Virgilio Spada's Defence of Borromini
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The document published here tells the story of his one resounding failure. It occurred in 1657 when he tried unsuccessfully to persuade his fellow Oratorians to take Borromini back to finish the last remaining wings of the Casa dei Filippini. Spada was outvoted and his scheme for financing the building rejected. Instead of Borromini the priests confirmed a bland young man, Camillo Arcucci, as their architect. It was Arcucci who eventually built the west wing of the Casa, the unexciting stretch between Borromini’s clocktower and Borromini’s oratory (Fig. 2). Thus, what most people think of as Borromini’s grand scalone was largely erected under Arcucci’s supervision, and those with an eye for this sort of thing can ascend the staircase and see the points where Arcucci’s chubby mouldings join onto Borromini’s leaner forms (Fig. 3).

Until now all that has been known is the bare fact of Borromini’s rejection after thirteen years of service. What has come to light, however, is a forgotten text among Spada’s papers in the Archivio di Stato in Rome that one who has had to grapple with Virgilio Spada’s handwriting will be surprised that parts of the text stoutly resisted decipherment. I thank Peter Rietbergen for his expert help with some of the worst passages.

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helps explain these events (Appendix I, below). It is the draft of the speeches Spada made in 1657 in his attempt to win over his fellow Oratorians to Borromini’s cause. Although unsuccessful in their immediate aim, these scribbled notes nevertheless take us inside the mind of a seventeenth-century patron and spell out his views of what makes a good architect, and what makes a bad one. They reveal much about the practice of architecture and the styles of architectural careers. They also quote important witnesses: popes, cardinals and artists of the stature of Bernini and Cortona are brought to the stand to say what they think of Borromini. Like the frozen words in Rabelais that drop out of the heavens onto the deck of Pantagruel’s ship, where they can be warmed in the hands until they thaw into the curses and shouts of a long-vanished battle, Spada’s notes preserve the very words with which these men summed each other up, the epigrams with which one virtuoso dismissed another.

The background to the commission

Borromini won the commission for the oratory and residence of the Filippini in early 1637 (Fig.4). He took over the plans and even some of the physical fabric completed before his arrival by the architect Paolo Maruscelli between 1624 and 1637. Paradoxically Borromini’s charge was to execute Maruscelli’s plans, or something not too far from them, but instead he introduced changes everywhere, dragging his patrons along with him like a sheet anchor. He also had to walk a narrow path between the Congregation’s contradictory ideals, never exceeding a ceiling of corporate modesty and never falling below a floor of corporate decorum. Thus, when he designed a suite of waiting rooms for cardinals they had to be simultaneously simple and splendid, halfway between the Congregation’s world and that of the papal court. Some of the tension that characterised this relationship emerges from the pages of the monograph on the building that Borromini and Spada composed together in 1646-47, called the Opus Architectonicum. The tone is set in the preface:

I ask you who read these ramblings of mine to remember that I had to serve a Congregation of souls so meek and mild that they held back my hand in the matter of ornament, so that in many places I had to obey their will rather than follow the dictates of my art.

*See the anonymous MS Description de Rome moderne of 1675 in Avery Library, Columbia University: ‘Elles [i.e., the cardinals’ rooms] sont non seulement propres mais aussi fort ornées sans que rien tienne du luxe, ce qui repose à la profession de ces prêtres qui la plus part sont riches en patrimoine’.*

*Provoquye che leggera queste mie discorsi a riflettere, che lo hasto a servire una Congregatione di anime così venezia che mi fuma insieme le mani, e conseguentemente mi è consueto in più luoghi chiedere poi al veder loro che all’arte...’. Fol.3r of MS C.11.6 of the Archivio della Congregazione dell’Oratorio a S. Maria in Vallicella, published by Sebastiano Giannini in 1725 as volume II of his projected series of Borromini’s complete works. The Latin title Opus Architectonicum dates only from the eighteenth century. See CONNORS, op. cit. at note 2 above, pp.267ff. (Cat.90), and pp.285-88 (Cat.110).
The headstrong horse and the bridle are the images that recur to express the stormy relationship between architect and patron. Borromini could deal successfully with the Oratorians only when Spada was on hand to interpret both his behaviour and his designs to them. But when Spada entered the service of Innocent X and went to live in the Vatican Palace, he left the mainstream of Oratorian life. And that is when Borromini’s troubles started. From 1644 to 1655, while Spada was away, the Congregation was governed by two of his contemporaries, both of whom were leading personalities and, like him, north Italian noblemen. Padre Odorico Rinaldi (1596-1671) had entered the Congregation in 1618, just four years before Spada. Rinaldi’s fame rests on his scholarship. He continued Baronius’s ecclesiastical history, publishing volume XIII of the Annales in 1646 and an eight-volume sequel in 1669. He may have been a force in shaping the iconographical programme of the Biblioteca Vallicelliana when it was built in 1641-43, and he was later offered a position as custode of the Vatican Library. Independently wealthy, he was a generous alms giver and a benefactor of the Congregation, and he served as preposito for two terms from 1650 to 1656. From a remark in Spada’s notes it seems that it was Rinaldi who was most interested in replacing Borromini with Arcucci.

The second personality was Padre Pier Francesco Scarampi (1596-1656), a Piedmontese nobleman who left a promising military career to enter the church and who eventually joined the Oratory in 1636, a short time before the building was put into Borromini’s hands. A zealous priest and minister to the poor, he was sent as papal representative to Ireland from 1643 to 1646, where he saw some of the fighting between the Catholics and Cromwell. He was recalled by Innocent X in 1646 and elected preposito of the Congregation a decade later, just before the bubonic plague of 1656 reached Rome. Both he and Spada decided to enter the pesthouse on the Tiber Island to minister to the dying. As soon as Alexander VII heard the news he ordered Spada out, but no such orders arrived for Scarampi, and the old soldier stayed on to die of plague in October 1656.

Once out of quarantine, Spada was elected preposito in Scarampi’s place. When he proposed completing the build-
ing in April 1657, the Congregation was still traumatised by the plague. Old houses still stood in what are now the courtyards of the Casa dei Filippini (Fig.5). Although shops had closed and commerce had gone they still harboured ‘families of every sort of generation’, people who resented the priests’ expansion and who were prone to steal. Clearly it was time to close the shell and seal off the Congregation from the outside world. The question was whom to put in charge.

Borromini began to slide out of the Oratorians’ employ, and Arcucci to insinuate himself into it, in 1650-52. In 1650 Borromini offended the priests by refusing to hand over the Libri delle misure pertaining to the construction of the clocktower façade, thus leaving them helpless in a dispute over costs with their master mason. In December 1650 the half-yearly architect’s stipend went not to Borromini, but to his assistant Righi. Arcucci, who at this time was a young sopola maestro delle strade, came to the Congregation’s assistance during a tiresome lawsuit that was brought against them in August 1652 by their neighbour to the north, Pietro Boncompagni. Boncompagni was annoyed that the new wing of the clocktower obstructed the view from his palace door, and in retaliation he blocked the little fountain Borromini had planned for this corner as well as a sidewalk along the northern side of the building. During these legal troubles Arcucci seems to have been particularly helpful to the Congregation, drafting the licence for their sidewalk (Fig.6) and in general turning what could have been an adversarial situation into a pleasant working relationship. In a decree of 23rd August 1652 Arcucci was officially taken on as the Oratorians’ architect in place of Borromini, who has refused to serve, in the future, as architect for our Congregation. This comes as a surprise, and it seems probable that, although Borromini had not been particularly helpful over the last few years, he had not resigned in any official way and still counted on finishing his building. There was one other matter, however, in which he crossed swords with his patrons and which was held against him as insubordination: the new marble altar that threatened to disfigure his oratory.

In July 1651 a wealthy Florentine named Vaio Vai died and left a large sum, eventually calculated as 3000 scudi, to construct a family chapel in the oratory. The heirs were willing to forego privileges such as burial rights, and also to let the endowed masses be said elsewhere. For them the new altar was totally a matter of aesthetics and prestige. The problem was that the space was too small to use up all that money, and so lavish marble decoration perfecly spread from the altar proper to the architecture around it. Someone came up with the idea of using four large columns of alabaster, conveniently quarried on the property of an Oratorian priest. It seems that Borromini was invited, or forced, to participate in redesigning the altar, and that he tried to think of a way to use the columns while still ‘adhering to what had already been done’. A drawing shows him experimenting with ways of rotating the column capitals through forty-five degrees so as to accommodate convex balconies between them. He did what he could, but failed to please.

Then the ever-accommodating Arcucci stepped in with a model for the new altar that delighted the Congregation. The design was lavish. It accommodated the columns and

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6. Licence for the sidewalk along the north wing of the Casa dei Filippini, 20th July 1652, by Camillo Arcucci (ASR. Cong. dell’Oratorio, Vol.145, fol.8), 42 by 49 cm.
proposed a marble revetment for the whole west end of the oratory, including new marble singers' balconies. It included a huge marble crucifix over 20 palmi (4½ metres) high and four large statues of angels that would stand over the columns and conceal the incongruities between the architecture and the new decoration. Spada delivered a devastating critique of the new altar on 10th November 1652, but it fell on deaf ears. The new altar with its lavish marble revetment was built between 1654 and 1664 (Fig.7 and 8). Borromini might look on in silent rage as his oratory was defaced by the ill-considered ornament, but for the Oratorians it was their oratory, and Arcucci was now their architect.

In 1657 Spada tried to reverse these trends and to bring Borromini back. His strategy was linked to a financial package designed to pay for the demolition of all the houses still standing in the two courtyards of the Casa and for the completion of the west wing. He engineered a loan at advantageous rates, but tied the loan to Borromini's being recalled. For all his professions of disinterest and evenhandedness ("inclinare a non inclinare"), he felt it was only natural to entrust the completion of a building to the man who had begun it. And Arcucci could save face and stay on as architect of the Congregation's other property, such as the houses in the piazza. In meetings of the small executive committee, the congregazione dei quattro deputati, Spada managed to quarantine the opposition and achieve a narrow margin in favour of Borromini. But sensing trouble with the congregation at large, he prepared extensive notes exploring the 'Qualità dell'Arcucci', and the 'Qualità del Borromini' as well as dozens of other issues that come up in the choice of an architect. The notes give the appearance of being scribbled in haste, late into the night, under considerable psychological pressure. Spada first presented his case at the meeting of the general congregation on 2nd May 1657, and afterwards seemed to think that a long written statement might win over his colleagues. But nobody listened to his careful arguments. When the congregation at large met again on 17th May it rejected both the loan and Borromini by a vote of twelve to four. It was a
stunning reversal, and Spada thought of resigning. But always the pragmatist, he swallowed defeat and got on with the business of governing. A year later he found new financing to finish the building. To defend himself against Arcucci’s incompetence he managed to convince Borromini’s assistant Righi, and perhaps secretly Borromini himself, to send advice when it was needed. As for the notes of 1657, he probably stuffed them into a drawer and never looked at them again. But they survive, and give an unparalleled glimpse into the practice of architecture in mid-seventeenth-century Rome. Before turning to their contents, however, we should have a brief look at the opposition as represented in the personality of Camillo Arcucci.

**Camillo Arcucci**

A native of Sigillo near Nocera, Arcucci seems to have been singularly pious and to have had good connections; these were probably the qualities that first recommended him to the Oratorians. He had an important sponsor in the person of an uncle from the same town, Padre Fulgentio Petrelli, who rose to become general of the Augustinian order. After Petrelli’s death in 1648, Arcucci venerated the memory of this successful prelate. He owned copies of Petrelli’s devotional books and later left money in his will for a monument commemorating Petrelli in S. Agostino.

In 1652, when the Oratorians came across this proper young man, whose uncle everybody had known, working diligently on their behalf in the office of the master di Strade, he must have seemed far more sympathetic than the truculent genius whom they had been wrestling with for the past fifteen years.

The Oratory altar seems to have been Arcucci’s first substantial commission. But soon afterwards he built the colossal, and still unfinished, new wing of the Palazzo Pio on the Campo de’ Fiori, which we know from the present document was standing by 1657 (Figs 9a and 9b). Superencrusted with lively and exotic baroque ornament this palace is a representative of the ‘sumptuous style’ that first reared its beautiful head in Paolo Maruscelli’s Palazzo Medici-Madama in 1641. Details such as the great lions that seem to claw their way out of the window frames show the common sensibility of the two designers. Arcucci’s other major palace is the Palazzo Gottifredi-Grazzini opposite Palazzo Venezia, apparently built in conjunction with the widening of the street (the present Via del Plebiscito) by Alexander VII. In 1666 he designed the small but luxurious campanile of S. Maria in Vallicella. Before his death in 1667 he asked permission to be buried, without marker, in the tomb of the lay Oratorian brothers at the Vallicella. He left money for masses at SS. Martina e Luca and for a portrait at the Academy – if, he says a little sheepishly, Pietro da Cortona should have no objections. But his major personal monument was the church of S. Maria del Rosario on Monte Mario. He had been involved in its construction since 1651, and in his Will (see Appendix II, below) he designated it as his co-heir, along with an adopted son. The church must have been for Arcucci what S. Carlo eventually became for Borromini, the building closest to his heart and the shrine to his own memory, overlooking Rome from one of its most beautiful suburban hilltops.
Most of what we know of Arcucci comes from this testament and from the inventory of his possessions drawn up on 6th February 1667 (see Appendix II below). Like Benvenuto Cellini’s father, Arcucci may have taken seriously Vitruvius’s advice that architects should learn music; in any case he had instruments such as a ‘gravicordino’, a harpsichord, and a virginal in the house. He owned a small library of about fifty books, modest by comparison with Borromini’s, but nonetheless containing the most important texts: Vitruvius, Alberti, Serlio, Vignola, Palladio, Bernardo Radi, Domenico Fontana, Sabbatini, and many books on mathematics, perspective and fortification. He left portfolios of drawings that show what he was best at designing: vases, candelabra, putti, fountains, cornices, tombs and the like. There was a big framed drawing of the oratory altar, and another of the façade of S. Andrea della Valia. There were plans for ‘diversi padroni’, and a collection of architectural and mathematical instruments. Arcucci had a natural son, but left him the bare legal minimum. Instead he smiled upon an adopted son, Giuseppe Brusati Arcucci, leaving him the books and tools of the trade in the hopes that he would follow in his footsteps. And indeed, on 25th February 1667 Brusati was appointed architect of the Congregation of the Oratory together with CarloRainaldi. With six months to live, Borromini had to endure the smart of being passed over once again.

Spada’s opinions on architecture

Spada’s notes of 1657 were written to counteract a long-standing prejudice on the part of most Oratorians in favour of Arcucci, the man who had imitated himself into their service by courtesy, connections and piety, in short, by everything except imagination and art. A confusion between personality and profession prevented them from acknowledging that Borromini was the better architect. To dispel such misconceptions, Spada tried to penetrate beneath the surface and formulate general criteria for judging a good architect from a bad one. Architecture, he says, is a hard art to judge. It is a matter of taste, and unlike those things that have measure, meaning and weight, it cannot be reduced to simple quantities. Changes in style sweep through architecture like new fashions in dress, and trend-setters first draw ridicule upon themselves, then acceptance, then praise and emulation. A century-and-a-half ago (i.e., about 1500) gothic was the style that held sway. (Spada seems to think that Sangallo’s model for St Peter’s can be called gothic, taking Michelangelo’s critique of it literally.) Then Michelangelo turned taste in the direction of a new architecture based on the antique, which was scorned at first but eventually accepted and is now celebrated by everyone. As in all matters of taste ‘drink with their ears’, as Spada puts it. Happy is the architect who has friends in high places, since everything goes according to the recommendations of influential people. Everybody is attached to his own architect, just as to his own doctor. And as in medicine what counts in architecture is long experience, growing old in the profession. So, even though it is hard to weigh the quality of an architect in the balance, there are still some touchstones that help a patron to make an informed choice.

First, Spada advises, look at an architect’s origins. It is certainly not a good sign if he comes out of the Maestri di Strade. The job of the sottomaestro was to measure distances and draft licences, to lay out the filo on the site and thus determine whether a builder could advance onto or had to retreat from public land. It meant time and sweat paving the city streets and laying out roads in the country. One locked horns with the powerful and had to develop a thick skin (‘gran stomaco’) against all the abuse that came one’s way. It was a life that allowed no time for reading books or for imbiring the fundamentals of the profession. Arcucci had wasted his time with this sort of thing. Borromini had not: thirsty for glory, and untainted by the motivation of gain, he spent his youth observing and drawing the vestiges of ancient Rome with extreme diligence.

Second, ornament may be pleasing but the acid test of an architect’s talent is his ability to solve problems in plan. Spada confesses to liking Arcucci’s Palazzo Pio, but has not had a chance to study the plan. The plans he has seen worry him. Arcucci designed the central house on the Piazza della Chiesa Nuova, a prestigious location opposite the church façade. But he neglected to accommodate the needs of the type of gentleman the location was likely to draw: only one of the two apartments on each floor of the building has access to a sala. On the other hand Borromini had proved his skills, in the days of propostis Saluzzi, when he solved problems in the plan of the oratory, adapting the fenestration to parts of the building that were already standing. For Spada there was only one way to test the merit of different architects: set them the same task and then compare the plans.

Third, an architect has to know how to calculate costs. Here Arcucci is hopeless. His altar in the oratory was supposed to cost 3000 scudi but will certainly cost 5000, and he has just finished a house in Trastevere for 5000 scudi instead of the 2000 he estimated. Defects began to appear as...
soon as it was finished, and in a suit brought against him he was forced to pay damages, even though his protector Cardinal Sacchetti presided over the tribunal and even though suits against architects are notoriously hard to win. He does not use the method of the scandaglio (cost estimate) to keep a check on payments to workmen. Borromini, on the other hand, runs a very tight ship. He is rounded hated by the workmen because he neither steals himself nor lets them steal. He keeps their payments in arrears so that if anyone has to sue it is them, not the patron. He cut 4000 scudi off the bills presented for work at the Sapienza and 10,000 scudi off those for S. Agnese. When the contractors at the Sapienza protested and even the patrons, the Consistorial Advocates, sided with the workmen, Borromini held firm, and to everyone’s surprise one of the two contractors came around and accepted his cuts. He may be more lavish in his use of ornament than the norm, but he trims the payments so much that the patron usually profits.

If you want to know a good architect, Spada continues, ask the recommendation of professionals in the field, and especially of the best practitioners. When the preposito Rinaldi sent Spada out to ask three important prelates what they thought of Arcucci, two said nice things, but the third was negative, and he was the acknowledged expert and also prefect of the Maestri di Strade. On the other hand, when people talked about Borromini they did so with enthusiasm, even when they had broken with him. These are the witnesses whose testimony we most want to hear: Bernini and Cortona, two popes, and a flock of nobles and cardinals.

The most interesting witness brought to the stand was Bernini. Spada recalls a conversation he had ‘many years ago’ with Bernini in St Peter’s.

And although they quarrelled bitterly together, Bernini and Borromini, and their love turned to great [canceled: mortal] hatred (though for reasons other than architecture) nevertheless Cavaliere Bernini actually said to me many years ago, in front of the altar of St Peter’s, that Borromini alone understood this profession, but that he was never satisfied, and that he wants to hollow out one thing inside another, and that inside another, without ever coming to an end [see Appendix I, below, fol.11; c.468r].

We already know from other sources what Borromini thought of Bernini. In his opinion Bernini was a sculptor who had obtained the position as architect of St Peter’s through papal favouritism. When Maderno died in 1629 Bernini convinced Borromini to stay on at St Peter’s and at the Palazzo Barberini as draughtsman and technical expert, lavishing him with sweet words and grandiose promises. But in the end he drew all the salaries for himself alone and gave Borromini nothing. When the two men finally broke Borromini said, ‘What galls me is not that he had the money, but that he enjoys the honour of my efforts’. Spada’s conversation gives us the other side of the coin. Bernini thought of Borromini as a man who wants to shape or hollow out one thing inside another, ‘dentro una cosa vacare un’altra, e nell’altra l’altra senza fare mai’. In one sense this is a complaint about obsessive behaviour. But in another it is a penetrating insight into the way Borromini’s mind worked. To us the image recalls Russian dolls or nestled Shaker boxes. To the seventeenth-century mind it may have recalled complex artistic turnery, the so-called ‘Contrefaitkugeln’, or ivory balls hollowed out one inside the other on the lathe. Whatever the source of the image, it is a good description of what Borromini had done at St Peter’s; he had merged the tassled ‘ephemeral’ baldachin with the more architectonic canopy by lowering the tassels and making them into an architrave. Fusing the two forms had already been in the minds of Maderno and of Paul V, of Bernini and of Urban VIII. But Borromini took the process a step further, insuring that the baldachin was nestled more snugly inside the ciborium, and then checking to see that the whole apparatus would fit, proportionally speaking, inside the vast space of the crossing.

Without knowing the exact date of Bernini’s remarks it is hard to know how much of Borromini’s work he had seen when he made them. What he said was either perceptive or prophetic. He may have sensed that Borromini’s special technique of the pencil drawing, combined with his obsession with solving problems graphically, would eventually result in plans where one graphite layer is superimposed over another until the sheets become transparent records of the process of creation. He may have seen the potential Borromini had for creating many-layered enigmas such as the first plan for S. Carlino. He may also have sensed Borromini’s affinity, both in temperament and training, to the double-shelled structures of Milan, such as S. Lorenzo Maggiore, or, among modern buildings, Riccioni’s S. Giuseppe. And indeed, Borromini designed S. Carlino as a shell within a shell, an uncultivating Hadrionic screen of columns set inside a Michelangelesque quatrefoil that is shaped and moulded within an outer box, una cosa cavata dentro l’altra, e nell’altra l’altra. In this sense Bernini’s brief comments are profoundly perceptive.

Pietro da Cortona also gave Spada his opinion of Borromini, but unfortunately what he said was short and cryptic, and the script in this passage is particularly hard
made an impression on Passeri (before 1679), and were re-stated with force by his own nephew Bernardo Borromini in the sketch of a biography that he wrote in 1685: `il palazzo deli Barberini fu tutto fatto con suo [Borromini's] disegno e ordine.'14 But they made no impression on Baldi-nucci,14 who continued to attribute the palace somewhat thoughtlessly to Bernini, thus obscuring for posterity the complex process of collaboration that went into its design.

Finally, the document attests to Borromini's authorship of the portal erected at the Castel S. Angelo in 1628-30, and then copied by the architect himself at S. Martino al Cimino in 1653-54.15

The problem of Borromini's relations

The year 1657 was one of the blackest in Borromini's life. The crisis that had been building up at S. Agnese ever since the death of Innocent X finally came to head.16 In January Borromini absented himself from the worksite for over a month, making his absence all the more conspicuous by browsing in the bookshops around Piazza Navona. The decision to drop him was taken with Alexander VII's consent `so that Rome would now believe that His Holiness wanted to finish the fabric, since in the hands of that architect no one thought it was possible'.17 The final report of 7th February dismissed him for a list of structural and administrative shortcomings, but also attacked his character as difficult and inflexible. In May came the definitive rejection from the Oratorians. Just as he threatened in the present document, he tried to retaliate by refusing to complete the installation of a set of ancient bronze doors at the Lateran.18 The strategy was to attack the Oratorians indirectly by embarrassing Virgilio Spada, the pope's trusted administrator at the Lateran. Alexander VII's reaction was one of extreme annoyance, but it was directed more at Borromini himself than at Spada. He removed the commission for the Lateran Altar of the Apostles from Borromini's hands.19 As a further indirect retaliation Borromini refused to supervise work at the palace of Virgilio's brother, Cardinal Bernardino Spada, who was surprised

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84 THIELEN, op.cit. at note 34 above, No.64.
85 HEMBÜRGER RAVALLI, op.cit. at note 1 above, p.225.
86 Sec H. HIBBARD: Carlo Maderno and Roman Architecture 1589-1630, London [1971], pp.80-84 and 222-30, for an excellent survey of the attributions, with an attempt to steer a cautious path between conflicting claims. P. WARDY, on the other hand, tries to recast the problem by studying the contributions of the architectural amateurs ("The Design and Designers of Palazzo Barberini", Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians, XXXV [1976], p.151-85).
87 M. MARTINELLI: Roma entro dall'architettura, pittura e scultura, MS Casanatense 4984, 1660-63, fol.296 (ed. by C. d'ONOFRIO as Roma nel Settecento, Florence [1969], p.228). The first draft said that the palace was "raggiungito con architettura del Cac. Bernino", but after Borromini's revisions it read: "raggiungito con architettura d'oli, specialmente del Cav. Bernino e altri...".
88 THIELEN, op.cit. at note 34 above, pp.95ff; HIBBARD, op.cit. at note 41 above, p.229.
89 Ibid., pp.229ff.
90 THILEN, Francesco Borromini: Maitre de disegni e documenti visitatori, ex. cat., Vatican City [1967], pp.45-47; M. HEMBÜRGER: L'architetto militare Massimando de Rossi e alcune sue opere in Roma e nel Lazio, Rome [1971], pp.21-23 (both of which support the attribution of the Castel S. Angelo door to Borromini); and C. d'ONOFRIO: Castelli S. Angelo, Rome [1971], pp.283-88 and 257 (who surveys all the documentation but who excludes Borromini from any role in the Castel S. Angelo door).
92 MONTALTO, loc.cit. at note 46 above, p.165.
93 These are the doors of the Curia Senatori, transformed in the middle ages into the church of S. Adriano. In 1655 MARTINELLI speaks of them as though they had already been moved to the Lateran: "la maggiore [porta] segue con la gran porta del Pantheon in modo, che è stato necessario arretrare i suoi geni fusi di Aabo con edegni, e feromanti tali, che mostrassero in un col la sua forza e lo abilità dell'architetto, il quale, accio fossero facili ad aprire anche per mano di fanciulli, la poste sopra ben agevole battito di metallo, avvi più digni d'eccore in opera ammata, che in corto descrivere" (Prima trofeo della S.ma Croce..., Rome [1655], p.135). But the doors were not in fact moved until 1656; the pope was not shown a design for installing them until January 1657; the work was still not finished in June 1658 (R. KRAUTHEIMER and J.R.E. JONES: The diary of Alexander VII: Notes on Art, Artists and Buildings, Romische Jahrbücher für Kunstgeschichte, XV [1975], Nos.32, 33, 37, 40, 44, 84, 166, and 212); and in November 1658 Borromini was still using the completion of the doors as a lever to regain control of the Casa dei Filippini (see Appendix I below, p.68). See also THILEN, op.cit. at note 65 above, pp.55ff.
94 KRAUTHEIMER and JONES, loc.cit. at note 48 above, No.123 (22nd August 1657): "circa il nuovo architetturo della Cappella degli Apòscoli di S. Giovanni Laterano che il Cav. Barberini si vuol morire di dolore". On 2nd September 1657 there is a report that "P. Virgilio Spada dice che il Barberini non è contento e che bisognano cappellari da mano le note e disegni di S. Gio. Laterano per via di detti diritti" (Vat. Lat. 13442, fol.106r, published in K. NOELLES: "Architekturprojekte Cortonas", Münchener Jahrbuch der bildenden Kunst, XX [1969], p.193ff.). KRAUTHEIMER and JONES (p.200) mention Felice della Grecia as the architect of the Apo's Alar, while the ape of the basilica seems to have been rededicated following a project by Cortona in 1662.
and hurt by this gratuitous transfer of resentment. By November the architect’s passions had had time to cool. Feeling he could confide again in Bernardino, he poured out a long tale of grievances and affronts upon his honour. By now Alexander VII was soliciting him to return to the Lateran, and soon after showed a renewed interest in his work at the Sapienza. The crisis was over, at least temporarily, but Borromini had lost the Oratory and S. Agnese for ever.

Was the crisis precipitated by a psychological disorder, or was it more a strategy for dealing with the artist’s difficult and ever-shifting environment? The psychopathological point of view was possibly being aired in 1657, when it was rumoured that Borromini was suffering from a ‘malattia’. It gained ground after his suicide in 1667 and flourished whenever the architecture itself was considered symptomatic of deeper problems. Eighteenth-century critics saw both the man and the buildings as the products of delirium, and Sedlmayr tried to diagnose Borromini as a kind of schizophrenic under control. The other point of view, which explains behaviour as a response to environment, was championed eloquently by Wittkower, who saw the crisis as precipitated by reversals in patronage: ‘Adversity in human relationships, lack of sympathy and understanding transformed the most alert, the most concentrated, scrupulous and punctilious expert into an inconsistent, bewildered, sloppy and even lazy bungler’. Spada himself took the environmental approach and tried to show the rational side to Borromini’s apparently self-defeating behaviour. Even though he was about to be the victim of one of the architect’s retaliations, Spada tried to defend Borromini as a man with a deep sense of honour, loyal and expecting loyalty in return, sensitive, defenceless in the face of intrigue but determined to be completely predictable. Measured retaliation was his answer to the fickness of courtly patronage. Instead of passing over the recent events at S. Agnese in silence in his speech to his fellow Oratorians, Spada tried to catalogue every one of Borromini’s work-stoppages and to explain them in rational terms.

The pattern had first established itself in 1647-48. After he had brought water to Piazza Navona in April 1647 Borromini expected to be given the commission for the obelisk fountain intended for the centre of the piazza. But later that year Innocent X began to incline towards a model submitted by Bernini, backed by Donna Olimpia Maidalchini. When the commission officially went to Bernini on 10th July 1648, Borromini stormed through a series of angry interviews with the pope, so agitated that to some observers he looked as though he might throw himself into the Tiber. He immediately withdrew from the Lateran, where the structural restorations were mostly finished but the stucco decoration had hardly been begun. There was a race against time to finish the Lateran by the Holy Year of 1650. But just how measured Borromini’s retaliation was is shown by his willingness to have another architect assume direction of the work so that no time would be lost, especially if it were his friend Pietro da Cortona. He began to listen to the pope’s blandishments, and would probably have returned to the job if Spada had not made a strategic blunder. In order to speed work along, Spada had appointed a second master stuccatore who turned out to be hostile to Borromini. So the architect continued his personal strike and called off his men as well, until the matter was finally settled to his satisfaction and work could be resumed at the end of September 1648.

To counteract the image of the irascible architect Spada mentioned in his speech all the patrons for whom Borromini had worked without the slightest hint of friction: Count Orazio Falconieri and Prince Andrea Giustiniani, Cardinals Ulde rico Carpegna and Bernardino Spada, and the Congregation of the Propaganda Fide. Rivals had instilled a negative image of Borromini into the mind of Alexander VII, Spada says, but as soon as the pope saw his drawings he began to think differently. Spada also gives us a very clear insight into what actually went on at S. Agnese in the stormy years 1655-57. After Innocent X’s death, Camillo Pamphili had expected to return the commission to old Rainaldi and his son Carlo, the family architects and his personal favourites. But against all expectations he was so satisfied with Borromini that he kept him on for two more years. In the end it was Borromini’s desire to press on hard with work, ‘the way the late pope wanted and the present one too’, that came into conflict with Camillo Pamphili’s tendency to go more slowly.

Even though he had to admit that Borromini’s character had flaws, Spada also saw the logic and consistency in his behaviour:

He is by nature of such a temperament that he does not stand up well to the wrongs that others do him, and for that reason he has broken with many, but where he has been treated with that respect that his love and loyalty deserve, he is like a puppy [Appendix I, fol.12; c.48b].

However, this strategy of retaliations took a heavy toll in psychological terms. To compensate for the loss of one commission Borromini would put another at risk, and to force a patron to go faster he would slow himself down and eventually bring all work to a halt. This most intensely active of men forced himself into states of crippling inaction. The self-destructive instinct, whipped up into fury by the ‘stimolo d’honor’, became engrained in his character and was always ready to return, which it did with a vengeance in the fatal summer of 1667 when the architect took his own life.


"It has been said that Borromini ‘had no sense of proportion’, an observation which might be true of his contemporaries, yet it is difficult to reconcile this with his architectural achievements. Spada’s comments on Borromini’s ‘malattia’ are critical of his temperament, rather than of his ability to execute his ideas. The psychological theories of Sedlmayr’s Die Architektur Borrominis, Berlin [1930], pp.117ff., are critically reviewed by L. Neppi: Palazzo Spada, Rome [1975], p.168, note 155; p.283, Doc.41 and 42. However, these documents only make sense if dated and ordered in a slightly different way: see glossary, op.cit. at note 2 above, pp.124ff., note 66.


[50] Blunt, op.cit. at note 37 above, pp.211-22. The psychological theories of Sedlmayr: Die Architektur Borrominis, Berlin [1930], pp.117ff., are critically reviewed by L. Neppi: Palazzo Spada, Rome [1975], p.168, note 155; p.283, Doc.41 and 42. However, these documents only make sense if dated and ordered in a slightly different way: see glossary, op.cit. at note 2 above, pp.124ff., note 66.
begins a building but another finishes it; nonentities with good manners rise meteorically while geniuses are shuf\f1ffed off. In this vortex Spada tried to delineate stable values that a critic might use as a benchmark for judging architecture. However primitive they might seem these are Spada’s ‘lamps’, and they lie on a deeper plane than any simple preference for the baroque or any other style. He believes first in the learned architect who reads books and studies the antique, who pursues the ideal of ‘Rome researched on the site, as well as in the school of all the best antiquarians’.58 Then he believes in the importance of the plan, and in the power of drawings to demonstrate an architect’s basic intelligence. But on the deepest level he believes in something that might be called spirit or greatness of soul. Spirit is vivacity of imagination, liveliness of personality, quickness of wit. There are likely to be few spiritisti among the clans who work their way up through the Maestri di Strade. But Borromini, on the other hand, had been a youth of great spirit, as shown by his study of ancient architecture. Spirit is a quality that transcends frontiers of date or style.

There is a revealing incident which shows that even medieval architects could have the kind of daring courage that forms part of Spada’s notion of spirit. In 1646-7 the restoration of the gothic palace at S. Martino al Cimino was put in Spada’s hands by Donna Olimpia Maidalchini.59 The ground floor was totally given over to a great salon, covered by a massive vault resting on seven columns running down the centre of the room. Spada called in the usual professionals for a report on structural conditions. All the consultants advised caution. They thought that the columns could not bear the weight and that their function should be taken over by a relieving wall that would divide the salon in two. Spada disagreed. The daring of the unknown gothic architect caught his fancy. The man had known what he was doing and there was no reason for timidity:

> Whoever put up this building had greatness of spirit (‘l’animo grande’), and consequently it seems had his eye fixed steadily on the perpetuity of what he built. One gathers that he was a man of judgment, generous and rich. We should therefore not assume that he was deceived.57

Daring, generous judgment, and ‘l’animno grande’ are the qualities that link this unknown builder across the centuries with a spirit such as Borromini’s.

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\[58\] See the title of the guidebook by Borromini’s friend Fioravante Martinelli: Roma ricreato nel suo stato, et nella scuola di tutti gli antiquari, Rome [3rd ed., 1658].


\[57\] ... chi pianti detta fabbrica si come habbe l’animno grande, così si vede che habbe l’occhio grandemente rivolto alla perpetuaità... no racconfgliam nego esser stato, [il signor di giudicato generosa, e ricco, no si deve prescrive che si sta ingannate.’ (Bibl. Vat., Vat. Lat. 11257, fol.15r, dated 14th July 1647). The experts who offered the cautious advice were Paolo Marucelli, Lucatelli, and a certain M.ro Lodovico.
In tanto sparsoi per la casa la resoluzione presa, che il Borromino havesse a finire la fabbrica, con che restante l'altro col titolo di architetto della Congregazione, e con la solita provvisione, imbucati tutti di pessimo concetto contro il Borromino, e di ottimo dell'Arcuici, pensiamo ad alitero quella vita che si propone (il partito delle cagioni) della fabbrica in congregazione generale, quale essendo stato al primo del avente mese di maggio, stetti un pezzo dubbioso se doveva differire, ò no la proposizione, e mi risolve rial al di, essendo innome la vendita dell'officio vacabile dell'amico, unico motivo per risolvere se si voleva queste cose, ò no la fabbrica.

[fo.4 (c.464v)] Hebbe dunque per bene non solo proporre il proseguimento della fabbrica, ma il dar parte della resoluzione seguita in congregazione de' quattro dell'architetto, non che questa si havesse a restituire in congregate, per far vedere il caso che si trovava in questo modo, e che non si dovesse dimenticare che si doveva firmare nella prospettiva che il governo si dovesse disposto in forma, che ciascuno di detti appartenenti, e in modo che possiamo disporre gli appartenenti per tutti gli intellettuali, e se non ogni piano trovò che gli ha divisi i suoi appartenenti, nondimeno uno de' suoi appartenenti non parzialmente della sala e conseguentemente sarebbe meno affidabile, dove che col mezzo di disporre in forma, che ciaü uno degli appartenenti ne i treiani godessi della sala, havrebbe recato a vedervi mio maggior utille assai. Cosi anche la lontanezza dell'acqua dalle [toccine?] (..?) importa assai.

Per quello poi che riguarda il fabbrica disse contro che per diverso valore, buono dovrebbe invece restituire la professione come i medici; e si dice che 'n parimente [ancora?] questi anche non che se v'era che in Trastevere

[fo.5 (c.465r)] Marginal note: Si devono leggere conforme l'ordine del numeri di fiori, e ritrovati conforme le carte che nel diritto si citano.

le proposizioni dunke che dovrebbe mettere in chiaro sono le seguenti: 1. Qualità dell'Arcuici, a foglio 8. 2. Qualità del Borromino, a foglio 11. 6. Se il valore di questo porto disimpegnato all'Arcuici è tal quale soglio, f.14. 5. Se metta conto di valere d'altro architetto che di quello che ha formati i disegni della fabbrica da larsi, a f.15. 6. De' cagionii dell'evasa restata privata la Congregazione del Borromino, f.17. 7. De' g'errori nell'ornato ultimo dell'arcutro, a foglio 20. 8. Si l'angustia della casa debbono insistere ad intraprendere la fabbrica, a f.22.

[fol.b (c.465v)] Here follows an examination of conscience on Spada's part, in which he struggles with the dilemma of whether he should throw himself into the dispute or leave the outcome in the hands of God.

[fol.b (c.466v)] (1) Qualità dell'Arcuici

Tutte le cose che non si pensano non si numerano e non si misurano sono difficili ad essere giudicate uniformemente. L'architetto è tale, e consistendo nella disposizione, nell'ornato, e nella sicurezza, non è facile il dar giudizio che previene, perché l'architettura ha diritto dell'architetto, e se trovasi in qualche parte, di obediere ad alcuna parte già fatta, e non facendo in quel caso si non per uno, non si può paragonare chi faccia meglio. E così ogni uno si astienne a l'architetto, al suo medico, e massime trattandosi di arte nota a pochi che deppende in gran parte dal gusto, e si verifica in ciò che la maggior parte degli'umani [beve?] con le orecchie, e felice quello architetto che ha più amici accreditati, pochi dal detto di essi si [regolano?] tutti gli altri. E se bene le opere si vedono, nondimeno g'interiori sono che i visitamenti che i nuovi sempre portano, ma asserendosi, il fiorito i primi al li stimati, sono poi a' primi ad usarli. Non sono 150 anni che prevaleva in Roma la rettorica gottica, e i Sangiulano portavano il vanto, vedendosi in uno di essi un superbo modello della basilica di S. Pietro, succedette M. Angelo, quale rigiugnendo l'architetura de Romani antichi è stato seguito da tutti gl'altri, e si è bandita la gottica, e se bene provò gran trasverso, e gran grido arvandosi di lui ornato, nondimeno censita l'invidia acquistò gran lode, e hoggi è più che mai celebre il suo nome.

Se nel dunque [perchiamo] e se si sapeva che l'architetto non sarà facile a pesticare, la potere si attribuisce al prodotto, ma ritorrendo alla concezione, non fa buonsi [sono?] in l'essere in classe delle quelli architetti che si impiegano nel tribunale de Mastr de Strada [canceled: vuoi esser molti stimati] perché portando tale impiego bongi грando in cosa piccole, come sono seltzere, e accommodamenti de strade in campagna, no da uso n'ecomodità di rivolere i libri, e impossessarsi di [d.uncandl di l'arte].

[fol.9 (c.467v)] Ben è vero che anche fra quegli che ne son spiritosi, ma la presunzione è in contrario.

Quando il Padre Odoardo volle [canceled: mustere] provvedere di nuovo architetto mi ordinò che prendesse informazioni di questo, e me chiese 3 prelati, di due quali ne dissero bene, il 3io. che era Prefetto di Mastr de Strada e professava intendersi assai di questa professione, non me disse molto bene, riferii però sinceramente quanto imparai, e chiedendomi che sarebbe stato buono a creder mio, risposi di tal classe parerumi il più a proposito per noi il Contini, stato sempre amorevole di Congregazione, vicino, e che disegna bene, tuttavia il mio bene valersi di questo, e veggia a dire il vero, che l'ornato del Palazzo Pio mi è sempre piaciuto, non parlo della disposizione, non havendo veduta la pianta.

Vero è che alla casa incontro la facciata del nostro Oratorio non sono rimasto interamente soddisfatto della disposizione delle statue, poiché mi sarebbe parso che si affossasse di qualche parte che faceva piacere che la casa fosse disposta in modo che si possano dividere gli appartenenti per tutti gli intellettuali, e se non ogni piano trovò che gli ha divisi i suoi appartenenti, nondimeno uno de' suoi appartenenti non parzialmente della sala e conseguentemente sarebbe meno affidabile, dove che col mezzo di disporre in forma, che ciaü uno degli appartenenti ne i treiani godessi della sala, havrebbe recato a vedervi mio maggior utile assai. Così anche la lontanezza dell'acqua dalle [toccine?] [..?] importa assai.

Per quello poi che riguarda il fabbrica disse contro che per diverso valore, buono dovrebbe invece restituire la professione come i medici; e si dice che 'n parimente [ancora?] questi anche non che se v'era che in Trastevere

[fo.11 (c.468r)] (3) Qualità del Borromino

Il Cavaliere Borromino fu accettato per architetto della nostra Congregazione in tutti il detto Padre Angelo, e havendo capito ritrovare altri che mi si prestasse onore uguale, e facessi un disegno per il nuovo ornato senza stringere come si è detto il disegno partito nell'architettura di nostra Congregazione, e parte in un libro legato da me, unico modo per bilanciare il valore de molti, massimamente quando si tratta d'obiette ad altri fabbrica già fatta, come succede nel nostro caso rispetto alla sagrestia che era già stata piastriata, e alzata del marzurici nel tempo mio, poiché ben spesso i muratori restano debitori e convien litigare per rihavere di più che stia pagato.

Si come liu ineso dire che rare volte capitarà a rivedere le fabbriche che si fanno sotto della giustizia.

Ma quello che mi è parso sostanzioso è l'ornato dell'oratorio con danno grande a mio credere del primo suo nascimento. Vede a foglio 20.

Se nolni.17 to 20 sum missing we lack the first paragraph of section 2. "De' g'errori nell'ornato ultimo dell'oratorio." When the text resumes on fol.21 (c.473v), however, the subject is still Arcuci's new altar and its errors:

[fol.21 (c.473v)] ... l'autro diviso in due piccoli cori, è se riso impraticabile il grande, perché dove era una bellissima corta con grand'arte per dare la maggior voce possibile a chi si ritrova in detta loggia e il maggior sito di voce che si potesse desiderare, con spesa bene di 300 scudi, se ne sono privati per spenderne qualche'altr' centinario, e col togliere la vista, e la voce de cantori, che però il Padre Baldischi mi ha fatto instanza di vendere quell'oggetto ch'ivi si conserva come inutile in avermente.

Se questi siano errori massicci e nell'ornato, e nella disposizione, mi rimetto. Solo che intende prese tutte queste cose, anzi le posì in scrito e le conservò, come pronostico che si sarebbero spesi sopra scudi cinque milla contro la volontà de chiu vor'apora con soldi scudi 3,000.

[fol.11 (c.468v)] (3) Qualità del Borromino

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VIRGILIO SPADA'S DEFENCE OF BORROMINI

esse che doppo le rotture fra di loro si sia [credito?] Il Borromino dell'opere
rebbe, ma è difficile assurgirne la cagione.
[fol.12 (c.468v)] E certo che Papa Innoziano X di [gloriosa memoria?] s'ancor tal convovlo egli posse in mani di S. Giovanni, sospetto volere udire il parere d'alt'architetto, e quanto [arti?] siano in detta
fabbrica in adirizzare muraglie storiche, in sostenere le muraglie cadenti, benche li siano state levate di sotto le gambe delle colonne, ed in tal'altre cose che hanno dell'incredibile, se non si potessero chiarire col tutto et osservazione, si leggano
[fol.13 (c.469r)] e presto si veggono nel stampo che da i nuove Mos. l'anno 830 nascono sulla quella Basilica.
E con tutto che segnato il Papa di lui, perché abbandonò quella fabbrica nel più bello, et si doveva che havessi detto a fare ad altri la superba fonte di Piazza Navona doppo havere egli condotto l'acqua, nondimeno stamando il Papa stroppa la fabbrica di S. Agnese, si vedeva alta da terra, la diede a correggere a lui qual fece formò quella bellissima, che non senza [...] d' cancellato: odio invidia può essere tacciata.
E Alessandro VII felicemente regnante quando ha veduto nel suo disegno ha formato concetti diversi da quello che altri avevano procacciato d'intu-
Egli è di natura di tale tempera che non resisterà a i tori che si lo fanno, e perciò si è retto con molti, ma dove g'è portato quel rispetto chi se deve al suo amore, et alla sua fedeltà, egli e un cagnolo.
Si suppo meco di [mal?] maniera perchè voli sostener un stuccatore al dispetto suo nella fabbrica di S. Giovanni e confessò che lo feci per dar gusto ad altri, se ben [cancellato: conoscendo [...] i disordini che è nascere per mai, non mai che il non mandarli all'azzardo e alla macchia in croce che[...] un condotto con le bea Scotia [cancellato: non mi consiste a sostener lo stuccatore, [fol.13 (c.469r)] ne pagò il [pic?] poiché [cancellato: lo stuccatore] questo non potè spulire il promessso senza l'aiuto del muratore et il muratore depenendo dal Borromino non volle mai sterco.
Si disgustò col Principe Paulino, perché voleva il Borromino che si lavorasse assai in finito detta fabbrica di S. Agnese conforme la mentce del Papa defunto, et del regnante, et il Principe voleva che si lavorasse adagio, ma di questo non è da maravigliarsi perchè essendo stato levato il lavoro del Papa suo zio al Raimondo' è stato detto dal Principe. E più tosto raverviglia che morto il zio non levasse subito il lavoro al Borromino e lo rendesse al Raimaldì, che l'abbia comportato di anni, ma restò tanto soddisfato contro il suo credere del Borromini [cancellato: che il raiato mi doni] che non se ne sarebbe privato qualsiasi il favore [...].
Il S. Oratio Falchetti, II S. Principe Giustiniano, il S. Cardinale Carpegna, il S. Cardinale Spada, la Congregazione de Propaganda si sono sempre serviti di lui e se ne servono così che mai vi sia stata ombra di disguido.
Egli è fedele e et Papa Innocenzo X, de i soggioni se non affatto dominante, e si l'attacca del Borromino che non si replicava mai a ciò che coso ordinava, et tutti.
E lodato da g'arteggiari che egli ne ruba non lascia rubare, e se bene come [...] che egli faccia spendere assai è falsissimo, e si veduo i conti della Sagrestia, e di S.ta Agnese, stimati da lui a scadere 4,000 meno i primi, e scadendo 10,000 i secondi de stime altre, e contatto che alcuni degli SS. Avvocat Concistoriali appagassero i muratori creduti da essi nel stima dal Borromino, nondimeno restarono confusi quando udromo che uno de i muratori accetto la stima e confessò di restar soddisfato, e se nell'ornato ecceso l'uso dell'altro del stinnare è così moderato che il più l'utile che il danaro che riceve il Padrone.
Ma quando la sua natura havesse delle imperfezioni ed grandi, la legge [ad benefic?] non ci avvertisce che si devono comportare anche nelle materie capitali senza privarle di vita.
Section 4, 'Delle cagioni dell'essere restata privata la Congregazione del Borromini', was written on the missing fol.17.

[fol.15 (c.470r)] (5) Se mette conto valersi d'altr'architetto che di quello che ha formato i disegni della fabbrica da farsi.
Apreso di me fu stimato tanto ragionevole, che chi ha fatto il disegno della fabbrica l'eseguisca, che non mai caduto in dubbio potere essere creatore da l'architetto, e in segondo, a quanto lo disti i primi giorni del facendosi [cancellato: ad amic] a la chi mi parlò per l'Arcuca, qual mostrava di dubitare che fosse per licitarlo, et io dissi che non havrei mai fatto alla Congregazione tale proposta senza dementio particolare, eccetto che se si havessi havuto a proseguire la fabbrica della nostra habitatione, nel qual caso havendo il Borromino fatto i disegni, et posti in esecuzione per la parte fatta, stimavo che dovessi egli compirlo. Ne udendo altra replica, hebbo occasione di credere che fosse stata recusata la convenevole, che però vendemomi parlato per parte del Borromini usi il medesimo conforto, e in segondo, e non è maraviglia se io ho proposto alla Congregazione cosa di pura sua soddisfazione, perchè al principio non arrivarò a dubitarne, e quando m'accorri del sentimento comun, ero impegnato non ad farlo riuscire, ma proporlo come ho fatto.

[fol.22 (c.473v)] (7) Se l'angustia della casa debbono ostante all'intra-
prendere la fabbrica.
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Il levarci la servitù di tante feste di diverse famiglie ch'hanno il prospetto ne i nostri cortili, mi par che sia atto di prudenza christian, et un'occasione di havere il denaro con piccòlo interesse mi persuadea a non indugiare...

[c.47v] Mâ potendo a questo remediarìi la mia borsa, benche da doi anni in qua estenuata da tali, et tanti accidenti che non posso supplire alle mie spese ordinarie, trovandomi pieno di debiti, saltati facilemente questo fatto, et me parziali in congregazionc piccolo venendo accettato il partito, et decreto che se ne parlassi in publia congregatione.

[c.48r] Nascita 1568: a petition submitted to Alexander VII to excute the Oratorians from the papal edict ordering all religious congregations that had begun buildings on the basis of the papal immigration laws in fashol sham. The petitioners have to do most legally with the finances of the Congregation or with issues already raised in the previous document. Hence I omit the entire passage.

[c.47r] Data alla congregazione de il 22 aprile 1569 ritirandomi in. These notes seem to be a proposal by Spada to resign as prior and bring peace to the Congregation. They were composed on Good Friday, 11th April 1569. Among the many excuses Spada brings forth are loss of memory and general overwork, with meetings 6 days a week at the papal palace. There is a second copy of this draft on c.48v, followed by notes on Alexander VII's edit of 1568 to fight all buildings begun under the hall of ius consulti. Apart from the first line the notes are in a scrivo's hand.

[c.483r] A recapitulation of the family arguments why Borromini should be kept on as architect, and why he might expect Spada to back him up. No date, I omit the entire passage.

On cc.484v-485v: there is a plan of the houses standing between the Oratory and the Torre dell'Orologio. (See note 8 and Fig.5 above).

cc.486-489 are blank, while c.489 has notes and figures on the Borgiotti hospice. Spada's notes on c.491 treat traditional problems of room size and corridor width in the new wing. He also sketches the door and window of the Monte Giordano using of the case in the margin. I omit the entire passage.

[c.492r and 492v]: a letter from Francesco Rigli to Virgilio Spada. It seems to show that Rigli was acting as the agent through whom Borromini continued to offer technical advice to Spada during the construction of the new wing.


Ho fatto relazione a quello V.S. Ill.ma mi ha detto in ordine alla fabbrica di Chiesa Nuova. Mi pareva che per haverla a seguire con ordine et disegno, e non parlarla a straordinari, il modo che V.S. III.ma medesima haverò trovato era eccellente, perché in fine non se ne riporta se non la gloria, e laudare all'autore è stato prima V.S. III.ma et dopo il Cavaliere Borromino parlo da me medesimo prendendo ardore col darsi questo ultimo incognito, di raccordarli come vera- mente sarebbe il tutto risuonando con lode, honore, di V.S. III.ma, e gloria e decoro di costei Rma Congregazione nel modo che si reca, cioè che V.S. III.ma fosse stato lei l'architetto il quale con la sua solita et innata prudenza havense guidato l'ordine della fabbrica, et io havesi desegnato, a portato al Cavaliere Borromino le misure acciò lui havesi potuto stabilire il disegno e senza anco che lui fosse compiuto in costi lavori pratici, sarebbe stata stato lui da presfero[...], perché più volte mi ha detto che [per] amor di V.S. III.ma se sarebbe gettato nel buco se havesesse bisogno, e così spero in Dio che il tutto fosse potuto riuscire con honore dei V.S. Ill.ma e di tutta la Congregazione e nostro commissario della fabbrica, senza pericolo di potere essere offesa in alcuno errore mentre veniva guidata da chi ha fatta nascere. Ma essendo poi in contrario sara con precisa rissione di V.S. Ill.ma che ci a proposti el Cavaliere Borromino, e mia che la reputazione è quella che importa a presso a Dio, et al mondo, tanto più mi dissi quando che l'essere Cavaliere Borromine riferito da me il parere di V.S. Ill.ma gli piacque e ne resto soddisfazione, mentre facave V.S. Ill.ma almeno a me degno assieme con lui a serviria, parvosino assai strano il poter far capace di quietarlo, mentre anco io resto con tal romore mortificato, non havendo io fatto alcun mancamento, ne se potia mai dar intenderia, a Roma che in tempo di V.S. Ill.ma si a ricevuto questo incontro, né che per l'onor di V.S. Ill.ma della fabbrica [enri?] si sia offerto, mi è parso bene accennarlo a V.S. Ill.ma per mio discarico, sperando solo prima in Dio Benedetto come V.S. Ill.ma ha detto, e poi nella innata bennignità e gratia ha parlato a me de' suoi desideri, la vita li suoi devoti servitori che restando quasi privo di vita restò a scrivere scusandoli dell'ardore che con tanta sigura pronto solo per mera reputazione accennare a V.S. Ill.ma alla quale con ogni umiltà rivinse a me l'inchino.

Casa, il 24 aprile 1569
Servo, vero dev.mo et oblig.mo
Francesco Rigli

[c.493v] notes of account of 1568, and measurements of rooms, all of which I omit.

[c.494r] Site of 1568: with sketch by Spada sketched at bottom. These seem to be technical questions about the building on which, surprisingly, Borromini's advice is sought.

[c.495v] This letter to the Cavaliere Borromino shows his concern for his visitors, and his desire to maintain the relationship with V.S. Ill.ma non habbia a serviria da me in questa fabbrica mostrandone gran passion che essendomi io a misurare non gli [sarebbe?] tanto stravagante paragonandogli essersi lui medesimo, et tanto più parla strano vedendosi dentro l'Arcuoi che fa tanto rumore [or tinore]?

On cc.502r-503r: 26th October 1659, measurements of pilasters, arches, etc., in preparation for new work near the Oratory, in Spada's hand.

On cc.507r: 1589 September 1659, Congregation dei 4 Deputati: 4000 scudi offered by Cardinal Cesi, and another 4000 scudi offered by him in the form of a censo vitalitio at the rate of 8½ per cent. Other copies of decrets of the period 1581-64 are in francese.

On cc.509r: 20th July 1650, Virgilio Spada's account for 37.05 scudi of masonry work on his rooms under the Orolologio, including a little stucco, and an upper caminerno.

On cc.544v-447v: 13th August 1650, 74.95 scudi of carpenter's work, with stiga and misura sings by Francesco Rigli.
Appendix II.


Arcucci designates his mother, Caterina Petrella, and his adopted son, Giuseppe Brusati, as his heirs. He is to be buried “privatamente, senza pompa alcuna” in the Chiesa Nuova in the tomb of the Oratorian brothers, with 100 masses said as soon as possible, with 4 torches lit in the Chapel of St. Filippo Neri and 20 around his cadaver. Masses are requested in other churches too. He orders a deposito or memoria to the late Padre Generale Fulgenzio Petrella, his uncle, in S. Agostino in Rome, to resemble the monument to Monsignore Ghislandardi by Luca Bertani, which the inscription to be done by a specialist.

He leaves 200 scudi to the church of the Madonna del Rosario and della Febre alla Croce di Monte Mario, to continue the structure of the building, with the obligation of a perpetual monthly mass.

As for ‘Benedetto, putto in casa sua, che si dice sia figliulo naturale’, he is to be given what he likes and as much as possible. He gives 500 scudi to S. Luca dei Pintori, Scuttori et Architetti di Roma for a mass a week and to do his portraits in the usual way, if Pietro da Cortona is in agreement, otherwise the money would revert to his heirs. He provides for funeral masses in the church of S. Agostino in Sigillo, and an inscription for another church: “Irm ordino che si restaurino le pitture, et scudchi, che sono, et vanno per ornamento dentro la chiesa di S. Anna di detta terra di Sigillo con metterci la memoria che si era stata restaurata da me, e con la mia arme.” He leaves to Cardinal Accolino a gravioregan con il cimabu per segno della mia devotione et obligazioni.

To Duke Giuliano Mattei he leaves “un disegno con cornice del S R Andrea Sacchi, et il quadro di una donna di mano del Guercino per segno della obligazione che li tengo.” To his nephew Giuseppe Brusati he leaves “li stigli, scritture, e libri della mia professione di architettore acciò possa con suo vantaggio esercitare il suo talento da conseguersi seguito la mia morte.” After bequest to his mother he leaves as his universal heirs Giuseppe Brugnati, figlio del S R Sebastiano mio nipote, and the detta venerabile Chiesa della Madonnina Sma del Rosario, e Febre alla Croce di Monte Mario, each with equal portion.

Inventory of Arcucci’s possessions. Ibid., cc. 202ff. and 209ff. I omit furniture, etc., 6th February 1667.

After the cimabu and the cimabu, there are various paintings; and drawings such as: “un disegno della facciata di S. Andrea della Valle in tela di cinque palmi”; “un disegno in stampa di carta della facciata di S. Pietro”; “un disegno colorito in carta, che è l’altare nell’oratorio della Chiesa Nova con cornicieta dorate.” Two drawings of cimabu are mentioned as well as a print of the facade of St Peter’s and a chat aver 23 libri di diversi musei di diversi anni adeso di protocolli appartenenti alla professione d’architettura già spedite’.

c. 221ff Books:
Fortification of the Catani
Astrologia dell’Argoli [or angoli?]  
Opera stampata dal P. Generale Petrelli De Intercessione B. Mariæ Virginis
Collectio diversarum Bullarum Apostolicarum
Opera del misurare di Girolamo Catani
Fortificazioni dei Luciani
Architettura di Sebastiano Serlio
Marco Vitruvio Latino d’architettura
Libro di varii depositi dei Radi
L’inganno delle cieche della prospettiva di Pietro Accolli
Un libro di disegni in stampa de’funerali di Gregorio decimoquinto
Geometria d’Euclide
Due libri primo et 2o tomo d’Euclide del Padre Clavio
Architettura degli Alberti in Latino
Architettura di Leon Battista Alberti in volgare
Prattica d’aritmetica di Franco [Galligai]?

Discorsi, e dimostrazioni matematiche del Galileo
Disegni in stampa della Giotira in Navona
Stampe di disegni di fontane cartelle et altre
Architettura del Vignola
Architectures di Marco Vetrusio volgari
Prattica di scena, e machina del Sabatini
Libro di varie figure in stampa
Palma militare dell’artiglieria di Luigi Collado
Fortificazioni dello Scala
Fortificazioni d’autore francesi
Fortificazioni di Carlo [Teti?]  
Prospective del Siretti
Machine del Besone spagnolo
Prattica della matematica del Cataneo
Misura con la vista di Cesino Bartoli fiorentino
Machine del Bancha
Fortificazioni di Paolo Sarri
Discorso del Radio Latino dell’Orisino
Misura con la vista di Silvio Belli Vicentino
Quesiti militari del Fiammelli
Misura dell’acque correnti del Cartelli Monaco Cassinense
Architettura del Palladio
Elementi d’Euclide volgari
Geometria del Pomodoro
Altro libro di Leon Battista Alberti
Fabriche del Fontana
Le scritture illuminate grammatiche della lingua Latina
Poesie di Ludovico Pazzolli
Isanze del Polite poetic
Libretto di diverse figure in stampa del Galloni
Maneggio dell’armi dei Guadì
Un libro di diversi disegni a mano di mattonatini
Un libro di diversi disegni a mano di vasi candelieri et altro
Un altro libretto di diversi schizzi di putti, cornici, fontane et altre fatti a mano
Un libro bianco con alcuni disegni in fine di vasi, et disegni a mano
Una cartella di carta pescora di diversi disegni a mano tocchi di acquarella, et altro
Due altre cartelle di carta pescora di diversi disegni a mano tocchi d’acquarella, et altro
Due altre cartelle similari con vari disegni di pianeti di diversi padroni
Prospection dell’Androvetto
Prattica della matematica del Cataneo

Instruments:
Una scatola con dentro complessi toccasali squadre tiraline e righe d’ottone diverse
Un compasso d’ottone di palmo uno e mezzo
Un caso d’ottone detto il radio Latino
Un altro instrumento di’ottone con squadra sopra e [tupradi?] da livellare, et levar piante
Una scatola con dentro un’altro instrumento di matematica di squadra da levar piante con sua bussola.

Property:
Three book of document on lauras that Arcucci owns.
One book of documents on lauras della cassa sotto la casa dell’Arcucci incontro alli Cesarini.

Finally, Arcucci’s real estate is mentioned as including three houses and one villa.