



### Travani, Gioacchino Francesco

Rome? 1634 – 1675

### Foundation medal for the twin churches in the Piazza del Popolo

#### Rome 1662

BRONZE, very fine original cast. 66 mm diameter.

*Obverse* Bust to left, a portrait of Fabio Chigi, Pope Alexander VII (1655–1667), wearing cope with embroidery of Christ as the Redeemer, and tiara. Around, ALEX. VII. PONT. MAX. A. VII.; below truncation, 1662

*Reverse* View of the Piazza del Popolo, showing the three streets running off the piazza: at right the Via Leonina (later di Ripetta), in the centre Via Larga (later del Corso), and at left the Via Paolino (later del Babuino), with the churches of Santa Maria di Montesanto (left) and Santa Maria dei Miracoli (right), and in foreground the obelisk set up by Domenico Fontana in 1589. Around, SAPIENTIA. IN. PLATEIS. DAT. VOCEM. SVAM; below, MDCLXII (Wisdom gives voice in the squares of the city, *Proverbs*, I, 20)

PROVENANCE Stonyhurst College, Lancashire — sale Christie's, 'Ancient English and Foreign Coins, Banknotes, and Commemorative medals', London, 6 March 1990, lot 732



Reduced from Ø 66 mm

**I**n 1658 Pope Alexander VII commissioned the architect Carlo Rainaldi to build two churches in the Piazza del Popolo, both dedicated to the Virgin Mary, and foundation stones were laid in 1661 and 1662 respectively.

The reverse of our medal records Rainaldi's design at the time of laying the cornerstone of Santa Maria di Montesanto, on 15 July 1662, after Rainaldi had modified his original design by adding free-standing porticos, but before changes instituted by his collaborator, Carlo Fontana, in 1664, and by Rainaldi himself in 1665.<sup>1</sup> The piazza was given its present form between 1816 and 1820 by Giuseppe Valadier,

<sup>1</sup> Giovanni Incisa della Rocchetta, in 'La medaglia di Alessandro VII per S. Maria di Montesanto e S. Maria dei Miracoli', in *Messaggero*, 6 April 1926, published a letter from Rainaldi to Mons. Gastaldi (undated) regarding the completion of this medal. On the evidential value of the medal for Rainaldi's design, see Hellmut Hager, 'Zur Planungs- und Bauschichte der Zwillingskirchen auf der Piazza del Popolo' in *Römisches Jahrbuch für Kunstgeschichte* 11 (1967–1968), pp.191–307, especially p.212 ( medal reproduced as fig. 144).

who added the two curved bays at the sides and the terraces leading up to the Pincio.

This is one of the most picturesque of all papal architectural medals. The piazza is shown busy with pedestrians and carriages, clouds float overhead, and behind the new churches a complete townscape is visible. The high degree of illusionism is typical of the designs furnished by Gian Lorenzo Bernini to the papal medallist Travani, and it is generally assumed that the scene of the piazza depends from a Berninesque model so far undiscovered.

The portrait of Alexander VII on the obverse is the version with the Risen Christ embroidered in the stole. Travani also cast the portrait with embroidery depicting Christ on the way to Calvary, and again with the Annunciation.<sup>2</sup>

Examples known to the writer include

- Berlin, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Münzkabinett (silver 65.5 mm; bronze, 66 mm)<sup>3</sup>
- Bologna, Museo Civico Archeologico, Inv. 3518 (bronze, 65.5 mm)<sup>4</sup>
- Florence, Museo Nazionale del Bargello (bronze, 65.5 mm)<sup>5</sup>
- London, British Museum (bronze, 65 mm)<sup>6</sup>
- London, Victoria & Albert Museum, Inv. 1246.1893 (bronze, 66 mm)
- Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, Cabinet des Médailles, Inv. 985 (silver, 66 mm)
- Rome, Cassa di Risparmio di Roma (bronze, 66.10 mm, 79.27 g)<sup>7</sup>
- Stuttgart, Württembergisches Landesmuseum (silver,

65.5 mm)<sup>8</sup> • Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Gabinetto Numismatico (bronze, 66 mm)<sup>9</sup> • Weimar, Goethe-Nationalmuseum (bronze, 66 mm, 77.08 g)<sup>10</sup> • Private collection, Vincent P. O'Brien (bronze, 66 mm)<sup>11</sup> • Private collection (bronze, 66 mm)<sup>12</sup> • Private collection (bronze, 65 mm)<sup>13</sup>

REFERENCES Filippo Buonanni, *Numismata pontificum romanorum* (Rome 1699), p.695 no. XXXVII; Ridolfino Venuti, *Numismata romanorum pontificum* (Rome 1744), p.269 no. XXXVIII; W.S. Lincoln & Son, *A Descriptive catalogue of papal medals* (London 1890), p.65 no. 1219 (bronze); Edoardo Martinori, *Annali della Zecca di Roma* (Rome 1919), pp.70, 76; Walter Miselli, *Il papato dal 1605 al 1669 attraverso le medaglie* (Pavia [2003]), p.510 no. 601

<sup>2</sup> Miselli (*op. cit.*), p.506 no. 595.

<sup>3</sup> Lore Börner, *Die italienischen Medaillen der Renaissance und des Barock (1450 bis 1750)*, Bestandskataloge des Münzkabinetts Berlin (Berlin 1997), p.249 nos. 1153.1–2.

<sup>4</sup> Daniela Picchi, 'Suggestioni culturali e sopravvivenze iconografiche dell'antico Egitto nella medaglistica italiana del XV e XVI secolo' in *XIII Congreso Internacional de Numismática, Madrid, 2003: actas-proceedings-actes*, edited by Carmen Alfaro, Carmen Marcos and Paloma Otero (Madrid 2005), pp.1737–1742 figs. 12–13.

<sup>5</sup> Fiorenza Vannel and Giuseppe Toderi, *Medaglie italiane del Museo Nazionale del Bargello. Volume II: Secolo XVII* (Florence 2005), p.61 no. 510.

<sup>6</sup> 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), pp.249–262, fig. 21; Jennifer Montagu, *Gold, silver and bronze: Metal sculpture of the Roman Baroque* (New Haven & London 1996), p.90 fig. 139; Timothy Clifford, in *Effigies & Ecstasies. Roman Baroque sculpture and design in the age of Bernini*, catalogue of an exhibition, National Gallery of Scotland (Edinburgh 1998), p.130 no. 91.

<sup>7</sup> Giancarlo Alteri, 'L'Area di Via del Corso nella numismatica' in *Via del Corso: una strada lunga 2000 anni*, catalogue of an exhibition, Museo del Corso, Rome, 8 May–30 September 1999 (Rome 1999), pp.197–198 no. v.10; another example, *Una collezione da scoprire: Capolavori dal '500 al '700 dell'Ente Cassa di Risparmio di Roma*, catalogue of an exhibition, Museo del Corso, Rome, 2 February–31 March 1999, edited by Giancarlo Alteri and Anna Coliva (Rome 1999), pp.109, 170 no. 42 (bronze, 63 mm, 80 g).

<sup>8</sup> Ingrid Weber, in *Bauten Roms auf Münzen und Medaillen*, catalogue of an exhibition, Staatliche Münzsammlung (Munich 1973), pp.145–146 no. 247 (attributed to Gaspare Morone).

<sup>9</sup> Fritz Dworschak, 'Der Medailleur Gianlorenzo Bernini' in *Jahrbuch der Preussischen Kunstsammlungen* 55 (1934), pp.27–44, Taf. III, no. 3; Luigi Michelini Tocci, in *Bernini in Vaticano*, catalogue of an exhibition in the Braccio di Carlo Magno, Città del Vaticano, May–July 1981, edited by Anna Gramiccia (Rome 1981), p.297 no. 300.

<sup>10</sup> Jochen Klauß, *Die Medaillensammlung Goethes* (Berlin 2000), p.136 no. 441.

<sup>11</sup> *Roma Resurgens: Papal Medals from the Age of the Baroque*, catalogue of an exhibition, Mount Holyoke College, University of Chicago & University of Michigan (Ann Arbor 1983), pp.118–119 no. 100.

<sup>12</sup> John Varriano, 'The Architecture of Papal Medals' in *Projects and Monuments in the Period of the Roman Baroque*, edited by Hellmut Hager and Susan Munshower (University Park, PA 1984), pp.69–82 fig. 4/n.

<sup>13</sup> *Das Papsttum im Spiegel von Münzen und Medaillen*, catalogue of an exhibition, Bischöflichen Zentralbibliothek, Regensburg, 3 July–29 September 2006, edited by Paul Mai (Regensburg 2006), p.168 no. 387 (as by Gaspare Morone).