

**Morone Mola, Gaspare**

Milan? 1603 – 1669 Rome

**The Canonisation of Saints Peter of Alcantara and Maria Maddalena dei Pazzi (Annual Medal, year 3 – 1669)**

**Rome 1669**



BRONZE, extremely fine early strike, 34 mm diameter.

*Obverse* Bust of Giulio Rospigliosi, Pope Clement IX (1667–1669), bearded, in profile to left, wearing cassock, cap, and stole. Around, CLEM . IX . PONT . MAX . A . III .

*Reverse* the two Saints, Peter of Alcantara, left, and Maria Maddalena dei Pazzi, right, kneel upon a cloud facing one another, the Holy Spirit above centre. Around, ADDITVM ECCLESIAE MVNIMEN ET DECVS; below, on scrolls, S . PETRVS DE ALCANTARA – S . M . MAGDALENA DE PAZZIS

PROVENANCE Michael Hall (1926– ) — sale Baldwin’s, ‘Auction 66: The Michael Hall Collection: Medalllic portraits from the Renaissance to the Nineteenth Century (Part Two)’, London, 29 June 2010, lot 1148

EXHIBITED *Roma resurgens: papal medals from the Age of the Baroque*, catalogue of an exhibition held at Mount Holyoke College Museum of Art, 4 March–26 April 1981, David and Alfred Smart Gallery, the University of Chicago, 1 July–9 August 1981, and the University of Michigan Museum of Art, 22 August–11 October 1981, by Nathan T. Whitman in collaboration with John L. Varriano (Ann Arbor, MI 1983), pp.131–132 no. 113



Reduced from Ø 34 mm

**THIS MEDAL** commemorating the canonisation (28 April 1669) of the ecstatic mystics Peter of Alcantara (1499–1562), a Spanish Franciscan, and Maria Maddalena dei Pazzi (1566–1607), a Florentine Carmelite, was the annual medal of 1669. As usual, it was issued on 29 June, the feast day of Saints Peter and Paul. According to the account of papal expenses recorded in the series of ‘Mandati camerale’, Clement IX commissioned 264 examples struck in gold, 404 in silver, and an unspecified number in bronze.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Bartolotti (*op. cit.*), p.419 no. 41 (payments 4 June and 28 June 1669, transcribed from Archivio di Stato di Roma, Camerale II – Zecca, busta 28). Cf. Steven F. Ostrow, in *Bernini and the birth of Baroque portrait sculpture*, edited by Andrea Bacchi (Los Angeles 2008), p.66: ‘the average Seicento edition of *annuali* was 200 gold, 350 silver, and perhaps as many as 1000 bronze’.

The medallist Gaspare Morone Mola was the nephew and namesake of Gaspare Mola, who had been master of the papal mint from 1625 until his death in 1640. He first worked for the Gonzaga at the mint in Mantua. By 1636 he had moved to Rome, where on 19 June a license was issued to ‘Gaspare Moroni orefice milanese’ permitting him to work as a goldsmith (his uncle stood as guarantor). Morone Mola served as an assistant to his uncle until the latter’s death in January 1640, when he inherited his uncle’s valuable collection of dies, and succeeded him in the office of ‘maestro de ferri della Zecca’. He remained at the mint for nearly thirty years, executing medals and coins for all the popes from Urban VIII through Clement IX.<sup>2</sup>

With rare exceptions, the papal medallist was responsible for the artistic design of the medal as well as for the cutting and striking of the die. It was most unusual for other artists to furnish drawings for him to follow; when this occurred, the design was invariably for the reverse, rather than the portrait obverse. Popes themselves seldom became personally involved in the process. Fabio Chigi, Pope Alexander VII (1655–1667), who was said by the French ambassador in 1666 to be more concerned with his collections of medallions than with public affairs,<sup>3</sup> was an exception. Deeply concerned with the production and design of medals, he built a new papal mint, and commissioned the most gifted artist of the day, Gianlorenzo Bernini, to supply designs.<sup>4</sup>

At the invitation of Alexander VII, Bernini supplied Morone Mola with *modelli* for a coin and five medals.<sup>5</sup> Two of these were medals representing works that Bernini had himself created: one commemorates construction of the church of S. Tommaso in Castel Gandolfo, in 1658;<sup>6</sup> the other Bernini’s additions to the Quirinal palace, in 1661.<sup>7</sup> Although there is

<sup>2</sup> Constantino Bulgari, *Argentieri gemmari e orafi d’Italia. Parte prima – Roma* (Rome 1959), II, p.182; Antonino Bertolotti, *Artisti Lombardi a Roma nei secoli XV, XVI, XVII* (Milan 1881), II, pp.197, 230–235.

<sup>3</sup> *Roma resurgens* (op. cit.), p.12.

<sup>4</sup> The principal literature on Bernini as a medallist is cited by John Varriano, ‘Alexander VII, Bernini, and the Baroque Papal Medal’ in *Studies in the History of Art, 21: Italian Medals*, edited by J. Graham Pollard (Washington, DC 1987), p.260 (note 21).

<sup>5</sup> Bernini collaborated with Gioacchino Francesco Travani, goldsmith and engraver at the papal mint, on three others: a medal commemorating the cessation of the plague, in 1657 (*Effigies & ecstasies: Roman baroque sculpture and design in the age Bernini*, catalogue of an exhibition, National Galleries of Scotland, Edinburgh 1998, pp.188–189 no. 166); and foundation medals for his two churches at Ariccia, in 1662 (*Effigies & ecstasies*, op. cit., pp.188–189 no. 90). Travani’s 1662 foundation medal for the Piazza del Popolo is ‘uncompromisingly Berninesque’, however no evidence has yet come to light proving that he had a hand in its design (Varriano, op. cit., p.259).

<sup>6</sup> The evidence of Bernini’s involvement is an entry in the diary of Alexander VII, 6 April 1658 (transcribed in *Bernini in Vaticano*, catalogue of an exhibition, held in the Braccio di Carlo Magno,

no graphic evidence of Bernini’s authorship of either medal, his involvement is otherwise proved. Autograph drawings exist for the coin and three other Alexandrine medals: the reverse of the annual medal of 1657 commemorating the cessation of the plague;<sup>8</sup> the reverse and obverse of a silver *scudo* of Alexander VII, possibly issued to commemorate the canonisation of Saint Thomas of Villanova on 1 November 1658;<sup>9</sup> the reverse of the annual medal of 1662 commemorating the Cathedra Petri, struck four years before the unveiling of that monument;<sup>10</sup> and the reverse of the annual medal of 1663 commemorating the Scala Regia.<sup>11</sup>

Our medal of 1669 for the canonisation of Saints Peter of Alcantara and Maria Maddalena dei Pazzi was the third of three *annuali* issued during Clement IX’s pontificate. It is the only known occasion that Bernini was entrusted by Clement IX with design of a papal medal. Two variant drawings by Bernini for the reverse of the medal have survived.<sup>12</sup>

May–July 1981, Rome 1981, p.324); for the medal, see *Bernini in Vaticano* (op. cit.), p.294 no. 293; Miselli (op. cit.), p.474 no. 564.

<sup>7</sup> Diary entry, 8 September 1660 (*Bernini in Vaticano*, op. cit., p.330); medal, *Bernini in Vaticano* (op. cit.), pp.294–295 no. 294. For additional evidence, see *Effigies & ecstasies* (op. cit.), pp.124–126 no. 83; Miselli (op. cit.), p.495 no. 582.

<sup>8</sup> For the medal and drawing, see *Bernini in Vaticano* (op. cit.), p.289 no. 288, and Miselli (op. cit.), p.461 no. 545 and p.616 (‘Documento 4’); the pen and wash drawing, formerly in the De Pass collection, Truro, Cornwall, is now lost. Morone’s preparatory wax model is in the British Museum (*Effigies & ecstasies*, op. cit., p.187 no. 161).

<sup>9</sup> *Bernini in Vaticano* (op. cit.), pp.290–291 no. 290; Nicholas Turner, *Roman Baroque Drawings c. 1620 to c. 1700*, Italian drawings in the Department of Prints and Drawings in the British Museum (London 1999), I, p.12 nos. 16–17. The preparatory wax model for the reverse also is in the British Museum (*Effigies & ecstasies*, op. cit., p.187 no. 164).

<sup>10</sup> For the drawing, preparatory wax model, and medal, see *Effigies & ecstasies* (op. cit.), pp.111–113 nos. 69–71, and Miselli (op. cit.), p.509 no. 600 and p.622 (‘Documento 10’); and for the drawing alone, Luke Syson, ‘Designs on posterity: drawings for medals’ in *Designs on Posterity*, edited by Mark Jones (London 1994), pp.266–267; and Turner (op. cit.), I, p.13 no. 18.

<sup>11</sup> *Bernini in Vaticano* (op. cit.), pp.300–301 nos. 304–305; Miselli (op. cit.), p.517 no. 611 and p.622 (‘Documento 11’). The drawing by Bernini or studio is in Bibliotheca Apostolica Vaticana.

<sup>12</sup> Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum, Inv. 1955: 75, 76 (each 59 mm diameter); see *Le dessin italien dans les collections hollandaises*, catalogue of an exhibition held at the Institut Néerlandais, Paris, Museum Boymans-Van Beuningen, Rotterdam, and Teylers Museum, Haarlem ([Paris] 1962), p.102 no. 167 and pl.CXIX. Also reproduced by Graham Pollard, ‘La medaglia con ritratto di epoca barocca in Italia: Sunto storico con un esame di alcuni problemi’ in *La Medaglia d’arte, atti del primo convegno internazionale di studio, Udine, 10–12 ottobre 1970* (Udine 1973), p.148 fig.12; Ann Sutherland Harris, *Selected drawings of Gian Lorenzo Bernini* (New York 1977), p.XXII and pl.79.

Bernini did not choose to depict the rites in St. Peter's, but to show the two Saints in direct communion with the Holy Spirit:

'The two Saints, although linked compositionally, seem totally unaware of each other and react to the Holy Spirit in different ways. Saint Peter throws his arms wide and his head upward as if to open himself fully to the divine light emanating from the dove. By contrast, Saint Maria Maddalena humbly bows her head and crosses her hands on her breast in a gesture of submission reminiscent of the Virgin Annunciate. This play of opposites – male and female, active and passive – lends a characteristically baroque tension to the seemingly simple composition. Both iconographically and stylistically Bernini, through Morone as intermediary, has added a new dimension to the medallion repertory.'<sup>13</sup>

Examples known to the writer include

- Berlin, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Münzkabinett (silver, 34.5 mm)<sup>14</sup>
- Florence, Museo Nazionale del Bargello (silver, 34.5 mm; two examples in bronze, 34 mm and 34.5 mm)<sup>15</sup>
- Glasgow, University of Glasgow, Hunterian Museum (silver, 34 mm)<sup>16</sup>
- London, British Museum (bronze, 34 mm)<sup>17</sup>
- Milan, Civiche Raccolte Numismatiche, Inv. 1165 (silver, 34 mm)
- Padova, Museo Bottacin (bronze, 33 mm)<sup>18</sup>
- Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Medagliere, XXII–50 (bronze, restrrike, 33 mm)<sup>19</sup>
- Vicenza, Musei Civici di Vicenza, Medagliere (bronze, 19th century restrrike, 34 mm)<sup>20</sup>
- Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Münzkabinett, Inv. 5560bß (silver, 34 mm)
- Weimar, Goethe-Nationalmuseum (bronze, 33 mm, 16.27 g)<sup>21</sup>
- Private collection (bronze, 33.5 mm, 13.60 g)<sup>22</sup>

REFERENCES Filippo Buonanni, *Numismata pontificum romanorum, quæ à tempore Martini V. usque ad annum M.DC.XCIX* (Rome 1699), II, p.710 no. VII; Ridolfino Venuti, *Numismata Romanorum Pontificum præstantiora, à Martino V. ad Benedictum XIV* (Rome 1744), p.278 no. VI; Francesco Mazio, *Serie dei conj di medaglie pontificie da Martino V fino a tutto il pontificato ... di Pio VII* (Roma 1824), p.81 no. 291; W.S. Lincoln & Son, *A Descriptive catalogue of papal medals* (London 1890), p.68 no. 1270; Franco Bartolotti, *La medaglia annuale dei romani Pontefici da Paolo V a Paolo VI, 1605–1967* (Rimini 1967), p.74 E 669; Walter Miselli, *Il papato dal 1605 al 1669 attraverso le medaglie* (Pavia [2003]), p.595 no. 704 and p.624 ('Documento 13')

<sup>13</sup> 'E.P.', in *Roma resurgens* (op. cit.), pp.131–132.

<sup>14</sup> Lore Börner, *Die italienischen Medaillen der Renaissance und des Barock (1450 bis 1750)*, Bestandskataloge des Münzkabinetts Berlin (Berlin 1997), p.293 no. 1419.

<sup>15</sup> Fiorenza Vannel and Giuseppe Toderi, *Medaglie italiane del Museo Nazionale del Bargello, Volume II: Secolo XVII* (Florence 2005), p.59 nos. 498–500 and Tavola 105.

<sup>16</sup> Timothy Clifford, in *Effigies & ecstasies* (op. cit.), p.185 no. 156.

<sup>17</sup> Varriano (op. cit.), p.254 fig.10 (reverse).

<sup>18</sup> Reproduced by Miselli (op. cit.), p.595

<sup>19</sup> *Bernini in Vaticano* (op. cit.), pp.302–304 no. 314.

<sup>20</sup> Armando Bernardelli and Renato Zirona, *Le medagliere dei Musei Civici di Vicenza, I. Le medaglie papali* (Vicenza 2007), p.101 no. 554 (reproduced p.236).

<sup>21</sup> Jochen Klauß, *Die Medaillensammlung Goethes* (Berlin 2000), p.147 no. 487.

<sup>22</sup> Reproduced by Bartolotti (op. cit.), p.74.