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The Pentecostal Meaning of Borromini's Sant'Ivo alla Sapienza

Louise Rice

The spiral of Sant'Ivo alla Sapienza is among the most curious and unconventional of Borromini's creations (fig. 1). Scholars have long puzzled over its meaning but have yet to reach consensus, and none of the numerous interpretations that have so far been advanced can alone account for all of its many features.¹ This suggests that the spiral is a multi-layered, multivalent form embodying a range of interrelated meanings. The question remains, what was the initial idea, the iconographic kernel, planted presumably by Borromini's advisers, that then grew and flowered in the architect's imagination into this extraordinary invention? The scholar who has perhaps come closest to answering this question is Hans Ost, whose interpretation of the spiral published over thirty years ago remains one of the most compelling.² Ost's article provides the point of departure for the investigation that follows and I begin therefore with a brief summary of his main points.

From an inscription on one of his preparatory drawings we know that Borromini conceived of the church as a house of Wisdom, a fitting image given its affiliation with the university of Rome, called the Sapienza.³ Wisdom is transmitted from heaven to earth through the agency of the holy spirit;⁴ and the Biblical event that exemplifies the transmission of wisdom is Pentecost, when the holy spirit descended on the apostles in tongues of flame ("dispertitae linguae tamquam ignis"),⁵ empowering them to preach the Gospel in all the languages of the earth. Borromini alludes to Pentecost in the interior of the church, where, in the lantern, the

dove of the holy spirit was surrounded not only by the usual splendor of rays but also by tongues of flame, which refer, explicitly and unequivocally, to the fire that rained down on the apostles at Pentecost. (The dove is no longer in place, but the tongues of flame are still plainly visible on the vault of the lantern, as they are in several early printed views [fig. 2].) Documents published since Ost's article appeared confirm his reading of this particular motif and make plain the architect's intention. A payment for work done in 1653 reads: "Per haver fatto la palomba scolpita per il spirito santo in mezzo detta volta [...] con suoi raggi che fanno splendore attorno, e con lingue di fuoco in guisa della venuta dello spirito santo che porti la vera Sapienza".⁶ Ost goes on to suggest that the Pentecostal theme articulated in the interior of the lantern is also expressed on the exterior, where the spiral is an overt reference to the tower of Babel. Ost is not the first, of course, to note the similarity of Borromini's lantern to the tower of Babel, traditionally represented in western art as a spiral structure, as, for example, in the frontispiece to Athanasius Kircher's *Turris Babel*, published in 1679 (fig. 3). But he is the first to propose a plausible reason why this seemingly negative architectural prototype might be appropriate as a model for a Christian church in honor of Wisdom. The story of Babel and the story of Pentecost are theologically paired as type and anti-type in liturgy and iconography from the Early Christian period on.⁷ The rationale for this pairing is the shared emphasis in both stories on the theme of language. The construction of the tower of Babel results in the

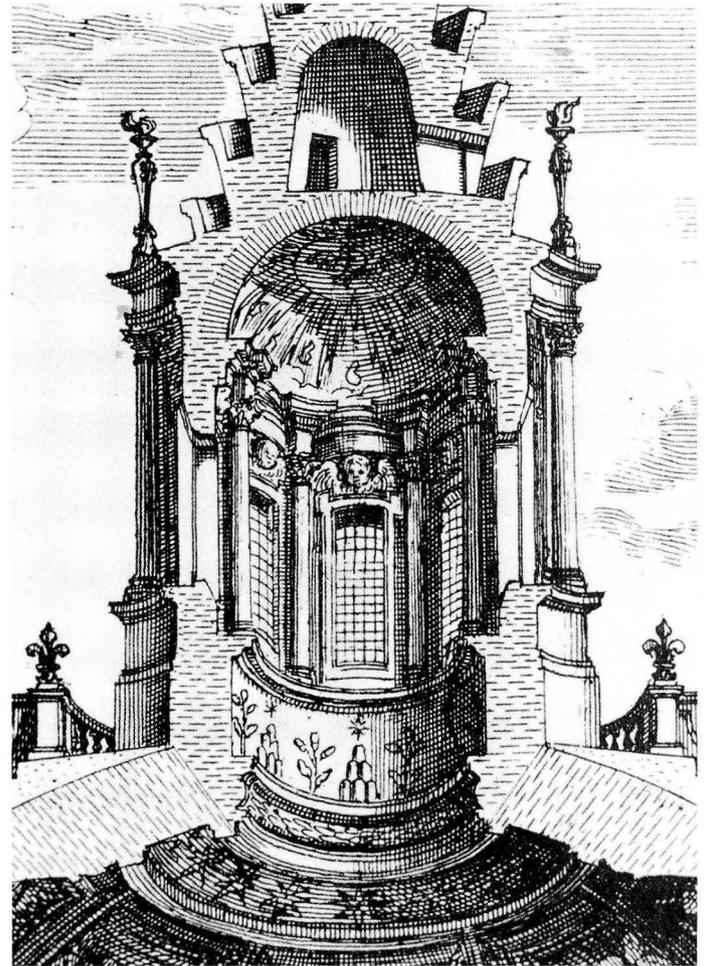
division of mankind through God's imposition of different and mutually incomprehensible languages; Pentecost results in the unification of mankind through the mystical gift of multiple languages pronouncing a universal Christian truth. On the basis of this well-established typological link, then, Ost interprets Borromini's spiral, not as a tower of Babel, but rather as an anti-Babel tower, in other words, a tower of the Church in which the architect has transformed a negative symbol into a positive one.⁸ Ost concludes by pointing to a drawing by the Swedish architect Erick Dahlberg, made in 1656, barely three years after the completion of the spire, in which Borromini's church is labeled "Sapientia Babilonia", apparent confirmation that, at that time at least, the Babel reference was not lost on its audience (fig. 4).

Ost's argument is, on the whole, persuasive, but it has a fundamental flaw. In developing his interpretation of the spiral of Sant'Ivo as a tower of anti-Babel, he relies almost exclusively on evidence that is neither Roman nor Seicento, and that is therefore of questionable relevance. To be credible, an interpretation must situate Borromini's imagery in the intellectual world of Baroque Rome, and more particularly, in the academic culture of the Sapienza itself. The tongues of fire in the interior of the lantern signal that Pentecost is central to the meaning of the church. It is therefore to Pentecostal texts and prints produced in Rome in the years immediately preceding and during the construction of Borromini's church that we should turn, to discover the rhetorical basis of its symbolism.

1. *Sant'Ivo alla Sapienza, lantern and spiral.*



2. *D. Barrière, Sant'Ivo alla Sapienza, section, detail of the lantern, in Opera del Caval. Francesco Boromino, Rome 1720.*



Pentecost in Seicento Rome

Annually on Pentecost Sunday, an aristocratic student from the Jesuit-run Seminario Romano delivered a sacred oration in the presence of the pope, cardinals, and other leading dignitaries (including, significantly, members of the college of consistorial advocates which governed the Sapienza).⁹ These sermons were published, and they and their elaborately engraved frontispieces furnish a goldmine of seventeenth-century Roman Pentecostal imagery.¹⁰ Typically, the texts allude only in passing to the Bib-

lical narrative of Pentecost, and instead describe the descent of the holy spirit in abstract, allegorical terms, using language rich in poetic metaphor. Variety and ornament are the goals of this kind of rhetoric, and no two Pentecost orations are ever alike. Tongues of flame, the symbols of Pentecost, recur in all or most of the sermons, but in many different guises. In the title page to the Pentecost oration of 1628, for example, the tongues of flame are playfully depicted as St. Elmo's fire flickering around the mast of the ship of the Church

(fig. 5). The frontispiece to the sermon of 1634, designed and engraved by Claude Mellan, shows flaming tongues softly falling around the figure of New Testament Amor Dei, while Old Testament Timor Dei is accompanied by thunderbolts (fig. 6). And in the frontispiece to the 1652 sermon, designed by Giacinto Brandi and engraved by Joseph Greuter, a gentle rain of tongues of fire falls left and right, while the light emanating from the dove of the holy spirit is concentrated by lenses into lethal beams that explode both the heathen's

idol and the heretic's book (fig. 7).

These annual Pentecost orations hold the key to unlocking the imagery of Borromini's spire. Every feature of the design is prefigured in them. For the crown of triple flames atop the spiral, for example, we need only turn to the sermon delivered in 1630, entitled *Ignea corona*, or *The Fiery Crown*. On the title page, designed by Jacques Stella and engraved by Charles Audran, the tongues of fire come together to form a crown of tripartite flames, fanned by a divine wind (fig. 8). The text develops the image: "This crown of fire [...] ravishes our eyes, that we may contemplate it, and our souls, that we may venerate it; in these crown-like heavenly flames let us recognize the extraordinary victories that fire has customarily brought, whether in the field of Nature or in the theater of Art".¹¹

Other orations contain equally evocative passages. But for our purposes, the oration of greatest interest, because it deals explicitly with architectural imagery, is the one recited in the papal chapel of the Quirinal Palace on Pentecost Sunday, 1637, that is, five years after Borromini was appointed architect of the Sapienza and five years before he began the construction of the church. The student orator was Giovanni Francesco Aldobrandini. As was nearly always the case with student presentations of this kind, however, the text was in fact written pseudonymously by a Jesuit professor: the real author was Padre Alessandro Gottifredi, who taught philosophy and theology at the Collegio Romano and was at that time rector of the Seminario Romano.¹² The sermon is entitled *Turrus linguis concordibus fabricata*, or *The*

Tower built with Concordant Tongues, and opens with an extended comparison between the tower of Babel and the tower of the Church, the one which resulted in the division of mankind through the introduction of languages, the other which resulted in the union of mankind through the harmony of tongues speaking a single Christian truth.¹³ Divine Love sends tongues of flame to inspire the builders, that they may erect the tower of the Church in the image of a flame, which rises to the sky "like a shining pyramid, or like a blazing tower".¹⁴ The orator then elaborates, painting a picture in words of the tower of the Church, piling image on top of image, conceit on top of conceit. The tower of the Church is not only the New Testament answer to Babel, it is "the house that Wisdom built for herself", and where she sets her table; the orator here cites precisely the same passage from the book of Proverbs that Borromini planned to inscribe over the door and over the altar of the church.¹⁵ It is also "a new and greater lighthouse, from which ardent tongues, like vocal, eloquent torches, shine out, so that men navigating the billowing sea of life can guide themselves through the darkness by means of this double illumination of fire and voice towards the port of Heaven".¹⁶ And it is also a crown: for if the ancients falsely worshiped Magna Mater, a goddess crowned with towers, Ecclesia, the true mother of all things divine, being entirely a tower, is also by implication entirely a crown, and thus the more august in her majesty.¹⁷

These passages read like a compendium of modern interpretations of Borromini's spiral, for each of the images – the tower of Babel, the house of

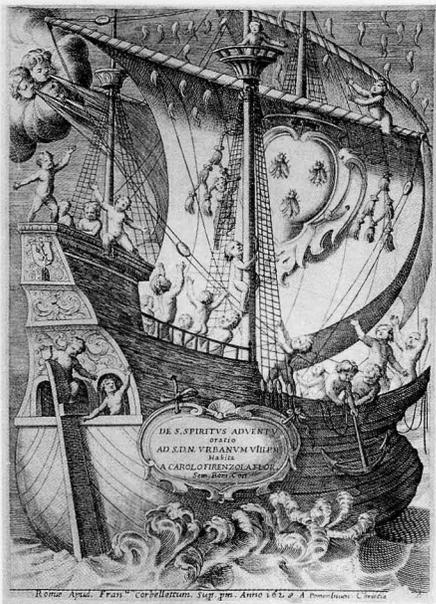
3. J. van Munnickbuysen after G. de Lairese, *Frontispiece to A. Kircher, Turrus Babel*, Amsterdam 1679.

4. E.J. Dahlberg, *Sant'Ivo alla Sapienza*, 1656. Stockholm, Royal Library.



5. C. Sas after A. Pomarancio, Title page to C. Firenzuola [G.L. Confalonieri, S.J.], *De S. Spiritus adventu oratio*, Rome 1628.

6. C. Mellan, Frontispiece to E. Berzetti di Buronzo [A. Gallucci, S.J.], *De sacra Pentecoste oratio*, Rome 1634.



Wisdom, the lighthouse, the crown – has at one time or another been proposed as a source for Borromini’s invention.¹⁸ But perhaps even more significant than the familiarity of the individual images is the fact of finding them combined together in a single text. The orator’s method of superimposing one metaphor on another exactly parallels Borromini’s. The architect takes the basic structural figure of the Babel spiral and clothes it in layers of ornament, each with its own symbolic reference. He designs like an orator, in other words, building the tower of the Church out of an amalgam of figurative conceits, expressed not in words but in architecture.

If the text of the 1637 Pentecost oration suggests surprising affinities with Borromini’s architecture, so too does its frontispiece (fig. 9). Designed by Gregorio de’ Grassi and engraved by Michel Natalis, the print is described in the dedication to the orator’s kinsman Cardinal Ippolito Aldobrandini: “You have seen two towers pictured in the frontispiece to this sermon, Most Eminent Prince, one destroyed by the confusion of languages, the other raised heavenward by the blessed concord of tongues”.¹⁹

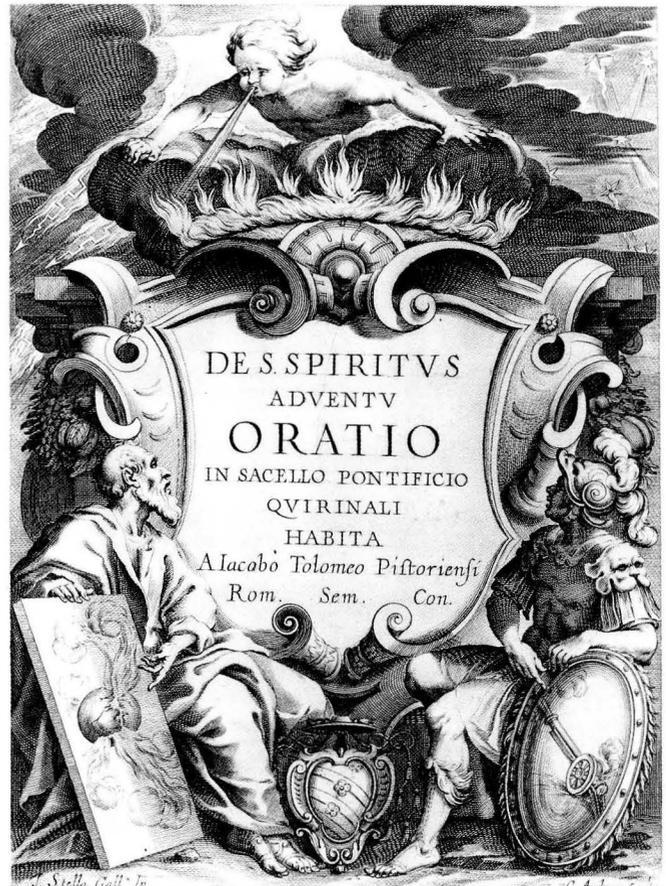
In the foreground, under the loving gaze of Clemency (whose presence is an allusion to the Aldobrandini pope, Clement VIII), the workers, with tongues of flame hovering above their heads, embellish the outer bulwarks of the tower of the Church, which like David’s tower is encircled with bastions and hung about with the armor and shields of great men.²⁰ In the background, on the right, is the tower of Babel, it too under construction but about to be cast down by the angel of God descending with

a thunderbolt (fig. 10). Although the building is sketchily rendered and cut in half by the edge of the page, its similarity to the church of the Sapienza is inescapable. A centralized edifice, its vault partially enclosed within a Lombard drum, it is topped by a disproportionately large lantern with a large central window, and crowned with a spire presumably meant to be a spiral, although its exact form is hard to make out. Of course it is not Sant’Ivo; but it is more like Sant’Ivo, in elevation and profile, than any earlier building, real or imagined, that comes to mind. And the resemblance is even more striking when we consider an extraordinary sheet in the collection of the Gabinetto Nazionale dei Disegni e delle Stampe in Rome, which is made up of the frontispiece and a counterproof of the frontispiece, the two carefully aligned and glued together to form a single, symmetrical image (fig. 11).²¹ Why anyone would have gone to the trouble of producing such a sheet is hard to imagine, unless it was for the purpose of revealing what the building in the background would look like, if it were whole. The sheet presumably dates from 1637, the year the plate was cut, or soon after; and if nothing else it shows us how Romans visualized the tower of Babel at the time Borromini began work on his church. In the past, only the spiral of Sant’Ivo has been considered in relation to the tower of Babel. Now we can see that the building is Babel-like from top to bottom, and that the representation of Babel it most closely resembles is the one most recently and most widely circulated in Rome at the time of its construction (fig. 12-13). It may seem improbable that a small detail in an artistically modest en-

7. J. Greuter after G. Brandi, *Frontispiece to G. Pelli, Congeminatio, seu percussus flammaram in adventu S. Spiritus emicantium oratio*, Rome 1652.



8. C. Audran after J. Stella, *Title page to G. Tolomei [A. Gallucci, S.J.], Ignea corona, sive de S. Spiritu adventu oratio*, Rome 1630.



graving can have influenced one of Borromini's most original and splendid inventions. And yet, when we consider the frontispiece in connection with the oration it accompanies, with its evocative description of the mystical tower of the Church, and its references to Wisdom, Babel, the lighthouse, the crown, and the tongues of flame, the similarities seem too numerous to be coincidental. Either the sermon directly informed the program of Borromini's spire, or it comes closer to it in content and spirit than any text of its time. At the very least, they are products of the same academic culture

and have in common not only their imagery, but a rhetorical mode of expression – learned, allusive, and conceited – rooted in the classrooms of the colleges and schools of baroque Rome.

Pentecost at the Sapienza

It is not difficult to imagine how Borromini might have become acquainted with the 1637 and other Pentecost orations. As already noted, members of the college of consistorial advocates, the body that administered the Sapienza, regularly attended the papal mass on Pentecost, as they did other occasions of the kind. In partic-

ular, Carlo Cartari, dean of the college from 1647, almost never missed the event unless out of town or otherwise unavoidably engaged.²² In his diary, which he began in 1642, he gives yearly descriptions of the Pentecost mass, usually including at least a passing reference to the sermon and always listing the consistorial advocates present.²³ Cartari was an avid collector of academic broadsides, pamphlets, and other ephemera; nothing could be more likely than that he gathered together and saved the published sermons that he and his colleagues attended. Cartari was Borromini's closest contact and con-

sultant at the Sapienza. It was he who oversaw the construction work, kept track of the financing, and, from 1647, chaired the meetings at which the architect's plans were discussed. He was there when Borromini laid the foundations of the church in 1643 and of the library in 1659, and he saw both buildings through to completion. Moreover, Cartari seems to have had a fondness, not at all unusual for his time, for what might be called representational architecture, that is, architecture permeated with symbolic reference. Borromini may not have had the Barberini bee in mind when he designed the ground plan of Sant'Ivo, but it occurred to him shortly afterwards and Cartari was the first to embrace the idea; on the very day the foundations were begun, he wrote in his diary: "Delineamentum est in modum Apis".²⁴ One could speculate that it was Cartari, too, who in 1664-1665 suggested to Borromini the rebus-like relief over the south portal of the Sapienza. There, a winged laurel wreath flanked by the symbols of Justice and Prudence signifies, as Joseph Connors has pointed out, the *laurea* in jurisprudence awaiting those who pass within.²⁵ The conceit is reminiscent of Cartari's own inaugural address, delivered in 1642 upon his appointment to the college of consistorial advocates, in which he took as his theme "the ever-green laurel as a symbol of Jurisprudence".²⁶

Given what we know about him, it would not be surprising if Cartari were the one who brought the Pentecost orations to Borromini's attention. But there is no need to posit such a specific scenario. The annual Pentecost orations are bound to have been read with lively interest by many

at the Sapienza. They were student productions, after all. The students who delivered them were from the Seminario Romano and not from the Sapienza, it is true, but there were close ties between these two schools. Students from the Seminario often took courses at the Sapienza, and many of them enrolled there upon leaving the Seminario. One need only consider that it was a Seminarian who delivered the annual sermon on the feast of St. Ives, the patron saint of lawyers and, eventually, the titular saint of Borromini's church, to understand how interconnected the two institutions were.²⁷

Moreover, just as at the Seminario, so too at the Sapienza, every year a speaker was chosen to compose and recite a sacred oration on Pentecost.²⁸ Naturally, the university speakers were keenly interested in the orations coming out of the Seminario. Indeed, on at least one occasion, the person selected to give the Pentecost oration at the Sapienza was himself a former student at the Seminario, who had delivered the sermon on Pentecost in the papal chapel some six years earlier.²⁹ The Sapienza orations were in-house affairs and the texts were not usually published, with the result that most of them have not come down to us; but a small selection of about a dozen of them were collected and published in a volume issued in 1673 by Carlo Cartari's son Antonio Stefano.³⁰ One of these is the oration delivered at the Sapienza on the Thursday before Pentecost, 1643, by Giovanni Lucido Palombara.

The orator takes as his familiar theme the tongues of flame that descended on the apostles and endowed them with the ability to speak in languages.

Like Aldobrandini six years earlier, Palombara then conjures up the image of the tower of Babel: "And if one sole language, divided into many by discord, destroyed in the Babylonian Tower the temerarious enterprise, vain presumption, and insane pride of the giants, today's languages, for all that there are thousands and thousands of them, [...] will raise to the stars the incomparable Tower of the Holy Church. [...] In the construction of the Babylonian Tower, the multiplicity of tongues confused the design; but here the concordant variety perfects the architecture".³¹

The last phrase is particularly suggestive. It is almost as though the orator knew exactly what Borromini was planning to build, and was pointing, even as he spoke these words, towards the construction site at the far end of the courtyard. In the audience was Carlo Cartari,³² and one may well wonder whether Borromini was there, too. Four days later, on June 1, 1643, the architect began work on the walls of his church.³³

Palombara's oration is in places so close to Aldobrandini's that there can be little doubt that he had the 1637 printed text in front of him as he wrote. Where Aldobrandini opens with: "Divinus Architectus, qui Mundum nihilo pro materia, lingua & voces pro operarijs utens fabricavit..." (p. 7), Palombara echoes: "Cava il Divino Architetto dal mero, e semplicissimo nulla questa sì vaga mole del Mondo, della quale sicome materia n'è la privatione, e forma la bellezza, così l'operante, & il fabro è la lingua: opera questa con le voce, e con le parole..." (p. 229). And where Aldobrandini states: "Neque sane in turris fabrica discordare potuerunt linguae, quae non modo corda plurima fecere

9. *M. Natalis* after G. de' Grassi, Frontispiece to G.F. Aldobrandini [A. Gottifredi, S.J.], *Turris linguis concordibus fabricata, sive de S. Spiritus adventu oratio*, Rome 1637.



10. Detail of fig. 9.



concordia, sed ex omnium cordibus cor unum, & animam unam quodammodo fabricarunt” (p. 8), Palombara responds with: “...queste [lingue] d’oggi, tutto che mille, e mille, se trovaran quel *cor unum & anima una*, per la unione degl’amori concordemente moltiplicate, in alzaranno alle stelle l’incontrastabil Torre di Chiesa Santa” (p. 230).

It is significant that Palombara was taking Aldobrandini’s oration as his model in precisely the year that Borromini was beginning the construction of his church. It proves that the

ideas and images embodied in Aldobrandini’s text were in the air, and under close scrutiny at the Sapienza itself, at a crucial moment in the creative genesis of Sant’Ivo.

The polyglot culture of Roman academe

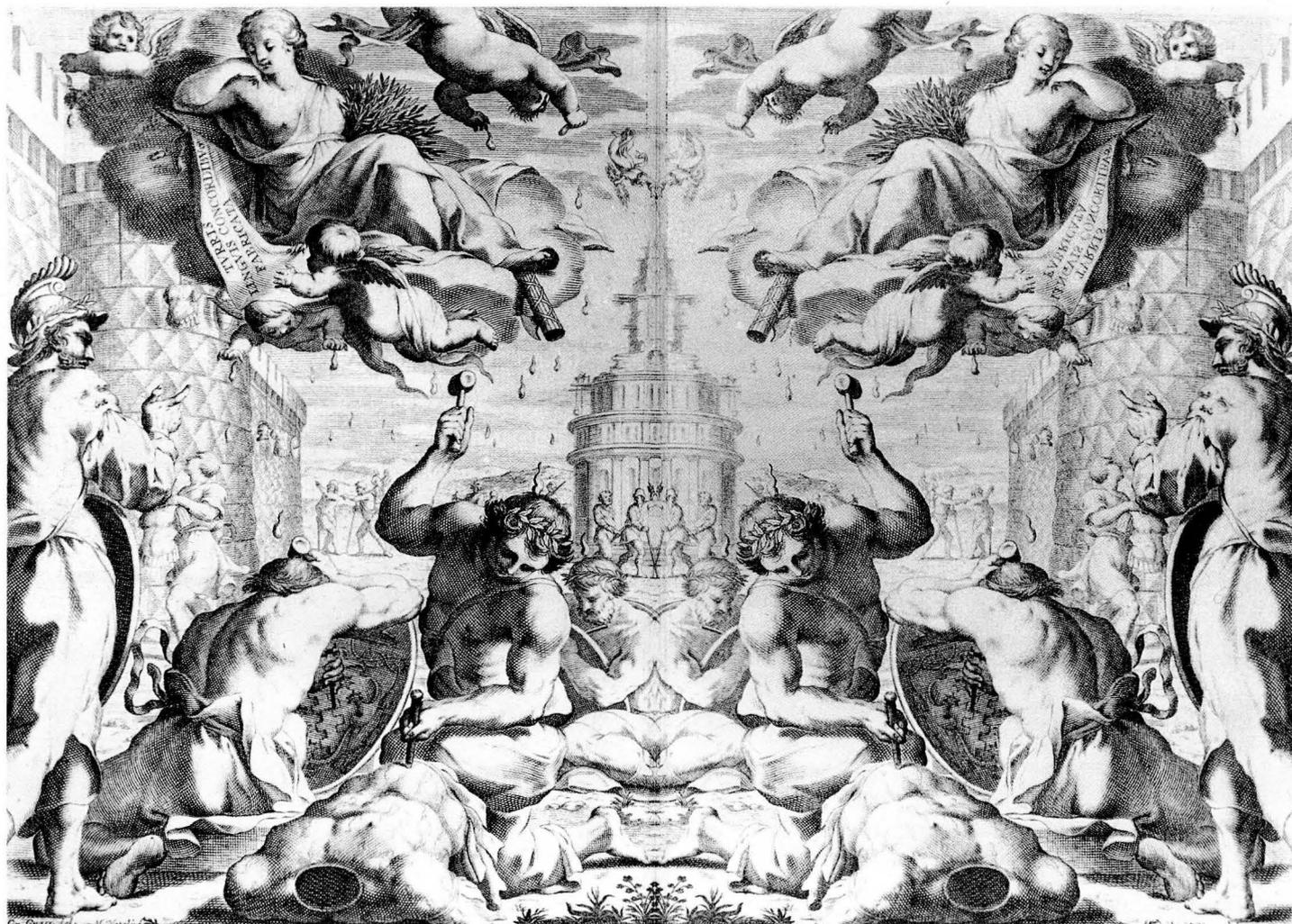
Language, the link between Babel and Pentecost, was an essential part not only of the curriculum but of the cultural identity of Roman educational institutions such as the Collegio Romano, the Seminario Romano, and the Sapienza. There were many rea-

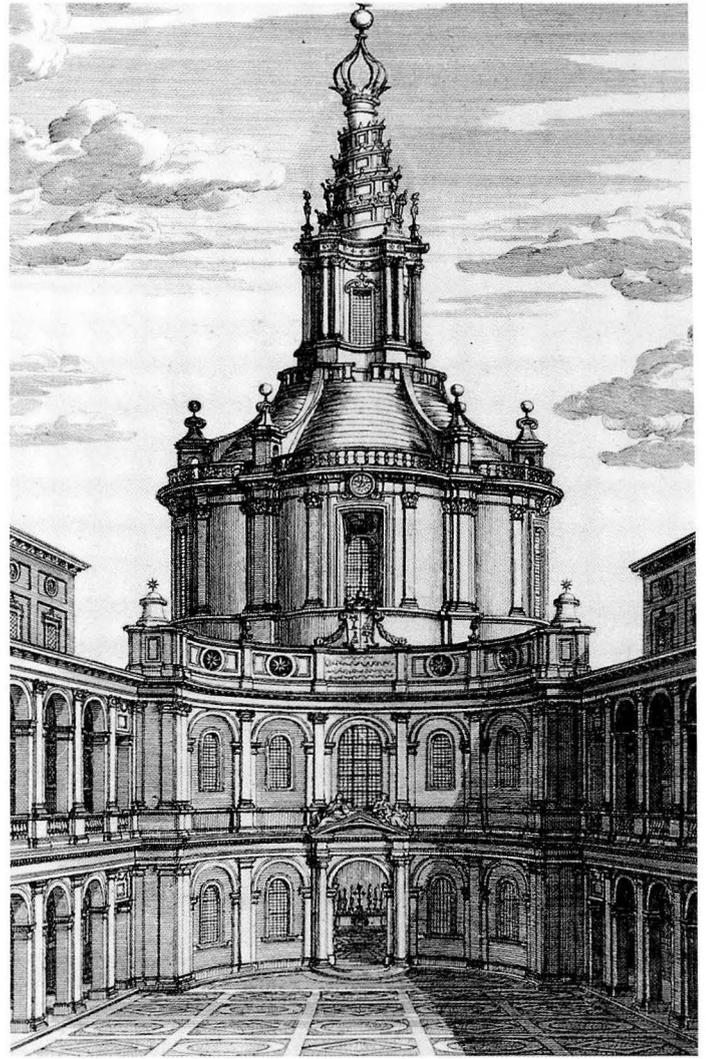
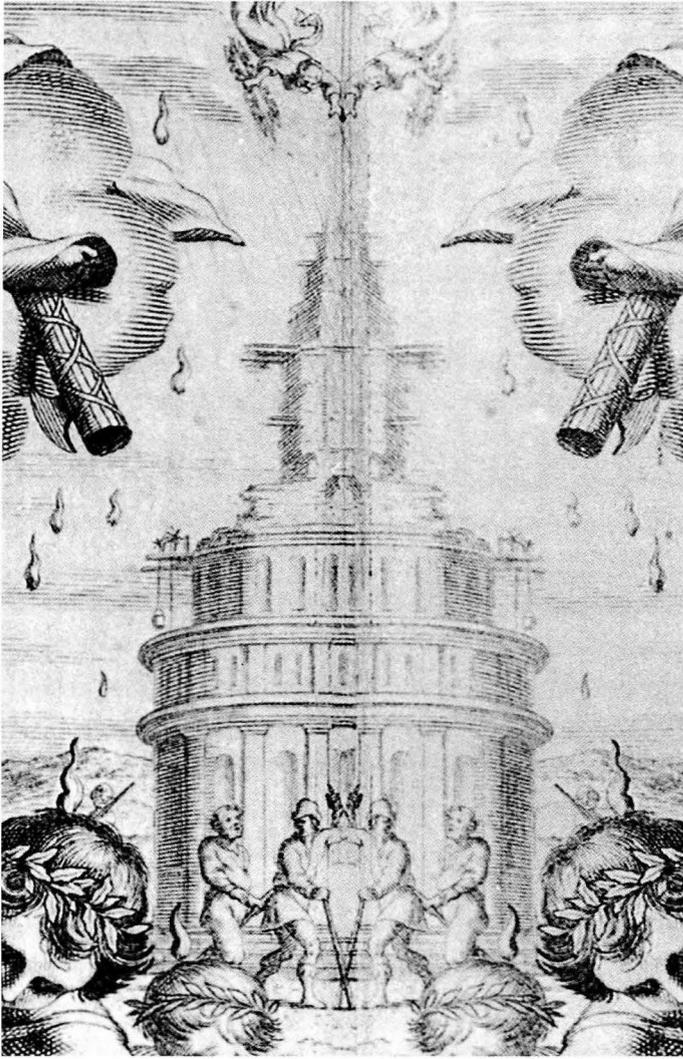
sons for this. As Palombara explains in his 1643 oration, “just as the Holy Church must be the Mother of all nations, so too she must speak in all of their tongues”.³⁴ Post-Tridentine Rome was the capital of a global Church, and modern languages were a vital asset both to those involved in governing and administering the Church from its center and to those who undertook missionary work abroad. The student body was in any case a remarkably international and multilingual one, with young men from all over the Catholic world com-

11. M. Natalis after G. de' Grassi,
Frontispiece to G.F. Aldobrandini
[A. Gottifredi, S.J.], *Turrus linguis
concordibus fabricata, sive de S. Spiritus
adventu oratio*, Rome 1637, with
counterproof. Rome, Gabinetto Nazionale
dei Disegni e delle Stampe.

12. Detail of fig. 11.

13. D. Barrière, *Sant'Ivo alla Sapienza*,
detail, in *Opera del Caval. Francesco
Boromino*, Rome 1720.





ing to Rome for their studies. In addition, the traditional curricular emphasis on philological and Biblical studies required the teaching of classical and ancient Near Eastern languages. One could also point to the scientific trend to systematize and to classify that affected the study of languages and linguistics, as it did other branches of knowledge, around that time. Scholars like Athanasius Kircher at the Collegio Romano sought to catalogue and correlate all the languages of the world. Kircher's fascination with the subject found expression in his famous museum, which included "Chinese scrolls, Egyptian hieroglyphs, Etruscan tablets, and fragments of other ancient and modern scripts", along with his *arca glottotactica*, or "linguistic chest", a device designed, it seems, to establish correspondences

between languages.³⁵ His various linguistic projects culminated in his last book, *Turris Babel*, in which he traces the history of human speech from the original Adamic language through the 275 different languages that emerged after Babel and down to their modern derivatives (fig. 3).³⁶ How did this preoccupation with language manifest itself publicly? At the Collegio Romano, visiting dignitaries were greeted with virtuoso displays of linguistic ability, with students reciting epigrams and panegyrics in as many as thirty or even forty different languages.³⁷ Such exhibitions were customary at the Sapienza, too, not least at Pentecost. In 1643, for example, after Palombara had delivered his oration: "In addition, a selection of compositions in praise of the Holy Spirit were recited in vari-

ous languages, including Hebrew, Arabic, Syriac, Chaldean, *Magarica*, *Isrlonitica*, Egyptian, Ruthenian, Slavic, Polish, Lithuanian, Armenian, Turkish, Greek, French, Spanish, Portuguese, and Oscan".³⁸ On occasions like these, the Sapienza became a Babel of languages, but a Babel converted, its halls resounding with a Christian message. Sant'Ivo was built in part to house academic assemblies and ceremonies of this kind, and when faculty and students convened beneath its spiral tower to praise God in a multitude of languages, the architecture must have resonated with particular symbolic force and theatricality.

Conclusion

Pentecost is, of course, as much about eloquence as is it about lan-

guage *per se*. Touched by the holy spirit, the apostles received the ability not only to speak, but to speak well: to debate, to persuade, to inspire, and to convert. The tongues of fire brought them understanding and authority, and in so doing transformed them from disciples to priests, from followers to leaders. The Pentecost orations abound with references to eloquence and erudition, and thereby illustrate the special relevance that the feast had for academic institutions such as the Sapienza, devoted to educating young men, training them in rhetoric, and preparing them to take on leadership roles in the world.³⁹ It is this, above all, that makes Pentecost so fitting a theme for a university church.

No one possessed the qualifications of eloquence and erudition to a greater degree than the titular saint of Borromini's church, the Breton lawyer Ives. St. Ives died on May 19, 1303, one week before Pentecost.⁴⁰ Pentecost is, however, a movable feast, and so occasionally it coincides with the saint's feast day. In the seventeenth century, Pentecost fell on May 19 four times, in 1619, 1630, 1641, and 1652, the year in which the spiral was built.⁴¹ If Borromini's advisers already had in mind at that point to dedicate the church in honor of St. Ives, then the saint's periodic association with Pentecost might well be an additional factor in the decision to incorporate Pentecostal imagery into the design. We need to be cautious in how we interpret this circumstance, however, since it is unclear when exactly St. Ives became officially connected with the church. The dedication was certainly determined by 1660, when Pietro da Cortona was commissioned to paint the

altarpiece representing the charitable lawyer in action.⁴² But no source before 1660 unequivocally links St. Ives with the church of the Sapienza.⁴³ Given the Sapienza's status as a law school and the fact that St. Ives is the patron saint of lawyers, it is certainly possible that Borromini's advisers planned on the dedication from the start. But it is also possible that the saint came to be connected with the church as an afterthought and that his occasional association with Pentecost is nothing more than a happy coincidence.

Before and even after 1660, Sant'Ivo was most commonly referred to simply as the church or chapel of the Sapienza. *Sapienza* – Wisdom – is the gift of the holy spirit, and the principal feast associated with the holy spirit is Pentecost. The link between Wisdom and Pentecost is at the root of Borromini's invention. The spiral of Sant'Ivo is a Pentecostal tower, which reaches up to heaven and draws down the holy spirit that it may fill the students of the *Studium Urbis*, as it did the disciples of Christ, with its fiery gift.

In preparing this article, I have benefitted from conversations and exchanges with a number of scholars, among whom I am particularly grateful to Joseph Connors, Giuseppe Dardanella, John O'Malley, and Enrico Parlatto for their perceptive comments and helpful suggestions.

¹ The huge literature on the spiral is helpfully summarized in J. B. Scott, *S. Ivo alla Sapienza and Borromini's Symbolic Language*, in "Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians", XLI, 1982, pp. 302-303; S. Macioce, *La 'chiocciola' di S. Ivo alla Sapienza*, in *Innocenzo X Pamphij. Arte e potere a Roma nell'età barocca*, ed. A. Zuccari and S. Macioce, Rome 1990, pp. 93-94; and J. Connors, *Borromini's S. Ivo alla Sapienza: the spiral*, in "The Burlington Magazine", CXXXVIII, 1996, pp. 681-82. Interpretations of the architecture of Sant'Ivo to appear since Connors's article include R. Stal-

la, *L'opera architettonica di Francesco Borromini nel contesto politico, culturale e storico del Seicento romano*, in *Borromini e l'universo barocco*, ex. cat., ed. R. Bösel, C.L. Frommel, Milan 1999, pp. 23-33; M. Raspe, *Borromini e la cultura antiquaria*, *ibidem*, pp. 83-93.

² H. Ost, *Borrominis römische Universitätskirche S. Ivo alla Sapienza*, in "Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte", XXX, 1967, pp. 101-42. A summary in Italian appeared as *L'iconologia di S. Ivo alla Sapienza* in *Studi sul Borromini. Atti del convegno promosso dall'Accademia Nazionale di San Luca*, Rome 1967, I, pp. 145-48.

³ ASR, Università, vol. 198, no. 122. The inscription in the upper left corner of the drawing reads: "Nel fregio della porta / SAPIENTIA AEDIFICAVIT SIBI DOMVM / nel fregio delle 7 colonne / EXCIDIT COLVMNA SEPTEM / nel Piedistallo della Statua / PROPOSVIT MENASVM SVAM." The citation is from Proverbs, 9:1-2.

⁴ See, for example, C. Ripa, *Nova Iconologia*, Padua 1618, p. 495 (cited in Ost, *op. cit.* at note 2, p. 125): "Sapientiam docet Spiritus Dei." For the Biblical sources linking Wisdom and the holy spirit, see Scott, *op. cit.* at note 1, p. 313 and nn. 127-28.

⁵ Acts, 2:3.

⁶ ASR, Università, vol. 115, fol. 42v, cited in Connors, *op. cit.* at note 1, p. 681. See also Scott, *op. cit.* at note 1, p. 313, n. 126.

⁷ See, in particular, A. Borst, *Der Turmbau von Babel. Geschichte der Meinungen über Ursprung und Vielfalt der Sprachen und Völker*, 4 vols. in 6, Stuttgart 1957-1963, I, pp. 224, 236, 246, 249-50, and *passim*; IV, pp. 1989-91, 2030-31. For a general discussion of Biblical typology, see L. Réau, *Iconographie de l'art chrétien*, 3 vols. in 6, Paris 1955-1959, I, pp. 192-222.

⁸ For the idea of the Church as anti-Babel, see Borst, *op. cit.*, I, pp. 227-28 and *passim*; IV, pp. 2031 and n. 445; Réau, *op. cit.*, II.2, p. 593. Typological iconography was not as common in the seventeenth century as it had been in earlier periods, but in support of Ost's argument one could point to the Lateran nave, where cycles of reliefs representing Old and New Testament scenes are arranged typologically in pairs, each type opposite its anti-type (the Expulsion opposite the Crucifixion, the Flood opposite the Baptism of Christ, and so on). The reliefs were executed between 1648 and 1649, just a few years before Borromini began work on the spiral, and their presence in a building he designed is likely to have sensitized him to a typological way of thinking.

⁹ The tradition of having a student from the Seminario Romano deliver the annual sermon on Pentecost was instituted in 1614. Previously, orators assigned this honor had included

professors from the Sapienza, such as Girolamo Enrico and Pompeo Muti (*Hieronymi Henrici romani Sacrae Theologiae et I. U. Doctoris et in almae Urbis Gymnasio legum publici Professoris oratio habita Romae in die sancto Pentecostes in Basilica Principis Apostolorum dum a Summo Pontifice et amplissimis cardinalibus sacrum solemniter haberetur*, Rome 1601; Pompeo Muti I. U. D. *in diem sanctum Pentecostes oratio ad Sanctissimum D. N. Paulum V Pont. Max. habita in Templo S. Petri*, Rome 1612). For a partial list of Pentecost sermons from the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, see J. O'Malley, *Praise and Blame in Renaissance Rome. Rhetoric, Doctrine, and Reform in the Sacred Orators of the Papal Court, c. 1450-1521*, Durham NC 1979, pp. 245-55; see also F. McGinness, *Right Thinking and Sacred Oratory in Counter-Reformation Rome*, Princeton 1995, pp. 65-68 and *passim*.

¹⁰ A number of bound collections of Pentecost sermons survive, including BAV, Misc. M.1 and St. Barb. V.VII.96; Bibl. Casanatense, Vol. Misc. 1253 and 1377. I am currently preparing an article on the evolution and iconography of the frontispieces to these sermons.

¹¹ G. Tolomei [A. Gallucci, S.J.], *Ignea corona, sive de S. Spiritu adventu oratio*, Rome 1630, p. 6: "Haec ergo Corona Ignea, qua prima illa Christiani generis capita, non tam de coelo tacta, quam redimita sunt, nostros ad se rapit oculos, ut contemplerur; animos, ut veneremur: atque in his coronarijs coeli flammis praecipuas agnoscamus victorias, quas ignis vel in campo Naturae, vel in Artis theatro reportare consuevit".

¹² G. Nappi, S.J., *Annali del Seminario Romano*, II (Archivio della Pontificia Università Gregoriana, vol. 2801), pp. 929-30: [1637] "L'orazione dello Spirito Santo solita recitarsi da convittori nella cappella papale della Pentecoste fu recitata quest'anno in Monte Cavallo alli 31 maggio da Giovanni Francesco Aldobrandino fiorentino, quale la fece stampare, dedicandola al Cardinale Hippolito Aldobrandino Camerlengo con un bel frontespizio che dimostra la torre della Chiesa fabricata con la concordia delle lingue de' santi apostoli. Vi erano scolpite queste parole: *Turris linguis concordibus fabricata*. Si dice esser opera del P. Alessandro Gottifredo Rettore del Seminario". On Gottifredi (1595-1652), see C. Sommervogel, *Bibliothèque de la Compagnie de Jésus*, 12 vols., Brussels-Paris 1890-1932, III, cols. 1623-24 (with no mention, however, of the work in question).

¹³ On the sermon's theological content, see McGinness, *op. cit.* at note 9 above, pp. 108-109.

¹⁴ G.F. Aldobrandini [A. Gottifredi, S.J.], *Turris linguis concordibus fabricata, sive de S. Spiritu*

adventu oratio, Rome 1637, p. 8: "Aptissime quoque linguas praebuit conflatas ex igne, cuius id ingenium est, ut rebus omnibus in unam, id est in suam formam compactis unus ipse instat lucidae pyramidis, vel flammantis Turris in Coelum assurgat, & splendida mole sacram Ecclesiae Turrim aemuletur".

¹⁵ *Ibidem*, pp. 10-11: "Ubi verior, ac maior Sapientia? [...] Hanc arcem ac Domum sibi Sapientia edificavit: hic posuit mensam...". See above at note 3.

¹⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 10: "Ubi Tutela splendidior? hanc Turrim recte novam ac meliorem Pharum dixerimus, ex qua ardentis linguae, hoc est non mutae, sed eloquentes praelucunt faces, ut per obscurum fluctuantis vitae mare navigantes homines & igne, & voce, hoc est duplici luce in coelestem portum dirigant".

¹⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 11: "Ubi denique Maiestas augustior? Quam Deorum Matrem falso veteres crediderunt eius caput corona & turribus compacta praecinxerunt: ut matronalem simul ornarent, ac munirent maiestatem. Nos autem quanto aequius Ecclesiam Parentem Divorum verissimam non solum capite, sed toto corpore Turritam hodie veneramus".

¹⁸ For the tower of Babel as a source, see W. Born, *Spiral Towers in Europe and their Oriental Prototypes*, in "Gazette des Beaux-Arts", XXIV, 1943, pp. 234, 244; Ost, *op. cit.* at note 2, pp. 127-35. For the house of Wisdom, see M. Fagiolo, *Sant'Ivo, 'Domus Sapientiae'*, in *Studi sul Borromini. Atti del convegno promosso dall'Accademia Nazionale di San Luca*, Rome 1967, I, pp. 151-57; as well as Ost; Scott, *op. cit.* at note 1; and most others who have written on the church. For the lighthouse, see F. Deseine, *Description de la ville de Rome*, Lyon 1690, II, pp. 224-28 (cited in Connors, *op. cit.* at note 1, p. 682); R. Wittkower, *Un libro di schizzi di Filippo Juvarra a Chatsworth*, in "Bollettino della Società Piemontese di Archeologia e di Belle Arti", III, 1949, p. 106; and W. Hauptman, *'Luceat Lux Vestra Coram Hominibus': A New Source for the Spire of Borromini's S. Ivo*, in "Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians", XXXIII, 1974, pp. 73-79. For the crown, see, in particular, Scott, pp. 303-11; see also the documents relating to the construction of the spiral, which repeatedly refer to it as a crown (Connors, p. 681).

¹⁹ Aldobrandini [Gottifredi, S.J.], *op. cit.* at note 14, p. 5: "Duas in huius orationis fronte lineatas Turres vidisti, EMINENTISSIME PRINCEPS, alteram confusione sermonum disiectam; alteram concordia linguarum ad Caelum feliciter tendentem".

²⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 9: "Siquidem eam olim adumbravit Turris illa [...] David aedificata cum propugnaculis, e qua mille pendebant clypei,

& omnis armatura fortium, non tam novorum instrumenta bellorum, quam partarum monumenta victoriarum". The reference is to Song of Songs, 4:4.

²¹ Inv. FC 116745.

²² On Carlo Cartari, see A. Petrucci, *s.v. Carlo Cartari*, in *Dizionario biografico degli italiani*, XX, Roma 1977, pp. 783-786.

²³ ASR, Cartari-Febei, vol. 73, foll. 71v, 273; vol. 74, fol. 118; vol. 75, foll. 94, 186-86v, 291v-92, 394v; and *passim*.

²⁴ ASR, Cartari-Febei, vol. 73, fol. 48v.

²⁵ Connors, *op. cit.* at note 1, p. 680 and fig. 16.

²⁶ "...semper viridantem laurum tamquam Jurisprudentiae symbolum" (ASR, Cartari-Febei, vol. 73, fol. 25). Cartari's address was dedicated to his patron Cardinal Francesco Barberini, and his celebration of the laurel therefore had a double significance, alluding both to the symbol of the law degree and to the favorite device of the Barberini family.

²⁷ On the St. Ives orations, see note 43 below.

²⁸ When the tradition of annual Pentecost orations at the Sapienza began is uncertain. It may have been as late as 1642, when the law professor Giuseppe Carpano founded an academy for students, called the Accademia degli Intrecciati, which from then on had responsibility for the oration.

²⁹ The orator was Ludovico Bussi from Viterbo, who delivered the Pentecost oration in front of the pope in 1641 (G.B. Andriani, S.J.), *Ignis eruditio, sive de S. Spiritu adventu oratio*, Rome 1641) and the Pentecost oration at the Sapienza in 1647 (*Discorsi sacri e morali, op. cit.* in the following note).

³⁰ *Discorsi sacri e morali detti nell'Accademia degli Intrecciati eretta dal Dottore Gioseppe Carpano*, ed. A.S. Cartari, Rome 1673.

³¹ *Ibidem*, p. 230: "E se una lingua sola, divisa in molte dalla discordia, distrusse nella Torre Babilonica il temerario sforzo, e la vana superbia, & insano orgoglio de' Giganti, queste d'oggi, tutto che mille, e mille, se trovaran quel *cor unum, & anima una*, per la unione degl'amori concordemente moltiplicate, in alzaranno alle stelle l'incontrastabil Torre di Chiesa Santa [...]. Nella fabrica della Torre Babilonica la molteplicità delle lingue sconcordò il disegno; ma qui la varietà concorde perfezionò l'architettura".

³² *Fasti dell'Accademia degli Intrecciati nelli quali sono descritte le accademie di belle lettere fin'hora tenute etc.*, p. 8, in *Discorsi sacri e morali detti nell'Accademia degli Intrecciati eretta dal Dottore Gioseppe Carpano*, ed. A.S. Cartari, Rome 1673.

³³ ASR, Cartari-Febei, vol. 73, fol. 75: "Die lunae prima mensis Junij fuerunt positi primi lapides Tibertini supra fundamenta novae ecclesiae Studij".

³⁴ *Discorsi sacri e morali*, *op. cit.* at note 30, p. 230: "...Santa Chiesa, come deve esser Madre di tutte le nationi, così deve parlar con le lingue di tutte".

³⁵ P. Findlen, *Possessing Nature. Museums, Collecting, and Scientific Culture in Early Modern Italy*, Berkeley-Los Angeles 1994, p. 86.

³⁶ A. Kircher, *Turris Babel*, Amsterdam 1679. For an overview of the book, see Findlen, *op. cit.*, pp. 86-92; J. Godwin, *Athanasius Kircher. A Renaissance Man and the Quest for Lost Knowledge*, London 1979, pp. 34-43.

³⁷ See, for example, BAV, Urb. lat. 1090, fol. 164: [8 Sep 1621] "In detta mattina il Signor Cardinal Ludovisio [...] con altri 14 cardinali e gran numero di prelati e nobiltà nel Collegio Romano fu dai Padri Gesuiti di detto Collegio invitato ivi a pranzo [...], facendoli il dopo pranzo recitare diverse compositioni fatte in lode di Sua Signoria Illustrissima in circa 30 linguaggi diversi". For similar events, see Urb. lat. 1081, fol. 87v; Urb. lat. 1094, fol. 340v; APUG, vol. 142, foll. 61-62, 67v.

³⁸ *Fasti dell'Accademia degl'Intrecciati*, *op. cit.* at note 32, p. 7: "Furono in oltre recitate diverse compositioni in varie lingue in lode dello Spirito Santo; cioè nelle lingue Hebrea, Arabica, Siriaca, Caldea, Magarica, Isrlonitica, Egittica, Rutena, Schiavona, Pollacca, Lithuiana, Armena, Turca, Greca, Francese, Spagnuola, Portoghese, ed Oscha".

³⁹ See, for example, V. Ariguzzi, *Dotalis eloquentia verbi sponsi, sive de S. Spiritus adventu oratio*, Rome 1635; L. Bussi [G.B. Andriani, S.J.], *Ignis eruditio, sive de S. Spiritus adventu oratio*, Rome 1641; R. Gonzaga, *Sapientia triumphantrix, seu de adventu S. Spiritus humanum genus erudientis oratio*, Rome 1663.

⁴⁰ *Acta SS*, May, vol. IV, Paris-Rome 1866, pp. 542, 561 (cf. Connors, *op. cit.* at note 1, p. 672).

⁴¹ A. Cappelli, *Cronologia, cronografia e calendario perpetuo dal principio dell'era cristiana ai nostri giorni*, 6th ed., Milan 1988, p. 54.

⁴² *Pietro da Cortona 1597-1669*, ed. A. Lo Bianco, ex. cat., Milan 1997, pp. 378-379.

⁴³ The frontispiece to the 1653 sermon on the feast of St. Ives, designed and etched by Dominique Barrière, includes the recently-built spire of Borromini's church, peeking up behind a more conventional circular temple in the foreground (A. Biancari, *Ivonianum templum, sive de S. Ivone pauperum patrono oratio*, Rome 1653; illustrated in Connors, *op. cit.* at note 1, p. 676 and fig. 55). But whether this indicates that already by then the saint and the church were associated in people's minds is uncertain. It was only in 1661 that the St. Ives oration was actually recited there for the first time; from 1581, when the first such oration was delivered by a student from the Seminario Romano, until 1660, the event was always held in the nearby church of Sant'Ivo dei Brettoni. It is worth noting that the orations for the feast of St. Ives are strikingly similar to the Pentecost orations in language and imagery, with fire a dominant theme in both (see Scott, *op. cit.* at note 1, pp. 310-11; Connors, p. 672, n. 25).