

C H A P T E R   O N E

THE CONGREGATION  
 AND THE CHAPTER



**A** HISTORY of the altars and altarpieces in St. Peter's must necessarily take into account the two groups of churchmen who, under the guidance and supervision of the pope, were largely responsible for shaping it. One was the Congregation of the Fabbrica of St. Peter's, a powerful committee of cardinals and other prelates whose job it was to supervise the construction, outfitting, and physical maintenance of the new basilica, as well as to administer the financial and legal aspects of the enterprise. The other was the Chapter of St. Peter's, comprising the nearly one hundred priests and clerics who had charge of the liturgical and ceremonial life of the basilica. The responsibilities of the Congregation and of the Chapter rarely overlapped, and while the building was under construction the two organizations had little to do with one another. But when it came to furnishing the interior, and especially to developing a plan for the designation and decoration of the altars, their separate worlds converged, necessitating for a time their close collaboration. Since both organizations will figure prominently in this study, it seems appropriate to begin with a brief account of the history, constitution, and function of each.

THE CONGREGAZIONE DELLA  
 REVERENDA FABBRICA DI SAN PIETRO

The Fabbrica di San Pietro came into being with the laying of the foundation stone of the new basilica in 1506.<sup>1</sup> It began as a loosely knit, loosely defined organization, without a constitution and without a central administration. The word "Fabbrica" – literally "Building" or "Construction" – was used in a general sense to apply to all persons, offices, and activities in any way connected with the financing and construction of the new basilica, and thus covered everything from the soliciting of funds in far-off lands to the stockpiling of travertine blocks at the building site.

As the building campaign accelerated, putting a growing strain on papal resources, it became necessary to coordinate the multiple activities of the Fabbrica under a central

<sup>1</sup> On the history of the Fabbrica di S. Pietro, see Vespignani, 1762; Renazzi, 1793; Nicolai, 1817; Moroni, 1840–79, *ov* "Congregazione della Reverenda Fabbrica di S. Pietro," XVI, pp. 199–206; Del Re, 1969; Rietbergen, 1983, esp. pp. 121–23; Basso, 1987–88.



administration. In 1510, Pope Julius II appointed a commission of prelates “to preside over the great work, and to collect the donations of the faithful for so pious and praiseworthy an enterprise.”<sup>2</sup> He invested this commission with extraordinary powers and privileges, enabling it to collect the vast sums of money needed to pay for his ambitious undertaking. The Fabbrica’s fund-raising activities included the widespread sale of indulgences; a network of representatives in Italy and throughout Europe was authorized to offer indulgences to all who donated money toward the rebuilding of the basilica. The commission also had exclusive rights to the proceeds from the sale of certain dispensations, including age dispensations to candidates for the priesthood and matrimonial dispensations to unlawfully consanguinous couples. It had the right to inspect the personal finances of priests, and to confiscate any money or possessions judged to have been acquired by illegal or improper means. It had access to the wills and fiduciary testaments of all residents of the Papal States and the Regno of Naples, in order to ascertain whether or not they contained legacies left for religious or charitable purposes. A fifth part of all so-called pious legacies (*legati pii*) went directly into the coffers of the Fabbrica; furthermore, if any such pious legacy was wrongly or ambiguously worded, if the heirs failed to execute it within a year of the testator’s death, if the will was contested, or if it involved any irregularity whatsoever, the Fabbrica was free to appropriate the entire amount for its own purposes.<sup>3</sup> Finally, the Fabbrica received considerable income from the so-called Crusade, a tax levied by the kings of Spain and Portugal, a percentage of which was handed over to Rome, nominally to support the Church’s struggle against infidels and heretics, but in fact to help pay for the building of St. Peter’s.<sup>4</sup> Throughout the period under discussion, the portion of the Crusade set aside for the pope remained fairly constant, with Spain undertaking to contribute about 100,000 gold *scudi* every six years and Portugal roughly three-quarters as much.<sup>5</sup>

In 1523, Clement VII instituted a committee of sixty prelates – the so-called College of Sixty – to direct the Fabbrica’s activities.<sup>6</sup> The College included representatives from every Christian nation; and to maintain its international character, whenever a member died he was replaced by a compatriot. Clement realized that in order to finance the construction of new St. Peter’s he had to have the participation of the entire Catholic community. This was becoming all the more imperative in the wake of Protestant attacks against the Fabbrica and its fundraising methods, especially its notorious policy of marketing indulgences. There was, in fact, growing resentment against Rome for what was widely perceived as nothing more than a new form of taxation. The pope needed to defuse the fears and encourage the generosity of the faithful outside Italy. By placing the Fabbrica’s business in the hands of a multinational committee, he hoped to remind them that “this sacred and sublime temple to the blessed Peter is not ours, nor does it belong to any one people, but to all Christian nations in common.”<sup>7</sup>

In the ensuing years, the Fabbrica’s rights and prerogatives were strengthened and

<sup>2</sup> “. . . [per] presiedere al gran lavoro, e raccogliere le oblazioni de’ fedeli per una sì pia, e lodevole opera.” (Renazzi, 1793, p. 1; cited by Del Re, 1969, p. 289.)

<sup>3</sup> Moroni, 1840–79, XVI, p. 200; Del Re, 1969, p. 289; Rietbergen, 1983, pp. 121–23, 127–28; Basso, 1987–88, I, pp. 110–13.

<sup>4</sup> Moroni, 1840–79, *ov* “Bolla della Crociata,” V, p. 283; Rietbergen, 1983, pp. 122–23; Basso, 1987–88, I, pp. 107–10.

<sup>5</sup> *Bullarium Romanum*, 1857–72, XI, pp. 557–58, 610–11; XIII, p. 283; XV, pp. 674–75. The arrangement remained in effect even during the period known as the Sixty Years of Captivity, between 1580 and 1640, when the Spanish king sat on the throne of Portugal.

<sup>6</sup> Moroni, 1840–79, XVI, p. 200; Del Re, 1969, pp. 289–90.

<sup>7</sup> “. . . hoc sacrum et sublime B. Petri templum non nostri, neque cuiusquam esse proprium, sed omnium christianarum nationum commune . . .” (*Bullarium Romanum*, VI, p. 48.)



increased. The College of Sixty was answerable to no one other than the pope. It employed its own judge and was allowed to try all legal cases in which it was involved.<sup>8</sup> Since its various money-making activities frequently resulted in litigation, the Fabbrica relied heavily on this privilege. That the Fabbrica had jurisdiction in all lawsuits in which it was a party may not have been fair but was certainly efficient, and discouraged those who might otherwise have initiated long drawn-out legal proceedings against it.

In 1589, Sixtus V put an end to the virtual autonomy of the College of Sixty by placing it under the direction of the cardinal archpriest of St. Peter's basilica, then Giovanni Evangelista Pallotta.<sup>9</sup> The move suggests that Sixtus wanted to tighten his control over the Fabbrica. As construction accelerated in the fourth quarter of the sixteenth century, it was becoming increasingly clear that the College was a bulky and unwieldy institution, too large to administer the Fabbrica effectively. Eventually, it was abolished altogether, and in its place was put a small but powerful Congregation of cardinals and prelates, equipped to assist the papacy in its drive to complete the new basilica.<sup>10</sup>

It was Leo XI who, during his month-long papacy, made the first moves toward the creation of the Congregation of the Fabbrica.<sup>11</sup> Leo died before his plan could be put into effect, but Paul V picked up where he had left off, and within a month of his election on May 16, 1605, had established the Congregation and appointed three cardinals to it.<sup>12</sup> Cardinal Pallotta remained in charge, and Cardinals Giustiniani and Arrigoni served under him.<sup>13</sup> Over the next couple of decades, the membership was gradually increased until by 1623 there were ten cardinals on the Congregation. Thereafter, and throughout the period covered in this study, the number remained more or less constant.<sup>14</sup>

One cardinal was put in charge of the Congregation as a whole. His title was that of Prefect, although in the first decades of the seventeenth century he was more often called simply *il capo della Congregazione*. Between 1605 and 1679, there were six different directors of the Fabbrica. Cardinal Pallotta, appointed by Sixtus V to head the College of Sixty in 1589, retained the directorship of the Fabbrica until his death in 1620. He was succeeded by Cardinals Giustiniani (died 1621), Del Monte (died 1626), Ginnasi (died 1639), Lante

<sup>8</sup> Del Re, 1969, pp. 289–90; Basso, 1987–88, I, pp. 119–21.

<sup>9</sup> Moroni, 1840–79, XVI, p. 201; Del Re, 1969, p. 291.

<sup>10</sup> Moroni, 1840–79, XVI, p. 201; Del Re, 1969, p. 291. A Congregation, by definition, is headed by a committee of cardinals and is the highest-ranking administrative unit in the Roman Curia. Thus the change was designed to increase the prestige and authority of the Fabbrica.

<sup>11</sup> Grimaldi, p. 34: "Paulus quintus . . . congregationem aliquorum sanctae Romanae ecclesiae cardinalium ad Fabricae eius templi regimen, quam Leo undecimus Medices primus instituerat, sed XXVI dierum pontificatu ab hac luce subtractus, executioni non tradiderat; . . . Paulus quintus Burghesius confirmavit, de novo instituit et ordinavit ad fabricam eius amplissimi templi absolvendam, eamque in temporalibus gubernandam. Antea namque nonnulli Romanae curiae praelati ipsi Fabricae praeerant."

<sup>12</sup> *Avviso* of June 15, 1605: "Ha Sua Beatitudine eretto una nuova Congregazione de tre cardinali, capo il cardinal Pallotta, sopra la fabrica di San Pietro et sabato si tenne per la prima volta . . ." (BAV, Urb. Lat. 1073, f. 327 v; transcribed by Orbaan, 1919, p. 33.) See also the previous note.

There is no formal bull of foundation; apparently Paul V created the Congregation by proclamation (ie. *viva voce*). The lack of a document has led to considerable confusion. A common misconception is that the Congregation was founded not by Paul V but by Clement VIII. This error seems to have originated in 1751, in a bull issued by Benedict XIV, redefining the authority and composition of the Fabbrica, and has since been picked up and repeated in virtually all of the literature on the Fabbrica, including, for example, Vespignani, 1762, p. 9; Moroni, 1840–79, XVI, p. 201; Del Re, 1969, p. 291; Rietbergen, 1983, p. 123; Basso, 1987–88, I, p. 47.

<sup>13</sup> *Avviso* of June 18, 1605: "Oltre la Congregazione sudetta delli tre cardinali, cioè Pallotta, Justiniani et Arrigone, diputata per la fabrica di San Pietro come si è scritto . . ." (BAV, Urb. Lat. 1073, f. 331; cited in Orbaan, 1919, p. 33.)

<sup>14</sup> For a list of the cardinal members of the Congregation from 1605 to c. 1650, see Appendix I.



(died 1652), and Francesco Barberini (died 1679).<sup>15</sup> Throughout this period, the leadership of the Congregation seems to have been entrusted to its oldest cardinal member.<sup>16</sup>

Under the cardinals were a varying number of high-ranking prelates who handled much of the administrative business of the Fabbrica. These men usually held prestigious office in other branches of the Curia: among them, for example, were the Auditor General of the Camera Apostolica, the Treasurer General, members of the Sacra Rota, and assorted bishops, archbishops, and patriarchs.

The Congregation generally convened at the palace of the cardinal-in-charge. At first, meetings were held at irregular intervals, and rarely more than three or four times a year. But Urban VIII wanted to speed things up, and in February 1625, he gave orders that the cardinals were to meet every fifteen days.<sup>17</sup> His action reflects his intense interest in the basilica, and his impatience to bring its construction and decoration to completion. But the frequency of the meetings put a burden on the cardinal members, most of whom belonged to several congregations at once and had innumerable other demands on their time; not surprisingly, attendance varied considerably from one meeting to the next. Inevitably, the *congregazioni generali*, or meetings of the full board of members, became less and less frequent, while the *congregazioni piccole* or *particolari*, those at which only the cardinal *capo* and a few lesser functionaries were in attendance, became more common. Not until the middle of the 1630s, however, did the *congregazioni particolari* begin to outnumber the *congregazioni generali*; in the period with which we are chiefly concerned, most of the Fabbrica's business was conducted at meetings of the *congregazione generale*.

The Congregation's rights and responsibilities were much the same as those of the College of Sixty, although in the wake of the Counter Reformation its methods for raising money differed somewhat. The sale of indulgences and dispensations, formerly sanctioned by papal policy, was now frowned on, and although it was not entirely abandoned, it yielded only a tiny portion of the Fabbrica's budget in the seventeenth century. The Crusade, too, was unreliable, since all too often Spain and Portugal failed to deliver the promised sums. To make up for these losses in revenue, the Congregation relied more heavily than ever on the proceeds from pious legacies. Notaries were obliged to inform the Fabbrica every time they drew up a will that included a pious legacy, so that the Fabbrica could lay claim to its fair share. If they failed to do so, they were subject to fines. The Fabbrica had agents in every major town in the Papal States and Regno, who kept an eye on the notaries and saw to it that they did not cheat the Fabbrica.<sup>18</sup> In addition, the Fabbrica financed certain of its major undertakings, such as the construction of the nave, the facade, and the porticoes of the piazza, by taking out loans.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>15</sup> It is often assumed that after Sixtus V appointed Pallotta, who was cardinal archpriest of St. Peter's, to head the Fabbrica, the two positions, namely, those of archpriest and "capo" of the Fabbrica, were always filled by one and the same man. Thus Cardinal Scipione Borghese, who succeeded Pallotta as archpriest, is often said to have directed the Congregation in the years between Pallotta's death and his own in 1633 (Del Re, 1969, p. 300; Rietbergen, 1983, p. 124; Basso, 1987–88, I, p. 71). The mistake is understandable, given the fact that the bull appointing Borghese archpriest named him "Fabricae . . . Protectorem, & Superiorem" (*Collectionis Bullarum*, 1747–52, III, p. 226). Nevertheless, although he was a member of the Congregation from 1620, Borghese never directed it. The two jobs became officially linked only in 1652, when the then cardinal archpriest Francesco Barberini was appointed Prefect of the Congregation. Thereafter the two positions were always held by a single incumbent.

<sup>16</sup> Lunadoro, 1650, p. 360: ". . . fanno Congregatione . . . in casa del cardinale più antiano di questi [cardinali]."

<sup>17</sup> See Chapter 4 and Doc. Appendix, no. 6. A similar decree had been issued on 28 November 1622 (AFSP, Piano 1–serie 3–159a, f. 50), and another similar decree was issued under Alexander VII (Rietbergen, 1983, p. 125).

<sup>18</sup> Moroni, 1840–79, XVI, p. 202; Del Re, 1969, pp. 293–94; Rietbergen, 1983, pp. 128–29.

<sup>19</sup> Orbaan, 1919, p. 64; Rietbergen, 1983, pp. 138–41.



By the seventeenth century the Fabbrica had developed into a finely tuned and efficient organization consisting of two distinct branches, one that handled the financial and legal side of the business, and the other that managed the building itself. Each branch was administered separately by its own staff of salaried officers who were appointed by the Congregation to oversee the Fabbrica's day-to-day operations.

The staff of the financial-legal branch of the Fabbrica was headed by the *econom*, or steward, and included a secretary who also served as a notary, an accountant, a judge, a lawyer, an archivist, a scribe, and two chaplains.<sup>20</sup> The *econom* worked closely with the cardinals in charge of the Congregation. He attended their meetings and took the minutes, handled their correspondence, and reported to them on the activities of the Fabbrica's farflung agents and representatives. He also coordinated the activities of the two branches of the Fabbrica, arranging the transfer of moneys from one to the other and communicating the cardinals' instructions to the Architect and his underlings.

The other branch of the Fabbrica was headed by the Architect. He provided designs when necessary and maintained artistic control over the building as a whole. Second in command was the *sopra*stante, or superintendent, who oversaw the workers, recorded their hours, ordered and inspected building materials, and kept accounts of the cost of those materials. In this he was helped by the *fattore*, or factor, who in addition was responsible for distributing the tools and materials and for doling out the workmen's wages.<sup>21</sup> The Architect, the superintendent, and the factor were salaried officers.<sup>22</sup> Under them worked teams of skilled craftsmen, including masons, stonecarvers, stuccoists, gilders, carpenters, and metal workers. These teams were paid on the basis of piecework. They presented their accounts to the Architect who, together with the superintendent and the factor, carefully measured and appraised all work before approving payment. In addition, there were scores of unskilled laborers in the employ of the Fabbrica, paid according to the number of *giornate* they worked. Finally, a small number of convicts were sentenced to hard labor in the service of the Fabbrica, and were paid nothing at all.<sup>23</sup>

The Congregation united both arms of the Fabbrica under its single authority. The minutes of its fortnightly meetings bear witness to the range and diversity of its affairs. The basilica itself was only one part of the cardinals' agenda, albeit an important one. At any given meeting, they might be called on to respond to a case of litigation brought against the Fabbrica by a private citizen hoping to protect his inheritance; an accusation of corruption against one of its commissioners in Naples; a report from the Fabbrica's agent in Ancona about a consignment of bronze; a criminal case involving an employee of the Fabbrica arrested on charges of assault; or a request for charitable assistance from the widow of a workman killed on the job.

Yet clearly it was in its supervision of the construction and decoration of the new basilica that the Congregation made its most lasting contribution. From the moment the Congregation came into being in 1605, the cardinal members assumed a degree of artistic control not even aspired to by their predecessors in the College of Sixty. One might have thought that, as the building neared completion, the Congregation's role would have diminished. In fact the contrary was true. While construction was in progress, the day-to-day operation of the Fabbrica could be left in the hands of the Architect, whose models

<sup>20</sup> See Appendix II.

<sup>21</sup> AFSP, Piano 1—serie 1—no. 20, ff. 346–46v (“Del offitio del fattore”); ff. 347–48 (“Sopra l’offitio del soprastante, et fattore”).

<sup>22</sup> See Appendix II.

<sup>23</sup> On the organization and activities of the artistic branch of the Fabbrica, see, in addition to the literature cited in n. 1 above, Ackerman, 1954, p. 5; Tratz, 1988, esp. pp. 422–27; Anselmi, 1991, pp. 272–80.





and drawings had been approved in advance. But as the focus of activity shifted from building to furnishing the church, increasingly the decisions that had to be made fell outside the competence of the Architect and required the attention of the Congregation.

One further point needs making. A number of churches in Rome and throughout Italy had their own permanent *fabbriche*, organizations founded originally to oversee the construction of the buildings and later perpetuated to finance and supervise their maintenance. But no other *fabbrica* was as influential in determining the physical and sacral character of a church as the Fabbrica of St. Peter's. The reason is simple. In new St. Peter's, private patronage (i.e. nonpapal patronage) was excluded. Thus, the paintings, sculptures, stuccos, inscriptions, pavements, and other decorations, which in any other church would be commissioned by private individuals or families or institutions of one kind or another, in St. Peter's were commissioned by the Fabbrica or, to be more precise, by the Congregation in charge of the Fabbrica, acting on behalf of the pope.

The ban on private patronage is spelled out in no known edict or bull. Yet that it existed, and was recognized universally, is evidenced by the total absence of privately owned chapels, altars, and burial vaults in the new basilica. The policy seems to have been formulated at the outset of Paul V's pontificate, in other words, at around the time that the Congregation of the Fabbrica came into being. It is plausible, indeed, that the ban on private patronage and the creation of the Congregation were related events, the one necessitating the other. For with private patronage disallowed, some other system of patronage had to be devised to cope with the myriad decisions involved in completing and outfitting the basilica. Obviously, the pope could not direct the operation entirely on his own; he needed competent representatives to carry out the work in his name. The Congregation of cardinals, educated, cultivated, and committed to the goals of the papacy, was ideally suited for the purpose.

### THE CHAPTER OF ST. PETER'S

The Chapter of St. Peter's was composed of beneficed clergy whose duty it was to attend to the day-to-day liturgical running of the basilica.<sup>24</sup> They said masses at its altars; recited the Divine Office at the appropriate hours of the day in their private chapel off the nave; performed baptisms, funerals, and other functions of the sort; and took part in papal ceremonies in St. Peter's. On certain feast days and holidays, they attended the festivities in various other churches in Rome, and they participated in the major processions and *cavalcate* that played such an important part in the ceremonial life of the Baroque city.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>24</sup> On the history, constitution, and duties of the Chapter of St. Peter's, see Grimaldi, pp. 346–49; Martorelli, 1792; Moroni, 1840–79, *op. cit.* "Chiese di Roma. S. Pietro in Vaticano," XII, pp. 302–327; Reynolds, 1982, pp. 218–47; Schmidtbauer, 1986; 1987; Montel, 1988–89; Blaaauw, 1994, II, pp. 621–30.

<sup>25</sup> The diaries of the Chapter's Master of Ceremonies Andrea Amici are full of references to the festivals and processions in which the clergy participated. For example, on November 30, 1622: "Questa mattina finito il nostro Offitio in Coro si è fatta una bella, e numerosa cavalcata, con l'occasione, che il Signor Niccolo Ludovisio nipote di Nostro Signore ha sposato la Principessa di Venosa" (BAV, ACSP, *Diari* 11, p. 117). On one occasion, a procession turned into a fiasco when it started to pour with rain right in the middle of it: ". . . siamo stati forzati dalla pioggia grande di fermarci alli Cesarini, chi in un portico, e chi nell'altro, e dopo havere aspettato un gran pezzo, e visto, che la pioggia non cessava, con cattivissima risoluzione, e malissimo esempio, tutti li Canonici, e anco una parte de' Beneficiati, et Clerici fatto venire le carrozze, entrati in esse se ne sono andati alla volta di S. Pietro ben serrati nelle medesime carrozze, lasciando il sinicchio, e la croce con quelli pochi Beneficiati, Clerici, ed altri ministri quasi tutti dipersi." (*Diari* 10, p. 538.) A more pleasant outing took place on May 2, 1615, when the entire Chapter went on a weekend trip to Castel Porziano (near Ostia) to consecrate a chapel recently built by Pietro Strozzi, a



The Chapter of St. Peter's prided itself on its great antiquity. As early as the fifth century, there existed a body of clergy that devoted itself to the physical and ritual maintenance of the basilica.<sup>26</sup> Over the centuries, the Chapter grew in size, until by the sixteenth century it had developed into a highly structured organization with a fixed membership, clearly defined rules and responsibilities, and a host of jealously guarded privileges. Thereafter, for at least two hundred years, the Chapter changed little. Headed by the cardinal archpriest of St. Peter's, it consisted of three ranks of clergy. The first in order of importance were the canons, of whom there were thirty; next came the *beneficiati*, who numbered thirty-six; and finally the twenty-six *chierici beneficiati*. In addition, there were four *cappellani Innocenziani*, named after Pope Innocent VIII, whose rank was equivalent to that of the *beneficiati*,<sup>27</sup> and usually one or two supernumeraries appointed to the Chapter in an honorary capacity.<sup>28</sup> Thus the Chapter's total membership fell just shy of one hundred.

A position in the Chapter was considered highly desirable. It was well paid, prestigious, and probably not too demanding. The appointment was for life, if the incumbent so desired; but often it served merely as a stepping stone to higher office. Many canons went on to become bishops, archbishops, and cardinals.<sup>29</sup> The Chapter included representatives of the leading noble families, such as the Aldobrandini, the Caffarelli, the Cesarini, the Muti, and the Cibo. Many of these families had long-standing ties with the Chapter, and their names show up in its registers generation after generation.<sup>30</sup> But there were others from obscurer backgrounds, who had in one way or another earned the favor of the pope and his family.<sup>31</sup> For example, Urban VIII made his personal physician Giulio Mancini a canon.<sup>32</sup> Lucas Holstenius, the Barberini librarian and a leading member of Cardinal Francesco's entourage, received the same honor.<sup>33</sup> The fashionable composer Stefano Landi, whose patrons included the Borghese and the Barberini, was first assigned a lucrative chaplaincy by Gregory XV, and later made a *chierico beneficiato* by Urban VIII.<sup>34</sup>

member of the Chapter. The group, accompanied by four singers (soprano, alto, tenor, and bass), was taken by carriage to the banks of the Tiber, and then by boat downstream to their destination. They brought with them a relic of the True Cross (the chapel was in honor of St. Helen) and placed it in the altar; the formalities over, they had a picnic on the beach (*ibid.*, pp. 260–62).

<sup>26</sup> Martorelli, 1792, pp. 1–55; Moroni, 1840–79, XII, pp. 303–17; Blaauw, 1994, II, pp. 454–55, 517–20.

<sup>27</sup> On the *cappellani Innocenziani*, see Chapter 5 and Cat. 5 (a).

<sup>28</sup> For example, in 1624 the pope made Wladislaus, crown prince of Poland, an honorary canon of St. Peter's, to reward him for his stalwart defense of Catholicism (BAV, ACSP, *Decreti* 12, f. 51; *Collectionis Bullarum*, 1747–52, III, pp. 236–37).

<sup>29</sup> During the first half of the seventeenth century alone, at least two dozen canons, including Metello Bichi, Cesare Gherardi, Angelo Giorio, Marcantonio Gozzadino, Agostino Oreggi, Stefano Pignatelli, Fausto Poli, and Roberto Ubaldini, were elevated to the cardinalate. See BAV, ACSP, H95, ff. 12v–87v; Torrigio, 1635, pp. 611–13; Schmidtbauer, 1986, pp. 276–78.

<sup>30</sup> On the social makeup of the Chapter, see Schmidtbauer, 1986, especially pp. 280–91. Certain families clearly had what amounted to a prerogative of membership. Thus, for example, on March 21, 1630: "In solita capella Reliquiarum in sacrario, a Reverendissimis Dominis Canonicis per resignationem Domini Innocentij Cybi admissus fuit Beneficiatus in eius locum Dominus Dominicus Cybo eius nepos." (BAV, ASCP, *Turni* 13, f. 297v.)

<sup>31</sup> For complete membership lists, see BAV, ACSP, *Distribuzioni mensili*.

<sup>32</sup> Mancini assumed the post in January 1626. It has been suggested that he received the canonry as a reward for seeing Urban safely through the illness that attacked him immediately after his election (Mancini, 1923, p. 11), but if so he had to wait a couple of years, perhaps for a vacancy to open up.

<sup>33</sup> Pastor, 1924–53, XXIX, p. 443.

<sup>34</sup> Panofsky-Soergel, 1984, pp. 108–10. For more on Stefano Landi, see Chapter 8 and Cat. 11, esp. n. 14.

Members of the Chapter received a monthly salary, the amount of which varied according to their rank. Before the sixteenth century, the clergy squabbled amongst themselves over the distribution of resources. Julius II put an end to the bickering by introducing a system whereby the Chapter's income was divided in such a way that each canon received one amount, each *beneficiato* one half of that amount, and each *chierico* one-quarter of that amount.<sup>35</sup> During the 1620s, the canons earned about 65 *scudi* per month, the *beneficiati* about 33 *scudi*, and the *chierici* about 16 *scudi*.<sup>36</sup>

The Chapter's wealth, amassed over many centuries, was enormous. The basilica had always attracted generous gifts from the faithful. At the very outset, Constantine, the basilica's founder, had endowed it with huge gifts of land.<sup>37</sup> Thereafter, donations both large and small continued to pour in. In the later Middle Ages, the Chapter's assets increased dramatically, as the practice of bequeathing money or land to pay for masses of private intention, usually on behalf of the soul of the donor, gained in popularity.<sup>38</sup> To give but two examples, in 1342 Napoleone Orsini left the Chapter nearly one thousand acres of agricultural lands, the revenues from which were to pay for the saying of soul-masses and the upkeep of the altar of St. Martial.<sup>39</sup> Nearly a century later, Orsina Orsini bequeathed 2,000 gold florins for a similar purpose.<sup>40</sup> As late as the seventeenth century, the tradition of providing for soul-masses was still active. In 1619, Cardinal Odoardo Farnese presented the Chapter with the sum of 3,000 *scudi* for an annual mass to be said in perpetuity on behalf of his own soul and those of his parents.<sup>41</sup> Two years later, in 1621, Antonio Maria Aldobrandini, himself a canon of the basilica, donated 1,300 *scudi* for the saying of masses at the altar of Sts. Processus and Martinian.<sup>42</sup>

The Chapter's assets came in various forms. The Chapter was the single largest landowner in the Roman *campagna*, or indeed anywhere in the Papal States. Its properties included twenty-three *casali*, more than a hundred *vigne*, and over a hundred thousand acres.<sup>43</sup> By one estimate, the Chapter owned as much as 12.5 percent of the total arable and grazing land in the *campagna*.<sup>44</sup> In addition, it owned rich, crop-producing monasteries as far afield as Viterbo, Ravenna, Salerno, and Calabria. In Rome itself, it owned about three hundred buildings, most of which it rented out. Finally, it had over 20,000 *scudi* invested in *monti*.<sup>45</sup> The revenues from all of this property and capital came to an average of 60,000 *scudi* annually, most of which went directly into the members' salaries.<sup>46</sup>

The Chapter's business was taken care of at weekly meetings. Just as the meetings of the Congregation were held at the palace of the cardinal in charge, so the Chapter's

<sup>35</sup> Martorelli, 1792, p. 243; Moroni, 1840–79, XII, p. 318.

<sup>36</sup> See BAV, ACSP, *Distribuzioni mensili* 68, unfoliated. Grimaldi (p. 348) gives a slightly higher estimate for the members' salaries: 900 *scudi* annually for the canons, 440 for the *beneficiati*, and 230 for the *chierici beneficiati*.

<sup>37</sup> Krautheimer, 1980, p. 20.

<sup>38</sup> On this subject, see Chapter 2.

<sup>39</sup> See Cat. 15, n. 12.

<sup>40</sup> See Cat. 15, n. 13.

<sup>41</sup> BAV, ACSP, *Decreti* 11, ff. 196–196v; *Diari* 11, p. 78.

<sup>42</sup> See Cat. 11, n. 11.

<sup>43</sup> Grimaldi, p. 348.

<sup>44</sup> I am indebted to Mirka Beneš for providing me with this statistic, which she derived from information contained in BAV, Chigi H.III.64 (*Compendio o' vero indice de casali esistenti nel territorio romano deciato alla Santità di N.S. Alessandro VII*). See also Coste, 1971; 1973; Montel, 1971; 1979–85.

<sup>45</sup> Grimaldi, p. 348.

<sup>46</sup> The records for 1627, for example, show that of an estimated net income of 59,373 *scudi*, at least 41,478 *scudi* was set aside for the members (BAV, ACSP, *Inventari* 32, unfoliated). See also Schmidtbauer, 1987, especially pp. 322–27.





meetings took place at the palace of the cardinal archpriest – in other words, throughout most of period with which we are chiefly concerned, “in aedibus Illustrissimi ac Reverendissimi Cardinalis Scipionis Burghesij Archipresbyteri.”<sup>47</sup> Obviously not all ninety-six members attended these meetings; a group of about fifteen officers was appointed annually to represent the Chapter as a whole. These officers discussed everything from the roster of duties in St. Peter’s to the administration of the Chapter’s lands and other assets. In a way more illuminating, though, is what they did *not* discuss. Anything that might be construed as the Fabbrica’s business they consistently omitted from their agenda, at least until the middle of the 1620s. Throughout the sixteenth century, as new St. Peter’s gradually took shape around them, the canons remained strangely silent. Despite the fact that the decisions being made at that time were inevitably going to affect them profoundly, they seem to have taken no part in the great debate over the size and design of the basilica, and expressed no reaction to the scores of models and ground plans presented by a succession of architects. They carried on performing their duties in the truncated remains of the old nave, just as though nothing were going on right next door. The canons’ oddly blinkered demeanor is typified by Onofrio Panvinio, a member of the Chapter, who in 1570 published a guide to the seven basilicas of Rome, in which he devoted nearly thirty pages to a detailed description of old St. Peter’s, but no more than a line or two to the new basilica.<sup>48</sup>

Nevertheless, the canons must have had a keen interest in the building destined to be their new domain. And if, for whatever reasons, they did not involve themselves openly in the Fabbrica’s affairs, they had other channels of communication available to them. For example, during the forty-six years that Alessandro Farnese was cardinal archpriest of St. Peter’s (1543–89), the Architects of the Fabbrica were, successively, Antonio da Sangallo, Michelangelo, and Giacomo della Porta, all of whom had close ties to the Farnese family and to Cardinal Alessandro in particular; it would be surprising if, in the latter’s frequent discussions with these architects, he failed to represent the interests of the Chapter.<sup>49</sup> Farnese’s successor as archpriest, Cardinal Giovanni Evangelista Pallotta (1589–1620), was eventually put in charge of the Fabbrica, and was thus in an even better position to mediate between those who were designing and constructing the new basilica and those who would eventually use it. Cardinal Scipione Borghese, who served both as archpriest (1620–33) and on the Congregation, continued to provide a link between the two organizations. The extent to which the Chapter influenced, directly or indirectly, the design of new St. Peter’s has yet to be investigated, but was probably considerable. Paul V, for one, paid close attention to the canons’ needs: one of his chief motives for building the nave was to provide additional spaces to house the Chapter’s activities, including a private chapel in which the members could convene to recite the Divine Office; a sacristy where they could store their liturgical equipment and don their vestments; and a baptismal chapel.

After the Chapter moved into the new basilica in 1609, it continued to mind its own business and to have no official say in the activities of the Fabbrica. Only in the 1620s, when the time came to ready the basilica’s altars, did the situation change. The altars clearly fell within the Chapter’s purview; and although the cardinals tried at first to act on their own, they soon realized that they could accomplish little without the cooperation and participation of the canons. The history of their collaboration will be explored in subse-

<sup>47</sup> For example, see BAV, ACSP, *Decreti* 12, f. 1v.

<sup>48</sup> Panvinio, 1570, pp. 51–79, esp. p. 58.

<sup>49</sup> Robertson, 1992, esp. p. 240.

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quent chapters. Here, it need only be added that, even where the altars were concerned, there were distinctions to be drawn. The Chapter's assistance was solicited only in the case of the side altars and apse altars. The high altar over the tomb of the Apostles was a papal altar, reserved for ceremonies at which the pontiff was in attendance. It therefore fell outside the Chapter's sphere, and the canons had no part in the decisions concerning its placement and decoration.