



‘The Marvel Not Only of Rome, But of All Italy’:
The Galleria Colonna, Its Design History and Pictorial Programme
1661–1700

The Roman Carnival of 1701 was both a time for pleasures and a time of troubles. In his diary, the chronicler Francesco Valesio reported on masques, horse races, tightrope dancers and fantastic carnival floats, but also on fears of war and famine.¹ On 6 February 1701, he recorded that a magnificent festival had taken place in the gallery of the *Contestabile* Colonna. The recently completed gallery (Fig. 1), sparkling with the utmost brilliance, was lit by more than three hundred candles, the splendour of their light refracted and magnified by crystal chandeliers.² Composed of three ample spaces, a western ante-room, a long middle section or *Sala* forming the gallery proper, and an eastern throne room, such a magnificent gallery complex had never before been seen. It was impressive not only for its dimensions but also for its decoration, which was distinguished by overwhelming ceiling frescoes, an exceptionally lavish employment of coloured marble, sumptuous gilding, exquisite objects from antiquity and high quality paintings. The host, Principe Filippo II Colonna, Grand Constable of the Kingdom of Naples (*Gran Contestabile del Regno di Napoli*), then aged thirty-seven, must have been overjoyed at being able to use this room, which he had known his whole life as a construction site. Few guests would have been able to recall the commencement of the gallery’s construction, which occurred prior to Filippo’s birth in 1663. His patience was finally rewarded: today the Galleria Colonna is the most magnificent gallery in Rome—‘la meraviglia non solo di Roma, ma anco dell’Italia’ (the marvel not only of Rome, but of all Italy), as it was described by Rossini in 1700.³

Although the Colonna family was one of the oldest noble families of Rome and had played a central role in the history of the city, and consequently had commissioned numerous works of art designed to demonstrate their social status, their artistic patronage has been little studied. While the Galleria Colonna is frequently referred to in the standard works on Baroque art, it has not hitherto been the subject of a detailed investigation. This article summarises the conclusions reached by the author on the basis of research spanning many years in the Archivio Colonna (the Colonna family archive), and published more fully in German in *Berninis unbekanntes Meisterwerk. Die Galleria Colonna und die Kunstpatronage des römischen Uradels* (2007). Newly discovered documents enable the individual stages of the building’s construction and the execution of its decoration to be accurately reconstructed, allowing us to understand its patrons’ political and social ambitions and the degree to which these determined the appearance and decorative scheme of the gallery.

The Galleria Colonna in the literature

Before these new findings are introduced, it is necessary to summarise the state of research. In 1909, Oskar Pollak identified Antonio del Grande as the original architect of the Galleria Colonna on the basis of several letters by del Grande and a document in the Archivio Colonna then known as perg. XLIX, n. 52.⁴ This document is a fascicle that contains four compilations of documents dating from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries that detail the cost of the gallery’s construction and record the artists involved in the project. They are, in fact, sloppily presented excerpts from the *libri mastri*, or ledgers, of the Colonna family, and form only a small part of the relevant data. Pollak apparently was unable to consult the original documents pertaining to the building from the period of the gallery’s conception, which include *misure e stime* (measurements

Fig. 1: Galleria Colonna, Rome.
Interior view from the west.
(Bibliotheca Hertziana–Max-Planck-Institut für Kunstgeschichte, Rome.)

and estimates) and numerous other accounts in the series *conti saldati* (settled accounts).

Subsequently, the archivist Guido Corti carried out pioneering work, systematically using the *libri mastri* and making excerpts from the *conti saldati*. Corti was primarily interested in paintings and other decorative objects. The brief account of the gallery with which he prefaced his 1937 guide to the Colonna collection was largely based on the documents used by Pollak, supplemented with several other notices drawn from the *libri mastri*.⁵ The more recent Colonna collection catalogues, while adding significantly to our knowledge of both individual paintings and sculptures and the history of the collection, did not add much that was new on the gallery itself, although they did publish two important watercolour paintings that reveal how the paintings were hung in the gallery in the early eighteenth century (Fig. 18).⁶

According to Corti, the chronology of the gallery's building history runs as follows.

- 1654: construction commences under the direction of Antonio del Grande.
- 1665: the completion of the ceiling vault.
- Between 1665 and 1670: the execution of the decorative ceiling frescoes by Giovanni Paolo Schor, Filippo Schor and Laura Bernasconi.
- Following del Grande's death in 1671: the resumption of building under the direction of Girolamo Fontana.
- Between 1675 and 1678: the execution of a fresco programme consisting of five *quadri riportati* (fictive framed paintings), including scenes from the life of Marcantonio Colonna, by Giovanni Coli and Filippo Gherardi.
- 1694: the transportation of the antique coloured marble for the floor.

In addition, Corti reattributed the fresco in the Western Ante-room, which, according to the first catalogue of the Colonna collection in 1783 was a work by Giovanni Coli and Filippo Gherardi,⁷ to Sebastiano Ricci, on the basis of a payment to the artist made in 1696. He dated Chiari's ceiling fresco in the eastern room to 1699–1702, and the gallery's inauguration to 1703.⁸ These dates appear in most later publications,⁹ although recently both Safarik and Gozzano have assumed that completion of the gallery spanned the period from 1654 to 1725.¹⁰

The Galleria Colonna has its place in most standard works on Roman Baroque art,¹¹ but only certain aspects of its design have been analysed in detail. The frescoes in the gallery's central *Sala* were the subject of separate investigations by Cerrato, Ehrlich, Dunn-Czak, and Mertz, all of which focussed on their formal and stylistic char-

acteristics.¹² In 1958 Silvia De Vito Battaglia published an interpretation of Ricci's ceiling fresco in the Western Ante-room that is still valid today and provided the basis for Jeffery Daniels' later treatment.¹³ In a 1968 essay on Giuseppe Bartolomeo Chiari, Bernhard Kerber included Chiari's fresco in the easternmost room of the gallery, without, however, fully deciphering its iconography.¹⁴ The most recent studies discuss the iconographic program of the ceilings more comprehensively.¹⁵

In large part the slumber into which research on the gallery had sunk can be explained by the inaccessibility, the confusing wealth of material, and the lack of organisation of the Archivio Colonna, which was only made properly accessible to scholars in 1996. On my first visits to the Archivio Colonna in early 1995, it soon became evident that the *Conti saldati* contained an abundance of documents on the gallery. Each of the volumes is between ten and fifteen centimetres thick and brings together invoices of diverse kinds: from tailors, saddlers, apothecaries, bricklayers, grocery suppliers, carpenters, artists, plumbers, and so on, all jumbled together, all in diverse, and sometimes scarcely legible handwriting, without any attempt made to organise them chronologically nor to provide the volumes with any list of contents.

From the period of the gallery's conception, there exist about a hundred such volumes, which I have analysed *in toto*. Additional sources that I have drawn on in order to reconstruct the building's history and the gallery's decoration include *Libri mastri* (ledgers); *Istromenti* (contracts) supplemented by notarial acts in the Archivio di Stato di Roma; the series *Appendice IV (Roma)*; correspondence, and the *Miscellanea storica* (historical miscellanea). On the basis of these documents, the reconstruction of the history and decoration of the Palazzo Colonna and its gallery has become possible.

The building site and the patrons

In tandem with the gallery's construction, the entire family residence of the branch of the Colonna family known as the Colonna di Paliano, near the Church of SS. Apostoli in Rome, was subjected to a profound modification. The impetus for these changes came from Girolamo Colonna (23 March 1604–4 September 1666, cardinal from 7 February 1628), followed by his nephew Lorenzo Onofrio (19 April 1637–15 April 1689, Grand Constable of the Kingdom of Naples from 24 January 1659).¹⁶ From 1639, Girolamo, who was eulogised by his contemporaries for his intelligence and education, managed the family's business, having been invested with the right of primogeniture. In 1664 he was summoned by the Spanish court, which resulted in his transfer of far-reaching powers of attorney

Fig. 2. Anonymous artist (Filippo Schor?) after Jakob Ferdinand Voet, *Laurentius Onuphrius Columna Dux Paliani Magni Comestabilis Regni Neapolis X*, 1673 or thereafter. Engraving. (Rome, Istituto Nazionale per la Grafica, 46.H.6, N.71496.)

to his nephew. The latter then began to engage in fruitful patronage activities. He promoted painters, sculptors, composers, musicians and writers in addition to installing a public opera theatre in his palace, and acquired in the course of several decades an impressive library and more than nine hundred paintings.¹⁷

While Cardinal Girolamo strove to surpass Nero's luxurious *Domus Aurea* (Golden House) in the decoration of his apartment,¹⁸ Lorenzo Onofrio, taking up an interpretation according to which a Temple of the Sun had once stood on the ground owned by the Colonna, sought to rebuild his residence as a 'Palace of the Sun'.¹⁹ In doing so, Prince Colonna (Fig. 2) compared himself with no less a figure than the 'Sun King' Louis XIV, whose former favourite, Maria Mancini, he had married in 1661.

Under the terms of a papal bull dating from 1556, which put the principality of Paliano on a par with the states of Ferrara, Parma and Urbino, each Prince of Paliano considered himself entitled to the rank of sovereign head-of-state.²⁰ A manuscript dating from after 1631 presents this claim in considerable detail in two hundred and thirty-nine pages of text.²¹ According to this document, the Colonna were entitled to exert the same rights in their territory as the emperor in the Reich, in areas that included the dispensation of justice, the enactment of laws, the levying of taxes and tolls, the minting of coins, the building of fortresses and the formation of armies. Like monarchs, the Colonna were divinely appointed by God and not subject to any worldly authority, nor to the authority of the Pope. The text implies the equality of birth of the head of the Colonna family with that of the French king:

Enjoyed by such princes are two royal prerogatives: one of restoring reputation, legitimising bastards and ennobling commoners, the other of not being indebted for this dignity except to God. Such princes consider themselves to be invested only by His Divine Majesty and to be princes solely through the grace of God, and yet in all the other kingdoms and regions of the Christian world, and particularly in France and England, this pretence would constitute the crime of *lèse-majesté*; not only for princes, but also for a king's own sons.²²



The type of status consciousness described here found its visual counterpart in the spectacular festivities staged on the occasion of the birth of Lorenzo Onofrio Colonna's first son (Fig. 3). Like the son of Louis XIV, the 'successor to the throne' in the Colonna microstate was welcomed in 1663 as a 'rising sun'.²³ In the following years, Lorenzo Onofrio commissioned decorations for many of the rooms in his palace that allude to the sun as it appears in mythological representations. The extension of an Apollonian programme to an entire palace, an innovation understood to have originated at Versailles, had a parallel, if not a precursor, in the Palazzo Colonna.²⁴

Rivalry with papal families

Contrary to what has hitherto been assumed, construction of the Galleria Colonna commenced not in 1654 but at the end of 1661, shortly after the marriage of Lorenzo Onofrio Colonna to Maria Mancini.²⁵ Maria, of Roman origin, had been raised at the French court by her uncle Cardinal Giulio Mazzarino (Jules Mazarin), the chief minister of Louis XIV. Her union with Lorenzo Onofrio was intended to be an astute diplomatic move, but because of Mazarin's death in 1661 it failed to bring about the desired political outcome.²⁶ Half of Rome mocked this *mésalliance*. Maria was not only far removed socially from the rank enjoyed

by her husband, but also was known to have been Louis XIV's favourite, so that her virginity was questionable. As the saying went, 'un giglio portato nei reali appartamenti di Francia non poteva conservare il suo candore' (a lily [that is, a pure person] brought to the royal apartments of France could not maintain its whiteness). The 'speaking statue' Pasquino hardly judged her flatteringly when he observed that 'la vacca è stata attaccata alla Colonna' (the cow has been tied to the column/Colonna).²⁷

In those years, these were but some of the insults that the Colonna of Paliano had to endure. The family found itself in crisis. As a result of its close ties to Pope Urban VIII Barberini (1623–1644), the Colonna of Paliano were in a difficult position during the subsequent pontificate of Innocent X Pamphilj (1644–1655), when the Barberini and their entourage had fallen from favour.²⁸ Pamphilj's successor, Alexander VII Chigi (1655–1667), upon assuming office immediately made it clear to the Colonna that they did not stand in his good favour either, as he prohibited Marcantonio V Colonna from holding the prestigious office of imperial ambassador.²⁹

Throughout the seventeenth century, the traditionally anti-papal Colonna family was more strongly dependent on the goodwill of the Pope than it wished to admit. At the same time, it was forced to go on the defensive against attempts by *nouveau riche* papal families to dispute the primacy of the old noble lineages, which manifested itself above all in conflicts concerning questions of etiquette.³⁰ In this context, the gallery's construction, which was partly financed by the generous dowry of Maria Mancini,³¹ may be interpreted as an artistic affirmation of status: both its architecture and its pictorial programme aimed to strengthen the disputed rank of the Colonna of Paliano and to outshine the papal families of the time.

Antonio del Grande's gallery and its Pamphilj models

Galleries are known to have been in existence in Italy from at least the mid-sixteenth century. During the course of the seventeenth century a transformation in the function of galleries was taking place, which is apparent in written descriptions of galleries, their design, their position within the palace, their dimensions and the themes of their pictorial programmes. The gallery, which at first functioned primarily as a place for private relaxation, was in the process of becoming the most important representational room of the Baroque palace and consequently assumed functions that traditionally had been assigned to the *Sala grande*.³² As a systematic overview of Roman galleries dating from the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries has revealed, 'social climbers' played a significant role in this development.³³ While the old elite families traditionally

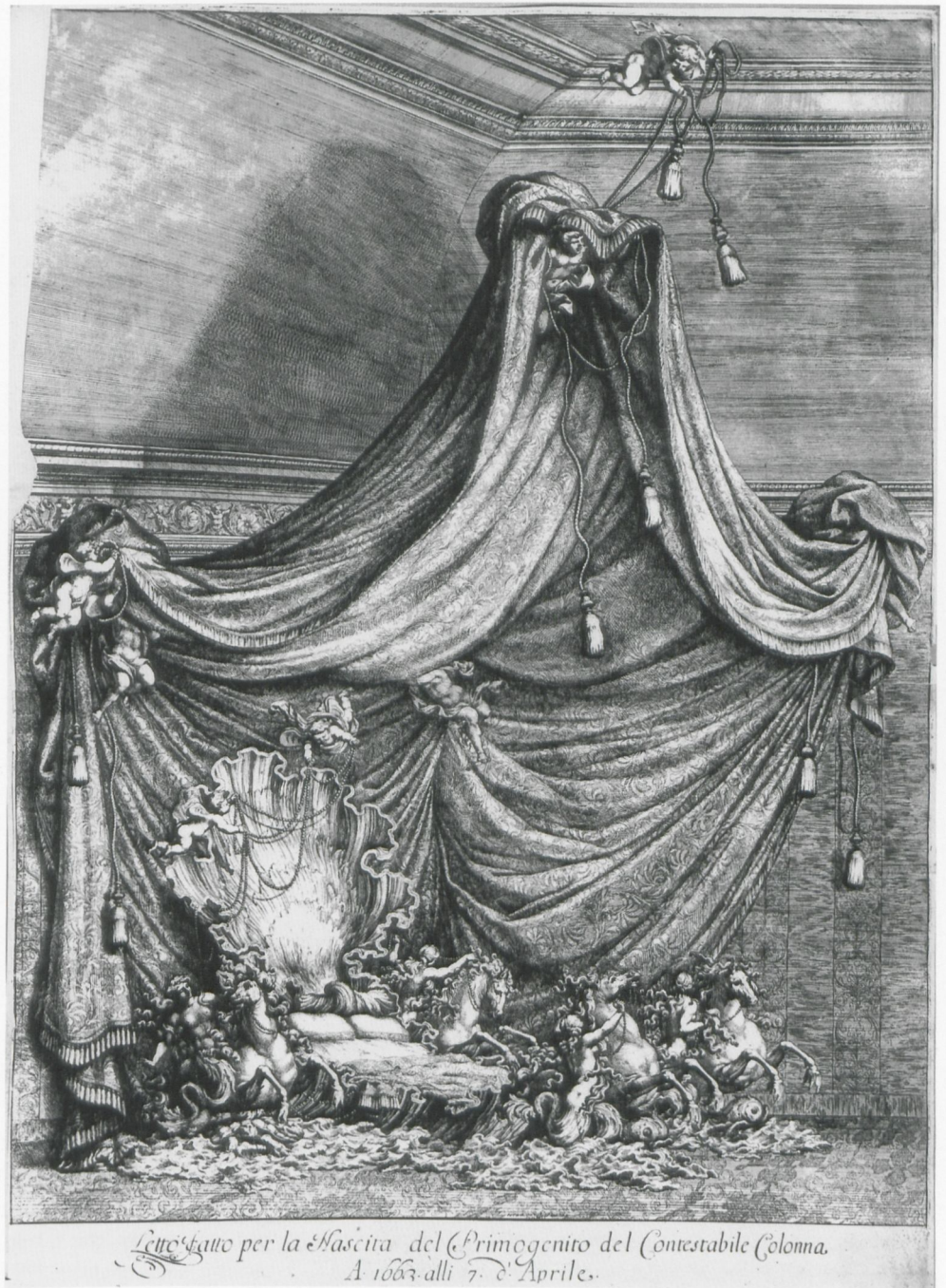
aggrandised themselves in the *Sala grande* by means of ancestral portraits or frescoes depicting their family history, the papal families (most of whom could not boast any memorable history) had to find an alternative form of self-representation. To this end, the gallery offered an ideal site, where refined artistic taste, and a patronage style typified by *magnificenza* and exorbitant luxury could be demonstrated. The huge amount of expensive inner city space needed for the gallery made it a status symbol: the bigger, the better.³⁴

The Galleria Colonna was at the forefront of this development, and took as its point of departure two galleries belonging to the Colonna's enemies, the Pamphilj. The huge, today no longer extant gallery of the Palazzo Aldobrandini Pamphilj (now Palazzo Doria-Pamphilj) provided the architectural model,³⁵ while the gallery in the Palazzo Pamphilj in Piazza Navona inspired the painted decoration of the Galleria Colonna. By fusing an enormous room with an exceptionally magnificent decoration, the Colonna achieved a 'synthesis of the superlative', which put even papal pomp in the shade.³⁶

The gallery realised by Antonio del Grande at Palazzo Colonna aimed to impress the visitor by both its dimensions and the overwhelming quantity of light that was admitted through its windows. Measuring 10.67 x 40.05 m, with a vertical height of 13 m, the room's dimensions were almost identical to those of the gallery in the Palazzo Aldobrandini Pamphilj.³⁷ Both were distinguished by an elaborate fenestration, which subdivided the large wall surfaces. In the Galleria Colonna, each of the long sides of the gallery had twenty-one windows (articulated in seven bays each consisting of three windows one above the other), while in a preparatory project as many as ten window bays were envisaged for each long side.³⁸

Although architectural treatises of the time recommended that galleries should only have windows along their north sides, since northern light enhanced the viewing of pictures,³⁹ the Colonna opted for the type of the Palazzo Aldobrandini Pamphilj, which barely managed to fulfil the traditional functions of a gallery, chief among which was promenading. As a space for promenading such a room could hardly be considered suitable, at least in summer, since with forty-two windows (of which twenty-one faced south) the heat in the Galleria Colonna would have been unbearable. Paintings on the narrow wall surfaces between the windows would not have been clearly visible, owing to their being hung against the light. Little wall space remained for works of art, even if the room was primarily intended for antique sculpture. The limited functionality of the Pamphilj gallery and, by extension, the Galleria Colonna indicates that such rooms

Fig. 3. Pietro Santi Bartoli after Johann Paul Schor, *Bed Designed for the Birth of the Contestabile Colonna's First-born in the Year of 1663 on 7 April*. Engraving. (Rome, Istituto Nazionale per la Grafica, F. C. 41 H 12.)



were, above all, intended to impress by their spaciousness. Such a demonstrable waste of expensive inner city land served to affirm one's social position.

In the realisation of this project, the pre-existing form of the Palazzo Colonna had to be taken into account, since this in part determined the structure of the room. Prior to the construction of the gallery in 1661–1665 the Western Ante-room already existed in its present dimensions. It would be integrated into the complex only after 1674 as the consequence of a change of plan which will be discussed later (Fig. 6, A; cf. Fig. 1). Originally only the

central *Sala* was defined as a '*galleria*' (Fig. 6, B), and was connected with the Western Ante-room by means of low doors. On the site of the future Throne Room, the eastern part of the gallery complex, stood the so-called Palazzo dell'Arcivescovo (Archbishop's Palace), which as yet did not communicate with the *galleria* (Fig. 6, C).⁴⁰

One *misura e stima* establishes that the gallery was not erected *ex novo* but on the foundations of an older wing that belonged to the quattrocento palace complex of Giuliano della Rovere. The ground floor of this wing was preserved and modified only slightly. Since the new

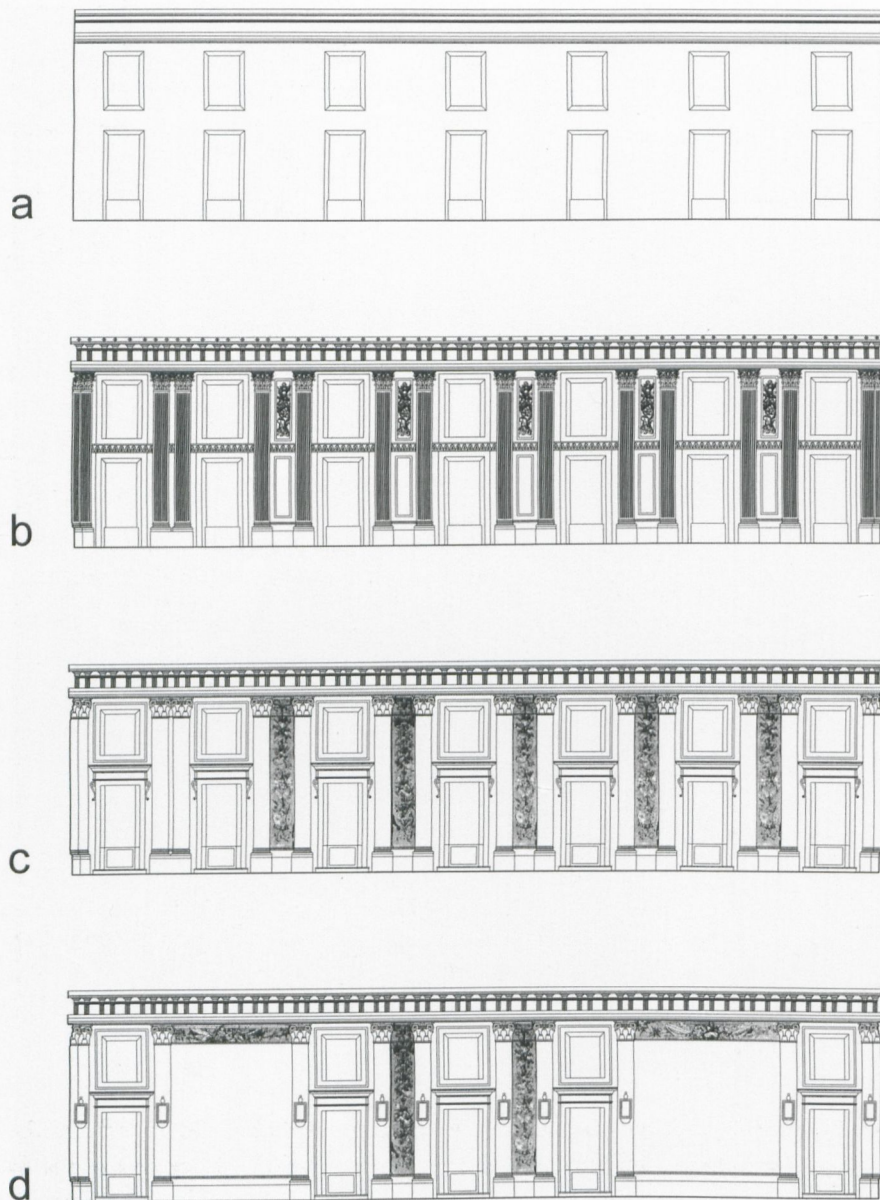


Fig. 4. Comparison of various actual or projected sub-divisions of the north wall of the Galleria Colonna at different phases of its construction. a. Antonio del Grande (Appearance following the walling up of seven lunette windows). b. Mattia de' Rossi. c. Carlo Fontana. d. Girolamo Fontana. Reconstruction by Christina Strunck, drawing by Gilbert Diller.

gallery façade on the *piano nobile* had to be built in conformity with this floor, which was not completely regular, the two westernmost window bays were placed closer to each other than were the remaining five (Fig. 4a).⁴¹ This irregularity prevented a symmetrical articulation of the wall and caused substantial delays in the completion of the gallery when, during the following decades, various attempts to achieve a satisfying decorative scheme succeeded each other.

Johann Paul Schor's designs for the decorative scheme

The task of creating the interior decoration for the gallery fell to an architect hailing from Innsbruck, Johann Paul Schor, a close colleague of Gianlorenzo Bernini, who, as a result of the generous patronage of Pope Alexander VII

and his family, the Chigi, from 1655 rose to become a leading 'society artist'.⁴² The engagement of Schor, a papal favourite, emphasises how important it was for Lorenzo Onofrio Colonna to keep pace with the newest trends of nepotistic displays of splendour.

Schor's plans reveal that from the outset the gallery was intended to possess a public representational character. For the end walls, he envisaged triumphal arch motifs (Fig. 5), while he planned to decorate the long sides with portrait medallions in the antique manner of Colonna *uomini illustri* (worthies) and a cycle of history paintings alluding to the family (Fig. 7).⁴³ Following the completion of the shell of the building in 1665, it seems to have been realised that paintings displayed between the numerous windows would not be seen at their best,

Fig. 5. Johann Paul Schor. Design for an end wall of the Galleria Colonna. Windsor Castle, Royal Collection, Inv. No. RL 5592. By permission of Her Majesty the Queen.



owing to the excessive illumination. Accordingly, Schor proposed a decorative scheme with mirrors on the walls (Fig. 9),⁴⁴ while the history paintings were moved to the ceiling. In order to provide a continuous surface on which to paint the vault frescoes, fourteen lunette windows were walled up.⁴⁵

The ceiling fresco

Begun in 1665, the ceiling fresco glorifies the greatest hero in the history of the family, Marcantonio Colonna, who played a central role in the decisive victory over the Turks at the naval Battle of Lepanto in 1571. Documents reveal that Schor not only painted the iconographically neutral framing, but also created the majority of the figurative incidents secondary to the main narrative presented within this framing.⁴⁶ Among other things, these episodes show Oriental captives and workmen who adorn a fictive triumphal *porticus* of the Colonna with standards, ships and trophies, all evidently alluding to the Battle of Lepanto (Figs 10, 13). It follows that Marcantonio's naval

victory over the Turks had already been established as the main theme of the gallery in 1665, although the *quadri riportati* (fictive framed paintings) would not be begun by Giovanni Coli and Filippo Gherardi until 1675 (Fig. 11, Nos. 1–5).

As there is a gap in the sequence of invoices (payments to Schor are recorded between 1665 and 1668, and to Coli and Gherardi between 1675 and 1678) it has always been assumed that Schor completed his part of the project in 1668, and that the *quadri riportati* had been intended from the beginning to be executed by other artists. However, the documents indicate that structural problems caused the break in activity: between 1669 and 1673 work had to be postponed while the ceiling vault, which had threatened to collapse, was reinforced.⁴⁷ A drawing which has recently appeared on the art market suggests that Schor had already made designs for the *quadri riportati*.⁴⁸ Although Schor resumed work on the paintings in 1673,⁴⁹ his death in early 1674 necessitated the employment of Coli and Gherardi to see the fresco through to completion.

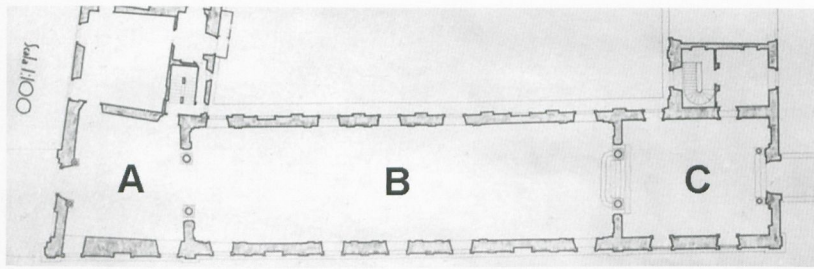


Fig. 6. Galleria Colonna, Rome; ground plan, present-day appearance. A. Western Ante-room. B. Central Sala of the gallery. C. Throne Room.

Like the architecture, the structure and theme of the ceiling fresco of the Galleria Colonna was conditioned by the problematic relationship between the Colonna and the papacy, and more specifically by the family's desire to outshine the Pamphilj. Stylistically and compositionally the Colonna ceiling resembles the vault of the Galleria Pamphilj in Piazza Navona, which Pietro da Cortona had decorated between 1651 and 1654 with frescoes illustrating Virgil's *Aeneid*.⁵⁰ The Colonna, however, commissioned a representation of Marcantonio's exploits, glorifying a real-life family hero, as opposed to the fictional hero Aeneas, in whom the Pamphilj Pope saw his *alter ego*. In this way the Colonna pointed to the fact that the Pamphilj could not muster a comparable hero among their rather more modest ancestry and had to resort to mythic typologies.⁵¹

In the sense that the mediating figures illusionistically presented in the cove of the vault appear to celebrate the triumph of Marcantonio in the present (Figs 10, 13), they emphasise the contemporary relevance of his victory over the Turks. In the light of the Siege of Candia (Crete), which had held Rome in suspense between 1645 and 1669 and which ended with the defeat of the Christians, Lepanto was an apt choice of theme. The clashes between the papal galleys and the Turks around Crete provided a foil for Colonna's glorious naval victory. The theme was also a diplomatic one, since it did not represent the Colonna locked in battle against France, Spain or the papacy (as would have been the case if other episodes drawn from the family's history had been chosen); instead it extolled the universally acknowledged Christian theme of triumph over enemies of the faith.

Since Marcantonio Colonna achieved the victory at Lepanto as general of the papal fleet, this choice of theme was a means by which the Colonna could demonstrate their loyalty to the papacy. This may appear surprising given the family's traditional anti-papal attitude. However, during the course of the seventeenth century the Colonna were forced to acknowledge that they could not maintain their leading social position in Rome without the assistance of the Pope.⁵² Therefore in spite of their rivalry with the papal families, it made sense for the Colonna

to show their general readiness to cooperate with the papacy. The frescoes present the historical justification for the Colonna's honorary office of *assistente al soglio papale* (papal throne assistant), through which the family was privileged over all other Roman nobles. This office, which members of the Colonna (and Orsini) family had held intermittently since the fifteenth century, was made hereditary in 1589 because of the valuable services the Colonna had rendered unto the pope—chief among them the victory at Lepanto.⁵³

The decorative system of the fresco, devised by Johann Paul Schor, probably in discussion with Cesare Colonna and with reference to his epic text *Le Colonne del Tempio dell'Eternità*,⁵⁴ consists of five history paintings (Fig. 11, Nos. 1–5),⁵⁵ which have been incorporated into a fictive architecture resembling an ancient portico. In antiquity porticoes were often built to display the spoils brought home from a victorious battle.⁵⁶ Accordingly, workmen are outfitting the painted Colonna portico with flags and trophies, while oriental captives gaze up in admiration at the paintings that glorify Marcantonio's deeds. The main action that takes place 'just now' is the decoration of the hall, whereas the *quadri riportati* serve as flashbacks reporting earlier events. This scheme constituted an innovative solution to the much-discussed problem of how unity in the multiplicity of an epic visual cycle was to be achieved—in this case through adherence to the three Aristotelian unities of time, place, and action.⁵⁷

Moreover, the painted draperies ingeniously disguise the inconsistencies inherent of the architecture. Colourful multi-patterned standards distract the eye from the irregular placement of the *quadri riportati* (in Fig. 11, the gap between Nos. 1 and 2 is much narrower than that between Nos. 4 and 5). In designing the ceiling structure to correspond to the articulation of the wall (the oval *quadri riportati* were aligned with the second and sixth window bays, while the square one was positioned above the central bay), Schor accepted the irregular placement of the windows which therefore could not subsequently be changed. This made it even more difficult to design a consistent architectonic articulation for the walls.

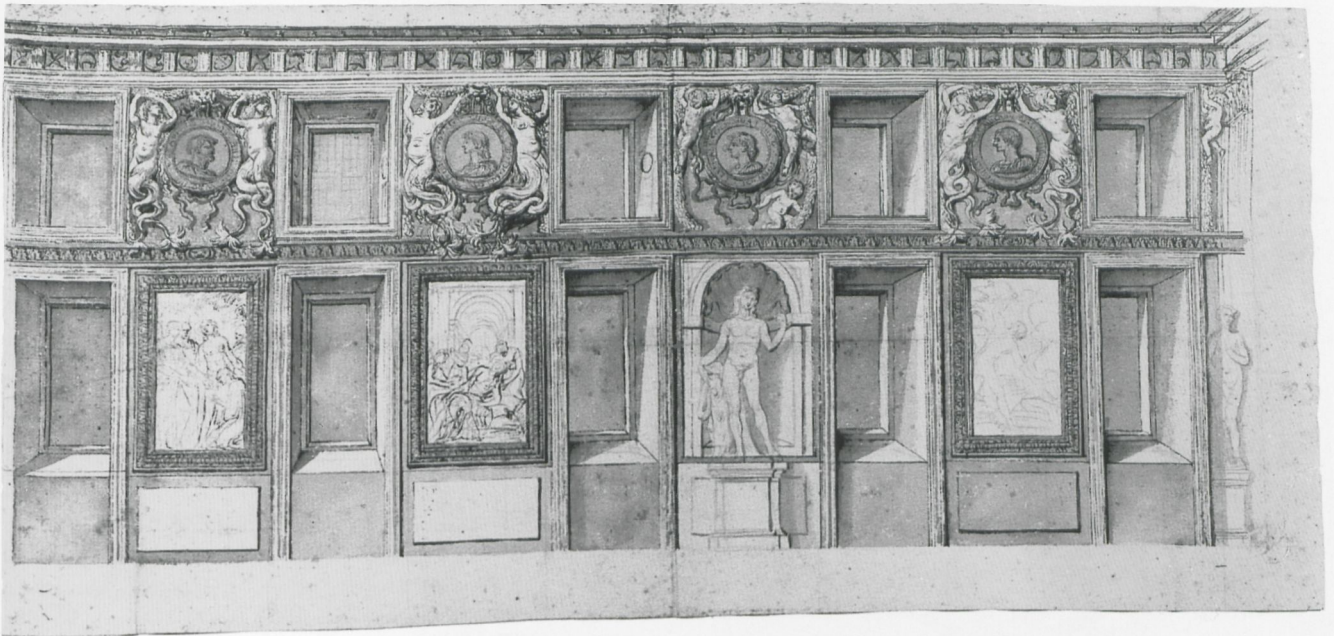


Fig. 7. Johann Paul Schor (or studio), design for the northern long side of the Galleria Colonna. Subiaco, Archivio Colonna, III.QB.4, no. 2. (Bibliotheca Hertziana–Max-Planck-Institut für Kunstgeschichte, Rome.)

Gianlorenzo Bernini's change of plan (1674)

After Johann Paul Schor died suddenly on 13 March 1674 aged fifty-nine (possibly as a result of a tragic fall from a scaffolding),⁵⁸ Lorenzo Onofrio Colonna succeeded in interesting the star of the Roman architectural scene, Gianlorenzo Bernini, in his gallery. Bernini, who in earlier years had cultivated contacts with the Colonna, participated in various aspects of the creation of the room. Summoned to inspect the frescoes,⁵⁹ he designed a cabinet ornamented with small-scale ivory reproductions of famous works of art (a gallery within a gallery),⁶⁰ but his most substantial contribution was a completely new spatial conception for the gallery developed in the summer of 1674.⁶¹

The realisation of his plan required significant modifications: the wall shared with the former Palazzo dell'Arcivescovo (Fig. 6, C) was opened up, and both it and the Western Ante-room were connected with the gallery by means of large openings supported by monumental columns. The elevated floor level of the Palazzo dell'Arcivescovo was retained and converted into a throne platform. The tripartite sequence of rooms achieved in this way (Fig. 6, A–C) was new to European gallery design and because of its majestic effect soon inspired imitations or variants at Versailles, Berlin, Vienna, Stockholm and elsewhere.⁶² Contrary to what Pollak and his followers have maintained, this innovative structure is not owed to Antonio del Grande, but is instead Bernini's unknown masterpiece.⁶³

The initiative for the rebuilding came from Lorenzo Onofrio Colonna, who in 1674 found himself in personal

and social crisis. In the summer of 1672 he was left by his wife Maria Mancini, who not only made him the mockery of Rome, but also, through her flight across half of Europe, discredited him at other courts, and in spite of many attempts to mediate with her in the following years could not be persuaded to return. As a visible consequence of his social degradation, in 1673 Lorenzo Onofrio was denied the prominent position in the annual cavalcade of the *Chinea* which he considered his due. The *Chinea* was a ceremony in which a special Spanish envoy (*ambasciatore straordinario*) paid the annual tribute of the Kingdom of Naples to the papacy. The head of the Colonna family, as Grand Constable of that Kingdom, wished to present this tribute himself or at least to ride alongside the Spanish envoy within a space protected by the Swiss guards. His being excluded from this prestigious place and forced to mingle with the rest of Roman nobility signalled that his claim to superiority was no longer accepted. Bitterly hurt, Lorenzo Onofrio did all he could to have his old privilege restored to him for the following year's cavalcade. However, after several memoranda failed to bring about the desired result, he remained absent from the cavalcade in June 1674 out of protest.⁶⁴

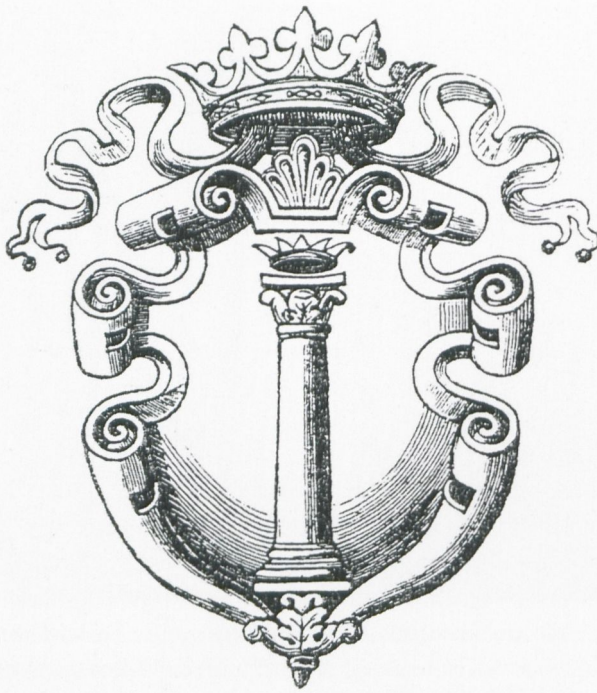


Fig. 8. Colonna coat of arms.
(Author.)

The new conception of the gallery, which was developed in the same summer, can be seen as an attempt to promote his cause by architectonic means: it was meant to express the special status of the House of Colonna in a tangible way. Inspired by the French practice of installing a throne on the end wall of royal galleries, the Throne Room in the Galleria Colonna served to demonstrate to all of the world that Prince Colonna was equal in rank and power to sovereign heads of state,⁶⁵ an assertion increasingly being publically questioned.⁶⁶

In appropriating the strategies of regal scenography that he had already experimented with elsewhere,⁶⁷ Bernini created for the *Contestabile* a privileged space that visibly elevated him above his contemporaries (Fig. 1, and Fig. 6, C). The rhythmically charged stucco decoration designed by Mattia de' Rossi for the walls of the central *Sala* (Fig. 4b) was intended to create a movement which leads the viewer towards the Throne Room, without distracting from it.⁶⁸ The presence of monumental columns framing the openings between the three areas of the gallery not only served to connect these spaces visually, but also alluded to the Colonna coat of arms and its associated symbolic meanings.

The meaning of the columns

It is surely no coincidence that obvious connections exist between the gallery's real and painted architecture, especially since Bernini visited the gallery in May 1675 in

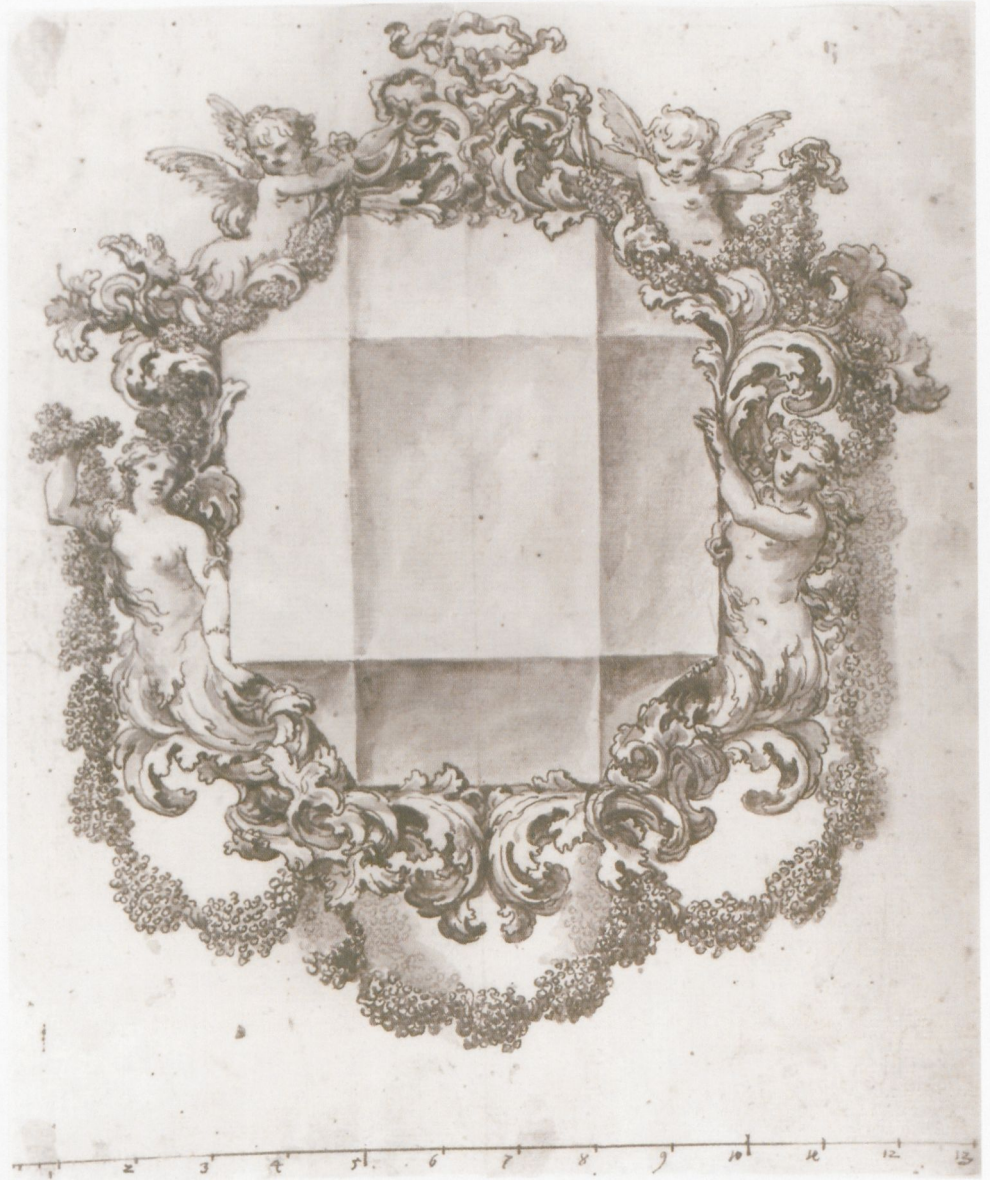
order to assess the ceiling frescoes.⁶⁹ As 'colonna' in Italian means 'column', this architectural element had appeared on the family's armorial bearings since the Middle Ages (Fig. 8). In the scene in which Marcantonio Colonna is invested with the office of commander-in-chief by Pope Pius V (Fig. 11, No. 2, and Fig. 13), the central column visually associated with Marcantonio by being placed behind him puns on his name: by receiving the commission to defeat the Turks, Colonna becomes a 'pillar of the threatened church'.⁷⁰

A figure in the right middle ground who points to the column at the right (and whose gesturing hand is picked out by a beam of light), invites the viewer to read the architecture of the gallery anthropomorphically. 'Colonne', columns or column-like pictorial elements appear in prominent positions in all five *quadri riportati* and are, so to speak, mnemonic devices for the Colonna family virtues of *Fortitudo* (Fortitude) and *Constantia* (Constancy) that were traditionally associated with the column.⁷¹ By foregrounding the column, a symbol common to all generations of the Colonna family, the ceiling emphasises the exemplary role of Marcantonio: every family member was thereby exhorted to identify themselves with his virtues.⁷²

Marcantonio's exemplary quality is especially highlighted in the last *quadro riportato* of the series, located above the opening to the elevated Throne Room (Fig. 11, No. 5, and Fig. 14). Surrounded by Roman dignitaries, Marcantonio's statue in the Palazzo dei Conservatori on the Capitoline Hill looms up from the middle ground. Although in reality its pedestal is right-angled, in the fresco it has taken on a columnar shape. Two men, who are putting the final touches to the inscription on the pedestal, draw the viewer's attention to the text. The word '*exemplum*' is centrally positioned and distinctly legible.⁷³ This fresco reinforces the parallel between figure and column, thus establishing a heraldic and anthropomorphic reading of the gallery architecture; at the same time it creates a direct visual connection between the living head of the Colonna family and the family tradition. In his Throne Room, each *Contestabile* was to present himself beneath his heroic ancestor, whom the inscription identified as his model (*exemplum*) (Fig. 1).⁷⁴

Bernini's design seems to have been conceived with an *impresa* in mind, which was omnipresent in the Palazzo Colonna and signified familial continuity (Fig. 12).⁷⁵ Each head of the family, who was to be perceived by his

Fig. 9. Johann Paul Schor. Design for a mirror-frame encased by sirens. Leipzig, Museum der Bildenden Künste, Graphische Sammlung, Sammlung Renzi, Inv. No. 7441, p. 31 A.



visitors between the gallery's twin columns, took the place which the *impresa* assigned to the siren, a Colonna family symbol rich in tradition. At the point where a horizontal axis passing through the columns crosses a vertical axis implied by the fresco, Bernini wished to install Prince Colonna.⁷⁶ Only with a living person at its centre is the message of this arrangement complete. The Prince was expected to position himself visually as Marcantonio's successor in order to fulfil the promise of the twin column *impresa*: in spite of the fact that the person of the Prince would change from generation to generation, the family itself would have an everlasting presence. The Herculean family virtues embodied by the columns forever stand the test of time.

Marcantonio Colonna had chosen the stability of the column as a model of virile constancy: *semper immota*

(forever unmoved) proclaimed the motto of his *impresa*.⁷⁷ In deference to his great ancestor, Lorenzo Onofrio took this up: 'Eius enim columna, quae semper immota manet, non flectitur ventis, nec frangitur undis' (His is the column that always remains unmoved, neither bent by wind nor broken by waves).⁷⁸ This motto, *semper immota*, is the *concetto* expressed by the gallery's design without using words. In a new kind of *bel composto*,⁷⁹ architecture, painting, and ceremony interact in order to convey the message at the very core of the work of art.

A painted epic poem

Although the innovative conception of the gallery is solely attributable to Gianlorenzo Bernini, the painters involved also achieved much of significance. Giovanni Coli and Filippo Gherardi created in the centre of the ceiling vault

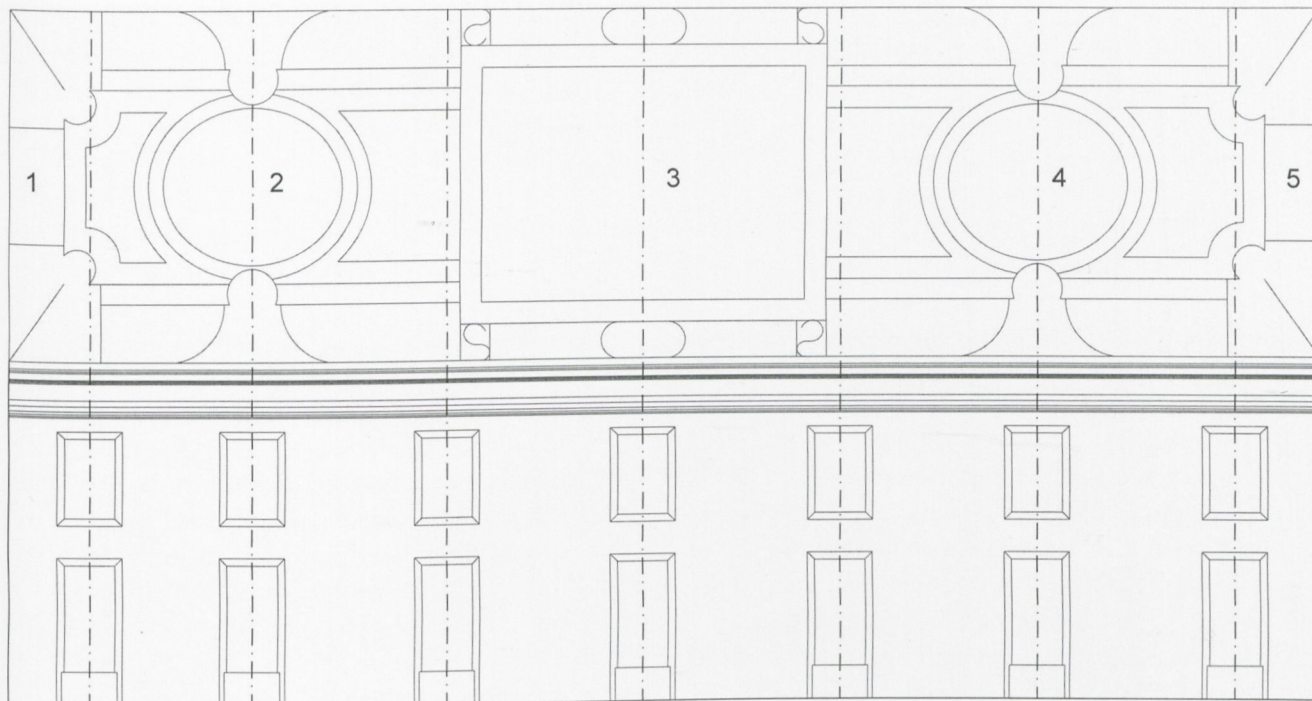


Fig. 10. Galleria Colonna, Rome; ceiling fresco by Johann Paul Schor, Giovanni Coli and Filippo Gherardi, eastern third. (Bibliotheca Hertziana–Max-Planck-Institut für Kunstgeschichte, Rome.)

an extraordinary interpretation of the victory at Lepanto (Fig. 11, No. 3, and Fig. 15).

According to Torquato Tasso, the ideal subject matter for an epic poem was a true history, neither too ancient nor too recent, preferably drawn from the wars between Christians and enemies of the faith.⁸⁰ Seen in this perspective, the battle of Lepanto called for an epic depiction and was immortalised by several poets.⁸¹ Aided by Cesare Colonna and probably inspired by his epic poem *Le Colonne del Tempio dell'Eternità*, Johann Paul Schor

had already defined the basic structure of the 'painted epic poem' in the Galleria Colonna by modelling the narrative framework on the opening sequence of Tasso's *Gerusalemme Conquistata*.⁸² After Schor's death Coli and



Gherardi faced the task of extending the epic mode to the *quadri riportati*.

The tendency in all five *quadri riportati* towards magnifying Marcantonio's deeds through subtle historic manipulations reaches a climax in the central painting, where Colonna appears as the sole victor of the Battle of Lepanto—a perspective that in no respect corresponds with the historical reality.⁸³ While sea battles commonly were depicted as an intricate skirmish of countless ships in bird's-eye perspective, the artists here concentrate the action in a dramatic close-up of the two main protagonists, Marcantonio Colonna and the Turkish commander-in-chief Muezzinzade Ali, who scrutinize each other in a moment charged with suspense. The outcome of the battle is as yet undecided, although several details indicate that victory by the Christians is imminent. This is the moment of the *peripeteia*, or reversal of circumstances, constructed according to the model of similar confrontational scenes provided by famous examples of epic poetry.⁸⁴ The epic stylisation and the inclusion of supernatural pictorial elements (heavenly harbingers of victory, the personification of Fides (Faith), the Cross in the sky) exaggerate Marcantonio's role, forming a visual analogue for the 'allegoria del poema' (allegorical reading of the epic poem) as construed by Tasso.⁸⁵

Luca Giordano and the completion of the Throne Room
Although the frescoes of the central *Sala* of the gallery were thought to have been completed in 1678, it can now

Fig. 11. Drawing of the north wall of the gallery shell, completed in 1665, and of the decorative system of the ceiling frescoes, begun in 1665. 1. Marcantonio Colonna as ambassador in Venice supports the formation of a Holy League. 2. Pope Pius V installs Marcantonio Colonna as Commander-in-chief of the papal fleet. 3. The sea battle of Lepanto. 4. Marcantonio Colonna's triumphal entry into

Rome. 5. The erection of a statue in honour of Marcantonio Colonna in the Palazzo dei Conservatori on the Capitoline Hill. Reconstruction by Christina Strunck, drawing by Gilbert Diller.

Fig. 12. Stefano Colonna's *Impresa*, from Paolo Giovio's *Le sententiose imprese*, Lyon, 1562.

DEL S. STEFANO
COLONNA.



*Se bene irato & tempestoso è il mare,
Non perciò la Serena il suo furore
Teme: così l'huom pien d'alto valore
Suol ogni caso auerso superare.*

Cōtemnit
tura procel
las.

be shown that work was temporarily suspended between 1678 and 1681, that is, during Lorenzo Onofrio Colonna's period of office as viceroy of Aragon. In his absence Coli and Gherardi returned to Lucca where Coli died in 1681. Two letters prove that his companion was summoned in 1682 in order to complete the gallery painting. Gherardi is documented in Rome in 1682, 1684 and 1685 and put the finishing touches to the vault of the main *Sala* only in 1685.⁸⁶

On his return from Spain, Lorenzo Onofrio set about finding a painter to fresco the vaults of the two square spaces at either end of the main *Sala* (Fig. 6, A and C). As letters reveal, as early as 1678 Ciro Ferri had been approached, while in 1681 the *Contestabile* turned his attention to Luca Giordano. The evidence suggests that in 1685 Giordano, in fact, began a ceiling painting in the Throne Room (Fig. 6, C) but that it was left unfinished, and was only completed in 1692 by Sebastiano Ricci.⁸⁷

Before painting of the Throne Room could proceed, its construction had to be completed. Work on this was supervised by Carlo Fontana, a pupil of Bernini who had fought hard to gain the position of house architect to the Colonna following the death of Antonio del Grande in November 1679.⁸⁸ Fontana wanted the three rooms of the gallery to be perceived as a climax: the Western Ante-room did not receive an architectonic articulation, whereas the walls of the central *Sala* were structured by means of white, perhaps partially gilded, stucco pilasters and by trophies, which cleverly covered up the difference in width between the pilasters through their wealth of forms (Fig. 4c). The elevated Throne Room eventually distinguished itself by an astonishing material preciousness as the climax of the spatial complex.⁸⁹ As the equivalent to a throne, a magnificently decorated bed would have been installed here, the design of which, attributed to Johann Paul Schor, imitated Apollo's *quadriga* appearing from the waves (Fig. 3).⁹⁰ The yellow marble decoration of the windows and doors of this room was intended to reinforce the impression of brilliant light, which seemed to emanate from the gilded 'chariot of the sun' of the 'Roman Sun King'—a scenography that was, as in 1674, more concerned with a claim to privileged status than with the exposition of a generally accepted social position.⁹¹

The ceiling frescoes by Sebastiano Ricci and Giuseppe Bartolomeo Chiari

Responsibility for continuing work on the gallery fell to Filippo II Colonna in April 1689, following the death of his father Lorenzo Onofrio. In 1692 Sebastiano Ricci received payments for the ceiling painting in the Throne Room, which he completed within just three months.⁹²

As he would take almost two years (from 1693 to 1695) to complete another great ceiling painting of identical dimensions in the Western Ante-room (Fig. 16), it may be assumed that his work in the Throne Room only involved the completion of the decoration begun by Giordano.⁹³ However, the resulting composite work appears not to have impressed his patron, since the fresco was destroyed in order to make room for the present ceiling painting by Giuseppe Bartolomeo Chiari, dating from 1698–1700 (Fig. 17).⁹⁴

The ceiling paintings of both rooms (Fig. 6, A and C) were designed to unify the three gallery spaces both optically and thematically. They seek to imitate the style of the frescoes in the central *Sala* and provide a commentary in allegorical mode on the epic occurrences depicted there. The Western Ante-room (Fig. 16) may be interpreted as a prologue that introduces the hero and the problematic that lay behind the epic history (the threat of the Turks), while the Throne Room (Fig. 17) formulates the significance of Marcantonio's exploits as an epilogue for posterity, in which his virtue is rewarded by his apotheosis.

The thematic programme and design of the frescoes are related to the Planetary Rooms in the Palazzo Pitti⁹⁵ as well as to the Gallery of Mirrors (*Galerie des Glaces*) at Versailles, which, like the central *Sala* of the Galleria Colonna, is flanked by two subsidiary spaces, the Salon of War (*Salon de la Guerre*) and the Salon of Peace (*Salon de la Paix*).⁹⁶ In contrast to Versailles, however, the two subsidiary spaces at the Galleria Colonna are not symmetrical, but rather differentiated opposites: the predominance of Peace over War is demonstrated by the integration of the frescoes into the climactic design of the three gallery spaces.⁹⁷ Both the architecture and the fresco decoration of the Throne Room designate this space as the symbolic climax of the sequence. In the midst of allegories celebrating his victory and the peace it has brought, Marcantonio is assigned a throne within the pantheon of the immortals.⁹⁸ The intended function of the room as a throne room is subtly mirrored in the fresco where the Colonna's worldly claim to a throne is surpassed by a claim to a heavenly one.

A new *Domus Aurea*

Assisted by Girolamo Fontana, who in 1689 succeeded his uncle Carlo as house architect to the Colonna,⁹⁹ Filippo II Colonna busied himself with further augmenting the gallery's representational function, not only by commissioning the splendid ceiling frescoes, but also through the luxurious materials that were employed. Between 1696 and 1698, Filippo had the original stucco decoration in the central *Sala* removed which had been created under Carlo Fontana's supervision between 1686 and 1689.¹⁰⁰ Columns, pilasters, window and door frames were covered



with yellow and black marble (Fig. 1).¹⁰¹ The floor was redecorated with a surface consisting of white, red, green and yellow marble.¹⁰² Numerous drawings recording these decorations testify to the admiration that they attracted.¹⁰³ The extravagant use of marble and gilding endows the Galleria Colonna with an architectural luxury reminiscent of the epoch of the Roman emperors.

As was noted earlier, around 1650 Cardinal Girolamo Colonna had attempted to transform the palace into a new

Fig. 13. Galleria Colonna, Rome; ceiling fresco by Johann Paul Schor, Giovanni Coli and Filippo Gherardi, western third. (Bibliotheca Hertziana–Max-Planck-Institut für Kunstgeschichte, Rome.)

Domus Aurea, since it was believed that the Colonna estate lay over the ruins of Nero's legendary Golden House. The inscription that Girolamo had placed at the entrance to

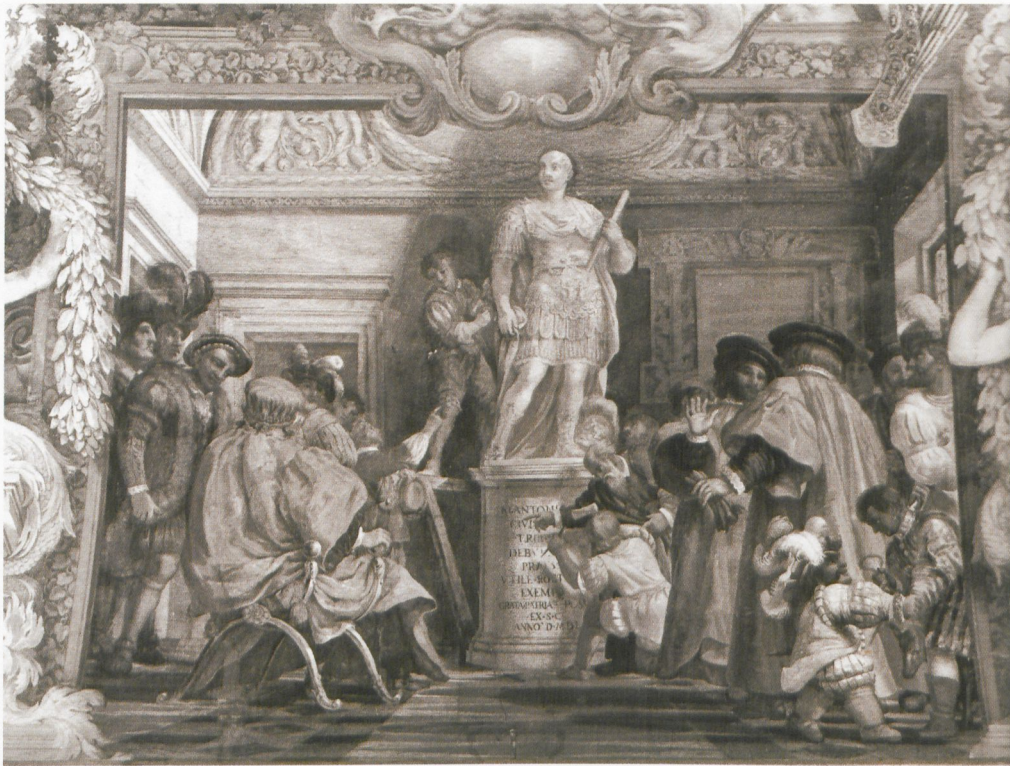


Fig. 14. Galleria Colonna, Rome; ceiling fresco by Filippo Gherardi, *The Erection of a Statue in Honour of Marcantonio Colonna in the Palazzo dei Conservatori on the Capitoline Hill* (cf. Fig. 11, no. 5). (Bibliotheca Hertziana–Max-Planck-Institut für Kunstgeschichte, Rome.)

the apartment leading to the gallery and which called the Palazzo Colonna ‘this Golden House’, provided a programmatic hint for the visitor.¹⁰⁴ The magnificence of the gallery’s decoration clearly alluded to the most spectacular palace of antiquity.¹⁰⁵ Its truly regal display of splendour, which put all other Roman galleries in the shade, reflected the fact that by then the leading position of the family had been successfully consolidated. In 1693 Filippo Colonna had been nominated *ambasciatore straordinario perpetuo* by the King of Spain, which assured him a place of honour in Roman ceremony. In 1698 the last member of the main line of the bankrupt Orsini family, hitherto a rival to the Colonna in antiquity and status, had died, so that the Colonna could claim without challenge to be the oldest and noblest of elite families in Rome.¹⁰⁶

Changes of function

As the gallery increasingly took on an official character, its function as a place for entertainments had been gradually relegated to the adjoining *casino*.¹⁰⁷ In 1698 the situation changed again when a connecting bridge was constructed between the Throne Room and the garden,¹⁰⁸ which meant that the gallery regained a more informal atmosphere. This functional change, which only permitted its use as a throne room on rare occasions, may have been driven by practical considerations, but it also appears to have been determined by the changed expectations of what representation for a noble family ought to involve. Self-

representation through cultivated leisure was beginning to take on a greater role.¹⁰⁹

It was at that moment that the Galleria Colonna became an art gallery in a real sense. Designs for the decoration of the gallery’s central *Sala* that had been tried out in the early stages of building (Figs 4b, 4c) did not dedicate any space to the hanging of paintings; at best it was anticipated that statues would be installed there. Apparently there were not supposed to be too many objects, which could have diverted attention from the throne platform as the focus of the sequence of rooms. In 1697 Girolamo Fontana had four windows on each long side walled up, which not only resolved the long-standing problem of the uneven fenestration, but also for the first time created surfaces suitable for hanging paintings (Fig. 4d).¹¹⁰ Continuous horizontal structural elements at the level of socle and capitals, combined with the pilasters, formed a ‘mega-frame’ for individual items, and integrated the comparatively loosely structured hanging spaces tightly into the architectonic design (Fig. 18).

While the gallery’s central *Sala* was given over mainly to history paintings, the Western Ante-room (*‘a piedi della galleria’* —‘at the foot of the gallery’, as it is expressed in the documents) was dominated by landscapes, traditionally regarded as one of the lower genres of painting and referring to the ground on which mankind sets foot. This anthropomorphic interpretation of architecture was also evident in the Throne Room, described as the *‘stanzone*



da capo, in the sense that portrait heads were placed here at the head (*capo*) of the room sequence. The significance of this space as the seat of the '*capo*' (family head) of the Colonna received additional emphasis through being referred to in Chiari's ceiling fresco (Fig. 17).¹¹¹

As a counterpoint to the Throne Room, a structure resembling a benediction loggia was created on the west wall of the Western Ante-room. The window that forms the western terminus of the gallery's central axis had existed since Bernini's time, but now it was enlarged

Fig. 15. Galleria Colonna, Rome; ceiling fresco by Giovanni Coli und Filippo Gherardi, *The Sea Battle of Lepanto* (cf. Fig. 11, no. 3). (Bibliotheca Hertziana–Max-Planck-Institut für Kunstgeschichte, Rome.)

and connected to a balcony, which gave a distinct accent to an otherwise nondescript façade.¹¹² Here the Prince showed himself on special occasions, in order to both see his subjects and be seen by them, thus reinforcing the



notion that the gallery (rather than the *sala grande*, as in other Roman palaces) forms the representational centre of the palace.¹¹³

The inauguration of the gallery

In the Holy Year of 1700, celebratory occasions were plentiful. The newborn Colonna heir, Fabrizio, was welcomed into the family at the end of January and christened at the beginning of February; this was followed by Carnival; in March, the *Generale delle Galere* (Commander of the Neapolitan Fleet) was accommodated as a guest; in May,

Fig. 16. Galleria Colonna, Rome. Western Ante-room, ceiling fresco by Sebastiano Ricci. (Bibliotheca Hertziana–Max-Planck-Institut für Kunstgeschichte, Rome.)

the Colonna received a splendid ceremony of adoration by their vassals from Marino, and on the next day invited the Roman nobles to receive the papal Ascension Day blessing from a box seat in their garden; in June, the *Contestabile* presented, as was by now customary, the *Chinea* (the



tribute of the King of Naples to the Pope); and in December the *Contestabile* participated as a throne assistant (*assistente al soglio papale*) in the festivities on the occasion of the election of Clement XI.¹¹⁴ Presumably, on all of these occasions the Colonna would have been desirous of impressing their guests with their new gallery.

The documents record hectic work in the gallery in 1699: the walls were painted, the stuccowork was gilded, paintings were hung and statues were installed. The concerted efforts of those involved apparently were intended to ensure that the room became functional by

Fig. 17. Galleria Colonna, Rome. Throne Room, ceiling fresco by Giuseppe Bartolomeo Chiari. (Bibliotheca Hertziana–Max-Planck-Institut für Kunstgeschichte, Rome.)

New Year. Although the chronicler Francesco Valesio first mentioned a *'nobilissimo festino'* (a most noble festival) in the Galleria Colonna on 6 February 1701,¹¹⁵ this does not preclude the possibility that the gallery was inaugurated at one of the festivals in the first half of 1700, since Valesio



Fig. 18. Salvatore Colonnelli Sciarra, *Section Through the Central Sala and the Throne Room of the Galleria Colonna, View of the South Side*, c. 1730. (Rome, Amministrazione Colonna.)

commenced his diary only in August 1700. The minor, cosmetic works that were still being carried out in 1700 in the gallery would not have prevented its inauguration.¹¹⁶ An indirect confirmation of this assumption may be found in Rossini's guide to Rome published in 1700, where the gallery is already described as *'finita'* (complete).¹¹⁷

The fascination of the Galleria Colonna resides not least in the fact that it continues to function in much the same way that it always has. On 14 June 2000, gallery and garden constituted the stage for a spectacular summer festival, in which the present Colonna princes celebrated '900 anni Famiglia Colonna, 600 anni Palazzo Colonna, 300 anni Galleria Colonna' (900 years of the Colonna family, 600 years of the Palazzo Colonna, 300 years of the Galleria Colonna). It is only with such a festive company that the gallery may be said to be truly complete. In 1700 one would have sauntered through the garden and palace in much the same way as in 2000, enjoying the spectacle and the colour, either ignoring the works of art or taking them as a starting point for conversations of greater or lesser importance. The representational effect of the ensemble remains as powerful as ever. Gazing on empty champagne bottles left standing between antique busts, the art historian, somewhat bemusedly, concludes that sociological theory and practice, past and present, art and life, can co-exist in surprisingly close relation to one another.

Conclusion

It is evident that the basic question—why does the Galleria Colonna appear as it does?—demands a richly complex answer. The desire of the Colonna to demonstrate their privileged social position by means of the design and

decoration of their gallery was a constant during each phase of the project. Numerous factors contributed to the concrete realisation of this aim: the instructions of the patrons; aesthetic and conceptual constants in the work of the respective head architects; architectural pre-conditions; legendary traditions surrounding the site; artistic models; functional demands; purposely-chosen political messages; and shifting representational strategies. The definitive concept of the gallery evolved through multi-layered interplays between these factors. The non-linear history of the gallery's planning and construction exemplifies the experimental design process of the Roman school of architects, and attests to the dynamism and creativity of building during the Baroque era. The creative process did not unfold additively but organically; the common goal shared by each phase of planning was the attainment of aesthetic and programmatic unity as opposed to decorative diversity.

Translated by Monica Lausch. Revised by David R. Marshall.

*Bibliotheca Hertziana Max-Planck-Institut für Kunstgeschichte,
Rome*

This article provides a summary account of the arguments of my dissertation, submitted to the Freie Universität Berlin in 2000 and published by Hirmer Verlag of Munich under the title *Berninis unbekanntes Meisterwerk. Die Galleria Colonna in Rom und die Kunstpatronage des römischen Uradels*. (Römische Studien der Bibliotheca Hertziana, vol. 20), 2007. The primary sources referred to here may be consulted in the documentary appendix of this book (pp. 461–560).

¹ Valesio, 1977, pp. 282–93.

² Valesio, 1977, p. 291: 'In questa sera il contestabile Colonna nella galleria del suo palazzo fece un nobilissimo festino con copiosi rinfreschi e detta galleria era illuminata da più di trecento lumi con riflessi di cristallo.' (On this evening the Contestabile Colonna staged a most magnificent festival in the gallery of his palace with plentiful refreshments, and the said gallery was illuminated by more than three hundred candles reflected in mirrors.)

³ Rossini, 1700, p. 57.

⁴ Pollak, 1909, p. 140, n. 22; the document is presently catalogued as III. BB.49, n. 52.

⁵ Corti, 1937 (see below).

⁶ Carinci *et al.*, 1990, pp. 28–29, and note 164 on p. 49. Safarik and Milantoni, 1991, pp. 121–22, plates VIII, IX (attributed to Giuseppe Bartolomeo Chiari). Safarik and Pujia, 1996, p. 596 (attributed to Salvatore Colonnelli Sciarra).

⁷ Catalogo Colonna, 1783, p. 27.

⁸ Corti, 1937, pp. VII–VIII.

⁹ Safarik and Milantoni, 1981, pp. 14–15, 87, slightly modify the dates traditionally given. For instance, for the fresco by Schor they only mention payments dating from 1665 and 1667. Some new data and ideas (which are based in part on my Master of Arts dissertation) are contained in Safarik's short guide, published in 1997. Of greater significance for the history of the collection are Safarik and Pujia, 1996 and Gozzano, 2004, although neither discuss the architecture of the gallery in any detail. Carinci discovered that in 1686 Girolamo Fontana measured the quantity of yellow marble that was delivered for use in the gallery. (Carinci *et al.*, 1990, p. 25.)

¹⁰ Safarik, 1999, p. 136 (no sources are cited). Gozzano, 2004, pp. 37–39, refers to Pinaroli's guide to Rome of 1725, in which the gallery is characterised as 'non ancora finita' (not yet finished). Although she draws attention to the fact that Pinaroli's text follows that of an earlier edition of 1703 (note 48 on p. 39), she does not recognise that the paragraph published in 1725 is an outdated reprint of the old description, and not a contemporary source: Rossini's guidebook of 1700 had already described the gallery as 'finita' (complete) (Rossini, 1700, p. 57).

¹¹ E.g. Voss, 1925, pp. 305–7, 577–79. Golzio, 1968, pp. 192–93. Waterhouse, 1976, p. 67. Magnuson, 1986, vol. II, pp. 331–36. Portoghesi, 1978, pp. 270, 536. Wittkower, 1991, pp. 334–37.

¹² Cerrato, 1959; Dunn-Czak, 1975; Ehrlich, 1975, pp. 38–59, and Mertz, 1975, pp. 122–26.

¹³ De Vito Battaglia drew attention to the fact that since Ricci's presence in Rome is verifiable only between 1688 and 1695, the ceiling frescoes had to have been completed before 1696 (De Vito Battaglia, 1958, p. 349). Jeffery Daniels verified this on the basis of the correspondence of the directors of the French Academy, in which Ricci's activities in the Palazzo Colonna are mentioned as early as 1693. (Daniels, 1976, pp. 105–6.)

¹⁴ Kerber, 1968, pp. 78–79.

¹⁵ Several of the results of my dissertation pertaining to the pictorial programme were first presented in 1999 at a conference in Rome and in 2001 appeared in print (Strunck, 2001). In 2000 Contant published a brief interpretation of the frescoes, which in several points coincides with my analyses (Contant, 2000).

¹⁶ On the biography and intellectual range of both these individuals, see Strunck, 2007, Chapters II.3 and VII.5.

¹⁷ Tamburini, 1997, and Gozzano, 2004, especially pp. 103, 130–33, 260–67.

¹⁸ From the sixteenth well into the eighteenth century Roman guidebooks claimed that Nero's Golden House, the most magnificent residential palace of its time, was located on the site of the Palazzo Colonna. In 1652 a huge porphyry mask of Medusa that had allegedly been found in the Golden House was placed at the entrance to the two main *piano nobile* apartments of the Palazzo

Colonna. Girolamo Colonna chose the following inscription to accompany it: 'In hac aurea domo/ memoriam Neronis habes/ non facta/ Medusae caput non damna/ monumentum/ huic solo datum esse/ placare Medusas/ non ferre Neronis.' (In this Golden House you find a memory of Nero, but not his deeds; the head of the Medusa, but not the harm done by her. That reminds us that this place can calm Medusas and does not tolerate Neros.) As is evident from these words, Girolamo saw his palace as a 'new Golden House', which outshone its ancient model because of the virtues of its inhabitants. Cf. Strunck, 2007, Chapters III.1 and III.2.

¹⁹ Strunck, 2007, Chapter III.3.

²⁰ For more detail on this, see Strunck, 2007, Chapter II.2.

²¹ Strunck, 2007, Doc. I, 1631,06,00: *Il Principe Duca di Paliano. Et facere, & pati fortia Romanum est, ovvero La Baronia Liberata (The Prince Duke of Paliano. To act and to endure virtuously is to be Roman, or: The Barony Liberated)*.

²² Strunck, 2007, Doc. I, 1631,06,00: 'godono tali Principi due prerogative da Rè, l'una di restituire la fama, legittimare i Bastardi, e nobilitare gli Ignobili, l'altra di non esser debitori per tanta dignità fuorche à Dio, mentre dalla sola Divina Maestà si chiamano gratificati, e solo per la Dio gratia Principi, e pure in tutti gli altri Regni, e Regioni di Christianità, et precisamente in Francia et Inghilterra non solo à Principi, ma à gli stessi figliuoli de Rè sarebbe delitto di Maestà lesa l'intitolarsi con tal conditione'.

²³ On representations of the sunrise on the occasion of the birth of French (and Spanish) successors to the throne, see Magne, 1930, p. 286; Fagiolo dell'Arco and Carandini, 1977–1978, vol. I, pp. 108–9, 196–98; Fagiolo dell'Arco, 1997, pp. 407–19. On the interpretation of the magnificent Colonna bed (Fig. 3), see Strunck, 2007, Chapter V.3. A poem by Giovanni Lotti, the court poet to the Colonna, which was composed in 1663 on the occasion of the birth of Filippo Colonna, confirms the 'Apollonian' significance of this bed, which emerges like a chariot of the sun from the waves: 'Nato sol per illustrare/ de'suoi raggi il Cielo, e'l Mondo,/ Con trionfo il più giocondo/ Nuovo Sol spunta dal Mare ...'. (Born only to glorify/ With his rays the Heavens and the Earth/ With triumph the most joyful/ New Sun emerges from the sea ...).

²⁴ Strunck, 2007, Chapter III.3.

²⁵ The documents pertaining to this are discussed in Strunck, 2007, Chapter IV.5. The dating of the commencement of the building to 1654 is based on a flawed interpretation of sources that actually deal with a cartographic gallery located in another area of the palace (see Chapter III.2).

²⁶ Louis XIV, who was deeply in love with Maria Mancini, had to separate from her in order to guarantee the peace treaty of the Pyrenees by marrying the daughter of the Spanish king. By accepting Maria as Lorenzo Onofrio's bride the Colonna meant to do an important favour for both Spain and France that would be repaid at some future time. Cf. Strunck, 2007, Chapter II.3.

²⁷ Celletti, 1960, p. 210. In Italian, 'colonna' means 'column'.

²⁸ Christina Strunck, 'Old Nobility Versus New: Colonna art patronage during the Barberini and Pamphilj pontificates', in Michael Bury and Jill Burke (eds), *Art and Identity in Early Modern Rome*, London: Ashgate, (in press).

²⁹ Strunck, 2007, Chapter II.2.

³⁰ Strunck, 2007, Chapter II.3.

³¹ Although Cardinal Girolamo Colonna also contributed money towards the gallery's construction, Lorenzo Onofrio appears in the documents as the primary patron, to whose apartment the gallery belonged. Cf. Strunck, 2007, Chapter IV.5.

³² Prinz, 1988; Guillaume, 1993. On the reasons why the *sala grande* was replaced by galleries, see, in particular, Strunck, 2001.

³³ Christina Strunck, 'One Hundred Galleries in Rome and Its Environs (16th–18th Centuries): a statistical approach', in Christina Strunck (ed.), *Europäische Galeriebauten: galleries in a comparative European perspective*, (in press).

³⁴ Strunck, 2001.

³⁵ Strunck, 2001, Fig. 5; cf. Strunck, 2007, Chapter IV.6.

³⁶ Strunck, 2007, Chapter X.1.

³⁷ This Gallery measured 11.20 x 38.00 m; with its ceiling vault, it had a height of 15.20 m.

³⁸ The *misura e stima*, which reports on the shell of del Grande's unfinished yet structurally complete gallery, is reprinted in Strunck, 2007, Doc. II, 1661, 10,04; cf. Strunck, 2007, Chapter IV.2.

³⁹ De Benedictis, 1995, p. 236 (Scamozzi, 1615); Mancini, 1956–1957, vol. I, p. 144; Leoncini, 1679, Chapter XIX, p. 35, and Coope, 1984, p. 449.

⁴⁰ Strunck, 2007, Chapters IV.3 and IV.4.

⁴¹ Strunck, 2007, Chapters IV.3, IV.4 and IV.6.

⁴² Strunck, 2007, Chapter V, 'Introduction'. See also Strunck (ed.), *Un regista del gran teatro del barocco: Johann Paul Schor und die internationale Sprache des Barock*, (to be published in 2007).

⁴³ On Schor's designs and the cycle of history paintings, see Strunck, 2007, Chapter V.1. As discussed above, the uneven structuring of the long sides of the gallery (Fig. 4a) presented an obstacle to subsequent attempts to modify the gallery's structure. The drawing (Fig. 7) therefore omits the two problematic bays. That this design was intended for a wall consisting of seven bays is evident from the perspectival design of the window niches: the second bay from left should clearly be interpreted as the central axis, as it is the only one to be frontally presented; the other window niches indicate stronger perspectival foreshortening that increases towards the margins of the drawing. Also, the profile portraits in the medallions face towards that second window bay, which thus functions as the axis of symmetry. By analogy with the right side of the drawing, one can imagine two more bays to the left. That the drawing was not altered in hindsight is visible from a narrow bare surface located between the outer left window and the edge of the paper. Presumably Schor deliberately omitted the missing bays since their asymmetrical position would have detracted from the effect of the drawing.

⁴⁴ A document dating from February 1673 refers to 'cornici alli specchi grandi che devono andare alla galleria' (frames for the great mirrors destined for the gallery). Fig. 9 shows one of two designs by Schor, today preserved in Leipzig, for a mirror encased with figures of sirens. These must have been intended for the Palazzo Colonna, since the siren can be encountered as an old family symbol in many artistic commissions of the Colonna. See Strunck, 2007, Chapters V.1 and VI.5.

⁴⁵ Strunck, 2007, Chapter IV.2.

⁴⁶ Strunck, 2007, Chapter VII.1. From payments specifying when the various sections of the vault were worked on, as well as on the basis of style, it can be inferred that the lower parts of the northern and eastern side of the vault were painted by Schor, whereas the lower parts of the southern and western side of the vault were painted by Coli and Gherardi. Figures painted on the northern side reappear in other documented works by Schor. This means he not only frescoed the decorative chiaroscuro framework but was responsible for the design and execution of the figurative parts as well.

⁴⁷ Strunck, 2007, Chapter V.2.

⁴⁸ Strunck, 2007, Chapter VII.1.

⁴⁹ Strunck, 2007, Chapter VII.1.

⁵⁰ On the frescoes of the Galleria Pamphilj see especially Preimesberger, 1976, and Scott, 1997.

⁵¹ Strunck, 2001. On the author of the pictorial programme and the share that Girolamo and Lorenzo Onofrio Colonna had in its conception, see Strunck, 2007, Chapter VII.5.

⁵² Strunck, 2007, Chapter II.3.

⁵³ Bruni, 1963, and Strunck, 2007, Chapters II.2 and VII.2.

⁵⁴ Strunck, 2007, Chapter VII.5.

⁵⁵ More information on the interpretation of the single *quadri riportati* is to be found below under the headings 'The Meaning of the Columns' and 'A Painted Epic Poem'.

⁵⁶ Strunck, 2007, Chapter VII.4.

⁵⁷ One action (the decoration of the portico) is happening in one place (the portico) at one given moment in time ('now'). This Aristotelian approach distinguishes itself from the blurring of logically incompatible elements in Pietro da Cortona's epic fresco cycles. For a discussion of 'epic' painting, see Strunck, 2007, Chapter VII.4.

⁵⁸ Between November 1673 and April 1674 the bricklayer Antonio Maliet continuously produced *colla* (the ground for fresco) for the gallery. In several invoices he is expressly described as 'assistente a Giampaolo Schor nella galleria'. This gives the impression that Schor may have stood on the scaffolding himself until his death. Cf. Strunck, 2007, Chapter VII.1.

⁵⁹ Strunck, 2007, Doc. II, 1676, 08, 31, fol. 94r: 'Adi 7 Maggio 1675 p(er)

ordine de S(ua) Ecc(ellenza) fu levato un'altra volta le piane in d(ett)o ponte in lung(hez)za de palmi 65 palmi 40 [14.52 x 8.93 m] p(er) scoprire la pittura acciaio S(ua) Ecc(ellenza) con il Sig(nor) Caval(ier) Bernino potessi vederla.' (On 7 May 1675 at the behest of His Excellency the planks of the said scaffolding, measuring 65 x 40 *palmi* [14.52 x 8.93 m] were taken away once more to reveal the painting so that His Excellency might be able to view it in the company of *Cavaliere Bernini*.)

⁶⁰ Strunck, 2005.

⁶¹ Strunck, 1998, and Strunck, 2002.

⁶² On the European reception of the Galleria Colonna, see Strunck, 2007, Chapter X.

⁶³ The *misure e stime*, which document Bernini's involvement, are published in Strunck, 2007 (Doc. II, 1673, 11, 24 and Doc. II, 1676, 08, 31) and are provided with a commentary in Chapter VI.1. See also Strunck, 2002.

⁶⁴ Tamburini, 1997, and Strunck, 2007, Chapters II.2 and II.3.

⁶⁵ For proofs of the intended function of this space as a throne room, see Strunck, 2007, Chapter VI.2.

⁶⁶ On Lorenzo Onofrio's claims to be treated as a sovereign see above, especially note 22, and Strunck, 2007, Chapter II.

⁶⁷ Cf. especially Bernini's plans for a monument to Philip IV and his *mise-en-scène* of the 'Constantine' as it is to be seen from the portico of St Peter's. A full discussion of Bernini's models is found in Strunck, 2007, Chapter VI.2.

⁶⁸ Strunck, 2007, Chapter VI.3.

⁶⁹ See note 59 above.

⁷⁰ The Venetian general Sebastiano Venier called Marcantonio 'fortissima colonna di Santa Chiesa' (most steadfast pillar of the Holy Church) (Diedo, 1863, p. 22). Earlier Cardinal Giovanni Colonna and the Colonna pope Martin V had been honoured by the titles 'Immobilis Ecclesiae Columna' and 'Padre, e Colonna della Patria' (Strunck, 2007, Doc. I, 1666,00,00).

⁷¹ On symbolical interpretations of the Colonna columns during the seventeenth century see Strunck, 2007, Chapter VI.5.

⁷² Strunck, 2007, Chapters VII.3 and VII.4.

⁷³ The complete inscription on the pedestal of the statue in the Palazzo dei Conservatori reads: 'MARCO ANTONIO COLUMNAE/ CIVI CLARISSIMO TRIUMPHALI/ DEBITUM VIRTUTI PRAEMIUM UTILE/ POSTERITATI EXEMPLUM/ GRATA PATRIA POSUIT EX S.C./ ANNO MDXCV' (to Marcantonio Colonna, triumphal citizen of greatest renown, a useful reward as a debt to his virtuous example (*exemplum*) for posterity. Erected on behalf of a grateful country by the Senate of Consuls in the year 1595). De Santis, 1675, unpaginated.

⁷⁴ Strunck, 2007, Chapters VI.6 and VII.3.

⁷⁵ This *impresa*, originally designed for Stefano Colonna (died 1546), was adopted by various later family members. In the course of the seventeenth century, it was represented in the Palazzo Colonna both in painted and in sculptural form. As Stefano's *impresa* became appropriated by later generations, its meaning, which once referred specifically to him, took on a more general significance. The interpretation of the *impresa*, which also alludes to the famous columnar device of Charles V, is discussed in detail in Strunck, 2007, Chapters VI.5 and IV.6.

⁷⁶ The *colonna bellica* visible at this site today was only erected there in the nineteenth century (Carinci *et al.*, 1990, p. 149).

⁷⁷ Ruscelli, 1584, pp. 281, 283.

⁷⁸ De Santis, 1675, unpaginated, *s.v.* 'Laurentius Onuphrius Columna'.

⁷⁹ Strunck, 2007, Chapter VI.6. According to Baldinucci it was thought 'ch'egli [Bernini] sia stato il primo, che abbia tentato di unire l'architettura colla scultura e pittura in tal modo, che di tutte si facesse un bel composto' (that he [Bernini] was the first to unite architecture with sculpture and painting in such a way that they formed a beautiful *composto*). The meaning of the term *composto* has been much discussed. While Lavin understood it as aesthetic unity or totality, Preimesberger underscored its derivation from treatises on *impresa* (Lavin, 1980, vol. I, pp. 6–14, and Preimesberger, 1986, p. 191). In the *bel composto* in the Galleria Colonna, the various elements of the work of art comment and modify each other just as in an *impresa*, though unlike an *impresa* it does not consist of image and text, but of architecture, painting and ceremony.

⁸⁰ Tasso, 1964, pp. 83–84, 93, 98, 100.

- ⁸¹ Strunck, 2007, Chapters VII.2 and VII.3.
- ⁸² Strunck, 2007, Chapter VII.5. The *Gerusalemme Conquistata* begins with a visit of two Turkish ambassadors to the protagonist, Godefroy, depictions of whose deeds they admire in an embroidered tent. Similarly, the painted portico on the ceiling of the Galleria Colonna is filled with orientals gazing up at the frescoes glorifying Marcantonio's deeds, while Marcantonio receives the homage of two Turkish ambassadors (Fig. 10, upper right corner).
- ⁸³ The contemporary sources on the battle of Lepanto and the strategies employed in the visual manipulation of history in the pictorial programme of the Galleria Colonna are discussed by Strunck, 2007, Chapter VII.3.
- ⁸⁴ Homer, *Iliad*, XXII, 25 ff.; Virgil, *Aeneid*, XII, 451 ff., and Tasso, *Gerusalemme liberata*, XX, 105–7. Cf. Strunck, 2007, Chapter VII.4.
- ⁸⁵ Strunck, 2007, Chapter VII.4.
- ⁸⁶ Strunck, 2007, Chapter VII.1.
- ⁸⁷ Strunck, 2007, Chapters VIII.1 and IX.1.
- ⁸⁸ Strunck, 2007, Chapter VIII, 'Introduction'.
- ⁸⁹ Strunck, 2007, Chapters VIII.1, VIII.3 and VIII.5.
- ⁹⁰ On the iconography of the bed see Strunck, 2007, Chapter V.3. Documents that prove Lorenzo Onofrio Colonna's plans to move the bed to the Throne Room are quoted in Chapter VIII.5. On the ceremonial function of magnificent beds and their comparability with a throne, see Baillie, 1967, pp. 186–88.
- ⁹¹ Strunck, 2007, Chapter VIII.5.
- ⁹² Strunck, 2007, Chapter IX.1.
- ⁹³ Evidence for the existence of a fresco fragment by Giordano is provided by the letters of Carlo Ventura del Nero and Luca Giordano dating from 1682 to 1683 that include repeated statements by the painter that he would fresco the rooms flanking the Galleria Colonna; a statement confirming this in a letter by Sebastiano Baldini dating from the summer of 1684; the erection of a painter's scaffolding in the Throne Room at the end of 1684 or at the beginning of 1685; Giordano's verifiable stay in Rome at the beginning of 1685; documents proving the activity of painters (not mentioned by name) in the gallery 1684–1685; the existence of a large oil painting in the Colonna Collection that was attributed to the School of Giordano in 1714 which from the description of the subject could have provided a *modello* for the ceiling painting of the Throne Room; and finally Robert de Cotte's description of the gallery dating from 1689, which mentions several ceiling paintings in the gallery. Cf. Strunck, 2007, Chapter VIII.1.
- ⁹⁴ Strunck, 2007, Chapter IX.3; on the destruction of a pre-existing fresco cf. Pascoli, 1992, note 1 on p. 291, and note 23 on p. 294.
- ⁹⁵ On the Planetary Rooms see Campbell, 1977. Both fresco cycles show how the protagonist turns his back on the seductions of Venus, attains glory in a naval battle and is rewarded for his deeds by an apotheosis likened to that of Hercules.
- ⁹⁶ Strunck, 2007, Chapters IX.1 and IX.3.
- ⁹⁷ Strunck, 2007, Chapter X.2. On the 'climactic' sequence of the three gallery spaces, see above.
- ⁹⁸ Contrary to what is suggested by Kerber (Kerber, 1968, pp. 78–79), the central figure is not a 'Queen of Heaven' but the personification of Eternity (cf. Ripa, 1992, pp. 122–23). Pascoli accordingly entitles the theme 'Marcantonio Colonna condotto da Ercole all'immortalità' (Marcantonio Colonna being led by Hercules to immortality): Pascoli, 1992, pp. 288–89.
- ⁹⁹ On Girolamo's professional formation in the Palazzo Colonna, where he was trained by his uncle, see Strunck, 2007, Chapter VIII.2.
- ¹⁰⁰ Strunck, 2007, Chapter VIII.3.
- ¹⁰¹ Strunck, 2007, Chapter IX.2.
- ¹⁰² The floors of both flanking rooms (Fig. 6, A, C) date from the twentieth century (Grazioli Medici, 1993, pp. 349–54).
- ¹⁰³ Strunck, 2007, Chapter X.1.
- ¹⁰⁴ Strunck, 2007, Chapters III.1 and III.2. See above, note 18.
- ¹⁰⁵ Strunck, 2007, Chapter IX.4.
- ¹⁰⁶ Strunck, 2007, Chapters II.2 and II.3.
- ¹⁰⁷ Strunck, 2007, Chapter VIII.4.
- ¹⁰⁸ Strunck, 2007, Chapter IX.3.

¹⁰⁹ Strunck, 2007, Chapter IX.4.

¹¹⁰ Strunck, 2007, Chapter IX.2.

¹¹¹ Strunck, 2007, Chapter IX.3. In Chiari's fresco, Marcantonio Colonna receives a seat among the immortals (Fig. 17).

¹¹² The original impression of the façade was greatly altered by the addition of a palace wing to the west of the gallery between 1731 and 1733 and by the inclusion of arcades, which were integrated as fronts in the gallery and the adjoining tract on the north. The present-day appearance of the gallery's west façade dates from between 1879 and 1881 (Strunck, 2007, Chapter III.4).

¹¹³ Traditionally, representational balconies were joined to the *sala grande*: cf. Frommel, 1973, vol. I, pp. 68–69.

¹¹⁴ Strunck, 2007, Chapter IX.3.

¹¹⁵ See above, note 1.

¹¹⁶ Strunck, 2007, Chapter IX.3.

¹¹⁷ Rossini, 1700, p. 57.

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