**Missing Monuments to Women in early modern Churches**

**Brief summary**

Directly connected to the conference theme of “Commemorations”, this workshop proposes to address tomb monuments of early modern women in Italy and France that do not survive completely intact or in their original locations. These monuments, which often included dedicatory inscriptions and sometimes portraits, were dismantled, shuffled, reduced, appropriated, and led to a reception across time that included a pervasive loss of knowledge of influential women in early modern society and the skewed historical perspective that such women were not publicly commemorated. Analyzing these changes is a way to consider the historically specific reception of public artwork honoring women and comparing these monuments with the changes to other – including men’s – tombs from the same sites will be helpful to point to the political motivations or gender bias that came into play, when appropriate.

**Organizers**

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Fields: Art History; Classics  
Specializations: Italian Baroque/Early Modern sculpture and prints; history of collecting and display; Classical tradition.

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Fields: Art History; Gender Studies  
Specializations: Italian Renaissance sculpture and portraiture, Visual Culture; Literary reception of Renaissance Artworks.

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**Description of the workshop**
This workshop looks at church monuments in Italy and France commissioned by and for early modern women that do not survive completely intact or in their original locations. Women commissioned costly floor tombs, portraits, and dedicatory freestanding sculpture and paintings by highly skilled and well-known artists in some of the most important sacred spaces in early modern society. Yet, with the rise of art collecting, shifting of political tides, competitions between families, and the ravages of time (preservation, theft), early modern tomb monuments and their related works of art and inscriptions do not always survive as they were intended. In addition to proposing new questions and ways of approaching the monuments, we will address practical problems in researching such monuments, including loss and interpretation of dedicatory inscriptions, new resources for researching monuments, and the challenges in interpreting the fragments that sometimes still remain.

**Comparative and interdisciplinary focus:** The study of tomb monuments to women requires comparative and interdisciplinary approaches due to the historical context, but also the components of the physical monument. In terms of historical context, the monuments figured in sacred spaces that were socially and politically contested during the early modern period. Though they vary in size and adornment, women’s monuments are sometimes rich architectural spaces with painted altarpieces, freestanding or relief sculptures, inscriptions in Latin, and painted backdrops, and could be the setting for elaborate liturgical practices. These memorials are comprised of material, visual, and inscriptional evidence that all work in tandem to commemorate women. The foundational methods of art history (formal analysis, iconography/iconology, and technical analysis) are essential. But the profitable social historical approach to art that defines the best scholarship in the field of art history has not yet fully taken up comparative and micro historical approaches to tomb monuments dedicated to women.

**Format:** The panel will be structured as follows: Each organizer will take five to seven minutes to introduce her case studies, in particular, present the key visual/material and inscriptional evidence by means of a brief PPT presentation (slides), and present the key research problems particular to each case study. Then, questions directly related to the case studies and the readings will invite discussion and further questions from the participants of the session.

**Innovation:** The panel moves beyond the foundational art historical approaches to tomb monuments that focus on discrete elements, such as the portraiture or the valuable art object separate from the monument, development of iconography, materials, and the monument as an index of artistic development. By looking at monuments across time and in comparison with monuments made for men, the reasons for why the monuments were dismantled, and within the larger context of the social-political context (physically, the site; conceptually, the time in which the monument was dismantled), we hope to create a discussion of the problems in researching tomb monuments to women in the early modern period.

**Recent conferences on related topics:**

See recent program from the conference “Fifty Years after Panofsky’s Tomb Sculpture”, June 2014, Courtauld Institute, London. The conference focuses on the foundation aspects of the study of tomb monuments.

http://www.courtauld.ac.uk/researchforum/events/2014/summer/jun21_FiftyYearsAfterP
See the follow up conference that responded to the June 2014 “Panofsky” conference, due to lack of material inclusion (limited to marble). The follow up conference focused instead on brass monuments, but also limited itself to mainly iconographic and artistic production concerns.

http://www.mbs-brasses.co.uk/mbsmeetings.html

List of readings

“Facts Sheets” for each case study listing key information and research problems [1 page each case study]


Bacci, Andrea. *Del Tevere, Libro quarto...di tutte le prodigiose inondationi dal principio di Roma, insino all’anno 1530 aggiuntivi l’altre sin’a quest’ultima del 99.* Rome: Stampatori camerali, 1599. English translation of section describing damage to churches [1 page].


Strocchia, Sharon. “Remembering the Family: Women, Kin, and Commemorative Masses in Renaissance Florence.” *Renaissance Quarterly* 42.2 (1989): pp. 635-639, with the rest of the article as suggested reading. [5 pages]

Monument Fact Sheet

Memorial for Francesca Pitti Tornabuoni (died in childbirth, precise age unknown but assumed later 30s-early 40s)

Date: after 1477, based on Francesca’s death on 23 September of that year

Location: Originally in the Tornabuoni chapel (now the Nari Chapel) in Santa Maria sopra Minerva, Rome. The tomb was dismembered in the seventeenth-century at which point the pieces of Francesca’s tomb were dispersed, and only possible fragments remain.

Patron: Giovanni Tornabuoni (Francesca’s husband)

Tomb type: Though no longer extant, a variety of sources can be used to reconstruct the appearance of Francesca’s tomb, including early descriptions found in Vasari, Roman guidebooks, mentions in a descendant’s will, and a sketch by Martin van Heemskerck, which is assumed to depict Francesca’s effigy. Additionally, the still extant tomb of her nephew Francesco, which was originally located in the same chapel and is now located next to the antifacciata of Santa Maria sopra Minerva, provides comparative information. Francesca’s tomb was likely a wall monument composed of an effigy lying on a bier or sarcophagus placed below three sculpted Virtues. The Tornabuoni Chapel was also originally frescoed with episodes from the lives of the Virgin and John the Baptist by Domenico Ghirlandaio, as recorded in Vasari. However, when the chapel was sold to the Nari family in the seventeenth century and subsequently remodeled, both the frescoes and Francesca’s tomb were lost.

Related tombs: Mino da Fiesole’s tomb of Francesco Tornabuoni

History: The only extant sculpture which scholars have widely acknowledged must come from Francesca’s monument is a relief currently in the Bargello Museum, depicting a childbirth scene on the right and the presentation of the child to its father on the left. Despite the long association of the Bargello relief with the tomb of Francesca Pitti Tornabuoni, initially suggested by Alfred Reumont in 1873 and maintained in much of the ensuing scholarly tradition, there is only circumstantial evidence that the relief was present on the tomb.

The Virtues that Vasari describes as part of the monument likely adorned the wall above the effigy, similar to the arrangement of the Tartagni monument in San Domenico, Bologna. Various sculptures have been suggested as these Virtues, including a set in the Musée Jacquemart-André in Paris.

Additional clues to the appearance of Francesca’s tomb can be found in Martin van Heemskerck’s Roman Sketchbooks dating from the 1530s, where there is a small
sketch of an effigy of a woman atop a sarcophagus supported by acanthus scrolls. Lying on the woman’s chest is an infant, an unprecedented mother-and-child double effigy on a Renaissance commemorative monument. The drawing has been associated with Francesca Pitti Tornabuoni since 1934, when Hermann Egger connected the sketch, a letter written by Giovanni Tornabuoni to his nephew Lorenzo de’Medici informing him of Francesca’s death, and the Bargello relief. In Heemskerck’s notebooks, the effigy is adjacent to a sketch of the corner of a sarcophagus supported by sphinxes, clearly identifiable as part of the tomb of Francesco Tornabuoni.

Attribution Unknown, though frequently attributed to Verrochio or his Workshop, *The Death of Francesca Pitti Tornabuoni*, after 1477, marble, Bargello, Florence

Martin van Heemskerck, usually identified as the *Effigy of Francesca Pitti Tornabuoni*, Roman Sketchbooks, 1530, Kupferstichkabinett, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Preussischer Kulturbesitz.
that Vasari had some specific recollection of the Roman chapel must be assumed because of his discussions of it in both the life of Mino da Fiesole and that of Ghirlandaio, but, as mentioned, above, he may also have been working from records provided by the Tornabuoni family in Florence. The stylistic disparities between the two Tornabuoni tombs are evident in the Heemskerck drawings and it is possible that Vasari presumed that these differences resulted from the presence of two artists. His sense of the distinction between the two works could have been furthered by the additions added in the 1540s. He may not have associated even the sarcophagus and effigy with the same sculptor who carved the tomb of Francesco Tornabuoni. As has been pointed out numerous times, Vasari had some very confused ideas about fifteenth-century artists in Rome. With reference to Mino, the tombs of Francesco Tornabuoni and Paul II are the only works from Mino’s second sojourn in Rome that he mentions. The evident Florentine nature of the commission and the style of the sarcophagus and effigy may have led Vasari to assume that the work was carved by a Florentine sculptor. Because of his assertion that Verrocchio was present in Rome during the reign of Sixtus IV it was also possible to presume that Verrocchio was responsible for the tomb which he describes in Santa Maria sopra Minerva.

When one compares the work of Mino da Fiesole in Florence with that of Verrocchio, Vasari might well be forgiven for assuming that a greater figural plasticity is to be associated with the later sculptor. An interesting problem to be considered in this context are the standing saints produced under Mino’s guidance for the so-called ciborium of Sixtus IV. There is a distinct quality, most notable in those saints associated with Mino, that evokes the style of Verrocchio. That Mino’s work during the late 1470s approaches the style of Verrocchio might be seen as further evidence for the source of Vasari’s confusion (for the ciborium, see cat. no. 19).

Two further unusual aspects of the Francesca Tornabuoni tomb deserve consideration. It is one of merely a handful of large-scale marble tombs erected in the fifteenth century to commemorate women. It was also probably one of the first tombs specifically paired with a second tomb in a frescoed funeral chapel. Frescoed chapels with monumental wall tombs were not common in the 1470s. A limited number of frescoed burial chapels existed in Florence; they include Trecento examples such as the Bardi chapel in S. Croce as well as the chapel of the Cardinal of Portugal and Mino’s derivation of that project, the Salutati chapel in Fiesole. It might be recalled here that none of the humanist tombs in Florence were associated with frescoed chapels - a fact equally true for most large-scale Roman wall tombs of the time. In Rome, frescoed burial chapels appear to become popular only later (Domenico della Rovere’s addition of frescoes to the burial chapel in S. Maria del Popolo dates to the late 1480s, cat. no. 59).

The experimental nature of the Tornabuoni project is further evident because of the placement of two tombs in the chapel. Perhaps the most relevant comparison to the Tornabuoni chapel is the chapel which was built by Francesco
Sassetti and his wife, Nera, in Santa Trinità, Florence (E. Borsook and J. Offerhaus, Francesco Sassetti and Ghirlandaio at Santa Trinità, Florence: History and Legend in a Renaissance Chapel, Doornspijk, Holland, 1981, passim). It entailed not only paired tombs but also a fresco cycle provided by Ghirlandaio. The chapel was begun almost immediately after that commissioned by Giovanni Tornabuoni. Given the two Florentines’ well-documented contest for control of the high altar chapel in Santa Maria Novella, it may be assumed that Sassetti was aware of Giovanni Tornabuoni’s Roman undertaking (Simons, op. cit., pp. 225ff.). This, of course, is made even more obvious when it is recalled that the painter was the same for all three fresco cycles. The Sassetti chapel might almost be viewed as an improved version of the Roman chapel. The tombs appear to fit more gracefully into the chapel decoration and they are a matched pair. These differences may reflect the changing role of the painter and sculptor. At S. Maria sopra Minerva, Mino da Fiesole received the initial tomb commission; the idea to include frescoes came later. In other words, the chapel was conceived first in sculptural terms, with the painted decoration added later.

The scheme of two paired tombs - male and female - was used by Mino in Rome on another occasion, again before the commissioning of the Sassetti tombs. The two tombs for Cardinal Ammannati and his mother in Sant’Agostino are paired tombs (cat. nos. 61 and 62). Although their original location is only a matter for speculation, it seems highly likely that they were set in parallel positions on the side walls of a chapel, probably that dedicated to S. Nicholas. This double tomb chapel was conceived ca. 1477-9. Both the Ammannati tombs and the Tornabuoni tombs are paired tombs for related male and female persons. The Tornabuoni tombs, while not matching, were unified in the chapel by the addition of frescoes. The unity of the Ammannati tombs was made evident in their parallel design. Thus, two chapel constructions commissioned from Mino da Fiesole form the precedents for the Sassetti chapel.

The development of these double tomb chapels has never been treated as a separate issue. The three chapels discussed above all include tombs dedicated to females. In general, the number of tombs commemorating women is, not surprisingly, rather small. In almost every case, they are associated with an important male patron unless the woman was a figure of political import (examples of this type are found in the royal tombs of Naples). Beginning with the freestanding tomb for Ilaria del Carretto by Jacopo della Quercia, others erected in honor of female relatives include the tombs for Barbara Manfredi (Il monumento a Barbara Manfredi, op. cit., 1989), Isotta degli Atti in Rimini (Pope-Hennessy, 1971/85, p. 312) and the tomb for Medea Colleoni in Bergamo (F. Piel, La Cappella Colleoni e il Luogo Pio della Pietà in Bergamo, Bergamo, 1975, p. 57). The lack of Florentine precedents for this type must be acknowledged from the outset. Perhaps the idea reflects an elaboration of a type that was popular during the same period; single tombs dedicated to the parents of the patron. Pius II, Sixtus IV and Giuliano della Rovere all erected such monuments. Cardinal Ammannati’s
decision to build a tomb in honor of his mother in 1477 developed from their examples. The tomb of Francesca Tornabuoni, as reconstructed here, is highly traditional in form. This may reflect the newness of female tombs in general. In Rome, most of the tombs erected by and for women appear to have been slabs placed on the ground (see S. Strocchia, "Funerals and the Politics of Gender in Early Renaissance Florence," Refiguring Woman: Perspective on Gender and the Italian Renaissance, eds. M. Migiel and J. Schiesari, Ithica, 1991, pp. 155-68, for a discussion of several related issues). The only extant large-scale tombs were commissioned by sons or husbands. In a certain sense, Giovanni’s decision to erect a tomb for his wife in Rome can be attributed not only to his remarkable devotion to his wife, but also as a public statement of his power and presence in Rome.

The reconstruction of the tomb follows the outline of Mino’s successful Florentine adaptation of the S. Croce tombs. The late dating is confirmed by the style of the relief fragments associated with the tomb. The progression of the Tornabuoni chapel can be reconstructed in the following manner; ca. 1475/6, Mino da Fiesole was commissioned by the Tornabuoni to erect a chapel in S. Maria sopra Minerva. It may be that Giovanni was actively involved from the outset and that a dedication to the Baptist was intended. Probably during this early stage, Ghirlandaio was commissioned to produce frescoes with scenes from the life of the Baptist and the altar statue of S. Giovannino was carved by Mino and his shop. The next likely step was the creation of the relief tomb of Francesco Tornabuoni. Although this would seem to suggest an early death date for Francesco, this is not required. In the fall of 1477, with the death of his wife, Giovanni became more directly involved in the chapel, adding plans for a monumental tomb in Francesca’s honor and, perhaps, extending the plans for the fresco decoration. The tomb for Francesca Tornabuoni, however, was not completed before Mino’s departure for Florence and was left unfinished at his death, occasioning a second commission from Verrocchio which, too, was not completed.

Related Works:

If the reconstruction proposed above is accepted, what is to be made of the description provided by Vasari? Two different portions of the tomb are at issue here - the presence of the narrative relief and the existence of three Virtues. A set of Virtues associated with the lost tomb by Verrocchio are four reliefs today in the Jacquemart-André Museum, Paris. The annotated bibliography for these figures provided in the recent catalogue of the collection reflects the chaos surrounding the tomb generally (F. de la Moureyre-Gavoty, Institut de France, Paris -Musée Jacquemart-André: Sculpture Italiene, Inventaire des Collections Publiques Françaises, no. 19, Paris, 1975, nos. 49-52). The four virtues were purchased from the Bardini Collection in Florence in 1886. They have been variously assigned to the tomb of Francesca Tornabuoni in S. Maria sopra Minerva, to a tomb for the same in S. Maria Novella in Florence and, in the catalogue, to an unidentified tabernacle. The early attribution to Verrocchio has also been rejected by Moureyre-
In August 1465 Alessandra Macinghi Strozzi, mother of the art patron and builder Filippo Strozzi, arranged for an annual set of masses in the parish church of Santa Maria Ughi. Her purpose, as she said, was to commemorate the souls of “all our dead,” “tutti e nostri passati” (sic). In her record of the commission, Alessandra carefully outlined the conditions of the bequest. She noted, for example, the location of the land donation whose proceeds subsidized the masses and the day the ten masses were to be performed, and made alternate arrangements should the priests of Santa Maria Ughi fail to uphold their obligations. Yet within this context of legal specifications and formulae, Alessandra remained curiously vague about one of the program’s essential clauses: namely, the precise identity of “all our dead.”

In both their precision and ambiguity, commemorative bequests made by women like Alessandra Strozzi offer an important new observation on the Florentine family. In contrast to recent studies of family and gender in other areas of Europe, the study of Florentine kinship has been marked by the surprising absence of feminist perspectives that illuminate the relation between gender, family struc-

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1Alessandra Macinghi-Strozzi, Lettere di una gentildonna fiorentina (Florence, 1877), 545, note B.
ture, and the dynamics of women’s power. Historians have instead focused attention on such issues as the role of household versus lineage in creating a modern conjugal unit, or the demographics of family organization. Even novel work, like that analyzing the fictive kin of Florentine confraternities, has passed lightly over the issue of gender distinctions in relation to ritual kinship. A feminist perspective on women and gender has recently begun to enter historical discourse on the Florentine family through the essays of Christiane Klapisch–Zuber, whose portrayal of women as displaced and disempowered nevertheless needs to be critically examined.

This essay aims to redress some of these imbalances in recent historiography by asking a fundamental question: based on patterns of family remembrance, how did women in Renaissance Florence define and experience kinship as compared with their male kin? In assessing the relation between gender and kinship, commemorative masses commissioned for dead relatives offer a particularly useful source for several reasons. First, memorial masses were in themselves implicit family statements; the very act of remembrance, which reinvested the memory of dead kin among the living on a regular and formal basis, aimed at the continual integration of the kin group as it moved both backward and forward in time. Second, as a source for family history, commemorative bequests help docu-

2The introduction by David Nicholas, The Domestic Life of a Medieval City: Women, Children, and the Family in Fourteenth-Century Ghent (Lincoln, NE, and London, 1985), reviews the recent interpretations of, and bibliography for, European family structures in general, with a particular emphasis on northern Europe.


4Klapisch–Zuber, Women, Family, and Ritual in Renaissance Italy (Chicago, 1985).

ment the elusive area of affective ties among family members, as well as delineate family organization on both the domestic and larger social level. Finally, because commemorative commissions, performances, and problems were documented by ecclesiastical institutions to which women had regular access, these church records balance the lineage-heavy pages of family diaries and throw their patrilineal messages into sharp relief.

For historians, the complexity of relations among women, kin, and commemoration is intensified by the conflicts and tensions inherent in the Florentine family system. In the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, Florentine society faced the structural contradictions of combining a dotal system with a patrilineal one, which placed women in a highly ambiguous and vulnerable position as members of two families. The contradictions in this arrangement were especially pronounced for the Florentine elite. As dowry prices spiraled upwards throughout the fifteenth century, husbands increasingly depended on the dowries their wives brought them from other lineages to provide capital for business ventures and to legitimize their social place. But what husbands received, fathers had later to give. Enriched by the economic resources of their brides, husbands confronted the transfer or loss of their own patrimony when, as fathers, they dowered their daughters in an escalating marriage market. While some of these problems were resolved during the sixteenth century, when a more concentrated property entailment safeguarded dowries, in republican Florence the family represented an arena in which a powerful patrilineal ideology conflicted with social practice.


The competition between the dotal and lineal faces of the family intruded not only in the economic marketplace but also behind the closed doors of domestic life. It was in the households of the urban patriciate that patrilineal ideology met the daily test of cognatic and conjugal arrangements. The conflict between family regimes worked to carve out a central social position for patrician women, on the one hand, and to fragment their social identity on the other. Women wove and continued to sustain a powerful web of family relationships through marriage and the creation of parentado. Yet this same central position also exerted competing claims on a woman’s status and affection in everyday life. As daughters, patrician women depended on paternal wealth for the dowry that guaranteed their status as wives.\(^9\) Should they be widowed, custom granted them the right of returning to their natal fold, but often at the expense of abandoning the children born in their conjugal union.\(^10\) The economic needs of a dotal and lineal system both created and confused ties of affection between fathers and daughters, husbands and wives. Although the Florentine family system was governed by a patrilineal ideology, family life itself was characterized by tensions between economic and affective relations.

Moreover, Florentine demographic patterns fostered a tangle of family relationships that often made kinship temporary and somewhat vague. Late marriages for men, around age thirty-two for a first marriage, coupled with a relatively low life expectancy, truncated the conjugal experience for many Florentine males. Although women married at the much younger age of about sixteen to eighteen, the high incidence of death in childbirth commonly shortened the length of their natural and married lives. Patrician women under about age forty who survived childbirth and who outlived their husbands frequently remarried. These second or even third marriages created a new set of alliances that further served their natal families’ purposes and that further confused kin relationships.\(^11\) In this society of multiple marriages, where women both bound and broke patriline, kinship was a critical yet tenuous bond.

\(^9\)Diane Owen Hughes makes a similar point in connection with women’s clothing in her article “Sumptuary Law and Social Relations in Renaissance Italy,” 69–99 in Disputes and Settlements: Law and Human Relations in the West, ed. John Bossy (Cambridge, 1983).


Given these competing family claims, my first objective in this essay is to explore what commemorative patterns reveal about gender-based experiences of kinship, including conflicts in family allegiances and affiliations. In particular, I want to focus on women’s response to their splintered social identity as part of two or even three families by comparing their commemorative patterns with those of their fathers, brothers, and husbands. To what extent did women’s visions of the family they remembered correspond to the family pictures of their male kinsmen? Second, I want to explore the problem of family structure and sentiment from a different perspective by examining how commemorative masses to some extent resolved conflicts in family relationships. What I hope to suggest in the course of the essay is not a single historical model of the Florentine family but rather multiple, complex representations that describe the actual and idealized human relations of both women and men.

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In one important sense, the commemorative habits of Florentine men and women were remarkably similar. From a numerical standpoint, the cultural imperative to honor kin through masses was experienced by and available to both men and women in roughly equal proportions. Between 1360 and 1500, women sponsored about half the total number of perpetual programs established at ecclesiastical institutions scattered throughout the city. The confraternity of San Pier Martire, one of the oldest and wealthiest laud-singing companies in the city, for example, listed thirty-seven women and thirty-six men among its donors when the group compiled a commemorative ledger in 1423. Of the ninety programs listed in the company’s 1427 Catasto report, forty-nine (54%) had been instituted by men and forty-one (46%) by women.\(^\text{12}\) The endowment records of the Benedictine convent of San Pier Maggiore describe a world similarly balanced between genders. Between 1367 and 1488, twenty-nine women and twenty-seven men commissioned a total of fifty-four perpetual programs at the convent.\(^\text{13}\) This gender equation,


\(^{13}\) San Pier Maggiore, vol. 38 (Summary of Obligations and Charges). According to the preface (unpaginated), this compilation was made in 1668 in order “to know the origins and foundations of all the [convent’s] obligations,” since some programs had to be
Monument Fact Sheet

Tomb monument to Marta Porcari

Date: after 1512

Location: S. Maria sopra Minerva, Rome. Originally located near the Tribune area

Patron: Marta Porcari provided funding for her chapel, while one of her heirs Metello Vari contracted with Michelangelo for the Risen Christ.

Components of monument: tomb slab (lost), inscription (lost, but recorded), sculpture of Christ by Michelangelo Buonarroti, niche for sculpture (lost, but recorded) and an altar (lost).

Inscription:

Metello Vari and P. Paul Castellani, Romans,
Erect this Altar
According to the will of Marta Porcari
With a third part of the expenses, and dowry,
Which Metello completes from his own resources
Dedicated to God Almighty

Metellus Varus, & P. Paul Castellanus
Romani Martiae Portiae testamento
hoc altare erexerunt
cum tertia parte impensarum, et dotis,
quae Metellus de suo supplens
Deo Opt. Max. Dicavit

The inscription no longer survives, but is recorded in early guidebooks in the 16th century. In the early 20th century, one author turns “Martiae” (Martha) into “Matthiae” (Matthew), “Metellus Verus et P. Paul. Castellanus, Romani, Matthiae Porciae festo, hoc altare [p. 235] erexerunt, cum tertia parte impensarum et dotis quae Metellus de suo supplens, Deo. Opt. max. dicavit” (Berthier 1910, 230, fn.1), although by the time of Berthier’s publication, the inscription was already removed.

Print after sculpture in original niche
Michelangelo’s Risen Christ. Woodcut. Le cose maravigliose dell’alma città di Roma... Rome, Franzini 1600, 71 (Source: Bibliotheca Hertziana)
Questa è la incomparabile fama del N.S. Gesù Cristo, del quale Maria, madre, a sua divina & immortale Michaele Angelo Boarabon & nella sopradetta chiesa di S. Maria sopra Minerva, dell'ordine di S. Domenico, con le sue sei lettere in Italia.

METELLYS VARVS ET P. PAUL. CASTELLANVS
ROMANI MARTIB PORCLE TESTAMENTO
HOC ALTARE EREREXVRNT
CVM TERRA PARTE IMPENSARVMET DOTIS
QUA METELLYS DE SVO SUPPLEMENT
DEO OPT. MAX. DICAVIT.
...
In faccia al de[tto] piaestallo sotto li piedi del Salvatore si legge in lettere di metallo dorato. Ave Benignissime Jesu = Salvatore Mundi = Miserere mei = Sopra poi al Salvatore medemo [sic] in un mezzo cerchio che attornia [attorenica?] lo Spirito santo in forma di Colomba al di sotto si legge = Tu es Filius meus dlectus in te
...
In questo istello pilastro o colonna quasi in cima si cede un arme Cardinalizia in un pezzo di pietra quale consiste in due filze di stucchi in quartati con due aquile nere.


Fol. 11v: “… et appariva questo Tempio da principio molto più bello, che non apparisce oggi; má per l’inondazioni del Tevere fú alzato il pavimento di esso alcune braccia, come lo dimostrano le basi de Pilastri che con l’occassione di cavare nuove Sepolture si vedono sotterrate è sepolté il che dimostrano anche alcune lapidi di sepolture antiche che spesso si trovano sottoterra al piano dell’antico pavimento.”

p. 48: “Gran giuditio di Dio, che ne i luoghi più bassi, & donde le chiaviche hanno havute le bocche più aperte da sfogare, per le Chiese, in Sant’Apostolo, alla Minerva, à S. Rocco, & alla Rotonda baßissima, la forza dell’acque hanno sfondati i pavimenti, e le sepolture, e sbalzati fuora gli avelli di gravißimi marmi, & per le strade dove ha potuto scorrere, ha sfondati li condotti sotto terra, desertevi le selciate, & scorzati i mattonati, come se vi fosse stato il fuoco, è venuto infangando per tutto i pozzi e le cisterne, e le fontane per Roma, & impite specialmente le cantine, le stalle, e le stanze sotterranee, & lasciatovi un lezzo, & una creta tanto viscosa, che manco si la lascia scavare con le pale, e per sgombrarle essendo forzati a buttarle per le ripe, non è senza dubbio de’ molti, che non le restringano, e venghino à causare peggiori effetti de prima, che dio l’averta.”
ALEXANDRE LENOIR AND THE MUSEUM OF FRENCH MONUMENTS

Barbarians and slaves despise the sciences and destroy artistic monuments; free men love and preserve them.

Abbé Grégoire, Rapport sur les destructions opérées par le vandalisme, 1794
The Museum of French Monuments was the second great Revolutionary museum of Paris. Officially recognized in 1795 and remaining open until the Bourbon Restoration, it was largely the creation of one man, Alexandre Lenoir, and differed in fundamental respects from the Louvre museum of the 1790s. Unlike the Louvre, whose roots lie deep in the ancien régime and in the Enlightenment ideal of a museum, the Musée des monuments was the product of circumstances unique to the Revolution and would have been inconceivable before 1789.¹ Instead of paintings and antique marbles, it contained French sculpture and tomb monuments from the Middle Ages to the early nineteenth century — not then (or since) in many people’s canon of “great” art. This lack of recognized masterpieces pushed Lenoir to create a museum more strictly chronological than any that had gone before and to design the first “period rooms” in museum history in order to display his collection sympathetically. Unable in contemporary eyes to stand on their own as works of art, many of Lenoir’s monuments required historicizing and exoticizing through context to become museum objects.

The Musée des monuments was born of the contradictory Revolutionary desires, on the one hand, to obliterate the past in pursuit of a regenerated society and, on the other, to preserve past monuments as evidence of Republican enlightenment. As we have seen, many works of art and historical artifacts represented subjects and memories antithetical to Republican principles; in Varon’s powerful words, they were marked by the “superstition, flattery, and debauchery” of a corrupt, discredited regime. At the same time to destroy testaments of human progress and the fruit of individual genius was to go against everything the Enlightenment stood for. As the Abbé Grégoire observed, only a barbarous people despises science and destroys artistic monuments (see the epigraph for this chapter).

The question was, however, what qualified as an artistic monument no civilized people would destroy? And who was to decide? There was never serious discussion of destroying Old Master paintings destined for the Louvre; it proved simple enough to veil certain “offensive” signs (the fleur de lis, for example), and to rationalize their public display in aesthetic terms. But objects that failed in contemporary eyes to qualify unambiguously as works of art, such as commemorative monuments, religious sculpture, and stained glass, were as a class treated with much less respect. We should remember that just days before the Louvre museum opened in August 1793 many royal tombs at Saint-Denis, the traditional burying place of the French kings, were systematically destroyed by order of the government (Fig. 60). In virtually the same breath Jacques-Louis David could plead the cause of responsible conservation at the Louvre and propose the erection of a colossal statue of the French people on a base composed of “feudal debris,” to include statuary torn down from Notre-Dame and other church
façades. Simply put, at work during the Revolution was a distinction between a great work of art embodying transcendent, eternal aesthetic values and objects whose worth was measured primarily in terms of historical importance and local memory. A devotional painting by Raphael, despite its subject, was protected as the inviolable patrimony of world civilization, whereas the tomb of a cardinal was prone to Revolutionary iconoclasm and the fury of the mob. Rubens’s paintings of Marie de Medici were masterpieces of the Flemish school, whereas Bouchardon’s equestrian statue of Louis XV was identified not as the masterpiece of France’s most acclaimed eighteenth-century sculptor but as a prominent representation of a recent French king that had to be torn down. An implicit distinction between works of art and historical monuments is still very much with us: the former, located in museums and outside history, are rarely defaced (when they are the result is public outrage), whereas the latter, burdened by their identity as political-historical representations, are prime targets for graffiti and vandalism. Who stopped to question the recent toppling of Communist icons in eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union?

By and large monumental Renaissance and later sculpture was not highly prized in late-eighteenth-century France and was notably absent from the three museum projects discussed in previous chapters (aside from d’Angiviller’s Grands Hommes, whose primary value was commemorative). At the Revolutionary Louvre even Michelangelo’s Slaves, confiscated from the

Figure 60. Hubert Robert, Desecration of Royal Tombs at Saint-Denis in 1793. Oil on canvas, Musée Carnavalet, Paris.
descendants of Cardinal Richelieu, settled for a decorative role, framing but not crossing the entrance to the Grand Gallery. Meanwhile few if any at the time saw aesthetic merit in medieval sculpture. It took Lenoir's vision, energy, and ambition to make of non-antique sculpture material fit for a museum.

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Until its dissolution in December 1793, the forces of conservation were represented by the Commission des monuments, created to designate and safeguard objects of artistic and historical importance following the nationalization of Church property in November 1789. The Commission was made up of two dozen learned men – antiquarians, artists, and scientists, drawn in large part from the various Paris academies. As the Revolution progressed they were further entrusted with property confiscated from émigrés and, at the same time, forced to contend with the rise of vandalism, which became
ALEXANDRE LENOIR AND THE MUSEUM OF FRENCH MONUMENTS

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Monument Fact Sheet
Memorial for Faustina Lucia Mancini (died at the age of 24)

Date: 1544

Location: Santa Maria in Aracoeli, Cappella San Giacomo

Patron: Paolo Attavanti (husband of Faustina)

Tomb type: Marble wall tomb with epitaph plaque and sarcophagus with decorative garland relief; portrait bust on socle of the deceased inserted in a niche within the obelisk

Original appearance preserved in Windsor drawing (RL 11789), produced by Francesco Gualdi, which was likely presented to Cardinal Mazarin in 1646.

Related Mancini tombs: Tomb for Lucio Mancini (in the church of Santi Apostoli, Rome 1514)

History: The scholar Elena Bianca di Gioia has most recently suggested that the original bust of Faustina was taken down in 1670, and replaced by an idealized portrait bust of Ortenzia Mancini Mazzarino as Faustina (now in the Museo di Roma). Faustina’s tomb was further dismantled in the 19th century, being reused for the monument of Barbara Clarelli, making the current monument a pastiche of sixteenth, seventeenth, and nineteenth century elements.

Little has been recorded relative to the seventeenth-century renovations of the monument but the particulars of when Faustina’s bust was taken down from the monument are worthy of further examination here. Moreover, the repurposing the monument’s sarcophagus within the 19th century monument for another women opens up broader discussion relative to gender, family, historicism, and the protracted role of women’s monuments within the commemorative landscape of Roman churches.

Francesco Gualdi, Tomb of Faustina Lucia Mancini (RL 11789)
Tomb of Barbara Clarelli.  
1870. Santa Maria in Aracoeli.
I. Testimony of a Cultural Phase and Source for Lost Monuments: The Collection of Drawings of Tombs in Windsor

Rome is recognized as one of the main centres for the funerary art of every age. There are two main reasons for this: first, the peculiar conditions that have concurred to create this unprecedented stage of Roman funerary sculpture; and second, the millennia of power exerted by a city in which, over the centuries, many illustrious men who had moved thither or were temporarily resident there, met their death. In the post-classical period the city’s particular socio-political character, and especially the nature of the effective monarchy of the papacy, ensured that the ruling elites that succeeded each other in holding the reins of power were renewed with unexampled frequency and rapidity. Each new holder of power wished to leave a magnificent memorial of himself in stone, thus contributing to the stratification of a heritage of extraordinary richness (fig. 1), which long constituted an indispensable model for funerary art throughout Europe. So it is clear that the documentary culture that revolves around this heritage, and that has left a testimony of it in the form of drawings and prints, should also be considered with the greatest attention.

The volume RCIN 970334 in the Royal Library at Windsor Castle, with the title Tombs of Illustrious Italians at Rome, contains almost exclusively drawings of tomb slabs and funerary monuments in Rome. The drawings are the work of various artists and are executed in various techniques. The volume entered the English royal collections in 1762, together with drawings and prints from the Albani library, where it had been preserved at least since 1736. Ever since its arrival in England — if not even earlier — the volume was commonly considered one of the albums of drawings that make up the Museo Cartaceo, the “paper museum”, of Cassiano dal Pozzo. The first scholar to reject the alleged link between the Windsor album and the famous collector and patron of archaeological and scientific studies was Ingo Herklotz in 1992. Herklotz proposed instead to establish a connection between the Windsor syllogia and a group of Vatican codices, first attributed by Forcella to the antiquary and collector Francesco Gualdi, in which the same script used in the marginia of many drawings in the volume RCIN 970334 is frequently encountered. This attribution needs, however, to be more precisely defined, on the basis of the fact that the compilation of these codices should be ascribed in the main not to Gualdi himself, but to a close collaborator, hitherto little known, Costantino Gigli. So a decisive, though not (as we shall see) exclusive role should be attributed to Gigli also in the genesis of the Windsor syllogia.

The volume in the Royal Library is quite unique in the context of the antiquarian interests and documentation campaigns in the first half of the eighteenth century. It testifies to the vigour and variety of the antiquarian and archaeological erudition that characterized cultured circles in Rome during this period. The collection falls outside the more widespread interest in classical and Christian antiquities during this period, whose major legacies were Cassiano’s Museo Cartaceo and Antonio Bosio’s Roma sotterranea. It focuses attention, instead, on far more recent periods, as late as the second half of the Cinquecento, represented by a large number of wall-monuments, and especially on the last centuries of the Middle Ages.

In its preference for tombs dating between the thirteenth and fifteenth century, the Windsor album represents, indeed, a significant testimony of the revival of interest in the medieval period in seventeenth-century Rome. It can be compared, in this sense, with Francesco Gualdi’s treatise Delle memorie sepolcrali, to whose realization Gigli himself contributed, as we shall see later.

The other main source of interest in the Royal Library codex consists in the fact that a good number of the monuments illustrated in its drawings have since been lost, while of others only fragments have been preserved, recomposed or completed more or less freely; some tombs have been shorn of parts not considered essential, while others have even been repurposed for purposes other than those for which they were originally intended. So the volume is not only the historiographical document of a cultural phase, but also enriches our knowledge of a genre of art that is exceptionally well-represented and preserved in Rome, and permits us (though with the caution due to frequent imprecisions) to reconstruct the original appearance of monuments that are now mutilated.

II. Characteristics of the Collection

The album is bound in half calf in an English book-binding of the later eighteenth century (440×300 mm), with brown leather backstrip gilt-ruled with raised bands, English title (‘Tombs of Illustrious Italians at Rome’) gilt-lettered in the second compartment, marbled paper sides, leather corners (fig. 2).

The drawings are mounted on paper passepartouts, measuring on average 438×285 mm. Variable in size, the drawings were in many cases cropped at the time they were...
V. Paper Pantheons: Drawings and Prints of Tombs in the Modern Period

Throughout the ages, and for many reasons, tombs have aroused great interest among the living, who have honored, and sometimes venerated, them for the remains they enclosed, or investigated them for the information transmitted by their epitaths, or simply admired them for their beauty. It was not until the period of Humanism, however, that a tradition of studying funerary monuments — their iconography, their epigraphy — developed. It was only then that humanists, or the artists working for them, began to copy them in prints and drawings, and to reproduce ancient burials, from simple cinerary urns to mausolea. It was not until the second half of the Cinquecento, however, that this tradition extended its field of investigation to more recent periods.

The first field in which we would expect to find testimonies of an interest in tombs is obviously that of family memoria: not only due to the natural devotion to one’s own ancestors or an interest in reconstructing the history of one’s own family — at least since genealogies began to trace a family’s origins back to real and no longer legendary epochs, but also due to the fact that, as is repeatedly underlined in the jurisprudence of the period, coats of arms, sepultures and epitaphs were also legal documents and able to prove a family’s particular rights, beginning with the ius patronatus over a chapel. Attention, in this regard, was generally focused on the inscriptions alone, ignoring the figurative components, as is eloquently shown by a letter of Antonio Dal Pozzo to his son Cassiano on 20 April 1614: “I wish you to inquire about the church in which Cardinal Puleo and the Archbishop of Barì Pozzo, who was the cousin of the said cardinal, were buried. I think both are buried in Santa Maria sopra Minerva. See if there is an epitaph of the one or the other and send me a copy of anything you find, advising me in what chapel and in what part of the church they are buried, because all the dead of our House in Piedmont I have been able to discover the churches [in which they are buried], the epitaphs, the days of their death, and have digested them into a book that will serve for our descendants.”

Cases however are not lacking in which family memoria registered not only the epitaphs, but also the visual appearance of family tombs: a fine example of this is the dossier compiled by a nobleman of Rieti, Francesco Crispolti, to prove his eligibility to be admitted to the Hospitaler Order of St. John of Jerusalem (Knights of Malta): a dossier that also includes representations of tomb slabs and monuments in demonstration of the antiquity and prestige of his family (fig. 13). We may also cite the drawings of Pisan tomb slabs made by one of the main exponents of sacred erudition in the Rome of the Barberini, the abate Costantino Gaetani, who was interested not least in the sepultures of his (supposed) ancestors (fig. 16). Although of mediocre quality, the drawings of this eclesiastic are significant examples of the freedom with which tomb slabs of this type were reproduced, extrapolating the figure of the deceased from its funerary context: the figure, in this case, is shown not recumbent but standing, with his feet resting on an invented floor. Yet this freedom is conspicuously absent in the Windsor codex, in which the tomb slabs are reproduced in the main admittly with their proportions altered and some elements deformed, but invariably in their entirety and respecting the rectangular format of their tomb type.

The mention of the abate Gaetani introduces us to the vast field of ecclesiastical historiography and tradition in which great attention was paid to medieval figurative testimonies, albeit to a far lesser degree than to the monuments of the Early Christian period, to which greater attention was drawn not only for purely antiquarian motives but also by virtue of their possible apologetical use in the ongoing conflict with Protestants. So, if the burials of the first Christians found a great investigator in Antonio Bosia, who reproduced them with some degree of fidelity and commented on them in his pioneering study of Roman catacombs, published three years after his death, the folio Roma sotterranea (1632), the tombs of medieval popes were especially studied by those interested in recovering the verae effigies of the popes of previous centuries. In the reproduction of these tombs, consequently, preference was often shown for reproducing only the papal portrait, ignoring all the rest; or, if the deceased were reproduced in his entirety, he was extrapolated from his funerary context and converted from a funerary effigy into a living person, in the manner of Gaetani. It is clear that in this approach — and in that ascertainable in other cases, in which the tombs of sovereigns or humanists were being taken into consideration — the status and historical importance of the deceased counted for much. The same cannot be said of the Windsor album, in which the status of the deceased does not seem to be of paramount importance: though it comprises representations of many tombs of popes and important cardinals, it also contains those of many obscure persons. So the album as a whole cannot be placed in the tradition of the study of virtut illustres, in which the English title of the album, Tombs of Illustrious Italians, would like to situate it.

Iconographic interests, like those described above, were often combined with other types of curiosity, such as that in the various kinds of historical costumes, or suits of armour, weapons and accessories represented on tombs. Evidence of a more purely antiquarian interest can be found in the texts of the Vatican archivist Giacomo Grimandi’s Instrumenta autentica (1619–1620) and also — in the field of the historiography of may institutions — in the work of Felice Contelori. We need however to point out that, apart from motivations linked to interests of historical, genealogical and antiquarian type, there was another strong incentive that prompted men of learning of the period to take into consideration the sepultures of the past and to register their appearance, namely, the acknowledgement that many of them had been destroyed or ran the risk of being lost. The implementation of provisions on funerary monuments issued by some popes in the period of the Council of Trent and the consequent “deplorabile strage d’iscrizioni, di urne, di marmi” undoubtedly represented an important spur for this grow-
ing consciousness; and the wholesale demolitions that accompanied the wave of the modernization or remodeling of churches in baroque Rome helped to keep it alive in the following decades.\(^{147}\) The documentary culture, which grew with particular vigour in Rome in the aftermath of the study of antiquity, and received a decisive impulse with the traumatic event of the demolition of the old St. Peter's,\(^{149}\) therefore included among the privileged objects of its attention funerary monuments and tomb slabs. The Memorie sepolcrali of the cavalier Gualdi, and not least the Windsor album itself, were one of the principal testimonies of this new interest. This tradition was continued in the first decades of the following century by the erudite Francesco Valesio, indefatigable explorer of the churches of Rome (figs. 17 and 18),\(^{150}\) and culminated, at the start of the nineteenth century, in the campaign of documentation ordered by the antiquarian and naturalist Anbin–Louis Millin during his period of residence in Rome (fig. cat. 187a).\(^{150}\)

The consideration, in which the tombs of the past in Rome were held, torn between interests of various kinds and irresponsibility to the need to preserve them for posterity, can be placed in a wider perspective, comprising the rest of the peninsula and various regions of Europe. Here too different approaches can be identified. Historical or genealogical interest in tomb sculptures thus led the historians of the House of Savoy to pay attention to the sepulchres of the dynasty.\(^{151}\) It also inspired the monumental campaign of reproduction conducted in Flanders by the painter Antoine de Succa, commissioned to "faire la recherche des genealogies effigiénaires des princes et princesses" who had held power in the region in the past.\(^{152}\) Comparable, instead, to Gualdi's Memorie sepolcrali and the Windsor album in terms of the spirit of conservation that inspired it, in the face of an unstoppable wave of destruction, is the Sepolтурario fiorentino composed by Stefano Rosselli around 1657: a manuscript corpus of Florentine tombs, illustrated with schematic reproductions of them.\(^{153}\)

In French medieval studies, funerary sculpture drew the attention of more than one erudite, in an inextricable intertwining between historical interests proper and antiquarian curiosity that is not always possible, or justifiable, to separate.\(^{154}\) In his insatiable curiosity for every aspect of nature, history and art, the great Nicolas–Claude Fabri de Peiresc (1580–1637), astronomer, student of fossils and flora, collector of antiquities, polymath, commissioned many drawings of the tombs of French kings and noblemen, at least in part gathered with the intention — never realized — of publishing a collection of Monumens de la monarchie françoise, of the kind that Montfaucon would send to the press over a century later.\(^{155}\) Even more significant than the drawings, however, is the instruction that de Peiresc sent to a painter by the name of Thomas, commissioned to design the tomb of Ogier and Bernad in Saint Faron at Meeau: the two points on which de Peiresc most insisted were: first, the absolutely faithful rendering of each of the figures sculpted in the tomb, with all their "deformities"; and without succumbing to the temptation to adjust them to contemporary taste or contemporary representative practice; and second, the scrupulous reproduction of costumes and footwear, urged with a vehemence that is a clear indication of an approach of antiquarian type on the part of Peiresc, who was also interested in changing fashions of dress over the centuries.\(^{156}\)

Several decades after the death of the Provengal erudit, French medieval tombs found another great and indefatigable investigator in the aristocratic Roger de Gaignières (1642–1715), who, apart from collecting manuscripts, works of art and memorabilia of the Middle Ages, promoted the realization of a "paper museum" of limitless extent, totally focused on the Middle Ages, in which the lion’s share was taken by thousands of reproductions of funerary monuments and tomb slabs. This was of enormous importance, given that a large part of them have since been lost.\(^{157}\)

To see tombs of the medieval period not only drawn, but also translated into copperplate prints and published, we need to await another half century or so until the arrival of the Age of the Enlightenment, and the publication, in 1729, of the Monumens de la monarchie françoise of Bernard de Montfaucon (1655–1741).\(^{158}\) The quality of many of the engravings of tombs in this corpus, and their resemblance to the originals, is variable, but in general the images are accurate, although — in contrast to Gaignières — the tombs are not always reproduced in their entirety; a preference is sometimes shown for extrapolating the figures of the deceased alone (in ways we have already seen in other cases).

In the British Isles, too, a lively and variegated interest in historic tombs began to be expressed in the seventeenth century. Apart from many printed books on churches and monasteries that in many cases include engravings of funerary monuments,\(^{159}\) we should cite, in this regard, the extremely rich manuscript repertoire assembled by the gentleman antiquary Thomas Dingley (+ 1695) in the second half of the seventeenth century. With the explicit aim of deriving a History from Marble, Dingley transcribed inscriptions and drew coats of arms, seals and tombs in many counties in England, which he then annotated profusely.\(^{160}\) He was undeterred by a strong sense of indignation about the wretched state of ancient tombs, spoiled of their most precious materials and constantly under threat from the "sordid opinion in some people that Tombs and Monuments, with Epitaphs, relish of Romish Superstition and Popery".\(^{161}\) Ireland can also be included in this rapid survey of the kind that Montfaucon would send to the press over a century later.\(^{155}\) Due to the difficulties posed by its interpretation, it can be compared with the Windsor sylloge.\(^{162}\)

Within this wider European survey of repertoires of tombs and funerary monuments a unique place is occupied by the Monumenta sepulcralorum published for the first time at Breslau in 1574 and consisting of 125 engraved plates depicting tomb slabs, monuments and inscriptions. The plates were produced by the engraver Tobias Pendl. The collection, whose huge success throughout Europe is testified by the numerous editions published, under slightly varied titles, between the last decades of the sixteenth and the end of the following century, was far long the only printed sylloge of reproductions of tombs.\(^{163}\)
Francesco Gualdi e gli arredi scultorei nelle chiese romane

Fabrizio Federici

Il collezionista di origini riminesi Francesco Gualdi (1574 circa - 1657) fu senza dubbio il testimone più attento e allarmato della rimozione degli arredi scultorei di molte chiese di Roma nel corso della prima metà del Seicento, a seguito dei restauri, dei rifacimenti radicali e delle demolizioni che interessarono l’edilizia sacra cittadina in quell’epoca. Alla base dell’impresa più vasta e significativa del cavaliere Gualdi, l’inedito trattato *Delle memorie sepolcrali*, ci fu proprio la volontà di documentare la ricchezza del patrimonio di lastre tombali tre-quatrotcentesche custodito nelle chiese romane, nella piena consapevolezza del suo interesse dal punto di vista storico-genealogico e antiquario e del fatto che le lastre per prime, in virtù della loro facile amovibilità e della scarsa considerazione in cui erano tutele, correvano il rischio di andare distrutte. E a riprova della vastità del perduto in questo ambito e dell’importanza documentaria del trattato, basti considerare che sono scomparse oltre la metà delle novantasei tombe riprodotte nelle xilografie che dovevano illustrare l’opera1.

Già alla fine degli anni venti del Seicento Gualdi mostrò un particolare interesse nei confronti della scultura sepolcrale di età medievale. Fra le tavole da lui fatte eseguire per l’edizione del 1630 delle *Vitae Pontificum* di Alonso Chacon (Ciacconius), raffiguranti monumenti sepolcrali, monete e medaglie di diversi papi, da Onorio III a Urbano VIII, spicca l’incisione che riproduce il sepolcro di Onorio IV e di sua madre Giovanna Savelli Aldobrandeschi nella chiesa di Santa Maria in Araceli (fig. 1), sormontato dal baldacchino originale, oggi scomparso e sostituito da una copertura settecentesca2; mentre per un’ulteriore edizione delle *Vitae*, cui si lavorava nei primi anni trenta, il cavaliere Gualdi commissionò una tavola che riuniva, in una maestosa abside, diverse effigi di Bonifacio VIII (fig. 2), tra cui il monumento funebre di Arnolfo, privo del mosaico tornitano che in origine lo sovrastrava. Tuttavia fu solo nel 1677 che venne pubblicata una terza edizione di Chacon, nella quale fu inclusa anche la tavola dedicata a papa Caetani, mancante però di ogni riferimento a Gualdi, scomparso ormai da vent’anni.

In numerosi punti della *Memorie scritta* – la cui stesura, a opera di Gualdi, dello storico Costantino Ga-gli e degli antiquari Gauges de’ Gozze e Ottavio Tronsarelli, è da situare nei primi anni quaranra del secolo3 – si deplorano le continue distruzioni di antiche “memorie”, nella prima versione dell’avviso *Al lettore*, in particolare, è posto sotto accusa il meccanismo che, nella gran parte dei casi, provocava la scomparsa delle lastre terrate:

“Simili disordini irreparabili vengono cagionati in gran parte da una certa dannosa introduzione di dar a cottimo, cioè ad opera finita, alcuni edifici; ma pensando noi a’ successi accaduti a’ nostri giorni degli antichi tempi demoliti, ed altri sitaurati, per la convenzione solita farsi da deputati poco intendenti, e meno caritativi in conceder a conto di pagamento al capo maestro muratore le rovine degli ammassati marmi, co’ quali ci hanno comprese anch’essa centinaia delle nostre antiche lapidi sepolcrali; e con simili altri modi, e patti giornalmente vien deteriorata la veneranda antichità ecclesiastica”4.

In altri passi del trattato si suggerisce l’adozione di provvedimenti legislativi tesi a fermare tali “disordini irreparabili”; parlando, ad esempio, della quattrocentesca lastra di Maria Cenci, già in Sant’Agostino e ora al Museo di Roma (fig. 3), Gualdi afferma con forza:

> È cosa certamente degna di provvedimento, e di ri-medio l’abuso introdotto d’alterare le capelle, e rimuovere le lapidi sepolcrali, che si pongono a difon-dere la vera della necropoli non meno ai successi accaduti a’ nostri giorni de’ monumenti sepolcrali, che ad ogni altra fortuna.

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la cappella da lei fabbricata, e dotata come dalla me- desima inscrizione si può comprendere, e stava non so come questa pietra nel mezzo del pavimento della detta chiesa; si vede pure, nel punto di essa notizia alcuna si ritrova, come se non fosse mai stata eretta, e pure è vecchia, e nobile famiglia [...]."

Il nobilissimo riminese, peraltro, non si limitò a invo- care l’intervento delle autorità nelle pugnature del suo trattato, ma agli inizi di tali riscatti ad ottenere, è indubbiamente infatti, che si debba scorgere la sua in- fluenza alla base di un singolarissimo editto del cardi- nale di Sant’Onofrio Antonio Barberini, del 2 ottobre 1638; nel commento dell’abate notevole attenzio- ne è dedicata, sulla scorta di quanto era avvenuto per papi più recenti nella seconda edizione delle Vi- tas Pontificum di Gregorio XIII (1630), al mecenatismo di Gelasio e ai suoi interventi in Santa Maria in Co- smedin, in San Bartolomeo e al Laterano. Per quan- to riguarda la prima chiesa, l’attenzione si appunta anche in questo caso sul cilindro, opera di un ‘non contemnedium artificis’ che alcuni, sulla base degli stemmi posti su di essa, volevano commissionata da Gelasio II e che l’autore giustamente riferisce al pontificato di un altro papa Gaetano, Bonifacio VIII. A questa conclusione l’abate perviene non attra- verso svariati studi, a quest’altezza cronologica ancora rara per le opere medievali, ma incrementando le informazioni fornite dalle iscrizioni presenti su questa e su altre testimonianze della pro- duzione artistica romana degli ultimi anni del Due- cento.


Dunque il passo delle Monem xilografici riportato più sopra riprende da questo di Gaetani non solo la ci- tazione dell’iscrizione in San Gaucino a porta Set- timiana, ma anche l’accennato alla pratica – databile con certezza – di Cosmati al Laterano; ciò che è nuovo nel testo di Gaudi è il riferimento a Jacopo Torriti. Non si tratta dell’unica menzione del gran- de mosaicista nelle Monem, a lui è inoltre attribuita la lastra tombale lavorata a mosaico di Munio di Za- mora in Santa Sabina, che è riprodotta in una delle xilografie del trattato più singolari e, nel complesso, meno aderenti all’aspetto dell’originale (fig. 4). Guali ha parole di elogio per Torriti.

‘Trieno M. Magnone zamomeo di nazione spa- gnoulo come attesta l’iscrizione su detta, per il suo valore, e bontà meritevole d’essere il settimo magistro generale della sua religione de’ Predicatori, ed es- servante morto nell’anno 1308 sotto il pontificato di Bonifacio VIII. Giacomo Torriti valente artifices di que’ tempi nelle opere di mosaico con disegno goti- co, lo effigiat in pietra sepolturale nel sarcofago di Santa Sabina, che fece ancora del suddetto pontifi- ce nella Cappella di San Bonifacio la sua retta nel- la Basilica Vaticana, bogtt demolita per cagione del- la fabbrica del maraviglioso tempio di San Pietro, e lavorò parimenti la tribuna di Santa Maria Maggio- re, con quella di San Giovanni Laterano, in un fre- gno della quale effigiat se stesso con altri frai franc- escani, che fiadogh huius conserva’.

ma poco dopo tornò a farci sentire, in una veste pun- gente e ironica, la consueta condanna seicentesca per l’arte ‘rozza’ del medioevo: ‘Il lavoro del sepol-
È la probabilitymente da questa ligure presa dall’ori-
ginale che Giovanni Ciampini trasse l’incisione del ciborium (fig. 5) inserita nei quattro medaglioni pubblicati deci anni dopo il Raggiufo di Arman-
ni, nel frattempo (1685) fu posta in chiesa di Santa Maria in Campitelli – dove ancora oggi si tro-
va – un’iscrizione che descriveva il “quadratum ta-
bernaculum” e ne ricordava l’arte; se, evident-
temente, la conservazione fisica del monumento non interessò più di tanto, ciò che premeva, in questo luogo ai Capizucchi, era “sui memoriam ad posteros [...] transmittisseri”, tramandare il ricordo di una prova tangibile dell’antichità e del prestigio di questa no-
ble casa”.

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suo, Giovanni Capitelli, Beatrice Cirulli e Paola Pirzelli.

5 Incisione raffigurante il perduto ciborio
(da Ciampini 1690)

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