

THE PALACE-CITY INTERFACE: SHIFTING DEFINITIONS
OF MOVEMENT AND PLACE IN EARLY MODERN ROME

by

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Modern Rome

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This essay considers four seventeenth-century Roman palaces in the contexts of topographical setting and city circulation, with particular attention to the façade as a definer of place. It draws on seventeenth-century guidebooks, etchings, and maps, analyzing them within the frameworks of papal urbanism and dynastic self-representation. The results of the analysis show that, during each pontificate from 1605-67, the pope encouraged his relatives to develop or redevelop the family palace in a way that would inscribe their image onto the city. Once constructed, each palace became the center of an urban node, symbolically connected with other monumental landmarks by the viewer's movement through the city. The space around the palace façade was also subject to design, and each pope utilized different strategies to enhance the location and context of his family's palace. Comparing the cases, the essay argues that Innocent X and Alexander VII integrated public-welfare urbanism more fully into the family palace project. More broadly, this comparative study reveals some qualities of early modern urban theory and design, as well as shifts in urban planning mentality.

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Mom and Dad, this is for you.

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Introduction

In order to inscribe the family image onto the city the seventeenth century pope lead an initiative to re-direct the movement of people around the city as well as the approach toward the family palace, thus engineering the perception of its façade. The movement of the elite, that is, of foreign ambassadors, kings and queens, ecclesiastics and nobles, and relatives of the pope, was an inherent mechanism in the city for



Fig. 1 *Il Carnevale al Corso*, 1740. From *La Festa a Roma*, edited by Marcello Fagiolo dell'Arco.

controlling the perception of not only family image but also topographic authority, and ultimately one's topographic legacy. In the wake of Urban VIII's reign (1623-44) one can

detect a clear shift in the way that the pope inscribed his legacy onto the urban fabric. Rather than focusing his

attention on how the nobility would move through the city, Innocent X Pamphilj and Alexander VII Chigi more acutely defined the movement of the general public. As a result of their urban planning campaigns, the family palace immediately became the new symbolic center of the city because of the generous and salubrious space that surrounded it. During Innocent X's reign, Piazza Navona became *the* central node of Rome, a cultural and social space revitalized as a result of Pamphilj patronage. During

the pontificate of Alexander VII Chigi, Piazza Colonna, the Corso, and *Piazza San Pietro* were all enlarged and designed with an eye to movement, sightlines, and the idea that public space was a *teatro*, or theatre, of human activity. A comparison of the etchings and maps from before and after 1645 reveals a significant shift of thought in early modern Roman urbanism. Innocent X and Alexander VII integrated public-welfare urbanism more fully into the family palace project than their predecessors (Paul V and Urban VIII) did.

The argument of this essay is supported by using seventeenth-century guidebooks, etchings, and maps as well as research conducted in the field. Two maps are considered in detail: the Tempesta map of 1593 and the Nolli map of 1748. During the initial analysis and research process, more questions were created than were answered. Looking at all pontificates of the early modern period is beyond the scope of this paper. Recognizing that limitation, this paper only considers four pontificates from 1605-67, a period which most historians characterize as the High Baroque. This particular period eye ultimately shaped the following questions. How was papal urbanism related to private building campaigns? How was the papal family palace related to other landmarks in the city? How did movement through the city shape the view of that palace? Were there any differences between these particular sites?

The point of analyzing these two maps was to understand the topography of the city and to see how the streets shaped and defined the approach to the palace, and thus the perception of the façade. Looking at the urban fabric holistically is a way to understand how each palace was spatially related to other landmarks, and thus to see the potential symbolism in associating the palace with other landmark/s that collectively

make up the identity of the city.¹ They are also important because they demonstrate the city before the reign of Paul V Borghese (r. 1604-21) and after the reign of Alexander VII Chigi (r. 1655-67). Thus, the Nolli map represents some of the legacy left behind by each pope.

The etchings, in turn, reveal the impression of these landmarks from the ground level. They reveal a remarkable amount about each façade, the space around it, the figures using that space, and the emotional impact of the façade. Moreover, they reveal a view that was unlike any others, one that was predominant in the minds of artists; a view that had significantly more emotional impact than any other alternative approach. As artistic renderings, they are inherently designs; constructions based on the aspects the artists thought worthy of attention. They cannot be analyzed as fact, but they do reveal certain characteristics of the palace and the site that were truly there, characteristics that were truly extra-ordinary.

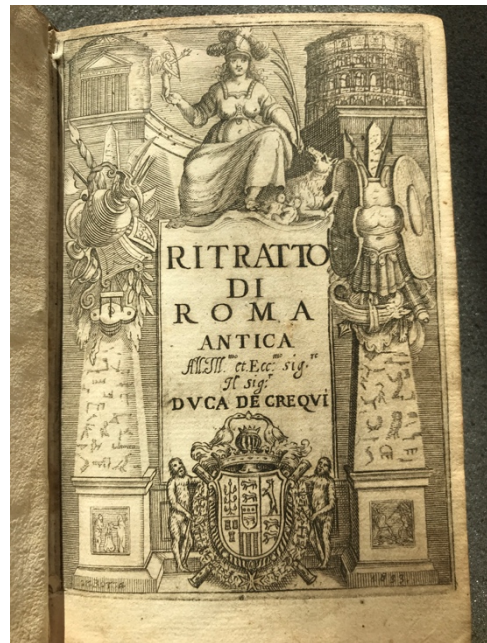


Fig. 2 Guidebook by Pompilio Totti, first published 1633, from College of Design Library, University of Oregon.

¹ My understanding of landmark and node comes from Kevin Lynch, specifically from *The Image of the City*. Lynch, Kevin. *The Image of the City*. Publication of the Joint Center for Urban Studies. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1960.

The guidebooks provide an opportunity to analyze the maps and etchings from a tourist's perspective. The method was to look at the table of contents and some of the images like a tourist² in order to gain a general understanding of how seventeenth century travelers would have seen the city. As visitor guidebooks, they reveal the parts of Rome that were considered to be worth seeing in the seventeenth century and, like the etchings, also reveal one's impression of particular sites, landmarks, nodes and facades.

These sources are collectively used to explain how one moved through the city and where one felt a sense of place.³ They reveal the stand-out spots of the city, the spaces that were important, and the facades that were predominant. Furthermore, they help explain how movement was inherent in the urban planning process. To widen a street or to open up a piazza was to consider how pedestrians would move through them and use them. To redevelop a palace, and to design the façade, was to consider how one would approach it, and thus, how one would perceive it. Constructing the perception of the façade was important for the pope and his family because they held the local political and cultural authority. Representing themselves through architectural patronage was one of the most emphatic and enduring ways to legitimize their power. The guidebooks, etchings, and maps, therefore, collectively reveal how the palace could represent the family's physical and symbolic position in the urban landscape.

² The seventeenth-century term that was given to people who guided others around the city was "sights-man". See De Beer, E.S. *The Diary of John Evelyn*. London: Oxford University Press, 1959. Pp. 110.

³ This cliché is used here to make clear the situation in which one comes across a space or a building that sparks interest.

The sources are placed within the frameworks of papal urbanism and self-representation. The goal of this essay is to reveal the shifts in mentality and the shifts in strategy between successive papacies. The results of the analysis show that, during each pontificate from 1605-67, the pope encouraged his relatives to develop or redevelop the family palace in a way that would inscribe their image onto the city. Once constructed, each palace became the center of an urban node, symbolically connected with other monumental landmarks by the viewer's movement through the city. The space around the family palace was also subject to design, and each pope utilized different strategies to enhance the location and context of his family's palace. The essay argues that Innocent X and Alexander VII integrated public-welfare urbanism more fully into the family palace project. More broadly, it reveals some qualities of early modern urban theory and design, as well as shifts in urban planning mentality.

Palazzo Borghese

Before Camillo Borghese purchased the old Palazzo Farnese-Poggio near the Ripetta port, the neighborhood did not have a good reputation. The harpsichord-shaped block where it was located contained both aristocratic and lay property. By the mid sixteenth century, this port along the Tiber was also the terminus of a sewer and the area where several brothels were located.⁴ One Tomasso del Giglio had bought the property, began redevelopment, but eventually sold it to Cardinal Deza, who continued building,

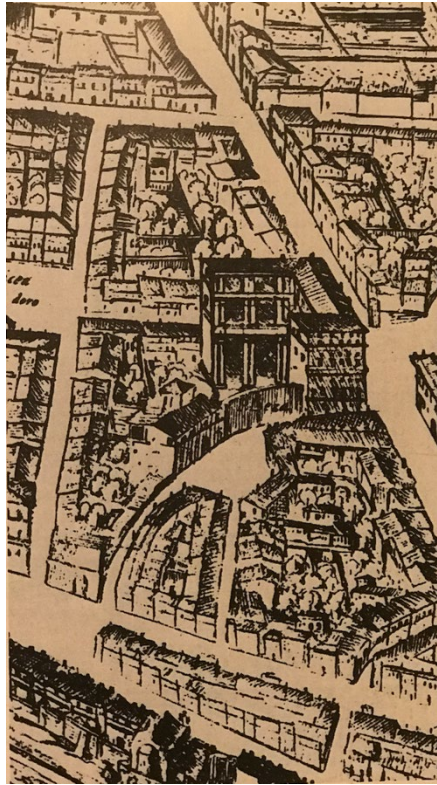


Fig. 3 Tempesta Map
1593, detail with Palazzo
Deza-Borghese, from

but left the courtyard unfinished by the time of his death in 1578. The palace was sold and transferred multiple times between 1578 and 1593, but its residents during this period had never developed the entire block. Although the façade was not unified on all sides, the residents of the palace were given permission to acquire extra water from the ancient *Acqua Vergine*. On 22 September, 1599 an *avviso*, or dispatch, reported that Cardinal Dorio was going to buy the property for a staggering 100,000 *scudi*. He never bought it, however, and the evolving Palazzo continued to be leased by cardinals between

⁴ Howard Hibbard. "The Architecture of Palazzo Borghese," *Memoirs of the American Academy in Rome*, 27 (1962): 3-4.

1600 and 1602. Cardinal Borghese signed a lease on October 3rd, 1602, and “in November 1604, Pope Clement VIII gave him permission to incur a debt of 40,000 *scudi* in order to buy the palace”.⁵ The sale was confirmed two months later, and Cardinal Borghese lived there until elected pope in 1605.

Traditionally, the pope would hold one of his nephews responsible for developing the family’s secular image, which typically involved the commissioning of a palace, whether new or redeveloped, in the Campus Martius. It is significant, however, that Camillo Borghese was only a cardinal when he purchased the property. He was not a nephew of a pope, nor were the Borghese a papal family yet. For the cardinal to purchase the property on borrowed money says something more. By committing to the partially finished palace, Camillo Borghese may have envisioned a unified block of property with one cohesive façade. The completion of the long-unfinished building would be, from the pope’s point of view, an improvement to the city, especially useful considering the marginal reputation of the neighborhood. Considering the availability of real-estate all over town,⁶ it seems odd that Cardinal Borghese would choose the location. On the other hand, the north façade was already finished and the development of the courtyard already started, so from an economic point of view it made good sense. Given his rising fortunes at the papal court, the vision of one unified palace block would not have been impossible for the Borghese to attain. And Cardinal Dorio’s interest in

⁵ Ibid., 145

⁶ Although *avvisi* were essentially rumors, their content confirms the existence of an early modern real-estate market because they reveal the process of property selection. The example used above was provided in Howard Hibbard’s chronology of the building of the palace. Dorothy Metzger-Habel has also analyzed the conditions of the early modern real-estate market in the context of the pontificate of Alexander VII Chigi (r. 1655-66). See *The Urban Development of Rome in the Age of Alexander VII*. 2002

the property may have further sparked Cardinal Borghese's interest from a developer's perspective.

Once Cardinal Borghese was elected to the papacy, taking the name Paul V, the completion of the palace on a grand scale was assured. The development that took place during his pontificate focused on establishing a visual node, physically connecting



Fig. 4 Piazza Borghese with Palazzo Borghese, engraving by Specchi, from Waddy.

it with the route to the Vatican and symbolically associating it with other topographical landmarks. As pope, Paul V helped finance the demolition of the majority of the block,

extending the façade towards the Ripetta port. Contemporary

engravings show the cohesiveness of the façade.⁷ The unity of architectural elements wraps around the entire block. The piazza, which was first delineated by the addition of bollards and chains, spatially connects the southwest façade from the building directly opposite, which became an annex for housing Borghese servants. Already by 1638 the guide-book writer Pompilio Totti had felt the sense of place, aptly naming the site “Palazzi et Piazza Borghese”.⁸ Totti’s guidebook is a testament to the idea of Palazzo Borghese as a place that extends from the interior to exterior and beyond; a site within

⁷ A vast amount of these contemporary etchings are provided in Patricia Waddy’s *Seventeenth Century Roman Palaces*. New York, N.Y.: Cambridge: Architectural History Foundation; MIT Press, 1990.

⁸ Patricia Waddy. *Seventeenth Century Roman Palaces*. The MIT Press (1990): pp. 110-11.

the context of the city. In order to show off his family's new semi-public zone, Paul V altered the processional route so that pedestrians would pass by it.⁹

What is interesting is how Paul V engineered the movement of pedestrians and carriages and the means by which he communicated the gravitational importance of the Borghese palaces. The layout of his new processional route was to begin from the Porta Pia, pass the Quirinal Palace, then pass the Borghese palaces on the *Strada Condotti*, and finally went its way towards the Ponte Sant'Angelo.¹⁰ The piazza, therefore, played a crucial role in defining the bulk of the palace, and furthermore in defining the experience of the façade. In this context, the creation of the private piazza, with bollards and chains along the perimeter, functioned as a visual divider between the public domain and the Borghese realm. Connected by the powerful ephemeral activation of the procession, the experience of the Borghese zone was brought into association with that of the Quirinal Palace and the Vatican. The location of the palace primarily defined the processional scheme and the visual character of the zone gave a highlight to the procession.

⁹ Its association with other topographical nodes and the processional route to the Vatican has already been revealed by Joseph Connors.

¹⁰ Connors; pp. 222

Palazzo Barberini

As the Borghese case establishes, each successive palace building campaign reflects a highly individualized urban design, yet cloaked in the same overarching self-aggrandizing objective. Palazzo Barberini, however, represents a special case particularly because of its location and unity of architectural parts.

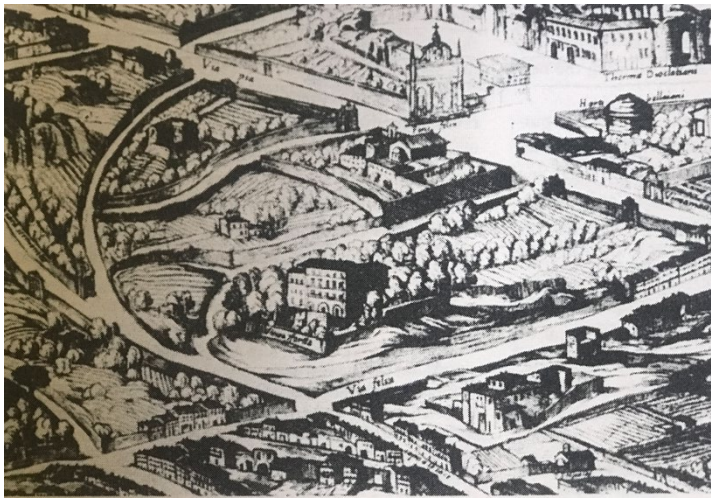


Fig. 5 Tempesta Map of 1593, detail with Palazzo Sforza, from Waddy.

As with Palazzo Borghese, Palazzo Barberini incorporated preexisting construction. It was originally the Palazzo Sforza, as one can see on the Tempesta Map of 1593.

Located on the slope of the Quirinal Hill, just north of the

Quirinal Palace, its main portal façade facing Piazza Grimana (later Barberini), and notably situated in the suburban region away from the city center.¹¹ For this reason, the Palazzo Sforza can be analyzed as a palace and a suburban villa, and indeed it was originally a casino and garden.¹² Ultimately, however, the palace and the block of land underwent major redevelopment under the ownership of Urban VIII's secular nephew, Taddeo. In 1625, three years into his uncle's reign, Taddeo received the old Sforza

¹¹ Aside from its salubrious setting and view of the Quirinal Palace and beyond, the Sforza palace was also close to the recently restored *Aqua Felice*. See Rinne, pp. 195.

¹² See Waddy, pp. 153-54.

palace and the nearby garden as a gift from his Cardinal brother Francesco. This suggests that negotiations for the property actually began before the coronation of their uncle took place. Given their rising fortunes at the papal court, coupled with the possibility of their uncle's coronation, the delay between the official purchase in

December of 1625 and the beginning of construction one month later suggests not only that they had a general design in mind but also that they had seriously browsed the real-estate market before Urban's election. Negotiations for the property began in 1623 when Cardinal Maffeo Barberini was



Fig. 6 Maggi-Maupin-Losi Map of 1625 with detail of Palazzo Barberini, from Waddy.

elected to the papacy. As one can see on the 1625 Maggi Map of Rome, Francesco had been set on the final design (the H-shape plan and southwest orientation), before giving it to his brother. Therefore, it is likely that the Barberini had browsed the real-estate market from a developer's perspective.

Before Francesco bought the Sforza palace the family had been living in their *Casa Grande* in the Campus Martius. Traditionally, the relatives of a newly elected pope moved into a larger palace for both practical and symbolic reasons. Marriages and nepotism brought more money and members into the family, so the logical options at that time were to enlarge the palace that the papal family already occupied, or to choose

another palace at a different location for redevelopment and expansion. Not uncommonly, the Barberini did both. However, the palace on the Quirinal Hill became the primary center for the family's self-representation.

The land on which the Sforza palace rested was irregular and hilly. A lot of money was needed to move the earth and to level it in order for the palace to fit within the perimeter of the block. Architect Carlo Maderno executed a carefully crafted design, effectively re-orienting the main portal facade to face the sloping *Via alle Quattro Fontane*, and beyond towards the Quirinal Palace. The Maggi-Maupin-Losi Map of 1625 shows the essential form of the palace we see today, but multiple designs were considered in the years before its completion.

One design in particular is significant to mention for discussing the façade as a definer of place and movement. In the design process there was significant attention paid to how one would enter the palace.¹³ Architect Michelangelo Buonarroti the



Fig. 7 View by Lieven Cruyl, from Waddy.

Younger envisioned the entrance façade to be directly facing the Piazza Grimana. The visitors would enter the piazza, associate palace façade with the open space, and effectively identify the site as a Barberini zone. Moving

¹³ See the reconstruction of Michelangelo Buonarroti the Younger's design provided by Patricia Waddy in "The Design and Designers of Palazzo Barberini". *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, Vol. 35, no. 3 (October 1976): pp. 151-185.

along, visitors would ascend into the palace using a grand flight of stairs that would link the old and new wings. The synthesis of the two wings via middle structure eventually remained in the final design. Contrary to Palazzo Sforza, however, Palazzo Barberini pointed outward towards the Quirinal Palace and beyond towards the cityscape. This peculiar orientation left an impression on many contemporary artists, including Leiven Cruyl. His etching especially portrays the site as a landmark of the city, as well as the implicit spatial connection between the façade and the piazza. By dedicating the entire bottom half of the frame to the piazza and the top half to the palace, Cruyl attempted to combine not only the public domain with the Barberini zone but also the predominance of the palace in relation to what lay beyond the frame of view, which was actually the Quirinal Palace. And although the view by Leiven Cruyl is from 1665, Palazzo Barberini was already completed by 1633 and listed in the guidebooks by 1638.¹⁴

The idea of the Barberini Palace ‘watching over’ the Quirinal Palace and ‘speaking’ to the Vatican from afar was first probed forty-three years ago¹⁵, but it is worth revisiting for a brief discussion of the façade and its topographical location. Because of the southwest orientation of the façade and its elevated position, the palace stands out from the perspective of both the approaching visitor and the cartographer. As Leiven Cruyl had done, pedestrians would have approached the palace from the bottom of the piazza, from the aptly named *Via del Tritone*, taken after the name of

¹⁴ See, for example, the etchings by Totti (1638), Teti (1642), Greuter Map of 1634, or the engraving by Specchi or Ingres, provided by Patricia Waddy in her book *Seventeenth Century Roman Palaces*. The MIT Press (1990): 174-271.

¹⁵ Waddy, Patricia. “The Design and Designers of Palazzo Barberini”. *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, Vol. 35, no. 3 (October 1976): pp. 151-185.

Urban VIII new fountain. Alternately, the flow of visitors entering from the north could have also moved down the *Strada Felice* thoroughfare and turned the corner at the four fountains. Judging from other contemporary etchings, this descending approach would not have allowed people to fully experience the palace as a predominant building. Zooming out on the map, one can see the diamond shaped constellation linking two palaces and two churches (Quirinal and Barberini; Santa Maria Maggiore and Santa Maria della Vittoria). Within just a couple blocks, there were already four sites on the Quirinal Hill which signaled Catholicism and authority, secular and ecclesiastic. Ripe with representational capacity, the Quirinal Hill was highly charged with political, symbolic, social and cultural meaning, and it is in this context, from the developer's perspective, searching for a way to establish a family zone and for a way to link the flow of pedestrians and carriages around monuments and palaces, that the decision of Francesco to buy the property is understandable, and even masterful. Indeed, the Barberini brothers and their uncle had a favored processional route in mind when considering the orientation of the main portal façade.¹⁶

What remains to be discussed more precisely is the social meaning of the palace building campaign. There were two ways to get to Palazzo Barberini: approaching from the *Strada Felice* thoroughfare, or from the bottom of *Piazza Grimana*. Both of these public spaces were intertwined by movement, and with movement came change. No matter the approach, the visitor's perception of Palazzo Barberini would have been framed at a point in time in which the palace was in visual competition with the

¹⁶ See, for example, the various contemporary depictions of ambassadorial entries provided in Peter Gillgren and Martin Snickare's *Performativity and Performance in Baroque Rome* (2012).

buildings nearby and the buildings beyond and below the Quirinal Hill. For all contemporary artists, this site was special because it was a site within the city, *the* Palazzo Barberini. It constituted a profound visual mix of princely architecture, open public space, and the implicit connection between them.

As the northwest façade points directly at the piazza, the southwest communicates mostly with the street. The honorable visitor would have moved down the *Via alle Quattro Fontane*, where the porousness of the entrance – the integration of street and palace – could be seen and felt. At the same time, its orientation could also symbolically associate itself with the topography of Rome. The Palazzo Barberini stands at a point where processional movement and everyday activity are linked by two streets. The construction of the Palazzo Barberini was a means to visually link a major thoroughfare, on which ambassadors frequently traveled, and a piazza that foregrounded and magnified the papal family palace. With the addition of Bernini's semi-public Triton fountain, on which the Barberini coat of arms is inscribed, the name of the piazza changed, signaling the patronage of the papal family. The family palace in this case deliberately makes a connection between social spaces, which are in turn magnified by both the new drinking amenity and the topographical context. As a result, the palace and piazza become a unified and coherent site within the city.

Palazzo Pamphilj

Key to the comparison of these palaces is the notion that movement activates the perception of social meaning and of topographic relationships. In this context, the case of Palazzo Pamphilj demonstrates the clearest mix of social meaning and symbolic function within a pre-existing topographic and circulatory system.

Situated on the historic and hospitable Piazza Navona, the ancestral home of the Pamphilj since the early sixteenth century, Palazzo Pamphilj was already part of a hub where celebratory, competitive, and combative events occurred.¹⁷ While Giovanni

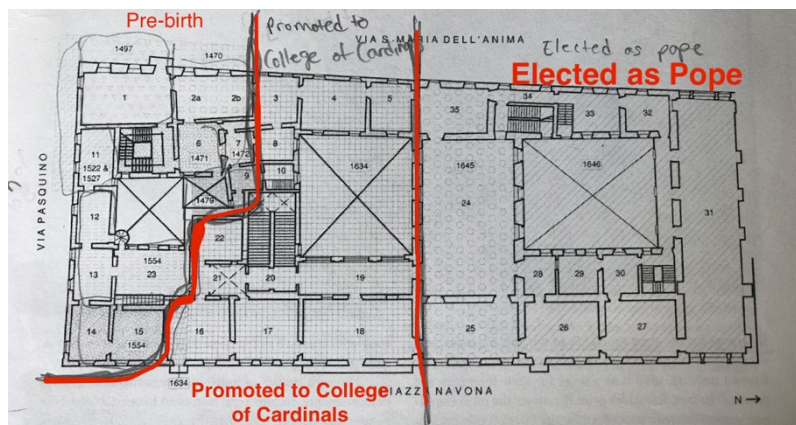


Fig. 8 Image showing expansions at Palazzo Pamphilj, from Leone.

Battista was still a cardinal, living in his family house on the square, Piazza Navona was constantly animated by ritualized activity because it was a central city space.¹⁸

Unlike his predecessors, Giovanni Battista inherited a highly charged space. During his time as cardinal and pope, he took advantage of such an opportune location simply by

¹⁷ To demonstrate the celebratory side, historians commonly use the 1592 engraving of the Easter Procession by Girolamo Rainaldi, and the 1731 oil painting by G.P. Panini depicting the celebration of the birth of the *Delfino*. In both the Palazzo Pamphilj is visible. See Stephanie C. Leone's "Cardinal Pamphilj Builds a Palace: Self Representation and Familial Ambition in Seventeenth-Century Rome" (2004): pp. 444, and Marcello Fagiolo dell'Arco's *La Festa a Roma* (reprint; 1997) for various of examples Piazza Navona events.

¹⁸ See Laurie Nussdorfer. "The Politics of Space in Early Modern Rome" (1997): pp. 169-170

buying property to the north in order to enlarge his palace and extend the façade further along the piazza. His long-term commitment to the extension of the palace is a testament to conventional ideology. Like his predecessors, he saw an opportunity to aggrandize and magnify his name by extending the façade of his palace into public space. As the façade constituted more and more of the visual realm of Piazza Navona, it also assimilated the Pamphlij name with the identity of that central space. Ultimately, the façade gradually came to define both physically and symbolically the Piazza as Pamphilj space.¹⁹ With the addition of Bernini's Fountain of the Four Rivers in 1651, decorated and mounted with heraldic emblems, the Piazza became even more concretely defined by Innocent's patronage. In this case, façade and fountain had the most direct association, and as a result, the papal family facade was physically linked with an urban node.

Innocent's city façade was located at the center of a far wider and more emphatic system of nodes and streets than the others in this analysis. Along with the Capitoline Hill, the Pantheon, St. Peter's Basilica, and the Roman Forum, Piazza Navona was a node with ancient roots. Palazzo Pamphilj, therefore, connected to a system of nodes that was both ancient and wide-reaching. Not to mention that the *Via Papalis*, thoroughfare of papal processions, passed just a south of the piazza. With such a welcoming and accommodating space in front of the façade, Innocent's family enjoyed what Stephanie Leone has called 'optimal visibility'.

¹⁹ During his papal *possesso*, Innocent X made a detour into Piazza Navona, where his sister-in-law was waiting on the balcony of the family palace, holding her baby, and also where a spectacular show of music and fireworks exploded and reverberated around the piazza to celebrate the commencement of Innocent's reign. See Leone (2008): pp. 169-170.

Once the Fountain of the Four Rivers was erected in the middle of the Piazza in 1651, Innocent X had fully harnessed the power of his office to change the identity of the space. It then became a kind of stage of Pamphilj patronage. By erecting the grand fountain in the middle, a symmetry was created, effectively placing the Church on the center axis. Although the palace was visually off-center, it became unmistakably associated with these pre-existing monuments.²⁰ The socio-symbolic function of combining public space, papal façade and semi-public amenity was finally materialized.²¹

The façade of the Pamphilj palace gallery also represents a very direct interface between ecclesiastic and secular power. The architect Borromini linked the palace to the church of Sant'Agnese by employing an authoritative symbol known by the ancient Roman emperors as the *fastigium*, a particular arrangement with an arched bay flanked by two trebbiated bays. It was intentionally incorporated in order to display the presence of the pope within a public setting. The form recalled the fastigium in Raphael's *Fire in the Borgo* painting in the Vatican library and would later be reprised by Alexander VII Chigi in his façade for Santa Maria in Via Lata and in his grand Vatican staircase, the *scala regia*.²² Although not completed until after his death, it is a prime example of the palace-city interface.

²⁰ During the celebration for the birth of Louis XIV, an array of temporary monuments was erected on the long axis in order to emulate the appearance of an ancient hippodrome. See G.P. Panini's *Preparativi in piazza Navona per festeggiare la nascita del Delfino, 1731*, provided in *La Festa a Roma*.

²¹ It is important to note that the church of Sant'Agnese was tightly identified with the Pamphilj family. They were also more generally sympathetic to the Spanish crown, which also had a church facing Piazza Navona. See Leone (2008): pp. 168.

²² For an extensive look at the history of the *fastigium* see Habel, *The Urban Development of Rome in the Age of Alexander VII* (2002): pp. 218-244.



Fig. 9 The Pamphilj gallery, detail of fastigium. Taken by the author.

Unlike Paul V or Urban VII, Innocent X inherited a location that afforded optimal visibility. Rather than watching it pass from the balcony of his palace, Innocent X was in the procession, looking at it not only from the perspective of the general public but also from a developer's perspective. His energy as a patron was focused on the creation of a celebratory and aggrandized core within the city.

Perhaps the most economic solution of all the examples studied in this thesis,

his strategy more directly established an interface by intertwining public and papal space, and moreover, by emphasizing continuity and the gravity of Piazza Navona through architectural projects. During this pontificate the center of topographic gravity shifted once again. Piazza Navona was revitalized as an attractive center of the life of the city. With the help of and on behalf of his relatives, Innocent X manifested his influence in secular affairs by concentrating a figurative architectural papal presence in a truly central city space that was constantly activated and animated by moving bodies.

along the Corso. Albeit, only the back façade of the Apostoli palace faced the Corso, but various designs were considered for the Apostoli façade, each one expressing a monumentality in line with that of the Colonna façade. Ultimately, those proposals were rejected in order to retain more of the inherited fabric, which in effect provided a sober setting for the façade of *Santa Maria Via Lata* across the street, with its deep-cut rhythm of *fastigium* shadows.²³ Because of the contemporaneous development of the church façade the Chigi likely wanted to allow that rhythm to penetrate the pedestrians view down the Corso. Indeed, although the height of the complementary buildings is obstructive today, *Santa Maria in Via Lata* looms into the view quite significantly before one faces it head on.

Meanwhile, on the other side of the palace was Piazza SS. Apostoli, a space that had been also been used as setting for celebrations.²⁴ In this space, however, the Chigi establishment engaged in a pendant relationship with the grand palace of the Colonna, one of Rome's oldest and most prestigious baronial families.

On the other hand, *Santa Maria in Via Lata* also gave some of its religious charge to the Apostoli Palace. By commanding a small sequence of traffic space along the Corso, within context of the longer sequence of spaces that proceeded it, the church façade was thus prioritized to obstruct the view down the street and impress the pedestrian with a sense of ancient, authoritative overtones. Through movement the façade of the church became a reference with which the viewer would memorize the street; a street marked with Chigi patronage.

²³ Habel, pp. 208-209.

²⁴ Marcello Fagiolo dell'Arco notes that Piazza SS. Apostoli was the site of the "*fuochi e luminarie per celebrare l'elezione del nuovo re dei Romani, Ferdinando IV*", pp. 276.

Like Paul V, Alexander VII envisioned a grand processional route for noble entries into the city.²⁵ To incentivize private builders to adhere to his program for the Corso Alexander VII instigated multiple renovations almost simultaneously. First was the circulation from the Piazza Venezia to the *Gesù*, a strategic move that not only allowed for easy traffic flow but also for other aristocratic families to display and dress their palace facades during special events. Another was emulating the urbanism of ancient Rome by clearing the Corso, a strategy that asked for façade trims, but not



Fig. 11 Engraving by Falda, Piazza SS. Apostoli with Palazzo Chigi on the right, 1667, From Habel.

demolition, and that would revitalize the symbolic function of an ancient hippodrome, or race-course, and the social and cultural function of a city thoroughfare. Another project was the

squaring of Piazza Colonna, completed by negotiating with the church next door and with the Ludovisi, a former papal family, in order to cut the existing facades back and therefore to make the Column of Marcus Aurelius and the fountain appear to be in the center of a reconfigured piazza. This redevelopment campaign also initiated talks for a fountain-palace, although those proposals were eventually rejected in favor of the sober

²⁵ Although he never lived to see the Corso fully renovated, surely the entry of Queen Christina of Sweden from the *Porta del Popolo* in 1655 inspired him to think of urban design in terms of movement.

façade that exists today. Overall, by renovating a pre-existing *node*, Alexander VII effectively magnified his family façade. Indeed, many travelers would acknowledge the commanding presence of both palaces.

In the same way as other visual nodes, Piazza Colonna would have been anticipated by the oncoming pedestrian. The purpose of allowing viewers to see the landmark before they arrive is not to spoil the spectacle, but rather to give visual access. Access then permits the pedestrian to acknowledge his relative position in space and

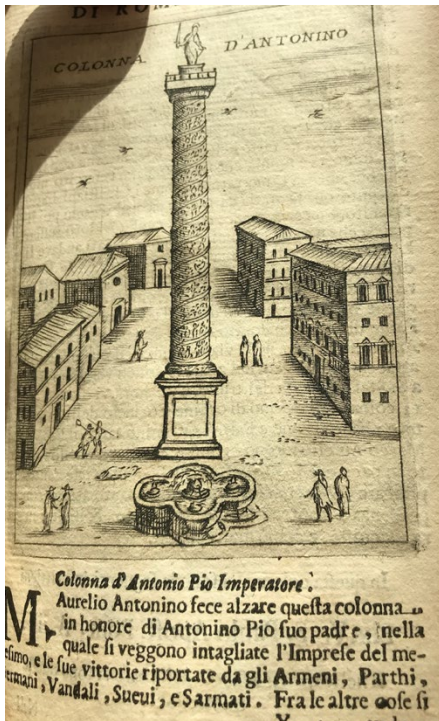


Fig. 12 “Portrait of Ancient Rome”, by Pompilio Totti, 1633, detail of Piazza Colonna.

time. Once the viewer’s relative position is established, anticipation kicks in. The effect upon arriving is a kind of theatrical ‘reveal’, both confirming and denying the pedestrians preconception or expectation. Their view allows them to visually participate in the social spectacle happening in the piazza without being in it, a strictly visual experience. But when they actually enter the piazza the peripheral ambience created by

the combination of harmonious or inharmonious façades and moving bodies becomes the real experience. From the

beginning, both types of experiences are stimulated by movement and sightline, and these are what create that sense of place, or *teatro*, that Alexander VII had envisioned.²⁶

²⁶ Richard Krautheimer was the first to pour through the diary of Alexander VII, in which the general symbolic term used for a piazza is *teatro*, or theatre.

Together with other enduring urban renewal projects, not least of which was the Piazza San Pietro, Alexander VII's system of topographic elements and system of streets and piazzas transformed the city in the most profoundly pedestrian-minded way. There was a self-aggrandizing aspect to it, of course, but the most enduring result, which can still be seen and felt today, is the way in which the urban fabric absorbs and repels bodies. Even on the ground today one can see the compression and rarefaction of moving bodies so elegantly articulated during Alexander VII's reign.

Concluding Thoughts

By comparing these four case studies we learn that papal ideologies from 1605-67 had a lot in common, yet also differed quite significantly. Uniting them all were the same self-referencing ambitions that had already characterized sixteenth century urbanism for many historians. Movement and sightlines as an inherent phenomena of the city were key tools for every party involved in Rome's redevelopment. The piazzas and streets and palace facades were designed with an eye to the idea of how people would move, with a new sensitivity to the inherent affect that setting has on behavior. But the strategies that seventeenth century papal families used to accomplish such ambitions are where the individuality can be seen.

Thus, the Piazza Colonna initiative, with all of the imaginative proposals for design that came with it, was ultimately shaped, designed, and developed in a way that was based on the notion that bodies would move in a certain direction, and that that movement would facilitate various experiences and impressions for people of all classes. The Piazza Borghese, a relatively small space, yet unified by one facade, was likewise the result of a processional ideology. The façade animated movement, giving it color, while street parades and rituals gave the façade some of their social, cultural and political charge.

On his way down the *Via Papalis*, the newly elected Innocent X purposely passed the Pamphilj palace, right at the same time that a heraldic firework display exploded above the Church of San Giacomo, celebrating not only his presence in Piazza Navona but also the initiation of a promising pontificate. In Piazza Navona, the façade

of Palazzo Pamphilj performed the traditional function of symbolizing the Pamphilj's presence as well as their political predominance. In this regard, it was the style of façade that predominantly defined the mid seventeenth-century experience of that space.

In this context, Palazzo Barberini could be considered the most dynamic expression of movement. With its intensely orthogonal façade and sharp shadows, with the contrasting corners activated by circumvention, the whole palace changed as one moved. The path of the elite, however, of foreign ambassadors, kings and queens, ecclesiastics and nobles, was certainly prioritized in each design process. Guidebook etchings of ancient processions emphasize the imperial origins of such movement and thus of their enduring significance in the seventeenth century.

On the other hand, Popes Innocent X and Alexander VII were even more mindful of the experience of the general public. The drive to improve the quality of public space is manifested in their initiatives to redecorate and renew their respective piazzas. Innocent X expressed the continuity of his inheritance by not selling his ancestor's home while also enlarging the façade's presence in the piazza. His addition of the fountain more directly focused attention on the palace because it brought attention into the piazza. While upholding the post-



Fig. 13 Totti, detail of ancient Roman triumphal procession.

Tidentine initiative to make Rome the center of a global Christian ‘commonwealth’, Alexander VII was also aware that quality public space could improve his image. Grand vistas and open squares created a salubrious atmosphere within the already dense urban fabric. Moreover, they improved traffic flow; a solution that ideally would prevent questions over precedence that often characterized the procession of noblemen. It was during the period from 1645-67 that the Roman populace witnessed the first renewal of initiatives that also served them. This was a period of renewing the social and cultural importance of urban space, of making symbolism function with social meaning.

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