriate, e in luoghi eminenti si pongono più alte de i sacri altari e s'appongono le memorie, i titoli, gli eppigrammi, i trofei e le insegne de gli antipassati, dove le vere effigie di bellissime e finissime pietre si vedono, e i gloriosi gesti in lettere d'oro intagliati si leggono cose da esser poste più presto nel foro e nella piazza, che nella chiesa, e solamente de gli huomini illustri e di quelli le opere virtuose de i quali esser possono di memorabile e imitabile essemplio a i cittadini', M. VITRUVIO, *I dieci libri*, p. 125 (as in note 76).

churches in Milan of these signs of vainglory of princes and the nobility.

Barbaro was unable to make a similar demonstration, because, being merely the 'patriarca eletto' of Aquileia, he was unable to initiate such an action in Venice. However, he made sure that his own burial would serve as an eloquent example of Christian humility for the faithful. In his last will, written on 9 April 1570, he ordered that his body be buried in the Campo Santo at the church of San Francesco della Vigna in Venice where the chapel of the Barbaro family stood. The patriarch-coadjutor instructed that his remains, enclosed inside a simple wooden coffin, be interred in the middle of that cemetery in an ordinary grave dug out in the ground, that was to be marked with a headstone only.¹⁴⁰ The execution of Barbaro's last will caused a big consternation, both among Venetians and the humanists from other cities who admired the scholarly achievements of the prelate¹⁴¹, but there were no followers, even among his close relatives.¹⁴² Yet, it may be assumed that Borromeo, while appealing in his *Instructiones* for the promotion among the upper classes of the 'ancient' custom of interring the dead in cemeteries¹⁴³, had in mind the consistent attitude of the bishop from one of the most powerful Venetian families, who, having criticised the opulence of church monuments, made sure that his own burial place would be marked – as his biographies had put it – by a small heap of soil and a headstone only.¹⁴⁴

CONCLUSION

According to Giussano, Borromeo's private apartments in the Palazzo Arcivescovile in Milan were hung with portraits of prelates whom he considered to be 'exempla viva' of performing the function of a bishop. Those paintings, concealed from the eyes of the majority of visitors to the palace, helped the cardinal to carry out his spiritual exercises, by reminding him about virtues of the figures depicted in them and their splendid achievements.¹⁴⁵ The deta-

ils of these spiritual exercises were not documented, so we can only speculate on their results, finding in Borromeo's attitude and actions clear reflexes of achievements of other bishops. This prelate equally put out of sight of his readers the inspirers of his writings on sacred art, since his texts were not provided with footnotes and only rarely were some recommendations substantiated by an authority. Their perceptive reading, however, makes it possible to reveal in them concepts and solutions whose inspirations are either self-evident or at least traceable.

It is my conviction that making the effort of such a reading and searching for the undertakings of north-Italian prelates which inspired (or could have inspired) Borromeo's artistic patronage can help in the better understanding of the main directions of shaping the art of the Catholic Church in the sixteenth century. And, above all, it can help to determine more precisely the role played by the Archbishop of Milan in this process, because this prelate emerges not so much as the 'inventor' of certain art-theoretical concepts and specific practical solutions, but rather as an ingenious compiler who combined someone else's ideas into a strictly coherent system which he presented mainly in his *Instructiones fabricae et suppellectilis ecclesiasticae*, a work read with admiration in the entire Catholic world.¹⁴⁶ Thus, there is every indication that the main 'artistic' merit of Borromeo, whose way of thinking had been shaped, above all, by juristic education and his interest in rhetoric¹⁴⁷, was the codification of precise regulations which made it possible to use art as a powerful tool for supporting the pastoral work of the Catholic Church and substantiating its arguments in interdenominational polemics.

¹⁴⁰ B. BOUCHER, 'The Last Will of Daniele Barbaro', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 42, 1979, pp. 277–282; T.E. COOPER, *Palladio's Venice. Architecture and Society in Renaissance Republic*, New Haven, 2005, pp. 91–92; F. BIFERALI, *Paolo Veronese*, p. 55 (as in note 40).

¹⁴¹ B. BOUCHER, 'The Last Will', p. 281 (as in note 140).

¹⁴² Although the patriarch's brother, Marco Antonio Barbaro (1518–1585), ordered to be buried 'without excessive worldly pomp', he chose the family tomb chapel as his resting place. See D. HOWARD, *Venice Disputed. Marc' Antonio Barbaro and Venetian Architecture*, New Haven, 2011, p. 131.

¹⁴³ C. BORROMEUS, *Instructionum fabricae*, p. 132 (as in note 8). See also K.B. HIESINGER, 'The Fregoso Monument', p. 284 (as in note 126).

¹⁴⁴ G. FONTANINI, *Biblioteca dell'eloquenza italiana*, vol. 1, Venice, 1753, p. 106.

¹⁴⁵ G.P. GIUSSANO, *Vita di S. Carlo Borromeo*, pp. 50–51 (as in note 53); A. PROSPERI, *Tra evangelismo e controriforma*, p. 120 (as in note 24); B. BOUCHER, 'The Last Will', p. 53 (as in note 140).

¹⁴⁶ P. KRASNY, 'Epistola pastoralis biskupa Bernarda Maciejowskiego z roku 1601. Zapomniany dokument recepcji potrydenckich zasad kształtowania sztuki sakralnej w Polsce', *Modus. Prace z Historii Sztuki*, 7, 2006, pp. 120–124.

¹⁴⁷ W. DE BOER, *The Conquest of the Soul. Confession, Discipline and Public Order in Counter-Reformation Milan*, Leiden, 2001, pp. 43–83.