Everlasting ephemera: temporary festival structures and Bernini's Fountain of the four rivers

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EVERLASTING EPHEMERA: TEMPORARY FESTIVAL STRUCTURES
AND BERNINI'S FOUNTAIN OF THE FOUR RIVERS

by

Nathan Lindstrom Shepard

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
Master of Arts degree in Art History
in the Graduate College of The University of Iowa

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Thesis Supervisor: Professor John Beldon Scott
This is to certify that the Master’s thesis of

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To my family, thank you all for believing in me
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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

The Fountain of the Four Rivers represents a combination of public festival decorations, the papal politics of Innocent X, and the familial ambition of the Pamphili. Pope Innocent X commissioned the fountain in 1648 and Gian Lorenzo Bernini designed and completed it between 1648 and 1651. The fountain stands in the middle of Piazza Navona, one of the largest public spaces in seventeenth-century Rome and the location of Innocent X’s family palace, the Palazzo Pamphili (Fig. A1). Maurizio Fagiolo first suggested the similarities between ephemeral structures built for Innocent X’s *possesso* and the Fountain of the Four Rivers.¹ Fagiolo brought particular attention to two pyrotechnic festival displays known as Rome Triumphant and Noah’s Ark. These two temporary installations contained formal motifs and iconographic themes that influenced the fountain’s final design.

This thesis will examine in greater detail the sources that Fagiolo identified while also identifying other previously unconsidered components—obelisks, river gods, and mountains—incorporated in the final design of the Fountain of the Four Rivers. The timeline of the fountain’s conception, design, and construction remains incomplete. Domenico Bernini provides the earliest primary source for the artist’s involvement in the project. However, being Gian Lorenzo’s son, Domenico was likely biased. This prompts many biographers to find the truth using other sources.

On August 23, 1645, Innocent X ordered water to be diverted from the Trevi Fountain

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¹ Maurizio Fagiolo and Silvia Carandini, *L’effimero barocco: strutture della festa nella Roma del ’600*, (Rome: Bulzoni), 1978, 2:179; The *possesso* was a lavish papal procession through the streets of Rome starting in the Vatican and ending at San Giovanni in Laterano for the pope to formally take possession of his official ecclesiastical seat as the bishop of Rome.
to Piazza Navona. The project entered several planning stages after that. The pope called upon Athanasius Kircher to translate the obelisk in 1646. Innocent X visited the site of the fallen obelisk in the Circus of Maxentius in April 1647 and Domenico Bernini reported that Innocent X saw Bernini’s model for the fountain on March 25, 1648. This gave Bernini nearly a year to design the fountain. Innocent X formally approved the model in July of 1648 and paid the artist the first 5,000 scudi to begin construction. Workers put the obelisk on the unfinished base in August of 1649. The fountain was inaugurated on June 8, 1651. Using primary accounts and recent analyses, it is quite possible that this narrative was the chronology of the fountain’s commission, conception, and construction.

**Borromini**

By 1646, Innocent X already designated Francesco Borromini, Bernini’s rival, as the architect for the improvements to Piazza Navona. Borromini was therefore the first to design the fountain (Fig. A2). Erik Iversen identified an early drawing by Borromini for the fountain as well as the procedure and apparatus to re-erect it (Fig.

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5 Torgil Magnuson, *From the Election of Innocent X to the Death of Innocent XI*, vol. 2 of *Rome in the Age of Bernini* (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1982), 83.

6 Mormando, 174.

A3). This first version is similar to his final design, lacking only the ornament and having a stepped pedestal instead of a tapered one. Iversen provides no date for this early drawing, only implying that it was before 1647.

Borromini’s design included the same symbolism and a few elements that Bernini’s later design would incorporate. Four inscriptions relating to the obelisk, four water spouts symbolizing the four rivers of the world, the Pamphili coat of arms, shells, a dove with olive branch, a circular basin, and a base nearly doubling the height of the obelisk were all elements common to Borromini’s and Bernini’s designs.

The early stages of the project began in January of 1646. Innocent X called for Kircher, a Jesuit and scholar of Egypt, to provide advice on a broken obelisk laying in the Circus of Maxentius. Kircher claimed to be able to decipher hieroglyphs and released his translation of the obelisk in 1650 for the Jubilee Year celebrations.

Borromini installed the fountain hydraulics in Piazza Navona during the early stages of the project. In 1646, he worked on the improvements to the Palazzo Pamphili and in 1647, following the orders of Innocent X, redirected more water to the Piazza Navona in anticipation of a new fountain. Marder identifies marginalia written by Borromini in a manuscript by Fioravante Martinelli that explains parts of

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9 Marder, 143.

the early design process.\textsuperscript{11} The marginalia indicate that Innocent X assigned Borromini the task of designing the fountain and determining what would be used as the spire. According to Borromini’s own notes to Martinelli, Borromini had the idea to incorporate an obelisk into the fountain. Martinelli also goes on to attribute the theme of four rivers representing the four parts of the world to Borromini as well.\textsuperscript{12}

Marder also identifies a drawing attributed to Borromini that shows the five fragments of the obelisk destined for the fountain and Borromini’s plan for reassembling them.\textsuperscript{13} Indeed, in 1647 Innocent X ordered Borromini to move the obelisk from the Circus of Maxentius to Piazza Navona. Borromini contributed the overall theme of four rivers shown under the pope’s arms and dove, but Bernini elaborated this with his own proposal.

Innocent X’s seemingly sudden decision to choose Bernini over Borromini has been the subject of debate, hyperbole, and myth. Marder suggests a more plausible version of events than the popular anecdote told by Domenico Bernini involving the silver model that captured Innocent X’s attention. As Kircher already had contact with Innocent X prior to Bernini’s involvement in the project, it is possible that he played a role in convincing Innocent X to choose Bernini’s proposal over Borromini’s. Marder also proposes that Kircher provided constant advice to the pope and that Innocent X was prepared to fully understand and appreciate Bernini’s

\textsuperscript{11} Stefano Tabacchi, “Martinell (De Martini), Fiorvante,” in Dizionario biografico degli Italiani, ed. Serena Andreotti (Rome: Instituto della Enciclopedia Italiana, 2008), accessed online. Martinelli was a Roman priest, author, and the Scriptor Latinus in the Vatican Library from 1637 to 1660.

\textsuperscript{12} Marder, 140; Fiorvante Martinelli, Roma nel seicento, ed. Cesare D’Onofrio (Florence: Vallecchi, 1968), 282.

\textsuperscript{13} Francesco Borromini, Study for the Pamphili Obelisk, Vatican Library, Vat. Lat. 11258, fol. 198r., in Marder, 142.
model.\textsuperscript{14} This gives Kircher a much larger role in the design process of the Fountain of the Four Rivers.

\textbf{Bernini}

Marder credits Kircher with orchestrating Innocent X’s selection of Bernini’s version of the fountain.\textsuperscript{15} Kircher did not want Borromini to receive the commission for the Piazza Navona fountain. Borromini’s initial designs for Sant’Ivo alla Sapienza were carried out under Urban VIII and included many Barberini symbols.\textsuperscript{16} It was Kircher’s hope, according to Marder, to create a new identity for Innocent X by using his own book, \textit{Obeliscus Pamphilius}, and Bernini’s fountain design.\textsuperscript{17} This explains the allusions to Egyptian themes in the fountain and pharaonic associations to the pope in Kircher’s translations, elements too specific or esoteric for Bernini to include in a design of his own.

Bernini’s design also incorporates elements from ephemeral works that signified Innocent X’s familial ambitions and political goals. A basin filled with water surrounds the fountain’s sculptural base: a rocky grotto made of travertine. Four marble statues recline on the grotto, each a personification of a river from one of the four continents. A pedestal and obelisk rise above the grotto. Plaques on the pedestal contain a brief history of the fountain, accolades to Innocent X, and a

\textsuperscript{14} Marder, 140.

\textsuperscript{15} Marder, 140.


\textsuperscript{17} Marder, 144.
reminder that the fountain is for the welfare of Rome. A dove holding an olive branch in its mouth perches on top of the obelisk.

Several scholars interpret the fountain to represent the Church’s secular authority in the world. Götz Pochat calls the Fountain of the Four Rivers a monument to church unity and the primacy of the papacy’s international status.¹⁸ Norbert Huse identifies the four river gods as representations of the world beneath the dove of the pope.¹⁹ Frank Fehrenbach sees the fountain as a symbol of the papacy balancing the disparate parts of the world and as a call for peace.²⁰

Bernini designed a dynamic fountain with layered meanings in the iconography. It is therefore important to consider the original works from which Bernini drew inspiration. Each design element carries a unique history that, when combined, creates a meaningful monument.

The city of Rome depended upon the Church and its economic and cultural connections. Every papal election provided opportunities for artists, poets, and entrepreneurs to solicit favor from not only the new pope but also his newly appointed officials. The circumstances after Innocent X’s election were no different. The early months of a pontificate provided several important events for hopeful commission-seekers to display their talents and adoration for the pope. The possessio and associated nighttime celebrations were among the most public and prestigious.


Themes and motifs established during those spectacles help define the visual themes throughout a pope’s reign.

Ephemeral structures, made to last for only a short period of time, offered artists and their learned advisors the opportunity to establish their interpretations of a new pope’s iconographic imagery. Due to their temporary nature these constructions could be more fantastic and theatrical than monuments made of permanent materials. Furthermore, because artists designed these structures primarily for public festivals, they served to quickly advertise papal policy and family ambitions to the public. Fortunately, the important nature of these festivals has resulted in prints and descriptions of the ephemeral structures. We can imagine these monuments and spectacles using such sources. The mediums of print and published accounts rely on the integrity and accuracy of the draughtsman and diarist whom we must trust to record the event faithfully. If Bernini designed the Fountain of the Four Rivers with ephemeral sources in mind, as Fagiolo suggested, the fountain would serve as a permanent reminder of Baroque festival structures.

Bernini’s realized version of the Fountain of the Four Rivers combines various ideas and images taken from ephemeral structures that celebrated—both directly and indirectly—Pope Innocent X. This is what sets it apart from Borromini’s version and what appealed to Innocent X. The dense meanings within the fountain originate in biblical and classical stories, the Pamphili family coat of arms, mythology, and other imagery and poems created by various artists, scholars, and poets to align themselves with the new pope. This thesis aims to identify these
sources, examine the circumstances surrounding their creation, and then analyze their influence on the overall look and meaning of the Fountain of the Four Rivers.
Numerous interpretations of the Fountain of the Four Rivers stem from the monument’s rich symbolism. According to those scholars who have studied the fountain in the last fifty years, it variably represents Innocent X’s power and sovereignty, a reaction to specific political situations, a symbol of the Pamphili family’s dynastic power, and the power of the Church and papacy. These myriad interpretations offer different explanations for the significance of this fountain to Innocent X and the goals of his pontificate.

The iconography of the fountain was explored in detail by Rudolf Preimesberger. He focused his interpretation on the family coat of arms of the Pamphili (Fig. A4). The primary element is the dove, a symbol of Venus—the goddess of love. The Pamphili associated with Venus, as their name meant “all-loving” (pan philia).

When Cardinal Giovanni Battista Pamphili became Pope Innocent X, he knew of his familial symbols and connection to universal love. He took the papal name Innocent to pay homage to Innocent VIII who reigned when his...

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22 Preimesberger, 79.
family originally moved to Rome from Gubbio.\textsuperscript{23} The name also alluded to the peaceful connotations of his family symbol—the dove—and to his opposition to war.\textsuperscript{24}

The Pamphili lilies, dove, and olive branch represent, according to Preimesberger’s interpretation of a panegyric in praise of Innocent X, the three goddesses that catalyzed the Trojan War: Juno, Venus, and Minerva.\textsuperscript{25} The symbols of these goddesses visually connect the Pamphili to the Trojan War thereby linking the pope’s family to the event that led to the founding of Rome.

Preimesberger identifies the iconographic symbols and visual sources of each river god. The Nile has its head covered, the Rio de la Plata has the riches of the New World, the Danube supports the papal coat of arms, and the Ganges holds an oar. He explains how each symbol represents each river.\textsuperscript{26}

Fagiolo originally proposed the idea that permanent Baroque structures were influenced by ephemeral constructions.\textsuperscript{27} When designing the Fountain of the Four Rivers Bernini drew inspiration from two decorations created for Innocent X’s \textit{possesso} on November 23, 1644. Fagiolo notes the similarity between the four river gods of the fountain and the female personifications of the four continents in a temporary structure erected in Piazza Borghese for the \textit{possesso} (Fig. A5). Each

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item Preimesberger, 78.
\item Baldassare Bonifacio, “Innocenti Decimi Pontificis Maximi Insignia Viri Doctissimi Jacobi Salvini Panegyricis Orationibus celebrate,” no page given, from Vatican Library, in Preimesberger, 81.
\item Preimesberger, 129-34.
\item Fagiolo, \textit{L'effimero barocco}, 170.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
personification stood in front of an animal from that continent and wore a native costume. Fagiolo also notes that Noah’s Ark was erected in Piazza Navona for the same occasion (Fig. A6). For this display, a dove descended on a line hung from the façade of the Palazzo Pamphili to Noah on the Ark. Upon impact, the dove ignited the pyrotechnics within the installation. The dove perched on the obelisk high above the rocky base of the Fountain of the Four Rivers continues this motif.\(^\text{28}\) Fagiolo’s keen observations on the connection between Baroque ephemera and permanent works prompted further investigations.

Ann Sutherland Harris also remarks on the relationship between the Fountain of the Four Rivers and temporary structures. She focuses her study on Bernini’s theater set designs and refers to temporary structures created for festivals to celebrate the election of Ferdinand III as Holy Roman Emperor in 1637.\(^\text{29}\) She finds that rocky, mountainous bases do not have many precedents before the Fountain of the Four Rivers.

Stephanie Leone has extensively studied the Pamphili family and their actions in Piazza Navona. Her research suggests that the Fountain of the Four Rivers was a final capstone to generations of Pamphili building, renovating, and transforming the piazza into their own symbol of power.\(^\text{30}\) For most of its history the piazza enjoyed popularity as one of the largest open spaces in Rome. In the Baroque era it also became a site for festivals with elaborate decorations. This shows in the crowning


\(^{29}\) Harris, 491.

\(^{30}\) Leone, 247.
elements inspired by festival decorations in Borromini’s project for the Palazzo Pamphili’s façade. Although Innocent X rejected Borromini’s design, it did show that the piazza was associated with festivals. The pope’s rejection of the design for his family palace may have suggested to Borromini that Innocent X disliked ephemera-inspired ornament and may explain why Borromini’s proposal for the Piazza Navona fountain lacked such elements.

Scholars have expended great effort analyzing the Fountain of the Four Rivers, using a variety of different methodologies. This has resulted in a sizeable body of literature. The work by Preimesberger, Fagiolo, and Leone are of particular interest to this thesis. By connecting the fountain’s iconography to the Pamphili family heraldry Priemesberger enabled other scholars to continue the interpretation of the fountain as a personal monument. This study will elaborate on Fagiolo’s thesis that Baroque festival ephemera influenced the fountain. Leone provides insight to Innocent X’s ambitions and aesthetic desires by exploring the expansions of Palazzo Pamphili during the time period of the early design phase of the Fountain of the Four Rivers. This paper will verify and expand on the literature on the Fountain of the Four Rivers and bring forth new examples of ephemeral architecture that provided a rich formal and iconographical vocabulary for Bernini’s design.

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31 Leone, 262.
CHAPTER III

EPHEMERA

The Fountain of the Four Rivers contains many levels of meanings which have resulted in different interpretations. All of them, however, revolve around a central theme: the victory of Christianity (specifically the Catholic Church) over non-Christians and the glorification of Pope Innocent X. To create meanings beyond this basic theme, Bernini includes references to the family genealogy and history of the Pamphili, temporary festival installations, and other works of art in Rome.

To understand the ambitions of the Pamphili one must know the family’s history. Before moving to Rome, the Pamphili enjoyed noble status in their native town of Gubbio, Umbria. In 1461, Holy Roman Emperor Frederick III granted Antonio Pamphili and his brothers the title of counts-palatine. Antonio then moved his family to Rome to seek greater opportunities. The Pamphili family began their association with Piazza Navona in 1470 when Antonio purchased real estate on Piazza di Pasquino, near Piazza Navona. By doing so, he clearly desired to establish his family as prosperous Roman nobility. Antonio and his descendants continued to purchase land piece by piece until, in 1554, the family palace touched Piazza Navona. After his elevation to the cardinalate in 1630, Giovanni Battista Pamphili further extended the palace and increased its presence on the piazza. The

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32 Leone, 67.
33 Leone, 65.
family also secured their Roman nobility through intermarriage with established
Roman families such as the Mellini, Porcari, and the Mattei.\textsuperscript{34}

By 1646, after close to two centuries, the Pamphili had completed their claim
to Piazza Navona. Innocent X purchased two more nearby palaces after his election,
thereby doubling his family’s palace in size and visibility on the piazza. After
expending generations of effort in securing this location, Innocent X aimed to
commemorate his family’s own triumph. Innocent X finally fulfilled his ancestor
Antonio’s goal.

River Gods

The Pamphili triumph took the form of the Fountain of the Four Rivers. The
rocky base teems with river gods, animals and vegetation arranged on four supports
creating a cavernous interior (Fig. A7). This base reflects the geological theory of
Kircher, who held that the hollow Earth was filled with water that was released onto
the surface. An engraving from Kircher’s \textit{Mundus Subterraneus} illustrates the
theory by showing four streams of water gushing into a hollow mountain before
exiting it in the form of rivers and lakes (Fig. A8).\textsuperscript{35} While Kircher first published his
geological theory in 1665, he had developed the idea as early as the 1630s.\textsuperscript{36} Bernini
knew of Kircher’s scientific beliefs since the two worked together to restore the
obelisk. The artist then incorporated them into his design for the fountain.

\textsuperscript{34} Leone, 65-68, provides a brief overview of the Pamphili intermarriages.

\textsuperscript{35} Athanasius Kircher, \textit{Mundus Subterraneus} (Amsterdam: Joannem Jansonsium a Waesberge &
Filios, 1678), 1:255, this is a later printing of the 1665 edition.

\textsuperscript{36} Ingrid Rowland, “‘Th’ United Sense of th’ Universe’: Athanasius Kircher in Piazza Navona,”
\textit{Memoirs of the American Academy in Rome} 46 (2001), 166.
Rome’s celebration of the 1637 election of Ferdinand III as Holy Roman Emperor included earlier examples of cave-like bases in temporary installations. Most of these structures were simple mountains with a wide variety of real and fantastic creatures. A few of them had cave-like openings and coats of arms similar to the base of the Fountain of the Four Rivers. Cardinal Maurizio, Prince of Savoy, commissioned seven such mountain installations outside Palazzo Orsini on Monte Giordano. An engraving shows three of these mountains, each one populated with real and fantastic creatures (Fig. A9). Palazzo Madama hosted three other similar structures. One of the three included a rocky arch, perhaps the inspiration for the arches in the base of the Fountain of the Four Rivers (Fig. A10). Few other ephemeral mountain decorations existed before this, thus these constructions serve as precedents for the fountain’s mountainous base. As these were created for festivals celebrating the Holy Roman Emperor, a rocky base might therefore also carry imperial connotations. Romans of the mid-seventeenth century could see the base of the Fountain of the Four Rivers as a reference to the imperial imagery of the earlier festival for Ferdinand III.

Harris also identified structures that had rocky bases but I have identified several other temporary installations that shared similarities with the fountain that did not fit within the scope of her paper. A construction in front of Santa Maria

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dell’Anima, the national church of the Germans near Piazza Navona, had a similar overall theme to the later Fountain of the Four Rivers. Four enslaved figures, an African man, a man wearing a turban, a man with a crescent moon, and the unseen fourth figure refer to different parts of the world. They kneel around an ancient trophy of armor, typically associated with the triumphs of Roman generals and emperors (Fig. A11).40 The entire group sits on a dome-like structure with many arches opening below it. This general composition of four figures arranged around a trophy atop a structure with openings may have provided a source for Bernini’s arrangement for the river gods on the rocky grotto below an obelisk.

A series of drawings on a single sheet of paper in Leipzig demonstrates the careful planning that Bernini put into the design of the rocky base (Fig. A12). Twenty separate sketches show the artist’s process. He pays particular attention to the proportion and dramatic effect of the base to make the obelisk appear weightless. Several studies for the plinth also show that Bernini wanted to elevate the obelisk to a commanding position within the piazza.41 His interest in making the travertine base appear light, open, and dramatic evinces Bernini’s desire to mimic the dramatic and open forms previously only accomplished with temporary and lightweight materials in festival decorations.

Bernini personally carved the palm tree, lion, and horse, indicating their importance to the ensemble.42 Rowland asserts that both Bernini and Kircher...
collaborated on the fountain although she does not give her source for this. Bernini likely sought out and collaborated with Kircher, who had already received the instructions to help repair and translate the hieroglyphs. This would suggest that Kircher had a great deal of influence on some of the abstract ideas in the fountain such as geology and Egyptian mythology. The fact that these Egyptian and scientific themes exist in a papal monument signifies that Kircher and Bernini worked very closely and may also explain why Kircher had an interest in convincing Innocent X to select Bernini over Borromini. Kircher perhaps saw Bernini as a more willing artist to incorporate his ideas. Bernini would then use Kircher’s ideas, together with the ephemeral sources, to create the final design of the fountain.

The lion and horse in the basin represent the Nile in different ways and therefore indicate Kircher’s influence on the fountain. Kircher interprets various symbols in his book, Obeliscus Pamphilius, published in the Jubilee Year of 1650 to coincide with the pending completion of the Fountain of the Four Rivers. He interprets a lion emerging from a dark cave as symbolizing learning and the Egyptian god Mophta (Fig. A13). The lion also represents the rainy season of the Nile, as the Sun enters into the constellation Leo. Giuseppe Simonetta believes the nearby palm tree symbolizes the fertility of the Nile valley caused by the annual flood. The other opening, opposite to the lion, contains more references to Egyptian themes. A horse

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44 Kircher, *Obeliscus Pamphilius*, 475.

trots into the fountain’s pool (Fig. A14). Kircher identifies the horse with Typhon, the enemy of Osiris, and further equates Typhon with Seth, the Egyptian god of the dry desert wind who opposes the annual flood. Simonetta continues by interpreting the wind-swept mane of the horse as a reference to Typhon/Seth since the horse and lion are compositionally opposite, establishing a dichotomy between the rainy season represented by the lion and the dry season represented by the horse. Also, in the form of a visual pun, the horse represents the Nile-dwelling hippopotamus (river-horse) and the Nile itself.

The four river gods comprise the main feature of the fountain’s base. Michelangelo’s stairway in front of the Palazzo Senatorio in the Piazza del Campidoglio includes two ancient reclining statues of the Nile and Tiber (Fig. A15). This is the most significant use of river gods prior to the creation of the fountain. Completed in 1554, Michelangelo’s stairs continued the renovations of the Campidoglio begun in the mid-1530s as part of Pope Paul III’s city-wide preparations for the arrival of Charles V, the Holy Roman Emperor. The new Christian Rome appropriated these two antique river gods and incorporated them into the fountain in front of the stairs to the Palazzo Senatorio. One should note that the renovations further solidified the reversal of the ancient orientation of the Capitoline Hill. This shifted the focus away from the Roman Forum and reoriented it towards the Vatican, symbolizing that the new power in Rome was the Pope and Church, not the pagan empire of antiquity. Therefore the two river gods in front of the Palazzo Senatorio,

46 Kircher, *Obeliscus Pamphilius*, 216.

47 Simonetta, 70.
the Tiber and the Nile, gaze out towards the Vatican. As a result of the modern renovation of one of ancient Rome’s most significant locations, river gods referred to the re-emergence of Rome as a modern *caput mundi*, albeit as the head of a spiritual world. Just as the Capitoline Hill had river gods, so too did the fountain’s base, thereby symbolically bringing the Capitoline Hill into Piazza Navona and therefore under Innocent X’s authority.

A temporary façade of SS. Giovanni e Petronio dei Bolognesi erected for the funeral of Marchese Ludovico Fachinetti, Senator of Bologna and ambassador to Rome, included the most recent use of river gods prior to the election of Innocent X (Fig. 16). Alessandro Algardi designed the façade of the obsequies of April 9, 1644, five months before Innocent X became pope. The two bearded river gods, the laurel-crowned Tiber and Rhine, pour water from their urns.48

Each river god on the Fountain of the Four Rivers represents one of the four continents—Europe, Africa, Asia, and the Americas. Personifications of the four continents appeared fairly regularly. During the celebrations associated with Innocent X’s *possesso*, the French ambassador erected a temporary structure in front of Palazzo Borghese called Rome Triumphant (Fig. A5). It included female personifications of the four continents, each accompanied by an animal representative of that continent.49 The structure also included the coats of arms of Innocent X and


the king of France at the top. Personifications, animals, and Pamphili family symbols return later in the Fountain of the Four Rivers.

**Dove**

Two sides of the fountain prominently display the coat of arms belonging to the Pamphili family. The arms include a dove, an olive branch, and three fleurs-de-lis—symbols allegorized many times to glorify the family (Fig. A4). These associations began early in Innocent X’s pontificate such as the temporary installation of Noah’s Ark in front of Palazzo Pamphili for his *possesso*. The Ark contextualized the dove and olive branch on the coat of arms as representing the Flood of Noah. According to Fagiolo the Ark also represented the four elements. In a panegyric of 1644, the writer and seventeenth-century biographer Tomaso Tomasi likened Innocent X’s papacy to an innocent dove descending from heaven on the Vatican. In the same panegyric he proclaimed that Innocent X is innocent of the deaths from the first War of Castro under Urban VIII. Tomasi gives specific meaning to the fleurs-de-lis included on the Pamphili arms. He says that the lily symbolizes the peace and unity among Christian rulers because of the fact that so many European coats of arms contain the fleur-de-lis. Cardinals remarked with optimism on the new pope’s coat of arms. Cardinal Harrach, Archbishop of Prague, mentioned in his report of September 15, 1644, that the new pope’s arms contained a good omen: a

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51 Tomaso Tomasi, “Della esaltazione di papa Innocentio decimo” (Rome, 1644), 16, in Preimesberger, 79.

52 Tomasi, 15, in Preimesberger. 79.
dove with olive branch. In an undated poem, Baldassare Bonifacio explained the association between the Pamphili and Juno, Venus, and Minerva. He says that the sides they took in the Trojan War disunited the three goddesses. Now the Pamphili coat of arms contained all three of their symbols it represented not only an end to war and the start of a peaceful era, but also the union of three disparate entities into one symbol. Another allegory associating Innocent X with the dove comes in pictorial form. A print from Antwerp in 1645 shows the pope speaking the words “rise, my dove” to a personification of the Church holding a heart with the Pamphili arms inside it (Fig. A17). Vignettes of Noah’s Ark directly above Innocent X and a lamb labeled “Innocentio” in the upper left corner surround the central scene. The many meanings, explanations, and stories of the Pamphili coat of arms established a theme of peace, renewal, and unity for Innocent X’s reign that would transfer to the Fountain of the Four Rivers. The elements derived from the coat of arms, such as the doves atop the obelisk and the temporary Ark, specifically acted to visually connect the Fountain of the Four Rivers with the earlier possessio display.

Preimesberger uses the sources mentioned above to further interpret the three elements of the coat of arms. The red field under the dove represents the rainbow that signified the end of Noah’s Flood (the outermost color of a rainbow is always red). The dove also holds an olive branch, the sign that the flood waters receded and life returned to the world. The three golden lilies represent the mythical Golden Age.


54 Bonifacio, in Preimesberger, 81.
Therefore, the coat of arms reads as the Pamphili ushering in a peaceful, new, and idyllic world similar to the new world created after Noah’s Flood.55

A dove featured prominently in the Noah’s Ark installation when one came down a line hung between the Palazzo Pamphili and the temporary Ark. It ignited the pyrotechnics in the structure upon impact and symbolized the gift of peace coming directly from the Pamphili family (Fig. A6).56 This motif repeats in the dove on top of the fountain which would later stand near the location of the Noah’s Ark structure (Fig. A18). Fehrenbach notes that before the 18th century the distinction between an obelisk and a pyramid was not yet strictly established. Therefore the obelisk—which even Kircher refers to as “pyramis truncata”—represents the Ark itself since several early Christian interpretations described the Ark as looking like a pyramid.57

The dove is an attribute of Venus, the lilies of Juno, and the olive branch of Minerva.58 A beauty competition between these three goddesses prompted Venus to promise Helen of Sparta to Paris, a Trojan prince, in exchange for winning. Following Troy’s destruction in the Greeks’ effort to save Helen, Aeneas—the son of Anchises and Venus—escaped and eventually settled in Italy. His descendent, Romulus, would found the city of Rome. This particular allegory of the coat of arms would thus associate the Pamphili with the beginnings of Rome. As the Pamphili did not originate in Rome, the family would want to promote these associations. The dove on the Fountain of the Four Rivers therefore suggests a Pamphili connection to

55 Preimesberger, 81.
56 Banck, 282.
58 Preimesberger, 81.
ancient Rome by conflating Venus’ dove with the Pamphili dove. An association between the Pamphili and ancient Rome would also further strengthen the monument’s purpose as a public claim over Piazza Navona.

**Obelisk**

The Emperor Domitian originally commissioned the obelisk of the Fountain of the Four Rivers in the first century C.E. to celebrate his accession to the imperium. Workers quarried it in Egypt and then transported to Rome. According to the custom of the time, a scholar knowledgeable in Egyptian hieroglyphs composed the inscriptions. Then a Roman craftsman would carve those inscriptions on the obelisk. The hieroglyphs are therefore coherent, legible, and make references to conventional Pharaonic titles and styles, the Flavian family, Domitian’s father, his brother, and make it clear that Domitian dedicated the obelisk to himself. The obelisk originally stood in the Campus Martius, as part of Domitian’s addition to the Serapeum.  

Later, in the fourth century C.E., Emperor Maxentius moved the obelisk to his circus on the Appian Way. Seventeenth century Romans erroneously believed that Emperor Caracalla commissioned the obelisk and placed it in the Circus of Maxentius (also erroneously known at that time as Caracalla’s circus). Early seventeenth century Romans would have known the obelisk’s five fragments were in the Circus of Maxentius as seen in drawing by Étienne Dupérac in 1606 (Fig. A19). It laid there until Innocent X had it moved to Piazza Navona, the site of an ancient stadium

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coincidentally also built by Domitian. Innocent X then commissioned Kircher to reconstruct the obelisk fragments and, with the assistance of Bernini, restore missing sections.⁶¹

Kircher composed inscriptions for each face of the obelisk’s pedestal. On the western side—facing the palace—Innocent X receives accolades for enlarging and embellishing his family’s palace and removing “cumbersome buildings” and bringing greater dignity to the “most famous piazza in Rome.” The inscription on the northern side imparts a brief history of the obelisk to the viewer, incorrectly stating that Emperor Caracalla transported the obelisk to Rome.⁶² On the eastern side, the inscription describes how “harmful Egyptian monsters” harass the innocent dove and that this dove holds the olive branch of peace, is crowned by the lilies of virtue, and chooses this obelisk as a trophy of the triumphs of Rome. The southern inscription informs the viewer that everyone can enjoy the fountain, thanks to Innocent X’s generosity. His fountain quenches thirst and provides a place to rest, meditate, and be amazed by the “Nilotic puzzles” carved in stone.⁶³

These inscriptions, particularly the one on the east side, contain heavy political messages. As we have seen, the “innocent dove” with an olive branch and lilies refers to the Pamphili coat of arms and Innocent X specifically. The Egyptian monsters that threaten the innocent dove could refer to heretics, Protestants, political opponents, or any other challenge that Innocent X faced. The dove declares victory

⁶¹ Cesare D’Onofrio, Gli obelischi di Roma (Rome: Romana Societa Editrice, 1992), 293.

⁶² Domitian commissioned the obelisk and Maxentius moved it to the Appian Way. See notes 59 and 60.

⁶³ Italian translations of original Latin found in Simonetta, 68-69.
over the monsters and perches triumphantly atop the obelisk, thereby making it a trophy representing the Roman Church’s victory over any adversary.

Contemporary poets also took advantage of the Pamphili dove’s allusions to peace. Fulvio Testi composed a sonnet for the occasion of Cardinal Pamphili’s elevation to the papacy. In it, the poet asserts that with Innocent X enthroned in the Vatican the doors of the Temple of Janus will close, unjust fires will extinguish, and the pope will be victorious in all things.⁶⁴ These themes of peace, justice and victory run throughout the Fountain of the Four Rivers.

While the river gods dominate the rocky base, the obelisk crowns the entire structure and serves as the central element of the piazza. Many of the obelisks erected in imperial times fell during the Middle Ages. Not until Sixtus V, who reigned from 1585 to 1590, did obelisks receive serious attention. That pope’s remarkable program of urban renovation included the re-erection of four obelisks at important public and religious locations throughout Rome. Piazza di San Pietro, Santa Maria Maggiore, San Giovanni in Laterano, and Piazza del Popolo all had obelisks installed thanks to Sixtus V. By placing these obelisks in such important locations, Sixtus V appropriated them as symbols of both the Church and Rome. He also ordered that each obelisk be topped with a cross, symbolizing the power of Christianity.⁶⁵

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⁶⁴ Girolamo Brusoni, Degli allori d’Eurota, poesie di diversi all’eccellentiss. sig. principe D. Camillo Pamphilio, e dedicate all’eccelentissima signora principessa Donna Olimpia Aldobrandina Pamphilj (Venice, 1662), 1:41.

⁶⁵ For Sixtus V’s urban renewal program see: Curran, 109-138; D’Onofrio (1992), 143-279.
Due to Sixtus V’s program of urban renewal obelisks would become associated with the pope himself and with the idea of Christian Rome being just as powerful as Imperial Rome. The global extent of Christendom in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries made Christian Rome more powerful. Therefore, any obelisk erected after Sixtus V would carry the connotations of imperial power, urban rejuvenation, and religious domination. Bernini was aware of this connection. As Irving Lavin notes, the early sketches for the obelisk’s plinth resembled the plinths that held up Sixtus V’s obelisks. Bernini eventually abandoned those plans in favor of a taller, more elongated, plinth. Indeed, by the time of Innocent X, the Roman populace and any educated visitor to the city understood an obelisk’s connotations. The lawyer, diarist, and writer, Teodoro Ameyden recalls in his diary the day Innocent X visited the Circus of Maxentius to inspect the future Piazza Navona obelisk, noting that it imitated Sixtus V’s program. Even John Evelyn, an English Protestant visiting in 1644, recognized the “vast cost and stupendous invention” required to re-erect the obelisk in Piazza di San Pietro, indicating a common perception of obelisks as symbols of power. Therefore, by including an obelisk in the Fountain of the Four Rivers, Innocent X declared that his reign would rejuvenate the city, strengthen the Church, and defend Christianity. These important claims reassured the residents of Rome while the Church combated the Reformation and the temporal power of the pope began its steady decline.

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66 Lavin, 112.


Prior to the Fountain of the Four Rivers, no other permanent monument incorporated an obelisk into a larger design. The other obelisks erected by Sixtus V from 1585-1590 stood on their own, elevated by pedestals. Funerary biers, known as catafalques, represented the exception to the trend of isolated obelisks. Architects of catafalques fully incorporated obelisks made of ephemeral materials into their designs. Olga Berendsen’s work on catafalques provides insight into the prevalence and use of obelisks in these temporary funeral structures. The catafalque of Sigismund II in San Lorenzo in Damaso in 1572 featured the first such obelisk used as an integral component (Fig. A20).\textsuperscript{69} The catafalque honored the Polish king who defended the Church from Lutherans and the Russian Orthodox Church.

In 1621, Giovanni Leo Rainaldi designed a catafalque in Milan with five obelisks for Philip III, King of Spain (Fig. A21). As Berendsen remarks, the design of Philip III’s catafalque resembles an ancient circus.\textsuperscript{70} She goes on to explain the connection between funerary practices and ancient circuses. Funeral games usually happened in circuses with obelisks and columns along the \textit{spina} to honor emperors. Christians were martyred in these places as well. These connotations would make a catafalque based on Roman circuses ideal for anyone wishing to allude to power and piety. As Piazza Navona was built on top of the ancient Stadium of Domitian, the obelisk of the Fountain of the Four Rivers in the middle of the piazza would recall the obelisks placed on the \textit{spina} of imperial circuses. The similarity between the catafalque of Phillip III, with its reference to ancient stadia, and Piazza Navona’s


\textsuperscript{70} Berendsen, 63.
origin as a stadium would create imperial connotations for Innocent X. Borromini may have deliberately referred to four continents to further recall Phillip III’s imperial control over the world in the Spanish Empire and equate that with the pope’s universal spiritual sovereignty.

Similar to Phillip III’s dominion over the world and owing to Counter-Reformation missionary activity, the Catholic Church—with Innocent X as pope—could claim adherents on all known continents. The Fountain of the Four Rivers, with its prominent obelisk in the middle of the piazza, recalls the ancient circuses and stadia of Roman emperors. The similarities between Philip III’s obelisk-circus-catafalque and Innocent X’s obelisk-stadium-fountain evince that Innocent X wanted to draw connections between himself as ruler of the Church and the Spanish kings as rulers of the world. Bernini ultimately succeeded by anticipating Innocent X’s ambitions and creating a fountain that had a truly global scope.

The catafalque for the benefactors of the Society of Jesus featured the most recent obelisk prior to the Fountain of the Four Rivers (Fig. A22). Andrea Sacchi designed it in 1640. This structure contained four obelisks arranged around the central bier. The Jesuits’ catafalque demonstrates more pious intentions. A painting of Gregory the Great interceding for the souls of the benefactors and statues of Adam, Eve, Charity, Faith, Benignity, Generosity, and Eternal Immortality all give this structure a religious, rather than political, tone. One should note that the Jesuits did worldwide missionary work, so, by incorporating a symbol used in the Jesuits’ catafalque, the fountain took on associations with the Church’s global reach.

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71 Maurizio Fagiolo, Corpus della festa a Roma (Roma: Edizioni De Luca, 1997), 215.
No popes between Sixtus V and Innocent X re-erected an ancient obelisk, but the use of obelisks as elements in ephemeral constructions continued during those intervening years. To celebrate the birth of the Dauphin of France in 1638, a temporary construction erected in Paris included an obelisk (Fig. A23). It resembled a circular Renaissance temple with open arches. On top, there were figures surrounding an obelisk which was adorned with a crown. The Parisian structure shares a similar general design with the later Fountain of the Four Rivers and Bernini could have seen a print of the structure published in Rome in 1643 by Antonio Gerardi.

Incorporating obelisks in ephemeral structures began with Sigismund’s catafalque in 1572—which predates Sixtus V’s obelisks by about fifteen years. As we have seen, other catafalques and temporary structures in the decades between 1572 and 1648 featured obelisks as well. This shows that Bernini designed the fountain to emulate an ephemeral structure because those were the only precedents that incorporated obelisks in larger designs.

Bernini incorporated many ephemeral elements into his design for the Fountain of the Four Rivers. The rocky base had few precedents prior to the fountain’s conception and therefore recalled the memory of Ferdinand III’s election celebration in Rome and gives Innocent X’s fountain imperial connotations. Romans would see the river gods on the fountain and relate them to Rome Triumphant, the installation in Piazza Borghese for Innocent X’s posessio. The dove and

72 Giovanni Cipriani, Su i dodici obelischi egizi che adorno la città di Roma (Rome, 1823), in D’Onofrio, Gli obelischi di Roma, 2-3.
73 Fagiolo, La festa barocca, 1:307.
mountainous base of the fountain memorialized the pyrotechnic display of Noah’s Ark in Piazza Navona during the same celebration. An obelisk, already carrying connotations of power, would remind the citizens of Rome of the many instances of ephemeral catafalques that featured obelisks. Before the Fountain of the Four Rivers, obelisks were only incorporated into larger designs in these catafalques, indicating Bernini’s debt to ephemeral works. By bringing together these sources Bernini created a permanent ephemeral decoration with a multitude of meanings only possible through referencing past festivals and evoking those memories in Roman viewers.
CHAPTER IV

POLITICS

The Fountain of the Four Rivers’ complex iconography embodies the social and political climate of Rome, the Church, and papacy in the mid seventeenth century. Innocent X faced many problems upon his election in 1644, such as heterodox teachings within the Church, disagreements with the Farnese that would culminate in the second War of Castro, and the Thirty Years War. The fountain expresses Innocent X’s desire to reassure the people of Rome during a time of myriad crises by reminding them of papal authority and global Catholic unity.

Although Protestantism still represented a challenge, perhaps a more insidious and subtle problem manifested in dealing with heretics within the Church who maintained that they were still devout Catholics. The Jansenists represented such a concern. Cornelius Jansenius studied at the University of Louvain in Flanders. He held that the writings of St. Augustine supported the Calvinist beliefs on predestination. Pope Urban VIII issued a Bull in 1641 refuting the teachings of Jansenius and forbidding further publication of his book, *Augustinus*.

In 1644, a special Congregation of Cardinals summoned Jansenists from the University of Louvain. This congregation included Cardinals Spada, Falconieri, and Pamphili (who would be elected pope later that same year). The cardinals upheld Urban VIII’s Bull against the Jansenists. In the context of the Jansenist threat, the

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74 Pastor, 29:71.
75 Pastor, 29:120.
76 Pastor, 29:128.
Fountain of the Four Rivers’ iconography of global and spiritual domination declares victory over the repeatedly-refuted challengers to papal authority, a victory in which Innocent X himself participated. While the Fountain of the Four Rivers contains no explicit references to the Jansenists, the controversy surrounding them throughout Innocent X’s reign, and the pope’s own interactions with them, may have created a desire to portray the Church as victorious. Although Kircher’s inscription warns of pagan Egyptian monsters threatening Innocent X’s dove, seventeenth-century Roman viewers may well have interpreted the fountain as a reference to Jansenism, a contemporary and closer threat than pagans.

Temporary triumphal arches—erected on the Capitoline Hill and in the Roman Forum—demonstrated the secular side of the papacy’s relationship with the city of Rome. While the pope ruled the Roman Church without question, the Church had a complex jurisdiction over the secular affairs of the city. According to Cardinal Giovanni Battista De Luca, the institutions that dealt with exclusively local matters were “considered […] as a private city and not as the Curia of the pope.” These exclusively local and secular institutions included the Senator of Rome and Conservators. Although the pope appointed the Senator, the Senator and elected Conservators were distinct from the offices of the Church and therefore represented a secular and local government for the city known as the Senate and People of Rome. The Senator represented ultimate papal authority over the civic government of Rome. During Innocent X’s possessio, Senator Orazio Albani ceremonially granted Innocent X secular power over the city in the form of an ivory scepter.

77 Giovanni Battista De Luca, Il dottor volgare (Rome: Giuseppi Corvo, 1673), 15:308.
The institutions and nobility of Rome commissioned temporary triumphal arches along a pope’s *possesso* route. By doing so, these patrons simultaneously sought to gain favor with the new pope and to demonstrate their own influence. These triumphal arches established the visual imagery of the pope’s character, qualifications, and goals.

On the Capitoline Hill the Senate and People of Rome paid, at “enormous expense,” for an arch to be constructed at the top of the Campidoglio stairs (Fig. A24).\(^78\) Carlo Rainaldi designed the arch and it contained imagery of the she-wolf nursing Romulus and Remus, scenes from Cardinal Pamphili’s nunciatures in Naples and Spain, Urban VIII making him a cardinal, his political missions in France and Spain, and his papal election and coronation. Six statues of personifications adorn the arch: Nobility, Effort, Wisdom, Vigilance, Discipline, and Diplomacy. These represented the ideal characteristics of a good leader, and ones that various ambassadors had observed in Innocent X immediately after his election.\(^79\)

The she-wolf represents the civic government of Rome. As the Pamphili claimed descent from Numa Pompilius, the second king of Rome responsible for many civic customs and institutions, this association with the she-wolf would also emphasize the family’s link to Rome. The visual connection created by an image of the she-wolf on an arch commissioned by the civic government would recall the Pamphili’s lineage and legitimize Innocent X’s rule over the city’s secular affairs.


\(^79\) On the character of Innocent X Pastor cites reports from the Venetian Embassy; a letter from Francesco Albizzi to Fabio Chigi dated September 24 1644; the diary of Servantius for December 12, 1644; in Pastor, 30:31.
The Capitoline arch established Innocent X as a capable civic ruler. By emphasizing, reinforcing, and enhancing the Pamphili family’s relationship with Rome, the Senate and People of Rome expressed its pleasure with having a Roman-born pope compared to Innocent X’s now reviled predecessor, the Florentine-born Urban VIII Barberini. The arch designed for Urban VIII’s possessio also included personifications of the pope’s characteristics as identified by Fagiolo: Sacred Poetry, Greek Eloquence, Legal Discipline, Theology, Humanity, Kindness, Abundance, Public Happiness, Fame, and Glory.80 This shows that the personifications on a papal triumphal arch were specific to each pope and demonstrated each pope’s unique and positive aspects to the people of Rome.

Various sources established a specific iconographic program of justice, Church unity, and papal obedience early in Innocent X’s reign. During Innocent X’s possessio, Odoardo Farnese, the Duke of Parma and Castro, commissioned Girolamo Rainaldi to create a triumphal arch for the new pope in the Roman Forum, opposite the Farnese property located there (Fig. A25).81 This arch is significant for several reasons. Odoardo commissioned it after the conclusion of the first War of Castro and it includes meanings used later in Innocent X’s pontificate.

Odoardo Farnese and Urban VIII, Innocent X’s predecessor, fought the first War of Castro from 1641 to 1644. Considering the tenuous relationship between the Farnese duke and the papacy, Odoardo commissioned a triumphal arch for Innocent

80 Fagiolo, La festa barocca, 252.
81 Banck, 278.
X to emphasize the current state of peace between them. The Farnese and Pamphili coats of arms both contain fleurs-de-lis. Therefore, their inclusion on the Forum arch symbolizes cooperation and unity between the ducal and papal families, or at least the hope of it.

The arch contains many ideas part of the iconography Innocent X used throughout his pontificate. Giorgio Maria Bonelli de Rasori, in his report dedicated to his patron from Parma, notes the images used on this arch: the Frankish king Clovis I, the goddess Astraea, Noah’s Ark, a feast of classical gods, cornucopias, and the statue of Alexander the Great on Kos. These all relate to the goals Innocent X set for his reign and the themes presented by these images would carry on to the Fountain of the Four Rivers.

Clovis I defeated the heresy of Arianism within Gaul and unified the Frankish tribes in his realm during the early sixth century. This idea of eliminating heresies and restoring peaceful order and unity would become another central theme to the Fountain of the Four Rivers. Ancient Romans believed the return of Astraea, the goddess of justice, would start a new Golden Age. According to Ovid the constellation Virgo represents her. Innocent X’s election occurred while the sun was in Virgo on September 15, thereby giving his pontificate the judicial and restorative

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characteristics of Virgo. This theme of renewal and return to glory is echoed in the theme of renewal and cleansing incorporated into the Fountain of the Four Rivers with the allusion to the story of Noah with the dove and rocky base.

The image of Noah’s Ark on the arch refers to the dove with an olive branch on the Pamphilii coat of arms. According to the Bible, a dove with an olive branch signaled to Noah that his ordeal had ended. The olive branch indicated that life and prosperity had returned to the newly pacified world. A dove with an olive branch tops the Fountain of the Four Rivers, continuing the theme of a prosperous new world ushered in under the Pamphilii. Even the fountain’s base surrounded by water evokes a flooded world.

The Forum arch also contained a feast of mythological gods, fleurs-de-lis, and cornucopias that represented the abundance that Rome and the Church will enjoy under Innocent X’s leadership. According to the south inscription on the Fountain of the Four Rivers, the people of Rome should enjoy the water it delivered as a tangible source of abundance. The image of the statue of Alexander the Great on Kos recalled the pledge that Alexander made on the Greek island of Kos in 324 B.C.E. promising a peaceful era with all people equal before the law and no distinctions between Greek and barbarian. This also refers to the unity and justice that people hoped for under the Pamphilii pope and a theme incorporated in the Fountain of the

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85 The connection between Innocent X, the Pamphilii, and justice has been noted by many scholars including Pastor, 30:31; John Beldon Scott, “Strumento di potere: Pietro da Cortona tra Barberini e Pamphilii,” in Pietro da Cortona 1597-1669, ed. Anna Lo Bianco (Milan: Electa, 1997), 90-96; Fagiolo, La festa barocca, 333; Leone, 144. The connection between the date of Innocent X’s election, the astrological sign of Virgo, and Astraea is, to the best of my knowledge, my contribution.

86 Italian translations of the original Latin inscriptions in Simonetta, 69.

87 Fagiolo, Corpus della festa a Roma, 331-332.
Four Rivers. As the Farnese commissioned the arch and both the Farnese and
Innocent X opposed the Barberini, it is also a hopeful appeal to make the Barberini
(the barbarians mentioned in the pledge) responsible for their corruption under Urban
VIII.

Due to myriad obstacles facing Innocent X, the pope wanted to cultivate the
idea of a new Golden Age, usually associated with Astraea’s justice and her return to
earth. Alexander the Great’s pledge at Kos also demonstrates a desire for unity and
cooporation within the Church. The later fountain depends on this theme of a new
Golden Age of peace and justice under Innocent X.

The Fountain of the Four Rivers, by nature of its ephemeral sources, is
inherently political. Triumphal arches commissioned by the Farnese Duke of Parma
and the Senate and People of Rome established the visual vocabulary that would be
used during Innocent X’s pontificate. The messages of justice, renewal, and unity
that were evoked during the possesso would be reiterated in the fountain’s final
design.
CHAPTER V
CONCLUSION

As a permanent monument inspired by impermanent sources, the Fountain of the Four Rivers demonstrates the value of prints in depicting the action and theatricality of festival installations, decorations, and pyrotechnic displays in Baroque Rome. The fountain helps us to more fully understand how these temporary structures looked. By identifying the source for each element of the fountain, this thesis has advanced a more complete understanding of the influence of Baroque ephemera.

Festival ephemera—with their relatively short lifecycle of design, construction, and demolition—were able present more topical messages than permanent monuments. Such transient and fleeting works of art deserve more study despite the challenge of not seeing the object except through the limited lens of prints. One should not understate the value of prints. They form a permanent visual record of impermanent seventeenth-century art throughout Europe and inspired contemporary artists such as Bernini. As such, the Fountain of the Four Rivers gives us a permanent glimpse into the world of Baroque festivals.

The fountain’s program thus preserves the excitement and collective public memory of these festivals. As a popular public space, Piazza Navona held many festivals and spectacles. By creating a structure that made ephemera permanent, Bernini translated those fleeting moments of the past into the present. The weighty messages of Innocent X such as familial ambition and Church unity that otherwise
would have faded into obscurity are thus preserved not only for the duration of his own pontificate, but for the future.
Figure A1. Fountain of the Four Rivers. Gian Lorenzo Bernini. Piazza Navona, Rome, 1648-51.
Figure A2. Design for Piazza Navona fountain. Francesco Borromini. 1648.
Source: Vatican Library
Figure A3. Proposal to re-erect the Piazza Navona obelisk. Francesco Borromini. Before 1647.
Source: Danish Institute of Rome
Figure A4. Pamphili family coat of arms, detail from the Fountain of the Four Rivers. Gian Lorenzo Bernini. Piazza Navona, Rome, 1648-51.
Figure A5. Festival after the *possesso* of Innocent X. Rome Triumphant. 

Source: Banck
Figure A6. Festival after the *possesso* of Innocent X. Noah’s Ark. Anonymous. Piazza Navona, Rome, 1644. Engraving.

Source: Banck
Figure A7. Base, detail from the Fountain of the Four Rivers. Gian Lorenzo Bernini. Piazza Navona, Rome, 1648-51.
Figure A8. Geology of mountains, internal reservoirs and springs. Engraving.
Source: Kircher, 1678, 1
Figure A9. Festival for the election of Ferdinand III. Niccolo Tornioli. Palazzo Orsini, Rome, 1637. Engravings.

Source: Manzini
Figure A10. Festival for the election of Ferdinand III. Anonymous. Palazzo Madama, Rome, 1637. Engraving.

Source: Motmanno
Figure A11. Festival for the election of Ferdinand III. Anonymous. Santa Maria dell’Anima, Rome, 1637. Engraving.

Source: Ameyden, 1637
Figure A12. Studies for base of Piazza Navona fountain. Gian Lorenzo Bernini. 1648.

Source: Leipzig Museum of Fine Art
Figure A13. Lion with trunk of palm tree, detail from the Fountain of the Four Rivers. Gian Lorenzo Bernini. Piazza Navona, Rome, 1648-51.
Figure A14. Horse, detail from the Fountain of the Four Rivers. Gian Lorenzo Bernini. Piazza Navona, Rome, 1648-51.
Figure A15. Michelangelo. Detail of Palazzo Senatorio façade. Piazza del Campidoglio, Rome. Engraving.

Source: Falda

Source: Rolandi
Figure A17. *Innocent X Comforts the Church*. Workshop of Officina Plantiniana. Antwerp, 1645. Engraving from Ambrosio Smetio, *Innocentii x. pont. max. columba gemens militans Ecclesia*. (Antwerp, 1645).

Source: Vatican Library
Figure A18. Dove with olive branch, detail from the Fountain of the Four Rivers. Gian Lorenzo Bernini. Piazza Navona, Rome, 1648-51.
Figure A19. Circus of Maxentius. Étienne Dupérac, 1606. Engraving.
Figure A20. Memorial for Sigismund II. Catafalque. Anonymous. San Lorenzo in Damaso, Rome, 1572. Engraving.

Source: Fagiolo, *La festa barocca*
Figure A21. Memorial for Philip III. Catafalque. Giovanni Leo Rainaldi. Milan, 1621. Engraving.

Source: Berendsen
Source: Gerardi, 1639

Source: Gerardi, 1643

Source: Banck

Source: Banck
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