

Sassi, Francesco GerolamoMilan *circa* 1663 – 1731 Milan**Religio in Aula. Laus Augustiss. Conjugum Magni Leopoldi Austriaci, et Eleonoræ Magdalenæ Teresiæ Neoburgensis. Authore Francisco Hieronymo Saxio, olim Præposito Gener. Congreg. Oblatorum Sanctorum Ambrosii, et Caroli, nunc Mediolanensis Ecclesiæ Canonico Ordinario, Comite &c.****Milan, Giuseppe Pandolfo Malatesta, 1724**

BOOK IN SHEETS (twelve sheets 450 × 345 mm, each imposed with eight pages; and three half-sheets 225 × 345 mm, each imposed with four pages), apparently complete, making-up as a QUARTO, signed a⁴ A–L⁴ M⁶ and paginated (8) 1–99 (1), ornamented by an engraved head-piece (platemark 32 × 115 mm, A1r), initial C (platemark 42 × 42 mm, a2r), and initial A (platemark 39 × 32 mm, A1r); plus an engraving signed *Jo. Bap. Saxsus del. | C: B. Sculp. Med.* (platemark 224 × 172 mm, sheet 220 × 320 mm).

CONTENTS title as transcribed above (a1r; verso blank), dedication to Charles VI (a2r–a3v), *Ad Lectorem* (a4r–a4v), text, commencing ‘Augusto exceptam solio, sceptrique potentem | Virtutem cano, quae sacris occludere septis’ (A1r–M6r), *Imprimatur* 18 May 1724 (M6v).

PAPER uniform stock, watermark of an imperial eagle with triangle countermark (within a triangle)

In fine state of preservation.

A EULOGY IN VERSE of Eleonora Maddalena Teresa, Pfalzgräfin von Neuburg (1655–1720), third wife of Leopold I (1640–1705), and mother of the reigning Emperor Charles VI (1685–1740), to whom the work is dedicated by its author. Although properly licensed, correctly imposed and printed, the book may never have been issued: there is no trace of it in relevant bibliographies, and no copy has been located in a thorough search through a broad range of printed and electronic library catalogues.

The author was the elder brother of Giuseppe Antonio Sassi (1675–1751), prefect of the Biblioteca Ambrosiana, and principal collaborator of Filippo Argelati in compilation of the *Bibliotheca Scriptorum Mediolanensium* (Milan 1745).¹ The notice of Francesco Sassi

¹ Fausto Ruggeri, in *Dizionario della Chiesa ambrosiana* (Milan 1992), v, pp.3226–3226.

which appears in that magisterial work (II, cols. 1295–1297) may have been prepared by Giuseppe Antonio: eight printed books (all published at Milan, between 1699 and 1724)² are listed, together with eight manuscript works (all said to be in the possession of Giuseppe Antonio, ‘Ms. Penès Clariss. Joseph Antonium ejus fratrem’). No mention is made of *Religio in Aula*.

An engraving accompanying the work shows the Virgin in Glory, displaying a portrait of his parents to the Emperor Charles VI. The draughtsman is identified in the matrice as another brother of the author, Giovanni Battista Sassi (1679–1762).³

² Three of these books are cited here in the author’s *Ad lectorem* (a4r): *Christi laudes, quibus carmine elegantissimo Vitam, Miracula, Passionem, & Mortem Servatoris nostri describit* (Milan, Domenico Bellagatta, 1712), *Mariae Laudes, seu historico-poetica ejus purissimae vitae descriptio additis SS. Scripturarum, & Patrum testimoniis, ac notis, in quibus vera a falsis, certa a dubiis discernuntur... Pars I* (Milan, Giuseppe Richino Malatesta, 1719), *Mara laudes... Pars altera* (Milan, Domenico Bellagatta, 1724).

³ Amalia Barigozzi Brini, in *Dizionario della Chiesa ambrosiana* (Milan 1992), v, pp.3224–3225. In recent research, G.B. Sassi has emerged as ‘uno dei principali esponenti dal barocche milanese’; see Vittorio Caprara, in *Il Settecento Lombardo*, catalogue of an exhibition in the Palazzo Reale, 1 February–28 April 1991 (Milan 1993), pp.176–178. Several of Giovanni Battista’s drawings are in the Biblioteca Ambrosiana (web catalogue by Robert Randolph Coleman) and three of his prints are in the Raccolta Bertarelli, Milan (Micaela Bussolera, ‘Testimonianze su G.B. Sassi’, in *Arte lombarda*, 5, 1960, p.99 note 3). At the time of publication, he was working on frescoes in S. Giovanni alle Case Rotte (1723–1725).