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Tutto l'Architrave fa  $\phi$   $27\frac{3}{4}$   $\frac{3}{8}$   $\frac{1}{8}$ ; che per n<sup>o</sup> 4 Architravi fanno  
insieme  $\phi$   $111\frac{3}{8}$ .

Oro messo nelli Angeli



Il sudetto Angelo indorato da M<sup>o</sup> Giacomo Vbertini Spadaro, po-  
sto sopra la Colonna verso la Nicchia di S. Andrea, fa  $\phi$   $273\frac{1}{12}$   $\phi$   $273\frac{1}{12}$ .

Il sud<sup>o</sup> Angelo indorato da M<sup>o</sup> Altobello Zucoli Spadaro, posto  
sopra alla Colonna verso la Nicchia di S<sup>ta</sup> Veronica, fa  $\phi$   $220\frac{2}{3}$   $\phi$   $220\frac{2}{3}$ .

Il sud<sup>o</sup> Angelo indorato da M<sup>o</sup> Giovanni Ducci Spadaro, posto  
sopra la Colonna verso la Nicchia di S. Longino, fa  $\phi$   $214\frac{1}{4}$   $\phi$   $214\frac{1}{4}$ .

Il sudetto Angelo indorato da M<sup>o</sup> Alessandro Bariffa Spadaro

A drawing from "Oro messo nelli bronzi" (Gold placed in the bronzes), the **manuscript** at the center of a **Vatican** criminal case, is seen in a facsimile in a book about Gian Lorenzo Bernini by Maria Grazia D'Amelio, a professor of architectural history. The drawing shows where gold will be affixed to the four angel sculptures on top of the baldachin or canopy over the main altar in St. Peter's Basilica. (CNS/courtesy Argos)

by Cindy Wooden, Catholic News Service

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Rome — June 11, 2024

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The lawyer for the former Vatican employee accused of trying to sell St. Peter's Basilica an allegedly stolen 17th-century manuscript about plans for the massive canopy over the basilica's main altar said the illustrated manuscript is different from one listed in the archives and later reported missing.

Angelo Coccia, the lawyer, told Catholic News Service June 10, that even the arrest warrant for his client, Alfio Maria Daniele Pergolizzi, showed doubt when it asserted the item Pergolizzi attempted to sell could "presumably be traced back" to a booklet purchased in 1879 for the archives of the Fabbrica di San Pietro, the office that oversees the upkeep of the basilica.

Pergolizzi was arrested by Vatican police May 27 after a sting operation in which he delivered the manuscript to Cardinal Mauro Gambetti, archpriest of the basilica and president of the Fabbrica, in exchange for a check for 120,000 euros (about \$130,700).

From 1995 to 2011, Pergolizzi worked for the Fabbrica, serving as photo archivist and de facto communications officer. He founded a publishing house specializing in art books and after leaving the basilica pursued publishing as a full time career until

the company declared bankruptcy in 2022 or 2023.

Coccia said his client has been in a cell in the Vatican gendarmes' barracks since his arrest. The Vatican prosecutor interrogated Pergolizzi May 27 and May 28 and had another session scheduled for June 10. Coccia said that at that appointment he would make a second formal petition for Pergolizzi's release.

The manuscript Pergolizzi had tried to sell to Gambetti is called "Oro messo nelli bronzi" (Gold placed in the bronzes), Coccia said, while the Vatican repeatedly referred to the missing or stolen manuscript, including in the arrest warrant, as "a manuscript titled, 'Little Book of gold.'"

The Vatican described its stolen manuscript as containing 16 numbered pages, Coccia said, while the piece in Pergolizzi's possession has 36 pages and is not numbered.

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The lawyer said Pergolizzi's manuscript appears to have been prepared by collaborators of Gian Lorenzo Bernini in 1633 to raise money to pay for the Baroque master's massive baldachin or canopy over the main altar in St. Peter's Basilica. The 36-page manuscript, Coccia said, details weights and measurements for the gold Bernini wanted to use on the baldachin, drawings that illustrate where the gold would be placed and descriptions of how it would be affixed to the bronze canopy.

Pergolizzi claimed that in 2007 or 2008, Msgr. Vittorino Canciani, one of the canons of St. Peter's Basilica, asked him to evaluate the authenticity of the manuscript and its value. Later the priest gave him the manuscript, telling him that if he ever sold it, he should give some of the money to charities in Rome run by religious sisters. Canciani died in 2014.

Because the manuscript was a gift, Coccia said, Pergolizzi never had a certificate of ownership.

Coccia said Canciani had told his client that the manuscript was given to him by friends and was not the property of the Fabbrica. The theory of Pergolizzi and Bernini scholars he has worked with is that the manuscript was presented to Pope Urban VIII, who put it in his private collection, which then passed to his family — the

Barberini.

The Vatican prosecutor, however, said the manuscript was purchased in 1879 by the archivist of the Fabbrica and was listed as missing by the Fabbrica archivist in 1994. Then, the prosecutor said, in April Pergolizzi contacted the Fabbrica to ask if they had any document attesting to the existence of the "little book of gold."

Pergolizzi is counting on the testimony of Maria Grazia D'Amelio, a professor of architectural history and author of a 2021 book on Bernini and the gold for the baldachin, a book published by Pergolizzi's company and containing a facsimile of the 36-page manuscript.

Coccia said that D'Amelio already has told the Vatican court that in her research in the Fabbrica's archives between 1979 and 2017 she never saw a trace of reference to the manuscript Pergolizzi had.