The Seventeenth Century

1. Italy

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Many terms are used to describe 17th century art – Baroque, Ideal, Natural. If there is one important feature of 17th century art perhaps it was the exploration of light. Caravaggio, de la Tour, Claude, Velazquez, Rembrandt and Vermeer opened this new realm in painting (and Bernini in sculpture), into which they were followed by their successors, notably those of the 19th century.

Counter-Reformation – Idealism and Naturalism

The reforms proposed by the Council of Trent underpinned the Counter-Reformation, a movement which was largely defensive and reacting to Protestant objections. Art did not escape scrutiny. Religious paintings should be simple and intelligible to ordinary worshippers, should adhere to the Bible and should stimulate pious thoughts. Mannerism was condemned, with its emphasis on style as opposed to content. But Mannerism was slow to die. Twenty years after the Council of Trent critics were still lamenting *"the decline of the noble art of painting."*

Annibale Carracci (1560-1609)

The situation in the hometown of Annibale and his brother, Agostino, and older cousin Ludovico, was typical. The Archbishop of Bologna published a treatise in 1582 deploring the obscure and ambiguous pictures to be seen in churches with irrelevancies such as long perspective views or a child playing with a dog. The Archbishop established visiting committees to survey works of art in the city to protect against these abuses, which he blamed more on patrons than artists. Mannerists ran a closed shop in Bologna. As the Carracci were rediscovering Italian painting *"this rabble",* Annibale complained*, "were often after them as if they were assassins."*
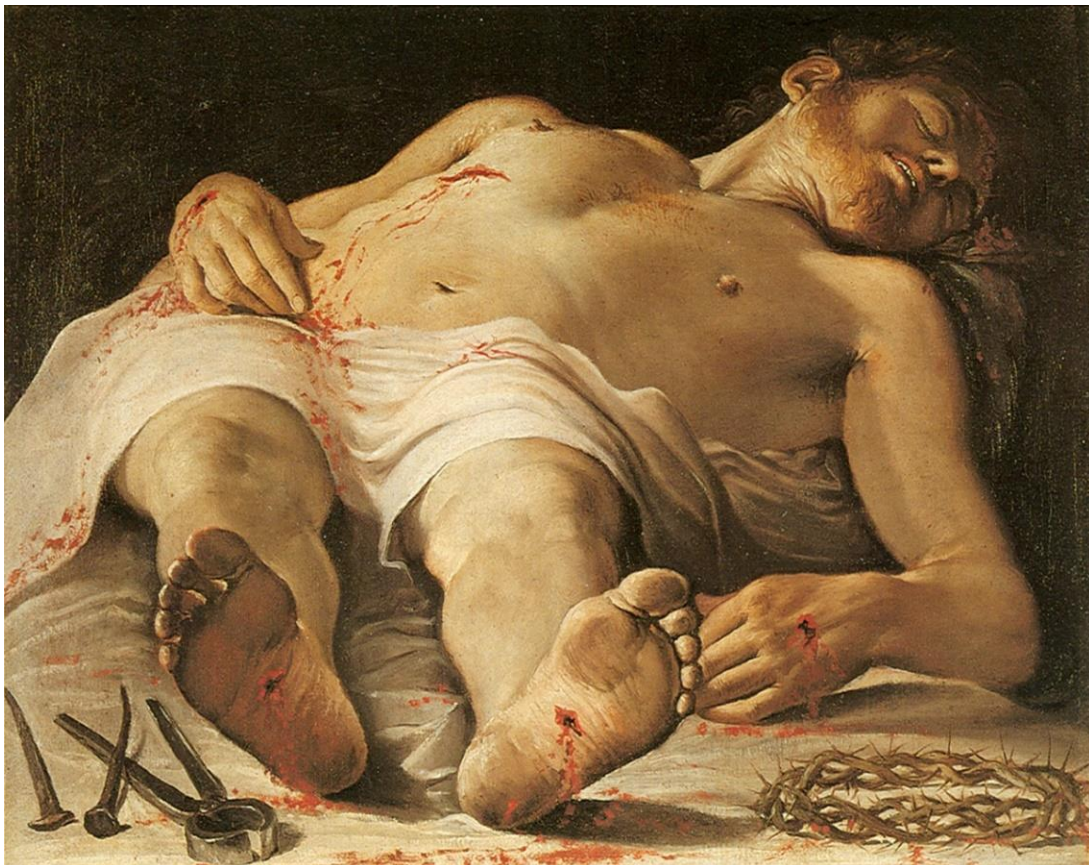
Annibale Carracci, *Corpse of Christ*, 1583-5

Annibale was the most talented of the three. He returned to old Italian masters. *Corpse of Christ* is a homage to Mantegna. But it was for the revitalisation of the ideal form in Italian painting that Annibale is celebrated. He was greatly influenced by Correggio and Veronese, to whose works he was attracted when visiting Venice. *Madonna enthroned with St Matthew* is an adaptation of Veronese's *Marriage of St Catherine*, with a similar brilliant colour scheme.

Venus, Adonis and Cupid depicts the first meeting of the two lovers and shows the influence of Titian in the form of Venus and her pose and in the wonderful dogs. Cupid gleefully holds his arrow and points to the wound. Venus is alluring; who can blame Adonis for abandoning the hunt? Annibale captures the sensuality and emotion of the moment. The diagonal of Venus is softened by Adonis' right arm and left leg, and his left arm and the dogs form a stabilising vertical.

The Carracci set up their own Academy in Bologna in 1582 (and invented caricature as a game for their students), and won commissions to decorate three palaces there. That made them famous and opened the way to Rome. Only Annibale and Agostino went.

Annibale Carracci, *Madonna enthroned with St Matthew*, 1588

Annibale Carracci, *Venus, Adonis & Cupid*, 1590 (Prado, Madrid)

The Farnese Palace in Rome was finished in 1589, and Odoardo Farnese took up residence two years later. The Sala Grande and the Gallery needed decorating. Odoardo wanted the Carracci to decorate the former (and smaller) with scenes illustrating the deeds of his father, Alessandro, the Duke of Parma – Philip II's ace military leader. The Duke had been happily hammering the Dutch Republic into submission when Philip twice ordered him to Paris to fight. The Duke was defeated by Henry of Navarre (soon to accede as Henry IV). Philip's moves were disastrous. While the Duke was away the Dutch recovered and turned the tide, Spanish influence in France was ended and a wound sustained by the Duke at Paris soon led to his death.

Annibale and Agostini Carracci, *The Loves of the Gods* (Farnese Gallery ceiling),1597

The Alberti brothers were slated to paint the ceiling of the Gallery, but pulled out for a bigger commission at the Vatican. So this decoration fell to the Carracci brothers. The frescoes show gods bowing to love. Agostini painted the two rectangular scenes middle top and bottom; Annibale did the rest. He revived the practice of Michelangelo and Raphael (abandoned by the Mannerists) of making hundreds of preparatory drawings, a method which remained until the Romantics of the 19th century felt it hampered their inspiration.

The four small square panels between green medallions show (bottom left) Juno beguiling Jupiter into abandoning his vigil of the battlefields of Troy so that Neptune could rescue the Greeks. His eagle, used to seduce Ganymede, looks away in disgust at this dereliction of duty. To their right Diana descends to earth, overcome by passion for the shepherd Endymion. Top right, Hercules humbles himself before his lover, Iole, swapping his club and lion skin for her tambourine. To the left Venus surrenders to her love of Anchises. These scenes are bordered by standing Atlas figures. The Gallery housed the Farnese's collection of antique sculptures and Annibale, with some wit, made sure some atlantes appeared chipped or broken.
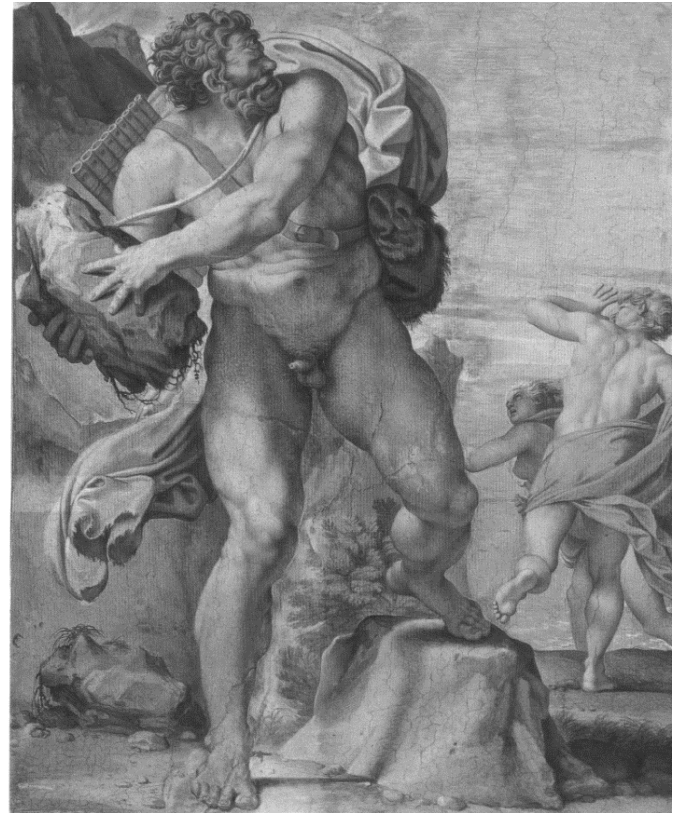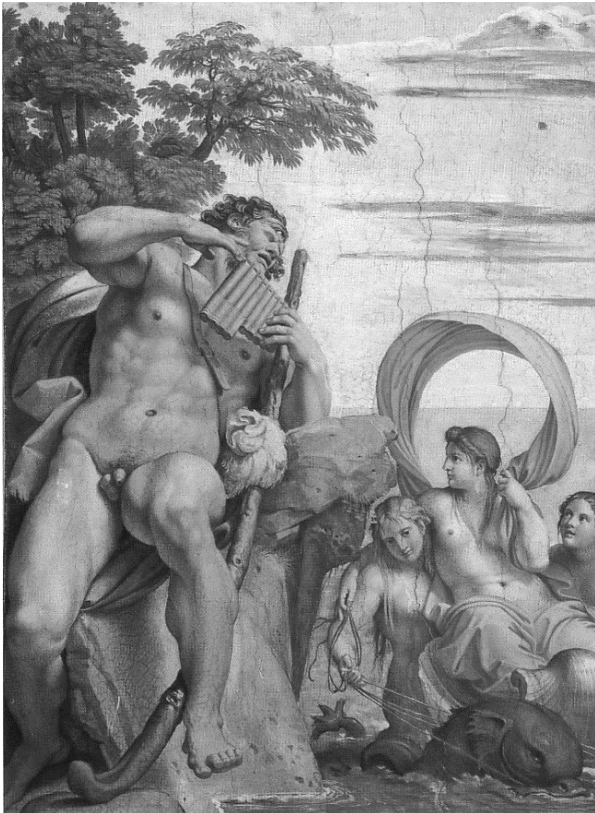
On the short sides of the vault is Polyphemus; gentle in singing of his love for Galatea and then terrible in the rage of his frustrated passion. The figure of the angry Polyphemus is balanced by the reflected pose of the fleeing Acis, their two left feet being the fulcrum. Galatea and Polyphemus' poses are linked, his arms form a circle to match her swirling robe.

Balance appears either side of the central piece between Mercury and Paris who takes the golden apple of discord, and Pan and Diana who takes the white wool which will draw her to Endymion. One is gift from god to human, the other the reverse. The compositions are mirrored.

The Triumph of Bacchus and Ariadne - this time with tigers pulling the chariot instead of Titian's cheetahs - is the triumph of sensual Love. On the left Bacchus is paired with a satyr who embraces a goat, Ariadne with a faun, who reaches across to the maenad with tambourine aloft, which leads us into the right side. Here the group is rowdier with drunken Silenus on his donkey. Figures and poses are grouped with skill. There are lovely touches; the contrast between lively goats pulling Ariadne and the tiring cats.

Annibale Carracci, *The Triumph of Bacchus and Ariadne* (Farnese Gallery), 1597

Annibale's paintings for the Farnese Gallery are widely acclaimed: *"Annibale thus restored and reformulated an ideal vision of man and nature that had been created by the artists of antiquity, recreated by the men of the High Renaissance and then lost for a century (Posner)."* Giovanni Pietro Bellori, prominent biographer of artists (the 17th century equivalent of Vasari) exclaimed; *"Oh Rome, well may you glory in the genius and skill of Annibale, for it was by his merit that the golden age of painting was renewed in you."*

Annibale began the death of Mannerism. After the Farnese Gallery, Annibale should have been acknowledged as the unrivalled artistic genius of his time. Enter Caravaggio, whose *St Matthews* for the Contarelli Chapel surprised everybody in Rome and catapulted him to fame. The two masters were commissioned to produce paintings for the Cerasi Chapel, and these together finished off Mannerism.

Annibale Carracci, *Assumption of the Virgin* & Caravaggio, *St Peter* and *St Paul* (Cerasi Chapel), 1600-1

Annibale's figures reflect the beauty of the ideal, Caravaggio revealed a passion for truth to nature, and painted figures from life. Because of this difference Annibale was regarded as the reformer and Caravaggio the revolutionary. These two artists were not really competitors, patrons frequented both quite happily.

The *Assumption* was one of Annibale's last paintings. By 1604 he was in very poor health. His collapse was precipitated partly by Odoardo Farnese's payment of a miserly 500 scudi for the artist's work on his Gallery: he was persuaded by a Spanish courtier to reduce the payment by the 8 years of food and drink Annibale had consumed while working there. In the summer of 1609 after a short trip to Naples for his health Annibale succumbed to a final illness and died on 15 July. He had asked to be buried in the Pantheon, near Raphael, *"whom he wished to accompany in death, having followed him in life (Bellori)."* We will return to Annibale.

Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio (1571-1610)

The Council of Trent proscribed excessive elegance in religious pictures. Caravaggio's religious art followed this recipe; bringing the sacred into the everyday life of Italian people and choruses of disapproval for himself. His early work was not religious. His training in Milan included still life, and Caravaggio produced the first pure example for centuries. Much ink has been spilled over the decaying fruit and tattered leaves. The transience of beauty or the parlous state of the Catholic Church being popular themes.

After he arrived in Rome he fell ill and convalesced at the house of Cavaliere D'Arpino (the Mannerist hated by Annibale Carracci), who set Caravaggio to painting flowers and fruit. *Bacchus* has no rot – all is fresh, both fruit and boy.   *Bacchus* is modelled on Caravaggio's close friend Mario Minniti. Shortly after this was painted Caravaggio moved into the household of Cardinal Francesco Maria del Monte, who had spotted the young artist's talent and offered food, wine, pocket-money and lodgings.

Caravaggio, *Basket of Fruit*, 1596

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Caravaggio, *Bacchus*, 1595-6

Bacchus starts a run of paintings of pretty semi-naked figures. Twenty years later, Cardinal del Monte, then 68, was described by a Roman commentator as, *'a living corpse … given up entirely to spiritual matters, perhaps so as to make up for the licence of his younger days'*. Caravaggio moved in when the Cardinal hosted many banquets and theatrical parties *'where, as there were no ladies present, the dancing was done by boys dressed up as girls.'*

Caravaggio, *The Musicians*, 1595-6

Minniti appears again as the lute player in *The Musicians*, thought to be the first work done for del Monte. The boy next to Mario looking at us is a self-portrait. The winged cupid on the left tells us that the three boys sing of love. Gorgeous winged creatures appear elsewhere; *Flight to Egypt* - beautiful work.

Caravaggio, *Rest on the Flight to Egypt*, 1594-6 (Doria Pamphilj Gallery, Rome)

There are some wonderful still life elements; music score, foreshortened violin, water bottle and basket, and another entrancing figure, once again as angel; *"a slim dainty creature with half-folded wings, nude except for a drapery swirling around waist and seat … He plays a viol … truly a Shakespearean idyll"* (Berensen).

Caravaggio's paintings of alluring young men climax with *Love Conquers All*, almost universally praised.

Friedlaender: *"never before was the reputed mischievousness of Cupid so pointedly stressed … heavy dark eagle or vulture wings contrast markedly with the white swan-wings … of angels. One arrow is red-tipped, the other black as of love accepted and love rejected."*

The work delighted Berensen who relished the playfulness of Cupid: *"he is amused. It will be a lark to see those silly humans hit by his dart and going mad with the sweet poison."*

Caravaggio shows that love triumphs over the moral and intellectual world. Symbols of geometry (compass and triangle), music (the recently invented Cremona violin, the more conventional lute with pegbox sharply bent back, and score), astronomy (a slice of blue globe with gold stars is visible behind leg of Cupid) are trampled on.

Cupid also triumphs over fame (laurel), learning (big book on the floor below the laurel), military glory (armour discarded) and political power (crown and sceptre carelessly hidden in white drapery on the table).

Caravaggio, *Amor Vincit Omnia (Love Conquers All),* 1601-2
(Gemaldegalerie, Berlin)

Caravaggio was not quite done with attractive winged figures. Soon after painting *Amor*, he was commissioned to paint an altarpiece of *St Matthew and the Angel* for the Contarelli Chapel. His first version was rejected by the clergy ostensibly, according to Bellori, because, *"the figure [of St Matthew] had no decorum and did not look like a saint, sitting with crossed legs and with his feet crudely exposed to the people."* Yet this was common in Northern Italian paintings of the saint in which he is a working-class figure, often a cobbler or blacksmith. Many painters including Caravaggio's tutor all painted St Matthew as a rough man with legs crossed and feet bare. Bellori and later commentators are united in the view that Caravaggio's work was rejected because of the angel; *"too-lightly draped"*, *"the erotic physical proximity of the svelte angel"*, *"the young girl of charming and rather sensuous vitality."* The rejected work was bought by Marchese Giustiniani (for whom *Amor* had been painted) and was sold by his descendants to the Kaiser-Friedrich Museum Berlin in 1815 where it was destroyed at the end of WWII. It is known now only from photographs.

Caravaggio, *St Matthew and the Angel*, 1602

The rejected work seems perfect. Friedlaender, who is quoted below, certainly thought so.

St Matthew is shown writing his gospel in Hebrew, unlike the Greek of the other three. The saint has no halo (he does in the second version), but his head is highlighted by the wing of the angel. He sits on a scissor-shaped chair of the Savonarola type.

His tense expression reveals his concentration and anxiety. He is used to heavy manual labour, not the writing of neat delicate characters. *"The girl-angel takes her mission very seriously, her round and open mouth seems to articulate every syllable of the text and, not trusting the saint's capacity for understanding, she has laid three fingers upon his enormous hand … in this way she leads Matthew's hand with the quill."*

There is a lovely contrast between the figures who are knitted closely together, *"humbleness combines with grace ... dull manner is animated by celestial inspiration."*

The realistic truth – Matthew was a humble labourer – and naturalism of this painting, together with the *chiaroscuro* and the shallow stage are hallmarks of Caravaggio's religious works. Going back a few years these characteristics can be seen in *Judith*.


Caravaggio, *Judith Beheading Holofernes*, 1598-9

The tale of Judith was popular in Catholic states after the Reformation. For one thing, the Book of Judith was not accepted by Protestants. More importantly, the Counter-Reformation's emphasis on stamping out heresy elevated Judith's act as ideal. Holofernes had wanted Jews to worship the Assyrian king Nebuchadnezzar instead of the true faith of Jehovah. He deserved to be executed, as did present-day heretics in the Netherlands and England. Previously, Botticelli, Raphael and others had shown Judith and her maid after the act, carrying away the head in a sack. Now the violence of the scene was lauded.

Partly this reflected life in Rome where banditry was rife. In 1583 the Avvisi (a handwritten newspaper) reported; *"The Papal States are in chaos … the countryside is in the hands of bandits who murder and rob the courtiers and lay waste to towns and houses".* Beheading was a common penalty. The Venetian ambassador to Rome reported in 1595, *"practically no day passes without our seeing the heads of dead bandits they have brought into the city or of the men they behead at the Castel Sant'Angelo in groups of 4, 6, 10, 20 and sometimes even 30 at a time … more severed heads are nailed to one bridge over the Tiber than there are melons in Rome's market stalls."* To help them depict scenes like Judith and Holofernes convincingly, artists were instructed by a textbook to go to executions to observe the twitching eyelids and rolling eyes of the decapitated. Evidently, Caravaggio had heeded this advice.

Not that he needed much excuse to venture out of the studio. Armed bodyguards accompanied visitors or citizens who could afford them on their travels in the city and Caravaggio did this often and enjoyed it, *"he rarely stuck it out at work for very long before setting out with his gang of toughs attending one tennis match after another always ready to fight a duel or engage in a brawl."* He was arrested six or seven times for assault. Naturally enough, his models were not entirely respectable. His model for *Judith* was the courtesan Fillide Melandroni who Caravaggio also used for *St Catherine.*
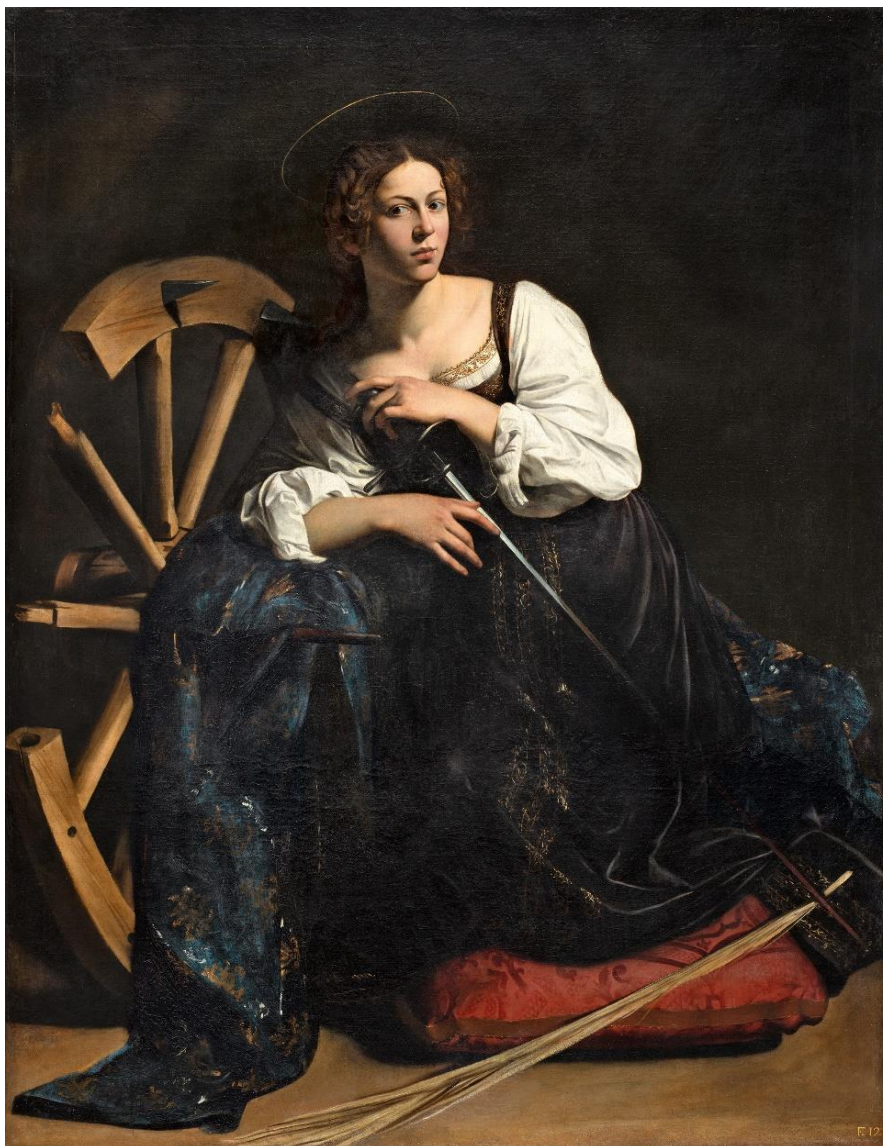

Caravaggio, *St Catherine of Alexandria*, 1598

Back to the Cerasi Chapel. Because he was a difficult character, the contract required Caravaggio to, *"submit specimens and designs of the figures and other objects with which according to his invention and genius he intends to beautify the said mystery and martyrdom."* Caravaggio's two works exaggerate his lighting, naturalism and the shallow stage, but are contrasting compositions. The diagonal cross of St Peter is created by the rope and backs of the two men, and strengthened by the robes of red and blue at the ends of the real cross. St Paul is circular – his arms through the horse's rear leg and over its back to the drooping head.

Caravaggio, *Conversion of St Paul* (Cerasi Chapel), 1601
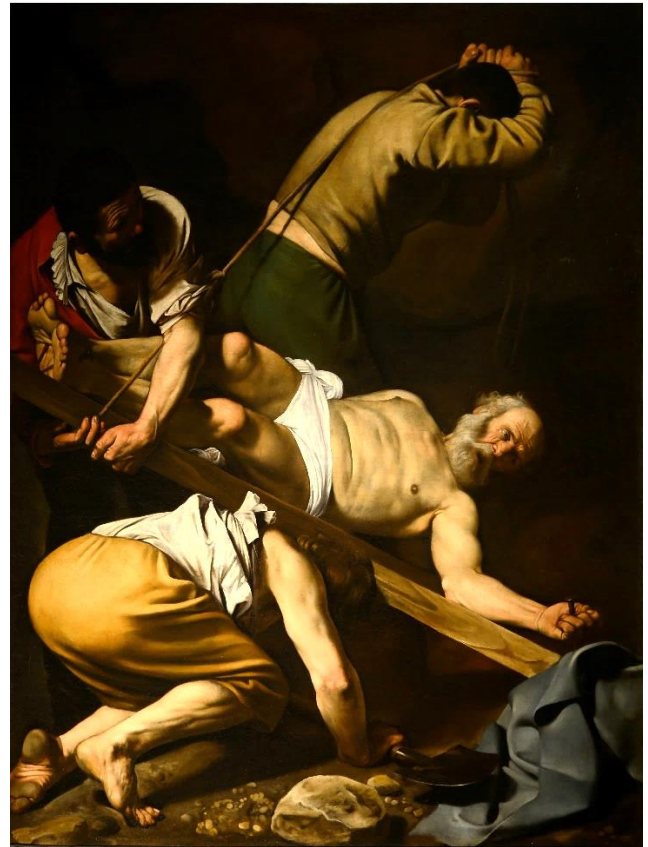
Caravaggio, *Crucifixion of St Peter* (Cerasi Chapel), 1601

St Paul's conversion had been painted by Michelangelo and Raphael with the horse bolting, chased by a young attendant. Caravaggio prefers Raphael's young Paul with his open arm gesture to Michelangelo's old man shielding his eyes, but chooses a common soldier rather than a centurion. The servant and the horse seem to have the same puzzled expression (why has Saul fallen to the ground?), just as the donkey and Joseph both appear equally entranced by the music in *Rest on the Flight to Egypt*.   Caravaggio replaces the turmoil in the traditional scenes of the conversion with the quiet wonder of the power of faith.

These works drew a mixed response. Seventeenth century critics accused Caravaggio of neglecting ideal beauty and so did prominent art historians even into the 20th century. One wonders what ordinary people made of Caravaggio's art. Certainly, wealthy patrons were not deterred, tripping over themselves for his services. Significantly, critics are never in agreement about which works ought to be condemned. For example, the next two works were rejected by church authorities, but Berenson, who lambasted the Cerasi Chapel paintings, found both marvellous.

The *Madonna del Loreto* shows the miraculous statue which is supposed to come alive. Clerics rejected the earthiness of the pilgrims, the man with muddy feet and the woman with a torn and dirty bonnet. Yet, these are entirely realistic and as Friedlaender notes, *"the humble spectator seeing [this] could easily identify himself with the bearded pilgrim or his worn-looking wife, who kneel before the floating and miraculous vision of the Madonna."* The great classicist Poussin would depict the same dirty feet in his pilgrims. *The Death of the Virgin* was rejected by the clergy of the church for which it was intended either because Caravaggio had used a drowned prostitute as the model for the Virgin Mary or because She was depicted indecorously, *"swollen up and with bare legs."* The discarded painting was quickly bought by the Duke of Gonzaga on the urgent advice of Rubens, who loved the work.

Caravaggio, *Madonna del Loreto*, 1603-5

Caravaggio, *The Death of the Virgin*, 1605-6

Berenson hailed it as, *"one of the best representations of the subject that mature European art has produced and is admirable not only for the stately solemnity of the figures but for the arrangement as well … deeply appealing is the young woman [Mary Magdalene] in the foreground broken with grief."* Philip Neri, a saint with much influence in Rome, had objected to the Mother of Christ being shown as if she were an elegant lady of society. The blood red curtain in *Judith* reappears here as a sign of martyrdom.

Caravaggio, *Supper at Emmaus*, 1601 (National Gallery, London)

We will close by returning to a teetering basket of fruit, this time in *Supper at Emmaus*: the pomegranate symbolising the crown of thorns; the apple and figs represent man's original sin; the grapes through wine, the blood of Christ. Caravaggio depicts Christ as youthful, plump, without a beard, serene and remote, transcending mortal life. The shell is a badge of a pilgrim, whose arms echo the crucifixion. The other pilgrim starts convincingly from his chair at the staggering news. The highlight on his elbow patch is a touch of Caravaggio's genius.

In May 1606 Caravaggio brawled again after a ball game and this time killed a man. He worked in exile while being chased through Naples, Malta, Syracuse, Palermo and back to Naples in 1610 where he was imprisoned by mistake, a pardon having been granted in Rome. Released, Caravaggio tried to find the ship holding his belongings. Wandering, raging and half demented, under a burning sun along the shore he contracted a fever. Despite receiving help in a small seaside village Caravaggio died a few days later.

Over the succeeding three centuries Caravaggio and his work drew mixed comments:

> *"He is a mixture of grain and chaff: indeed he does not continuously devote himself to this study but when he has worked for a couple of weeks, he swaggers about for a month or two, his sword at his side and a servant with him"* (Karel van Mander, *The Lives of the Painters*, 1604);

> *"There is no question that Caravaggio advanced the art of painting because he came upon the scene at a time when realism was not much in fashion and when figures were made according to convention and manner and satisfied more the taste for gracefulness than truth … [But] He possessed neither invention nor decorum nor design nor any knowledge of the science of painting.* (Bellori, *The Lives of Modern Painters, Sculptors and Architects*, 1672);

> Caravaggio was the *"black slave of painting … feeding upon horror and ugliness, and filthiness of sin."* (Ruskin, *Modern Painters Vol II*, 1846).

> *"Modern naturalism in the strict sense begins in its simplest form with Caravaggio … His aim is to show the viewer that the sacred events of the beginning of time unfolded exactly in the same way as in the alleys of southern cities towards the end of the 16th century.* (Burckhardt, *Der Cicerone*, 1855).

After the important exhibition in Milan in 1951, he received the praise which we consider his due:

> *"The more compelling drama of reality he glimpsed after he had given up his calm mirrorings of young boys … scenes of sacred history, which he now mastered, came to him as a succession of brief and decisive dramas whose climaxes could not be treated in a leisurely sentimental narrative."* (Longhi, *Il Caravaggio*, 1952)

> *"His sudden changes from a delicacy and tenderness of feeling to unspeakable horror seem to reflect his unbalanced personality … He is capable of dramatic clamour as well as of utter silence … But when all is said and done, his types chosen from the common people, his magic realism and light reveal his passionate belief that it was the simple in spirit, the humble and the poor who held the mysteries of faith fast within their souls."* (Wittkower, *Art and Architecture in Italy 1600-1750*, 1985)

The work of this immensely talented man revolutionised art. Even his fiercest critics acknowledge the formative influence he exerted on Velazquez, Vermeer and Rembrandt. He had followers closer to hand too.

<u>Artemisia Gentileschi (1593 – c 1656)</u>

Artemisia, eldest of four children and the only girl, was trained by her father **Orazio Gentileschi (1563-1639)**, a master painter influenced strongly by Caravaggio. She was the only one of his children with an aptitude for painting. At the time, women could not formally train with a master or join an academy and in Italy were not eligible for travel. Artemisia specialised in scenes in which women play a dominant role. She had good reason to distrust men. She was raped by Agostino Tassi while he was collaborating with her father in painting a vault and teaching her perspective. At the rape trial Artemisia was tortured by *sibille* (metal rings placed round her fingers and tightened) to prove she was telling the truth. After a 7-month trial, Tassi, a known sexual predator, was released from prison and the case dismissed.

Artemisia's art often uses Caravaggio's striking *chiaroscuro*. Her father, Orazio, emphasised Caravaggio's naturalism, as can be seen in *Lot*, which convincingly conveys the intimacy of the group in a beautifully sensual pose. Emotional closeness is emphasised by the flow between the colours of their clothes, and the symmetry of the pose of the legs of Lot and one of his daughters. Like Caravaggio, Orazio's still life is stunning, shining against the earthy naturalism of the family.

Orazio Gentileschi, *Lot and his Daughters*, 1621-3

Artemisia was immensely talented and must have needed a great deal of assurance and toughness to thrive in a world of artists and patrons who were almost exclusively male – many of whom must surely have had the same tendencies as the elders in the story of Susannah; a popular topic for her. In a famous self-portrait, Artemisia depicted herself as the *Allegory of Painting*. Cesare Ripa's *Iconologia* described how virtues and other abstract qualities should be depicted as figures and was widely used by artists.

Ripa wrote that *Painting* should be shown as *"a beautiful woman, with full black hair, dishevelled, and twisted in various ways, with arched eyebrows that show imaginative thought, the mouth covered with a cloth tied behind her ears, with a chain of gold at her throat from which hangs a mask, and has written in front "imitation." She holds in her hand a brush, and in the other the palette, with clothes of evanescently covered drapery."*
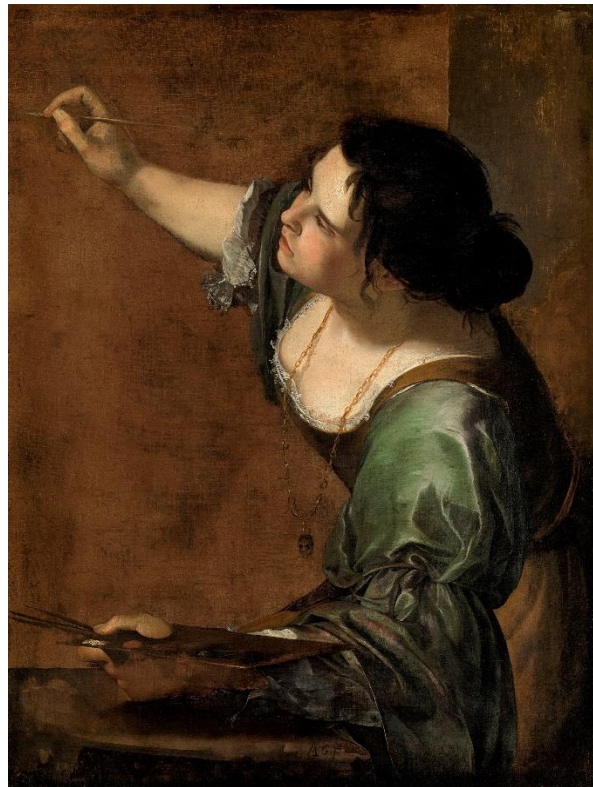
Artemisia Gentileschi, *Self-Portrait as the Allegory of Painting*, 1638-9

Artemisia worked for most of her career in Naples, where Caravaggio's powerful chiaroscuro and penchant for violence appealed long after his style was discarded. Artemisia's *Judith* is more violent than Caravaggio's. She painted two versions; one now in Naples and this one in the Uffizi. Uniquely, Artemisia depicts both Judith and her maid, Abra, as the same age.

The Uffizi version has more sophisticated colour. Most significantly it features an upward spray of blood. When it came to the Uffizi in 1774, the painting was relegated to the darkest corner of the gallery because Grand Duchess Maria Luisa could not stand to see such horror. Both versions show Abra assisting the execution – no other painting of the beheading shows this – either Judith is alone or the maid passively waits by her side. Perhaps Artemisia was suggesting that if women work together the oppression of men could be broken?

Artemisia Gentileschi, *Judith Beheading Holofernes*, 1614-1620

Artemisia twice painted the pair getting ready to escape with the severed head. Judith and Abra are young women. The heroine is shown in elegant garments with ornaments. The one in Judith's hair has an image of a male figure with lance and sword (echoes of St George?). The end of the sword has a head, the mirror image of Holofernes's head in the basket, open-mouthed and screaming. Artemisia shows blood oozing through the weave of the basket.

Artemisia Gentileschi, *Judith and her Maidservant*, 1618-19

Catholic Reformation – the Baroque

The edicts of the Council of Trent didn't last long in Rome. The Catholic Reformation was a more positive force of spiritual renewal and vitality, and brought success in Europe. Protestantism reached its height in 1580 when it was the official religion of half of Europe, but by 1650 this had fallen to one-fifth; the balance having re-joined the Catholic Church. These successes brought joy to Rome. The origin of the Baroque lies with Popes. Sixtus V (1585-90) returned to the traditional practice of consolidating his power by building grand palaces and churches. That threw off the austerity of the Council of Trent. Then, as parts of Europe returned to the fold, two long papal reigns, Paul V (1606-1621) and especially that of Urban VIII (1623-1644), established the Baroque. This was a term applied later in a derogative way. The negative reaction began with Johann Winckelmann, pioneering art historian in the 1750s, and held sway well into the 20th century.

> *"Borromini in architecture, Bernini in sculpture, Pietro da Cortona in painting … are a plague on taste, a plague which has infected a great number of artists."* So wrote Francesco Milizia in 1768 of the three great masters of the High Baroque, crystallising the hostility of later generations.

The Pauline Chapel which Paul V commissioned and completed in 1613 had elaborate tombs and frescos, overwhelming in opulence, but bland and largely unmoving emotionally. Baroque artists strove to appeal to the emotions, to instil a sense of wonder and to draw the observer into sharing an experience in another world.

Stefano Maderno, *St Cecilia* (*Church of St Cecilia in Trastevere, Rome*), 1600

A new style of sculpture was apparent in *St Cecilia* by Stefano Maderno who is presented as her body was found entombed underneath the altar of a church in Rome in 1600 – severed head turned away from viewer and hand pointing to her feet. Understatement (in contrast to the opulence of Pauline Chapel) heightens the work's emotional impact. The great upsurge of religious feeling in the Catholic Reformation saw artists creating images of visionary experiences of recently canonised saints.

Gianlorenzo Bernini (1598-1680)

More than any other artist Bernini gave Rome its Baroque character. Urban VIII is said to have told him, *"you are made for Rome and Rome is made for you."* Bernini considered himself primarily a sculptor but he was no less gifted as an architect, painter and poet. He was prolific*.* Gianlorenzo Bernini was born in Naples, son of a Florentine father who was a *"gifted but facile late Mannerist sculptor"* and a Neapolitan mother. The family moved to Rome in 1605 and Bernini stayed there until his death, apart from six months in Paris in 1665. His father worked after his arrival in Rome for the Borghese Pope Paul V. It was through this circumstance that Bernini's talent was noticed by the Pope and his wealthy and powerful nephew, Cardinal Scipione Borghese.

From 1618-24 Bernini produced four works for the Cardinal which *"inaugurated a new era in the history of European sculpture (Wittkower)."* The first was *Aeneas, Anchises and Ascanius* inspired partly by Raphael's *Fire in the Borgo*, which is considered to be a little Mannerist in style.

The next piece was breathtakingly new. *The Rape of Proserpina* has echoes of Giovanni Bologna's *Rape of the Sabines* [see 16th century in Italy], but his unified figures have been replaced by Bernini's violent collision between the captor and captive.

The puzzled amusement of Pluto contrasts with the frozen tears and cries of Proserpina; brutal lust with desperate anguish; his bristling torso sets off her soft voluptuous form (emphasised by Pluto's fingers sinking into her flesh). The struggle is shown by her hand convincingly distorting his brow and left eye.

In Renaissance sculpture the marble block prescribed the physical limit of the work. Mannerists broke with this, allowing extremities to protrude. They also designed their statues to be seen from many viewpoints. Mannerist sculpture usually depicts a stable moment: the poses in Giovanni Bologna's *Rape of the Sabines* are like the end of a ballet movement where the dancers hold their positions and wait for applause.

Gianlorenzo Bernini, *The Rape of Proserpina*, 1621-2 (Galleria Borghese, Rome)

Bernini follows the Mannerists in allowing limbs to protrude (Proserpina's right arm and both feet) but portrays energetic action and rejects the multiple-viewpoint of Mannerism. The drama is increased because all the action can be seen from the front, even the expressive tension in Proserpina's toes as she struggles to break free. Significantly Cardinal Borghese placed the statue against a wall.
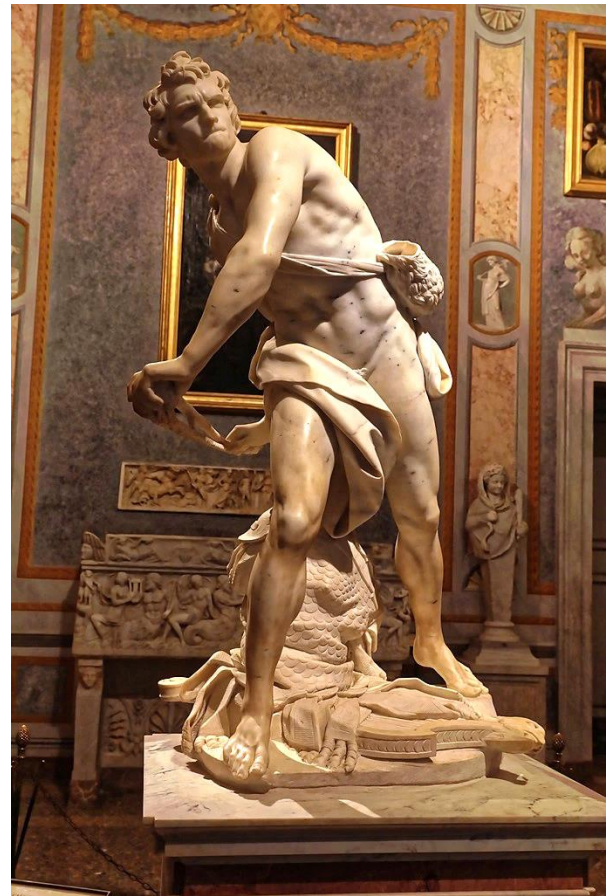
There are links to Annibale Carracci's *Farnese Gallery*: the voluptuous beauty of Proserpina, the overdeveloped torso and hair and beard of Pluto, and Cerberus is an adaptation of Paris' dog.

Breaking the sequence of works for Cardinal Borghese is *Neptune and Triton,* commissioned by Cardinal Peretti for his large fish pond at his Villa Montalto. Ovid tells the story. Juno had incited the wind god to let loose a storm on the Trojan fleet. Neptune, seeing his protégé Aeneas in danger, appeared and by swinging his trident calms the waters. Bernini shows Neptune in action, his power and determination by the commanding *contrapposto* and grip of his trident, the set of his jaw and the wildly flowing hair. The more peaceful form of Triton blows upon a conch (which was the outlet for the fountain).

The work is now in the V&A and loses its impact for two reasons. Originally set outside, the face of Neptune was intended to be seen from a distance in bright sunlight. Bernini therefore reduced it to essential forms. There are no eyes but the illusion of them is given by the projecting eyebrows. In all his works Bernini was acutely sensitive to the setting and to light. Secondly, the large pond extended the action of the statue beyond the block from which it was carved. The gently undulating water of the pond was easily appreciated by the spectator as being the result of Neptune's action. In this way, the spectator was brought into Neptune's realm. Bernini would be aghast that these crucial effects, especially the second, have been lost.

Gianlorenzo Bernini, *Neptune and Triton*, 1620   Gianlorenzo Bernini, *David*, 1623-4 (Galleria Borghese, Rome)

The extension of the action beyond the block and the involvement of the spectator are even stronger in *David*, the third of Cardinal Borghese's commissions. Again, Bernini is inspired by the *Farnese Gallery* this time *Polyphemus Killing Acis*. Annibale Carracci had shown the action in the split second before the release of the missile. Gianlorenzo chose the same moment for *David* and tension fills the whole figure: toes firmly pressed on ground (originally the plinth was smaller and David's toes gripped the edge), the winding up of the legs and torso, the lips compressed and brow furrowed in concentration, and the eyes transfixing the target. Again, strong action and Bernini extends that action into our space; Goliath must be close to us. Thus, Bernini abolished the boundary between the stone figure and our world.

Apollo and Daphne was done for Cardinal Borghese to replace *The Rape of Proserpina* which he had given away as a present. The beautiful huntress Daphne, daughter of the river god Peneus, prized her freedom above love and marriage (much to her father's regret, who longed for a grandchild). She was Apollo's first love. One day Apollo saw her after she had been hunting, her dress and hair alluringly dishevelled. Apollo gave chase. Daphne fled and just as Apollo was catching her, she saw her father's river and cried for help. At Apollo's touch she was transformed into a laurel. Apollo fell into dismay and grief: "*O fairest of maidens you are lost to me. But at least you will be my tree. With your leaves my victors will wreathe their brows.*"

Bernini depicts the transitory moment just after the transformation has begun, there is nothing like it previously or since in sculpture as it is a painter's subject. Daphne turns horror-stricken as she feels the hand of her pursuer but is not yet aware of the simultaneous transformation. Apollo is caught between the chase which still animates his body and amazement as he notices the transformation.

Gianlorenzo Bernini, *Apollo and Daphne*, 1622-5 (Galleria Borghese, Rome)

Apollo and Daphne was immediately lauded. Quite apart from the depiction of action, also acclaimed were the astonishing mimicry of flesh, bark and leaves. The use of various degrees of polish within the work was a revolutionary technique. Filippo Baldinucci, Gianlorenzo's biographer, *"the chisel was used in such a way that one could believe it had been cutting wax instead of marble."*

These works have two other motifs used frequently by Bernini. While he was working at the Villa Borghese he would have seen Caravaggio's *Boy bitten by Lizard* and *Sacrifice of Abraham.* They inspired Bernini to express terror by an open mouth with a meticulous representation of the tongue and teeth. Bernini shows the terror of Proserpina and Daphne with these devices and in later works also uses them to show ecstasy.

The second motif is drilling small holes in the eye sockets, again evident in the two girls. Bernini, knowing that sunlight casts blue shadows on white surfaces, used this so that eyes appeared coloured.

Bernini also revolutionised portrait busts. The accoutrements of rank had become more important than the features of the sitter which were depicted in a bland abstract way. Bernini turned to portraiture early in his career to supplement his income. Bernini famously observed that a person's features were at their most characteristic either just before or after speaking. His portrait of his first patron, *Cardinal Scipione Borghese,* has the cardinal turning with half-open mouth and lively gaze.

The Venetian ambassador maintained Cardinal Borghese was characterised by, *'the mediocrity of his learning and a life largely devoted to the cultivation of pleasures and pastimes.'*

Bernini catches this nature. Despite his joviality the Cardinal was ruthless in acquiring art. One night in 1608 a gang of his forcibly removed Raphael's *Deposition,* the central altarpiece, from the Baglioni family chapel in Perugia, and brought the work back to the Cardinal's palace.

There are two busts as the first developed a crack across the forehead when almost finished (as can be seen in the picture). Bernini quickly copied the bust in only three days, but Wittkower and Pope-Hennessy thought the second version lacked the vitality of the first. Bernini's success with portrait busts brought more elevated clients, perhaps the most famous being Charles I of England.

Gianlorenzo Bernini, *Bust of Cardinal Scipione Borghese* (first version), 1632 (Galleria Borghese, Rome)

Bernini believed princes and leaders ought to be portrayed with the qualities expected of men of their rank. His *Bust of Francesco I d'Este* can be compared to Velazquez' portrait. The bust carries an air of command: armour is visible, ringlets are rife and the head turned decisively. Velazquez, on the other hand, captures the feckless and vacillating character attributed to the Francesco by his contemporaries.

Gianlorenzo Bernini, *Bust of Francesco I d'Este*, 1652

Diego Velazquez, *Francesco I d'Este*,1638

Bernini enhances the feeling of dynamic leadership by increasing the size of the torso relative to the head, and using the drapery to convey a sense of movement. Francesco was so taken with Gianlorenzo's work he paid him the huge sum of 3,000 scudi, far beyond the usual fee of a few hundred scudi for a bust.

Bernini took the same approach to Charles I. The resulting bust was destroyed, probably in a fire in Whitehall Palace in 1698, but a scrupulous copy by John Bushnell shows that Gianlorenzo portrayed the ideal monarch. He worked from Anthony Van Dyke's triple portrait, but the bust is much more vital – strong jawbones, a bold nose, the eyelids undrooping and the head raised proudly, crowned with luxurious ringlets.

John Bushnell, *Bust of Charles I (copy of Bernini)*, 1675

Anthony Van Dyck, *Charles I of England*, 1635/6

Bernini presented a dominating personality, full of resolve – a flawed view of the timid monarch. The bust was presented by the pope to Queen Henrietta Maria in 1637. At the time the Vatican hoped England might re-join the old faith. Charles's enthusiasm for the bust was boundless and the Queen sent Bernini a diamond worth 4,000 scudi. She wanted a portrait bust of herself, the painting for which began in August 1638 and the Queen approached Bernini in 1639, but the Civil War prevented any further progress. Bernini established the model for portrait busts of rulers well into the 18th century.

Virtually everyone imitated Bernini's new bust style. Only **Francesco Mochi (1580-1654)** was different. His *Cardinal Antonio Barberini* (nephew of Urban VIII) has simplified features but they are handled delicately and so avoid the generic approach of 16th century works. Mochi uses his drapery in a more muted way to form shadows which animate the work. Like Bernini, he extends the torso to produce an imposing and sensitive portrait. Mochi's work was too abstract for Roman tastes, but provided the foundation of a style popular in 18th century.

After that foray into portraits, back to the ascent of Pope Urban VIII in 1623. In summer of 1624 he set Bernini to work on St Peter's, and for the next 56 years Bernini was almost solely responsible for the works of major importance in the church and its immediate vicinity (he laid out the square of St Peter's).

Francesco Mochi, *Cardinal Antonio Barberini,* 1628-9 (Toledo Museum of Art, Ohio)

Urban's first papal commission was for a canopy or *baldacchino* for the main altar of St Peter's which sits at the crossing of the church and above the tomb believed to contain the remains of St Peter and St Paul. This huge triumphant structure, 95 feet high, marks the central importance of the crossing *"not only for the church but also for all Christendom (Honour & Fleming)."* The twisted columns are giant versions of the Boaz and Jachin columns which the Bible says stood on the porch of Solomon's temple in Jerusalem. Raphael included them in one of his tapestries [see 16th century notes]. The canopy has four bronze angels with one pair of putti holding the papal tiara and St Peter's keys and the other pair the sword and book, emblems of St Paul. The tasselled valence of the canopy apes the fabric which covers the sacrament during Holy Communion. The immense quantities of bronze required were partly looted from the portico of the Parthenon and from the ribs of the dome of St Peter's itself.

Gianlorenzo Bernini, *Baldicchino*, St Peter's, 1623-34

Around the crossing are four large niches. On the bottom right of the picture above can be seen one of them with Andrea Bolgi's sculpture of St Helena, mother of St Constantine. Opposite, and completely overshadowing the work, was Bernini's sculpture of *St Longinus*, the blind Roman soldier who pierced Christ's side during the crucifixion with his lance. Gianlorenzo depicts the dramatic moment when the Roman soldier acknowledged Christ to be the son of God and looks towards heaven as his sight is miraculously restored; his military accoutrements cast off at his feet.

Gianlorenzo shows this conversion by an expansive spread of arms "*a pose unprecedented for statuary.*" Many of Bernini's 20 models for the statue show a quieter stance, but he realised that this would lack conviction when seen at the distances common in the great basilica.

Again, Bernini is acutely aware of the setting. The dishevelled locks of hair (taken from his Neptune) and the folds in the agitated drapery which enhance the triangle formed by the Holy Lance, arms and left leg all make the work clear and striking from afar. Bernini also scored the bulk of the statue with a toothed chisel so it would absorb light and create balanced contrasts. These marks can be seen on the drapery.

The pose and drapery also mirror the internal turmoil and excitement of the saint's experience. St Augustine had written about showing internal emotions through visible means. The use of drapery to show emotion recurs in Gianlorenzo's works.

Gianlorenzo Bernini, *St Longinus*, St Peter's, 1629-38

Reforming clerics tried to abolish large monuments in churches but failed. Tombs, like funeral services, assumed greater magnificence during the 17th and 18th centuries, especially where rulers were concerned and particularly popes. Sixtus V established a new standard in his opulent monument in the Sistine Chapel.

Urban made sure Bernini designed his tomb, which follows Michelangelo's Medici tombs in forming a pyramid. In an imposing gilt-bronze statue Urban's powerful gesture of benediction commands attention. The allegories of Charity and Justice appear at the base, their apparently human form is created by the surface treatment and the use of white marble. Bernini uses colour not merely for decoration but to distinguish realms: Urban and the figure of Death belong far from our world.

Death and commemoration touched on Christian belief about this world and the next, which the Reformation amplified. Protestants saw death as the end, after which nothing could influence one's fate on the day of judgement. Catholics saw death as the beginning of a second life in the intermediate state of Purgatory where everyone expiated for their sins in the hope of eventual salvation. This could be facilitated by pious financial bequests, indulgences and prayer.

Gianlorenzo Bernini, *Tomb of Urban VIII*, 1628 & 1639-47

The winged skeletal angel of death was commonly used by this time to indicate the mortality of flesh. Bernini adds another dimension. Death inscribes Urban's name in the book of history. Thus, the pope may be dead but he is rendered immortal. Bernini took a different approach with his later tomb for Alexander VII. Here Death reverts to tradition, brandishing an hour-glass at Alexander. The pope, however, is unconcerned and carries on with his prayers peacefully.

Bernini had to design this tomb around a door (which precluded a sarcophagus), but coped with the problem brilliantly. The four virtues around the base and the arm of Death turn the door into the gate of death, through which we all must pass. Thus, the viewer is involved in the drama, helped by Alexander looking more like everyman, rather than the august Urban. We too need not be concerned by death and the door to the afterlife, but continue in our prayers.

For the tomb of Alexander, Bernini uses a shroud-like canopy of jasper. Partly this isolates the work from the door, but also softens the transition between the two. Bernini used coloured marble drapery in his *Blessed Ludovica Albertoni*, created around the same time, with the same dual purpose of barrier and link.

Gianlorenzo Bernini, *Tomb of Alexander VII*, 1671-8

Gianlorenzo Bernini, *Blessed Ludovica Albertoni*, 1671-4

Twenty-four years after he had finished the *Baldacchino* and between designing the two papal tombs, Bernini produced the *Cathedra Petri (St Peter's Chair) and the Glory*.

Gianlorenzo Bernini, *Cathedra Petri and Glory*, 1657-66

High above the ground hovers the chair of St Peter and the greatest Latin and Greek fathers, Saints Augustine, Ambrose, Athanasius and Chrysostomus. The *Glory* – a window with the image of the Holy Dove surrounded by angels amid blazing rays - is high up above. Bernini made sure that the first thing seen by a visitor to St Peter's was the *Cathedra* framed by the *Baldacchino*.

Urban died in 1644. The new pope, Innocent X, proceeded to rid the Vatican of Urban's associates. Bernini was pushed into the wilderness, but while there he produced his greatest artistic accomplishment, the Cornaro Chapel.

Cardinal Federico Cornaro chose the Carmelite church of Santa Maria della Vittoria for his burial chapel, which he decided to rededicate to St Teresa. Cornaro was able to acquire Bernini's services for a work which commemorated not only him but his family. The result is a masterpiece, an indivisible unit from floor to ceiling.

Abbatini's oil painting gives a hint at the richly-orchestrated combination of fresco, coloured marbles, alabaster and white marble for the three principal groups of statues.

The vault, painted after Bernini's design, depicts light from the dove of the Holy Spirit which descends through clouds to illuminate the scene below. The light highlights angels and stucco clouds which cast shadows on the architectural mouldings and so appear to enter our world. The high window provides a source of light. Two lateral reliefs, one on either side, show Federico, his father (the doge) and six earlier Cornaro cardinals. These figures are incorporated much as a painter might include donors in a triptych. The celebrated central tableau is the *Ecstasy of St Teresa*.

Guido Ubaldo Abbatini, *Cornaro Chapel* (Santa Maria della Vittoria), 1650s

Gianlorenzo Bernini, *Ecstasy of St Teresa*, 1647-51

Lighting was dim in the 17th century so Bernini, ever alive to the effects of light, added another window of yellow tinted glass above St Teresa and the angel. This light augments his yellow metal rays to light up the special alcove in which the group is placed. It gives the chapel an illusionary experience, so St Teresa's conversion seems to take place in a different realm.

St Teresa described the moment the angel struck her with a fiery dart, which was cited in the Bull for her canonisation; *"Beside me … appeared an angel in bodily form … not tall but short and very beautiful; and his face was so aflame that he appeared to be one of the highest rank of angels … called cherubim … In his hands I saw a great golden spear and at the iron tip there appeared to be a point of fire. This he plunged into my heart several times so that it penetrated to my entrails. When he pulled it out, I felt he took them with it and left me utterly consumed by the great love of God. The pain was so severe that it made me utter several moans. The sweetness caused by this intense pain is so extreme that one cannot possibly wish it to cease, nor is one's soul then content with anything but God. This is not a physical but a spiritual pain, though the body has some share in it – even a considerable share."*

Bernini rendered this description of nuptials and death in physical terms; angel and saint, spirit and matter, pleasure and pain. Their drapery amplifies these emotions; calm in the angel, severe agitation in Teresa. The expressions help too – the angel joyful and St Teresa's alluding to ecstasy and death. Her face conveys an image of her pure soul rather than that of the middle-aged woman she was. Bernini shows the transformation into a saint with the convulsive arching of her left foot, head inclined and eyes rolled back.

Bernini's art removed the transitions between real and imaginary space, past and present, life and death, inducing the beholder to forget his everyday existence and participate in the reality before his eyes. Everything is done in the Cornaro Chapel to draw the viewer into the scene. The idea of transporting a man to another world was linked to the conflict between reason and faith which afflicted western intellectual life for the first time in the 17th century. The age was one of great scientific discovery, which often (as Galileo would attest) presented a rebuttal of the teachings of the church. Thus, there was much uncertainty among educated people. Gianlorenzo's work "*was the road of escape for those who began to doubt* (Wittkower)."

At the height of his fame Bernini prophesised that after he died his reputation would decline, and this turned out to be an understatement. Bernini's art was pilloried even before his death and slated mercilessly over the next two centuries. Bellori made snide comments in his *Lives of Artists (1672)*; Winckelmann, rigid Classicist, rejected the works in the 18th century and Ruskin, the narrow traditionalist, rated Bernini's sculpture not only bad but morally corrupt; *"it is impossible for false taste and base feeling to sink lower."* Wittkower's monograph in 1955 was the first sympathetic account and he had to plead with his readers to take Baroque sculpture seriously.

During Bernini's life most of the important commissions in Rome went to him. Almost all sculptors of note travelling to Rome found themselves working for Bernini on his vast papal projects. **Alessandro Algardi (1598-1654)** was too junior to work with Bernini on St Peter's. There were not many commissions left but Algardi was Bolognese by birth and secured work from the Bolognese "mafia" in Rome.

Alessandro's flair started the fashion for sculptural altarpieces which grew in the 17th century, showing the way with his *Encounter of St Leo the Great and Attila* (1646-53) for St Peter's. A new altar for Pope Leo I had been planned since 1626. Innocent X placed the commission at a time when Bernini was out of favour, so Algardi was the natural choice.

Algardi shifted the encounter from horseback to foot, and brought the two main figures forward so they are almost fully rounded sculptures, thus emphasising their confrontation. The commanding authority of Leo is answered by Attila's cringing retreat. Drapery reflects this too; the calm flow of papal cloak against the agitated fright of Attila's clothes.

From this central pair radiate their retinues. The heavenly apparition of Peter and Paul whose gesture form a counterpart to the pair below are pointed out by Leo's gesture and by his cross. Only Attila sees the apostles. Algardi uses depths brilliantly. The apostles, angel and Leo's attendants are in medium relief; Attila's cavalry is flattened to suggest a distant (and irrelevant) horde.

Alessandro's relief enjoyed great critical acclaim; the pictorial qualities of marble exploited in ways never conceived by Classical sculptors. But he had little time to enjoy it, dying a year after its completion. Algardi had a profound effect on subsequent sculptors but most were not as good.

Alessandro Algardi, *Encounter of St Leo the Great and Attila* (St Peter's, Rome), 1646-53

One of the most gifted was **Melchiorre Cafa (1636-67)** from Malta. He came to Rome in 1659 and gained his first commission a year later. He was killed by falling masonry in St Peter's foundry aged only 31. When Bernini saw Cafa's models and drawings he let it be known that the younger man had overtaken him in his art. Despite only a brief burst of activity, Melchiorre produced three great Baroque works: *Thomas of Villanova*, *St Rose of Lima* (which probably influenced Bernini's *Blessed Ludovica*) and the *Ecstasy of St Catherine of Siena* (1667).

Cafa uses layers of white marble applied like impasto, particularly for the cloud, against a kaleidoscope of colour, with the lighter shades of alabaster creating a halo round the saint's head.

St Catherine's ascent to heaven looks as if it were executed with a palette knife rather than carved. The movement of the saint's body creates a curve to which the angels and cherubim contribute, producing a snaking movement which is perfectly balanced.

St Catherine is elegant and delicate and her drapery is not as agitated, a much quieter mood than that of Bernini's female saints. But then Cafa depicts a different moment, the peace after acceptance rather than the raw emotion and trauma induced by God's touch.

The white marble stands out in the church, against colourful surroundings, marked out further by the two dark columns on either side. Cafa had Bernini's sense of space. Marble reliefs appear on the side walls (one can be seen in the photograph below), but these may not be by Cafa who died soon after completing *St Catherine*.

Melchiorre Cafa, *Ecstasy of St Catherine of Siena* (Santa Caterina a Magnanapoli, Rome), 1667.

Without Cafa the demand for painterly reliefs would not have grown and sculptors such as **Pierre Le Gros the Younger (1666-1719)** would be inconceivable. Legros was among the first beneficiaries of the French Academy, founded by Colbert in 1666. He was the son of a sculptor to the French King and although trained in the Classicism of the Academy, was open to the Baroque style of Cafa. The most conspicuous sculptural commissions in the late 17th cent came from Jesuits, who set about transforming the altar of St Ignatius Loyola at the Gesu in Rome. Andrea Pozzo designed the altar which called for two over-life size marble groups. These most important commissions went to Frenchmen. Jean-Baptiste Theodon produced *Triumph of Faith over Idolatory* and Legros the much more emotive and dynamic *Religion Overthrowing Heresy and Hatred.*
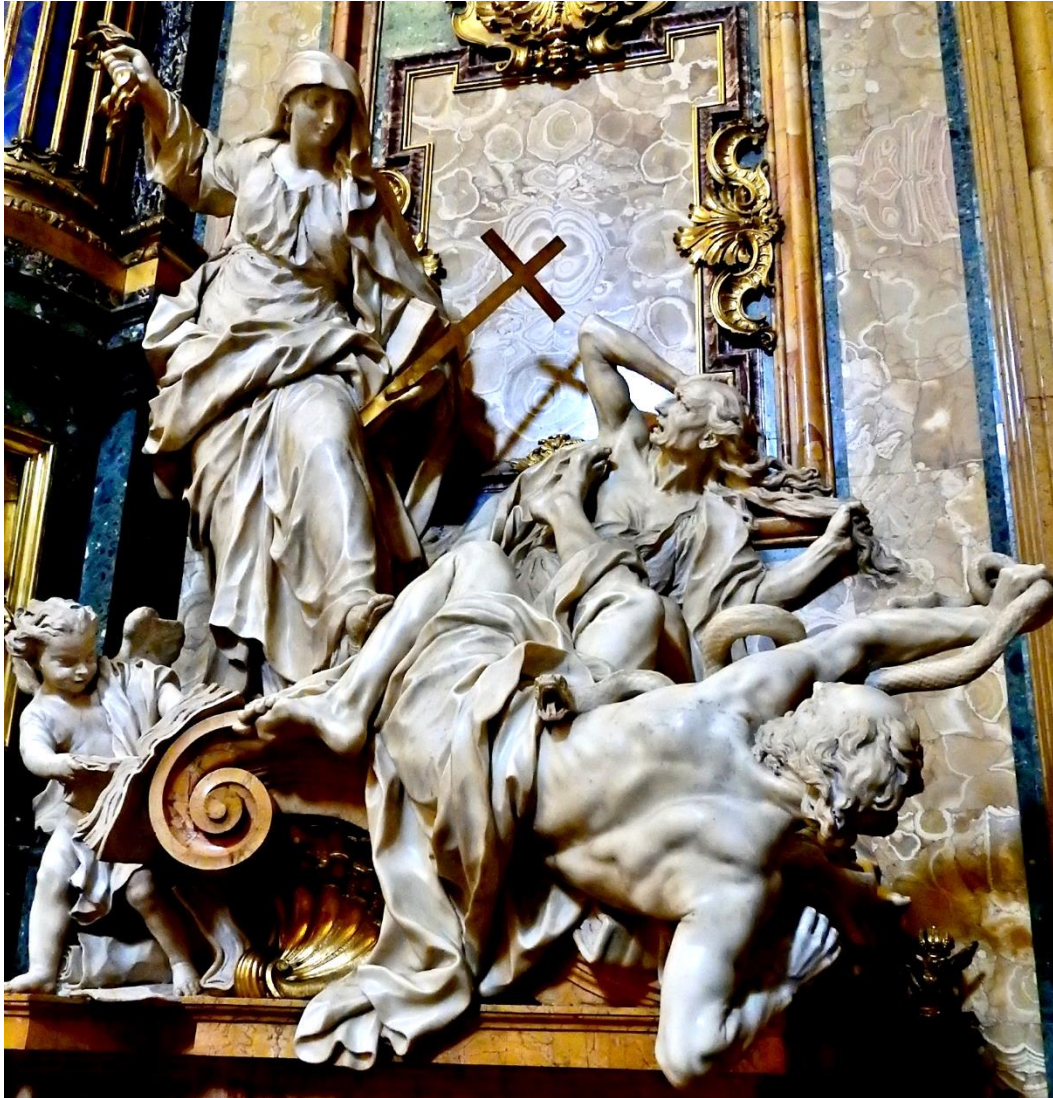
Pierre Le Gros the Younger, *Religion Overthrowing Heresy and Hatred* (Church of the Gesu), 1695-9

Pierre depicts the female religion, bearing a cross, throwing thunderbolts at an old woman representing *Hatred* while a male figure of *Heresy* writhes vanquished beneath. A putto cheerfully rips out pages of a volume by Zwingli and a book with Luther written on its spine lies beneath Heresy, who holds a book bearing Calvin's name. These small touches leave no doubt that Protestantism is routed – the Church Triumphant. Le Gros entered the competition arranged by Andrea Pozzo to produce silver statue of St Ignatius. The 12 contending sculptors exhibited their models and drawings in the Farnese Gallery and then voted for the best one (excluding their own). When Le Gros won, he was carried through the streets by students at the French Academy in Rome who chanted his name. The officials of the French Academy took a different view, sacking Le Gros "*for accepting private commissions in defiance of his status as a pensioner of the King of France.*"

This did not arrest Pierre's progress, as the Jesuits loved his work. For them he went on to produce an exquisitely modelled coloured marble relief altarpiece inspired by Melchiorre Cafa's *St Catherine* but with less colour. The figure of the saint is brought forward and is accompanied by clouds and angels. The position of his hands and flowing drapery produce the same restrained effect. St Aloysius looks down sedately and stands out because of a higher degree of polish which catches the light.

Pierre Le Gros the Younger, *St Aloysius Gonzaga in Glory* (Church of St. Ignatius of Loyola), 1698-9

Borromini (1599-1667)

Borromini was born Francesco Castello at Bissone on Lake Lugano in 1599 to a family of stonemasons. After establishing himself in Rome, he called himself Borromini – a name his mother's family used. After his first independent commission Borromini became known as the father of Baroque architecture. His spaces flow into each other; walls are curved and he invents fantastic forms for his domes, belfries and lanterns. *"The result is an architecture in which the essentially Baroque feature of movement is given its most brilliant expression (Blunt)."* This was not anti-Classical heresy, but had a grounding with Michelangelo who in his designs (especially for the Sforza Chapel) broke with the traditional architecture of lines and planes, creating curved open spaces. Movement, incomplete spaces and geometry are united in all Borromini's works.

In his first independent commission received in 1634 for the church of St Carlo alle Quattro Fontane, Borromini uses an oval, drawn by the accepted technique in 17th century handbooks on geometry. Borromini extends this with lines through the circles to form the four subsidiary chapels. They differ in shape (according to their function) but are open as in Michelangelo's design for Sforza Chapel.
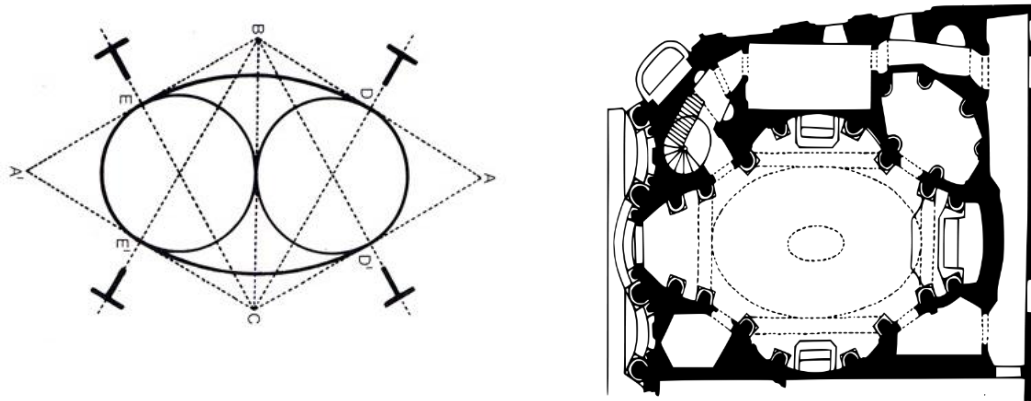
Borromini, geometry and floor plan of St Carlo alle Quattro Fontane

An oval plan for churches became more popular as a result of the Council of Trent emphasising the worship of the Holy Sacrament and ruling that it should be kept on the altar. So that the congregation could see it oval and rectangular floor plans were more suitable than a Latin Cross. At St Carlo in the church, Borromini's series of curved and straight surfaces create walls of movement – *"the first impression produced on the spectator will probably be of the flowing movement of the walls – composed of shallow and deep curved bays linked by straight elements (Blunt)."*

Borromini, Church of St Carlo alle Quattro Fontane, 1634-41

Over the church springs the dome of oval, replicating the floor plan. The lantern is lit by large windows which throw light down into the church and up on to the symbol of the Holy Trinity on the vault of the lantern itself.

The cloister is next to the church. Borromini introduced movement and variety into the rectangular space by cutting off the corners, with slight curves and then straight lines at the top. The balustrade is novel. Michelangelo had rejected tradition and pushed the bulge below the middle of balusters to make them look more stable. Borromini adapts further; the balusters are not circular in plan but triangular and bulges alternate. That creates a sense of movement and a contrast with the rest of the cloister which is pretty plain.

In 1632 on the recommendation of Bernini, Urban VIII appointed Borromini to the post of architect to the University of Rome, called the Sapienza. Borromini's job was to build the church in the cramped space between the two long facades [shown below with the finished church].
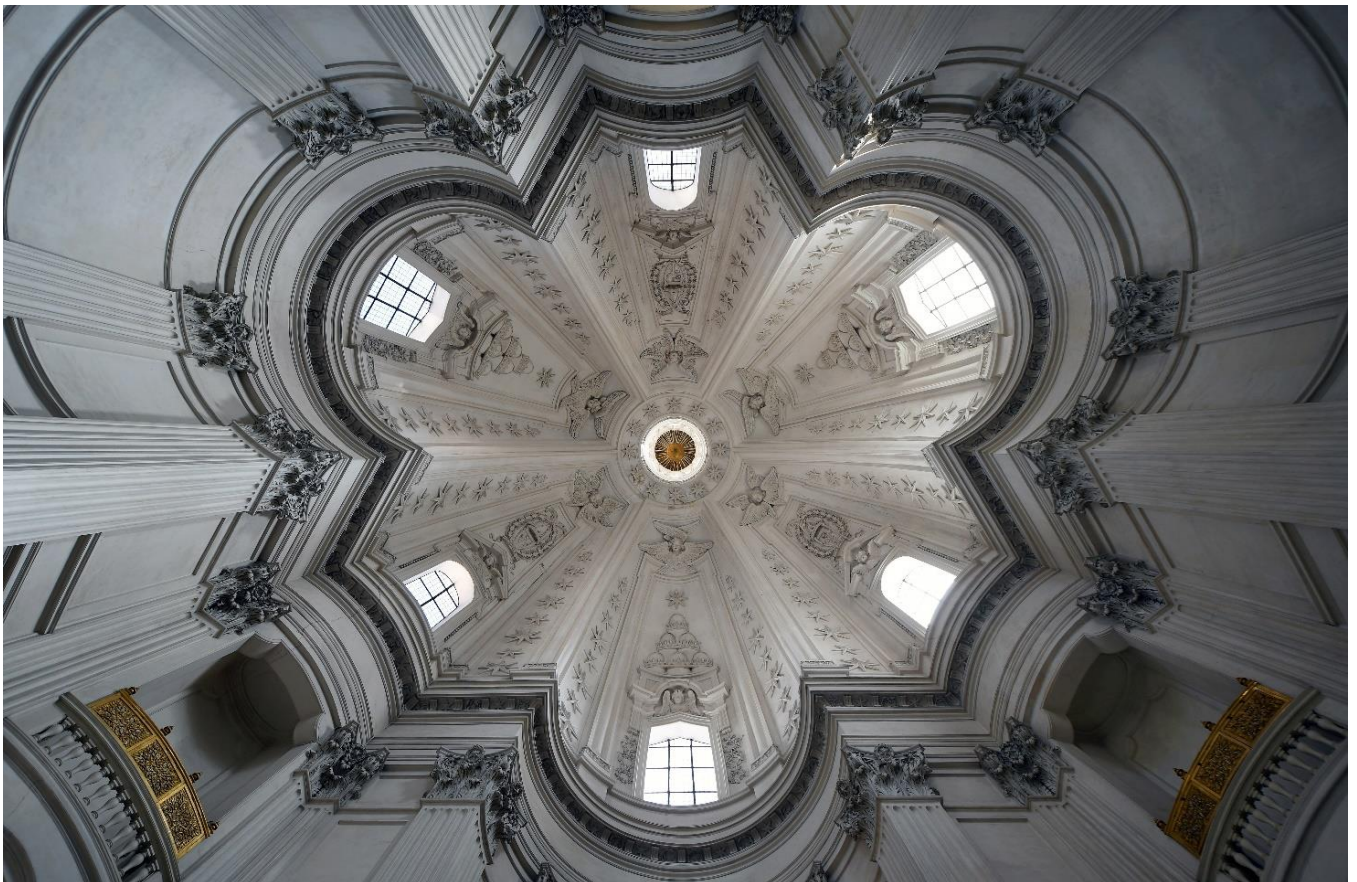

Borromini, Church of *Sant'Ivo della Sapienza,* 1640-50

The space available for the church was almost square. A previous architect had produced a circular plan with very small side-chapels. Borromini "*evolved a plan of the most startling ingenuity*", based on a central hexagon for the church surrounded by three pairs of alternating bays of two different shapes for the chapels.

Just as in S Carlo, Borromini creates the effect of movement by not breaking the entablature (running around above the top of the columns), so the eye is drawn *"in a ceaseless swing, moving from the simple concavity of one bay to the broken and more angular form of the next. Never perhaps did the Baroque ideal of movement attain more complete and perfect expression (Blunt)."* The effect can be seen by looking at the vault, which also forms a tent intended to mirror the little tent-like silk covering placed over the tabernacle containing the sacrament.
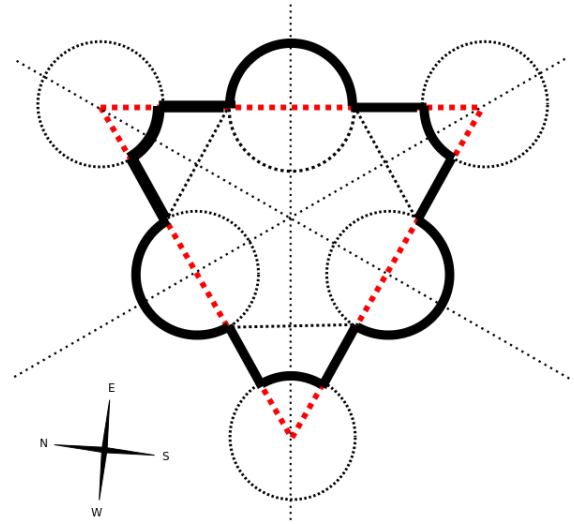
The six-pointed star of David, the accepted source of wisdom and, therefore, appropriate to the University, appears up the sides of the dome. Borromini does not use columns in the dome, instead carrying the sharp edges of the bays up to the base of the lantern, thus creating tremendous momentum up to the circle of the lantern. The dome has lots of winged cherubs, a popular motif for Borromini, under the lantern and over windows.

Borromini, Dome of Sant'Ivo della Sapienza, 1640-1650

At St Peter's Bernini relied on Borromini to solve structural problems. They were a contrast. Bernini was charming and tactful, at ease in the Papal court. Borromini lacked social grace and was melancholy and nervous. He quarrelled with patrons. When Innocent X came to power Bernini was also in trouble for weak foundations at St Peter's which had cracked. Borromini unworthily joined in the attacks on Bernini.

Borromini got the job in 1647 to make a conduit to bring water into the Piazza Navona, the square on which Innocent's family palace was built, so a fountain could be built using an Egyptian obelisk. Borromini prepared a design for the fountain, which had the obelisk supported on a simple base.

Bernini also produced a design and it was smuggled into a room where the pope would see it. Innocent immediately determined to have the model executed, reputedly remarking that the only way to avoid employing Bernini was not to see his designs.

The *Fountain of the Four Rivers* celebrates the spread of Roman Catholicism, symbolised by the dove carrying an olive branch at the top of the obelisk, over the world, represented by river-gods for the Danube, Nile, Ganges and Plate.

Gianlorenzo Bernini, *Fountain of the Four Rivers*, Rome, 1648-1651

Innocent did not neglect Borromini, however, giving him the commission to complete Propaganda Fide. The college was founded in 1627 by Urban VIII to train young missionaries. Bernini had built the chapel in 1634. When Borromini was given the job to finish the college, he initially decided to keep Bernini's church. Eventually though Borromini decided it was too small and had it destroyed. Blunt comments; "*one cannot help feeling that he would have felt a certain pleasure in pulling down one of his rival's buildings.*"

Borromini, Church of Propaganda Fide, 1647-64

Borromini changed the church from Bernini's oval to a rectangle with rounded corners. Apart from the arms of Alexander VII over the high altar, the only decorations are busts in marble which stand on plain oval cylinders of black marble. The vault, crowned with a dove, has simple rectangles in the lower windows and ovals for the upper ones.
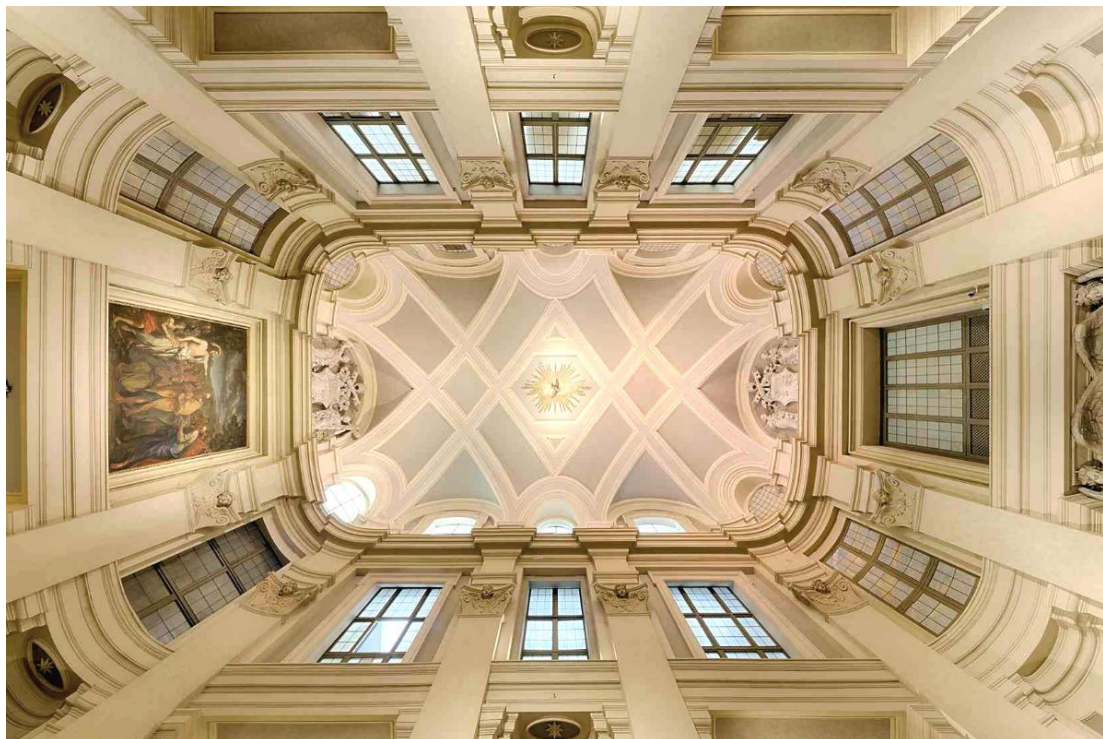
Borromini, Vault of the church of Propaganda Fide, 1647-64

Borromini was treated with the same contempt as Bernini by Bellori and from England, in thrall to the classicism of Palladia, came many savage attacks. Francesco Milizia in his *Lives of the Architects (1768)* joined in but noted, *"and yet, even in his greatest freaks there is something undefinably grand, harmonious and subtle, which reveals his sublime talent."* Borromini was likewise resurrected by Wittkower in the 1950s, not through a monogram as for Bernini, but by an excellent chapter in *Pelican History of Art* (1958).

Pietro da Cortona (1596-1669)

The third target of slander in the quotation opening this section was Pietro Berrettini from Cortona in Tuscany, *"recognised for years as the most distinguished painter in Rome, indeed in Italy (Haskell)."* Pietro's first patron was Marcello Sacchetti, a close friend of Urban VIII. Pietro's frescoes for Marcello's country house revealed his true medium, and gained him the commission to fresco the ceiling of the grand salon of the Palazzo Barberini; Pietro da Cortona's masterpiece and the foremost High Baroque painting.

Pietro da Cortona, *Triumph of Divine Providence, Palazzo Barberini,* 1633

The grand salon was earmarked for another artist, but when his works in the smaller rooms exposed his talent as being limited, Pietro was given the big job. His fresco glorifies the reign of Pope Urban VIII, whose bees and the laurel are essential elements, borne aloft by Faith, Hope and Charity, along with the papal keys and tiara. Divine Providence, resplendent in yellow, controls the election of popes. She commands Rome to give the halo of stars (the Crown of Immortality) to the Barberini family. Beneath her are Chronos (with a putti's hand in his mouth, perhaps to signify timelessness) and the Fates (one of whom holds the threads of life). Four themes break the frame and allude to the virtuous and efficient government of the pope: Minerva (convincingly) banishes the Giants at the bottom; Hercules drives off the Harpies with his signature club at the top; to the sides are scenes depicting the authority of the pope.

Pietro covers the vast expanse with one single fresco - very different to the compartments of images created by Michelangelo and Annibale Carracci – and creates a stunning overall effect. The calm of the centre contrasts with the surrounding swirling figures which convey the diverse energetic activities of the pope, including his war against evil. The action breaks through the bounds of architecture and fills the room; a masterpiece of *quadratura* (architectural illusionism).

Da Cortona was more restrained in churches. He frescoed the church of Chiesa Nuova (also called Santa Maria in Vallicello). This is the church built by St Philip Neri. He had the original church on the site demolished, even though he had no money to build a new one. Miraculously, donations flooded in from rich and poor alike in Rome.

On the ceiling of the nave Pietro depicts the Virgin Mary appearing to St Philip suggesting that building a new church is not only possible, but inevitable. Pietro painted an *Assumption* above the apse, and the *Holy Trinity* in the dome, which form a linked series. Several other frescoes of his decorate the church.

Inevitably, da Cortona was called to Florence to decorate the home of one of the greatest of all Italian families, the Medici in the new Baroque style. Pietro began at the Palazzo Pitti by painting the *Four Ages of Man* in 1637 and 1641 in a small room. The Grand Duke Fernando Medici was so pleased with these, he asked the artist to decorate the five grand reception rooms at the front of the palace. This Pietro did to a programme of planets celebrating the virtues of the first prince of the Medici. The Mars room sees Pietro return to the form he showed at Palazzo Barberini.

Pietro da Cortona, *The Virgin appearing to St Philip Neri*, 1664-5

The fresco covers the entire vault, showing the education of the young prince, instructed in the art of warfare and command by Mars, god of War.

The prince is depicted in the naval battle which rages around the perimeter, watched over by Mars who (to the left) with his star in his left hand bestows strength to the young prince who is spearing an enemy. At the end of the battle, Hercules makes a trophy with the enemy spoils (bottom right). To the right, prisoners approach the female figures of Victory, Plenty and Peace. In the centre of the vault, the Medici coat of arms is held aloft by a cluster of cherubs, topped with a crown inscribed with the name of Ferdinand.

This fresco is said to have brought the Baroque to Florence.

Pietro da Cortona, Mars Room ceiling, Palazzo Pitti, 1643-4 & 1647

Pietro's ceiling frescoes of one scene set a new standard, catching the imagination of patrons and masters. Later artists followed his lead and, while styles would change, his innovation would be carried by Tiepolo into the 18th century. Wittkower remarks, *"it was monumental fresco-painting that educated Italians of the 17th and 18th centuries still regarded as the finest flower of art and the supreme test of a painter's competence."* Pietro was immensely popular with Roman patrons after Divine Providence, moving from project to project, far too busy to accept invitations from the French and Spanish royal courts.

Ideal Landscapes

There was no strong landscape tradition in Annibale Carracci's birthplace of Bologna. As in ancient Rome, bucolic landscapes decorated the palaces and villas of the wealthy. Alberti noted that scenes of the life of rustics were cheerful to him and his rich friends: *"our minds are delighted in a particular manner with pictures of pleasant landskips, of havens, of fishing, hunting, swimming, country sports, of flowery fields [abundance] and thick groves."*

The landscape frieze painted by Niccolo dell'Abate in the Palazzo Poggi in Bologna was an example for Annibale who evidently noted particular features: the screen of tree trunks in the foreground on a rise of a river bank at one side of the composition; water in the middle distance cut by outcroppings of land; a city and mountains in the distance. In the few years around the turn of the century, Annibale developed these themes and perfected the ideal landscape style.

Every known Roman landscape by Annibale contains a religious or mythological subject. The figures neither dominate the foreground nor are unduly small: man and nature are in balance. *Flight into Egypt*, one of the six lunettes decorating the chapel of the Aldobrandini Palace in Rome, represents Annibale's most perfect ideal landscape.

Annibale Carracci, *Flight into Egypt*, 1604 (Doria Pamphilj Gallery, Rome)

The scene is spacious; broad and deep. Man's works and nature are united: hillocks and trees rise together prefacing the great citadel. The landscape flows from left to right almost along the line of trees, to the one that stands sentinel to the mountain in the distance. The figures provide a counter-balance; the Holy Family moving from the boat that transported them; the flock of sheep edging towards the water. Humans, animals and birds charge the scene with movement. Light and atmosphere are cool and fresh.

This work was the prototype for Poussin and Claude. They placed elements in a similar way to create depth and space. Poussin often used diagonals in zig-zags across the foreground and mid-ground to produce layered planes; Claude had diagonals running into the far distance from the foreground corners. Massive buildings give stillness and repose.

Nicolas Poussin (1594-1665)

Nicolas Poussin did not paint landscapes until quite late in his career. His parents were against him becoming an artist and when he was 18 Nicolas ran away from home in Normandy to Paris. While there he saw Raphael's works in the royal collections. They inspired him to move to Rome in 1624. Poussin stayed apart from a brief visit to France at the behest of Louis XIII.

Poussin achieved the highest aim of an artist when he was commissioned to paint an altarpiece for St Peter's. Guido Reni pulled out and work was shuffled; Pietro da Cortona got the commission intended for Reni and Poussin was given Cortona's original job of painting *St Erasmus*. Nicolas used Cortona's sketches but emphasised the diagonals (running through the saint's torso and the priest's pointing arm, crossed by the line of Erasmus' legs through the priest's other arm) and enlarged the rich vestment in the foreground.

Erasmus was tortured in an attempt to force him to worship pagan gods, which is why the high priest is pointing to the statue of Hercules. In early legends Erasmus miraculously survived all manner of torture and died a natural death. He was venerated as the patron saint of sailors and was often depicted holding a windlass with a rope wound round it. In late medieval art the meaning was mistaken and the windlass became the object round which his intestines were wound.

Valentin was given the commission intended for Poussin and the two were regarded as competing. After the unveiling the majority opinion was against Nicolas. This setback deeply affected him and was quickly followed by another. He was overlooked for the decoration of the French church in Rome in favour of the younger Charles Mellin who, like Valentin, was a pupil of Simon Vouet. Blunt comments, *"the whole story smacks of the kind of intrigue from which Poussin was to suffer at the hands of Vouet and his supporters when Poussin went to Paris in 1640."*

Nicolas Poussin, *Martyrdom of St Erasmus*, 1629

These events made Poussin ill. He was cared for by a French cook (one of whose daughters he married), his recovery sustained by studying classical antiquity and sketching the Roman countryside on trips with Claude Lorrain. Poussin accepted that he would not win commissions for altarpieces and settled into a new life of painting pictures for intellectuals. Foremost was Cassiano dal Pozzo, a lawyer with a passion for ancient art and life. Pozzo and his friends shunned papal court life to pursue their interests in peace. Into this haven Poussin was drawn after his illness. A series of works emphasised the transience of human happiness: death is also to be found in paradise.

Nicolas Poussin, *Et in Arcadia Ego (or Arcadian Shepherds)*, 1637-8 (Louvre)

Another expression of ephemeral nature of wealth and happiness is *Dance to the Music of Time,* which according to Bellori is a sort of Wheel of Fortune. The four main figures representing poverty, industry, richness and luxury through which men pass in an eternal series of revolutions. Time plays the tune on the right and one putto in the foreground holds an hourglass symbolising the passing of time and the other blows a fragile bubble. Apollo's chariot is preceded by Aurora and is followed by the Hours.

Nicolas Poussin, *Dance to the Music of Time*, 1634-6 (Wallace Collection, London)

More optimistically, Poussin emphasised fertility and resurrection in other works. Poussin uses the flowers in Ovid as symbols of resurrection in his *The Empire of Flora* and fertility is the theme of *The Triumph of Bacchus*. By the end of the 1630s, Poussin's talent had become evident in Paris. Cardinal Richelieu got him to Paris to work for Louis XIII but it was not long before Nicolas was pining for Rome, being attacked by Vouet and his mates. His time in France, however, gained him important clients, particularly for his major landscapes.

Poussin was not new to the genre. Gian Maria Roscioli, a friend of Pozzo, commissioned two landscapes: *St Matthew* and *St John on Patmos*. Both have fragments of classical columns around the saint with striking buildings in the distance. The influence of Annibale is evident in the calm and spacious settings and the clear even light. Poussin had no idea what Patmos looked like, but Pozzo's circle had a passion for antiquity so Nicolas used the Torre delle Milizie and Castel Sant'Angelo from Rome for the Greek city in the far distance. These were two of Poussin's favourite monuments in Rome. They appear in many of his works: in *Orpheus and Eurydice* they are linked by the Pont Milvio.

Nicolas Poussin, *Landscape with Saint John on Patmos*, 1641

Nicolas Poussin, *Orpheus and Eurydice*, 1650 (Louvre)

Nicolas shows the wedding feast with Orpheus playing his famous lyre. Eurydice is about to be bitten by a viper, which will lead to her death and Orpheus' trip to the underworld. This landscape is close to the ideal of Annibale. Poussin painted a pair of landscapes: *Landscape with Buildings,* perhaps showing Diogenes as one of the travellers and, in a contrasting stormy scene, *Pyramus and Thisbe.*

Nicolas Poussin, *Landscape with Buildings*, 1650-1 (Prado, Madrid)

Nicolas Poussin, *Pyramus and Thisbe*, 1650-1 (Stadel Museum, Frankfurt)

Thisbe encountered a lion, blood on his jaws fresh from a kill. She managed to escape but dropped her cloak which the beast shredded. Pyramus seeing the blood-stained cloak thought Thisbe dead and killed himself. Poussin shows Thisbe finding her lover's corpse.

In both these scenes the lake is a flat mirror, which provides stillness amid the chaos of the storm and adds to the peace of the calm landscape. Above all else, Poussin and his French patrons were middle-class intellectuals, who valued order and they were ardent followers of the Stoic philosophy. In the civil war of the Fronde, which unsettled France from 1649 to 1653, they supported the bourgeoisie because they distrusted the nobles, who aimed to become again the leaders in court and government. The nobility had been humbled and neutered under Richelieu; some executed for anti-state activities. Poussin and his friends were not worried by Richelieu's absolutism as the Cardinal was working for the good of the state. They feared arbitrary government, whether by arrogant nobles completely unfamiliar with trade and finance (activities in which they had been barred in France for centuries) or ignorant common people.

It is in this context that Poussin's famous landscapes of Phocion should be appreciated. Phocion, the Athenian general and Stoic, was devoted to duty and truth, and refused to pander to populist opinion. According to Plutarch, Phocion was hated by the people of Athens because of his moral rectitude and was condemned to death on a false charge of treason by an assembly in which the popular element had got the upper hand. Phocion was made to drink hemlock and was denied burial in the city of Athens. His body was carried out of the city to the neighbouring state of Megara.

Nicolas Poussin, *The Funeral of Phocion*, 1648 (National Museum Cardiff)

The political situation later changed in Athens and Phocion was pardoned and given an honourable burial, which is shown the accompanying piece. Poussin invokes in these works the moral of endurance, patience and acceptance, all qualities of "stoic resignation" but also the qualities necessary for men to rise to independence. The interest in antiquity of Poussin's circle is underlined by the appearance of buildings by Palladio, who was considered the most classical of architects. *Funeral* has Palladio's reconstructions of the temple at Pola (right background) and the two circular temples by the Tiber and at Tivoli (on the left). Palladio's temple at Trevi forms the central feature of Megara in *Ashes.*

These landscapes, each with a rich variety of buildings and diverse human activities, give a sense of man exerting control over nature. In later mythological landscapes Poussin changes this, emphasising the power and fertility of nature.

Nicolas Poussin, *The Ashes of Phocion*, 1648 (Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool)

Nicolas Poussin, *Landscape with Polyphemus*, 1649 (Hermitage)

Here is early history when men (in the middle distance) began to use agriculture as a way to enjoy nature's abundance. In the foreground are three water nymphs, the symbols of fertility, one of whom has hair of a blue-green colour like the reeds around her. Satyrs, symbol of fertility in the animal kingdom, hide behind bushes.   Polyphemus sits on a distant mountain playing on his pipes to Galatea. In classical mythology, the Cyclopes were favourites of Jupiter who gave them a home where vines and fields, unsown and unploughed, bore fruits plentifully and goats and sheep thrived and grazed unmanaged. Polyphemus is pushed into the background, disappearing before the advance of man. The landscape conveys the richness of untamed nature.

Poussin has been treated in a very abbreviated manner. Before leaving him for his friend Claude, a return to his first mature work, *Death of Germanicus*. The successful Roman general, believing himself to have been poisoned on the instructions of Emperor Tiberius made his friends swear to avenge him and to look after his wife and children. The work shows Poussin's skill in composition: the soldiers linked through the lines of their arms, leading the eye to Germanicus' right hand; most of them looking upwards in contrast to the family who have heads lowered. There are many examples of Poussin's skill with compostion, and there is a lot embedded in Poussin's art. Bernini remarked, pointing to his forehead, that Nicolas is, "*a painter who works up here.*"

Nicolas Poussin, *Death of Germanicus*, 1627 (Minneapolis Institute of Art)

At the end of his life Nicolas fought against trembling hands and illness. In a famous letter of July 1663: *"It is with great difficulty that I reply to you, due to the weakness of my shaking hand which no longer obeys my will, as you can see … I have laid aside my brushes forever, and my only thoughts are of dying, death being the sole cure for the ills which afflict me. May God let it be soon, as life weighs too heavily upon me.*" His wife, Anne-Marie, was first to die towards the end of 1664 after nine months of illness. Poussin outlived her by a year and Abraham Bruegel wrote in April 1665 that Nicolas *"did little else other than drink, for the sheer pleasure, an occasional small glass of fine wine with his neighbour Claude Lorrain."* Poussin died on 19 November and as he wished his funeral was a simple ceremony in his parish church of San Lorenzo in Lucina, where he had married Anne-Marie.

Claude Lorrain (c 1604 – 1682)

Poussin's good friend Claude was not a scholar and left no letters about his life and art. They were not competitors. Claude's clients were largely popes and kings. Claude delighted in the beauty of the Gulf of Naples and his paintings contain scenes from its coastline and the islands of Capri and Ischia. Claude used real features in his works which were primarily about landscape; *"it has long been recognised that the subject was not of primary importance to Claude whether a Flight in Egypt or Cephalus and Procris (Langdon)."*

There is uncertainty about Claude's early life, even his birthdate (1600 or 1604/5?), but he was born in a small village in the then Duchy of Lorrain. Baldinucci wrote that Claude's parents died when he was young and his elder brother, an in-lay artist, taught him to draw. Sandrart maintained Claude did poorly at the village school as a boy and was apprenticed as a pastry chef and went to work in Rome. Either way Claude arrived at the house and workshop of Tassi – the rapist of Artemisia. There he learnt his art from the northerners in Rome; predominantly Paul Bril (Tassi's master) whose works have elements which influenced Claude.

Paul Bril, *Landscape with Christ at Emmaus*, 1617

Paul Bril, *Scene of a Seaport*, 1607

Little is known about Claude's works in the 1620s and 30s, but his reputation was made by a commission from Cardinal Guido Bentivoglio (who Van Dyck depicted in a vivid portrait) for two landscapes for his Palazzo Borghese. These *"earned him so much credit, not only with that great prelate, but also with his Holiness Pope Urban VIII, that from that time … other cardinals and finally princes of all ranks, began to frequent his studio."*

Urban VIII commissioned two pairs of pictures; the first a landscape with a country dance and with a seascape with a setting sun, both completed in 1637. This set a trend in Claude's commissions.

Claude's poetic vision of nature delighted these senior clerics, answering their longing for a refuge from court and city. These powerful men lived in palaces with grand facades, manifestations of their status, but hidden from view was a garden for rest and meditation. Country villas served the same purpose. The works for Urban established Claude's reputation and attracted the patronage of Philip IV, King of Spain who commissioned many paintings for his new palace, Buen Retiro, in the wooded outskirts of Madrid.

Claude Lorrain, *The Embarkation of Saint Paula*

Claude Lorrain, *The Burial of Saint Serapia*

Claude Lorrain, *The Finding of Moses*

Claude Lorrain, *Archangel Raphael and Tobias*

Claude painted other landscapes with saints for Philip's palace. One an unusual, moonlit scene with St Anthony tormented by demons, who weave towards him in boats curving into the distance. God's grace illuminates the saint. Claude was so popular that his work was copied, so from 1635 he kept a record made up of drawings of the final versions of his paintings, *Liber Veritatis*. In the 1640s Claude's compositions open up with a new magnificence and grandeur.

Claude Lorrain, *Landscape with the Temptations of Saint Anthony*, 1638

Claude Lorrain, *Landscape with Nymph and Satyr dancing*, 1641 (Toledo Museum of Art, Ohio)

The bridge, probably Ponte Molle, and tower are recognisable from *Finding of Moses*, and Claude adds the monumental ruins of the temple of the Sibyl at Tivoli, which was familiar to every visitor to Rome. Here it is clear that Claude loves expansive landscapes, adding figures to give a sense of Arcadia, and explaining their appeal to world-weary clerics. The majestic seaport scenes also appear for the first time.

Claude Lorrain, *Seaport with the Embarkation of Saint Ursula*, 1641 (National Gallery, London)

Claude Lorrain, *The Embarkation of the Queen of Sheba*, 1648 (National Gallery, London)

As the 1640s wore on Claude opted for greater simplicity, producing calmer and more spacious scenes. *Saint Ursula* is packed with action, architecture and masts. The pared-down *Queen of Sheba* is more idyllic and serene, a painting with which to relax. Claude leads the eye from the foreground boat through the coloured chest to the small boat and line of figures to the queen, about to travel (by boat rather than overland as in Kings, Chapter X) to test the wisdom of Solomon.

Claude Lorrain, *Landscape with Apollo and the Muses*, 1652 (Scottish National Gallery, Edinburgh)

This simpler style prevails in landscape too. Apollo sings, surrounded by the Muses, as poets climb to listen. The Temple of Immortality crowns Mount Helicon/Parnassus where a poet kneels to receive a laurel crown. Pegasus strikes his hooves against the rock to release the Hippocrene fountain, from which poets drank for inspiration. The spring collects in a still pool where stately swans glide, whose whiteness symbolised the sun and were sacred to Apollo. The foreground figure is the personification of the River Helicon.

Claude painted this for the nephew of Innocent X. Innocent, as we have seen from the section of Bernini, rejected artists who were favoured by Urban VIII. But Claude had plenty of patrons. Some were shocked at his prices: Cardinal Mazarin, successor to Richelieu as chief minister to Louis XIII and later Louis XIV, heard from his secretary in Rome that Claude, *"was not ashamed to ask for 300 ecus for one of his largest pictures and eight months wait! His impertinent pretension has persuaded me that you should free yourself of the desire to own one of his pictures which, in the end, are not miracles!"*

Nature is emphasised more in *Apollo and the Muses* than in the earlier *Nymph and Satyr*. This continues in the 1650s and 1660s in mythological scenes and recurs in works Claude painted for Prince Lorenzo Onofrio Colonna. Colonna married Marie Mancini, the niece of Mazarin and one of the great beauties of the age. Louis XIV had fallen deeply in love with Marie, so she had to be banished from France so the king could be persuaded to make a more strategic marriage with Maria Theresa of Spain.

Marie and Colonna at first shone in Roman society but his many infidelities ruined the marriage and she left him. He spent his later years in retirement. His commissions to Claude were usually for melancholy and romantic themes (Aeneas leaving his love Dido to found Rome, the nymph Egeria mourning her dead husband Numa). A celebrated work is the *Enchanted Castle* showing Psyche outside Cupid's palace, where she is destined to lose her lover through her own treachery (just as Onofrio had).

Claude Lorrain, *The Enchanted Castle*, 1664

Claude Lorrain, *View of Delphi with a Procession*, 1673 (Art Institute of Chicago)

Claude painted less after 1670.   He had suffered from gout in 1663, so severely that he was moved to write a will. The devastation of the Plague of 1656 and the severe political and economic difficulties besetting the papacy and Rome brought troubled times in the 1660s.

The aristocracy, threatened with economic disaster, tended to commission nostalgic landscapes from Claude, recalling a more glorious past. *View of Delphi* is one example, architecture a symbol of power. The golden age of Rome was celebrated by Claude in six works showing scenes from the life of Aeneas. The landscapes link past and present – buildings from ancient and modern Rome – linking contemporary nobles with the hero - set against a countryside which changes little and so augurs well for the future.

Claude Lorrain, *Coast View of Delos with Aeneas*, 1672 (National Gallery, London)

The first of these six pictures (which hints at the elongation of figures which became more marked) sees Aeneas, accompanied by his aging father Anchises and his son Ascanius, welcomed by the king and priest of Delos, Anius, who points to the two trees to which Leto had once clung when she was giving birth to her children, the divine twins Apollo and Diana. Aeneas visits the shrine of Apollo in the background on the right, where he learns of Rome's future glory if he goes and founds the city. Apollo's shrine is based on the Pantheon, and this is an important part of the painting. By the time Claude painted this the Piazza del Pantheon was cluttered with vendors' stalls and a jumble of small medieval houses, the Roman pavement had sunk and the building no longer dominated. Alexander VII had dreamed of renewing its ancient glory because the Pantheon had been venerated since the Renaissance as the noblest architectural monument to antiquity. Claude paints the Pantheon as it originally looked, offering a pictorial consolation as economic troubles grew and Rome's population dwindled.

Claude's gout increased incessantly and in 1681 he wrote to his relatives in Lorrain with whom he remained close saying that he was waiting a peaceful end. He died in 1682 and was buried in the church of Santissima Trinita dei Monti, his nephews Jean and Joseph dedicated his monument:

> *"To Claude Gellee Lorraine, born at Chamagne, the outstanding painter, who represented marvellously the rays of the rising and setting sun over the landscape and in this city where he practised his art earned the highest praise among the great."*

JMW Turner was a big fan, *"pure as Italian air, calm, beautiful and serene, springs forward the works and with them the name of Claude Lorrain. The golden orient or the amber-coloured ether, the midday ethereal vault and fleecy skies, resplendent valleys, campagnas rich with all the cheerful blush of fertilization, trees possessing every hue and tone of summer's evident heat … "* Sandrart emphasised Claude's primary interest in 'pure' landscape, no matter who the figures were with which the artist populated his scenes: *"He tried by every means to penetrate nature, lying in the fields before the break of day and until night in order to represent very exactly the red morning sky, sunrise and sunset and the evening hours."*

Bamboccianti and Salvator Rosa

Ideal landscapes were not the only scenes available in Rome. Pieter van Laer, a mature painter from Haarlem, arrived in the city in 1625 when he was 31. He lived in the enclave of Dutch and Flemish artists (the *Bentvueghels* "birds of a feather"), each of whom adopted a nickname. Pieter's was *Il Bamboccio* "ugly doll" because of his appearance. He specialised in small pictures of peasant life in the backstreets of Rome and in the surrounding countryside. Success came quickly, attracting his fellow *bentveughels*. Within ten years, Pieter could get 35 scudi for each picture, *"an astonishingly high price, much more than many an established painter of his day could expect, from which he soon acquired a reputation which he never lost of being a very expensive artist (Haskell)."* This genre of paintings was named after him; *Bamboccianti.* Pieter left Rome in 1639 leaving behind a large market for these paintings, which was exploited by his compatriots and by the Italian, Michelangelo Cerquozzi.

Pieter van Laer, *Card Players in the Forum, Rome*, 1630s

Jan Miel, *Roman Carnival*, 1653

Few of these paintings survive in good condition. They became popular with the rich (Poussin's patron, Pozzo, being one) in part because they represented a revival of antiquity. Pliny had written that the Ancient Greek artist Pieraikos was famous for paintings of barbers' and bootmakers' shops. Contributing also was the poor economic situation in Rome. The 1640s and 1650s were periods of austerity when the lower price of *bamboccianti* made them more attractive. The success provoked bitterness and frequent criticism that the genre was inferior. That sting was felt: Jan Miel tried to 'improve' by switching to history paintings, which were nowhere near as lucrative as his *bamboccianti*.

Guido Reni was the first notable artist to criticise the genre, but **Salvator Rosa (1615-73)** suffered most. Arriving in Rome in 1637, one of his first patrons, Niccoli Simonelli, had a strong interest in Pieter van Laer. Driven from Rome by the hostility of Bernini, Salvator found Florence no better; leading noble families there were among Cerquozzi's keenest admirers. Returning to Rome in 1649 Rosa found *bambroccianti* more fashionable than ever. Unable to bear this, Rosa slated these pictures of, "*rogues, cheats, pickpockets, bands of drunks and gluttons, scabby tobacconists, barbers, and other 'sordid' subjects*." And went on to show his contempt for the patrons, *"and these pictures are so much admired that they can be found magnificently framed in the apartments of the great … alive the afflicted and naked beggars receive no money from those who pay for the paintings - those they abhor in life, are loved in paint."*

Salvator considered himself a painter of allegories and histories. He was the first talented painter to recognise he was dependent on inspiration and (shockingly) that an artist might paint a poor picture. Thus, in contrast to other artists, he would not agree to a price in advance for a commission, and refused to take a deposit and stipulate a delivery date. In a letter of 1666 to his patron Don Antonio Ruffo, Salvator explained he did not want to *"enslave his will"* by committing himself to complete one work when he might have a more interesting project; *"I do not paint to enrich myself but purely for my own satisfaction. I must allow myself to be carried away by the transports of enthusiasm and use my brushes only when I feel myself rapt."*

Rosa's greatest patron in Rome was his banker Carlo de Rossi (brother of famous composer Luigi) who assembled a private museum of Rosa's works, including a very gory *Prometheus* and *Allegory of Fortune,* shown here. *Fortune* symbolises the contempt for Pope Alexander VII and general dissatisfaction in Rome, as the pope was profligate with his money, with little heed for the troubles of his people. Rosa portrays *Fortune* frittering away her cornucopia of riches to a gathering of pigs, wolves, foxes, wild birds and beasts of prey.

Salvator's unusual approach to commissions and his scathing treatment of over-bearing clients (one who launched into details of the picture he wanted was told to, *"go to a brickmaker as they work to order")* meant that he kept his studio full of pictures ready for sale, both large and small. Admirers would visit and infuriate Rosa when they chose small paintings instead of the large historical scenes which he valued more highly.

He was a friend of Claude and shared his fascination. To his closest friend, the poet Giambattista Ricciardi in Florence, Salvator wrote*, "the country is such an extravagant mixture of the horrid and the tame, of the flat and the precipitous, that the eye cannot hope to find anything more pleasing. I can swear to you that the colours of one of those mountains are far more beautiful than everything I have seen under the Tuscan sky … At Terni I saw the famous waterfall of the Velino, the river of Rieti. It was enough to inspire the most exacting brain through its horrid beauty: the sight of the river hurtling down a half-mile mountain precipice and raising a column of foam fully as high."*

Salvator Rosa, *Allegory of Fortune*, 1658-9

His landscapes of ruins and wild nature inspired the type of scene regarded in the 18th century as "sublime", and lead on to the Romantic landscapes of the 19th century. Ironically, Salvator often included in his paintings the very folk he lamented as subjects – bandits and brigands.

Salvator Rosa, *Fishing on the Coast*, 1650s

Salvator Rosa, *Bandits on a Rocky Coast*, c 1655

Later Frescoes

<u>Giovanni Battista Gaulli (1639-1709)</u>

Gaulli is associated with the Jesuits. For their church of San Andrea al Quirinale, he painted the altarpiece for the side-chapel of St Francis Xavier. But two years before that, Giovanni began his decoration of the Church of the Gesu, for which he is best known. He was given the commission when aged just 22. His frescoes of the ceiling lead back from the *Glory of the Mystical Lamb* over the high altar, past the *Duplex Intercessio* in the dome (in which the Virgin and Christ together appeal to God for mercy for mankind) to his masterpiece, *Triumph of the Name of Jesus* over the nave.

Giovanni Battista Gaulli, *Death of St Francis Xavier*, 1676

Giovanni Battista Gaulli, Ceiling of the Gesu, 1674-9

Gaulli's work over the nave celebrates the Jesuits' success as missionaries across the world, and returns to Pietro da Cortona's revolutionary ceiling at Palazzo Barberini. From the name of Jesus, IHS (the Jesuit's emblem), rays pierce a circle of cherubs and illuminate saints and the blessed, assembled on clouds whose shadows appear on the architecture. Among them are the Three Kings who first worshipped the name of Jesus. The light continues on and strikes the damned and the heretics who are blinded and thrown past the frame of the painting and on to the decoration of the vault. The work is perhaps a more striking example of *quadrature,* combining stuccoed and painted figures and architecture, than Pietro's masterpiece.

The colours are warm and brilliant, the cosmic drama established by the golden glare. Gaulli devised 16 figures which his pupils executed in stucco and which were placed in window niches along the nave, gazing up in awe. They represent the regions in which the Jesuit missionaries operated; Ethiopia to Peru, China to Mexico.

Giovanni Battista Gaulli, *Triumph of the Name of Jesus*, 1674-9

The founding of the college of Propaganda Fide, the design of the *Fountain of the Four Rivers* and Gaulli's frescos for the Gesu show the grave importance given in the 17th century to the spreading of the faith across the world. Parts of Europe might be lost to heathen Protestants, but there were souls to be saved overseas. Exuberance is the keynote of many religious works commissioned by the Jesuits, including the altarpieces they commissioned from Rubens for their church in Antwerp, climaxing (as we shall see) with Fra Andrea Pozzo's fresco on the ceiling of Sant'Ignazio in Rome.   This splendour and Giovanni's wonderful example of it, however, were not universally applauded.

One critic was the leading light of classicism Bellori, who bitingly commented of Gaulli's work in the Gesu, *"all artists concluded that the vault would be beautiful if the proportions of the painting were less inaccurate and by someone else."* The style favoured by Bellori can be seen opposite the Gesu in Palazzo Altieri, home of the family of Pope Clement X. At the same time Gaulli was painting in the Gesu, **Carlo Maratta (1625 – 1713)** was decorating the ceiling of hall in which audiences were held with the allegorical work *The Triumph of Clemency* to a delightful scheme designed by Bellori.

Clemency in blue is supported by Prudence dressed as Minerva and holding a shield decorated with Altieri stars, Justice holding a book of law and Abundance with her cornucopia. On the right is a muscular young Gaspare Altieri, Clement's hope for the continuation of his line, holding an emblem of the family (whose geometrical design and red tone provide a break from the rest of the fresco). Above Clemency angels bear the papal tiara and keys. Bellori's design is simpler, classical and shows respect for rules – not breaking the frame, physically or otherwise.

The difference between Gaulli and Maratta repeated a debate in 1636 between Andrea Sacchi and Pietro da Cortona. Andrea argued that frescoes should have few figures so that their gestures and meaning would be clear. Pietro believed a fresco could be like an epic, with a central theme surrounded by vignettes.

Carlo Maratta, *The Triumph of Clemency*, 1674

Luca Giordano, ceiling of Grand Hall, Palazzo Medici Riccardi

Luca Giordano (1634-1705) followed Pietro da Cortona in Florence with another Baroque decoration, again for the Medici. Luca frescoed the ceiling of the Great Hall of Palazzo Medici Riccardi with scenes celebrating the wisdom and glory of the family. The central image is the *Triumph of the Medici*.

Luca Giordano, *Triumph of the Medici*, 1683-85

Luca also decorated the adjacent Library, appropriately enough with an *Allegory of Wisdom.* Science and wisdom can lift man, shown gaining angel's wings, to the level of the divine. The work is quieter and simpler, suitable for its setting, and one can imagine both Andrea Sacchi and Bellori approving. This is a lighter and more airy composition. Luca would soon be off to work for the King of Spain. The Florence he left was dazzled by the Baroque decorations of Pietro and Luca, but not completely convinced; after all, the city had a long and rich heritage of classical art.

Andrea Pozzo (1642-1709)

Andrea is one of the most influential painters and writers of the Late Baroque period. He was born in Trento, then part of Austria and the Holy Roman Empire, and had a Jesuit schooling. His father spotted Andrea's artistic talent and arranged for his son to enter a workshop. On Christmas Day 1665, Andrea entered the Jesuit Order as a lay brother and was assigned to Milan to produce festival decorations, which met with great approval. The Jesuits arranged for Pozzo's training to continue in Genoa and Venice and then employed him to decorate their churches and buildings in Modena, Bologna and Arezzo. In 1676 came his first stunning illusionistic work, at the church of St Francisco Xavier at Mondovi in Northern Italy. It is hard to imagine how this work was received. Over the apse, Andrea depicts Saint Francis Xavier baptizing Queen Neachile of India, which is stunning enough. But body of the church surpasses that.

Luca Giordano, *Allegory of Wisdom*, 1685

Andrea Pozzo, apse ceiling, Church of St Francisco Xavier at Mondovi, 1676

On the largely flat vault, Pozzo constructs (with paint) a fake octagonal drum which opens to the sky, thence St Francis Xavier is taken as he ascends to heaven. The perspective is spectacular and is helped by the four female figures around the base which represent the four continents of the world.

Andrea Pozzo, Church of St Francisco Xavier at Mondovi, 1676

After this triumph comes a charming story which is quite possibly true. The Jesuits in Northern Italy were aware that their church of Sant'Ignazio in Rome, more than 40 years after it had been consecrated, still had bare ceilings. So, they sent Andrea to Rome to rectify the matter, but failed to tell their fellow brethren why. When Pozzo arrived the Jesuits, having no idea he was an artist, thought he had come to join them as a junior member and gave him the usual mundane chores. These he accepted with humility and spent much time collecting alms from around the city. One day he heard his Jesuit fathers complaining that their celebration for the Forty Hours would need to be trimmed because of lack of money. Andrea offered to construct decorations out of rags and used canvases. The fathers rejected this with much scorn. But needs must, they finally accepted and the resulting decorations were regarded as a marvel. Thereafter, the Jesuit fathers treated Pozzo as an artist.

Sant'Ignazio had bare flat ceilings because a dome had not been built for want of money. Everyone realised the situation was not going to change for many years but artists and architects were commissioned for plans. Andrea confidently proposed to paint an illusion of the dome on a flat canvas, which prompted much mirth, but when his model was shown to the public in 1685 it was described as, *"very beautiful and ingenious, and it is thought that it will be many years before they decide to build a real dome."* Someone pointed out that the image on the canvas would darken and within a few years it did.

Andrea Pozzo, Illusionistic Dome, Church of Sant'Ignazio, 1685

Almost twenty years later, Andrea produced another *trompe l'oeil* dome for the Jesuit church in Vienna. This one was a fresco rather than being on canvas and has weathered rather better. Back to Rome. Pozzo began in 1688 the fresco of the entire vault of the church of Sant'Ignazio, as a celebration of Jesuit missionaries. Andrea was inspired by the words of Christ, "*I am come to send fire on the earth (Luke)*", and Ignatius, "*Go and set everything aflame.*"

"in the middle of the vault I have painted the figure of Jesus, who sends forth a ray of light into the heart of Ignatius which is then transmitted by him to the most distant hearts of the four parts of the world … from the breast of the Redeemer there emerges another ray which strikes a shield [held by a female figure at the bottom] on which is painted the name of Jesus, the crown of light."
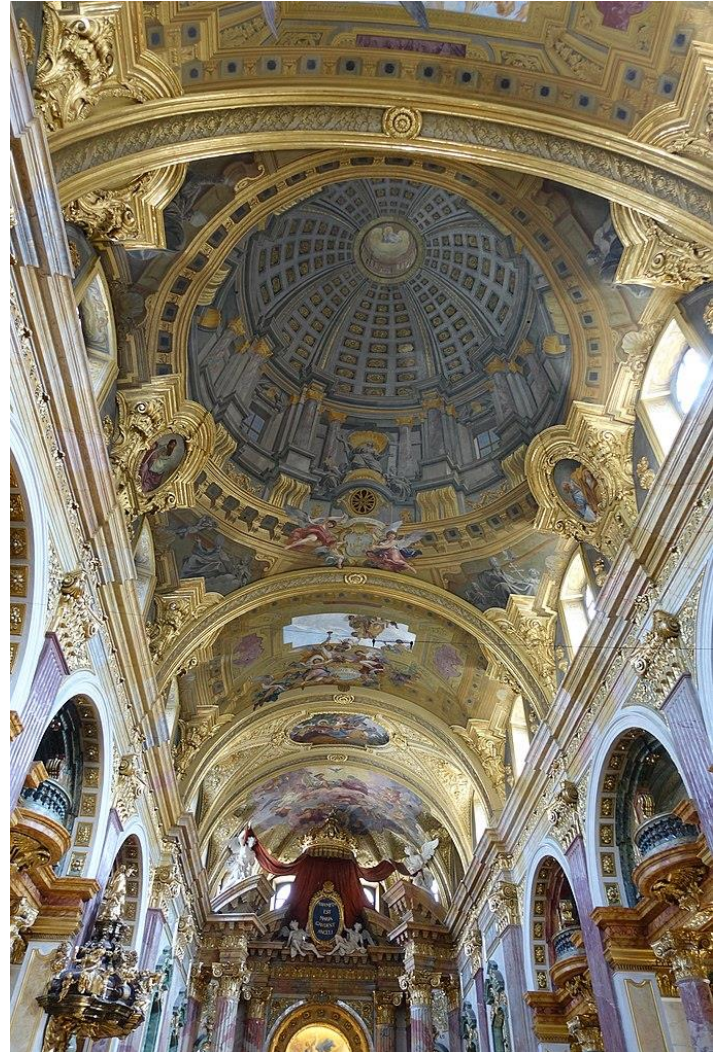
Andrea Pozzo, ceiling frescoes, Jesuit church, Vienna, 1703

All the figures project upwards and, just like the octagonal drum at Mondovi, the roof of the church disappears to reveal heaven. Pozzo depicts the four continents – American (top) and Europe (bottom) on the left, Africa (top) and Asia (bottom) on the right. He represents the continents as women: Asia rides a camel, Africa is dark-skinned on a crocodile, America (the original natives) is bare-breasted in a head-dress of feathers and carrying an arrow; Europe, wearing a crown on her yellow hair, holds a sceptre and orb. The figures summarise the notion, then held widely, that Europe although the smallest of the continents *"was born to rule over Africa, Asia and America."* Of course, religion and economic exploitation were close cousins; missionaries wrote detailed accounts about natural resources and products quite as much as their success in creating converts – the customs and beliefs of the natives being disregarded as outlandish.

Andrea Pozzo, *The Glorification of St Ignatius*, 1688-94

Andrea Pozzo brought *quadratura* decoration to its artistic zenith. Emperor Leopold I invited him to Vienna in 1702 where Andrea was inundated with commissions, starting with the Jesuit church. One significant surviving work in Vienna is the monumental ceiling fresco in the Hercules Hall of the Liechtenstein Garden Palace which shows the *Admittance of Hercules to Olympus (1707*) [only a poor copy available] surrounded on the frieze with his various deeds. Andrea died in Vienna in 1709 as he was preparing to return to Italy to design a new Jesuit church in Venice. He was buried in the shadow of his long-lasting illusionistic dome in the Jesuit church.

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