

CHAPTER NINE

The Poisoned Present



A NEW READING OF
GIANLORENZO BERNINI'S
RAPE OF PROSERPINA



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SINCE THE VERY BEGINNINGS OF CIVILIZATION THE EXCHANGE OF PRESENTS has played an important role in human society.¹ Gifts serve to stabilize or possibly improve relationships. While they should be chosen to give pleasure to their recipient, at the same time they function as a self-representation of the donor. Understandably, not every present is greeted with true joy. A gift may be the expression of a taste alien to the recipient, and it can create obligations which the recipient might have preferred to avoid. Evil motives lie behind the choice of certain gifts, as the well-known episode of the Trojan horse illustrates. Pandora's box is another famous example of a present intended to harm and to displease its recipient.² In this essay, I will analyze one such poisoned present: Gianlorenzo Bernini's marble group depicting the rape of Proserpina (fig. 9.1).

Bernini's earliest biographers relate that this statue was commissioned by Cardinal Scipione Borghese, who then gave it to Cardinal Ludovico Ludovisi.³ It remained at the Villa Ludovisi until it was moved to the adjacent *palazzo* Piombino, built by Rodolfo Boncompagni Ludovisi in 1886–90.⁴ In 1908 it was bought by the Italian state and transferred to the Villa Borghese, where it can still be admired today.⁵ In 1953 Italo Faldi published payments for the sculpture and its transport dating from the period 1621 to 1623.⁶ They were, however, interpreted in different ways: some scholars maintain that the group was delivered from Bernini's studio directly to the Villa Ludovisi,⁷ whereas others believe that it was first displayed at the Villa Borghese and only at a later stage



given to Ludovico Ludovisi.⁸ This second view is now apparently the official one, since it has made its way into the Galleria Borghese guidebook.⁹

It is important to clarify this point in order to understand the iconography of the piece. If Bernini's group was created for the Villa Borghese, displayed there and only subsequently destined as a gift for Ludovico Ludovisi, then its iconography requires analysis solely in the context of Borghese patronage. Indeed, the foremost interpretations of *Pluto and Proserpina* focus primarily on Scipione Borghese.¹⁰ However, if the statue was not displayed for a time at the Villa Borghese but immediately sent to the Villa Ludovisi, it is worth considering the possibility that the sculpture was intended from the very outset as a present for Ludovisi. In that case it may be expected that the meaning of the group refers both to Ludovisi and to Borghese, due to the special nature of a present, which almost invariably makes a statement both about the recipient and about the donor. This simple insight might open up an entirely new approach to interpreting Bernini's *Rape of Proserpina*.

Starting in 1619, Scipione Borghese commissioned a total of four large-scale sculptures from Bernini (*Aeneas and Anchises*, *David*, *Apollo and Daphne*, and *Pluto and Proserpina*), three of which came to be displayed at the Villa Borghese.¹¹ Thus it may seem logical to assume that the *Rape of Proserpina* was created for the Villa Borghese, too. However, only in retrospect can these four sculptures be perceived as an ensemble. They share the same material, are of more or less the same dimensions, and have the same creator, but there is no common thematic bond which unites the four statues. The story of *Aeneas and Anchises* is taken from the *Aeneid* and has political overtones, and the *Rape of Proserpina* and *Apollo and Daphne* portray amorous encounters inspired by Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, while the *David* illustrates a bellicose episode from the Old Testament. Because of the absence of an overall program, it is highly unlikely that Scipione Borghese had already set his mind on an ensemble of four sculptures when he commissioned the first work, *Aeneas and Anchises*. Only after Bernini had finished the second group (*Pluto and Proserpina*) are there documentary references to the next two projects.¹² It seems that the commissions evolved successively, prompted by the quality of Bernini's achievements. Therefore it is by no means certain that the *Rape of Proserpina* was originally intended as part of a series of four sculptures for the Villa Borghese.¹³ On the contrary, a reexamination of the payment documents regarding the transport of the statue establishes that the *Rape of Proserpina* was not even briefly displayed at the Villa Borghese, but rather brought straightaway to the Villa Ludovisi.

In 1953 Faldi published a documentary reference to the transport of the group in a bill from the *muratori* Marcantonio, Pietro Fontana, and Santi Framberti. They charged Scipione Borghese for having taken down a sculpted Neptune in the house of a certain Berna and carried it outside to the piazza, after which it was taken away by the men responsible for its further transport.¹⁴ As Pluto may be easily mistaken for Neptune and as Bernini is not known to have carved a Neptune for Scipione Borghese, Faldi inferred

9.1 · Gianlorenzo Bernini, *The Rape of Proserpina*, Galleria Borghese, Rome

that this document relates to the transport of *Pluto and Proserpina*. He therefore interpreted the “Casa del Berna” as Bernini’s house near S. Maria Maggiore. The document does not provide the statue’s destination, but states that it was donated to Ludovisi.

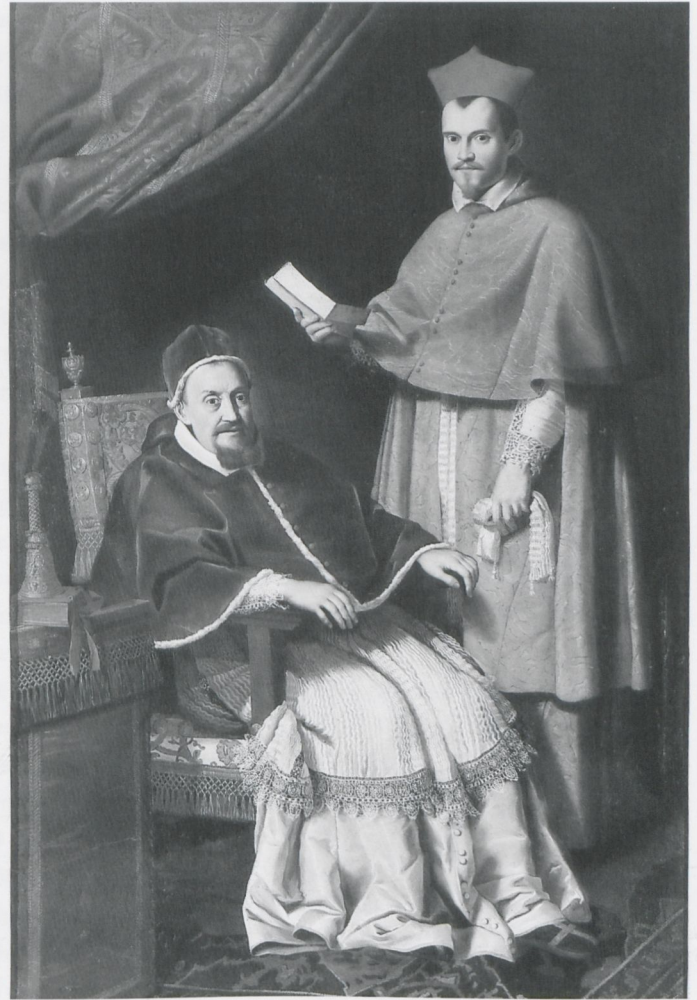
The bill dates from July 26, 1623, which furnishes a *terminus ante quem* for all the work listed in the document. The same bill also mentions the transport of a huge block of marble delivered to the house of “Berna.”¹⁵ Another payment record clarifies that this entry refers to the marble for the *Apollo and Daphne* group, which reached Bernini’s house before August 8, 1622.¹⁶ Therefore the bill of July 26, 1623, sums up work that was done in the course of about a year, with the first entries dating back to the summer of 1622. The transport of *Pluto and Proserpina* reported by the same document might thus have taken place in 1623 or as early as 1622.

A second document discovered by Faldi gives a more precise date for the transport. It states that a certain Giovanni Viscardi was paid on September 23, 1622, for having moved *Pluto and Proserpina* from S. Maria Maggiore to Porta Pinciana.¹⁷ “S. Maria Maggiore” is again a reference to Bernini’s house and studio located close to that church, while “Porta Pinciana” is ambiguous since both the Villa Borghese and the Villa Ludovisi had an entrance next to Porta Pinciana.¹⁸

Only recently did a third document come to light, which was published in the 1998 exhibition catalogue *Bernini Scultore*. This document is a bill listing work executed by the joiner Giovan Battista Soria between January 4 and the end of October 1622.¹⁹ Soria charged thirty-five scudi for having produced a crate in which *Pluto and Proserpina* was carried to the Villa Ludovisi. Unfortunately, he did not indicate the departure point of the transport. In the exhibition catalogue of 1998 the document was interpreted as referring to a presumed transport from Villa Borghese to Villa Ludovisi.²⁰ However, this is highly unlikely because of the chronology I have just outlined. It would mean that the sculpture was first (towards the end of September 1622) brought to the Villa Borghese and then within the next few weeks moved to the Villa Ludovisi. In that case we might expect to find payments for two transports. Moreover, it would have been necessary to undo the transport crate at the Villa Borghese and then to install it again before moving the precious marble to the Villa Ludovisi, but the joiner’s bill mentions nothing about such an operation. Soria’s bill, which lists all the work he did between January and October 1622, refers to just one transport, and this transport ended at the Villa Ludovisi. When the three documents (quoted in notes 14, 17, and 19) are read in conjunction, it becomes evident that on or before September 23, 1622, the *Pluto and Proserpina* group traveled from Bernini’s house directly to the Villa Ludovisi without ever being displayed in the Villa Borghese.

Having established this, I will now proceed to analyze the function and meaning of Scipione Borghese’s present to Ludovico Ludovisi. In doing so it must be taken into account that *Pluto and Proserpina* might have been conceived as a present from the very outset, that is, from June 1621, when the group was first mentioned in a payment to Bernini.²¹ What was Scipione Borghese’s situation like in June 1621?

At the age of twenty-seven, Scipione Caffarelli had been adopted by his uncle, Pope Paul V Borghese, and promoted to the rank of a cardinal. When Paul died a decade and



a half later in 1621, Scipione was forty-three years old and was able to look back on his uncle's papacy as a long and prosperous period in which he had held important offices and been showered with immense wealth. Despite his prominent position within the papal government, he had devoted little attention to political matters.²² His opponents in fact saw him as an ignorant, indolent, and even lascivious man who preferred personal pleasure to politics;²³ others, however, praised his courteousness and generosity.²⁴ He was an avid art lover who sometimes reverted to rather dubious methods in order to enrich his collections.²⁵ In a famous bust still kept in the Galleria Borghese, Bernini portrayed him in an innovative "informal" way, presenting him in a relaxed and jovial attitude (fig. 9.2).²⁶

Ludovico Ludovisi, nephew of Paul V's successor, Gregory XV, began his career at an even earlier age than Scipione: at age twenty-five he was made a cardinal soon after Gregory's election in February 1621.²⁷ Domenichino's double portrait (fig. 9.3) captures

9.2 · Gianlorenzo Bernini, *Bust of Scipione Borghese*, Galleria Borghese, Rome

9.3 · Domenichino, *Double Portrait of Gregory XV and Ludovico Ludovisi*, Musée des Beaux-Arts, Beziers

the relationship between the Ludovisi pope and his secretary of state: while Gregory XV, whose ill health was notorious, looks passive and absentminded, Ludovico towers above him.²⁸ The letter, which he seems to have been reading to the pope, indicates Ludovico's active participation in the government. He was no doubt an ambitious politician; some supposed him to be the true head of state, governing in his ill uncle's stead.²⁹

This is how the Venetian ambassadors characterized Ludovico Ludovisi in the summer of 1621: "The Cardinal is twenty-six years old; he has noble manners, is prudent, was well trained by the Jesuits, is affable and extraordinary in his ability to interact with others; he has a taste for negotiation, in which he is continuously engaged; he is profoundly loved by the pope, with whom he holds such authority that one can say that he holds in his hands the will of the papal government."³⁰ In contrast, the ambassador Raniero Zeno judged Scipione Borghese much less favorably, describing him as "mediocre in his knowledge and extremely addicted to pleasures and idle pastimes" (*mediocrità del sapere et la vita molto dedita a' piaceri et passatempi*).³¹ In an anonymous account of ca. 1622, Scipione is characterized as uneducated ("di poche lettere"), lazy ("non molto inclinato à negotij"), and reputedly lascivious ("è stato incolpato d'essere assai dedito al vizio della carne").³² Another contemporary observer stated that Ludovico possessed more authority already on the first day of his uncle's pontificate than Scipione after sixteen years of being in office.³³

Although Gregory XV had been raised to the cardinalate by Paul V Borghese and although Scipione had contributed to his election to the papacy,³⁴ it soon became clear that there was not much love lost between the Ludovisi and the Borghese. Raniero Zeno reported that Gregory XV bore Scipione a grudge because the rich revenues from Ludovisi's archbishopric of Bologna had been withheld and pocketed by Scipione during the Borghese pontificate.³⁵ Moreover, in April 1621 the pope married his niece Lavinia to Giangiorgio Aldobrandini,³⁶ thereby creating a family alliance that must have been worrisome to Scipione, since the Aldobrandini had been treated rather badly during the Borghese pontificate. Indeed, the Aldobrandini were soon crying for revenge, instigating their papal ally to prosecute those who had harmed them. As a consequence, Scirocco, a judge close to Scipione Borghese, was imprisoned, and in September 1622, under most humiliating circumstances, Scipione had to beg for mercy on his behalf.³⁷

It is certainly no coincidence that in the very same month—September 1622—Borghese sent Bernini's *Pluto and Proserpina* to Ludovico Ludovisi.³⁸ To be sure, this gift was not given as a token of sympathy, but rather as a tribute to a powerful enemy. The conflict between the Ludovisi and the Borghese, however, had already developed during the very first months of Gregory's pontificate. An account of February 12, 1621, recorded that Gregory XV had "una santa sua aversione alle cose di Borghese" (a holy aversion to the concerns of Borghese);³⁹ an "aversione straordinaria a Borghese" (extraordinary aversion to Borghese) was again reported in March,⁴⁰ and in June 1621 the Venetian ambassadors remarked on massive tensions between Ludovico and Scipione.⁴¹ Again it may be no coincidence that Scipione's commission of *Pluto and Proserpina* is first documented in the very same month, June 1621.⁴² By that date he may have already

felt it necessary to soothe Ludovisi with a lavish present that should at the same time demonstrate his own superior generosity and magnificence. This hypothesis opens up the question of why the story of Pluto and Proserpina was chosen as the subject matter. If the statue was intended from the very outset as a gift for Ludovico Ludovisi, does it encode a specific message addressed to Borghese's enemy?

It is not known who suggested the theme. The idea to create an abduction group based on an ancient myth might well have come from Bernini himself, since such a task would have offered him the opportunity to prove his abilities in a multiple *paragone*. In order to satisfy his patron, who possessed a remarkable collection of ancient sculptures, Bernini wished to rival the old masters. This aspect was highlighted by Bernini's son Domenico:

Inside [the palace of Villa Borghese] there is almost a whole people of ancient statues, almost all intact, which were preserved for us from the fury of the barbarians by the same ruins of Rome. Of these, the Seneca in the Bath, the Venus and Cupid believed to be by Praxiteles, the Gladiator of Agasias, the famous sculptor of Ephesus, the Hermaphrodite rediscovered in the Gardens of Sallust near the Quirinal Hill during the papacy of Paul V, and the head in bas-relief of Alexander the Great hold the first place among the principal ones: and it was there that he [Bernini] had to place his own [works]. His emulation of such celebrated artists, the comparison between their works, and the expectation of everyone created in Bernini great apprehension for the undertaking.⁴³

Bernini responded to the challenge by seeking to outdo almost every conceivable precedent, probably guided by a learned advisor. The *Rape of Proserpina* improves on Gianlorenzo's own earlier group of *Aeneas and Anchises*, as well as rivaling ancient sculpture and poetry, Michelangelo, and Giambologna.⁴⁴ However, if the only intention was to create a highly complex virtuoso group based on famous sculptural and literary models, a *Rape of the Sabine Women* or *Hercules Wrestling with Antaeus* would have fulfilled the task equally well. Indeed, Giambologna's *Rape of a Sabine* and an ancient group of *Hercules and Antaeus* as well as a bronze version of the same theme by Pietro Tacca counted among Bernini's sources of inspiration.⁴⁵ Why then did Scipione Borghese select the *Rape of Proserpina* of all possible topics?

Since the story of *Pluto and Proserpina* can be understood as an allegory of the change of the seasons, it is evident that the subject was particularly appropriate for a villa setting.⁴⁶ In the context of a cardinal's villa, though, the flagrant eroticism of the group (fig. 9.1) needed to be tempered through a moralizing reading of the myth. In fact, the pedestal was originally decorated with a Latin inscription, which read, "Quisquis humi pronus flores legis, inspice, saevi/ me Ditis ad domum rapi" (Oh you who are bending over the earth to gather flowers, look at me as I'm being taken away to the kingdom of the cruel Dis!).⁴⁷ As Pluto (Dis), the god of the underworld, carries away the blooming Proserpina, the beholder is reminded of the omnipresence of death. Some scholars have therefore argued that Scipione Borghese chose this particular subject matter as a

reference to the recent death of his uncle, Pope Paul V.⁴⁸ It seems strange, though, that Scipione, who was generally described as a hedonistic lover of pleasure, would have wanted a constant reminder of the source of his present misfortune. Could it be possible that this message about the futility of human life was addressed not to him but to Ludovico Ludovisi? As I will now argue in more detail, the *paragone* at the very core of this work is a social rather than an art-theoretical one, and refers specifically to the rivalry between Borghese and Ludovisi.⁴⁹

Michael Hill has demonstrated that Scipione Borghese was highly competitive in his art patronage. For instance, he commissioned a sumptuous new gilt ceiling for the Roman church of S. Crisogono in order to outdo the splendid soffit that Pietro Aldobrandini had donated to S. Maria in Trastevere just a few months before.⁵⁰ Aldobrandini had been cardinal-nephew to Clement VIII and therefore Borghese's predecessor in

9.4 · Guercino, *Aurora*, Casino Ludovisi, Rome





this important position as the reigning pope's most powerful relative. But just as Aldo-brandini was superseded by Scipione Borghese, Borghese was superseded by Ludovico Ludovisi—a situation that could not fail to create new enmities.⁵¹

Only weeks before the first payment for *Pluto and Proserpina* is recorded, Ludovico Ludovisi had bought a villa bordering the Villa Borghese.⁵² Apparently sensing that his uncle, Pope Gregory, would not live long, Ludovico hastened to amass possessions in a bid to outdo Scipione,⁵³ and indeed during the two and a half years of the Ludovisi pontificate he managed to accumulate “ricchezze da Creso” (riches of Croesus), as one contemporary put it.⁵⁴ Another observer judged, “pare vada à camino di voler superare in omnibus tutti gli altri nepoti de’ Papi passati de recente” (it seems he is pursuing the path of surpassing in all ways all of the other recent papal nephews).⁵⁵ Having this ambitious youngster right under his nose must certainly have been no pleasure for Borghese, who had himself dominated the Roman scene for more than fifteen years. Ludovisi made things worse by accentuating their rivalry: he commissioned Guercino to decorate his new retreat with a ceiling fresco (fig. 9.4) that was clearly intended to surpass the similar fresco by Guido Reni at Scipione Borghese’s villa on the Quirinale (fig. 9.5).⁵⁶ That the two paintings were meant to be compared and contrasted by a large audience is evident from the fact that a set of engravings after both works appeared in print towards the end of 1621.⁵⁷

What was the contemporary beholder to make of this *paragone*? Both frescoes share a common theme, the sunrise, to be understood as a metaphor for the dawning of a new age—alluding to the new era which began with Borghese and Ludovisi rule, respectively.⁵⁸ Scipione Borghese associated himself with the masculine sun god Apollo, who exerts a calm and masterly control over his chariot (fig. 9.5). The Ludovisi

9.5 · Guido Reni, *Aurora*
(Apollo in his chariot), Casino
dell’Aurora, Palazzo Pallavicini
Rospigliosi, Rome

sunrise instead looks more dynamic, but also less stable (fig. 9.4). As Eva Krems has pointed out, Guercino's fresco stresses the passing of time and the fleeting moment, hinting at Ludovico Ludovisi's readiness to act swiftly and to seize sudden chances in the interest of papal politics (*prontezza*)—as opposed to the well-known slowness (*lentezza*) of his predecessor as secretary of state, Scipione Borghese.⁵⁹

I would like to draw attention to a hitherto overlooked aspect of the visual *paragone* between the two cardinal nephews, taking as my starting point the simple observation that the Ludovisi sunrise has a female rather than a male protagonist: the goddess Aurora, the morning star that “announces” the sunrise. In a chapter on the personification of dawn in the widely used manual *Iconologia* (1603), Cesare Ripa stated that Aurora should strew flowers while riding her chariot. This gesture was meant to refer to the fact that flowers open their blossoms at the rise of dawn.⁶⁰ Similarly, the Aurora Ludovisi who showers the beholder with flowers signifies the positive, life-giving influence of the sun on the earth. While the Borghese sunrise visualizes the aloof, self-assured ruler, the Ludovisi sunrise speaks of care, benevolence, and generosity.

From the very beginnings of Gregory's pontificate, the Ludovisi displayed remarkable generosity. They distributed money and lucrative offices in order to create a large group of loyal followers. Ludovico Ludovisi “bribed” the college of cardinals into electing his uncle.⁶¹ Contemporary sources tell us that the cardinals who had supported Gregory's election were given large rewards.⁶² While Scipione Borghese was reputed to be generous to a few elect favorites only,⁶³ the Ludovisi apparently tried to enrich a large number of people.⁶⁴ Giacinto Gigli relates that Gregory XV marked the beginning of his pontificate by handing out four hundred thousand doppie d'oro that had allegedly been hidden away by Paul V.⁶⁵ One observer found Rome “reanimated” by the “piacevolezza” (charm) of the new government, which contrasted markedly with the much less generous pontificate of Paul V (“scarsità delle gratie di Paolo”).⁶⁶ The cardinals claimed to have received more riches from Ludovisi in sixteen days than from Borghese in sixteen years, as Gregory XV himself proudly remarked.⁶⁷ Quite appropriately *Abundantia* was chosen as an allegory by which to represent Gregory's pontificate on his tomb,⁶⁸ while *Liberalitas* was among the topics discussed at the Accademia de' Virtuosi, founded by Ludovico Ludovisi.⁶⁹ Giovanni Luigi Valesio, a painter and writer in charge of the Villa Ludovisi,⁷⁰ praised Pope Gregory's liberality with the words “con larga mano . . . sparge[v]a tesori” (with a broad hand . . . he was spreading treasures).⁷¹ The flowers in Guercino's fresco may therefore have been understood as a metaphorical image of the benefits that the pope showered on his people (fig. 9.4).

A second important Ludovisi metaphor is light. As the Ludovisi coat of arms consisted of three golden stripes on a red ground, several poems written shortly after Gregory's election likened the papal device to the rays of the sun, which herald the dawn of a new golden age.⁷² Most suitably, the name Ludovisio could be interpreted as “lucis visio,” that is, “vision of light.”⁷³ The painted sunrise in the Casino Ludovisi (fig. 9.4) clearly encodes such ideas, as does the *Allegory of Fame* on the second floor of the same building. This huge ceiling fresco, which depicts Fame hovering over the personifications of Honor and Virtue, is permeated by rays of light, alluding to the Ludovisi coat

of arms, while the phoenix, a bird associated with sunrise and renewal, announces a golden age in which the Ludovisi virtues are rewarded by eternal fame.⁷⁴

Both the sun and the flowers familiar from Guercino's Ludovisi frescoes play an important role in the story of *Pluto and Proserpina*. Proserpina had been picking flowers when Pluto took her away to the underworld.⁷⁵ According to Vincenzo Cartari's influential *Le immagini de i dei*, Proserpina's fate may be read as a reference to the fact that plant seeds are confined to the soil during the dark season, while Pluto symbolizes the sun, which dwells in the underworld in winter, causing the death of the vegetation.⁷⁶ Proserpina's abduction is therefore an allegory of the change of the seasons: florid summer gives way to grim winter.⁷⁷ Bernini's statue ironically alludes to the dawn of a new age, which is, however, a bleak, cold, and dark age rather than the golden age celebrated by the Ludovisi. While the Ludovisi evoked a flourishing, plentiful era, Bernini's group shows just the opposite, as Proserpina, an image of youthful prosperity, is carried away by a god associated with wealth and death.

As Guercino's frescoes were only just being designed when Bernini started work on his sculpture, it is not very likely that they exerted a direct impact on Bernini's *invenzione*.⁷⁸ However, the themes that Guercino immortalized in his paintings, namely the golden age propaganda and the financial tactics behind it, had already emerged in the first months of the Ludovisi pontificate.⁷⁹ When Scipione Borghese commissioned *Pluto and Proserpina* (more than four months after Gregory's election), he might have intended the sculpture as a critical response to those recent developments. The critical tendency of Bernini's work becomes particularly apparent when one considers the inscription.

According to the extant documentation, the pedestal and the inscription were executed only in 1622.⁸⁰ By that time, Guercino had finished his frescoes, and Scipione was certainly aware of them, because the *Aurora* had been engraved in 1621 as a pendant to the Borghese sunrise.⁸¹ Scipione knew that flowers alluding to the prosperity of Ludovisi rule constituted an important element of Guercino's painting. Interestingly, flowers also played a key role in the inscription with which Scipione Borghese labeled his gift to Ludovico Ludovisi. It seems almost like a response to the Ludovisi *Aurora* when Proserpina addresses Ludovico Ludovisi with the following words: "Oh you who are bending over the earth to gather flowers, look at me as I'm being taken away to the kingdom of the cruel Dis!"⁸² The inscription thus implies that Ludovico only concentrates on the flowers before him, that is, on pleasure and worldly goods, intent on gathering riches. Proserpina, however, cautions him not to rejoice too much in his prosperity because the god of death can change his fate as soon as hers. In fact, everybody at the Roman court supposed that Gregory XV would not live long.⁸³ In this context the inscription sounds like a subtle warning, a reminder that—just like Scipione—Ludovico, too, might fall in disgrace after his uncle's death, implying the imprudence of creating enmities.

However, in the end things took a more favorable turn for Ludovisi. Although the new Pope Urban VIII (Maffeo Barberini) had had close contacts with Scipione since the pontificate of Paul V, he made it known that he would not side with Borghese in acts of vengeance against the Ludovisi and their allies, the Aldobrandini. Soon after his

election in 1623 he ordered cardinals Borghese, Ludovisi, and Aldobrandini to embrace each other publicly in order to end their hostilities.⁸⁴ Interestingly, the very same Maffeo Barberini had acted as an intermediary between Borghese and Ludovisi during the Scirocco crisis of 1622, in the context of which the *Rape of Proserpina* was given to Ludovico.⁸⁵ Moreover, he had authored the distich that Scipione Borghese chose to be engraved on the pedestal of *Pluto and Proserpina*.⁸⁶ To be sure, Maffeo knew to what use his verses had been put. Once elected to the Holy See, he seems to have acted along the lines of the message encrypted in Scipione's gift: given the limited duration of any pontificate and the objectives which each papal family—his own, too—sought to meet during and after this time span (that is, primarily the elevation and consolidation of its social status), it was best to avoid rancor.

But how did Ludovico Ludovisi himself react to the “poisoned” present? As is well known, playful ambiguities and multiple layers of meaning were at the core of Roman Seicento art production. For instance, Anthony Colantuono has shown that Guido Reni's *Abduction of Helen* was meant to convey a hidden criticism of King Philip IV of Spain, but could then be reinterpreted in an equally meaningful way by its later owner, the French queen mother Maria de' Medici.⁸⁷ Similarly, Ludovico Ludovisi altered the message of Bernini's group by changing its context. An inventory of 1623 informs us that Ludovico displayed the sculpture quite prominently in the so-called Palazzo Grande of the Villa Ludovisi, establishing a *paragone* between Bernini's work and two famous ancient masterpieces. Alongside *Pluto and Proserpina* Ludovisi placed two sculptural groups, which the inventory described as “un'Amicitia di due statue di marmo” (to be identified with *Orestes and Electra*) and “una donna morta con il padre che si ammazza da sè” (today known as the *Vanquished Gaul Slaying His Wife*).⁸⁸ This arrangement created a setting for *Pluto and Proserpina* in which the abduction could be compared to and contrasted with other forms of interaction between the sexes. Embedding the sculpture in an ensemble that focused on various alternatives of moral conduct as well as on the *paragone* between “ancients” and “moderns” neutralized and covered up the potentially critical message of Bernini's group. Ludovico Ludovisi seems to have accepted Borghese's present graciously, pretending not to understand it.

CODA

The visual arts, classically defined as *muta poesis*, sometimes took a rather eloquent stance, expressing ideas that would have been dangerous to put in words. One such case is Gianlorenzo Bernini's *Pluto and Proserpina*.⁸⁹ As a careful reexamination of the documents proves, the group was never displayed at the Villa Borghese but was carried directly from Bernini's studio to the Villa Ludovisi in September 1622. We do not know precisely when Scipione Borghese decided to give the group to Ludovico Ludovisi, but as tensions between the two of them had existed since the very beginning of the Ludovisi pontificate, it is conceivable that the statue was intended from the outset as a “poisoned present.” Seen in this perspective, the chosen subject matter wittily caricatured

two central Ludovisi metaphors: while the Ludovisi stylized their rule as an era of light and a new golden age, the *Rape of Proserpina* announced just the opposite—the beginning of a dark, bleak age.

Even if Scipione Borghese had originally commissioned the group for himself, it is likely that the inscription placed on the pedestal in 1622 (shortly before the statue was given away) was meant to address the prospective owner. The flowers which play a key role in the inscription had by then become a prominent image of Ludovisi propaganda, symbolizing the prosperity of Gregory's rule. The inscription on the pedestal of the *Rape of Proserpina* was probably intended to remind Ludovico Ludovisi that his season of "flowers"—just like Proserpina's—might come to a rapid end.

It seems that social rivalry was just as important as the art-theoretical concept of competition, the *paragone*, in determining key aspects of Bernini's work. Scipione Borghese wanted to display his generosity by making a splendid present, but at the same time he wished to warn his rival that his days were numbered, admonishing him not to create enmities in his own precarious situation. From this point of view the group takes on an entirely new meaning, having been interpreted previously as an allegory by which Scipione Borghese intended to remind himself of his uncle's death as the source of his present misfortune. Even though we have no documentary evidence about Scipione's intentions, it is, I think, worth considering that Bernini's masterpiece may have been meant as a hidden criticism of the Ludovisi rule rather than as a *memento mori* for the Villa Borghese.

APPENDIX: SCIPIONE BORGHESE AND LUDOVICO LUDOVISI
COMPARED AND CONTRASTED BY AN
ANONYMOUS CONTEMPORARY

Discorso Sopra Alcuni Card[ina]li nel tempo dell'ultimo Pontificato di Greg[orio] XV, n.d. [1629?],⁹⁰ Archivio Segreto Vaticano, Archivio Boncompagni Ludovisi, prot. 895, no. 6.

[fol. 1r] Il Card.le Ludovisio trattò nella sua minor fortuna con termine d'esquisita humanità, e cortesia, come sotto Tiberio fece C. Cesare, il quale diede occasione à Cassieno oratore di dire ciò che disse, l'alterigia, e superbia che se gl'oppone è più colpa della dominatione, che sua, e forse è magnanimità per il breve confine, che è frà le virtù, et il vitio.

Non è huomo da ingannare, e fa professione più tosto di libero, et aperto, sfoga le sue passioni, dove si sente di essere offeso, e dicono, che nell'animo non gli resti cicatrice d'ingiuria, ne di memoria. Hà più del Cesare, che del Catone, il quale sibi Imperium exoptat, ubi virtus enitescere posset, e veramente sono le ricchezze istromento di Virtù, se si procurano con moderatione, e se sono possedute, e non possedono, è avido di buona fama, e la v[er]rà [fol. 1v] sollecitando con le Congregationi, e con l'Accademie, è dedito al negozio, hà spirito d'eloquenza, e sarebbe in somma il Germanico de nostri

tempi, se egli avesse la sua fortuna d'essere amato, come partecipe della sua vigilanza, e del suo valore, si è dato in braccio a' Fiorentini, mostrando in questa parte di haver' poca fede a' gl'esempli, mà la ricevuta Invidia della sua fortuna adhuc obstreperit, e non lascia sincero il giuditio, ne forse senza passione la volontà, e però mutandosi la scena apparirà nella vera sua fortuna.

Il Card.le Borghese temperò la severità di Paulo con la facilità de suoi costumi, essendogli più tosto mancato istruzione, e buon consiglio, che bontà di natura, la quale predominata, e rischiarata dal sangue poteva in lui [fol. 2r] prepararsi di tutte le forme, natura veramente blanda, e versabile, grata e fallace à speranti, implicità nelle simulationi, e nelle lusinghe, mà senza amaro.

Due giovani hà partorito l'età n(ost)ra fortunatissimi. Questi [Borghese], e Ludovisio, i quali poiche il tempo, e l'occasione li congiugne, ho preso consiglio di comparare insieme, acciò il costume loro, e la natura per quanto mi sarà concesso si discopra.

Dunque la fortuna e la gratia verso quelli, che hanno creata la fortuna loro nell'uno, e nell'altro è stata pari, mà disuguali l'autorità, la quale fù quasi maggiore in Ludovisio nel primo giorno del suo Pontificato, che in Borghese nell'estremo. Più rapido [*sic*; rapito?] Ludovisio dalla dolcezza [fol. 2v] della lode, più intemperante Borghese nel senso della sua cupidità. Pari il desiderio dell'acquistare, e dell'havere, mà nell'uno per ambizione, e nell'altro per imbecillità nell'uno professione di sapienza, nell'altro ostentatione di cortesia, Più timoroso Borghese dell'odio publico, e Ludovisio più incurioso dell'amore, nell'uno natura più facile, nell'altro più severa nelle due parti dell'Anima, nelle quali è più divisa l'autorità delle ragioni più simile, è Ludovisio all'irascibile, e l'altro all'altra, Dunque questi nelle delectabili, Ludovisio nelle cose ardue, l'uno hà per impresa il piacere, e l'altro la gloria, mà la vera strada di farsi glorioso è sprezzar la gloria gloriosamente [fol. 3r] sperando, e sacrificar se stesso alla salute della Repubblica.

NOTES

1. On the exchange of gifts see, for instance, Mauss, *Gift*; Weiner, *Inalienable Possessions*; Godelier, *Enigma*; Davis, *Gift*.

2. Panofsky, *Büchse der Pandora*, 27–31.

3. Baldinucci, *Vita*, 78–80; Bernini, *Vita*, 17, 18, 23. On the relationship between these two texts see D'Onofrio, "Priorità"; Montanari, "Gian Lorenzo Bernini e Sforza Pallavicino," 47; Montanari, "Bernini e Cristina di Svezia," 401–25; Delbeke, Levy, and Ostrow, "Prolegomena," 17–23.

4. Schiavo, *Villa Ludovisi*, 150–51. In this essay the term "villa" will be used in the modern sense as referring to both a country house and its landscape setting. It has to be borne in mind, though, that in the seventeenth century "villa" meant only the site, while the buildings on it were called "casini" or "palazzi."

5. Winner, "Ratto di Proserpina," 180.

6. Faldi, "Note sulle sculture borghesiane," and Faldi, "Nuove note sul Bernini."

7. Faldi, "Note sulle sculture borghesiane," 143; Avery, *Bernini*, 48 (states explicitly that the statue was brought from Bernini's studio to the Villa Ludovisi). Pope-Hennessy gives conflicting information: on the one hand he maintains that the statue was first placed in the Villa Borghese, while on the other hand he says it was made for Villa Ludovisi, having to rival the *Vanquished*

Gaul Slaying His Wife. Pope-Hennessy, *Italian High Renaissance and Baroque Sculpture*, 4th ed., 107, 427. Bernini's emulation of the Ludovisi *Gaul* was also highlighted by Howard, "Identity Formation," 141. After this essay (whose argument was first presented at a conference at the American Academy in Rome in 2004) was submitted and in press, Tomaso Montanari put forth a similar view in Montanari, "Il significato politico."

8. D'Onofrio, *Roma vista*, 300; Kauffmann, *Giovanni Lorenzo Bernini*, 49; Kenseth, "Bernini's Borghese Sculptures," 196 (fig. 3), 201–2; Winner, "Bernini the Sculptor," 194; Preimesberger, "Berninis Borghese-Skulpturen," 117.

9. Moreno and Stefani, *Galleria Borghese*, 136.

10. See, for example, Kenseth, "Bernini's Borghese Sculptures"; Preimesberger, "Berninis Borghese-Skulpturen"; Winner, "Ratto di Proserpina"; Avery, *Bernini*, 48–55.

11. Coliva, "Apollo e Dafne"; Preimesberger, "Enea e Anchise"; Preimesberger, "David"; Winner, "Ratto di Proserpina."

12. The marble blocks from which Bernini carved *Apollo and Daphne* and *David* were paid for on August 2, 1622, and on March 16, 1623, respectively; only after these dates do the relative payments to the sculptor commence. By that time the *Rape of Proserpina*, begun in the summer of 1621, must have been finished or at least very close to completion, as work on its pedestal was under way on July 7, 1622, and the group was removed from Bernini's studio in September 1622. Minozzi, "Appendice documentaria," Docs. 33, 37–39, 55, 61.

13. Domenico Bernini, *Vita*, 17–20, names *Pluto and Proserpina* among the statues created for the Villa Borghese. However, he does not seem particularly well informed about the Borghese commissions, as he gets many facts wrong. According to him, *Pluto and Proserpina* was the last of the four statues that were created within two years by the young sculptor, whose age was "allora presso a quella [età] di diecinueve anni." As recent documentary findings have shown, Gianlorenzo worked on the sculptures between 1619 and 1625 (age twenty-one to twenty-seven), with *Pluto and Proserpina* being the second rather than the fourth group undertaken for Scipione Borghese. (Cf. Minozzi, "Appendice documentaria," Docs. 14–20, 33–44, 55–75.) Domenico Bernini's text, therefore, provides no firm evidence on which to base the claim that the *Rape of Proserpina* was indeed created for the Villa Borghese rather than as a gift to Ludovico Ludovici. Interestingly, Baldinucci (*Vita*, 79–80) does not mention the *Rape of Proserpina* in the context of the Villa Borghese sculptures, but in a section on Ludovisi patronage.

14. Faldi, "Note sulle sculture borghesiane," 146, Doc. 9. Cf. Minozzi, "Appendice documentaria," Doc. 41: "Per haver calato la statua di Nettuno in Casa del Berna con numero 16. huomeni, quale fu' donata à Ludovisio / Per haver cavato fuori di detta Casa la suddetta statua cavata in piazza, acciò la potessero portar via

li facchini" (For having taken down with sixteen men in Berna's house the statue of Neptune which was donated to Ludovisio / For having transported the said statue from the house onto the piazza so that the porters could take it away). The title of the bill suggests that it concerns only work done at the Villa Borghese. However, Faldi and Minozzi transcribed only a small section of this fairly long document. When one looks at it in the original, it becomes clear that apart from mentioning the house of "Berna" thrice it also lists work at the church of S. Sebastiano.

15. Minozzi, "Appendice documentaria," Doc. 64.

16. Ibid., Doc. 62.

17. Ibid., Doc. 39: "Signore Giovanni ecc. a Giovanni Viscardi fachino di Dogana scudi 15 moneta per la portatura della statua di Plutone e Proserpina da Santa Maria Maggiore a Porta Pinciana con ricevuta ecc. di Casa li 23 settembre 1622" (Signore Giovanni etc. to Giovanni Viscardi porter at the Dogana 15 scudi for having transported *Pluto and Proserpina* from Santa Maria Maggiore to Porta Pinciana with receipt etc. [This order is written] "di Casa" [i.e., in the Borghese palace] on the 23rd of September 1622).

18. Frutaz, *Piante*, plates 345, 378.

19. Minozzi, "Appendice documentaria," Doc. 40: "Per haver fatto il Cassone attorno la statua di Plutone con la figura di Proserpina, . . . et andato acompagnarla per la strada, et di poi andato a disfarla alla vigna dell' Illustrissimo Sig.r Cardinale Ludovisio" (For having made the big crate around the statue of Pluto with the figure of Proserpina, . . . and for having accompanied it on its way, and then for having undone the crate at the garden of the most Illustrious Signor Cardinale Ludovisio).

20. Winner, "Ratto di Proserpina," 187.

21. Minozzi, "Appendice documentaria," Doc. 33.

22. Emich, *Bürokratie*, 396–401; Büchel, "Raffe und regiere!" 229–30.

23. See appendix.

24. Magnuson, *Rome*, 1:103–5. Cf. *Discorso de' cardinali*, 167r (on Scipione Borghese): "di natura libera et affabile più che sia stato mai Nepote di Papa . . . sarà sempre gran Card[ina]le e sarà amato, e stimato."

25. Spear, *Domenichino*, 1:192; Coliva, *Domenichino*, 23–24; Sickel, "Kunstlerrivalität," 166.

26. Coliva, "Scipione Borghese."

27. Gigli, *Diario*, 1:81, 83. Magnuson (*Rome*, 1:193) gives Ludovico's age as twenty-seven, but the exact date of birth (October 27, 1595) is established by Jaitner, *Hauptinstruktionen*, 1:112.

28. Magnuson, *Rome*, 1:193–95; Spear, *Domenichino*, 1:227. On another portrait of Gregory and his nephew in which the latter again plays the key role, see Büchel, "Raffe und regiere!" 201–2.

29. This traditional view, already widespread during Gregory's lifetime (see, e.g., the following note), has recently been opposed

by Jaitner, *Hauptinstruktionen*, 1:98–99, 101–2. However, Jaitner does acknowledge the far-reaching political decisions made by Ludovico Ludovisi: *ibid.*, 124. See also Büchel (“Raffe und regiere!”), who underlines Ludovico’s active political engagement.

30. Barozzi and Berchet, *Relazioni*, 117: “Il Cardinal è di 26 anni, di nobili maniere, pieno di prudenza, versato nei studij sotto la disciplina di Gesuiti, d’affabilità nel complir e trattare straordinaria, ha gusto del negotio, nel quale stà del continuo fisso, è amatissimo del Papa, con cui tiene tale autorità, che si può dire in sue mani sij lo arbitrare della volontà del governo del Pontefice.”

31. *Ibid.*, 158.

32. *Informatione dei Cardinali*, 237r.

33. See appendix.

34. Barozzi and Berchet, *Relazioni*, 116–17; Schiavo, *Villa Ludovisi*, 21; Jaitner, *Hauptinstruktionen*, 1:84–85, 114–15. See also an anonymous account of the conclave of 1621: *Relazione ordinata*, 189v, 195r–v.

35. Barozzi and Berchet, *Relazioni*, 158–59; D’Onofrio, *Roma vista*, 286.

36. Gigli, *Diario*, 1:84–85.

37. D’Onofrio, *Roma vista*, 286–300. On other aspects of the enmity between Borghese and Ludovisi see Jaitner, *Hauptinstruktionen*, 1:88–89, 105–8, 118, 120–21, 151.

38. D’Onofrio, *Roma vista*, 300. Although D’Onofrio drew attention to the enmity between Borghese and Ludovisi, he did not consider its possible implications for the iconography of the statue, as he believed it to have been commissioned for the Villa Borghese and displayed there before being sent to the Villa Ludovisi.

39. Jaitner, *Hauptinstruktionen*, 1:106–7.

40. *Ibid.*, 1:109.

41. Barozzi and Berchet, *Relazioni*, 122: “Del presente Pontefice [Gregory XV] vi sono cinque creature: il nipote [Ludovico Ludovisi], delle condizioni già sopra espresse, quale cozzerà sempre con Borghese.” On the date of this observation (before June 8, 1621) see *ibid.*, 114. The word *cozzare* is usually chosen to denote the fighting of wild deer and the like: see Battaglia, *Dizionario*, 3:929–30.

42. Minozzi, “Appendice documentaria,” Doc. 33.

43. Bernini, *Vita*, 17–18: “Dentro [il palazzo di villa Borghese] risiede quasi un Popolo di Statue antiche, e quasi tutte intatte, preservate a Noi contro il furore de’ Barbari dall’istesse ruine di Roma. Fra queste il Seneca nel bagno, Venere e Cupido credute di Prassitele, il Gladiatore di Agasio celebre Scultore della Città di Efeso, l’Ermafrodita ritrovato negli horti di Salustio presso il Colle Quirinale sotto il medesimo Pontificato di Paolo Quinto, e la Testa in basso rilievo di Alessandro Magno, ottengono frà le principali il primo luogo: E quivi doveva egli [Bernini] porre ancora le sue. L’emulazione con sì celebri Artefici, il paragone delle

opere, e l’espettativa di tutti recavano grand’apprensione al Bernino del fatto.”

44. Wittkower, *Bernini*, 2nd ed., 5–6; Pope-Hennessy, *Italian High Renaissance and Baroque Sculpture*, 3rd ed., 107; Kauffmann, *Giovanni Lorenzo Bernini*, 43–45; Howard, “Identity Formation,” 140–41; Kenseth, “Bernini’s Borghese Sculptures”; Winner, “Bernini the Sculptor”; Preimesberger, “Zu Berninis Borghese-Skulpturen,” 115–22; Barolsky, “Bernini and Ovid,” 29–31; Schmidt, “Marble Flesh” (who presents a “new” literary source which was however already mentioned by Preimesberger, “Berninis Borghese-Skulpturen,” 121n56); Avery, *Bernini*, 49–54; Winner, “Ratto di Proserpina.”

45. Avery, *Bernini*, 48–52; Winner, “Ratto di Proserpina,” 191.

46. Preimesberger, “Zu Berninis Borghese-Skulpturen,” 117.

47. “The kingdom of the cruel Dis” is a synonym for Pluto’s realm, the underworld. Cf. D’Onofrio, *Roma vista*, 273–76; Preimesberger, “Berninis Borghese-Skulpturen,” 118–19; Winner, “Ratto di Proserpina,” 190.

48. Avery, *Bernini*, 54. According to Winner, the laurel leaves covering the hind legs of Pluto’s companion Cerberus allude to the regeneration of the Borghese family after Paul’s death: see Winner, “Bernini the Sculptor,” 196–97; Winner, “Ratto di Proserpina,” 187, 190. However, this seems far-fetched, as the inscription does not sound particularly hopeful.

49. This hypothesis was first presented in my contribution to the conference “The Muse in the Marble: Plastic Arts and Aesthetic Theories in the Seventeenth Century” (American Academy at Rome, February 18, 2004). An abstract of this paper was also part of a booklet produced for and displayed by the Bibliotheca Hertziana at the Deutscher Kunsthistorikertag (Bonn, March 16–20, 2005). Arne Karsten, whom I met at the Kunsthistorikertag, mentions this hypothesis in *Bernini*, 39–43, without, however, citing the precedence of my argument.

50. Hill, “Patronage of a Disenfranchised Nephew,” 432–34.

51. *Ibid.*, 433, 436–38.

52. The Villa Ludovisi was acquired on June 3, 1621: see Hibbard, *Maderno*, 296. The first payment for the sculpture was registered on June 19, 1621: Minozzi, “Appendice documentaria,” Docs. 33, 34.

53. Magnuson, *Rome*, 1:193; Büchel, Karsten, and Zitzlsperger, “Mit Kunst aus der Krise?,” 168–69.

54. Barozzi and Berchet, *Relazioni*, 160.

55. *Informatione dei Cardinali*, 246r. See also Wood, “Indian Summer,” 119.

56. Schiavo, *Villa Ludovisi*, 126. Although Scipione had sold this villa in 1616 to Duke Giovanni Angelo Altemps, in 1621 his contemporaries were certainly still aware of the fact that Reni’s famous fresco had been commissioned by Borghese; see Krems, “Prontezza,” 197.

57. Karsten, *Künstler und Kardinäle*, 54. See also Wood, *Indian Summer*, 73: "That Guercino himself desired this *paragone* is indicated by the fact that his friend, Pasqualini, produced engravings of both vaults in 1621, soon after Guercino's *Triumph of Aurora* was finished." A reproduction of Pasqualini's *Aurora* is to be found in Gozzi, *Il Guercino*, 46, cat. no. 14.

58. Wood, "Visual Panegyric," 224; Wood, "Indian Summer," 74–76. On the Borghese sunrise as prophecy of a new golden age, see Ubl, "Guido Reni's *Aurora*," 222–25, 232–34. Ubl sees this theme as a reference to the young Prince Marcantonio Borghese, who was, however, only eleven years old when the decoration of the Casino dell'Aurora was begun. The frescoes were commissioned by Scipione, and thus it makes more sense to link their iconography to him, especially as the program comprises a *Triumph of Scipio*; see Beer, "Sogni di Scipione," 178–201.

59. Krems, "Prontezza," 200, 213–14. For the context of the *Aurora* see also Krems, "Die 'magnifica modestia.'"

60. Ripa, *Iconologia*, 60.

61. Schiavo, *Villa Ludovisi*, 52.

62. Giunti, *Vita*, 6–8.

63. Barozzi and Berchet, *Relazioni*, 159.

64. Giunti, *Vita*, 7v–8.

65. Gigli, *Diario*, 1:121.

66. Antonio Possevino to Ferdinando Gonzaga, May 28, 1621: "Non crederà mai V[ostra] A[ltezza] quale et quanta sia la metamorfosi di Roma. Io che ho visti otto Pontificati non ho scorta tanta mutatione quanta si vede al presente. Questa varietà in sé bella mi fa curioso d'indagar le cause et trovo che la scarsità delle gratie di Paolo et la piacevolezza del presente ha quasi ritornata in vita questa povera città." Quoted by Jaitner, *Hauptinstruktionen*, 1:100.

67. Schiavo, *Villa Ludovisi*, 25. In keeping with this attitude, in his political testament Gregory recommended giving generous alms: Jaitner, *Hauptinstruktionen*, 1:125.

68. Büchel, Karsten, and Zitzlsperger, "Mit Kunst aus der Krise?," 180. The pope's generosity was also stressed by other Ludovisi commissions. In the Sala della Fama just above the Sala dell'Aurora, a cornucopia held by the personification of Honor possibly symbolizes Ludovisi liberality (Krems, "Prontezza," 218).

69. Jaitner, *Hauptinstruktionen*, 1:156, 164.

70. Schiavo, *Villa Ludovisi*, 128–29.

71. Valesio, *Roma felice*, n.p. [4].

72. Wood, "Visual Panegyric," 226–27.

73. *Ibid.*, 227.

74. *Ibid.*, 226; Krems, "Die Prontezza," 215–20.

75. Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, book 5, lines 339–571. See the inscription on the pedestal of the statue (see above, note 47).

76. Winner, "Ratto di Proserpina," 188. Cartari's text, first published in 1571, appeared in numerous editions throughout the seventeenth century.

77. Kauffmann, *Giovanni Lorenzo Bernini*, 48–49; Preimesberger, "Berninis Borghese-Skulpturen," 117.

78. According to Malvasia, Guercino left Bologna for Rome on May 12, 1621. The Villa Ludovisi was acquired in the beginning of June (see above, note 52), and work on its fresco decoration was already under way in July (Krems, "Prontezza," 186n26). Baldinucci stressed the close contacts between Ludovico Ludovisi and Bernini, whom he regularly invited for conversations about art. Bernini restored ancient statues for the villa Ludovisi, as a payment of June 20, 1622, proves: "a Cav.re Bernini scultore per restaurazione di una statua antica di Adone [to be identified with the famous *Ludovisi Mars*] e per ogni altro lavoro fatto per il casino di essa vigna fino al 14 [June] corrente." See Giuliano, *Collezione Boncompagni Ludovisi*, 80; De Angelis d'Ossat, *Scultura antica*, 161–65. There is thus a theoretical possibility that Bernini knew of Guercino's projects for the Casino dell'Aurora already at a very early stage, i.e., when he himself started work on the *Rape of Proserpina* in June 1621.

79. See above, notes 61–74.

80. Minozzi, "Appendice documentaria," Docs. 37, 38.

81. See above, note 56, and note 77 on Bernini's role as a possible source of information.

82. See above, note 47.

83. Magnuson, *Rome*, 1:193; Büchel, Karsten, and Zitzlsperger, "Mit Kunst aus der Krise?," 168–69.

84. Cornaro, *Relatione*, 356v. On the identity of the author, see Gauchat, *Hierarchia catholica*, 4:113.

85. D'Onofrio, *Roma vista*, 295–96.

86. The lines come from Maffeo Barberini's *Dodici distichi per una Galleria*, written in about 1618/20. It has repeatedly been supposed that Barberini might have had some part in the conception of the statues that Bernini produced for Scipione Borghese. See D'Onofrio, *Roma vista*, 276–77; Preimesberger, "Berninis Borghese-Skulpturen," 118; Winner, "Ratto di Proserpina," 190–91. Beer, "Sogni di Scipione," 200, also connects Maffeo with the program of Scipione Borghese's Casino dell'Aurora.

87. Colantuono, *Abduction of Helen*, 98–104.

88. Palma and de Lachenal, *I marmi Ludovisi*, 84–89, 146–52; Palma, *I marmi Ludovisi*, 70; Giuliano, *Collezione Boncompagni Ludovisi*, 176–81; De Angelis d'Ossat, *Scultura antica*, 168–71, 223–27.

89. For more examples, see, e.g., Colantuono, *Abduction of Helen*, 98–104; Strunck, "Bilderdiplomatie," 575–80.

90. Seidler, *Il teatro del mondo*, 32, no. 10, lists a text with the same incipit ("Il cardinal Ludovisio trattò nella sua minor fortuna con termini"), which bears the title *Imagines cardinalium qui an. 1629 vivebant*.