

**Travani, Gioacchino Francesco**

Rome? 1634 – 1675

**Foundation medal for S. Maria dell'Assunzione, Ariccia**

**Rome 1662**

BRONZE, very fine original cast. 67 mm diameter. Pierced at 12:00.

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

*Reverse* Front elevation of Santa Maria dell'Assunzione in Ariccia. Around, [star] BENE . FVNDATA . DOMVS . DOMINI [star]; below, on a scroll, B . VIRGINI ARCINORVM PATRONAE

PROVENANCE Stonyhurst College, Lancashire — sale Christie's, 'Ancient English and Foreign Coins, Banknotes, and Commemorative medals', London, 6 March 1990, lot 731



Reduced from Ø 67 mm

**T**HE FOUNDATION MEDAL for the suburban church of Santa Maria dell'Assunzione in Ariccia, commissioned from the architect Gian Lorenzo Bernini by Pope Alexander VII, and completed in 1665. Like many foundation medals it records the formative rather than the final stage of the building's design. The medal, which was ready by 28 January 1662, pre-dates by at least a year the decision to frame the round church with *loggie*.

An entry in the diary of Alexander VII for 13 December 1661, documents Bernini's responsibility for the design of the present medal, and for one of the nearby Santuario della Madonna in Galloro: 'Accomodiamo le lettere al Cavaliere Bernino per le medaglie alle chiese dell' Ariccia'.<sup>1</sup> A drawing by Bernini of the front elevation survives, however it is unlikely that it was intended for the medallist.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Richard Krautheimer and R. Jones, 'The Diary of Alexander VII: Notes on Art, Artists, and Buildings' in *Römisches Jahrbuch für Kunstgeschichte* 15 (1975), pp.199–233 no. 529.

<sup>2</sup> Heinrich Brauer and Rudolph Wittkower, *Die Zeichnungen des Gianlorenzo Bernini* (Berlin 1931), I, pp.124–125, II, plate 95; also reproduced 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 fig. 106.

Gioacchino Francesco Travani was one of three ‘Consuls’ of the goldsmiths’ guild in Rome and from about 1655 until 1673 engraver at the papal mint.<sup>3</sup> He cast a series of medals executed from designs supplied by Bernini, often commemorating Bernini’s own architectural projects.

Published examples of this medal, which is known only in bronze, include

- Berlin, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Münzkabinett (66.4 mm)<sup>4</sup>
- Brunswick, ME, Bowdoin College (65 mm, old aftercast with diagonal casting crack on reverse)<sup>5</sup>
- London, British Museum (66 mm)<sup>6</sup>
- Modena, Galleria e Medagliere Estense, Inv. 3579 (66 mm)<sup>7</sup>
- New York, Michael Hall collection (67 mm)<sup>8</sup>
- [Rome], Francesco Calveri Collection (65 mm, 77.4 g)<sup>9</sup>
- Siena, Museo Civico (66 mm)<sup>10</sup>
- Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Gabinetto Numismatico (66.5 mm,<sup>11</sup> 67 mm<sup>12</sup>)
- Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Münzkabinett, Inv. 10197/1914/B (67 mm)<sup>13</sup>
- Private Collection (66 mm)<sup>14</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Costantino Bulgari, *Argentieri, gemmari e orafi d’Italia. Parte prima* (Rome 1959), II, p.482.

<sup>4</sup> Hermann Voss, ‘Eine Medaille Lorenzo Berninis’ in *Zeitschrift für Numismatik* 28 (1910), pp.231–235; Lore Börner, *Die italienischen Medaillen der Renaissance und des Barock (1450 bis 1750)*, Bestandskataloge des Münzkabinetts Berlin (Berlin 1997), p.254 no. 1181.

<sup>5</sup> Andrea Norris and Ingrid Weber, *Medals and Plaquettes from the Molinari Collection at Bowdoin College* (Brunswick 1976), p. 35 no. 98.

<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.257–258, fig. 12; Timothy Clifford, in *Effigies & ecstasies (op. cit.)*, p.190 no. 90.

<sup>7</sup> Elena Corradini, *Museo e Medagliere Estense tra Otto e Novecento* (Modena [1996]), p.68 no. 7 and p.130 no. 48/7.

<sup>8</sup> *Roma Resurgens: Papal Medals from the Age of the Baroque*, catalogue of an exhibition, Mount Holyoke College, University of Chicago and University of Michigan (Ann Arbor, MI 1983), pp.116–117 no. 98. Sold by Baldwin’s, ‘Auction 66: The Michael Hall Collection: Medallion portraits from the Renaissance to the Nineteenth Century (Part Two)’, London, 29 June 2010, lot 1132.

<sup>9</sup> Francesco M. Calveri, *La memoria dei Papi: medaglie dalle origini al Giubileo del 2000* (Rome 1999), p.133 no. 67.

<sup>10</sup> Margherita Anselmi Zondadari, in *Alessandro VII Chigi (1599–1667): Il Papa Senese di Roma Moderna*, catalogue of an exhibition, Palazzo Pubblico and Palazzo Chigi Zondadari (Siena 2000), pp.154–155 no. 79.

<sup>11</sup> 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.298 no. 301.

<sup>12</sup> Giancarlo Alteri, *Summorum Romanorum Pontificum historia numismatibus recensitis illustrata ab saeculo XV ad saeculum XX* (Città del Vaticano 2004), pp.149–150 fig. 13.

<sup>13</sup> Fritz Dworschak, ‘Der Medailleur Gianlorenzo Bernini’ in *Jahrbuch der Preußischen Kunstsammlungen* 55 (1934), pp.27–41; Taf. III, no. 4.

<sup>14</sup> *L’Ariccia del Bernini*, catalogue of an exhibition in the Palazzo Chigi in Ariccia, 10 October–31 December 1998 (Rome 1998), pp.106–108 no. 23B.

REFERENCES Filippo Buonanni, *Numismata pontificum romanorum* (Rome 1699), pp.694–695, no. XXXVI; Ridolfino Venuti, *Numismata romanorum pontificum* (Rome 1744), p.266–267, no. XXXIV; *Trésor de Numismatique et de Glyptique: Choix Historique des Médailles des Papes* (Paris 1839), pl.XXXIII, no. 6; W.S. Lincoln & Son, *A Descriptive catalogue of papal medals* (London 1890), p.65 no. 1209; Walter Miselli, *Il papato dal 1605 al 1669 attraverso le medaglie* (Pavia [2003]), p.503 no. 592 and p.621 (associated drawing)