PERFORMING ARTISTIC CONTROL: GIAN LORENZO BERNINI AND HIS CARICATURE DRAWINGS

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES.....iv

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION.....1

CHAPTER II: SETTING THE SCENE: BERNINI'S ROME.....29

CHAPTER III: THE CARICATURES OF A FRENCH KNIGHT AND CARDINAL NINI.....41

CHAPTER IV: THE CARICATURES OF CARDINAL ANTONIO BARBERINI AND CARDINAL FLAVIO CHIGI.....61

CHAPTER V: CONCLUSIONS.....81

APPENDIX A.....88

BIBLIOGRAPHY.....90

LIST OF FIGURES

1. Agostino Carracci, *Caricatures*, 1594.....17

2. Leonardo da Vinci, *Five Grotesque Male Heads*, late fifteenth century.....18

3. Albrecht Dürer, Detail from letter to Willibald Pirckheimer, 1506.....19

4. Michelangelo Buonarroti, Sonnet on the Sistine Ceiling, 1508-1512.....20

5. A Sample of Gian Lorenzo Bernini's handwriting; postscript from a letter written by Mattia de' Rossi while traveling with Bernini to Paris, May 5, 1665.....21

6. Diego Velázquez, *Isabella, Queen of Spain*, 1632.....22

7. Gian Lorenzo Bernini, *Preparatory Sketch for Portrait Bust of Cardinal Scipione Borghese*, 1632.....23

8. Gian Lorenzo Bernini, *Caricature of Cardinal Scipione Borghese*, after 1632.....24

9. Gian Lorenzo Bernini. *Academic Study of a Seated Male Nude*, after 1630.....25

10. Gian Lorenzo Bernini, *Two Studies for the Drapery of "St. Longinus,"* 1629-30.....26

11. Gian Lorenzo Bernini, *Caricature of Innocent XI*, 1676-1680.....27

12. Gian Lorenzo Bernini, *Caricature of a French Knight and Caricature of Cardinal Nini*, 1664-1665.....58

13. Jacques Callot, *La Noblesse: Le gentilhomme enroulé dans son manteau bordé de fourrures*, 1602-1635.....59

14. Jacob Ferdinand Voet, *Portrait of Cardinal Flavio Chigi*, 17th century.....77

15. Gian Lorenzo Bernini, *Caricature of Cardinals Antonio Barberini and Flavio Chigi*, 1665-1667.....78

16. Robert Nanteuil, *Cardinal Antonio Barberini*, 1657.....79

17. Gian Lorenzo Bernini, *Caricatures of Don Virginio Orsini and the Captain of the Army of Urban VIII,* before 1644.....86

I. Introduction

> …when the artist imitates such things, he cannot help taking pleasure in them and giving delight to others, because things produced in this way by Nature, already being ridiculous in themselves, when imitated, turn out to be doubly amusing; and so the viewer gets great pleasure both from the quality that prompts his laughter and from the imitation, which is extremely enjoyable in itself. But besides this, when an artist imitates things of this sort not only as they are, but also represents them with their defects greatly amplified yet without sacrificing resemblance, he creates yet another kind of work called small portrait caricatures [*ritrattini carichi*] in the school of the Caracci, and here, Annibale would say, is added the third case for pleasure—and this is caricature, which, when effectively employed, arouses even more laughter from the viewer.[1]

The English word *caricature* is surprisingly a relatively young one. The above passage is from one of the first treatises to include caricature, written by Giovanni Antonio Massani (pen name Giovanni Atanasio Mosini) in 1646. Given the surviving written discussions of portrait-caricature, the genre was clearly recognized as a new art form during this period. Caricature's conception and reception reflected an evolution of artistic identity; by the end of the sixteenth century, the artist had become "creator" rather than manual laborer.[2] The artist now had the greater freedom to produce from his own genius, creating an inspired reality that captured the "essence" of his subject.[3] The essence, or what Massani terms the "Idea," of a subject lies at the heart of caricature; the potency of such a portrait is intrinsically tied to its careful simplicity and perceived

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[1] Anne Summerscale, *Malvasia's Life of the Carracci: Commentary and Translation* (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2000), 123.
[2] Ernst Kris and Ernst Gombrich, "The Principles of Caricature," *British Journal of Medical Psychology* 17, 3-4 (1938): 331.
[3] Ibid.

purpose. Written in the seventeenth century about the celebrated sixteenth-century artistic circle of the Carracci, Massani's treatise discusses and alludes to the most influential artists associated with the invention of contemporary portrait caricature: the aforementioned school of the Carracci and the artist at the focus of this thesis, Gian Lorenzo Bernini.

Massani's passage underscores the common thread of humor that unites the work of the Carracci and Bernini, as well as contextually defining the crucial difference in the artists' motivations. As this thesis will discuss, the Carracci set into motion the method of skillfully manipulating observed reality in portrait drawings aimed at an ideal balance between humor and beauty. Their sketches, in the manner that they were made and saved by the artists themselves, existed as self-diversions, tools, and manifestations of a burgeoning artistic identity as creator. In other words, these drawings focus on the act of exaggeration via artistic creativity, rather than the development of a new genre. Bernini, an artist of the following generation, would take the Carracci's humorous method a step farther by repeatedly creating works that depict a single, recognizable individual. Bernini's caricature drawings apparently were made with the motives of personal gain, thus occupying a truly unique position within the history of portrait caricature. Building from the experimentations with natural deformity and artistic creativity performed by the Carracci school, Bernini, through both the production and the reception of his drawings, thrusts the genre of caricature into broader social and political realms.

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Along with their cousin Ludovico, brothers Annibale and Agostino Carracci founded the Accademia degli Incamminati in Bologna, an academy of drawing where students would focus on the imitation of nature. The three men were known to sketch almost exclusively from observation of everyday life and posed models.[4] Their sketches were meant to reflect actual people, as it was customary for the artists to quickly capture reality on paper for later use. The studies could be extremely accurate in their depiction of the subject, a point that led to likely exaggerated anecdotes concerning the origin of these drawings. One such example describes Annibale and his father being attacked by highway robbers while on their way to Cremona. The young Annibale's observational and drafting skills are so great that he is able to capture the likenesses of the robbers with an accuracy that quickly leads to the capture of the perpetrators.[5]

This anecdote holds particular significance in the discussion of the tension between observation and invention. Though the Carracci's series likely portray individual persons with whom the artists came into contact—as they taught and practiced drawing after life—there is clearly evidence of the artists pushing beyond observation. After documenting their observations, the Carracci would later synthesize various elements in order to achieve a truly realistic, but manipulated image.[6] Several of these studied segments by Agostino and Annibale depict varied series of distorted human heads aligned as if to demonstrate a progression of alteration (Fig. 1). The studies are often organized in rows with their 'unique' characteristics emphasized, almost as if to make the drawings appear more real in their flaunted anti-ideal state. The Carracci could thus both

[4] National Gallery of Art, *The Drawings of Annibale Carracci* (Washington, D.C.: National Gallery of Art, 1999), 9.
[5] *The Drawings of Annibale Carracci*, 16.
[6] *The Drawings of Annibale Carracci*, 9.

find comic relief in their study and highlight the unexpected or humorous beauty found in nature's distortions.[7] Massani writes that Annibale referred to these series as *ritrattini carichi* ("miniature exaggerated or loaded portraits"), underscoring the fact that the artistic group intentionally charged an image from reality.[8] By exaggerating, merging, or altering the size of certain characteristics, the Carracci packed their portraits with greater meaning, be that meaning a joke or the expression of an ideal. Like Nature itself, the artists drew attention to the joy of creation through willful disproportions.

Massani later describes this artistic desire to create the perfect deformity ("perfetta deformità") in his treatise, using the verb *caricare* ("to charge" or "to exaggerate") and *caricatura* as a term for inspired artistic exaggeration. In repeating the word choice of Annibale Carracci ("*ritrattini carichi*"), Massani underscores the power that the artist holds to alter reality, thus creating a new, imagined image for his intended audience. This telling verb *caricare* would eventually evolve into the name of the genre itself, rather than the term of exaggeration. In fact, it is in a letter from Gian Lorenzo Bernini that the word *caricatura* is first used as it is understood today: referring to a specific type of drawing that requires personal knowledge of the subject and the wit to appreciate the reality of the sheet's exaggerations.[9]

Caricature is relatively understudied in the field of art history, and the essence of caricature itself remains a point of dissension amongst scholars in all fields. Within the history of art, much of the focus is placed upon the 19th century "masters" in England and France, and most particularly upon Honoré Daumier. Daumier and his peers are seen as

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[7] Constance McPhee, *Infinite Jest: Caricature and Satire from Leonardo to Levine* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2011), 4.
[8] Summerscale, *Malvasia's Life of the Carracci*, 123.
[9] Irving Lavin, *Drawings by Gianlorenzo Bernini from the Museum der Bildenden Künste Leipzig, German Democratic Republic* (Princeton: The Art Museum, Princeton University, 1981), 48.

elevating caricature from its trivial position as the pastime of amateurs (or those artists with considerable skill in a more noble art, such as painting) to a particular genre of art requiring an incisive wit and a powerfully unembellished style.[10] However, this perspective precludes the rich possibilities for scholarship on earlier forms of caricature that may shed new light on the methods and *oeuvres* of artists in earlier centuries. In order to examine the caricature drawings of Gian Lorenzo Bernini, this thesis will focus strictly on portrait caricature that includes three key characteristics: it is quickly sketched with few lines, it invites humor through personal recognition, and it displays the artist's own wit and ability. This description will be further narrowed in order to distinguish this type of caricature from terms like "visual satire" or "cartoon." The latter terms are understood as primarily aimed at offending the subject or at inciting widespread, public participation in political or social change by passing moral judgment upon a situation, position, or individual through the use of humor. However, the earlier portrait caricatures of Bernini are political only in the sense that they appear to have been made for the artist's personal gain through familiar social connections; there was no attempt to appeal to a general audience for a more public governmental or societal outcome.

The distinction between caricature and other humor-based genres becomes sharper when one considers the history of caricature's development. A significant predecessor of Bernini's caricature drawings is found in the uncommon observation of the grotesque within the works of Leonardo da Vinci. His fascination with human physiognomy often drove him to create studies of actual or imagined people with 'bizarre' features (Fig. 2). In the following centuries, these drawings were often understood as caricatures in their humorously wild distortion of facial features and were

[10] Werner Hofmann, *Caricature from Leonardo to Picasso* (London: John Calder Publishers, 1957), 9.

widely copied by other artists.[11] Though these physiognomic studies could have inspired later true caricatures, they lack the simplicity of line and pointed exaggeration that have become synonymous with the genre. Leonardo's sketches seem to depict (with beautifully technical draughtsmanship) his fascination with the extreme physical mechanics of the human body, rather than the desire to humorously and graphically depict a known individual.

Similarly, as early as the sixteenth century, there is evidence that a sort of lowbrow method of drawing was used by artists in order to convey jokes associated with the sitter or with the artist himself. In 1506, for example, Albrecht Dürer included a deliberately coarse sketch of a woman in a letter to his friend Willibald Pirckheimer (Fig. 3). In the letter, Dürer describes how well the Italians received his *Rosenkranz Madonna*, which "silenced all the painters who admired his graphic work but said he could not handle colors."[12] Dürer's confidence in his own work can be understood in the relationship between the illustration and his questioning of Italian taste. Reduced to a laughably graphic face, Dürer's 'Madonna' appears to leer at the viewer. This purposefully poorly drawn portrait responds the Italian critics' backhanded compliment about Dürer's form supplanting his color; if the viewers are only able to appreciate his graphic art, he will reduce his Madonna to this. The artist's illustration then can be understood as a private joke amongst friends that relates a sense of self-awareness in its sarcastic response to his critics. Dürer adapts a 'low' style in order to make a highbrow statement about his ability to create, manipulate, and appreciate art. This process of

[11] *Infinite Jest*, 22-23.
[12] Lavin, *Drawings,* 31.

adaptation underpins the layers of meaning found within the later early modern caricature drawings.

Another example of this kind of tongue-in-cheek representation can be found in an early sonnet by Michelangelo. In the text, Michelangelo parodies himself with a description of the grueling task of painting the Sistine ceiling and its effect on his work. He remarks, "My brush, above my face continually, //Makes it a splendid floor by dripping down…I'm not in a good place, and I'm no painter."[13] This humorous sonnet is accompanied by a sketch of the artist himself—drawn in a simple, even elegant manner despite its waggish pose—painting a delightfully crude figure above his head (Fig. 4). The Renaissance master references his preference for and training in other media like sculpture, comically suggesting that his time would be better spent elsewhere. In demonstrating his ability to create deliberately 'ugly' works, Michelangelo asserts his own artistic decision and manipulation. Perhaps then this can be understood as Michelangelo's caricature of himself, though it unclear if the drawing had any audience beyond the artist.

It is this kind of drawing as self-parody that is expanded in the work of the Carracci. In exaggerating the depictions of individuals, the Carracci lampooned the observation of nature, the artistic method that they faithfully taught in their academy. The tension between genuine recording of observation and the inventive deformation of these recordings suggests a growing interest in the artist's ability to assert his own role in the process of creating art. The exaggerated depiction of real strangers and self is at the heart of caricature drawings in the sixteenth century and up to the redeployment of caricatures by Gian Lorenzo Bernini in following century.

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[13] Lavin, *Drawings,* 34.

Though he may not be the first artist to produce caricatures of recognizable individuals (rather than anonymous figures or himself), Bernini is the earliest artist to do so whose drawings have survived.[14] Many of Bernini's caricature subjects were found at the high-ranking levels of courtiers, cardinals, and even popes. There are only a few extant examples associated with Bernini's hand today, most of which are located in the Vatican Library and the Istituto Nazionale per la Grafica in Rome. It has always been accepted that some of these surviving caricatures may be copies.[15] The extant caricatures most widely accepted as autographs number around thirteen.[16] Though Bernini is known to have made many such portraits—the three main biographical sources of Bernini's life all make a note of them—few have survived as a result of the fragile nature of the medium, and perhaps due to the nature of their subject matter and style as well. The caricatures are likely weakly represented in contemporary collections as a result of the distaste for Bernini's style in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, causing owners who were ignorant of or indifferent toward Bernini to dispose of the images.[17] Those that do survive form a fairly clear set of characteristics that define this particular part of Bernini's *oeuvre.* Though there is some debate concerning which works are autograph and which are copies,[18] these drawings give valuable insight into Bernini's style, social position, and purpose for creating them.

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[14] *Infinite Jest*, 42.
[15] Ann Sutherland Harris, "Angelo de'Rossi, Bernini, and the Art of Caricature," *Master Drawings* 13, 2 (1975): 158.
[16] For a list of caricatures associated with Bernini, see Table of Caricature Drawings in Appendix A.
[17] Anne Sutherland Harris, *Selected Drawings of Gian Lorenzo Bernini* (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1977), ix.
[18] The most recent source that references doubt about authorship is found in the catalogue entries of Ann Sutherland Harris's *Selected Drawings of Gian Lorenzo Bernini* (1977). There is a surprising lack of further commentary in the past few decades.

In an unusual method for the time, Bernini typically composed his caricatures by portraying a single figure on a single sheet, though he occasionally paired two individuals.[19] This is particularly striking when compared to the work of artists like the Carracci, who would often fill an entire page with dozens of faces. Generally the size of a folio or half Royal sheet, Bernini's images balance intimacy with a scale that would be legible to a handful of viewers at once. Within the group of thirteen acknowledged drawings, seven caricatures depict recognizable figures and six are considered types. However, there is not an inscription on every drawing, meaning that the identity may be lost to modern viewers who lack the contemporary knowledge required to recognize the individual. Similarly, there is some evidence that at least three of the six types are modeled after other individuals and are simply not explicitly inscribed as such on the sheet.[20]

The inscriptions on those drawings that include them are nearly always found directly above the figure they describe and close to the sheet's edge. Most are written in brown ink similar to that used for the caricatures themselves. However, the inscriptions are not all of the same hand, nor do any appear to be that of Bernini (see Fig. 5 for an example of Bernini's handwriting). Of the five caricature drawings I was able to examine at the Istituto Nazionale per la Grafica in Rome, the inscriptions appeared to be by at least four different hands, though the inscriptions above paired figures typically match. The labeling of the drawings' subjects refers to the particular nature of these portraits; they required intimate, contemporary knowledge. It can be assumed then that

[19] Edward Lucie-Smith, *The Art of Caricature* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1981), 44.
[20] Cecil Gould, *Bernini in France: An Episode in Seventeenth-Century History* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson Ltd., 1981), 31.

they were kept as private artifacts after the game of guessing the subject was complete, and that the descriptions were inscribed by the original or slightly later owner.

All but one of the caricature drawings' figures are shown full-face or in profile, a direct deviation from the trend of three-quarter view in portrait drawings and paintings since the early Renaissance. For example, the famous and contemporary portraitist Diego Velázquez paints Queen Isabella of Spain somewhere between frontal and profile, similar to the manner in which nearly all of his subjects are shown (Fig. 6). Bernini is thus clearly making a deliberate artistic choice and preference, as his own independent portrait drawings are shown solely in three-quarter view, while his drawings made as studies for portrait sculptures are typically made in profile.[21] In their format then, the caricature drawings seem to have a significant connection to his work as a sculptor. Bernini would approach a caricature subject like a block of marble, from the strict frontal or side view, perhaps because these angles most aptly capture features that produce the greatest comic effect when exaggerated.

In preparation for working with marble, Bernini was known to have made several sketches of his sitter from various angles and while speaking. These unusually relaxed studies allowed Bernini to mark the animation of his subject even within two-dimensional paper or the rigid three dimensions of marble. Only one of these studies for a sculptural portrait survives today; fortunately for comparison purposes, it is of Scipione Borghese, the cardinal who 'discovered' Bernini and the subject of a surviving caricature and two busts by Bernini (Fig. 7). The hazy strokes of the graphite and chalk lend softness to Borghese in the preparatory sketch, giving the paper a flesh-like quality and his gaze a sense of attentiveness. Both the sketch and the caricature merely suggest Borghese's

[21] Lavin, *Drawings*, 29.

position as cardinal in the minimal attention paid to his garb and instead focus on the features of the man himself. The marvel of the caricature is in the thought behind the style; not only does Bernini's technique give off a sense of apparent effortlessness, but his use of negative space also echoes the artist's own explanation of a medium's unique obstacles.

In all three main biographical sources and in diaries of acquaintances, Bernini uses a particular metaphor for the artistic challenge of sculpture.[22] The artist asks the audience to imagine a man who paints his entire face, hair, and eyes white. With this image in mind, Bernini explains that the painted man would be virtually unrecognizable to his family and friends, as most of the visual clues of his identity are stripped away.[23] Therefore, according to Bernini, it is sometimes necessary to insert certain elements into sculpture that do not actually exist in order to imitate nature. Bernini famously overcame these obstacles by adding features like deeply incised pupils that mimic color through shadow or large voids in the subject's clothing to suggest billowing cloth and weight. Without the aid of color, the task of portraiture is made significantly more difficult, an obstacle that Bernini certainly overcomes not only in his sculptures, but also in his caricatures.

The caricatures are done exclusively in pen and ink, an innately graphic technique. Unlike the Carracci brothers whose studies utilized academic modeling of the human figure with pen and chalk, Bernini reduces his caricature subjects to the absolutely essential lines and contours. Whereas the Carracci school created shadows and depth

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[22] The three roughly contemporary biographical sources are Paul Fréart de Chantelou's *The Diary of the Cavaliere Bernini's Visit to France* (1665), Filippo Baldinucci's *The Life of Bernini* (1682), and Domenico Bernini's *The Life of Gian Lorenzo Bernini* (1713).

[23] Genevieve Warwick, "'The Story of the Man Who Whitened His Face': Bernini, Galileo, and the Science of Relief," *The Seventeenth Century* 29, 1 (2014): 1-2.

with extensive hatching, Bernini pens a few lines in order to construct his entire image. As one can see in his caricature of Scipione Borghese, the lines are whimsical in their simplicity; the pen strokes of the cardinal's robe and *biretta* never fully meet and the playful curls of his hair and ears suggest a jovial nature (Fig. 8). Although the excess of his lifestyle may be apparent in his pear-bottom jowls and his mouth may rest slightly turned down, the dimples of his cheeks suggest that Borghese could be provoked to laugh at any moment. Eliminating even the gradated shading of his sketches, in the caricature drawing Bernini inserts a single, deep line under each of Borghese's eyes and a solitary hooked line for nose in order to create likeness out of the blank whiteness of the page. Even the variation of line shape mimics Bernini's approach to sculpture; his interest in conveying texture can be seen in the sharp dashes of Borghese's moustache and beard in stark contrast with the soft, sweeping strokes of his *biretta* and collar.

As is evidenced through his surviving finished drawings, Bernini was a more than capable draughtsman. For example, his mastery of the human form is undeniable in the academic study of a seated male nude (Fig. 9). It is possible that drawings such as this were made during the time of Bernini's association with the Academy of St. Luke around 1630, and thus were purposefully executed in black and red chalk in order to demonstrate his technical finesse.[24] Alternatively, his preparatory studies for sculpted works reveal some of the desire for freshness and freedom of thought seen in his caricatures, but they are much more perfunctory in that they focus on elements such as composition or texture rather than a subject's essence. For example, there are several surviving studies of the complicated knot and falling drapery from the cloak of St. Longinus that stands in St. Peter's (Fig. 10). Though there is decisively less interest in modeling (note the mere

[24] Harris, *Selected Drawings*, xiii.

suggestion of the arm and hand), Bernini does employ shading to suggest the depth of the recesses that needed to be carved in order to produce the famous rippling quality of his fabric folds. The composition of these studies reflects their purpose as study sheets, serving as a space where the artist can puzzle through the obstacle at hand. St. Longinus does not even require a face in these images, as Bernini is solely interested in the difficult detail of the tied cloak at this particular time. The red chalk lines are quick and assured, becoming more aggressive as the complexity of the forms grows; the desire to capture his newest solution is apparent in the sketchy style of the sheet.

The clear stylistic difference between Bernini's presentation drawings, studies, and caricatures then demonstrate a deliberate artistic choice according to the work's intended purpose. Though his stylistic choices have been recognized by scholars, the role of caricatures within Bernini's drawn *oeuvre* has not been sufficiently explored. The most extensive single work of scholarship on his caricatures is Irving Lavin's "Bernini and the Art of Social Satire," a chapter within an informative catalogue of the first exhibition of such a large number of Bernini's drawings outside of Leipzig.[25] Lavin delves into the aforementioned historical influences on Bernini and the subsequent innovation of his caricature in order to confirm their ramifications in the realm of what Lavin calls "social satire." While recognizing that the caricatures clearly have a place in reflecting contemporary humor, this thesis is more interested in these drawings' role as a reflection of Bernini's artistic status. The caricatures do not merely indicate Bernini's achievement of high social status; this thesis argues that the caricatures played an active role in achieving this status, and as such they demonstrate the intertwining of Bernini's artistic persona and *oeuvre*.

[25] Lavin, *Drawings*, 27-54.

A HOLISTIC EXPERIENCE: A NEW LOOK AT BERNINI AND CARICATURE

Previous scholarship on Bernini's caricature drawings falls into two camps. In the first, these drawings are pointed to as a brief example of the unique relationship that Bernini had with most of his patrons or as a humorous anecdote to illustrate the artistic passion and innovation of the artist. One can see this in the seminal work of Francis Haskell on patron-painter relationships in Baroque Italy. For example, Haskell states that Bernini's caricature of Cassiano dal Pozzo "confirms the impression made on us by the only known portrait" of the collector, yet fails to comment on the significance of this statement.[26] Bernini's caricature drawing manages to capture the "impression," arguably the essence, of an individual through the sparsest of portraits, yet this work is given a single sentence's mention. Bernini's caricature serves here only as a brief suggestion of the complex relationship between Bernini and dal Pozzo, rather than an artwork with valuable insight to the artist and numerous facets of his life.

The second camp of scholarship attempts to more firmly establish Bernini in the history of caricature and satire. Lavin, in his earlier discussed *Drawings of Gianlorenzo Bernini*, puts forth the clearest example of this type of scholarship. Lavin endeavors to analyze the effect Bernini had on what is coined "visual satire," by examining the infamous caricature of Pope Innocent XI (Fig. 11). In comparing Bernini's humorous work to not only Dürer and Michelangelo, but also to early Roman graffiti on walls and

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[26] Francis Haskell, *Patrons and Painters: A Study in the Relations Between Italian Art and Society in the Age of the Baroque* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1980), 100.

adoption of childish styles in high art, Lavin claims that Bernini unleashes this 'low' style in order to demonstrate that no one is above ridicule.

Unlike Lavin, this thesis argues that Bernini did not simply wish to poke fun at those around him or break norms of social position. Lavin fails to examine the critical difference in reception between Bernini's caricatures and his documented satirical works. Bernini delighted in writing, constructing, and directing theater during his career, mostly producing comedic plays for carnival season. These were often steeped in the *commedia dell'arte* tradition, meaning that they largely consisted of stock characters and familiar plot lines. In his discussion of the caricature of Innocent XI, Lavin conflates Bernini's drawings and plays, asserting that his theater productions included "living caricatures," as Bernini injected contemporary persons or issues into the plot.[27] While Lavin's discussion of theater is useful in establishing Bernini's wit, humor, and understanding of his audience, there is a distinction to be made between the genres of caricature and theater. First, the characters of Bernini's plays were almost exclusively types, meaning that they could not truly be portrait caricatures, as they do not depict a recognizable individual. Furthermore, Lavin fails to discuss the critical public component of theater, something that is absolutely disconnected from the method in which the caricature drawings were viewed. These drawings were shared amongst a privileged few, so in no way could they be considered public offense; rather they became something of an in-joke, as will be discussed in the following chapter.

There is a deeper connection to Bernini both as artist and as courtier that needs to be explored within these caricature drawings. By combining aspects of previous approaches to Bernini's caricatures, a more holistic view of these works can be found.

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[27] Lavin, *Drawings*, 39.

Recent scholarship, most notably that of Genevieve Warwick, has begun to effectively analyze the strategic attitude that Bernini took toward not only his artworks, but also toward his social interactions. In her *Bernini: Art As Theatre*, Warwick focuses upon the "inter-medial exchange" between architecture, sculpture, and theater through which "Bernini forged an art of illusion."[28] Her willingness to connect the art of performing with the production of art itself has opened the field for richer study; unlike the canonical study of Rudolf Wittkower and the extensive work of Irving Lavin, which shy from too closely associating Bernini and the "theatrical," Warwick's scholarship reclaims the term as a positive, contemporary, and accurate one. The marriage of art and artist that Warwick employs is magnified in this thesis; by focusing on two specific works created during a window of time in Bernini's life, this thesis attempts to clearly present the caricatures as both autonomous artworks and the results of the artist's own social performance. Stemming from my previous work on Bernini's self-representation and analyses of the artist-patron relationship, the following case studies will reestablish Bernini's caricatures as significant independent works of art and situate them firmly within Bernini's biography. In this manner, the caricatures become more than examples of contemporary social satire; they will be revealed as tools for portraying creative genius and *savoir faire* as a natural claim to Bernini's elevated status.

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This thesis will focus on Bernini's relationships with the influential patrons in power at the time of each caricature drawing's creation, interrogating how the drawings might be seen as another means of managing his delicate patronage relationships. Nearly all of the surviving caricature drawings were produced during the three papacies between

[28] Genevieve Warwick, *Bernini: Art as Theatre* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012), 3.

1623 and 1647, with the most identifiable and high status subjects appearing during the term of Pope Alexander VII. For this reason, this thesis focuses upon two works dating from Alexander's reign in order to unpack the layers of artistic strategies involved in their creation. Chapter II will situate the reader within the context of culture, society, and etiquette of Baroque Rome, specifically that of the papal court in which Bernini worked. Chapter III will introduce Bernini's growing understanding of the tensions between the royal French court and the papal court through a case study of Bernini's paired caricatures of Cardinal Nini and of a French knight. The privileged and intimate knowledge of courtly personages discussed in the comparison of stereotype and individual will be further developed in Chapter III, which analyzes Bernini's caricature drawing of Cardinal Antonio Barberini and Cardinal Flavio Chigi. This chapter reveals a leap in Bernini's daring, as well as his careful manipulation of the genre of caricature, ensuring that his humor refrains from becoming offensive. In the final chapter, I will reflect upon the connection between Bernini's caricature drawings and his status as court artist, arguing that scholars should recognize the drawings as the boldest works of Bernini's *oeuvre*.

Fig. 1. Agostino Carracci. *Caricatures*, 1594. Pen and ink on paper, 20.5 x 28.1 cm. Reproduced from Constance C. McPhee and Nadine M. Oreinstein, *Infinite Jest* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2011).

Fig. 2. Leonardo da Vinci. *Five Grotesque Male Heads*, Late fifteenth century. Pen and brown ink, 18.2 x 17.6 cm. Reproduced from Artstor.

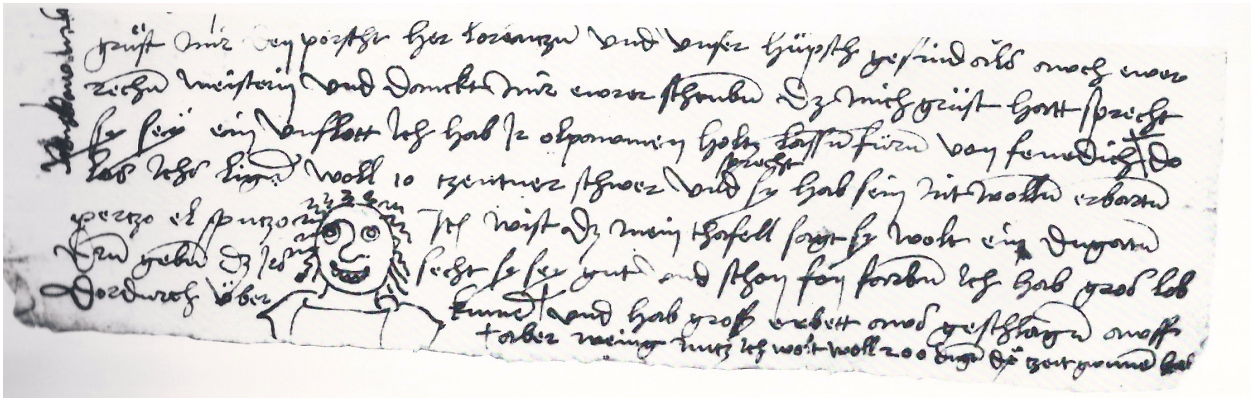

Fig. 3. Albrecht Dürer. Detail from letter to Willibald Pirckheimer, 1506. Reproduced from Irving Lavin, *Drawings by Gianlorenzo Bernini* (Princeton: The Art Museum, Princeton University, 1981).

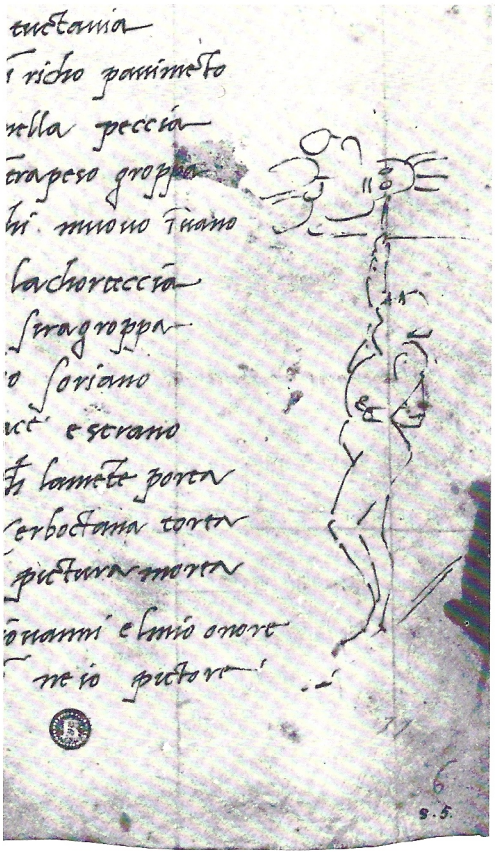

Fig. 4. Michelangelo Buonarroti. Sonnet on the Sistine Ceiling, 1508-1512. Reproduced from Irving Lavin, *Drawings by Gianlorenzo Bernini* (Princeton: The Art Museum, Princeton University, 1981).

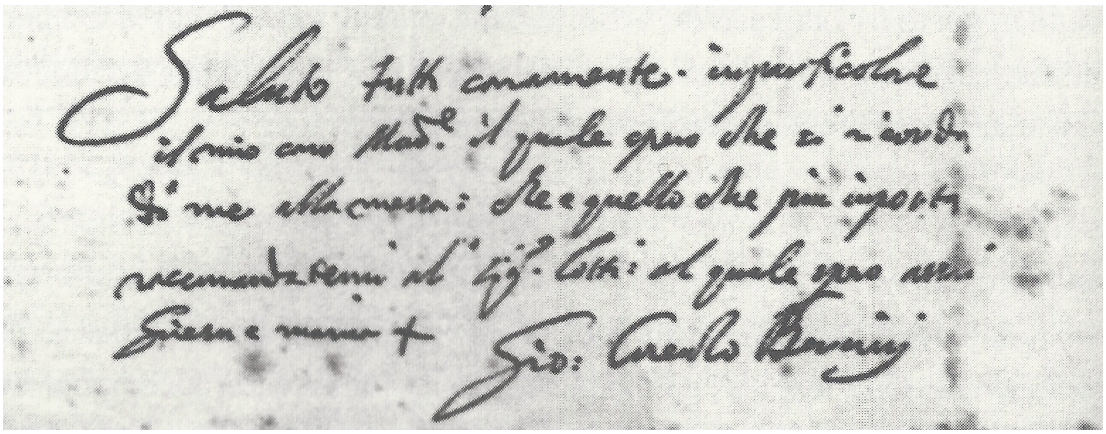

Fig. 5. A Sample of Gian Lorenzo Bernini's handwriting; postscript from a letter written by Mattia de' Rossi while traveling with Bernini to Paris. May 5, 1665. Reproduced from Franco Mormando, *Bernini: His Life and His Rome* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011).

Fig. 6. Diego Velazquez. *Isabella, Queen of Spain*, 1632. 128.5 x 99.5 cm. Reproduced from Artstor.

Fig. 7. Gian Lorenzo Bernini. *Preparatory Sketch for Portrait Bust of Cardinal Scipione Borghese*, 1632. Graphite and chalk on paper, 276 x 237 mm. Reproduced from Artstor.

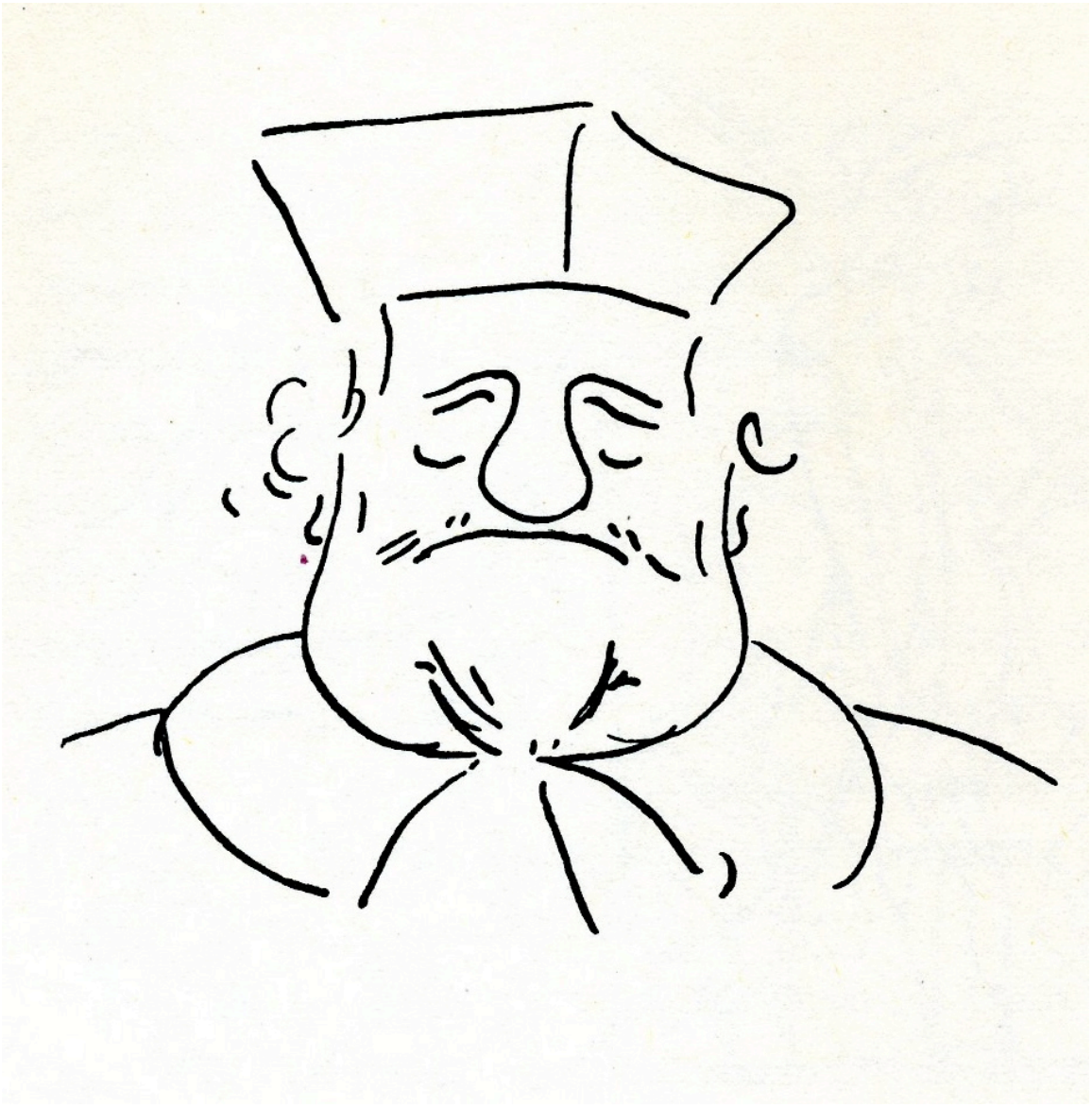

Fig. 8. Gian Lorenzo Bernini. *Caricature of Cardinal Scipione Borghese*. Pen and ink. Reproduced from Werner Hoffman, *Caricature: From Leonardo to Picasso* (London: John Calder, 1957).

Fig. 9. Gian Lorenzo Bernini. *Academic Study of a Seated Male Nude*, after 1630. Red and black chalk on buff paper, 57 x 43.5 cm. Reproduced from Ann Sutherland Harris, *Selected Drawings of Gian Lorenzo Bernini* (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1977).

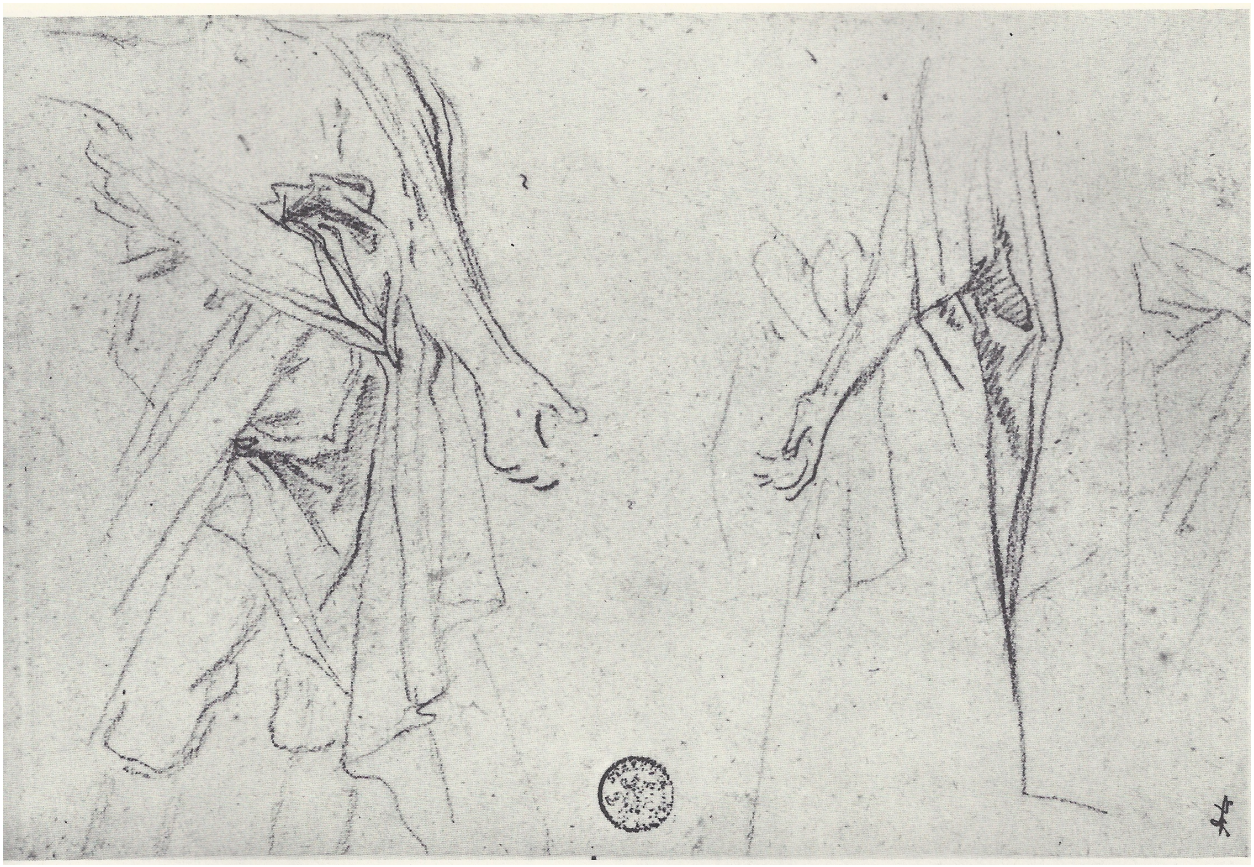

Fig. 10. Gian Lorenzo Bernini. *Two Studies for the Drapery of "St. Longinus,"* 1629-30. Red chalk on buff paper, 25.6 x 39.3 mm. Reproduced from Ann Sutherland Harris, *Selected Drawings of Gian Lorenzo Bernini* (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1977).

Fig. 11. Gian Lorenzo Bernini. *Caricature of Innocent XI*, 1676-1680. Pen and ink on paper, 11.4 x 18 cm. Reproduced from Arstor.

II. SETTING THE SCENE: BERNINI'S ROME

In order to fully appreciate how Bernini's caricature drawings functioned, it is necessary to first place the artist and these works into the context of Baroque Rome. 'Baroque' has been a troublesome term for many scholars; entire books have been dedicating to "rethinking" its use and purpose as an anachronistic term, and one disparaged in early art historical scholarship of fundamental scholars like Johann Joachim Winckelmann.[1] However, this thesis employs the term *Baroque* in order to extract some of the original potency of the term and to promote its value over the recently suggested "early modern," despite its previous pejorative connotations. A popular theory of its etymology has the word *baroque* derived from *barocco*, a Portuguese term for an irregularly shaped pearl; this object was prized by sixteenth-century jewelers for "its unpredictable departures from regularity and norms."[2] Baroque would not come to mean "strange" or distasteful until the eighteenth century in both France and Italy, and it is only first linked to art in 1757, when Antoine-Joseph Pernety writes in his *Dictionnaire Portatif de Peinture, Sculpture, et Gravure* that baroque is "that which is not in accord with the rules of proportions, but follows caprice…to mean that it is not in good taste."[3] Clearly, the work of Bernini and many of his contemporaries differed from that of High Renaissance artists like Michelangelo, and thus appeared "not in good taste" to many

[1] Helen Hills, *Rethinking the Baroque* (Burlington: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2011).
[2] Hills, *Rethinking the Baroque*, 12.
[3] Ibid.

early scholars, but it is precisely this seeming "caprice" and the desire to depict the extraordinary that was prized by Baroque artists and audiences.

The extraordinary relationship between audience and art was of particular interest for the Catholic Church during this period. The papal court held relatively little territorial power at the time, but Rome still served as the authoritative and symbolic center of the Catholic world. After the treatment, purpose, and reception of sacred images had come under attack during the Reformation, public measures were taken by the Church in order to draw believers back into the fold. At the final session of the Council of Trent in 1563, the Church determined that in art, "all lasciviousness be avoided...that there appear nothing disorderly, or unbecomingly or confusedly arranged, nothing profane, nothing indecorous."[4] It was also understood that images should appropriately act upon the viewer's imagination in order to impart a spiritual message, whether emotionally, intellectually, or sensually.[5] Unsurprisingly, this issuance left abundant room for interpretation. The years immediately following the Council were consumed with strict artistic regulations made by wary patrons and a cultural rigidity that would soon inspire the pontiffs of Bernini's lifetime to move toward a more humanist, flexible approach to patronage.[6] It is during this period, less than fifty years after the Council of Trent, that Baroque artists would create art that refused to simply spell out its meaning, and instead required the viewer to actively engage with it.[7] The artist's goal was often to elicit a

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[4] Theodore Alois Buckley, trans., *The Cannons and Decrees of the Council of Trent: Literally Translated into English* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006), 215.
[5] Gillgren and Snickare, *Performativity and Performance in Baroque Rome*, 10.
[6] Rita A. Scotti, *Basilica: The Splendor and the Scandal: Building St. Peter's* (New York: Penguin Group, 2006), 248.
[7] Beverly Louise Brown, "Between the Sacred and Profane," in *The Genius of Rome: 1592-1623*, ed. Beverly Louise Brown (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 2001), 277.

direct response from the audience, developing a theatrical space in which artwork and viewer could interact.

The work of Baroque artists and the reaction of Baroque audiences was not spurious as some may believe; rather, the people of this period had a unique self-awareness that allowed for them to both understand the dramatic nature of a piece and fully experience its intended emotion.[8] That is to say that the audience recognized the artistic intent of eliciting a response, yet experienced genuine reactions through the appreciation of the talent such an intention required. A sense of marvel is thus created in this interaction, allowing the viewer to not only acknowledge the skill that created the artwork, but also further enjoy the artwork because of its ability to draw the viewer into a performance of his own reaction. This relationship empowered viewer and artwork alike, creating a role for both in the understanding and performance of beliefs.

A particularly resonant example of the artistic intersection of performance and devotion is the practice of the *Quarant'ore*. This was a ritual ceremony named for the forty hours during which Christ rested in his tomb before his Resurrection. In a cycle of prayer lasting the same amount of time, the faithful would visit churches across the city, experiencing a slightly different *teatro* displaying the focus of the ritual: the Eucharist.[9] The *Quarant'ore* exemplified the Council of Trent's requirement that the host be permanently displayed on church altars, and it is this emphasis upon adoration that inspired a deluge of lavishly wrought tabernacles.[10] At the heart of this annual display in 1628 within the Cappella Paolina was Bernini's motif of a sunburst radiating from the

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[8] Erwin Panofsky, "What is Baroque?" in *Italian Baroque Art*, ed. Susan M. Dixon (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2008), 15.
[9] Warwick, *Bernini: Art as Theatre*, 45.
[10] Ibid.

host, an illusion achieved by some two thousand hidden lamps fitted with metal reflectors that shed light onto painted or plaster clouds.[11] This novel system, which replaced the ephemeral architecture and candles previously used, was designed by the artist himself and adapted by others for years to come.

The Forty Hours' Devotion was a ritual typical of the papal court during Bernini's lifetime, as it inspired involved worship through artistic innovation. With its potent network of artists, writers, architects, and willing patrons, the papal court soon became the standard-maker of pageants and festivals, both religious and secular. These performances were thought to be powerful tools that could ameliorate the public image of any honored diplomat being received by the Vatican.[12] In a unique position, Rome was both a local entity defined by the papal court and an international city viewed by Catholics around the world. The papal court not only ruled Rome, but also dictated its arts. Within powerful countries lead by steadfast Catholics, whole populations looked to the Vatican when bestowing approval upon art, behavior, and especially monarchs. In the decades following the Thirty Years' War (1618-1648), its identity as a stage for diplomatic affairs only strengthened.[13] Because processions and festivals celebrating the entrance of a diplomat or monarch were held to curry favorable public opinion, it is likely that these demonstrations reinforced within nobility the need to present themselves in artful trappings.

The interdependence between viewer and viewed was not limited to physical pieces of art, however. The public eye became a powerful audience to which the

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[11] Warwick, *Bernini: Art as Theatre*, 47.
[12] Laurie Nussdorfer, "Print and Pageantry in Baroque Rome," *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 29, 2 (1998): 439.
[13] Nussdorfer, "Print and Pageantry," 453.

individual catered a polished image of himself. In the seventeenth century, the metaphor of the world as a stage maintained its popularity, and Romans took this message to heart.[14] Similar to the diplomats and monarchs of other nations who used public display to manipulate reputation and cultivate power, the papal court in which Bernini worked required careful attention to one's public impression. The discussion of courteous behavior is pertinent to the analysis of Bernini's art and social interaction, as he occupied the positions of *cavaliere* (Italian knight) and of artist, each requiring certain behaviors when employed by the Church.

Within the papal court, there was a complex system of loyalty and ambition that both tied artists to the patrons who "discovered" them, as well as bound family members who shared courtly benefits. Families continuously struggled for the prestige and wealth that came from the highest offices of the Church, with the ultimate position being that of the pope. As pontiffs are elected rather than born into their position, a cunning mind and powerful connections were invaluable qualities for cardinals vying to accede to the papal throne. Additionally, by the time most popes were elected, they were generally well into old age, meaning that power traded hands frequently. For a courtier of any station, it was crucial to be wary of where one placed his allegiance, not to mention when or how publicly. It was within this fickle atmosphere that Bernini had to delicately adjust his own behavior and sense of loyalty in order to successfully work for one papacy and the next. It is this blurred boundary between life and art that defines the Baroque period; the term *performative* thus becomes a central one for the discussion not only of the period in which Bernini worked, but also of Bernini's art and self.

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[14] Nussdorfer, "Print and Pageantry," 453.

As discussed at length in Gillgren's and Snickare's recent scholarship on Baroque Rome, performativity is the ability of an artwork to not only describe or portray the world, but also to shape it.[15] This mutual influence is intrinsically bound to performance of some type, as it requires a relationship between the viewer and the viewed. Recall the *Quarant'ore* tradition that compelled the faithful to perform a 'pilgrimage' across the city of Rome, worshipping at the artistically enhanced altars. The sunburst display became a surrogate for spiritual light, inspiring awe through its unknown source and inviting the viewer to react to this imitation of the divine with deepened religious devotion. Devotees were also encouraged to say specific prayers or meditate upon predetermined topics at each hour in front of specific altars, thus incorporating art and viewer into a unique performance. The art served as a focal point for this religious demonstration, but the viewer maintained an active role through use of the art itself.

In his time spent working for the Church, Bernini would have recognized the compelling means of communication that performative art provided. Through the use of such art, not only did the papal court seek to reinvigorate devotion, but also to endorse its own image and that of powerful allies. Any individual within this social realm would naturally have adapted certain behaviors so that it might be possible to gain or maintain favor. The level of success an individual might obtain was tied to his position, but it was also closely related to the persona he was able to fashion for himself. This is certainly the case for Bernini, who achieved privileges far beyond those typically enjoyed by court artists. With his nearly unbroken employment record under eight different pontiffs, it is reasonable to claim that Bernini had a firm grasp upon the ideal comportment of a

[15] Peter Gillgren and Marten Snickare, "Introduction: By the Tomb of St. Genesius," in *Performativity and Performance in Baroque Rome*, ed. Peter Gillgren et al. (Burlington: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2012), 4-10.

courtier-artist, particularly in light of his ability to create caricatures of the privileged figures surrounding him.

THE ARTIST PERFORMS: BERNINI AS COURTIER AND CREATOR

Domenico Bernini, author of one of the three contemporary biographical sources on his father Gian Lorenzo, claims that the artist was one of only a handful who practiced caricature since few could "derive beauty from deformity," and thus "princes and other eminent personages" were flattered to have Bernini portray them in this way.[16] There is only one other source that verifies this assent: an anecdote recorded by Paul Fréart de Chantelou in his *Diary of the Cavaliere Bernini's Visit to France* (1665). Chantelou, who will be discussed at greater length in Chapter III, would be the champion of Bernini's story in France, as he was both entrusted with the artist's care during his stay and found Bernini's art to be on par with its international reputation. Though Chantelou did edit his diary before it was published, it was begun only four days after meeting Bernini and originally was intended to be shared with his brother for their mutual enjoyment, rather than as a biographical work.[17] Valuable information concerning the artist, his work, and reception of both can thus still be gleaned from this subjective source.

Chantelou's first reference to caricature crucially informs the timeline set out in the introduction of this thesis. Chantelou writes that while sketching a study of the King,

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[16] Domenico Bernini, trans. by Franco Mormando, *The Life of Gian Lorenzo Bernini* (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2011), 115.
[17] Paul Fréart de Chantelou, trans. Margery Corbett, *Diary of the Cavaliere Bernini's Visit to France* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985), 3.

Bernini observed an attendant whisper something in the King's ear and remarked "with a smile, 'These gentleman have the King to themselves all day long and they won't leave him to me even half an hour. I have a good mind to make a caricature of them.'"[18] Chantelou then says that no one understood the term or concept, thus requiring an explanation. This is worth noting, as it shows that at this time, the genre of caricature (understood as a humorous representation of a specific and recognizable individual) was still unknown in France. Therefore Bernini's caricature drawings were seen as distinctly different from earlier physiognomic studies, grotesques, or exaggerated genre sketches; very possibly his is the invention or introduction of 'modern' caricature.[19]

Chantelou provides another piece of context for Bernini's caricatures concerning audience in a later anecdote. The topic of caricature again comes up at the French court a few weeks after the artist's introduction of the genre, and Bernini mentions that he had made a caricature of Abbot Buti, a member of the Barberini entourage and accomplished librettist who happened to be present during Bernini's stay. Unable to find the drawing in order to show the King, he produces one "with a couple of strokes" on the spot for the King, "who studied it with much amusement and then passed it to Monsieur [the King's brother Philippe, duc d'Orléans] and the others who had come into the room…"[20] As Chantelou's wording is occasionally difficult to follow in this diary, one cannot be certain that Abbot Buti remained in the room for the showing of his caricature, but it is possible due to the fact that Chantelou mentions his presence in the same room in the previous paragraph. It is likely then that the caricature drawings were received by the subject or by the subject's close associates, and that these princely personages generally received

[18] de Chantelou, *Diary*, 129.
[19] de Chantelou, *Diary*, 130.
[20] de Chantelou, *Diary*, 188.

them with delight. Perhaps even more convincing than this is the fact that there is no record of Bernini being punished or chastised for these drawings. Had the works offended the audience, it follows that documentation of the negative reception would survive, like that of Cardinal Gaspar de Borja's unrealized threat following one of Bernini's particularly unsavory representations of him in a play.

As Spanish Ambassador to the Holy See, Borja's loyalty lay with the Spanish court, thus making him a thorn in the side of Urban VIII (r. 1623-1644), who was staunchly pro-French. The animosity between these two figures can be summarized in the papal consistory on the sixteenth of March in 1632. Under the pretense of presenting another matter, Borja took the floor and began a statement lauding the Spanish crown for its continuous support of the good of Christianity and condemning the hesitance of his Holiness in returning this support.[21] Ignoring Urban's shout of "Tace," translating roughly to "Shut up" in contemporary English, Borja continued his speech.[22] It was clear that Borja valued more his service to the Spanish king than his immediate interests in the papal court, something that Urban VIII never forgave nor something for which Borja would apologize.

Demonstrating his support for the pontiff, Bernini pokes fun at Borja in a comedy written around 1634. From a letter dated in the same year, an agent in Rome writes to the duke of Modena, describing Borja's fury at the veiled criticism within the play, which shows a "bull being beaten on the stage to everyone's laughter" and a servant who beats up a Spanish bully at the advice of a Frenchman.[23] The bull imagery references Urban's nickname for Borja, "bue nell'armi" ("bull in arms"), given both for the striding bull in

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[21] Harry B. Wehle, "A Great Velazquez," *The Metropolitan Museum of Art* Bulletin 1, 3 (1942):120.
[22] Wehle, 120.
[23] Stanislao Fraschetti, *Il Bernini: La sua vita, la sua opera, il suo tempo* (Milan: 1900), 262.

the cardinal's coat of arms and his tactless behavior.[24] Though the agent goes on to express worry for Borja's vengeance toward Bernini, naught seems to have ever come from his offense.

The targeted mockery of Borja in Bernini's play is close to caricature, yet it crucially highlights the main differences between the artist's work in theater and in caricature. In the play, the subject of Bernini's ridicule is not only essentially named, but also revealed to a public audience with the apparent intention of humiliating the adversary of a very powerful patron and protector. Bernini's caricature drawings, however, were created without the inscriptions that name the subjects, and they were only shared amongst the few who could and would appreciate them. I argue that they were not meant to insult their audience, but were instead created with the playfully tendered purpose of demonstrating Bernini's own privileged knowledge of the papal court's inner circle. Because they were saved and inscribed by various hands, it seems that these were kept as personal, collectible pieces rather than offensive jibes at individuals that managed to be saved over time.

One can understand how the caricature drawings could have become popular through the game-like reception of guessing at the person being portrayed or the joke associated with the subject's exaggerated features. The delight of discovering someone's identity through their flaws or their otherness—which likely had never been depicted in such an open way in these elite social circles—would have made these images even more enticing. This process evokes the courtly virtue of *maraviglia*, or a marvel-inducing mode of presentation, in that viewer unexpectedly finds himself in the position to determine the subject of the portrait, wondering at the balance of identifiable traits and

[24] Stanislao Fraschetti, *Il Bernini: La sua vita, la sua opera, il suo tempo* (Milan: 1900), 262.

the graphic style that prevents the image from being too knowable. It is very likely that Bernini read and interacted with works on the proper conduct of courtiers, such as Castiglione's *Il Cortegiano* (1528) and Della Casa's *Il Galateo* (1558). These works served as handbooks for men like Bernini who wished to embody virtues such as *maraviglia*; in fact, there is evidence that suggests the artist had copies of these works in his own private library.[25] Although Bernini was not of noble birth, he could take comfort in Castiglione's acknowledgement that a courtier need not come from an aristocratic family; the writer claims that a true courtier is one who has established his preeminence through defining actions. Bernini exemplifies Castiglione's ideal of *sprezzatura*, a behavioral ideal described by the writer in this passage:

> …practice in all things a certain sprezzatura, so as to conceal all art and make whatever is done or said appear to be without effort and almost without any thought. And I believe much grace comes of this: because everyone knows the difficulty of things that are rare and well done; wherefore facility in such things causes the greatest wonder; whereas, on the other hand, to labor and, as we say, drag forth by the hair of the head, shows an extreme want of grace, and causes everything, no matter how great it may be, to be held in little account. Therefore we may call that art true art which does not seem to be art…[26]

In his caricature drawings, Bernini creates delightful portraits at which the viewer marvels for the seeming ease with which they were created. It becomes all the more impressive that a recognizable likeness and underlying essence can be depicted when only using a handful of lines. Bernini could produce these seemingly on a whim and without study, as Chantelou describes in the Abbot Buti anecdote outlined above. Additionally, the intimate nature of the size and the manner in which these images were

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[25] Sarah McPhee, "Bernini's Books," *The Burlington Magazine* 142, 1168 (2000): 442.
[26] Baldassare Castiglione, trans. Charles S. Singleton, *The Book of the Courtier* (New York: Anchor Books, 1959), 43.

circulated shows Bernini's interest in using unexpected methods of presentation; in this intimate setting, there is a great sense of wonder and preciousness.

Bernini takes the virtues of *maraviglia* and *sprezzatura* one step further by turning each on its head through his use of humor. Humor is an inherently social phenomenon because it involves "play," a state in which "people take a nonserious attitude toward the things they are saying or doing, and they carry out these activities for their own sake."[27] It can also become a 'safe' method of communication in which implicit messages conveyed in an indirect manner influence the viewer; by nature of employing "incongruities and contradictory ideas" that serve multiple meanings at once, humor can mediate situations that run "the risk of being too confrontational, potentially embarrassing, or otherwise risky."[28] In the role of courtier-artist, Bernini walked the fine line between ingratiating himself and overstepping social boundaries. Therefore, in producing works that poke fun at members of high offices, Bernini opens a humorous dialogue concerning his status, his relationship with patrons, and his artistic persona.

[27] Rod A. Martin, *The Psychology of Humor: An Integrative Approach* (Burlington, MA: Elsevier Academic Press, 2007), 6.
[28] Martin, *The Psychology of Humor*, 17.

III. The Caricatures of a French Knight and Cardinal Nini

After suffering through an initially cool relationship with Innocent X (r. 1644-1655), Bernini redoubled his efforts to secure his position as the premier artist of the papacy. Innocent's successor would prove to be a much better match for Bernini, as he, like the artist, keenly understood the value of public image. Fabio Chigi, nuncio of Cologne, was elected as Pope Alexander VII in 1655. His election was largely due to his being the least politicized candidate amongst the three camps within the conclave: those who supported the Barberini and France, those who supported the Pamphili and Spain, and those who harbored an independent agenda (the so-called *Squadrone volante* or "flying squadron").[1] The supporters of foreign interests ultimately would secure his election based on his limited time in Rome and his personal witness of the greatly lessened power of the papal seat through his facilitation of the Peace of Westphalia. Chigi, however, began his papacy with a public act of defiance that would distance his association with these supporters. In assuming the papal name Alexander, Chigi claimed that he wanted to align himself with Alexander III, who was able to "stand up to his powerful contemporaries."[2] Alexander VII also decidedly eschewed foreign support by focusing on reforms of spirituality and administration at a local level.

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[1] Dorothy Metzger Habel, *The Urban Development of Rome in the Age of Alexander VII* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 6.
[2] Habel, *Urban Development*, 326.

In the midst of this inwardly focused regime, Bernini created a caricature drawing that was emblematic of this political and social moment. Drawing from current winds of favor, the artist demonstrated his own acuity and privilege through a visual and comedic comparison between his beloved Rome and a bullying France in the personification of two courtly figures. This caricature drawing not only alludes to Bernini's understanding of a growing global conflict between the two political powers, but also his personal knowledge of the inner workings of courtly status.

At the local level, Alexander VII, too, found the inspiration for a public image that would have much broader ramifications. Maarten Delbeke has examined the "nuovo teatro," or new stage, of *Roma alessandrina* (the Rome of Pope Alexander), analyzing the architecture as a theatrical endeavor of the pope, as well as the public spaces in which he could 'perform' a papal persona.[3] Delbeke describes the episode in which Alexander declines the gift of a statue in the Palazzo dei Conservatori on Capitol Hill, suggesting that he recognized that monumental representation was not required in order to create public persona. By declining a gift from the Roman senate, but paid for by the people of Rome, the pope would prove in the public eye that he was a pontiff of great modesty and prudence. Alexander would finally agree to having an inscription installed in the Palazzo dei Conservatori detailing his modest refusal and the initial impetus for the statue: his sage measures against the spread of the bubonic plague from May 1656 to March 1657. This inscription's service to Alexander is twofold; the pope both gained a permanent testament to his good nature and a stage upon which to publically act out his virtuousness.

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[3] Maarten Delbeke, "Oprar sempre come in teatro: The Rome of Alexander VII as the Theatre of Papal Self-Representation," *Art History* 33, 2 (April 2010): 353-363.

Alexander's papacy is synonymous with urban renewal projects that would virtually complete the face of Rome as it is known today. Bernini was not the sole artist involved in the projects that would create *Roma alessandrina*, but he would shoulder responsibility for the majority of them. His skill for multitasking enabled him to produce the Colonnade of St. Peter's Square (1655-1666), the Cathedra Petri of St. Peter's Basilica (1656-1666), the Scala Regia (1663-1666), and several other iconic structures. Considering both men's age and health issues during this period, it is remarkable that both pontiff and artist successfully designed and completed these city plans. Only a year apart in age, both Alexander and Bernini would have been in their late fifties and early sixties during the years of Alexander's reign, a somewhat senior age span for the time. Plagued by poor health since his childhood, Alexander was ever conscious of impending death, even commissioning Bernini to make two *memento mori* objects, a marble skull and lead coffin, only days after his election.[4] Bernini suffered a similar brush with mortality in September of 1655, when he was wracked with a grave case of malaria that would last for months and would prompt the artist to draw up a last will and testament.[5] Despite—and perhaps as a result of—this tremulous start, Bernini and Alexander would build a working relationship that would establish their respective roles and status. Under Alexander's reign, Bernini would be given the opportunity to expand his knowledge of the world, though for the artist that would only mean venturing past the Italian border.

A testament to Bernini's elevated position at this time can be seen in the artist's caricature drawing of a French knight and Cardinal Giacomo Filippo Nini. The two courtly figures of the drawing face each other, inviting a humorous comparison between

[4] Franco Mormando, *Bernini: His Life and His Rome* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2011), 198-199.
[5] Mormando, *Bernini*, 200-201.

not only the men themselves, but also the countries they represent. The cultural stereotypes understood by Bernini and his privileged audience are thus magnified; a fussily dressed Frenchman exudes a sense of entitlement and artifice, while the humbly presented Italian cardinal grins with perhaps genuine, yet also comical subservience. As with Alexander's show of public magnificence, Bernini's cultivated demonstration of his unique position extended even beyond Rome, most notably in the royal court of France.

GETTING ACQUAINTED: ALEXANDER'S INTRODUCTION OF BERNINI TO *LA FAMIGLIA* AND TO THE COURT OF FRANCE

In Alexander's hometown of Siena, Bernini's work can be seen on both the Chigi Chapel and the new cupola lantern of the cathedral. His familiarity with both Siena and the Chigi family would have been extremely useful in the caricature drawing examined at length in this chapter. The figure depicted at the viewer's right is Cardinal Giacomo Filippo Nini, *maggiordomo* to Alexander VII. Also born in Siena, Nini was an intimate member of the Chigi family circle.[6] It was Fabio Chigi, later to become Alexander VII, who brought Nini to Rome where he would be elevated to cardinal in 1664. As *maggiordomo*, Nini would have had much interaction with Alexander and the entire papal *famiglia*; Nini would have suggested candidates to the pope for household offices and managed various palace accounts. By nature of this relationship with the pope, Nini would also have been well within Bernini's circle of regular interaction. In addition to knowing each other by reputation and position, Bernini and Nini likely would have

[6] C.D. Dickerson III, Anthony Sigel, and Ian Wardropper, *Bernini: Sculpting in Clay* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2012), 71.

become more closely acquainted during Alexander's renovation of the Palazzo del Quirinale, as Bernini was named architect of the wing in which Nini's quarters were placed.[7] Bernini and Nini's relationship evidently became sociable enough to warrant Nini's collection of three drawings by Bernini (perhaps even several *modelli*[8]) and Nini's countersigning with Bernini the payments for the work on the Ponte S. Angelo.[9]

Facing the *maggiordomo* is another figure, that of a French knight. This figure has particular significance when reinserted into the temporal and political context of the drawing's creation. As has been mentioned, Alexander held great disregard for the foreign powers and their supporters, despite his position as pontiff largely being dependent upon them. This tension was manifest in his dealings with Louis XIV of France, as the young king was quick to establish his dominance over any other power, be it national or papal. In 1662, Cardinal Antonio Barberini, a former patron of Bernini's who was sympathetic to the French, wrote to Bernini from Paris.[10] In his letter, Barberini revisits the idea of Bernini visiting Paris in order to work for the royal French court. In doing so, the cardinal hoped to further ingratiate himself with Louis, who sought to establish himself as a magnificent patron and to publicize his name to even greater extent. Bernini, ever wary of losing favor in the fickle world of papal patronage, had responded to these numerous inquiries with evasive, but courteous responses. Alexander's hand was forced, however, when on an August night in 1662, an armed scuffle between the pope's Corsican guards and the soldiers of the French ambassador resulted in the death of the

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[7] Habel, *Urban Development*, 40.
[8] Tomaso Montanari, "Creating an Eye for Models: The Role of Bernini," in *Bernini: Sculpting in Clay* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2012), 71.
[9] Irving Lavin, *Visible Spirit: The Art of Gianlorenzo Bernini, vol. 2* (London: The Pindar Press, 2009), 1042.
[10] Mormando, *Bernini*, 247.

page of the ambassador's wife.[11] Louis XIV quickly took this as another opportunity to publically dominate a rival; the king claimed that Alexander intentionally incited the incident and demanded that the pope fulfill a list of reparations. In his impatience for a reaction from the pope, Louis directed troops to seize the papal territory of Avignon and to head toward Rome itself. With the threat of imminent military conflict, Alexander was compelled to agree completely to all of the French king's terms and to sign the Treaty of Pisa in 1664. After this humiliating affair and Bernini's reception of a personal letter from Jean-Baptiste Colbert (Louis XIV's chief minister and his superintendent of buildings, arts, and manufacturing), Alexander finally conceded in the symbolic "tug-of-war" over Bernini the following year by granting the artist permission to go to Paris.[12] Bernini accepted Colbert's request to submit a design for the new Louvre and arrived in Paris in June of 1665. Bernini's experiences with the French court undoubtedly were on his mind when he sketched the humorous figure of a French knight opposite the caricature drawing of Cardinal Nini (Fig. 12).

HUMOR AS INGRATIATION: THE CARICATURE OF A CARDINAL

The dating of Bernini's caricatures of Cardinal Nini and a French Knight has not been firmly established, but given that Nini was made cardinal in 1664 and that Bernini visited France from May through October of 1665, the drawing was likely created in 1665, just prior to or following this visit. The figure of Cardinal Nini, as the inscription reads above his head, is composed of quickly drawn lines of brown ink. Taking up a full

[11] Mormando, *Bernini*, 249.
[12] Mormando, *Bernini*, 251.

half of the 17.9 by 22.2 centimeter sheet, the figure's flattened, nearly skeletal appearance immediately draws the viewer's attention to its sharp profile.[13] Nini's steeply sloped forehead ends in the razor peak of his nose. The severity of the nose's shape is repeated in the jagged pattern of upper lip, two rows of horse-like teeth, lower lip, and chin. Nini's visible eye is a mere suggestion; an incomplete circle lacking a pupil sits in a sunken cavity implied by one large dipped line on the bottom. Without a distinct pupil, the eye widens in the crazed, overcompensating expression of an exhausted man unsuccessfully trying to appear presentable. The wild curls of his hair echo this expression as their hasty, voluminous swirls contrast with his gaunt face and simple *zucchetto* (ecclesiastical skullcap). His grin is pasted on, or more accurately, it is revealed by peeling back the skin across his skull in the permanent position of a fawning *maggiordomo*. Perhaps he is even gritting his teeth in order to hold back his tongue. This enormous smile is clearly the focus of this humorous composition; it is drawn most deliberately, as can be seen both in the dark hue of the ink and the neatness of the lines composing his teeth. The lines of Nini's teeth are much darker, perhaps saturated with ink because Bernini took greater time and care to make the severe squares. Nini's garb is added last in skipping lines that break and pale with less ink, merely adding a piece of context in the schematic dress of a cardinal.

There is no attempt to create depth through modeling in this particular portrait. The cardinal appears skeletal, so generically displayed that the drawing clearly had to be shown amongst individuals who would recognize its unique specificity. The composition

[13] While handling this drawing at the Istituto Nazionale per la Grafica, I was able to confirm that the sheet originally was larger, as it was later cut, removing part of the "Il Card.le Nini" inscription and resulting in a split of the sheet at the bottom left. It is possible that this re-sizing also points to the caricature drawing's collectability, as it could be altered to fit in an album or other personal receptacle.

has been reduced to the absolutely essential lines required to assemble likeness. The particular sparseness of line in this image is remarkable even amongst the small extant corpus of caricature drawings by Bernini. In so graphically flattening the image, Bernini ensures that in spite of recognizing Nini as an individual, the viewer cannot dissociate Nini from his defining characteristic of subservience. Barely elaborated as an individual, some known joke or comedic description must have been apparent in this drawing of Nini, thus making it all the more enticing for the audience to name the figure.

Nini was a member of Fabio Chigi's service from Chigi's term as nuncio through his papacy. Though he was not a member of the Chigi family, Nini would be elected as cardinal and papal *maggiordomo*. It was this initial expression of distaste for nepotism—a vice to which he would later succumb—that garnered further support for Alexander VII's election. Naturally the honor of such titles and Alexander's implied confidence in bestowing them also would have been even greater for Nini because he was not a Chigi. It can be inferred both from the unique situation in which Nini found himself and the treatment of Nini in Bernini's caricature drawing that the *maggiordomo* was under much pressure (internally or externally) to be a loyal steward. In the position of *maggiordomo*, Nini was responsible for supervising the papal household, administering justice in civil and criminal matters concerning household officials, and accommodating papal audiences. With these responsibilities came a list of enviable privileges that publically expressed his position. First, Nini was permitted to alter his coat of arms by combining half of Alexander's to his own and by adding ten pink acorns instead of the usual six.[14] He was also allowed to wear the purple *mantelletta* (small three-quarter length coat

[14] Philippe Levillain, *The Papacy: An Encyclopedia* (New York: Routledge, 2002), 738.

without sleeves) and carry the keys to the cabinets containing sacred relics of Saints Peter and Paul.[15] Perhaps even more impressive than these fashionable statements of status were the privileges that allowed Nini intimate access to the pope. According to his position, Nini could sit to the immediate right of the thrown, take "precedence over patriarchs and bishops while attached to the pope's person," and take the final view of the pontiff before sealing his casket at his burial.[16] Certainly Nini would want to protect this elevated status with whatever means he had available, perhaps even to the point that he would appear like the inhuman 'yes-man' of Bernini's depiction.

In order to unpack the implications of this portrait, it is necessary to revisit the unique nature of caricature drawings. These pieces were not commissioned, meaning that Bernini did not have to adhere to a patron's guidelines, desires, or expectations; he was free to experiment with style, subject matter, composition, and audience. With this freedom, Bernini chose to focus on humor and intimacy, drawing the likenesses of people with witty distortions that exaggerated the pre-existing "defects" made by nature.[17] As was mentioned in the introductory chapters, the size of the caricatures accommodated a small audience of viewers to consult one sheet at a time, creating a strong sense of insiderness. Only those with privileged access to this elite social circle would be able to view the image, recognize the individual, and understand the joke.

In capturing Nini's person and personality on paper, Bernini not only touts his artistic prowess, but also slyly emphasizes his personal knowledge of those closest to the pope. Only someone who spent enough time at the papal court and who was granted privileged access to its social circles would be able to readily depict one of the pope's

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[15] Levillain, *The Papacy*, 739.
[16] Levillain, *The Papacy*, 739.
[17] Domenico Bernini, *The Life of Gian Lorenzo Bernini,* 115.

right-hand men. Bernini stretches this social advantage to the point of intimacy by lampooning Nini; if Bernini was able to mock individuals gently enough to escape consequences or even, if Domenico is to be believed, to flatter those individuals, he establishes his status as one nearing that of these prominent individuals. By choosing only to share the caricature drawings with the elite circles of court (in Domenico's words, "princes and other eminent personages"), Bernini indirectly reassures the members that these humorous portraits will only be shared amongst 'friends'; they are not meant to satirize or incite political change. This inserts Bernini directly into the inner circle.

Though there would be no doubt that Bernini was of a different status than cardinals, officials, and popes, Bernini used humor as a source of ingratiation with these individuals. By creating 'in-jokes,' Bernini could build a sense of group just broad enough to include himself. Martin describes this phenomenon in his *The Psychology of Humor*:

> Although humor can be used to reinforce status differences between people, it can also be a way of enhancing cohesion and a sense of group identity. Gary Alan Fine (1977) used the term *idioculture* to describe the system of knowledge, beliefs, and customs by which a small group of people defines itself and enables its members to share a sense of belonging and cohesion. He suggested that humor, in the form of friendly teasing, funny nicknames, shared 'in-jokes,' and slang terms, can contribute to the idioculture of a group, providing a way for members to construct a shared reality and sense of meaning.[18]

Bernini clearly understood the potential of humor for building his status and securing relationships for the future. In finding the ridiculous within these figures so often regarded at a distance due to their titles, Bernini constructed a space for personal connection. He implicitly asserted his own irreplaceable position at the papal court not only because of the quality of his work, but also because he fashioned himself as more

[18] Martin, *The Psychology of Humor*, 122.

than an artist. Bernini's charismatic persona of courtier-artist made him appear a necessity at court.

THE FUN IN THE FOREIGN: A CARICATURE OF A FRENCH KNIGHT

Bernini's social tact and interpersonal intuition was not limited to the papal court. As was outlined at the beginning of the chapter, Bernini became a diplomatic pawn under Alexander VII. It is perhaps just before or upon his return from France that Bernini made his caricature of a French knight, seen on the left of Nini's caricature portrait. Though it is inscribed simply as "un cavaliere francese," it is very possible that this caricature is a specific portrait.[19] With the knight's distinct features and his pairing with Cardinal Nini, it seems unlikely that Bernini drew this figure purely from imagination. Though the inscription itself cannot be entirely trusted, as the handwriting is not Bernini's, it does provide context for the portrait. A later owner unable to positively identify the individual might have interpreted the figure as merely a noble Frenchman given his dress and appearance. Though the knight's image may or may not be that of an individual, the caricature very much falls into the category of humor through stereotype, and thus the joke can still be enjoyed without further identification.

Nearly the same height as Nini's figure, the knight only takes up a narrow section of his half of the sheet. He, too, is seen in strict profile, a most unflattering view considering his facial embellishments. His rather bulbous forehead stands in full glory as his long sheet of coiffed hair begins near the back of his skull. Perhaps more likely—

[19] Cecil Gould has similarly thought another caricature inscribed "un cavaliere francese" by Bernini is actually a portrait of Jean-Baptiste Colbert. See Gould, *Bernini in France,* 31.

given Bernini's disinclination to cover his own balding head[20]—is that the knight has been caught embarrassingly unaware of the fact that his magnificent wig has slipped out of place. Meticulously groomed eyebrows and long lashes frame a studied nonchalant gaze. An undulating bridge ends in the button of his nose before sliding back into a recessed upper lip. This sharp under-bite is only made more humorous by the extension of a chin that almost appears to be a finger wagging at some *faux pas*. There is less attention to the handling of his dress (note how the circles of his shirt buttons do not complete), yet the overall frills of proper dress are made clear in the waves of his cravat and the voluminous curl of his sleeve. The emphasis on personally tuned appearance speaks to the current stereotype of the fashion-obsessed French, particularly those of the French court with whom Bernini would interact during his time in the country.

In early June of 1665, Bernini would finally meet the key players of the French court after a journey filled with spectacular reception. In a letter to the Cardinal Nephew Flavio Chigi, King Louis XIV stated that Bernini would know the magnitude of his appreciation by the treatment he would receive in France, and indeed, Bernini did.[21] So great was the pomp of his reception from Lyons to the royal court, that Jacques Esbaupin, a maître d'hôtel to Louis, reported that the artist was "visited by all the officials of the cities through which he passed with those courtesies that are usually given to great princes and ambassadors."[22] Unfortunately, much of Bernini's time at the French court would not stand up to this reception. The artist certainly built a rapport with Louis, but Bernini would never succeed in his original goal of designing the new Louvre, nor would

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[20] de Chantelou, *Diary,* 14.
[21] de Chantelou, *Diary*, 4.
[22] Ibid.

he find many friends in the circle of French nobility around him. Prejudiced against the foreign Bernini, most of the tension during the Italian artist's time in France was created by the aforementioned Colbert and by Charles Perrault, Colbert's chief assistant in connection with the royal buildings and brother of Claude Perrault, the architect who would eventually create the east façade of the Louvre. Bernini did nothing to mollify their combined opposition, however; in spite of his well-known gift for entertainment through witty and charming conversation, Bernini was extremely self-confident and unapologetically frank, qualities that often shocked the French.[23] The candor with which he claimed his distaste for French art (something he shared with most Italians of the period), would lead the King to exclaim, "At least he's praised something in France!" when Bernini acknowledged Poussin's skill in several paintings found within Chantelou's home.[24] Bernini had clearly won over the King; Louis accepted Bernini's every whim in studying him, whether at Mass, whilst playing tennis, or from below as the artist sat at his feet.[25] However, it would seem that the mutual admiration between King and artist would be the only positive international relationship by the end of Bernini's visit.

Bernini's caricature of the French knight appears to reference existing prejudices between Italian and French personalities. In particular, the grip that fashion held on the French is mocked through Bernini's emphasis on the knight's wig and his particular dress. The rather obsessive, uniform waves of the knight's wig suggest the great care with which the French nobility were known to dress. Attitudes toward nobility in France were altered significantly during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries as the concept of

[23] Gould, *Bernini in France,* 5.
[24] de Chantelou, *Diary*, xix.
[25] de Chantelou, *Diary*, xx.

medieval warrior evolved into the early modern aristocrat.[26] With this evolution came a list of new noble virtues, chief among them being *honnêteté* and taste. Nobles were thought by many contemporary theorists to have an innate sense of morality and intellectuality that would manifest itself in a specific taste for food, decoration, and fashion.[27] This taste then became a social marker under the reign of Louis XIV, creating an atmosphere of competition for "credit," or the respect of other courtiers and favor from the King; in fact, it was not uncommon for nobles to look for out-of-date clothing or a miss-step during dances in order to discredit others.[28]

It was also during this time that the embrace of luxury was realized as a solution for boosting the national economy. Louis both prohibited the importation of foreign luxury textiles and subsidized French textile and lace manufacturers (the latter tactic suggested by Colbert).[29] Though Louis used fashion as a means of furthering political independence from rival markets, fashion also become a national fascination because it was "grounded in nothing more menacing than consensus practice and the shifting whims of the people."[30] These whims soon became widespread fodder for writers. As early as 1604, fashion's influence on France was satirized in pamphlets, particularly for its fleeting, illogical nature and the "strange behaviors" it prompted.[31] So-called "fashion prints" were also circulated in the seventeenth century, and for many, their initial

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[26] Donna J. Bohanan, *Fashion Beyond Versailles: Consumption and Design in Seventeenth Century France* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2012), 9.
[27] Bohanan, *Fashion Beyond Versailles*, 10-11.
[28] Kathryn Norberg and Sandra Rosenbaum, ed. *Fashion Prints in the Age of Louis XIV: Interpreting the Art of Elegance* (Lubbock, TX: Texas Tech University Press, 2014), xviii.
[29] Kathryn Norberg, "Louis XIV: King of Fashion?" in *Fashion Prints in the Ages of Louis XIV: Interpreting the Art of Elegance*, 157-159.
[30] William Ray, "Fashion as Concept and Ethic in Seventeenth-Century France," in *Fashion Prints in the Age of Louis XIV: Interpreting the Art of Elegance,* 98.
[31] Ray, "Fashion as Concept and Ethic in Seventeenth-Century France," 93.

intention was to provide artists with information on costumes (Fig. 13).[32] Depicting non-individual figures with impeccably constructed and complete outfits, these prints eventually served as inspiration for both artist and consumer.

With the world beginning to look toward France as a fashion capital—or at least remarking upon the French court's apparent absorption in it—Bernini would have found great material for caricature. He dismantles the seriousness of fashion in his caricature of the French knight by highlighting several incongruities: the ill-positioned wig contrasts with the strict grooming of the figure's eyebrows; his gaze is calm and open, though he appears to bite his upper lip in an effort to hold back some smarting remark; and this repressive under-bite contradicts the disapproving angle of his pointed chin. The caricatures were meant to be viewed by Italians, as the inscriptions read in Italian and imply an intimate knowledge of the papal court through their identification of Cardinal Nini. Thus the "otherness" of the French knight would not only highlight the French knight's lack of desired *honnêteté*, but also contrast his selfish attitude with the servitude of the Italian *maggiordomo*. While the *maggiordomo* appears to lose himself entirely in the act of pleasing his superiors, the Frenchman seems to mentally note the infractions of the unseen object of his gaze in the hopes that he might discredit a competitor for royal favor. The confrontation between the knight and Nini demonstrates the two kinds of humor at play within the drawing: the teasing quality of Nini's portrait and the biting quality of the French knight's image. The social bond between the caricature drawing's audience members is strengthened by the particular, privileged awareness required for the identification of the subjects; the viewer needs both to know Nini personally and to have

[32] Françoise Tétart-Vittu, trans. Kathryn Norberg, "The Fashion Print: An Ambiguous Object," in *Fashion Prints in the Ages of Louis XIV: Interpreting the Art of Elegance*, 4.

knowledge of current social attitudes and tropes concerning the French court in order to recognize the portrait and appreciate the foreign individual or stereotype.

The caricature drawing serves as a humorous commentary on Bernini's idea of or experience with French culture, but it also serves as a foil to his own (genuine or affected) humility. In spite of his well-known ego, Bernini strove to create a more courteous persona through acting the part of modest or deferential artist, particularly with the most influential figures in his life. One example of this contrived modesty is found in Domenico's account of Christina of Sweden's arrival for a visit at Bernini's home:

> Bernini, who was at that moment absorbed in his work, received her, dressed just as he was, wearing the clothes of his profession, even though he had had the time to change into something different. To those who had advised him to change his clothing, the artist replied that "he had no attire more appropriate with which to receive a queen wishing to visit an artist than this coarse, rough garb, which was indeed proper to that talent that had elevated him to the status of artist in the estimation of the world." The sublime mind of that great lady was able to penetrate the significance of this gesture on Bernini's part and not only did her opinion of him consequently rise all the more, she, as a further demonstration of her esteem, actually touched the garment with her own hands.[33]

As with Bernini's careful control over the way in which his art was received or unveiled, the artist ensured that his own persona was revealed with *maraviglia*. He so cunningly presents himself as the modest—yet ever cultured—instrument of incomparable art that the patron is simultaneously flattered by his adherence to social niceties and impressed by the noble way in which he demonstrates this adherence. The French knight pales in comparison; in spite of his dubious attempt to appear the polished, intellectual noble, he

[33] Bernini, *The Life of Gian Lorenzo,* 175.

emanates the *schadenfreude* of courtiers who monitored one another in the attempt to diminish rival 'credit.'

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With his already lengthy career in Rome (Alexander's was the fifth papacy in which he had worked), Bernini was steeped in the experience of 'playing to' the patron. Through trial and error, he honed his own particular successful strategies for cultivating and maintaining relationships. Humor was both a clever and powerful tactic for Bernini because he was able to tread the line between intimate and impertinent, servant and social equal. Humor, as has been noted, is an intrinsically social concept, and Bernini was nothing if not a social person. Nearly every description of the artist by contemporaries includes an allusion to his temperament of "all fire", spryness even into old age, and talent for lively, sound conversation despite lacking formal schooling.[34] Bernini sought to ingratiate himself with a group far above his own social standing, and soon found his footing through the use of *maraviglia*, *sprezzatura*, and his own artistic talent. Humor connected these virtues, breaking down many of the barriers between artist and patron.

By presenting himself as an insider who beautifies the Church with his art, who experiences the private workings of the papal palace, and who creates aesthetic *private* jokes about privileged members with such ease, Bernini fashions another artwork: his own persona. The caricature drawings were sketched by Bernini's hand, and were then passed from one privileged hand to another within this sophisticated group. They were never published or shared with the public, only saved occasionally as "intimate and

[34] de Chantelou, *Diary*, 14-15.

private artifacts."[35] In the safe perimeters of this private space, Bernini inverts the traditional ideal beauty of portraiture through the use of visual humor. Diana Donald has argued that it is the reciprocity of this humor and beauty that gives authority to both.[36] In such an analysis, one can see Bernini's understanding of his audience; his humorous play with traditional theory would both flatter the viewer's intellect and delight the viewer's eye with the display of figures drawn so swiftly and deftly as to epitomize *sprezzatura*.

As the engineer of this private group of joke-sharers, Bernini silently injects himself into their elevated sphere. Though he is of a lower status, Bernini's position as artist does not negate his construction of the social space creating the joke, a space that ensures a position for the artist amongst the privileged members. Through the caricatures, the elite found the comfort of relishing in their own humanity without fear of public opinion or disapproval. Though the magnification of flaws could have been reason enough to ostracize Bernini, the artist-courtier manipulated the manner in which these flaws were seen, received, and understood. Bernini was therefore able to occupy a role within the social circles of the Vatican precisely because he fashioned and acted out that role himself.

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[35] Amelia Rauser, *Caricature Unmasked: Irony, Authenticity, and Individualism in Eighteenth-Century English Prints* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2008), 15.
[36] Diana Donald, *The Age of Caricature: Satirical Prints in the Reign of George III, 1760-1820* (London: J. Horne, 1992), 49.

Fig. 12. Gian Lorenzo Bernini. *Caricature of a French Knight and Caricature of Cardinal Nini*, 1664-1665. Pen and brown ink on white paper, 17.9 x 22.2 cm. Reproduced from Ministry of Heritage and Culture, National Institute for Graphics, Rome.

Fig. 13. Jacques Callot. *La Noblesse: Le gentilhomme enroulé dans son manteaux bordé de fourrures*, 1602-1635. Etching on paper, 14.3 x 9.2 cm. Reproduced from Artstor.

IV. The Caricatures of Cardinal Antonio Barberini and Cardinal Flavio Chigi

Bernini's five-month stay in France was the first and only step the artist would take out of his native country. Though his time at the French court would fail to produce any additions to his list of widely well-received commissions, it did provide him with a new global perspective that perhaps ironically strengthened his loyalty to Italy, and specifically to Rome. Leaving without a ready or sanctioned plan for the new Louvre, Bernini would only continue to experience the disfavor of the French. Rumors soon circulated in Louis XIV's court that the artist felt snubbed by the monetary compensation given to him at his departure, words that would devastate any goodwill that had been fostered during the visit should the rumors reach the King's ear. With a bruised ego, the nuisance of dispelling potentially reputation-ruining gossip, and the anxiety of completing three monumental projects (the Cathedra Petri, the Scala Regia, and the Colonnade of St. Peter's Square), one can safely assume that Bernini felt relief when arriving home on December 3, 1665. He had survived the French court with the aid of intermediaries and friendly advisors, two of whom lie at the heart of this chapter: Cardinals Antonio Barberini and Flavio Chigi.

This thesis asserts that the caricature drawing inscribed "Card. Antonio Barb." and "Il Card. Chigi quando era giovane," described simply as "two male caricatures" by the Istituto Nazionale per la Grafica where it is held, depicts Cardinals Antonio Barberini

and Cardinal Flavio Chigi. This assertion is based upon the striking resemblance between contemporary portraits of Flavio Chigi (Fig. 14) and the caricature of Cardinal Chigi. Given that Flavio Chigi was made cardinal in 1657, the "Card. Antonio Barb." must be Antonio Barberini, nephew of Alexander VII, rather than his uncle Antonio Marcello Barberini, who died in 1646. The dating of the caricature drawing at hand (Fig. 15), as with the caricatures of Cardinal Nini and the French knight (Fig. 12), has not yet in scholarly literature been specified beyond the years of Bernini's lifetime. Using the phrasing of its inscriptions and the context of the subjects' lives, however, this thesis has narrowed the span of the drawing's possible creation dates. Both men are referred to as cardinals, meaning that it must be at least as late as 1657, the year that Chigi (the younger of the two) gained this title. Similarly, it is likely not later than 1671, as Barberini died that year. The inscription above Chigi's head describes the caricature as being of the cardinal "quando era giovane" ("when he was young"), meaning that Chigi is 'older' by the time of the drawing's creation. This description combined with the pairing of the two cardinals seems to point to a time in which the two would have simultaneously had significant influence in Bernini's life or held significant opportunity for Bernini. These specifications fit the period between December of 1665 and May of 1667, the time of Bernini's reentry in Rome and the time of Alexander VII's death, respectively. As will be discussed, both cardinals were a key part of Bernini's life not only as old and close acquaintances of the artist, but also as *camerlengo* and papal nephew seeking to maintain their own status through authority and secular political loyalties.

Building upon relationships that the artist had cultivated over years, Bernini chose to portray Barberini and Chigi in a playful and necessarily intimate manner during a time

of hurried construction and forming alliances. Bernini's caricatures of the cardinals suggest that the artist keenly felt a need to reaffirm and strengthen his ties to authoritative players in the shifting atmosphere of the papal court. With Rome's strained relationship with France and a chronically ill pope, power seemed as if it was again about to change hands. Once back in the familiar setting of the Catholic capital, Bernini would sharpen his focus on maintaining the favor of those with the most clout. Rather than alluding to his high position through knowledge of court life in both France and Italy (as seen in the caricatures discussed in the previous chapter), Bernini directly connects himself to two of the most influential figures of the papal court, making a statement about his own status and pursuing support for the seemingly imminent change in rule.

CHANGING CHARACTER: THE CARICATURE OF CARDINAL BARBERINI

The ivory paper sheet on which the caricatures are drawn measures approximately 16.5 by 25.4 centimeters.[1] On the left, the viewer sees the strict profile of Barberini drawn in brown ink. A boyish flip of hair at the crown of Barberini's head draws attention to the startling expanse of flesh that is his nose. The suggestion of its size is almost undeniably sexual; a literary and visual tradition of associating the size of a man's nose with that of his penis can be traced at least from the sixteenth century.[2] The end of his forehead dips back toward his eye as if the enormous trunk of his nose required a sturdier base, hinting at voracious or even unseemly sexual appetite. Below the looming

[1] As with the caricature drawing of the previous chapter, the size of this sheet was originally larger. The inscription above Cardinal Chigi's head is partly sliced through.
[2] Alison Stewart, "Large Noses and Changing Meanings in Sixteenth-century German Prints," *Print Quarterly* 12, 4 (1995): 348-349.

shadow of his nostrils are a jaunty moustache and goatee that echo the virile movement of his forelocks. His expression is one of rest, neither smiling nor frowning, as his mouth sets with firm lines along the front of his fleshy cheek. A double chin rests upon his sharp collar, which appears a bit too tight as the lines pull at his neck. Beyond the relatively clear shape of this collar and the tassels that rest beneath it, the rest of Barberini's garb consists of a four whispery, broken lines. The attention to the cardinal's hair is much greater, as it hugs the top of his head, gradually cascading down into voluminous, wavy clouds near the nape of his neck. The uniform, diagonal hatching through these waves is a curious addition; perhaps the thickness of Barberini's hair was unclear without the supplementary lines.

Another unique characteristic of this caricature is the cardinal's single visible eye. Distinctly and delicately drawn pupil and iris gaze slightly upward, outlined with pale lashes. This eye is the most pronounced of Bernini's surviving caricatures, more closely resembling those of his more finished sketches, or even those of his statues with incised irises. The eye appears to have a greater sense of intellectual presence behind it, perhaps suggesting the long, familiar, and mutually beneficial relationship between Barberini and Bernini.

As papal nephew of Urban VIII (r. 1623-1644), Antonio Barberini had enjoyed the greatest of privileges and wealth. He was made cardinal at only twenty years old, a young age that showed in his early, decadent, and often scandalous lifestyle. At this time, Barberini hosted licentious and criminal consorts within the family palazzo, even taking on high-profile lovers like Gualtiero Gualtieri, a young man of the powerful

Pamphili family.[3] One of his more acceptable spendthrift habits included the commission of multiple art projects, often by the hand of Bernini. Openly admitting his desire to be another Scipione Borghese (one of Bernini's first and most influential patrons in the 1620s), Barberini particularly enjoyed the performing arts.[4] Though other sources suggest that Bernini began staging public performances of his comedies as early as 1632, Filippo Baldinucci, the second contemporary biographer of Bernini's life, claims that it is Barberini who urged the artist to compose and produce them after 1635.[5] This connection is probably deliberate, as it lends more prestige to Bernini's comedies and decreases the possibility of holding the artist alone accountable should the comedies offend a person of significant power or prestige. Regardless of when he began staging the productions, Bernini's skill with scenography and special effects was well known at the time, thus making the many musical and theatrical spectacles held at Palazzo Barberini even more attractive to regular and potential attendees. No cost was spared in any department; extravagant scenery, costuming, and musical accompaniment were employed for each full-scale show.[6] A boisterous and familiar bond was thus created between cardinal and artist, one that would mature after Barberini's flight to France in reaction to the election of the Pamphili pope in 1644.

After a hostile falling out with Barberini, the aforementioned Gualtieri was dismissed from Barberini's service. Soon after this separation, Gualtieri found an untimely death while fighting for the Holy Roman Emperor against the Protestant Swedes. Rumors circulated that the death was not actually a casualty of war, but instead

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[3] Mormando, *Bernini*, 119.
[4] Mormando, *Bernini*, 119.
[5] Filippo Baldinucci, *Vita di Bernini*, ed. Sergio Samek Ludovici (Milan, 1948), 262.
[6] Mormando, *Bernini*, 119.

the result of a vengeful plot concocted by Barberini.[7] Cardinal Giambattista Pamphili, uncle of Gualtieri, would hold on to these rumors, adding them to a list of grievances that he would bring against the Barberini family upon his election as Pope Innocent X. In light of an investigation into his illicit profits, Barberini fled with his two brothers to Paris in 1645.[8] After years in exile at the hospitable French court, Barberini would reconcile with Innocent X and return to Rome in 1653. Two years later, Barberini underwent a notable "conversion" upon the election of pope Alexander VII (r. 1655-1667), thus recovering his titles and assuming a religious life characterized by a strict orthodoxy.[9]

Though he would evolve into a somewhat more respectable character, Barberini did not spend less time with Bernini. In fact, the cardinal would play a significant role as intermediary between artist and French court, likely serving as a sounding board for Bernini's ideas and grievances concerning all things (and persons) French. Chantelou records several hours-long chats between cardinal and artist, in addition to friendly acts such as Bernini showing Barberini studies for the King's portrait bust and Barberini showing the artist a gift he intended to give to the King.[10] It is reasonable to assume that this close relationship between the two continued upon their return. In Rome, Bernini would likely cling more tightly to this friendship because of the cardinal's numerous connections. Barberini was tethered both to the pro-French sector of the papal court through his loyalty in earlier papal elections and the pro-Spanish sector through his brother Francesco Barberini, a diligent servant to Spain's interests. A similarly wide net

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[7] Mormando, *Bernini*, 120.
[8] Salvador Miranda, "Barberini, iuniore, O.S.Io.Hieros., Antonio," *The Cardinals of the Holy Roman Church*, 2015, www2.fiu.edu/~mirandas/bios1627.htm.
[9] Ibid.
[10] de Chantelou, *Diary*, 125, 236, 179.

of connections was cast by Cardinal Chigi, who not only stood as a 'free agent' in control of a faction of cardinals, but also as cardinal nephew to Alexander VII.

CLOSEST TO THE THRONES: THE CARICATURE OF CARDINAL CHIGI

To the right of the caricature of Cardinal Barberini is that of a "young" Cardinal Chigi, as the inscription attests. This description perhaps excuses the child-like abundance of face and hair—softening the punch of caricaturizing such a privileged person—or even alludes to an in-joke that is now lost. The fact that this caricature is not in strict profile or full-face is worth noting, as it is the only exception within the group of existing caricatures by Bernini. This standard three-quarters view (typical of formal portraiture) combined with the subject's more detailed and less exaggerated appearance might suggest that this caricature is a much gentler approach to the genre due to Chigi's status. The remarkable fullness of his cheeks could indicate that Bernini was poking fun at the cardinal's weight or indulgent lifestyle, yet the caricature is surprisingly faithful to the size of the cardinal's cheeks seen in commissioned portraits (Fig. 12). Again it appears that Bernini treats Chigi with exceptional care, perhaps showing in his caricature a 'truer' portrait than a formal, and thus often idealized, portrait of the cardinal. If this is the case, the 'satire' of Bernini's caricature of Chigi is the artist's honesty in the depiction of the cardinal.

Chigi's round, youthful flesh frames a large nose, though it is certainly nowhere near the size of his companion Barberini's nose. A prominent philtrum and a succession of lines under the one separating his lips further emphasize the plumpness of Chigi's face; his lips appear to pucker even as they rest. A wide chin is reinforced with a second

that is cut off by the sharp slash of his collar. A wild, rotund expanse of hair frames Chigi's visage, repeating the semi-circles of his cheeks. His hair recalls shrubbery in its thick, strictly trimmed shape; two massive, hairy ovals are capped with a tiny tricorn of curls. This bushy quality is also seen in Chigi's eyebrows that dip low over his eyes. It is difficult to determine exactly what expression the eyes originally had, as a great deal of ink bleeding has obscured the lines. However, they appear to gaze straight ahead—as most of Bernini's caricature subjects do—and a tiny line below his left eye suggests an innate drowsy quality. The viewer again sees the boxy outline of clothing that reaches just below the shoulders.

It is also crucial to note that Bernini chooses not to include the traditional garb of the cardinal in either this caricature or that of Barberini. There is no indication of the buttons that typically fasten the *mozzetta* (elbow-length cape), nor do the cardinals wear a *zucchetto* (ecclesiastical skullcap) or a *biretta* (square cap with three peaks). The reader will recall that the much earlier caricature of Scipione Borghese (Fig. 5) specifically notes the subject's position as cardinal through the inclusion of a *biretta*, as does the *zucchetto* of Cardinal Nini in the caricature drawing discussed in the previous chapter (Fig. 12). Though Bernini does not pay extraordinary detail to these pieces of clothing, he does acknowledge their significance by including them in the caricatures of Borghese and Nini. In opting to portray Barberini and Chigi without their status-indicating vestments, Bernini truly focuses on the individuals themselves. This relatively casual appearance hints at Bernini's frequent interaction with these prominent men, as he would have known them outside of public and ceremonial appearances. This is a potent

message speaking to Bernini's own status, particularly in regards to Chigi, who occupied a position just below that of the pope.

Though Chigi was not in France during Bernini's visit, as Barberini had been, the papal nephew served as a sort of moderator for the artist. Bernini, though well-acquainted with Chigi from working on projects like the renovation of the cardinal's quarters in Rome, was keenly aware of his need to appear respectable in Chigi's presence; decorum was certainly necessary in order to ingratiate himself with a cardinal of his status. Bernini's early recognition of this requisite can be seen in his habit of creating three presentation drawings per year during Alexander's reign: one for Alexander VII, one for Christina of Sweden, and one for Cardinal Chigi.[11] Chantelou records Bernini's mention of this tradition in his diary:

> When I went to the Cavaliere's [Bernini's] he showed me a drawing of St. Jerome, which, he said, was the fruit of yesterday evening's work. To a connoisseur like me, he said, he could show his work without explanations. I thought it most beautiful, and the light and shade very effective with reflections in the right places, and above all, the most expressive feeling. He told me that each year in Rome he made three drawings, one for the Pope, one for the Queen of Sweden, and one for Cardinal Chigi, and presented them on the same day.[12]

This passage highlights two crucial pieces of information concerning Bernini and caricature. The first relates to the discussion of various genres of drawing. In this passage, Bernini appears to broadcast his presentation of these particular drawings. As a member of court and Bernini's guide during his stay in France, Chantelou would clearly be the closest source for information on the artist. Bernini would have known that any comment he might make could easily be repeated to a number of people, even reaching those in the most elevated positions. It can safely be assumed then that he intentionally

[11] de Chantelou, *Diary*, 240.
[12] Ibid.

doled out the description of this tradition. Rather than maintaining a private and personal interaction, as takes place in the sharing of his caricature drawings, Bernini publicizes his relationship with these three key figures through his presentation drawings. This is somewhat different from the manner in which he introduced the genre of caricature to the French court. Recalling the anecdote discussed in the second chapter, Bernini made a thinly veiled criticism of the many attendants 'interrupting' his study of the King, remarking that he had "a good mind to make a caricature of them." This comment seems much more off the cuff, particularly as none of those present were aware of what the term caricature meant at the time. In describing the presentation drawings, however, Bernini asserts the status that he holds in court. He is not only able to secure an audience with perhaps the three most influential persons in Rome on the same day, but he is also able to create a certain aura of prestige surrounding his 'finished' drawings, as they are presented in this habitual and formal manner.

The second revelation of this passage is the subtle weaving of implicit and explicit flattery than Bernini employs. In calling Chantelou a "connoisseur" who can readily appreciate his art "without explanations," Bernini compliments the sophistication and intellect of his companion. Similarly, by declaring that Chantelou did not need any artistic preface from him, Bernini also allows for any observation that Chantelou might make to sound profound, thus fulfilling the title of connoisseur that Bernini bestows upon him. It further implies that the two are so alike that Bernini can informally show his work to Chantelou; in other words, their relationship and tastes are mutually known and thus Bernini need not ceremoniously introduce his work to Chantelou. This sort of maneuver was not uncommon in Bernini's interaction with courtly figures. The artist's

own son and biographer Domenico documents this social tact in reference to Bernini's reluctance to criticize the works of others (though, as has been recorded, Bernini did not refrain from doing so in France). Domenico writes:

> …when it was not possible to praise a work, he preferred to remain silent, rather than to speak ill of it. When it was absolutely necessary for him to comment about a painting, he found ways to say nothing even while saying something. For example, it happened one day that he was asked by a cardinal to give his opinion about a cupola that had been painted by an artist in the employ of the same cardinal and who in fact had not done such a good job in this case. Finding it distasteful either to stay silent or to speak the truth, Bernini simply remarked, "The work speaks for itself," repeating that line three times with great energy. The cardinal, who was fond of the artist in question, readily interpreted Bernini's remark as one of praise for the author of this work, whereas many artists who happened to be present laughed silently among themselves, exchanging telling glances with one another.[13]

Bernini was clearly capable of manipulating both how he was viewed and how his perception of others was viewed. This relates to his caricature drawings because here, too, he controls the manner in which an artwork received. In suggesting that they guess at the person depicted, Bernini obliquely flatters his audience members by referencing their personal relationships with high personages, a coveted intimacy that allows them to find the answer. This would certainly be the case in the caricature of Chigi, as it displays the cardinal "when he was young," suggesting that the audience both recognize him at various ages and understand perhaps a more intimate in-joke associated with his youth.

In addition to actively seeking Chigi's respect through his presentation drawings, Bernini would also alter his demeanor around Chigi so that he might appear more courtly. For example, the artist would learn to check his notorious temper when projects did not proceed upon his terms. One such occasion would take place in 1664, both the year before Bernini's sojourn in France and the year in which Chigi would make a trip to

[13] Domenico Bernini, *The Life of Gian Lorenzo Bernini*, 116.

formally apologize to Louis XIV for the Corsican Guard incident of 1662 (see Chapter III). While Chigi was smoothing relations between the French king and Alexander VII, Bernini was in Rome and in the midst of a frustrating correspondence with Louis's minister Colbert. Though Bernini had responded to Colbert's request for designs for the new wing of the Louvre, the artist was unaware that designs from three other architects in Rome had similarly been requested.[14] Believing that he had personally been commissioned, Bernini anxiously awaited an invitation to view the French site in person so that the project might progress. Colbert eventually sent a letter confirming that he had received the designs, but refrained from mentioning the list of criticisms that he had begun to compile. These criticisms were finally passed on to the French court's agent in Rome, Elpidio Benedetti, who fearing the artist's aforementioned temper, hesitated to relay the objections.[15] The task was thus assigned instead to the more commanding personage of Chigi, whose position as papal nephew dictated that Bernini's response to the news be dignified. The efficacy of Chigi's status in restraining the artist's response is notable, as Bernini evidently accepted the terms with grace in Chigi's presence, and instead vented his anger in the presence of the French ambassador Charles III de Créquy.[16] This apparent social remove from Chigi is perhaps part of the motivation behind Bernini's caricature of the cardinal. Though Chigi occupied a position far above that of the artist, Bernini attempted to connect the two with the charming and ingratiating quality of humor.

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[14] Mormando, *Bernini*, 254.
[15] Mormando, *Bernini*, 255.
[16] Mormando, *Bernini*, 255.

CONNECTING THE DOTS: TWO CARDINALS IN A PRE-CONCLAVE ROME

Though Bernini had established earlier relationships with Cardinals Barberini and Chigi, and thus would have had reason to make caricatures of either, their pairing on the drawing in question points to a particular context in which both men held significance for Bernini at the same moment. The roughly eighteenth-month period to which this thesis dates the caricature drawing's creation marked a time of careful alliances. France would have remained on Bernini's mind upon his return, as he would engage in a few last projects for Louis XIV while in Rome. The trip to France had been relatively unsuccessful, and Bernini likely would have wanted to reaffirm his social standing in Rome in light of this. Similarly, the guidance of Chigi and Barberini during his sojourn would not be something the artist-courtier would forget, especially as Alexander VII's health continued to wane. With the pope's apparently imminent death, cardinals and countries alike had their eyes on the papal throne, as Alexander's passing would open the court system to political and personal gains.

In order to appreciate the value of Bernini's courting of Barberini and Chigi, the influence that certain Catholic monarchs and the factions of cardinals associated with these monarchs had upon papal elections should be considered. During the seventeenth century, the Sacred College experienced the rise of secular interference in papal elections, namely the use of *Jus Exclusivae*, or the right of exclusion.[17] This term denotes the claim that powerful Catholic countries like France and Spain could send a cardinal with a

[17] Johannes Baptist Sägmüller, "Right of Exclusion," *The Catholic Encyclopedia* 5 (1909): 2, http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/05677b.htm.

written veto in order to exclude an undesirable candidate from becoming pope. This veto could only be declared once per conclave and only at the last moment; any veto cast after the election would be disregarded.[18] Though this was not a formally acknowledged right, it was evidently accepted. In both the conclave of 1644 and of 1655—which elected, respectively, Innocent X and his successor Alexander VII—Cardinal Giulio Cesare Sacchetti, a candidate backed by the French, was vetoed by Spain.[19] It was often a race between the most powerful countries to send this type of veto in time to secure the way for their own candidate. With his wealth of knowledge from years in the papal court, Bernini certainly would have been aware of the exceptional secular power over the politics that existed in the Catholic capital. Similarly, the Vatican functioned as a network of loyalty; any individual who could claim approval from the pontiff or his family could reasonably expect favor in proportion to the individual's status. Bernini, the perceptive courtier-artist, plainly understood that it would be unwise to let any useful social connections fade.

Cardinal Barberini himself had been the most prominent proponent of Sacchetti in both of the above mentioned conclaves, and thus it would be natural for Bernini to assume that the cardinal would again maintain some authority should Alexander succumb to his ailments. Barberini also retained his position as Camerlengo of the Holy Roman Church at this time (1638-1671), meaning that he would act as head of the Sacred College during the period between the death of the pope and the election of his successor. This power was added to other elevated duties involving Church revenue and property.[20]

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[18] Sägmüller, "Right of Exclusion," 1.
[19] Ibid.
[20] Umberto Benigni, "Camerlengo," *The Catholic Encyclopedia* 3 (2015): 1, http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/03217a.htm.

Thus in caricaturizing Barberini, Bernini drew attention to his close relationship with a man of great means. This act laid the groundwork for maintaining at least one vetted ally in the event that an upcoming election take place, especially if it should turn toward French favor.

Bernini continues to seek out current and future support by referencing Cardinal Chigi in his caricature drawing. As papal nephew, Chigi presented a strong ally for Bernini in any lingering disappointment surrounding the artist's return from France. If the pontiff and his family continued to favor Bernini, the artist could continue to work and hold his previous status. Similarly, this prestigious favor could potentially carry over into a new papacy. Chigi would be extremely invested in choosing a successor for his uncle Alexander VII. Not only would he need to avoid any candidate holding a grudge toward his family—a valid fear considering Barberini's flight after Innocent X's election—but he would also want to sustain his current lifestyle as closely as possible. The latter concern meant that Chigi would strive to put a generous ally or a candidate that he was paid to endorse upon the papal throne. The large faction of thirty-four cardinals known to have been under his guidance in the eventual conclave of 1667 was likely formed or forming at this time, a testament to Chigi's obvious determination to maintain a high status. By appealing to Chigi and to those who respected him through the intimate act of caricature, Bernini safeguards several possible successful futures. The favor and protection of key players like Chigi and Barberini meant security for a court artist who had seen his fair share of papacies.

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Bernini's appeal to Chigi and Barberini is not only seen in their somewhat unusual pairing on the caricature drawing, but also in the relatively soft approach Bernini takes in this drawing. The caricatures of the two cardinals have less bite than others like that of Nini and the French knight. The previous chapter's caricatures appear almost inhuman with their schematic representation and the extreme exaggeration of their facial features, while Chigi's and Barberini's could almost be studies at a quick glance. There also appears to be only the slightest reference to scandal in the drawing: Barberini's nose. The disreputable backgrounds of both Chigi and Barberini were well known and would have been fruitful fodder for caricature, yet Bernini chose only to allude to the sexual appetite of his closer associate Barberini. Even this allusion is slight, as Barberini's nose is quite large even in formal portraits (Fig. 14). The caricature of Barberini gives more the impression of virility than lechery with his lush hair and extravagant nose, thus softening any commentary on the immoral behavior of a cardinal. Bernini's artistic decisions seem to align with the fact that these were extremely high profile subjects. If the body of surviving caricature drawings accurately represents all of Bernini's caricatures, they are some of the highest profile subjects of any such drawings by the artist.[21] For this reason, it seems logical that Bernini took a gentler approach so that these particular caricatures appear less offensive or inflammatory.

Bernini also suggests greater intimacy in his approach to the caricatures of Chigi and Barberini. The apparent private joke implied by the "when he was young" inscription not only points to Bernini's long-standing familiarity with Chigi, but also hints at a possible excuse that Bernini might employ. This particular caricature might seem less offensive as Chigi could have grown out of or into any exaggerated features or

[21] Bernini would caricaturize Pope Innocent XI sometime between 1676 and 1680 (Fig. 11).

characteristics of his youth; in other words, Bernini could flatter Chigi by claiming the cardinal was unable to be caricaturized at his present age. As was seen in his interaction with de Chantelou, Bernini had a skill for charmingly combining informality with flattery. Altering his approach according to an individual's status and personality, Bernini was able to both clearly demonstrate that his privileged audience occupied a higher position than himself and suggest that he was worthy of similar privileges and admiration.

This delicate balance is epitomized in an interaction with Louis XIV recorded by Mattia de' Rossi in 1665. While studying Louis for his portrait bust before a large group of courtiers, Bernini asks for a comb and gently brushes aside the locks on the King's forehead, which had been styled there according to French fashion. Thus able to better see the King's face, Bernini adds flattery to this extremely bold gesture by remarking, "Your Majesty is king, who can show his brow to all the world."[22] In dressing his own actions in pleasing phrases, Bernini achieves artistic control over the production and reception of his work. It is precisely this subtle blurring of accepted practice that won over patrons from one papacy to the next. Bernini's caricature drawings thus can be viewed as the manifestations of his strategy for ingratiating himself with privileged persons like Chigi and Barberini. Combining the informality of personal humor with the marvel of his skill, Bernini's caricatures of the cardinals suggested to their audience that the artist was a valuable and entertaining commodity at court.

[22] Warwick, *Bernini: Art as Theatre*, 199.

Fig. 14. Jacob Ferdinand Voet, *Portrait of Cardinal Flavio Chigi*. 17th century. Reproduced from the Palazzo Chigi in Ariccia.

Fig. 15. Gian Lorenzo Bernini. *Caricature of Cardinals Antonio Barberini and Flavio Chigi.* 1665-1667. Brown ink and paper, 16.5 x 25.4 cm. Reproduced from Ministry of Heritage and Culture, National Institute for Graphics, Rome.

Fig. 16. Robert Nanteuil. *Cardinal Antonio Barberini*. 1657. Engraving. Reproduced from Artstor.

V. Conclusions

In spite of its inherently performative qualities, caricature remains an understudied and underemphasized genre of art from the Baroque period. The stimulating interaction with and reaction to this type of drawing parallels the viewer-viewed relationship publically celebrated in Bernini's Rome. Though known for his command of this dramatic relationship in sculpture and architecture, Bernini also created his caricature drawings with similar intentions. These pieces should be treated as a key part of Bernini's *oeuvre* in their own right. While they are limited in number, or even because they were limited, his caricature drawings were presented, received, and saved in a unique manner. The deeply personal nature of these artworks provides a glimpse not only into Bernini's artistic ability, but also into the artist's understanding of his own identity within society.

By the time of Alexander VII's papacy, Bernini was the premier artist of the papal court. He had received large commissions and garnered success under three previous pontiffs, in addition to earning international acclaim. This thesis has discussed two case studies from this period in order to analyze the possible role of the caricature drawings in Bernini's relationships at the height of his career. Bernini, now firmly entrenched as a papal courtier, was ever aware of opportunities to safeguard or improve his position. Even for an established artist like Bernini, favor was never guaranteed. His mindfulness of this fact can be seen in a prescient comment recorded in Chantelou's diary, "He

[Bernini] replied with great modesty that he owed all his reputation to his star which caused him to be famous in his lifetime, that when he died its ascendency would no longer be active and his reputation would decline or fail very suddenly."[1] The artist understood that the status he enjoyed was not only due to his artistic talent, but also largely tied to his skill with self-presentation. Bernini's success as an artist was not limited to the physical objects he created; he also carefully crafted a persona that became a work of art itself. The ability to adapt his demeanor and his method of presenting art to multiple audiences was a necessity for the artist to work fruitfully through successive papacies.

Arguably Bernini's foremost strategy for cultivating relationships with his superiors and manufacturing prestige was his delicate mixture of informality and flattery. Building from the most recent scholarship, this thesis has attempted to combine a social network biography of the artist with the artworks themselves. In addition to the social and political context of the Baroque period, I have included interpretations of biographical events and documented interactions in order to more thoroughly examine Bernini's caricature drawings. This method allows for richer analysis, revealing the many identities of the artist and the likely spectrum of intentions behind his work. Bernini's caricature drawings are ripe for this type of study, as they epitomize the precarious balance of artistic intention and social response. These humorous portraits seamlessly elevated artist and audience; those viewing the drawing feel a sense of accomplishment and comradery in identifying the privileged subject, while Bernini gains status through the association with and the appreciation of this audience.

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[1] de Chantelou, *Diary*, 75.

Bernini's caricature drawings are comically driven pieces. Given the variable of the subject's ability to receive a joke gracefully, humor was a precarious method for an artist to employ; any perceived criticism could have grave repercussions. As Warwick has described, Bernini was responsible for elevating his "artistic labour into a form of noble entertainment, conducted within a social skein of aristocratic mores," a duty that often had vastly different interpretations as power changed hands.[2] What has previously been ignored in scholarship, however, is that Bernini's elevation of his work to courtly entertainment is clearest within his caricature drawings. As I have demonstrated, Bernini used these drawings as a method of subtle communication, drawing upon humor and intimacy to ingratiate himself with and promote his own art within a privileged circle.

In reassessing caricatures associated with Bernini, I have also attempted to reopen the discussion of the attribution and dating of these sheets. Through a closer analysis of the social connections associated with, the possible motivations behind, and the technical comparison of the caricature drawings, the difference between copy and autograph can more readily be determined. Take for example, the caricature of the captain of the army of Pope Urban VIII (Fig. 17). This figure is on the same sheet as a caricature of Don Virginio Orsini, and the sheet is found in a collection alongside supposed copies.[3] Ann Sutherland Harris relays the consensus that the caricature of Orsini is a copy, but only offers lukewarm statements concerning stylistic differences that she views between the figure of the captain and other autograph caricature drawings. While the image of Don Virginio Orsino does in fact appear to be a less than convincing copy with its tremulous ultra-fine lines and small scale, I feel that the caricature of the captain follows rather

[2] Warwick, *Bernini: Art as Theatre*, 194.
[3] Harris, *Selected Drawings*, xviii.

closely the drawings often considered to be autograph. The figure is drawn with the sparseness of line that Bernini favored and positioned in full-face view. Composed on a sheet nearly identical to those of other caricature drawings by Bernini, there are also similar treatments of physical elements like hair and of artistic choices like theme. For example, the curls at the side of the captain's face appear to be less concentrated versions of those atop Barberini's head in Bernini's caricature of the cardinal (Fig. 15), mimicking both the degree of curl and the thickness of line.[4] Bernini's preference for certain modes of humor is also seen in this image. The satirized characteristic of the captain echoes that of Barberini in that both are obviously associated with the sexual in some capacity. The captain's absurdly long neck and wide, flattened face create an undeniably phallic image. The curvilinear quality of his eyes and mouth is paired with the lines across his neck, emphasizing the sexual tone with its mimicry of flesh. Though this is a rather caustic humor for Bernini in its crudeness, it matches the social position of the person portrayed. Within the group of surviving caricatures, the severity of the joke is nearly always directly proportionate to the status of the subject: the lower the position, the greater the bite.[5]

It is also possible that Bernini amplifies the sexual joke here in response to a greater deal of familiarity with the subject or to a rather vulgar joke/rumor concerning the captain that had circulated within the papal court. The artist was known to make the occasional ribald remark in certain company; when someone at the French court

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[4] When viewing this sheet in person, I noted that the thick ink was occasionally highlighted with white chalk, a technique that Bernini sometimes employed in sketches. The chalk might have been used here to counteract the bleeding caused by the rather thin paper and pressure of the pen. It is also possible that this was added later when the sheet was cut for collection purposes.

[5] The exception is of course the caricature of Innocent XI (Fig. 11), created sometime just before Bernini's death. This portrait shows the pope as a fragile, insect-like being who blesses an unseen audience from his sickbed.

suggested that Bernini make a caricature of a lady, Chantelou writes that Bernini replied, "There was no need to burden the ladies save at night."[6] Bernini would have felt most comfortable at this point in his career, as he was a publically recognized favorite of Pope Urban VIII, who lavished commissions and privileges upon the artist. Reading the caricature drawing in this light, it seems possible or even likely that this particular caricature is autograph. This drawing, like those discussed within this thesis, is bold in its intimacy, fresh in its style, and perfectly attuned to an audience conditioned for performance.

It is perhaps because of these novel or even radical qualities that nearly all of the surviving caricature drawings cluster around the papacies during which Bernini experienced the height of his favor: that of Urban VIII (1623-1644) and that of Alexander VII (1655-1667). Though the artist was known to use mischievous methods of interaction with patrons very early in his career (especially with Cardinal Scipione Borghese), Bernini truly elevated the strategy of humor with his caricature of the most privileged members of court at the apex of his career. The significance of his caricature drawings' subjects at this time connects several points: first, Bernini was established with a certain status that allowed him to privately caricature privileged persons without fear of punishment; second, this status was reinforced by the caricature's suggestion of intimacy; and third, the success of this humorous strategy is seen in the drawing's survival until today. It is logical that the majority of the surviving caricature drawings are of key players, as they were likely the most prized and thus the most carefully kept.

The caricature drawings of Cardinal Nini and the French knight and of Cardinals Barberini and Chigi provide insight into the intimate circles of the papal court. Through

[6] de Chantelou, *Diary*, 129.

a contextualized analysis of these pieces, the fragility of Bernini's position, even during the climax of his career, becomes apparent. Both an incredibly talented artist and a cunning courtier, Bernini recognized his unique opportunity to employ humor as a method that would break barriers between himself and nearly any superior. Perhaps with continued attention to the genre of caricature, new drawings will come to light, yielding a greater breadth of examples to study. Through its renewed look at these illuminating works, this thesis asserts that Bernini's caricature drawings were more than sketches made at whim; they are the best examples of intentional and social works of art presented by Baroque Rome's most successful courtier-artist.

Fig. 17. Gian Lorenzo Bernini. *Caricatures of Don Virginio Orsini and the Captain of the Army of Urban VIII,* before 1644. Pen and brown ink on white paper, 18.8 x 25.6 cm. Reproduced from Ministry of Heritage and Culture, National Institute for Graphics, Rome.

APPENDIX A: TABLE OF CARICATURE DRAWINGS

TITLE	DATE	SCHOLARS/ INSTITUTIONS THAT ACCEPT DRAWING AS AUTOGRAPH	SCHOLARS/ INSTITUTIONS THAT DOUBT DRAWING'S ATTRIBUTION TO BERNINI
Caricatures of a Venetian Lawyer and of the Maggiordomo of Urban VIII	c. 1632-1644	Istituto Nazionale per la Grafica	
Caricature of Two Priests Wearing Eyeglasses	After 1632	Heinrich Brauer, Steven Heller, Ralph E. Shikes, Rudolf Wittkower	
Caricature of Cardinal Scipione Borghese	After 1632	Heinrich Brauer, Ernst Gombrich, Ann Sutherland Harris, Werner Hofmann, Ernst Kris, Irving Lavin, Genevieve Warwick, Rudolf Wittkower	
Caricature of a Dwarf or *Caricature of a Man Pointing*	After 1632	Constance McPhee	
Caricature of an Unknown Man	After 1632	Heinrich Brauer, Irving Lavin, Rudolf Wittkower	
Caricatures of a Captain in the Army of Urban VIII and Don Virginio Orsini[1]	Before 1644	Heinrich Brauer, Ernst. Gombrich, William Feaver, Werner Hofmann, Istituto Nazionale per la Grafica, Ernst Kris, Edward Lucie-Smith, Rudolf Wittkower	Ann Sutherland Harris

[1] Each scholar mentioned in relation to this particular sheet is convinced that the caricature of Don Virginio Orsini is a copy. The placement of the scholars according to their stance on attribution in this row are thus concerned only with the caricature of the captain.

TITLE	DATE	SCHOLARS/ INSTITUTIONS THAT ACCEPT DRAWING AS AUTOGRAPH	SCHOLARS/ INSTITUTIONS THAT DOUBT DRAWING'S ATTRIBUTION TO BERNINI
Caricature of Cassiano dal Pozzo	Before 1644	Ann Sutherland Harris, Francis Haskell	
Caricature of a Cleric	c. 1640-1645	Heinrich Brauer, Rudolf Wittkower	Ann Sutherland Harris
Caricature of a Priest with Wineglass and Money Bag or *Caricature of a Priest with an Aspergillum*	1640-1645	Ann Sutherland Harris, Irving Lavin	
Caricatures of a French Knight and of Cardinal Nini	c. 1665	Istituto Nazionale per la Grafica	
Caricatures of Cardinals Antonio Barberini and Flavio Chigi	c. 1665-1667	Dorothy Metzger Habel, Istituto Nazionale per la Grafica	
Caricature of a French Knight	c. 1655-1680	Cecil Gould, Istituto Nazionale per la Grafica	Heinrich Bauer, Rudolf Wittkower
Caricature of Innocent XI	c. 1676-1680	Heinrich Brauer, Irving Lavin, Constance McPhee, Robert T. Petersson, Amelia Rauser, Rudolf Wittkower	

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BIOGRAPHY

Rory DeMaio grew up in Louisville and Lexington, Kentucky, and currently lives in New Orleans. She earned her Bachelor of Arts degree from Tulane University, where after viewing a slide with a detail of Bernini's *Pluto and Proserpina* in a survey course, she shifted her focus from theater to the history of art. Rory also has a background in the fine arts and creative writing, both of which have enriched her study of artworks and their impact on society. She would like to combine elements of these varied interests in her career so that she might find richer possibilities for the appreciation of art.