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# Baciccio's Beata Ludovica Albertoni Distributing Alms

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# Baciccio's Beata Ludovica Albertoni Distributing Alms

## **Comments**

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The author

# Baciccio's *Beata Ludovica Albertoni Distributing Alms*

Karen J. Lloyd

In 1970, the Getty Museum acquired a painting by the Genoese master Giovanni Battista Gaulli (1639–1709), known as Baciccio, which had recently appeared on the market in London (fig. 1). Identified in the collection as *Saint Francesca Romana Giving Alms*, the work was previously unknown, the provenance going back only to a private collection in Geneva.<sup>1</sup> Burton B. Fredricksen dated the painting to around 1675/76, based on similarities to Baciccio's altarpieces for San Francesco a Ripa (*The Madonna and Child with Saint Anne*, 1674) and Sant'Andrea al Quirinale (*Death of Saint Francis Xavier*, 1676).<sup>2</sup> A closer look at the iconography reveals that the painting's main figure is not Francesca Romana (born Francesca Bussi de' Ponziani, 1384–1440), but rather another Roman noblewoman, the Beata Ludovica Albertoni (1473–1533). Knowing the correct subject, we can identify the patron for Baciccio's picture, redate the work precisely, and reconstruct the context in which it was produced. Establishing this information also allows us to make some comments on the artistic relationship between Baciccio and Gian Lorenzo Bernini, reexamining the currents of creative influence between the two artists and positing a more active and independent role for Baciccio in the decoration of the Altieri chapel in San Francesco a Ripa than has thus far been assumed.

Silhouetted in front of a dark wall that underscores the distinct glow of a nimbus around her head, the young woman in Baciccio's *Beata Ludovica Albertoni Distributing Alms* wears a long black dress and white veil and offers a small loaf of bread to a burly, bare-shouldered man seated on the ground to her right. Her left hand, tight to her waist, holds a bright red book and draws up the energetically unruly veil. At her feet are a plain bowl filled with dark liquid and two more loaves of bread for distribution. Leaning against the seated man are two animated children who examine another of the loaves, while in the middle ground a mother with an infant held to her shoulder moves away, food in hand. Two figures appear in the distance at center, conversing and gesturing toward the woman, presumably remarking on her generosity. Behind the figures on the left side, the composition opens to a landscape of thick trees that partially obscure vaguely familiar, but unspecific, classical buildings.

Although Santa Francesca Romana is traditionally shown in a black dress and white veil and holding a book—as in the altarpiece in the chapel of Tor de' Specchi, the Roman monastery founded by the saint (fig. 2)—the Getty painting lacks her guardian



**Fig. 1. Giovanni Battista Gaulli, known as Baciccio (Italian, 1639–1709).** *Saint Francesca Romana Giving Alms* [here identified as *Beata Ludovica Albertoni Distributing Alms*], ca. 1675 [here dated 1671], oil on canvas, 210.2 × 137.2 cm (82¾ × 54 in.). Los Angeles, J. Paul Getty Museum (70.PA.30)

angel, her constant attribute, and this omission should have raised questions about the identification of the figure.<sup>3</sup> The key iconographical element in this painting is instead the bread, which, as seen in the center foreground, is studded with coins.<sup>4</sup> The eldest child, who is the only figure to look directly out of the painting and engage the viewer, calls attention to this detail by pointing to several silver pieces that she holds in her right hand. A younger brother clambers up to grab at them. The coin-studded loaf of bread is a standard iconographical attribute of the Beata Ludovica Albertoni, a Franciscan tertiary who was noted for her charity and beatified in January 1671 by Pope Clement X Altieri (reigned 1670–76).<sup>5</sup>



**Fig. 2.** Antoniazzo Romano (Italian, before 1452–between 1508 and 1512) and studio. *Santa Francesca Romana* (detail), 1468, altar fresco. Rome, Monastero di Tor de' Specchi. Photograph courtesy Monastero delle Oblate di S. Francesca Romana

Ludovica's feast day was officially celebrated for the first time on 31 January 1671.<sup>6</sup> The date of her beatification is not coincidental: between 1669 and 1670, Cardinal Emilio Altieri (from 1670 on, Pope Clement X) adopted three members of the Albertoni family, Ludovica's direct descendents, to ensure his family's survival and strengthen his hold on the Curia.<sup>7</sup> Abruptly vaulted from shabby nobility to the highest echelons of Roman society, the new Altieri nephews made the most of their short time in power, accumulating substantial incomes and constructing monumental works of art.<sup>8</sup> The pope moved swiftly, beatifying their ancestor—and adding to the glory of both families—within that first, active year of his reign.

The new Altieri family was composed of Cardinal Paluzzo (died 1698), who took on the role of cardinal nephew and right-hand man to the pope; Gaspare (died 1720), who married Laura Altieri, Clement X's first cousin once removed and sole heir to the family fortune; and Angelo (died 1706), Gaspare's father. Of the three, only Angelo was without a clear role in the new family hierarchy, and his art patronage strongly suggests that he retained the strongest ties to his natal family.<sup>9</sup> Although much of the literature on Altieri patronage instinctively identifies Paluzzo as the decisive figure in family projects, we now know that it was Angelo who paid for and oversaw Bernini's work in the Altieri chapel (fig. 3).<sup>10</sup> Angelo's dedication to Ludovica Albertoni was evidently profound: like the Altieri chapel, his funerary chapel in Santa Maria in Campitelli, unveiled in 1705, also has a shared dedication to the beata and features another monumental marble honoring her memory, namely Lorenzo Ottoni's *Beata Ludovica Albertoni Adoring the Holy Family* (1696–1702).<sup>11</sup> It should not be a surprise to find that Angelo was also the patron of Baciccio's *Ludovica Albertoni*.

Baciccio's earliest biographers, Lione Pascoli and Carlo Giuseppe Ratti, tell us that the Genoese artist produced "some paintings" for "Prencipe Altieri,"<sup>12</sup> and Altieri inventories indicate that the family had several paintings of the beata in their palace, including a "large one" with a black frame in the main gallery and another with a gold frame in the lower *guardaroba*.<sup>13</sup> Baciccio was also intimately familiar with Ludovica's image. As a result of changes made to the beatification process by Pope Urban VIII (1623–44), for Ludovica's beatification to be successful it was fundamental to prove that she had been actively venerated for at least one hundred years.<sup>14</sup> The Altieri called upon experts in art history, connoisseurs, and artists to testify that existing depictions of Ludovica were of the necessary age; two of these witnesses were Giovanni Pietro Bellori and Baciccio.<sup>15</sup> Bellori and Baciccio described each element of Ludovica's iconography and swore that the earliest surviving monumental depiction of her, a sixteenth-century fresco in the Albertoni chapel in the church of Santa Maria d'Aracoeli, was proof of the longevity of her cult.<sup>16</sup>

To these circumstantial connections between Baciccio, Ludovica Albertoni, and the Altieri, we can add precise documentary evidence, namely the receipt for the Getty painting. Angelo Altieri's payment records for the years 1670 and 1671 include the following entry: "The bookkeeper is ordered to make the payment of 105 scudi to Giovanni Battista Gaulli Painter in recognition of a painting of the Beata Ludovica made for our



**Fig. 3. Cappella Altieri, San Francesco a Ripa, Rome on the feast day of Beata Ludovica Albertoni, 31 January 2009. Photo: Karen J. Lloyd**

use, February 22nd 1671. 105 scudi, Angelo Altieri.”<sup>17</sup> The date provided by the payment is earlier than that proposed for the Getty painting by Fredricksen and supported by Maurizio Fagiolo dell’Arco, yet it falls within a reasonable timeframe, given what we know of the developing style of the artist. The painting was probably begun late in 1670 or early in 1671 and finished, as we shall see, by the end of January 1671.<sup>18</sup> It has suffered significant damage, yet one can see that the original execution is rough, particularly in the middle-ground and background figures and in details such as a visible pentimento in Ludovica’s left hand.<sup>19</sup> The slightly raw quality suggests either that it was meant to be seen from a distance or that it was executed in some haste; the latter appears the more likely conclusion.

The date provided by the payment record corroborates the stylistic evidence. For example, the *Ludovica Albertoni* shares significant similarities with Baciccio’s picture of Saint Louis Beltran in Santa Maria sopra Minerva, which is dated 1671 to 1674.<sup>20</sup> Robert Enggass observed that Baciccio depicted Beltran with distinctly elongated proportions, particularly in his lower half, where the “length between the kneeling saint’s waist and his knee would almost suffice for an entire leg.”<sup>21</sup> The Getty picture of Ludovica Albertoni shares precisely these characteristics, which are also found in Bernini’s later works,

such as the angels for the Ponte Sant'Angelo: the beata has a relatively short torso and an exaggerated, long, gently curving lower half. Baciccio's painting of Beltran was definitely installed by 1674, but it may have been made just after the Spanish Dominican's canonization in 1671. The stylistic similarities between these two works would suggest that both were executed early in 1671.

One of the pressing questions regarding Baciccio's *Ludovica Albertoni* is that of its intended purpose.<sup>22</sup> The payment states that it was made "for our [Angelo's, or the Altieri's] use" (*per nostro servitio*). The proposed execution date, around January 1671, suggests that the painting was intended to play a role in the celebration of Ludovica's feast day on the 31st of that month. A further payment supports this hypothesis. On 30 January 1671, Angelo ordered 25 scudi to be paid for the gilding of a "very large frame for the altarpiece of the Beata Ludovica, entirely burnished with a plaster ground."<sup>23</sup> Assuming that this is the same painting referred to in the 22 February payment, then the payment date for the frame, the day before Ludovica's feast day, also fits the timeline suggested for Baciccio's painting.<sup>24</sup>

Aspects of the composition itself indicate that it was intended for use as an altarpiece.<sup>25</sup> Placed over an altar, the torn loaves of bread and the dark liquid just visible in the bowl make a direct connection to the enactment of the sacrament that would have taken place below. Eucharistic references pertain to Ludovica as well: her seventeenth-century biographers stress that among her saintly qualities was the ability to subsist on the tiny amount of bread and wine that she consumed during the mass.<sup>26</sup> Aspects of the painting's composition indicate that it was meant to be installed just above eye level: we see down into the bowl in the lower half of the painting, but not significantly under the edge of Ludovica's veil. Such an arrangement would have been appropriate had the painting been placed above the altar in the Altieri chapel in San Francesco a Ripa before Bernini added an architectural recess for his statue of the beata (1674).<sup>27</sup> Given the size, date, and composition of Baciccio's painting, with its clear iconographical references to the Eucharist, one can safely conclude that it was employed as the main altarpiece during the first celebration of the beata's feast day in 1671.

From an early age Ludovica Albertoni desired to devote herself to a religious life.<sup>28</sup> Familial concerns prevailed, however, and instead she married Giacomo della Cetera and had three daughters before della Cetera's death in 1506. In her widowhood, Ludovica joined the third order of Franciscans and devoted her life to charity and prayer. She died in 1533 and was buried in the Altieri chapel, her husband's family chapel in San Francesco a Ripa. Although during her life she was seen to undergo miraculous experiences, for example, levitating at mass after receiving the host, her *vite* are more notable for their emphasis on her charity and good deeds than for miracles, ecstasies, or mystic experiences.

It is not surprising to find a case of mistaken identity between Ludovica Albertoni and Francesca Romana, as a strong congruence between the two women was established as part of a deliberate canonization strategy long undertaken by the Albertoni family.





**Fig. 4. *Ludovica Albertoni*, 16th century, fresco.** Rome, San Francesco a Ripa, Cappella Altieri.

Photo: Karen J. Lloyd

**Fig. 5. *Ludovica Albertoni*, 17th century (?), fresco.** Rome, Cappella Santa Francesca Romana, San

Bartolommeo all'Isola. Photo: Karen J. Lloyd

Both women were widows, and Ludovica is known to have been particularly devoted to Francesca, carrying a piece of her veil in constant veneration.<sup>29</sup> The two were frequently shown together in chapel decorations from the late sixteenth century on. They appear, along with Saints Agnes and Cecilia, in the pendentives of the Albertoni chapel in the church of Santa Maria d'Aracoeli, where they are dressed identically but labeled, so the identifications are clear.<sup>30</sup> As part of a decorative campaign that took place around 1622, these frescoes were replicated, without the captions, in the Altieri chapel.<sup>31</sup> Ludovica is represented three times in this chapel—in the pendentive fresco by Cristoforo Grippi, in Bernini's statue, and in an anonymous sixteenth-century fresco to the right of the altar (fig. 4). The latter was no doubt Baciccio's main source, and in essence his work reads as a restatement and embellishment of this earlier work. In this simple image, the hidden coins are not visible, but presumably that element of the story would have been familiar to those coming to the chapel to honor the beata's memory.

Although previously unremarked, the anonymous sixteenth-century fresco of Ludovica is replicated in another fresco located on the nave side of one of the piers framing the chapel of Santa Francesca Romana in the church of San Bartolommeo all'Isola (fig. 5). While difficult to date due to significant damage and overpainting, the initial fresco likely dates from the sixteenth century and indicates that Ludovica's iconography was standardized and narrowly diffused in the topography of Rome.<sup>32</sup> Again, it is notable that this

# COMPENDIO

DELLA VITA DELLA BEATA  
LODOVICA ALBERTONI  
DELLA CETERA  
VEDOVA ROMANA  
RELIGIOSA DEL TERZORDINE DI SAN FRANCESCO

*Con l'aggiunta d'alcuni Epigrammi di Cesare Solatij Romano,*

Dedicato all'Illustrissimo, & Eccellentissimo Sig. Principe

**DON GASPARO ALTIERI**

**NIPOTE DI NOSTRO Signore,**

E GENERALE DI SANTA CHIESA &c.



IN ROMA, Nella Stamperia del Mancini, 1671. *Con licenza de' Superiori.*

**Fig. 6.** Title page showing the Beata Ludovica Albertoni giving alms. From Cesare Solatio, *Compendio della vita della beata Lodouica Albertoni della Cetera vedoua romana...* (Rome: Nella Stamperia del Mancini, 1671). Photograph courtesy Biblioteca nazionale centrale di Roma

image of Ludovica appears in a chapel dedicated to Francesca Romana, underscoring the close ties between the two women. Francesca Romana, one of the patron saints of Rome, was canonized by Paul V in 1608.<sup>33</sup> In his 1671 biography of Beata Ludovica, Cesare Solatio notes that it is “worthy of consideration . . . that before Santa Francesca Romana was canonized, these two glorious matrons and heavenly blessed were depicted together, one next to the other, and with equal veneration they were revered and adored by the Roman people.”<sup>34</sup> In all of these frescoed representations of Ludovica, and in Baciccio’s painting, the beata wears the habit chosen by Francesca Romana for her order of Roman oblates: a simple black dress with a collar up to the neck, a thin belt, and a long white veil.<sup>35</sup> As Ludovica was never in fact a member of the oblates, but rather belonged to the tertiary Franciscan order, the choice of her vestments must have been part of a deliberate ongoing strategy meant to connect the two women. The successfully canonized Francesca Romana provided the best exemplar for the Albertoni family in their quest to gain recognition for the sanctity of an ancestor. The two were consistently linked through word and image, and the pairing was encouraged elsewhere in the city, where each public statement acted as an affirmation of Ludovica’s rightful place in the heavenly hierarchy and was further evidence of the persistence, popularity, and longevity of her cult.

In formulating his image of Ludovica, Baciccio may also have looked at printed material, such as the frontispiece of Solatio’s 1671 biography of the beata (fig. 6), which features an image very similar to that in an anonymous fresco in the San Francesco a Ripa chapel, of Ludovica giving bread to a poor man. The differences are in the details; in the frontispiece, Ludovica is clearly shown as an older woman, a detail that is more historically accurate since she was in her thirties when she was able to fully devote herself to her charitable activities. Greater emphasis is given to the poverty of the man who receives the bread. His clothes are composed of rags and he holds up his right foot, suggesting that he is lame. The change in media and purpose must account for the differences from the chapel fresco; monumental paintings tend to heroize the subject, while prints and *vite* are intended to have a more popular appeal. This can be seen in Baciccio’s painting, where the recipient of the young, beautiful Ludovica’s charity is no longer a youth, but instead a substantial, muscled man—the embodiment of a kind of “heroic” poverty.

### **Bernini, Baciccio, and Reciprocal Influence**

Entering Baciccio’s depiction of the Beata Ludovica Albertoni into the sequence of events and works related to Ludovica’s beatification and the subsequent redecoration of the chapel in San Francesco a Ripa under Bernini suggests that we consider a shift in how we view the notion of creative agency in the collaboration between these two artists in the last quarter of the seventeenth century. The idea that Bernini in his later years may have drawn on Baciccio’s work for inspiration has been proposed by Valentino Martinelli in reference to several late drawings by Bernini.<sup>36</sup> The hypothesis was mentioned again by Francesco Petrucci in regard to Bernini’s late works, such as the angels designed for



**Fig. 7. Giovanni Battista Gaulli, known as Baciccio (Italian, 1639–1709).** *The Holy Family with Saint Anne*, 1674, oil on canvas, 242 × 133 cm (95.3 × 52.4 in.). Rome, San Francesco a Ripa, Cappella Altieri. Photo: Karen J. Lloyd

Ponte Sant'Angelo.<sup>37</sup> Baciccio's success in his own time, and his continued fame in our own, are closely tied to Bernini.

Baciccio is believed to have arrived in Rome from Genoa shortly after the plague devastated the Ligurian city in 1657. It is not known exactly when Bernini and Baciccio met, although it is generally thought to have been quite soon after Baciccio's arrival in Rome. Baciccio is often presented as a kind of Berninian alter ego, the man who was able to fully translate the sculptor's ideas into paint.<sup>38</sup> Bernini is always cited with regard to Baciccio's most famous project, the vault frescoes in the Gesù, as he is believed to have obtained the commission for Baciccio through his close ties with Padre Oliva, the general of the Jesuit order. Contemporaries even attributed the fresco's design to Bernini.<sup>39</sup> Modern scholars have been more circumspect, crediting Bernini with the most innovative aspect of the main fresco, namely the unified use of painting, sculpture, and architecture to dissolve barriers between real and illusionistic space and create the illusion that the painted figures are tumbling into the real space of the church.

Evidence makes clear that Bernini and Baciccio openly collaborated on the Altieri chapel, for which Bernini provided the design and the main sculpture and Baciccio the altarpiece depicting the Holy Family with Saint Anne (fig. 7). Christopher Johns has argued that Baciccio depicted Saint Anne with the features of Ludovica Albertoni as portrayed by Bernini in the statue installed below (fig. 8).<sup>40</sup> With the goal of establishing iconographic links between the various elements of the chapel's decoration, Johns notes that

the two women share a “rather long Roman nose” and thickly lidded eyes, and are both dressed in a linen hood that peaks upward above and to either side of the eyes.<sup>41</sup> We know from documentary evidence that Bernini’s statue of the beata was commissioned in 1673 and installed by 1674; Baciccio’s altarpiece was likely installed at the same time.<sup>42</sup> While this timeline would support the notion that Baciccio was following the lead of his older collaborator, the addition of Baciccio’s earlier depiction of the beata to the chronology complicates the issue. Surely, the overall project for the chapel as it is seen today is Bernini’s, but the assumption of his complete creative authority should be modified in light of Baciccio’s earlier depiction of the Beata Ludovica Albertoni. In general, the traits that Johns identifies as characteristic of Bernini’s depiction of Ludovica and Baciccio’s of Anne can already be found in Baciccio’s painting.<sup>43</sup> Moreover, with the discovery of Baciccio’s *Ludovica* we can examine the possibility that it was an active influence on Bernini’s sculpture.

Baciccio’s *Ludovica* appears younger than Bernini’s—the painting shows the beata at an earlier point in her life, presumably just after her husband’s passing but well before her own body was distorted by ecstasy or death.<sup>44</sup> Yet these two depictions of *Ludovica* have significant commonalities. In both depictions of the beata, her silhouette is defined by the long sinuous line of the veil that runs from the crown of her head to her

**Fig. 8. Gian Lorenzo Bernini (Italian, 1598–1680).** *Beata Ludovica Albertoni*, 1674, Carrara marble, 90 × 210 × 80 cm (35.4 × 82.7 × 31.5 in.). Rome, San Francesco a Ripa, Cappella Altieri. Photo: Scala / Art Resource



waist on her left side, and by a jagged contour on the right where it bunches just under her chin to create a sharp line over her left shoulder. A frequently noted feature of Bernini's statue, the long thick fold of cloth that runs in a straight line between the beata's legs, is already present in Baciccio's work, although not as heavily emphasized. Both artists place undulating bunches of fabric around her waist, creating a dynamic node that acts in counterpoint to the long, curved length of her legs. Thus a number of salient characteristics of Bernini's *Ludovica* are already present in Baciccio's 1671 painting.

In a recent essay on Bernini, Baciccio, and the Gesù, Claudio Strinati put forth the Altieri chapel in San Francesco a Ripa as the paradigmatic example of Baciccio's excessive obsequiousness toward his mentor.<sup>45</sup> Yet Bernini's involvement with the Altieri chapel can be firmly dated only from 1673, while we now know that Baciccio was already involved with the celebration of the new beata and the decoration of her chapel two years prior.<sup>46</sup> Although there is no way to discount an undocumented influence by Bernini at this early stage, there is no evidence of it in the written or circumstantial evidence. Without further information, therefore, we can conclude that the discovery of Baciccio's *Ludovica Albertoni* fundamentally alters the sequence of events in the development of the Altieri chapel in San Francesco a Ripa and allows us to bring the Genoese painter out a little bit from Bernini's long shadow.

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1. Burton B. Fredericksen, *Catalogue of the Paintings in the J. Paul Getty Museum* (Malibu: J. Paul Getty Museum, 1972), 51. As it only came to light in 1970, the painting does not appear in Enggass's pioneering monograph on Baciccio: Robert Enggass, *The Painting of Baciccio, Giovanni Battista Gaulli, 1639–1709* (University Park: Pennsylvania State Univ. Press, 1964). The altarpiece is referenced, without discussion, in Maurizio Fagiolo dell'Arco, Dieter Graf, and Francesco Petrucci, eds., *Giovan Battista Gaulli, Il Baciccio, 1639–1709* (Milan: Skira, 1999), 155 (fig. 23), 67; and Maurizio Fagiolo dell'Arco and Rossella Pantanella, eds., *Museo Baciccio: In margine a quattro inventari inediti* (Rome: Antonio Pettini, 1996), 51.

2. Fredericksen, *Catalogue* (note 1), 51.

3. On Santa Francesca and her monastery of the Tor de' Specchi, see Giorgio Picasso, ed., *Una Santa Tutta Romana: Saggi e ricerche nel VI centenario della nascita di Francesca Bussa dei Ponziani (1384–1984)* (Siena: Monte Oliveto Maggiore, 1984); illustrations of the cycle appear in Antonio Paolucci, "Prodigy Mother: Frescoes in the Convent of Tor de' Specchi," *FMR* 75 (1995): 78–95. Francesca Romana is typically shown in the black dress and white veil that was the habit of her order (which was under the protection of the Monte Olivetan Benedictines), with a halo, an open book in her hand, and a young angel at her side. The book often has a visible inscription reading: "Tenuisti manum dexteram mean et in voluntate tua deduxisti me et cum gloria suscepisti me (Ps. LXXII, 23)." George Kaftal, *Saints in Italian Art: Iconography of the Saints in Central and Southern Italian Schools of Painting* (Florence: Sansoni, 1965), 447–67. On Francesca

Romana's iconography and her role in the seventeenth century as a plague saint, see Marc Fumaroli, "Un 'ex-voto' de Nicolas Poussin: Sainte Françoise Romaine annonçant à Rome la fin de la peste," in idem, *De Rome à Paris: Peinture et pouvoirs aux XVIIe et XVIIIe siècles* (Dijon: Faton, 2007), 106–63. Fumaroli notes that the one constant in Francesca Romana's iconography is her guardian angel, who is likely a kind of deified surrogate for her son, who died at a young age during a plague.

4. Less frequently Francesca Romana was also shown with loaves of bread, but they are without coins and are in reference to a different miracle, namely when the saint miraculously multiplied bread to feed the citizens of Rome during the plague of 1402. The loaves of bread appear prominently in a painting of the saint by Guercino, dated 1656, where Marc Fumaroli has interpreted them as a symbolic representation of the theological virtue of charity. They no doubt have a double meaning, drawing on both standard imagery related to charity and the specific, miraculous, example of the virtue from Francesca's own *vita*. See Fumaroli, "Un 'ex-voto'" (note 3), 117.

5. The coins are generally not visible in sixteenth-century representations of Ludovica, where she is simply shown handing loaves of bread to the poor. Presumably at that time it was assumed that the story would be familiar to viewers, who would know what the loaves contained. The coins do, however, appear prominently in Lorenzo Ottoni's eighteenth-century altarpiece for the Altieri chapel in Santa Maria in Campitelli, showing the beata in the midst of a vision of the holy family (1705). Almost two centuries after her death, it became necessary to visualize this aspect of Ludovica's hagiography, by then faded from living memory. On the altarpiece and the chapel, see Alessandra Anselmi, "Sebastiano Cipriani: La cappella Altieri e 'I pregi dell'architettura oda di Giambattista Vaccondio,'" in Elisa Debenedetti, ed., *Alessandro Albani patrono delle arti: Architettura, pittura e collezionismo nella Roma del '700* (Rome: Bonsignori Editori, 1993), 203–17.

6. *Magnum Bullarium Romanum*, vol. 7 (Graz: Akademischen Druck- & Verlagsanstalt, 1965), 86–87.

7. Gaspare Albertoni was adopted in 1669 when he wed Laura Altieri and took her name and coat of arms. After Cardinal Emilio Altieri was elected to the papal throne in 1670, he adopted Gaspare's uncle, Paluzzo, and father, Angelo. On the Altieri family under Clement X, see Ludwig Von Pastor, *Storia dei papi: Dalla fine del medio evo*, vol. 14.1 (Rome: Desclée, 1961), 628–44; and Armando Schiavo, *Palazzo Altieri* (Rome: Associazione Bancaria Italiana, 1962).

8. Schiavo, *Palazzo Altieri* (note 7); and Franco Borsi et al., *Palazzo Altieri* (Rome: Editalia, 1991).

9. Angelo's superfluosity to the family and political structure was also noted by contemporaries. Venetian ambassador Pietro Mocenigo reported back to the Serenissima: Angelo Altieri è fratello [of Cardinal Paluzzo] con cui passa buona corrispondenza e ben s'intendono insieme per procurare li mezzi valevoli per fare accrescere le ricchezze della casa nel resto nelle materie pubbliche, e nelle distributioni del governo non ne ha questo alcuna parte anzi fuori della sfera de' provecci privati, ne ambisce, ne desidera alcuna ingerenza. Ha egli la carica di Generale delle Galere quale ad altro non serve, che à dargli il Titolo e gl'emolumenti.

(Angelo Altieri is the brother [of Cardinal Paluzzi], with whom he has a healthy relationship and together they certainly intend to make use of valid methods to make the riches of the house grow; for the rest, in public matters and in the distribution of the government he has no place, rather, he is outside of the sphere of private incomes, nor does he aspire to, nor desire any intrusion. He has the position of General of the Galleys, which has no other purpose than to give him the title and income.)

Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Barb. lat. 5271, *Relatione Della Corte di Roma dell'Ecc.mo Signore Pietro Mocenigo Ambre Veneto*, 67v. All translations, unless otherwise noted, are my own. Angelo had no male children other than Gaspare; his daughters Tarquinia and Ludovica married Egidio Colonna (in 1672) and Domenico Orsini (in 1671), respectively. Thus with Angelo's adoption into the Altieri family, the Albertoni

name became extinct.

10. Federica Di Napoli Rampolla, “Chronologia della ristrutturazioni della Cappella della beata Ludovica Albertoni a San Francesco a Ripa,” in Claudio Strinati and Maria Grazia Bernardini, eds., *Bernini, Regista del barocco: I restauri* (Milan: Skira, 1999), 85–95; and Michela Ulivi, “La Cappella della beata Ludovica Albertoni nella chiesa di S. Francesco a Ripa,” in Claudio Strinati and Maria Grazia Bernardini, eds., *Bernini, Regista del barocco: I restauri* (Milan: Skira, 1999), 97–110.

11. On the chapel, see Anselmi, “Sebastiani Cipriani” (note 5). The chapel, second to the left, is dedicated to Saint Joseph and the Beata Ludovica.

12. Carlo Giuseppe Ratti, *Delle vite de’ pittori, scultori, ed architetti genovesi* (Genoa: Casamara, 1769), 81; and Lione Pascoli, *Vite de’ pittori, scultori, ed architetti moderni* (Rome: Antonio de’ Rossi, 1730), 202.

13. Archivio di Stato di Roma, Fondo Notai Auditor Camerae Laurentius Bellus 871, 502r and 507r: “Uno [quadro] grande della Beata Ludovica con cornice grande e negra” (in the main gallery); “Un quadro grande della Beata Ludovica con cornice d’oro d’intorno. (Robba, che sta nella guardarobba da basso.)” On 15 February 1674 the family received a special dispensation from Clement X to erect images of the beata in the family chapels in Palazzo Altieri. Schiavo, *Palazzo Altieri* (note 7), 175. Baldassare Albertoni, Angelo’s grandfather and the individual responsible for the redecoration of the chapel in San Francesco a Ripa in 1622, also had paintings of Ludovica in his collection that may well have come down to Angelo. A copy of his will and an inventory of his belongings, dated 29 August 1652, was placed in the Archivio Capitolino by his son Antonio to ensure that primogeniture was established and that Baldassare’s goods stayed in the family. The paintings appear in the inventory as “Un altro quadro della Beata Iodovica Albertoni con cornice negra” and “Una S. Ludovica figura sana 15”—15 scudi was apparently the estimated value of the latter painting. It is interesting to note that Ludovica is identified as “santa”; the scribe either made a simple slip or the Albertoni family possessed a painting that visually anticipated a canonization that would never take place. Archivio Capitolino, Rome, Fidecommessi, Paluzzi-Albertoni, 32, 401r, and 422v.

14. Shelley Karen Perlove, *Bernini and the Idealization of Death: The Blessed Ludovica Albertoni and the Altieri Chapel* (University Park: Pennsylvania State Univ. Press, 1990), 11–12.

15. Bellori is also a key figure in Altieri family commissions, as he was intimately involved with the redecoration of Palazzo Altieri and provided the program for Carlo Maratta’s *Triumph of Clemency* in the main *salone*. On Bellori, and for further bibliography, see Giovan Pietro Bellori, *The Lives of the Modern Painters, Sculptors, and Architects*, trans. Alice Sedgwick Wohl (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2005), 11–13, 407–9.

16. From these records we know that the bread was interpreted as an expression of the beata’s “love, and prodigious charity toward the poor,” while the book was interpreted as a reference to her “very lofty contemplation” (*altissima contemplatione*), her profound meditation on God’s laws. Giovanni Paolo di Roma, *Vita della B. Ludouica Albertoni Piermattei Paluzzi del Terzo Ordine di S. Francesco composta da vn religioso riformato di S. Francesco à Ripa, . . . Dedicata all’eminentiss. e reuerendiss. prencipe Palutio cardinal Altieri camerlengo di S. Chiesa* (Rome: Per Giuseppe Coruo, 1672), 264–65.

17. Archivio Altieri, *Giustificazioni del Sig. Principe D. Angelo Altieri pp mandati 1670–1671* (n. 593 b): “Il Comp.a [Computista] faccia il mand.o di s. centocinque m.ta a Gio. Batta Gauli Pittore p regalo di un quadro della B. Ludovica fatto p nro serv.o qsto di 22 feb.ro 1671 s. 105 m.ta A. Altieri.” Published in Di Napoli Rampolla, “Chronologia” (note 10), 97.

In his essay on Baciccio’s altarpieces for the 1999 *Il Baciccio* catalog, Maurizio Fagiolo dell’Arco connects this payment receipt with Baciccio’s altarpiece for San Francesco a Ripa, despite the fact that there is a second receipt dating from 1675 and made out to Baciccio, also for 105 scudi, for what is clearly the current altarpiece. Doc. 12, ric. 57: “Il Comp.a faccia il mand.o di s. Cento cinque m.ta à Gio Batta Gauli Pittore p regalo del quadro di S. Anna fatto a S. Franc.o q.sto di 24 lug. 1675 s. 105 m.ta [firmato]



A. Altieri” (The bookkeeper is ordered to make the payment of 150 scudi to Giovanni Battista Baciccio, painter, in recognition of the painting of S. Anne made for [the church of] S. Francesco, 24 July 1675. 105 scudi. [signed] A. Altieri). Published in Di Napoli Rampolla, “Chronologia” (note 10), 108. As a result, Fagiolo dell’Arco dates the commission of the current chapel altarpiece to 1671, when in fact the correct payment dates to 1675, reinforcing the accepted chronology.

18. A beatification process was opened for Ludovica in November of 1670, thus Baciccio could have begun the painting by that date, in anticipation that the process would swiftly reach a successful conclusion. Howard Hibbard, “Ludovica Albertoni: L’arte e la vita,” in Marcello Fagiolo, ed., *Gian Lorenzo Bernini e le arti visive* (Rome: Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana, 1987), 150.

19. The painting was badly damaged by rain en route to Los Angeles in 1970, and afterward it was transferred to a new support. The weave of the new canvas backing was visible in the paint itself, and the painting underwent significant inpainting. Without the original canvas—in particular without the edges—it is impossible to determine if the painting has been cut down or altered.

20. That is, between 1671, when the Spanish Dominican was canonized by Clement X, and 1674, when Titi referenced the altarpiece in his Roman guidebook. Filippo Titi, *Stvdio di pittvra, scoltvra, et architettvra, nelle chiese di Roma: Nel quale si hà notitia di tutti gl’Artefici, che hanno iui operato* (Rome: Mancini, 1674), 155. For an illustration of the work, see Enggass, *Paintings of Baciccio* (note 1), fig. 21.

21. Enggass, *Paintings of Baciccio* (note 1), 17, 144–45.

22. Vittorio Casale has classified the types of paintings produced for canonizations and solemnizations during the seicento and settecento into three types: standards or banners, narrative canvases or medallions, and “tribute paintings” (*dipinti-omaggio*). For various reasons relating to quality, materials, dimensions, and composition, Baciccio’s depiction of Ludovica Albertoni can be excluded from these categories. For Casale, see, most recently, Vittorio Casale, “Santi, Beati e Servi di Dio in immagini,” in Giovanni Morello, Ambrogio M. Piazzoni, and Paolo Vian, eds., *Diventare Santo: Itinerari e riconoscimenti della santità tra libri, documenti e immagini* (Vatican City: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana/Events, 1998), 73–76.

23. Ap. doc. n. 6: “Filza di Giustificazioni per l’Ecc.mo Sig.re Pnpe D Angelo Altieri 1673–1675” (n. 702b). Doc. 1, ric. 103: “Conto dell’Ill.mo et Ecc.mo Sig. Prencipe D. Angelo Altieri con gli eredi del S. Baldassar Castelli. A dì 30 d. [gennaio 1671] p haver indorato una cornice grande assai p il quadro da Altare della B. Ludovica tutta imbrunita col fondo gessato. s. 25.” Published in Di Napoli Rampolla, “Chronologia” (note 10), 104. Angelo immediately had to pay another two scudi to have the frame repaired, as it was damaged by rain on the way to San Francesco a Ripa. It seems that the painting has always been prone to bad luck with the weather.

24. At the same time Angelo paid for fifty coats of arms with the Altieri *stemma*, which were intended to decorate the church, and to have iron grating in the chapel painted silver. This further supports the hypothesis that Baciccio’s painting was for the family chapel, as all of these payments were made together. Di Napoli Rampolla, “Chronologia” (note 10), 104 (App. doc. n. 6., Doc. 1, ric. 103). In March 1671, Angelo paid a debt he owed to a printer, Matteo Gregorio Rossi, for, among other things, four hundred images of the Beata Ludovica on paper. It is recorded in the payment itself that these prints were made specifically for Ludovica’s feast day. Di Napoli Rampolla, “Chronologia” (note 10), 101 (ric. 4).

25. Technically, an altar cannot be dedicated to a beata or a beato, hence the double dedications in the Altieri chapels in San Francesco a Ripa and Santa Maria in Campitelli. However, for the feast day of a prominent holy figure the church is transformed in their honor—the Franciscans at San Francesco a Ripa to this day place a large image of Ludovica Albertoni over the high altar of the church for the duration of the celebration.

26. Cesare Solatio, *Compendio della vita della Beata Lodovica Albertoni della cetera vedova Romana religiosa del terz’ordine di San Francesco: Con l’aggiunta d’alcun epigrammi di Cesare Solatij Romano: Dedicato*

*all'illustrissimo, & eccellentissimo Sig. Principe Don Gasparo Altieri nipote di nostro signore e generale di Santa Chiesa, &c.* (Rome: Nella Stamperia del Mancini, 1671), n.p.

27. The viewing point for the current altarpiece, Baciccio's *Holy Family with Saint Anne*, is slightly lower, with a more pronounced tilt to look up at the figures—this is an adjustment made to accommodate the fact that the painting is further away from the viewer and above Bernini's sculpture. The point of view for Baciccio's *Ludovica Albertoni* is not dissimilar to that of the sixteenth-century frescoed representation of the beata to the right of the altar in the San Francesco a Ripa chapel. My thanks to Anna Seidel for contemplating viewing points and their significance with me.

28. There are two surviving seventeenth-century biographies of Ludovica Albertoni: Paulo, *Vita della B. Ludouica Albertoni* (note 16); and Solatio, *Compendio* (note 26). Ludwig von Pastor refers to a third in manuscript form in the Vatican library written by a Fra Gennaro, but this has yet to come to light. See Christopher M. S. Johns, "Some Observations on Collaboration and Patronage in the Altieri Chapel, San Francesco a Ripa: Bernini and Baciccio," *Storia dell'arte* 50/52 (1984): 44.

29. Perlove, *Bernini* (note 14), 10.

30. They are dressed identically, in the black dress and white veil that was characteristic of Francesca Romana's oblates, both hold a book (although, as here, Francesca Romana's is usually open to show the standard inscription—see note 3—while Ludovica's is closed), and are accompanied by their small companion figure—Ludovica and the poor youth, Francesca and the angel. On the chapel, see Johanna Elfriede Louise Heideman, *The Cinquecento Chapel Decorations in S. Maria in Aracoeli in Rome* (Amsterdam: Academische Pers, 1982).

31. At the time of Ludovica's death in 1533, the chapel belonged to her husband's family, the Della Cetera, and was dedicated to the Holy Cross. Apparently a proposal for a reconstruction was made by Baldassare Peruzzi immediately following Ludovica's death, but never carried out. A decorative campaign was undertaken in 1571 by Tiberio della Cetera with Rocco d'Orlando, but there is little surviving information regarding the chapel's appearance before the early seventeenth century. In the early 1620s, ownership of the chapel was transferred to the Albertoni, the dedication changed to Saint Anne, and a redecoration project begun by Baldassare Albertoni. Baldassare commissioned Giacomo Mola to lead a reconstruction and redecoration project that involved placing Ludovica's sarcophagus above ground in the center of the space, installing an altarpiece by Gaspare Celio—*The Virgin and Child and Saint Anne* (the painting went to Palazzo Albertoni and is now lost)—and adding frescoes in the dome and pendentives by Cristoforo Grippi that depict, respectively, music-making angels and four holy women: Saints Cecilia, Agnes, and Francesca Romana and the Beata Ludovica. The two frescoes now flanking the altar, depicting Saint Clare and Ludovica, are generally dated to the sixteenth century, as both Bellori and Baciccio testified at Ludovica's beatification hearings; it has been suggested that they were originally located elsewhere in the chapel or church and were relocated or retained during the renovation in 1622, but their precise history is unknown. The surviving documentation paints a slightly muddled picture of the chapel's history—Baldassare's project, led by Mola, has been dated to 1622 and 1624, while ownership of the chapel was not officially transferred to the Albertoni until October 1625. On the chronology and development of the chapel, see Di Napoli Rampolla, "Chronologia" (note 10); and Ulivi, "La Cappella della beata Ludovica Albertoni" (note 10).

32. The subject of this fresco has not previously been identified; Marco Pupillo describes the image of Ludovica Albertoni only as a saint offering bread to a pilgrim. That she is not a saint is quite clear from the fact that she is shown with her head encircled by rays, rather than a halo. Marco Pupillo, *S. Bartolomeo all'Isola Tiberina: Mille anni di storia e di arte* (Milan: Edizioni Angelo Guerini, 2003), 39.

33. Mauro Tagliabue, "Francesca Romana nella Storiografia: Fonti, Studi, Biografie," in Giorgio Picasso, ed., *Una Santa Tutta Romana: Saggi e ricerche nel VI centenario della nascita di Francesca Bussa dei Ponziani (1384–1984)* (Siena: Monte Oliveto Maggiore, 1984), 199.

34. Solatio, *Compendio* (note 26), n.p.: “E quello che ancora è degno di considerazione è, che avanti che si canonizasse Santa Francesca Romana, dipignevansi amendue queste gloriosissime Matrone, e Beate del Cielo insieme, l’una allato dell’altra, e con pari venerazione erano dal popolo di Roma riverite, & adorate.”

35. Giancarlo Rocca, *La sostanza dell’effimero: Gli abiti degli Ordini religiosi in Occidente* (Rome: Edizioni Paoline, 2000), 440–41. The design of the habit was given to Francesca by Mary in a vision; the characteristics are the very long white veil and the lack of a wimple or scapular, leaving the forehead and neck uncovered. Although the habit of the Franciscan tertiaries was less standardized, the habit was generally dark grey in color, accompanied by a scapular or hood, and cinched at the waist with the Franciscan knotted cord (pp. 337–38).

36. Valentino Martinelli, “I Disegni di Bernini,” in idem, *Gian Lorenzo Bernini e la sua cerchia: Studi e contributi* (1950–1990) (Naples: Edizioni Scientifiche Italiane, 1994), 40–41; originally published in *Commentari* 3 (1950): 172–86.

37. Francesco Petrucci, “Baciccio ritrattista: proposta per un catalogo,” *Fima Antiquari—Arte Viva* 10 (1997): 52–54.

38. Beatrice Canestro Chioyenda, “Ancora del Bernini, del Gaulli e della Regina Cristina,” *Commentari* 20 (1969): 231. The sentiment was voiced perhaps most vociferously by P. J. Mariette when he wrote that “le Bachiche étoit la main dont le Bernin se servoit pour exprimer en peinture ses pensées neuves et piquante” (Baciccio was the hand that Bernini used to express in painting his new and titillating thoughts). Mariette’s comment appears in his ten-volume commentary on Pellegrino Antonio Orlando’s *Abeceario Pittorico* (1704), written between 1717 and 1728, but not published until the nineteenth century. Pierre-Jean Mariette, *Abeceario de P. J. Mariette et autres notes inédites de cet amateur sur les arts et les artistes*, ed. Philippe de Chennevières and Anatole de Montaiglon, vol. 1 (Paris: Dumoulin, 1853), 48.

39. Enggass, *Paintings of Baciccio* (note 1), 52. An *avviso* dated 20 April 1675 states: “Hanno li P.P. Giesuiti scoperto la cuppola della loro [chiesa] del Giesu dipinta da nuovo con disegno del Cavalier Bernini, e fattura d’una tale Baccici Fiorentino e da molti virtuosi non viene troppo lodata l’Inventione del primo, come anche il lavoro del secondo” (The Jesuits have uncovered the dome of their church of the Gesù, newly painted by a certain Baciccio, Florentine, to a design by the Cavalier Bernini, and by many experts the invention of the latter is not very praised, nor is the work of the former). *Bibliotheca Apostolica Vaticana*, Barb. lat. 6413, 109r. As is often the case with *avvisi*, a factual error, in this case the identification of Baciccio as a Florentine, is coupled with a useful insight into contemporary events.

40. Johns, “Some Observations” (note 28), 43–47.

41. Johns, “Some Observations” (note 28), 45.

42. Anna Coliva, *Bernini Scultore: La Tecnica Esecutiva* (Rome: De Luca Editori d’Arte, 2002), 266–67.

43. Baciccio’s source, in turn, is quite clear—the sixteenth-century fresco in the chapel itself, now found to the right of the altar. As noted earlier, the Genoese artist translated quite literally the Renaissance source into a baroque idiom.

44. On the issue of whether Ludovica is shown in ecstasy or dying, see Frank Sommer, “The Iconography of Action: Bernini’s *Ludovica Albertoni*,” *Art Quarterly* 36 (1970): 30–38; Hibbard, “Ludovica Albertoni” (note 18); Perlove, *Bernini* (note 14); and Giovanni Careri, *Voli d’amore: Architettura, pittura e scultura nel “bel composto” di Bernini* (Rome: Laterza, 1991), 73–121.

45. Claudio Strinati, “La grande ombra,” in Maurizio Fagiolo dell’Arco, Dieter Graf, and Francesco Petrucci, eds., *Giovan Battista Gaulli, Il Baciccio (1639–1709)* (Milan: Skira, 1999), 45.

46. Bernini was doing social penance at the time following a particularly unsavory incident at Saint Peter’s involving his brother. He officially executed the statue of Ludovica for free in order to win back the pope’s good favor toward his family. In fact, Angelo Altieri paid Baciccio slightly more for the

painting, 105 scudi, than he paid for Bernini's statue of the beata, since the only direct cost of the latter was 96 scudi for the marble. Coliva, *Bernini scultore* (note 42), 266 (app. doc. 1). The payment of 105 scudi is commensurate with what Baciccio was making for other similarly sized altarpieces around the same time: as we have already seen he was paid the same amount four years later for his altarpiece for the Altieri chapel, in 1669 he was paid 100 scudi for *Rest on the Flight into Egypt* (Rome, Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Antica, Palazzo Barberini), and in 1676 he was paid 100 scudi for his altarpiece for Sant'Andrea al Quirinale, *The Death of St. Francis Xavier*. Fagiolo dell'Arco, Graf, and Petrucci, *Giovan Battista Gaulli* (note 1), 156; and Enggass, *Paintings of Baciccio* (note 1), 179. On painter's earnings in seicento Rome, see Richard Spear, "Scrambling for Scudi: Notes and Painters' Earnings in Early Baroque Rome," *Art Bulletin* 85 (2003): 310–20. Spear notes that artists generally paid between 5 and 10 scudi per painting for canvases and other basic materials like pigments and stretchers. Perhaps this explains some of the slightly odd amounts we encounter in documents, such as the 105 scudi paid to Baciccio for the *Ludovica* picture—100 scudi for the picture proper and 5 scudi to cover necessary materials.