

NOTE ON THE ARTWORK ON THE PLINTHS OF BERNINI'S BALDACHIN IN ST. PETER'S (ROME).

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Recently, my dear friend Pieter Vereertbrugghen blogged on the pedestals of Bernini's Baldacchino¹ which is erected above the high altar on top of apostle Peter's grave, right in the midst of Vatican's St. Peter's Basilica. I knew about this 'baldachin'² (constructed 1623-1634) but I was completely in the dark about the remarkable artwork on the plinths supporting its four spiraling pillars³. Immediately, I was struck by the steganographic nature of this series of eight images on the outer sides of these pedestals (see scheme in [figure 1](#) and images with comments in [figures 2 and 3](#)).

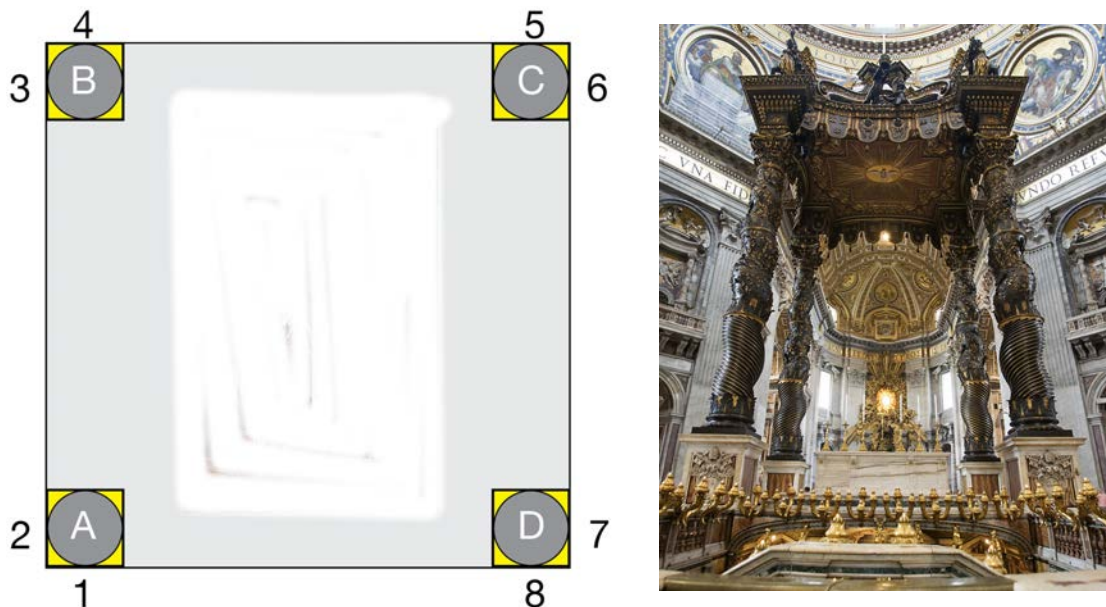


Figure 1: Left: scheme of the emplacement of the eight images, numbered 1 to 8. A, B, C, D: pillars. West is up; images 1 and 8 face east. Squares around the four pillars represent the plinths underneath the pillars. As indicated, the images are on the two outer sides of each of the four plinths (from Pieter's blog). Right: Bernini's Baldacchino (westside in front).

¹ Pieter Vereertbrugghen "De kraamkliniek van de Sint-Pietersbasiliek" (in Dutch). <https://hetverzet.eu/artikels/de-kraamafdeling-van-de-sint-pietersbasiliek> (29.08.2024). Description of the artwork in the present note is basically copied from Pieter's blog.

² https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St._Peter%27s_Baldachin

³ The main source of information is the paper by Irving Levin which is accessible online. See: Irving Lavin "Footsteps on the Way to Redemption. The Pedestals of Bernini's Baldacchino in St. Peter's" (first presented, in brief, at a symposium organized by Giovanni Morello "La basilica di San Pietro. Fortuna e immagine, Rome" (2009), published 2012, p.245-313; reprinted in extenso in: Irving Lavin "Bernini at St. Peter's" The Pilgrimage, London, 2012, p.41-130). https://www.academia.edu/7388130/Footsteps_on_the_Way_to_Redemption_The_Pedestal_of_Bernini_s_Baldacchino_in_St_Peter_s



Figure 2: The fourth and seventh of the eight images (B4 and D7 in figure 1). Each image shows (from top to bottom) a tiara, a pair of papal keys, a face (immediately underneath the keys), a coat of arms with three bees and finally a satyr-like mask. The eight images are all very much the same, but faces (figure 3) and masks show pronounced differences.

The sequence of eight images constitutes an integrated whole and is understood to symbolically represent subsequent phases of the process of parturition⁴. The female faces in images 1-7 depict a woman in labor and the putto head at the final stage shows the newborn. The coat of arms with three bees appertains to the family of the then pope Urban VIII (born Maffeo Vincenzo Barberini; pope from 1623 to his death in 1644; compare to figure 4). It is generally believed to steganographically represent the body of the woman whose face is depicted on top of the coat. In images 1, 7 and 8, the coats are flat but the coats in images 2 to 6 are bulging, confirming that the artwork encompasses a cryptic representation of the birth process. Given their emplacement with respect to the coat, the grotesque masks at the bottom seem to be depictions of the pains of labor.

⁴ On the coat of arms with three bees, of which many executions can be found in Rome's *Palazzo Barberini* (which was also built by Urban VIII), Irving Lavin (p.275) writes: "Spiritual betrothal and the laborious creation of its progeny is exactly what is emblemized in the pedestals of the Baldacchino: the birthing that takes place in the embrace of the papal arms, with the expressive heads above, the bees marking the breasts and the belly in the swollen torso, and the groin covered or replaced by the ghoulish masks that echo the goatskins with which, in the Lupercalia, pagan women were lashed at their groins to insure fertility".

The author also documents that bees were seen, in the cultural context of 17th century Rome, as symbols of virtue, purity and chastity. This conforms with the symbolic value attributed to the bee in Antiquity. See for instance: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Melissa_\(mythology\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Melissa_(mythology))



Figure 3: Left: the faces on each of the eight representations (cf. [figures 1 and 2](#); from Pieter's blog). The series opens with a faintly smiling woman (1) followed by six faces expressing pain (2-7). The final image shows a beaming putto, indicating that birth has taken place. Right: the tiara in the first image is exceptional in that it shows a small putto head (surmounted by a bee flying straight upwards) which clearly prefigures the putto in the final image. The presence of a putto in both the first and the eighth image constitutes a *loop*; the first image prefigures the last one, and the latter refers back to the first. Note that images 1 and 8 are placed next to each other, facing east.

Guiding ideas.

Clearly, a woman giving birth is steganographically embedded in the artwork. However, the symbolism of this parturition looks obscure and its presence right above the grave of Saint Peter seems very puzzling. In order to attain a better understanding, we will start from the following considerations:

- The series of eight images on the plinths of the *Baldacchino di San Pietro* constitutes one single integrated and autonomous piece of artwork, which should be basically self-explaining;
- The explanation of the artwork should account for the fact that the images are located right above the grave of Saint Peter. Thus, an adequate explanation is expected to involve the martyrdom of the apostle Peter;
- Most likely, the parturition depicted on the Baldachin's pedestals connects to some particular New Testament passage in which Peter was involved;
- Given the steganographic nature of the artwork, a complete explanation can be expected to encompass elements of esoteric Christianity;
- Obviously, the eightfoldness and the looped [7+1]- or [(1+2·3)+1]- structure of the imagery are at the core of the riddle. The basic fact that the artwork consists of exactly *eight* images, with the last image referring back to the first (or the first image being a prelude to the last), requires an explanation;
- Given the pious mindset of Gian Lorenzo Bernini (1598-1680), the architect and sculptor who produced the Baldachin, and given the fact that the artwork was created right under the nose of the highest Church authorities, frivolous interpretations of its meaning are unlikely to be true.



Figure 4: An Urban VIII coin, showing tiara, two keys, and Barberini coat of arms with three bees, in the overall configuration seen on the pedestals. Apparently, this composition was recycled in its totality on the plinths, with the sole addition of the faces and masks.

The Holy Week, the liturgical octave, and Jh.16:20-22.

Within an ecclesiastical context, the looped [7+1]-structure of the artwork inescapably points to the Christian liturgical octave⁵, for which the Holy Week followed by Easter Day provides the archetype. The Christian Holy Week starts with Palm Sunday, when Jesus Christ enters into Jerusalem. This triumphal day is followed by three periods of about two days, each with its own character: (a) Holy Monday and Holy Tuesday, when Christ resides in Bethany⁶; (b) Holy Wednesday and Maundy Thursday, when the Lord's Supper takes place⁷, Judas betrays Jesus, and Jesus is arrested and tried by the Jewish authorities; and (c) Good Friday and Black Saturday, when Jesus dies by crucifixion and his body rests in the grave. Finally, the Holy Week culminates on the eighth day, which is Easter Day i.e. Resurrection Day. The primordial Christian octave consists of the Holy Week along with Easter Sunday and consists of [7+1] days or, more specific still, of [(1+2·3)+1] days.

The event of Christ's Resurrection is understood as the birth of the new and future human being, whose coming already transpires in Pilate's declaration: '*Ecce Homo!*' ('*Idou ho anthropos*'; '*Behold the human being [as it is supposed to ultimately become]*' Jh.19:5). In the primordial octave, the triumph of Palm Sunday appears as an auspice of the Resurrection. According to the scheme shown in [figure 3](#), Palm Sunday and Easter Sunday would correspond to images 1 and 8 on the eastern side of the Baldacchino.

Speaking to his disciples (including Peter), Christ compared his forthcoming Passion to the pain of a woman giving birth:

Jh.16: 20 "Truly, truly, I say to you, that you will weep and will lament, but the world will rejoice. You will be grieved, but your grief will turn to joy. 21 A woman has pain when she is giving birth, because her hour has come; but when she brings forth the child, she remembers that pain no longer, on account of the joy that a man has been born into the world. 22 Therefore you also indeed have grief now; but I will see you again, and your heart will rejoice, and no one will take your joy from you".

We hold that this well-known passage, where Christ compares (in real time!) the primordial octave-structured Christian event (i.e. the Holy Week + Easter Sunday) to a woman giving birth, constitutes the scriptural base for the insertion of the faces and masks in the eight images. Thus, the very specific structure consisting of a series of [7+1] images, with a loop connecting the first and eighth images, refers to some implementation of the Christian octave, which has a congruent structure; the addition of the faces (of a mother and her child) and of the masks (which indicate the involvement of brutal pain)

⁵ [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Octave_\(liturgy\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Octave_(liturgy))

⁶ Contrary to the common view, according to which the Lord's Supper took place on Maundy Thursday, we follow the argumentation presented in the book by Colin J.Humphreys ("**The mystery of the Last Supper**" Cambridge U.P. 2011): the Last Supper happened on Wednesday, and most of the trial of Jesus took place on Thursday. According to the traditional view, nothing at all happened on Wednesday whereas the complex trial of Jesus is squeezed into the early hours of Friday (which seems impossible).

⁷ The highly significant cursing of the fig tree took place on Holy Monday.

adds to this configuration the reference to Jh.16:20-22. Strikingly, even the more detailed [(1+2·3)+1] structure of the Holy Week is closely reflected by the artwork: images 1 and 8, corresponding to Palm Sunday resp. Easter Sunday, are installed on the eastern side, facing the direction of sunrise. The 2·3 other images are placed pairwise on the three other sides (cf. [figure 1](#)).

Crucially, early Christians did not understand this complex eight day-event as an isolated historical episode which one had to commemorate but which conclusively belonged to the past. On the contrary, they considered the 'primordial octave' (i.e. the Holy Week + the Resurrection) as a pivotal episode which changed the quality of time itself by adding to the uniform and featureless 'chronos' (i.e. 'physical time' as measured by clocks) a sanctifying 'hebdomadal imprint'. After Christ's passion, death and resurrection, the chain of weeks received a potential for sanctification. From the 'primordial octave' onwards, every subsequent week could appear as a recapitulation of that octave. Correspondingly, the first day of the week (which is also the eighth day of the preceding week) became the Lord's Day. In course of time, an octave structure was introduced in the Christian liturgical calendar with respect to a great many feasts. An octave was connected not only to prominent festivals such as Pentecost and Christmas but also to feasts of saints such as the feast of Saints Peter and Paul. Not only was the 7 day-week (already known in Jewish tradition) liturgized; the temporal structure of [7 days + 1day] which characterizes the [Holy Week + Easter] was generalized as a sanctifying time structure throughout the liturgical year. Eventually, this practice led to overloading of the liturgical calendar. As a consequence, it has been reduced drastically in the twentieth century⁸. Nevertheless, the underlying idea still holds: the Holy Week annex Easter constitutes a sanctifying scheme or matrix according to which Christian time and Christian calendars should be organized. In accordance with Mt. 28:20 ("...**behold, I am with you all the days, until the completion of the age**"), the Christian believer is expected to live in this christianized stream of time which is characterized by hebdomadal periodicity (with Sunday as both the first day of the upcoming week and the eighth day of the preceding week) and which operates as an inspiring stream of 'kairos' (i.e. 'qualitative time' which appears to reach us coming from the future bringing new ideas and creative power; cf. "**Behold, I make all things new**" Rev.21:5) superposed upon ordinary 'chronos' (the uniform flow of physical time).

In order to come to an understanding of the remarkable symbolism of Bernini's artwork, another additional element has to be considered. Christ identified Himself as being the Truth, as a living being conceived ("**I am the way and the truth and the life**"; Jh.14:6). Also, He confirmed that Truth sets free ("**And you will know the Truth, and the Truth will set you free**"; Jh. 8:32). In accordance with these statements, the sanctification of chronological time was not unilaterally imposed by Christ. On the contrary, it is the *potentiality* for such a sanctification which was believed to have been created through His Resurrection. This possibility had still to be actively accepted by the fallible human being.

⁸ [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Octave_\(liturgy\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Octave_(liturgy))

This act of acceptance was performed by Peter, the firstmost apostle who was very fallible indeed. In order to understand the symbolism on the pedestals, it is important to notice that (according to John's gospel) the fallibility of Peter was, so to say, earmarked by the number three. Peter betrayed Christ three times; then the rooster crowed (Jh.18:27). Reflecting this threefold act of treason, Christ questions Peter thrice (Jh.21:15-17). Again, Peter's threefold answer shows lack of understanding and is far from perfect. Immediately thereafter, Jesus predicts that Peter will die through crucifixion (Jh.21:18-19)⁹. That Peter would follow Christ up to the end, as Christ had asked him, was by no means a given. By facing persecution and accepting his death by crucifixion, Peter compensated for his threefold betrayal of Christ. There can be little doubt that those creating the series of eight images on the pedestals understood the three bees (which are symbols of moral purity and selflessness) and the triple tiara¹⁰ (which is no longer in use but still figures on the flag of Vatican City) in this sense. The symbolism on these images refers to Peter who overcame his threefold weakness and ultimately decided to follow Christ up to the end, thereby accepting the potentiality of terrestrial time being sanctified. In order to understand the nature and the importance of this event, it should be kept in mind that the Verb is per se also the principle of the 'I' or 'Self' (i.e. the 'Ego Sum' or 'Ego Eimi': "**before Abraham was: I am**"; Jh.8:58). Christ's offer cannot be accepted by a community or an institution, but only by the individual human 'I'. By accepting Christ's proposal, the 'lower I' gives birth to the 'higher I' (cf. Goethe's '*Stirb und Werde*'¹¹).

It is Peter's final acceptance of Christ's proposal (which is not a mere spoken proposal; Christ's offer to humanity took the form of a complex act of liberation performed during the Holy Week and culminating in the Resurrection) that is expressed through the eight images on the Baldacchino.

The cryptic and steganographic nature of Bernini's symbolism suggests that the crucifixion of Peter was seen as an event with an esoteric dimension. With Peter's acceptance of Christ's offer, something was born that is symbolized by the putto which appears in both the first and the last image. From a trichotomic viewpoint¹², the bee symbolizes Peter's purified soul whereas the putto represents Peter's spirit. In the ordinary human individual, daily life is led and directed by the 'lower I' i.e. by the impure soul; the 'higher I' (i.e. the spirit) witnesses and judges what is performed by the soul. In the saint, the roles of soul and spirit are reversed. The 'higher I' is born to the Earth and starts to

⁹ According to the apocryphal *Acts of Peter*, the fallibility and lack of inner strength of the first apostle persisted to the end. Peter was fleeing Rome because of the persecution of Christians. On his way, he met Christ who was walking in the opposite direction. Peter then asks: 'Where are you going, Lord?' ('Quo vadis, Domine?'). Christ answers: 'I am going to Rome to be crucified again' ('Roman eo iterum crucifigi'). Thereafter, Peter returns back to Rome, where he was crucified indeed. The small *Chiesa del Domine Quo Vadis* is named after this legend.

See: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Quo_vadis%3F https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Santa_Maria_in_Palmis

¹⁰ The triple tiara can be understood as a threefold 'crown of martyrdom'. In Christian iconographic tradition, martyrs are equipped with a palm and/or a crown, referring to Palm Sunday and the crown of thorns, respectively.

¹¹ https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Selige_Sehnsucht

¹² See for instance: https://pure.rug.nl/ws/portalfiles/portal/10430055/2010_-_Anthropological_Trichotomy.pdf

directly guide the thoughts and deeds of the individual whereas the purified soul turns into the 'glory' (Greek: 'doksa'/'δόξα'; cf. Jh.1:14; 2:11) of the individual (which has become a 'Son of Man'). Apparently, this switch is expressed on the first image, where the bee is striving upwards above the putto. The first image shows that the Self of Peter has reached the point where this primordial turnover (i.e. the 'second birth'; cf. Jh.3:5) is going to occur. It is shown at the level of the tiara, meaning that a fundamental intention or final decision is depicted. This image corresponds with the entrance of Jesus in Jerusalem on Palm Sunday, which is the ultimate event of Christ accepting his coming passion and crucifixion. The first image represents the acceptance by Peter of his coming crucifixion. The next six images represent Peter's passion. The final image, where Peter's spirit is 'born', constitutes the ultimate riddle embedded in the artwork. In the context of the Holy Week, the eighth day is Resurrection Day, which means that Christ (i.e. the Logos or the 'living principle of Truth') has become irreversibly embedded within the flow of human history (Mt.28:20). The Resurrection of Jesus Christ is a 'birth' of kinds. It has the nature of an 'arrival and settlement on Earth of an extraterrestrial spiritual Being' meaning that this divine entity 'pitches his tent' (Jh.1:14) within human history. This arrival does not have the nature of an imperialistic invasion (cf. Jh.10: 1-10, 16). Rather, it has the spiritual quality of a divine candidate-bridegroom delicately solliciting the potential human bride. The latter is free to accept or to reject. Christ's agony in Getsemane was not about his coming physical suffering but about the possibility that his proposal could be refused by these human beings which he loved and loves so much. A possible refusal by the human being would have meant that Christ would simply fade away from human history and that his presence, although still persisting, would have remained unnoticed and totally ineffective. However, Peter accepted Christ's proposal. With respect to the flow of human history, this acceptance took the totally surprising form of the introduction of the planetary 7-day week, with Sunday as the pivotal day. This means that into the flow of chronos an hebdomadal pattern was introduced which could act as a societal receptacle wherein the Gestalt of the Holy Week could permanently insert itself, with Sunday acting as a permanent 'pivot of Christian resurrection'.

The 7 day-week was known to the Jews. However, this period was supposed to commemorate the creation of the world by the Elohim. According to Genesis 1, this creation encompassed six fundamental time units or 'yoms', and was followed by a seventh 'yom' which was a 'yom of rest'. Accordingly, the Jewish week encompasses seven days, with the final day (the 'sabbath') being a day of rest (Ex. 20:11; however, see also Deut. 5:15). In the Jewish tradition proper, there is no link connecting these seven days to the seven classical planets. During the second half of the first century, the so-called 'planetary week' mysteriously appears¹³. There were no decrees imposing the

¹³ "...the silent and unofficial diffusion of a new time-cycle through a vast empire is a very remarkable fact (...) that argues some powerful motive behind it (...) ...the Planetary Week, like Mithraism and other mystery-religions, is an important factor in the background of primitive Christianity, and (...) its existence must not be ignored, especially when we consider the origin of the Christian Sunday" (F.H.Colson "The Week" Cambridge U.P. 1926,2015; p.vi); "...the most remarkable fact about the planetary week [is] that it spread without any civil or official recognition" (ibid., p.25); "...there is complete silence as to any official enforcement or even recognition of the planetary week,

use of this new time unit, and no authorities are known to have promoted or imposed its use. Nevertheless, the planetary week suddenly comes along and quickly spreads. In this week, each of the seven days corresponds to one of the seven 'planets' which were publicly known in antiquity: Moon, Mercury, Venus, Sun, Mars, Jupiter, and Saturn (figure 5).

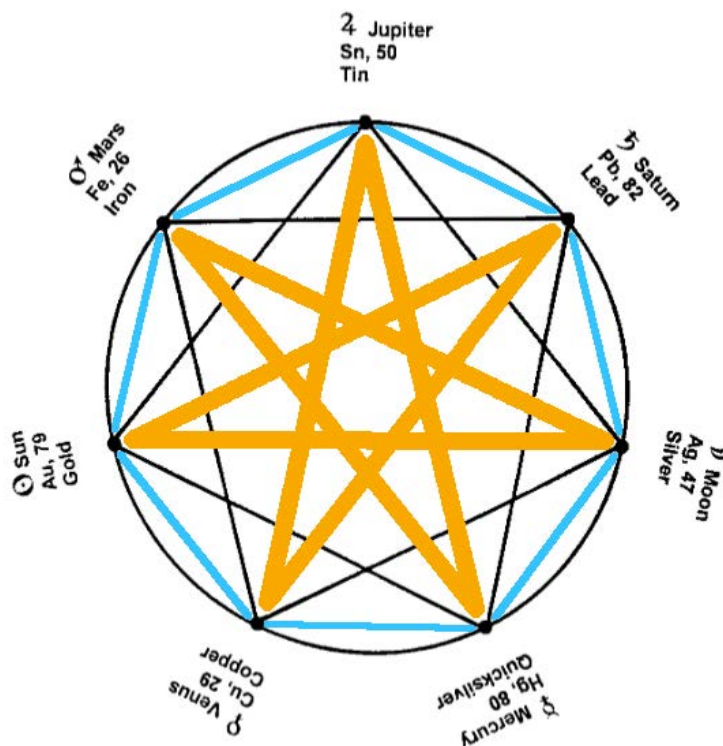


Figure 5: Scheme connecting the seven classical planets to the seven days of the planetary week.

From the second century BC onwards, the seven 'planets' used to be enumerated according to a canonic order: Moon, Mercury, Venus, Sun, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn. In the scheme above, the planets are arranged counterclockwise according to this sequence (**{7/1} heptagon**). This specific order is believed to reflect the increasing distances which separated, according to the Ancients, the successive planets from the Earth (cf. the order of the 'celestial spheres' in Dante's *Divina Commedia*)¹⁴. Traditionally, each of these astrological planets is associated with a metal. Curiously, the sequence of the atomic numbers of these planets follows the order indicated by the **{7/2}**-heptagon. In the planetary week, the sequence of the seven days follows the pattern of the **{7/3}**-heptagon. See Colson (p.43 ff.) on the possible astrological origin of this {7/3}-pattern.

and this is a matter in which silence does imply non-existence" (ibid., p.62); "To the fact (...) that the planetary week established itself without official recognition, we have to add the probability that it established itself with little reference to any astrological body of doctrine, or to any existing religion, except indirectly to Judaism (...). It leaves me with a sense of some mystery surrounding the whole institution. One thing, however, is clear. The institution of the week remains to shew us, as nothing else in the history of the astrological movement does, how widely diffused and deeply rooted in the early Empire was the belief in the all-mastering power of the planets" (ibid., p.80-81).

¹⁴ Clearly, there is some ambiguity involved with respect to Sun, Venus and Mercury, as to which of these celestial bodies is closer to the Earth. For instance, as seen from the Earth, each of these three 'planets' can eclipse the two others. Nevertheless, the canonical order was already well established in the second century BC. Interestingly, Cicero mentions the conventional order in *De Divinatione* (II,91) but inverts Mercury and Venus in *Natura Deorum* (II,53) (Colson, p.19).

The day of Peter's crucifixion.

The apostle Peter died in Rome on Saturday, October 13, 64 AD. The date was identified by Margherita Guarducci¹⁵ and is also encoded in the final chapter of the fourth gospel¹⁶ (the hour of Peter's death is unknown but the scene in John 21 suggests that sunrise time is primal). The date of Peter's death can be compared to the date of the eruption of the Vesuvius in October 79 AD. In the archeological remains of Pompeii, the oldest known unambiguous evidence referring to the planetary week has been found (Colson, p.32; "...we get no certain evidence of the [planetary] week till a time approaching A.D.79"; p.54). The close temporospatial conjunction of Peter's death and the societal surfacing of the planetary week, considered together with the [7+1]-structure of the Holy Week (which is reflected by Bernini's cryptic artwork on the pedestals), suggests a deep underlying connection. The origin of the planetary week is an historical riddle. It pops up during the second half of the first century, quickly spreads throughout the Roman Empire without promotion by any visible authority, and is globalized in the course of the first millennium when it is adopted by the Arabic world, in China and India, and elsewhere¹⁷. The occult network of the declining antique Mysteries (Mt.21:18-19; Lk.23:45-47; Jh.19:38) seem to be the only institution to which the silent rise of such a remarkable societal structure can be attributed.

Figure 6 shows the horoscope of the sunrise on the day of Peter's death. The constellation is extraordinary in that all ten 'astrological planets' (i.e. the seven classical planets together with Uranus, Neptune, and dwarf planet Pluto) are involved in very sharp aspects. Moreover, the horoscope also shows a remarkable affinity with the 'celestial cross' (figure 7) which characterizes the horoscope of the Resurrection: the two aspects constituting this horoscopolical Gestalt, the square (Moon□Neptune) and the opposition (Jupiter♁Pluto), appear to be reflected by the conjunctions (Moon♁Neptune) and (Jupiter♁Pluto).

Christ died on Friday, April 3, 33 AD (Julian calendar). The fact that his Crucifixion occurred on Friday (the day of Venus) has deep esoteric meaning, in that Venus is the planet of love. The death of Christ is above all an act of divine love. Petrus died on Saturday (the day of Saturn). Saturn is called the 'great malefic' and is associated with death (in the Holy Week, Black Saturday is associated with the 'descent into hell' or 'harrowing of hell'). Good Friday is followed by Christ's Resurrection on Sunday, April 5, 33 AD. Accordingly, we expect the day of Peter's crucifixion to be followed by the celestial signature of the harvest of Peter's lifetime, which is his ultimate acceptance of Christ's offer to humanity. Figure 8 shows the chart for the morning of Sunday, October 14, 64 AD which seems to reveal the ultimate esoteric meaning of Bernini's eight images.

¹⁵ <https://crc-resurrection.org/toute-notre-doctrine/contre-reforme-catholique/archeologie-biblique/la-verite-sur-la-tombe-de-saint-pierre.html>

¹⁶ https://www.academia.edu/45671575/Commentaren_bij_het_evangelie_van_Johannes_III_Hoofdstuk_21_en_de_planetaire_week

¹⁷ Mark Anderson "Christianizing the Planetary Week and globalizing the seven-day cycle" *Studies in Late Antiquity* 3 (2), p.128-198 (2019).

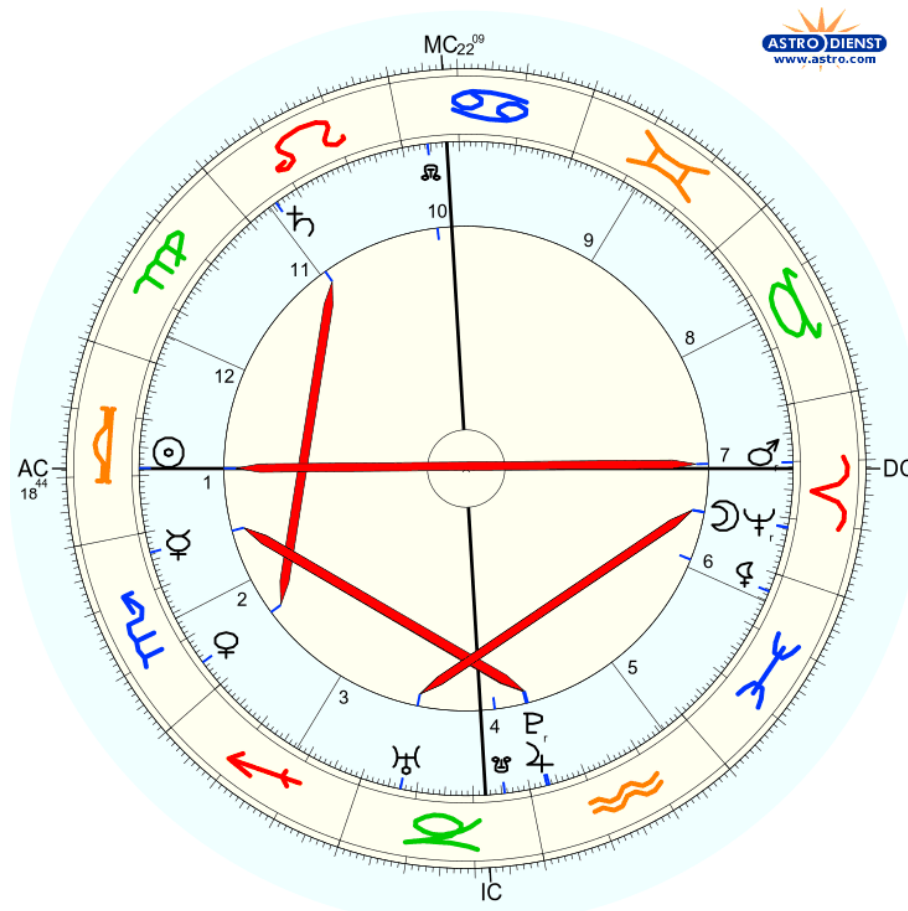


Figure 6: Sunrise horoscope of the day of Peter's death (Saturday, October 13, 64 AD; Julian calendar; Rome; 6:15 a.m. local time; orbact: 20%). Sun: 18°40'1" Libra; Moon: 8°23'4" Aries; Mercury: 3°37'36" Scorpio; Venus: 25°4'32" Scorpio; Mars: 19°51'58"R Aries; Jupiter: 3°5'1" Aquarius; Saturn: 24°19'2" Leo; Uranus: 7°8'39" Capricorn; Neptune: 8°19'13"R Aries; Pluto: 3°28'59"R Aquarius; rising lunar node: 25°32'10" Cancer; lunar apogee: 26°40'24" Pisces; ascendant: 18°44' Libra; Midheaven: 22°9' Cancer.

The horoscope shown in figure 8 is extraordinary, in that all astrological planets are connected by very sharp aspects in such a way that the whole [(1+2·3)+1]- structure of the Holy Week is drawn out.

The Sun (in the 'double sign' Libra) in the east opposes the (Moon♄Mars) conjunction in the west. This {Sun♁(Moon♄Mars)}-complex corresponds to the three consecutive days {Sunday, (Monday, Tuesday)}. Obviously, what seems to transpire through these constellations transcends by far everything that a mere mortal can ever hope to comprehend. On the morning of Peter's death (figure 6), the Moon connects to the square of the two transcendent planets (Uranus♁Neptune). After 24 hours, the Moon shifts into a conjunction with Mars completing on Sunday morning a celestial image of the Holy Week – as if importing into this week whatever (Uranus♁Neptune) might represent in terms of inspiration and spiritual rejuvenation. Contemplating this signature, the inspired and confrontational nature of the 'Olivet Discourse'¹⁸ seems to shimmer through.

¹⁸ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Olivet_Discourse

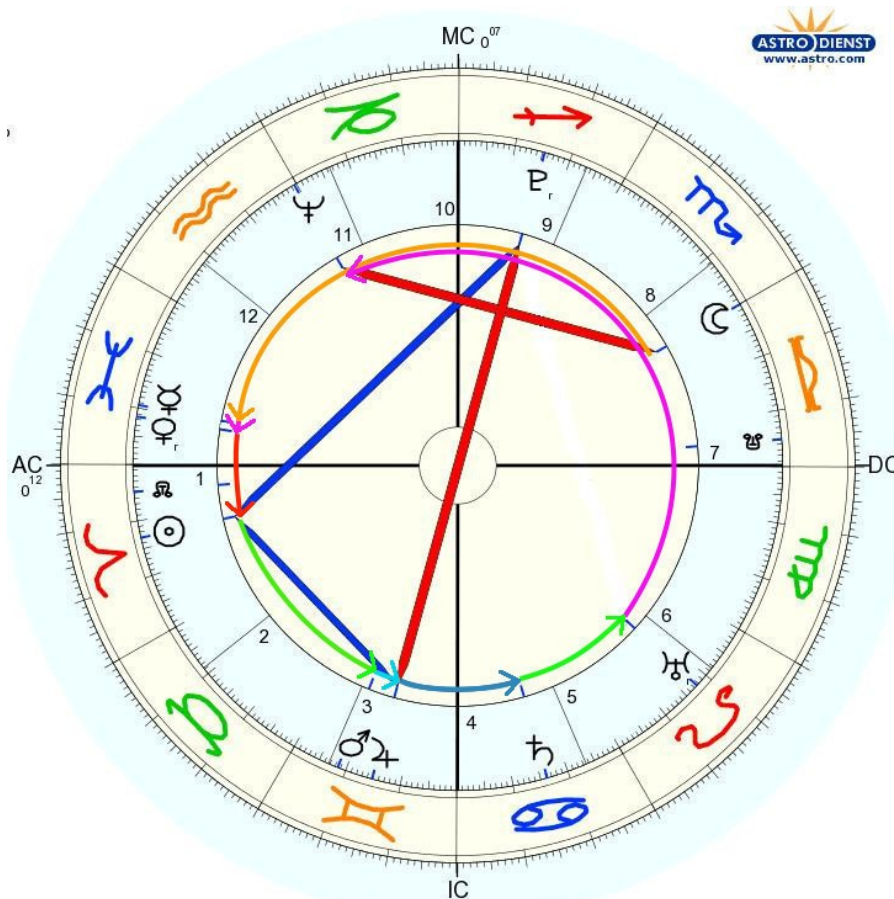


Figure 7: The 'celestial cross' (red) which took shape on the morning of Resurrection Day (Jerusalem, Sunday, April 5, 33 AD; 5:15 a.m. local time = 18:00 stellar time). The cross is 'held' by the Sun through weaker aspects (blue). It consists of an opposition (Jupiter \circ Pluto) and a square (Moon \square Neptune). Given the high ecliptical velocity of the Moon, the astrological Gestalt of the cross persists for a few hours only. Sun: 13°3'12" Aries; Moon: 29°56'32" Libra; Mercury: 19°28'12" Pisces; Venus: 21°32'4"R Pisces; Mars: 8°30'28" Gemini; Jupiter: 14°52'28" Gemini; Saturn: 16°11'39" Cancer; Uranus: 17°35' 20"R Leo; Neptune: 0°25'57" Aquarius; Pluto: 14°38'52"R Sagittarius; rising lunar node: 4°49'40" Aries; ascendant: 0°12' Aries; midheaven: 0°7' Capricorn.

The arrows connect the subsequent nine planets (taken in canonical order) along the smallest zodiacal angle. The nine angles are all directed counterclockwise, spanning a total of $360^\circ + 90^\circ = 450^\circ$. The 'canonical order' consists of the seven classical planets in the order given to them by the Ancients, supplemented by Uranus and Neptune. Given its orbital relationship to Neptune, the dwarf planet Pluto cannot be incorporated in this pattern, although it is part of the Gestalt of the celestial cross. From:

https://www.academia.edu/33857672/King_Eisu_and_the_riddle_of_the_fig_tree_John_1_48_On_Jesus_presence_in_Cornwall_and_Somerset

Although Uranus, Neptune and Pluto are invisible to the naked eye and were discovered only in modern times, the celestial cross must have been known in esoteric Christian tradition. Iconographically, it is expressed as the cross on the two-pointed banner of the Lamb of God. A most striking example is van den Broeck's *Resurrection* in the Sistine Chapel. See:

https://www.academia.edu/23264166/The_Easter_Cross_and_the_Lamb_of_God_a_mystery_at_the_heart_of_esoteric_Christianity_With_a_discussion_of_Hendrick_van_den_Broeck's_The_Resurrection_Sistine_Chapel_Rome_1573_1576_and_P_P_Rubens_Resurrection_of_Christ_Cathedral_of_Our_Lady_Antwerp_1611_1612

This celestial cross is a symbol of Resurrection. On the physical nature of the Cross whereon Christ died, see (in Dutch):

https://www.academia.edu/75472983/Commentaren_bij_het_evangelie_volgens_Johannes_V_De_tuin_op_de_Olijberg

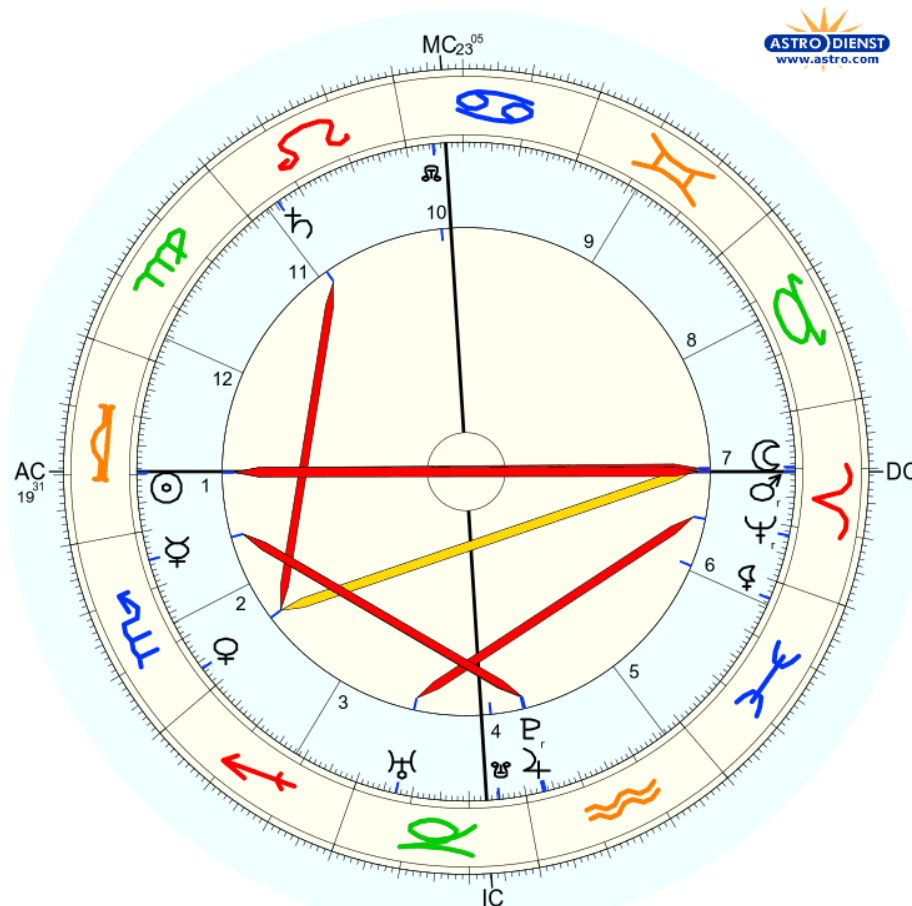


Figure 8: Horoscope of sunrise, on the day after Peter's death (Sunday, October 14, 64 AD; Julian calendar; Rome; 6:15 a.m. local time; orbfact: 20%). Sun: 19°40'28" Libra; Moon: 20°20'58" Aries; Mercury: 5°6'13" Scorpio; Venus: 26°17'17" Scorpio; Mars: 19°30'2"R Aries; Jupiter: 3°7'45" Aquarius; Saturn: 24°24'20" Leo; Uranus: 7°9'58" Capricorn; Neptune: 8°17'34"R Aries; Pluto: 3°28'51"R Aquarius; rising lunar node: 25°17'35" Cancer; lunar apogee: 26°47'7" Pisces; ascendant: 19°31' Libra; Midheaven: 23°5' Cancer.

Again, the two planets corresponding to Wednesday and Thursday are united by a square aspect (Mercury□Jupiter). Strikingly, the latter planet is involved in a close conjunction with Pluto (Jupiter♌Pluto). Astrologically, the polarized planetary pair (Mercury⇌Jupiter) expresses the complementary (teacher⇌disciple) relationship which characterizes the Last Supper. It is treacherously easy to recognize in the involvement of Pluto the elements of corrupt judgement (Jupiter is the planet of jurisdiction and adjudication) and of betrayal (by both Judas and Peter) which characterizes the middle part of the Holy Week.

Finally, Venus and Saturn, the planets associated with the ultimate segment of the Holy Week, are again connected by a square aspect. Both planets are in exile, astrologically speaking; and both express to perfection the inner nature of Good Friday (i.e. love) resp. Black Saturday (i.e. death).

13-14 October, 64 AD, was the time of the silent insertion of the Holy Week's planetary Gestalt in human history. This is what Seth (Jh.1:42) accomplished. Before this mystery, on which Bernini must have been informed, one cannot but stand in awe.