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Bernini, Baciccio, and  
the Dome Fresco in the Gesù:  
A Reconsideration

For Irving Lavin *in memoriam*

Giovanni Battista Gaulli's dome fresco in the church of Santissimo Nome di Gesù [Fig. 1], the mother church of the Society of Jesus, which he carried out between 1672 and 1675, has long been recognized as one of the most spectacular examples of Roman Baroque painting.<sup>1</sup> Even prior to its unveiling, Filippo Titi remarked, in his guidebook of 1674, that 'those who have seen it regard it highly and praise it very much, even though it is not yet finished', and in the next edition of his guidebook, of 1686, he lauded it as a work 'executed [...] with great boldness, and elegantly colored'.<sup>2</sup> Since its cleaning and restoration in the 1990s, viewers can once again appreciate the fresco's original splendor – its dazzling luminosity, glowing colors, lucid massing and marvelous foreshortening of the figures, and sense of infinite space and atmosphere.

According to Marcello Fagiolo and others, the dome fresco should be seen as a 'collaborazione a tre', a three-way collaboration between the patron, Gian Paolo Oliva (1600–1681), who invented the iconographic program; Gian Lorenzo Bernini (1598–1690), who designed the fresco; and the painter, Gaulli (1639–1709), better known by his nickname Baciccio, who executed it.<sup>3</sup> But is this, in fact, a valid way of understanding how the work came into being? Did the painter play no role in the visual conception of the fresco and merely carry out Oliva's program and Bernini's designs? Or, should more creative agency be given to Baciccio for originating the design of the work? In an effort



1. Giovanni Battista Gaulli, «The Church Triumphant in Heaven», 1672–1675, dome fresco, Rome, Church of the Gesù. Photo: Livio Andronico/  
Wikimedia Commons

to answer these questions and to define, to the extent that it is possible, the particular role each of these individuals played, this essay revisits the history of the dome fresco project. By carefully re-examining all of the relevant primary and secondary sources, and, more importantly, all of the visual evidence, my hope is to arrive at a more nuanced and more accurate picture of what each of these three men contributed to the conception, design, and execution of the fresco.

## The Commission and the Fresco

As we learn from Baciccio's early biographers, Nicola Pio, Liono Pascoli and Carlo Giuseppe Ratti, almost immediately after the young Genoese painter arrived in Rome c. 1657, he came to the attention of the city's foremost artist, Gian Lorenzo Bernini, who took him under his wing and became his protector.<sup>4</sup> His biographers also inform us that upon the unveiling of the painter's vault frescoes in the Jesuit church of S. Marta in 1672, Gian Paolo Oliva, the eleventh Superior General of the Society of Jesus, went to see them and, so impressed was he, that he added Baciccio to the small list of painters he was considering to carry out the pictorial decoration of the Gesù – a list that included Giacinto Brandi, a student of Giovanni Lanfranco; Cirro Ferri, a pupil of Pietro da Cortona; and Carlo Maratti, Andrea Sacchi's most talented follower.<sup>5</sup> Before making his choice, however, Oliva 'sought the advice of various *professori*, his friends, and particularly of Bernini, whom he believes above all the others'.<sup>6</sup> Not only did Bernini recommend Baciccio, his young, thirty-three-year-old protégé for the project, but he also guaranteed the success of his work.<sup>7</sup> And with Bernini's assurance, Oliva chose Baciccio, his Genoese compatriot, and a contract was signed on 21 August 1672, which called on the artist to decorate the nave vault, dome, pendentives, and transept vaults of the church. The first area to be painted, according to the contract, was the dome, which was to be completed by Christmas Eve of 1674, in time for the inception of the Holy Year celebration.<sup>8</sup>

Constructed by Giacomo della Porta and completed c. 1583, the dome of the Gesù rises above an octagonal drum and is crowned by a lantern. When finished, it stood as one of the largest and tallest in Rome, measuring approximately eighteen meters in diameter and nearly fifty meters high. Faced with the task of painting it, Baciccio confronted a serious challenge: ribs that rose along its inner surface, from the top of the drum to the lantern, segmenting it into eight compartments. Oliva, and certainly the painter, too, wanted the ribs removed in order to create a unified and coherent surface, but the Gesù's chief patron, Ranuccio II Farnese, was opposed to the idea, fearing that their removal would undermine the dome's structural integrity.<sup>9</sup> Had Ranuccio II prevailed, Baciccio's fresco might well have looked somewhat akin to the dome of St Peter's, where

a compartmentalized composition of separate figures fills the spaces between the ribs. But fortunately, after careful inspection of the dome by a group of experts appointed by the Jesuit general, the decision was made to remove the dome's inner ribs, so as, in the words of a contemporary document, 'to be able to adorn it with greater magnificence'.<sup>10</sup>

Despite the delay caused by the debate over the ribs, Baciccio nearly met his deadline, and the dome fresco was unveiled on Easter Sunday of 1675. An *avviso*, or proto-news report, dated 20 April 1675, announced that 'the Jesuit Fathers have uncovered the cupola of their church of the Gesù, newly painted to the design of the Cavalier Bernini and executed by a certain Baciccio, a Florentine, and neither the invention of the first nor the work of the latter was much praised by many experts'.<sup>11</sup> Beyond the mistaken claim that Baciccio was Florentine, and putting aside the *avviso* writer's assertion that the fresco was not well received, the report makes it evident that the common perception was that Bernini, and not Baciccio, was responsible for the design of the dome fresco.

Before addressing this issue, a brief description of the fresco and its iconography is in order. What we see in the dome is the empyrean, the celestial realm of Heaven. The elect of Heaven, made up of Old Testament worthies (Adam and Eve, Noah, David, and Esther) and Christian martyrs, founders of religious orders, rulers, nobility, *beati*, and other saints – including, conspicuously, the Jesuits Ignatius, Francis Xavier, Francis Borgia, Stanislaw Kostka, and Aloysius Gonzaga – inhabit the lower ring, interspersed among clouds and angels. Within this tier of figures are God the Father, Christ, and the Virgin Mary, who form a separate pyramidal group at the center of the far side of the dome, closest to the church's high altar. Jesus and Mary enact a double intercession, a *duplex intercessio*, before God the Father, who is engulfed in radiant light. Above, at the summit of the lantern, is the dove of the Holy Spirit, and populating the upper reaches of the dome are more angels, hovering, playing musical instruments, singing, and rejoicing amidst clouds, while others, at the very top, appear to support the ring of the lantern inscribed with the name of Alessandro Farnese, the Gesù's founder.<sup>12</sup>

## Bernini's Role in the Design of the Dome Fresco

The perception that Bernini was the mind behind Baciccio's hand has a long history. The eighteenth-century French collector and connoisseur, Pierre-Jean Mariette (1694–1774), wrote that 'Baciccio was the hand that Bernini used to express in painting his new and piquant ideas'.<sup>13</sup> Nicola Pio, the painter's first biographer, asserted that Bernini assisted the painter in all the works he made in Rome, while Ratti claimed that during the painter's early days in Rome Bernini provided the models for his history



2. Gian Lorenzo Bernini, «Intercession of Christ and the Virgin (Study for the Dome Fresco of the Gesù)», c. 1672, pen and ink, 22.9 × 21 cm, Leipzig, Museum der bildenden Künste, inv. no. 7813. Photo: bpk Bildagentur/Art Resource, New York, NY

paintings.<sup>14</sup> As to Bernini's presumed role in designing the Gesù dome fresco, and, I should add, the vault decorations as well, we have the *avviso* quoted above and the testimony of Nicodemus Tessin the Younger (1654–1728), the Swedish architect who visited Rome in 1673 and again in 1687, where he came to know both Bernini and Baciccio. In his travel diary, Tessin recorded his visit to Baciccio's studio as well as his impressions of the Gesù decorations, describing them as the 'very magnificent invention of Cavalier Bernini', and adding that the idea of casting a giant shadow over the stucco frame of the vault was Bernini's as well.<sup>15</sup> Based on these early sources, the majority of art historians have taken it for granted that the Gesù decorations were designed by

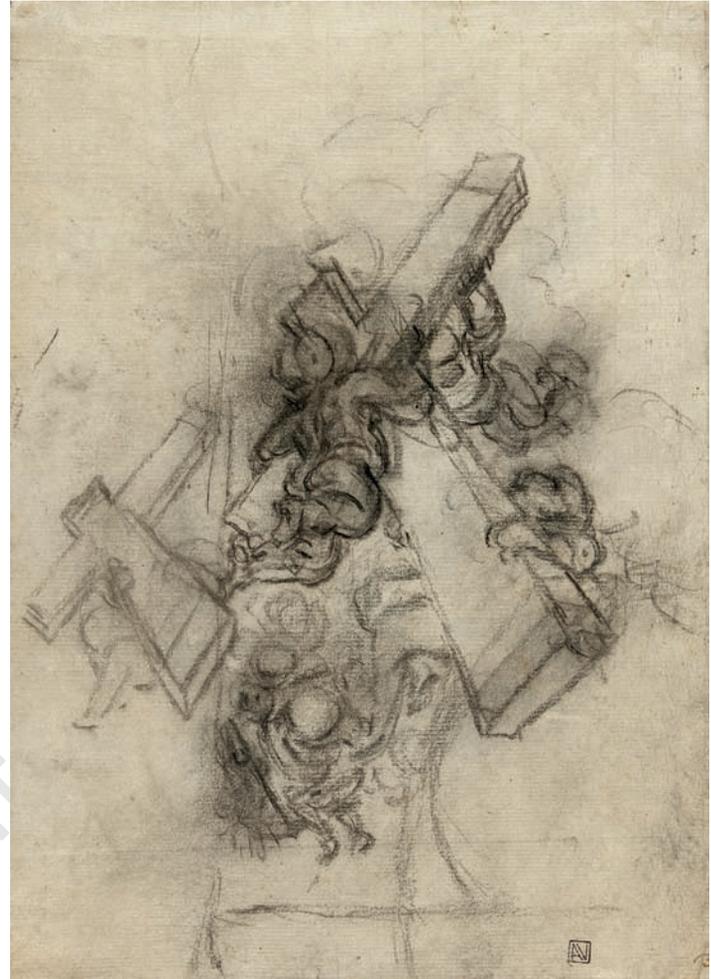
Bernini. Robert Enggass, for example, in the first English-language monograph on Baciccio, asserted, matter-of-factly, that Bernini's contribution was 'in essence [...] the invention'.<sup>16</sup> Rudolf Wittkower described the Gesù frescoes as 'the fullest exposition of Bernini's revolutionary conception of painting'.<sup>17</sup> According to Tomaso Montanari, the Gesù frescoes represent 'the most important and fascinating episode of Bernini [as] inventor of painting'.<sup>18</sup> And most recently Jacopo Curzietti, in his monograph on Baciccio's Gesù decorations, argued that Bernini's role entailed his 'conception of all the frescoes and, more broadly, the ideation of the entire decorative scheme'.<sup>19</sup>

Beyond the early textual sources, however, the only tangible proof of Bernini's role in designing Baciccio's dome are five drawings, all of which are restricted to the relatively small section of the fresco representing the *duplex intercessio*.<sup>20</sup> The first is a compositional sketch, a *primo pensiero* in pen and ink in Leipzig, in which Bernini established the general pyramidal composition, with God the Father, Christ, and the Virgin [Fig. 2]. Christ, bearing his cross and seated on clouds, extends his hands to God the Father, showing him his wounds, while the Virgin, kneeling on a cloud, exposes her breast to Christ. Summarily sketched angels help to support the cross, while other angels at the extreme left and right bear instruments of Christ's passion, the column of the flagellation and the crown of thorns. When the drawing was first published in 1927 by Erwin Panofsky,

he identified its subject as a 'combined intercession', based on a late medieval devotional formula. Then, just a few years later, in 1931, Heinrich Brauer and Rudolf Wittkower proposed that the sketch was a preparatory study for the artist's *Sangue di Cristo*, a composition engraved by François Spierre in 1670, which depicts Christ on the cross, hovering below God the Father above a sea of blood, flanked by the Virgin Mary and an angel, which embodies the theme of double intercession.<sup>21</sup> However, in 1935, Karolina Lanckorońska associated the drawing, for the first time, with Gaulli's dome fresco. Accepting both Panofsky's interpretation of the iconography and Brauer and Wittkower's argument for a direct connection between the sketch and Spierre's print,



3. Gian Lorenzo Bernini, «Intercession of Christ and the Virgin (Study for the Dome Fresco of the Gesù)», c. 1672, black chalk, 27.3 × 17 cm, private collection, USA. Photo: Courtesy of the Owner



4. Gian Lorenzo Bernini, «Angels Bearing the Cross (Study for the Dome Fresco of the Gesù)», c. 1672, black chalk, 27.5 × 20.2 cm, The Art Institute of Chicago, Margaret Day Blake Endowment and Harold Joachim Memorial Endowment Fund. Photo: The Art Institute of Chicago/Art Resource, NY

she concluded that there was an earlier, alternate design for the fresco, which would have represented, like the engraving, the *Sangue di Cristo*.<sup>22</sup> In 1972, Irving Lavin questioned whether the sketch was a preparatory study for the engraving, and in 1981, following Lavin's lead, I argued, conclusively, that Bernini's drawing was made exclusively for Baciccio's fresco.<sup>23</sup>

In addition to the Leipzig sketch, four other drawings by Bernini show the development of his first idea. In one, drawn in black chalk, in a private American collection, Bernini began to refine the composition, maintaining the triadic relationship

among God the Father, Christ, and the Virgin, but moving the cross and the angels who bear it to a location below Christ, with the lower edge of the cross and a cloud overlapping the circular window at the base of the dome [Fig. 3]. The cross supported by angels, and their relationship to the window, are the focus of another black chalk drawing, in the Art Institute of Chicago, where Bernini further explored the foreshortening of the cross, varying the direction in which it is viewed, first from the right and, then, in the fainter sketch at left [Fig. 4]. As in the Leipzig sketch, in both of these drawings Bernini included angels



5. Gian Lorenzo Bernini, «Intercession of Christ and the Virgin (Study for the Dome Fresco of the Gesù)», c. 1672, black chalk and pen and brown ink, 26 × 18 cm, Paris, ex-Mathias Polakovits Collection (present whereabouts unknown). Photo: author

carrying the column of the flagellation, lightly indicated to the left of the cross's shaft. In a fourth sheet, in black chalk and pen and brown ink, formerly in the Mathias Polakovits collection in Paris, Bernini drew even closer to his definitive idea [Fig. 5]. Christ is more proximate to God the Father, who appears lightly sketched within an aureole of light and, as in the two previous drawings, he paid close attention to the angel-borne cross and its relationship to the circular window, but here deleted the angels holding the column. And in a fifth drawing, also in black chalk, which belonged to the Venetian art dealer Paolo Scarpa, Bernini focused on the figure of Christ seated on a cloud, extending his arms to God the Father, with drapery swirling around his body [Fig. 6]. Although the exact sequence of the five drawings is uncertain, they should, I believe, be ordered as I have discussed



6. Gian Lorenzo Bernini, «Christ (Study for the Dome Fresco of the Gesù)», c. 1672, black chalk, 23.3 × 19.2 cm, Venice, ex-Paolo Scarpa Collection (present whereabouts unknown). Photo: author

them – from the *primo pensiero* in Leipzig to the sheet in a private American collection, then to the more focused drawing of the cross in the Art Institute, and, finally, to the ex-Polakovits and ex-Scarpa drawings.<sup>24</sup>

When it came to executing the fresco, however, Baciccio did not religiously follow Bernini's designs [Fig. 7]. He avoided the illusionistic overlapping of the cross on the window (although he retained the idea of overlapping the window frame elsewhere in the dome); he transformed the figure of Christ, who now stretches out his arms so as to both reveal his wounds and point to the cross, and moved him further away from God the Father; he introduced the figures of Adam and Eve below Christ, with Adam adopting the pose of Christ as rendered in the drawings and embracing the foot of the cross; the Virgin more decorously clasps



7. Giovanni Battista Gaulli, «Intercession of Christ and the Virgin», 1672–1675 (detail of the dome fresco), Rome, Church of the Gesù. Photo: Livio Andronico/Wikimedia Commons

her hands across her breast, rather than overtly exposing it; and Mary is in a more erect posture and, with her left foot, tramples on a serpent. Despite these significant changes, and the fact that no other drawings by Bernini for the dome have come to light, a number of scholars have cited the existing drawings as evidence of his having invented the entire fresco. Francesco Petrucci argued that they 'confirm' both Enggass's statement that Bernini's role in the project was 'the invention' and the *avviso* writer's claim that the dome was 'painted to the design of the Cavalier Bernini'.<sup>25</sup> Jacopo Curziotti also asserted that the drawings affirm what the *avviso* tells us and prove that the sculptor had 'already completely delineated the entire scheme [...] of the cupola'.<sup>26</sup> Maurizio Fagiolo dell'Arco saw the five drawings as verifying Ratti's claim, in his biography of the painter, that Bernini executed the models for all of Baciccio's history paintings during his early days in Rome.<sup>27</sup> And Ursula Fischer Pace stated that they 'document his [Bernini's] decisive role in the design of the cupola and Baciccio's adherence to his ideas'.<sup>28</sup> Jennifer Tonkovich, however, was more circumspect, writing that 'Unless

further drawings by Bernini are discovered closer to Baciccio's final solution', the differences between the drawings and the fresco as executed 'suggest that Bernini's designs served as a basic guideline rather than a blueprint' for the painter.<sup>29</sup>

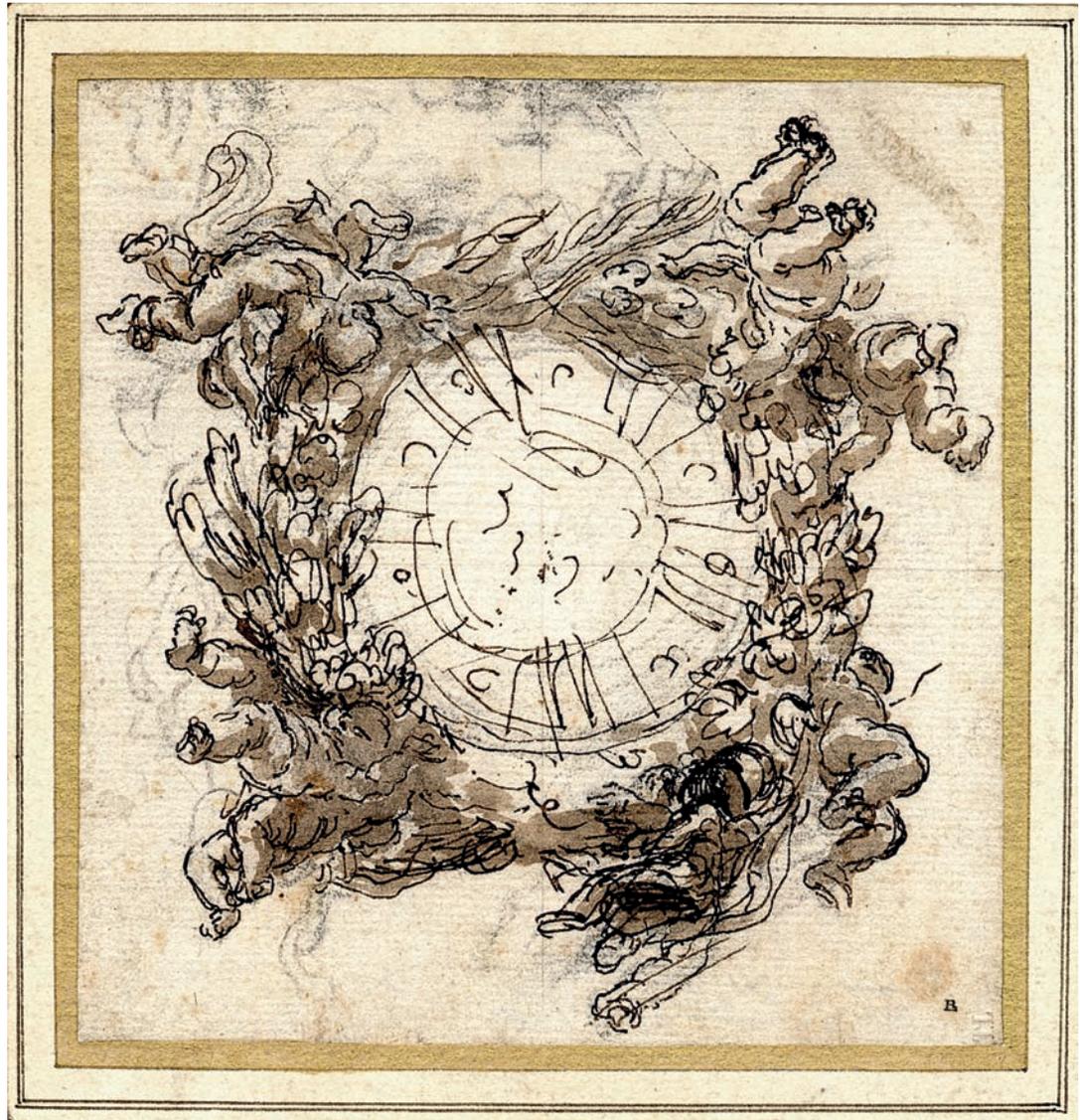
It is notable that all five of Bernini's drawings focus on a small but, in all other ways, very conspicuous part of the dome fresco. Not only is the *duplex intercessio* what the viewer first sees when walking down the length of the nave and the dome comes into view, it is also the fresco's iconographic center, according to the program that Oliva most certainly conceived.<sup>30</sup> Given Bernini's guarantee of Baciccio's success, it is not at all surprising that his drawings exclusively focus on this section of the fresco, which would anchor the entire scheme, and it seems reasonable to think he made the drawings not only to suggest to the painter how to begin planning the composition, but also to show Oliva what the *duplex intercessio* might look like as the dome's centerpiece.<sup>31</sup>

All the other surviving visual evidence for the design of the fresco is from Baciccio's hand. It consists of drawings and



8. Giovanni Battista Gaulli,  
«Christ and Angels in Heaven  
(Study for the Dome Fresco of  
the Gesù)», c. 1672, pen and  
brown ink, black chalk, and brown  
wash, 39 × 25.8 cm, Düsseldorf,  
Kunstmuseum, Sammlung der  
Kunstakademie, Inv. KA (FP) 1887.  
Photo: Museum

9. Giovanni Battista Gaulli, «Angels (Study for the Dome Fresco of the Gesù)», c. 1672, pen and brown ink, black chalk, and brown wash, 13.9 × 13.3 cm, London, British Museum, inv. no. 1946,0713.756. Photo: © Trustees of the British Museum



*bozzetti*, which, although relatively few in number, must certainly represent only a fraction of the preparatory work he produced for the dome, including other drawings, oil sketches, painted *modelli*, cartoons, and, perhaps, a three-dimensional model, in keeping with his practice for all of his other major decorative projects.<sup>32</sup> Two drawings, one in Düsseldorf and the other in London, focus on the lantern at the summit of the dome, with the ring of angels around its circumference. In the Düsseldorf sheet [Fig. 8], executed in pen and brown ink, black chalk, and brown wash, Baciccio explored an alternative idea for the lantern in which, rather

than the dove of the Holy Spirit, a descending Christ appears at the center within a glory of light, with angels appearing to support the ring around the lantern's base. The painter, it seems, either contemplated a radical departure from Bernini's scheme, only to abandon the idea, or, more likely, made this drawing prior to Bernini's sketches for the *duplex intercessio* in which Christ is a central actor.<sup>33</sup> The London sheet, drawn in the same media, is also a study for the lantern [Fig. 9], only here Baciccio focused all his attention on the ring of angels around its base and only summarily indicated some clouds in the lantern itself.<sup>34</sup> In two



10. Giovanni Battista Gaulli, «Music-Making Angels (Study for the Dome Fresco of the Gesù)», c. 1672, pen and ink with white heightening, 27 x 41 cm, Paris, Musée du Louvre, inv. no. 13806. Photo: Mathieu Rabeau © RMN-Grand Palais/Art Resource, NY

other drawings, one in Paris and the other in Edinburgh, the angels that inhabit the upper reaches of the dome were Baciccio's focus. The first, executed in pen and ink with white heightening, features a number of groupings of music-making angels amidst clouds [Fig. 10], while the second, drawn in red chalk with white heightening, is a study of the head and hands of an angel – the former, that of the angel above St Paul (in a red robe) to the left of the harp-playing angel; the latter, those of the praying angel, to the immediate left of the former one, who directs his gaze toward God the Father [Fig. 11].<sup>35</sup> One additional drawing, in Madrid, in pen and brown wash over red chalk, shows Baciccio's invention for Adam and Eve who appear below Christ in the fresco [Fig. 12]. Here Adam holds the lower end of the cross, as in the painting, but extends his right arm to the left instead of the right, and Eve holds the apple in her left hand and points to it with

her right, whereas in the fresco she raises her hands in a gesture of veneration and the apple appears before her knees.<sup>36</sup> It is, perhaps, the most important of Baciccio's surviving drawings for the dome, as it shows a radical departure from Bernini's designs for this section of the fresco, no doubt based on Oliva's request, and, at the same time, presents an earlier stage in his development of these two key figures.<sup>37</sup>

We have even fewer of Baciccio's *bozzetti* than we do drawings for the fresco, with only four that have come to light. In one, in Düsseldorf, which is the most complete [Fig. 13], the painter studied about one quarter of the dome, spanning the section from immediately to the left of Christ to the area above the chapel of Sant'Ignazio in the left transept of the church. Although Baciccio made changes to the composition when executing the fresco, especially with respect to the massing, poses, and



11. Giovanni Battista Gaulli, «Head and Hands of an Angel (Study for the Dome Fresco of the Gesù)», c. 1672, red chalk heightened with white, 26.7 × 23.6 cm, Edinburgh, Royal Scottish Academy of Art & Architecture Collections, David Laing Bequest (on loan to the Scottish National Gallery), National Galleries of Scotland. Photo: Courtesy of Museum

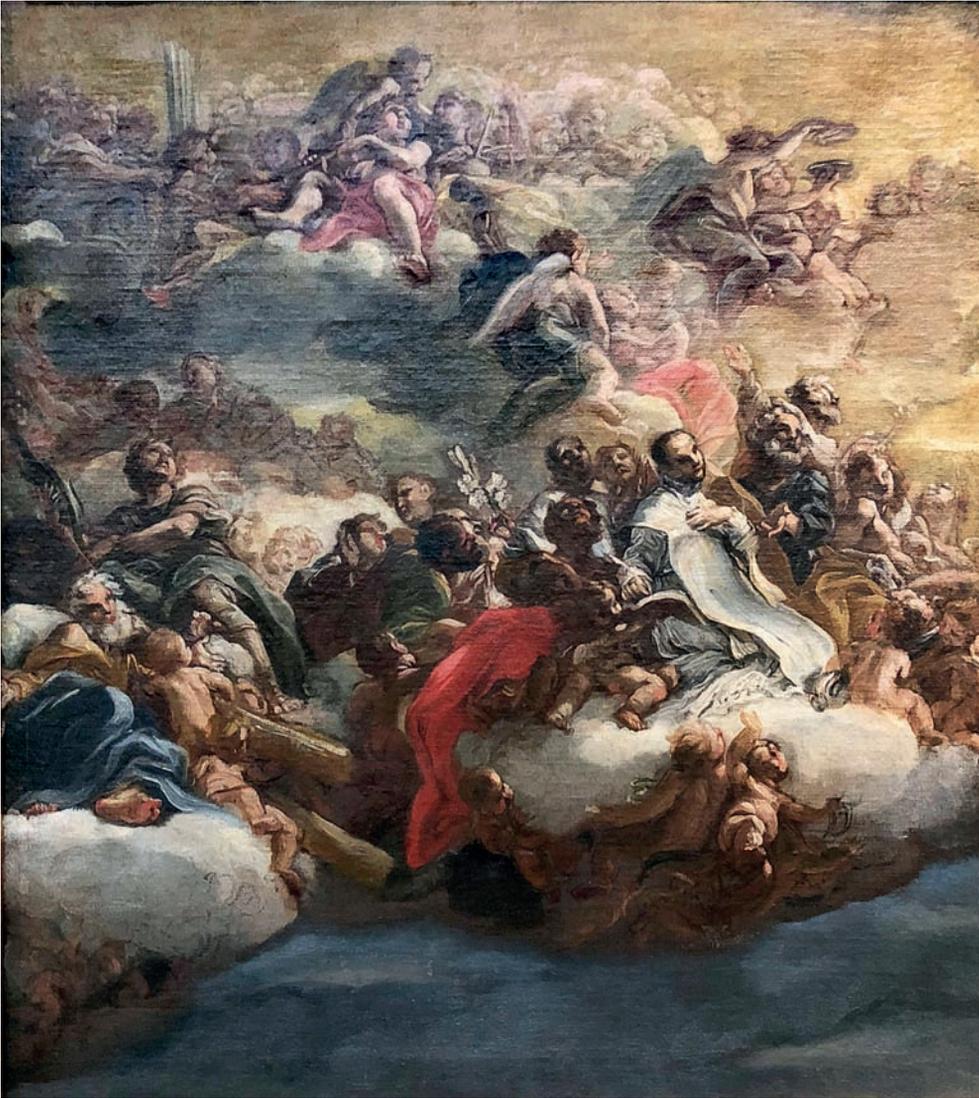
costumes of several of the figures, it documents an important phase in his conception of the elect of Heaven and the music-making angels above them.<sup>38</sup> Two other oil sketches are studies for the music-making angels. One, in the Vatican Pinacoteca, develops elements from the drawings in Paris and Edinburgh, showing a group of angels sitting on clouds, singing and playing various instruments [Fig. 14].<sup>39</sup> The other, in Florence, is closely related, but here Baciccio studied the group of angels immediately to the right of those in the Vatican *bozzetto*, who appear at the upper right of the Düsseldorf oil sketch [Fig. 15].<sup>40</sup> The last known *bozzetto*, which sold at Christie's in London in 2015, is unpublished. Highly finished, it depicts the figure of Christ who, as in the fresco, sits on a bank of clouds, gazes upward, and stretches out his arms [Fig. 16].<sup>41</sup> From inventories of the property of Baciccio's heirs, we know that the painter produced other *bozzetti*, too: one is recorded as 'Adam and Eve with the Cross, without a Frame a *Bozzetto* for the Cupola of the



12. Giovanni Battista Gaulli, «Adam and Eve (Study for the Dome Fresco of the Gesù)», c. 1672, pen and brown wash over red chalk, 20.5 × 13.1 cm, Madrid, Palacio Real, inv. no. IX-M-89 (no. 80). Photo: Courtesy of the Palacio Real

Gesù'; another is described as 'A portion of the Cupola of the Gesù representing Jesus Christ with the Cross, Adam, and Eve with little angels'; and a third is listed as 'A portion of the Cupola representing various Martyrs and Angels'— which may refer to the *bozzetto* in Düsseldorf.<sup>42</sup>

There is no reason to doubt Baciccio's biographers' claim that Bernini secured the commission for the painter and guaranteed the success of his work. The sculptor was Baciccio's protector and supporter and, no less significant, Bernini and Oliva



13. Giovanni Battista Gaulli, «Glory of Saints and Angels (Study for the Dome Fresco of the Gesù)», c. 1672, oil on canvas, 66 × 60 cm, Düsseldorf, Museum Kunstpalast, inv. 2049. Photo: Courtesy of Fabio Barry

had a very close relationship, dating back to c. 1660.<sup>43</sup> The five drawings by Bernini prove that he played a role in designing one small portion of the dome fresco, and there is also good reason to believe Nicodemus Tessin that it was Bernini's idea to spread a portion of the fresco and the shadows over the stucco frame in the nave vault, as Guidobaldo Abbatini had carried out similar medium-blending things, following Bernini's designs, in the semi-dome of the Pio Chapel in S. Agostino and the vault in the Cornaro Chapel in S. Maria della Vittoria. And based on what we see in several of Bernini's drawings, extending the fresco over the frames of some of the circular windows of the dome was

clearly Bernini's idea as well. But all of the other evidence points to one conclusion: that Baciccio, who by the time he received the Gesù commission was an experienced and technically accomplished fresco painter – as he demonstrated in the pendentives of S. Agnese in Agone (1666–1671), the lunette in the Altieri Chapel in S. Maria sopra Minerva (1671–1672), and the vault decorations of S. Marta (1671–1672) – was not only capable of assuming, but did assume, the generative role in giving visual form to Oliva's program and designing the imagery for the larger scheme of the dome fresco as well as for those of the pendentives, nave vault, and apse.



14. Giovanni Battista Gaulli, «Music-Making Angels (Study for the Dome Fresco of the Gesù)», c. 1672, oil on canvas, 49 × 98 cm, Vatican City, Musei Vaticani, Pinacoteca, inv. no. 40752. Photo: © Musei Vaticani



15. Giovanni Battista Gaulli, «Music-Making Angels (Study for the Dome Fresco of the Gesù)», c. 1672, oil on canvas, 49 × 96 cm, Florence, Fondazione Longhi. Photo: Fondazione Longhi



16. Giovanni Battista Gaulli, «Christ in Glory (Study for the Dome Fresco of the Gesù)», c. 1672, oil on canvas, 66 × 49.8 cm, private collection. Photo: Wikimedia Commons

17. Pierre Mignard,  
«The Trinity Presiding  
over the Celestial Court  
in Paradise», 1663–1666,  
dome fresco, Paris,  
Church of the Val-de  
Grâce. Photo: Myrabella/  
Wikimedia Commons



### ‘To Work in Masses’

If Bernini was not, in the end, the designer of the dome fresco, he was, I suggest, responsible for providing Baciccio with a theoretical approach to the challenge of dome painting. This is evidenced, in part, by Bernini’s recommendation, while the painter was beginning his work on the pendentives in S. Agnese, to visit Parma to study Correggio’s dome and pendentive frescoes in the duomo and the church of S. Giovanni Evangelista. In a letter dated 29 December 1666, Duke Francesco II d’Este’s agent in Rome, Ugone Rangoni, wrote to him about Baciccio’s intention of visiting Modena and nearby Parma ‘to study from Correggio in Parma to then be able to paint the pendentives of the cupola in S. Agnese’. Although Baciccio’s departure was delayed until March of 1669, when he set off, he did so with a personal letter of introduction to the duke from Bernini.<sup>44</sup> And as Robert Engass

and others have observed, Correggio’s prototype in the duomo of Parma served as a point of departure for Baciccio’s dome, especially in the way light and color were used to unify the groupings of figures.<sup>45</sup>

Bernini’s theoretical guidance may also be discerned in the larger composition of the dome fresco and, more specifically, in the scale and massing of the figures. Although Bernini himself never painted a dome, we learn from several comments he made during his sojourn in Paris in 1665 that he had very clear ideas about dome painting and what a dome fresco should look like. All but one of his comments pertain to the dome fresco representing the *Trinity Presiding over the Celestial Court in Paradise* by Pierre Mignard (1612–1695) in the church of the Val-de-Grâce, which was carried out between 1663 and 1666 [Fig. 17]. Bernini’s interest in the dome was certainly based on his desire to see as much art as possible during his Parisian visit; but he

may also have been particularly interested in Mignard's fresco as he had met the French painter when he was in Rome in 1635 and again in 1655–1657. After having visited the church on 13 June 1665, soon after his arrival – when, as his companion and guide Paul Fréart de Chantelou wrote in his *journal*, Bernini 'went up into the cupola to get a view of Mignard's decorations' – he returned on 9 October. Chantelou recorded:

The Abbé Buti told him that the Cavaliere was going to look at Mignard's work on the cupola, which was coming along very well, as he [Mignard] had profited by the Cavaliere's advice to enlarge the subject of the *Trinity* as the principal part of the design for the glory of paradise, which he was painting in the cupola. In the first design he had put it in the distance where it could hardly be seen. The Cavaliere had suggested placing it on a cloud drifting down toward the principal figures, which he had done most successfully.<sup>46</sup>

Chantelou then wrote about the visit:

Once we climbed on the scaffolding to see the dome we found Mignard. The Cavaliere looked at it from every angle, saying he considered it very beautiful, and he added that a painter who had not done a cupola could hardly be called a painter in his opinion.<sup>47</sup>

One day later, on 10 October, Chantelou noted a conversation that took place among the Abbé Buti, Bernini, and himself that 'returned to the subject of the cupola of the Val-de-Grâce'. Bernini, his guide tells us:

said that in the composition of these grand works it was necessary to work in masses, he said *delle macchie*, as if one were to draw the figures on a piece of paper and then cut them out and place the different masses to make a loose composition for the whole, and to create a fine contrast, and then to fill the empty spaces with carefully drawn figures, going into great detail. This was the way to obtain something grand and well organized, and all those who follow other methods of composition never succeed in creating something beautiful.<sup>48</sup>

In Chantelou's entry for 11 October he recorded the last of Bernini's comments about domes. In this case it pertained to Charles Le Brun's design for a fresco to adorn the oval cupola of the grand salon at Vaux-le-Vicomte. 'Bernini looked at it [the drawing] very carefully', Chantelou wrote, and then said 'it is very beautiful, rich without being confused'. A fresco for a dome, he added, 'presents great difficulties; all the parts must be strictly subordinate to the whole, everything must converge on one point, and everything appear foreshortened, as it is seen from below'.<sup>49</sup>

By claiming that 'a painter who had not done a cupola could hardly be called a painter', Bernini no doubt sought to flatter Mignard, in whose presence he said this. But the statement also reveals his recognition that dome-painting presented an extraordinarily difficult physical and technical challenge and, at the same time, it shows his adherence to the longstanding opinion in Italy that fresco was both the most difficult and the highest achievement of the painter's art.<sup>50</sup> Bernini's recommendation to Mignard to enlarge the *Trinity* as the principal part of the design brings us closer to issues pertaining to the Gesù dome. In his *vita* of Baciccio, Pascoli relates that the painter's first designs for the fresco were too small to draw the viewer's eye up into the vast dome and, after Oliva consulted with Bernini, the sculptor concluded that Baciccio should 'enlarge' the design. Enggass argued that 'if by the "enlargement" of which Pascoli speaks no more is meant than to increase the same design in scale, there would be no need to call in the most famous artist in Rome', and he concluded that what Bernini intended by his recommendation to 'enlarge' the design was not about scale but the introduction of the technical innovation of having the fresco extend over the window frames in the dome and the coffers and ribs of the vault.<sup>51</sup> However, it is far more likely, I believe, that Bernini recommended an enlargement in the scale of the figures – just as he urged Mignard to 'enlarge' the *Trinity*. This enlargement was especially important for the triadic grouping of the *duplex intercessio*, which, like the *Trinity*, serves as the 'principal part of the design'. And it is tempting to connect Bernini's recommendation with his making the drawings for this section of Baciccio's fresco, as he recognized that the group of God the Father, Christ, and the Virgin was the focal point on which everything would converge and to which everything else needed to be subordinate.

Bernini's other comment, that in composing large works it was necessary to think in masses, *delle macchie*, is equally applicable to Baciccio's fresco.<sup>52</sup> The word *macchia*, which translates literally as splotch or stain, was defined by Filippo Baldinucci in his *Vocabolario toscano dell'arte del disegno* of 1681 in this way, but also as a term that 'painters use [...] to express the quality of some drawings, and sometimes also paintings, made with extraordinary facility [...] and freshness'.<sup>53</sup> As Lavin noted, Bernini seems to have been the first to use this term in reference to a compositional method, rather than to a sketchy technique.<sup>54</sup> And his description of how one works in this way – by arranging the figures to form a loose composition of masses or groupings, which produce fine contrasts – is exactly what Baciccio did in some of his preliminary drawings and *bozzetti* as well as in the final dome fresco. It was not a new method, per se, as one glance at the dome frescoes by Giovanni Lanfranco in S. Andrea della Valle and Pietro da Cortona in the Chiesa Nuova, which are always cited as Baciccio's closest models, demonstrates. But the way Baciccio arranged the figural groups in the Gesù dome,

together with the prominence he gave to the *duplex intercessio*, so closely conform to Bernini's statements as recorded by Chantelou that it is hard not to see his influence on his protégé.

## Conclusion

As his frescoes and works on canvas amply demonstrate, Baciccio was a remarkably gifted painter, a master of rich coloristic effects, luminosity, and bravura handling. In his portraits, as Pascoli wrote, 'he showed great art and singular mastery', and, indeed, for their vivid characterization, intimacy, and sense of animation, they were among the most widely sought after in seventeenth-century Rome.<sup>55</sup> For their spiritual qualities, sense of drama, and emotional tenor, many of his altarpieces and devotional paintings are no less impressive. And he was an accomplished and facile draftsman as well. This is to say that while Bernini may have provided a few drawings for one small section of the dome fresco in the Gesù, Baciccio was fully capable of translating Oliva's iconographic program from words to images and of inventing the larger scheme.

In his discussion of Bernini, Rudolf Wittkower noted that the artist's production should be divided 'into works designed by him and executed by his hand; those to a greater or lesser degree carried out by him; others where he firmly held the reins but actively contributed little or nothing to the execution; and finally those from which he dissociated himself after a few preliminary sketches'.<sup>56</sup> The Gesù dome fresco may, in certain ways, be placed in this last category but, as I have tried to argue, it should not, in the end, be considered a work by Bernini. Rather than minimizing Baciccio's skills and contribution, and seeing him as little more than Bernini's amanuensis, it is far more profitable to recognize the very limited role the sculptor played in the fresco's invention and, instead, to locate his influence in providing Baciccio with a way of approaching the challenge of painting a dome fresco, with respect to working on a monumental scale, composing *delle macchie*, and having everything converge on one point. Baciccio may have been Bernini's 'alter ego', as many scholars have said, capable of fully translating the sculptor's ideas and manner into paint, but concerning the Gesù's dome fresco he should unequivocally be recognized as its true author, with respect to both its pictorial invention and execution.

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<sup>1</sup> The literature of the dome fresco is vast, but see, especially, K. Lancorońska, *Dekoracja kościoła 'Il Gesù' na tle rozwoju baroku w Rzymie*, Lvov, 1935, pp. 9, 19–22, 51–52; P. Pecchiai, *Il Gesù di Roma*, Rome, 1952, pp. 109–127; F. Banfi, 'Il "Paradiso" di Baciccio', *L'Urbe*, 22, no. 2,

1959, pp. 4–10; R. Enggass, *The Painting of Baciccio. Giovanni Battista Gaulli 1639–1709*, University Park, PA, 1964, pp. 32–37, 135–136; F. Haskell, *Patrons and Painters. Art and Society in Baroque Italy*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn, New York, 1971, pp. 79–82; M. Fagiolo, 'Strutture del trionfo gesuitico: Baciccio e Pozzo', *Storia dell'arte*, 38–40, 1980, pp. 353–357; F. Petrucci, 'Tre momenti del Baciccio', in *Giovan Battista Gaulli. Il Baciccio 1639–1709*, ed. by M. Fagiolo dell'Arco, D. Graf, and F. Petrucci, exh. cat., Milan, 1999, pp. 60–62; D. Graf, 'Giovanni Battista Gaulli al Gesù', in *Giovan Battista Gaulli. Il Baciccio 1639–1709*, pp. 136–138; G. Giachi, *Una parabola di luce: Lettura pasquale dei restaurati affreschi del Baciccio*, Rome, 2000, pp. 39–46, 135; F. Petrucci, *Baciccio. Giovan Battista Gaulli 1639–1709*, Rome, 2009, pp. 39–41, 193–197, 203–206, 458–461; J. Curziotti, *Giovan Battista Gaulli. La decorazione della Chiesa del SS. Nome di Gesù*, Rome, 2011, pp. 41–50, 69–77, 116–118; C. M. S. Johns, "'Upon the Roof of Heav'n". Giovanni Battista Gaulli's Dome, Pendentive, and Vault Frescoes at Il Gesù', in *The Holy Name:*

- Art of the Gesù. Bernini and His Age*, exh. cat., ed. by L. Wolk-Simon, Philadelphia, 2018, pp. 269–276. Part of the introductory section of this article replicates that in my essay cited below, n. 12.
- 2 F. Titi, *Studio di pittura, scoltura et architettura nelle chiese di Roma*, Rome, 1674, p. 197: 'Hora la Cuppola è dipinta di novo da Baciccio Gaulli Genovese, e quelli, che l'hanno veduta la stimano, e lodano assai, benche non ancor finita'. F. Titi, *Ammaestramento utile, e curioso di pittura scoltura et architettura nelle chiese di Roma*, Rome, 1686, p. 154: 'operato tutto con gran franchezza, e vago colorito'.
  - 3 Fagiolo, 'Strutture del trionfo', p. 353. Others who have put forth similar arguments include Enggass, *The Painting of Baciccio*, pp. 52–53; Haskell, *Patrons and Painters*, p. 81; Curziotti, *Giovan Battista Gaulli*, pp. 49–50. More nuanced discussions of the rapport between the two artists and of their roles in the design of the Gesù frescoes have been offered by Petrucci, 'Tre momenti del Baciccio', pp. 59–61; Petrucci, *Baciccio*, pp. 38–41, 458; Johns, 'Upon the Roof of Heav'n', pp. 269–270, 273–275.
  - 4 N. Pio, *Le vite di pittori scultori et architetti [Cod. Ms. Capponi 257]*, ed. and intro. by C. and R. Enggass, Vatican City, 1977, p. 23; L. Pascoli, *Vite de' pittori, scultori, ed architetti moderni*, vol. I, Rome, 1730, p. 195; C. G. Ratti, *Delle vite de' pittori, scultori, ed architetti genovesi [...] in continuazione dell'opera di Raffaello Soprani*, vol. II, Genoa, 1769, p. 76.
  - 5 Pascoli, *Vite*, vol. I, p. 200; Ratti, *Delle vite*, vol. II, p. 78.
  - 6 Pascoli, *Vite*, vol. I, p. 200: 'Prima però di determinarsi, sentir volle il parere di diversi professori suoi amici, e del Bernini particolarmente, cui piucchè ad ogni altro credeva'. Ratti, *Delle vite*, vol. II, p. 78, repeats this almost verbatim.
  - 7 Pascoli, *Vite*, vol. I, p. 200: '[...] che egli [Bernini] ne sarebbe stato il mallevadore'.
  - 8 The contract was first published by P. Tacchi Venturi, 'Le convenzioni tra Giov. Battista Gaulli e il Generale dei Gesuiti Gian Paolo Oliva per le pitture della cupola e della volta del Tempio Farnesiano', *Roma: Rivista di studi e di vita romana*, 13, 1935, pp. 149–151; it is also transcribed in full in Curziotti, *Giovan Battista Gaulli*, pp. 219–220.
  - 9 On the debate over the removal of the ribs, see Pecchiai, *Il Gesù*, pp. 113–118; F. Trevisani, 'Giovanni Battista Negrone committente dell'altare di S. Francesco Saverio al Gesù di Roma', *Storia dell'arte*, 38–40, 1980, pp. 362–364; M. G. D'Amelio, 'Il Farnese e la Compagnia Ignaziana: le modificazioni alla cupola del Gesù per la decorazione secentesca', in *Vignola e I Farnese. Atti del convegno internazionale Piacenza 18–20 Aprile 2002*, ed. by C. L. Frommel, M. Ricci, and R. J. Tuttle, Milan, 2003, pp. 84–98; T. Manfredi, "'Non poteva patir la Chiesa': Perizie e conflitti intorno alla cupola della Chiesa del Santissimo Nome di Gesù a Roma', in *Saperi a confronto: Consulze e perizie sulle criticità strutturali dell'architettura d'età moderna (XV–XVIII secolo)*, ed. by S. Piazza, Palermo, 2015, pp. 65–86.
  - 10 Quoted in D'Amelio, 'Il Farnese', p. 98, n. 38: 'per poterla adornare con maggiore magnificenza'.
  - 11 Archivio Segreto Vaticano, Barb. Lat. 6413, fol. 109r: 'Hanno li Padri Giesuiti scoperto la cuppola della loro Chiesa del Giesù dipinta da nuovo con disegno del Cavalier Bernino, e fattura di un tale Baccici Fiorentino, e da molti virtuosi non viene troppo lodata l'inventione del primo, come anche il lavoro del secondo'. First published by E. Rossi, 'Roma ignorata', *Roma*, 19, no. 1, 1941, p. 30; republished by Enggass, *Painting of Baciccio*, p. 177, and Curziotti, *Giovan Battista Gaulli*, p. 239.
  - 12 On the iconography and meaning of the dome fresco, which lies outside the scope of this essay, see S. F. Ostrow, 'Duplex Intercessio: The Centrality of the Virgin in Giovanni Battista Gaulli's Dome Fresco in the Gesù' (forthcoming).
  - 13 P.-J. Mariette, *Abecedario de J. P. Mariette et autres notes inédites de cet amateur sur les arts et les artistes*, vol. I, ed. by P. de Chennevières and A. de Montaignon, Paris, 1853, p. 48: 'le Baciche évoit la moine dont le Bernin se servoit pour exprimer en peintre ses pensées neuves et piquante'. Although not published until the mid-nineteenth century, Mariette's comments were written c. 1720–1725.
  - 14 Pio, *Le vite*, p. 3: '[Bernini] l'assiste in tutte l'opere che egli [Baciccio] fece in Roma'; Ratti, *Le vite*, vol. II, p. 76: 'Qualora poi venivagli occorrenza di dipingere quadri storiati; il Bernino stesso gliene formava i modelli'.
  - 15 *Nicodemus Tessin d.y.s. Studieresor i Danmark, Tyskland, Holland, Frankrike, och Italien. Anteckningar, Bref och Ritningar*, ed. by O. Sirén, Stockholm, 1914, pp. 161 and 193, respectively: 'Al Giesù siehet man die sehr herliche Pencée vom Cav. Bernin im gantzen Gewelbe der Kirchen durch Sig:r Bazziggi exequivret, wass den mahlreireihen gehet'; and 'Die meisten wollen sousteniren dass Cav. Bernin die gantze Composition gemacht habe, wie auch dass er selbst die grosse Schatten über dem gibsswercke undt goldt soll geworffen haben'. These passages are widely cited in the literature on Baciccio's Gesù frescoes.
  - 16 Enggass, *The Painting of Baciccio*, p. 53.
  - 17 R. Wittkower, *Art and Architecture in Italy 1600–1750*, vol. II, rev. edn by J. Connors and J. Montagu, New Haven and London, 1999, p. 23.
  - 18 T. Montanari, *Bernini pittore*, Milan, 2007, p. 62.
  - 19 Curziotti, *Giovan Battista Gaulli*, p. 49: '[...] l'intervento del Bernini nel cantiere gesuita non fu limitato alla sola promozione del Gaulli, ma si estese anche nell'ambito della progettazione degli affreschi e, più in generale, all'ideazione dell'intero comparto decorativo'. The author later (p. 51) expands on this idea, stating that Bernini 'ne assume l'effettivo ruolo di regista ed ideatore'. Two recent publications have similarly argued for Bernini's central role in the design of the nave vault and dome frescoes: U. V. Fischer Pace, "'Eine sehr herrliche Pencée von Cav. Bernini'" (un'idea meravigliosa del Cav. Bernini), *Commentari d'arte*, 9–20, nos. 56–57, 2013–2014, pp. 53–61, and B. Rosasco, 'The Triumph of the Name of Jesus: Evidence for the Evolution of the Nave Fresco in the Gesù', in *The Holy Name*, pp. 325–349.
  - 20 In her article, Fischer Pace, 'Eine sehr herrliche Pencée', publishes a drawing (her fig. 2) in the Louvre, Département des Arts Graphiques, inv. 14755 (ors. 408), which she attributes, unconvincingly to this writer, to Bernini and identifies as a *primo pensiero* for the nave vault fresco.
  - 21 E. Panofsky, "'Imago Pietatis': Ein Beitrag zur Typengeschichte des "Schmerzenmanns" und der "Maria Mediatrix"', in *Festschrift für Max J. Friedländer zum 60. Geburtstag*, Leipzig, 1927, pp. 93–94; H. Brauer and R. Wittkower, *Die Zeichnungen des Gian Lorenzo Bernini*, Berlin, 1931, pp. 166–168.
  - 22 Lanckorońska, *Dekoracja kościoła 'Il Gesù'*, pp. 19–22, 51–52. This thesis was also followed by F. Haskell, *Patrons and Painters*, p. 82.
  - 23 I. Lavin, 'Bernini's Death', *Art Bulletin*, 54, no. 3, 1972, p. 169, n. 32; S. F. Ostrow, 'Intercession of Christ and the Virgin', in *Drawings by Gianlorenzo Bernini in the Museum der Bildenden Künste, Leipzig*, ed. by I. Lavin, exh. cat., Princeton, 1981, pp. 310–314.

- 24 The present whereabouts of the ex-Polakovits and ex-Scarpa drawings is unknown. I published the former in *ibid.*, pp. 310–311, fig. 110, as did P. Dreyer, 'Eine unbekannte Zeichnung von Gianlorenzo Bernini', in *Per A. E. Popham*, ed. by I. and A. Consigli, Parma, 1981, pp. 161–163. The drawings in the private American collection and the Art Institute of Chicago were first published by J. Tonkovich, 'Two Studies for the Gesù and a 'quarantore' design by Bernini', *Burlington Magazine*, 140, no. 1138, 1998, pp. 34–37. The ex-Scarpa drawing was first 'published' in an advertisement of sale in the *Burlington Magazine*, 128, no. 996, 1986, p. xix. The first four drawings have been widely cited and discussed in the literature; see, in addition to Tonkovich, Petrucci, 'Tre momenti del Baciccio', p. 61; Petrucci, *Baciccio*, p. 39; Curziotti, *Giovan Battista Gaulli*, p. 74; Fischer Pace, 'Eine sehr herrliche Pencée', p. 53; Johns, 'Upon the Roof of Heav'n', p. 276 (and pp. 510–513), catalogue entry nos. 45–46, on the drawings in the private American collection and Art Institute. Only M. Fagiolo dell'Arco, *Berniniana. Novità sul regista del Barocco*, Milan, 2002, pp. 68–69, was aware of and has discussed all five of the drawings.
- 25 Petrucci, 'Tre momenti del Baciccio', pp. 60–61; Petrucci, *Baciccio*, p. 39. See also, F. Petrucci, 'L'opera pittorica di Bernini,' in *Bernini a Montecitorio*, ed. by M. G. Bernardini, Rome, 2001, p. 73, where he writes: 'È ormai certo che la decorazione del Gesù rappresenti l'ultima grande invenzione del Bernini a fianco di Gaulli [...]. Lo confermano oggi i quattro [sic] suoi schizzi per la *Duplex intercessio* della cupola'.
- 26 Curziotti, *Giovan Battista Gaulli*, p. 74.
- 27 Fagiolo dell'Arco, *Berniniana*, p. 69.
- 28 Fischer Pace, 'Eine sehr herrliche Pencée', p. 53.
- 29 Tonkovich, 'Two Studies for the Gesù', p. 36. Johns, 'Upon the Roof of Heav'n', pp. 273–274, was more equivocal, asserting that Bernini's influence on Gaulli's decorations was 'pervasive [...] his fingerprints everywhere', but also that 'Baciccio should be given much more credit for the invention and execution of the Gesù dome, pendentives, and vault frescoes than he has previously received'. In his catalogue entry for the Art Institute drawing (p. 510), Johns further states, in keeping with Tonkovich, that Bernini's drawings 'are best considered as suggestions [...] for the dome rather than precise models for the painter to follow'.
- 30 See above, n. 12. Although the question of Oliva's role as inventor of the Gesù's iconographic scheme lies outside the scope of this essay, it is hard to imagine that anyone other than the Superior General of the Society – an erudite theologian, and renown preacher and author – could have been responsible for devising such an iconographically complex and coherent program.
- 31 I am grateful to Ann Sutherland Harris for discussing this matter with me and for the suggestion of this double purpose of the drawings.
- 32 Petrucci, *Baciccio*, p. 458, suggested that the painter produced this array of preparatory work. For the three-dimensional wood model of the Gesù apse fresco, see *ibid.*, pp. 484–485, cat. no. B16c. Baciccio must have produced a large painted *modello* of the entire dome of the Gesù, as he did for the dome of S. Agnese, on which, see *ibid.*, p. 502, cat. no. B27.
- 33 See D. Graf, *Die Zeichnungen von Guglielmo Cortese und Giovanni Battista Gaulli*, 2 vols, Düsseldorf, 1976, vol. I, p. 93, cat. no. 238; D. Graf, 'Cristo in Cielo', in *Giovan Battista Gaulli. Il Baciccio 1639–1709*, exh. cat., ed. by M. Fagiolo dell'Arco, D. Graf, and F. Petrucci, Milan, 1999, p. 292, cat. no. 68, with additional bibliography.
- 34 See N. Turner, *Roman Baroque Drawings c. 1620 to c. 1700*, London, 1999, p. 70, cat. no. 109.
- 35 On the Louvre drawing, see M. Newcome Schleier, *Le dessin à Gênes du XVI<sup>e</sup> au XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle*, exh. cat., Paris, 1985, pp. 107–108, cat. no. 93; on the Edinburgh drawing, see *Effigies & Ecstasies. Roman Baroque Sculpture and Design in the Age of Bernini*, ed. by A. Weston-Lewis, exh. cat., Edinburgh, 1998, p. 149, cat. no. 114, entry by E. Stirrup. The verso of this sheet features additional studies of hands.
- 36 The drawing was attributed and published by M. B. Mena Marqués, 'Un dibujo de Giovanni Battista Gaulli para los frescos de la cupula del Gesù', in *Per A. E. Popham*, ed. by I. and A. Consigli, Parma, 1981, pp. 205–211.
- 37 Mena Marqués, 'Un dibujo', p. 210, argues, quite rightly, I believe, that 'el dibujo del Palacio Real, claramente de mano de Gaulli, vuelve a quedar de manifiesto que fué él y no Bernini el que realizó las ideas preparatorias para los grandes frescos'.
- 38 See D. Graf, 'Giovanni Battista Gaullis Ölskizzen im Kunstmuseum Düsseldorf', *Pantheon*, 31, no. 2, 1973, pp. 163–167; D. Graf, 'Gloria di angeli e santi', in *Giovan Battista Gaulli. Il Baciccio 1639–1709*, pp. 137–138, cat. no. 24; Petrucci, *Baciccio*, p. 460, cat. no. B10a; Curziotti, *Giovan Battista Gaulli*, p. 76, 76, n. 37, with additional bibliography.
- 39 See Petrucci, *Baciccio*, p. 461, cat. no. B10b; Curziotti, *Giovan Battista Gaulli*, p. 76, 76, n. 40, both with additional bibliography. As Stirrup noted, the study of the angel in Edinburgh corresponds to the right-most angel in this *bozzetto*. *Effigies & Ecstasies*, p. 149, cat. no. 114, entry by E. Stirrup.
- 40 See Petrucci, *Baciccio*, p. 461, cat. no. B10c; Curziotti, *Giovan Battista Gaulli*, p. 76, 76, n. 39, both with additional bibliography.
- 41 Christie's, London, 9 December 2015, Lot 178. It previously sold at Sotheby's, London in 2013, and before that at Drouot, Paris in 1995.
- 42 The first is from the inventory of the effects of the painter's son, Giulio Gaulli, dated 3 January 1761: 'Adamo ed Eva con la Croce senza Cornice Bozzetto per la Cupola del Gesù'. The two others are from the inventory of the effects of the painter's granddaughter Caterina Gaulli Miloni, dated 11 January 1803: 'Un pezzo della Cuppola del Gesù rapp: e Gesu Cristo colla Croce, Adamo, ed Eva con dei Putti' and 'Una porzione di Cuppola rappres:i diversi Martiri ed Angeli'. Transcribed in Petrucci, *Baciccio*, pp. 678 and 680. Both inventories were originally transcribed in M. Fagiolo dell'Arco and R. Pantanella, *Museo Baciccio. In margine a quattro inventari inediti*, Rome, 1996, pp. 114, 123–124.
- 43 On the relationship between Oliva and Bernini, see F. Mormando, 'Gian Paolo Oliva: The Forgotten Celebrity of Baroque Rome', in *The Holy Name*, pp. 185–221, esp. pp. 203–207.
- 44 See F. Imparato, 'Documenti sul pittore Baciccio', *Archivio storico dell'arte*, 2, fasc. 1–4, 1889, pp. 153–155: '[...] la sua intenzione è per studiare dal Correggio à Parma per poter poi dipingere li Angoli della Cupolla di S.<sup>ta</sup> Agnese'. Bernini introduced Baciccio as a 'pittore di molto merito et oltre allo storiare, fa ritratti per eccellenza'.
- 45 Enggass, *Baciccio*, p. 35; Petrucci, *Baciccio*, p. 35; Curziotti, *Giovan Battista Gaulli*, pp. 100, 102; Johns, 'Upon the Roof of Heav'n', pp. 273, 280. Another aspect of Bernini's influence on Baciccio can be discerned in the painter's decision not to employ *quadratura*, fictive architecture, on the vault of the nave, which is convincing only from a single point of view, as is the case in Andrea Pozzo's later vault of S. Ignazio. Instead, Baciccio followed Bernini's method of opening up the vault through

- other means, especially by having the painting extend out and over the architectural frame. Unlike *quadratura*, which creates an illusionistic expansion of real space, Baciccio's vault, like Bernini's in the Pio and Cornaro chapels, obliterates the boundaries between illusion and reality. See Wittkower, *Art and Architecture in Italy 1600–1750*, vol. II, p. 22, and I. Lavin, *Bernini and the Unity of the Visual Arts*, New York and London, 1980, pp. 127–129, 129, n. 6.
- 46 P. Fréart de Chantelou, *Diary of Cavaliere Bernini's Visit to France*, ed. and intro. by A. Blunt, annotations by G. C. Bauer, trans. by M. Corbett, Princeton, 1985, p. 32 (13 June), p. 276 (9 October). Here and below I follow, with minor changes, Corbett's translation. See also P. Fréart de Chantelou, *Journal de voyage du Cavalier Bernini en France*, ed. by M. Stanic, Paris, 2001, pp. 58, 241.
- 47 Chantelou, *Diary*, p. 277; Chantelou, *Journal*, p. 242.
- 48 Chantelou, *Diary*, pp. 283–284; Chantelou, *Journal*, p. 247.
- 49 Chantelou, *Diary*, p. 285; Chantelou, *Journal*, p. 249.
- 50 This was stated, for example, by G. Vasari, *Le Vite de' piu eccellenti pittori, scultori e architettori*, vol. I, Florence, 1568, p. 50, and G. Mancini, *Considerazioni sulla pittura*, vol. I, ed. by A. Marucchi, Rome, 1956, p. 22. I am grateful to Richard Spear for alerting me to this latter reference. With respect to the technical and physical challenge of painting domes, immediately following the passage quoted, Chantelou goes on to write: 'We talked about the difficulty of carrying out these huge paintings; a brush a yard long was needed; one could not step back to see the effect, nor could one see near to what one was doing, as everything was on such a large scale', Chantelou, *Diary*, p. 277; Chantelou, *Journal*, p. 242.
- 51 Pascoli, *Vite*, vol. I, p. 200: '[...] e nel lavorare conobbe, che secondo il concertato sarebbe riuscito assai misero, e da non poter ben guarnire i siti, come il P. generale supponeva, e come egli stesso aveva creduto. Discorsosi pertanto di ciò tra lui, il P. generale, ed il Bernini si conchiuse, ch s'accrescesse', Enggass, *Baciccio*, pp. 52–53.
- 52 After I had come to this conclusion, I discovered that Fischer Pace, 'Eine sehr herrliche Pencée', pp. 59–60, had also connected this statement to Baciccio's fresco.
- 53 F. Baldinucci, *Vocabolario toscano dell'arte del disegno*, Florence, 1681, p. 86: 'MACCHIA f. Segno che lasciano i liquori, i colori, e le sporchie, nelle superficie di quelle cose, ch'elle toccano, o sopra le quali cadono. Lat. *Macula*. ¶ I pittori usano questa voce per esprimere la qualità d'alcuni disegni, ed alcuna volta anche pitture, fatte con istraordinaria facilità, e con un tale accordamento, e freschezza'. For earlier usages and meanings of the term, see L. Grassi and M. Pepe, *Dizionario dei termini artistici*, Milan, 1994, pp. 477–478.
- 54 Lavin, *Bernini and the Unity of the Visual Arts*, p. 14. See also C. Lehmann, 'Bernini's *macchia*', in *A Transitory Star: The Late Bernini and His Reception*, ed. by C. Lehmann and K. J. Lloyd, Berlin and Boston, 2015, pp. 95–116, in which she argues that the meaning of this term as voiced by Bernini in Paris should not be sought in Italian usage but in the context of French art theory, and that Chantelou may even have added this comment himself to adapt Bernini's ideas to the cultural politics in France in the late 1660s and early 1670s.
- 55 Pascoli, *Vite*, vol. I, p. 207: 'ed in questi [his portraits] ebbe per verità grande arte, e singolar maestria'.
- 56 Wittkower, *Art and Architecture in Italy 1600–1750*, vol. II, p. 21.