

## CHAPTER TEN

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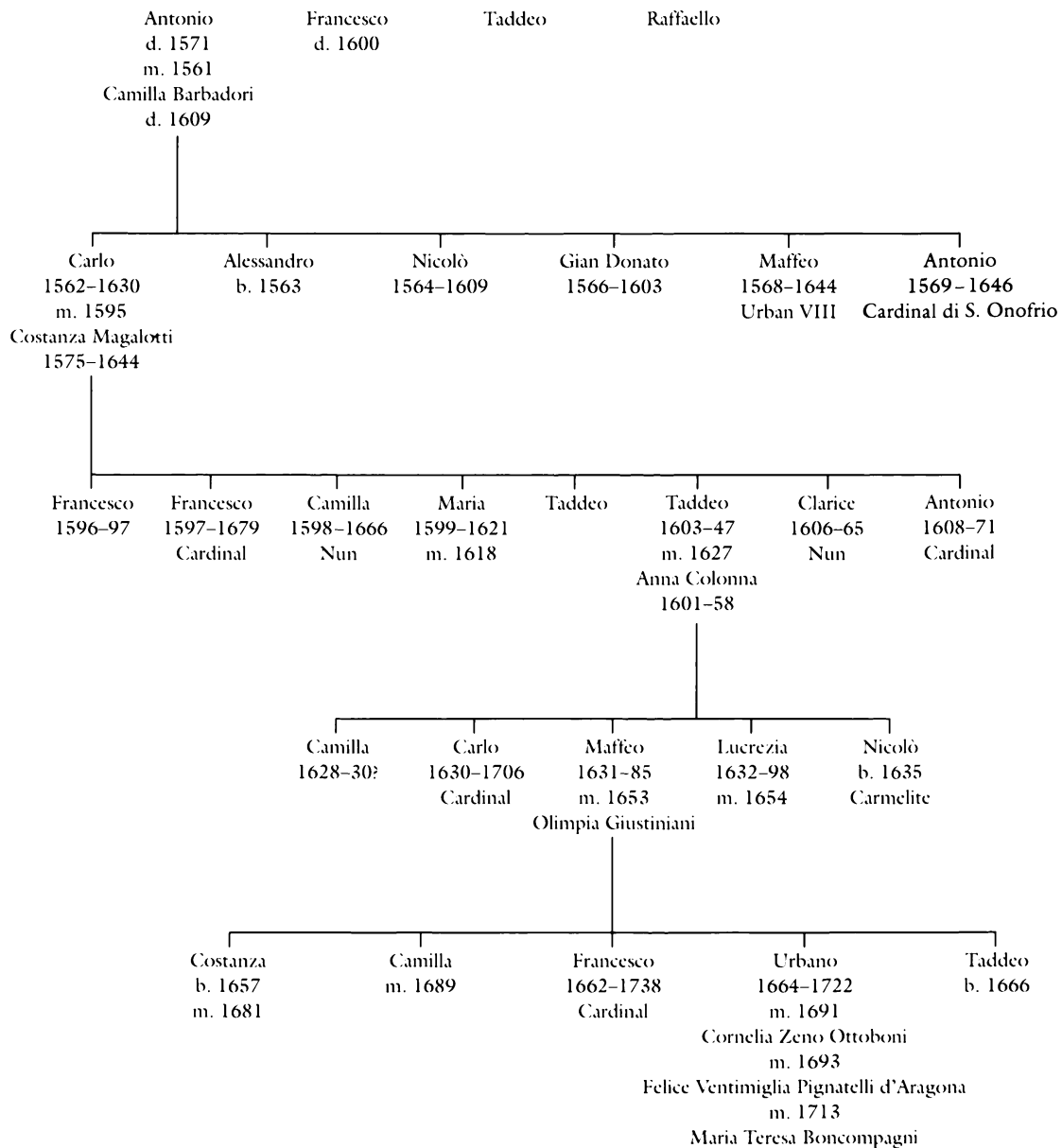
# Barberini Family

**T**HE Barberini family in the later sixteenth and seventeenth centuries presents a virtual paradigm of the well-managed Roman family (Fig. 50). The Barberini recognized that the way to power and wealth lay through the Church and that the perpetuation of the family was dependent on marriage; and they accordingly consistently pursued both of those channels of family development. For several generations they were blessed with sufficient male offspring, and they managed this natural resource to the benefit of the family as a whole.<sup>1</sup>

The family had been settled in Florence since the fourteenth century and had enjoyed moderate prosperity in business by the time of Antonio Barberini's marriage to Camilla Barbadori in 1561. Antonio's death only ten years later left Camilla a widow with six young sons. Two of them, first-born Carlo (1562–1630) and second-youngest Maffeo (1568–1644), seemed to offer most promise and were taken as protégés by uncles—the pattern of the seventeenth century already apparent in that Carlo was groomed for a career in business by his uncle Taddeo Barberini in Ancona, and Maffeo, after studies in law at the university of Pisa, went to Rome to live with another uncle, Monsignor Francesco Barberini, Apostolic Protonotary, and to find his future in the Church. Alessandro, Nicolò, and Gian Donato died before this generation came into promi-

nence. The youngest son, Marcello (1569–1646), called Antonio after his deceased father, became an exemplary Capuchin monk. Maffeo, with the sponsorship of Monsignor Francesco, rose quickly through the ecclesiastical hierarchy to become a cardinal in 1606, in the second year of the pontificate of Paul V Borghese; and he was himself elevated to the papacy as Urban VIII on 6 August 1623. He created his younger brother Antonio cardinal in 1624. Carlo meanwhile was tending to his responsibilities in the family by advancing in business, marrying Costanza Magalotti<sup>2</sup> (1575–1644; eldest daughter of a respectable Florentine family) in 1595, and fathering the next generation of Barberini. Uncle Francesco died in 1600; Maffeo as Francesco's heir inherited the “Casa Grande” ai Giubbonari; and Carlo, with his widowed mother Camilla and his young family, moved to Rome to join Maffeo there.

Now established in Rome, the Barberini family continued the same pattern of family management as had been employed in Florence. Costanza Magalotti Barberini bore eight children, and the six who survived infancy were disposed according to the bifurcation of their society into ecclesiastical and secular realms. First-born Francesco lived only a year (1596–97),<sup>3</sup> but he was soon succeeded by a second Francesco (1597–1679),<sup>4</sup> who was created cardinal by his uncle Pope Urban VIII in 1623 and appointed



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vice-chancellor in November 1632; he had a long and distinguished career in the church. The youngest son, Antonio (1608–71), was made a cardinal in 1627. The responsibility for continuing the family through marriage then devolved on Taddeo (1603–47).<sup>5</sup> The choice of a bride was a major family and political decision, and Tad-

deo naturally deferred to his father and uncle Urban VIII in the matter. Among several possibilities even a French match was considered. Urban VIII was at first reported to be disinclined to any but a Roman marriage, but eventually Anna Colonna (1601–58), daughter of the Constable Filippo Colonna of Naples, was chosen.

The pair were married in Castelgandolfo on 24 October 1627.<sup>6</sup> Taddeo became Prince of Palestrina on 26 February 1630, on the death of his father Carlo (who had acquired the territory of Palestrina and its princely title only a few weeks earlier); and on 6 August 1631 he was invested as Prefect of the City of Rome. Carlo and Costanza's three daughters were similarly divided between the Church and marriage: Camilla (1598–1666) and Clarice (1606–65) became nuns; and Maria (1599–1621) married, to die in childbirth.

In the next generation the same husbandry of family resources can be seen. Since the development of Taddeo's family is linked closely to the building of Barberini palaces, and since the birth dates of some of his five children have been in dispute,<sup>7</sup> it seems worthwhile to clarify the history of this generation. Taddeo and Anna's first child, Camilla (not Lucrezia), was born in the year following their marriage.<sup>8</sup> Her uncle Cardinal Francesco Barberini writes of the charms of this child, who died before her second birthday.<sup>9</sup> The eagerly awaited birth of a son, Carlo, occurred on 1 January 1630; and the second son, Maffeo, essential for the bifurcated management of the family's resources, was born on 19 August 1631. A fourth child was born in the family's new Palazzo Barberini alle Quattro Fontane and baptized in its chapel on 8 September 1632; this child has sometimes been thought to be Nicolò, but a pair of *avvisi* make clear that it was a female child and give her complete baptismal name, Maria Lucretia Anna Camilla Francesca Domenica Candida Rosa Angela.<sup>10</sup> Records of salary payments to her wet nurse, from 1 November 1632 until 30 November 1634, confirm that the child was Lucrezia, who married the Duke of Modena in 1654 and died only in 1698.<sup>11</sup> Taddeo and Anna's fifth child, Nicolò, was born somewhat later, probably in late 1635: earlier in that year, the Venetian ambassador Alvise Contarini reported that Taddeo and Anna had only two sons, "Maffeo e Carlo, piccioli figliuolini" — that is, not yet Nicolò; payments for Nicolò's wet nurse begin

on 9 January 1636.<sup>12</sup> As in previous generations, the sons divided family responsibilities: in 1653 Carlo gave up his primogeniture to his younger brother Maffeo and was created cardinal, and Maffeo married the twelve-year-old Olimpia Giustiniani to the end of continuing the family for yet another generation.<sup>13</sup> Nicolò, whose date of death remains even more obscure than his date of birth, became a Carmelite monk in 1662.<sup>14</sup>

As both the bipartite structure of the family and its chronological development were important for the history of Barberini palace building, so too the personalities of the main players affected what was built. The vigorous pope Urban VIII was chief among them. As cardinal (and even earlier), he sponsored construction at the "Casa Grande" ai Giubbonari; later, as pope, he lived at the Vatican and used other papal properties, but even so, the force of his personality was such that he affected what other members of his family built. First, his interest in the welfare of his family and his generosity toward its members, in terms of both money and rank, simply made possible the scale on which the Barberini built. His patronage of the arts is well known.<sup>15</sup> Further, his confidence in his own opinions is attested by the Venetian ambassador Alvise Contarini, who, in his characterization of Francesco as deferential to the pope, tells us that Urban did not like people who showed themselves to know more than himself.<sup>16</sup> Many years later, in his biography of Taddeo, Francesco speaks of Urban's involvement in Taddeo's projects: a certain design for Palazzo Barberini alle Quattro Fontane "also pleased Pope Urban, who, however, as His Holiness also had good taste in these matters, added a few embellishments and improvements which had not been foreseen [by others]"; and for Taddeo's villa of Mompecchio Urban proposed some ideas and a design for a "beautiful residence"; and Francesco alludes to the general possibility that Taddeo's work at the "Casa Grande" would have been influenced by his uncle the pope, even as he explains that it was all for Anna's sake.<sup>17</sup>

Francesco Barberini's position as the representative of the Church in his generation of the family was expressed in building. Most conspicuously, the bulk of his architectural patronage, as listed by his biographer Archangelo Spagna, was religious — monasteries, convents, churches, chapels.<sup>18</sup> At Palazzo Barberini alle Quattro Fontane (not mentioned by Spagna), the south half of the building, paid for by Francesco, was intended as his residence and was seen as the pendant of the north wing, where Taddeo would live. Francesco's scholarly interests provoked the construction of the large library at the palace, to house his extensive collection of books and manuscripts; and his passion for collecting both contemporary and antique art (together with the inheritance of his brother Antonio's collection in 1671) led to the remodeling of the palace in the 1670s.

Taddeo as steward of the secular aspect of the family was most closely connected with Barberini palace building. Like Francesco's, his residence in the bifurcated Palazzo Barberini was to

be a visible sign of the nature of the family. His patronage of the arts (other than architecture) was slight, but, according to Francesco, he enjoyed miniature painting in his youth and took an active interest in building.<sup>19</sup> His sober, shrewd, and economical character, combined with his sense of responsibility for maintaining and improving both the image and the material substance of the family, would find expression in his many architectural projects.

Antonio, relieved of the representational responsibilities of his two older brothers, was interested more in the things that could take place in buildings than in the buildings themselves; therefore, his main contributions to building were the construction of the Barberini theater at Palazzo Barberini alle Quattro Fontane, the remodeling of the ground floor of the "Casa Grande" ai Giubbonari as an art gallery, small modifications to suit both buildings to his particular interests, and the accumulation of rich furnishings for his apartments.

## “Casa Grande” ai Giubbonari

**T**HE Barberini family’s “Casa Grande” ai Giubbonari,<sup>1</sup> in the heart of seventeenth-century Rome, grew over the years, not according to a distinctive controlling idea but rather in response to the changing constitution and fortunes of the family. From the beginning the owners were actively involved with the development of their building. Three generations of Barberini consulted an array of architects and builders over the course of nine decades. Sometimes the collaboration of patron and architect resulted in minor adjustments and reshuffling of elements; once there was a major revision that fundamentally changed the palace. Its form remained intimately tied to the cellular structure of urban Rome. It grew through the addition of cells, extensions upward and downward, combination, and reshaping of the preexisting masonry. At every stage in its growth, it remained in harmony with its mercantile context, and the one major change in its outward form occurred exactly in response to a major change in the plan of the neighborhood. Even today the casual shopper in the busy via dei Giubbonari is hardly aware of the existence of what was once a palatial residence (Fig. 51). Altogether, the saga of growth and change in the “Casa Grande” is characteristic of one kind of Roman architecture; and its organic development is in marked contrast to the design and construction of the family’s other city pal-

ace, the Palazzo Barberini alle Quattro Fontane, within a few years’ time and according to a single controlling idea.

### Monsignor Francesco, 1581–1600

Monsignor Francesco Barberini bought the nucleus of the property in 1581 (Fig. 52, property 1).<sup>2</sup> Already called “Casa Grande” (or “Domus Magna” in the instrument of sale), the relatively small house was accompanied by four ground-floor shops opening to the via dei Giubbonari, three smaller houses, a stable, and courtyards. The purchase price was 10,000 scudi, to be paid over the course of five years; and Francesco calculated that the property could yield 583 scudi per year in income: the “Casa Grande” itself was at that time rented to Monsignor de Graffi, Bishop of Faenza, for 250 scudi, and the shops, smaller houses, and one room of the main house together would produce 333 scudi.<sup>3</sup> Francesco’s house (Fig. 53) was bordered to the northwest, toward Campo dei Fiori, by the house of Jacopo Matei and to the southeast by a house owned by the Paperoni family. It was only two structural bays wide, subdivided on the ground floor into four shops (of unequal size, to judge by the rents charged).<sup>4</sup> The six mezzanine windows above the shops, smaller than the others of the eventually expanded palace, can still be identified in the façade toward via dei Giubbonari (Fig. 54; cf.