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Pietro Paolo Drei's Flower Mosaics Revealed in Print

Erin Giffin

Pietro Paolo Drei (c. 1600–56) was a *fattore* (under supervisor) and later *soprastante* (foreman and architect's assistant) of the Fabbrica of St Peter's Basilica.¹ Like his father Benedetto (c. 1580–1637), another *fattore* of the Fabbrica, Pietro Paolo orchestrated multiple projects at the Vatican complex from the 1630s until his death, including works headed by Gianlorenzo Bernini (1598–1680) and his brother Luigi (1612–81).² Also like his father, Pietro Paolo practiced the devotional artform of flower mosaics, wherein the artist creates imagery through the arrangement of vibrant flower petals. Traces of Pietro Paolo's little-known creations survive in a series of prints, executed between 1635 and 1637 by the Antwerp artist Pieter de Bailliu (1613–60), who is known to have worked in Rome between 1631 and 1637.³ This article opens a window onto Drei's flower mosaics via de Bailliu's prints and explores how the former used the annual ephemera to connect the new architectural additions of St Peter's Basilica to St Peter's historic burial site on the Vatican hill.

Although de Bailliu's 1635 print of *Pilgrims at the Tomb of St Peter, Before a Sculpture of St Peter in an Architectural Niche* has been published before, no scholar has yet considered the image's source, even though

its origins are inscribed directly across the printed page (fig. 8).⁴ Pilgrims divide their attention between the saintly representation and the *fenestrella confessionis* (window allowing relics to be seen) in the sculpture's base, where a lit lantern implies direct visual access to the body of the saint within. The sculpture closely resembles the bronze *St Peter*, a cult object at St Peter's Basilica, then assumed to be of ancient origins but now attributed to Arnolfo di Cambio or his thirteenth-century circle (fig. 9).⁵ The scene is surrounded by a verdant landscape dotted with architectural remnants. De Bailliu's *Pilgrims at the Tomb of St Peter* enhances its classical contextualization with a Latin inscription across the top of the etching that reads: 'St Anacletus constructed the altar [*presbyter*] in memory of the Blessed Peter, from the book of Roman pontiffs', that is, the *Liber pontificalis*, the authoritative, ninth-century text on the early popes.⁶ The artist's gesture to this authoritative text signals the status of St Pope Anacletus as the believed creator of the first memorial erected over the first pontiff's tomb. The scene represents the first-century monument and its imagined reception by contemporary pilgrims.⁷

Thus far scholarship regarding this print has focused on the image's central subject of the bronze

Thanks to Chiara Franceschini, Cloe Clavero and Megan Erickson for discussing the themes of this text. This essay was produced within the framework of ERC-funded research project *SACRIMA: The Normativity of Sacred Images in Early Modern Europe* (PI: Chiara Franceschini), based at Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität in Munich, as part of the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme (grant agreement n° 680192).

1. S. McPhee, 'The Long Arm of the Fabbrica: St Peter's and the City of Rome', in *Sankt Peter in Rom 1506–2006*, edited by G. Satzinger and S. Schütze, Munich, 2008, pp. 353–58; L. Rice, *The Altars and Altarpieces of New St. Peter's*, Cambridge, 1997, p. 320, appendix II.
2. M. Raspe, 'Drei', in *Allgemeines Künstlerlexikon*, XXIX, Leipzig, 2001, pp. 360–61.
3. Pieter de Bailliu is also documented as 'Baliu', 'Ballui', and 'Balieu'. D. Bodart, *Les peintres des Pays-Bas méridionaux et de la principauté de Liège à Rome au XVII^e siècle*, II, Brussels, 1970, p. 10. F. W. H. Hollstein, 'Pieter de Bailliu', in *Dutch and Flemish Etchings, Engravings and Woodcuts ca. 1450–1700*, I, Amsterdam, 1949, pp. 70–76.
4. Hollstein, 1949, op. cit., p. 74, no. 91, not illustrated. Impressions

in Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Stamp.V.143, plate 67, and Cicognara XII.541, plate 110.

5. F. M. Torrigio estimates the sculpture was at the Vatican by 453; F. M. Torrigio, *Le sacre grotte vaticane, Cioè narratione delle cose più notabili, che sono sotto il pavimento della Basilica di S. Pietro in Vaticano in Roma*, Rome, 1618 (1635 edn.), pp. 126–27. Torrigio later dates the sculpture even earlier as the supposed product of the melted *Jupiter Capitolinus* cult statue in *I sacri trofei romani del trionfante prencipe degli apostoli San Pietro gloriosissimo*, Rome, 1644, p. 153. For more on the bronze *St Peter* cult site, see E. Giffin, 'Giovanni Battista Braccelli's Etched Devotions before the Vatican Bronze *St Peter*', *I Tatti Studies in the Italian Renaissance*, XXIII, no. 2, 2020, pp. 341–74.
6. 'S. Anacletus adhuc Presbyter memoriam Beati Petri construxit ex libro de Romanis. Pont.^{bes}'
7. Anacletus appears twice in the lineage of popes: as the third pope 'Cletus', and as fifth pope 'Anecletus'. Davis interprets Anecletus as a duplicate of Cletus, necessitated by the conundrum of St Peter's monument; R. Davis, *The Book of Pontiffs (Liber Pontificalis)*, Liverpool, 1989, pp. viii, 1–3. Torrigio names St Anacletus the monument's commissioner; Torrigio, 1644, op. cit., p. 8.



8. Pieter de Bailliu after Pietro Paolo Drei, *Pilgrims at the Tomb of St Peter, Before a Sculpture of St Peter in an Architectural Niche*, 1635, etching, 325 x 242 mm (Vatican, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana).

St Peter without addressing the engraving's intended purpose.⁸ Little attention has been paid to the second inscription below the image:

Christians coming together from all parts of the world to the tomb of *St Peter*, as if to the rock of faith and the foundation of the Church, worshipped at the holy location of the tomb of the first of the apostles with extreme devotion and piety. From the Roman Breviary Pieter de Bailliu engraved this image, made of flowers by Pietro Paolo Drei before the tomb of *St Peter*, in Rome in 1635, with permission of the authorities.⁹

De Bailliu clearly states that the etching is not his own creation, but rather documents visually the flower mosaic of Drei, an ephemeral display once adorning the floor of the new basilica. The flower painting was installed 'before the tomb of *St Peter*', today marked by Carlo Maderno's (1556–1629) *confessio* completed in 1617 at the heart of the basilica's crossing, over which stands Bernini's baldachin, completed in 1633 (fig. 10). This implies that Drei's 1635 flower mosaic would have stretched eastward (because, unusually, *St Peter*'s is oriented to the west) from the *confessio* towards the basilica's nave and in the direction of the bronze *St Peter*, where the sculpture had received tactile devotions since its early seventeenth-century installation against the southern face of the northeast crossing pier.

The Jesuit professor Giovanni Battista Ferrari (1582–1655) offers one of the few period explanations of the artistic practice of flower mosaics – which he terms *musaico di fiori* – in his *De florum cultura* of 1633, subsequently translated and republished in Italian in 1638. In the text, Ferrari mentions by name the two Drei mosaicists as well as one other, a Stefano



9. Attributed to Arnolfo di Cambio, *St Peter*, c. 1293, bronze (Vatican, *St Peter's Basilica*. Image Hercules Milas / Alamy).

Sperantia (active 1629–36), noted as a purported workshop assistant of Bernini.¹⁰ The author explains

8. Some debate surrounds the sculpture. At least two seated *St Peters* were at the Vatican in this period: the bronze *St Peter* honoured in the basilica's nave, and, by 1605, an ancient marble statue creatively restored as *St Peter* in the *grotte vaticane* under the basilica that Guarducci dates to 1565. M. Guarducci *San Pietro e Sant'Ippolito: Storia di statue famose in Vaticano*, Rome, 1991, pp. 85–109, figs. 27, 29–31. The bronze *St Peter* is the more probable model with keys held vertical in the saint's left hand. The text surrounding the scene admittedly makes no reference to the sculpture's material.

9. 'Christiani ex omnibus Orbis terrae partibus ad S.^{ti} Petri confessionem, tanquam ad fidei petram et ecclesiae Fundamentum / convenientes, locum principis Apostolorum sepulchro consecratum summa Religionis ac pietatis Venerabantur. Ex Breviario Romano / Imaginem ex Florum materia fabrefactam a Petro Paulo Dreio ante B.^{ti} Petri confessionem Petrus de Ballui sculpsit Romae 1635 Sup. per.' All author's translations unless otherwise noted, with special thanks to Diletta Gamberini for her feedback. Nolan and Bodart transcribe the text of all three de Bailliu prints in footnotes, but only Nolan summarizes their content, also translating some of the passages. Neither explores Pietro Paolo Drei or the flower mosaic medium. L. A.

Nolan, 'Touching the Divine: Mobility, Devotion, and Display of Religious Objects in Early Modern Rome', PhD dissertation, University of Southern California, 2010, pp. 83–84 note 188–90; Bodart, *op. cit.*, 1, pp. 133–34, note 3–5.

10. G. B. Ferrari, *De florum cultura*, libri IV, Rome, 1633, pp. 423–26. G. B. Ferrari, *Flora ovvero cultura di fiori*, translated from Latin into Italian by L. A. Perugino, 1638, pp. 423–26; facsimile with introduction by L. Tongiorgi Tomasi, Florence, 2001. Both texts are cited in D. Freedberg, 'From Hebrew and Gardens to Oranges and Lemons. Giovanni Battista Ferrari and Cassiano dal Pozzo', in Cassiano dal Pozzo. *Atti del Seminario Internazionale di Studi*, edited by F. Solinas, Rome, 1989, pp. 43–44. No visual evidence of Stefano Sperantia's or Speranza's work has hitherto surfaced. Ferrari, 1633, *op. cit.*, p. 426; A. Bacchi, *Scultura del '600 a Roma*, Milan, 1996, p. 844. Fagiolo dell'Arco and Petrucci, in *Gian Lorenzo Bernini nell'Infiorata di Genzano 1598–1998*, Rome, 1998, p. 13 infer from the association with Bernini that Bernini himself also engaged in flower mosaics, though they offer no proof. Furthermore, no mention of the ephemeral artform appear in Bernini's biographies by F. Baldinucci (Florence, 1682), or by the artist's son, Domenico (Rome, 1713).

that Pietro Paolo and Benedetto Drei were both masters of painting with flower petals as their medium, in which whole flowers, individual petals, and petals cut into smaller pieces form all components of the composition.¹¹ Ferrari explains that the artist would begin with a coloured design for the mosaic. If the ephemeral composition was destined for a canvas or other portable surface, then a copy of the drawing was pounced off the original onto another piece of paper that was subsequently attached directly to the canvas or panel. Lastly, flowers would be glued to the canvas-lined or panel-supported paper. Larger compositions presumably lacked the paper armature due to their immense scale, and instead consisted of loose flower arrangements directly on the floor. The location of the mosaic would have to be cool and protected from the sun to maintain the delicate petals, and every few days, the artist would reapply flowers wherever they had wilted or fallen away to maintain compositional integrity.¹²

Ferrari tells us that Benedetto and Pietro Paolo constructed the ephemeral *mosaici* annually for the feast day of Sts Peter and Paul on 29 June.¹³ According to Ferrari's 1633 publication, Pietro Paolo assisted his father with the flower paintings across the floor of St Peter's Basilica for at least thirteen years, thus from around 1620.¹⁴ This year was portentous for the Vatican complex and our print's subject because Paul V Borghese had just installed the bronze *St Peter* in the basilica's new nave on 29 May 1620.¹⁵ If the tradition of flower mosaics indeed began that same year, then father and son were at work with their flower petals near the crossing just one month after the installation of the sculpture. As Sarah McPhee found in the Drei family records, private household inventories list as many paintings of St Peter as of flowers in the family's collection. Devotion to St Peter deeply impacted both father and son, as builders on the cult site and artisans of devotional ephemera. Drei's decision to incorporate the cult object into

his display may indicate undiminished personal and familial allegiance to the saint, and possibly to the bronze cult statue itself.¹⁶

Although flower mosaics seem a Roman phenomenon, the use of flowers and organic materials have played a part in Christian worship for millennia: one need only consider the garland adorned altars, festooned canopies and ephemeral displays documented in early modern paintings and cult site records. Prominent examples include Andrea Mantegna's fruit-laden painted garlands, and the glazed terracotta or stone garlands encircling the ciboria of Florentine cult sites like the *Santissima Annunziata* and the *Madonna of Imbruneta*. Records from Orsanmichele in Florence detail habitual flower arrangements decorating the altar of St Anne, and the *Madonna del Parto* in Rome is regularly adorned today.¹⁷ The rhetorical association between saintly burial and rich, blossoming soil, like Gregory Martin's 1581 exaltation of Rome 'where only the sacred tombs bloom', further enhances the floral symbolism of saintly figures.¹⁸ The *Pilgrims at the Tomb of St Peter* – as well as the many other flower paintings ephemerally adorning the new church, as Ferrari attests – matched the majesty of the Vatican complex by creating a visual context where the fecund floors of the basilica seemingly blossomed with Christian *historia*.¹⁹

Even though the exact date of Benedetto Drei's first flower mosaic is unknown, its origins likely emerged from the quickly transforming New St Peter's Basilica. He probably began work for the Fabbrica in around 1600, the old Constantinian building was demolished in 1606 following Paul V Borghese's 1605 mandate, and construction of the new nave barrelled forward unimpeded in the decades following.²⁰ The likely start date of around 1620 for the ephemeral practice may indicate a general shift in mentality at the Vatican worksite, from construction zone to devotional locus, as highlighted by the bronze *St Peter's* commensurate installation: enough of the nave

11. 'Prende poscia i fiori raunati in gran copia, parte interi, parte minuzati, e sfondati, secondo il bisogno'; G. B. Ferrari, 1638, op. cit., p. 423.

12. Ferrari, 1633, op. cit., pp. 424–25.

13. Ferrari, 1633, op. cit., p. 424. *Breviarium Romanum ex decreto Sacrosancti Concilii Tridentini restitutum, Pii V. Pont. Max. iussu editum, et Clementis VIII. auctoritate recognitum...* Rome, 1634, pp. 468–74, mentions the feast day, but does not include an image or description relevant to Bailliu's engraving or the Saint's tomb.

14. McPhee incorrectly dates the start of the flower mosaics to 1625, probably having taken the date (which was not updated) from the 1638 Italian republication; op. cit., p. 354.

15. Guarducci, op. cit., p. 59.

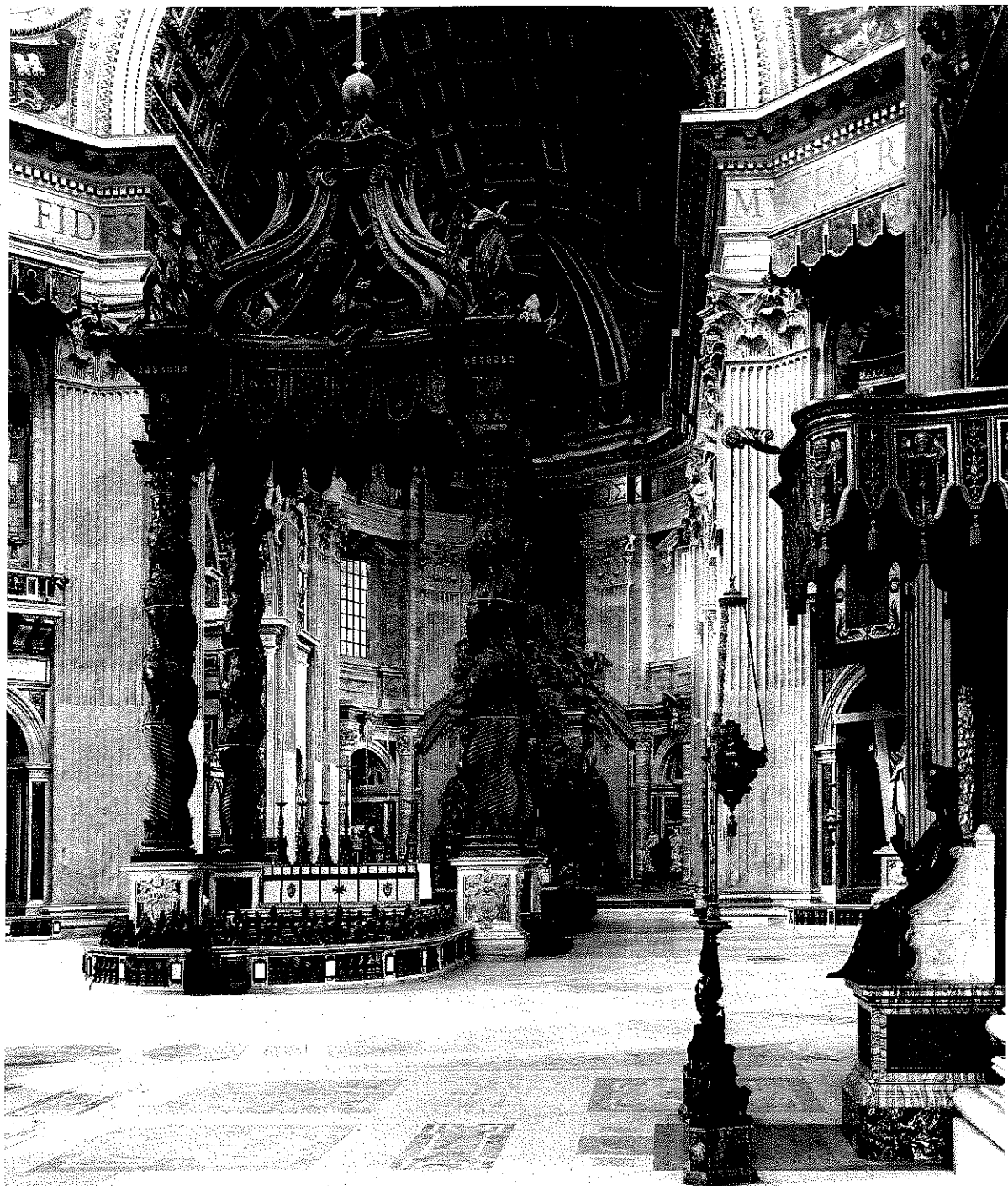
16. McPhee, op. cit., p. 356.

17. Archivio di Stato di Firenze, Orsanmichele, vol. 151 (undated) and vol. 217, fol. 29' (dated 26 July 1566).

18. 'divus urbanum solum sacris sepulchris floreat'; cited in S. Ostrow, 'The Confessio in Post-Tridentine Rome', in *Arte e committenza nel Lazio nell'età di Cesare Baronio*, Rome, 2009, p. 19.

19. 'In tal maniera, per servire alla maestà Vaticana, i pavimenti stessi di marmo si son veduti fiorire'; Ferrari, 1638, op. cit., p. 425.

20. A 1620 record regarding Benedetto Drei's potential promotion within the Fabbrica states that he claimed employment for twenty years; C. Benocci, 'Drei', in *Dizionario biografico degli Italiani*, xli, Rome, 1992, p. 684; Raspe, 'Drei', p. 360. For the Basilica's construction, *Francesco Maria Torrigio (1580–1649): San Pietro e le sacre Memorie*, edited by D. Gavallotti Cavallero, Rome, 2015, p. 19.



10. The bronze *St Peter* beside the crossing of St Peter's Basilica, with Gianlorenzo Bernini's bronze baldachin of 1626–33 at centre over Carlo Maderno's *confessio* of 1615–17, photographed 1930 (Image MARKA / Alamy).



11. Giuseppe Arcimboldo, *Primavera*, 1563, oil on panel, 660 x 500 mm (Madrid, Museo de la Real Academia de San Fernando).

and internal decorations were complete to re-instigate active, cultic adornment. The church would not be formally reconsecrated until during Urban VIII's reign on 18 November 1626.

Current scholarship on the artistic practice of flower mosaics and de Bailliu's representation arrive at different conclusions, with those interested in the etching prioritizing the bronze sculpture and its purported position in early Church history.²¹ From this point of view de Bailliu's print is more a manifestation of early modern perceptions of the statue than a visual record of a flower mosaic. The few scholars interested in the ephemeral decorative practice and its connection with the Drei family rely on hypothetical interpretations of what the images may have been.²² One popular proposal, as in the work of Lucia Tongiorgi Tomasi, associates the mosaics with the fantastical creations of Giuseppe Arcimboldo (1526/7–93), specifically his *Primavera* (spring) of 1563 (fig. 11).²³ In Arcimboldo's painting, the profile of a woman in a high collar and green dress emerges from a fictive arrangement of flowers. Roses compose the reddish pink of her cheeks, small white daisies and periwinkle constitute her collar, and her dress is a medley of leafy vegetation. Arcimboldo's choices somewhat anticipate what Ferrari advises in the construction of flower mosaics, with 'cheeks painted with roses.'²⁴ Even so, the conflation fails to recognize the key difference between the artists as revealed through de Bailliu's print. Arcimboldo constructs his figures through painted representations of plants and vegetal produce wherein entire flowers, individual petals and leaves are as clearly visible as the overarching composition: we see the roses composing the woman's cheeks together with the woman with rosy cheeks. Pietro Paolo Drei, by contrast, subsumes the materiality of his medium into a *trompe l'oeil* composition. In *Pilgrims at the Tomb of St Peter*, the flower petals dematerialize into the scene's bronze statue, pilgrims and Vatican landscape. We do not see the flowers in de Bailliu's composition, therefore Drei's ephemera remains hidden in plain sight.

While small flower mosaics may have indeed played with material legibility in the vein of Arcimboldo, the



12. Flower petal designs at the Infiorata festival in Genzano, Lazio, photographed 2009 (Image Gari Wyn Williams / Alamy).

sheer scale of the Drei family mosaics before St Peter's *confessio* would have negated such blatant visibility. This effect occurs in the modern *infiorata* (flower carpet) tradition maintained at Genzano near Rome (fig. 12).²⁵ Since the early-nineteenth century, this Lazian community has decorated the town's main street with complex, large-scale compositions composed of flower petals, vegetation and other ephemeral media for the feast day of Corpus Domini.²⁶ Today, the annual tradition includes thirteen separate flower mosaics, each measuring seven metres in width and fourteen metres in length. Created by community

21. Nolan, *op. cit.*, pp. 82–84.

22. The few modern publications referencing flower mosaics are: Fagiolo's introduction in Fagiolo dell'Arco and Petrucci, *op. cit.*, pp. 7–8; Freedberg, *op. cit.*, pp. 43–44; L. Tongiorgi Tomasi, *L'arte ingenua e ingegnosa di coltivare i fiori*: Note su *Flora ovvero cultura di fiori* di Giovan Battista Ferrari, in Ferrari, 1638, *op. cit.*, p. xxiii; A. Picchiotti, *L'Infiorata di Genzano: Significato civile religioso*, Rome, 2001, pp. 24–35.

23. Tongiorgi Tomasi, *op. cit.*, p. xxiii; Fagiolo dell'Arco, *op. cit.*, p.

8. For Arcimboldo, S. Ferino-Pagden, 'e massime con le invenzioni e capricci, ne' quale egli è unico al mondo. Il rebus Arcimboldo', in *Arcimboldo*, Milan, 2011, pp. 159–94.

24. 'La rosa dipingerà le guance [...] Ferrari, 1638, *op. cit.*, p. 424.

25. For the early history at Genzano, see Picchiotti, *op. cit.*, pp. 15–34; for drawings of the 1998 *infiorata* designs at Genzano, see Fagiolo dell'Arco and Petrucci, *op. cit.*, pp. 29–84.

26. Many modern Italian communities support an *infiorata* tradition on the feast day of *Corpus Domini*.

members, the *mosaici* are appreciated by locals and visitors for only three days before a procession of the Eucharist destroys the ephemeral adornment. Each year the street is blanketed with freshly cut flowers, amassing hours of labour, only to be purposefully destroyed.²⁷

De Bailliu's print clearly demonstrates an affinity to Genzano's *infiorata* tradition of complex, large-scale ephemera. Any flower composition would have to be immense to draw attention in the richly polychromatic and outsized structural interior of New St Peter's. Ferrari states that numerous flower paintings enlivened the church for the same event, writing 'on the feast of the princes of the apostles, their images painted in flowers, or other figures and histories, were exhibited on the most beautiful pavement before their sepulchre.'²⁸ Among the potential subjects, Ferrari lists papal symbols, family crests, implements of the Passion and depictions of the saints themselves, either with their attributes, or otherwise laid out in their sepulchres. The complexity visible in Drei's composition, with multiple figures, architectural elements and perspectival depth, implies the high level of design and quality of execution invested in early modern ephemera. Regardless of whether de Bailliu drew his representation from the actual flower mosaic as visible on the floor of the Vatican, or from one of Drei's preparatory drawings or cartoons, the print clearly represents the medium's illusionistic capacity.

Drei's *Pilgrims at the Tomb of St Peter* utilizes key visual cues to link the viewer and the newly constructed complex to the ancient Vatican cemetery. The worn semi-circular niche framing the devotional object refers to multiple time periods by simultaneously referencing the apse of a contemporary church and the vestiges of pagan Rome. The dome over the figure of St Peter arguably paraphrases in miniature Michelangelo's dome of the new basilica, with the

vertical lines of the external pilasters continuing into the dome's drum and translating into the dome's ribs, capped by a multi-layered lantern surmounted with an orb and cross. Finally, the statue's position above the *fenestrella confessionis* references the four monumental sculptures newly installed in the church's crossing.²⁹ In effect, the bronze statue represented in flowers on the floor mediated multiple eras simultaneously – from the ancient *presbyter* to Michelangelo's dome overhead – as generations of worshippers gathered before the *confessio* and the bronze *St Peter*, uniting the pilgrims depicted in flower petals with seventeenth-century devotees.

At present, only one other print explicitly acknowledging its flower foundations is known (fig. 13). Depicting *Emperor Constantine Constructing St Peter's Basilica at the Tomb of St Peter*, this too was etched by de Bailliu after an invention of Pietro Paolo Drei.³⁰ Dated 1637, it elaborates on the initial history established in the 1635 etching. In the scene represented we have moved forward chronologically, over 200 years, to find a devout Emperor Constantine genuflecting before St Anacletus's monument, his crown and sceptre discarded on the grass as he pays homage to St Peter. The text below the image reads:

Augustus Constantine on the eighth day of his baptism came to the tomb of the Blessed Apostle Peter and removed his crown from his head; laying it on the ground he wept profoundly, and he took off his robe and took up his hoe and opened the first foundations to construct the basilica. All sing on account of the twelve baskets full of earth that he [Constantine] carried on his shoulders. From the Acts of Silvester and the Roman Breviary the image out of flowers was made before the tomb of the Blessed Peter by P. Paolo Drei: P. de Bailliu engraved with permission of the authorities in 1637.³¹

As in the *Pilgrims at the Tomb of St Peter*, this print legitimizes its historic narrative of the basilica's construction via the venerated Acts of Silvester and

27. The *infiorata* on the Roman feast day of Sts Peter and Paul was recently revived in 2011 by the tourist initiative Pro Loco Roma Capitale. The modern floral carpets measure six by eight metres and decorate the external piazzas before St Peter's and Santa Maria in Trastevere, among others. Flower petal arrangement is not particular to Catholicism: consider also the geometric *Rangoli* flower petal designs used in Hindu homes and ceremonies. For a brief discussion on *Rangoli*, see R. Dohmen, 'Happy Homes and the Indian Nation: Women's Design's in Post-Colonial Tamil Nadu', *Journal of Design History*, XIV, 2001, pp. 134–35; C. Correa, 'The Public, the Private, and the Sacred', *Daedalus*, CXVIII, 1989, pp. 94–109.

28. 'nella festa de' Principi degli Apostoli le loro imagini dipinte a fiori, ovvero

altre figure, e historie nel bellissimo pavimento davanti al sepolcro loro sono solite d'esporsi', Ferrari, 1638, op. cit., p. 425.

29. E. Lingo, *Mochi's Edge and Bernini's Baroque*, London, 2017, p. 160.

30. Hollstein, 1949, op. cit., p. 74, no. 90, not illustrated. Nolan, op. cit., p. 83, note 189. Impression in Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Cicognara XII.541, plate 109.

31. 'Constantinus Augustus octava die sui Baptismi veniens ad Confessionem B'i Petri Apostoli ablatoq. diademate capitis, humi iacens, vim lacrymarum profususq. ac exuens se chlamyde, / et accipiens bidentem, terram primus aperunt ad fundamenta Basilicae construendae. Diende ob numerum duodecim Ap. duodecim cophinos terra plenos Sup= / positus humeris baiulans asportavit. Ex actis Silvestri et Breviar. Roman. Imag. ex florum materia fabrefactam à P. Paulo Dreio ante B'i P'i Confessionem. P. de Bailliu sculp. Roma / sup. per. 1637.'

the Roman Breviary.³² The composition offers a running narrative of Constantine's personal journey that begins at the centre of the composition with the humbled and baptized emperor. To the right, Constantine appears a second time, now with his cloak upon the ground as he raises his hoe to mark the dimensions of Old St Peter's Basilica into the earth, around Anacletus's monument. An older man in the background at right holding a floorplan of the original basilica is likely a member of the emperor's construction crew – possibly Constantine's architect or *soprastante*. One is tempted to interpret this as a possible self-portrait of Pietro Paolo, or as a portrait of his father Benedetto (who died the same year), though no likeness of the pair survives for comparison. To the left of the scene, Constantine appears a third time, with one of the twelve symbolic baskets full of debris balanced upon his shoulders (the other eleven as yet unused baskets appear in the foreground). The 1637 etching demonstrates how the flower mosaic exalted the construction of a commemorative basilica, and comments on the historical precedent of the new building barely a decade after its reconsecration.

The architectural focus of both the 1635 and 1637 etchings reiterates the preoccupation with the site of St Peter's tomb. Anacletus's monument and Constantine's basilica visually root the new Vatican centre in an early Christian history of monumental adornment and construction via vibrant ephemera. In hindsight, de Bailliu's prints document and preserve what are both effectively transitory arts: the flower mosaic and monumental architecture.

A third etching by de Bailliu, portraying the translation of St Peter's remains into the *confessio*, further elaborates on this visual objective of collapsing the temporal distance between architectural monuments.³³ The print *Pope Cornelius Translating the*

Body of St Peter is signed by de Bailliu at the bottom centre of the composition beside St Peter's new tomb, and parallels the two other known flower mosaic prints by virtue of the textual description at bottom, the publisher's mark and stylistic similarities (fig. 14). The text states:

The aromatic body of the Blessed Peter was relocated near the place where he was crucified in the Vatican, and in this context most magnificently buried in royal fashion. Hence from the east he was carried down to the catacombs by the Romans, and in this location replaced. To the catacombs he has been transferred, resituated there at night by Cornelius. From the Acts of Linus by Gregory, and the book of Roman pontiffs. With permission of the authorities.³⁴

If the 1635 etching regards the first-century Pope Anacletus, and the 1637 print addresses Emperor Constantine, then the bridge between the two is the mid third-century Pope Cornelius and his translation of the remains of St Peter back to the Vatican catacombs after approximately two centuries on the Via Appia southeast of Rome.³⁵ While the *Liber Pontificalis* makes no mention of Peter's relocation away from the Vatican, its biography of Cornelius elaborates upon the body's return: 'the blessed bishop Cornelius took the body of St Peter and put it close to the place where he was crucified, ... on the Vatican at Nero's palace, on 29 June.'³⁶ The composition also references the apocryphal Acts of Linus and Gregory of Tours's *Glory of the Martyrs* to assert the Vatican hill as the site of Peter's martyrdom.³⁷

The printed inscription makes no mention of any prototype, or the date of its creation. Even so, the fact that the etching is another work by Pieter de Bailliu regarding the monument of St Peter, is of comparable dimension to the other two and commemorates an

32. H. A. Drake, *A Century of Miracles: Christians, Pagans, Jews and the Supernatural, 312–410*, Oxford, 2017, pp. 157–59.

33. Hollstein, 1949, op. cit., p. 73, no. 79, not illustrated; Nolan, op. cit., p. 51, note 110. Impression in Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Cicognara XII.541, plate 108. The only publications to reproduce all three de Bailliu prints is Busiri Vici, and Bodart; A. Busiri Vici, *Peter, Hendrik e Giacomo Van Lint: Tre pittori di Anversa del '600 e '700 lavorano a Roma*, Rome, 1987, pp. 3–5, figs. 3–5; Bodart, op. cit., II, figs. 52–54 on plates XXXV–XXXVI. Nolan mentions all three, but only reproduces the *Pilgrims at the Tomb of St Peter*. Nolan, op. cit., pp. 82–84, 258 fig. 24.

34. *Corpus B. Petri aromatibus conditum et in hac Vaticani parte propè locum ubi crucifixus est, magnificentissimè / regio more sepelitur. Hinc a Fidelibus Orientis ablatum, et ad Catacumbas delatum, a Romanis inventum, / in hunc locum reponitur. Denuo ad Catacumbas translatum, a Cornelio noctu suae sedi restituitur. Ex actis Lini ap. Greg. / et lib de Rom.*

³⁴ Pontif. / Superiorum permissu.

35. J. M. C. Toynbee, 'The Shrine of St. Peter and Its Setting', *The Journal of Roman Studies*, XLIII, 1953, p. 14.

36. Davis, op. cit., p. 9.

37. The apocryphal Acts of Linus, attributed to Pope Linus, probably date to the mid-fourth century. C. Thomas, *The Acts of Peter, Gospel Literature, and the Ancient Novel: Rewriting the Past*, Oxford, 2003, pp. 40–41. D. Eastman, *The Ancient Martyrdom Accounts of Peter and Paul*, Atlanta, 2015, pp. 27–65. Bishop Gregory of Tours (c. 530–approximately 594) wrote about Peter's martyrdom and burial in the years 580s–90s: 'in the church that for a long time has been called the Vatican. ... The tomb is located beneath the altar and is quite inaccessible', in *De gloria martyrum*, 1.27, translated by R. van Dam, *Gregory of Tours: Glory of the Martyrs*, Liverpool, 1988, pp. 5, 45–46.



Cornelius B. Petri a Romanis creatus, et in hac Vaticani parte proprii locum ubi crucifixus est, magnificentissime regio more sequebatur. Hinc a Fidelibus Orientis ablatum, et ad Catacumbas delatum, a Romanis inventum, in hunc locum reponitur. Denuo ad Catacumbas translatum, a Cornelio rogatu sua sedi restituitur. Ex actis Rom. Pont. c. 1636.

14. Pieter de Bailliu after Pietro Paolo Drei, *Pope Cornelius Translating the Body of St Peter*, c. 1636, etching, 317 x 232 mm (Vatican, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana).



15. Carlo Maderno, *Confessio*, 1615–17, photographed 2017 (Image Morten Kirk).

event of 29 June, convincingly implies an association with de Bailliu's documentation of Drei's annual flower mosaics. Like the other two, *Pope Cornelius Translating the Body of St Peter* bears the publisher's mark of Peter van Lint (1609–90), another Antwerp visitor based in Rome between 1633 and 1640.³⁸ The print must predate de Bailliu's departure from Rome in 1637. Additionally, even without a clear reference to a flower mosaic, the language of the print's inscription, which comments on the aromatic quality of the saint's body, '*Corpus B. Petri aromatibus conditum*', can be understood as a subtle gesture to the sweet-smelling petals that composed the incorrupt saint's body on the basilica's floor.

This third print takes the viewer inside the subterranean tomb, where a small group of men carefully carry the body of Peter. Pope Cornelius assumes most of the physical burden in his capacity

as bishop of Rome (note the bishop's mitre), thereby aligning himself on the central axis with his illustrious predecessor. The regularized ionic pilasters, framed revetment slabs and empty niches of the catacomb walls echo Maderno's *confessio*, completed in 1617 (fig. 15). Embedded in the modern church crossing, and visible obliquely from behind the balustrade at the heart of the basilica, the nearby structure would have resonated with viewers visualizing the catacomb underfoot through Drei's composition, like Michelangelo's dome in the 1635 etching.³⁹

It is here proposed that *Pope Cornelius Translating the Body of St Peter* records a flower mosaic of 1636 by Drei in St Peter's Basilica. By inserting the print into the timeline of Drei's flower mosaics, the tradition assumes a serial effect: each year Drei's ephemera expanded upon the decorative program of the previous iteration.⁴⁰ All three designs strategically

38. The publisher's overlapping initials *P. V. L.* appear in the bottom left corner. For the artist's chronology, see F. W. H. Hollstein, 'Peter van Lint', *Dutch and Flemish Etchings*, XI, Amsterdam, 1955, p. 84. See also 'Pierre van Lint' in Bodart, *op. cit.*, II, p. 48.

39. Ostrow, *op. cit.*, pp. 24–25.

40. Only Bodart publishes all three images together in the correct order by their subject matter, but again without acknowledgment of Pietro Paolo Drei or flower mosaic. Bodart, *op. cit.*, I, pp. 133–34, and II, figs. 52–54 on plates XXXV–XXXVI.

utilize architecture to orient the narrative moment and inform the viewer of their respective proximity to St Peter's tomb. As an artist with a professional career within the Basilica's Fabbrica, Drei would have been keenly aware of architecture's performative capacity to shape the experience of his contemporaries. By visually paraphrasing Michelangelo's dome, Maderno's *confessio* and the construction site of the old basilica, Drei brought the contemporary building into the narrative history of the Vatican. Without de Bailliu's documentation of Drei's compositions, this visual parity would be lost to history.

De Bailliu's prints are a remarkable reminder of the ephemeral accoutrements once coating early

modern sacred spaces. All three etchings – the *Pilgrims at the Tomb of St Peter*, *Pope Cornelius Translating the Body of St Peter* and *Emperor Constantine before the Tomb of St Peter* – demonstrate the complexity and *trompe l'oeil* effect inherent to Drei's flower mosaics of the early seventeenth century. By finally connecting de Bailliu with Drei, we can accurately visualize the appearance of flower mosaics in the Vatican complex, and begin to unveil the rich ephemeral displays once adorning New St Peter's. The discovery of Drei's compositions through de Bailliu will, one hopes, spur ever greater discoveries of religious ephemera and the early modern traditions now lost but for their surviving representations in print.

Ludovico Mirri's *Vestigia* and Publishing in Eighteenth-Century Rome

Francesca Guglielmini

Eight unpublished hand-coloured etchings of grotesque wall decorations taken from antique ruins in Rome and its vicinity attest to the eighteenth-century vogue for recording monuments of Roman antiquity (figs. 16–19). Part of the collection of the British Museum, they bear manuscript notes on their versos which locate the depicted decorations as from Hadrian's Villa, the Baths of Livia, a tomb in Pozzuoli and Santa Maria di Capua Vetere near Naples, respectively. The etchings are here presented as the extension of an ambitious project, the *Vestigia delle Terme di Tito e Loro Interne Pitture* (The remains of the Baths of Titus and their paintings), spearheaded by the erudite antiquarian, art dealer and print publisher Ludovico Mirri (1738–86).¹ A detailed account of this major antiquarian project, which initially consisted of illustrations of the palace of Nero, known as the Domus Aurea, and also the site of the Baths of Titus, which

rose above the ruins of the Domus Aurea, reveals much about the publishing industry of Rome during the second half of the eighteenth century. Mirri's innovative approach, his strategies of production and sale, and the financial difficulties he encountered are discussed as responses to new demands presented by the print market in those decades.

Being relatively cheap and easily transportable, prints were among the most sought-after souvenirs for the eighteenth-century visitor on the Grand Tour, allowing the Roman publishing industry to reach very high volumes of production. This fast growing antiquarian market, however, met unexpected competition when Herculaneum and Pompeii were unearthed in 1738 and 1748 respectively and, above all, when their excavation and study was systematized in the second half of the century. Both archaeological sites were rich in wall decorations that survived in

1. For the *Vestigia delle Terme di Tito e Loro Interne Pitture* see *Roma e l'antico: realtà e visione nel '700*, edited by C. Brook and V. Curzi, in particular, L. Tedeschi, 'Rappresentare l'antico: le Vestigia delle Terme di Tito e loro interne pitture', Milan, 2010, pp.

39–44. P. Coen, 'L'attività di Ludovico Mirri nell'editoria Antiquaria', in *Percorsi di ricerca 2 – Il Mercato delle stampe a Roma (XVI–XIX secolo)*, edited by G. Saporì, San Casciano, 2008, pp. 173–92.