

Monuments of Meditation and Propaganda The tombs of Popes Pius III and Pius V*

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For Henk van Veen

This study discusses the gap between the arrangements that two prominent persons made for their own tombs, ordering them already while alive, and the changes wrought to them by others after their deaths, (re)shaping their memory for specific purposes. Focusing on two important cardinals, the two central questions to be answered are: what did Francesco Todeschini-Piccolomini, who was to become Pope Pius III, and Michele Ghislieri, future Pope Pius V, want their tombs to look like and why? And how and why did others afterwards reshape the way these popes would be remembered? Before these questions can be addressed adequately, a few introductory remarks are necessary.

Introduction

A tomb is, first of all, a place to be buried. However, devices such as an inscription or a representation in stone or some other material, also make it a place of commemoration. Initially, it is the buried person who draws the attention of the tomb's visitors and arouses their memory. On further consideration, however, the person(s) who set up the tomb and devised its inscriptions and other features demand(s) just as much attention. It was, after all, this person (or these persons) who steers the visitors' memory through the wording of the inscription on the tomb and the selection of other features. Moreover, this same person usually has his/her name mentioned on the tomb, thus presenting him/herself as a respectful relation, thanks to whom the memory of the deceased will live on. A tomb, in other words, tells just as much – and perhaps even more – about the person(s) who set it up as it does about the deceased who is buried in it.

It is this understanding that has gradually expanded the scope of studies of Italian tomb monuments made during the Renaissance (c.1400-1600). Apart from biographical

* All churches mentioned in the text are in Rome, unless explicitly specified otherwise. Also except when mentioned otherwise, all translations from the Latin are mine. Quotations from the Bible are after the Douay-Rheims translation. I am very grateful to drs. Marieke Nugteren, Charlotte van ter Toolen and Emma de Jong, for their help and advice, and to Maarten van Deventer for his photographs.

In preparing this paper, I have made thankful use of R.U. Montini, *Le tombe dei papi*, Roma, A. Belardetti, 1957, which contains good, concise information on all the papal tombs. In the notes of this paper, however, I refer to more specialized or detailed (and more recent) literature. I have decided to ignore the book by W.J. Reardon, *The Deaths of the Popes: Comprehensive Accounts, Including Funerals, Burial Places and Epitaphs*, Jefferson, N.C., McFarland & Co., 2004, as the information it offers is very arbitrary; moreover, the transcriptions of the epitaphs are often inaccurate and some of the translations (in particular those of the sixteenth century epitaphs) betray complete unfamiliarity with papal matters, if not with Latin.

studies about the deceased, which mostly consider his/her tomb as a kind of documentation, traditional art historical studies have concentrated on the individual artists who made the tombs, discussing these monuments mainly within the context of (the development of) their oeuvre.¹ Other studies have focused on such aspects as (the development of) various types of monuments.² Next to these readings, a growing number of studies have widened the scope by paying attention to the persons who commissioned these tombs and their reasons to do so,³ and to the even wider societal context, for instance of specific groups of buried people or commissioners.⁴ Yet another approach is followed in studies that specifically take into account the location of a tomb in a church and/or in relation to other tombs, thus explaining the tomb's position literally and figuratively.⁵ A useful tool for all these (and other) approaches is the *Requiem* website, which in a systematic way offers historical and art historical information on the tombs of popes and cardinals from the early modern period (1420-1798). The website was launched in 2001 as an on-going project, but does not seem to have been updated for at least five years.⁶

This brief survey is primarily based on studies of tombs in Rome, as this is what my contribution will concern. It is, of course, too short to be exhaustive and it does not pretend to be representative of the wider field of studies of Italian Renaissance tombs. Yet a few more words should be added to this short outline: not for the sake of completeness, but because of a lacuna. There are hardly any publications that systematically study the inscriptions (usually written in Latin) on the tombs. Iiro Kajanto's 1980 book on Latin epitaphs of Medieval and Renaissance Rome is a rare exception.⁷ An interesting aspect of this book is that it shows how epitaphs – just like other inscriptions – bring in an understanding of tombs that seems largely overlooked in the present attention for societal aspects, namely that tombs also functioned as 'instruments' for meditation. It was particularly the epitaphs that spurred people to think about matters of life, death and the afterlife. Tombs were therefore not only

¹ For instance: M. Kühnenthal, 'Andrea Bregno in Rom', in: *Römisches Jahrbuch der Bibliotheca Hertziana*, 32 (1997/1998), pp. 179-272.

² J. Götzmann, *Römische Grabmäler der Hochrenaissance. Typologie - Ikonographie - Stil* (Beiträge zur Kunstgeschichte des Mittelalters und der Renaissance, 13), Münster, Rhema, 2010.

³ Two examples are: M.J. Gill, 'Death and the Cardinal: The Two Bodies of Guillaume d'Estouteville', in: *Renaissance Quarterly*, 2, 54 (2001), pp. 347-388; A. Ladegast, 'Liturgie und Memoria bei den Ammanati Grabmälern in S. Agostino. Möglichkeiten und Grenzen einer Grabmalsstrategie', in: A. Karsten & P. Zitzlsperger (eds.), *Vom Nachleben der Kardinäle. Römische Kardinalsgrabmäler der Frühen Neuzeit*, Berlin, Mann, 2010, pp. 67-98.

⁴ Some examples are: A. Karsten, 'Gräber für Gelehrte? Anmerkungen zu den römischen Papst- und Kardinalsgrabmälern im Zeitalter der Katholischen Reform', in: T. Maissen & G. Walther (eds.), *Funktionen des Humanismus. Studien zum Nutzen des Neuen in der humanistischen Kultur*, Göttingen, Wallstein, 2006, pp. 303-324; P. Zitzlsperger, 'Requiem - die römischen Papst- und Kardinalsgrabmäler der Frühen Neuzeit. Ergebnisse, Theorien und Ausblicke des Forschungsprojekts', in: idem, *Vom Nachleben der Kardinäle*, Berlin, Mann, 2010, pp. 23-65; J.L. de Jong, 'Moeders en monumenten: Graftombes voor en door moeders in Rome tussen 1400 en 1600', in: *Roma Aeterna*, 2, 4, (2016), pp. 44-63.

⁵ S. de Blaauw, 'Grabmäler statt Liturgie? Das Presbyterium von Santi Apostoli in Rom als private Grablage 1474 - 1571', in: W. Maier, W. Schmid & M.V. Schwarz (eds.), *Grabmäler. Tendenzen der Forschung an Beispielen aus Mittelalter und früher Neuzeit*, Berlin, Mann, 2000, pp. 179-199; G. Schelbert, 'SS. Apostoli a Roma. Il coro-mausoleo rinascimentale e il triconco rinato', in: S. Frommel (ed.), *La place du choeur: architecture et liturgie du Moyen Âge aux temps modernes* (Itinéraires percorsi, 1), Paris, Picard, 2012, pp. 101-112.

⁶ 'Requiem. Die Römischen Papst- und Kardinalsgrabmäler der frühen Neuzeit', <http://requiem-projekt.de/db/>. For a critical review, see J. Kohl, 'Requiem. Die römischen Papst- und Kardinalsgrabmäler der Frühen Neuzeit', in: *H-Soz-Kult*, 03.09.2005, www.hsozkult.de/webreview/id/rezwww-100.

⁷ I. Kajanto, *Classical and Christian: Studies in the Latin Epitaphs of Medieval and Renaissance Rome*, Helsinki, Suomalainen Tiedeakatemia, 1980. Vincenzo Forcella's *Iscrizioni delle chiese e d'altri edifici di Roma dal secolo XI fino ai giorni nostri*, Roma, Cecchini, 1869-84, is an extremely helpful documentation of epitaphs and inscriptions, but not an analytical study.

monuments of representation of the dead and their surviving relations, they were also ‘vehicles’ that urged the viewers to reflect on their own life and the inescapable moment of passing away.⁸

This aspect was crucial for – amongst many others – the German scholar Nathan Chytraeus (Nathan Kochhaff or Kochhafe, 1543-98), who in 1594 published a book on the delights of travelling in Europe.⁹ For him, the most valuable part of visiting other cities and countries was the chance to read epitaphs and other inscriptions. According to him, they teach us about the various ways people faced their death and met their end. They expose their qualities, accomplishments and vanities, and they inform us about the feelings of the survivors trying to deal with the death of a loved one. All this should make us realize that ‘a pious man’s life must be a permanent meditation on death’. ‘Reminded of one’s own mortality’ through all these texts and warnings, ‘who would not start at the right moment to improve his life and conduct, and gradually take down more and more plumes of his pride?’¹⁰

By considering these things carefully, who would not become more cautious in avoiding opportunities of this kind of occurrences? Become more eager in imploring divine guidance and protection of the holy angels? And finally, become more careful in a pious and serious preparation of that fated migration?¹¹

Two examples taken from tombs of clergymen in Rome may illustrate how epitaphs did indeed function as an impetus to meditation. The tomb of Giuliano Maffei da Volterra († 1510), in S. Pietro in Montorio, bears not only information on the deceased bishop, but also the aphorism: ‘For the righteous both death as well as life is sweet’.¹² The epitaph on the tomb of Ausias Despuig (†1483), in S. Sabina, says aphoristically about the defunct cardinal: ‘Dying so that he would live, he lived as one who was to die’.¹³

At the same time, tombs would also exhort viewers to a better way of life via another method: that of showing the deceased as an example of virtue, worthy of imitation. This notion of the inspiring effect of monuments or tombs of virtuous (wo)men, and of representations of their deeds, was widely shared during the Renaissance. It was, for instance, expressed in Justus Lipsius’s letter to François de Lannoy, which was published in 1586 (and reprinted many times, in various languages, amongst which the 1594 translation by John Stradling):

⁸ Another aspect that tends to be overlooked in present-day studies of Italian Renaissance tombs, is that they (also) functioned as a place to remember the deceased and pray for them. Accordingly, Sebastiano Medici wrote in his *Tractatus de sepulturis, & opuscula septem*, Firenze, Bartolomeo Sermartelli, 1580, p. 2: ‘nam sepulcra inspicientes eorum (sc. defunctorum) memoriam retinemus, & pro eis oramus, & alia offerimus suffragia’ (‘looking at tombs, we retain the memory of them (who have died), and pray for them, and offer other intercessions’). This aspect is well studied in a recent book on Burgundian tombs: D. Brine, *Pious Memories: The Wall-Mounted Memorial in the Burgundian Netherlands*, Leiden / Boston, Brill Publishers, 2015.

⁹ *Variorum in Europa Itinerum Deliciae*, Herborn, Christoph Rab (Corvinus), 1594.

¹⁰ *Ivi*, *Praefatio* (no page numbers): ‘Praeterea, cum totam vitam hominis pii meditationem mortis esse debere in confesso sit; quam utile erit polyhistori, praesertim adolescenti, si huius generis delicias consecans, subinde in tot funerum, cadaverum, sepulcrorum, et monumentorum, non solum hominibus, verum canibus quoque et equis, imo muscis quoque subinde exstructorum, mentionem incidat? quibus ipse quoque mortalitatis suae admonitus, vitam et mores in tempore incipiat emendare; et cristas suas paulatim magis et magis demittere’. The reference ‘cum totam vitam hominis pii meditationem mortis esse debere in confesso sit’ is to Plato’s *Phaedo* 67E4-5 and to Cicero’s *Tusculanae Disputationes* I, 74: ‘Tota enim philosophorum vita, ut ait idem [sc. Cato], commentatio mortis est’.

¹¹ *Ivi*, *Praefatio* (no page numbers): ‘Quos quidem attente considerando, quis non in occasionibus huiusmodi casuum vitandis evadat circumspector? in imploratione divini regiminis, et praesidii sanctorum angelorum petitione ardentior? in pia denique et seria ad fatalem illam migrationem praeparatione accuratior?’

¹² Forcella, *Iscrizioni*, cit., V, p. 249, nr. 689: ‘Bonis et mors et | vita dulcis est’.

¹³ *Ivi*, VII, p. 301. nr. 604: ‘Ut moriens viveret | vixit ut moriturus’.

What a delightfull sight will it be to behold so manie [...] sumptuous sepulchres? Surely I knowe not howe, but it is so, the minde of man beginnes to revive, and lift up his selve above itselfe, and to affect and meditate on excellent, and noble things, at the verie sight, and consideration of these so great, and glorious monuments of antiquitie: neither can the remembrance of the valour, prowesse, and vertue of former men and ages, but ingender brave and worthie thoughtes, in everie gentle heart, and noble blood.¹⁴

In 1568 Giorgio Vasari wrote in a similar way about representations of forefathers:

Who does not feel infinite pleasure and contentment, to say nothing of the honour and adornment that they confer, at seeing the images of his ancestors, particularly if they have been famous and illustrious for their part in governing their republics, for noble deeds performed in peace or in war, or for learning or any other notable and distinguished talent? And to what other end, as has been said in another place, did the ancients set up images of their great men in public places, with honourable inscriptions, than to kindle in the minds of their successors a love of excellence and of glory?¹⁵

This specific way of making the viewers of a tomb think of the deceased has some consequences. Not only do the inscriptions and images on a tomb commemorate the deceased (perhaps overly positive) as an example worthy of imitation, but at the same time they contribute to the way the deceased will be remembered in the future. The memory of generations to come, who will not have known the deceased personally, will be formed by the image created of him or her through the tomb, regardless of the question if this image corresponds with how (s)he actually was. Indeed, the fact that a tomb presents an image of the deceased as an *exemplum virtutis* (an example of virtuousness to be followed), does not necessarily mean that while alive (s)he was a truly virtuous person. The implication of this is that survivors – be they relatives, close friends, colleagues or others – in order to serve their own purposes or interests, can shape an image of the deceased that does not quite (or not at all) correspond to how (s)he was. The deceased, in other words, has no control over the image that will be presented on his/her tomb, unless (s)he has the tomb made while alive and personally determines what it must look like.

This gap between how a (prominent) person wanted his tomb to look, therefore ordering it while alive, and how others (re)shaped his/her memory for specific purposes, is the subject of this study. Focusing on two important cardinals – Francesco Todeschini-Piccolomini, who in 1503 was elected Pope Pius III, and Michele Ghislieri, whose pontificate as Pius V lasted from 1566 to 1572 – it will be shown that both men wanted a grave that would incite viewers to meditate on matters of life and death. Deviating from their wishes, however, their tombs were turned into monuments of papal glory and propaganda.

¹⁴ J. Stradling, *A Direction for Travailers: Taken out of Justus Lipsius*, London, R.B. for Cutbert Burbie, 1594, no page numbers. On Lipsius's letter, see J. Papy (ed. and tr.), *Justus Lipsius. Brieven aan studenten: De Romereis, honden en geleerden, drinkebroers en smulpapen*, Leuven, Uitgeverij P/Leuven, 2006, with the original Latin of the lines quoted on p. 12: 'Iam [...] sepulchra, lapides, quem non et doceant mirifice et delectent? Doceant, dico, quia revera notata aut exscripta haec talia, mirum quanta luce mentem perfundant, trepidantem per veterum scripta. Idque experti dicimus ipsi. Ut omittam etiam illud per commodum, quod nescio quomodo attolatur et grandior sese fiat animus adspectu tot sublimium et grandium rerum. Cupidinem verae virtutis et gloriae ingenerat, visa toties aliena gloria et virtus'.

¹⁵ Giorgio Vasari, *Lives Of The Painters Sculptors and Architects*. Translated by Gaston du C. De Vere, introduction and notes by David Ekserdjian, London, David Campbell Publishers (Everyman's Library), 1996, I, p. 495 ('Lives of Jacopo, Giovanni and Gentile Bellini, Painters of Venice'). The original Italian can be found in the Vasari edition of R. Bettarini and P. Barocchi, *Vite de' più eccellenti pittori scultori e architettori, 1550 e 1568*, Firenze, SPES, già Sansoni, 1966-1987, 3 (testo), pp. 438-39. Vasari's reference to what 'has been said in another place' may refer to Salustius's *Bellum Iugurthinum* IV, 5-6.

Francesco Todeschini-Piccolomini

In 1460, Francesco Todeschini-Piccolomini was created cardinal by his uncle, Pope Pius II.¹⁶ In 1492, long after the latter's death, he drew up a last will that included instructions for his own tomb. The cardinal took into consideration that:

If it is fitting for any man to live his life in constant contemplation of the fate that hangs over him and presents itself at every moment – which is the mark of both philosophers and believers – then it is surely fitting for the Christian man, who is sustained in the secure belief of a second life, and fitting above all for bishops, whose duty is to instruct by word and example the people entrusted to them. For undoubtedly the man who does not perceive the fragility of human nature and fails to consult the interests of his soul, himself and his household while time permits, but is heedless of what will happen tomorrow, thinking of anything rather than his final day – that man seems to misunderstand the coming age and be too indifferent to future events. For amid the many and varied dangers which hourly threaten our life, who can guarantee himself even so much as a day? We know not what the night will bring; it is altogether uncertain whether we are to be called away at cock-crow or morning.

Turning these things over frequently in my mind, I Francesco, unworthy Cardinal Deacon of Siena of the sacred Roman Church of S. Eustace, have been greatly stirred by the words of our Father Jesus Christ, who declared that blessed would be the servant whom the Lord found awake when he knocked on the door. And again, “be ready because you do not know the hour at which the Lord will come”.¹⁷

These considerations led the cardinal to order a plain and simple tomb:

I choose a place of burial in the basilica of the Prince of the Apostles within the chapel of St Andrew the Apostle amongst the bones of my uncle Pope Pius, so that he who brought me up from childhood and advanced me to this rank when alive may even in death tend the ashes of his nephew up to the great day of the resurrection. I order that my body be laid in the ground at the feet of my uncle's tomb on his right between the sepulcher and the wall of the basilica covered only by a marble sculpted in my likeness, but I do not wish the tomb to be decorated with any sculptures except that a marble tablet is to be inserted into the wall three braccia [2 metres] from the ground above the tomb which has an epitaph incised with beautiful letters as follows:

Sacred to God.

[This monument has been erected]

To Francesco Piccolomini

Deacon of St Eustace

Cardinal of Siena

Nephew of Pope Pius II

In accordance with his will.

He lived . . . years.¹⁸

Should he die elsewhere, the cardinal wished to be buried in Siena.¹⁹

¹⁶ K. Eubel, *Hierarchia catholica medii aevi, sive Summorum pontificum, S. R. E. cardinalium, ecclesiarum antistitum series ab anno 1198 usque ad annum perducta e documentis tabularii praesertim Vaticani*, München, Libraria Regensbergiana, 1913-1967, II, p. 13, nr. 5.

¹⁷ Quoted after the translation in C.M. Richardson, *Reclaiming Rome: Cardinals in the fifteenth century* (Brill's Studies in Intellectual History, 173), Leiden / Boston, Brill Publishers, 2009, pp. 425-26. The complete Latin text has also been published by C.M. Richardson, 'The Lost Will and Testament of Cardinal Francesco Todeschini Piccolomini (1439-1503)', in: *Papers of the British School at Rome* 66 (1998), pp. 193-214, esp. 198-202. The biblical references in the second paragraph of this quotation are to *Matthew* 24:44, and *Luke* 12:35-40.

¹⁸ Richardson, *Reclaiming Rome*, cit., p. 450. The exact number of years he had lived was, of course, to be added after his death.

¹⁹ *Ibidem*.

In accordance to these stipulations, the cardinal had two graves prepared: one in Rome and one in Siena.²⁰ The marble slab that was to cover his grave near that of Pope Pius II in St Peter's still exists and is indeed sculpted 'in the cardinal's likeness', showing him lying in state in his ecclesiastical clothes, his eyes closed and his hands crossed over his body (Fig. 1).²¹



Fig. 1: Grave slab of Cardinal Francesco Todeschini-Piccolomini; ca. 1496. Rome, Grotte Vaticane. Photo from: J. Röhl, 'Das Grabmonument Papst Pius' III' (see n. 20), p. 237.

Under his feet there is an inscription which is slightly different from the one proposed in the will:

Francesco Piccolomini, Cardinal of Siena, nephew of Pope Pius II,
While alive, has here at the feet of his most holy uncle,
For himself and for Agostino,
His cousin, erected and adorned a chapel,
And has endowed it with a dotation from his own money.
He has lived ... years ... months ... days.²²

²⁰ For the history of the tombs of Pope Pius III, see Richardson, *Reclaiming Rome*, cit. pp. 451-452, and in particular J. Röhl, 'Das Grabmonument Papst Pius' III', in: J. Poeschke (ed.), *Praemium Virtutis. Grabmonumente und Begräbniszeremoniell im Zeichen des Humanismus*, Münster, Rhema-Verlag, 2002, pp. 233-256.

²¹ The slab is now in the *grotte vaticane* under St Peter's; see below, n. 31.

²² Forcella, *Iscrizioni*, cit., VI, p. 79, nr. 220; Röhl, 'Das Grabmonument Papst Pius' III', cit., pp. 236-237: 'Fran[ciscus] Piccolomineus Car[dinalis] Senensis Pii II | Pont[ificis] Max[imi] nepos vivens hic ad avunculi | sanctiss[imi] pedes sepulcrum sibi et Augus[tino] | nepoti posuit capellamq[ue] hanc ornavit | ac proprio aere dotavit | Vixit annis ... mens ... dieb ...' (The spaces that were left open, so that the years, months and days of the cardinal's lifetime could later be added, indicate that the slab was executed before the cardinal died.) It is not clear if this inscription came in place of the inscription on the wall that the cardinal mentioned in his last will (quoted in the text, above), or if there were two inscriptions planned: one at the cardinal's feet and another one on the wall.

From this inscription, it may be deduced that at a certain moment the cardinal changed his mind and destined the grave not only for himself, but also for his nephew Agostino Patrizi Piccolomini, bishop of Pienza. As Agostino died in 1496 and was indeed buried in St Peter's, in the same chapel as Pius II, we may assume that the tomb slab was carved after that date, which means four or more years after the cardinal had made his will.²³

At the same time, the cardinal had a grave prepared in the dome of Siena, in the Piccolomini chapel in the left aisle (Fig. 2).



Fig. 2: Piccolomini-altar; ca. 1480-1500. Siena, Duomo (S. Maria Assunta)

On the base of the altar he had an inscription carved:

Francesco Cardinal of Siena had this sepulcher placed for himself while alive.²⁴

Curiously, neither the inscription proposed in the cardinal's will, nor the one actually sculpted on the tomb slab in Rome, nor the one in Siena, makes mention of any of the cardinal's deliberations: his awareness of 'the fragility of human nature', the anticipation of the day of resurrection and the wish to await this day at the feet of his uncle Pope Pius II. Cardinal Francesco Armellini, for comparison, did have these

²³ Röhl, 'Das Grabmonument Papst Pius' III', cit., pp. 236-237, n. 4.

²⁴ *Ivi*, p. 237: 'Fran[ciscus] Car[dinalis] Senen[sis] hoc sepulchrum sibi vivens poni curavit'.

deliberations included in the inscription on his tomb in S. Maria in Trastevere, which he set up several years before he died in 1527/28:

Francesco Armellini [...] considering the volatile feebleness of the life of mortals and the uncertain vicissitudes of matters, has built this house for himself while he was still alive and vigilant, so that the Lord would not come upon him unprepared.²⁵

The only ‘edifying’ words hinting at Cardinal Todeschini-Piccolomini’s awareness of his own mortality in putting up these tombs are: ‘for himself while alive’ (*sibi vivens*).

The situation changed drastically in 1503, when Cardinal Todeschini-Piccolomini, old and fragile, was unexpectedly elected as Pope Pius III. Even though he died within a month of this election, he had to be buried in a tomb that would convey his papal dignity. The tombs he had prepared ‘for himself while alive’ therefore had to be either discarded or at least one of them had to be adapted. This happened to the slab that had originally been made for the Roman grave of the cardinal (and his nephew Agostino). According to his wishes, Pius III was buried in St Peter’s, close to his uncle Pope Pius II in the chapel of St Andrew. His body was laid in a floor tomb and was covered with the slab, which was, however, put upside down. The ‘new’ upside was now inscribed with just the name of the pope: Pius III.²⁶ Against the chapel’s wall, work was started on a memorial monument, which would be situated next to the monument for Pope Pius II and would closely resemble it. It was to contain reliefs showing the coronation of Pius III, the pope lying in state, and recommending Popes Pius II and III to the Virgin and the Christ Child.

It is only this latter relief, with St Peter and Paul, which hints at some sort of life after death. Nor does the inscription give any indication of an afterlife or the pope’s religious expectations. The long text originally carved on the monument listed the most prominent deeds and accomplishments of Francesco as a cardinal and as a pope, as if he had been some ecclesiastical careerist, and summed up the good qualities through which he distinguished himself.²⁷ One of these was *religio*, but this respect for things religious still does not say anything about the hereafter or Francesco’s expectations of resurrection after death.

This long inscription was shortened in 1614, when the memorial monument was moved to another church. Due to the construction of the new St Peter’s, many tombs and other monuments had to be moved or removed. During this process Cardinal Alessandro Peretti Montalto, a distant relative of the Piccolomini family, obtained permission from Pope Paul V to move the memorials of both his papal relatives to the newly built church of S. Andrea della Valle, of which he had sponsored the construction and decoration.²⁸ Thus he enhanced the church with some important ‘attractions’ and raised its prestige amongst the many Roman churches that could boast of important relics, famous monuments or widely admired works of art. However, the two papal

²⁵ Forcella, *Iscrizioni*, cit., II, p. 344, nr. 1060: ‘Franciscus Armellinus (...) Fluxam vitae mortalium imbecillitatem et rerum incertas | uices animo intu[i]tus ne non parato Dominus superveniret vivens | et vigilans domum sibi hanc munivit’. I have assumed that *intutus* is an error for *intuitus*, and have translated *intuitus animo* with one word, *considering*. No one has commented on the fact that the inscriptions on Cardinal Armellini’s tomb have some odd features, making it seem as if they were never inspected during the execution and were half way abandoned. Thus the inscription for the cardinal starts with ‘Epitaph. Card.’, which looks like an instruction for the carver which was thoughtlessly copied in stone. More or less the same happened to the epitaph on the part of the tomb that was for reserved for Cardinal Armellini’s father; this inscription has even remained unfinished (*Ivi*, II, p. 344, nr. 1059). In this context of careless wording, it seems tenable to assume that *intutus* should be understood as *intuitus*. On this tomb, see Götzmann, *Römische Grabmäler*, cit., pp. 151-189.

²⁶ Röhl, ‘Das Grabmonument Papst Pius’ III’, cit., pp. 236-237, n. 4.

²⁷ *Ivi*, p. 242, n. 27.

²⁸ *Ivi*, p. 239.

memorials were no longer placed on ground level as they had been originally, but were raised high above eye level and incorporated in two pillars facing each other at the end of the nave (Fig. 3).



Fig. 3: Tomb monument of Pope Pius III; ca. 1505. Rome, S. Andrea della Valle. Photo: author.

For reasons of space, the inscriptions on both memorials were reduced, which in the case of Pius III's monument was done at the cost of the enumeration of the pope's good qualities. This meant that even the last allusion to his religious life and feelings – the mention of his *religio* – disappeared.²⁹ There was space, though, for a new inscription. In a plaque under the monument, closer to eye level than the original legend and therefore easier to read, Cardinal Peretti Montalto proclaimed, prominently displaying his own name, that with the papal permission of Paul V he had had the memorials of Pope Pius III, as well as of Pius II, brought over from the Vatican and had them repositioned 'in a more magnificent way' (*magnificentius*).³⁰ Nine years later, in 1623, the bodies of both Pius-popes were also transferred to the church of S. Andrea della Valle.³¹

²⁹ *Ivi*, p. 242, n. 27, and Forcella, *Iscrizioni*, cit., VIII, p. 263, nr. 661.

³⁰ *Ibidem*.

³¹ Röhl, 'Das Grabmonument Papst Pius III', cit., p. 239. Due to the reconstruction of the nave of St Peter's, the body of Pope Pius III had already been exhumed and transferred to a Roman sarcophagus in 1608. This sarcophagus, covered with the slab of his grave (but without his body) and inscribed with

So 120 years after he had died, the memory of Pope Pius III had been (re)shaped in a way that differed considerably from how he had wanted it preserved. The ‘humility appropriate to death’ that he wished his tomb to convey had gradually been brushed aside to make room for words and images illustrating his achievements and qualities while alive. References to the afterlife were restricted to a relief suggesting that he could count on St Peter and Paul to recommend his soul to Christ and St Mary. The memory of Francesco Todeschini-Piccolomini was shaped into that of a leader who – as cardinal and pope – was in the first place busy ruling the Church on earth. Moreover, the memorial no longer only served to commemorate Pope Pius III. It now had also become a monument to celebrate Cardinal Peretti Montalto, who had been so considerate as to salvage the pope’s tomb from the chaos of St Peter’s under construction and have it relocated ‘in a more magnificent way’ in the church of S. Andrea della Valle.

Michele Ghislieri

In 1557, Antonio Ghislieri, who had adopted the name Michele when he joined the Dominican order, was created cardinal by Pope Paul IV.³² Even though he opted for the title of S. Sabina in 1561,³³ it was his wish to be buried in his first titular church, S. Maria sopra Minerva. In this church he had a tomb prepared in 1564, with an inscription that clearly expressed his hope of resurrection:

Praise to God, best and greatest.

Brother Michele Ghislieri, from the town of Bosco Marengo in the territory of Alessandria, belonging to the Order of missionary Preachers, cardinal-priest of the Holy Roman Church with the title of S. Sabina, knowing that he will restore dust to dust, has determined this place for himself while alive, in the certain hope of resurrection, in the church of the Virgin Mother of God, through whose intercession he desires to be saved, as well as through that of the saints and pious people still alive. When he was 60 years old, in the year of salvation 1564, he has arranged that when he meets his final day, his dead body will here be deposited.³⁴

Two years later, in 1566, Cardinal Ghislieri was elected pope, with the name of Pius V. Among many other things, this meant that if he still wanted to plan his own grave, he had to think about a new tomb that would convey his papal dignity. Contrary to the tradition that popes were buried in Rome, he decided he wanted to be laid to rest in his native village of Bosco Marengo (in the present province of Alessandria in Piemonte). Soon after his election he ordered the construction of a (Dominican) monastery in Bosco Marengo, after designs by Martino Longhi di Viggiù. The minster, dedicated to the Holy Cross (S. Croce), was to house the tomb of the pope.³⁵ Giorgio

the name of Pius III, is still in the *grotte vaticane* under St Peter’s; see Montini, *Tombe dei papi*, cit., p. 304.

³² Eubel, *Hierarchia catholica*, cit., III, pp. 35-36, nr. 14.

³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ Forcella, *Iscrizioni*, cit., I, p. 460, nr. 1789: ‘Ad Laudem D[ei] O[ptimi] M[aximi] | Frater Michael Ghislerius ex oppido Boschi | Agri Alexandrini Ord[inis] Praedica[torum] D[ominicanorum] Mis[sionariorum] | t[er]t[ulian]i S[an]ctae Sabinae S[an]ctae R[omanae] Ecclesiae] Presb[iter] Card[inialis] | Noscens terram terrae se redditurum ob certa[m] | Resurrectionis spem in Virginis Dei genitricis | Templo cuius et sanctor[um] ac pior[um] vive[n]tium | Cupiens adiuvari suffragiis locu[m] hunc | vivens sibi statuit in quo cadaver cum | suu[m] obierit diem poni curavit an[no]s] agens | aetatis suae LX et humanae salutis an[no] | MDLXIII’. The words ‘terram terrae se redditurum’ (he will restore dust to dust) refer to *Genesis* 3: 19 and to *Ecclesiasticus* 40: 11.

³⁵ For extensive and well-illustrated information on the history of the monastery and the minster, and their decoration, see F. Cervini & C. Spantigati (eds.), *Santa Croce di Bosco Marengo*, Alessandria, Cassa di Risparmio di Alessandria, 2002.

Vasari was commissioned to paint the large high altarpiece with a representation of *The Last Judgment*, showing prominently in the foreground the pope's name saint, the Archangel St Michael, fighting against the demons of Hell.³⁶ Behind his back there are a multitude of resurrected souls hoping for salvation, including Pope Pius V, whose portrait is clearly recognizable immediately to the left of St Michael.

The tomb for the pope was planned in the right transept, against the eastern side. It was to be a large marble construction with a sculpture of St Michael on top, and in the zone below it two statues personifying *Faith* and *Religion*, flanking a large relief showing *Pope Pius V Adoring the Resurrection of Christ*. The two zones below this relief were to contain the casket and, under it, the epitaph, but for reasons to be discussed below they were never executed as planned. Instead, in 1672 a table was placed under the large relief, turning the tomb monument into an altar (Fig. 4),³⁷ and the casket and the epitaph were placed against the opposing wall, as a separate cenotaph.



Fig. 4: Altar, originally planned as the tomb monument) of Pope Pius V; ca. 1575. Bosco Marengo, S. Croce. Photo from: F. Cervini & C. Spantigati (eds.), *Santa Croce di Bosco Marengo*, (see n. 35), p. 62.

³⁶ Since the renovation of the church in 1710, the altarpiece hangs on the back wall of the apse: *Ivi*, pp. 76 and 80.

³⁷ *Ivi*, pp. 58-63. In 1743, the altar table was replaced by the present one in marble, made by Francesco Maria Schiaffini: *Ivi*, p. 63.

The words of the epitaph are those that were originally planned:

Pope Pius V from Bosco Marengo,
Descendant of the Ghislieri family,
Belonging to the Order of Preachers,
Having always had in view the day of death
And the universal resurrection, since the day
Of his elevation to the apex of the apostolate,
Has ordered to erect this monument
For his body to be laid to rest,
when the Divine Clemency has seen fit
To snatch him away from the worthless time of life.³⁸

Reading this epitaph in relation to the themes of the high altarpiece and the relief on the tomb – *The Last Judgment* and *Pope Pius V Adoring the Resurrection of Christ* – it becomes clear that the pope did not want the tomb monument to be a memorial of his life, status, qualities and/or achievements, but wished it to be a testimony of his sure expectation that the dead will be raised at the day of resurrection.

It is not quite clear which exact place the pope had planned for the altarpiece he commissioned from the Dutch painter Bartholomeus Spranger, around 1570 (now in the Galleria Sabauda in Turin; Fig. 5).



Fig. 5: Bartholomeus Spranger, *Last Judgment*; ca. 1570. Turin, Galleria Sabauda. Photo from: J.L. de Jong, ‘Cultivating Piety’ (see n. 42), p. 385.

³⁸ Alphonsus Ciaconius (Alfonso Chacón), *Vitae et res gestae Pontificum romanorum et S.R.E. Cardinalium: ab initio nascentis Ecclesiae usque ad Clementem IX P.O.M.*, Roma, Philippus et Antonius de Rubeis, 1677, III, col. 1000: ‘Pius Papa V Boschensis | ex familia Ghisleriorum oriundus | Ordinis Praedicatorum professus | diem mortis universalisque | resurrectionis prae oculis habens a die | assumptionis suae ad apicem apostolatus | monumentum istud erigi mandavit | pro cadavere suo reponendo | quando divinae clementiae visum fuerit | ipsum ab hoc saeculo nequam eripere’. The transcription of this epitaph in Cervini & Spantigati, *Santa Croce di Bosco Marengo*, cit., pp. 7 and 58, is missing lines 7 and 8 (‘monumentum istud erigi mandavit | pro cadavere suo reponendo’), making the translation on p. 7 incorrect.

According to Spranger's biography from 1604, written by the well-informed Karel van Mander, it could be seen in the monastery of Bosco Marengo, 'on the sepulcher of Pius Quintus'.³⁹ No matter where precisely this altarpiece stood, it is interesting to note that it showed a theme which was completely in line with Pope Pius's expectation of the final day: *The Last Judgment*. Even more interesting is that Spranger's painting is a fairly accurate copy of a work by the fifteenth century painter Fra Angelico, which is now in the Gemäldegalerie in Berlin (Fig. 6).⁴⁰



Fig. 6: Fra Angelico, *Last Judgment*; ca. 1435-1440. Berlin, Gemäldegalerie der Staatlichen Museen. Photo from: J.L. de Jong, 'Cultivating Piety' (see n. 42), p. 384.

There are strong indications that Fra Angelico's *Last Judgment* stood in S. Maria sopra Minerva in the 1560's, when Pius was the titular cardinal of this church. Apparently he not only knew the painting, but liked it so much that he summoned Spranger to his presence and commissioned a copy.⁴¹ That Pius appreciated this fifteenth century work so highly is especially noteworthy because contemporary art critics were not wholeheartedly positive about its maker's works.⁴² In the eyes of such writers as Giorgio Vasari and Andrea Gilio da Fabriano, Fra Angelico's work fell short of the standards of contemporary, sixteenth century art. Vasari even used such words as rude (*goffo*) and

³⁹ Karel van Mander, *Het leven der doorluchtighe Nederlandtsche, en Hooghduytsche schilders*, in: *Het schilder-boeck*, Haarlem, Paschier van Wesbusch, 1604, pp. 270^v-271^r: '[Spranger] maecte een stuck van het Oordeel, ses voeten hoogh, op een coper plaet, vol werck, datter vijf hondert tronien in quamen, het welck noch te sien is in't Clooster tot den Bosch tusschen Pavia en Alexandria, op de Sepultuer van Pius Quintus ...'.

⁴⁰ On this painting, see L.B Kanter & P. Palladino, *Fra Angelico* (cat. exh. New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art), New York NY./ New Haven CT./ London, 2005, p. 170.

⁴¹ Van Mander, *Het leven*, cit., p. 270^v.

⁴² This and the following information on Pope Pius and the appreciation of Fra Angelico's work in the sixteenth century is based on my article: 'Cultivating Piety. Religious Art and Artists after the Council of Trent', in: K. Enenkel & W. Melion (eds), *Meditatio - Refashioning the Self*, Intersections. Interdisciplinary Studies in Early Modern Culture, Leiden / Boston, Brill Publishers, 2011, vol. 17, pp. 367-389, esp. 378-386.

inept (*inetto*). They had to admit, however, that Fra Angelico's works are effective in stirring feelings of devotion, which they accounted for by adducing his devout disposition. In other words: seen through sixteenth century eyes Fra Angelico's works may have looked old-fashioned, but they did seem to possess and evoke the kind of 'honest' religious emotions that were lacking in many 'modern' – one would now say Mannerist – paintings. It must have been the purity and sincerity of Fra Angelico's work, and its capacity to fuel feelings of truly Christian devotion, that appealed to Pope Pius, of whom it is known that he rejected the lavishness and artificiality of most of the arts of this time. Moreover, Fra Angelico was a monk of the Dominican order, just like the pope himself.

The tomb monument in S. Croce in Bosco Marengo was not finished yet when the pope passed away, on May 1, 1572. He was temporarily laid to rest in St Peter's, near the chapel of St Andrew, in a small tomb.⁴³ It was marked with an epitaph which cleverly listed the qualities and accomplishments of the pope, inserted between, at the top, his name and function as priest – *Pius V Pontifex* – and at the bottom the qualification 'greatest' – *Maximus*. Read together, this makes him *Pius Pontifex Maximus*, which can either be understood as a priest who, because of his character and deeds, was 'the greatest', or as 'the supreme priest' which means: 'the Pope'.

Pius V Priest

Of religion and virtue a protector
 Of what is right and just a champion
 Of morals and discipline a restorer
 Of the Christian cause a defender.
 Advantageous laws were promulgated
 France was preserved
 Princes were united in a league
 A victory over the Turks was obtained
 Enormous deeds and exploits were done
 In war and peace there was glory
 Supreme
 Pius Favorable the Best Prince.⁴⁴

Missing in this eulogizing inscription, however, is any reference to such notions as mortality, resurrection after death and final judgment, which figured so prominently on the tombs that Pius as a cardinal and as a pope had had prepared for himself during his life.

Fifteen years after Pope Pius V had died, his body was still resting in the temporary grave in St Peter's, waiting to be transferred to the tomb in Bosco Marengo. Meanwhile a new pope, Sixtus V, had started the construction of a large chapel next to the church of S. Maria Maggiore, where he wished to be buried and be remembered by a grandiose monument. Hoping to raise the prestige of this chapel with the presence of a second papal tomb, Pope Sixtus called off the transfer of Pope Pius's remains to Bosco Marengo and instead had them moved to S. Maria Maggiore. There they were solemnly reburied on January 11, 1588, in the personal presence of Pope Sixtus V.⁴⁵

⁴³ Ciaconius, *Vitae et res gestae*, cit., III, col. 994: 'in Vaticano apud sacellum S. Andreae, in parvo licet tumulo sepultus'.

⁴⁴ *Ibidem*: 'Pius V Pont[ifex] | Religionis ac pudicitiae vindex | Recti et iusti assertor | Morum et disciplinae restitutor | Christianae rei defensor | Salutaribus editis legibus | Gallia conservata | Principibus foedere iunctis | Parta de Turcis victoria | Ingentibus ausis et factis | Pacis belliq[ue] gloria | Maximus | Pius Felix Op[timus] Princ[eps]'.

⁴⁵ For extensive information on this tomb of Pius V and the chapel built by Sixtus V, see A. Herz, 'The Sixtine and Pauline tombs: Documents of the Counter-reformation', in: *Storia dell'arte* 41/43 (1981), pp. 241-262, esp. 241-242. See also the contributions of S. Lombardi, 'La Cappella Sistina in S. Maria

Meanwhile, an enormous monument was being raised above his tomb, which would mirror the monument for Pope Sixtus V on the opposite wall of the chapel (Fig. 7).



Fig. 7: Tomb monument of Pope Pius V; ca. 1590. Rome, S. Maria Maggiore. Photo: L. van ter Toolen and M. van Deventer.

It holds a statue of the pope sitting, dressed in full *pontificalia* and making a blessing gesture. Surrounding this statue are five reliefs showing deeds performed by the pope or important events from his pontificate. They are all explained in Latin inscriptions in the base of the monument.⁴⁶ The inscription in the middle of the base, although still there, is hardly visible anymore. Its view was blocked after the canonization of Pius V in 1712, when a glass casket with the body of the newly created saint was placed in front of it. It sums up the ecclesiastical career of Pius before he was elected pope and in general terms praises his pontificate, stating that, ‘He surpassed the ancient holy popes’.⁴⁷ Thus the monument (in its original state, before it housed the glass casket) glorifies, even more than the temporary grave in St Peter’s did, the memory of Pius V

Maggiore’, and P. Petrarola, ‘Tomba di Pio V’, in: M. L. Madonna (ed.), *Roma di Sisto V: le arti e la cultura*, Roma, De Luca, 1993, resp. pp. 382-83 and 386-89.

⁴⁶ The subjects of the reliefs and the inscriptions explaining them are all described and translated by Herz, ‘The Sixtine and Pauline tombs’, cit., pp. 257-258 and 261. The original Latin of the inscriptions is in Forcella, *Iscrizioni*, cit., XI, p. 44, nrs. 82 and 83.

⁴⁷ Forcella, *Iscrizioni*, cit., XI, p. 44, nr. 83. ‘qui veteres sanctos pontifices aemulatus [est] ...’.

as a Prince of the Church, omitting any reference to his spiritual life and his expectations of life after death. An inscription put up by Sixtus V, ingenious and beautiful as it is, makes the monument also – and perhaps even more – a celebration of Pope Sixtus himself, as it was he who honored his great predecessor with this magnificent tomb and thus saved (and shaped) the memory of Pius V:

For Pope Pius V
from the Order of Preachers
Pope Sixtus V
from the Order of Friars Minor
gratefully
posed this monument.⁴⁸

Conclusion

The history of the tombs of Popes Pius III and V shows that the final monuments in which they were buried were very different from the graves they had wished. The ‘humility appropriate to death’ and the notion of a tomb being a place to await the resurrection of the dead, were brushed aside as soon as the popes had died and could no longer control what their tomb would look like or which memory of themselves they would leave behind. Obviously, their survivors – relatives, and especially clerics from the Roman Curia as well as the succeeding popes – found it more important to reshape their memory and create an image of a Supreme Pontiff who had ruled in glory. This image would reflect on the sitting pope, as it would illustrate the blessings of papal rule for both the Church and the world. In other words: from sites to rest in peace, locations to pray for the dead, and/or places of memory and reflection, the tombs of Popes Pius III and V had been turned into monuments of papal propaganda.

This conclusion must make us aware, that (papal) tomb monuments should not be considered as ‘documents’ of the life of the deceased, or as their spiritual testament – not even if they had a tomb planned for themselves while alive. Pope Paul V, living (and dying) not too long after Pope Sixtus V, must have been very aware of this, as is apparent from the tomb he had constructed for himself.⁴⁹ To ensure that he would shape his own image and memory, he started the construction of this monument early in his pontificate. Situated in S. Maria Maggiore, in a newly built chapel right across the nave from the chapel built by Pope Sixtus V, and looking very much like tomb monuments of Sixtus V and Pius V, the memorial for Paul V was finished around 1610, eleven years before he would die (Fig. 8). Just like the tombs of Pius V and Sixtus V, it contains in the center a statue of the pope. Around it are reliefs showing deeds and events from his pontificate (before 1610), which are explained in Latin inscriptions on the base.⁵⁰ Just like the tombs of Pius V and Sixtus V (as well as Pius III), they also conjure up an image of a Supreme Pontiff who is primarily involved in running God’s Church on earth. However, Paul V must have wanted to enrich his memory with a reference to his meditation on matters of life and death. Thus he included a statement that is conspicuously missing on the monuments of Popes Pius III and V (especially if one knows their wishes), expressing his awareness of the transience of earthly life: ‘Pope Paul V, mindful of death, raised [this monument] while alive’.⁵¹ Yet the pope

⁴⁸ *Ivi*, XI, p. 44, nr. 82: ‘Pio V Pont[ifici] Max[imo] | ex Ord[ine] Praed[icatorum] | Sixtus V Pont[ifex] Max[imus] | ex Ord[ine] Minor[um] | grati animi monumentum | posuit’.

⁴⁹ The pontificate of Paul V lasted from 1605 to 1621.

⁵⁰ For detailed information on his tomb monument, see Herz, ‘The Sixtine and Pauline tombs’, cit., esp. pp. 242 and 260-262, with a translation of the inscriptions on pp. 261-262. The original Latin of the inscriptions is in Forcella, *Iscrizioni*, cit., XI, p. 65, nr. 128.

⁵¹ Forcella, *Iscrizioni*, cit., XI, p. 65, nr. 128: ‘Paulus V Pont[ifex] Max[imus] | mortis memor | vivens sibi posuit’.

did not completely shape his own memory. In the center of the base, between the two inscriptions describing the great deeds and events from his pontificate, he left space for an inscription to be added after his death. Thus later generations could, if necessary, still insert a mention of important events that happened during Paul's pontificate after the completion of the monument in 1610. More importantly, it was modestly left to them to fill this remaining space with words of praise for the defunct Pontiff.⁵²



Fig. 8: Tomb monument of Pope Paul V, ca. 1610. Rome, S. Maria Maggiore. Photo: L. van ter Toolen and M. van Deventer.

⁵² The pope's surviving nephew Cardinal Scipione Borghese did indeed add a long and eulogizing inscription, not forgetting to mention himself as the one who had taken care of this: *Ibidem*.

Keywords

tomb monuments, epitaphs, Pope Pius III (1503), Pope Pius V (1566-1572), Pope Paul V (1605-1621)

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RIASSUNTO**Monumenti di meditazione e propaganda****Le tombe di Pio III e Pio V**

Questo articolo si interroga sulle caratteristiche dei monumenti funebri di due cardinali, che sarebbero poi divenuti papi, Francesco Todeschini-Piccolomini (Pio III, 1503) e Michele Ghislieri (Pio V, 1566-1572), e le loro motivazioni nella scelta dei rispettivi monumenti funerari. Il saggio, inoltre, analizza come e perché i due pontefici sono stati successivamente ricordati in modo diverso da quello che essi avevano scelto. Da vivi, ambedue i cardinali avevano fatto allestire il proprio monumento tombale in modo tale da veicolare due messaggi: in primo luogo, il concetto dell'umiltà nei confronti della morte; in secondo luogo, l'idea che la tomba non era soltanto un luogo in attesa della resurrezione del corpo, ma anche uno spazio di meditazione che avrebbe ispirato pensieri sulla vita, la morte e l'oltretomba. Tuttavia, una volta deceduti, ambedue i pontefici furono deposti in monumenti funebri che celebravano principalmente il loro ruolo di capi della Chiesa. La loro volontà venne pertanto sacrificata per esigenze di propaganda papale, di carattere esclusivamente terreno, senza alcun richiamo spirituale alla morte, la salvezza celeste e la speranza della resurrezione.