

Stephanie C. Leone. *Pamphilj and the Arts: Patronage and Consumption in Baroque Rome*.

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Piazza Navona is Rome's splendid testimony to the culture of Baroque nepotism. Pope Innocent X Pamphilj (1644–55) with his nephew Camillo built Palazzo Pamphilj, the Pamphilj Gallery with the famous *Aeneas* frescoes by Pietro da Cortona, the family church of Sant'Agnese, and the Collegio Innocenziano, and allowed Bernini to install two fountains, the *Four Rivers* and the *Moro*. The ancient stadium underlying the piazza was turned into a dynastic enclave presided over by the heraldic globe and dove (*pan + philos*) of a family that had begun its ascent two hundred years earlier with an immigrant lawyer from Gubbio. The Pamphilj took five generations to rise to the summit but, after the pope's death, enjoyed only three generations of post-nepotism (to use James Harper's fetching phrase). Camillo, cardinal for only three years, "returned the red hat" and married the wealthy widow Olimpia Aldobrandini Borghese. The couple produced three children, but when their last grandson died in 1760 without male issue, the palaces and titles passed to the Doria Landi of Genoa, thus creating the Doria Pamphilj, known to gallery goers from their splendid palace on the Corso.

The present volume is the result of a conference on Pamphilj patronage held at Boston College in 2010; it complements the fine monograph on Palazzo Pamphilj published by Stephanie Leone in 2008. Though the emphasis falls on the late Baroque, several contributions deal with the making of the piazza under Innocent X. Tod Marder and Maria Grazia D'Amelio discuss the *Four Rivers Fountain* from the point of view of construction, using documents from that fecund source, the *fabbrica* of St. Peter's, to put a feather in Bernini's somewhat wrinkled cap as an engineer. Andrea De Marchi turns up a magnificent Baroque telescope in a forgotten cupboard and pieces together Camillo's telescope collection, while Laurie Shepard has us listen to pasquinades and murmurs evincing popular discontent. Laura Stagno studies the dynastic marriage of 1671 that laid the foundation for the Doria inheritance a century later.

The hero of the volume, however, is Benedetto Pamphilj (1653–1730), the younger son of Camillo, raised to the cardinalate in 1681 and active for the next fifty years as a collector of paintings, bibliophile, and patron of music. Lina Montalto wrote a superb monograph on Benedetto in 1955. She idolized her subject and had the run of the archives, but perspectives have changed and the present volume is replete with new material and innovative approaches.

Benedetto was educated at the Collegio Romano and Paul Grendler's informative paper explores the system of Jesuit education, especially of aristocrats. An especially compelling essay by James Weiss dissects the politics of the Sacred College that Benedetto joined at age twenty-eight, where consanguinity mattered far more than religion, zeal, or doctrine. Benedetto participated in five conclaves, usually as a member of the right-thinking Zelanti, the faction that stood above

faction. In the first three he was too young to be elected, while by the last two he had withdrawn from public life in such an extreme way that his election was out of the question.

Through Weiss's rich notes we come across Oratio d'Elci, the count whose brilliant character sketches of the cardinals who would go into the conclave of 1700, written for Ferdinando de' Medici and published shortly afterward in London, probe the inner recesses of Benedetto's personality. As a spirited aristocrat of twenty Benedetto cut a figure in the streets of Rome with the "sunflower" carriage that Stefanie Walker recreates in a sparkling study of the role of decorated allegorical carriages in noble life. An intelligent youth (the Jesuits did not give away their doctorates in theology to dolts), he bought books all his life and had Carlo Fontana convert a wing of the family palace into a splendid library, which is studied in a cornucopian article by Alessandra Mercantini. He inherited a superb painting collection from his Aldobrandini mother (Catherine Puglisi reconstructs the chapel that originally housed the six famous Aldobrandini lunettes); but he added 1,400 paintings to it, especially in the genre he loved most, the still-life. Here, Stephanie Leone draws rich material from the archives to reconstruct his relations with the art market.

However, a spring seems to have snapped in the cardinal's psyche after the death of his lovely mother, when he began to distance himself from the curial routine and to withdraw into melancholy. He continued to be generous to an array of worthy causes as long as they required no exertion on his part. Compared to his father and older brother (who between them built Bernini's Sant'Andrea al Quirinale as well as Piazza Navona), Benedetto left behind only the faintest visible trace as a patron. Few tourists, as they look through the famous keyhole on the Aventine, know that the allée of trees through which they see St. Peter's was planted by Benedetto in the garden of his beloved Knights of Malta. Although he left an estate valued at a million scudi, there is no tomb or monument of any sort to him in Sant'Agnese. His genius was as a patron of entertainment, which vanishes as the dishes are cleared and the strings and woodwinds packed away. Daria Borghese studies his menus in an essay on food history that lights up his receptions in Rome and at his country seats.

The dynamite essay of the book is by Ellen Harris, who, harking back to her study of 2001, *Handel as Orpheus*, puts under her lens the cantatas Benedetto wrote for the young German composer, freshly arrived in Rome in 1703. (Her essay is reinforced by Alexandra Nigito, who studies the composer Carlo Francesco Cesarini, in charge of Pamphilj entertainments for forty years; by Carolyn Gianturco and Eleanor McCrickard in their notes on the composer Alessandro Stradella; and by Vernon Hyde Minor, who lifts the lid off homosexual culture in the Roman Accademia dell'Arcadia.) During his time in Rome, Handel preferred to live with the spendthrift Marchese Ruspoli, while pursuing the mistress of his Florentine patron. However, it was Benedetto who wrote the most moving of the cantatas that the twenty-one-year-old composer set to music during his Roman sojourn.

Let us take leave of Benedetto at a concert of 1709 in the Lateran. The cardinal was fifty-six and had arranged for Handel to play on the great Montano organ in the

transept. Benedetto loved the Lateran and thought of it as a family church. Innocent X had restored the nave with Borromini's elegant architecture and Benedetto himself had pledged 20,000 scudi to build the façade on the designs Borromini left behind. He rounded up funds from the cream of Catholic Europe to pay for the most expensive sculpture program of the age, the twelve colossal Apostles installed in the nave between 1702 and 1718. The concert of 1709 brought Handel out of the salons and showed the Roman public that he had no peer at the keyboard, not even Alessandro Scarlatti. As he listened, Benedetto thought of the cantatas he had written for Handel, tender poems in which the Soul, at the crossroads of Pleasure and Good Counsel, meets a *leggiadro giovinetto* in the Palace of Pleasure, whose hands have wings and whose alluring music awakens *bel diletto* and, just when the Soul had hung its motionless plectrum on a dry tree, forces it into renewed song. Benedetto still had two decades of entertainments and generous patronage before him, and an undiminished output of cantatas, but this coded language taps the wellsprings of desire that, for a moment, inspired this most cultured of Baroque cardinals.

JOSEPH CONNORS
Harvard University