



Reduced from Ø 95 mm

Chéron, Charles Jean-François

Lunéville 1635 – 1698 Paris

Portrait medal of Pope Clement IX, commemorating the Restoration of the Ponte Sant'Angelo

Rome 1669

BRONZE, very good early cast, on a thin flan. 95 mm diameter. Superficial crack extending from seven o'clock to four o'clock on the obverse.

Obverse Bust to right, a portrait of Giulio Rospigliosi, Pope Clement IX (1667–1669), bearded, in profile to right, wearing camauro, mozetta and stole. Around, CLEMENS IX . PONT MAX . AN . III. Signed



on the truncation, F . CHERON . F. Reeded border

Reverse View from the East of the Ponte Sant'Angelo with the newly-completed statues of angels, with above an angel blowing the trumpet of Fame, and below the river god of the Tiber, to his right the She-Wolf suckles Romulus and Remus. Around, ÆLIO PONTE EXORNATO. Incised signature on the outer rim, F . CHERON

PROVENANCE Michael Hall (1926–) — sale Baldwin's, 'The Michael Hall Collection: Medallion Portraits from the Renaissance to the Nineteenth Century (Part One)', London, 4 May 2010, lot 573

EXHIBITED *Five college Roman Baroque festival*, catalogue of exhibitions held at Mead Art Building, Amherst College, Smith College Museum of Art, and John and Norah Warbeke Gallery, Mount Holyoke College, April–May 1974 (*S.l.* [1974]), no. 54; Nathan T. Whitman and John Varriano, *Roma resurgens: Papal Medals from the Age of the Baroque*, catalogue of the 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 (Ann Arbor, MI 1983), pp.130–131 no. 112 (reverse reproduced on catalogue front cover)¹

THIS MEDAL was cast in the third year of Clement IX's pontificate to celebrate the restoration of the Pons Aelius, the Hadrianic bridge leading across the Tiber to the Castel Sant' Angelo, and its new sculptural decoration executed from drawings and models supplied by Gian Lorenzo Bernini.²

It is the first documented work of the medallist Chéron and its astonishing sophistication has raised doubts that he was wholly responsible for its design. The portrait of Clement IX on the obverse is similar to the one appearing on a medal by Alberto Hamerani struck in the same year and it has been suggested that both medallists 'made use of a drawing provided by a major artist. While it is tempting to hypothesize that that artist was Bernini and many circumstantial arguments could be adduced in his favor, the name of Carlo Maratta merits equal consideration'.³ Likewise, the reverse of the medal is believed to depend on a lost drawing by Bernini.⁴

This example featured in exhibitions held in 1974 and 1981 (cited above); other published examples include

• Florence, Museo nazionale del Bargello, Inv. 7301 (bronze, 97.2 mm)⁵ • London, British Museum, Department of Coins and Medals (bronze, 98 mm)⁶ • Milan, Johnson Collection (silvered bronze, 97 mm)⁷ • Modena, Galleria e Medagliere Estense, Inv. 3580 (bronze, 96 mm)⁸ • Padua, Museo Bottacin (bronze, 95.5 mm)⁹ • Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, Cabinet des Médailles, Série des Papes (bronze, 97 mm; silver, 97.5 mm)¹⁰ • Rimini, Franco Bartolotti Collection (bronze, 98 mm)¹¹ • Vatican City, Biblioteca Vaticana, Medagliere (bronze, 97 mm;¹² lead, 102 mm)¹³ • Vicenza, Musei Civici di Vicenza, Medagliere, Inv. Med. Pont. 556 (bronze, 95 mm)¹⁴ • Weimar, Goethe-Nationalmuseum (bronze, 98 mm, 156.10 g)¹⁵ • Private collection (bronze 93 [sic] mm)¹⁶ • Private collection (bronze, 88 mm)¹⁷

Examples seen in the market include

⁵ Giuseppe Toderi and Fiorenza Vannel, *Medaglie italiane: Barocche e Neoclassiche* (Florence 1990), pp.140–143 no. 131; Fiorenza Vannel and Giuseppe Toderi, *Medaglie italiane del Museo nazionale del Bargello, 2: Secolo XVII* (Florence 2005), p.67 no. 551 (reproduced Tavola 116). A second example 'senza cornice modanata' (83 mm) is in the same collection (Inv. Dep. 4332) and catalogue (no. 552).

⁶ British Museum, Department of Coins and Medals, *A guide to the exhibition of Italian medals*, by Charles Francis Keary (second edition, London 1893), p.87 no. 340; *Effigies & ecstasies* (*op. cit.*), pp.132–133 no. 94B.

⁷ Cesare Johnson, *Collezione Johnson di medaglie, I. – Secoli XV–XVIII* (Milan 1990), I, pp.206–207 no. 126.

⁸ Elena Corradini, *Museo e Medagliere Estense tra Otto e Novecento* (Modena [1996]), p.68 no. 8 and p.131 no. 48/8 (reproduction).

⁹ Reproduced by Miselli (*op. cit.*), p. 603.

¹⁰ Joseph Jacquiot, *La Médaille au temps de Louis XIV*, catalogue of an exhibition, Hôtel de la Monnaie, Paris, January–March 1970 (Paris 1970), pp.121–123 no. 178. No other example cast in silver is recorded by Miselli (*op. cit.*), p. 603 no. 715.

¹¹ Ingrid Weber, in *Bauten Roms auf Münzen und Medaillen*, catalogue of an exhibition, Bayerischen Hauptstaatsarchiv, Munich (Munich 1973), p.104 no. 196.

¹² Luigi Michelini Tocci, 'Bernini nelle medaglie e nelle monete' in *Bernini in Vaticano / Comitato Vaticano per l'Anno Berniniano*, catalogue of an exhibition in the Braccio di Carlo Magno, Città del Vaticano, May–July 1981, edited by Anna Gramiccia (Rome 1981), p.305 no. 317; Marc Worsdale, in *Vatican Splendour: Masterpieces of Baroque Art*, catalogue of an exhibition at the National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, 6 March–11 May 1986 (Ottawa 1986), p.105 no. 32.

¹³ Giancarlo Alteri, *Summorum Romanorum Pontificum historia nomismatibus recensitis illustrata ab saeculo XV ad saeculum XX* (Città del Vaticano 2004), pp.160–161.

¹⁴ Armando Bernardelli and Renato Zirona, *Le medagliere dei Musei Civici di Vicenza, I. Le medaglie papali* (Vicenza 2007), pp.101 no. 556, 237 (reproduction).

¹⁵ Jochen Klauß, *Goethe als Medailensammler* (Weimar 1994), pp.111, 218 no. 53; J. Klauß, *Die Medailensammlung Goethes* (Berlin 2000), p.144 no. 477.

¹⁶ Augusto Donini, 'Scultura e architettura del barocco su medaglie papali' in *Medaglia 10* (1975), pp.127–130 fig.126.

¹⁷ Fiorenza Vannel and Giuseppe Toderi, *La medaglia barocca in Toscana* (Florence 1987), pp.18–19 fig.4.

¹ 'Ambitious in design and monumental in scale, this medal is one of the most impressive in the exhibition. Despite a superficial crack, extending from seven o'clock to four o'clock on the obverse, the piece is extremely attractive. The softness of contour, the molded quality of the forms, and the atmospheric effect of the background are products of the casting technique, while the clarity of the detail, the brown patina, and the gentle wearing of the surface suggest an early cast.'

² Mark S. Weil, 'Bernini drawings and bozzetti for the Ponte Sant' Angelo: a new look' in *Sketches in clay for projects by Gian Lorenzo Bernini: theoretical, technical, and case studies*, edited by Ivan Gaskell and Henry Lie (Cambridge, MA 1999), pp.144–150.

³ Nathan T. Whitman, in *Roma resurgens: Papal Medals from the Age of the Baroque*, catalogue of the 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 (Ann Arbor, MI 1983), p.130. See also, Timothy Clifford, in *Effigies & ecstasies: Roman baroque sculpture and design in the age of Bernini*, catalogue of the exhibition held at the National Gallery of Scotland, Edinburgh, 25 June–20 September 1998, curated by Timothy Clifford and Aidan Weston-Lewis (Edinburgh 1998), p.133; and Charles Avery, *Bernini: Genius of the Baroque* (London 1997), p.271 (medal illustrated p.173 fig.235).

⁴ Augusto Donini, 'Scultura e architettura del barocco su medaglie papali' in *Medaglia*, anno 5, 10 (1975), p.128; cf. Donini's *Ponti su monete e medaglie* (Rome 1959), p.141.

• [Stonyhurst College], bronze, 98 mm, a fine cast with the signature of Chéron incised on the rim (sale Christie's, 'Ancient English and foreign coins, banknotes and commemorative medals', London, 6 March 1990, lot 737, £2600) • Timothy Clifford collection, bronze, 96 mm, a poor cast without Chéron's signature on the rim (Spink & Son Ltd in association with Christie's, 'An Important collection of Renaissance and Baroque medals and plaquettes', London, 21 May 1996, lot 199, £380) • Charles Avery collection, bronze, 98 mm, a fine cast (Morton & Eden Ltd in association with Sotheby's, 'Coins and Medals including Renaissance and Later Medals from the Collection of Dr Charles Avery', London, 11 June 2008, lot 465, £4200; resold by Morton & Eden Ltd in association with Sotheby's, 'The Stack Collection: Important Renaissance Medals and Plaquettes', London, 9 December 2009, lot 223, £3200)¹⁸

REFERENCES Filippo Buonanni, *Numismata pontificum romanorum* (Rome 1699), pp.714–716 no. XIV; Ridolfino Venuti, *Numismata romanorum pontificum* (Rome 1744), pp.280–281 no. XIV; W.S. Lincoln & Son, *A Descriptive catalogue of papal medals* (London 1890), p.69 no. 1281; Walter Miselli, *Il papato dal 1605 al 1669 attraverso le medaglie* (Pavia [2003]), p.603 no. 715

¹⁸ Charles Avery, 'Soldani's models for medals and his training' in *Studies in The History of Art, 21: Italian Medals*, edited by J. Graham Pollard (Washington, DC 1987), p.15 fig.6.