

Specchio di Roma barocca. Una guida inedita del XVII secolo. Insieme alle vedute di Lievin Cruyl, ed. Joseph Connors and LOUISE RICE, Rome, Edizioni dell'Elefante, 1991

The Avery Guidebook: Notes on the Manuscript, Date, and Authorship
by Joseph Connors and Louise Rice

In 1975, Avery Library of Columbia University in New York acquired a seventeenth-century manuscript guidebook to Rome from a Paris book dealer.¹ The manuscript, of unknown provenance, is written in French, and bears the title *Description de Rome moderne*. Neither the name of the author nor the year in which it was written are recorded, although on the basis of internal evidence the text can be dated to 1677 and the years immediately following. The guidebook was plainly intended for a French audience, but for reasons that are unclear it was never published. The Avery manuscript is the only version which has yet come to light.

I. The Manuscript

The manuscript is 513 pages in length, and is written on paper probably manufactured in Paris, with a dated watermark.² Pages 1-220 are written on paper dated 1688; pages 221-513 are written on paper dated 1689. The book is bound in parchment, and the endpapers lining the parchment are dated 1693.

Since it can be shown that the text predates the watermarks by about a decade, it follows that the Avery manuscript is a copy of an earlier, presumably lost manuscript. It contains many mistakes of grammar and spelling, which seem to be the fault of an ignorant copyist who was completely unfamiliar with the names of many Roman artists. Romanelli, for example, appears as “Roraanelli”, and Borromini is spelled in a variety of misleading ways, from “Baronni” to “Barontini” to “Parominei”. In addition, there are other mistakes that may indicate that the manuscript was dictated at one stage in its transmission. The scribe who wrote *n'estre* for *naistre* may not have been French, and his mistakes compound those that come from an illegible hand and an ignorant copyist.

The manuscript is unfinished. It breaks off in mid-sentence in the middle of a page, halfway through a description of the church of S. Atanasio dei Greci. All the same, since virtually every major monument in Rome is described in the existing pages, we may assume that the manuscript is nearly complete. Indeed it may be missing no more than the conclusion. S.

1. Avery Library, call no. AA 1115 D456.

2. The manuscript measures 253 by 184 mms. It is in reasonably good condition except for a certain amount of staining due to water damage along the upper margin. I am grateful to Mr. Herbert Mitchell, Rare Book Librarian of Avery Library, for providing me with this information.

The watermark represents a box containing the initials P M followed by the year and surmounted by a fleur-de-lys. A closely related watermark, identified as that of a 1683 Paris manufacture, is published by E. Heawood, *Watermarks Mainly of the 17th and 18th Centuries*, Hilversum 1950, fig. 204, num. 1436.

Atanasio is located on the Via del Babuino halfway between the Piazza del Popolo and the Piazza di Spagna. One possibility is that the guidebook would have directed its readers from there to the Piazza del Popolo (described in an earlier chapter) and deposited them at the Porta del Popolo, through which Northerners normally departed from Rome on their way back home.

II. The Date

Internal evidence enables us to date the guidebook with considerable accuracy to 1677 and the years immediately following. The reigning pope, Innocent XI (Odescalchi, 1676-1689) is mentioned nowhere by name, but we are given ample indication of his identity. Early on, for example, in describing the interior of St. Peter's, the author observes:

“On rencontre un peu au-delà le tombeau d’Innocent 8^e. de l’illustre famille des Cibo, d’où descend le Cardinal qui porte aujourd’hui ce nom, et que Sa Sainteté a choisy d’entre tous les autres comme ayant le plus de mérite, tant pour sa vertu extraordinaire, que pour les grands talens qu’il a pour le gouvernement dont le pape se décharge en partie sur luy comme sur son premier ministre” (pgg. 36 sg.).

The reference is to Cardinal Alderano Cibo, who was appointed Secretary of State immediately following the election of Innocent XI and who retained the post throughout the pontificate.³ From this and similar references, it is apparent that the guidebook was written while Innocent XI was pope, or in other words between 1676 and 1689.

Other clues make it possible to pinpoint the date with greater precision. The author reports a conversation with the aging Cardinal Francesco Barberini, who died on 10 December 1679. The author visited the Gesù and saw Gaulli's frescoes in the dome and pendentives, but found the nave fresco still under scaffolding. This means that his visit occurred between 1676, when the pendentives were completed, and New Year's Eve, 1679, when the nave fresco was unveiled.⁴ The author was interested in palace design and diligently visited several palaces which were being extensively renovated in this period. He saw the new stairways and carriage ramp at Palazzo Barberini, which were finished in November 1677 and which he describes as being built “depuis peu”.⁵ He examined the long enfilade and perspectival vista created on the ground floor of Palazzo Borghese in 1671-1677. Perhaps the most precise indication of the date of the original manuscript is a reference to Charles Le Brun, who is described as:

“aujourd’hui le Prince de l’Académie des peintres de Rome” (p. 208).

Le Brun held the position of *principe* of the Accademia di S. Luca in 1676-1677, and we may conclude that the *Description* was begun during these years.⁶

There are several indications that the author completed the guide, or at least had it retranscribed, after his return to Paris. He says that Cardinal Francesco Barberini had given him

3. L. van Pastor, *The History of the Popes*, trad. E. Graf, XXXII, Londra 1940, pp. 18 sg.

4. Robert Engass, *The Paintings of Baciccio. Giovanni Battista Gaulli, 1639-1709*, University Park 1964, pp. 136 sg.

5. Vedi la nota alle pagine 467 sg.

6. Vedi la nota alle pagine 208-210.

books to bring back with him to Paris. When he describes the martyrs' lamps found in the catacombs he adds, "J'en ai apporté en France" (pgg. 400 sg.). He wanted to consult with experts on the proportions of the column in front of S. Maria Maggiore "lorsque je fus près de partir de cette ville" (p. 412). The latest datable item in the text is in the description of S. Maria in Campitelli, where he speaks of "le père Capisucchi, aujourd'huy cardinal" (p. 207). Raimondo Capizucchi was named cardinal in 1681,⁷ and presumably the phrase "aujourd'huy cardinal" was an interpolation made when the author heard the news after his return to Paris.

III. The Attribution to M^r.^s Du Nozet

On the flyleaf of the Avery manuscript is an inscription, written in a different hand from the rest of the manuscript, which reads:

"Il est a présumer que le livre a été écrit par Monsieur du Nozet Auditeur de la Rotte à Rome en 1720 ou 1730."

This inscription is at least partially incorrect, since we know that the book was begun in 1677. But should we therefore ignore it? Whoever wrote it may have had information no longer available to us (for example, he may have found the manuscript among other books owned by M. Du Nozet), or else he may have been relying on the evidence of the text itself. The name Du Nozet does, in fact, appear in the text. After describing the church of S. Maria della Pace, the author digresses into a discussion of the Sacra Rota Romana, the papal court which at that time convened in the building attached to the church. He relates how the committee arrived at its decisions, and adds:

"Ce sont ces décisions ainsy raisonnées qu'on ramasse de temps en temps, comme on[t] fait M^r.^s Dunozet, et qu'on publie sous le nom de *Décisions de la Rote*" (p. 260).

Since the abbreviation "M^r.^s" is plural in form, the author must be referring to more than one Monsieur Du Nozet; and in fact there were two men of that name connected with the Rota. Guillaume Du Nozet was an auditor from 1613 until 1626; and his nephew Aimé Du Nozet took his place and held a seat on the Rota from 1626 until 1657.⁸ Their collected *Decisions*, to which the author of the guidebook makes reference, were published in Rome in 1668, less than a decade before the guidebook was written.⁹ These were posthumous publications, however. Guillaume Du Nozet died in the 1630s and Aimé in 1657, so neither of them could have had any part in writing the guidebook.

But the issue is still more complicated. Assuming whoever wrote the inscription on the flyleaf was indeed relying on textual evidence, it is easy to see why he came to the conclusion that the author was a member of the Rota. Following a description of Bramante's cortile at S. Maria della Pace, the text reads:

7. *Sub voce* nel *Dizionario biografico degli Italiani*.

8. E. Cerchiarì, *Capellani papae et apostolicae sedis auditores causarum sacri palatii apostolici seu Sacra Romana Rota*, Roma 1920, II, pp. 138 sg. e 145 sg.

9. *Decisiones bo: mem: R.P.D. Guglielmi Dunozeti archiepiscopi Seleucien. Sacrae Rotae Romanae auditoris...*, a cura di Io. Scipio de Pol Santronchetus, Roma 1668; *Mellifluae decisiones bo: mem: R.P.D. Amati Dunozeti sacrae Rotae Romanae Decani celeberrimi...*, a cura di Io. Scipio de Pol Santronchetus e Mario Fino, 2 voll., Roma 1668.

“C’est ycy que je tient la Rote” (p. 259).

This sentence might at first glance seem to provide an important clue to the author’s identity. But the sentence is grammatically flawed--the pronoun and verb do not agree--and this should alert us to the possibility of a transcriber’s error. If the author means to refer to himself, then the third person form of the verb is incorrect. But the problem is more likely to be with the pronoun. If instead of “je” we substitute “se”, the verb can stay as it is and the sentence makes much better sense:

“C’est ycy que se tient la Rote.”

In favor of the latter emendation, it should be pointed out that it is unlikely in any case that an auditor of the Rota would have written a guidebook. A position on the Rota was an important one, and brought with it considerable financial rewards, prestige, and political influence. The committee of the Rota consisted of twelve members: eight Italians, two Spaniards, one German, and one Frenchman.¹⁰ At the time the guidebook was written, the French member was Louis d’Anglure de Bourlémont, who succeeded Aimé Du Nozet and served on the court from 1658 until 1679.¹¹ Bourlémont was one of the most powerful members of the French community in Rome. He corresponded regularly with Colbert, and indeed on several occasions served in the capacity of ambassador *pro tempore* of the French court in Rome.¹² It is hardly realistic to suppose that a man in his position would have had the time or the inclination to compose a guidebook for French tourists to Rome, even though having lived there for over two decades he certainly would have known the city well enough to have done so.

The inscription on the flyleaf, based as it appears to be on a copyist’s error and a false association of names, must therefore be discounted. This means that we have to rely solely on the author of the guidebook to provide us with clues to his identity. Indeed, a careful reading of the text does enable us to sketch his personality, his interests and his literary culture.

IV. The Anonymous Author

The author was a well-travelled man. He describes the base of the obelisk of Theodosius in the hippodrome at Constantinople, and the customs of the Janissaries in the holy places of Jerusalem.¹³ He seems to have been familiar with the major cities of northern Italy, including Venice, Pisa, Bologna and Ferrara, which he presumably visited on his way to or from Rome.¹⁴ He was well-introduced in Rome. He seems to have had easy access to the French ambassador, the Duc d’Estrées, and to the ambassador’s residence in the Palazzo Farnese. He once walked into the Quirinal Palace right up to the pope’s antechamber without being stopped. He had an interview with Cardinal Francesco Barberini in his apartments at the Cancelleria, and he recounts his conversation with the “volpone porporato” at length. The cardinal encouraged him to use his

10. D. Bernini, *Il Tribunale della S. Rota romana*, Roma 1717.

11. Cerchiari, *op. cit.*, pp. 177 sg.

12. M. Prevost, s.v. “Louis d’Anglure de Bourlémont,” *Dictionnaire de biographie française*, II, Parigi 1936, coll. 1179-82.

13. *Description*, pp. 16, 188.

14. *Description*, pp. 386, 485.

personal library in the Palazzo Barberini, and gave him books to take back to France.¹⁵ Like his countrymen, the Marquis de Seignelay and Misson, he had an interview with the Queen of Sweden, and he took the trouble to record her rather personal remarks on Descartes.¹⁶ These interviews are among the highlights of the *Description*, and we can only regret it when the author cuts them short by saying “mon dessein n’est que de parler des choses et non pas des actions et des personnes” (p. 162).

The author is thoroughly and chauvinistically French. He lists the “maisons françaises” in Rome at S. Luigi dei Francesi, the Trinità ai Monti, the Madonna dei Miracoli at Piazza del Popolo, S. Antonio Abate, and S. Dionigio on Strada Felice, though he says that in recent times this last church had been taken over by Italians (p. 407). He often compares the monuments in Rome to those in Paris, usually to the detriment of the former. The library of the Sapienza is not so big as that of St. Victor (though Borromini’s shelving is more magnificent). The beautiful shelving and bindings in the great Parisian libraries like the Sorbonne, the Bibliothèque Ste. Geneviève, and the Bibliothèque Mazarine are more beautiful than the low cupboards in which the books of the Vatican Library are hidden. The intersection of the Via Pia and the Via Felice at the Quattro Fontane is not so impressive as the Rue de Richelieu or other streets in the new quarters of Paris. The greatest compliment the author can think of paying Piazza Navona is that at certain times of day one might think one were in Paris. Paris is always the point of reference, even when the comparison is more neutral. The arches of Ponte S. Angelo are about the same size as those of the Pont-Neuf; Piazza S. Pietro has about the same dimensions as the Place Royale; the public granaries of Urban VIII are as long as the galleries of the Louvre. The use of metal to clamp together stones in the Colosseum makes him think of similar techniques in Perrault’s Observatoire and the new east facade of the Louvre (p. 335).

The author has a low opinion of Italian gardens in comparison with those of France. Some are hot and dusty, others damp and melancholy, and there are none that compare with those of Paris and the environs. One might recall the similar sentiments voiced by André le Nôtre after his visit to Italy in 1679: “Les Italiens n’ont point de jardins qui approchent des nôtres. L’art de les faire est un art qu’ils ignorent absolument.”¹⁷

The author of the *Description* is deeply concerned about the progress of the arts in France, which he sees as the great challenger to the traditional artistic hegemony of Rome. He acknowledges that Leonardo da Vinci was a great artist, but one who spent most of his life in France, and was honored on his deathbed by a visit from the French king. He is interested in the progress of the new French Academy in Rome, which he takes the trouble to visit. The achievement of Poussin leads him to think that from now on all the French will need is

15. Vedi la nota alle pagine 467 sg.

16. Vedi la nota alle pagine 98-102. Vedi anche *L’Italie en 1671*, a cura di P. Clément, Parigi 1867, pp. 138 sg.; e Maximilien Misson, *Nouveau voyage d’Italie faite en l’année 1688*, l’Aia 1691; edizione inglese, Londra 1699, vol. II, pp. 21 sgg.

17. For Le Nôtre’s impressions of Rome, as recorded by his nephew, Claude Desgots, a pensioner at the French Academy and Le Nôtre’s companion and interpreter during his visit, see E. de Ganay, *André Le Nôtre, 1613-1700*, Parigi 1962, p. 102.

application in order to succeed in everything they undertake (p. 31).

The author's admiration for the comforts and elegance of the French *hôtel* prevents him from admiring Roman palaces unreservedly, though he is occasionally overawed by the grandeur of their interior spaces. Just as the French hold the lead in dress, so too they are superior in interior design. Italian furnishings are bare, the chairs straight-backed, the beds disproportionate. Covering walls with paintings in the Italian manner is not so impressive as the French fashion of hanging just three or four paintings in front of a tapestry. The author reminds us that there was a room in the Palazzo Chigi in Piazza SS. Apostoli which people went to see because it was decorated in the French manner.¹⁸ He is one of the few observers to note the French character of the dormer windows in the roof of the Palazzo Salviati on the Via della Lungara, which indeed were created in a mid-sixteenth-century renovation of the palace in expectation of a visit from the king of France. In the Palazzo Farnese he cannot help but admire the richness of the architectural ornament, but he finds much to criticize as well. The entrance is too insignificant and the courtyard too small and dark for so great a palace, while the staircase is lit by a well which lets in the cold. The whole palace lacks the *legrezza* and *vaghezza* of French interior design, and reflects the darker and more melancholy character of the Italians.

However, he is stunned by the Farnese salone, which he finds as splendid as a church, and he admits that the French have something to learn from Italian magnificence in the disposition of the public and representational rooms. He even foresees a synthesis between French and Italian design. The Italians will agree with the French on small and convenient private apartments, and the French will learn to make their public rooms vast and spacious, something which he feels has recently begun to happen. And they will profit by copying the cross-ventilation found in French palaces, since the Italian habit of having a window on just one side of a room can be suffocating in the summer.

The author knew the Palazzo Farnese well because he was able to frequent the French ambassador, the Duc d'Estrées, who had his residence there. The ubiquitous Farnese giglio in the architectural ornament, he says, would make one almost suppose that the palace had been designed for the French. The author knew about the problems generated by the ambassador's claim to diplomatic immunity, not only for the palace but for French houses in the immediate neighborhood. In fact, the "*droit de quartier*" was a burning issue during the pontificate of Innocent XI.¹⁹ The author could see how this right could get out of hand when claimed by so many different embassies, and he acknowledges that the pope might have some justification in trying to restrict it. But his patriotism triumphs and he maintains that the *droit de quartier* should be preserved only for the French. The pope's authority ultimately derives from the king of France, and so there should be at least one quarter of the city that preserves a vestige of the old royal dominion ceded everywhere else to the pope.

French cultural superiority is, for the author, a reflection of French political sovereignty. Overawed by the artistic and material splendor of the Vatican, he speculates on where all this

18. Vedi la nota alla pagina 383.

19. Vedi le note alle pagine 134 e 137.

wealth might have come from. Certainly it did not come simply from the alms of the faithful. Instead he believes that the kings of France enriched the Vatican by deposing usurpers from the various small Italian states and then turning these territories over to the papacy. France exalted the pope so that he might command respect as a temporal sovereign, but the ultimate source of this wealth should never be forgotten. A visible reminder of French military superiority could be found in a monument which had already disappeared from Rome but which the author takes the trouble to remember. This is the pyramid commemorating the Duc de Créqui incident of 1662, in which Pope Alexander VII was humiliated and papal prestige collapsed in the face of a French threat of invasion.²⁰

The author is amused to find reflections of the great international rivalries in popular culture. Betting on the success of the French and Spanish military efforts was commonplace in Piazza Navona. Coffeehouses were known for their sympathy with one or the other party. Rome was a place where one could find a noble heart even in a Neapolitan, such as the monk the author met in S. Lorenzo in Lucina who, though technically a subject of the king of Spain, was nevertheless a French sympathizer: “Neapolitain qui avoit le coeur aussy françois que françois né au milieu de Paris” (p. 496).

V. *Literary Sources*

The author was well-read, especially in the Latin and Greek classics. Among the many ancient writers he cites are Cicero, Pliny, Ammianus Marcellinus, Procopius, Vitruvius, Virgil, Minucius Felix, John Chrysostom, and Prudentius, who lived in “les beaux jours de l’église” (p. 400). The inscription on the *colonna rostrata* on the Capitoline moves him to remark that the ancient pronunciation of Latin was very different from the modern, and to recall passages in Plautus where there were similar echoes of archaic diction (pgg. 301 sg.). He has read the ecclesiastical chroniclers like Anastasio Bibliotecario, Platina (“historien un peu outré”, p. 414), and Baronius. He cites the books by Prado and Villalpando on the Temple of Jerusalem, Dufresne Du Cange on the late Byzantine emperors, Nicolò Alemanni on the frescoes of the Lateran basilica, Domenico de Santis on the Colonna family, and Sforza Pallavicino on the History of the Council of Trent. He has investigated the antiquity of usages such as the *sedes stercoraria* and the custom of kissing the papal foot. He knows recent dissertations on canon law by authors such as Cardinal Brancaccio and Cardinal Capponi. He went out of his way to learn the editorial history of the Polyglot bible published by the Propaganda Fide in 1671.²¹

Cardinal Francesco Barberini invited him to visit the Barberini Library, and he put his time there to good use. He also seems to have consulted the Vatican and other Roman libraries. The *Description* cites more recent antiquarian scholarship than any other Roman guidebook. Among the learned treatises he uses are Demonzioso’s *Gallus Romae Hospes*; Ottavio Falconieri’s dissertation on the pyramid of Caio Cestio; Fulvio Orsini’s book on the Severan plan; and the treatise by Suarès and Pietro Santi Bartoli on the Arch of Septimius Severus. The

20. Vedi le note alle pagine 259 e 448.

21. Vedi la nota alle pagine 498-501.

author has looked at manuscripts by Alfonso Chacon and Pirro Ligorio, “dont les seuls desseings ravissent en admiration” (p. 456). He knows Vasari and Bellori well, and has consulted the treatises of Serlio, Palladio and Scamozzi. Cardinal Barberini gave him a copy of Suarès’s dissertation on the nymphaeum relief at Palazzo Barberini to take back with him to France. In mechanics and hydraulics he cites the work of Mario Bettini, Marin Mersenne, Agostino Steuco, Fabritio Guastaferrri and Giovanni Battista Doni. He mentions the work of Kircher and Gaffarel on the decipherment of the hieroglyphs, even if he disapproves of their results.

To judge by his reading and general culture, the author may have been a learned *abbé*. He cultivated monkish friends, especially at the Aracoeli, where one of his acquaintances lived so much in the odor of sanctity that he could hardly walk the streets of Rome without having his robe torn for relics. Like the monk Jean Mabillon in the following decade, he talked to the Benedictines at S. Paolo fuori le mura, the church where he felt closest to the spirit of primitive Christianity. Here, in the desolation of the Roman campagna, he experienced the “sainte frayeur” (p. 186) which other visitors, like Bralion, often felt when visiting the catacombs. In the catacombs he too is disoriented by the thoughts of the thousands of dead, “dont les cendres nous reprochent les occupations et les vanitez de nostre vie” (p. 405). He indignantly attacks the libertinage of those who try to disprove the authenticity of the relics of the martyrs which are brought from the catacombs. He describes the great care which is taken to identify the bodies of genuine martyrs, and the penalty of excommunication decreed for unauthorized removal of their remains. He has visited the catacombs often enough to offer the pilgrim seasoned advice: take a good guide, and bring plenty of stout candles and tinder to relight them, since they often go out in the stale air (p. 400 sg.).

The clerical attitudes of the author also emerge when he describes the privileges of palace chapels (p. 354). He explores the reasons why they should be outfitted so splendidly, such as the magnificent chapel in Palazzo Altemps. The higher the rank of the prelate, the more privileges his palace chapel is likely to have. The chapel of a cardinal will have the same rights as a parish church. In it one can satisfy the obligation to hear mass on Sundays and feast days, and foreign domestics can receive the sacraments there. In fact the use of these chapels is one of the reasons why the parishes have become depopulated or sometimes deserted altogether. Since so many Romans are in the service of a cardinal or gran signore, it has become the fashion to frequent the chapels and never go the parish church at all. The parish priest is limited to attending the dying, giving out Easter Communion, and collecting the bigliettini which prove that the parishoners have done their Easter duty. No one attends more than the occasional low mass, and a Frenchman might think that the papal decrees about masses of obligation were more strictly observed in France than in the very city where they were promulgated. In any case the piety of the Italians is not so intense as that of the French. Street preaching in Piazza Navona is one of the few types of religious instruction offered to the common people. Religious music in Rome is in need of reform, which many popes have tried to carry out but with little success. The music in most churches softens the soul and distracts it. He hopes that some day a reform will usher in

“une dévotion plus masle et plus chrestienne”.²²

Nowhere do the clerical biases of the author come out more openly than in his hostile attitude towards women and his prudish rejection of libidinous art. He found the *Last Judgment* in the Cappella Sistina offensive and recalled an attempt, “il y a plusieurs années” (p. 66), to remove it. The painters of Rome banded together to resist this move, defending the painting from the theological point of view and saying that if it were consigned to an attic rats would eat it. The author admits that Michelangelo may have painted it with the best intentions, thinking that normal human passions would be quenched on the eve of the final doom. But nevertheless the painting tempts the passions of those not strong enough to resist, and it would have been better in the end to remove it. He mentions with approval a brief submitted by Cardinal Bona to Pope Clement IX to cover over all indecent painting in the churches and palaces of the city. The pope hesitated to carry out so sweeping a decision, but might have if it had been limited to churches and had left the art in palaces to moral suasion. He says that the present pope (Innocent XI), has a similar decree in mind and that many beautiful nude statues are in the process of being clothed with drapery, which should be an incentive to cover those of scant artistic worth as well. And indeed his stay in Rome coincided with the decision to clothe the *Caritas* and the *Nuda Veritas* on Bernini’s tomb of Alexander VII, a fate that had already befallen the statue of Clelia Farnese on the Tomb of Paul III.²³

The author recounts a visit to a church in Venice, apparently the Redentore, where he was told why an artist had painted images of the Prophets and Sibyls with transparent drapery.²⁴ Just as they foretold the truth in ways that were sometimes clear and sometimes veiled, so too their drapery should sometimes reveal and sometimes conceal their bodies. Never had he heard such sophistry. He knows the kind of indecent inspiration that can fester in the minds of the weak after contemplating certain crucifixes, St. Sebastians, or St. Susannas. Possibly he speaks with the authority of a confessor, much troubled by the temptations his penitents experienced in churches. In the church of S. Caterina a Monte Magnanapoli in Rome a sensuous portrayal of St. Catherine moves him to lash out against the libertine imagination and its corrupting influence on sacred art, contrary to everything that had been decreed in the Council of Trent. For no matter how pious the patron of a work may be, painters are “gens ordinairement lascifs” (p. 385).

The author is not friendly to women and openly hostile to the freer customs of modern times. When he reads a classical inscription in Villa Giustiniani, praising the wife who stays home weaving, he rails against the modern woman who is never so miserable as when she is home with her family, especially in France, where women live “sur le pied de liberté” (p. 238). His fury rages when he visits the cemetery of the prostitutes at the Muro Torto. He discourses on the difficulties of rooting out “ce diabolique métier” (pgg. 482-484), citing recent attempts to do

22. Vedi la nota alle pagine 470 sg.

23. Vedi la nota alle pagine 385-387.

24. Vedi la nota alle pagine 385-387.

so in London and Venice.²⁵ Since the popes have not been able to extirpate it in Rome, he urges a policy of severe regulation, which would put the women under constant surveillance and make their lives as vile as possible, enveloped in poverty and moral ostracism, with the prostitute's grave as their inevitable fate.

VI. Guidebooks and Travel Literature

Like any guidebook, the *Description* is heavily indebted to its predecessors.²⁶ The author freely drew on a tradition which dated back to the *Mirabilia* of the late middle ages, and which reached a peak in the flood of literature produced to celebrate the pontificate of Alexander VII (1655-1667). Although he may have intended to do so in the published version, the author seldom names his guidebook sources. He drew freely on Fioravante Martinelli, and since Martinelli was Borromini's great apologist, it is not surprising to find that often-misunderstood architect treated with sympathy in the *Description*.²⁷ Alveri's guidebook of 1664 was in some ways the official guide to Alexander VII's Rome and contained the best collection of modern inscriptions from the churches of the city. It is frequently drawn on in the *Description*, as are the works of Donati and Piazza.²⁸ The author knew Aldroandi's list of the famous statues of Rome and sometimes drew on it without checking, as in the case of the *Bacchus* of Michelangelo, which he describes in the Casa Galli near the Cancelleria even though it had long since migrated to Florence.²⁹

But the Italian guidebook to which the Avery *Description* owes most is Filippo Titi's

25. See also Claude Jordan, *Voies historiques de l'Europe*, Parigi 1693, pp. 255-257, who describes the strict regulations against prostitutes in Rome; they cannot be admitted to communion, nor buried in consecrated ground, but only along the city wall. They cannot make a will, and the rare times they leave property behind it must go to the hospital of girls.

26. Vedi Johann Beckmann, *Litteratur der älteren Reisebeschreibungen*, 2 voll., Göttingen, 1807-1809; Antoine Jules Dumesnil, *Voyageurs français en Italie depuis le seizième siècle jusqu'à nos jours*, Parigi 1865; *I libri di viaggio e le guide della raccolta Luigi Vittorio Fossati Bellani. Catalogo descrittivo*, a cura di Antonio Pescarzoli, 3 voll., Roma 1957; Cesare De Seta, "Italia nello specchio del 'Grand Tour'", *Storia d'Italia* (Einaudi), Annali 5, Torino 1982, pp. 125-263; Elisabeth e Jörg Garms, "Mito e realtà di Roma nella cultura europea. Viaggio e idea, immagini e immaginazione," *Storia d'Italia* (Einaudi), Annali 5, Torino 1982, pp. 561-662. In particular, the reader is referred to the two great studies by Ludwig Schudt on Roman guidebooks (*Le guide di Roma*, Vienna e Augsburg 1930), and on the literature of travel (*Italienreisen im 17. und 18. Jahrhundert*, Vienna e Monaco di Baviera 1959). For the past decade the *Bollettino del Centro Interuniversitario di Ricerche sul Viaggio in Italia* (CIRVI) has published many new texts and discoveries in this field.

27. Fioravante Martinelli, *Roma ex ethnica sacra*, Roma 1653; *Primo trofeo della S.ma croce eretto in Roma nella via Lata da S. Pietro apostolo*, Roma 1655; *Roma ricercata nel suo sito*, Roma 1644, ma specialmente la 3a. ed. del 1658, con stampe di alcuni edifici del Borromini e del Cortona. Vedi Cesare D'Onofrio, *Roma nel seicento*, Firenze 1969, che è l'edizione di un manoscritto di 1660-1663, *Roma ornata dall'architettura, pittura e scoltura*, scritto dal Martinelli ma con correzioni e marginalia dalla mano di Borromini.

28. Gasparo Alveri, *Roma in ogni stato*, 2 voll., Roma 1664; Alessandro Donati, S.J., *Roma vetus ac recens*, 3a ed., Roma 1665; Carlo Bartolommeo Piazza, *Santuario, ovvero menologio romano perpetuo per la visita delle chiese, feste, indulgenze, stationi, reliquie de santi, e cose sacre memorabili di Roma*, Roma 1675.

29. Vedi la nota alle pagine 162 sg.

Studio di pittura, scoltura, et architettura nelle chiese di Roma, first published in 1674.³⁰ Abbate Titi attempted to write a guide to the art in the churches of Rome which would be complete and relatively free of value judgments. He checked all the available sources and consulted experts in order to arrive at correct attributions for as many works of art as possible. He proceeded around the chapels of the churches systematically, counterclockwise beginning with the first chapel on the right, instead of naming just the highlights. He produced the most accurate and encyclopedic guidebook then in existence.

The author of the *Description* took an enormous amount of information from Titi. Almost all the attributions of paintings and sculpture in the churches come from this source, with some lapses and omissions but few original contributions. Like François Deseine a few years later, our author might have said of Titi, “je l’ai presque entièrement traduit & incorporé dans mon ouvrage.”³¹ Instead he said nothing. Titi’s name is never mentioned in the *Description*. But there may be a subtle allusion to him in a remark made about the colossal statue of Nero near the Colosseum, which had its head replaced by one of Titus and later by another of Commodus:

“et ainsy faisoit-on de cette figure ce que font auhourd’huy tant d’auteurs
plagiaires qui s’approprient le corps des ouvrages à la teste desquelles ils n’ont
mis que leur nom” (p. 337).

Titi had been victimized by a notorious pirated edition printed in Macerata in 1675, brought out by an unscrupulous editor anxious to capture the market for the Holy Year.³² Since the real and the pirated editions of Titi came out only two or three years before our author began to write the *Description*, he probably knew both. He may have been moved to contemplate, if not his own extensive borrowings from his predecessor, at least the fate that could await any good book not covered by a papal privilege.

The *Description* was written by a French author for a French public. The number of French visitors and residents in Rome was large, but the guidebook literature was predominantly in Latin and Italian. The tables of the booksellers in Piazza Navona were filled with guidebooks in these languages, but there was none available in French until 1655, when the Oratorian priest Nicolas de Bralion brought out *Les curiositez de l’une et de l’autre Rome*.³³ Bralion resided in the city from 1625 to 1641, and so the Rome he knew was that of Urban VIII. He saw the Porta Santa closed in 1625, Giotto’s *Navicella* mosaic moved in 1629, and the body of Matilda of Tuscany installed in St. Peter’s in 1633. He observed the construction of Bernini’s baldacchino, of Grassi’s S. Ignazio, and Cortona’s SS. Martina e Luca.

30. The six editions from 1674 to 1763 are synthesized in the edizione comparata, a cura di Bruno Contardi e Serena Romano, 2 voll., Firenze 1987.

31. *Description de la ville de Rome*, Lione 1690, I, premessa (non paginata).

32. Marco Lattanzi, “Per Filippo Titi: la vita, l’opera e la fortuna del libro. Uno studio bio-bibliografico,” nell’ ed. cit., 1987, p. xxv.

33. Nicola[s] de Bralion, *Les curiositez de l’une et de l’autre Rome*, I, Paris, 1655. Vol II: *Seconde partie du premier livre*, 1658. Vol. III: *Seconde livre*, 1659. Vedi Schudt, *Le guide*, pp. 128 sg.; A.M.P. Ingold, *Essai de bibliographie oratorienne*, Parigi 1880, pp. 27 sg.; e *idem*, *Mémoires domestiques pour servir à l’histoire de l’Oratoire*, a cura di Louis Batterel, Parigi 1902-1903, pp. 508 sgg.

Bralion was an author of saints' lives and devotional literature, but he was also a man of wide reading who knew how to aim at the right level of audience. He felt that the existing guidebooks were either too specialized or too popular. Some were mere lists of the things worthy to be seen. Others were over-illustrated, and meant for professional artists and architects. Others mixed Christian and pagan antiquities in a confusing way. Bralion chose to write for an audience of *doctes* but at the same time to avoid superfluous erudition:

“Ie tascheray donc en ce Traité de satisfaire un honneste homme, & un lecteur raisonnablement curieux” (III, p. 3).

Bralion organized his work into three separate books: one on the seven basilicas, one on Marian and other churches, and one on the ancient remains. He carefully acknowledged his sources. He was both informative and pious. His guidebook is in fact pervaded by Oratorian spirituality. The catacombs evoke tears of penitence and of love, more abundant than the waters of the rivers of Eden; the descent into their Stygian depths provokes “une horreur toute sainte” (p. 34). The ruins of Rome lead him to quote from Du Bellay's *Antiquitez*. But although he shares Du Bellay's *regret* for the passing of Rome's grandeur, it is a sentiment that he quickly Christianizes. The course of the Tiber should remind the Christian of the river of life, which passes on to empty in the vast ocean of eternal felicity.

The author of the *Avery Description* knew and used Bralion. He borrows details like the rite of throwing rush dolls into the Tiber at the Ponte Sublicio or the location of the Capitolium Vetus. He shares Bralion's overwrought sensibility at the descent into the catacombs, and he quotes the same line from Virgil (*Horror ubique*) and the same sonnet of Janus Vitalis.³⁴ Bralion's guidebook is rare. It was printed in Paris and possibly it was not widely known in Rome. Hence our author may have thought that he could easily supplant Bralion on the Roman market.

Bralion was the first French guidebook to Rome in the strict sense of the term. But there was a long tradition of French travel literature, the *journal de voyage*, which treated Rome in greater or lesser detail as part of a longer voyage through Italy and countries further north and east. The earliest *journals* of the sixteenth century tended to remain in manuscript form, and therefore our author is unlikely to have known them. This is the case of the manuscript attributed to Nicolas Audebert of Orléans, a young French humanist who travelled in Italy in 1574-1578.³⁵ The author of the *Description* would certainly have been attracted to Audebert's erudition and to his insistence on measuring the walls and gates of Rome. But all he could have known of this author was the curious anthropological study of Italian customs patched together out of some other, lost manuscript and published under the name of “le Sieur Audeber Conseiller du Roy au

34. Vedi le note alle pagine 186 e 7.

35. British Library, Lansdowne MS 720, “Voyage D'Italie,” 2 ottobre 1574 - 27 aprile 1578. Vedi Eugène Müntz, *Les antiquités de la ville de Rome aux XIVe, XVe et XVIe siècles (Topographie - monuments - collections) d'après des documents nouveaux*, Parigi 1886; P. de Nolhac, “Nicolas Audebert archéologue orléanais,” *Revue archéologique*, 3a ser., X, 1887, pp. 315-324; R. W. Lightbrown, “Nicolas Audebert and the Villa d'Este,” *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, XXVII, 1964, pp. 164-190; e Lino Pertile, “Un umanista francese in Italia. Il ‘Voyage d'Italie’ (1574-1578) di Nicolas Audebert,” *Studi mediolatini e volgari*, XXI, 1973, pp. 89-214.

parlement de Bretagne” in 1656.³⁶

Nor could our author have known the now-famous *Journal de voyage* (1580-1581) of Michel de Montaigne, which was never intended for publication and which remained in manuscript until its accidental discovery in 1774.³⁷ In any case it is doubtful whether our author would have wanted to know much about the man whose *Essais* were put on the index in 1676.³⁸

The liveliest of the seventeenth-century *journals de voyage* was that of Balthasar de Monconys, published by his son after his death in 1665.³⁹ Monconys was something of a mystic virtuoso whose intense curiosity drew him to Egypt and the Levant but also to Italy,

“Ce pays ou le goust fin & delicat, de l’ancienne Grece, s’est encore conservé, eut pour luy des charmes si puissants, qu’il l’attira iusques à trois fois” (p. 4).

He came to know Claude, Poussin, Cortona, and Duquesnoy as well as many of the eminent scientists of Rome, including Guastaferrri and Auzout, two men whose work our author admired. He records the inscription “Hic sita...” in the Vigna Giustiniani, and mentions the pyramid erected by the French after the Duc de Créqui incident, as does the Avery author.

Finally, the author may have known or at least known of the young doctor from Lyons, Jacob Spon, who was in Rome for five months in early 1675 before his departure for Greece and Turkey. In his book on the antiquities of Lyons of 1673 Spon had already begun to list the famous cabinets of the virtuosi in Rome, a list which he expanded in the publication of his travels in 1678.⁴⁰ Spon was fascinated by Rome, the capital of curiosity. For him there was no better place to talk to learned men or to see paintings by the great masters. He knew the collections of the Giustiniani and the Aldobrandini, as well as dozens of cabinets including those of Dal Pozzo, Kircher and Bellori. He probably knew Titi’s guidebook of 1674, but he also mentions other works in preparation:

36. *Le voyage et observations de plusieurs choses diverses qui se peuvent remarquer en Italie*, Parigi 1656, è apparso insieme al libro di Pierre Duval, *Le voyage et la description d’Italie*, Parigi 1660. The first to maintain that Audeber was Audebert and that the book of 1656 reflected conditions of the later 16th century was Beckmann, *op.cit.*, II, p. 477, who is followed by Schudt, *Italienreisen*, p. 100.

37. *L’Italia alla fine del secolo XVI. Giornale del viaggio di Michele de Montaigne in Italia nel 1580 e 1581*, a cura di Alessandro D’Ancona, Città di Castello 1889. Un’edizione moderna è *Journal de voyage en Italie...*, in *Oeuvres complètes*, a cura di Albert Thibaudet e Maurice Rat (Bibliothèque de la Pléiade), Parigi 1962, pp. 1099 sgg. Vedi Imbrie Buffum, *L’influence du voyage de Montaigne sur les Essais*, Princeton 1946; Donald Frame, *Montaigne: A Biography*, New York 1965, pp. 201-222; Luigi Michelini Tocci, “La statue du bon Aristide”, *Studi offerti a Giovanni Incisa della Rocchetta* (Miscellanea della Società Romana di Storia Patria, 23), Roma 1973, pp. 377 sgg.; e François Moureau e René Bernouilli, *Autour du Journal de Voyage de Montaigne 1580-1980, Avec une copie inédite du Journal de Voyage*, Ginevra e Parigi 1982.

38. Maturin Dréano, *La pensée religieuse de Montaigne*, Parigi 1936, p. 471, citato da Buffum, *op. cit.*, p. 25.

39. Balthasar [de] Monconys, *Journal des voyages*, a cura di Le sieur de Liergues, Lione 1665-1666. Vedi Antoine Schnapper, *Le géant, la licorne et la tulipe. Collections et collectionneurs dans la France du XVIIe siècle*, I, Parigi 1988, pp. 262 sg. Vedi anche le note alle pagine 309-311 e 385-387.

40. [Jacob Spon], *Recherches des antiquités et curiosités de la ville de Lyon,....Avec un Mémoire des Principaux Antiquaires & Curieux de l’Europe*, Lione 1673; Jacob Spon, *Voyage d’Italie, de Dalmatie, de Grece, et du Levant, fait es années 1675. & 1676*, 3 voll., Lione 1678. Su Spon vedi soprattutto l’affascinante studio di David Constantine, *Early Greek Travellers and the Hellenic Ideal*, Cambridge 1984, pp. 7-35.

“Pendant que j’y étois on en composa un Livre, qui est un recueil des plus fins ouvrages de toutes les Eglises de cette Ville” (1678, p. 24)

“Celui qui a fait imprimer la liste des tableaux qui sont à Rome, en promet une semblable des Palais & des cabinets, & Monsieur Patin nous fait esperer la relation de son voyage d’Italie, qui ne sçauroit manquer d’être bien receuë: ce qui me dispense de m’étendre sur cette matiere, qui sera amplement traitée dans ces deux Livres qu’on nous prepare” (p. 28).

But Spon’s first love was Greece and he had the good sense to see that the market for Roman guidebooks was beginning to be filled by others. In 1675 he departed for Constantinople and never returned to Rome. His destiny was to become, with George Wheler, one of the pioneers in the discovery of Greece, and he left the more crowded field of Rome to less adventurous authors.

The author of the *Avery Description* saw a niche for a guidebook in French, modelled on Titi, enriched by erudite reading in the Barberini library, and enlivened by an eye for popular life. If he had managed to publish it with a good editor he probably would have secured the market for himself. But for unknown reasons the manuscript was left unedited and unpublished.

The opportunity our author missed was seized in 1690 by François Deseine.⁴¹ His *Description de la ville de Rome* was an altogether better guidebook than the *Avery Description*, highly literate, scrupulous in its citation of sources, and well-informed in its discussion of Roman institutions. He devotes a volume to the government and ceremonies of Rome, and gives us much information on the elections and funerals of the popes and the sede vacante. He has less sense of street life and popular culture than the Avery author, but more sense of how institutions worked. Deseine’s treatment of Borromini’s architecture is perhaps less inspired, but his discussion of Borromini’s patrons, like the avvocati concistoriali at the Sapienza and oratoriani at S. Maria in Vallicella, is more thorough and penetrating. He is much more systematic in his treatment of the infrastructure of the ancient city, and he describes all the bridges, aqueducts and cloache of Rome with reference to both present remains and ancient sources. Both Bralio’s guidebook and the *Avery Description* are drenched in a pious, Christianizing version of the old French sentiment of *regret* for the passing of Rome, but Deseine managed to see both the ancient and the modern city through less sentimental and more analytical eyes.

VII. French Classicism and Italian Art

The author of the *Avery Description* is a product of the age of intense French interest in Rome. Bernini travelled to France in the summer of 1665 and spoke on several occasions before the French Academy.⁴² In 1666 the painter Charles Errard was sent to Rome to found an Académie Française for twelve young French artists. In 1675 Errard was again sent to Rome

41. *Description de la ville de Rome, en faveur des étrangers, divisée en trois parties*, 3 voll., Lionne 1690; later edition entitled *Rome moderne, Première Ville de l’Europe Avec toutes ses magnificences et ses delices*, 6 voll., Leida 1713. Vedi anche le note alle pagine 33 e 49.

42. Paul Fréart de Chantelou, *Journal du voyage du Cavalier Bernini en France*, a cura di L. Lalanne, Parigi 1885; Cecil Gould, *Bernini in France: An Episode in Seventeenth-Century History*, Londra 1981. Vedi anche la nota alla pagina 208.

with instructions from Colbert to bring about a merger between the Accademia di San Luca and the Académie Royale in Paris. As a tangible symbol of the union Charles Le Brun was elected principe of the Roman academy in 1676. It was agreed that in the future the name of a member of the Académie in Paris would always be placed in the bussola for the elections of the principe of the Accademia di San Luca.

The official union was a reflection of a common viewpoint that had as its basis the art theory of Giovanni Pietro Bellori, and in particular, his idea of an ideal beauty which painters could achieve by combining the best characteristics of the different Renaissance masters and the different regional schools.⁴³ The Bellorian ideal of selective beauty is shared by the author of the *Description*. For example, in the section on Palazzo Borghese, he tells the reader to study the distinctive characteristics of the different schools, such as those of Florence and of Bologna, or those of Lombardy and of Venice, which could be studied easily in the six or seven hundred paintings on display there. By comparing them one can learn “les différentes manières des grandes peintres” (p. 472). The attentive spectator would appreciate Raphael’s force of color, expression and grace; Carracci’s vibrancy of spirit; the disegno of Michelangelo and the colorito of Titian; the sweetness and vivacity of Correggio; the beauty of drapery of Veronese; and the other various traits which distinguish Guido, Cortona, Domenichino, Rubens, Poussin, Maratta and other great men. There is no clearer statement in any guidebook of the program of Bellorian selective beauty.

The author reveals his classical allegiances when he describes the Arch of Titus and pauses for a long digression on the composite capitals found there.⁴⁴ The composite order was not used in Greek architecture and there are no rules for it in Vitruvius. Therefore it was taken by writers like Vasari as a symbol of the free creativity of the modern artist, in particular of Michelangelo, who broke the chains that kept art fettered to the antique. Against this attitude, writers like Roland Fréart de Chambray propounded a classical art theory based on obedience to the great models of antiquity in all the arts.⁴⁵ This is the line followed by the author of the *Description*. He preaches an excellence based on imitation of the antique in literature and a parallel imitation of the antique in architecture. Demosthenes, Cicero and Quintilian on the one hand, and Virgil, Ovid and Horace on the other, have left us models which are meant to be imitated by modern writers. To introduce new architectural ornaments, not found in the good centuries of the antique, is like trying to invent new Latin words not found in Cicero. Nothing could be more extravagant. This is not to say that certain subtle inflexions cannot be introduced to highlight the beauty of the ancient orders, just as Quintilian himself allowed certain figures of speech which might not have been pleasing to the audiences that Cicero addressed. But the watchword is “sagesse”, and “une réserve qui marque beaucoup de prudence” (p. 326).

43. Giovanni Pietro Bellori, *Le vite de' pittori, scultori e architetti moderni*, Roma 1672, a cura di Evelina Borea and Giovanni Previtali, Torino 1976. L'edizione del 1672 è stata dedicata a Colbert, sul consiglio di Charles Errard, primo direttore dell'Accademia di Francia a Roma.

44. Vedi la nota alle pagine 309-311.

45. Claude Mignot, “Michel-ange et la France: libertinage architectural et classicisme,” *Il se rendit en Italie.* “*Etudes offertes à André Chastel*, Parigi e Roma 1987, pp. 523-536.

The aesthetic values of the author are in complete harmony with his bias against women, since for him classical art is male art *par excellence*. He finds, for example, that the Pantheon exudes “une certaine beauté masle” (p. 444). It is a most admirable building, loved by all those who shun works that are overloaded with little ornaments, or full of mouldings multiplied to infinity, or loaded down with columns superimposed in dense clusters. Instead, the beauty of the Pantheon consists in exactness of proportions and “regularité.” It is the paradigm of what architects should be doing, and a living reproach to modern design. In a similar vein the author withholds his admiration from the Cappella Sistina and the Cappella Paolina at S. Maria Maggiore. He finds each of the individual sculptures and reliefs beautiful in itself. But too much delicate beauty is piled up in too limited a space. The eye and the spirit grow tired and excess takes away the appetite, like a meal in which too many excellent ragouts are served together on the same table.

However, even though he is steeped in the tradition of Bellororian and French classicism, the author of the *Description* surprises us by his fresh and original interpretation of the great baroque architect, Francesco Borromini. Borromini had died in 1667, a decade before the *Description* was begun. The author never met him, but he sought out the architect’s friends and hunted down information about his working habits. He was told how Borromini would pass entire nights awake, sweating over problems in his designs. He trained himself to recognize the style of Borromini, “dont il n’est pas difficile de connoistre la manière” (p. 233). Borromini never drew a straight line and he was the enemy of flat facades, but he is always original and his work is the product of deep study and hard work. He should not be imitated, but his genius is undeniable. To him goes “la gloire de marquer de l’esprit dans tout ce qu’il invente dans l’architecture” (p. 277).

Borromini’s architecture is seldom discussed in depth in the Roman guidebooks, with the one exception of Fioravante Martinelli’s *Roma ricercata* of 1658, where the architect supplied the author with several drawings and helped him compose the text dealing with his buildings.⁴⁶ In 1660-1663 Borromini helped Martinelli write a long dissertation on the Sapienza, which was to be inserted into a new guidebook called *Roma ornata*.⁴⁷ The manuscript, however, remained unpublished, and the treatment of S. Ivo in future guidebooks is bland and uninformed. For example, in Hugueta’s *Voyage d’Italie curieux et nouveau* of 1681 we are told the following about S. Ivo, here called by its older name of S. Leo:

“S. Leon de la Sapience fut commencé par Michel Ange, & poursuivy par d’autres architectes. Le Cavalier Borromino la achevé de sa maniere qui est toute particuliere et bizarre” (p. 301).

François Deseine, in his *Description de la ville de Rome* of 1690, showed a deeper familiarity with the university and even ventured an iconoglogical explanation of the church:

“La petite Eglise au bout de cet Edifice, couverte d’un Dome terminé en ligne Spirale comme on peint la tour de Pharos parmi les sept merveilles du monde, est

46. Connors, *op. cit.*, pp. 369-379.

47. Cesare D’Onofrio, *Roma nel seicento*, Firenze 1969.

dediée à S. Leon le grand Pape” (II, p. 227).

An interpretation of the spiral of S. Ivo as the Pharos of Alexandria stresses the element of fire but leaves out many other elements in the design, such as the crown jewels that stud the spiral and the laurel crown at the summit.⁴⁸ Compared to this, the interpretation advanced in the *Description* is more sensitive to the design and to its context in a university setting:

“cette pyramide autour de laquelle est une couronne tournée en viz qui meine jusqu’au sommet forme un escalier qui semble convier ceux qui se rendent illustres par les lettres d’y monter pour les conduire jusqu’au sommet de la gloire dont tout ce dôme est un symbole” (p. 277).

Borromini’s Oratorio dei Filippini was built by a congregation of priests who wanted to achieve a delicate balance between a courtly and a conventual style.⁴⁹ The Oratorians were not monks and were not bound by vows of poverty or obedience. They were free men who chose to live together in a community based on Florentine republican traditions and organized around the charismatic figure of San Filippo Neri. Their architecture had to reflect a middle level, above the monastic but below the princely, combining elements of both in a new synthesis. Guidebooks seldom go into such issues, but the *Description* treats them with considerable sensitivity. The author says that Borromini’s style in this building is completely new. He starts with an imitation of the antique, but he does not stop there. Normally one would disapprove, but his talent is such that he leaves marks of grandeur and imagination on everything he touches. The whole work exudes “agrément” (p. 50). The oratorio is magnificent, and the scalone is worthy of a great palace. But the rooms where visiting cardinals lodge are simultaneously ornamented and simple, without ostentatious luxury, which would misrepresent the spirit of the congregation, even if most of the fathers are from wealthy backgrounds. Here the *Description* comes closer than any other guidebook to understanding the subtle compromise between austerity and wealth that lies at the heart of Oratorian patronage.

VIII. Hydraulics and the Culture of Measurement

The author of the *Description* is concerned with the exact measurement of many of the buildings he sees. Indeed, measurement is something of an *idée fixe* for him, and allows us to situate the author in the context of Frenchmen who were pursuing the same scientific ideal in the Rome of the 1670s.

The author has measured the entablature of the Pantheon and the exact size of the fluting of the column in front of S. Maria Maggiore. He has climbed to the higher parts of the Colosseum in order to take the measurements of the upper stories, although he lacked the time or the courage to make it to the very top. He measured the cornices of the Teatro di Marcello. When

48. Nevertheless it has been advanced by modern authors such as Rudolf Wittkower, “Un libro di schizzi di Filippo Juvarra a Chatsworth,” *Bollettino della Società Piemontese di Archeologia e di Belle Arti*, III, 1949, p. 106; e William Hauptman, “*Luceat Lux Vestra coram Hominibus*: A New Source for the Spire of Borromini’s S. Ivo,” *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, XXXIII, 1974, pp. 73-79.

49. Vedi Connors, *op. cit.*, pp. 108-114.

he gives the measurements of the basilica of S. Paolo fuori le mura he adds the caution, “Je m’arete peu à ces mesures que je n’ay pas prises moy-mesme” (p. 181). He hesitates also to give the dimensions of St. Peter’s since he has not taken them himself and has little faith in those taken by others, “que j’ay convenu de fausseté en cent rencontres” (p. 55). He thinks that the towers of Notre Dame de Paris would fit inside St. Peter’s, and in fact this was the period when the measurements of Notre Dame were brought to Rome, presumably in the form of ropes or chains, to prove the truth of this fact.⁵⁰ In the seventeenth century the vast spaces of St. Peter’s must have played a role similar to that supposedly played by the Tower of Pisa in the time of Galileo, namely as a theater for experiments requiring great height. The *Description* mentions the experiments of Marin Mersenne, the Minim monk who measured the movement of the pendulum and the behavior of falling water inside the immense space of the cupola.⁵¹

In this obsession with measurement the author is close to the young French architect Antoine Desgodets, who was in Rome at this time and who pursued the measurement of ancient architecture to an extreme almost of fanaticism. Desgodets was sent to Rome by Colbert in order to provide the newly founded Académie Royale d’Architecture with exact drawings and measurements of the major temples and public buildings. He arrived in 1676 and stayed through the summer of 1677, which is exactly the time that the *Description* was begun; eventually his book was published in 1682. When Desgodets started his work, the seemingly exact measurements in the treatises of Serlio, Palladio and other Renaissance architects made him think that there might be hidden numerical mysteries in ancient architecture analogous to those being discovered in astronomy and biology:

“Et cette exactitude de ces grands Maîtres à coter toutes les mesures, semble fair entendre, qu’il y a des misteres dans les proportions de l’Architecture, qu’il n’est donné qu’aux Sçavans de penetrer; & que de même dans le cours des Astres, & dans les Organes qui servent aux plus nobles fonctions des Animaux, il y a des mouvemens & des conformations dont on ignore les causes & les usages...”

Exactitude was his unique goal and mission:

“...mais je n’ay pas crû que pour éviter le reproche d’une vaine ostentation d’exactitude, je dûsse m’abstenir d’esposer les choses telles que je les ay trouvées, puisque cette exactitude est la seule chose dont il s’agit icy.”⁵²

And to his satisfaction he found that his predecessors were inaccurate or even grossly wrong most of the time. He mercilessly exposes the mistakes of Serlio and Palladio. Only in one case does he trust the work of a Renaissance architect enough to include it in his book, namely a plan

50. M. Huguetan, *Voyage d’Italie curieux et nouveau*, Lione 1681, pp. 61 sg.: “La voute [de St. Pierre] est aussi fort haute à proportion, & je me souviens, que quelques François gagerent une gageure qu’ils avoient faite, que les Tours de Nostre Dame de Paris passeroient sous la voute, en ayant fait venire la mesure”.

51. Vedi la nota alla pagina 23.

52. Antoine Desgodets, *Les édifices antiques de Rome, mesurés et dessinés tres-exactement*, Parigi 1682, premessa (non paginata). Vedi anche gli due studi di Wolfgang Herrmann: “Antoine Desgodets and the Académie Royale d’Architecture,” *Art Bulletin*, XL, 1958, pp. 25-53; e *idem*, *The Theory of Claude Perrault*, Londra 1973, soprattutto pp. 70-94. Vedi anche la nota alla pagina 173.

of the Teatro di Marcello that seems to have been drawn by Peruzzi.⁵³

Desgodets detected many variations in the proportions of ancient architecture, proportions that were usually held to be fixed and unalterable. His findings contradicted the most deeply held beliefs of the French academician François Blondel, who believed that the proportions of ancient buildings were so predictable and so precise that most of the complex members of these structures could be generated with a few well-chosen lines. Blondel also believed, along with most of the Académie, that the proportions of the orders were adapted to account for optical distortions. The entablatures high up on huge buildings like the Colosseum and the Teatro di Marcello were unusually large because they were meant to be seen from below. The upper order of the Teatro di Marcello was taller than the lower because it would naturally appear less tall to the viewer on the ground. Desgodets showed that the upper order was, in fact, less tall. He introduced a note of scepticism about optical corrections that was later developed by Claude Perrault into a full-blown polemic against the theory.

The author of the *Description* was interested in many of the same themes as Desgodets. He was not, however, quite so fanatical in his pursuit of accurate measurement, and occasionally he satisfied himself with measurements taken from his predecessors. For example, when he describes the ionic volutes on the so-called Tempio di Fortuna Virile, then known as the church S. Maria Egiziaca, he says:

“Pour les volutes du chapiteau, leur manière est un des secrets de l’antiquité dont on a perdu les règles, et qu’on auroit beaucoup de peine d’imiter. Elles sont contournées en ovales, ce qui leur donne une grace extraordinaire” (p. 176).

Here he simply follows Palladio, who says also that the volutes are oval.⁵⁴ Desgodets, on the other hand, looked for himself and saw that Palladio was wrong:

“Il [Palladio] fait à la face du chapiteau les volutes ovalles qui sont rondes, ou seulement quelque peu pendantes” (p. 100).

The author of the *Description* believed in the theory of optical corrections for the upper parts of large buildings. Thus he says that it would be inappropriate to accept the proportions of a building like the Teatro di Marcello and use them out of context. The great projecting cornices are designed for their high position but would not make sense elsewhere, for example, in a salone where the spectator could not step back to see them from a distance. He also says that the cornice of the top storey of the Colosseum was meant to be seen as the cornice of the entire building, and that to take it in any other way is patently wrong. Serlio made a gross error when he saw it merely as the cornice of the fourth storey, which was as ludicrous as putting the head of a giant on the body of a pigmy. Desgodets makes a similar point, though with greater subtlety. He says that the cornice of the Colosseum can be taken either as the entablature of the fourth storey, or as

53. Vedi Desgodets, *op. cit.*, pp. 290 sg.: “La premiere est le plan general du rez de chaussée que je n’ay point mesuré, mais seulement copié d’après un plan tres-ancien, qu’un de mes amis me presta lorsque j’estois à Rome, & m’assura qu’il avoit esté levé par l’architecte qui conduisoit le bastiment du Palais qui est presentement à la place de ce Theatre. Quoique cette Plance soit la seule de toutes celles qui sont dans ce livre que je n’aye point mesurée, j’ay bien voulu la mettre avec les autres, comme estant necessaire pour donner une idée des Theatres des anciens.”

54. A. Palladio, *Li quattro libri dell’architettura*, Venezia 1570, IV, xiii, p. 48.

a huge cornice for the entire building (p. 272). But Desgodets does not agree at all with the theory of optical correction, since his precise measurements showed that in most cases that these corrections simply are not there.

The *Description* makes a strange observation about the colossal column in front of S. Maria Maggiore. Carlo Maderno removed it from the Tempio della Pace (Basilica di Massenzio) and installed it in the piazza in front of the church in 1612-1614.⁵⁵ But to the author of the *Description* it seemed to have been installed upside down. He is not entirely sure; his eyes are weak; he measured the bottom of the column but not the top; and he left Rome before he could check with the experts. But nevertheless it still appeared upside down whenever he looked at it. In his view the rationale for such a thing would have been the desire to correct the excessive diminution that the upper part of the column would have suffered when seen against the backdrop of the open sky. Still, he finds it hard to believe that Maderno would have been quite so subtle as to think through all of the implications, or quite so stupid as to have set the column upside down by mistake. A few years previously, in 1671, the Marquis de Seignelay and his tutor Blondel had noticed a strong entasis in the column. But the *Description* is the only guidebook that goes so far as to suggest that it might have been inverted as a demonstration of the laws of optical correction.

Aside from Desgodets, there was another Frenchman in Rome who was interested in exact measurement, and the author of the *Description* once mentions him by name: Adrien Auzout.⁵⁶ Auzout was a distinguished French scientist and a founding member of Colbert's Académie des Sciences. He was known for astronomical observations and for the development of precision sights on telescopes. He withdrew from the Académie in 1668, and by 1671 he had come to Rome, where he seems to have lived until his death in 1691. There his interests expanded to include ancient architecture and hydraulic engineering. The author of the *Description* cites him for his opinions on the Arch of Septimius Severus, and adds that during his stay in Rome he became known as one of the really erudite men of his age. One wonders if the two men might have met. In any case, Auzout was part of the "culture of measurement" that originated from Colbert's circle in Paris and that descended on Rome in precisely the years when the *Description* was being composed.

Both the author of the *Description* and Auzout were fascinated by hydraulic engineering, ancient and modern. Auzout went on walking expeditions with his friend Raffaele Fabretti in the Roman campagna, and on one of these he discovered the lost Aqua Alexandrina. In 1672 he formed part of a papal commission to increase the flow of water from the Lago di Bracciano in order to supply the new fountain then being erected on the south side of the Piazza S. Pietro. Carlo Fontana would later remember part Auzout played in this project when he wrote his treatise on running water.

The author of the *Description* also pays close attention to pumps and other hydraulic works. In his passage on the monastery of S. Maria della Vittoria he mentions a complex self-

55. Vedi la nota alle pagine 411 sg.

56. Vedi la nota alle pagine 309-311.

propelling pump that the fathers had built on a model which he himself had sent from France before his arrival in Rome.⁵⁷ He goes on to give a detailed description of the machine, an elaborate contraption which used the flow of water from a spring to fill a heavy bucket with water, the weight of which would raise a lighter bucket up to the level of a reservoir. The description was to be accompanied by a drawing, which somehow went astray. But the one illustration that is preserved in the Avery manuscript is of another hydraulic mechanism, this time a system of buckets and pulleys that was used to raise water from a well up to the top story of a Roman house (pgg. 491-492).

In his interest for hydraulic engineering the author of the *Description* is fully in the tradition of the humanist engineers of the Renaissance.⁵⁸ Leonardo was fascinated by pumps and waterworks, and Montaigne cites many examples of hydraulic engineering in his travels to Italy. The young French humanist Nicolas Audebert took great care to describe the waterworks of the Villa d'Este in 1576-1577.⁵⁹ Of the 195 machines illustrated in Agostino Ramelli's beautifully illustrated book, *Le diverse et artificiose machine*, printed in both Italian and French in Paris in 1588, fully 116 are of pumps and hydraulic devices. Although the *Description* does not cite Ramelli, it does cite the curious book of 1642 by the Jesuit Mario Bettini, *Apiaria Universae Philosophicae Mathematicae*, where there is a section on hydrology and even a diagram of a system of counterweighted buckets used to facilitate drawing water from a well which bears a certain resemblance to the hydraulic machine at S. Maria della Vittoria.⁶⁰ The *Description* takes great care to describe the water organ in the lower garden of the Palazzo del Quirinale and in so

57. Vedi la nota alla pagina 460. Research in the archival records of the church and monastery of S. Maria della Vittoria has so far yielded no information relating to this machine. However, the monastery seems to have had close ties with France. Between 1659 and 1676, three of the four Generals of the order were Frenchmen, which may explain how the author came to be involved. See E. Alford, *Annales brèves des Carmes Déchaux de France, 1600-1970*, Avon 1973, pp. 34 sg.

By a tantalizing coincidence, the same Aimé Du Nozet to whom the guidebook is attributed on its flyleaf was also closely associated with S. Maria della Vittoria. In 1657, shortly before his death, he presented the church with a large *vigna* near S. Agnese outside the Porta Pia, in return for which the priests agreed to say weekly masses for his soul in perpetuity. Du Nozet's association with S. Maria della Vittoria presumably came about through family connections: a relative of his, Dominique Tandy (Dominicus a SS. Trinitate), was a Discalced Carmelite priest who, in 1659, became the first Frenchman to be elected General of the order. Vedi S. Maria della Vittoria, *Libro delle memorie de' PP. Carmelitani Scalzi della Vittoria*, f. 196; A. Fortes, "Catalogus Superiorum Generalium O.C.D.," in *Monumenta Historica Carmeli Teresiam*, Roma 1988, p. 11.

58. A.G. Keller, "Le opere idrauliche e l'idromeccanica nel Rinascimento," *Endeavour*, XXV, 1966, pp. 141-145; e Claudia Lazzaro, *The Italian Renaissance Garden*, New Haven e Londra 1990, pp. 16-19.

59. R. W. Lightbrown, "Nicolas Audebert and the Villa d'Este," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, XXVII, 1964, pp. 164-190.

60. Mario Bettini, S.J., *Apiaria Universae Philosophicae Mathematicae*, Bologna 1642, Apiar. IV, propositio vii, p. 40.

doing it goes into considerable detail about the way in which a water organ works. One wonders if the author had read the great French treatise on the subject by the Huguenot engineer Salomon de Caus.⁶¹ He has read the work on the specific gravity of water by Guastaferrri and he mentions the places in Rome where one could buy instruments to measure water as well as thermometers.⁶² In the years when Adrien Auzout was measuring the levels of the Lago di Bracciano and Carlo Fontana was calculating the flow of water that would arrive at the new fountain in Piazza S. Pietro, the author of the *Description* was following the same interests in the flow and regulation of water.

The trail blazed by Auzout, Desgodets, and the *Description* would later be heavily travelled by other Frenchmen who came to Rome in search of exactitude of measurement. The climax of this genre, which might be called the “voyage mesuré”, comes in the middle of the eighteenth century. In 1756 the abbé Barthelemy would return to the Colosseum to complete its measurement, this time with the assistance of the learned Minim mathematician, père Jacquier. Even though Desgodets and Carlo Fontana had done it before him, Barthelemy pledged to do it again, “par la même raison que j’ai mesuré les pieds antiques du Capitole, quoiqu’ils l’aient été plusieurs fois par des gens très-habiles.”⁶³

In the same year, 1756, Charles-Marie de La Condamine arrived in Italy, fresh from Peru, where he had spent years as a member of a team sent to measure an arc of the meridian. Nothing interested de La Condamine except what could be measured. He examined all the examples of the ancient Roman foot that could be found in Rome, and discussed the problems of giving an accurate scale to the Severan Plan with the cartographer Giovanni Battista Nolli. He used iron chains to measure the facade of the Pantheon and the columns of Trajan and Marcus Aurelius, and thermometers to calculate the expansion and contraction of the chains. He measured the velocity of the barbary horses galloping down the Corso during the Roman carnival (37 feet a second), the height of the falls at Terni, the length of the meridian of Florence cathedral, the degree of inclination of the leaning towers of Pisa and Bologna, and the speed of liquefaction of the blood of San Gennaro. He studied the machines devised by Zabaglia to raise and lower the hangings in St. Peter’s, searched for the peaks in the Appenines from which both seas could be seen, and took his barometer to the Alps and into the crater of Vesuvius. He discourses at length on the different systems for measuring time in France and in Italy, and he notices that the clock on the facade of the Trinità ai Monti was the only one in Rome to give “le ore francesi”.⁶⁴ Art he ignores, and festive life he positively despises. The feast of the Marriage to the Sea in Venice, usually so appealing to the writers of travel literature, is dismissed as a mere distraction, a “tumultuous season, and quite unsuitable to such observations as require ease and tranquility”.⁶⁵

61. Salomon de Caus, *Les raisons des forces mouvantes*, Frankfurt 1615; vedi la nota alla pagina 451.

62. Vedi la nota alla pagina 447.

63. J.J.Barthelemy, *Voyage en Italie*, ed. A. Sériey, 2a ed., Parigi 1802, p. 191.

64. Vedi la nota alla pagina 453.

65. Charles-Marie De La Condamine, *An Extract from the Observations Made in a Tour to Italy*, Londra 1768, p. 167. Vedi anche Yves Laissus, “Charles-Marie de La Condamine,” *Dictionary of Scientific biography*, New York 1978, XV, pp. 269-273.

IX. Lievin Cruyl

We have chosen to illustrate the *Description* with the drawings of a Flemish artist who was active in Rome between 1664 and 1674, Lievin Cruyl.⁶⁶ Cruyl was a native of Ghent who came to Rome at the age of 24 and set out to record the streets and piazzas of the Rome of Alexander VII (1655-1667). In the first year or two of his activity in Rome, Cruyl drew a series of thirty vedute which were intended as preparatory studies for prints. The drawings are all reversed, except for the captions, which are written in the normal direction. Eighteen of the original drawings are in the possession of the Cleveland Museum of Art and three are in the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam. Nine more drawings in this series, now lost, are known from prints. Ten of Cruyl's drawings were published along with a frontispiece in a volume called *Prospectus Locorum Urbis Romae Insign[ium]*, edited by Giovanni Battista de Rossi and his son Matteo Gregorio de Rossi in 1666. The same editors used twenty-two of Cruyl's drawings, without crediting the artist, as small vedute at the bottom of a plan of Rome which they published in 1668, *Nuova pianta di Roma presente* (Figg. 40 a-c). Cruyl and his editors worked in rivalry with another young printmaker of great talent, Giovanni Battista Falda, whose work was published by Giovanni Giacomo de Rossi. Eventually the prints and maps of Falda won universal acclaim, but the real genius was Cruyl, whose ideas were often taken by Falda.

Cruyl had a vision which was simultaneously wide-angled and telescopic. In his drawings and prints the atmosphere is always limpid and the eye can pick out tiny details of buildings on the most distant hillsides. A Dutch collector, Conrad Ruysch, praised him for never missing a window or a chimney. But he also opened up the narrow streets of Rome into grand boulevards that dwarf carriages and passers-by. He used a type of perspective that approximates the effect of a wide-angled lens. In his view of the Corso at S. Maria in Via Lata the houses open out and the roofs seem to follow a curving line to a distant vanishing point. His view of the Piazza del Popolo covers an angle of vision of more than 180 degrees, a span much wider than the conventional angle of 60-90 degrees. His competitor Falda often had to split Cruyl's vedute into two in order to imitate them. Cruyl's is an exact vision but not a natural one: "varia Urbis Romae

66. Vedi J. Connors and B. Jatta, *Vedute romane di Lievin Cruyl. Paesaggio urbano sotto Alessandro VII*, cat., Roma 1989 per il più recente contributo. Tra la vecchia letteratura si può consultare soprattutto Hermann Egger, *Römische Veduten*, I, Lipsia 1911; II, Vienna 1931; *idem*, "Lieven Cruyls römische Veduten," *Mededeelingen van het Nederlandsch Historisch Instituut te Rome*, 2a ser., VII, 1927, pp. 183-196; Thomas Ashby, "Lievin Cruyl e le sue vedute di Roma (1664-1670)," *Memorie della Pontificia Accademia Romana di Archeologia*, ser. III, I.1, 1923, pp. 221-229; Karla Langedijk, "Eine unbekannte Zeichnungsfolge von Lieven Cruyl in Florenz," *Florentinische Mitteilungen*, X, 1961, pp. 67-94; Carlo Pietrangeli, "Vedute romane di Lievin Cruyl al Museo di Roma," *Bollettino dei Musei Comunali di Roma*, 1971, pp. 7-21; Guy Walton, "Liévin Cruyl: The Works for Versailles," nel *Art the Ape of Nature. Studies in Honor of H. W. Janson*, a cura di M. Barasch, New York 1981, pp. 425-437; Francesca Consagra, "The Marketing of Pietro Testa's 'Poetic Inventions,'" nel *Pietro Testa 1612-1650 Prints and Drawings*, a cura di Elizabeth Cropper, Philadelphia 1988, pp. lxxxvi-civ.

loca lineis elegantissime deformavit.”⁶⁷

Nurtured in his youth on the Ghent altarpiece of Jan Van Eyck, Cruyl’s training must have included experiments with lenses as well as the study of perspective. He could have continued to experiment with lenses in the museum-workshop of Eustachio Divini (1610-95), the most famous telescope maker of Rome.⁶⁸ And there is some evidence that he knew about developments in perspective which were taking place in the ambient of the Minims of the Trinità ai Monti and their patron, Cardinal Bernardino Spada.⁶⁹ The small self-portrait of the artist sketching from the terraces and rooftops in so many of Cruyl’s vedute is an oversimplified picture of an artist who must have used, or at least been inspired by, a much more elaborate scientific apparatus.

The Avery *Description* also shows an appreciation of perspective and of long urban vistas. When the author comes to the Quattro Fontane, he praises the straight streets which cut, he thinks, at a right angle and pursue their unbending courses to the four points of the compass. The view down such perspectives yields an “agrément” (p. 453) almost as pleasing as the view down the new avenues of Paris. Doubtless the author would have enjoyed Cruyl’s telescopic views of the Quattro Fontane. But he also adds an interesting detail that we would not otherwise have known. A short time before sunset men would assemble at the intersection and stand there for hours on end, in complete silence, hat in hand, enjoying the vistas and taking in the air. This now forgotten ritual was performed by the vista-loving public that Cruyl hoped to capture with his prints.

The author of the *Description* also remarked on the long perspective enfilades that are such a characteristic feature of Roman palaces. He visited the new enfilade recently cut through the Palazzo Borghese and also through a neighboring house, which he found to be “une perspective admirable” (p. 472). And after wandering through so many deserted rooms and antichambers in various Roman palaces he imagines himself on an enchanted stage, where the master of the house awaits at the end of the enfilade, sullen and solitary, like the vanishing point of a perspective (p. 170).

Both the author of the *Description* and Cruyl show an instinctive sympathy for the popular life of the streets and piazzas. While some of the figures in the foreground of Cruyl’s prints come from the stock staffage figures typical of northern printmakers,⁷⁰ others reflect the

67. The phrase is used to describe Cruyl’s drawings for the Dutch collector Conrad Ruysch in J. G. Graevius, *Thesaurus Antiquitatum Romanarum...*, Venezia 1732, vol. IV, “Descriptio... Livino Cruylis Presbytero Gandavensi”.

68. F. Buonanni, *Ricreatione dell’occhio e della mente nell’osservation’ delle chioccioline*, Roma 1681, p. 130; S. Bedini, “Seventeenth Century Italian Compound Microscopes,” *Physis*, V, 1963, pp. 383-422; e *idem*, “Eustachio Divini,” nel *Dictionary of Scientific Biography*, New York 1971, IV, p. 128.

69. When Cruyl designed an altar for the church of S. Bavo in Ghent after his return from Rome, he proposed a *trompe l’oeil* perspective of a kind used by the Minims for Eucharistic displays, and taken over by Bernardino Spada in the perspective colonnade at Palazzo Spada. Vedi il disegno riprodotto da Walton, *op. cit.*, p. 430, fig. 5.

70. Vedi Didier Bodart, *Les peintres des pays-bas Méridionaux et de la principauté de Liège à Rome au XVIIIème siècle*, Bruxelles e Roma 1970.

bustling streets of Alexander VII's Rome. Wagons of saltimbanques parade through piazzas at carnival time, carriages splash through a flooded Piazza Navona, donkeys carry flour to the floating mills along the riverbanks, scarpellini cut blocks of building stone in Piazza Colonna and Piazza San Pietro, pilgrims sit in the shade, and cavalieri swagger through the streets with their swords and arquebuses.

One of the great virtues of the *Description* is the author's eye for street life and popular culture. He lived on Piazza Navona, and his description of the ever-changing spectacle of life in the piazza, from the Jewish market to the ciarlatani and the vendors of quack medicines, is the liveliest of any Roman guidebook. He watched the games people played along the city walls and the water sports on the Tiber (pgg. 471 e 480). He sensed the tumultuous mood of the city during the fragile peace of the *sede vacante* (pgg. 436 sgg.). He noted the heads of executed men exhibited in cages on the Porta Pia, "de mesme qu'on faisoit entrer autrefois des testes de boeuf dans l'ordre dorique", and he listened to the stories of guilt and innocence told about them by the people, "juge fort unique en ces sortes de matieres" (p. 465). For all his clerical solemnity, he manages to catch the popular voice. He reminds us that the seminarians of the Collegio Germanico, with their red robes, were called "gamberi cotti" (p. 356), and that the nave of St. Peter's, decorated with the doves of Innocent X, reminded the local wits of a "pigeonnier" (p. 21). This learned and misogynist abbé, in his more relaxed moods, knew how to put down his measuring rod in order to sketch the ebb and flow of people through the streets of the papal city. It is these descriptions of everyday life, rather than his largely derivative attributions of works of art, that constitute the charm and merit of the *Description*, and establish an affinity with the work of Lievin Cruyl.

Note on the Illustrations

The drawings in Cleveland and Amsterdam (Plates I - XXI) have been reproduced exactly as they are; hence they show the architecture of the city reversed. Details of these drawings interspersed with the text also show the drawing as it is but the city reversed. However we have also reproduced a number of prints by Cruyl which show the city unreversed: figg. 5, 6, 12, 13, 15, and 22. After his early competition with Falda Cruyl seems to have abandoned printmaking and turned to the production of drawings for connoisseurs, which show the city unreversed: figg. 7, 14, 16, 21, 26, 29 and 39. Fig. 40 a-c shows the twenty-two small vedute by Cruyl included at the bottom of the *Nuova pianta* of 1668.