

HOPE FOR SALVATION AND SALVATION GRANTED: THE BURIAL CHAPEL AND
REBURIAL CEREMONY OF POPE SIXTUS V IN SANTA MARIA MAGGIORE

by

JENNY M. BEENE

(Under the Direction of Shelley Zuraw)

ABSTRACT

This thesis is a discussion of the burial chapel of Pope Sixtus V in Santa Maria Maggiore and also his reburial ceremony, which occurred in the nave of Santa Maria Maggiore in August of 1591, a year after the pope's death. What is referred to as a tempietto catafalque, designed by papal architect, Domenico Fontana, was erected before the apse of Santa Maria Maggiore for the celebration of the reburial. The author argues that the domed and centrally-planned form of the catafalque of Sixtus V functioned as a recognizable symbol of Christ and, therefore, salvation. Both the form and the symbolic meaning of the catafalque used in the reburial of Sixtus V derive from the monumental sacrament tabernacle, also by Domenico Fontana, located at the center of the pope's burial chapel.

INDEX WORDS: Sixtus V, Santa Maria Maggiore, Catafalque, *Edicule Christi*, Sacrament Tabernacle, Tempietto, Paul V, Pius V, *Presepio*, *Capella Ardente*, *Castrum Doloris*, Santa Maria Maggiore, Domenico Fontana, New Saint Peter's

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DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this thesis to my mom and Michele, for Christmas in Italy.

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Introduction

In a graduate course on Renaissance and Baroque Rome, a suggested reading was a chapter of Jack Freiberg's *Christian Concord in Counter-Reformation Rome* on the altar of the sacrament at San Giovanni in Laterano. I was intrigued by Freiberg's notion that the domed roof and polygonal plan of the Lateran tabernacle (1600) had a symbolic significance directly related to its function as a container for the body of Christ. As Freiberg suggested, the form of the Lateran tabernacle recalls that of the *edicule Christi*, the shrine constructed by Constantine to protect and glorify the relic of the tomb of Christ. Similarly in his dissertation, *The Sistine Chapel at Santa Maria Maggiore: Sixtus V and the Art of the Counter-Reformation*, Steven Ostrow suggested that with its domed roof and central plan, the sacrament tabernacle in the burial chapel of Pope Sixtus V at Santa Maria Maggiore (c. 1587) resembled the *edicule Christi*.

For a different graduate seminar, research for a paper on Renaissance and Baroque tomb sculpture, led me to a consideration of the invention of the so-called *tempietto catafalque* in late cinquecento Rome. Looking at the illustrations of one of the first such catafalques, built by Domenic Fontana for Pope Sixtus V (1591), the resemblance to the sacrament container commissioned by him for his burial chapel was unmistakable; both were centrally-planned, domed structures with a plethora of architectural details. That these two nearly contemporary monuments, one commissioned by Sixtus V and the other, an ephemeral memorial monument built in his honor, were so similar in appearance has been previously noted in the literature on Italian catafalques. In this essay, it is the author's intent to pick up where this scholarship has left off, and explore the important symbolic meanings of such a formal resonance.

Chapter One: *The Catafalque of Sixtus V and the Prehistory and
Development of the Ecclesiastic Catafalque*

The first papal catafalque was erected in the crossing of Santa Maria Maggiore for the reburial of Pope Sixtus V (Felice Peretti, 1585-90) (fig 1). After his death in August of 1590, Sixtus V had been temporarily buried in New Saint Peter's, but due to the ongoing construction of the church, the pope's body necessitated permanent burial elsewhere.¹ This was something that, in life, Sixtus V had anticipated. Thus, shortly after he was elected pope, he commissioned papal architect, Domenico Fontana to design and oversee the construction of an elaborate burial chapel at the church of Santa Maria Maggiore (fig. 2).² At the time of his death, however, the chapel had still not been completed, and it was therefore necessary that he be temporarily buried at Saint Peters. In 1591, the tomb and chapel were completed at last and on August 27th a festive ceremony celebrating the reburial of Sixtus V took place. On the evening of the 26th, the body of the pope was ceremoniously translated from New Saint Peter's to the Virgin's basilica and buried in the crypt of the new chapel. A requiem mass was held in the nave of Santa Maria Maggiore proper.³

¹ On the death and burial of Sixtus V see, Olga Berendsen, *The Italian Sixteenth and Seventeenth Century Catafalques* (Ph.D. Dissertation. New York University, 1961), 110-114; Marcello Fagiolo, "Il trionfo sulla morte: I catafalchi dei papi e dei sovrani," *La Festa a Roma dal Rinascimento al 1870* ed. Marcello Fagiolo, 26-41 (Turin: U. Allemandi, 1997); Minou Schraven, *Festive Funerals: Funeral Apparati in Early Modern Italy, particularly in Rome* (PhD Dissertation. Rotterdam: University Press of Groningen, 2006), 48 and 205-209.

² On the burial chapel of Sixtus V, see Steven F Ostrow, *Art and Spirituality in Counter-Reformation Rome: the Sistine and Pauline Chapels in Santa Maria Maggiore* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 23-63.

³ Berendsen (1961), 110-114; Marcello Fagiolo, 182-187; Schraven (2006), 48 and 205-209.

The focal point of the ceremony certainly must have been the pope's catafalque. At thirty meters in height and costing the pope's nephew, Cardinal Alessandro Montalto, 12,000 scudi, the catafalque was significantly more elaborate than any ecclesiastic catafalque that preceded it.⁴ Although the excess of the catafalque seems appropriate for the celebration of a pope's reburial, in fact, since they were invented in the late 1550s, catafalques had been forbidden by the master of ceremonies for the celebration of ecclesiastical funerals and requiems. With paintings and sculptures that highlight the attributes and virtues of the deceased, they were believed to be too concerned with individual praise.⁵ For the reburial ceremony of Pope Pius IV (Giovanni Angelo de' Medici, 1559-64), for instance, a catafalque was explicitly forbidden.⁶ The Master of Ceremonies, however, could only prohibit the use of official funds in the erection of catafalques, and thus, wealthy ecclesiastics could use private or family money to commission a catafalque.⁷ For Sixtus' reburial in August of 1591, there was no use of papal funds and so there were also no proscriptions against the ostentation of the ceremony.⁸ For the design of the catafalque, Cardinal Montalto employed the same group of artists often used by Sixtus V during his pontificate. Domenico Fontana designed its form, while Cesare Nebbia, Giovanni Guerra, Jacopo Zucchia and Il Cavaliere d'Arpino executed the paintings.⁹ Prospero Antichi, also known

⁴ Schraven (2006), 208.

⁵ Berendsen (1961), 13 and 100.

⁶ Ibid and Marcello Fagiolo, 26-27.

⁷ Berendsen (1961), 104-105 and Schraven (2006), 162-164.

⁸ Maurizio Fagiolo dell'Arco, *La festa barocca* (Rome: De Luca, 1997), 182-187.

⁹ On Giovanni Guerra, see Giuliano Briganti, *La pittura in Italia: Il Cinquecento* (Milan: Electa, 1988), 738; see also Herwarth Röttgen, *Il Cavalier d'Arpino* (Rome: Pal. Venezia, 1973).

as Il Bresciano was responsible for the catafalque's fictive sculpture, a program of virtues.¹⁰ All of these artists had also been active in the decoration of Sixtus' burial chapel.¹¹

Since the catafalque was an ephemeral structure, its appearance can only be reconstructed based on Girolamo Rainaldi's engravings of it from the book distributed to dignitaries after the reburial ceremony.¹² The Sistine catafalque appears in Rainaldi's print as a domed, openwork structure with a hexagonal plan raised on a stepped platform.¹³ There are six arched entrances into the interior of the catafalque where a bier draped with a ceremonial cloth can be seen. The series of arched doorways is interrupted by sets of multi-colored marble pilasters of the Corinthian order, recalling the materials of the permanent wall tombs in the Sistine Chapel of both Sixtus V and his predecessor, Pius V (Michele Ghisleri, 1566-72). Between these pilasters are standing sculptures, personifications of the virtues of Sixtus. The frieze of the entablature features a floral motif and over the front door of the catafalque is a small portrait of the catafalque's patron, Cardinal Montalto. Beneath this portrait is a rectangular panel with an inscription featuring the name of the patron and the date of the reburial ceremony. It is likely

¹⁰ Steven F. Ostrow, "Prospero Antichi," Oxford Dictionary of Art Online, www.oxfordartonline.com (accessed February 16, 2009).

¹¹ Berendsen (1961), 166-167; Maurizio Fagiolo, 182 and Schraven (2006), 206.

¹² Of the book commemorating the reburial of Sixtus V, *La Pompe Funerale*, Schraven states, it is the "first elaborate funeral book of this kind [that] would become an important model for subsequent editions." The book contained the complete oration of Lelio Pelligrini and fourteen engravings of the catafalque and its decorations, see Baldo Catani, *La Pompe funerale fatta dall'Ill. Mo et R. mo Sr Cardinale Montalto nella trasportatione dell'ossa di Papa Sisto Il Quinto* (Rome 1591) as discussed in Schraven (2006), 207; see also, Minou Schraven. "The Representation of Court Ceremonies in Print: The Development and Distribution of the Funeral Book in Sixteenth Century Italy," in *News and Politics in Early Modern Europe* ed. Martin Gosman and Joop W. Koopman, 47-61, (Dudley, MA: Peeters, 2005).

¹³ At this time, Girolamo Rainaldi worked as a draughtsman under Domenico Fontana see, Oxford Dictionary of Art Online, "Girolamo Rainaldi", www.oxfordartonline.com (accessed February 5, 2009). For display during the novenas at New Saint Peters after the death of Pope Sixtus V, Girolamo Rainaldi had executed a somewhat ornate *castrum doloris* painted to look like marble, for which there is no extant illustration, see Schraven (2006), 48-49.

that painted panels appeared above all six doors of the catafalque since it is clear in the engraving that a similar panel inscribed with the words, *Sisto Quinto* is located above the doorway on the right-hand side and although it is in shadow, a similar panel is also visible above the door to the left of center.

The dome and lantern that crown the catafalque are separated from the body by a balustrade where a row of candles stands before a series of painted panels. According to the text of the funeral book, these paintings represent a number of the artistic and architectural projects completed during the papacy of Sixtus V such as the Aqua Felice fountain, which was the first aqueduct built in Rome since ancient times, the Scala Santa, the Sistine Chapel and the Lateran Palace.¹⁴ The paintings highlight projects completed under the guidance of papal architect, Domenico Fontana.¹⁵ In fact, as will be discussed in greater detail later, the domed and centrally-planned catafalque noticeably resembles the monumental sacrament tabernacle, also designed by Fontana, which stands at the center of the Sistine Chapel, making it not only a burial chapel but more importantly, the chapel of the sacrament (fig. 3).¹⁶ The formal resemblance of the catafalque of Sixtus V to the sacrament tabernacle in the pope's burial chapel is key to what is the central focus of this essay: establishing the meaning of the domed roof and central plan in

¹⁴ On the Aqua Felice see, Simona Benedetti, "L'acquedotto Felice de porta Furba alla mostra del Mosé" *Storia architettura* no. 1 (1992): 90-192; on the Scala Santa see Laura Donadono, *La Scala Santa a San Giovanni in Laterano* (Rome: Quasar, 2000); on the Lateran Palace see Freiberg, Jack. *The Lateran and Clement VIII* (P.h.D. Dissertation. New York University, 1988) and Corinne Mandel, *Sixtus V and the Lateran Palace* (Rome: Istituto poligrafico e Zecca dello Stato, 1994).

¹⁵ On the urban and artistic projects completed during the reign of Sixtus V, see *Sisto V*, curated by Marcello Fagiolo and Maria Luisa Madonna (Rome: Istituto poligrafico e zecca dello Stato, 1992); Leros Pittoni and Gabrielle Lautenberg, *Roman Felix: la città di Sisto V e Domenico Fontana* (Rome: Viviani, 2002); see also Matthias Quast, "Domenico Fontana," Oxford Art Online, www.oxfordartonline.com (accessed February 11, 2009).

¹⁶ This visual comparison has been previously made by Maurizio Fagiolo, 69.

both contexts as a symbol of Christ's presence. There are, however, other important aspects of the catafalque's form and decoration that should be mentioned at this juncture.

Along with paintings representing many of the important architectural and artistic projects completed during the reign of Sixtus V, ephemeral representations of the four obelisks and two columns of Trajan and Marcus Aurelius that Sixtus ordered to be christened appear on the catafalque. Sixtus ordered that crosses be attached to the tops of the obelisks and that statues of Saints Peter and Paul be added as crowns for the columns in an effort to represent the triumph of Christian Rome over ancient, pagan Rome.¹⁷ In this and various other ways, in the last years of his life as a Counter-Reformation pope, Sixtus V promoted Rome as the official hub of the Christian world. One of the boldest and most important ways in which Sixtus V achieved this was in overseeing the completion of the dome of New Saint Peter's (fig. 4). With only a quick look at the catafalque erected at the reburial of Pope Sixtus V, the resemblance of it to the dome of New Saint Peter's is unmistakable and unsurprising considering that Domenico Fontana helped lead architect, Giacomo della Porta as he finalized the design of the dome and the lantern of New Saint Peter's.¹⁸ Instead of twelve-sections as on the dome of New Saint Peter's, however, the dome of the catafalque rhymes with its hexagonal plan. Like the cupola of New Saint Peter's, on the catafalque of Sixtus V, the ribbing of the cupola visually fills the gaps below between the pairs of Corinthian columns along the drum. Also the curve of both the catafalque's dome and the dome of New Saint Peter's are somewhat steep and pointed and the

¹⁷ Berendsen (1961), 167; for more detailed information see, Domenico Fontana, *Della transportatione dell'obelisco; 1590* ed. Adriano Carugo and Paolo Portoghesi (Milan: Il Polifilo, 1978).

¹⁸ This visual resemblance has been noted by Berendsen (1961), 112 and Maurizio Fagiolo, 182. For a brief discussion of Domenico Fontana's work on the dome of new Saint Peter's under Giacomo della Porta, see Alessandra Anselmi, "Giacomo della Porta," Oxford Art Online, www.oxfordartonline.com (accessed February 16, 2009).

drums and cupolas are separated by balustrades, resembling the other famous Roman monument to Saint Peter, the Tempietto at San Pietro in Montorio by Donato Bramante (fig. 5).¹⁹ The drum of New Saint Peter's, however, becomes the base of the catafalque, which is separated from its dome by a register of six panel paintings surmounted by a balustrade. Furthermore, the window of the drum of New Saint Peter's become, inventively, the arched doorways of the catafalque, which allow access to the interior. The windows of St. Peter's cupola, on the other hand, are repeated verbatim on the cupola of the catafalque.

Referring to the preeminent Christian monument in Rome, Domenico Fontana's design followed the model of the first ecclesiastic catafalque designed by Girolamo Rainaldi, which quite closely resembles Bramante's Tempietto. The grandson of Pope Paul III, Cardinal Alessandro Farnese, Vice-Chancellor of the Holy Roman Church, died on March 2nd, 1589.²⁰ The debut of the ecclesiastic catafalque occurred at the first requiem mass held in honor of Cardinal Farnese at the Gesù on March 22nd, 1589 and was sponsored by the Cardinal's nephew, Odoardo Farnese.²¹ Cardinal Farnese commissioned the building of the Gesù and had also

¹⁹ For more on Bramante's Tempietto, see Peter Murray, *Bramante's Tempietto* (Newcastle: University of Newcastle upon Tyne, 1972) and Arnaldo Bruschi, *Bramante* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1977), 129-145 and Peter Murray, *Bramante's Tempietto* (Newcastle: University of Newcastle upon Tyne, 1972).

²⁰ For more information on Cardinal Alessandro Farnese, see Angelo Calvani, "Munificenze, mecenatismo, arte e cultura nell'azione del Cardinale Alessandro Farnese" in *Convegno sul Cardinale Alessandro Farnese*, ed. Giuseppe Bertini, 123-140 (Parma: Presso la Deputazione di storia patria per le province Parmensi, 1991) and Clare Robertson, *'Il Grand Cardinale' Alessandro Farnese, Patron of the Arts* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992). [references to Cardinal Farnese passim].

²¹ On the requiem masses of Cardinal Alessandro Farnese, see Berendsen, 104-105 and Schraven, 162-164. On Odoardo Farnese, see Clare Robertson "The Artistic Patronage of Cardinal Odoardo Farnese" in *Les Carrache et les décors profanes : Actes du Colloque organisé par l'école française de Rome 2-4 Octobre 1986* ed. Andre Chastel, 359-72 (Rome: Ecole Française de Rome, 1988).

secured his permanent burial place, a reserved porphyry inscription, at the Gesù's high altar.²²

Three weeks after his death, for his first requiem mass, the entire nave of the church was obscured in black mourning cloth and decorated with Farnese coats of arms, but by far the most elaborate element of the ceremony was the catafalque itself, which was thirty meters in height (fig. 6). This catafalque is considered the first of what are now known as *tempietto* catafalques.²³

Circular in plan, colonnaded, domed and placed on a stepped, raised platform, Girolamo Rainaldi modeled Cardinal Farnese's Gesù catafalque after the famous martyrium dedicated to St. Peter. On the forty-eight metopes of Bramante's *Tempietto* patens and chalices are depicted among a total of twelve liturgical items.²⁴ As Bruschi states, the liturgical items included on the metopes indicate the importance of Peter as "the *primus pontifex*, the guardian of the liturgy, [who] transmit[s] grace through the sacraments."²⁵ The *Tempietto*, like new Saint Peter's, it is a monument to Peter, the first Vicar of Christ and to his martyrdom and, thus, a particularly apt model for a memorial to an ecclesiastic's death. Long before Rainaldi's catafalque for Cardinal Farnese, however, catafalques had been designed as ephemeral versions of permanent architectural structures that were themselves of memorial and/or religious significance. For

²² Schraven (2006), 162-163. Cardinal Farnese's desire to be buried at the high altar of the Gesù was first stipulated in a 1577 will, see Renato Lefevre, "1589, la 'gloriosa' morte del Gran Cardinale Farnese" in *Convegno sul Cardinal Farnese* ed. Giuseppe Bertini, 167-178 (Parma: Presso la Deputazione di storia patria per le province Parmensi, 1991). On Cardinal Farnese's role as patron of the Gesù see, Clare Robertson, "'Parmi che sia diventato tutto spirituale': il Cardinale Alessandro Farnese e la costruzione di edifici religiosi" in *Convegno sul Cardinal Farnese* ed. Giuseppe Bertini, 141-151 (Parma: Presso la Deputazione di storia patria per le province Parmensi, 1991).

²³ This term was first coined by Olga Berendsen (1961).

²⁴ Murray, 8. Other liturgical items included on the metopes are incense boats, the crossed keys of St. Peter, candlesticks, and censers. Murray cites the entablature fragment of the Temple of Vespasian, which depicts objects of pagan rites, as a possible prototype; see also Bruschi, 44.

²⁵ Bruschi, 133.

example, the catafalques built in commemoration of Holy Roman emperor Charles V were akin to funeral pyres in their tiered structure and thus recalled the funerary practices of the Emperor's ancient predecessors (fig. 7).²⁶ It was in fact, after the death of Holy Roman Emperor Charles V in 1558, when numerous requiem masses were held throughout Europe, that what we now refer to as a catafalque first developed for the purposes of honoring the emperor.²⁷

The catafalque owed much to its predecessor, the *capella ardente*. A *capella ardente*, its name meaning, literally, burning chapel, was a wooden frame that covered the bier during an aristocratic funeral ceremony or requiem mass; this frame was crowned by a baldachin-like roof that supported a myriad of candles, creating the burning effect. In elaborate quattrocento and cinquecento requiem ceremonies, the nave of the church would be cloaked in black mourning cloth over which often were placed painted coats of arms while additional candles would be scattered throughout the interior of the church. All these elements, together, compose what is often referred to as the funeral *apparato*.²⁸ Apart from the initial funeral, memorial masses were usually held in honor of aristocrats on the third, seventh and thirtieth days after the death. The first annual anniversary of the death was also celebrated.²⁹ The *capella ardente* had a very specific, liturgical use in these requiem masses; it was the centerpiece of visual interest,

²⁶ Schraven (2006), 73-77.

²⁷ On information concerning the 1558 invention of catafalques and their evolution in Italy throughout the Cinquecento, see Andrew Arbury, "Catafalque" Oxford Dictionary of Art Online www.oxfordartonline.com (accessed February 5, 2009); Berendsen (1961), 12-28 and Marcello Fagiolo, 26-41. For a more pan-European analysis see Iselotte Popela, *Castrum Doloris, oder 'Trauriger Schauplatz': Untersuchungen zu Entstehung und Wesen ephemere Architektur* (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1994.)

²⁸ Schraven (2006), 208.

²⁹ Arbury, "Catafalque", Berendsen (1961), 5, Fagiolo, 26-41, Schraven (2006), 208. Given the time it took to design and construct a catafalque, usually a month at least, some derivation from these days began to occur in the sixteenth century and thereafter.

indicating the location of the bier, where absolution of the deceased would occur.³⁰ Absolution was the culminating act of the requiem mass, in which the priest forgave the sins of the deceased. Because the deceased was already buried before the requiem mass, a symbolic body was needed for the absolution, which could be as explicit as a wood or wax effigy or as understated as a symbol related to the deceased's office, such as a crown for a king.³¹

In requiems for popes, the same tradition was employed, although effigies were never allowed as substitution for their bodies. The bier would be, instead, draped in gold cloth and on a cushion where the head would typically be, the symbol of the pope, the papal tiara was placed.³² In church tradition, the cover of the bier was referred to as a *castrum doloris* as opposed to a *capella ardente*. Like the *capella ardente*, the *castrum doloris* also had a baldachin-like roof that supported a great number of candles, which drew attention to the church crossing where the absolution of the deceased occurred (fig. 8). The *castrum doloris* was first used during the papal *novenas*, the nine-days in which the death of the pope was mourned. During this period, requiem masses were celebrated in honor of the deceased pope while the cardinals were given time to gather for the election of his successor.³³ It seems that the tradition of including a *castrum doloris* at memorial masses during the *novenas* was instituted during the papacy's tenure in Avignon and was directly influenced by local use of the *capella ardente* which was already traditional for aristocratic funerals in fourteenth-century France. The *castrum doloris* was also frequently used for the requiem masses of cardinals as well.³⁴

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Giovanni Ricci, "Les funérailles en effigie en Italie" in *Les Funérailles de la Renaissance* ed. Jean Balsamo, 159-170 (Geneva: Droz, 2002) and Schraven (2006), 24.

³² Schraven (2006), 24 and 30. For more detailed information see, Agostino Paravicini Bagliani, *The Pope's Body* trans. David S. Peterson (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000).

³³ Schraven (2006), 24 and 30.

³⁴ Ibid, 29.

The invention of a catafalque was, essentially, the innovative decision to embellish the *capella ardente*, and thus, the frame, which supported the candle-laden baldachin, as a space for elaboration. Paintings and sculptures memorializing the good works and virtues of the deceased began to decorate the frame. In order to support such paintings and sculptures, the structure itself had to be more substantial, more solidly constructed than a simple, wooden frame but still ephemeral enough that it could be quickly built and quickly disassembled for reuse or destruction. In the construction of catafalques, the wooden frame formerly used for the *capella ardente* was surrounded with a composite of hemp, clay and other materials that could be painted to resemble real materials such as marble or bronze. The arrangement of the wooden frame became more versatile so that finished catafalques could resemble any number of real, architectural models such as ancient Roman funeral pyres, temples, churches or mausoleums.³⁵

It is clear that the catafalque honoring Pope Sixtus V, the first papal catafalque, is firmly rooted in the tradition of ephemeral memorial monuments that preceded it. Where Domenico Fontana's design significantly departs from this tradition, however, is in alluding to such a wide variety of permanent architectural and sculptural monuments simultaneously, in both the form of the catafalque and also, the ephemeral sculptures and paintings that decorate it. Perhaps though, it was easy for Fontana to accomplish this innovation considering that he himself was the supervising artist or architect of most of the physical models to which his ephemeral creation refers. Unlike his predecessors in catafalque design, Fontana creatively chose to refer, not to generic architectural models, but rather, to the specific architectural and artistic projects that were initiated during the pontificate of Sixtus V. The completion of the dome of New Saint Peter's, the building of the Aqua Felice, the Scala Santa and the Sistine chapel are all referred to

³⁵ Arbury, "Catafalque" and Berendsen (1961), 7-8.

as proof of the pope's good works and lifetime contributions to both Roman society and, more importantly, the Church.

Chapter Two: *The Decoration of the Sistine Chapel in Santa Maria Maggiore:*

A Visible Expression of Pope Sixtus V's Belief in the Catholic Church

And Hope for Salvation

What is perhaps the most symbolically laden of the physical models that Fontana's catafalque evokes is the sacrament tabernacle in the chapel where Sixtus V is permanently buried. In a general sense, the literature on tempietto catafalques has noted their resemblance to monumental domed and centrally planned tabernacles and suggested that this formal similarity symbolizes the hope for Christian death and salvation.³⁶ Yet catafalque scholarship has failed to analyze the degree to which the meaning of Domenico Fontana's tempietto catafalque depends upon the symbolic function of the sacrament tabernacle, *in situ* in the Sistine Chapel. The Sistine tabernacle stands on the altar in the center of the room above the relic of the *presepio* and commands the attention of not only visitors but also, the effigies of the deceased popes who gesture and gaze towards it from the wall tombs that flank it. Appropriating the form of the sacrament tabernacle, Fontana's catafalque does not create a new symbolic meaning but rather illustrates that, by the late sixteenth century, whether or not it functioned as a container for the Eucharist, a domed and centrally-planned edifice was recognizable as a symbol that connoted the presence of Christ. Before, however, pursuing an in-depth analysis of the symbolic meaning of the domed and centrally-planned form of the Sistine sacrament tabernacle, it seems best to first consider its context in the burial chapel of Pope Sixtus V.

³⁶Andrew Arbury, *Spanish Catafalques of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, (Ph.D. Dissertation, Rutgers University, 1992), 35-39; Berendsen (1961), 101-103; Schraven (2006), 244.

Among the many architectural projects completed during the reign of Pope Sixtus V, the building of his burial chapel at Santa Maria Maggiore was perhaps, to him personally, the most compelling. Construction of the chapel occurred between 1587 and 1591 along the right hand aisle of the nave. The chapel was dedicated to the relic of the *presepio*, whose containing chapel was moved wholesale into its basement, a difficult task completed under the guidance of papal architect Domenico Fontana (fig. 9).³⁷ The Sistine Chapel, already containing the relic of the *presepio*, soon also became the chapel of the sacrament, due to the desire within Santa Maria Maggiore to bring more honor to the Eucharist.³⁸ Housing the sacrament in his funerary chapel, Sixtus V also assured that the chapel would be frequently visited.

The Sistine Chapel houses the papal tombs of both Sixtus V and Pius V (fig. 10 and 11). Resembling triumphal arches, the closest predecessors of the Sistine tombs are the paired tombs by Baccio Bandinelli of the Medici popes Leo X (Giovanni de' Medici, 1513-21) and Clement VII (Giulio de' Medici, 1523-34) in Santa Maria sopra Minerva.³⁹ Unlike the Bandinelli tombs, the tombs of Pius V and Sixtus V, which were designed by Domenico Fontana, are constructed of multi-colored marbles. More so than ancient triumphal arches, they therefore resemble

³⁷ On the burial chapel of Sixtus V, see Ostrow (1996) 23-63.

³⁸ Ostrow (1996), 50-51. Ostrow states that before the completion of the Sistine Chapel, there was a "sacrament problem" in Santa Maria Maggiore: In order to make way for a new tomb dedicated to Nicholas IV, the sacrament tabernacle, which had been at the left side of the presbytery, was moved to the Sforza Chapel. Then in 1574, based on an order of Gregory XIII, it was moved to the altar within the Tabernacle of the Relics, which sat along the right side of the nave, near where the Sistine Chapel was built. Thus, it was logical to have the Sistine chapel double as the chapel of the sacrament, since the Eucharist had not been permanently located in Santa Maria Maggiore since 1573. See also Jennifer Montagu, *Gold, Silver and Bronze: Metal Sculpture of the Roman Baroque* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994), 19.

³⁹ Alexandra Herz, *The Sixtine and Pauline Tombs in Santa Maria Maggiore: An Iconographical Study* (P.h.D. Dissertation, New York University, 1974), 111-112. On the Bandinelli tombs see, V.L. Goldberg, "Leo X, Clement VII and the Immortality of the Soul" *Simiolus* 8 no. 1 (1975-76): 16-25; On Leo X and Clement VII, see Herbert M. Vaughan, *The Medici Popes (Leo X and Clement VII)* (Port Washington, N.Y.: Kennikat Press, 1971).

ephemeral, polychromatic *feste* arches that were frequently erected, for example, to celebrate the entries of popes at religious festivals.⁴⁰ While the overriding theme of the reliefs on the tomb of Pius V is papal wars, the primary focus of the reliefs on the tomb of Sixtus V is the papacy at peace. Focusing on contemporary events, these reliefs reveal the influence of painted cycles such as that in the reception room of the Villa Caprarola by Taddeo Zucchari (c. 1562-1564) which are frescoes illustrating biographical scenes from the reign of Pope Paul III (Alessandro Farnese, 1534-49).⁴¹ Like the reliefs on the tombs of Pius V and Sixtus V, Zuccari's fresco cycle at Caprarola illustrates the supremacy of the pope's authority over that of kings.⁴² In one fresco, Paul III is shown excommunicating and deposing Henry VIII for heresy (fig. 12). War against heresy is similarly emphasized on the tomb of Pius V with reliefs depicting *The Battle of Lepanto* and *Count Sforza Victorius over the Heretics*. In contrast and keeping with the theme of the papacy at peace, on the tomb of Sixtus V, one relief shows him mediating a conflict between Austria and Poland, illustrating both his autonomy and ultimate authority over the two warring nations.⁴³ These marble rectangular reliefs seem to have influenced the series of painted panels along the balustrade of Fontana's catafalque for Sixtus V. Like the carved reliefs on the tombs, the painted panels are, in their own way, biographical. On the catafalque, however, the biography of the pope and his dedication to the Church is represented by the architectural and artistic projects he commissioned towards the urban and spiritual renewal of Rome rather than narrated through historical events.

⁴⁰ Herz, 111-112. For a discussion of triumphal arches and other ephemera used to celebrate popes' entries see, Bonner Mitchell, "A Papal Progress in 1598" in *Art and Pageantry in the Renaissance and Baroque*, 1, ed. Barbara Wisch and Susan S. Munshower, 118-135 (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University, 1990).

⁴¹ Herz, 118. For more information on the fresco cycle at Villa Caprarola, see Robertson, 100-103.

⁴² Ibid, 161 and Robertson, 100-103.

⁴³ Herz, 171.

The papal acts of punishing heresy, which are depicted on the tombs of Sixtus V and Pius V, are reinforced by a portion of the fresco cycle in the Sistine chapel.⁴⁴ Frescoes depicting Kings Achaz, Manasses and also Joram, whom God punished for the worship of false idols, have been interpreted as intentionally analogous to the heresies committed by rulers who rejected the Catholic church such as Henry III of France and Elizabeth I.⁴⁵ The reliefs on the papal tombs emphasize the popes' authority as greater than that of temporal rulers and similarly in these frescoes, the punishment of the Old Testament kings defines God as the utmost authority. In other words, papal power is aligned with God's own, a message surely emphasized in response to Reformation attacks on the papacy.⁴⁶ Other aspects of the Sistine chapel's decoration similarly work to defend central tenets of the Catholic Church such as the use of visual art to decorate and embellish religious structures and furnishings and the efficacy of the Virgin and saints as intercessors.

In 1577 Cardinal Carlo Borromeo's treatise, *Instructiones fabricae et suppellectilis ecclesiasticae* was first published. In response to the Council of Trent, this treatise set out to establish certain standards for the production of art, architecture and church furnishings.⁴⁷ In a letter accompanying the first edition of the *Instructiones*, Borromeo outlined the intent of the publication:

In these instructiones we also advise an imitation of that ancient piety and reverence of the faithful (which originated in the time of the Apostles) and which clearly shown forth in the construction of those sacred buildings and in the

⁴⁴ Ostrow (1996), 103-104.

⁴⁵ Ibid and Ludwig Freiherr von Pastor, *The History of the Popes from the Close of the Middle Ages*, Vol. 21 (London: K. Paul, Trench, Trubner, 1923), 321-322.

⁴⁶ Ostrow (1996), 104.

⁴⁷ For information on Cardinal Borromeo's influential treatise on the arts, I have relied on Evelyn Carole Voelker, *Charles Borromeo's Instructiones fabricae et suppellectilis ecclesiasticae, 1577: A Translation with Commentary and Analysis*, PhD Dissertation (Syracuse: Syracuse University, 1977).

admirable disposition of their sacred furnishings. The remains which are to be seen today indicate that there once existed large and numerous ecclesiastical structures. There was also a large and valuable abundance of sacred vessels . . . that were either gilded or encrusted with gold and silver . . . Be encouraged therefore by foreign as well as domestic examples of this ancient piety and religious munificence that is so worthy of continued imitation.⁴⁸

Since the seventh Ecumenical Council and the second Council of Nicea in 787, both the Orthodox and Catholic Churches had rejected the practice of iconoclasm and defended the representation of Christ, the Virgin and saints and also the veneration of these representations.⁴⁹ Veneration of icons includes both physical and spiritual deference in their presence as well as appropriately honoring them through the use of beautiful and decorative materials to create their representations, frame them and store them. Both Churches maintain that it is the incarnation of Christ which provides the theological justification for the representation of religious figures. In other words, in being made man in the person of Jesus Christ, God represents himself; Christ is the icon of God or as it is said in Colossians 1:15, Jesus Christ is “the image of an invisible God.”⁵⁰

In December of 1563, during the 25th session of the Council of Trent, the veneration of not only sacred images but also saints and relics was re-confirmed by the Catholic Church.⁵¹ As this event and Cardinal Borromeo’s 1577 publication indicate, the defense of the arts was a foremost priority of the Catholic Church in the late sixteenth century. Whereas Protestants at the

⁴⁸ Cardinal Charles Borromeo as quoted by Voelker, 21-24.

⁴⁹ Leo David Donald, *The First Seven Ecumenical Councils (325-787): Their History and Theology* (Wilmington, DE: M. Glazier, 1987), 290-32; see also Norman P. Tanner, *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils* (Washington D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 1990) 1, 131-138.

⁵⁰ On the incarnation as theological rationalization for representation, see Maria Donadeo, “Teologia delle icone” in *Arte e la Bibbia, immagine come esegesi biblica*, ed. Timothy Verdon, 111-118 (Settimello: Biblia, 1992) and Sergej S Averincev, “L’icona e il problema della rappresentazione religiosa” in *Il mondo e il sopra mondo dell’icona* (Florence: L.S. Olscki, 1998), 1-6.

⁵¹ Tanner (Vol. 2), 774-776.

time saw visual art and decoration as distracting from the central importance of the word of God, Catholics maintained that visual art was the bible of the illiterate.⁵² Similarly aligned with their dismissal of the intercessionary capacities of the Virgin and the saints, Protestants saw the veneration of their images, like prayers offered up directly to them, as contrary to the second commandment. The Catholic and Orthodox Churches, on the other hand, support prayer to the Virgin and saints in the hope that they who are of special honor will, in turn, offer these prayers to Christ.⁵³ In a similar way, by venerating a representation of Christ, the Virgin or saints, Catholics and Orthodoxes believe that the adoration passes directly to the prototype and is not directed to the visual image itself.⁵⁴ In light of all this, it is interesting to consider that as a Counter-Reformation era pope who supported numerous artistic projects, Sixtus V built a burial chapel that doubles as the chapel of the relic of the *presepio*.

From sibyls prophesying the birth of Christ to eleven frescoes depicting the events of His infancy, the overriding theme of the Sistine chapel fresco cycle is the miraculous birth of Christ, relating the chapel's painted decoration to the *presepio*, a recreation of the grotto in Bethlehem where Christ was born which includes hay and stones from the original grotto.⁵⁵ The decoration of the Sistine chapel thus honors the miracle of the incarnation, the theological justification for Church's use of the visual arts. At the same time, the Sistine Chapel in Santa Maria Maggiore is also the chapel of the Holy Sacrament. Christ's death upon the cross was his greatest act of

⁵² Ibid, see also New Advent Catholic Encyclopedia, "Christian Iconography" New Advent Catholic Encyclopedia, www.newadvent.org/cathen/01061a.htm (accessed February 6, 2009).

⁵³ Tanner (Vol. 2) 774-776; New Advent Catholic Encyclopedia, "Intercession" New Advent Catholic Encyclopedia, www.newadvent.org/cathen/01061a.htm (accessed February 6, 2009).

⁵⁴ Averincev, 1-6; Donadeo, 111-118.

⁵⁵ Ostrow (1996), 7, 25. On the fresco cycle of the Sistine Chapel, see Alessandro Zuccari, *I Pittori di Sisto V* (Rome: Palombi, 1992), 9-32; Barroero, L. "La Cappella Sistina in S. Maria Maggiore" in *Roma di Sisto V: le arti e la cultura*, ed. Maria Luisa Madonna, 137-141 (Rome: Edizioni de Luca, 1993); Ostrow (1996), 63-113.

intercession and allowed for the salvation of man, and this sacrificial act, which is reenacted at mass in the celebration of the Eucharist, was itself foreshadowed and guaranteed by his birth.⁵⁶ In short, the birth of Christ and the transubstantiation of Christ in the Eucharist are intercessions of God on behalf of man that are emphasized in tandem in the Sistine chapel; this synchronicity is of liturgical significance.⁵⁷

At the very center of the Sistine chapel stands the elaborate, gilded and bejeweled tabernacle that shelters the Eucharist. An engraving for the tabernacle was included in Domenico Fontana's 1590 publication, *Della Transportatione dell'Obelisco Vaticano*. Although Fontana may have designed the tabernacle, the receptacle and its decorative elements were modeled and sculpted by Ludovico del Duca while the four large, bronze angels at the base were designed and cast by Bastiano Torrigiano.⁵⁸ The tabernacle rests exactly above the relic of the presepio in a recreation of the below ground grotto of Christ's birth. In celebration of the Christmas mass at Santa Maria Maggiore, the acting pope would place the Eucharist in the presepio as a substitute for the body of the Child. This act symbolically confirms the Catholic belief that the consecrated Eucharist is itself a true incarnation of Christ. The axial symmetry of the relic and the tabernacle, thus, proclaims a sacramental interpretation of Christ's birth, the incarnation as a foreshadowing precursor and validation of the doctrine of transubstantiation and

⁵⁶ The Catholic Church confirmed the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist and transubstantiation in October of 1551 at the thirteenth session of the Council of Trent, see Tanner, 2, 657-801.

⁵⁷ Ostrow (1996), 49-50.

⁵⁸ Ibid, 46; Antonino Bertolotti, *Alcuni artisti siciliani a Roma nei secoli XVI e XVII.: Notizie e Documenti nell'Archivio di Stato Romano* (Palermo: Stab. Tip. Versi, 1879), 14 and Sylvia Pressouyre, *Nicolas Courdier: Rescherches sur la sculpture a Rome autour de 1600* Vol. 1 (Rome: Ecole Francaise de Rome, 1984), 97.

at the same time alludes to both as intercessionary acts of God on behalf of man.⁵⁹ A connection between the Blessed Sacrament and the birth of Christ had similarly been made by Saint Francis at the Christmas mass in Greccio when the birth of Christ was interpreted as integrally related to his death.⁶⁰ By placing the sacrament tabernacle above the relic of the presepio, Sixtus V symbolically forged a connection between the birth and death of Christ and presented that integral relationship year-round rather than only during the Christmas celebration.⁶¹

Born in Grottamare, the pope had frequently compared his birth to Christ's in a grotto, and as a Franciscan himself, Sixtus V was particularly devoted to the Christ Child.⁶² From his memorial wall tomb, the effigy in Sixtus' likeness, kneeling humbly in prayer, gazes steadily towards the sacrament tabernacle above the relic of the *presepio*; he is an active participant in the decorative program of the chapel, and his gaze bridges the distance between the tomb and the body of Christ (fig. 13). The effigy of Sixtus V redirects the viewer's attention from his own tomb to the sacrament tabernacle, drawing the audience away from contemplation of his mortal life and towards meditation of the greater sacrifice of Christ. In this way, the Sistine Chapel is

⁵⁹ Steven Ostrow, *The Sistine Chapel at Santa Maria Maggiore: Sixtus V and the Art of the Counter-Reformation* (P.h.D. Dissertation, Princeton University, 1988), 220; see also New Advent Catholic Encyclopedia, "Incarnation" and "Transubstantiation", New Advent Catholic Encyclopedia, www.newadvent.org (accessed February 6, 2009).

⁶⁰ The connection between the Incarnation and the death and Resurrection of Christ had been recognized in Catholic practice since the fourth century but was especially emphasized by St. Francis during the mass at Greccio, see Rudolf Berliner, *Die Weihnachtskrippe*, (Munich: Prestel, 1955), 28; Ursula Nilgen, "The Epiphany and the Eucharist: On Eucharistic Motifs in Medieval Epiphany Scenes." *Art Bulletin* 49 (1967): 311 n. 6; Ostrow (1996), 49-50.

⁶¹ Ostrow (1996), 49-50. The intimate connection between the relic of the *presepio* and the sacrament altar seems to present a Eucharistic interpretation of the birth of Christ similarly to the wall tabernacle of Desiderio da Settignano in San Lorenzo (after 1461), Florence, which features a crowning Christ Child ascending from the chalice, see Marc B. Bormand, Beatrice Paolozzi Strozzi and Nicholas Penny, *Desiderio da Settignano: Sculptor of Renaissance Florence* (Washington D.C.: National Gallery of Art, 2007), 228-250.

⁶² On Franciscan devotion to the Christ Child, see William Short, *The Franciscans*, (Wilmington, DE: Michael Glazier, INC, 1989), 114-119.

reminiscent of the tomb of Cardinal Francisco Quiñones (d. 1540) in Santa Croce in Gerusalemme. This tomb, consecrated in 1536 and designed by Jacopo Sansovino resembles an altarpiece at the core of which, a sacrament tabernacle is embedded. As in the Sistine Chapel, the presentation of Cardinal Quiñones on his tomb prioritizes his individual life less than Christ's, His intercession on behalf of man, and the efficacy of the blessed Eucharist itself.⁶³

A tabernacle is a house that guards the body of Christ and thus it seems logical that in Ecclesiasticus 24:8-10, the Virgin's womb, as the vessel for the conception of Christ and progenitor of the new covenant, is typologized as a tabernacle:

So the creator of all things gave me a commandment, and he that made me rested in my tabernacle, and said, let thy dwelling be in Jacob, and thine inheritance in Israel. He created me from the beginning before the world, and I shall never fail. In the holy tabernacle, I served before him and so was I established in Sion."⁶⁴

An anonymous engraving from 1588 published in a book of poems by Giovanni Francesco Bordini, dedicated to Sixtus V (fig. 14) plainly illustrates the sacrament tabernacle within the Sistine chapel articulating visually that it was intended to symbolically invoke the presence of the Virgin.⁶⁵ This print illustrates the Nativity scene occurring in the space of the Sistine chapel. The wall depicted in the anonymous print behind the scene of the Nativity is a facsimile of the rear wall directly behind the altar of the chapel. In the print, however, the marble statues of Saint Paul and Saint Peter by Il Bresciano that respectively abut the left and right side of the rear wall flanking the central niche where the papal throne would sit, are replaced by frescoed representations. To the left of center, shepherds with their animals kneel in humility before the

⁶³ On the tomb of Cardinal Quiñones, see Sible de Blaauw, "Das 'Opus Mirabile' des Kardinals Quiñones in S. Croce in Gerusalemme zwischen Memoria und Liturgie" in *Tod und Verklärung: Grabmalskultur in der Frühen Neuzeit*, ed. Arne Karsten and Philip Zitzlsperger, 137-155 (Köln: Böhlau, 2004).

⁶⁴ For a brief discussion of the Virgin as the tabernacle of the Word, see Glazier, 118-119.

⁶⁵ The engraving was published in Bordini's, *De rebus praeclare gestis a Sixto V Pont. Max*, 8. For more information on the engraving, see Ostrow (1996), 44-46 and fn 140.

Virgin and Child. To the right of center, Pope Sixtus V kneels with arms outstretched towards the altar; he is a living witness to the birth of Christ and reaches out in anticipation of receiving the infant who sits with His mother in the place of the sacrament tabernacle.

The placement of Sixtus V in the print corresponds to the location of his tomb, which from the entrance of the chapel is to the right of the altar. Furthermore, his kneeling posture, with the papal tiara removed and set to the outside of his left knee mimics the appearance of his effigy on the tomb. Akin to the sentiment of the print, Sixtus V's effigy is sculpted actively and permanently engaged in devotion to the Virgin and Child. The print, however, not only nicely compares with the chapel but also contrasts with it; whereas in the print, the pope's hands are open receiving the blessing of Christ's presence, in the real space of the chapel, the presence of Christ and the Virgin is not real but rather envisioned by the tabernacle, as indicated by the outward symbol of Christian meditation, the hands of the pope's effigy, folded in prayer. In other words, the anonymous engraving of the Sistine chapel published in Bordini's book of poems suggests that the sacrament tabernacle in the real space of the chapel acts as symbolic stand-in for the Virgin. What takes place between it, the *presepio* and the three-dimensional papal effigies can therefore be interpreted as a subtle but nonetheless Baroque activation of space or dramatization of a scene most commonly depicted in relief on Roman wall tombs.

In two centuries of Roman wall tombs preceding those of Sixtus V and Paul V, the Virgin and Christ Child frequently appear in the upper portion of the edicule in a scene of intercession. Such is the case in tombs such as Cardinal Bartolomeo Roverella's by Andrea Bregno and Giovanni Dalmata in San Clemente, and Pope Pius II's in San Andrea della Valle by Paolo

Romano (fig. 15).⁶⁶ In these crowning reliefs, on either side of the Virgin and Child, appear images of the deceased and the tomb's donor with, respectively, saints Peter and Paul.⁶⁷ The presence of the deceased in the upper portion symbolizes the soul's hoped for ascent into the heavenly realm.⁶⁸ A similar dynamic is suggested in the three-dimensional space of the Sistine chapel. With the statue of Saint Peter beside him, the effigy of Sixtus V kneels in prayer, facing the symbolic Virgin and Child (the tabernacle and *presepio*) and seeks admittance to the heavenly realm. Presuming the place of the donor on the tomb of Pope Pius II, the effigy of Pope Pius V with the statue of Saint Paul at his side, smiles peacefully across the space of the chapel towards Sixtus, and his left arm is raised and extended in a typical gesture of papal blessing. Echoing the support of saint Peter, the already deceased Pius V blesses and, thus, symbolically vouches for Sixtus V's spiritual honor to the Virgin. In this way, the organization of space in the Sistine chapel, like the triangular composition of the edicule of the tomb of Pope Pius II, conveys the Catholic hierarchy of intercession. The blessing of Pius V assures for Saints Peter and Paul, who stand beside himself and Pope Sixtus V, the faith of his successor. In turn, these pre-eminent saints of the Church intercess on their behalf to the Virgin who it is hoped, will pass the deceased's hope for salvation on to her son.

In the Sistine chapel, Fontana innovatively utilizes the whole of interior space to recreate what is typically a two-dimensional depiction of intercession. Yet despite the obvious representational advances, conceptually, the burial chapel of Sixtus V is steeped in tradition. This does not seem accidental but rather a purposeful and programmatic attempt to confirm the Catholic principles of Church hierarchy and the hierarchy of intercession as historical and long-

⁶⁶ These examples can be found in Erwin Panofsky, *Tomb Sculpture: Four Lectures on Its Changing Aspect from Ancient Egypt to Bernini*, (New York: H.N. Abrams, 1992), 76-78.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Panofsky, 76-78.

held. The presence in the chapel of the tomb of Pius V, a sponsor for Sixtus V, suggests that Catholic notions of both practical and spiritual hierarchy are literally passed on, and should remain unchanged, from generation to generation. This is interesting when one considers that it was Pius V who codified the canons of the Council of Trent. He published them in the Tridentine Missal also known as the *Missale Romanum* and in a 1570 bull announcing the publication, forbid any alterations to it.⁶⁹ In a way, then, the effigy of Sixtus V can be read as kneeling not only in deference to the Virgin and Christ but also to Pius, expressing his commitment, as his successor, to maintaining the policies of the Counter-Reformation Church. It is clear, furthermore, from the decoration of the Sistine chapel that a special priority for Sixtus V was confirming the role of the visual arts and their theological justification. Towards this end, it is especially compelling that in order to understand the meaning of the Sistine chapel as an expression of Sixtus' hope for salvation, the art historian need not primarily rely on didactic, written texts contextual to the social-historical period but rather can intuit meaning from the decoration itself. The chapel thus confirms that the visual arts can, and indeed, do serve as a form of religious edification.

⁶⁹Lee Palmer Wandel, *The Eucharist in the Reformation: Incarnation and Liturgy* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 231-241.

Chapter Three: *A Symbol of Christ:*

The Sacrament Tabernacle of the Sistine Chapel in Santa Maria Maggiore

The previous chapter discusses the Sistine chapel as a three-dimensional representation of Sixtus V's hope for salvation and faith in the hierarchy of intercession. This argument hinges on an interpretation of the sacrament tabernacle as an implicit invocation of the Virgin, an interpretation for which the anonymous engraving illustrating the Nativity occurring in the Sistine chapel encourages. In addition to symbolizing the Virgin's womb, however, it is likely that the domed and centrally planned edifice is also related to the *edicule Christi*, which enshrines the relic of Christ's tomb in the Anastasis Rotunda of the Church of the Holy Sepulcher in Jerusalem. Considering both these prototypes, the form of the sacrament tabernacle in the Sistine chapel can be seen as a symbol that was carefully chosen to visually evoke the presence of Christ.

Although the exact appearance of the original fourth-century *edicule* as built by Constantine is uncertain, the essential features are generally agreed to have been a porch with a pediment supported by four columns, a rounded or polygonal tomb chamber surrounded by columns, and a cone-shaped roof topped by a cross; these defining characteristics were mentioned in early Christian pilgrims' accounts and can be seen in much of the existing visual evidence.⁷⁰ For instance, the Narbonne model of the *edicule Christi*, which dates to the fifth century CE, is one of the earliest representations to have nearly all the features listed above (fig.

⁷⁰ Martin Biddle "Modello di Narbono" in *Dalla terra alle genti: La diffusione del Cristianesimo nei primi secoli*, ed. Angela Donati, 324 (Milan: Electa, 1996). For a thorough study of the *edicule Christi*, see Martin Biddle, *The Tomb of Christ*, (Gloucestershire: Sutton Publishing, 1999).

16). The model, nearly 1.24 meters in height, features the porch, but four columns most likely of a different colored stone, which would have supported the pediment have broken off.⁷¹ On a slightly later example, a marble fragment of a chancel barrier presumably from Syria that dates to the late sixth or early seventh century, a two-dimensional image of the *edicule Christi* appears (fig. 17).⁷² Like the Narbonne model, here, the *edicule* is identifiable due to its conical roof, which is again topped by a medallion featuring the cross and four columns. Including a depiction of the *edicule* on a chancel barrier emphasized the sacred nature of the separated space.⁷³ It seems most likely that the chancel barrier separated a baptismal fountain from a larger chapel due to the visual similarity between early Christian and medieval baptismal fonts and the form of the *edicule Christi*. This resemblance is exemplified, for instance, in the depiction of the Fountain of Paradise from folio 3v of the Godescalc Lectionary c. 781-783 CE (fig. 18).⁷⁴ Here, the Fountain of Life is represented as a baptismal font closely resembling the *edicule*; it is colonnaded, with a conical roof and crowned with a large cross. In fact, it was in the fourth century, at the same time that the *edicule* was built, that this form was determined for baptismal fonts. The similarity in their appearance most likely derives from the notion of baptism as a death and rebirth into Christian life. Contemporary to the making of this chancel barrier, seventh-century pilgrim texts often refer to the *edicule Christi* itself as “life-giving . . .

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² On the following information concerning the visual characteristics of the chancel barrier, see Paul Underwood, “The Fountain of Life in Manuscripts of the Gospels.” *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 5 (1950): 43-118; Gary Vikan *Catalogue of the Sculpture in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection: From the Ptolemaic Period to the Renaissance* (Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 1995), 82-86 and Asen Kirin, *Sacred Art, Secular Context: Objects of Art from the Byzantine Collection of Dumbarton Oaks, Washington D.C.* (Athens, Georgia: Georgia Museum of Art, 2005), 116.

⁷³ Vikan, 82-86 and Kirin, 116.

⁷⁴ Underwood, 89 and fig. 25.

the fountain of our resurrection.”⁷⁵ In the medieval period, the *edicule Christi* was also commonly used as a model for the shape of sacred containers that held the Eucharist or other holy relics. In 1009, the original roof of the *edicule Christi* was destroyed and afterwards a cupola was erected over an opening in a flat roof. Reflective of this change in the appearance of the *edicule*, the cups of trecento and quattrocento portable ciboria, which are polygonal in plan and stand on goblet-like stems, are crowned by cupolas (fig. 19). Beginning in the Quattrocento, large, permanent, immobile containers for the sacrament were sculpted that resemble these smaller containers (fig. 20). Late Cinquecento Eucharistic containers such as the Sistine tabernacle evolve from these, but they eliminate the goblet-like base and were also more often made of bronze rather than marble, which had previously been the predominant material.⁷⁶

The production of freestanding tabernacles resembling the *edicule Christi* does not surpass wall tabernacles, however, until the Counter-Reformation, seemingly in response to Church mandates. Earlier in the sixteenth century, Giovanni Giberti, the Bishop of Verona from 1524-1543, had indicated his preference that Eucharistic containers in his diocese be placed on the high altar to facilitate easier viewing for his congregants; this location, however, did not gain widespread appeal until the Counter-Reformation.⁷⁷ Bishop Giberti, it should be noted, did not provide recommendations for the appearance of the tabernacles, only their location. In 1564, however, ensuring that due honor was being paid to the Eucharist, Cardinal Carlo Borromeo mandated a major change in the diocese of Milan; tabernacles were to be placed in separate chapels dedicated solely to the Eucharist or upon the high altar, not as one aspect of a complex

⁷⁵ Ibid, 96.

⁷⁶ Doris Carl, *Benedetto da Maiano: A Florentine Sculptor at the Threshold of the High Renaissance* (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols Publishers, 2006) Vol. 1, 202-203.

⁷⁷ Maurice Cope, *The Venetian Chapel of the Sacrament in the Sixteenth Century*, PhD Dissertation (The University of Chicago, 1965), 16-17.

altarpiece arrangement but as the focal point of the altar's decoration. Cardinal Carlo Borromeo recommended this practice to the entire Catholic Church in his 1577 publication, *Instructiones fabrica et supellectilis ecclesiasticae*.⁷⁸ In the *Instructiones*, Cardinal Borromeo further indicated that sacrament tabernacles should be domed and centrally planned.⁷⁹

Akin to the symbolism of similarly shaped baptismal fonts, Cardinal Borromeo codified a form for sacrament tabernacles that had long been associated with the *edicule* so that the sanctity of the Eucharist would be conveyed by its container. Although it has no direct connection to Christ, having stood since the fourth century over the relic of the tomb, the *edicule Christi* itself seems to have itself become conventionally recognized as a symbol of Christ's presence; baptismal fonts and sacrament containers that mimic its form, thus, replicate this symbolic function and suggest that the sacraments of baptism and the Eucharist lead to union with Christ. This idea follows Charles Sanders Peirce's system of three categories: the icon, the index and the symbol.⁸⁰ While an icon is the image of Christ, the index is, for instance, the tomb of Christ, which was once in physical contact with Him. The *edicule Christi*, on the other hand, is only a symbol. This subtlety of expression aligns with the conservative mood of the Counter-Reformation; the Church maintained the efficacy of the visual arts, invoking Christ's presence through a symbol rather than an icon, while leaving no doubt that veneration is intended for Christ and not a likeness of Him.⁸¹

⁷⁸ Voelker, 161-165.

⁷⁹ Ibid, 161.

⁸⁰ Charles Sanders Peirce, *Peirce on Signs; Writings on Semiotics* ed. James Hoopes (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1991).

⁸¹ In the 25th session of the Council of Trent, December 3-4, 1563, although the visual arts were upheld in the Church, it was declared that images were not to be, "painted or adorned with seductive charm," as quoted in Tanner (Vol. 2), 774-776.

It seems likely, however, that there is an added layer of meaning to the domed and centrally-planned form of the Sistine tabernacle, considering that its octagonal plan and drum is reminiscent of the Dome of the Rock located on Mount Moriah, the former site of the Temple of Jerusalem (fig. 21).⁸² Although the Temple of Jerusalem was depicted in a variety of ways from the early Christian period onwards, a consistent conflation between the Muslim structure, the Dome of the Rock, and the Temple developed in the twelfth century after the Crusaders gained control of Jerusalem.⁸³ After the Crusades, westerners increasingly made pilgrimages to Jerusalem, and, thus, in what has been described as a local desire to please them, the Dome of the Rock began to be described by tour guides as the *Templum Domini*.⁸⁴ It is, however, unclear what the *Templum Domini* was understood to be. In the late medieval period and early Renaissance, many Christian pilgrims believed that the Dome of the Rock incorporated some of the features of Solomon's Temple. Others thought it was built by Herod; still others who recognized the destruction of these earlier sites believed it was the Temple rebuilt by either Constantine's mother, Helena, or by Emperor Justinian as a church dedicated to Christ and the Virgin.⁸⁵ In fact, in 1119, the Dome of the Rock was officially re-christened by the Knights Templars as a church dedicated to the Virgin, referred to as the Church of the Temple of the Lord. After 1333, when the Franciscans became the custodians of the Holy Land, the *Templum*

⁸² This similarity has been noted by Montagu, 19.

⁸³ Sylvia Schein, "Between Mount Moriah and the Holy Sepulchre: The Changing Traditions of the Temple Mount in the Central Middle Ages." *Traditio* 40 (1984): 175.

⁸⁴ Carol H. Krinsky, "Representations of the Temple of Jerusalem before 1500" *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 33 (1970): 5; Helen Rosenau, *Vision of the Temple: The Image of the Temple of Jerusalem in Judaism and Christianity* (London: Oresko Books, 1979), 65; Schein, 177.

⁸⁵ Schein, 181 and Nurith Kenaan-Kedar, "Symbolic Meaning in Crusader Architecture: The Twelfth-Century Dome of the Holy Sepulcher Church in Jerusalem." *Cahiers Archaeologiques* 34 no. 19 (1986): 113.

Domini on Mount Moriah took on new importance as the place where the Virgin was married to Saint Joseph.⁸⁶

With only a passing consideration, it seems odd that a church dedicated to the Virgin would be referred to as the Church of the Temple of the Lord. This dual identification, however, makes perfect sense in light of the biblical metaphor comparing the Virgin to a tabernacle. The sacrament tabernacle in the Sistine chapel is thus doubly a symbol for Christ. Like all domed and centrally-planned sacrament tabernacles, it resembles the *edicule Christi*. Furthermore, however, the Sistine tabernacle cites the specific plan of the Dome of the Rock, the former Church of the Temple of the Lord. This reinforces the interpretation, made in chapter two and based on the anonymous print published with Bordini's poems, that the tabernacle is a symbol of the Virgin. As the vessel of the incarnation, the Virgin is herself the first and foremost symbol of Christ's presence.

⁸⁶ Schein, 181 and 191-194.

Chapter Four: *Salvation Granted:*

The Symbolic Function of the Catafalque in the Reburial Ceremony of Pope Sixtus V

In chapter two it was established that the sacrament tabernacle of the Sistine chapel could be interpreted as a symbol of the Virgin, who was herself a container for the body of Christ. A print illustrating the Virgin and Child seated in place of the tabernacle on the altar of the chapel was discussed in support of this interpretation as was, in the third chapter, the tabernacle's resemblance to the Church of the Temple of the Lord. By way of this and its additional resemblance to the *edicule Christi*, the tabernacle can also be understood as a symbol for Christ and, therefore, salvation. Bearing these previous points of discussion in mind, the essay will now explore the ways that the catafalque used in the reburial ceremony of Sixtus V, which was described in detail in the first chapter, relies on and recreates the symbolism of the sacrament tabernacle in the pope's burial chapel.

During the reburial ceremony of Sixtus V, which occurred in the nave of Santa Maria Maggiore, the catafalque stood before the altar of the church where since 1749 Ferdinando Fuga's baldacchino has stood (fig. 22).⁸⁷ The aisles of the nave were obscured with black mourning cloth decorated with coats of arms of the deceased. The apse, however, remained unveiled. Whereas the presence of the Virgin is only implied by the sacrament tabernacle in the Sistine chapel, she was, on the other hand, explicitly present in the celebration of the reburial of

⁸⁷ David Massimiliano, "Santa Maria Maggiore," Oxford Dictionary of Art Online, www.oxfordartonline.com (accessed February 16, 2009); For more on Fuga see Roberto Pane, *Ferdinando Fuga* with documents edited by Raffaele Mormone (Naples: Edizioni scientifiche italiane, 1956). Modern photographs of Fuga's baldacchino before the semi-dome give a nice idea of where the catafalque would have been placed during the requiem mass.

Sixtus V whose catafalque stood in front of the apse, decorated with mosaics that included scenes of the Dormition of the Virgin and the Coronation of the Virgin by Jacopo Torriti and commissioned in the thirteenth century by Nicholas IV (Girolamo Masci, 1288-92) (fig. 23).⁸⁸ These representations of the death and assumption of the Virgin work in conjunction with the catafalque as visual metaphors that reinforce the reburial ceremony's message of hope for the salvation of Sixtus V.⁸⁹

The Dormition of the Virgin is illustrated in the mosaic panel directly beneath the semi-dome (fig. 24). Here the apostles and members of the earthly and heavenly realms mourn the death of the Virgin. Christ stands behind the Virgin, facing the nave, and protectively shelters the Virgin's soul. The Virgin's body forms a cross with Christ's own, suggesting both the sacrificial nature of death and possibly the Virgin's participation, as the vessel of the incarnation, in the salvation of humanity. In the semi-dome above, early Christian symbols such as peacocks, acanthus vines, a multi-colored shell directly above the head of Christ, and the gold ground of the mosaic indicate that it is a representation of the heavenly realm. Here, the Virgin's soul has been reunited with her body, and she is being crowned in glory by Christ as the queen of heaven. Once again a host of angels and the apostles surround her, no longer mourning but rather in reverence and exultation. As in the Sistine chapel, mosaic panels on the clerestory level of the apse illustrating the Annunciation, the Nativity, the Adoration of the Magi and the Presentation in the Temple focus on the incarnation of Christ. This reiterates the theme already expressed in the fifth-century mosaics on the triumphal arch in front of the altar apse (fig. 25).

⁸⁸ On the reburial of Sixtus V see Berendsen, 110-114; Marcello Fagiolo, 26-41; Schraven (2006), 48 and 205-217. For more information on the apse mosaics in Santa Maria Maggiore see Carlo Cecchelli, *I mosaici della basilica di S. Maria Maggiore* (Torino: ILTE, 1956): 246-277. For more on Jacopo Torriti see Alessandro Tomei, *Iacopus Torriti pictor: una vicenda figurativa del tardo Duecento romano* (Rome: Argos, 1990).

⁸⁹ Schraven (2006), 216-217.

The fifth-century mosaics were commissioned by the namesake of Sixtus V, Sixtus III. In fact, a mosaic dedication to Sixtus III reading, *XYSTUS EPISCOPVS SPLEBIDEI*, appears in the center of the triumphal arch and therefore would have been visible during the reburial ceremony of Sixtus V in line with the mosaics illustrating the Dormition and Resurrection of the Virgin and also the catafalque.⁹⁰

From the tomb where he is permanently buried, the effigy of Sixtus V kneels in prayer and meditation at the tabernacle addressing, symbolically, not only Christ but also the Virgin who can intercede on his behalf. Sixtus' desire for union with Christ in the afterlife is defended by his predecessor Pius V, whose effigy gestures from across the room towards Sixtus with a papal blessing. Although this arrangement echoes that of two-dimensional reliefs typically seen in the aedicule of Roman wall tombs such as that of Pius II, it also, and perhaps more importantly, echoes the arrangement of figures beneath the semi-dome representation of the Coronation of the Virgin in the nave of Santa Maria Maggiore. One of the patrons of the apse mosaics, Nicholas IV appears kneeling on the left accompanied by Saint Francis of Assisi, Saint Paul and Saint Peter while on the right is visible the other patron, the Franciscan Cardinal Deacon of Santa Maria in Via Lata, Giacomo Colonna, accompanied by John the Baptist, John the Evangelist and Saint Anthony of Padua (fig. 26).⁹¹ Like Sixtus V and Pius V in the Sistine chapel, these ecclesiastic figures trust in the hierarchy of intercession, offering their prayers for salvation, firstly, to the saints whom accompany them and then to Christ by way of the Virgin.⁹² The decoration of the apse at Santa Maria Maggiore, which they oversaw as an act of veneration,

⁹⁰ On the mosaics of the triumphal arch see, Cecchelli, 197-243.

⁹¹ Oxford Dictionary of Art Online, "Santa Maria Maggiore" Oxford Dictionary of Art Online, www.oxfordartonline.com (accessed March 30, 2009).

⁹² Interestingly the tomb of Sixtus V, who was a Franciscan like Nicholas IV is itself flanked by statues of Saint Francis and Saint Anthony of Padua.

is offered up to her in evidence of their devotion. This is much the case with the catafalque of Sixtus V, which sat directly in front of the apse; it is a facsimile of all the artistic and architectural projects sponsored during the pontificate of Sixtus V for the literal and spiritual renovation of Rome and the Church, including, perhaps most importantly, the sacrament tabernacle within Sixtus' own chapel, which provided the Church of Santa Maria Maggiore with a permanent and appropriate container for the body of Christ. Furthermore, within a church dedicated to the Virgin, the catafalque's resemblance to the dome of New Saint Peter's echoes the Catholic hierarchy of intercession that is stressed not only in the semi-dome above but also in the arrangement of the burial chapel of Sixtus V.

If, as was postulated in the previous chapter, the domed roof and central plan of the Sistine tabernacle was recognizable during the Counter-Reformation era as a symbol connoting Christ's presence, then the similarly shaped catafalque fulfills the wishes of those attending the requiem mass that Sixtus, no longer living, has passed into the heavenly realm, into the presence of Christ. The catafalque perfectly expresses the salvation that granted by the act of absolution, the culminating act of the requiem mass. In other words, by way of the catafalque, which both signifies Christ's presence and also stands in for the deceased at the requiem mass, Sixtus metaphorically achieves union with Christ in the afterlife. His prayers for salvation, which are permanently offered up in the space of the Sistine chapel, are thus symbolically answered by the catafalque.

That the catafalque of Sixtus V symbolizes Sixtus' union with Christ in the afterlife, finds confirmation in the details of a later papal reburial ceremony for Pope Paul V in 1622 in Santa Maria Maggiore. Paul V (Camillo Borghese, 1605-21) built his burial chapel directly opposite the burial chapel of Sixtus V, and thus transformed the former simple basilican plan of Santa

Maria Maggiore into a Latin cross.⁹³ Like the Sistine chapel, the Pauline chapel expresses the pope's hope for union with Christ in the afterlife. The ostensible function of the Pauline chapel was to house the relic of the *Salus Populis Romani*, an icon of the Virgin and Child, which was believed to have been painted by Saint Luke. This icon, which worked miracles, was moved to the Pauline chapel from its former fourteenth-century tabernacle to the left of the high altar in January of 1613 (fig. 27). It had been the original intention of Sixtus V to build a chapel to house the *Salus Populis Romani*, and Clement VIII (Ippolito Aldobrandini, 1592-1605) had also intended to complete a chapel for the icon. This project was not completed, however, until the papacy of Paul V.

Like the Sistine chapel, the Pauline chapel houses the wall tombs of Paul V and Clement VIII, which, like the tombs of Sixtus V and Pius V, resemble ephemeral *feste* arches (fig. 28 and 29). Flaminio Ponzio, then papal architect, oversaw the construction of the chapel as well as the tombs. Girolamo Rainaldi, the architect of the first tempietto catafalque for Cardinal Farnese and the engraver of the Sistine catafalque, supervised the building of the altar for the icon. The tabernacle surrounding the icon was the work of Pompeo Targone. The tabernacle is designed as an image of the assumption with the icon being lifted by angels; the bronze putti were completed by Pietro Bernini, the father of Gianlorenzo. Later, both father and son would also work on the catafalque of Paul V.⁹⁴

⁹³ For information concerning the burial chapel of Paul V and the icon of the *Salus Populis Romani* see, Ostrow (1996), 118-141. On the frescoes of the chapel see, 184-236.

⁹⁴ Ibid, 118-141. See also Olga Berendsen, "A Note on Bernini's Sculptures for the Catafalque of Pope Paul V" *Marsyas* VIII (1959): 67-69; Catherine Fruhan, "Pompeo Targone" Oxford Dictionary of Art Online, www.oxfordartonline.com (accessed March 31, 2009); Birgitta Ringbeck, "Flaminio Ponzio" Oxford Dictionary of Art Online, www.oxfordartonline.com (accessed March 31, 2009).

Recalling what has been determined as the implicit presence of the Virgin and Christ in the sacrament tabernacle of the Sistine chapel, it is clear that the arrangements of the Pauline chapel and the Sistine chapels are nearly identical. The Sistine chapel is a three-dimensional recreation of an image of intercession most often seen in the aedicule of Roman wall tombs such as that of Pius II, and the Pauline chapel functions in the same capacity. The kneeling effigy of Paul V seeks spiritual blessing from the effigy of his predecessor and sponsor, Clement VIII, and they are each on either side of the Virgin and Christ Child, whose image is enshrined in the central wall of the chapel. The thematic emphasis in both chapels is thus placed on the role of the Virgin as chief intercessor and the hope for salvation that she offers. As in the Sistine Chapel, the cupola of the Pauline Chapel depicts the heavenly realm with the hierarchy of angels, suggesting that it is the Virgin's blessing that allows access to the presence of Christ. Furthermore, the effigies of the Sistine and Pauline tombs were the first three-dimensional sculptures of popes that depicted them kneeling in such humility and deference.⁹⁵ It seems likely that in choosing such a similar composition for his burial chapel and a similar pose for his effigy, Paul V recognized the meaning of the Sistine Chapel as an expression of hope for salvation.

As was the case with Sixtus V, whereas the permanent burial chapel of Paul V is an expression of hope for salvation, on the other hand, the requiem mass visualizes, if only fleetingly, union with Christ in the afterlife. In the requiem mass of Paul V the catafalque commissioned by the pope's nephew, Scipione Borghese, stood in the exact same position as that of Sixtus V's, directly in front of the altar apse which illustrates the Dormition of the Virgin and her subsequent bodily ascension to the heavenly realm.⁹⁶ As in the reburial ceremony of Sixtus

⁹⁵ Herz, 273.

⁹⁶ On the catafalque of Paul V see, Minou Schraven, "Il lutto pretenzioso dei cardinali nipoti e la felice dei lori zii papi. Tre catafalchi papali 1591-1624" *Storia dell'Arte* no. 98 (2000): 9-10.

V, the aisles of the nave were draped in heavy cloth and familial coats of arms decorated their surface. Like Girolamo Rainaldi's first tempietto catafalque for Cardinal Farnese, the catafalque honoring Paul V by Sergio Venturi is colonnaded and stands on a stepped platform (fig. 30). Its base is similarly separated from the dome by a drum where, resting in a cornice, numerous candles and putti stand. Candles also decorate the surface of the cupola. The virtues of the pope, some of the earliest work of Gianlorenzo Bernini, stand between the columns as they did between the pilasters of the Sistine catafalque. A portrait of the pope with hands folded in prayer is visible above the arched doorway into the interior of the catafalque, and it is significant that this portrait faces in the general direction of the Sistine chapel where the sacrament tabernacle is located. The painted image of Paul V over the door of the catafalque, thus, in some ways mirrors the effigy on the wall tomb of Sixtus V who gazes at the tabernacle, praying for union with Christ in the afterlife. In fact, the catafalque of Paul V was painted to resemble bronze and, thus, perhaps even more so than the catafalque of Sixtus V, its material recalls contemporary sacrament tabernacles such as the one in the Sistine chapel.

In conclusion, the spatial organizations of not only the burial chapels but also the reburial ceremonies of Sixtus V and Paul V are so close as to be nearly exact. Sixtus V and Paul V are both commemorated at their requiem masses by ephemeral temples resembling sacrament tabernacles that themselves resemble the *edicule Christi*. These tempietto catafalques act as visual metaphors for a concept of salvation once interated by Saint Paul in a Letter to the Ephesians:

But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near through the blood of Christ . . . Consequently you are no longer foreigners and aliens but fellow citizens with God's people and members of God's household built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus as the chief cornerstone. In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a

holy temple in the Lord. And in him too you are bring built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.⁹⁷

Akin to Paul's metaphor of the dwelling, it seems likely that as a pair, the domed roof and central plan were well-known in the Counter-Reformation era as symbols of Christ's presence. The use of the tempietto form in the ephemeral memorials of Sixtus V and Paul V, a recognizable emblem for Christ's presence, thus fulfilled the wishes of those attending the requiem mass, if only fleetingly, who pray for the salvation of the deceased. It also refers to the popes' affinities with Christ as His appointed vicars. One of the important aspects of the liturgical mass that was codified by Pius V's publication of the *Missale Romanum* was the performance of the priest during the sacrifice of the mass.⁹⁸ The *Missale Romanum* mandated that during the ceremony of the Eucharist, the officiating priest was to literally act as Christ, performing the last supper with Christ's words and actions.⁹⁹ This mandate was based on Church teaching which interprets Christ as a member of the priesthood of Melchisedech and the Last Supper as the initiation of the priesthood of the new covenant in which, with the words, "do this in remembrance of me," Christ instructed the apostles and their successors in the Church to embody His sacrifice in the performance of the mass.¹⁰⁰ There is, in other words, theological and doctrinal precedent for the tempietto catafalque's conflation of a well-known symbol of Christ with a functioning ecclesiastical memorial. Despite such specific details that support the tempietto catafalque as a decorous symbol for an ecclesiastic's requiem mass, less than a decade after its invention the

⁹⁷ Ephesians 2:13, 19-22.

⁹⁸ The Church's decrees for the priest's performance during the mass were finalized at the 22nd session of the Council of Trent, September 17, 1562, see Wandel, 224-225.

⁹⁹ Ibid, 239.

¹⁰⁰ Wandel, 224-225.

form was being used in the memorials masses of secular elites.¹⁰¹ This rapid adaptation of the tempietto catafalque by the public is surely a testament to the efficacy of the visual arts as a vehicle through which the Church could communicate theological notions to its congregation. Laypeople of the Church who could afford elaborate funeral ceremonies saw the tempietto catafalque's unmistakable resemblance to contemporary sacrament tabernacles and understood it immediately as a symbolic invocation of union for the deceased with Christ in the afterlife. They, thereby, appropriated the form for the requiem masses of their own loved ones. Salvation is not reserved for ecclesiastics and so it seems neither would be its symbolic equivalent, the tempietto catafalque.

¹⁰¹ The earliest examples of this trend, which lasted throughout the seventeenth century, include Philip II of Spain, who, in 1593, commissioned a tempietto catafalque from Giacomo della Porta for the funeral of the Duke of Parma, Alessandro Farnese, in the church of Santa Maria in Aracoeli, see Berendsen, 117 and Maurizio Fagiolo, 191. After his 1598 death, Philip II was himself honored with tempietto catafalques at requiem masses in Naples and Chieti, a small town, two hundred kilometers northeast of Rome, which was experiencing an architectural and artistic revival due to papal funding during the Counter-Reformation, see Ciro Robotti, *Chieti: città d'arte e di cultura* (Lecce: Edizioni del grifo, 1997). Domenico Fontana executed Philip II's Naples catafalque and Sebastiano Venuturo, the Chieti catafalque, see Berendsen, 122- 123 and Maurizio Fagiolo, 191. Interestingly, in 1625, a tempietto catafalque was commissioned for the requiem of a protestant, the king and head of the Church of England, James I see, John Peacock, "Inigo Jones's Catafalque for James I," *Architectural History* 25 (1982): 1-5, 134-135.

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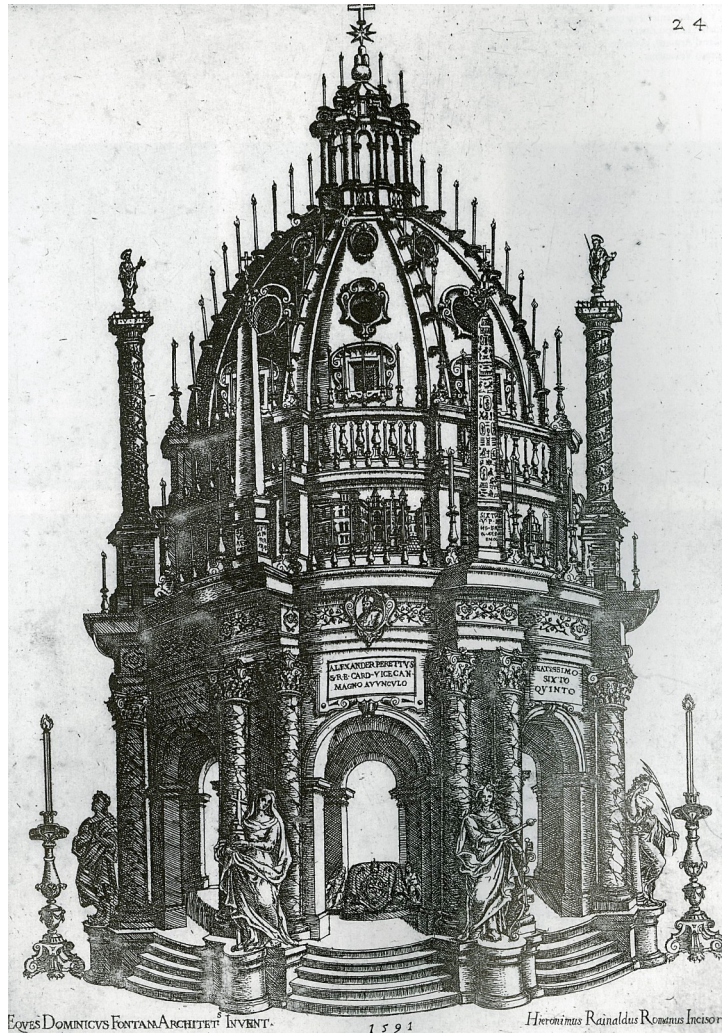


Figure 1: Domenico Fontana, Catafalque for Sixtus V Santa Maria Maggiore, 1591, engraving by Girolamo Rainaldi (Schraven (2006), fig. 11)



Figure 2: Exterior view of the Sistine Chapel, Santa Maria Maggiore, Rome, completed 1591



Figure 3: Domenico Fontana and Ludovico del Duca, Sacrament Tabernacle, Sistine Chapel, Santa Maria Maggiore, Rome, c. 1587



Figure 4: Giacomo del Porta and Domenico Fontana, Dome of New Saint Peter's, Rome, completed 1590



Figure 5: Donato Bramante, The Tempietto at San Pietro in Montorio, Rome, c. 1502

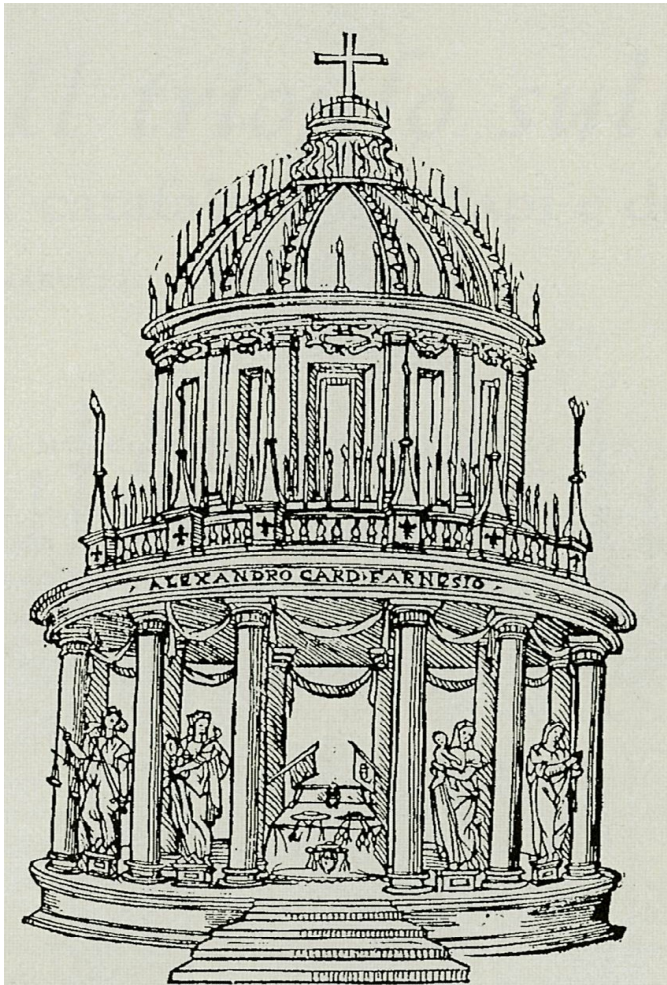


Figure 6: Girolamo Rainaldi, Catafalque for Cardinal Alessandro Farnese, Gesù, Rome, 1589, engraver unknown (Marcello Fagiolo, fig. 7)

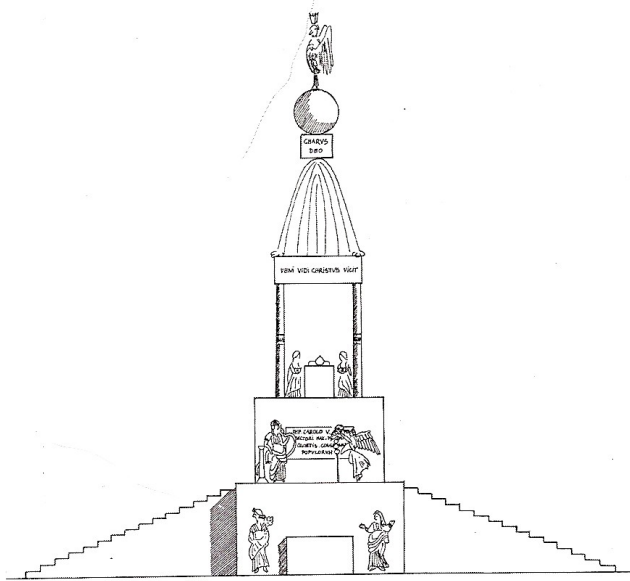


Figure 7: Reconstruction of the Catafalque of Charles V in Bologna, after Aurnhammer and Däuble, 1983 (Schraven (2006), fig. 19)

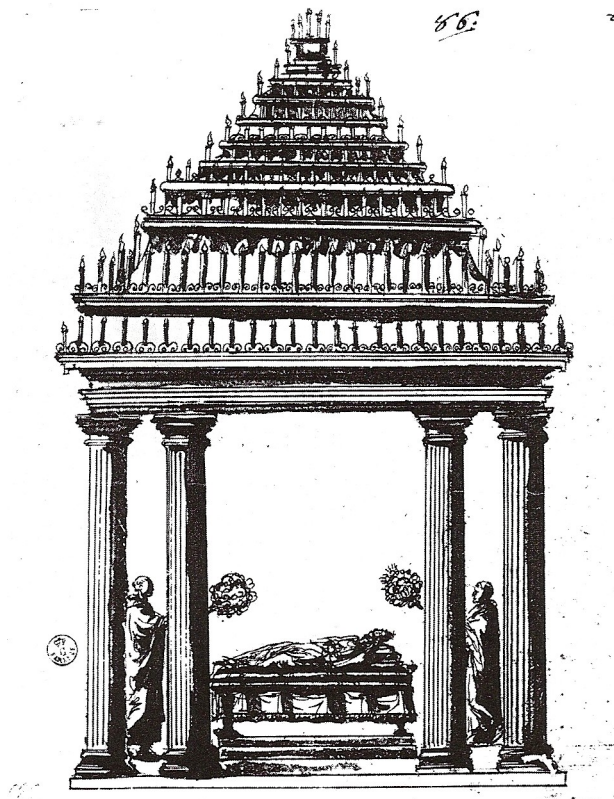


Figure 8: Anonymous Drawing of a papal *Castrum Doloris*, late sixteenth century (Schraven (2006), fig. 9)

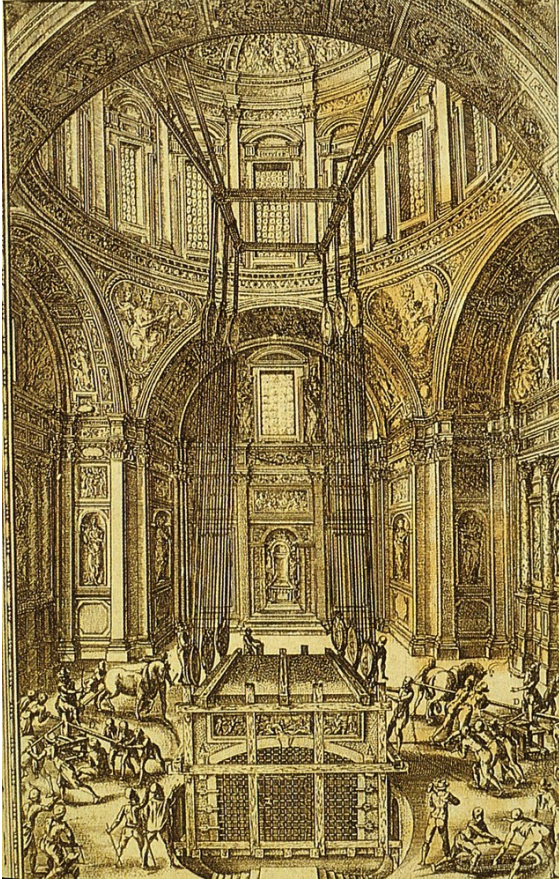


Figure 9: Engraving from Domenico Fontana's *Della Transportatione dell'Obelisco Vaticano* illustrating the relocation of the relic of the presepio to the basement of the Sistine Chapel, Santa Maria Maggiore, Rome, 1590 (Ostrow (1996), fig. 21)



Figure 10: Domenico Fontana, Tomb of Pope Sixtus V, Sistine Chapel, Santa Maria Maggiore, Rome, 1587-91



Figure 11: Domenico Fontana, Tomb of Pope Pius V, Sistine Chapel, Santa Maria Maggiore, Rome, 1587-91



Figure 12: Taddeo Zuccari and Workshop, Fresco Panel from vault, *Paul III excommunicating Henry VIII*, Antcamera del Concilio, Villa Caprarola, 1562-63, (Robertson (1992), fig. 86)

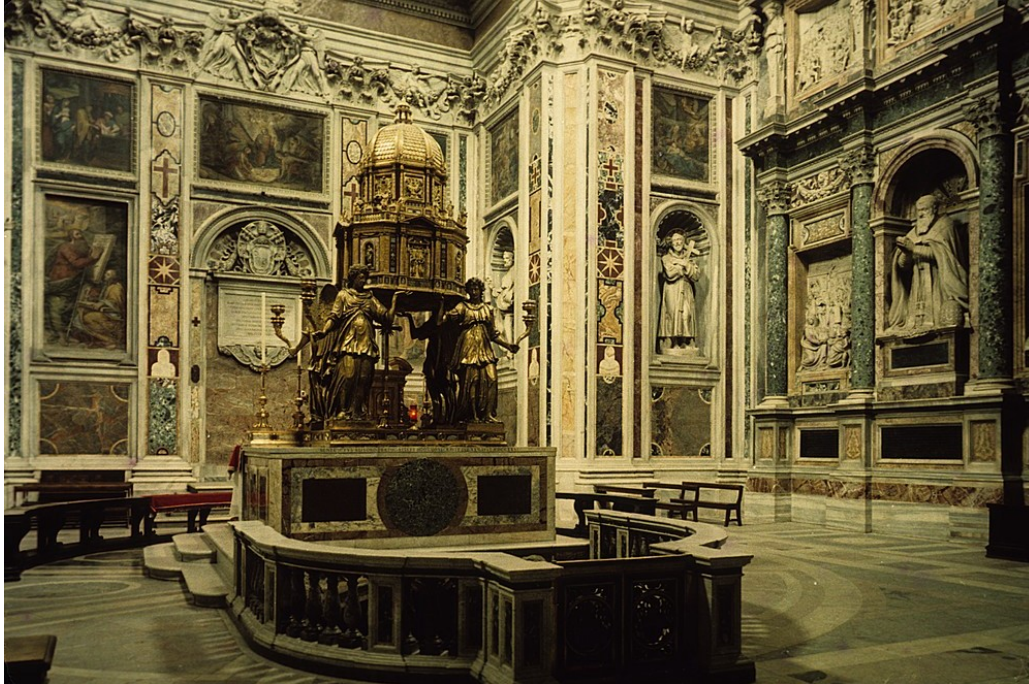


Figure 13: View of Sistine Chapel with Effigy of Sixtus V and Sacrament Tabernacle, Santa Maria Maggiore, Rome



Figure 14: Anonymous Engraving, *Sixtus V before the Virgin and Child in the Sistine Chapel*, published in 1588 by Giovanni Francesco Bordini (Ostrow (1996), fig. 38)



Figure 15: Paolo Romano, Tomb of Pius II, detail of upper half, San Andrea della Valle, Rome (from Saint Peter's) 1471



Figure 16: The Narbonne Model of the *Edicule Christi*, c. 5th century (Biddle (1999), fig. 16)



Figure 17: Fragment of a Marble Chancel Barrier, view of obverse illustrating the *Edicule Christi* and reverse, 6th to 7th century, Dumbarton Oaks Collection (Kirin, fig. 56)



Figure 18: Folio 3V, *Fountain of Paradise* from Godescalc Lectionary, c. 781-783 CE (Underwood, fig. 1)



Figure 19: Ciborium, Badia, Florence, Fourteenth Century (Carl, fig. 135)



Figure 20: Benedetto da Maiano, Marble Ciborium with Flanking Angels, San Domenico in Siena, 1480s



Figure 21: Dome of the Rock, Mount Moriah, Jerusalem c. 691-92



Figure 22: View of Ferdinando Fuga's baldacchino before the apse of Santa Maria Maggiore, Rome, 1749



Figure 23: Jacopo Torriti, *Coronation of the Virgin*, semi-dome mosaic, Santa Maria Maggiore, Rome, c. 1288-92



Figure 24: Jacopo Torriti, Detail of *Dormition of the Virgin*, apse mosaic, Santa Maria Maggiore, Rome, c. 1288-92



Figure 25: View of top of Ferdinando Fuga's baldacchino before the fifth century triumphal arch surrounding the apse, with inscription dedicated to Sixtus III, Santa Maria Maggiore, Rome, early 5th century



Figure 26: Jacopo Torriti, Nicholas IV and Cardinal Giacomo Colonna in Scene of Intercession within semi-dome mosaic, Santa Maria Maggiore, Rome, c. 1288-92



Figure 27: Pompeo Targone, Altar Tabernacle of the Virgin enshrining the icon of the *Salus Poulis Romani*, Pauline Chapel, Santa Maria Maggiore, Rome, 1612



Figure 28: Flaminio Ponzio, Tomb of Pope Paul V with detail of effigy, Pauline Chapel, Santa Maria Maggiore, Rome, 1611-15



Figure 29: Flaminio Ponzio, Tomb of Clement VIII, Pauline Chapel, Santa Maria Maggiore, Rome, 1611-15

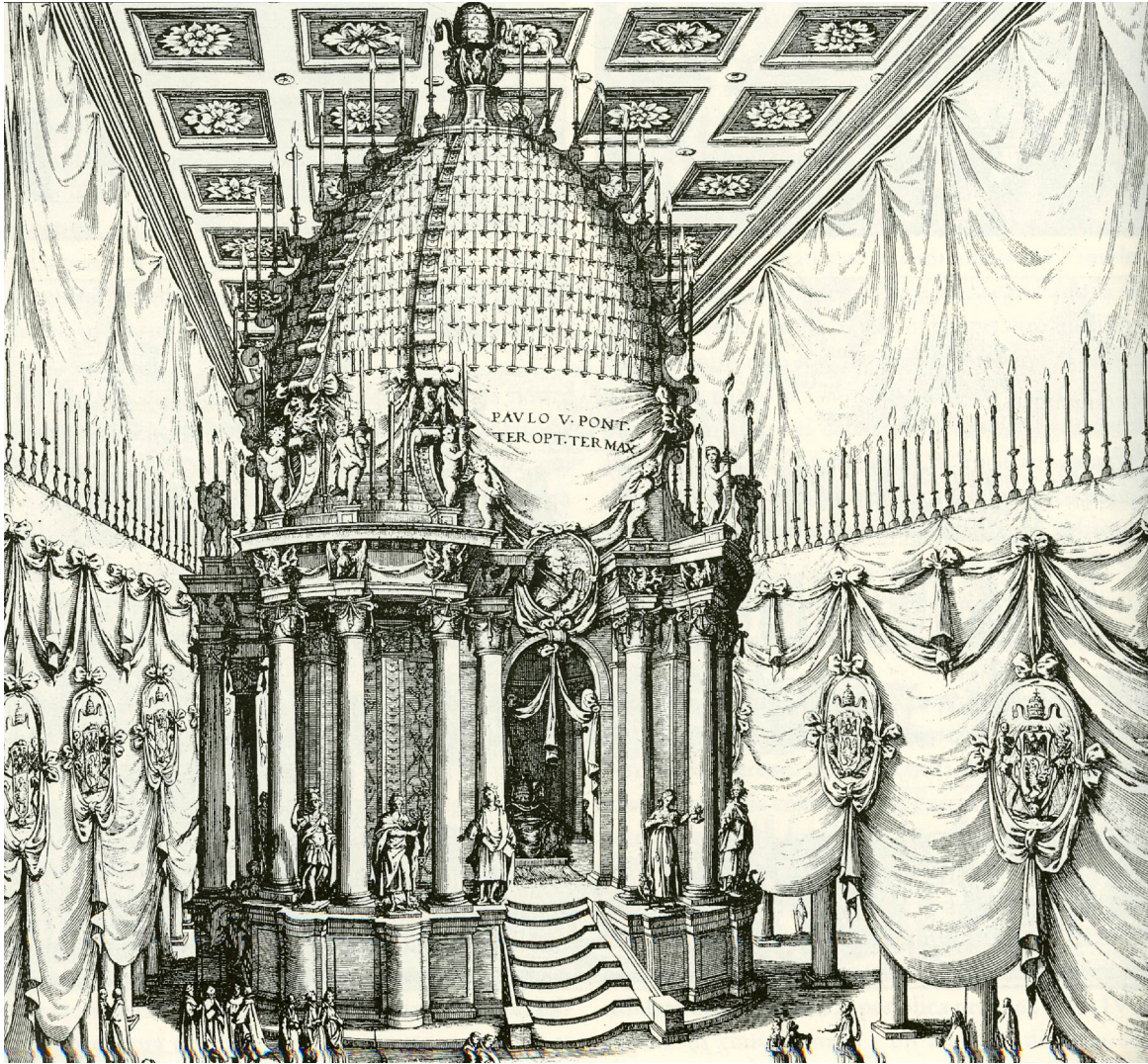


Figure 30: Sergio Venturi with sculpture by Gianlorenzo Bernini, Catafalque of Pope Paul V, Santa Maria Maggiore, Rome, 1622, Engraving by Dietrich Krüger (Schraven (2006), fig. 20).