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THE RHETORIC OF VIRTUE

The Vogue for Catafalques in Late Sixteenth-Century Rome

Over the last decades, our understanding of popes' and cardinals' tombs has benefited largely from new insights provided by interdisciplinary research. The knowledge of funerary ritual and liturgy has deepened our understanding of the function and formal development of late medieval and renaissance tombs. Meanwhile, there is an equal amount of interest in the construction of a liturgical *memoria* for individuals within the context of their family bonds, the church hierarchy and contemporary society.¹

This paper focuses on a specific element of the obsequies of popes and cardinals, namely the *castrum doloris*. The *castrum* was an ephemeral baldachin structure of monumental dimensions built over the bier and decorated with coats of arms and great numbers of candles. At the end of the death mass, the celebrant and his assistants would convene at this structure to give absolution to the deceased. In the course of the sixteenth century, the traditional *castrum* evolved into more sophisticated structures, outfitted with complex iconographical programmes. Contrary to the opinion of some scholars, I will argue that it is possible to distinguish between the traditional *castrum* and the new funeral *apparati*, especially when those built for popes and cardinals are concerned.²

My first aim is to establish the origin of the papal *castrum doloris* and its liturgical function within the funeral ceremonies. Having pointed out the differences between the traditional *castrum* and the new funeral *apparati*, I will examine the ways in which different social groups within early modern Rome adapted the vogue for catafalques to their needs of display of power and piety.

1. The *Castrum Doloris* and the Heraldic Funeral

The *castrum doloris* was by no means a curial or Roman invention. In fact, from the fourteenth century onwards, the *castrum*, outside Rome better known as *chappelle ardente*,

¹ JÖRG GARMS and ANGIOLA MARIA ROMANINI (eds.), *Skulptur und Grabmal des Spätmittelalters in Rom und Italien*, Vienna 1990; JULIAN GARDNER, *The Tomb and the Tiara. Curial Tomb Sculpture in Rome and Avignon in the Later Middle Ages*, Oxford 1992; AGOSTINO PARAVICINI BAGLIANI, *Il corpo del papa*, Turin 1994 (English translation: *The Pope's Body*, Chicago 2000); JOACHIM POESCHKE, BRITTA KUSCH and THOMAS WEIGEL (eds.), *Praemium Virtutis. Grabmonumente und Begräbniszereoniell im Zeichen des Humanismus (Symbolische Kommunikation und gesellschaftliche Wertesysteme, Schriftenreihe des Sonderforschungsbereichs 496; 2)*, Münster 2002.

² OLGA BERENDSEN, *The Italian Sixteenth and Seventeenth Century Catafalques*, Phil. Diss., New York University 1961; LISELOTTE POPELKA, *Castrum doloris oder »Trauriger Schauplatz«. Untersuchungen zu Entstehung und Wesen ephemerer Architektur*, Vienna 1994.

has been documented all across Europe as the visual and liturgical focal point of funerals of the aristocracy. During the thirteenth century, funerals of nobles had developed into increasingly elaborate rituals of heraldic display, both in Italy and elsewhere in Europe, hence their common denominator »heraldic funerals«. For these occasions, the churches were outfitted with dark mourning cloths, which, contrasting with the flickering of thousands of candles, created a solemn atmosphere. The funeral ceremony consisted of three stages, that is, the lying-in-state, the funeral procession and the death mass. The body was surrounded throughout by heraldic symbols and insignia, such as coats of arms, crowns, swords, banners, helmets and caparisoned horses.³ The culminating moment of the heraldic death mass was the offering of these heraldic objects, or *funeralia*: the heralds would kneel in front of the body (or effigy) of the deceased and then take the offerings one by one to the altar. After the service, the objects remained at the church, which either sold them back to the heirs or kept them for the church's treasury.⁴

At the beginning of the fourteenth century, a new feature of conspicuous commemoration was invented to enhance the solemnity of heraldic funerals, that is, the *chapelle ardente*. The *chapelle* was a monumental wooden baldachin structure built over the bier of the deceased, and decorated with gold cloth, coats of arms, and great quantities of candles on top, which were only lit during the death mass.⁵ Upon the arrival of the funeral procession in the church, the body was placed inside the *chapelle* and remained there for the wake and the festive death mass on the following day. Thus marking the body during the death mass, the *chapelle ardente* increased the solemn character of the rite of the absolution, given at the end of the death mass. Initially introduced at royal funerals, the custom to build a *chapelle* or *domus ardens* was adopted at funerals of lesser nobles across Europe in the course of the fourteenth century.⁶

From the early fifteenth century onwards, illuminations of *chapelles ardentes* began to appear in Books of Hours and breviaries.⁷ In the case of the obsequies of Anne of Brittany, Queen of France (d. 1514), as many as four *chapelles* were built, which were represented in a series of extraordinary manuscripts commissioned by Anne's

³ COLETTE BEAUNE, Mourir noblement à la fin du Moyen Age, in: La mort au Moyen Age, Paris 1977, pp. 125–143; MALCOLM VALE, Heraldic Display. The Tournaments and the Funeral Ceremony, in: Idem, War and Chivalry. Warfare and Aristocratic Culture in England, France and Burgundy at the End of the Middle Ages, London 1981, pp. 88–99; WENDY J. WEGENER, Chivalric Funerals and Catafalques, in: eadem, Mortuary Chapels of Renaissance Condottieri, Phil. Diss., Princeton University 1989.

⁴ The funeral banners were often reused for the decoration of the funeral chapel at anniversaries and on feast days. VALE (cf. note 3), pp. 88–89, with further references; SHARON T. STROCCHIA, Death and Ritual in Renaissance Florence, Baltimore 1992, p. 35.

⁵ Among the first documented *chapelles ardentes* are those built for the obsequies of the French King Louis X in St Denis and Notre Dame in Paris in 1316; ELIZABETH R. BROWN, Ceremonial of Royal Succession in Capetian France. The Double Funeral of Louis X, in: Traditio 34, 1978, pp. 227–271.

⁶ BEAUNE (cf. note 3).

⁷ GABRIELE BARTZ and EBERHARD KÖNIG, Die Illustration des Totenoffiziums in Stundenbüchern, in: Hansjakob Becker und Bernhard Einig (eds.), Im Angesicht des Todes. Liturgie als Sterbe- und Trauerhilfe. Ein interdisziplinäres Kompendium, St Ottilien 1987, vol. 1, pp. 487–528.



Fig. 1: The Obsequies of Anne of Brittany, Queen of France in St Denis, Paris (1514). In: Pierre Choque, Commémoration et Advertissement de la mort d'Anne, Reine de France. The Hague, Museum Meermanno-Westreenianum, MMW 10 C 12, fol. 42v.

late husband.⁸ The illumination reproduced below represents the *chapelle ardente* with the effigy of the Queen during the lying-in-state in St Denis near Paris. The wooden structure with turrets was decorated with precious cloths and great numbers of candles. The numerous coats of arms showed the impeccable lineage of the deceased queen, noble of four quarters (fig. 1).⁹

⁸ HELENE M. BLOEM, The Processions and Decorations at the Royal Funeral of Anne of Brittany, in: Bibliothèque d'Humanisme et Renaissance 54, 1992, pp. 131–160.

⁹ The display of lineage was among the principal functions of the *chapelle ardente*, as Herald Gilles pointed out in his late fifteenth-century »Traité de noblesse et chevalerie«: »[La chapelle ardente] se démontre

2. The *Castrum Doloris* at the Papal Court

It is generally agreed that the papal court adopted the *castrum doloris* during the Avignon exile. Its use was restricted to the obsequies of popes and cardinals, the so-called *novenas*, which lasted nine days. During the papal *novenas*, the College of Cardinals would celebrate each day a death mass for the late pope in St Peter's. The cardinals also made the necessary arrangements for the forthcoming conclave, during which they would elect a successor from their midst.

The *castrum doloris* was mentioned for the first time in a ceremonial *ordo* of c. 1400. By that time, it must have been a familiar element of the papal *novenas*, for the author does not feel the urge to describe it extensively.¹⁰ Only with the appointment of Masters of Ceremonies at the end of the fifteenth century, the documentation of the papal *castrum doloris* increased substantially. Entrusted with the complicated task of organising all funerals and obsequies at the papal court, the responsibilities of the Masters of Ceremonies included the appointment of an orator, the commission of mourning clothes for the papal household and that of the funeral *apparato*, of which the *castrum doloris* was certainly the most conspicuous element.¹¹

According to ceremonial diaries, the papal *castrum doloris* was built over the so-called *rota porfirica* within the central nave of old St Peter's, whose strong imperial connotations derived from its central role in coronations of medieval emperors.¹² According to early sixteenth-century descriptions, the dimensions of the *castra* were huge, measuring eleven by nine metres, with a total height of eight metres. Twelve large columns supported the pyramidal roof, which was covered with twelve large torches and about 1000 candles. The *lectus* inside was covered with gold cloth and the papal insignia, for the actual body of the deceased was buried well before the start of the *novenas*.¹³

From August 1590 onwards, at the *novenas* of Pope Sixtus V, the accounts of the Apostolic Chamber document substantial changes in the design of the papal *castrum doloris*. The traditional plan with its twelve columns was abandoned in favour of a centralised groundplan with four arches.¹⁴ Moreover, the accounts reveal that the *castrum* of Sixtus V was painted by the workshop of Annibale Corradini to resemble fake

à perpetuité la descente des lignages dudit noble [...]; c'est le signe que le mort est gentilhomme des quatre lignes, noble à la perpetuité», as cited in BEAUNE (cf. note 3), p. 137.

¹⁰ MARC DYKMAN, *Le cérémoniel papal de la fin du Moyen Âge à la Renaissance*, vol. 4: *Le retour à Rome, ou le cérémoniel de Pierre Ameil*, Brussels 1985, pp. 216–227.

¹¹ INGO HERKLOTZ, *Paris de Grassin* 'Tractatus de funeribus et exequiis' und die Bestattungsfeiern von Päpsten und Kardinälen in Spätmittelalter und Renaissance, in: GARMS/ROMANINI (cf. note 1), pp. 217–248.

¹² MICHEL ANDRIEU, *La 'rota porphyretica' de la basilique vaticane*, in: *Mélanges d'Archéologie et d'Histoire de l'École Française de Rome* 66, 1954, pp. 189–218.

¹³ HERKLOTZ (cf. note 11), pp. 239–243; PARAVICINI BAGLIANI (cf. note 1); MINOU SCHRAVEN, *Majesty and Mortality. Treatment of the Body in the Papal Funeral Ceremonies*, in: Andrew Hopkins (ed.), *Roman Bodies. Martyrdom, Mutilation, and Metamorphosis*, Proceedings of the Conference Held at the British School in Rome, London (in press).

¹⁴ This new typology of the papal *castrum doloris* would be abandoned only at the middle of the seventeenth century. From that time on, leading artists of the period would design a new catafalque for all papal *novenas*; MAURIZIO FAGIOLO DELL'ARCO, *La Festa Barocca*, Rome 1997, p. 447 ff.

marble, »pietra mischia egitia«.¹⁵ Monumental coats of arms of the late pope were on display within the four arches, while his name appeared in golden letters attached to the architrave. The dimensions of the new *castrum doloris* were smaller than earlier that century: about seven metres square.

Despite these formal changes, papal *castra* continued to be built on the porphyry *rota* within the central nave of old St Peter's, until its demolition in the early seventeenth century. Apparently, the fabrication of this sophisticated *castrum doloris* required more time. In fact, the wax accounts of the 1590 *novenas* indicate that the *castrum doloris* was ready to be used only during the final three days of the *novenas*. During the previous days, the absolution was given at the altar of the choir chapel instead, where the death masses in memory of the deceased pope were celebrated.¹⁶

In spite of the more elegant design of the papal *castra doloris*, Masters of Ceremonies complained about the presumed lack of decorum at the papal *novenas*. In 1591, Francesco Mucanzio commented the following on the *novenas* of Gregory XIV: »Cum iam castrum doloris [...] fabricatum fuisset in forma satis competente, sed paucis luminibus ornatum, cum omnia [...] nostris temporis restringantur«. ¹⁷ And that same year, at the *novenas* of Pope Innocent IX, he commented: »Verum est in dies magis magisque desertitur splendor et maiestas, quae in exequiis Summi Pontifici [...] iure servari solebat et [...] in funere privatorum hominum longe maior pompa fiat, quam in istis Romanorum Pontificum«. ¹⁸ Apparently, the pomp displayed at papal funerals could no longer compete with that of obsequies celebrated for lay rulers, to which we will turn now.

3. The Rhetoric of Virtue at the Obsequies of Charles V

The commemorative obsequies of Charles V, organised across his vast empire after his death in 1558, heralded a new form of conspicuous commemoration.¹⁹ Whereas the funeral *apparati* in Northern Europe remained true to the traditional *chappelles ardentes*, the organisers of the Spanish and Italian obsequies adopted far more innovative designs.²⁰ As we will see below, the most striking features of these sophisticated funeral

¹⁵ MARIA LUISA MADONNA (ed.), *La Roma di Sisto V. Le arti e la cultura*, Rome 1993, p. 528, for a biography of Annibale Corradini (documented in Rome from 1584 until 1628).

¹⁶ Rome, Archivio di Stato (subsequently: ASR), Camerale I, Giustificazione della Tesoreria, busta 17, fasc. 24 [Wax Accounts of the *novenas* of Sixtus V]. During the final three days of the *novenas*, when the *castrum* was used, the consumption of wax reached peaks of 1323 pounds instead of 800 on the previous days.

¹⁷ Rome, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana (subsequently: BAV), Vat. lat. 12316 [Ceremonial diary of Francesco Mucanzio], fol. 458.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, fol. 619v.

¹⁹ ACHIM AURNHAMMER and FRIEDRICH DÄUBLE, *Die Exequien für Kaiser Karl V. in Augsburg, Brüssel und Bologna*, in: PETER BLUM (ed.), *Studien zur Problematik des Todes im 16. Jahrhundert*, Wolfenbüttel 1983, pp. 141–190.

²⁰ ANDREW STEPHEN ARBURY, *Spanish Catafalques in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, Phil. Diss., Rutgers University of New Jersey 1992, pp. 135–140 for an overview of the funeral *apparati* for Charles V in Toledo, Alcalá de Henares, Santiago, Valladolid and Sevilla in November and December 1558. In Italy, the

apparati were the statues of virtues attributed to the deceased emperor. While some French *chapelles ardentes* had indeed been outfitted with statues of angels holding candles or coats of arms,²¹ the Spanish and Italian funeral *apparati* of Charles V were the first to incorporate specifically designed iconographical programmes of virtues attributed to the deceased.²²

Unfortunately, the mourning decorations of Charles V's obsequies have only come down to us by means of printed descriptions.²³ Since their authors used a myriad of terms for them, ranging from *tumulo*, *castello triumphale*, *castrum* to *catafalco*, I propose to label them »catafalques« retrospectively, in order to set them clearly apart from their medieval predecessors, the *chapelles ardentes*. First of all, the designs of the so-called catafalques were commissioned from renowned architects instead of anonymous carpenters. As a consequence, they tended to be complex architectural structures outfitted with columns, architraves and entablatures. Secondly, the invention of the iconographical programmes was entrusted to learned societies or academies, the fulcra of intellectual culture in early modern Italy.²⁴ The programmes of the new funeral *apparati* went well beyond the display of impeccable lineage alone, since the academicians invented paintings, statues and emblems to celebrate the virtues of the deceased. Yet one must be aware that, despite all these formal changes of the catafalques, their liturgical function remained unchanged, namely to provide the location where the absolution was given to the deceased.

The striking uniformity between the Spanish and Italian funeral *apparati* of Charles V was due to instructions, now lost, issued by his son and heir Philip II. The instructions must have contained explicit directions for the designs, such as the four-tier structure of the catafalques, the emblem »Plus Ultra« and the iconography of the political victories, elaborated either on monochrome canvases in the nave (as was the case in Toledo, Valladolid and Rome), or alluded to in inscriptions and emblems on the catafalques. Moreover, all catafalques under review contained references to the classical *consecratio*-ritual of the Roman Emperors, such as eagles ascending to the skies. At the climax of the classical *consecratio*- or apotheosis-ceremony, the pyre containing the effigy of the emperor's body was set on fire. At that moment, eagles were released, which were believed to take the soul of the deceased emperor to the gods. This imagery appealed

obsequies of Charles V were organised in at least five cities between December 1558 and April 1559, either by agents of the Habsburg rulers (in Piacenza, Milan, and Naples), or by Spanish nations (in Rome and Bologna).

²¹ BEAUNE (cf. note 3), p. 136 refers to the *chapelle ardente* of René of Anjou (d. 1481), Count of Provence and Duke of Anjou.

²² Virtues had been well-established features of monumental tombs since the early fourteenth century: MICHAELA BAUTZ, *Virtues. Studien zu Funktion und Ikonographie der Tugenden im Mittelalter und im 16. Jahrhundert*, Berlin 1999, pp. 47–65 with further references.

²³ The sole exception is the engraving of the Valladolid catafalque, included in the funeral book by JUAN CHRISTOBAL CALVETE DE ESTRELLA, *El tumulo imperial adornado de historias y letreros y epitaphios en prosa y verso latino*, Valladolid 1559.

²⁴ DAVID S. CHAMBERS and FRANÇOIS QUIVIGER (eds.), *Italian Academies of the Sixteenth Century*, London 1995.

greatly to medieval and early modern rulers, keen to revive funerals *all'antica*, and would become a recurrent motive in the iconography of catafalques.²⁵

Apparently, the orders of Philip II contained no specific directions about the choice of virtues on the catafalques of Charles V, and every city seems to have invented its own programme. None of the programmes contained the traditional cardinal and theological virtues. In Bologna and Rome, paintings of virtues were placed in pairs on the central tiers of the catafalques (table 1), while in Milan the programme of virtues was replaced with the sole name of the emperor, which should suffice to evoke his virtues.²⁶ In Bologna, personifications of the emperor's virtues were paired to personifications of his territories, such as »Spain«, »Europe« and the »New World«. Some of the virtues seem indeed to be invented especially for the occasion, such as the »Hilaritas« on the catafalque in Rome.²⁷

San Giacomo degli Spagnoli, Rome March 4, 1559		Collegio di Spagna, Bologna April 1559	
On top of the catafalque: Victoria in triumphal chariot			
Providentia	Abundantia	Fides	Pietas
Munificentia	Fides	Salus	Victoria
Immortalitas	Veritas	Fama	Mondo Nuovo
Hilaritas	Aequitas	Spagna	Marte Vincitore
Felicitas	Pax Augustea	Tutela	Europa
Religio	Laetitia	Pax	Libertas
Pietas Augustea	Salus		
Justitia	Spes Augustea		

Table 1: The virtues on the catafalques of Charles V in Rome and Bologna, 1559.

Distributed by means of printed funeral books, the iconography created an authoritative and appealing *memoria* of the late emperor across his vast empire. Naturally, the unlimited possibilities of display and self-fashioning of catafalques appealed greatly to

²⁵ POPELKA (cf. note 2), pp. 74–91: »Das Trauergerüst und die Antike«.

²⁶ »Non furono poste alcune iscrizioni in lode di Sua Maestà, quantunque molte ne fossero appresentate da dotti compositori; sì perché un tanto Imperatore è iscritto per tutto il mondo col nome suo [...] sodisfarà per tutte le iscrizioni«, as cited by SONIA G. GRANDIS, *Teatri di Suntuosissima e Orrida Maestà. Trionfo della Morte e Trionfo del Re nelle Pompe Funebri Regali*, in: Annamaria Cascetta and Roberta Carpani (eds.), *La Scena e la Gloria. Drammaturgia e Spettacolo in Milano in Età Spagnola*, Milan 1995, pp. 659–715.

²⁷ OLGA BERENDSEN, *Taddeo Zuccari's Paintings for Charles V's Obsequies in Rome*, in: *The Burlington Magazine* 112, 1970, pp. 809–810; PRUDENCIO DE SANDOVAL, *Historia de la Vida y Hechos del Emperador Carlos V*, Pamplona 1634, vol. 2, pp. 845–856.

the rulers of the early modern period, who in addition quickly discovered the importance of funeral books and commemorative engravings for the distribution of accounts of the events and the peculiarities of the iconographical programmes.²⁸

4. Catafalques for Foreign Rulers and Cardinals in Rome

Introduced at the obsequies of Charles V, the vogue for catafalques spread quickly across the Italian peninsula. In 1564, the recently founded Florentine *Accademia del Disegno* organised festive obsequies of Michelangelo. The exceptional funeral *apparato* in San Lorenzo consisted of paintings and a catafalque with paintings and statues of virtues overcoming vices.²⁹ In Rome, the vogue for catafalques was initially taken up by foreign nations, who thus followed the example of the Spanish nation: patron of the obsequies of Charles V in 1559.

On 4 November 1572, the Polish nation organised obsequies of King Sigismund II August of Poland, who had died earlier that year. Since the nation did not yet have a national church of its own, the obsequies were staged in S. Lorenzo in Damaso.³⁰ Our only source for this event is an anonymous engraving representing the funeral *apparato* in the crossing of the basilica, as it appeared before the seventeenth-century renovation of apsis and choir (fig. 2). The church's interior was again outfitted with mourning cloths, in order to exploit to the full the luminiscence of the burning candles and torches.³¹ Twelve Tuscan columns supported an architrave with emblems of the deceased king, while an inscription celebrated his virtue.³² On top of the inscription plaque stood three statues: the equestrian statue of King Sigismund flanked by the personifications of »Faith« and »Justice«, easily identified by their attributes. The monumental pyramid outfitted with candles and eagles was a clear reference to the classical *consecratio*-ideology. Around the catafalque were seated 100 mourners, while the cardinals were accommodated in the choir. Between the columns in the far right corner, one may discern the orator, who delivered his funeral oration at the conclusion of the absolution, given at the symbolic body inside the catafalque.

²⁸ MINOU SCHRAVEN, *The Development and Distribution of the Funeral Book in Sixteenth-Century Italy*, in: Martin Gosman and Joop W. Koopmans (eds.), *News and Politics in Early Modern Europe*, Louvain 2005 (in press).

²⁹ RUDOLPH and MARGOT WITTKOWER, *The Divine Michelangelo. The Florentine Academy's Homage on His Death in 1564*, London 1964. See also the contribution of Britta Kusch-Arnhold in this volume.

³⁰ Pope Gregory XIII would cede San Stanislao dei Polacchi to the Polish nation only in 1578, five years after the obsequies of Sigismund.

³¹ The legend reads as follows: »Funebris pompae ac cenotaphii quod Sigismundo Augusto Polonorum Regi a Polonica Natione Romae in aede Divi Laurentii in Damaso quarto id(us) Novembr(is) MDLXXII excitatum. XXX cardinalium aliorumq(ue) Principum virorum consessus et centum atratorum corona cohonestavit.« Although the explanatory legend speaks of a »cenotaph«, I suggest classifying the structure as a »catafalque« because of the presence of the virtues.

³² The inscription on the catafalque reads as follows: »Sigismundo Augusto Regi Poloniae Potentissimo Magno Duci Lithuaniae, Russiae, Prussiae, Maroviae, Samogitiae et Livoniae, Optimo et Foelicissimo Principi, cuius invicta virtus sola clementia superata est. Vixit annos LIII. Regnavit XLIII.«

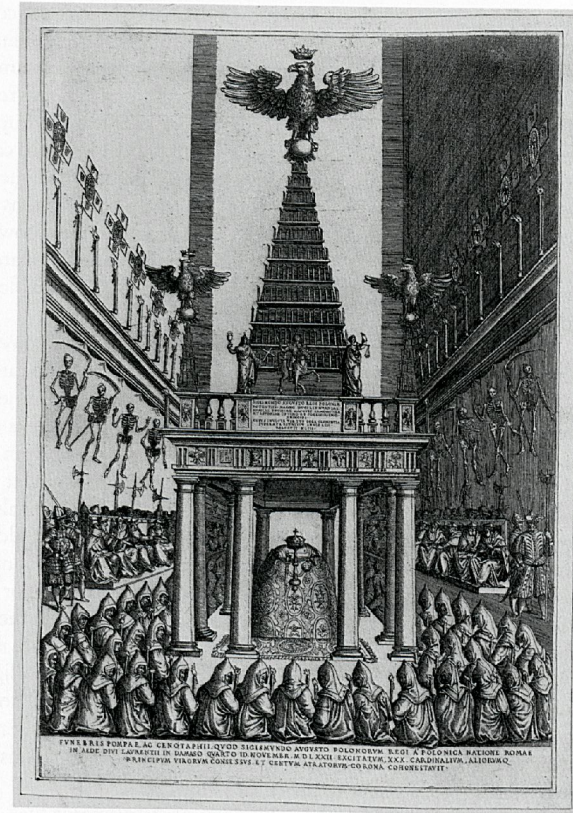


Fig. 2: Catafalque of King Sigismund August of Poland in S. Lorenzo in Damaso, Rome, November 1572. Anonymous engraving, London, British Library.

Recent research has brought to light several more commissions of catafalques for foreign rulers in this period in Rome.³³ In most cases, only a description survives, such as the funeral book on the obsequies of Grand Duke Cosimo de' Medici in 1574, organised by the Florentine nation one month after the obsequies celebrated in Florence.³⁴ Soon enough, catafalques were also introduced at the obsequies of wealthy and powerful cardinals. Despite repetitive calls for reform of their revenues, the discrepancy in income

³³ MINOU SCHRAVEN, *Festive Funerals. The Art and Liturgy of Funeral Apparati in Early Modern Rome*, Phil. Diss., University of Groningen (forthcoming).

³⁴ Le sontuose et ricche pompe funebri fatte in Roma per il Christianissimo Re di Francia et per il Serenissimo Gran Duca di Toscana Cosimo Medici con il nome dei Cardinali e Signori che vi s'intervennaro, Florence 1574. For the Florentine obsequies, see EVE BORSOOK, *Art and Politics at the Medici Court*, part 1: *The Funeral of Cosimo de' Medici*; Drawings for the Funeral of Cosimo I de' Medici, in: *Mitteilungen des Kunsthistorischen Institutes in Florenz* 12, 1965-66, pp. 31-54, pp. 366-371.

and wealth between cardinals had grown dramatically over the course of the sixteenth century.³⁵ As a result, the College included cardinals in need of financial support of the papal treasury, while those belonging to the established ruling families easily outdid the pope in wealth and number of benefices. This state of affairs was reflected in the funerals of individual cardinals, since the degree of pomp was bound up with the deceased's financial position.³⁶ While some cardinals could not even afford candles at their funeral procession, illustrious families quickly embraced the recent vogue for catafalques at the death of their relatives. To the patrons, the costly commissions were highly suitable occasions for the display of dynastic propaganda and their powerful position within Roman society. By celebrating the virtues of the deceased, the cardinals were presented as ideal models worthy of admiration and imitation by their flock: characteristic for post-Tridentine doctrine.³⁷

By far the most spectacular and best-known obsequies were those of Cardinal Alessandro Farnese celebrated in March 1589 in the Gesù. The cardinal had contributed generously to the construction of the first Jesuit church in Rome and had claimed the area in front of the main altar as his burial place. Three weeks after his burial there, the Gesù housed the »superbissime essequie« of the cardinal on the expenses of Don Odoardo Farnese, great-nephew of the deceased cardinal and at the age of sixteen the heir of the family interests in Rome. Present were 42 cardinals, many prelates and consistorial advocates, the civic authorities, and the patron Odoardo Farnese and his household.³⁸ The funeral *apparato* in the Gesù comprised six monumental coats of arms of the Farnese family, commissioned from Giuseppe Cesari, or il Cavalier d'Arpino. The circular catafalque stood in the crossing of the Gesù, near the grave of the cardinal. Designed by the nineteen-year-old architect Girolamo Rainaldi, it measured 30 metres, which makes it by far the highest catafalque of this period (fig. 3). Contemporaries judged its design to be »sopra ogni altra cosa, per la spesa, novità e bellezza«. ³⁹ At the end of the requiem mass, the celebrant with his four assistants entered inside the catafalque to give the absolution at the symbolic bier. Ingeniously lit from above, the ritual was perfectly visible to the entire congregation.⁴⁰

Between the columns stood eight monumental plaster statues, which represented the virtues attributed to the deceased cardinal. Dressed in decent white robes, the canonical set of three theological virtues and four cardinal virtues was complemented by the virtue of »Religion«. Four more statues of virtues stood on top of the two staircases

³⁵ BARBARA MCCLUNG HALLMANN, *Cardinals, Reform and the Church as Property*, Berkeley 1985; GIGLIOLA FRAGNITO, *Le corti cardinalizie nella Roma del Cinquecento*, in: *Rivista storica italiana* 106, 1994, pp. 5–41.

³⁶ GREGORIO LETI, *Itinerario della corte di Roma, Valence 1675*, vol. 2, p. 92: »Si costruiscono [gli apparati funebri dei cardinali] secondo la possibilità del defunto: chi può più, chi può meno«.

³⁷ FREDERICK J. MCGINNESS, *Right Thinking and Sacred Oratory in Counter-Reformation Rome*, Princeton 1995, p. 141.

³⁸ BAV, Chigiani L II 35 [Ceremonial Diary of Paolo Alaleone], fol. 468v.

³⁹ GIERONIMO RAINALDO, *Essequie celebrate per lo Illustrissimo Cardinal Farnese nella Chiesa del Gesù, nelle quali à pieno si describe il catafalco con tutto l'apparato della Chiesa*, Rome 1589, p. 3.

⁴⁰ RAINALDO (cf. note 39), pp. 7–8: »Nel mezzo delli intercolumnii si vedeano dieci finestroni, che parevano che pigliando lume di fuori illuminassero il tempio di dentro.«

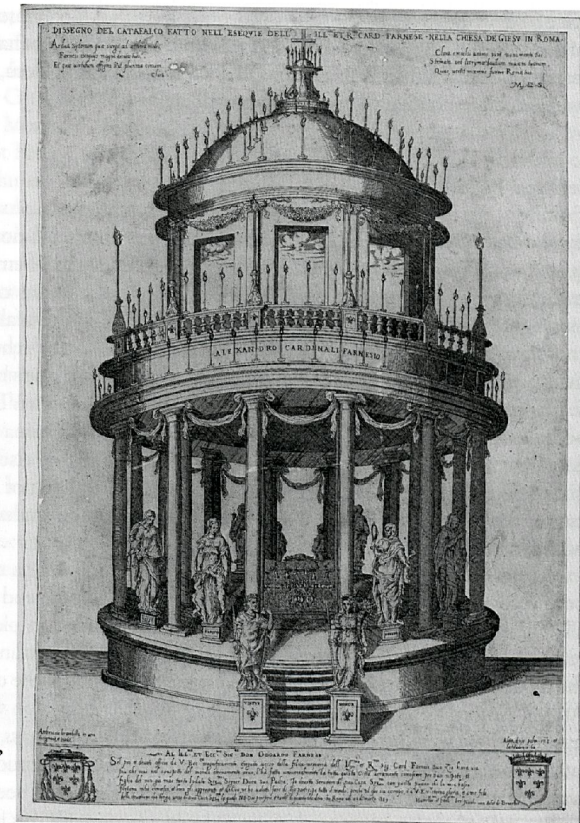


Fig. 3: Catafalque of Cardinal Alessandro Farnese in Il Gesù in Rome, March 1589. Engraving by Ambrogio Brambilla, London, British Library.

leading inside the catafalque: towards the main altar »Liberality« and »Hospitality«, and towards the nave »Honour« and »Virtue«. All in all, one could judge this a rather conventional programme as far as the choice of virtues is concerned, yet the concept of a *tempietto*-catafalque outfitted with statues of virtues proved to be of fundamental importance for the development of catafalques in Rome and elsewhere in Italy.⁴¹

The magnificent obsequies of Cardinal Farnese were covered in eight funeral books and at least three engravings, making it by far the best-propagated festival in sixteenth-century Rome.⁴² In addition to the funeral books, poems in praise of Cardinal Farnese

⁴¹ BERENDSEN (cf. note 2), pp. 100–137, calls this type the *tempietto*-catafalque.

⁴² FAGIOLO DELL'ARCO (cf. note 14), pp. 176–179, for an overview of the publications, often including funeral orations and encomiastic poems.

were sold on the street.⁴³ The festive obsequies were thus highly successful as a statement of the powerful position of the Farnese in Rome. There could not have been a more fitting starting-point of a memorial cult of Cardinal Farnese in the Gesù, whose anniversaries were celebrated until well into the twentieth century.⁴⁴

5. Papal Reburials

By the late 1580s, the traditional *castrum doloris* of the papal novenas seemed inadequate to compete with the extravagant display at obsequies of emperors, kings, artists and cardinals. But since the rigid system of the papal novenas could not be changed overnight, those papal families wishing to commission a catafalque had to resort to another ceremony, namely that of the reburial. Due to the rebuilding of St Peter's, many sixteenth-century popes had opted for a burial place elsewhere in Rome, such as S. Maria sopra Minerva (the Medici popes Leo X and Clement VII and Paul IV Carafa, both discussed elsewhere in this volume) and S. Maria dell'Anima (Pope Hadrian VI).⁴⁵ As a consequence, papal reburials from St Peter's to churches elsewhere in Rome were quite frequent. The reburials of Pope Pius IV (d. 1565) and that of Pope Pius V (d. 1572) in the early 1580s may serve as outstanding examples of the tendency to celebrate these occasions with increasing pomp and splendour.

At his death in 1565, the burial church of Pius IV, S. Maria degli Angeli, had not been ready, let alone his ambitious papal tomb, which in the end was never realised at all.⁴⁶ Therefore, the pope's body was provisionally buried in old St Peter's, where it remained for almost twenty years. Only in 1583, three of his cardinal nephews organised the reburial of their late benefactor to a modest wall tomb in the choir of S. Maria degli Angeli. According to the Masters of Ceremonies, the procession was »absque pompa«, meaning there were no confraternities or monks. The death mass celebrated a few days later was also lacking in ostentation: there was no funeral oration, no distribution of wax and no *castrum doloris*.⁴⁷ Interestingly enough, there had been a request on behalf of the cardinal nephews for permission to build a *castrum* for this reburial. Their request had been turned down, for it was judged that Pius IV had received all due pomp at

⁴³ BAV, Urb. lat. 1057, fol. 163r. [Avvisi di Roma, March 22, 1589]: »Nelle porte della Chiesa erano diverse compositioni de varii autori in idioma toscano et latino, et a mano si vendono anco per Roma in lode di questo Gran Cardinale.«

⁴⁴ ANNA PIA SCOLARI, La cappella musicale farnesiana nella chiesa del Gesù di Roma, in: Bulletin de l'Institut historique belge de Rome 63, 1993, pp. 371–379.

⁴⁵ JUTTA GÖTZMANN, Sepulchra divitiarum testimonia, non mortis honestamenta. Zum Grabmal Hadriani VI., in: POESCHKE/KUSCH/WEIGEL (cf. note 1), pp. 279–298.

⁴⁶ HERBERT SIEBENHÜNER, Santa Maria degli Angeli in Rom, in: Münchner Jahrbuch der bildenden Kunst 6, 1955, pp. 179–206.

⁴⁷ BAV, Chigiani L II 31 [Ceremonial Diary of Francesco Firmani, January 14, 1583], fols. 831–832: »Non fuit facta aliqua distributione candelarum, prout solet fieri in exequiis magnis, cum recenter pontifex defunctus non est, nec castrum doloris, quia non videbatur convenire ei huiusmodi exequiis, ipse solum factae fuerunt occasione translationis 18 annis vel circa post eius mortem.«

his novenas back in 1565.⁴⁸ Upon later reflection, however, the Master of Ceremonies explicitly admitted that »it would have been better if there had been built one.«⁴⁹

Seven years later, in 1591, the reburial of Sixtus V would make up entirely for this missed opportunity. On the first anniversary of the pope's death, his young cardinal nephew Alessandro Montalto, then eighteen years old, organised the reburial of his uncle's body from St Peter's to the Sistine Chapel. Built *ex novo* in the right nave of S. Maria Maggiore during the first two years of his pontificate, Sixtus had intended the chapel as a mausoleum for himself and his family. Outfitted with two subsidiary chapels, the centralised structure was crowned with a huge cupola, plainly visible from the adjacent family residence, the Villa Montalto.⁵⁰ Yet, the aspiration of the Sistine Chapel was much more ambitious than a traditional burial chapel, for, apart from some precious relics, it housed its own papal altar and papal throne for future station masses within the Sistine Chapel: a unique disposition without precedents or followers.⁵¹

Interestingly enough, Sixtus himself had inaugurated the ceremonial model for his reburial with that of his benefactor Pope Pius V in January 1588.⁵² At the death of Pius V in 1572, his corpse had been buried provisionally in St Peter's in anticipation of a reburial in his native Bosco Marengo. But Sixtus decided otherwise and commissioned a monumental tomb for Pius as the pendant of his own tomb in the Sistine Chapel.⁵³ According to the author of the commemoration booklet, with this act the Pope elected Rome, »velut in frequentissimo orbis terrarum teatro«, as the sole burial city for the popes, thus guaranteeing that the exemplary virtues of Pope Pius V remained visible to the Romans.⁵⁴

⁴⁸ LELIO GUIDICIONI, Breve Racconto della Trasportazione del Corpo di Papa Paolo V [...], Rome 1623, pp. 14–15: »I Signori Cardinali nipoti di Pio IV volendo in ogni modo alzar detta macchina dalla medesima congregazione furono persuaso di non farlo, con questa ragione, che nell'essequie vaticane di nove giorni [the novenas, MS] a ciaschedun papa si drizza il detto Castello, la qual cerimonia senza replicarla, devvia bastare usata per una volta.«

⁴⁹ BAV, Chigiani L II 32 [Ceremonial Diary of Paolo Alaleone, January 7, 1583], fol. 20: »Anno 1583 translatum fuit cadaver Pii Papae IV die 4 Januarii a Basilica Vaticana ad Ecclesiam S. Mariae Angelorum, absque pompa, quod portaverunt XII presbyteri accensis pluribus funalibus. Die 14 eiusdem fuit celebrata missa exequialis [...]. Non fuit factum castellum, sive catafalculus cum luminariis, quod melius si factus fuisset.«

⁵⁰ KLAUS SCHWAGER, Zur Bautätigkeit Sixtus V. an S. Maria Maggiore, in: Miscellanea Bibliothecae Hertzianae, Munich 1961, pp. 324–354.

⁵¹ SIBLE DE BLAAUW, Immagini di liturgia. Sisto V, la tradizione liturgica dei papi e le antiche basiliche di Roma, in: Römisches Jahrbuch der Bibliotheca Hertziana 33, 1999–2000, pp. 259–302.

⁵² The lengthy and detailed »Ordo Translationis« of this reburial is contained within PIETRO GALESINI, Translatio Corporis Pii Papae Quinti Beatae Memoriae quam sollemni sanctoque pietatis officio S.D.N. Sixtus V Pont. Max. celebravit VI. Idus Ianuarii anno MDLXXXVIII, Rome 1588, pp. 58–64.

⁵³ The concept of two opposing tombs followed the disposition of the Medici papal tombs in the choir of S. Maria sopra Minerva and that of the Sforza and Cesi chapels in S. Maria Maggiore. See the contribution of Jutta Götzmann in this volume.

⁵⁴ GALESINI (cf. note 52), p. 17: »corpus (...) ad urbem Romam transferendum erat, ubi sepulcris legendis vita et exempla mortuorum pontificum in memoriam vivorum revocantur.« Ibidem, p. 19: »Sic perpetuum quoddam quasque commune omnium ipsorum sepulcrum tamquam monumentum videtur pontificalium virtutum.«

In June 1587, Sixtus V attended personally the installation of the tomb monument of Pius V against the northern wall of the Sistine Chapel. The festive reburial of Pius' body was organised seven months later and lasted four days. On the evening of January 8, the body was unearthened and recognised in St Peter's. The following day, it was accompanied in procession to S. Maria Maggiore, and then buried in the Sistine Chapel. The processional route, represented on a fresco in the Vatican Library, proceeded from St Peter's via the medieval *via papalis* to Piazza San Marco. Then it headed via the Quirinal for the »new Rome«: along the Via Pia (the actual Via XX Settembre) and the Via Sistina to S. Maria Maggiore (fig. 4).



Fig. 4: Festive reburial of the body of Pope Pius V in the Sistine Chapel, S. Maria Maggiore, Rome, January 1588. Rome, Vatican Library, Salone Sistino.

Two days after this procession, a *cappella papalis* was ordained, at which the pope and all 44 cardinals assisted, as well as many ambassadors. Since the foundation bull of the Sistine Chapel forbade any death masses to be celebrated at the altar of the Nativity, the death mass was celebrated at the altar of the Relics situated in the central nave of the basilica.⁵⁵ At the end of the ceremonies, Sixtus V personally gave absolution at the symbolic corpse of the deceased, positioned in front of the said altar and surrounded by 40 candles. Although no catafalque or *castrum* was built, the reburial of Pius V was by far the most festive papal reburial to that date. The papal secretary delivered a funeral oration and several booklets and poems were published to commemorate the event,

⁵⁵ The bull »Gloriosa et semper Virginis«, issued on June 9, 1587 explicitly forbade the presence of »castra doloris, cenotaphia, palia feretralia, et alia mortuorum ac funeralium insignia« inside the Sistine Chapel. ALOYSIUS TOMASSETTI and FRANCISCO GAUDE (eds.), *Bullarium diplomatum et privilegiorum sanctorum Romanorum pontificum Taurinensis editio*, Bd. 8: A Gregorio XIII ad Sixtum V, Turin 1863.

all praising the patron of the festivities, Pope Sixtus V, for his piety, providence and wisdom.⁵⁶

6. The Reburial and Catafalque of Sixtus V

On the evening of August 28, 1591, a seven-hour procession accompanied the body of Sixtus from its provisional tomb in St Peter's to the Sistine Chapel. The itinerary was exactly the same as three years earlier at the reburial of Pius V. On the following day, the entire College of Cardinals assisted at the festive death mass in S. Maria Maggiore. The nave housed the funeral *apparato* with at its centre a magnificent catafalque, the first ever built for a pope in Rome.

The costs of this first major commission of Cardinal Alessandro Montalto were estimated 12,000 scudi.⁵⁷ The young cardinal nephew still relied heavily on the patronage of his uncle, drawing from the well-established pool of Sistine artists for the realisation of the catafalque. The favourite Sistine architect Domenico Fontana designed the hexagonal *tempietto* structure of 25 metres (fig. 5); Cesare Nebbia and Giovanni Guerra executed the paintings on the exterior of the catafalque; and Prospero Bresciano was responsible for the monumental statues. Finally, Jacopo Zucchi, Giuseppe Cesari and Ventura Salimbeni painted the virtues within the interior of the catafalque.⁵⁸ A voluminous funeral book documented the reburial ceremonies and the iconography of the catafalque.⁵⁹ The engravings correspond in detail with the extensive descriptions in the funeral book, although some details are left to our imagination, such as the huge amount of candles and the rich profusion of colours.⁶⁰

The massive structure stood on a basement resembling green marble. The first tier consisted of six arches of 18 *palmi*, that is, 4.5 metres, flanked by polychrome engaged columns of the Corinthian order with bronze heads and basements. In front of these columns stood six monumental statues of virtues on top of pedestals, each of them

⁵⁶ ANTONIO BUCCAFADULLI, *Oratio in translationem Pii V P.M. habita ad Sixtum V P.M.*, Rome 1583. The most voluminous booklet (71 pages) is that by GALESI (cf. note 52), who names the reburial of Pius V »officium Deo gratissimum, pontificia solitudine dignissimum, ad Sixti Quinti laudem insigne maxime in Ecclesia Sancta proprium maximumque illustre.« Moreover, BAV, Ottoboni 2445, fol. 105 contains a poem composed by a certain A. Q.: *Translatio cinerum Pii V Pontificis Maximi ex aede vaticana in sacellum esquilinum Sixti V Pont. Max.*

⁵⁷ BAV, Vat. lat. 1059, fol. 210r. [Avviso di Roma, August 28, 1591]: »Furono appresso distribuite molte cere et elemosine, pagato al Capitolo di San Pietro mille scudi [...], et in somma fanno conto che il Cardinale Montalto abbia speso in questi funerali et transportatione circa 12 mila scudi.«

⁵⁸ FAGIOLO DELL'ARCO (cf. note 14), p. 186, published two preparatory drawings for the Sistine catafalque: Zucchi's »Beata Visione« (Milan, Biblioteca Ambrosiana) and il Cavalier d'Arpino's »Eternity« (Paris, Ecole Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts).

⁵⁹ BALDO CATANI, *La Pompa Funerale fatta dall'Ill.mo et Rev.mo S.r Cardinale Montalto nella Trasportatione dell'Ossa di Papa Sisto il Quinto*, Rome 1591.

⁶⁰ Catani was priest and member of the Accademia degli Umoreisti and that of San Luca, and had delivered the funeral oration for Sixtus V at the conclusion of his novenas in 1590. Moreover, he had composed a poem for the marriage of Virginio Orsini and Flavia Peretti, great-niece of Pope Sixtus V in 1589.

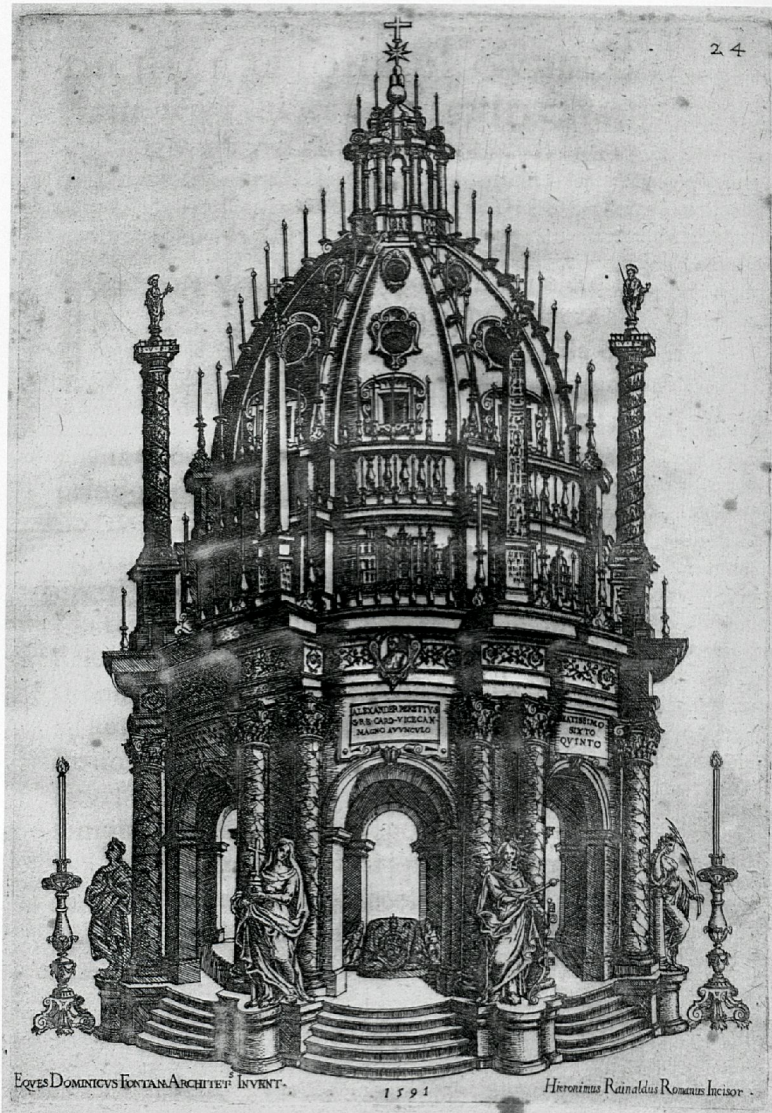


Fig. 5: Domenico Fontana, Catafalque of Pope Sixtus V in S. Maria Maggiore, Rome, August 1591. Engraving by Girolamo Rainaldi, in: Baldo Catani, *La Pompa funerale di Sisto il Quinto*, Rome 1591, Taf. 24.

decorated with an emblem and motto painted in fake bronze (not represented on the engraving). Over the arches, inscriptions of golden letters against a black background read the praise of the deceased pope and his nephew.⁶¹ Six staircases lead to the interior of the catafalque, with a diameter of 6.8 metres. A precious gold cloth embroidered with the coats of arms of the late pontiff represented the symbolical corpse, where the absolution was given. The bier had the form of a tomb sustained by four lions in fake bronze. Four large seated statues of 2.5 metres representing the cardinal virtues were placed around it: »Justice« and »Temperance« facing the Sistine Chapel, and »Strength« and »Prudence« facing the old sacristy in the opposite nave.⁶² The funeral book does not further describe the iconography of these four statues, and their location is indicated on the ground plan only (fig. 6). Inside the structure, invisible to the congregation, illusionary niches contained six painted virtues in fake bronze. Each of them corresponded to one of the virtues facing the exterior of the catafalque. Above the niches with the painted virtues, a frieze was decorated with the usual Peretti heraldry, such as lion heads, pear branches (referring to the family name Peretto, meaning »pear«), *monti* (referring to the family's city of origin, Montalto in the Marche) and stars. Finally, the interior of the cupola was painted in illusionary perspective with windows, balusters and torches.

Outside, an architrave decorated with the oblique Peretti heraldry sustained the second tier, dedicated to the urbanist achievements of the Sistine pontificate. The broad drum was divided horizontally into two zones, the upper one surmounted by a balustrade. The paintings in the lower compartments represented the Good Works of Sixtus, such as the Scala Santa and the new papal palace at the Lateran, the Acqua Felice and the Sistine Chapel on the Esquiline. The four obelisks and two columns of Trajan and Marcus Aurelius on protruding pedestals recalled the festive relocation of these pagan landmarks within the rationalised street plan of Sistine Rome, thus marking the triumph of Christian Rome over pagan Rome.⁶³ According to Catani, the catafalque's hexagonal cupola referred to that of St Peter's, finished during the Sistine pontificate.⁶⁴ The iconographical programme of the catafalque, in other words, consisted of the celebration of the Good Works of Sixtus V by means of his architectural achievements, a

⁶¹ Towards the main entrance: »Alexander Perettus S.R.E. Card. Vicecancel. Magno Avuncolo«; towards the entrance of the Sistine Chapel: »Beatissimo Sixto Quinto«; then »Pontifici Maximo«; »Patri optimo«; »Principi sanctissimo«; and finally »Christianae Libertatis Propugnatori«.

⁶² The old sacristy of S. Maria Maggiore was eventually torn down for the construction of the Pauline Chapel. KLAUS SCHWAGER, *Die architektonische Erneuerung von S. Maria Maggiore unter Paul V. Bauprogramm, Baugeschichte, Baugestalt und ihre Voraussetzungen*, in: *Römisches Jahrbuch für Kunstgeschichte* 20, 1983, pp. 241–312; STEVEN F. OSTROW, *Art and Spirituality in Counter-Reformation Rome. The Sistine and Pauline Chapels in S. Maria Maggiore*, Cambridge 1996.

⁶³ CATANI (cf. note 59), p. 17: »[The columns and obelisks] eretti dalla felice memoria di tanto pontefice, a sua perpetua gloria et honore eterno della Cristiana religione.« RENÉ SCHIFFMANN, *Roma Felix. Aspekte der städtebaulichen Gestaltung Roms unter Papst Sixtus V*, Bern 1985; HELGE GAMRATH, *Roma sancta renovata. Studi sull'urbanistica di Roma nella seconda metà del secolo XVI con particolare riferimento al pontificato di Sisto V 1585–1590*, Rome 1987.

⁶⁴ Similarities between the cupola of the catafalque and that of St Peter's include the division into three windows in vertical sequence and the lantern, topped by a cross standing on top of three *monti*, although the cupola of St Peter's consists of twelve segments instead of six.

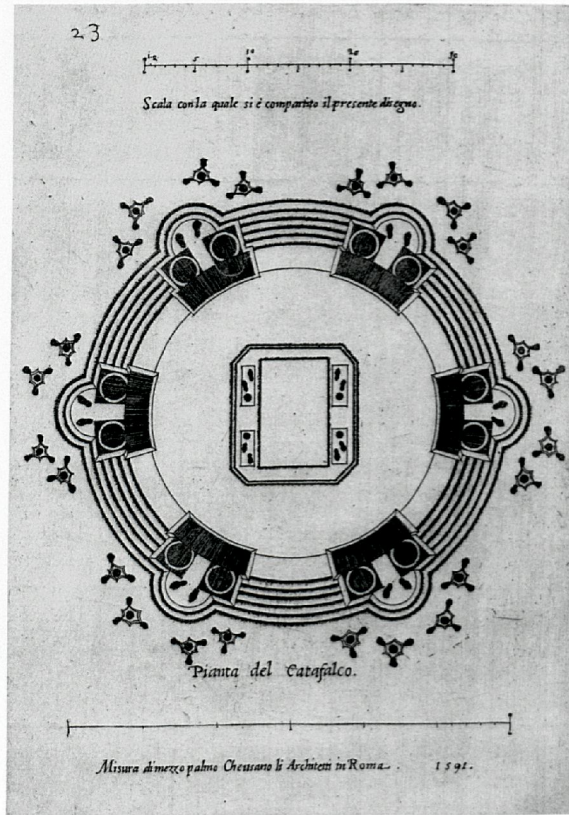


Fig. 6: Domenico Fontana, Groundplan of the catafalque of Pope Sixtus V, Rome, August 1591. Engraving by Girolamo Rainaldi, in: Baldo Catani, *La Pompa funerale di Sisto il Quinto*, Rome 1591, Taf. 23.

selection of virtues and the oblige family heraldry, so common in monumental fresco cycles and celebrative prints issued during the Sistine pontificate.

Of particular interest are the six monumental statues of virtues on the ground floor, representing »Providence«, »Faith«, »Magnificence«, »Security«, »Christian Religion«, and »Papal Authority«. As said earlier, these statues were complemented by a set of six painted virtues inside the catafalque, which represented the consequences or merits of the virtues outside (table 2).⁶⁵ The group of twelve virtues was designed especially for

⁶⁵ CATANI (cf. note 59), p. 90, summarises the programme as follows: »Il buon Sisto, [...] armato di zelo di santa Religione et con intrepida Auctorità, partorita la Sicurezza in terra, et con regal Magnificenza havuto Providenza di tutte le cose; al fine poi meritò quello, di cui sempre hebbe ferma Fidanza, cioè la Visione et Fruitione del suo Dio, la sicura Pace della sua coscienza, l'Eternità del suo bene, la Carità del suo Creatore, et il largo Premio delle sue fatiche.«

Statues standing outside the catafalque	Paintings inside the catafalque
Christian Religion	Vision of the Divine
Papal Authority	Beatified Fruition
Security	Tranquillity of Mind
Providence	Charity
Magnificence	Eternity
Faith	Complete Vision of the Divine

Table 2: The virtues on the catafalque of Pope Sixtus V, S. Maria Maggiore, Rome, 1591.

this occasion. As much as two-thirds of the voluminous funeral book was dedicated to their iconography, explaining their attributes and emblems, and of course the aptness of these particular virtues to Sixtus V. The emblems on the pedestals with their Latin mottoes were taken from the by then well-established imagery of the Sistine lions and stars. After their first appearance as frescoes in the staircase leading from St Peter's to the papal palace, executed by Giovanni Guerra in 1586, the Sistine emblems resurfaced in several major fresco programmes executed during the Sistine pontificate.⁶⁶

Although we do not know with certainty the identity of the inventor of the iconographical programme of the catafalque of Sixtus V, I would argue that Giovanni Guerra is among the most probable candidates. Two years earlier, Guerra had published a book on Sistine emblems.⁶⁷ Besides inventing emblems, he was also renowned for devising allegorical figures for frescoes within the Sistine building projects, such as the Sala dei festi perettiani in Villa Montalto, the extraurban villa of the Peretti family.⁶⁸ Moreover, it has recently been discovered that Guerra invented the illustrations for the 1603 edition of Ripa's »Iconologia«. In fact, Giovanni Guerra, Cardinal Montalto and the author of the funeral book, Baldo Catani, were all three members of the Accademia degli Umoristi, which demonstrates the overall importance of academies for the organisation of festive obsequies.⁶⁹

The virtue of »Papal Authority« with her counterpart »Beatified Fruition« may serve as an example (figs. 7 and 8). Flanking »Christian Religion«, the statue of »Papal Authority« stood at the entrance facing the central nave of S. Maria Maggiore. According to the funeral book, the aureole around her head referred to the fact that papal authority depends on God alone. The imperial sceptre in her right hand signified her supreme juridical powers, while the yoke and papal keys in her left hand recalled obedience

⁶⁶ CORINNE MANDEL, Felix Culpa and Felix Roma. On the Programme of the Sistine Staircase at the Vatican, *Art Bulletin* 75, 1993, pp. 65–90.

⁶⁷ GIOVANNI GUERRA, Varii emblemi hieroglifici usati [...] nelle fabbriche del [...] papa Sisto V, Rome 1589; CHIARA STEFANI, Giovanni Guerra inventore e l'Iconologia, in: MADONNA (cf. note 15), pp. 17–27.

⁶⁸ MADONNA (cf. note 15), pp. 152–61.

⁶⁹ STEFANO PERGUIDI, Alle radici dell'Iconologia. I rapporti di Cesare Ripa con Ignazio Danti, Giovanni Alberti e Giovanni Guerra, in: *Arte Cristiana* 90, 2002, pp. 433–448; Idem, Giovanni Guerra and the Illustrations in Ripa's Iconologia, in: *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 61, 1998, pp. 174–175.

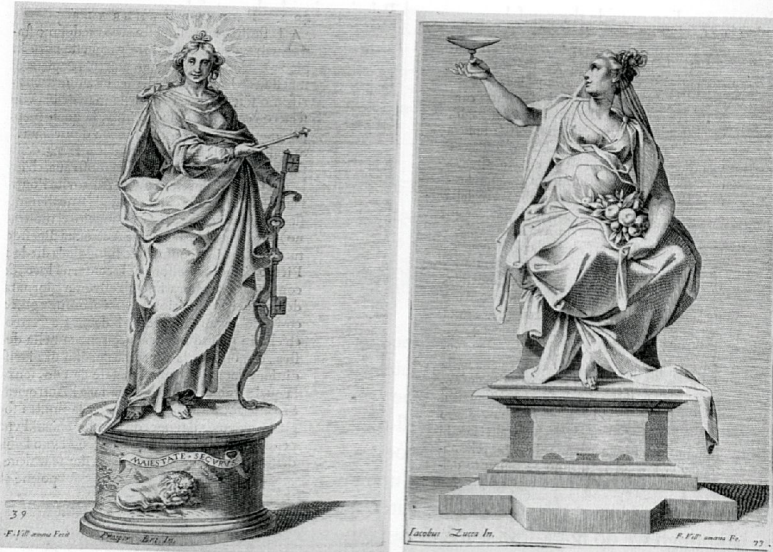


Fig. 7: Prospero Bresciano, »Papal Authority« on the catafalque of Pope Sixtus V. Engraving by Francesco Villamena, in: Baldo Catani, *La Pompa funerale di Sisto il Quinto*, Rome 1591, tab. 39.

Fig. 8: Jacopo Zucchi, »Beatified Fruition« inside the catafalque of Pope Sixtus V. Engraving by Francesco Villamena, in: Baldo Catani, *La Pompa funerale di Sisto il Quinto*, Rome 1591, tab. 73.

and her supremacy in temporal and spiritual matters.⁷⁰ Catani connected the virtue of »Papal Authority« to one of the most prominent aspects of Sixtus' self-image, that of the lawgiver and vindicator of justice.⁷¹ The particular emblem of the lion on the pedestal emphasised this message once more, for the lion is renowned for sleeping in the open field without fearing peril, as shows the motto: »Maiestate securus«, or »Secure by majesty«.⁷²

The pendant of the »Papal Authority« was the seated figure of »Beatified Fruition«, or the part of the heavenly bliss that fulfils our desires. She was represented as a joyful woman with fruits in her lap, her gaze resting on a chalice in her right hand (fig. 8). Referring to several biblical passages on the chalice, Catani saw a significant analogy

⁷⁰ CATANI (cf. note 59), pp. 40–41.

⁷¹ IRENE POLVERINI FOSI, *Justice and Its Image. Political Propaganda and Judicial Reality in the Pontificate of Sixtus V.*, in: *Sixteenth Century Journal* 24, 1993, pp. 75–95.

⁷² The same emblem, enriched with a pear branch, appears as emblem 13 in Guerra's book (cf. note 67), with the motto »Non dormit neq(ue) dormitabit.« Although the monogram »N B F.« stands for the printer Natale Bonifacio, the invention of this emblem must be accredited to Guerra, STEFANI (cf. note 67), p. 33. The emblem of the sleeping lion with the same motto appears also in the eastern entrance of the Vestibule of the Lateran Palace, MADONNA (cf. note 15), p. 9.

with the Last Supper and concluded that the »Beatified Fruition« was indeed the highest remuneration for Sixtus' papal authority.⁷³

It is important to establish that there exists no link whatsoever between the iconography of the catafalque and that of papal tombs within the Sistine Chapel, which had been finished by the time of the first anniversary of Sixtus' death. Dedicated to the Nativity, the iconographical programme of the Sistine Chapel is centred round the birth of Christ: starting with the sibyls and evangelists as testimonies of Christ's birth, it represents the Ancestors of Christ and several Nativity scenes, culminating in the magnificent cupola decoration where myriads of angels pay homage to the relic of the *presepe* below them in the crypt. Apart from the papal tomb and some Peretti heraldry in the ornaments, the Sistine Chapel lacks ostentatious dynastic propaganda. In this light it is important to underline once more that the catafalque of Sixtus stood outside the chapel in the nave of S. Maria Maggiore, in plain accordance with the directions expressed in the foundation bull of the chapel.⁷⁴

Neither did the funeral oration delivered by Lelio Pellegrini relate specifically to the twelve virtues on the catafalque.⁷⁵ Yet the orator elaborated extensively on the relationship between the holiness of the pope and that of Rome. He praised Sixtus »qui hodie vivit in Concilio immortalium« for restoring the Christian republic in Rome, recalling the numerous Sistine building projects and the reinforcement of law and justice during the Sistine pontificate.⁷⁶ Pellegrini concluded his oration with the proclamation of Cardinal Montalto as the heir of the Sistine virtues.⁷⁷ Catani, the author of the funeral book, likewise praised Cardinal Montalto for undertaking the reburial and showing once more the virtues of his uncle as examples for future generations.⁷⁸ During his lifetime, Sixtus had boasted himself often on his humble origins, in pretentious analogies with no one less a person than Christ himself. In the funeral book, Catani alluded to this myth, stating that Sixtus had been elected pope on the grounds of »nothing else than his virtues alone«.⁷⁹ This new concept of nobility, not deriving from ancient lineage but

⁷³ CATANI (cf. note 59), p. 76: »La Fruitione [...] con gran ragione fu posta corrispondente, come suo premio alla Pontificia autorità, la quale essendo atto di sincera [...] volontà, pare che per suo ultimo guiderdone richieda quello, che più per l'istessa voglia contenta. Et perchè Sisto si seppe sì ben servire dell'Autorità [...], crediamo pure piamente, ch'egli si goda colui nel cielo, di cui fu così buon Vicario nella terra.«

⁷⁴ See above, note 55.

⁷⁵ LELIO PELLEGRINI, *Oratio funebris de Sixto V Pont. Max. habita in Basilica S. Mariae Maioris post eiusdem corporis e Vaticano illuc sollempni funere deportati humationem*, Rome 1591. The oration is also included within the funeral book by CATANI (cf. note 59), pp. 91–III.

⁷⁶ MCGINNESS (cf. note 37), pp. 167–172.

⁷⁷ PELLEGRINI (cf. note 75), p. III: »Alexander sororis nepos cardinalis, tuae imago bonitatis, heres virtutis, tanta cura et liberalitate, tanta officiosae voluntatis gratitudine [...]«

⁷⁸ CATANI (cf. note 59), p. 26: »[The Peretti organised the reburial] per temperare la doglia di tanta perdita, [...] mostrare in parte la gratitudine dell'animo loro, et scoprire anchora il merito et la virtù di Sisto a perpetuo essemplio delle future etadi.«

⁷⁹ CATANI (cf. note 59), p. 26: »Questo [the papal throne, MS] s'era egli acquistato non con altro, che col mezo delle proprie virtù della divina gratia vestite.«

from personal virtues, had been the argument of Torquato Tasso's treatise »Il Forno, ovvero della Nobiltà«, published in Rome in 1581.⁸⁰

Praising Montalto's initiative, Catani went on to argue that princely funerals served a higher objective than ordinary funerals, namely that of setting a universally valid example of virtuous life. In this respect, the obsequies of ecclesiastical princes are the most prestigious models, due to the greater moral perfection of the church hierarchy.⁸¹ This way, the papal catafalque became a powerful didactic instrument for the faithful, presenting the virtues and achievements of Sixtus V as the ideal and consummate model of pious and virtuous living.

Without doubt, the concept of *memoria* was the driving force behind the commission of the catafalque of Sixtus V. While the death mass was celebrated in S. Maria Maggiore, hundreds of masses in memory of the late pope were said in churches all over Rome. Organising the reburial on the first anniversary of his uncle's death, the patron showed the strength of the Peretti family within the political and cultural setting of late sixteenth-century Rome. With the commission of the first papal catafalque, Cardinal Montalto plainly succeeded in drawing attention to his conspicuous acts of patronage, which constituted the resounding start of a cult of remembrance for the soul of Sixtus V and his relatives within the Sistine Chapel.

Credits:

Archivio Fotografico Vaticano, Rome, 4; British Library, London 2-3; Museum Meermanno-Westreenianum, Den Haag 1; Vrije Universiteit, Amsterdam 5-8.

Summary

This paper focuses on the formal transitions of the principal element of papal funeral ceremonies, that is, the *castrum doloris*. As the visual and liturgical focal point of the Requiem mass, the *castrum* consisted of an ephemeral baldachin structure of monumental dimensions, loaded with coats of arms, brocades and candles, where at the end of mass, the absolution was given to the deceased. Similar structures featured at obsequies of the aristocracy across Europe: the profusion of candles gave them their name *chappelles ardentes*.

Towards the middle of the sixteenth century, the *chappelles ardentes* gradually evolved into more sophisticated structures, fitted with complex iconographical programmes of paintings and sculpture, celebrating the virtues of the deceased. Introduced in Rome at the exceptional obsequies of Charles V, the vogue for these new funeral *apparati* initially spread among the obsequies of foreign rulers and cardinals. The papal funeral ceremonial was much slower to adopt them, remaining true to the traditional *castrum doloris* for decades to come.

⁸⁰ TORQUATO TASSO, *Il Forno ovvero della nobiltà. Il Forno secondo ovvero della nobiltà*, edited by Stefano Prandi, Florence 1999.

⁸¹ CATANI (cf. note 59), pp. 25-26: »[Princely obsequies are celebrated with great display in order to offer] universale esempio di ben passata vita: pompa convenevole a tutti gli huomini chiari per virtù, ma più convenevole a principi secolari, et convenevolissima agli ecclesiastici, de quali si come la vita deve essere più riguardevole et più esemplare, così lo sprone ad imitarla deve essere più pungente degli altri.«

Papal families, however, quickly understood the unlimited possibilities of displays of power and piety of the new funeral *apparati*, and thus the first papal catafalque was commissioned on the occasion of the festive reburial of Pope Sixtus V in 1591 in S. Maria Maggiore. Designed by the favourite papal architect Domenico Fontana, the lower tier of the *tempietto*-catafalque was adorned with twelve monumental statues of virtues, while the second tier and cupola celebrated the architectonic and urbanistic achievements of the Sistine pontificate. The festivities and the funeral *apparato* thus constituted a resplendent start of a remembrance cult for the soul of the late pope in his funerary chapel.