

Gaspare Mola, Roman medallists and seal-engraving

Documentary evidence and notes on technique

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WHILE IN FLORENCE at the service of the Medici, Gaspare Mola was contacted by the Este ambassador for a commission that would seem to have been left out of the modern bibliography on this artist.¹ The renowned medallist and goldsmith from Como was asked in the winter of 1622 to engrave a seal for the very young Francesco d'Este (the future Duke Francesco I, portrayed in the famous bust by Bernini). This is documented by two letters in the artist's hand and the draft of a reply from an anonymous correspondent, currently in the Archivio di Stato di Modena. The correspondence shows the broad network of prestigious contacts that Mola had skilfully woven over his lifetime and adds several biographical details that had not previously emerged in studies: for instance, a period that the medallist spent in Parma in December 1622 and January 1623. Above all, however, it sheds light on Mola's work with seals, which is not surprising, but of which no specific episodes appear to have come to our notice until now. Lastly, when juxtaposed with certain documents from the Archivio di Stato di Roma, it helps highlight the primary dynamics governing the relationship between seal-engraving and medal-making in Baroque Italy, including in the prestigious workshop of the Hamerani (figs 1, 2).

In the first letter from Mola, dated 14 December 1622, the Lombard engraver explained a problem that had emerged while working on the project: the drawing given to the medallist turned out to be incorrect, so the seal, though already finished and paid for, was returned to him for modification. The problem was the absence of the 'band in the middle, bearing the keys and the papal tiara'. From 1615 on, in the seals engraved in Modena for Francesco's father Duke Cesare d'Este, the vertical 'band in the middle' began to bear, not the crossed keys and the papal tiara, but increasingly the umbraculum (figs 3, 4), an update that may perhaps have caused confusion, escaping the attention of the Este ambassador to the Medici, who had acted as a go-between for the commission. The drawing (*scizzo*), sent to Mola for the

second time for him to correct the engraving, also had three fleurs-de-lis framed by triangles in the second and third quarters of the shield. This frame was missing in other ducal seals, which in the meantime the medallist had had the opportunity to see in Parma, leading him to doubt the accuracy of the new instructions he had received. His letter reads as follows:

Very illustrious lord. By the lord ambassador of Modena, who resides in Florence, I was ordered to make a seal of the impression that is here enclosed, for the prince Francesco; after I had done so and had been paid, the seal was sent back to me in Florence, because the coat of arms had not been made with the band in the middle, bearing the keys and the papal tiara. And this error was not of my own making: I had been ordered to do this by the said lord ambassador. When I was asked to modify the seal, I was about to go to Parma, called there by the lords of that place [Farnese] and also ordered [to go] by the grand duke [of Florence]. In order to satisfy the just wish of the aforesaid lord ambassador, I took the seal with me to modify it, although the alteration is not quite finished, because I fear a new error: I was shown an impression of the seals of that place [Modena] and I did not see the same triangles or squares that are around the three lilies, as can be seen in the attached drawing. Therefore, my lord, do me the favour of sending me the response and with it the enclosed impression that I am sending you, [to know] whether or not said squares should be engraved. And immediately I will finish the seal and send it to you. In the meantime, I pray to Our Lord God to grant you true happiness and I kiss your hands. This day, 14 December 1622. Your most humble servant, Gasparo Mola.²

By 5 January 1623, not having received any specific instructions from Modena, Mola had 'decided to do what seemed most opportune' to him, and enclosed with his second letter an 'impression' (now lost) of the now finished seal to show 'how it would appear'. Knowing that the court in Modena also needed other seals,



1. Giovanni Martino Hamerani: *Cardinal Luigi Portocarrero*, 1678, gilt bronze, 45mm., Museo Nazionale del Bargello, Florence.

he wrote that he would be happy to extend his trip back to Florence from Parma by travelling via Modena and receive all the necessary information ('size' and 'quality') for the new commissions:

Very illustrious lord. I hereby send you the seal of the most serene prince Francesco. I then decided to do what seemed most opportune to me, and you can see from the impression attached below how it would appear. I could not send the seal before. If anything else is needed, your Lordship may instruct me. The lord ambassador, who is next to the grand duke, told me that those highnesses in Modena need other smaller seals. If the size is sent to me and the quality of what they should be, I will serve him while I am here in Parma, and because I think that I may be free by the middle of this month, if your Lordship writes to me, I will come to you on my way back to Florence, and in this way I will better understand the will of those most serene princes. In the meantime, I reverence him and kiss his hands. From Parma, on this day, 5 January 1623. Most humbly at your service, your servant Gasparo Mola.³

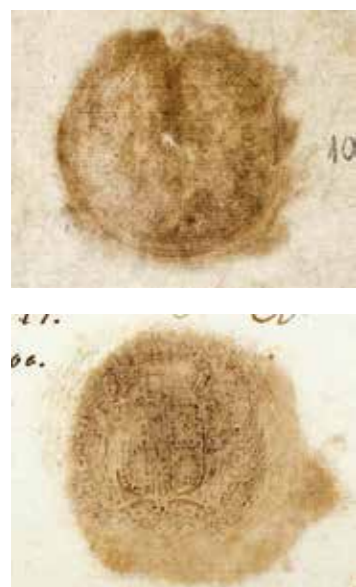
The reply from the anonymous Este agent leaves no doubt about the decisions that had been



2. Detail of fig. 1.

made at court: Mola received many compliments for the work he had done, but no further engagements, officially because he had taken a very long time to complete the first seal and had in the meantime accepted other jobs from other authorities. A similar concern would arise a few years later, in February 1626, in relation to a proposed commission for seals that Mola had received from the powerful Gaspar de Guzmán y Pimentel, Count of Olivares, thanks to the mediation of the Tuscan ambassador to Spain, Averardo de' Medici di Castellina; the engraver had already been in Rome for many months, at Urban VIII's invitation, and was so busy that it would have been difficult for him to accept other commissions, and even if he did so, the delivery time would be very long, perhaps even several years.⁴ The letter from the anonymous Este agent also expressed the suspicion that the engraver had been 'kept busy for too long with these tasks without being able to give great satisfaction for them':

12 January 1623. To the engraver Gasparo Mola for the service of the most serene prince. I have received the seal of the most serene lord prince Francesco, my lord, which you sent me, which was greatly admired here [in Modena] and its



3. *Impression of a seal for Duke Cesare d'Este, 1608, paper, Archivio di Stato, Modena. The central vertical band bears the crossed keys and papal tiara.*

4. *Impression of a seal for Duke Cesare d'Este, 1625, paper, Archivio di Stato, Modena. The central vertical band bears the umbraculum.*

quality duly praised. As for the other seals that I would gladly have had made by your hand, necessity dictated that they be made in haste. Seeing that you were kept busy for too long with these tasks without them being able to give [you] great satisfaction, it was decided to have the seals made more quickly by others, as far as possible. This was what I had to write in response to your letter. I remain at your service willingly for the future and I pray that from Our Lord you may have prosperity and contentment. Modena [unsigned].⁵

Though it is not accompanied by any graphic evidence that would allow us to identify the seal that is mentioned, the exchange of letters nevertheless brings several elements to light that merit attention. It does not seem difficult to identify the reasons for the qualitative 'hierarchy' in the arts of engraving, to which the anonymous correspondent referred towards the end of his letter with the suggestion that Mola did not find seal-engraving as gratifying an occupation as medal-engraving. Perhaps because they themselves functioned as a 'signature' for their

owners, seals lacked any mark of 'authorship' by the engraver, although such a mark was often present on seventeenth-century medals (and sometimes also on coins).⁶ Moreover, the prevalence of an heraldic language and the systematic absence of portraits in seals of the Baroque age drastically reduced the 'creative' autonomy of the seal-engraver compared to the maker of medals or coins (as can be seen from the case of the little 'triangles' cited by Mola in the first letter). In this light, one can understand Mola's anxiety about the instructions imparted to him and the possible errors they might contain, errors that must have been anything but uncommon in such commissions, since antique models and the rules of heraldry allowed the (future) owners of the seal and their learned counsellors very little leeway in formulating the legend and constructing the iconography. To guard against oversights on the part of the client, all the engraver could do was to preserve all documents relating to the job, to present should any dispute arise.⁷

The fact that various medallists of the 1600s



5. *Antonio Astesano's bill for seals for Cardinal Francesco Negroni, 1684, 270 x 200mm., Archivio di Stato, Rome.*

6. *Andrea Guazzalotti: Pope Callixtus III, c.1455, bronze, 43mm., National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC.*



7. *Paladino: Pope Sixtus IV, after 1664 and before 1689, silver, 45mm., Museo Nazionale del Bargello, Florence.*



and early 1700s in Rome, such as Antonio Astesano, Girolamo Paladino, Gioacchino Francesco Trvani and Giovanni Martino Hamerani, regularly engraved seals (which were never signed or initialled by their makers and hence are difficult to attribute without documentation) has long been known due to a series of payment requests presented to the Apostolic Camera by these engravers and various other colleagues specialised in seals, which are now in the *Miscellanea Famiglie* collection at the Archivio di Stato di Roma (*Sigillari romani*, envelopes 181 and 182). This documentation is particularly valuable due to the fact that a fair number of the sheets contain dry impressions on paper of the seals for which payment was requested (fig. 5). Often a single bill came together with up to six impressions, circular or oval, with or without letters and varying in size (from approximately fifty-five to twenty millimetres), which corresponded to seals intended for different functions: the 'large seal for letters patent', the 'large mid-sized seal', the 'mid-sized seal without letters', the 'small mid-sized seal',

and so on.⁸ Glued to the bill with an orange or white adhesive material (a thin layer of wax or flour) and made before the matrix was handed over to the owner for regular use, the paper seals are at present in a good state of conservation and still highly legible. Cited in the late 1980s in relation to the work of Girolamo Paladino as already being in their current location,⁹ these bills in all likelihood originally belonged to the *Giustificazioni di Tesoreria* collection, *Camerale I*,¹⁰ from which they were removed at an unknown date.¹¹ As can be seen from the modern inventory of the *Miscellanea Famiglie* and several pencil annotations in its margins from a revision of March 2009, this series was originally much more extensive and has suffered many serious losses over the years. This is one reason why an article that appeared in the Italian magazine *Dedalo* in 1925, which reported the collection to be in a perfect state of conservation, is particularly valuable, since it reproduces a number of dry seals that are now missing.¹²

These documents in the Archivio di Stato di



8. Paladino: *Pope Innocent VIII*, after 1664 and before 1689, silver, 45mm., Museo Nazionale del Bargello, Florence.



9. Pilaia: *Pope Innocent XI*, 1694, gilt bronze, 40.5mm., Museo Nazionale del Bargello, Florence.

Roma confirm the same 'hierarchy' in commissioning practices attested in Mola's letters. Girolamo Paladino's work on seals, conducted throughout the 1670s and in the early 1680s, can be seen in connection with the repetitiveness of the reverse sides of his papal series, which qualify him as a skilful craftsman but not as a brilliant or sophisticated designer or engraver of steel dies.¹³ It should also be remembered that his papal restitutions, produced as early as 1664, often feature coats of arms. This practice is a clear continuation of an iconography that was often adopted in fifteenth-century cast medal production (fig. 6) and which could easily be repeated on dies without the necessity of selecting a particular historical subject and creating *ex nihilo* a new composition. The frequency of heraldic devices on Paladino's papal series, executed in his sharper and more refined style, suggests that he was active as a seal-engraver even before the 1670s (figs 7, 8).¹⁴

What prevailed, however, judging by the Roman documents, was a generally different working situation from Paladino's. Gravitating



10. Detail of fig. 9.

for the most part around the city's two leading workshops in this sector (those of the Travani and Astesano families), seal-engravers tended to be specialised *sigillari*, who, as far as is known, did not do any parallel work as medallists. These included Andrea De Rossi (documented in 1656), Francesco Belli (1657), Domenico Angeloni (1668), Antonio Girolamo Pascucci (1676), Benedetto Damos (1673-96), Giovanni Borghini, Giovanni Agostino Battaglini (1715-21) and Gaetano Sevò (1724-41).¹⁵ Alternatively, they were like Antonio Pilaia (1696-1708), who also made and signed medals, perhaps using other artists' designs (figs 9, 10) but as a truly minor side line compared to their more extensive work in seals (fig. 11).¹⁶ Nonetheless, it is not improbable that the names of some of the authors of the vast production of seventeenth-century Roman medals for convents, confraternities and minor nobility, still anonymous today, might be hidden among the ranks of these *sigillari*, who were accustomed to not signing their works.

The boundaries are often blurred. The

11. Antonio Pilaia's bill for two seals for Cardinal Giuseppe Sacripante (detail), 1695, 268 x 268mm. (the seals 38 x 31mm. and 27 x 22mm.), Archivio di Stato, Rome.



personal histories of these seal-engravers sometimes intertwined with those of medallists through inheritance or changes in management, leading to their enriching workshops whose production and artistic potential grew increasingly complex. One exemplary case in this sense is that of Camillo Corradini (1579-1649), a seal-engraver active in the reign of Paul V and also Urban VIII, whose daughter Margherita married none other than Johann Andreas Hameran Hermanskircher, head of the Hamerani family in Rome.¹⁷ Recently, some medals cast during Urban's pontificate have been attributed to Corradini on the basis of documents and of formal qualities.¹⁸ One of these has on its reverse the coat of arms of Cardinal Girolamo Colonna, who is portrayed on the obverse. This is an iconography in line with the activity of engraving seals, into which it is hard to imagine that the skilled craftsman had not immediately initiated his grandson, Alberto Hamerani (1620-77; fig. 12), soon to be known as a talented medallist and the designer of alphabets in many languages. In the case of

first-rate engravers, such as the members of the Hamerani family, engraving seal matrices was a very secondary activity in the workshop compared to the main business of coins and medals. In his *Discorso* on the Roman family of engravers of around 1742-43, Ridolfino Venuti explicitly mentioned the production of seals only in relation to Beatrice. However, archival evidence (about which more below) shows that Giovanni Martino (and other descendants of his) also applied himself to seals, although not on a regular basis.¹⁹

At the same time it should be stressed that, as quintessential symbols of authority and thus objects that had to be carefully guarded against the risk of forgery,²⁰ seals most certainly held prime status in the bureaucratic society of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Italy, to the degree that there was a specific office associated with them in the papal court system. This was the *sigillaro di Palazzo*, a title under which the Camera documents that are known mention Antonio Astesano, who also made medals,²¹ and Gaetano Sevò (mentioned above), a seal-engrav-

er who was fairly prolific in the early eighteenth century, working both for the pope (Benedict XIII) and for a number of cardinals (Niccolò Coscia, Fabrizio Paolucci, Niccolò Maria Lercari, Antonio Banchieri, Prospero Marefoschi, Nicola del Giudice, Giovanni Antonio Guadagni),²² as well as for various governors of Rome and *camerlenghi*. Nor is it surprising that the creation of these matrices was delegated, even outside of Rome, only to engravers who could be fully trusted. In regard to the episode involving Mola, one might suspect that one of the reasons for leaving off further relations between the engraver and the Este family may have been the medallist's (maybe unwelcome) choice to travel with the seal and all related drawings to Parma, that is, to another court and a neighbouring one to boot. Similarly, one may suspect that asking one of the most famous Italian engravers of the time to make a seal of the young Francesco, that is of lesser importance than the much more authoritative ducal seal, was first and foremost a way for the client to test the medallist and his reliability in view of future, more delicate assignments. Lastly, the sophisticated workmanship of an engraving could also be considered a guarantee that the object would be impossible to reproduce (or forge), a fact that should be kept in mind in relation to something that emerges from both the Modenese agent's letter and Mola's attention to detail: seals, like medals and coins, were subject to a specific kind of aesthetic judgement ('[the seal] was greatly admired here [in Modena] and its quality duly praised'). In this specific case, since all freedom of invention was lacking, this was a frank assessment of the technical skill of the engraver.²³

Since they were often made by the same hands and played a similar public role in the society of the time, the production of seals in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries therefore seems to act as a significant counterpoint to the production of medals. Attention was drawn to this by Filippo Maria Bonini in a passage from *L'ateista convinto* of 1665. In a lively dialogue set in the Banchi (the street in Rome where Gaspare Mola and then Gaspare Morone, and many other medallists and goldsmiths in the early modern age, had their workshops), the two protagonists, Atelastrio and Filastrio, find themselves discussing seals, since the former is holding a pair of matrices.

Filas[trio]. ...Tell me, if it pleases you, where you've come from so early in the day!

Atelas[trio]. To tell you in a word, from [Giacchino Francesco] Travani, the engraver of medals

and seals, who is near [the palace of the Cardinal] Sforza.²⁴

Filas[trio]. He is my friend and a good virtuoso, and I wanted to be with him to see if he has made me a sketch for a new entrance, which I am contemplating on having opened above Ponte Sant'Angelo after it has been renovated.

[...]

Filas[trio]. What have you got in your hands?

Atelas[trio]. Two seals, one ancient, the other modern, made by Travani on the commission of that gentleman friend of mine, who is coming to Rome. You see that they are the same, only he has changed the crest into a cardinal's hat.

Filas[trio]. You do not speak according to the terms of art and you have made me understand that you do not know the blazonry, or, to speak Italian, the question of family arms, when this that you call a crest is a *casco*, that is, a little helmet.²⁵

Giacchino Francesco Travani was a key figure in both cast and struck seventeenth-century Roman medals (fig. 13), as well as an intelligent executor of Bernini's designs.²⁶ His activity as a *sigillaro* is confirmed by various documents of the time: from Costantino Bulgari's investigations at the Università degli Orefici up to payments from Cardinal Francesco Barberini, who on 30 October 1658 gave him '5 scudi for making a seal with arms of his Eminence',²⁷ as well as the bills cited above to the Apostolic Camera, related both to him and to various members of his family, the brothers Cesare and Giovan Pietro, and the younger Antonio.²⁸

The use of punches in engraving seals (a parallel to engraving dies for coins and medals), to which Atelastrio's intelligent observation alludes, is confirmed by the dry impressions that have survived in the Archivio di Stato, particularly the series of six 'large round seals for letters patent' made between 1726 and 1728 by Gaetano Sevò for Cardinal Niccolò Coscia.²⁹ Needed to distinguish the various offices assumed by Benedict XIII's favourite (prefect of the Memoriali, of the Consulta, of the Congregation of Loreto, of the Congregation of Avignon, and legate *a latere*), as well as the 'advances' in his ecclesiastic career (cardinal deacon of the titular church of S. Maria in Dominica and then also coadjutor archbishop of Benevento), the seals with the 'arms of the most excellent and most reverend cardinal Coscia, impaled with those of the pope' were made by Sevò using various kinds of punches: lettering of three different sizes, first of all, to specify the office for which the seal was intended; the same frame with a palmette border in all six impressions; and imagery with three types of cardi-



12. Alberto Hamerani: Cardinal Vincenzo Costaguti, 1647, silver, 41mm., Museo Nazionale del Bargello, Florence.

13. Travani: Pope Alexander VII, 1664, bronze, 63mm., Gabinetto Numismatico e Medagliere, Castello Sforzesco, Milan.

nal's hat and three differently shaped shields (fig. 14).³⁰ Expanding the comparison to include other works by Sevò preserved at the Archivio di Stato, the elegant range of ways in which the various elements are employed becomes apparent. Sometimes the entire field, with the arms, could remain the same, and all that would be changed was the legend around the perimeter. This does not occur in any of the six seals for Cardinal Coscia cited above, but can be seen in the same period in the matrices intended for the (less ambitious) Cardinal Niccolò Maria Lercari (1726-27). In other instances, the same model of shield or hat might recur even in seals intended for different prelates, filled in with the specific heraldic devices of the client.

This combination of different punches was finished off by the direct work of the engraver, who would vary, for example, the texturing of certain surfaces, the decorations at the edges of certain scrolls on the arms, or the relationship between the charges on the shield, making each matrix unique and not replicable, thereby fulfilling the high expectations of the mid-seventeenth century. The engraving, as Filastrio indicated in Bonini's *Ateista convinto*, not only had to be 'clean, well done and polished', but

the engraver's skill had to be such that, with the correct treatment of the surface, even the colours of the coat of arms could be made out, offsetting the monochrome of the metal.³¹ From a broader point of view, these requirements satisfied the taste for 'perfectly crafted detail' that had emerged in Roman Baroque medal-making, due above all to technological improvements in presses (which allowed medal sizes to be enlarged) and the, probably systematic, use of increasingly powerful magnifying glasses by artists. The same development can also be observed regarding the contemporary production of coins, for which, just as for seals, quality ended up becoming itself a guarantee of 'authenticity'. The fact that at that time all three types of objects (medals, coins and seals) were usually produced with the same technique (engraving matrices or dies) and by the same artists made it easier to meet shared standards.

One of the most beautiful coins of the late seventeenth century is a silver piastre made by Giovanni Martino Hamerani between 1677 and 1678 under Innocent XI. On the reverse is the façade of St Peter's, whilst on the obverse (instead of the portrait of the pope signed by the famous medallist, which is present in a



14. Sevò: Impressions of three seals for Cardinal Niccolò Coscia, 1726-28, paper, 55, 57 and 56mm., Archivio di Stato, Rome.

variant of the same coin) there is a splendid papal coat of arms of exquisite workmanship and with great freshness of engraving. This is evident in the foreshortening of the crossed keys, in the treatment of the metal surface, knurled or smooth, inside the shield, and in the naturalism of the movement of the tassels (fig. 15).³² An heraldic coat of arms also replaces a portrait on the obverse of a medal produced in the second half of the seventeenth century (fig. 16), which reuses, on the reverse, a view of the Villa Costaguti in Anzio from a die engraved by Alberto Hamerani in 1647 for Cardinal Vincenzo Costaguti (see fig. 12).³³ This hybrid was probably commissioned by the nephew of the high prelate, Giovanni Giorgio, Marquis of Sipicciano (1650-1703), to whom the coat of arms refers. He again sought the services of the Hamerani (Alberto, still alive, or his son Giovanni Martino), probably because the family of medallists still held the dies engraved for his uncle decades earlier or the punches used to make them. In any case, this is yet another clue to the excellent seal-engraving work done by the Hamerani workshop, probably by Giovanni Martino himself, and it is further discussed at the end of this essay in relation to the produc-

tion tools that were employed.

For seals too, punches were tools that became more cost-efficient the more they were used to engrave different matrices. The possession of such tools may also help to explain some of the accounts of commissions that would otherwise be difficult to put into context. Folder 181 of the *Miscellanea Famiglie* collection includes three payments, without dry impressions, connected to a group of seals engraved between 1679 and 1683 by Giovanni Martino Hamerani for Cardinal Alderano Cybo (figs 17, 18).³⁴ This small series was followed by at least one more payment dated 1687, also for a seal and also for the same prelate, which is no longer to be found at the Archivio di Stato but was mentioned in 1925 by Emilio Re in *Dedalo*.³⁵ In May 1679 the young medallist was expecting to be named *maestro de' ferri* at the Papal Mint, an appointment which took effect just a few months later, in September 1679. He was therefore not likely to be passed over for any significant commission, whether for medals or probably even for projects of 'lesser' importance such as seals.³⁶ The fact that for a span of almost ten years, Giovanni Martino, now the official and very powerful medallist to the pope, continued



15. Giovanni Martino Hamerani: *Piastre of Innocent XI*, 1677-78, silver, 44mm., Münzkabinett, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin.

to work for Cardinal Cybo, updating seals or creating them from scratch with every change in the cardinal's position or title, can be easily explained only by keeping in mind the factors of trust and material considerations that ended up firmly linking the client to his *sigillaro*, so long as the first job turned out well. Likewise, it is probable that Mola had also prepared punches for the seal of the young Francesco d'Este, and this might justify his hope, expressed in the exchange of letters, to continue working for the court in Modena.

Unlike dies for medals, which in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Rome usually remained in the engraver's hands because they could not be used without special presses, seal matrices (fig. 19) were always handed over to the client and used with the much more accessible screw presses and lever presses that did not require further work by the seal-maker.³⁷ While for subsequent jobs the presence of the punches at the workshop was of fundamental assistance, it was no less important for the engraver to preserve adequate visual documentation of the finished works, for instance with a dry impression of the seal, as was customary in payment requests of the time. This is confirmed



16. Hamerani workshop: *Giovanni Giorgio Costaguti*, after 1664 and before 1703, bronze, 41.5mm., Museo Nazionale del Bargello, Florence.

by the estate inventory of Giovanni Martino Hamerani. The home of the famous engraver, alongside various cases holding the wax models for medals and coins, also contained 'twelve frames filled with impressions of seals, of different sizes, with glass in front [and] six frames filled with small impressions of seals'.³⁸ These could in part have been the origin of the *Sigilli a secco* group now in the *Sigilli e timbri* collection at the Archivio di Stato di Roma, the potential of which has, to the knowledge of the present author, not been fully tapped by studies related to the Hamerani family.

Heavily rearranged in the early twentieth century, when each impression was glued onto modern cardboard and each card supplied with new captions, this collection of seals affixed onto paper currently comprises 766 pieces, divided into various series of ecclesiastic figures, private individuals and institutions. According to the Archivio di Stato di Roma inventory, the collection was acquired by the Italian state in 1889 'as seal impressions made in Rome by the Hamerani brothers in the 16th and 17th centuries for leading families, cardinals and high prelates',³⁹ although its chronological range, from the 1620s to at least the 1860s (by

17. Giovanni Martino
Hamerani: *Impression of a seal for Cardinal Alderano Cybo*, 1679, paper, 41 x 37mm., Archivio di Stato, Rome.



18. Giovanni Martino
Hamerani: *Impression of a seal for Cardinal Alderano Cybo*, 1687, paper, 43 x 38mm., Archivio di Stato, Rome.



which time the Roman workshop had already been dismantled),⁴⁰ confirms that its genesis was anything but uniform and suggests that a degree of caution must be applied in interpreting the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century impressions as the direct result of Hamerani seal-making activity. This fact is also borne out by several specific examples.

The collection contains, for example, an impression of a seal made in 1687 for Alderano Cybo by Giovanni Martino (Sigilli a secco, no. 119). This is confirmed by a comparison with the photographic documentation in *Dedalo*. There is also another paper impression (Sigilli a secco, no. 118) of equally fine quality, which can be seen to correspond with the matrix engraved by the medallist in 1679 for the same cardinal, given that the legend ALDERANVS. EPVS. PRAENESTINVS. S.R.E. CARD. CYBO (Alderano Cybo, bishop of Palestrina, cardinal of the Holy Roman Church) exactly matches the one transcribed on the aforementioned payment request still found in the Archivio di Stato di Roma (see figs 17, 18). Nor is it unlikely that the five other Cybo impressions currently

19. Seal matrix for Andrea Giustiniani, prince of Bassano, c.1645, case-hardened iron, 100 x 39 x 32mm., Archivio di Stato, Rome.




in the Sigilli a secco collection can be attributed to Giovanni Martino (nos 113-16). In the same collection, however, one paper impression can definitely be attributed to Antonio Astesano and not to a member of the Hamerani family (Sigilli a secco, no. 571). That this is from the seal that this medallist made in 1684 for Cardinal Francesco Negrone can be seen from the impression, identical in all ways (in iconography, legend and dimensions),⁴¹ that is still glued to the maker's request for reimbursement, now in file 181 of *Miscellanea Famiglie* (figs 20, 21).⁴² The quality of the engraving, the state of conservation of the matrix in both examples, and the type of paper employed suggest that the two impressions are perfectly coeval, that is, both from the late seventeenth century.

Many plausible hypotheses can be made about the Sigilli a secco collection at the Archivio di Stato and how it was formed. Among these, the possibility should not be dismissed that part of the collection acquired in 1889 actually came from the Hamerani workshop, which could have collected various series of impressions from other seal-makers between the late

20. Astesano: *Impression of a seal for Cardinal Francesco Negrone*, 1684, paper, 33 x 28mm., Archivio di Stato, Rome.



21. Detail of fig. 5.

1600s and early 1700s. As can be seen from the discovery of Giovanni Martino's estate inventory, the medallist was careful over the course of his life to accumulate various objects by other artists, from dies for medals to terracottas and bronzes, all the way to drawings and paintings. That the same interest was devoted to seals and the important visual evidence of them on paper cannot be ruled out. 

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NOTES

1. On the engraver, see recently Lucia Simonato, 'Mola, Gaspare', *Dizionario biografico degli italiani*, lxxv (Rome, 2011), pp. 298-302 (with bibliography); Andrea Di Lorenzo, *Il Crocifisso d'oro del Museo Poldi Pezzoli, Giambologna e Gasparo Mola* (Trento, 2011). See also Adriano Amendola, *Ritratti di bronzo. Il Medagliere Orsini dei Musei Capitolini di Roma* (Rome, 2017), pp. 100-112, 167-9.
2. Modena, Archivio di Stato (henceforth ASMo), Archivio per Materie, Belle Arti, file 11/1; letter probably sent from Parma, now without the impression: 'Molto illustre signore. Dal signore ambasciatore di Modena, che risiede in Firenze, mi fu ordinato che io facessi un sigillo della impronta che [è] qui inclusa, per il principe Francesco, e doppio fatto e pagato l'[h]anno rimand[al]to a Firenze, per non esser l'arme fatta con quella fassa di mezzo, dove si fanno le chiavi e mitra pappale, il qual errore non seguì per mio mancament[en]to, ma perché mi fu così ordinato dal suddetto signore ambasciatore. Nell'istesso tempo che fui chiamato per rassestarlo ero in procinto per venire a Parma, chiamato da queste altezze [Farnese] [e] così comandatomi anche dal granduca, e per soddisfare alla giusta richiesta del suddetto signor ambasciatore portai meco il sigillo per assettarlo, il quale non è del tutto finito, perché dubito di novo errore, perché mi fu mostrato un impronta fatto dalli sigilli di costi, che non vi ho visto quei triangolini o schachi che stano attorno alli tre gilli, come dal presente scizzo [sic] si vede. Però, signor mio, vostra signoria mi faci favore di mandarmi la risposta e con essa li stessa impronta che qui

incluso gli mando, se ci vogliono essere intagliati detti scacchi o no, che io subito lo spedirò del tutto e lo invierò a vostra signoria. Intanto gli prego da Nostro Signore Iddio vera felicità, e gli bacio le mane. Questo dì, 14 di dicembre 1622. U[milissi]mo servitore, Gasparo Mola'. Mola was in Parma, presumably for a new type of coin commissioned by Odoardo I Farnese; see Emanuela Ercolani Cocchi, 'L'ispirazione classica nella monetazione farnesiana per Parma e Piacenza fra XVI e XVII secolo', *Bollettino di numismatica*, liv (2010), pp. 217-58, at pp. 219, 228-9.

3. ASMo, Archivio per Materie, Belle Arti, file 11/1; letter without the impression: 'Molto illustre signore. Dal presente latore gli mando il sigillo del serenissimo signor principe Francesco. Ho poi risolto quello che a me è paruto più espediente, e vega dall'impronta qua sotto la riuscita che fa. Io non l'[h]o potuto mandar prima. Se occorre altro, vostra signoria comandi. Il signor ambasciatore che sta appresso al granduca mi disse che quelle altezze di Modena ne hanno di bisogno di certi altri sigilli minori. Se mi sarà mandata la misura e la qualità come devo essere, la servirò mentre starò qui in Parma, e perché credo che forsi sarò sbrigato a mezzo il presente mese in circa, se vostra signoria mi scriverà, io passando per ritorno a Firenze, farò moto a lei, che costì intenderò meglio la volontà di quei serenissimi. Io intanto gli fo riverenza e gli bacio le mani. Di Parma, questo dì, 5 di genaro 1623. U[milissi]mo per servirla, ser[vito]re Gasparo Mola.'
4. The letter, written by Curzio Picchena to Averardo di Raffaello de' Medici di Castellina

on 21 February 1626, is housed in the Archivio di Stato of Florence (Mediceo del Principato, f. 4954). See in particular the following passage: ‘Gasparo Mola si trovava in Roma già molti mesi sono, chiamato dal papa [Urbano VIII] il quale lo tiene occupato continuamente. Et sarà quasi impossibile che egli possa pigliare a fare quest’altri lavori. Et quando gli pigli, sarà huomo da durare qualche’anno a finirli.’ Shortly before, on 10 January 1626, the ambassador had promoted the commission (Mediceo del Principato, f. 4953), collecting all the instructions and in particular ‘un disegno in mezzo foglio, perchè Gasparo Mola possa intender meglio in figura maggiore, quello che sarebbe difficile a intendersi nelle impronte minori con le molte cifere et lettere che vi sono d’attorno. Si desiderano poi tre sigilli della grandezza et forma delle tre mostre che si mandano et che tenghino più rilievo che sia possibile ... i due maggiori hanno da esser d’acciaio et il minore d’argento.’ Despite Picchena’s fears, the larger seal arrived in Spain at the end of April of the same year, receiving praise from the court and raising hopes for the rapid despatch of the smaller ones, as reported in two other letters from Averardo de’ Medici di Castellina dated 25 April and 2 May (Mediceo del Principato, f. 4953). All the documentation relating to this episode has been transcribed in the Medici Archive Project database (<https://www.medici.org/>). Mola was invited to Rome at the request of Urban VIII, thanks to the mediation of Cardinal Francesco Barberini and at the suggestion of the painter Domenico Cresti da Passignano; see

Oskar Pollak, ‘Italienische Künstlerbriefe aus der Barockzeit’, *Jahrbuch der Königlich Preussischen Kunstsammlungen*, xxxiv (1913), Beiheft, pp. 1-77, at pp. 37-9.

5. ASMO, Archivio per Materie, Belle Arti, file 11/1: ‘12 gennaio 1623. All’intagliator Gasparo Mola per serv[iz]io del serenissimo signor principe. Ho avuto il sigillo del serenissimo signor principe Francesco, mio signore, ch’ella mi ha inviato, il qual è piaciuto qui assai e n’è stata data la debita lode al valor suo. Quanto agl’altri che volentieri si sarebbero havuti anch’essi di sua mano, il bisogno ha affrettato a fargli fare e vedendo lei occupata, con pensiero che si avesse a trattenerne in cotesti lavori più tempo senza poter dar questi alta soddisfazione, s’è preso partito di havergli più prestamente da altra banda, come si è potuto. Il che essendo quanto ho da dirle in risposta della sua lettera, mi pronto per sempre in servizio suo, nel qual haverò a cari ogni occlusio[n]e che ella mi darà di impiegarmi, e le prego da Nostro Signore prosperità e contento. Modena.’ Unfortunately, the letters do not contain information that would help identify the correspondent from Modena, who was probably a courtier at the service of Francesco.

6. It should be remembered that it was precisely Gaspare Mola, under Urban VIII, who began to insist on signing or initialling even his coins; Lucia Simonato, *Impronta di sua santità’. Urbano VIII e le medaglie* (Pisa, 2008), pp. 56-7, n. 45.

7. As Domenico Fedini, a member of the Orsini entourage, was forced to do in the same period in Rome; see Rome, Archivio Storico Capitolino, Archivio Orsini,

first series, 165/1, no. 128, fol. 1r (‘inviai a vostra eccellenza [Paolo Giordano II Orsini], otto giorni sono il sigillo da lettere della signora principessa [Isabella Appiano], dove la parola “Brac.” è pure abbreviata con un solo C; et essendo stato dal maestro ho trovato che l’errore lo feci io in presenza di vostra eccellenza, mentre gli distesi tutte le parole in caratteri romani, non s’essendo egli discostato da quello esempio, se bene io crederei che potessi dividermi anche quella sillaba con un C solo, havendolo fatto gl’antiqui [...]. In questi due grandi [sigilli] vedrà vostra eccellenza il C raddoppiato e particolarmente nel suo, che le invio stasera per la via di Siena [...]. Roma, li 30 di luglio 1621’), previously published in Carla Benocci, *Paolo Giordano II Orsini nei ritratti di Bernini, Boselli, Leoni e Kornmann* (Rome, 2006), p. 31, n. 110. For more on Orsini’s seals in the early 1600s, see also Amendola, *Ritratti di bronzo*, pp. 114-15, 291-3. See Antonio Pilaia’s bill for the seals produced for Cardinal Giuseppe Sacripante; Rome, Archivio di Stato, Miscellanea Famiglie, Sigillari romani, env. 181, file 9, unit 2: ‘sigillo grande da patente’, ‘sigillo mezzano grande’, ‘sigillo mezzano senza lettere’, ‘sigillo mezzanello’. Requests for payment for eighteenth-century seals, some with impressions, are also preserved in the ‘Palazzo Apostolico. Computisteria’ series of the Vatican Apostolic Archive (henceforth AAV).

9. Adolfo Modesti, ‘La serie papale di restituzione di Girolamo Paladino’, *Medaglia*, xvi (1988), 23, pp. 7-57, esp. pp. 12-14, 23. For many examples of these paper seals of the 16th-18th centuries, affixed by means

of an orange ‘ostia’ (a thin layer of flour), see Luca Becchetti, *I sigilli dell’Archivio Segreto Vaticano: nuove ricerche sfragistiche* (Vatican City, 2013); also Josef Grisar and Fernando de Lasala, *Aspetti della sigillografia: tipologia, storia, materia e valore giuridico dei sigilli* (Rome, 1997), p. 54.

10. This archive also contains other similar bills from seal-engravers. See, for example, Rome, Archivio di Stato (henceforth ASR), Camerale I, Giustificazioni di Tesoreria, env. 372, file 13 (1712) and env. 669, file 8 (1741), as kindly pointed out by Antonella Pampalone.

11. On this deposit and the lack of clarity surrounding its formation, see Elio Lodolini, ‘La formazione dell’Archivio di Stato di Roma (nascita travagliata di un grande istituto)’, *Archivio della Società romana di storia patria*, ic (1976), pp. 237-332, at p. 316; Edvige Aleandri Barletta, ‘Un problema posto dalle Istruzioni per la Guida generale degli archivi di Stato: la scomposizione della *Miscellanea famiglie* conservata presso l’Archivio di Stato di Roma’, *Rassegna degli Archivi di Stato*, xxxii (1972), pp. 9-26.

12. Emilio Re, ‘Stemmi e sigilli romani del Seicento e del Settecento’, *Dedalo*, vi (1925-26), 3, pp. 598-613. The author does not indicate the exact location in the Archivio di Stato of the collection at the time, but it is clearly the same group of documents. For example, the impressions of the two seals (a large circular seal and a mid-sized oval one) for Cardinal Niccolò Coscia’s prefecture of the Congregation of Avignon, engraved by Gaetano Sevò, at ASR, Miscellanea Famiglie (henceforth MF), folder 181, file 9, unit 3

(payment request of 8 October 1726), are the same as those reproduced in Re, ‘Stemmi e sigilli romani’, p. 612.

13. ASR, MF, env. 181, file 9, unit 2, n.n. (1673 and 1682): ‘per diversi sigilli fatti da lui [Girolamo Paladino] di nuovo e raggiustati’. See Modesti, ‘La serie papale’, pp. 12-14.

14. See Adolfo Modesti, *Corpus numismatum omnium Romanorum pontificum*, 6 vols (Rome, 2002-18), *passim*, and esp. i (2002), pp. 75, 78; ii (2003), pp. 238-9; v (2015), pp. 160-64; Giuseppe Toderi and Fiorenza Vannel, *Medaglie italiane del Museo Nazionale del Bargello di Firenze*, 4 vols (Florence, 2003-07), ii, p. 75, nos 610, 612.

15. See ASR, MF, env. 181 and 182, *passim*. The years given in parentheses in the text above are the years of activity that the documents attest to for each seal-engraver. In the case of Sevò, the last date is confirmed by ASR, Camerale I, Giustificazioni di Tesoreria, env. 669, file 8. See Leandro Ozzola, ‘L’arte alla corte di Alessandro VII’, *Archivio della R. Società Romana di Storia Patria*, xxxi (1908), pp. 5-92, at p. 67 (Belli, with activity also documented until 1660, and De Rossi, with activity starting in 1655); Re, ‘Stemmi e sigilli romani’, pp. 604-5 (Battaglini), 608-9 (Damos, with activity also documented until 1706), 612 (which has Sevò’s production starting in 1722); Costantino Bulgari, *Argentieri, gemmari e orafi d’Italia. Notizie storiche e raccolta dei loro contrasti con la riproduzione grafica dei punzoni individuali e dei punzoni di stato, Prima parte: Roma* (Rome, 1958-59), i, pp. 61 (Angeloni), 116 (Battaglini), 123 (Belli), 395 (De Rossi); ii, pp. 237 (Pascucci),

400 (Sevò). Documents on Sevò and Battaglini are also preserved in AAV, Palazzo Apostolico. Computisteria, eg. no. 327, cc. 298r-299v, and cc. 302r-303v (by Gaetano Sevò, dated 1737).

16. ASR, MF, env. 181, file 9, unit 2 (1696); env. 182, file 1, unit 1 (1708). See Bulgari, *Argentieri*, ii, p. 283 (Pilaia). For example, in 1694 this engraver from Messina, who worked for years alongside Antonio Atestano, made a medal for Innocent XII with the Ospizio di San Michele a Ripa Grande on the reverse. He also signed a piece for the same pope in 1688 with a papal ceremony on the reverse. See L. Forrer, *Biographical dictionary of medallists*, 6 vols (London, 1904-30), iv, p. 536; Toderi and Vannel, *Medaglie italiane*, ii, p. 101, nos 846-8.

17. Simonato, *Impronta di sua santità’*, pp. 30, 52, n. 22.

18. Simonato, *Impronta di sua santità’*, pp. 289-92; Camilla Parisi, ‘Dal busto alla medaglia, e ritorno. Profili stilistici e iconografici a Roma tra Seicento e primo Settecento’, in Lucia Simonato (ed.), *La collezione di medaglie Mario Scaglia*, 2 vols (Milan, 2020), i, pp. 141-54, at pp. 148-9.

19. Serafina Pennestrì, ‘All’insegna della lupa. Il patrimonio della bottega, Hamerani in due documenti dell’Archivio di Stato di Roma’, *Rivista Italiana di Numismatica*, cx (2009), pp. 437-78, at p. 455. For the passage from Venuti, see Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Vat. Lat. 7292, fols 250r-3v, at fol. 252r: ‘ella modellò in cera lodevolmente, ed intagliò in acciaio quantità grande di sigilli e di medaglie di devozione con esempio certamente raro e forse unico in una donna trattandosi d’una professione tanto difficile’. In this regard, see Lucia Simo-

nato, ‘Giovanni Martino Hamerani: artista e collezionista’, in Lucia Simonato (ed.), *Le arti a dialogo. Medaglie e medagliati tra Quattro e Settecento* (Pisa, 2014), pp. 231-67, 297-305, at pp. 254-56, n. 11, and bibliography. It should be borne in mind that in 1681 Giovanni Martino received the title of *sigillaro e medagliaro* from the Congregation of Goldsmiths; see Bulgari, *Argentieri*, ii, p. 10. Alberto was paid for making seals for Alexander VII in 1666; Ozzola, ‘L’arte alla corte di Alessandro VII’, p. 67.

20. In this regard see Grisar and Lasala, *Aspetti della sigillografia*, pp. 76-85.

21. ASR, MF, env. 181, file 9, unit 1, n.n., from 1668 to 1684, to be supplemented with Re, ‘Stemmi e sigilli romani’, pp. 606-7. See also Ozzola, ‘L’arte alla corte di Alessandro VII’, p. 67; Bulgari, *Argentieri*, i, p. 79; Antonino Bertolotti, *Artisti subalpini in Roma nei secoli XV, XVI e XVII. Ricerche e studi negli archivi romani* (Mantua, 1884), pp. 223-6; Simonato, *Impronta di sua santità’*, p. 56, n. 44; p. 102, n. 20; pp., 313-14, with bibliography.

22. Paper seals of Coscia, Guadagni, Lercari and Del Giudice are published, without indication of their authors, in Becchetti, *I sigilli dell’Archivio Segreto Vaticano*, pp. 91, 236, 388, 434.

23. See Benocci, *Paolo Giordano II Orsini*, pp. 18, 31-32, for a number of comments on seals by Paolo Giordano II Orsini.

24. This is probably the present Palazzo Sforza Cesarini, inhabited until 1624 by Cardinal Francesco Sforza, as confirmed by documents relating to a case involving Gioacchino Francesco Travani at the end of February 1664, in ASR, Miscellanea Artisti, file 2, unit 187: ‘essendo io [Michelangelo Bizzari] andato una mattina

con il signor Giovanni Francesco Guerieri alla bottega di un sigillaro posta contro il palazzo del signore cardinale Sforza, detto signore Giovanni Francesco non vi vedendo dentro alcuno bussò sopra il banco dove si lavora e subito calò in bottega un giovane con un poco di filo di barba, al quale detto signor Guerieri dimandò chi era il Travano e rispondendo egli sono io [perhaps he was Gioacchino Francesco’s son, given his young age], gli disse queste precise parole ...’. The dispute arose around four seals by Travani, commissioned by a certain don Placido, a Polish Benedictine monk. Not only had the artist made only two seals on time and not four, but those completed had been ‘very badly made’ (‘molto mal fatti’) and with ‘many errors’ (‘molti errori’) in the letters. Nor did a one-week extension of the delivery time make for any improvement. In the documents, some peculiarities in the manner of conducting the commission also emerge. To avoid errors, the coats of arms had been based on ‘models’ (‘esempi’) present inside some volumes kept in Travani’s workshop and the letters had been written by the client and then re-written by the artist: ‘Non fosse tant’aggravio de vostri errori che commetteste della ignoranza nella vostra arte, se non haveste havuto tutti l’esempi di quelle quattro arme nelli vostri libri. Ve le segnai colla penna. Le lettere pur ho scritto con propria mano: e di più non confidando a vuoi, ricercai che me le scriveste colla vostra mano.’ Despite these precautions, the work had turned out to be ‘amateurish’ (‘ragazzesco’). For the workshop of a Roman seal-engraver in the early eighteenth century, see the caricature of Giovanni

Perace, seal-maker and coral carver, made by Pier Leone Ghezzi in 1718; Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Ott. Lat. 3112, c. 143r. In the background of the drawing are some glass cabinets where objects made by Perace are displayed.

25. Filippo Maria Bonini, *L’ateista convinto* (Venezia 1665), pp. 421-3: ‘Filas[trio]. Dimmi, se ti aggrada, donde vieni così di buon’hora! / Atelas[trio]: A dirtela in una parola, dal [Gioacchino Francesco] Travani Intagliatore di Medaglie e Sigilli, che sta vicino a Sforza. / Filas[trio]. È mio amico, ed è un buon virtuoso, et io voleva esser appunto da lui, per vedere, se mi ha fatto un disegnuccio d’un nuovo ingresso, che vo meditando di far aprire sopra ponte Sant’Angelo doppo che sarà riformato. / ... / Filas[trio]. Che hai nelle mani? / Atelas[trio]. Due sigilli, l’uno antico, l’altro moderno, fatti fare al Travani per commissione di quel mio gentil’huomo amico, che viene in Roma. Vedi che sono lo stesso, solo che ha mutato il cimiere in un cappello prelatitio. / Filas[trio]. Non parli secondo i termini dell’arte, e m’hai fatto avvedere, che non t’intendi della blasoneria, o per parlar italiano del mestiere dell’armi delle famiglie, mentre questo che addimandi cimiere, è il casco, cioè un elmetto.’ See Franca Marré Brunenghi, ‘Un autore dimenticato: Filippo Maria Bonini’, *Atti della Società Ligure di Storia Patria*, n.s., xxxvi (1996), 2, pp. 305-24; Tomaso Montanari, ‘Roma 1665: il rovescio della medaglia. L’Ateista convinto dalle sole ragioni dell’abate Filippo Maria Bonini’, *Ricerche di storia dell’arte*, xcvi (2008), pp. 41-56; Simonato, *Impronta di sua santità’*, pp. 12, 129-30. The book was placed on

the Index of prohibited Books and was much criticised for its widespread maliciousness; see Giovanni Battista Pacichelli, *Memorie de’ viaggi per l’Europa christiana, scritte a diversi in occasione de’ suoi ministeri*, 4 vols (Naples, 1685), iii, *ad indicem* (‘Bonini abate Filippo Maria’): ‘Aggiugni, ch’ei fu huomo assai maldicente nel parlare e scrivere, e si vede nel suo *Atheista convinto*, dove maltratta con poco giuditio diversi curiali, architetti et altri in Roma, proibito con rigore. Però, chiestasi da un giovane permission di leggerlo al padre Libelli, maestro del sagra palazzo, hoggi arcivescovo di Avignone, glie la concesse a condition, che lo leggesse due volte, havendo per certo che alla metà della prima lettura fosse per divenirne stomacato.’ Pacichelli met Bonini in 1676 in Vienna, where he had become chaplain to the empress Eleonore Magdalene of Neuburg (Pacichelli, *Memorie*, iii, p. 39).

26. See Lucia Simonato, ‘Nella bottega di Bernini: Gioacchino Francesco Travani e le due medaglie Cornaro’, in Lucia Simonato (ed.), *La collezione di medaglie Mario Scaglia*, i, pp. 222-5, with bibliography. Travani received his licence as a seal-maker in 1634; see Bulgari, *Argentieri*, ii, p. 482 (and Ozzola, ‘L’arte alla corte di Alessandro VII’, p. 68). From 1646 onwards he produced medals for Innocent X and Alexander VII, some of them with the papal coat of arms; Walter Miselli, *Il papato dal 1605 al 1669 attraverso le medaglie* (Pavia, 2003), pp. 346, 455, 523.

27. Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Giustificazioni 7801-7892, no. 7816, fol. 76r, under the heading ‘spese diverse’ for October 1658: ‘5 [scudi] moneta ... per haver fatto un

- sigillo con arme di sua eminenza, per servizio della segreteria; 5 [scudi] moneta ... per haver fatto un sigillo con arme di sua eminenza, per servizio della segreteria'. See Bulgari, *Argentieri*, ii, p. 482.
28. ASR, MF, env. 182, file 1, unit 2, for the work of Gioacchino Francesco Travani (1671), Cesare Travani (1675-76) and Giovanni Pietro Travani (1671-96), supplemented by Re, 'Stemmi e sigilli romani', pp. 599-604. ASR, MF, env. 181, file 9, unit 2, for Antonio Travani (1715). See Bulgari, *Argentieri*, ii, pp. 481-2, with references also to the medal-making activities of various members of this family, in regard to which see also Forrer, *Biographical dictionary of medallists*, vi, pp. 128-30. According to Eleonora Giampiccolo ('Gioacchino Francesco Travani e i suoi discendenti', *Historia Mundi*, iv, 2014, pp. 202-19, at pp. 215-18), Cesare and Giovan Pietro were the sons of Gioacchino Francesco, while Antonio was their cousin. For more on Antonio Travani as a medallist, see Amendola, *Ritratti di bronzo*, pp. 269-70. On the Travani as engravers of matrices for *agnus dei*, see Anne Lepoittevin, 'Picciolini, piccolini et piccioli', *Archives de sciences sociales des religions*, lxxiii (2018), 183, pp. 87-118.
29. ASR, MF, env. 181, file 9, unit 3: 'grande da patente tondo'.
30. ASR, MF, env. 181, file 9, unit 3: 'l'arme dell'ecellentissimo e reverendissimo cardinal Coscia, interzata con quella del papa'.
31. Bonini, *L'ateista convinto*, p. 423: 'Filas[trio]. L'intaglio è netto, ben fatto, e polito; ma non ha inditiato il Travani i colori. / Atelas[trio]. Come sarebbe a dire? / Filas[trio]. Che non ha distinto con l'intaglio la diversità de' colori,

che sono necessarisimi all'arte del Blason. / Atelas[trio]. Tu mi fai ridere, come vuoi, ch'in un sigillo di ferro spicchino i colori?'. The reference here seems to be to the technique of monochromatic representation of colours proposed by the Jesuit Silvestro Pietrasanta in *Tesseræ gentilitiæ* (Rome, 1638).

32. The silver piastre illustrated here is Berlin, Staatliche Museen, Münzkabinett, inv. no. 18225394 (weight 31.94 g); <https://ikmk.smb.museum/object?id=18225394> (accessed 22 June 2022). On the obverse are the papal coat of arms and the legend INNOCEN. XI. PONT. M. A. II (Pope Innocent XI, year 2). On the reverse are the façade of St. Peter's and the legend PORTAE. INFERI. NON. PRAEVALEBVNT (The gates of hell shall not prevail), with the initials I H for Giovanni (Martino) Hamerani and in the exergue ROMAE. In the same collection there is also a piece with the papal portrait: inv. no. 18225393; <https://ikmk.smb.museum/object?id=18225393>.

33. See Toderi and Vannel, *Medaglie italiane*, ii, p. 64, nos 528 and 530, the second of which is wrongly dated 1647. Adolfo Modesti ('La medaglia pontificia della *Lavanda dei piedi*', *Rivista Italiana di Numismatica*, cviii (2007), pp. 467-80, at p. 474) proposes that the die with the coat of arms (unsigned) was also engraved by Alberto Hamerani. On the marquis, see Filippo Clementi, *Il carnevale romano nelle cronache contemporanee* (Rome, 1890), p. 488, and Patrizio Barbieri, 'Harpichords and spinets in late Baroque Rome', *Early Music*, xl (2012), 1, pp. 55-72, at p. 66, with a reference to his death inventory preserved in Rome (ASR, Not.

A.C., file 954, fols 379r-524v, 15 March 1703).

34. Pennestri, 'All'insegna della lupa', p. 455.
35. Re, 'Stemmi e sigilli romani', p. 599, where are also published the impressions that (in this case) had been attached *ab antiquo* to the record.
36. Simonato, 'Giovanni Martino Hamerani', p. 301.
37. Rome, Archivio Storico Capitolino, Archivio Orsini, 1st series, 169/3, no. 75, fol. 1r: 'e perché la strettoia che è in segreteria come ella haverà potuto vedere altre volte è molto piccola, et a proposito a pena per i sigilli piccoli, desideriamo che quanto prima ne facciate fare una, che sia grande da poter abbracciare et imprimere bene questi nuovi sigilli grandi da patenti'. Previously published in Benocci, *Paolo Giordano Il Orsini*, p. 31, n. 110. See also ASR, Camerale I, Giustificazioni di Tesoreria, b. 372, fasc. 13, with Cesare Travani's bill of 1712 for the 'accommodatura di un torchio de lettere dell'eminentissimo cardinal Albani. Per aver rifatte le piastre del sudetto torchio più grosse di quelle che c[']era per volere del signor Contini architetto della Reverenda Camera Apostolica'.
38. Simonato, 'Giovanni Martino Hamerani', p. 301: 'dodici cornici piene d'impronti di sigilli, di diverse grandezze, con li vetri davanti [and] sei cornici ripiene d'impronti di sigilli piccole'. See n. 24 above for the reference to the models of coats of arms available in some volumes housed in the workshop of Travani (ASR, Miscellanea Artisti, file 2, unit 187: 'Isempi di quelle quattro arme nelli vostri libri').
39. The inventory, drawn up by Maria Grazia Ruggiero Pastura in 1974, states that, 'nel 1889 furono inoltre compilate circa un migliaio

di impronte di sigilli "coniate in Roma dai fratelli Hamerani nei secc. XVI e XVII per le principali famiglie, per i cardinali e per gli altri prelati" ... qui la relazione [in ASR, Archivio della Direzione, tit. VI, 1906, b. 308] si riferisce certamente ai sigilli aderenti di carta – già nel 1906 erano state in parte classificate e riunite in "apposite quadri che formano oggetto di special curiosità ed interesse."

40. Simonato, 'Giovanni Martino Hamerani', p. 238.

41. 34 x 29mm., both with a border of foliage.

42. ASR, MF, env. 181, file 9, unit 1.

'Admired for their Rare Sheen'

Medals in honour of Queen Ulrika Eleonora the Elder *Simon McKeown*

IN JULY 1755 the Swedish statesman and patron of arts and sciences Count Carl Gustaf Tessin wrote a letter from his estate of Åkerö in Södermanland to his one-time charge, the nine-year-old Crown Prince Gustav of Sweden. In it, Tessin addressed his former tutee, the future Gustavus III, on the subject of medals, an area of artistic endeavour in which he was knowledgeable as both collector and connoisseur. In particular, Tessin reminded the prince of the role played by medals in furthering the glory and reputation of rulers and royal houses, and of their capacity to speak to posterity: 'The chief design of history is to perpetuate the memory of princes; but as that is a work of time, it has ever been the business of grateful subjects to invent more immediate methods to immortalise the great actions of their kings by erecting monuments and impressing medals.' In the creation of the latter, Tessin avers, Sweden has not been behindhand; indeed, in his view,

Our Swedish medals are by no means unworthy of a place in the best collection, not only on account of the actions which they commemorate, but also for the great skill with which they are executed. For the first, we are obliged to our many excellent monarchs, and for the latter, to those incomparable artists who were thus employed.¹

The happy confluence of worthy subject matter and skilled artistry described by Tessin is eloquently attested by a body of medals celebrating one of Sweden's outstanding royal figures, Queen Ulrika Eleonora the Elder (1656-93). Although born as Princess of Denmark and dying as Queen of Sweden, Ulrika Eleonora's name does not resonate as loudly outside Scandinavia as those of other seventeenth-century royal figures, such as Gustavus Adolphus, Charles XII or Queen Christina. But like Christina, Ulrika Eleonora became in her lifetime, and for some years after, the subject of concerted medallic invention. Indeed, Ulrika Eleonora stood as inspiration for a corpus of medals in honour of a queen second only in scale to that of

Christina, despite her royal tenure being abbreviated by her early death at the age of thirty-six. Unlike Christina, however, Ulrika Eleonora did not initiate her own *histoire métallique*, nor is there evidence that she played any part in the development of her personal iconography; on the contrary, the historical record speaks of a woman reticent and reluctant in the practice of self-promotion. This means that the figure of Ulrika Eleonora presented through her medals offers little insight into her private nature, but appears rather as an idealised social and public construct expressed with Baroque magniloquence. Of course, it would be unwise to expect an intimate portrait of the queen in the idiom of the medal, a public and proclamatory medium created close to the centre of power. But it would be equally imprudent to see the body of medallic work in her honour in isolation from its wider cultural context, a general panegyric programme that shaped the queen's public reception through poetry, oratory, painting and sculpture. One aim of this article is to introduce some of the key medals struck in acclaim of this seventeenth-century royal consort; another is to explore the political imperative behind presenting her person to the public in the authoritative mode of the medal with such invention and insistence.

Ulrika Eleonora was born in Copenhagen, daughter to King Fredrik III of Denmark and his wife Sofia Amalia of Brunswick-Calenburg, and as sister to Christian V, who ascended the Danish throne in 1670.² As princess of a royal house, she was educated with an eye to the graces that would equip her for an advantageous dynastic marriage; accordingly, Ulrika Eleonora became fluent in German and French, and was later to learn Swedish. Her proficiency in languages fostered a liking for reading, particularly in the *belles lettres* of Bourbon France; but she also cultivated an intense personal piety inflected by the *Frömmigkeitsbewegung* movement within German Lutheranism. She was, moreover, interested in the visual arts, and received tuition in drawing and