



Reduced from Ø 87 mm

Hamerani, Beatrice

Rome 1677 – 1704 Rome

The Beneficence of Innocent XII (Complimentary Medal, Year 3 – 1693)

Rome 1694

SILVER, a fine original cast. 87 mm diameter. Small piercing above head.



Obverse Bust to right, a portrait of Antonio Pignatelli, Pope Innocent XII (1691–1700), bearded, wearing cassock, cap, and stole ornamented with cross and Pignatelli insignia. Around, INNOCEN . XII PONT . OPT . MAX . A . III; below truncation, in a flamboyant script BEATRIX . HAMERANA. Reeded border

Reverse A pelican standing on a pedestal adorned by papal insignia and date 1694, tearing its breast to feed other birds with its blood, a vast rocky landscape behind, and another flock of pelicans in the sky. Around, SINVM . SVVM . APERVIT . EGENIS, and on a pedestal, 1694. Reeded border

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 1204

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), p.155 no. 141

THE ONLY SILVER EXAMPLE KNOWN of this cast medal, depicting on its obverse the 76-year old Pope Innocent XII, and on the reverse, a pelican reviving her chicks with her own blood, the traditional depiction of Christian charity.

The medal was created by Beatrice Hamerani, the youngest person (she was not yet seventeen years of age) and for three centuries the only woman to have produced a papal medal.¹ Goethe possessed an example in bronze, which his artistic advisor, Johann Heinrich Meyer (1760–1832), famously described as ‘undoubtedly one of the most skilful, expressive, and powerful productions of art which ever came from the hands of a woman’.²

The daughter of Giovanni II (Martino) Hamerani (1646–1705), chief die engraver of the papal mint, Beatrice worked beside her father in the family *bottega* in via dei Coronari, until her marriage in 1703. She died during childbirth, on 25 February 1704.³ Apart from this medal, Beatrice is known by two medallic portraits of Pope Clement XI: one (32 mm diameter, signed BEA. HAMERANI F.) was struck in 1702 as the annual medal, in order to fulfil a commission granted to her ill father, and has a reverse depicting the consecration of Carlo Tommaso Maillard de Tournon as apostolic legate to China;⁴ the other portrait (30 mm diameter, signed B.H.) was issued posthumously, in 1712 (24 March) and 1713 (13

¹ The annual medal for Pope John Paul II in 1989 was commissioned from Silvia Petrassi; see Giancarlo Alteri, *Summorum Romanorum Pontificum historia numismatibus recensitis illustrata ab saeculo XV ad saeculum XX* (Città del Vaticano 2004), p.578 fig. 17.

² Johann Heinrich Meyer, ‘Entwurf einer Kunstgeschichte des achtzehnten Jahrhunderts’ in *Winckelmann und sein Jahrhundert*, edited by Johann Wolfgang Goethe (Tübingen 1805), p.265: ‘...ohne Zweifel eins der kräftigsten, ausdrucksvollsten und tüchtigsten Kunstprodukte, die aus weiblichen Händen hervorgegangen sind’ (cf. edition by Helmut Holtzauer, Leipzig 1969, p.156). Meyer’s praise is often misattributed to Goethe himself; cf. Elizabeth Fries Ellet, *Women artists in all ages and countries* (London 1859), p.60.

³ Friedrich Noack, ‘Die Hamerans in Rom’ in *Archiv für Medaillen- und Plaketten-Kunde* 3 (1921–1922), pp.30–31; Constantino Bulgari, *Argentieri gemmari e orafi d’Italia. Parte prima – Roma* (Rome 1959), II, p.8.

⁴ Walter Miselli, *Il Papato dal 1700 al 1730 attraverso le medaglie* (Turin 1998), p.46 no. 28. Alteri 2004 (*op. cit.*), pp.195–197 and figs. 3–4, p.578, citing Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Ms Lat. 7292, f.252v: ‘...la quale fu da lei intagliata per supplire al bisogno in tempo della paterna infermità...’.

April), on both occasions in conjunction with her father’s scene of Christ washing Saint Peter’s feet on Maundy Thursday.⁵ Beatrice’s signature is also found on twenty-six devotional medals for pilgrims (oval or oblong, mostly 22 × 18 mm, with two larger: 28 × 24 mm and 46 × 37 mm) which survive uniquely in the Museo Franciscano in Rome.⁶

The present medal – her ‘vero e proprio capolavoro’⁷ – is known to the writer by these examples (all cast in bronze)

- Brembilla (Milan), Mario Scaglia Collection (partially gilt bronze, 87.8 mm)⁸
- Brescia, Musei Civici d’Arte e Storia, Gabinetto Numismatico (88 mm)⁹
- Budapest, Magyar Nemzeti Múzeum, Inv. 1208 (87 mm)
- London, British Museum, Department of Coins and Medals (87.8 mm)¹⁰
- Madrid, Museo Arqueológico Nacional, Inv. 1994/1379 (87 mm)
- Milan, Civiche Raccolte Numismatiche, Inv. 390 (87 mm)¹¹
- Milan, Johnson Collection (gilt bronze, 87 mm)¹²
- Munich, Staatliche Münzsammlung (88 mm)¹³
- Oxford, Ashmolean Museum (88 mm)
- Vatican City,

⁵ Miselli 2001 (*op. cit.*), pp.83–84 no. 83 (1712); p.93 no. 90 (1713, legend emended to XIII). Cf. nos. 112, 128, 139, reputed later striking.

⁶ Servus Gieben, ‘Un campionario di 630 medaglie di devozione della bottega Hamerani’ in *Collectanea Franciscana* 76 (2006), pp.254, 262–263, 291. The ‘campionario’ is a ‘pattern book’ of 630 medals by the Hamerani family, struck on silvered copperplate, the medals attached to twenty-four sheets of cardboard.

⁷ *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, 61 (Rome 2003), p.646.

⁸ Lucia Simonato, in *La raccolta Mario Scaglia: dipinti e sculture, medaglie e placchette da Pisanello a Ceruti*, catalogue of an exhibition held in the Museo Poldi Pezzoli, Milan, 30 October 2007–30 March 2008 (Cinisello Balsamo 2007), pp.158–159 no. 61; cf. *L’arte delle donne: dal Rinascimento al Surrealismo*, catalogue of an exhibition held at Palazzo Reale di Milano, 5 December 2007–9 March 2008 (Milan 2007), p.14.

⁹ Prospero Rizzini, *Illustrazione dei civici musei di Brescia. Medaglie* (Brescia 1893), p.28 no. 358; Vincenzo Pialorsi, ‘Le medaglie dei Musei Civici di Brescia. 2° parte: Seicento, Settecento ed Ottocento’ in *Medaglia* 18 (1983), p.25 fig. 26. This example also reproduced by Miselli 2001 (*op. cit.*), no. 310.

¹⁰ British Museum, Department of Coins and Medals, *A guide to the exhibition of Italian medals*, by Charles Francis Keary (second edition, London 1893), pp.87–88 no. 343.

¹¹ Velia Johnson, ‘Mostra della medaglia Barocca Italiana’ [Biblioteca Trivulziana, Milan, November 1979] in *Velia Johnson. Dieci anni di studi di medaglistica 1968–78* (Milan 1979), pp.204–205 fig. 215.

¹² Cesare Johnson, *Collezione Johnson di medaglie, I. – Secoli XV–XVIII* (Milan 1990), pp.158–159 no. 158.

¹³ *SinnbilderWelten: emblematische Medien in der frühen Neuzeit*, catalogue of an exhibition in the Bayerischen Staatsbibliothek, Munich, 11 August–1 October 1999, edited by Wolfgang Harms, Gilbert Hess and Dietmar Peil (Munich 1999), p.71 no. 101.

Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Medagliere, Inv. 2296–2697 (two examples, 88.2 mm)¹⁴ • Verona, Museo di Castelvecchio, Inv. 14746 (87 mm) • Vicenza, Musei Civici di Vicenza, Medagliere (88 mm)¹⁵ • Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Münzkabinett, Inv. 104bβ (87.5 mm)¹⁶ • Weimar, Goethe-Nationalmuseum (86 mm)¹⁷ • Private collection (88 mm)¹⁸

REFERENCES Filippo Buonanni, *Numismata pontificum romanorum, quæ à tempore Martini V. usque ad annum M.DC.XCIX.* (Rome 1699), II, p.831 no. XIII; Ridolfino Venuti, *Numismata Romanorum Pontificum præstantiora, à Martino V. ad Benedictum XIV* (Rome 1744), p.320 no. x; W.S. Lincoln & Son, *A Descriptive catalogue of papal medals* (London 1890), p.82 no. 1545 (bronze); Walter Miselli, *Il papato dal 1669 al 1700 attraverso le medaglie* (Pavia 2001), p.301 no. 310

¹⁴ Giancarlo Alteri, *Medaglie Papali del Medagliere della Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana*, catalogue of an exhibition, 29 September–1 October 1995 (Rome 1995), p.86 no. 58. One of these – or another example – is reproduced by Marica Mercalli, ‘Le Medaglie del pontificato di Innocenzo XII’ in *Le Immagini del Santissimo Salvatore: Fabbriche e sculture per l’Ospizio Apostolico dei Poveri Invalidi*, catalogue of an exhibition, Castel Sant’Angelo, Rome, 16 December–5 February 1989 (Rome 1988), pp.45–46, 54–55 no. 9 (bronze, 88.10 mm, 218.71 g; with location Medagliere, XXVIII, 91, 9).

¹⁵ Armando Bernardelli and Renato Zirona, *Le medaglie dei Musei Civici di Vicenza, I. Le medaglie papali* (Vicenza 2007), pp.107 no. 627, 247 (reproduction).

¹⁶ *An illustrated guide to the collections in the Museum of Fine Arts* (Kunsthistorisches Museum) at Vienna (Vienna [1927]), p.135 no. 16 (then exhibited in Room XXXVI).

¹⁷ Jochen Klauß, *Goethe als Medailensammler* (Weimar 1994), pp.134, 222 no. 76; J. Klauß, *Die Medailensammlung Goethes* (Berlin 2000), p.165 no. 559.

¹⁸ Fiorenza Vannel and Giuseppe Toderi, *La medaglia barocca in Toscana* (Florence 1987), p.24 fig. 15.