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A vocabulary of the Antique. An archaeological reconstruction and the reception of the Volta Dorata of the Domus Aurea of Nero

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Abstract

The aim of my research is to provide a critical analysis and comparison of the graphic documents (prints, watercolors, drawings) that depict and show the decoration of the Volta Dorata in the Domus Aurea of Nero. Precisely, my research is addressed towards two aspects that are strictly related to each other: the first is to reconstruct the original appearance of the Volta Dorata through the comparison of the graphic documentation; the second is to assess how such documentation can help us in understanding how and why artists from the Renaissance age copied this vault.

Thanks to the evidence that comes from the graphic documents, in the First Chapter, it has been possible to define how, since the discovery of the underground grottoes in the 70s of the 15th century, antiquarians and artists were able to hypothesize that those paintings might have belonged to the Domus Aurea of Nero. However, since the 17th century, such insight has been replaced by other interpretations, e.g. Titus' and Trajan's Baths. Only in the 19th century, because of the study of De Romanis (1822), Piale and, afterward, Lanciani were able to recover the first identification.

The Second Chapter consists of the catalogue of the graphic witnesses and the documents are analyzed, focusing the attention on the archaeological aspects and artistic features (i.e. stylistic, material, techniques, and attribution issues).

Thanks to the evidence from the catalogue, in the Third Chapter, after a preliminary discussion of room 80 in the Domus Aurea, it has been possible to show which were the colors and the type of decorations of the Volta Dorata but, mostly, to compare the different figural scenes. Thanks to such analysis, a potential iconological message of the decorative system has been detected and put in relation with the literary themes that can be seen in some figural scenes of the Domus Aurea's ceilings.

In the Fourth Chapter, the data that come from the catalog are discussed in order to assess the working methodology of artists from the 16th to 19th century. Precisely, it has been investigated how their interest and practice of copying caused a modification of the scene depicted. Then, considering the 16th century, through some cases of the modern ceilings of Peruzzi, Pinturicchio and Raphael's workshop, it has been possible to detect the reception and the assimilation of the artistic language that Renaissance artists found in the Volta Dorata.

A Gianni e Renata

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Publications

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Table of contents

Chapter 4. The reception of the Volta Dorata in the Renaissance and the

Catalogue plates and illustrations

INTRODUCTION
THE REASONS FOR RESEARCH AND THE NEED FOR A SELECTION

*La conoscenza storica non è mai una
costruzione personale, ma richiede la
collaborazione di molti e ogni nuova scoperta
ha sempre le sue fondamenta più solide nel
lavoro già compiuto da numerosi altri
studiosi che ci hanno preceduto.*
Eugenio La Rocca, in memoria di Luigi Beschi

The paintings of the Domus Aurea in Rome are among the most attractive research topics for archaeologists and art historians. Since their discovery in the 15th century, the Oppian grottoes have fascinated artists, antiquarians and explorers, and have in turn brought them fame, while also influencing their work. Weege's (1913) studies of the graphic documentation (prints, drawings, watercolors) along with archaeological evidence from the 20th century have suggested to scholars the possibility of reconstructing the original appearance of the paintings. Dacos' work (1969) provided important evidence of the influence of the Domus Aurea's painting in Renaissance art. However, Dacos' work aimed to investigate mainly the reception of one decorative ancient motif (the grotesque) in the Renaissance age, through the 15th- and 16th-century drawings and certain Renaissance artworks. Moreover, Dacos study has not taken into account how the graphic documentation might illuminate the phenomenon of copying the ancient paintings and, precisely, how Renaissance drawings of Domus Aurea provide evidence for knowing the working methodologies of the artists and why they decided to copy precise details from the paintings.

Nevertheless, while Dacos' work seemed to have collected all Renaissance graphic documentation known at her time, as often happens, new technologies have provided new paths of research and insight. In recent decades, the digitalization of the main museum collections of prints and drawings (Uffizi, Windsor, Louvre, British Museum, etc.) has made available new documents that are extremely important for archaeologists and art historians in studying the

paintings of the Domus Aurea and their reception. In addition, owing to new online databases (e.g. CENSUS), a large number of Renaissance drawings that depict the antiquities provide further information on ancient monuments, as in the case of the Domus Aurea.

Finally, thanks to the recent work of Meyboom and Moormann (2013), scholars have at last a detailed corpus of the original murals that, furthermore, analyzes the archaeological evidence of the paintings and marble decorations of all the Domus Aurea's rooms. Thanks to this comprehensive study, it is now possible to identify the subjects of Renaissance drawings that were often mentioned or inventoried by the museum curators in very vague ways (e.g. "ancient paintings", "all'antica vault corner", "ornato").

My dissertation started in this academic context of both Renaissance art history and Roman archaeology. My research needs were born from the question of whether, owing to Renaissance drawings of the Domus Aurea, it was possible to understand more about the paintings which are no longer visible, especially about the figural scenes. In fact, the recovery of the figural scenes might be helpful for a better understanding of which myths were depicted in the paintings of the Domus Aurea and how they fitted into the cultural and literary context of Neronian age. In fact, owing to the archaeological conditions of the vault, at the present day, only few vaults/ceilings of the Domus Aurea show few figural scenes. However, Renaissance drawings might provide new archeological evidence for this purpose.

Furthermore, the large number of Renaissance drawings of the Domus Aurea paintings also provides documentation for analyzing how the reception of the vault geometries and figural panels developed in the 15th and 16th centuries and not only the reception of the grotesques, as Dacos has pointed out. Moreover, these Renaissance graphic documents cannot be considered simple documents for archaeological purposes. They depict specific part of Roman paintings because their draftsmen had specific interests and sometimes such interests caused a modification or selection of what they were copying.

Therefore, the original aims of my research were to assess how the graphic documentation might be helpful for reconstructing the figural decorative systems of Neronian ceilings, but also how such

graphic documents provide evidence in the investigation of the development of Renaissance influence of the Domus Aurea.

For this reason, the first steps in my research were to collect new graphic documents that could enrich the repertoire collected by Nicole Dacos. Thanks to online databases as well as material in the large main museum collections of Europe (e.g. British Museum in London, Uffizi in Florence, Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam, and Kupferstichkabinett in Berlin, Biblioteca Hertziana in Rome), the number of documents collected was greater than expected[1]. After some preliminary study of other graphic collections and personal site inspections (such as Albertina in Vienna, Istituto Centrale per la Grafica in Rome, Real Academia de Bellas Artes de San Fernando in Madrid), it has been possible to exclude the presence of drawings of the Domus Aurea in such collections. In addition to such group of Renaissance drawings collected, many 17th- and 18th-century engravings and watercolors have to be analyzed for detecting archeological evidence of what is not more visible nowadays[2].

From the study of these documents, it has become clear that only the Volta Dorata (room 80) is relevant in the study of both fields of studies mentioned above. In fact, except for room 129 (Volta degli Stucchi), figural scenes are largely absent in the other rooms of the Domus Aurea discovered during the Renaissance age. For instance, the Volta delle Civette (room 29), Volta Gialla (room 31), Volta Nera (room 32), and Criptoportico (room 92) do not have figurative scenes,

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[1] Here just few examples. Drawings of Volta Gialla (room 31): Uffizi 1683 O *recto*, Uffizi 130 O, Berlin KdZ 25034, Louvre 3337 DR *verso*, Windsor RCIN 909567, Kupferstichkabinett Berlin 16942 *recto*; Criptoportico (room 92): Wien 187, Uffizi 1683 O *recto*, Uffizi 1683 O *recto*, Louvre 3334 DR, Kupferstichkabinett Berlin 16942 *verso*, Uffizi 129 O, 1637 E *verso;* Volta delle Civette (room 29): Parma Ms. 1535, c. 59; Codex Escurialensis fol. 34 *verso* and fol. 12 *verso*; Volta Nera (room 32): Uffizi 989 O, Codex Escurialensis fol. 14 *verso*; Volta degli stucchi (room 129): Volta degli stucchi: Codex escurialensis fol. 32 recto, Windsor RCIN 909573, Uffizi 54 O, Codex Escurialensis fol. 60 *recto,* 32 *recto.*

[2] E.g. Bartoli-Bel
lori 1680, Bartoli-Bellori 1706, Mirri-Carletti 1776.

but only decorative motifs and flying figures[3]. On the other hand, although originally the Volta degli Stucchi might have had a more elaborate figural system, its three figural scenes are copied in only one 17th-century watercolor, that of P.S. Bartoli (**Pl. 6, fig. 2**), whose reliability, as we will see, scholars are discussing[4]. Nevertheless, although the Volta Dorata could have been only one study case, through its wide number of figural scenes (25), it allows us at a high degree to study a very rich figurative program. In this way, it is possible not only to contextualize the myths depicted within the figural scenes into the artistic and literary programs of the Neronian age. It also allows us to assess whether the vault provides an iconological program and how it has to be read. In fact, thanks to the studies of Meyboom-Moormann[5], the artistic innovations and the stylistic similarities between Pompeian paintings and the Domus Aurea have been already investigated. Thus, thanks to the graphic documentation of the Volta Dorata, we may come closer to the possibility to assess the figurative program of this Neronian vault in relation to certain coeval Roman ceilings[6].

Moreover, while other ceilings of the Domus Aurea provided many different kinds of grotesques motifs to the Renaissance artists, in the Volta Dorata the grotesques were totally absent. The Volta Dorata fascinated the artists for other features and it was the only vault

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[3] For Volta degli Stucchi (room 129): Meyboom-Moormann 2013, I, pp. 236-238; Criptoportico (room 92): Meyboom-Moormann 2013, I, pp. 216-220; Volta Nera (room 32): Meyboom-Moormann 2013, I, pp. 159-161; Volta Gialla (room 31): Meyboom-Moormann 2013, I, pp. 158-159; Volta delle Civette (room 29): Meyboom-Moormann 2013, I, pp. 156-157; In Mirri's watercolor (1776), Volta delle Civette has a figural panel at the center of the vault that, as explicitly stated, was depicted although it did not belong to the room (Carletti 2014, p. 42 = Mirri-Carletti 1776, p. XXXII; cf. for the working methodologies of Mirri's artists: *Chapter 4*, pp. 321-332).

[4] For Bartoli's watercolor: Pace 1979, n. 57, fol. LXXII, Meyboom-Moormann 2013, I, pp. 236-238, Whitehouse 2014, pp. 279-280, Gentile Ortona-Modolo 2016, p. 157.

[5] Meyboom-Moormann 2013, I, pp. 84-99.

[6] For figural scenes of the Domus Aurea discovered also after the Renaissance age: Meyboom-Moormann 2012, Meyboom-Moomann 2013, I, pp. 95-97; for the figurative program in Pompeian paintings of the IV Pompeian Style: Beyen 1960 II, Croisille 1982, Peters 1982, Romizzi 2006, Lorenz 2008, Esposito 2009, Esposito 2014, Moormann 2016, Tabacchini 2018.

known at that time to provide such special features. As a matter of fact, the Volta Dorata was mainly copied because of its geometrical scheme, figural scenes, stucco decoration mixed with the painted decoration, different kinds of moldings, use of many bright colors and gold decorations. For this reason, as the drawings and engravings collected (e.g. Bartoli-Bellori 1707, Mirri-Carletti 1776) show, the Volta Dorata was the unique vault that was continuously copied from the end of the 15th century until the late 16th century.

Therefore, the focus of the research has been directed to the Volta Dorata. In fact, the large number of Renaissance drawings collected allows for the study of its original appearance and, thus, also clarifies how the decorative and figural system fits into the artistic and literary context of the Neronian age. At the same time, this documentation also brings us to the assessment of how this documentation was made for precise purposes and might illuminate the phenomenon of Renaissance copying from the Antique.

This research has collected 24 'new' Renaissance drawings of the Volta Dorata, next to those already illustrated and mentioned by scholars (11 cases). However, it is not a question of numbers, but mainly of approach this research matters. While the Renaissance drawings are often considered a tool for archaeological purposes, here they are seen as valuable as the paintings that they depict.

Therefore, the documentation here collected will not be merely used for archaeological reconstructions and investigating the antique cultural context, but also for studying why and how the Volta Dorata was copied during the Renaissance age and how the practice of copying the same ancient model developed. In fact, although the influence of the Volta Dorata on certain Renaissance ceilings is easily visible through some clear examples mentioned in *Chapter 4*, it is not as easy to understand how this influence was elaborated. This is why Renaissance drawings allow us to recognize which vault details attracted the attention of Renaissance artists and, hence, how they were re-elaborated.

The Volta Dorata was in fact one of the most copied subjects in Renaissance drawing-books, more than any other Roman vault or vault known in the 16th century (e.g. stucco arches of the Colosseum, ceilings of Villa Hadriana at Tivoli) and its presence in Renaissance drawing-books is more recurrent than other important monuments of Rome. Therefore, as will be shown, the number of documents

collected here allows us to conclude that the Volta Dorata was considered one of the most essential monuments to study during the apprenticeship of Renaissance artists in Italy.

By focusing my attention on the Volta Dorata, it has been possible to investigate another unexplored topic, ancient topography, that is testified by certain documents related to the Volta Dorata, like the watercolor of Francisco de Hollanda (CAT. 1). In the latter, it can be seen that Francisco knew that these paintings were the remains of the Domus Aurea and not those of Titus' Baths, as most antiquarians believed at that time (1538-1540). In order to study such an issue, I have analyzed many sources that have not been taken into account until now: i.e. the Late-medieval and Renaissance maps of Rome (Frutaz 1962), the Late-medieval and Renaissance guides of Rome (Valentini-Zucchetti 1942) and certain mentionings of excavations of the 15th and 16th centuries in Rome collected by Lanciani (Lanciani 1989-2002).

The study is composed in the following order. The first chapter will be focused on the introduction of the Oppian building and on the history of the identifications provided for the underground paintings. In fact, owing to their beauty and rich decorative nature, the paintings were seen and studied by many artists, antiquarians, and visitors. Thanks to geographical maps, guides of Rome, and documents of excavations, it is possible to know which archaeological identifications were provided for that underground building. In fact, apart from the few interpretations of the Renaissance age above mentioned, only in the 19th century, was it possible to confirm the ownership of the Oppian building to Emperor Nero. As will become clear, owing to literary sources and oral traditions, the shadow of the Domus Aurea has always wandered around the area of Esquiline Hill and Colosseum's valley. Since the Medieval age, the descriptions of how beautiful and rich this "Golden House" was have fascinated generations of antiquarians and artists, as their imaginative descriptions and graphic reproductions show. Thus, the first chapter will be focused on investigating this repertoire of ideas, beliefs, and images that, especially after the discovery of the underground paintings, increased considerably. Moreover, thanks to certain clues and evidence, it will be investigated how some antiquarians would have been able to suppose that the underground building belonged to

Emperor Nero.

In the second chapter, 24 Renaissance drawings of the Volta Dorata are presented with their essential data (material features, chronologies, attributions). In addition, two later watercolors (one from the 17th century and one from the 18th century) are taken into account because they enrich the knowledge of the original appearance of the vault and illustrate how the practice of copying the Antique changed in the run of time. In the analysis of the graphic documents, I have pointed out three main aspects: what they copied; whether the subject depicted provides some clues from an archaeological point of view; and how the technique, style, and selection of the subject may allow us to understand the potential interests of the artist. Since many drawings of the catalog are included within Renaissance drawing-books and do not form single sheets, I have devoted one section of the catalog entry to "drawing in context". By doing so, I have tried to assess whether and how the presence of the Volta Dorata in Renaissance drawing-books is related and connected with other subjects depicted.

In the third chapter, the archaeological evidence and clues that have come out of the catalog are collected and compared to what is possible to see today of the Volta Dorata. The aim is to provide a potential reconstruction of the original appearance of the vault and to contextualize its decorations (materials – stucco and paintings – and figural motifs) within the art of Neronian age. Thus, I will analyze the iconography of the figural scenes and what might be the iconological meaning of the entire vault decoration. Finally, thanks to the work of Croisille (1982) and the more recent bibliography on Neronian and Flavian art and literature, I will assess whether the myths depicted in the Volta Dorata reflected the coeval mythical repertoire testified by the literary and artistic sources.

Finally, in the fourth chapter, I will discuss the aspects related to the reception of the Volta Dorata. Precisely, I will investigate how Renaissance drawings of the Volta Dorata are tools for understanding the process of copying from antique models until their study in workshops. Moreover, I will focus my attention on why a specific part of the vault was depicted and how it was depicted. In this way, it will be possible to find clues for understanding which details were relevant for Renaissance artists and how these interests developed during the 16th century. Finally, I

will focus my attention on how the inspiration of the Volta Dorata might have been re-elaborated on certain Renaissance drawings and how this inspiration was concretized in some 16th-century ceilings. Moreover, since a couple of artists of the 17th and 18th centuries provide two watercolors of the Volta Dorata (P.S. Bartoli, F. Smuglewicz, V. Brenna), I will retrace how, in these centuries, the artistic interests for the Volta Dorata changed and, consequently, how the practice of copying was developed.

Obviously, the focus of this research is limited to only one room of the Domus Aurea for the reasons here discussed. However, as scholarship (e.g. Weege 1913a, Dacos 1969, Giuliano 1981, La Malfa 2009, Faietti 2019) and museum collections show, many more Renaissance drawings are available in order to study other rooms of the Golden House pavilion discovered in the Renaissance period. Therefore, the hope is that, from this first step, other steps will follow in the same direction by applying the same method of research, for instance how the geometries of Neronian ceilings can be reconstructed on the basis of Renaissance (and later) graphic documentation and how such geometrical systems were re-used by modern artists. As the quote at the beginning of this introduction says, this research has been possible because of the studies and the efforts of many other scholars that, before me, opened new paths of research. My hope is to have contributed, even to a little extent, to this fascinating field of study that the Domus Aurea allows us to investigate.

CHAPTER 1
THE OPPIAN BUILDING AND ITS HISTORY:
FROM ANTIQUITY UNTIL THE 21th CENTURY

In this chapter, I will analyze the Oppian building from an archeological point of view, taking into account the various interpretations that academic literature has provided for the chronology and function of the rooms, especially Volta Dorata.

The second aim of this chapter is to give an overview of the archeological explorations and excavations that were realized inside the Oppian building from its discovery until the present day. In this way, it will be possible to introduce the different personalities that had an important role in copying and documenting the Volta Dorata and the other rooms of the Domus Aurea.

Finally, the third aim of this chapter is to focus the attention on an issue that was not enough investigated, namely the reason why, in the 16th century, the grottoes of the Oppian Hill were identified by some antiquarians and artists as the remains of the Domus Aurea, and by most as the Baths of Titus or left without a name. Especially after the 16th century, the rooms were uniquely identified as the ruins of the Titus' Baths (but also sometimes confused with Titus' House, Trajan's Baths and Meceneas' House). Only in the 19th century, scholars were able to correctly identify the site as the Domus Aurea by the study of its architecture. Through this historical overview, we shall illustrate how and why such unexpected identifications of the Domus Aurea were realized in the 16th century.

Although the Oppian building originally consisted of two floors (ground floor and first floor), we will define its rooms as "underground rooms/grottoes". In fact, from its discovery around 1470s, the rooms of the Domus Aurea appear as they were located in the underground, because of being located under the ruins of Trajan's Baths.

1. The current remains of the Oppian building: chronologies and possible functions

The Golden House pavilion sits at the slopes of the Oppian Hill, the southern spur of the Esquiline Hill, and it is located below the ruins of Trajan's Baths, on ground level in respect to the southern side.

Thanks to the literary sources, we know that the Oppian building was built (or restored) after the fire of 64 AD, in the area of Nero's gardens on the Esquiline Hill, and formed part of Nero's Domus Aurea[7]. Originally, the palace had a *vestibulum* that has been found in the area of the Colosseum and the Temple of Venus and Rome[8]. Within the porches of the *vestibulum,* a colossal statue of Nero was erected which depicted the emperor in the shape of Apollo-Sol. Next to the *colossus Neronis,* there was a lake (*stagnum Neronis*) and, later, it was here that Vespasian built the Colosseum[9].

The boundaries of the Domus Aurea can be partially defined thanks to literary sources, such as Tacitus who says that, as the *Domus Transitoria* before 64 AD, the palace connected the Palatine with the *horti Maecenatis* and the *horti* of Nero on the Esquiline[10]. In the *horti Maecenatis* there was a tower where, according to the gossip narrated by Suetonius, Nero watched the fire of 64 AD and recited the Capture of Ilium[11]. This detail is important because, especially during the 18th century, the ruins on the Oppian hill (Titus and Trajan's Baths and, therefore, the Oppian building) were identified as the ruins of Maecenas' House or his Baths (**Sources 22, 23**).

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[7] Suet. *Nero* 31 (**Source 1**)*;* the other main literary sources on the Domus Aurea: Plin. *NH* 14. 112, 113; Tac. *Ann*. 15. 39, 42; for the Oppian building as new building after the fire 64 AD: Cizek 1982, Elsner 1994, Coarelli 1994, p. 221; for the Oppian building as restored part of the Domus Transitoria: Perrin 1985, Ball 1994, Fabbrini 1995.

[8] Suet. *Nero* 31 (**Source 1**); for the discovery of the *vestibulum*: Panella 1990, Medri 1996.

[9] Suet. *Nero* 31 (**Source 1**).

[10] Tacitus 15, 39: *eo in tempore Nero Antii agens non ante urbem regressus est quam domui eius, qua Palatium et Maecenatis hortos continuaverat, ignis propinquaret.*

[11] Suet. Nero 38: *hoc incendium e turre Maecenatiana prospectans laetusque 'flammae,' ut aiebat, 'pulchritudine' Halosin Ilii in illo suo scaenico habitu decantauit.*

The precise dimensions of the Domus Aurea are quite difficult to know, despite the attempts by the scholars to ascertain a reasonably accurate measurement[12]. In fact, some literary sources ironically say that, between 64 and 68 AD, the Domus Aurea included all the city of Rome: «all Rome will be one house: to Veii Romans fly, should it not stretch to Veii, by and by»[13].

From what existed of the Domus Aurea, in the present day only one part survives, namely the Golden House pavillion on the Oppian Hill (300 meters long and 170ca. wide), since it became the substructure of Trajan's Baths. The building was created through the union of, at least, two previous buildings or, more simply, different groups of rooms[14]. In fact, considering the map of the Oppian building (**fig. 1**), we can see how the West part has a rectangular court, surrounded by a peristyle, with rooms around it, as was common in domestic Roman architecture. On the other side, the East part of the building shows a more elaborate structure with one (probably two) pentagonal courts and one octagonal room (room 128) with rooms organized radially. Missing from these pages the *vexata quaestio* on the possible extension of the building towards East[15], it is sure that the East and West parts were adapted, owing to the irregular shape of some rooms (e.g. 51, 52, 69, 70). On the other hand, it can be seen how room 80 (the room of the Volta Dorata) has a central position and wider dimensions than all other rooms in the building. Such features would have made this room one of the main enjoyment spaces, surely seen as such in the eyes of the Emperor.

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[12] Champlin 2003, pp. 178-209; Coarelli 2008, pp. 228-237; Carandini 2010, pp. 285-287, Meyboom-Moormann 2013, I , pp. 16-17.

[13] Suet. *Nero* 39: *Roma domus fiet: Veios migrate, Quirites, / si non et Veios occupat ista domus*

[14] One of many credits of the recent work of P.G.P. Meyboom and E.M. Moormann is to have synthesized the wide bibliography concerning studies devoted to the chronology and function of the Oppian building: Meyboom-Moormann 2013, I, pp. 14-25; cf. also Beste 2016.

[15] While Carandini thinks that the East border of the building was barely wider, the major part of the scholars (e.g. Fabbrini and Meyboom-Moormann) think that, on the East side and beyond the second pentagonal court, there was - or at least planned - another rectangular court as that of the West side of the building (Carandini 2010, p. 287, Fabbrini 1983, pp. 169-186, Fabbrini 1995, 56-63, Meyboom-Moormann 2013, I, pp. 35-36)

Considering the perfect North-South orientation and the propaganda of Nero as Apollo-Sol[16], some scholars have thought that the Oppian building was a sort of religious building where the Emperor would have expressed his personal oriental cult. The first to provide such an interpretation was L'Orange[17]. Owing to the proximity of the *colossus Neronis* in the shape of Apollo-Sol and the so-called *coenatio rotunda[18]*, as described by the sources (and, unlikely, identified with room 80a), L'Orange provided his interpretation. However, this approach has been criticized by some scholars[19], and was definitively rejected in the last decades owing to the conclusions of Ball. This scholar recognized different chronological building phases (more than six) within the Oppian building[20]. Therefore, the Oppian building might be a "patchwork" of many different building phases (at least three)[21]. In reality, in the present day, since no architectural documentation (i.e. technically "rilievo architettonico") of the entire building has been made, given all the opinions of scholars about the precise number of the building phases, we cannot be completely sure.

Excluding the "religious" use of the building supposed by L'Orange, the possible function of the Oppian building might be found in topographical context, decorations, and architecture. The South-West and North-West sides were located next to the *porticus Liviae*, the *stagnum Neronis*, the *vestibulum* (and, therefore, to the residence part of Domus Aurea that arrived at the Palatine Hill). On the other hand, the South-East and North-East sides were overlooking to the area of the *horti (Maecenatis, Lamiani, Neronis)* and the temple of Claudius (**fig. 3**)[22]. Therefore, owing to the luxury paintings of the building, the proximity

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[16] Champlin 2003, pp. 112-144.

[17] L'Orange 1942.

[18] For the recent discovery of the *coenatio rotunda* on the Palatine: Hase 2017.

[19] Ward-Perkins 1956, p. 211; Picard 1962, pp. 165-167, 170-172; Blaison 1998 (who partially follows the interpretations of Morford 1968); Moormann 1998.

[20] Ball 2003, pp. 43-45; Beste 2016; Beste 2017.

[21] For the chronological building phases: Ball 2003 (six phases), Meyboom-Moormann 2013, I, p. 39 (three: I, II.1, II.2); for one synthesis of scholars opinions about the chronological building phases of the Oppian building: Meyboom-Moormann 2013, I, pp. 19-21.

[22] Tac. *Ann*. 15, 42; Meyboom-Moormann 2013, I, pp. 16-17; for the *horti*: Moormann 2003, pp. 385-387.

to the green spaces and the orientation North-South of the building (warm in winter and mild in the summer), most scholars agree on the function of the building as "a pavilion for the *otium*".

As will be analyzed in *Chapter 3* (pp. 232-240), the room of the Volta Dorata is a very special room owing to some precise features (its location at the center of the pentagonal court, the overview on the *horti* and the luxury decoration with dionysiac and loving themes). Fortunately, its decorations partially survived until the discovery of the Domus Aurea at the end of the 15th century and, not by chance, it was one of the most copied rooms of the Domus Aurea by Renaissance artists.

What happened to the Domus Aurea after the death of Nero has already been elaborated by P.G.P. Meyboom and E.M. Moormann. However, for the sake of completeness, I will synthesize the main historical events in order to focus my attention on the archeological identifications of the site provided by antiquarians and artists and in order to introduce the main artistic personalities who copied the Domus Aurea's paintings. In doing so, I will analyze some documents that have not been taken into account until now, such as the Humanistic and Renaissance guides of Rome (Valentini-Zucchetti 1940-1953), the maps of Rome (Frutaz 1962), some archival documents collected by Lanciani (Lanciani 1989-2002), prints and drawings.

2. After Nero and before the discovery of the 15th century

Although Nero was immediately affected by the *damnatio memoriae* after his death, Emperor Otho decided to fund new building works for completing the Domus Aurea (*ad peragendam Auream Domum*)[23]. Not by chance, in 1822, De Romanis noticed that the Oppian building was probably not finished[24]. Indeed, it is quite probable that, from 64 AD (time of the great fire) to 68 (death of Nero), the ambitious project of the Domus Aurea was never finished, and could not be finished in only four years. However, we have no literary clues or archeological evidence that suggest that the works funded by Otho were projected

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[23] Suet. *Otho* 7; for a detailed discussion of the literary sources: Schubert 1998, pp. 254-396.
[24] De Romanis 1822, pp. 8-10.

for finishing the Oppian building or, instead, other parts (such as those closer to the Palatine Hill).

On the other hand, Vitellius decided to not continue the works on the Domus Aurea. Paradoxically, he and his wife Galeria thought that such a palace was not enough for them (ὅτι οὐδὲ τῇ οἰκίᾳ τῇ τοῦ Νέρωνος τῇ χρυσῇ ἠρκεῖτο) nor did they think it was a nice place to live (κακῶς τε ᾠκηκέναι)[25]. Although this passage narrated by Cassius Dio was probably not true or misunderstood by the writer, we might conclude that the project of finishing the Domus Aurea ended with Otho.

During the Flavian dynasty, many spaces of the Domus Aurea were re-used for public buildings. For instance, the *stagnum Neronis* was replaced by the Colosseum and the face of the *colossus* was probably changed in the shape of the personification of Sun[26].

The function of the Oppian building is unknown during the Flavian dynasty (although, not far from there, Titus was born)[27]. One possible hypothesis, provided by Meyboom-Moormann, is that the rooms of the Oppian building were used by persons close to the imperial family or, less likely, by workers of the next active construction sites (e.g. Baths of Titus, Colosseum, *Ludus Magnus*, Temple of Claudius)[28]. It is likely that, when Martial wrote one epigram to his patron Domitian, the Flavian works for the Baths of Titus were already finished and took some space of the Domus Aurea (**fig. 4**): «here, where we admire the warm baths, swiftly bestowed and built, the arrogant estate robbed unfortunates of their homes»[29]. The fire of 104 AD destroyed a great part of what remained of the Domus Aurea and, within the changed city landscape, the Baths of Trajan were partially built over the Oppian building.

After the building of Trajan's Baths (104-109 AD), sources no longer describe or mention what happened to the structures of Domus Aurea (especially Suetonius, Tacitus, Cassius Dio). Some scholars have

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[25] Dio. 64, 4, 1-2.

[26] No literary source describes how the face of the colossal statue of Nero was surely changed after the death of the Emperor, but the statue was visible until the 4th century AD: Champlin 2003, p. 130.

[27] Suet. Tito, 1: *Titus natus est prope Septizonium aedibus sordidis*; for *Septizonium*: LTUR II (1995), p. 104 (W. Eck).

[28] Meyboom-Moormann 2013, I, p. 2.

[29] Mart. *Lib. Spect.* I, 2, v. 7 (transl. by W. Fitzgerald); Darwall-Smith 1966, pp. 70-72, 245.

supposed that such silence was in part an attempt to suppress the memory of Nero, owing to their closeness to senatorial or imperial environments[30]. However, considering the position occupied by the monumental Baths of Trajan, it is more likely that the silence of the sources was due to the effective destruction of the Oppian building, used as the substructure of the overhead baths.

As Jakob-Sonnabend has shown, Late Antique sources do not provide further details or descriptions for the Domus Aurea, but such sources mainly re-use Suetonius' passages[31]. In the same vein, the literary sources from the 8th century to the 10th centuries do not provide much information either[32].

However, since the 4th century, the *regionarii* catalogs testify to the presence of a region with the name *aurea / aura* in the area of the Templum Pacis (regio IV)[33]. Thanks to some documents from the 11th century, transcribed by A. Bartoli in 1909, it is possible to define topographically the *aurea regio*[34]. Thanks to the monuments mentioned around such "*regio aurea*", it has been possible to conclude that it might be the area between the southern slopes of the Oppian Hill and the Colosseum[35]. Not by chance, as it will be seen later through some 16th century maps (**fig. 15**), other monuments located between the Colosseum and the Temple of Venus and Rome were defined with the

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[30] Morford 1968, Elsner 1994, Champlin 2003, pp. 36-52; Momigliano has shown that the negative figure of Nero of the main Latin sources (Suetonius, Tacitus, Cassius Dio) is mainly due to the fact that Latin writers collected much information on Nero from the lost work of Pliny, *Historia a fine Aufidii Bassi*, strongly critic on Nero (Momigliano 1975, p. 803); rightly Champlin has also stressed how, after Nero's death, a positive image of him circulated among the working classes: Champlin 2003, pp. 84-111.

[31] Jakob-Sonnabend 1990, pp. 21, 49, 76-83.

[32] E.g. *Chronicon* of Fredegario.

[33] Valentini-Zucchetti 1940-1953, I, p. 99, n. 4; cf. for the *regionarii* catalogs see: Nordh 1949; Ceparano 1998.

[34] Bartoli 1909.

[35] The monuments mentioned in the documents are identified in the following way by A. Bartoli 1909: *Domus Nova*: "Basilica di Costantino"; *Trivio Cambiatoris*: "presso l'angolo delle Terme di Tito"; *via publica*: "via del Colosseo"; *ortuo de eccl. S. M. Nove*: "parte postica di S. M. Nova"; *Templum Romuli*: "tempio di Venere e Roma"; *in Quatronis*: "piazza del Colosseo".

adjective "*aurea*" since the Middle Ages (e.g. *Meta aurea* and *porta aurea)*[36].

In order to confirm the argument and the medieval topography of the "*regio aurea*", it might be helpful to note that, since the 8th century, the Basilica of Maxentius was called *palatium Neronis*[37]. The memory of the ancient topography of the Domus Aurea in the area of the Basilica of Maxentius was transmitted well until the 15th century. For instance, Giovanni da Tolentino in his Roman stay (1490) says: «Temple of Peace built by Vespasian in which basalt columns, once immensely valuable, lie scattered about; in the entrance is a huge porphyry bowl. There is another one in the Gardens of Nero where the Golden House was»[38]. Therefore, it is very likely that the adjective *aurea* to such an area was connected to the memory of the Domus Aurea. The adjective maybe survived thanks to the oral traditions of the ancient memory and, thus, used by administrative documents.

In the Middle Ages, of all Emperors of Rome, Nero left a pervasive memory in the popular imaginary[39]. In 1334-1339, Fra' Paolino da Venezia depicted the city of Rome and, on the Caelian Hill, he located the *Palatium Neronis* (**fig. 5**)[40]. Paolino located the palace of Nero in front of the Archbasilica of St John Lateran because, since the 12th century, some fragments of the colossal bronze statue of Constantine were exhibited in order to stress the victory of the Church over the pagan world (of course the Romans of that time did not know that such fragments came from the statue of Constantine). However, the rumor

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[36] For *porta aurea*: Lanciani 1891a, pp. 528-530.

[37] Lanciani 1891, pp. 494-496.

[38] Transl. by R.V. Schofield: *Templum Pacis a Vespasiano constitutum in quo ex basalte lapide columnae maximi olim praetii prostratae iacent; in vestibulo cupa grandis ex porphirite; alia est in Neronis hortis ubi aurea domus sita fuerat* (Schofield 1980, pp. 253-254); for the porphyry bowl mentioned: Lanciani 1891, pp. 161-162, 164-165; Schofield 1980, pp. 253-254, n. 55; Fantozzi 1999, p. 53.

[39] For the memory of Nero in the Middle Ages: Graf 1915, pp. 284, Champlin 2003, pp. 21-23.

[40] Frutaz 1962, pianta LXXIV; I, pp. 120-122; for the second map of Paolino at the Marciana Library (Venice): Frutaz 1962, I, pianta LXXII, tav. 143; I, pp. 115-119.

that such fragments belonged to the statue of Nero added to the presumption that, in that area, there was once the Domus Aurea[41].

Although the medieval interpretations of the topography of *palatium Neronis* were often incorrect, they indicate an interesting phenomenon. The collective imagination of the Nero myth was particularly vivid throughout the Middle Ages and the popular memory of his Domus Aurea continued to circulate. Thus, many ruins were often interpreted as signs of this collective idea. For example, Martino Oppaviense in his Chronicon wrote: *palacium Neronis quod fuit supra hospitale sancti Spiritus ad Sanctum Petrum*[42]. Although the topography provided by Martino for the Domus Aurea is wrong and did not depend on any other written sources (at least according to those known to us), it reveals that the legend of the wide dimensions of the Domus Aurea took the strangest forms, probably owing to the oral and popular traditions.

On the other hand, oral tradition could also modify the literary sources. For example, the anonymous writer of the *Edificazione di molti palazzi e tempi di Roma* (1363)[43] states that the Colosseum takes its name from a colossal statue of Rome (in the same gesture of the *colossus Neronis* described by Suetonius). According to the anonymous writer (**Source 3**), such a statue was inside the temple of the Sun. Moreover, inside the temple, there was a room with a metal moving vault with astronomical coordinates (*coenatio rotunda*). Finally, the writer concludes that Boniface IV (608-615) destroyed the statue and the temple. In these passages the literary influence of Suetonius is detectable, but many different details might be due to local traditions[44].

Around the first half of the 15th century, the guides of Rome became more suspicious about these oral traditions and popular legends. The direct or indirect quotations from ancient sources and the attempts to check directly spaces described became more recurrent. For instance, in

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[41] Ensoli 2001, pp. 78-81.

[42] Valentini-Zucchetti 1940-1953, III, p. 82, n. 3; also in 1538 Pietro Aretino thinks that the Domus Aurea was in the area of the Vatican (Shearman 2003, I, p. 907-908). Such confusion was due to the fact that in the Vatican there was the circus of Nero where St Peter died.

[43] Murray 1972, *Introduction.*

[44] In the same vein, see Anonimo Magliabechiano (ca. 1411), *Tractatus de rebus antiquis et situ urbis Romae*, fol. 39 *recto*, lines 9-24: Valentini-Zucchetti 1940-1953, IV, pp. 101-150.

De varietate Fortunae dated after 1448, Poggio Bracciolini suggests that his readers gaze to the Palatine hill (**Source 4**). He says that, from that hill, after the fire of 64 AD, the palace of Nero included great part of the city, although only few remains have survived[45].

On the other hand, the first (partially) correct attempt to define the spaces of the Domus Aurea was made by Flavio Biondo. In 1444-1446, he wrote the *Roma Instaurata* and, in the third book of the printed edition (1481), he devoted a passage to the Domus Aurea (**Source 5**): *Dom[us] nero[n]is loc[us] ubi fuit.*

According to Flavio Biondo, the *domus aureae spaciu[m]* began from the Caelian Hill (in the area of St. Gregorio Magno monastery) and included the Colosseum's valley, the area of Trajan's Forum and *Titi Uespasiani thermas*. Thanks to other passages of *Roma Instaurata*, we know that Flavio Biondo was able to define such limits because of existing ancient sources (especially Suetonius)[46].

Therefore, from the 14th until the 15th century, the approach to the ancient history of Rome was changed for a more "scientific" method, mainly based on ancient Latin writers (e.g. Suetonius, Tacitus, Pliny the Elder). However, thanks to the legends on Nero and the Domus Aurea, the vague (and sometimes distorted) memory survived.

Before discussing the Domus Aurea's discovery and the identifications provided by antiquarians for the ruins of the Oppian Hill, one last clarification is compulsory.

Before the discovery of the Domus Aurea and the Laocoon (1506), the Oppian Hill and the valley of the Colosseum were occupied mostly by vineyards and cultivated lands. A 15th-century map of the city of Rome, preserved at the Palazzo Ducale of Mantua, is the first to depict the rural situation of this area (post 1538-1538)[47]. On the other hand, around the same years, the illumination of Pietro del Massaio (1471)

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[45] Valentini-Zucchetti 1940-1953, IV, pp. 223-245; D'Onofrio 1989, pp. 65-90.

[46] In other chapters of the printed edition (1481), thanks to Suetonius ("Suetonius sic scribit"), Biondo describes the *colossus Neronis,* the *vestibulum* (III, 42), and the fact that the *Porticus Miliara* and the Temple of Fortune were part of Domus Aurea (III, 43). Moreover, because of other sources (**Source 2**; Tac. *Ann.* 15. 39), Biondo knew also the buildings that took the place of the Domus Aurea: *Postqua[m] de Neronis domo et maximis quae in eius demolitae loco co[n]structa fuerunt aedificiis dictum satis est* (Biondo 1481, III, 61).

[47] Frutaz 1962, pianta XCVIIb; I, pp. 151-158.

presents the Colosseum between the Esquiline Hill and the Palatine Hill. On the Esquiline Hill the church of S. Pietro in Vincoli is depicted, while on the Palatine Hill can be seen a palace called *palatium maius* (**fig. 6**)[48]. And, now, we are going to see why this Palatine palace played an important role in the identification of Oppian ruins with the Domus Aurea of Nero.

3. From the discovery of the Domus Aurea until the end of the 16th century.

The precise date of the discovery of the Domus Aurea is unknown. Whereas Nibby signals a signature of 1493[49], the earliest signature among those studied by Dacos is dated to 1495[50]. Nevertheless, the earliest chronology is provided by La Malfa before 1478-1479, when the decorations of San Girolamo Chapel in S. Maria del Popolo were realized[51]. Therefore, we should think of the 1470s as the possible period of the rediscovery[52].

On the other hand, as possible year, Weege suggests 1488 and Dacos agrees on the same date because she considered likely the previous chronology provided for the decoration of the San Girolamo Chapel[53]. However, Weege thinks of 1488 for another reason.

Owing to two letters, he argued that the paintings of the Domus Aurea and the Laocoon were found together in 1488. According to Weege, the

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[48] Frutaz 1962, pianta LXXXVIII; I, pp. 139-140; for the *Palatium Maius* and the Palatine in the Middle Ages: Augenti 1996, p. 71.

[49] «Dopo il IX secolo se ne perde ogni memoria [*scil.* of the Trajan's Baths] sino alla fine del secolo XV allorché certamente furono visitati i sotterranei, poiché vi ho letto io stesso una data coll'anno 1493»: Nibby 1838, II, p. 811 (and p. 816).

[50] Dacos 1969, p. 146 «BACIO 1495».

[51] La Malfa 2000, La Malfa 2008, pp. 61-73, La Malfa 2017.

[52] Dacos suggests around 1488: Dacos 1969, p. 64.

[53] Dacos 1969, p. 64.

Laocoon was left hidden until its second discovery in 1506[54]. Weege's hypothesis comes from one letter written in 1488 to Lorenzo il Magnifico (1449–1492): here is mentioned one statue, found next to S. Pietro in Vincoli, which seems to resemble the Laocoon: «tre belli faunetti in s'una basetta di marmo, cinti tutti e tre da una grande serpe»[55]. Moreover, thanks to another letter to Isabella d'Este (1474-1539) dated to 1506, the discovery of the Laocoon is located in a "beautiful decorated room": «in una camera antiquissima subterranea bellissima»[56]. Therefore, Weege concludes that one room of the Domus Aurea was found in 1488 and, here, the Laocoon was preserved. However, as Settis has shown, the description of the statue found in 1488 refers to another statue, nowadays preserved in a private collection[57].

Nevertheless, among Renaissance documents which speak about the discovery of the Laocoon[58], the 1488 letter to Isabella d'Este is the only one that refers to one "beautiful decorated room". In fact, for the first decades of the 16th century, the discovery of the Domus Aurea's paintings was considered separate in terms of chronologies and locations from that of the Laocoon (although both were realized on the Oppian Hill). Only later, especially in the 17th century, the discovery of the Laocoon was even placed in one room of the Domus Aurea, especially in room 129[59].

The mention of the discovery of the Laocoon in such analysis is important also because, after the Laocoon's discovery in 1506, the

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[54] «Die früheste Ausgrabung im Gebiet des Goldenen Hauses, von der wir hören, ist der im Jahre 1488 gemachte Fund der Laokoongruppe, über den S. 232 ff. berichtet wird. Die Grabung war eine richtige Raubgrabung, wie deren unzählige im Lauf des Mittelalters unternommen worden sein werden, und scheiterte durch vorzeitige Störung kläglich. Es scheint, daß man die berühmte Gruppe damals noch gar nicht aus ihrem Verstecke herausholte, was erst 1506 geschah»: Weege 1913a, p. 137.

[55] Weege 1913a, pp. 232-233; for the letter: Settis 1999, pp. 206-207.

[56] Settis 1999, pp. 104-105.

[57] Settis 1999, pp. 20-21, for the plaster copy: figs. 18-19 (the sculpture is now preserved at the Art Institute of Chicago).

[58] Settis 1999, pp. 99-228 (ed. by S. Maffei); for a general discussion of the artists who visited the Domus Aurea: Dacos 1969, pp. 139-143.

[59] F. Mariani in the description of Piranesi's map, 1748 (Borsi 1993, pp. 369-372).

rooms of the Domus Aurea began to be confused with the remains of Titus' House. According to Pliny the Elder, the Laocoon was in Titus' House (*in domo Titi imperatoris*) and, hence, the rooms of the Domus Aurea were often considered as part of Titus' House[60].

Despite what happened during the discovery of the Laocoon in 1506 (uncovered not far from the underground rooms of the Domus Aurea)[61], no official document or letter mentions the date of the discovery or the first location where the paintings were found. Probably, at least in the first years from the discovery, the owners of the vineyards under which the rooms were found tried to keep the discovery hidden. Nevertheless, around these years, the map of Alessandro Strozzi (15th century), dated to 1474, depicts the Oppian Hill with the church of S. Pietro in Vincoli and an interesting detail (**fig. 7**). At the slopes of the hill, he drew some underground entrances and it is possible that, already in 1474, the discovery of the paintings had attracted the interests of antiquarians as Alessandro Strozzi.

In the 15th and 16th century, the area of the Oppian Hill was often excavated unlawfully and secretly for finding architectonic materials and (hopefully) artifacts to sell. Thanks to more recent archeological studies of the area around Trajan's Baths, it has been possible to find traces of the underground tunnels that such Renaissance excavators ("cunicolari") created to reach new materials[62]. For this reason, we cannot exclude the possibility that the discovery of the underground grottoes was realized by the "cunicolari" themselves.

Returning to the letter for Lorenzo il Magnifico (1488), it is helpful to stress that, although it does not speak about the Laocoon, it is indicative of the archeological interests and investigations of the 1480s on the area of S. Pietro in Vincoli, i.e. next to the underground rooms of the Domus Aurea. In fact, thanks to the signatures left inside on the walls of the Domus Aurea, we can see how a wide number of artists

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[60] Pl. *NH* 36, 37-38; scholars have shown that, on the Oppius Hill, there was not the palace of the Emperor Titus, but his residence before he became emperor (Coarelli 2008, pp. 237-241). Therefore, when Pliny used the expression «Titi imperatoris», he was referring to his military charge (and not political which he received in 71 AD): Ortona-Modolo 2016, p. 208.

[61] For the location when the Laocoon was found: Parisi-Volpe 2009.

[62] Termini 2010.

came into the underground rooms in the last decade of the 15th century. Weege and Dacos have collected many names and dates that nowadays are no longer easily visible[63]. Especially in the last decade of the 15th century and in the first two decades of the 16th century, the paintings of the Domus Aurea were visited by a large number of artists and, among those, we can read the most important names of Renaissance art, such as Ghirlandaio, Pinturicchio, Giovanni da Udine, Francesco di Giorgio Martini (?), Filippino Lippi, Amico Aspertini, Morto da Feltre, Perin del Vaga, Parmigianino, Polidoro da Caravaggio, Maarten van Heemskerck, Giovanni Stradano[64]. In a short time, the paintings of the Domus Aurea became one of the main antique attractions and models studied and admired by artists and antiquarians. Especially, the Volta Dorata was one of the most copied vaults and became a must-see for the artistic education based on the Antique. The visit to the Domus Aurea was so impressive for some artists that, for instance, in 1536 Herman Posthumus (ca. 1512-1588) depicted the descent to the underground grottoes, after his visit with Maarten van Heemskerck and Lambert Sustris (**fig. 8**)[65].

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[63] Weege 1913a, pp. 141-151, Dacos 1969, pp. 143-160: Weege has ordered the signatures according to the nationalities of the names; Dacos has listed them according to the rooms. Although Dacos' work is more recent and collected a wider number of names and dates, Weege's repertoire has some names that were no longer visible at the time of Dacos' research and there are better interpretations for some names transcribed.

[64] Ghirlandaio ("Domenico Bighordi"): Dacos 1969, p. 146; Pinturicchio ("Biagio 1495"): uncertain for Weege 1913a, pp. 141-142, surely for Dacos because ead in the Volta Gialla (room 31) the name "Pintorichio" and next the comment "sodomito" (Dacos 1969, p. 156; cf. p. 140); Giovanni da Udine ("Zuan da Udene / Firlano"): Dacos 1969, p. 148; Francesco di Giorgio Martini (uncertain: "Francesho da Siano"): Dacos 1969, p. 158 (for another similar signature in one tunnel under Trajan's Baths: Termini 2010, p. 358); Filippino Lippi ("Fili/pino"): Dacos 1969, p. 147; Amico Aspertini ("Amicus"): Dacos 1969, p. 156; Morto da Feltre ("Antoni da Feltro"): Dacos 1969, p. 150; Perin del Vaga ("Pierino Fiorentino"): Dacos 1969, p. 148; Parmigianino ("Mazola"): Dacos 1969, p. 155; Polidoro da Caravaggio ("Ca/ravagio"): Dacos 1969, p. 156; Maarten van Heemskerck ("Hemskerc"): Dacos 1969 p. 157; Giovanni Stradano ("Hans Verstrate"): Dacos 1969, p. 160.

[65] Dacos 1995, fig. 7, pp. 17-18.

Thanks to the signatures in some rooms, but mostly owing to the Renaissance drawings of the paintings, it is possible to say that the rooms discovered in the 15th- and 16th century were the following: 29, 30, 31, 32, 34, 36, 72, 75, 79, 80, 84, 85, 86, 92, 126, 129 (**fig. 2**).

Thanks also to Weege's and Dacos's transcriptions, it can be seen how the greatest part of the 15th and 16th century dates are mainly concentrated between 1495-1520 and 1557-1576 (with a peak around the 1570s, especially 1574, of Nordic names). Not by chance, as the Renaissance drawings of the Volta Dorata show (cf. *Chapter 4*, pp. 294-303), excluding the drawings of the first decades of the 16th century, a consistent group of drawings are dated between the 1560s and 90s.

Although the underground rooms were visited by a small number of people, especially between 1490-1520, it was not so easy to reach the paintings alone, and assistance was needed. After his journey in Rome (1496-1497) an anonymous 15th century writer dedicated his brief poem *Antiquarie prospettiche romane* to Leonardo da Vinci[66], has devoted some verses to the difficulties to reach the rooms, but also he wrote about the wonder that such paintings gave to the visitors (**Source 6**)[67]. More precisely, the writer describes the stucco paintings which, according to him, seem to be made by expert artists, comparable to Apelles, Cimabue or Giotto. The author says that inside the rooms the temperature was mild, but the visitors had to follow a guide so as not to get lost, bringing with themselves also something to eat and drink because of the long way. The journey was so difficult that, in some points, it was also necessary to crawl and the clothes became dirty as those of the chimney sweeps. However, the efforts of the visitors were always rewarded by the amazing colors and motifs of the paintings. Some of the decorations show strange figures and animals, such as birds («ciuette e barbaianni e nottiline»). Not by chance, one room (room 29), already known in the 16th century, shows an elaborate

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[66] Fienga 1970 (especially pp. 50-51, 282-283, 343); Agosti-Isella 2004.
[67] Agosti-Isella 2004; for the attribution to Donato Bramante: Giontella-Fubini 2006 (for an updated bibliography on the *Antiquarie prospettiche romane*: Farinella 2019a, p. 66, n. 32); the first to mention the *Antiquarie prospettiche romane* was Weege 1914a, p. 154; cf. also Dacos 1964, pp. 9-10; Squire 2013, p. 448; Meyboom-Moormann 2013, I, pp. 3-4; La Malfa 2017, p. 81.

decorative motif with owls (and, from such owls, the room takes its name "Volta delle Civette")[68]. Around the same time (1499-1501), another brief written guide of the antiquities of Rome (*Nota d'anticaglie et spoglie et cose maravigliose*) mentions the underground grottoes, but also his author suggests to enter with an expert guide[69].

The most famous 16th-century descent into the underground rooms of the Domus Aurea is described by Vasari (**Source 11**): it concerns the descent of Raphael and Giovanni da Udine in the second decade of the 16th century[70]. In this passage, Vasari says that, next to the ruins of Titus' House (!) and the Church of S. Pietro in Vincoli, Raphael and Giovanni entered into underground rooms where they found wonderful stucco grotesques[71]. Afterwards, Giovanni tried immediately to replicate such stucco decoration and, after long exercise, his technique was able to match that of the ancients.

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[68] Meyboom-Moormann 2013, I, pp. 156-157; for instance, the Codex Escurialensis (cf. CAT. 11) provides some drawings of the Volta delle Civette: e.g. foll. 12 *verso* and 34 *verso*.

[69] «Se avessi tempo fatevi menare alle grottesche sotto terra e vedrete la grandezza degl'antichi, et non v'andate sanza buona compagnia»: Fantozzi 1999, 27, lines 256-258 (for the chronology: Fantozzi 1999, p. 12); mentioned for the first time by Meyboom-Moormann 2013, I, p. 3.

[70] For Giovanni da Udine and the Domus Aurea: CAT. 6; in his treaty on the painting art (1587), Giovanni Battista Armenini mention the same episode described by Vasari about Raphael and Giovanni da Udine's descent: Armenini 1587, III, pp. 194-195 («havendo egli [*scil*. Giovanni da Udine] inteso che si cavava vicino a S. Pietro in Vincola fra le ruine del Palazzo di Tito per trovar statue, vi andò et scoperse alcune stanze così dipinte con gran meraviglia d'ogniuno […]»).

[71] In his treaty *Trattato di architettura* (1537, 1st edition), Sebastiano Serlio also states that Giovanni da Udine became expert in the creation of stucco grotesques thought his observation of "the grotesques of ancients" visible in Rome, Pozzuoli and Baia (Serlio, IV, p. 192). Moreover, in this passage, Serlio says that many of these ancient grotesques were destroyed by modern artists in order they would have been the only experts in that ancient art («come ne fanno fede le antichità et fra le altre Roma, Pozzuolo, et Baie, dove ancora hoggidì se ne vede qualche vestigio: et assai più se ne vederiano se la maligna, et invidia natura d'alcuni non le havessino guaste, et distrutte, accioche altri non havesse a goder di quello, di che essi erano fatti copisti, la patria, il nome de i quali voglio tacere, che pur troppo sono noti fra quelli che di tali cose si son dilettati a nostri tempi»).

Beyond the information about the inspiration from the Domus Aurea to Giovanni, this passage is important for two reasons: the first is that, as it will be discussed later (*Chapter 4*, pp. 313-315), Renaissance artists were not simply imitators of the antique art, but they tried to overcome and improved it[72]; secondly, Vasari defines the underground grottoes as the ruins of Titus' House: «fra le ruine et anticaglie del palazzo di Tito». Here can be seen what I mentioned above, namely the confusion between Titus' Baths and Titus' House.

Vasari wrote this passage between 1550 (Torrentiniana edition of the *Vite*) and the 1568 (Giuntina edition). Therefore, around the 1550s and 1560s, Vasari believed that the underground paintings of the Oppian Hill were the remains of Titus' Baths. Vasari saw the Domus Aurea paintings, possibly during his second stay in Rome (1538) when he drew "more than three-hundred drawings" and he copied "most of what was underground in the grottoes"[73]. It is likely that, already during his second Roman stay (1538), Vasari thought that such paintings were the remains of the Titus' House.

Therefore, while all the ruins of the Oppian Hill were considered as the remains of the Titus' Baths since the 15th century (**Sources 4**), owing to the discovery of the Laocoon, the hypothesis that the underground grottoes were the Titus' House began to circulate. For this reason, the map of Bartolomeo Marliano (1488-1566), dated to 1544, depicts on the Esquiline Hill (**fig. 10**): the Domus of Pompey, the *Carinae*, the Baths of Titus, and the House of Titus (like a unique building complex)[74].

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[72] The attempt of Renaissance artists to replicate the art of the ancient world is also present in the letter of Raphael to Leon X (1519): «lassando vivo el parangone de li antichi, aguagliargli e superarli»: Shearman 2003, I, p. 502.

[73] «Arrivato dunque in Roma di febbraio l'anno 1538, vi stei tutto giugno, attendendo in compagnia di Giovambatista Cungi dal Borgo, mio garzone, a disegnare tutto quello che mi era rimasto indietro l'altre volte che ero stato in Roma, ed in particolare ciò che era sotto terra nelle grotte»: Vasari 1966-1987, VI (1987), p. 377.

[74] «Inserita nella seconda edizione della sua *Urbis Romae topographia* […] Nonostante la serietà con cui procedette nel suo lavoro, il Marliano fu oggetto di vivaci critiche, soprattutto da parte di Pirro Ligorio [*cf. the position of the Carinae in Ligorio (fig. 15)*]»: Frutaz 1962, II, pianta XII; I, pp. 56-57; also Giovanni Oporino (1551) follows the topography of Bartolomeo Marliano: Frutaz 1962, pianta XV; I, p. 59

Nevertheless, many 15th and 16th century antiquarians continued to call the ruins on the Oppian Hill "ruins of the Titus' Baths," not only "ruins of Titus' House"[75]. As the *Antiquaria Urbis* of Andrea Fulvio (1513) shows (**Source 8**), the antiquarians found such identifications in two main literary sources: one passage from Martial and one from Suetonius[76]. In fact, both Latin writers say that the Titus' Baths and the Colosseum took the place of the Domus Aurea of Nero.

Often one famous Renaissance document – the letter of Raphael to Pope Leo X (1519) – is taken into account for showing that Raphael identified the underground Oppian rooms as the remains of the Domus Aurea[77]. However, in his letter, Raphael simply mentions the Domus Aurea and the Titus' Baths[78]. Here, Raphael is not saying that, under Titus' Baths, there is the Domus Aurea and the underground grottoes are the remains of the Domus Aurea, as for instance Dacos says and Shearman follows[79]. Raphael simply points out (as Fulvio does) that, «come si legge», the Baths of Titus and the Colosseum occupied the space of the Domus Aurea. Raphael is simply mentioning the literary source of antiquarians, that I mentioned above (e.g. Suetonius, Martial and Pliny the Elder).

Owing to the attention of antiquarians and artists after the discovery of the Laocoon and Domus Aurea's paintings, it is quite predictable that portions of land were requested or bought because of their new historical value. In fact, it happened that some antiquarians, like

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[75] Caruso 2010, p. 233.

[76] Mart. Lib. Spect. I, 2, v. 7: «Here, where we admire the warm baths, swiftly bestowed and built, the arrogant estate robbed unfortunates of their homes» (transl. by W. Fitzgerald); Suet. *Tito*, 7: «Having dedicated his amphitheatre, and built some warm baths close by it with great expedition, he entertained the people with most magnificent spectacles».

[77] For the authorship, chronology and other two versions of the letter: Shearman 2003, I, pp. 537-545; Di Teodoro 2020, pp. 9-42.

[78] **Source 9:** «come si legge che nel loco dove era la Casa Aurea di Nerone, nel medesimo dippoi furono edificate le Therme di Tito».

[79] «La superposition des édifices est exposée déjà dans la lettre à Léon X attribuée traditionnellement à Raphaël»: Dacos 1969, p.9; «the identification is exceptional in the period, the substructures being known generally as the Baths of Titus until much later»: Shearman 2003, I, p. 531; for Raphael as architect: Frommel-Ray-Tafuri 1984.

Giovanni Gaddi, and also famous artists, like Raphael, suddenly bought lands in this area that otherwise were pure countryside at that time[80]. Moreover, many excavation permissions were officially given for recovering ancient architectonic materials or artifacts (alongside the underground illicit excavations of the "cunicolari")[81].

Around 1538 and 1540, one surprising identification of the archeological site of the underground grottoes is testified by one drawing by Francisco de Hollanda (1517-1585), the famous watercolor of the Volta Dorata (CAT. 1). Here, the artist wrote at the sides of the watercolor: «*in fornice Domus Aurea Neronis apud Amphiteatrum*»[82]. Such an indication seems almost incredible and has not yet been explained. However, one clue in understanding how Francisco was able to arrive to such identification comes from another drawing in his drawing-book *Os desenhos das antigualhas*. Here, Francisco copied the Colosseum (fol. 5 *verso*) and, next to the design, he wrote: «*amphiteatrum romanum a Vespasino aug. conditum nunc vocitatum Colloseum a colosso de Domo Aurea Neronis*»[83].

Thanks to this inscription, we know that Francisco, like many artists and antiquarians, knew that the Colosseum took the place of the *stagnum Neronis* of the Domus Aurea and the name "Colosseum" derived from the famous colossal statue of Nero[84]. Despite his

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[80] Giovanni Gaddi (1493-1542) bought the vineyard under which there was the Volta Dorata: CAT. 4; Raphael probably owned a vineyard on the Domus Aurea's ruins. Owing to the notary document (15 May 1518), we are sure about his purchase of a vineyard, but its location remains uncertain. Nevertheless, owing to the letter of Francesco Massi dated to 17 December 1519, it is possible to know that Massi's vineyard was near San Clemente, next to that of Raphael and to Vigna Mellini (which was "behind SS. Quattro Coronati on Monte Celio"), therefore, on the Esquiline.

[81] Lanciani 1989-2002, I, p. 280 (9th October 1521): next to the Seven Halls.

[82] Francisco mentions the Domus Aurea in the II Book of *Da Pintura Antigua* (IV Dialogue): «What am I to say of the Golden House of Nero, which was lined with gold paste and hammered silver? A single building, it spread across the entire city»: De Holanda 2013, p. 226; he also mentions the underground paintings without any reference to the Domus Aurea: De Holanda 2013, p. 148.

[83] Tormo 1940, pp. 49-51.

[84] For the Colosseum on the *stagnum Neronis*: Suet. *Nero* 31, Plin. *NH* XXXIV, 45; for the description of the Domus Aurea: Pl. *NH* XXXV, 3; Tac. *Ann*. XV, 42.

knowledge of the Latin sources[85], we have to surmise that the identification of the site testified by Francisco was only a personal interpretation: a Portuguese artist, he was no expert of the ancient topography of Rome, and stayed in the city for just two years (1538-1540). It is likely that the identification came from an antiquarian group of erudite men that, owing to their knowledge of the antique sources, provided the identification for Francisco.

Owing to Francisco's literary work *Dialoghi Romani*, we know that he had close relationships with important personalities of that time, such as Michelangelo, Lattanzio Tolomei, Giulio Govio and Vittoria Colonna[86]. Colonna (1490ca.-1547), one of the most fascinating figures of the Italian Renaissance, created in Rome a circle of antiquarians, poets, and artists, which included Michelangelo, Francisco, and Lattanzio Tolomei[87]. We have some information about Lattanzio Tolomei (1487-1443) who introduced Francisco to the circle of Vittoria Colonna[88]. We know that he was the brother of Claudio Tolomei (1492ca.-1556), great connoisseur of the antiquities of Rome and promoter of a very ambitious project of mapping and copying all the antiquities of Rome[89]. Hence, it is likely that, thanks to Lattanzio Tolomei and his brother Claudio, Francisco learned the identification of Domus Aurea for the underground grottoes. Not by chance, thanks to other 16th century sources (maps drawings, and literary works), we

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[85] For the literary knowledge of Francisco: Modroni 1988.

[86] The *Dialoghi Romani* are the II book of the *Da Pintura Antigua*: De Holanda 2013; for a general overview of the artistic and literary works and biographical events: Bury 1981; De Holanda 2013, pp. 45-64 (ed. by C. Hope); for other important friendships and acquaintances during the Roman stay: Modroni 1988, p. 23.

[87] For the relationship between Vittoria Colonna, Michelangelo and Francisco de Hollanda: Deswarte-Rosa 1997, Bianco-Romani 2005; Modroni 1988, p. 23.

[88] «And so, during the days that I spent thus at that court, I was due to go one Sunday, as I was in the habit of doing on others, to visit Messer Lattanzio Tolomei, who was the one who, with the aid of Messer Blosio, the pope's secretary, favoured me with the friendship of Michelangelo»: De Holanda 2013.

[89] Busi 2017, pp. 91-92; Sbaragli 2016; the project is described by Claudio Tolomei in his famous letter to Agostino de' Landi and it would be executed between 1535 and 1555 by the "Accademia de lo Studio de l'Architettura": Kulawik 2018.

will see that the underground Oppian rooms were identified with the ruins of the Domus Aurea by other 16th-century sources.

A very impressive document in this sense is the map of Fabio Calvo (**fig. 11**). It was drawn in 1527 and it depicts the city of Rome during the age of Pliny the Elder[90]. On the Esquiline Hill, the Domus Aurea can be found along with the *Templum Isidis,* and the *Templum Serapidis*. In representing the Domus Aurea of Nero, Calvo copied the image from one Neronian coin (and he used the same method for the Apollo's Temple, the Colosseum and the Meta Sudans). The coin used for depicting the Domus Aurea is a *dupondius* dated between 64 and 66 AD (**fig. 12**). Current scientific literature does not agree with this identification of the building: some scholars think that it represents the famous *coenatio rotunda* (found recently on the Palatine), others suppose the *Macellum Magnum* of Nero[91]. However, the coin was already known in the last decades of the 15th century. And between 1464 and 1500, in the Codex Magliabechianus, one copyist of Filarete asked: «ove è il palazzo di Nerone, che aveva le porte di bronze intagliate, secondo che per le sue medaglie ancora scolpite si vede?»[92].

Even before the map of Fabio Calvo (1527), one very interesting Uffizi drawing (163 S) depicts in the *recto* one building very similar to that represented on the *dupondius* and called it "Palazo Maiore" (**fig. 13**). Next to that building, the artist drew another building with the inscription "Palazo di Nerone" under the pediment. It seems that, in the *verso* of the sheet, draftsman copied the back of the two buildings of the *recto* (**fig. 14)**. However, from a closer and detailed observation, it is possible to assess that they are different buildings (i.e. they are not the

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[90] «Esemplare della Biblioteca Vaticana: R.G. Arte-archeol. Str. 496 (I): 425 x 550 mm; Silografia: consta di due forme stampate su due fogli; la pianta non ha titolo, ma recita: *Plinius vero suis temporibus Urbem* / *Rhomam quattuor et triginta* / *portas habuisse scribit*». Frutaz 1962, II, pianta X; I, p. 54; for the map of Calvo: Pagliara 1976; Jacks 1990; Jacks 1993, pp. 196, 341 n. 120.

[91] In other types of the same coin, it can be seen the letters *MAC AVG.* There are two possibilities: *MAC(hina) AVG(usti)* or *MAC(ellum) AVG(usti);* Fabbrini 1982 thinks of the *cenatio rotunda,* as Profumo (Profumo 1905, p. 673-675); for *Macellum Magnum*: Rainbird-Sear-Sampson 1971; for the recent discovery of the *cenatio rotunda* on the Palatine: Hase 2017.

[92] Codex Magliabechianus (Florence, BNC, inv. II.I.140; Codex: inv. II.I.140): Spencer 1982, pp. 58-60.

back of the same buildings depicted on the *recto)*. In fact, considering the *recto*, the structures and some architectural details of the buildings (e.g. the dome at the center of the building on the left side of the *recto*) do not correspond to those of the *verso*.

The Uffizi drawing 163 S has not yet been published[93]. Even the Uffizi database does not register the dimensions of the drawing. However, it is traditionally attributed to Simone del Pollaiolo (1457-1508), so-called "il Cronaca". This attribution to "il Cronaca" is mainly due to its inclusion with another group of drawing (157 S-166 S)[94]. Other scholars have provided a new attribution for this group of drawings, for instance the circle of Francesco di Giorgio (1439-1501)[95] or Baldassarre Peruzzi. According to the latter attribution, the corpus of drawings would have been made before 1505[96].

Excluding the issues related to the authorship, thanks to some details, it is possible to argue that, referring to the two buildings of the *recto*, the draftsman confused and changed the names used for two the buildings on the *recto* (i.e. "Palazo Maiore" and "Palazo di Nerone"). On the left side, because of the similarity with the *dupondius* and the presence of the *stagnum Neronis* in the front of the building, the Domus Aurea is depicted, and not the "Palazo Maiore". On the right side, the building depicted is defined as the "Palazo di Nerone", but we might consider it as the "Palazo Maiore".

Thanks to 14th-century literary and graphic sources (like the illumination of Pietro del Massaio, 1471, mentioned above: **fig. 6**), we know that the *palatium maius* was defined as the palace of the Emperors on Palatine Hill[97]. In this way, the author seems to have placed the Oppian building of the Domus Aurea next to the imperial palace on the Palatine Hill for this precise reason. In fact, as we have seen with the case of Biondo shows (**Source 5**), the 15th-century literary sources

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[93] Faietti 2010, p. 11; Pacciani 2010.

[94] For "traditional attribution", I mean the attributions that Pasquale Nerino Ferri (1851–1917), the most noted "Conservatore dei disegni e delle stampe" of the "Reale Galleria degli Uffizi", made for all drawings of Uffizi collection around the last decades of the 19th century and the first decades of the 20th century (Brunetti 2018-2019 for further bibliography).

[95] Günther 1988.

[96] Frommel 2003b, pp. pp. 157-191, 169-187; Waters 2014, p. 96, n. 109.

[97] Augenti 1996, p. 71.

provided detailed descriptions of the Domus Aurea, especially the fact that it ran from the Palatine Hill to the Esquiline Hill. Therefore, in the Uffizi drawing 163 S, the draftsman wanted to depict the three main elements that formed the Domus Aurea: the Palatine building, the *stagnum Neronis*, and the Esquiline building, as Fabio Calvo depicts in his map. The confusion in labeling the two buildings on the *recto* might depend on a mistake that the draftsman made in copying another drawing or, more generally, to some confusions made by the antiquarians.

However, while the inspiration from the *dupondius* for depicting the Esquiline building is clear[98], we are less sure about the identification of the imperial palace on the right side of the *recto* (i.e. Palatine Hill). Fortunately, some clues can be found in literary sources: Suetonius speaks about the *porticus triplices miliarias* and the *colossus Neronis* (**Source 1**); then, Pliny the Elder says that inside the Domus Aurea there was the Temple of Fortune (**Source 2**)[99]. On the palace on the right side, we can see a triple porch (*porticus triplices*) and inside the building one temple (Temple of Fortune). Moreover, it is likely that the form of the triple porch was inspired by the similar high porches of the Palatine Hill that, also nowadays, are still visible and once belonged to the Flavian Domus[100]. Not by chance, in one drawing, Palladio copied the Flavian Domus and wrote: «Terme di palacio mazore»[101].

The drawing is impressive not only for the precision of the stroke and the details of the architecture, but mostly for the chronology. Whatever authorship is accepted, the date cannot be before the year 1508. For this dating, the drawing can be considered an important source for the myth of the Domus Aurea that circulated among the artists and antiquarians already in the first decade of the 16th century.

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[98] Arciprete 1992 (cf. also Moormann 1996).

[99] For the Temple of Fortune in Pliny: Plin. *NH* 36, 46; for this passage in Biondo, see the translation of *Roma restaurata* (1444-1450) by L. Fauno (1543): **Source 5**.

[100] At the beginning of the 17th century, the ruins of the Domus Aurea on the Oppian Hill were identified as the Flavian House (Felini 1611, p. 354: **Source 15**).

[101] Zorzi 1959, p. 99, figs. 242-243.

The image of the *dupondius* was well known by other antiquarians and artists, such as Pirro Ligorio (1513-1583). In this map *Antiquae Urbis Imago* (1561), Ligorio represented the same building for the Domus Aurea (**fig. 15**)[102]. In Ligorio's manuscript, the artist-antiquarian says that the image of the *dupondius* depicts the Domus Aurea and, precisely, the building that had one room which turned like the sky, namely the *coenatio rotunda*[103]. Nevertheless, what is interesting in Ligorio's map is the position of the "*dupondius* building" in the topography. While the map of Calvo does not specify which ruins of the Esquiline Hill were considered the Domus Aurea, here Ligorio seems to indicate the underground grottoes were at the slopes of the Oppian Hill. In this way, it seems to confirm the hypothesis that many 16th-century antiquarians were convinced of the identification of the underground rooms as the Domus Aurea.

Finally, in Ligorio's map, other ancient buildings have the adjective "*aurea*" (Meta Aurea and Porta Aurea). Although they did not exist from an archeological point of view, Ligorio was probably confused by the large presence of these names in the Medieval guides and administrative documents, as we have seen before. Thus, the map of Ligorio confirms that the name "*aurea*" of this region influenced the way of naming other monuments[104].

Ligorio did not simply depict the Domus Aurea in his map, but he also visited the underground rooms personally. In book VII of *Libro dell'antichità*[105], dated after 1568, Pirro Ligorio describes the Psyche Loggia at the Farnesina and he mentions the inspiration of Raphael's

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[102] Frutaz 1962, pianta XVII, 2; I, pp. 61-62; Burns 1988, p. 56, n. 89; Jacks 1993, p. 196 n. 120, 341; next to the Colosseum and on the slopes of the Oppian Hill, the following ancient buildings are depicted: Dom. Titi Aug., Meta Aurea, Carinae, Porta Aurea, Domus Aurea, Domus Palbini Aug., Therme Titi Aug., Therme Traiani Augu.

[103] «Costoro hanno tolto dalla medaglia di Nerone quell'edificio che è tondo nel mezzo con due portici, che a destra e a sinistra si dilatano, che ha queste abbreviature MAG AVG, cioè Magna Augustana, che è l'esemplare di quella casa che fu chiamata Aurea che una parte à guida di cielo volgeva»: Ligorio's manuscript: Neap., XIII.B.4, f. 12 (Ranaldi 2001, p. 164 n. 604).

[104] Bartoli 1909.

[105] Manuscript preserved at the National Archive of Turin (foll. 151-161): *Chapter 4*

paintings from the underground paintings preserved in "in a room on the Esquiline which was ruined by wicked painters"[106]. As it will be clear in the catalogue (CAT. 19), Ligorio is speaking about the paintings of the Volta Dorata and, precisely, about scene 2 of the vault.

Among the 16th centuries archival documents transcribed by Lanciani, the mentions and descriptions of the underground grottoes are more recurrent around the central years of the 16th century[107]. In these documents, the ruins of the Oppian Hill also began to be mentioned as "remains of the Trajan's Baths". Not by chance, around the same time, Palladio was able to distinguish two different buildings on the Oppian Hill: Trajan's Baths and Titus' Baths[108]. Thanks to the drawings of Palladio, as we will see later, Lanciani was the first to recognize the distinction between the Domus Aurea, Titus' Baths, and Trajan's Baths.

The identification of the Domus Aurea for the underground grottoes is also testified by the *codices* of Cherubino Alberti (1553-1615) and his brother Giovanni Alberti (1558-1601), preserved in Borgo S. Sepolcro (**Source 13**)[109].

Such codices are basically personal memories of the two artists and, here, they described the discovery of some architectural elements (capitals) which were found under one vineyard of S. Pietro in Vincoli.

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[106] «In altre simili pitture havemo viste l'opere di Volcano, l'amori che haveano spogliate l'arme agli dei e le portavano per l'aria, ch'erano dipinte in una stanza nelle Esquilie, la quale da scelerati pittori furono guastati. Onde Raphaele le prese la istessa invenzione nelle nozze di Hebe con Hercule dipinte nella loggia di Augustin Ghisi in Transtibore incontra a Roma, e ne fece con nobile pittura»: fol. 155 recto (Dacos 1969, p. 170). Ligorio wrongly wrote about the scene of the wedding between Hercules and Hebe, instead of the wedding of Love and Psyche: Meyboom-Moormann 2013, I, p. 201 (Ligorio's passage is also mentioned by Lanciani 1989-2002, III, p. 209).

[107] E.g. according to Lanciani, in 1550 Tommaso Cosciari gave to Lucrezio Corvini part of the Domus Aurea's ruins, precisely in the site of the "Orto delle Mendicanti" (*cum griptis sive voltis antiquis intrantibus subtus vineam*): Lanciani 1989-2002, III, p. 11.

[108] Lanciani 1989-2002, II, pp. 252-256; for the drawings of Palladio: Zorzi 1959, pp. 65-66, figs. 89-95 (Baths of Titus: Palladio called them "Vespasian's Baths"); Zorzi 1959, pp. 67-68, figs. 106-109 (Baths of Trajan: Palladio called them "Titus' Baths"); see for the drawings of the Roman Baths by Palladio, see also Ortolani 2009.

[109] Lanciani 1989-2002, II, pp. 255-256.

The writer states that one doric capital, found in the underground, belonged to the "palace of Nero" that was destroyed by lout men («trovato nelle ruine dil palazo dinerone sotto terra asai quastoda vilani»). Shortly after, the author says that he excavated approximately 10 meters in depth and found beautiful rooms with golden stucco decorations and some paintings[110]. Outside these rooms, but next to them ("ein torno difora"), there was a "quarry" ("cava") where many underground architectural materials ("faccende") were recovered. For the writer these architectural materials must have belonged to the "ruins of Nero" ("ruine di Nerone").

Fortunately, the writer states why he concluded that these rooms and such materials belonged to the "palace of Nero". He arrives to this hypothesis because he found some monumental inscriptions that were similar to those found under the Colosseum[111]. For this reason, the author supposed that the underground rooms of the Oppian Hill belonged to an original building that existed topographically before the Colosseum. The writer had surely in mind some literary sources, such as Suetonius (**Source 1**), that describe the Domus Aurea from the Palatine until the Colosseum's valley and the Oppian Hill.

Owing to the inscriptions found under 10 meters, the writer concluded that they belonged to one building that existed previously before the Baths of Titus, thus the Domus Aurea. Such discovery might be confirmed by Pirro Ligorio who, between 1573-1580, noticed the presence of some inscriptions, under the ruins of Titus' Bath («nei lughi

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[110] «Sotto asai circa palmi 42 si trovo stanze bilisime lavorate di stucho lavolti con unpoco di pitture dorato»: **Source 13;** for the "palmo romano" (= 0,2234 m): Vasori 1981, p. 9.

[111] «Otrovato altre faccende e queste sono dille ruine di nerone ("I have found other materials and those are from the ruins of Nero") per quanto sie trovato pitafi di grandissime lettere. trovate sotto choliseo i una cava grandissimo pitafi in una vigna voliano dire fuisse sopra intrata dilsuo apartamento con molte altre facende»: **Source 13**.

edificati della Casa di Nerone […] nelle rouine delle Therme furono ritrovate alcune memorie fragmentate inscritto»)[112].

On the other hand, although the artists and antiquarians were not always able to identify the different ruins of the Oppian Hill, they were shrewd enough able to recognize that the underground rooms of the Oppian Hill did not belong to the same ruins visible on the same hill (i.e. Trajan's Baths).

The letter of Ulisse Aldovrandi to the Cardinal Paleotti (1550-1555) represents another literary source about the antiquarians' insight regarding the possible presence of the Domus Aurea in the underground grottoes of the Oppian Hill. Here, Aldovrandi asks (**Source 10**): «in the Esquiline Hill, where it is located the church of St. Peter in Vincoli, under the vineyards, there are many underground grottoes with high ceilings; here, thousand of wonderful paintings and ancient grotesques can be seen. Thirty years ago, owing to the guide of expert men, I saw them without losing myself inside. To whom belonged such paintings, if we exclude the Domus Aurea of Nero that, according to Suetonius, was so wide that occupied the Celian and Palatine Hills, including the Esquiline Hill and Maecenas' gardens, like it were a town?».

In his autobiography, written between 1558 and 1567, also Benvenuto Cellini mentions the underground grottoes and thinks that such rooms survived because they were covered with earth that became the foundations for Trajan's Baths (**Source 12**).

In the same vein, the sculptor Flaminio Vacca (1538-1605), who published in 1594 his *Memorie di varie antichità,* noticed that, next to the ruins on the Oppian Hill, there might have been another magnificent building: «innanzi alle Terme di Tito vi fosse un altro edificio molto

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[112] «Che le Therme de Tito furono fatte nei lughi edificati della Casa di Nerone, et l'Amphitheatro, nell'agiri superbi di quello doppo che furono dannate le sue sceleratezze. ora ne tempi nostri cavandosi nelle rouine delle Therme. furono ritrovate alcune memorie fragmentate inscritto, come piu volte per causa di Terremoti furono ristaurate. Le quali erano belissime con colonne sostenute del Marmo Numidi, et questo basti havere accennato qui havendo ne scritto assai nella dittione che cosa sia Therme, nellibro decimo nono»: Ligorio, 1573-1580, *Antichità Romane*, vol. 15, fol. 181 *recto* (Codex: Cod. a.II.1.J.15; MS. a.II.2).

magnifico» (**Source 14**)[113]. Still, we do not know how antiquarians and artists arrived at such an identification between Titus' House or the Domus Aurea. In any case, we are sure that other artists of the 16th century and 17th century, and not only Francisco de Hollanda, knew that such underground paintings might have belonged to the Domus Aurea.

A further example, Pietro Santi Bartoli (1635-1700), on one preparatory drawing of another vault of the Domus Aurea (cf. *Chapter 4*), he wrote: «one portion of a beautiful ancient vault decorated with stucco and painting decoration, under the ruins of the Baths of Titus and believed to be a room of Nero's Golden House» (**fig. 16**)[114]. And, because of Bartoli's network within the Roman antiquarian circles, the rumor that such underground paintings might belong to the Domus Aurea circulated among the acquaintances of P.S. Bartoli.

With this in mind, we have seen many identifications (and not only Francisco de Hollanda) for the underground rooms as "ruins of the Domus Aurea". Therefore, we should try to understand how such hypotheses were born and elaborated by the minds of antiquarians.

To help us understand this point, we have to come back to another passage of the *Antiquarie prospettiche romane* (ca. 1500), already mentioned above. Another passage is very important, although it has been ignored until now (**Source 7**)[115]. Here, the writer describes a

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[113] Vacca says "Titus' Baths", but he is referring to what today is recognized as the Baths of Trajan; in this passage, Vacca mentions some architectonic elements and materials that were taken and re-used for some internal decorations. As Meyboom-Moormann have stressed, these elements probably belonged to Trajan's Baths and not to the Domus Aurea (Meyboom-Moormann 2013, I, p. 5). However, as it will be shown later, many architectural decorations were found under Titus's Baths (**Source 13**; **Source 14** [Nibby 1820, IV, p. 144]).

[114] «Repartimento di una bellissima volta antica lavorata di stucchi e pittura, sotto le ruine delle Terme di Tito e perciò creduta una stanza della casa aurea di Nerone»: Windsor RL 09584; for this preparatory drawing, Bartoli created the engraving published in the second edition of the *Picturae Antiquae Cryptarum Romanarum Et Sepulcri Nasonum,* (II ed. 1750), preserved at the Istituto Centrale per la Grafica in Rome (Brunetti 2018-2019). Probably P.S. Bartoli knew such identification thanks to Francisco's watercolor of the Volta Dorata (CAT. 1) that he copied (CAT. 2).

[115] For the entire transcription of the poem: Agosti-Isella 2004.

magnificent building (strophes nos. 84-95) and, given some important details, I think it might be interpreted as the Domus Aurea.

The passage is placed between two other passages, one devoted to the descriptions of Trajan's and Marcus Aurelius' columns (nos. 82-83); and the other to the house of Virgil and the Seven Halls on the Esquiline Hill (nos. 95-96). Between these two areas, the anonymous writer describes the ruins of one magnificent building: it has elaborate architecture and, mostly, rich decorations in gold and precious stones.

Nevertheless, whereas the writer describes the ruins of such a building, at one certain point, the description of the ruins becomes a description of the building as it was originally.

The Italian language of this poem is quite difficult to understand and, owing to the poetic style, not every word has a clear meaning. For this reason, I have paraphrased the Italian and I have signed the uncertain points (**Source 7**).

The first reference of the anonymous writer that allows us to find the connection with Nero is the following sentence (paraphrased and translated): «(this building) was made by who opened his mother in order to see where he was born». That phrase is a clear reference to the famous passage of Tacitus that describes the death of Agrippina by the hand of Nero (Tac. *Ann*. 14, 8; see also *Octavia* v. 269). When a centurion drew his sword, she understood that she would have been killed, and therefore she said: "Strike my belly" (*ventrem feri*) for stressing where the sword had to go: namely, the point that generated his son.

In his description of this magnificent building, the anonymous writer mentions some details that recall many parts of the Domus Aurea narrated by the Latin sources. Including, that such building has three overlapping porches long more than two miles in length[116]; the architecture was decorated with gold and precious stones[117]; in front of the building, there was a giant statue and river where large boats

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[116] «era su tre colonne per salito» cf. *porticus triplices miliarias* in Suet. Nero 31 (**Source 1**).

[117] «cornicie lor datthon dorato […] degate e di diaspri» cf. *cuncta auro lita… distincta gemmis* in Suet. Nero 31 (**Source 1**).

sailed[118]; owing to the light of the sun, it became totally illuminated[119]; inside there was a fountain with pure water[120] and the vault covered by a lead plate[121].

So, from this description, we can argue that the building (or group of buildings) described by the anonymous writer of the *Antiquarie prospettiche* is the Domus Aurea. However, it is described through the "mythical" spaces narrated by the ancient sources: the *stagnum Neronis*, *colossus Neronis*, *vestibulum* with triple porches, *coenatio rotunda*, Temple of Fortuna, decorations in gold and precious stones[122].

Nevertheless, although the description is imaginary for the greatest part, we have enough elements to argue convincingly that, among the ruins of the Oppian Hill, 15th-century antiquarians and artists found enough material evidence to make a connection to the materials of the Domus Aurea as described by the literary sources.

For instance, in 1594, Flaminio Vacca says that, some years before, in one vineyard of S. Pietro in Vincoli, were found some materials where, it was told, the Domus Aurea ended («dicevano essere il fine di casa aurea»)[123]. In fact, among these materials, the excavators found some capitals (*porticus triplices miliarias*: **Source 1**), one fountain decorated by

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[118] «di bronzun poliphemo […] e sotto allui passava ogni alta gabia»: cf. *stagnum* and *colossus Neronis* in Suet. Nero 31 (**Source 1**); the anonymous writer of the *Antiquarie prospettiche* mentions a "polyphemic" statue (i.e. of Polyphemus) because probably associated the memory of the colossal statue to the dimensions of the giant, or he simply used the word "Polyphemus" for meaning "giant".

[119] «facendo con so lampa chiaro lume»: the reference is to the phengites stone used for the Temple of Fortune inside the Domus Aurea: **Source 2**; for this passage in Biondo, see the translation of *Roma restaurata* (1444-1450) by L. Fauno (1543): **Source 5**.

[120] « fonte dequa premia»: cf. *albulis fluentes aquis* in Suet. Nero 31 (**Source 1**).

[121] «di solo rame legato era el fondo»: a changed version of the *tabulis eburneis uersatilibus* in Suet. *Nero* 31 (**Source 1**); cf. also "Duno cielo de mettal" in **Source 3**.

[122] In 1526, around the area of the Seven Halls and probably next to underground rooms of the Domus Aurea, precious metals were found in Pietro Valterini's vineyard: «aurum argentum plumbus et omne aliud genus metalli» (Lanciani 1989-2002, I, pp. 280-281).

[123] **Source 14:** Nibby 1820, IV, p. 13.

different marbles (*albulis fluentes aquis:* **Source 1***),* lead ducts (*desuper spargerentur*: **Source 1**; "per certi chanaletti sutili di piombo": **Source 3**).

In the same vein, Dupérac wrote a brief inscription in one engraving that he has realized in 1575 (**fig. 9**). Here, the artist says that, digging among the ruins of Titus' Baths, some beautiful architectonic materials were found («colonne, base, et capitelli di marmoro bellissimo d'ordine composito») and, precisely, in the area over the Domus Aurea («dalla parte che riguardano il Mezzogiorno et sirocco […] sopra parte della casa aurea di Nerone»)[124].

Therefore, although we will never know what exactly was found in this area and if such materials effectively belonged to the Domus Aurea, these 16th century sources allow us to understand how the identification of the site was elaborated and shared among antiquarians.

One method of identification was that one now discussed, namely the comparison between the archeological evidence discovered and literary descriptions. When some material evidence recalls the description of one monument described by ancient sources, the evidence suggested the identification of the monuments.

Another method of identification was based on the comparison between different evidence coming from different spaces. For instance, we have seen how, during the papacy of Gregory XIII (1572-1585), the Alberti brothers found some similar inscriptions in Titus' Baths and next to the Colosseum. For this similarity, they attributed those evidence to the Domus Aurea. In the same vein, Flaminio Vacca recognized that some stones on the Capitoline Hill came from the Domus Aurea ("vestigie di Nerone") because they were similar to the so-called "Frontespizio di Nerone" (or Templum Serapidis) but, mostly, to those that he saw excavated in the area of the Oppian Hill[125]

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[124]«Vestigij delle Therme di Tito dalla parte che risguardano il Mezzogiorno et sirocco, donde e il monte celio, quali furono edificate nelle carina sopra parte della casa aurea di Nerone, nella qual ruina cauandasi al tempo di papa Pio .V. ui furono trouate colonne, base, et capitelli di marmoro bellissimo d'ordine composito et molti altri fragmenti»: Dupérac, *I vestigi dell'antichità di Roma*, 1575, fol. 17.

[125] **Source 14** (Nibby 1820, pp. 8-9); for the "Frontespizio di Nerone": Di Furia 2019, p. 340.

In conclusion, we can see how, in the 16th century, some archaeological evidence (the golden stucco of the paintings, the proximity to the Colosseum, and columns from a possible porch) was enough to "re-activate" the memory of the Domus Aurea and to attribute new discoveries to this lost monument of the Antiquity[126].

4. The 17th century

There is no information about explorations or archeological digs in the underground rooms of the Domus Aurea, from the 17th century but debate on the hypothesis on their identification continued[127]. In this century, conjectures increased and their multiplication extinguished valid opinions that had rightly identified the site.

For instance, in 1610, in his *Trattato nuovo delle cose meravigliose* Martire Felini describes the Domus Aurea without giving any material reference, but simply translating the ancient sources[128]. On the other hand, he confused the Seven Halls with the Flavian House and included the building with the ruins of the Esquiline Hill (**Source 13, fig. 17**).

However, in the same years, precisely in 1615, Giacomo Lauro depicts the Domus Aurea in one engraving of his album *Antiquae urbis splendor* (**fig. 18**)[129]. The engraving shows one long inscription (**Source 16**) in which Lauro mentions the main literary sources (Pliny the Elder and Suetonius) that allow us to know the main attractions that

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[126] For the archeological interests of Renaissance artists and antiquarians, here are a few references from the wide bibliography: Weiss 1969, Agosti-Farinella 1984, Agosti-Farinella-Settis 1987, Barkan 1999, Zanker 2009.

[127] For the antiquarian interests and archeological excavations in the 17th century: Herklotz 2012, pp. 121-144. Meyboom-Moormann suggest that rooms 35 and 142 were discovered during the 17th century because they were copied by P.S. Bartoli in Codex Massimi (room 35: Pace 1979, 143, no. 56, fol. XXIII; room 142: Pace 1979, no. 52, 54, foll. LXIII, LXVII). However, since the Codex Massimi consists of drawings copied from other drawings (maybe by Francisco de Hollanda: CAT. 2), it is possible that both rooms were already known in the 16th century.

[128] Felini 1610, p. 351.

[129] For 16th and 17th-century literary sources on the Domus Aurea: Causarano 2020.

characterized the Domus Aurea (*colossus Neronis, stagnum Neronis, coenatio rotunda, horti Maecenatis*). In Lauro's engraving, there is one very interesting aspect that has not been noticed so far: the building is not simply similar to the iconography of the *dupondius*, but it seems to follow the map of the Oppian building (**fig. 1, fig. 3**). In Laurio's Domus Aurea, there is a central octagonal court and, at the side, two wings that retreat and create two lateral courts, like the octagonal court that originally was double. It is impossible to know the reason why Lauro was able to imagine part of the map or, instead, it rather is a simple coincidence.

After some decades, in his *Roma Antica (*1666), Nardini clarifies that, at that time, there continued to exist different interpretations for the ruins of the Oppian and Esquiline Hill (**Source 17**). The most common interpretation was that the ruins at the slopes of the Oppian Hill (next to the church of S. Pietro in Vincoli) were the remains of Titus' Baths and Titus' House, and those towards the Seven Halls were ruins of Trajan's Baths. However, Nardini says that the Domus Aurea did not occupy the Oppian Hill with any building, but only with the gardens of Nero, linked to that of Maecenas. For this reason, Nardini thinks that all ruins were not just the remains of the Domus Aurea, but included those of Titus' Baths and House (called by someone also Trajan's Baths because Trajan restored part of the Titus' Baths).

In any case, around the central years of the 17th century, other archeological discoveries on the Oppian Hill attracted the interest of many excavators and a large number of permissions for excavations were given[130]. In 1659, a great number of visitors and economic interests connected to thee lands forced the "Commissario per le Antichità" to order that the underground rooms be left as they were, without any further damages[131].

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[130] Lanciani 1989-2002, V, pp. 243-245; for the excavations permission in 16th and 17th century: Barbanera 2009.
[131] Lanciani 1989-2002, V, pp. 179, 207-210.

Owing to the graphic activity of P.S. Bartoli[132], stimulated mainly because of the will of Cardinal Camillo Massimo, the attention of many antiquarians for new archeological excavations in Rome increased[133]. Moreover, in these years, G.P. Bellori was "Commissario delle Antichità" (1670-1694)[134] and he gave a great boost to the discoveries and studies of the antiquities. Thanks to his close collaboration with Bartoli, both published some important works on the ancient paintings discovered, including those from the Oppian Hill. In fact, two important discoveries were made next to the underground grottoes of the Oppian Hill and concerned Roman underground paintings. The first was made inside one underground building, under De Nobili's vineyard (1668)[135]. The second discovery was made in one building next to the Seven Halls (1683-1684)[136]. Bartoli copied the paintings of both underground buildings found in 1668 and 1683-1684 and identified them as Titus' Baths, although nowadays it is not possible to find any evidence of them. Since Bartoli identified both underground buildings as remains of Titus' Baths, we could consider them as liked to the rooms of the Domus Aurea (in fact, Bartoli and Bellori considers the rooms of the Domus Aurea as the remains of Titus' and Trajan's Baths: **Source 20**). However, both archaeological sites discovered in 1668 and 1683-1684 probably did not belong to the Domus Aurea, since scholars think that the paintings are not related to those of the Domus Aurea because of the style of the paintings copied by Bartoli's watercolors[137]. We are not sure whether Bartoli really visited the underground rooms of the Domus Aurea (cf. also *Chapter 4*). On the other hand, in *Nota delli*

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[132] The first attempts to collect all Bartoli's drawings were made by Lanciani 1895, Michaelis 1910, Ashby 1914, Ashby 1916, pp. 110-125; then, the works of Pomponi 1992, De Lachenal 2000, Faedo 2000, Whitehouse 2014 and Gentile Ortona-Modolo 2016 have clarified the genesis of many Bartoli's drawings and the relative archeological aspects.

[133] Pomponi 1992, p. 210.

[134] For his period as "Commissario delle Antichità": Fischetti 2008.

[135] Herklotz 2012, p. 126, p. 143 (Appendice 77, 79-86); Gentile Ortona-Modolo 2016, pp. 183-197.

[136] Lanciani 1989-2002, V, pp. 270-272, 299-300; Gentile Ortona-Modolo 2016, pp. 207-218.

[137] The frescoes are dated around the late 1st and the beginning of the 2nd century AD: Gentile Ortona-Modolo 2016, pp. 183-197, pp. 207-218.

Musei (1664) Bellori describes the room 129 of the Domus Aurea (**Source 21**)[138]. In this passage, Bellori states that, in his own collection , he has one of Annibale Carracci's drawing that depicts the scene of Hector and Andromache of room 129 (nowadays the drawing is preserved at the Windsor Collection)[139]. Bartoli e Bellori were so particularly attracted and fascinated by the paintings of the Domus Aurea (i.e. Titus' Baths/House) that both collected some Renaissance drawings of Domus Aurea's paintings (see *Chapter 4*).

For this century, it is important to point out that, although the collaboration of such important personalities as Bartoli and Bellori opened a new positive season for the Antiquarian in Rome, the memory and the identification of the underground Oppian rooms as the remains of the Domus Aurea seems to have almost completely vanished from local memory and myth. In many circumstances, despite the wide culture of Bellori, the noted "Commissario delle Antichità" seems to never have taken into account the possibility that such rooms were those of the Domus Aurea. Yet, he even knew many archeological clues for this interpretation were related to the Domus. For example, he knew very well the iconography on the *dupondius* and that probably such a building belonged to the Domus Aurea (**Source 22**). He saw the watercolor of Francisco de Hollanda where the artist wrote that such painting belonged to the Domus Aurea and, finally, he visited personally the underground rooms (**Source 19, Source 21**). He was an extreme connoisseur of the ancient sources, including those that describe the position and the artistic features of the Domus Aurea (**Source 23**)[140].

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[138] Bellori 1664, pp. 57-58; Fusconi 1994, pp. 88-89; Meyboom-Moormann 2013, I, pp. 5-6.

[139] Windsor Collection, inv. RCIN 909573: Brunetti 2018-2019.

[140] Therefore, it remains only a charming idea that, because of Bellori's dependency on the Roman ecclesiastic environments and his admiration for the Logge Vaticane by Raphael, he was not inclined to admit that such a terrible emperor, Nero, would have influenced with his art the decorations of the Vatican palace.

5. The 18th century

During the first two decades of the 18th century, there is no information about any of archeological digs within the rooms of the Domus Aurea. Moreover, no drawing of the Domus Aurea's paintings exists in these decades (except, of course, for the copies of other drawings).

Thanks to the drawings of Bartoli, the images of Domus Aurea's paintings continued to circulate among antiquarians and, hence, they were re-copied. For instance, Caylus and Mariette edited 30 copies of Bartoli's watercolors (1757-1760) and Turnbull included in his work on the Roman paintings some engravings that depict details of Bartoli's watercolor of the Volta Dorata in the Codex Massimi.

In this century, the archeological interests were focused on other areas of the city. As scholars have pointed out, the digs in Rome are mainly attested in the area of the Palatine Hill or around Caracalla's Baths[141]. For instance, on the Palatine Hill, in 1720-1729, some rooms of the Domus Transitoria were discovered, although they were misidentified as Augustus and Livia's Baths[142].

Thanks to this discovery and the enthusiasm that aroused, two archeological permissions exist for the area of S. Pietro in Vincoli: one in 1733, probably for the artist Girolamo Odam (1681-1741), and another permission was given to Francesco Ficoroni in 1740[143]. Unfortunately, it is not possible to know what such permissions were effectively allowed within the underground grottoes[144].

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[141] Picozzi 2010, Liverani 2010.

[142] Borrello-Maiorano 2019; The son of P.S. Bartoli, Francesco Bartoli (1675-1733) was in charge of copying the ceilings and his watercolors are now preserved at the Eton College (Windsor): Modolo 2019; the watercolors of F. Bartoli are characterized by a major level of artistic license than those of his father. Not by chance, the biographer of P.S. Bartoli (Nicola Pio), speaking about copying the art of F. Bartoli, states: «va copiando dalle stampe, diverse cose antiche che unisce insieme con coloretti in carta et, attribuendogli diversi nomi a suoi capricci, gli vende a forastieri, dicendo essere state trovate nelle rovine et antichità di Roma»: Fusconi 2010, p. 57.

[143] Lanciani VI, 103; Meyboom-Moormann 2013, I, p. 6.

[144] It is probable that Ficoroni went into the Seven Halls: in his description of the Seven Halls, Venuti mentions the visit of Ficoroni for the hydraulic system: Venuti 1763, I, p. 115 (for Ficoroni: Ridley 2017).

In any case, in 1748, Giovanni Battista Nolli drew the first archeological map of ancient Rome that can be considered reliable and precise[145]. Ferdinando Mariani described Nolli's map and Meyboom-Moormann has transcribed the passage that describes the area of the Oppian Hill[146]. In it, Mariani says that, under Gualtieri's vineyard[147], there were underground grottoes of the Domus Aurea («e dentro si vede una gran quantità di stanze che si vanno intrecciando fra di loro di modo tale che camminandovi uno senza guida si potrebbe smarrire, o cadere in qualche precipizio»)[148].

Mariani seems to describe room 92 (Criptoportico)[149] and he mentions the difficult conditions of the exploration. Precisely, in this room, Mariani states that it was not possible to measure the width of the room because of the mounds of earth on the sides. Moreover, Mariani states that, in certain points of the Criptoportico, he had to crawl and, sometimes, slither in the room («toccandosi nel principio la volta colla schiena, più avanti colla testa e ne fine colle mani»). Then, he describes room 129 (Volta di Ettore e Andromaca) and the figural panel with the so-called Coriolanus (= Hector)[150]. He says that, according to the man who worked in the vineyard («mi ha detto quello della vigna»), the Laocoon was found inside room 129. Finally, he suggests that probably such "underground labyrinth" run until S. Martino ai Monti («vanno sino sotto S. Martino ai Monti»), where the literary sources of the 17th century located the part of Titus' Baths restored by Trajan[151].

It is important to stress that Mariani came into the underground rooms from the south side of the building that nowadays is identified as Trajan's Baths. In fact, Mariani says that, next to the "semitondo", there were underground passages. It is likely that the "semitondo" was the central hemicycle of the south side (**fig. 19**). As it will be seen later, the

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[145] Borsi 1993; Manacorda 2013.

[146] Borsi 1993, pp. 369-372; Meyboom-Moormann 2013, I, p. 6-7.

[147] The vineyard is also mentioned in Venuti 1763, p. 116 (**Source 24**)

[148] Meyboom-Moormann 2013, I, p. 6-7 quote all the passage; Moormann 1995, p. 19.

[149] Weege 1913a pp. 182-183 n. 1; Meyboom-Moormann 2013, I, p. 12, n. 66.

[150] In his description of the underground grottoes, Meyboom-Moormann recognize other possible mentions of other rooms: e.g. 112-115 and 131: Meyboom-Moormann 2013, I, p. 12, n. 67.

[151] Nardini 1666: **Source 17**; Bellori 1664: **Source 19**.

artists and excavators of Mirri also came into the underground rooms from this side.

In these years, maybe because of the new enthusiasm for antiquities and the increasing arrivals of aristocrats during their grand tours, more visitors came into the underground rooms of the Domus Aurea. As Moormann has shown, more than one time, Winckelmann visited some rooms in 1757 and he noticed the high level of humidity that was damaging the paintings[152].

The 40s and 50s of the 18th century are crucial years for the history of archaeology and the Antiquarian[153]. One special step was the first volume of *Le antichità Romane* of Giambattista Piranesi (1756). In his work, Piranesi gives different numbers for each antique monument[154]. On the Oppian Hill (**Source 25, fig. 20**), he identified the Titus' Baths (on the S. Pietro in Vincoli vineyard: no. 234) and Titus' House (on the Gualtieri vineyard: no. 235). Also the Seven Halls are identified as "ruins of the *tepidarium* of Titus' Baths" (no. 236). Piranesi meanwhile located the Domus Aurea under the Basilica of Maxentius (no. 283), on the Palatine Hill (Ronconi vineyard: nos. 297, 301; Benfratelli vineyard and next to S. Bonaventura hortus: nos. 306-307)[155]

The first archeological study of the underground building of the Oppian Hill was made in 1768 by Charles Cameron (1746 - 1812). In those years, he was working on the Roman Baths and in 1772 he published the first edition of his work, *The Baths of the Romans*[156]. The main contribution of Cameron to the history of the Domus Aurea was to have realized an extremely precise map of the building (**fig. 21**).

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[152] Moormann 1995, pp. 13-23. As the scholar has pointed out, Winckelmann was the first to recognize the mythical scene of Hector and Andromache that he included in his *Geschichte der Kunst des Alterthums* (I ed. 1763).

[153] Barbanera 2010 (cf. also Momigliano 1950 and Herklotz 2012, pp. 191-203).

[154] Piranesi 1756, I, tav. II: Frutaz 1962, pianta XXXV; I, pp. 79-80.

[155] Meyboom-Moormann signal one alternative version of Piranesi's engraving which identified the *templum pacis* (i.e. Basilica of Maxentius*)* as some remains of the Domus Aurea: Meyboom-Moormann 2013, I, p. 12, n. 72; for the *templum pacis* as Basilica of Maxentius: Schofield 1980, p. 253, n. 55.

[156] Cameron 1772: Salmon 1993; Salmon 2000, p. 39.

Starting from Palladio's drawings of Titus' Baths[157], like Palladio, Cameron considered the ruins on the Oppian Hill as the remains of Titus' Baths and the underground rooms as another floor of the building[158]. In Cameron's map, it is possible to know which rooms were visible at that time. He was very careful with the proportions of the rooms. Not by chance, Cameron's map was reused by L. Mirri and improved by his artist (V. Brenna), after the excavations of 1775-1776[159]. Around those years, owing to the recent discoveries in the Vesuvian area, the antiquarian Ludovico Mirri (1738-1786) understood the economic potential of the paintings under the Oppian Hill[160].

As he shared Cameron's interest in this area, it also attracted the attention of Ludovico Mirri and, therefore, in 1774 he asked permission to start new excavations on the Oppian Hill, precisely on the "Vigna dei Canonici" and Lauretti-Ceci vineyard in Via Labicana, next to Esquiline Hill[161]. In 1775 the excavations began and, during the 14 months of work, 16 rooms were opened and copied by the artists F. Smuglewicz (1745-1820) and V. Brenna (1745-1820) (for the dating of the rooms discovered: **fig. 2**)[162]. Such a hurry was due to economic reasons, in order that Mirri would save time and money that he would otherwise have paid to his employees, but there was also competition from the antiquarian market who might have had other men interested in the same business[163]. The Mirri 's excavations had a great resonance in

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[157] The drawings of Palladio were discovered in Masera (next to Treviso, Italy) in 1719 by Lord Richard Boyle (1694-1753) and published in London (1732) and in Vicenza (1785): Ortolani 2009, p. 7.

[158] Such a belief was taken also present in Venuti 1763 (**Source 24)**, who in fact complained about the absence of a map for the building on the Oppian Hill (except that of Piranesi: **Source 25**).

[159] Carletti 2014, p. 32 (or. ed. Mirri-Carletti 1776, p. XXII).

[160] For the editorial businesses of Mirri: Coen 2008.

[161] Carletti 2014, p. 17 (Mirri-Carletti 1776, p. VII); Lanciani VI, 179; Pietrangeli 1958, pp. 29-30 (Fusconi 1994, pp. 158-159); Meyboom-Moormann 2013, I, p. 7; in the new edition his guide (first edition: 1763), Venturi records the work of Mirri and his artists (Venturi 1803, I, pp. 154-155: the passages added in the new edition are marked by the quotation marks: " ").

[162] For further details on the two artists and their drawings: *Chapter 4* and CAT. 3.

[163] Brunetti 2015, p. 138.

Rome and some guides were organized for the visitors and also a concert was performed inside one room[164].

As we will see in *Chapter 4*, the enthusiasm was probably increased by Mirri himself in order to advertise his forthcoming publication (*Le antiche camere delle terme di Tito e le loro pitture restituite al pubblico*, 1776), but also by Pope Pius VI who gave the permission to start the excavations[165]. In the introduction of *Le antiche camere*, Carletti mentions many times the role of the underground paintings of the Oppian Hill for Raphael's grotesques in the Logge Vaticane and the art patronage of the popes.

The work of Mirri had a great success and, after few years, in 1786 Nicolas Ponce (1746-1831) published a French edition and the description of the engravings is almost the same as the Italian one[166]. Unfortunately, there are no documents (e.g. journals of excavations, or administrative documents) that might show how the digs directed by Mirri were made. However, thanks to the map of the Oppian building realized by V. Brenna (**figs. 22, 23**), it is possible to see the dotted paths that signal how the excavators moved inside the building. Moreover, thanks to Carletti's descriptions of the engravings, the writer has left some notices about some activities, such as the holes created for passing from one room to the other (cf. CAT. 3; *Chapter 4*, pp. 321-331).

As the title of the work suggests, the underground building was identified as the remains of Titus' Baths and, according to them, they belonged to the same ruined building on the hill. Although Mirri and his collaborators followed the indications of Piranesi for the identification of the building (Titus' Baths and House), they considered the building as exclusively part of Titus' Baths (and not of his House). They arrived to this conclusion owing to the discovery of an aqueduct within the underground building (**Source 26**). On the other hand, during the 60s and 80s, there was also the belief that, owing to the reflections of Nardini 1666 (**Source 17**) the underground grottoes might

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[164] «[*scil.* Mirri] chiamò nel 1775 la folla degl'intendenti fra queste macerie ad ammirare le loro pitture»: Carletti 2014, p. 17 (= Mirri-Carletti 1776, p. VII); Pietrangeli 1958, p. 30; for the notice of one concert inside one room (from one letter of John Thorpe): Meyboom-Moormann 2013, I, p. 8.

[165] For a brief introduction of the *Le antiche camere:* Tedeschi 2010.

[166] Perrin 1982.

have belonged to the Baths of Maecenas or the House of Maecenas. In fact, according to Tacitus, the Domus Aurea connected the Palatine with the *horti Maecenatis* which lay on the Esquiline)[167]. From one tower of Gardens of Maecenas, according to the legend narrated by Suetonius, Nero watched the fire of 64 AD and he recited the Capture of Ilium[168]. Therefore, according to these 18th century sources (especially Piranesi and Venuti), the name "Baths and House of Titus" was due to the fact that Titus restored the house and baths of Maecenas[169].

For the last decades of the century, there is no further information, except the notice that the pope wanted to use the underground rooms for a munitions factory[170].

6. The 19th century: from the Titus' Baths to Domus Aurea

Thanks to Mirri's excavations, his artists documented the paintings in a very precise way. However, now exposed to the elements and frequent visitors, much damage was caused to the paintings. During the excavations, the excavators not only opened new rooms, but they partially freed the rooms from the earth. For example, after a few decades, in 1817, G. Guattani complained about the precarious storage

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[167] Tacitus 15, 39: *eo in tempore Nero Antii agens non ante urbem regressus est quam domui eius, qua Palatium et Maecenatis hortos continuaverat, ignis propinquaret*.

[168] Suet. Nero 38: *hoc incendium e turre Maecenatiana prospectans laetusque 'flammae,' ut aiebat, 'pulchritudine' Halosin Ilii in illo suo scaenico habitu decantauit*.

[169] Venuti 1763, p. 114-116 (**Source 24**): thinks to the Baths of Maecenas «si può pertanto arguire, che il Tepidario delle Terme, e la di lui casa non fossero altrimenti opera dello stesso Tito, ma di Mecenate […] La conserva, o sia piscina, o Tepidario, come la chiama il Signor Piranesi, delle Terme di Tito, si vede in una vigna de' Padri di S. Pietro in Vincoli.»; Piranesi 1784, vol. I, pp. 28-29 (**Source 25**) thinks to the House of Maecenas: «Avanzi della Casa di Tito nella vigna Gualtieri vicina alla predetta de' Padri di S. Pietro in Vincoli […] Si può pertanto arguire che il Tepidario delle Terme di Tito, e la di lui Casa sopra indicati, non fossero altrimenti opera dello stesso Tito, ma di Mecenate»«.

[170] The notice of the Prussian ambassador B.G. Niebuhr is mentioned by Meyboom-Moormann 2013, I, p. 9; such a function of some rooms is also confirmed by: Nardini 1818, I, p. 262; Caetani Lovatelli 1901, p. 160.

conditions and the difficulty in seeing the vault because of distance and limited light[171].

During the first two decades of the century Meyboom-Moormann mentions the interest of Ennio Quirino Visconti and Giuseppe Valadier in improving the conservative conditions of the paintings[172]. During the years 1811-1814, according to De Romanis, there were some works within the underground rooms directed by Tancioni and some of the rooms were totally freed by the earth, right down to the ancient floors[173].

In 1822, Antonio De Romanis published his study of the underground rooms (*Le antiche camere esquiline dette comunemente delle Terme di Tito).* He was the first to study the walls of the building and to recognize two different chronologies: the more recent walls are those that are not covered by plaster and their bricks are defined by different materials and forms[174]. Thanks to his map (**fig. 24**), descriptions and drawings, De Romanis' work reveals an important value also for the current investigations, especially given that some of this evidence is now lost[175]. Concerning the identification of the underground building, among all the identifications already provided (Maecenas's House, Domus Aurea, Titus' Baths, Trajan's Baths)[176], he rejects all of them and thinks that the building might have been a private palace[177].

Although De Romanis does not explicitly state that the underground rooms of the Oppian Hill might also be the remains of the Domus

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[171] Meyboom-Moormann 2013, I, p. 9; Perrin 2001: Guattani defines one room "nuova galleria" and it might be that one mentioned by Lanciani and, according to him, discovered in 1813 (Lanciani 1897, pp. 362-363).

[172] Meyboom-Moormann 2013, I, p. 9.

[173] De Romanis 1822, p. 4; Weege 1913a, p. 139;

[174] De Romanis 1822, pp. 45-49

[175] Perrin 2001, 261-263; Meyboom-Moormann 2013, I, p. 9.

[176] «Molti credono tutt'ora, che in origine appartenessero alla casa di Mecenate, altri che facessero parte della casa aurea di Nerone, altri finalmente opinano che, essendo queste le vere Terme di Tito, debbano riconoscersi distintamente in quelle superiori le Terme di Traiano»: De Romanis 1822, p. 5.

[177] «Nel totale in somma vi si riconosce una disposizione, la quale non corrisponde ad alcuna altra degli antichi avanzi di Roma, e per quanto può concepirsi sembra essere molto più opportuna per servire ad uso privato di quello che pubblico»: De Romanis 1822, pp. 9-10.

Aurea, such a possibility encouraged other scholars to pursue this direction.

An important step of this long process of identification was made by Stefano Piale[178], artist and antiquarian, who in 1827 gave a speech in the Accademia Archeologica in Rome (published in 1832) on the distinction between Domus Aurea, Trajan's Titus and Titus' Baths. Piale states that, excluding the possibility that the underground rooms of the Oppian Hill are the House of Maecenas, it is necessary to conclude that they are the remains of the Domus Aurea (**Source 27**)[179]. Considering the description of the Latin sources of the Domus Aurea and the conclusions of De Romanis about the private use of the building (i.e. no Baths), Piale concludes that the underground rooms are the remains of the Domus Aurea and the ruins on the Oppian Hill are those of Trajan's Baths[180].

Owing to this renewed attention on the Oppian building and to the topography of the Domus Aurea, the "Commissario delle Antichità" Carlo Fea gave a speech in the Accademia Archeologica in Rome in 1832 (and published his speech in the same year). In his talk, Fea investigated some remains of the Domus Aurea of Nero under the Torre Chartularia, destroyed in 1829, and next to Titus' Arch. Paradoxically, the method of identification adopted by Fea is the same that we have seen for the 16th century, like that of Vacca (**Source 14**) or his brother Alberti (**source 11**). According to Fea, the possibility that such ruins might be the remains of the Domus Aurea is due to their orientation towards the Esquiline Hill and their similarity with some stones of the Colosseum and the Nero's bridge[181].

In 1838 A. Nibby published *Roma nell'anno MDCCCXXXVIII, descritta da Antonio Nibby* that remains an important study as well for knowing the conditions the rooms in these years[182]. Following the indication of De Romanis, Nibby recognized the ruins on the Oppian Hill as the

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[178] Ridley 2000.

[179] Piale 1832, pp. 7-8.

[180] Considering the absence of any evidence provided by De Romanis for a further building, Piale concludes that the Titus's Baths were destroyed: Piale 1832, p. 12.

[181] Fea 1832, pp. 3-4 and p. 22; for the Torre Chartularia: Bison 2010.

[182] Nibby 1838, II, p. 815-830.

remains of Trajan's Baths. Considering the underground building, he stated that such rooms did not belong to Trajan's Baths, but to the Domus Aurea[183].

For the rest of the century, there is no information about any archeological digs or excavations, but only mentions of ordinary tourist explorations inside the rooms. It is likely that, since the works of Mirri, the underground rooms were no longer owned by private citizens but became public.

The confusion about the identification of the sites was definitively overcome by Rodolfo Lanciani in two articles dated to 1895 and his book of 1897 (*The ruins and excavations of ancient Rome*). For the first time, thanks to the drawings of Palladio, he identified on the Esquiline Hill the remains of three different buildings: the Domus Aurea, Trajan's Baths and Titus' Baths[184]. The first Lanciani's map of these buildings is preserved in the Vatican Library[185] and was published in 1897 (**fig. 4**)[186].

Yet, the modern scholar, who at the present day reads the pages of Lanciani about the identification of the underground rooms with the Domus Aurea, will be surprised by the absence of any substantial pieces of evidence in attributing the underground building to the Domus Aurea of Nero.

In fact, in these pages, Lanciani does not elaborate any argumentation for the identification with the Domus Aurea, but he simply states that one corner of Trajan's Baths «come tutti sanno, è sovrapposto ai ruderi della domus aurea neroniana formando con esse un angolo acuto»[187]. It is quite surprising that one of the most famous archeologists does not

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[183] Nibby 1838, II, pp. 815-817; «quindi è chiaro che le terme edificate da Traiano furono erette sul sito già occupato da Nerone, e che la fabbrica primitiva non in squadra con queste fu parte di quella Casa Aurea famosa»: Nibby 1838, II, p. 819.

[184] For the distinction between Trajan's Baths and Titus' Baths: Lanciani 1895a; Caruso 2010; for a synthesis of the three buildings after two years: Lanciani 1897, pp. 358-363; owing to such topographical distinction of the three buildings, in the same issue of the same journal, Lanciani identified the Domus Aurea's paintings in some of Bartoli's drawings, although some identifications are not correct: Lanciani 1895b.

[185] Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, MS. Vat. Lat. I3032, fol. 132.

[186] Lanciani 1897, fig. 138.

[187] Lanciani 1895a, p. 112.

mention the elements, clues, and evidence that convinced him that this underground building were the remaining part of the Domus Aurea. The truth is that, since the 16th century, when the underground rooms were discovered, the hypothesis that such rooms belonged to Domus Aurea arrived to the 19th century, until it became generally accepted.

Therefore, although Lanciani did not divulge the reasons that convinced him on the identification of the underground rooms, it is quite likely that such reasons were almost the same as those mentioned by Piale in his speech of 1827 (**Source 27**) and those that Weege briefly indicated in his long article of 1913[188].

Although Lanciani had the credit to have distinguished the three buildings of the Oppian Hill, Piale officially provided the first identification of the Domus Aurea in the 19th century. And he did so mainly owing to the antique sources (well-known since the 16th century), and the evidence provided by De Romanis in 1822. The ironic aspect of this process of identification is that the intuition and the reasoning of Piale were not enough to convince scholars: they also needed the scientific authority of Lanciani for a more substantial confirmation.

7. The 20th century: recent studies and new excavations

In 1907 Weege started his investigations on the underground building and, thanks to the results of De Romanis and Lanciani, accepted the identification of the building as the remains of the Domus Aurea[189]. In the first pages of his long article, Weege describes the difficult conditions inside some rooms: he and his collaborators found a labyrinth of rooms filled by the earth, where often they had to crawl[190].

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[188] Weege 1913a, pp. 127-128.

[189] Weege 1913a, p. 127: «Die folgenden Studien sind hervorgegangen aus einer langjährigen Beschäftigung mit den Ruinen, die seit etwa hundert Jahren mit Sicherheit als Reste des Goldenen Hauses nachgewiesen sind. Die früheren Bezeichnungen als Titusthermen, Souterrains der Trajansthermen, Haus des Mäcenas u. a. sind damit abgetan worden».

[190] Weege 1913a, p. 127

Thanks to the indications of Jordan-Hülsen and to the first important studies of Renaissance drawing-books and designs[191], Weege was able to mention and illustrate a conspicuous number of 16th and 17th century drawings of the paintings[192].

In my opinion, it cannot be excluded that Weege was interested in studying the underground building also because of the new discoveries and studies of drawings of Antiquity. Credit is also due to Weege for his study of all the inscriptions that the artists left on the paintings[193]. The collection of two groups of data (drawings and inscriptions) became the starting point of the work of Dacos, who focused on the reception of the grotesques in the Renaissance[194].

The work of Weege is fundamental also for our current studies since it conserves images, memories and descriptions of some paintings that nowadays are more damaged more than one century ago, as the case of the Volta Dorata shows.

Probably, owing to the impact of Weege's article, new excavations were started in the first half of the 20th century, especially those directed by A. Muñoz (1914), A. Terenzio (1934, 1938), A.M. Colini (1939)[195]. The first archeological excavations that were made in more scientific way were those of Laura Fabbrini, who was able to find a second pentagonal court on the West side and the presence of a second floor next to the octagonal court[196]. In fact, the excavations of the 1970s and 1980s were mainly focused on the East part of the building, between the two pentagonal courts (**fig. 1**).

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[191] Jordan-Hülsen 1871, pp. 273-280; Egger 1906; Bartoli Hübner 1911, Hülsen-Egger 1913

[192] Excluding the engravings of Mirri's album, Weege mentions approximately 40 drawings for all the rooms of the Domus Aurea (many of them simply depicts some grotesques); in the same issues of the *Jahrbuch des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts,* there is the article by Dehn in 1913 which some drawings of the drawings from the Antique, as that one of Volta Dorata by Dosio (CAT. 9).

[193] Weege 1913a, pp. 141-151.

[194] Dacos 1969.

[195] Meyboom-Moormann 2013, I, p. 10.

[196] Fabbrini 1982, Fabbrini 1983, Fabbrini 1985-1986, Fabbrini 1995.

In the last decades of the century, some restoration works on the paintings[197] began and they continued until the first decade of the 21st century. These archeological efforts were focused on the improvement of the architectural structures, since the humidity and the spoliations over the centuries have weakened the walls and the vaults[198].

The last and great archeological study of the Domus Aurea was made by P.G.P. Meyboom and E.M. Moormann who, after almost two decades of research and study, published their fundamental work. The great credit of this publication is to have described and studied the paintings and marble decorations of all rooms of the Domus Aurea. The chapters of their work are devoted to the history of the building, the painters' workshops, and the functions of the rooms. Moreover, thanks to the wide bibliography collected and images illustrated, Meyboom-Moormann's work remains a fundamental starting point for the new generations that want to approach this incredible monument of Roman art.

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[197] Iacopi 1999, Segala-Sciortino 1999.
[198] Beste 2015, Beste 2016, Filippi 2016.

8. Literary sources

Source 1

Suet. Nero 31, 2-3

Non in alia re tamen damnosior quam in aedificando domum a Palatio Esquilias usque fecit, quam primo transitoriam, mox incendio absumptam restitutamque auream nominauit. de cuius spatio atque cultu suffecerit haec rettulisse. uestibulum eius fuit, in quo colossus CXX pedum staret ipsius effigie; tanta laxitas, ut porticus triplices miliarias haberet; item stagnum maris instar, circumsaeptum aedificiis ad urbium speciem. in ceteris partibus cuncta auro lita, distincta gemmis unionumque conchis erant; cenationes laqueatae tabulis eburneis uersatilibus, ut flores, fistulatis, ut unguenta desuper spargerentur; praecipua cenationum rotunda, quae perpetuo diebus ac noctibus uice mundi circumageretur; balineae marinis et albulis fluentes aquis. eius modi domum cum absolutam dedicaret, hactenus comprobauit, ut se diceret "quasi hominem tandem habitare coepisse.

«In nothing was he more prodigal than in his buildings. He completed his palace by continuing it from the Palatine to the Esquiline hill, calling the building at first only "*Transitoria*", but after it was burnt down and rebuilt, "*The Domus Aurea*". Of its dimensions and furniture, it may be sufficient to say thus much: the porch was so high that there stood in it a colossal statue of himself a hundred and twenty feet in height; and the space included in it was so ample, that it had triple porticos a mile in length, and a lake like a sea, surrounded with buildings which had the appearance of a city. Within its area were corn fields, vineyards, pastures, and woods, containing a vast number of animals of various kinds, both wild and tame. In other parts it was entirely over-laid with gold, and adorned with jewels and mother of pearl. The supper rooms were vaulted, and compartments of the ceilings, inlaid with ivory, were made to revolve, and scatter flowers; while they contained pipes which shed unguents upon the guests. The chief banqueting room was circular, and revolved perpetually, night and day, in imitation of the motion of the celestial bodies. The baths were supplied with water from the sea and the Albula. Upon the dedication of this magnificent house after it was finished, all he said in approval of it was, "that he had now a dwelling fit for a man"» (transl. by J. E. Reed, A. Thomson).

Source 2

Plin. *NH* 36, 163

nerone principe in cappadocia repertus est lapis duritia marmoris, candidus atque tralucens etiam qua parte fulvae inciderant venae, ex argumento phengites appellatus. hoc construxerat aedem fortunae, quam seiani appellant, a servio rege sacratam, amplexus aurea domo; quare etiam foribus opertis interdiu claritas ibi diurna erat alio quam specularium modo tamquam inclusa luce, non transmissa. - in arabia quoque esse lapidem vitri modo tralucidum, quo utantur pro specularibus, iuba auctor est

 «During the reign of Nero, there was a stone found in Cappadocia, as hard as marble, white, and transparent even in those parts where red veins were to be seen upon it; a property which has obtained for it the name of "phengites." It was with this stone that Nero rebuilt the Temple of Fortune, surnamed Seia, originally consecrated by King Servius, enclosing it within the precincts of his Golden Palace. Hence it was that, even when the doors were closed, there was light in the interior during the day; not transmitted from without, as would be the case through a medium of specular-stone, but having all the appearance of being enclosed within the building» (transl. by J. Bostock).

Source 3

Anonymous, *Edificazione di molti palazzi e tempi di Roma*, 1363, fol. 3 recto, lines 11-34 (from the printed version (1480): British Library: inv. IA 21293)

«el tempio del sole di mirabel grandeza et belleza co[n]
diuersi mansioni er era cop[er]to duno cielo de mettal /
lo aureatto doue per arte magicha ueniuanno sa /
ecte et uedeasse choruschare o uero ballenare et pio
uere per certi chanaletti sutili di piombo et eraui an
chora tutti li segni et li pianeti del cielo et chiaschuno
facia suo corso ordinato nella somita desso colixeo
era uno idollo o uero simulacro multo grande et a /
uia i[n] chapo una coro[n]a doro ornata di pietre p[re]cioxe
et i[n] una mano auia uno pomo rito[n]do nellaltra una
palma significa[n]do che ro[m]a tutto elmondo regniaua
sechondamente che dice el uerso del sigillo: de roma.
Roma capud mondi tenet orbis frena rettondi. Et
fo chiamatto cholixeo et anchoi per che quando
alchuno forestieri ueniua a roma per li ministri di
questo tempio era me[n]ato adadorare el predicto idol
lo. et diciano li dicti ministri mostra[n]do lidolo collo

dicto cholexeu[m] sel fuoristieri rispondea collo subito
lo facia sacrifficare si diceua de non sillo faceano
sostenere gande pene pero fo ditto colixeu[m]: <u>posso
molto tempo sa[n]cto bonifacio quarto chomando che
quello tempio con piu altri tempii fosse guasto</u> et lo
p[re]dicto idollo fece ro[m]pere in piu parte, azo che li cri/
[stiani ...]».

Source 4

P. Bracciolini (1380-1459), *De varietate Fortunae*, I, fol. 8 *verso*, lines 1-8, post 1448
(Città del Vaticano: Vat. lat. 1784).

*Respice ad palatinum montem et ibi fortunam incusa q[uae] domum a nerone post
i[n]censam urbem totius orbis spoliis co[n]fecta[m] atq[ue] absumptis i[m]periis
virib[u]s ornatam, qua[m] silv[a]e lac[ua] obelisci porticus collosi theatra varij coloris
marmora admirandam videntib[us] reddebant, ita prostravit, <u>ut n[u]lla rei cuiusq[uam]
effigies superextet quam aliquid certum, pr[a]eter vasta rudera q[u]a[e]s dice[re].</u>*

Source 5

F. Biondo, *Roma Instaurata*, 1444-1446 (ed. 1481, III, chapter 44).

Dom[us] nero[n]is loc[us] ubi fuit.
*Nanq[ue] id totum domus aureae spaciu[m] fuit ab ea parte pallatii quae nu[n]c
<u>monasterium sancti Gregorii e regione rescipit recte ueniendo per Co[n]stani arcum
triumphalem coloseum & Traiani forum</u> quousque nunc domu[s] cardinalis Columnae
sub mecoenatiana turre perringim[us]. <u>Sicque Septizonium arcum Constantini
amphitheatrum et Titi Uespasiani thermas Traianique forum</u> diuersis postea temporibus
diruptae domus aurea solum arua siluasque stagna occupasse oportebit*

Italian translation by L. Fauno, *Roma ristaurata, et Italia illustrata di Biondo da
Forli*, 1543, fol. 53 *verso*.

«p[er]cioche questa casa cominciaua da quella parte del Palatino, c'ha hora a
fronte il monasterio di san Gregorio, uenendo dritto per l'arco trionfale di
Costantino per lo Coliseo, e per lo foro di Traiano insino doue e hora la case del
Cardinale Colonna sotte la Torre di Mecenate: onde il Settizonio, l'arco di
Costantino, lo anfiteatro, e le therme di Vespesiano, e di Tito, et il foro di
Traiano furono in diuersi tempi poi fatti su'l terreno di questa casa, e su le selue,
e gli stagni, che u'erano, ma il primo che ponesse mano a fare in questa parte
mutatione, fu Tito, che […] fece seco[n]do, che dice Martiale, l'anfiteatro,
dou'era stati i stagni di Nerone».

Source 6

Milanese Anonymous writer, *Antiquarie prospettiche romane composte per Prospettivo Milanese dipintore"*, ca. 1500, strophes nos. 125-131 (Agosti-Isella 2004).

«Hor son spelonche ruinate grotte / di stucco di rilievo altri colore / di man di cinabuba apelle giotte / Dogni stagion son piene dipintori / piu lastate par chel verno infresche / secondo el nome date da lavori / Andian per terra con nostre ventresche / con pane con presutto poma e vino / per esser piu bizzarri alle grottesche / El nostro guidarel mastro pinzino / che ben ci fa adottare el viso elochio / parendo inver ciaschun spaza camino / Et facci traueder botte ranochi / ciuette e barbaianni e nottiline / rompendoci la schiena cho ginocchi».

Source 7

Milanese Anonymous writer, *Antiquarie prospettiche romane composte per Prospettivo Milanese dipintore"*, ca. 1500, strophes nos. 84-92 (Agosti-Isella 2004).

«Era il stipe[n]dio del caualier delle aque/ q[ue]l fe collui che la madre entro ap[er]se/ per vedere oue staua quando naque/ Ellera tondo edi cose diuerse/ sicomo culiseo circuito/ et allimpeto de eul cio sofferse/ Era su tre colonne per salito/ colle corniecie lor datthon dorato/ e colla infodra dimarmo granito/ Di porfida era il prima colonnato/ formollo marte e per magior forteza/ con so potential lhaue circondato/ So basse capitelli per belleza/ degate e di diaspri del piu fino/ lhuman vedere ombraua p[er] chiareza / De ioue era el secondo serpentino/ smigraldi e capitelli in grosse piastre/ le basa de granata e de rubino/ El terzo era diaphene et alabastre/ producto della luna e calgalero/ come facto lhauessi geroastre/ Carboncolo e diama[n]te impezo intero/ era diloro il base el soprafitio/ chancor veder si po che fussiel vero/ De piombo era coperto esto hedifitio/ duna sil piastra q[ue]sto era el volume / di bronzun poliphemo alfronte spitio / che cavallo era averdelo in sul fiume / e sotto allui passava ogni alta gabia / facendo con so lampa chiaro lume / Non vera harena non terra non sabia / di solo rame legato era el fondo / e pietre sorian degypto arabia / più de do miglia lera lui circundo / nel mezo era una fonte dequa premia / nolla farebbeadesso tucto el mondo».

translation in modern Italian:
«era la dimora (?) del cavaliere delle acque, / lo fece colui che aprì la madre / per vedere dove stava quando nacque / era circolare e [decorato] di materiali diversi / come il Colosseo era circondato (di colonne) / e all'impeto di lui [= a causa dell'arroganza di lui?] venne distrutto / era formato da <u>tre portici</u>

sovrapposti / con cornici dai <u>colori (= toni) dorati</u> / e con l'interno (?) di granito / il primo colonnato era di porfido / e lo eresse Marte affinché fosse il più robusto (dei colonnati) /con la sua potenza aveva aveva accerchiato il luogo di colonne / i capitelli e le basi sono abbelliti / di agata e diaspri (quarzo) dei più raffinati / per la loro lucentezza accecano gli sguardi / Il secondo colonnato fu (eretto) da Giove / smeraldi e capitelli di grosso formato (?) / le basi (sono) di granito e rubino /Il terzo (porticato) era lucente per l'alabastro / prodotto dalla luna e dal calore (?) / come se l'avesse fatto Zoroastro (?) /rubini (carbuncolo) e diamanti in pezzi interi /erano la base del soffitto / che ancora si può vedere quanto è vero / <u>il soffitto di questo edificio era coperto di piombo</u> / e da una sola lamina / <u>davanti (al palazzo) un Polifemo [colossus Neronis?] di bronzo</u> / che stava con le gambe a cavallo di un <u>fiume [stagnum Neronis]</u> / e sotto di lui passavano alte imbarcazioni / e con la luce del sole (il palazzo) s'illuminava / era circondato da (portici lunghi) più di <u>due mila (piedi)</u> / al centro si trovava una <u>fonte con acqua pura</u> / come nessuno in tutto il mondo saprebbe oggi fare».

Source 8

A. Fulvio, *Antiquitates Urbis per Andream Fulvium antiquarium*, III, c. 36 *verso*, 1526 (Settis 1999, p. 160).

in prima parte Exquiliarum iuxta colosseum et busta gallica auspicabantur thermae Titi Imp. quae occupabant totum fere montis huius ambitum, ubi nunc <u>est templum S. Petri a vinculis. Quarum hodie tantum ruinae extant, ubi antea fuerat Domus Aurea Neronis</u>. Martialis: "hic ubi miramur velocia munera thermas / Abstulerat miseris tecta superbus ager"[scil. Mart. Lib. Spect. I, 2, v. 7]. Nam eas Titus mira celeritate absolvit, ut scribit Tranquillus cum inquit: "amphiteatro dedicato thermisque iuxta celeriter extructis, munus dedit apparatissimum largissimumque" [*scil.* Suet. Tito, 7].

Source 9

R. Sanzio, *Lettera di Raffaello d'Urbino a papa Leone X*, 1519 (Di Teodoro 2020, p. 60).

«E, benché molte volte molti edifici dalli medesimi antichi fossero ristaurati, come si legge che <u>nel luoco dov'era la Casa Aurea di Nerone</u>, dipoi furono edificate le Therme di Tito e la sua casa e l'Amphitheatro: niente di meno erano facti con la medesima maniera e ragione che gli altri edificii anchor più antichi che 'l tempo di Nerone e coetanei della Casa Aurea».

Source 10

Letter of Ulisse Aldovrandi (1522-1605) to Cardinal Paleotti (1522-1597), dated to 1550-1555 (Acciarino 2018, p. 85):

«Nel monte Esquilino dove è S. Pietro in Vincola, sotto le vigne sono molte grotte grandissime et alte dove si vedono infinite belle pitture fatte al vivo et anco delle grotesche, sì come già trenta anni sono ho veduto con gli occhi proprij, havendo havuto lume con noi et spago per non perdersi in quelle; et che altro erano queste grotte se non le reliquie della Casa d'Oro di Nerone che, come testifica Svetonio, era di tal grandezza che occupava quanto è il colle Palatino et il Cellio, estendendosi nelle Esquilie, giongeva insino a gli Horti de Mecenate, di modo che era a guisa d'una gran città?».

Source 11

G. Vasari (1511-1574), *Le vite de' più eccellenti pittori, scultori e architettori* (Vita di Giovanni da Udine Pittore), vol. 5, Edizione Giuntina, 1568, pp. 448-449.

«Non molto dopo, cavandosi da San Piero in Vincola fra le ruine et anticaglie del palazzo di Tito per trovar figure, furono ritrovate alcune stanze sotterra, ricoperte tutte e piene di grotteschine, di figure piccole e di storie, con alcuni ornamenti di stucchi bassi. Per che andando Giovanni con Raffaello, che fu menato a vederle, restarono l'uno e l'altro stupefatti della freschezza, bellezza e bontà di quell'opere, parendo loro gran cosa ch'elle si fussero sì lungo tempo conservate: ma non era gran fatto, non essendo state tócche né vedute dall'aria, la quale col tempo suole consumare, mediante la varietà delle stagioni, ogni cosa. Queste grottesche adunque (che grottesche furono dette dell'essere state entro alle grotte ritrovate), fatte con tanto disegno, con sì varii e bizarri capricci, e con quegli ornamenti di stucchi sottili, tramezzati da varii campi di colori, con quelle storiettine così belle e leggiadre, entrarono di maniera nel cuore e nella mente a Giovanni, che datosi a questo studio, non si contentò d'una sola volta o due disegnarle e ritrarle; e riuscendogli il farle con facilità e con grazia, non gli mancava se non avere il modo di fare quelli stucchi sopra i quali le grottesche erano lavorate […] Nella qual cosa egli non solo paragonò gl'antichi, ma, per quanto si può giudicare dalle cose che si son vedute, gli superò; perciò che quest'opere di Giovanni per bellezza di disegno, invenzione di figure e colorito, o lavorate di stucco o dipinte, sono senza comparazione migliori che quell'antiche, le quali si veggiono nel Colosseo e dipinte alle Terme di Diocleziano et in altri luoghi».

Source 12

B. Cellini (1500-1571), *La Vita di Benvenuto di Maestro Giovanni Cellini fiorentino, scritta, per lui medesimo*, 1728 (written between 1558 and 1567), vol. I, par. XXXI.

«Queste grottesche hanno acquistato questo nome dai moderni, per essersi trovate in certe caverne anticamente erano camere, stufe, studii, sale e altre cotai cose. Questi studiosi <u>trovandole in questi luoghi cavernosi, per essere alzato dagli antichi in qua il terreno e restate quelle in basso</u>, e perché il vocabolo chiama quei luoghi bassi in Roma, grotte; da questo si acquistano il nome di grottesche».

Source 13

Document dated to 1572-1578: transcription from Lanciani 1989-2002, II, pp. 255-256.

«Circa i tempi di Gregorio XIII avvennero altri scavi e altre scoperte, la memoria delle quali si trova nei codici di Cherubino e Giovanni Alberti in Borgo S. Sepolcro. (I, 1) "capitello (dorico fantastico) trovato nella vigna di Sa.to pietro invincola in le cave ruinato daivilani bellissimo affatto". Il medesimo è nuovamente disegnato II, 3 con la nota "trovato nelle ruine dil <u>palazo di Nerone</u> sotto terra asai quasto da vilani che apena lo rimisi insieme lavorato con gran diligentia…come si fu trovatto nelle vigne di santo pietro in vincola… la base qui disegnata era in ditto luogo cofronta asai seben a me non par sia di questo capitello" (I, 1'). Altro capitello dorico con rosette nel fregio "<u>nelle vigne di Sa.to piero in vincola</u>" (I, 38). Disegno di una colonna scanalata con la base rispettiva "i menbri sono spezati. era tutta intaliata di marmo portasanta. le colone sono dafricano belissime spezate cavato in lavigna di Sa.to pietro in vincula" e finalmente I, 40', 41: "nella vigna di sa.to invincula si feci una cava nella quale sotto asai circa palmi 42 si trovo stanze bilisime lavorate di stucho lavolti con unpoco di <u>pitture dorato</u> alquanto ein torno difora dimolte colonne di marmo mischio co' capitelli asai et altre cose ruinate. Questo capitello e basa (ionico bellissimo) lo misurai in ditto loco con diligentia. Sono di tutta grandezza (cioè al vero)…mise qui insieme asuoi luoghi come stavano inopera. ditta cava fu nella vigna di mezzo che fu cava i più luoghi che anco otrovato altre faccende e queste sono dille <u>ruine di nerone</u> per quanto sie trovato pitafi di grandissime lettere. trovate <u>sotto choliseo i una cava</u> <u>grandissimo pitafi</u> in una vigna voliano dire fuisse sopra intrata dilsuo apartamento con molte altre facende"».

Source 14

F. Vacca, *Memorie di varie antichità trovate in diversi luoghi della città di Roma*, 1594, printed for the first time in 1741 (per G. Zenobi, stampatore, a spese di G. Andreoli): passsage from Nibby 1820, IV, pp. 8-9; 13; 144.

«10. E opinione di molti, che li Giganti di Monte Cavallo anticamente stessero innanzi la porta di Casa Aurea, e poi fossero messi da Costantino sopra quelli posamenti, di dove li levo Sisto V. Sopra il medesimo posamento vi erano due Constantini di marmo, quali Paolo III. trasporto in Campidoglio, ed oggi sono per ornamento della scala dell'Araceli dalla banda verso il Palazzo del Senatore nella scala fatta a cordoni e quando Sisto disfece detti posamenti, io osservai, che quelle pietre verso il muro erano lavorate, e vestigie di Nervone, perche mi accorsi alla modinatura esser le medesime, che si veggono oggi nel frontispizio, ed in altre pietre, che per li tempi addietro mi ricordo cavate in quel luogo».
[…]
22. Accanto il Coliseo verso Ss. Giovanni, e Paolo, vi e una vigna: mi ricordo vi fu trovata una gran platea di grossissimi quadri di travertini, e due capitelli Corintj; e quando Pio IV. le terme Diocleziane restauro, e dedicolle alla Madonna degli Angeli, mancandogli un capitello nella nave principale, che per antichita vi mancava, vi mise uno di quelli; e vi fu trovata una Barca di marmo da 40 palmi longa, ed una fontana molto adorna di marmi, e credetemi, che aveva avuto piu fuoco, che acqua; ed ancora molti condotti di piombo. Dicevano essere il fine di casa aurea: a dipoi Vespasiano vi fabbrico il Coliseo.
[…]
166. Mi ricordo più volte aver visto cavare nelle Terme di Tito, dove ora è il monastero di S. Pietro in Vincoli, molte figure di marmo ed infiniti ornamenti di quadro. Chi volesse narrarli tutti, entrerebbe in un gran pelago di discorso: ma si è fatta al presente una cava molto profonda, la quale dimostra che innanzi alle Terme di Tito vi fosse un altro edificio molto magnifico; e adesso hanno cavato bellissimi cornicioni, i quali sono stati condotti alla chiesa del Gesù per adornare una cappella».

Source 15

F.P. Martire Felini, *Trattato nuovo delle cose meravigliose dell'alma città di Roma,* in Roma per Bartolomeo Zanetti, 1610, p. 354.

«e molte altre vi erano [*scil. famous houses and palaces of the Romans*] che per brevità si tralasciano solo facendo memoria della casa delli Flavij, la qual famiglia fu così detta dal color biondo de' capegli ch'havevano quegli di tal casata, la quale hebe successivamente tre imperatori, cioè Vespasiano, Tito suo

figlio, et Domitiano fratello di Tito, li quali hebbero la loro casa detta Flavia molto superbamente edificata e splendidamente ornata nel monte Esquilino».

Source 16

G. Lauro, *Antiquae urbis splendor*, tav. 101, engraving, 215 x 300 mm, Biblioteca Hertziana (DG 532-2370 raro).

DOMVS AVREA NERONIS AB AEDE S. IO. ET PAVLI COLOSSEV[M] VERSVS AD HORTO MAECENATIS. Prodigiosus ut in omni genere vitior[um] fuit Nero ita et tamqua[m] effusiss[im]us sugillatur ob ea[m] domu[m] precipue qua Romae edificavit que referente Marliano totum id spatium ocupavit quod incipit ab aede nunc SS Io. et Pauli recta eundo ad colosseum et carinas quosque ad aggerem Tarquinii perveniamus, et Maecenatis attingamus hortos de qua meminere Tacitus et Suetonius hanc ut extrueret innumerabilis civi una domos demolitus est quod e contra Augusto in suo foro fecerat unde morda illud epigramma ortum habuit Roma domus fiet Veios migrate Quirites, sino et Veios occupat ista domum nec mirum cum Plinio ita quoque testetur(?) et quota pars ea apparatus fuit aureae domus ambientis urbem Auream appellavit cum antea transitoria diceretur ut scribit Suetonius postquam illam incendio semel absumptam restituit. At vero primum ei nomen quadrare(?) videbatur cum domus hec aurea ita transierit ut nec vestigia iam eo tempore successores eius remanere voluerint. Intra domum test. Plin. aedem Fortunae inclusit, quae ex lapide phengite translucens forib. clausis claritatem diei intus haberet. Suetonius mira de domo ista prosequitur his verbis vestibulum eius fuit in quo Colossus CXX pedum staret ipsius effigies tanta laxitas ut triplices porticus milliarias haberet. Item stagnum maris instar circumseptum edificijs ad urbium speciem, rura insuper arvis atque vinetis et pascuis silvasque varia cum multitudine ovis generis pecudum ac feras. In ceteris partibus cuncta auro lita disticta gemmis uniorumque conchis erant cenationes laqueatae tabulis eburneis versatilibus ut flores fistulis et unguenta de super spargentur.

Source 17

F. Nardini, *Roma Antica*, in Roma: Per il Falco, a spese di Biagio Diuerfiano, e Felice Cesaretti, pp. 115-116 (= Nardini 1666).

«Piace però ad altri , che le Therme di Tito fossero assai più nel basso contra quel che si legge di S. Pietro in Vincula; ad altri, che Traiano rifarcisse le di Tito, non facesse Terme di nuovo, contra Vittore, e Rufo, che distanti registrano queste da quelle. Io per me credo, che Traiano ampliandole con l'aggiunta din nuova fabrica desse loro maggior magnificenza, e comodità, e perciò la parte da lui fabbricata acquistasse il nome di Terme Traiane, non essendo mai credibile che altre Terme separate, e sì vicine Traiano fabbricasse […] S'era nella Casa di Tito presso le Sette Sale, dunque, e S. Pietro in Vincula, dove quella statua [sicl.

the Laocoon] fu trovata (la cui trasportacione come difficile non può sospettarsi) era la Casa, e non le Terme di quel Cesare: ma facile è lo scioglimento. Poterono le Terme di Tito giungere a S. Pietro in Vincula; e potè Traiano distenderle a S. Martino de' monti, e lasciare a sinistra, dov'è S. Lucia in Selce, e le Sette Sale, intatto un'ampio Palagio, non che la casa di Tito […] Tornandocene, a S. Pietro in Vincila; quivi prima delle Terme di Tito pervenne la Casa aurea di Neroniana, o per meglio dire vi pervenne non la Casa, ma il giardino, così spiega Marziale nel già citato secondo Epigramma, Hic ubi miramur velocia munera Thermas / Abstulerat miseris tecta superbus ager. Dice ager non domus, cioè quel che Svetonio spiega rura insuper arvis atque vinetis et pascuis silvisque varia, cum multitudine omnis generis pecudum ac ferarum e dalla vista dei siti appar meglio la verità. Tra il Palatino e l'Esquilie tutto il basso havea Nerone occupato con Portici, per poter da un monte all'altro con Palagio continuato passar in piano: ma il piano del Palatino di quello di S. Pietro in Vincula è alquanto più basso: sotto dunque a S. Pietro in Vincula il palagio [scil. Domus Aurea] terminava; e quel poco di spiaggia fino agli Horti di Mecenate, i quali si congiunse, era distinto in verzure».

Source 18

G.P. Bellori, *Nota delli musei, librerie, galerie et ornamenti di statue e pitture ne' palazzi, nelle case e ne' giardini di Roma*, in Roma appresso Biagio Deversin e Felice Cesaretti, nella stamperia del Falco, 1664, p. 63-64.

«Non lascierò d'annotare come ne' libri della Bibliotheca di Monsig. Patriarca Massimi, la quale più volte, per cagione delle sue rarità, mi pregio di nominare, trovansi li Riferimento ad altre opere, Disegni di pitture antiche nella Biblioteca Camillo Massimi disegni di pitture eccellentissimamente imitati con li colori da quelli Riferimento ad altre opere, Disegni di pitture antiche nella Biblioteca dell'Escurial si conservano nella regia e famosa libreria dell'Escuriale in Ispagna, in uno si legge scritto in Domo Aurea Neronis; ma perché la Casa Aurea arse e diede luogo ad altri edifici dall'Esquilie al Palatino, dove si stendeva, pare più verosimile che gli originali di esse pitture fossero nella casa di Tito alzata su la Neroniana di cui s'è parlato, et la quale nel cavarsi le rovine gli anni passati si è riconosciuta ristaurata et habitata dopo da Petronio Massimo al tempo di Valentiniano, da una inscrittione del detto Petronio. Ma di queste celebri pitture lascierò per hora l'immagini a gli occhi de gli eruditi, non all'imperfettione della mia penna: riferirò solo per accennarne qualche cosa che in un foglio intiero vedesi la testudine di una camera, divisata in ripartimenti di colori diversi, nel cui mezzo in una sfera campeggiata di vaghissimo azzurro celeste, rappresentanti le nozze di Giove che abbraccia Giunone sopra una nube, con Amore che gli scocca incontro un dardo: et di rimpetto su la nube scorgesi Pallade et Mercurio co' piedi alati, il quale movesi verso Giove, col

vaso dell'ambrosia che porta in mano. Ne'quattro lati vengono figurate quattro Ninfe, due marine sopra Pistrice e Delfino, et due terrene, Europa et Helle; sopra l'ariete e' l toro, se forse non alludono alli celesti segni. Così ne' ripartimenti sono disposte compositioni di figurine picciole, sacrifici, scherzi di Satiri et di Ninfe, Pastori con gli armenti, carri tirati da cavalli et da Leoni, Baccanali, Sileni, giuochi, Amori che tirano al segno, et simili scherzi di vari costumi».

Source 19

G.P. Bellori, *Nota delli musei, librerie, galerie et ornamenti di statue e pitture ne' palazzi, nelle case e ne' giardini di Roma*, in Roma appresso Biagio Deversin e Felice Cesaretti, nella stamperia del Falco, 1664 p. 58.

«Nelle stesse Therme, alle quali era congiunta la casa di Tito, et <u>dove rimangono immensi vestigi di concamerationi a guisa di galerie</u>, in una, dove fu trovato il Laoconte nominato da Plinio, sono dipinti scompartimenti di colonnati con maschere ne gl'intercolunnii, et nell'altra parte di queste Therme sotterranee restituite da Traiano a San Martino de' Monti, dedicate ad uso sacro, <u>si veggono tuttavia li vestigi di figurette et di animali con altri consumati</u>».

Source 20

P.S. Bartoli - G.P. Bellori, *Le Pitture antiche del sepolcro de Nasonii*, 1680 (= Bartoli-Bellori 1680), p. 5.

«Ma ancorché noi non habbiamo vestigi dell'antica Pittura, che possino uguagliarsi a quelli della Scoltura; non è però che tra quelli sepolti fra l'ombre, non ne sia a noi scintillato qualche lume; essendo certo che Rafaelle da Urbino Ristauratore e Principe della moderna Pittura, alcune reliquie, quasi dalla tomba, riportò fuori dalle rovine, con le quali, a' nostri tempi, egli illustrò l'arte all'eleganza e stile heroico degli Antichi Greci, al quale non era pervenuta avanti. Egli il primo rivolse gli occhi alli vestigi, che duravano ancora ad altre opere, <u>Pitture nelle Terme di Tito, e di Traiano</u> in Roma, et nella celebre villa di Adriano a Tivoli, et nelle Grotte di Napoli, et di Pozzuolo, come è fama, che in Grecia istessa inviasse Disegnatori a raccorre gli avanzi di quelle opere, che rendono i Greci immortali. Da questi esempi si approfittarono ancora Giulio Romano, Polidoro e Giovanni da Udine, il quale trasportò nelle loggie Vaticane i più rari ornamenti delle Tiburtine Ville et così gli altri discepoli seguitando l'alto concetto del loro Maestro Rafaelle, che nelle Camere Vaticane ci lasciò eterni esempi de' più lodati studi de' gli Antichi, et dell'heroica Pittura, o sia per laude del colore, o del disegno, rinnovando le maraviglie di Zeusi, di Parrhasio et di Apelle».

Source 21

P.S. Bartoli - G.P. Bellori, *Le Pitture Antiche Del Sepolcro De Nasonii Nella Via Flaminia*, Roma 1680, p. 6.

«Delle Pitture nel secolo migliore de' Romani, resta ancora un'ombra nelle rovine della Casa di Tito et nell'istessa Camera, dove fù trovato il Laocoonte, la quale tanto piacque ad Annibale Carracci che la tradusse in disegno di sua propria mano, conservato ne' nostri libri e data alla luce dell'intaglio dal Signor Pietro Santi Bartoli. Delle Pitture di questa Casa, et delle Therme di Tito rimangono bellissimi disegni coloriti d'acque nella famosa Bibliotheca dell'Escuriale, de' quali il Cardinale Camillo Massimi, tornando dalla sua Nunziatura di Spagna, portò le copie à Roma, conservate nel suo gran libro dell'Antiche Pitture. In un foglio si rappresenta la testudine di una Camera divisata in ripartìmenti di vari colori, nel cui mezzo in una sfera celeste sono dipinte le Nozze di Giove, il quale sopra una nubbe, abbraccia Giunone con Amore che scocca verso di lui uno strale. Evvi incontro Pallade, e Mercurio col vaso dell'ambrosia; et ne' quattro lati quattro Ninfe: l'una sopra un Pistrice, l'altra sopra un Delfino; l'altre due sembrano Europa, et Helle portate dall'Ariete, e dal Toro, con altre figure minute et ornamenti. Nel disegno originale è scritto: De Domo aurea Neronis; forse perche credessero che la Casa di Tito fosse edificata sù le ruine di quella di Nerone, et chi vi rimanessero ancora, le pitture di quell'Amulio [scil. Famulus] celebrato da Plinio».

Source 22

G.P. Bellori, *L'Historia Augusta da Giulio Cesare a Costantino il Magno, illustrata con le verità dell'antiche medaglie da Francesco Angeloni*, 1685 p. 74 (= Bellori 1685), cf. Bellori 1685, pp. 50-51

«Nell'istesso rovescio dell'Anfiteatro si scorge la Meta Sudante; della quale appariscono pur hoggi rilevate vestigia; si tiene, che sostenesse una statua di Giove. Hebbe cotal nome in riguardo d'un capo d'acqua, che per comodità del Popolo, dalla sommità di essa discendeva al basso. All'incontro della Meta, sta nella medesima medaglia, un edificio fabricato di due ordini di Colonne, l'uno sopraposto all'altro, senza segnale di muraglia, che vi si interponga. E come la machina dell'Anfiteatro fu fondata sopra una parte della Casa Aurea di Nerone; così stimo, che tale edificio di Colonne fosse membro di quella, e restasse ivi per alcun tempo in piedi».

Source 23

G.P. Bellori 1685, *L'Historia Augusta da Giulio Cesare a Costantino il Magno, illustrata con le verità dell'antiche medaglie da Francesco Angeloni*, 1685 (= Bellori 1685), p. 51.

«E se qualunque scrittore concorda, che nell'entrare la Porta della Casa Aurea, stava il Colosso di bronzo di Nerone di cento venti piedi di altezza, e nella detta medaglia simile statua si scorge, non so come questa possa dirsi, che anche nel Macello stesse riposta: oltre che nella medaglia lasciataci da Tito per memoria della consecratione fatta da lui del Coliseo, e che a suo luogo si può vedere, se crediamo a coloro, che affermano cotal fabrica fosse fondata su una parte della Casa di Nerone, vi si scorgono dall'un lato due Colonne, che altre due sopraposte ne sostengono, co' cornicioni, e membri simiglianti a quelli, che stanno entro la medaglia [scil. the coin mentioned above, Bartoli 1685, p. 50], della quale si discorre; e queste poterono essere per avventura, dall'un de' lati in piedi, quando vi fu fabricato il Coliseo, apparendovi di rincontro la Meta Sudante, le cui rovine tuttavia si comprendono accanto il Coliseo medesimo; et in quel luogo, dove il Monte Celio ha sue radici, la Casa Aurea haveva il suo principio».

Source 24

R. Venuti, *Accurata e succinta descrizione topografica delle antichità di Roma*, 2 voll., Presso Gio: Battista Bernabò, e Giuseppe Lazzarini, 1763, I, pp. 114-116.

«Sembra nondimeno, che si possino obiettare gl'indici di Ruffo, e di Vittore, i quali descrivono le Terme di Tito nella Regione III e gli Orti di Mecenate nella Regione V […] Si può pertanto arguire, che il Tepidario delle Terme, e la di lui casa non fossero altrimenti opera dello stesso Tito, ma di Mecenate […] i quali fossero poi ampliati da Tito in quella forma di cui ne appariscono in oggi le vestigia.

La conserva, o sia piscina, o Tepidario, come la chiama il Signor Piranesi, delle Terme di Tito, si vede in una vigna de' Padri di (p. 115) S. Pietro in Vincoli. E' composta questa conserva di due piani, il primo de' quali è del tutto interrato dal moderno inalzamento del ripiano di Roma. L'altro superiore, che rimane in gran parte scoperto, è diviso da muri, i quali formano nove anditi ampli, due però riempiti dalle rovine, onde ne restano scoperti sette, detti volgarmente le Sette Sale […]

Torniamo adesso ad esaminare gli avanzi delle Terme, e del Palazzo di Tito. Nelle rovine di queste Terme si vedono i canali, che dal di sopra portavano le acque ne' bagni; è questa rovina d'incontro all'Anfiteatro. Siegue da questa parte la strada, che nel declive passando sopra le rovine delle Terme, va a finire

siusto ove principia l'Anfiteatro. Ivi a sinistra alle radici dell'Esquilino si vedono le rovine (p. 116) dell'Imperial Palazzo; maravigliandomi, che nè di esso, nè delle Terme nessun Architetto, che sia a mia notizia abbia avuto il pensiero di farne pianta, eccentuando il Sig. Piranesi, il quale modernamente l'ha data al pubblico nella sua Ichonografia di Roma. Si vede pertanto una facciata d'alti, lunghi, e larghi portici, le di cui fiancate mostrano le rovine di fabbrica circolare con piazza d'avanti, e queste riguardano la Via Pubblica, e parte del detto Anfiteatro [...] Bisogna entrare in questo luogo con lume per vedere le pitture de' grotteschi, degli ornamenti, e delle figure, tra le quali sono quelle di Coroliano, e della Madre, riportate dal Bartoli, e dal Bellori nel libro delle pitture degli antichi, volendosi, che Annibale Carracci fosse il primo a disegnarla. Adesso per istranezza de' Padroni non vi si permette più l'ingresso. Le altre pitture disegnate con i suoi colori da Francesco Bartoli si conservano nella Libreria Albani.

Continue sono le scoperte di cose antiche, che si fanno tra queste rovine. Flaminio Vacca racconta, che a suo tempo, dove è il Monastero di S. Pietro in Vincoli, si era trovato una gran quantità d'ornamenti di quadri, e molte figure di marmo; volendo che innanzi alle Terme di Tito fosse un'altro edificio molto magnifico, che sarà appartenuto agli Orti di Mecenate, come già dissi di sopra, avendone cavato bellisismi cornicioni, che sono serviti per una Cappella alla Chiesa del Cesù. Ma più singolare scoperta fatta a tempo di Leone X fu tra queste rovine, e S. Lucia in Selce nella vigna di Felice de Fredi, come dal suo Epitafio nella Chiesa d'Araceli si ricava, il bellissimo Laocoonte, che el Palazzo Vaticano conservasi: quindi riferendosi da Plinio essere questa statua nel Plazzo di Tito, è credibile, che possa essere quest'istessa. Nella vigna ove sono le conserve, dette Sette Sale, nel 1547, facendosi cavare dal Cardinal Trivulzio, furono trovate da XXV statue tutte intere assai belle con colonne di gran pregio, che saranno servite per l'ornato esteriore di quella gran fabbrica, dove ancora, come già dissi, si vedono le nicchie per le statue. E' da notarsi, che nel Pontificato di Innocenzo X nell'orto medesimo fu trovata una stanza con pavimento in lapislazzuli, e 54 statue, con una Roma sedente; parimente quantità non piccola di statue furono trovate nell'orto Gualtieri, già Panfilio, cose tutte, che indicano la magnificenza di queste Terme».

Source 25

G. P. Piranesi, *Le Antichità Romane: Divisa In Quattro Tomi: Gli avanzi degli antichi Edifici di Roma*, Roma, 1784, vol. I, pp. 28-29.

«234. Avanzi della piscina, o sia Tepidario dello Terme di Tito nella vigna de' PP. di S.Pietro in Vincoli. Egli è comporto di due piani, il primo de' quali è del tutto interrato, dal moderno rialzamento del piano di Roma. L'altro superiore, che rimane in gran parte scoperto, e si dimostra nella tavola XXVII di questo tomo alla figurai, è diviso da' muri , i quali formano nove anditi ampli, che

però riempiuti dalle rovine, onde ne restan scoperti sette, detti volgarmente le Sette Sale. Si vedono ne' muri di uno di questi anditi alcuni spechi, per dove l'aqua del Condotto inoggi rovinato (tendeva nel Tepidario, nella guisa che abbiam detto del Tepidario delle Terme di Caracalla. La costruzion del presente edilizio era per quel che si vede di molta considenza. I muri sono di tevolozza riempiuti di opera incerta, con fodera di grosso lastrico. E' osservabile la disposizione delle porte essendo elleno fatte a bella porta alternativamente in luoghi, ove non isminuissero co' loro vacui, e soppravvacui la robustezza de' muri i quali erano sempre investiti dalle acque. Gli anditi son ricoperti per attestato del lusso antico, di lastrico lavorato a musaico. Tempo fa nello scavare (?) della detta vigna entrarono i cavatori nel primo piano, e trovarono ne' di lui muri alcuni condotti e sistole, le quali inducevano l'acqua tepida ne' bagni.

235. Avanzi della Cala di Tito nella vigna Gualtieri vicina alla predetta de' Padri di S. Pietro in Vincoli. Questa Casa fu fabbricata prima delle predette Terme, perché una di lei parte s'interna col loro primo piano, senza uguagliargli anditi, e i muri delle medesime, come si vedrà nella sotto enunziata figura.

236. Avanzi delle Terme di Tito nelle vigne de' Canonici Regolari di S.Pietro in Vincoli, Laureti, e Galtieri. Quelle Terme si danno in pianta nella fig. II della detta tav. XXVII. Le linee de' punti notate silila Topograsia generale indicano gli anditi del primo piano, i quali conducevano ai bagni; lochè si vede con maggior distinzione nella elevazione del loro avanzo alla figura I della tavola XXVIII di quello tomo. Le presenti Terme, col Tepidario, e colla Casa di Tito surriferiti, occupavano certamente una parte degli orti di Mecenate

cotanto celebri, ma sin qui incogniti presso i moderni scrittori in riguardo alla situazione. Per tralasciare tanti e tanti documenti degli scrittori antichi, co' quali si conclude che il luogo occupato da quelle Terme apparteneva agli Orti di Mecenate, baderà riferirne alcuni […] ed ecco verificato, rispetto alle Terme il passo di Acrone, che il Nardini ha avuto il coraggio di sospettare di falsità: antea Sepulcra erant in loco in quo sunt horti Mecenatis; ubi sunt modo Tbermae […] Si può pertanto arguire che il Tepidario delle Terme di Tito, e la di lui Casa sopra indicati, non fossero altrimenti opera dello stesso Tito, ma di Mecenate, e che pervenissero a Tito, come successore nell'Imperio ad Augusto, a cui pervennero i beni di Mecenate, giacché questi due avanzi non corrispondono nell'odierno, nettampoco nella struttura colle Terme anzidette, che anzi quelle si estendono da una parte sopra la detta Casa, come si è riferito al numero precedente, e come si è dimostrato nella loro pianta alla figura I della Tavola XXVIII di quello Tomo. Onde è supponibile, che siccome Mecenate al dire di Dione nel LV della Storia Romana […] fu il primo istitutore nella Città de' Bagni di acqua calda; avesse, per porre in uso questa sua nuova invenzione, fabbricati quivi i suoi bagni, i quali fossero poi ampliati da Tito in quella forma di cui appariscono dalle loro vestigia».

Source 26

L. Mirri, G. Carletti, *Le antiche camere delle terme di Tito e le loro pitture restituite al pubblico*, 1776, pp. X-XI (= Carletti 2014, p. 20).

«Il Signor Cavaliere Piranesi nelle sue Romane Antichità le ricorda fra gli altri egregiamente: e se mai per avventura fossevi chi alla pianta delle Terme di Tito incisa da lui non si acquietasse, avrà di che molto soddisfarsi nella sua scoperta degli Orti di Mecenate sulle cime dell'Esquilie, occupati in parte dalle nostre Terme. Cerchisi poi da chi vuole fra questi confini e l'oscura stanza in cui nacque Tito, e dove si erge il Settizonio ad essa vicino; e perché ora Terme di Traiano, ora di Adriano, queste Titiane si nominassero che noi non ci smarriremo in rintracciarlo.

Necessaria cosa bensì sarebbe il premettere qui l'opinion nostra, dettataci dalla esperienza dell'opera medesima, che queste camere non si appartengano punto alla Casa, o Palazzo, di Tito o di chicchessia, come pensò taluno; ma soltanto ad uso di bagni fossero impiegate, quando le molte ragioni che cel persuadono non venissero chiaramente esposte nella descrizione di queste stanze che unitamente alle piante inferiore e superiore delle medesime Terme esce gemella alla luce coll'opera tutta. Ma poichè con sì replicate diligenze intende il Mirri alla soddisfazione degli eruditi ed al pubblico disinganno, passino ora sotto silenzio gli argomenti che dalla costruzione della fabbrica, dall'interno ornato delle camere, e dal vicino acquedotto scopertosi recentemente nello scavo, si rilevano in difesa dell'accennata opinione».

Source 27

S. Piale 1832, *Delle Terme traiane dette dal volgo erroneamente di Tito, della Domus Aurea di Nerone e della Titi Domus*, Roma: dalla Tipografia di Crispino Puccinelli, pp. 7-8.

«Esclusa così a ragione la Casa di Mecenate da queste camere, non si deve esitare di stabilire in esse una parte della Domus Aurea di Nerone, ivi costruita dopo l'incendio. Ed infatti questa Domus, secondo Svetonio (Nero, 31), si estendeva dal Palatino sino all'Esquilie *"domum a Palatio Esquilias usque fecit"* anzi la Casa di Nerone al dire di Tacito (Ann. 15) formava una continuazione dal Palatino fino agli Orti di Mecenate *"domum eius, qua Palatium et Maecenatis hortos continuaverat"* d'onde si accerta che la località di queste camere dovette necessariamente esservi compresa.

Se si considera il lusso eccessivo e la ricchezza ed ornamenti delle nostre Camere si troverà tale che non se ne ravvisa l'eguale in altro antico edifizio "e che la ricchezza" come dice il De Romanis "non vi fu risparmiata in modo alcuno; anche li più piccoli luoghi irregolari e reconditi che sono nella parte mezzo sepolta, si vede che erano dipinti elegantemente". Quindi è che si

verifica l'espressione di Svetonio che dice della Casa Aurea *"in ceteris partibus cuncta auro lita, distincta gemmis, unionumque conchis erant"*. Se vi si ricerchi l'abbandono, che di essa si fece alla morte di Nerone, basterà esaminare le diligenti ricerche del non mai abbastanza lodato SIg. De Romanis. "L'abbandono" prosegue egli a dire p. 11 "e la decadenza di questa fabrica sovraposta. Prima che queste camere fossero private di luce per mezzo di quei nouvi fornici, si vede che erano di già state ridotte ad uso di abitazioni private, deturpando con tramezzi con soffitti e nuovi intonachi le loro primiere decorazioni". Queste deturpazioni private dunque che dovettero farsi per obligo nei 30 anni, che corsero fra la morte di Nerone e l'elezione di Trajano all'imperio e nel suo tempo provano l'abbandono, e l'abbandono conferma la fabrica della Domus Aurea».

CHAPTER 2
THE CATALOGUE OF THE GRAFIC DOCUMENTS

1. Introduction to the catalogue

The catalogue consists of twenty-two Renaissance drawings, two 16th century watercolors (CAT. 1 and 25), one 17th century watercolor (CAT. 2), and one 18th century watercolored engraving (CAT. 3). They are ordered according to the subject depicted and following the numeration of figural panels provided by Meyboom-Moormann 2013 (**fig. 29**).

The first documents are those that reproduce the entire vault of the Volta Dorata (Pls. 1-9), then those that depict one vault corner (Pls. 9-20) and, finally, those that depict only figural scenes (Pls. 21-44).

In the case of figural scenes, the first are those that were located in the "Internal Area" (namely, the figural scenes with alphabetical numeration: from A to L), then those that were located in the "External Frieze" (namely, the figural scenes with algebraical numeration: from 1 to 12). When many documents depict the same subject (e.g. same vault corner or figural scene), they are ordered according to the dating.

The catalogue entries are organized into three essential parts (general data, provenance, and analysis). When it has been necessary, the catalogue entry has other two sections: one overview where the different attributions provided by scholars were discussed ("attribution"); and one section devoted to the position of the drawing within the relative drawing-book ("drawing in context"). In the latter, we have assessed whether the drawing of the Volta Dorata has a relation with other drawings of antiquities within the same drawing-book. When the drawing has had many different attributions or the draftsman has not been identified, we have not provided further attributions, since this is not among the aims of the present research. Obviously, considering the different attributions and the relative issues, we have expressed a personal opinion.

Since on many occasions the drawings were simply mentioned by scholars and not studied in detail, at the end of the catalogue entry, two bibliographies can be seen: one is devoted to point out the publications that have studied the drawing; the other reports the publications that

simply mention the drawing. Finally, since many graphic documents depict the same archaeological details of the Volta Dorata (and from such documents new engravings were printed in the 18th and 19th centuries), at the end of each catalogue entry, we have listed in chronological order all graphic documents that depict the same archaeological detail of the Volta Dorata. When one catalogue entry would have had the same list of another entry, we have simply make a reference to the catalogue entry where the list has been already provided.

In studying each graphic document, the attention has been devoted to study the material and stylistic features of the drawing (dimensions, type of support, technique, and hatching used). Thanks to the study of the drawing within the collection where it is preserved or through the remote support of the curators, we have paid attention to study some precise material features that are not often analyzed by scholars. Precisely, when it has been possible, we have reported the distance between chain wires and laid wires and the watermarks. In fact, these features are often evidence for assessing the provenance of more drawings of antiquities from the same drawing-book, as in the case of CAT. 10 it has been possible to argue.

Within each catalogue entry, a part of the analysis has been devoted to the archaeological evidence that the drawing testifies. Nevertheless, as stated in the *Introduction*, these graphic documents have not been considered simple documentation for archaeological purposes. They depict specific parts of Roman paintings because their draftsmen had specific interests and sometimes such interests caused a modification or selection of what they were copying. Thus, in the analysis of the graphic document, firstly we have focused our attention on which archaeological details it testifies. Then, we have assessed how it is possible to explain the differences and similarities between the documents that depict the same archaeological subject. Afterward, the archaeological and artistic evidence that come from the catalogue entries has been collected and discussed in detail through *Chapter 3* and *Chapter 4*.

LIST OF THE GRAPHIC DOCUMENTS

CAT. 1 (Pl. 1)
Francisco de Holanda (1517–1585), *Volta Dorata,* 1538–ante 1571, watercolor on paper, 350 (height) x 300 (width) mm; El Escorial, Biblioteca Real de S. Lorenzo, *Os desenhos das antigualhas* (Cod. 28-I-20), foll. 47 bis *verso* - 48 *recto*.

CAT. 2 (Pl. 3)
Pietro Santi Bartoli (1635–1700), *Volta Dorata,* 1658-1674; watercolor on paper; 415 (height) x 420 (width) mm.; Glasgow, University Library, Codex Massimi (MS Gen 1496 [HX 110]), fol. LXXV.

CAT. 3 (Pl. 7)
Francesco Smuglewicz (1745–1820), Vincenzo Brenna (1745–1820), Volta Dorata (in "*Terme di Tito e le loro interne pitture*"), 1776-1777; watercolored engraving; 542 (height) x 600 (width) mm.; Paris, Louvre collection, inv. 18141 (Pinot de Villechenon 1998, tav. 43).

CAT. 4 (Pl. 9)
Attributed to Orazio Porta (1540-1616), *Volta Dorata*; 1570-1580; pen and ink; 235 x 330 mm; Venice, Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana, Ms. It. cl. IV, 149 (=5105), fol. 6 *verso*.

CAT. 5 (Pl. 10)
Antonio da Sangallo il Giovane (1483-1546), *Sketched geometrical system of the Volta Dorata, stucco moldings and measurements,* post 1519 - ante 1546; pen and ink; 471 x 333 mm; Florenz, Gallerie degli Uffizi, Gabinetto dei Disegni e delle Stampe (GDSU), inv. 1273 A *recto*.

CAT. 6 (Pl. 12)
Giovanni da Udine (1487–1561), *NE vault corner of the Volta Dorata (scenes H and I),* 1510-1517?; brown ink and pen; 170 x 190 mm; Florenz, Gallerie degli Uffizi, Gabinetto dei Disegni e delle Stampe (GDSU), inv. 1682 O.

CAT. 7 (Pl. 14)
Anonymous Tuscan artist of the second half of 16th century (from the circle of Accademia del Disegno), *Alternative version of the NE corner of the Volta Dorata (scenes I, G, H, 7),* 1577 - end of the 16th century; paper, pen and ink; 278 x 205 mm; Siena, Biblioteca Comunale degli Intronati (MS L.IV.10), fol. 11 *recto*.

CAT. 8 (Pl. 16)
Giovanni da Udine (1487–1564), *SW vault corner of the Volta Dorata with the scene B*; 1510-1517?; beige paper, pencil, pen and ink, 342 x 243 mm; Windsor, Royal Collection, RCIN 909568 *recto*.

CAT. 9 (Pl. 18)
Giovanni Antonio Dosio (1533–1609), *SW vault corner of the Volta Dorata with the scenes B, A, 12, C*; 1560-1565; 240 x 250 mm; pen, ink, traces of black pencil (lapis); Berlin, Kupferstichkabinett, Codex Berolinensis (inv. 79.D.1), fol. 31 *verso* (drawing no. 86).

CAT. 10 (Pl. 20)
Manner of Vasari Giorgio (1511-1574), *SW vault corner of the Volta Dorata*; 1575-1600; pen, paintbrush, diluted ink, traces of black pencil (lapis); 392 x 268 mm; Florenz, Gallerie degli Uffizi, Gabinetto dei Disegni e delle Stampe (GDSU), 53 O *recto*.

CAT. 11 (Pl. 21)
Giuliano da Sangallo workshop, *SW angular medallion from Volta Dorata (scene B)*, 1490-1506/7; red pen; 330 x 230 mm; El Escorial, Biblioteca Real de S. Lorenzo, Codex Escurialensis (Cod. 28-II-12), fol. 10 *recto*.

CAT. 12 (Pl. 22)
Raphael Follower ("Anonymus Foro Semproniensis"), *SW angular medallion of the Volta Dorata (scene B) and head of the kneeling woman in Raphael's Transfiguration*, 1524-1533; ink and pen; 334 x 216 mm; Fossombrone, Biblioteca Civica Passionei, Codex Fossombronis (inv. Disegni vol. 3 [= Cod. C.5.VI] and Disegni vol. 4, c. 38), fol. 85 *recto*.

CAT. 13 (Pl. 23)
Raphael Follower ("Anonymus Foro Semproniensis"), *Panels C (above) and I (below) of the Volta Dorata*; 1524-1533; ink and pen; 334 x 216 mm; Fossombrone, Biblioteca Civica Passionei, Codex Fossombronis (inv. Disegni vol. 3 [= Cod. C. 5.VI] and Disegni vol. 4, c. 38 and c. 39.), fol. 87 *recto*.

CAT. 14 (Pl. 25)
Lippi Filippino (c.1457–1504), *Angular medallion of the Volta Dorata (scene K or E)*; 1490-1495; charcoal on paper; 145 x 156 mm; Florenz, Gallerie degli Uffizi, Gabinetto dei Disegni e delle Stampe (GDSU), inv. 1168 O.

CAT. 15 (Pl. 26)
Amico Aspertini (c.1475–1552), *Scene G of Volta Dorata (NE corner)?*, c.1503-1504; pen and black ink; 225 x 170 mm; Württemberg, Schloss Wolfegg, Codex Wolfegg, fol. 19 *recto*.

CAT. 16 (Pl. 27)
Giuliano da Sangallo workshop, *NE angular medallion of the Volta Dorata (scene H)*; 1490-1506/7; red pen; 330 x 230 mm; El Escorial, Biblioteca Real de S. Lorenzo, Codex Escurialensis (Cod. 28-II-12), fol. 6 *recto*.

CAT. 17 (Pl. 28)
Anonymous 16th Florentine artist (Jacopo di Giovanni di Francesco called Jacone?), *NE angular medallion of the Volta Dorata (scene H)*; first half of 16th century; pen, ink, traces of black stone; 265 x 400 mm; Lille, Palais des Beaux-Arts, Inv. Pl. 102 (*verso*).

CAT. 18 (Pl. 29)
Amico Aspertini (c.1475–1552), *Scene 1 of the Volta Dorata (SW vault corner)*, c. 1503-1504; pen and black ink; 225 x 170 mm; Codex Wolfegg, Württemberg, Schloss Wolfegg, foll. 44 *verso*–45 *recto*.

CAT. 19 (Pl. 31)
Giuliano da Sangallo workshop, *Scene 2 of the Volta Dorata*; 1490-1506/7; red pen; 330 x 230 mm; El Escorial, Biblioteca Real de S. Lorenzo, Codex Escurialensis (Cod. 28-II-12), fol. 10 *verso*.

CAT. 20 (Pl. 33)
Raphael Follower ("Anonymus Foro Semproniensis"), *Scenes 8 (above) and 2 (below) of the Volta Dorata;* 1524-1533; ink and pen; 334 x 216 mm; Fossombrone, Biblioteca Civica Passionei, Codex Fossombronis (inv. Disegni vol. 3 [= Cod. C. 5.VI] and Disegni vol. 4, c. 38), fol. 86 *recto*.

CAT. 21 (Pl. 35)
Filippino Lippi (c.1457–1504), *Right part of scene 8 of the Volta Dorata (Hippolytus leaving for the hunt), an harpy and one decorative frieze from the Domus Aurea*; c. 1490–1493; lapis and silver tip; 252 x 204 mm; Florenz, Gallerie degli Uffizi, Gabinetto Disegni e Stampe (GDSU), inv. 1255 E *verso*.

CAT. 22 (Pl. 37)
Amico Aspertini (c.1475–1552), *Left part of scene 8 of the Volta Dorata (Hippolytus leaving for the hunt) and one motif of acanthus leaves*; c.1503-1504; pen and black ink; 225 x 170 mm; Württemberg, Schloss Wolfegg, Codex Wolfegg, fol. 22 *recto*.

81

CAT. 23 (Pl. 39)

Amico Aspertini (c.1475–1552), *Right part of scene 8 of the Volta Dorata (Hippolytus leaving for the hunt);* ca. 1503-1504; pen and brush and black ink with wash on a thin ground; 225 x 170 mm; Württemberg, Schloss Wolfegg, Codex Wolfegg, fol. 19 *verso*.

CAT. 24 (Pl. 41)

Anonymous XVIth Florentine artist (Jacopo di Giovanni di Francesco called Jacone?), *Right part of scene 8 of the Volta Dorata (Hippolytus leaving for the hunt)*; first half of 16th century; 265 x 400 mm; pen and brown ink, traces of black stone; Lille, Palais des Beaux-Arts, Inv. Pl. 101 (*recto*).

CAT. 25 (Pl. 42)

Francisco de Holanda (1517–1585), *The "Grande Fregio" of the West wall*; 1538 - ante 1571; watercolor on paper; 300 x 350 mm, El Escorial, Biblioteca Real de S. Lorenzo, *Os desenhos das antigualhas* (Cod. 28-I-20), foll. 13 *verso*–14 *recto*.

CAT. 26 (Pl. 44)

Giovanni Antonio Dosio (1533-1609), *The "Grande Fregio" of the West wall*; 1560-1565; 240 x 250 mm; paper, pen, ink, traces of black pencil (lapis); Berlin, Kupferstichkabinett, Codex Berolinensis (inv. 79.D.1), fol. 31 *recto* (drawing no. 85).

CAT. 1

Volta Dorata
Francisco de Holanda (1517 Lisbon – 1585 Lisbon)
Os desenhos das antigualhas
Escorial, Biblioteca Real de S. Lorenzo (Cod. 28-I-20)
1538 - ante 1571
390 (height) x 540 (width) mm[199], no watermark[200]
foll. 47 bis *verso* - 48 *recto*
watercolor on paper
inscriptions: «IN FORNICE DOMUS AUREA NERONIS APUD AMPHITEATRUM»; «PALMOS LIII POR BANDA»

Provenance
Francisco de Hollanda started to work on his drawing-book *Os desenhos das antigualhas* during his stay in Italy (1538-1540) and he continued to work on it also when he came back to Portugal (1540) until 1571 at the latest[201]. By 1580, King Philip II of Spain (I of Portugal) was likely the owner of the album. The *Os desenhos das antigualhas* was surely under his possession since 1598[202]. In 1762 the drawing-book 28-I-20 was recorded in the inventory of the Biblioteca Real de S. Lorenzo (Escorial), where it is still preserved to this day[203].

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[199] Tormo 1940 does not indicate the dimensions of the double folios but, thanks to the images in high definition in this catalogue (CAT. 1, CAT. 25), it can be seen that the five double folios are exactly realized with two folios glued to each other (390 x 270 mm + 390 x 270 mm).

[200] Tormo says that he did not find any watermark («sin verse filigrana ninguna»: Tormo 1940, p. 26).

[201] The *terminus ante quem* of his working on the album is the year 1571. In this year, the artist says that the album was in possess of Don Antonio, Prior of Crato cf. *Da Ciênçia do Desenho* (1571), cap. VII: Modroni 2003, p. 235.

[202] We have scant and uncertain information for the period 1571-1580: Deswarte-Rosa 2016, pp. 266-267, 272; the album appears in the inventory list of King Philippe II of Spain (1598): Sánchez Catón 1959, p. 177, no. 1315: «un libro de tropheos y antiguallas romanas» and in the margin of the inventory record «es para Sant Lorenzo».

[203] Bury 1981, p. 34.

Drawing in context

According to the classification provided by Nesselrath, Francisco de Hollanda's drawing-book can be considered a "book-souvenir"[204]. The drawing-book was not created by the artist for personal practical functions (e.g. like a drawing-book created for copying and studying antiquities), but it was made for a precise patron (probably Don Luis), who wanted a drawings-book which would have collected the main Italian and Roman monuments[205]. Therefore, the album appears as luxury edition: it consists of 54 drawings and only 5 designs are "double": namely, five drawings with double dimensions. The first half is glued to the sheets of the codex and they are folded. Thus, the reader has to lift the folded half of the designs in order to open the drawings in its entirety. One of these five designs is the watercolor of the Volta Dorata.

In his book-souvenir, Francisco copied not only the Roman Antiquities, but also modern engineering works, buildings and urban landscapes of some Italian cities[206]. Not by chance, the participation of Francisco in

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[204] Nesselrath 1986, pp. 93, 122-144; for the facsimile edition of the drawing-book and a preliminary study: Tormo 1940.

[205] In his treaty *Da pintura antiga* (*incipit* of the First Dialogue, II Book) Francisco says: «The only thing that was always present in my mind was how I might put my art at the service of our lord the King [i.e. John III] who had sent me there [*i.e.* Rome], and I was constantly pondering how I might steal the masterpieces and elegances of Italy and carry them, stolen, away to Portugal for the gratification of the King and the Infantes [i.e. the brothers of John III] and the most serene lord, the Infante Don Luís. I used to say: what fortresses or foreign cities have I not yet got in my book [i.e. *Os desenhos das antigualhas*?]?»; De Holanda 2013, p. 170; for Italian version: Modroni 2003, p. 103).

[206] E.g. Ferrara's city-walls (fol. 35 *verso*), Pesaro's city-walls (fol. 36 *verso*), the city-walls and port of Nizza (fol. 37 *recto*), the city-walls and port of Genoa (fol. 37 *verso*), the bay and the "Torre d'Orlando" of Gaeta (fol. 38 *recto*), Spoleto's bridge (fol. 39 *verso*), Civita Castellana's fortress (fol. 39 *recto*), the Venetian Arsenal (fol. 41 *recto*), Padoa's bridge (fol. 41 *verso*), the fortress of San Sebastiàn and Fuenterrabia in Spain (fol. 42 *recto*), the city of Milan and Sforza Castle (fol. 42 verso), the water well of San Patrizio in Orvieto (fol. 43 *bis recto*), the fortress of Salces in Spain and Orvieto's city-walls (fol. 43 *verso*), the fortress of S. Elmo in Naples (fol. 45 *recto*), the Castel Nuovo in Naples (fol. 53 *verso*); for a complete see *Chapter 4* (list of the subjects depicted in Francisco's drawing-book *Os desenhos das antigualhas*).

his diplomatic journey in Italy was also due to his role for studying the defense systems of some Italian buildings[207].

The drawings are not ordered according to subject and it is not possible to find any kind of order which might justify the sequence of the designs (e.g. the technique, the topography, the chronological order according to Francisco's journey in Italy). Thus, from a general overview of the codex, it seems that Fransisco did not want to deliberately give any order to his documentation, following a sort of *varietas* principle. For this reason, the two drawings which depict the paintings of the *Domus Aurea* are located quite far from each other: foll. 13 *verso* - 14 *recto* (CAT. 25) and foll. 47 bis *verso* - 48 *recto* (CAT. 1). Although in his Italian journey Francisco saw other Roman paintings (e.g. those of Baia and Pozzuoli), he decided to depict only the paintings of the *Domus Aurea*[208]. Therefore, when he chose the ancient models to copy, Francisco did not make a selection according to the differentiate typology of the subjects (i.e. paintings, reliefs, statues, buildings). He probably picked out those that were more exceptional, and in better conditions for showing their original appearance as the most reliable way as possible.

In *Os desenhos das antigualhas,* Francisco depicted antiquities especially in the first part of the "book-souvenir" (foll. 5 *verso* - 31 *recto*) and few others in the last sheets of the codex (45 *recto*, 46 *recto*, 48 *recto*, 48 *verso*, 54 *verso*). In the second half of the "book-souvenir" (31 *verso* - 54 *recto*), Francisco depicted city landscapes, facades of private residence, maps of cities, modern public monuments, fortresses, facades of buildings (a

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[207] Consider the passage already mentioned in *Da pintura antiga* (incipit of the First Dialogue of book II): «what fortresses or foreign cities have I not yet got in my book [i.e. *Os desenhos das antigualhas*?]?». The participation of Francisco in the Portuguese embassy in Rome is part of a common political practice typical of the Spanish and Portuguese diplomatic missions of that time: see, for example, the journey of Jan van Eyck to Portugal, Castile and Granada in 1428-1429 and to that of Pieter van Aelst Coecke in Turkey in 1533 (Parada López de Corselas 2016, p. 37).

[208] In his treaty *Da pintura antiga* (1548), Francisco says that he saw Roman paintings in Baia and Pozzuoli: «what stucco painting or grotesque is discovered among these grottoes and antiquities, not only in Rome but also in Pozzuoli and Baia, that the rarest of them is not be found sketched in my notebooks?».

detailed list of all the subjects depicted in the *Os desenhos das antigualhas* is provided in *Chapter 4*).

In order to understand better the watercolors of the Volta Dorata and "Grande Fregio Ovest", it is important to stress that often Francisco copied the ancient models as they were in perfect conditions, often omitting where they were in bad conditions of conservation. This trend is quite clear if we consider the aim of his "book-souvenir": namely, to show the magnificence of Rome and Italy to his patron. Therefore, in Francisco's drawings, everything that could allude to the abandonment and carelessness has been left out. The cases of the Pantheon (fol. 6 *recto*), Trajan's Column (fol. 6 *verso*), the Arch of Constantine (fol. 19 *recto*), the Septizodium (fol. 23 *recto*) are particularly significant in this sense. Therefore, it is not surprising that the design of the Volta Dorata is depicted in such detailed, as it was perfectly conserved in 16th century. However, although it is evident that Francisco invented some portions of the Volta Dorata, thanks to some details of his drawing, it has also been assumed that his watercolor preserves a bona fide representation of many details of the vault . Finally, as will be argued in CAT. 2 and *Chapter 4*, it is important to remember that Francisco probably copied other ceilings of the *Domus Aurea,* although his drawings are now lost. Fortunately, the lost drawings of Francisco were copied by P.S. Bartoli around the first half of the 17th century and are now in the Codex Massimi in Glasgow.

Analysis

Francisco's watercolor is the unique drawing of the 16th century that depicts the entire vault of the Volta Dorata with all figural scenes. Nevertheless, as it will be discussed in *Chapter 3*, the measurements of the vault that Francisco noted and the colors that he used are very similar to those of the Volta Dorata. Francisco wrote beside the two sides of the drawing the provenance of the subject depicted. On left side, he recognizes the archaeological provenance of the painting, namely a decorated vault of the Domus Aurea (*in fornice Domus Aureae Neronis apud Amphiteatrum*); on the right side, he indicates the length of each side of the vault (*palmos LIII por banda*).

Regarding the inscription on the left side, we likely owe the identification of the Domus Aurea to the acquaintances of Francisco

during his stay in Rome (1538-1540)[209]. The use of the word *fornice* (*fornix, fornicis*) refers to the vault proper and it can be translated: «in a vault of the Domus Aurea of Nero close to the Amphitheater»[210]. The reference to the Colosseum is not a simple indication concerning the topography, but also an automatic (and maybe unconscious) mention of the most noted literary source that was known in the 16th century on the topography of ancient Rome, namely *De Roma instaurata* of Flavio Biondo (1444-1446)[211]. Owing to the work of Flavio Biondo which incorporates various different Latin sources in a unique description of ancient Rome's topography, the Humanistic and Renaissance literary texts considered the Domus Aurea to be located next to the area of the Colosseum (*Chapter 1*). According to the writer, the Colosseum was erected by Vespasian where there was the *stagnum Neronis* (i.e. the lake of the Domus Aurea)[212].

The inscription on the right side is very important as well. As in the case of Windsor drawing RCIN 909568 *recto* (CAT. 8), Francisco noted the measurements of the vault's side: "53 Roman palms", namely 11,84 m (53 x 0,2234)[213]. This distance is quite similar to that noted in the Windsor drawing, i.e. 11,25 m. The reason why Francisco wrote the dimensions of the vault was due to a common habit among the Renaissance artists: they copied such details in order to be studied into the workshop, or because their drawings were made for other people, as in the case of Francisco's "book-souvenir". Also in other cases, Francisco was very precise in measuring the dimensions of the subjects copied, like in the case of the marble crater of Pisa's Camposanto, so-called "Vaso dei Talenti", dated around 110 AD[214]. Here, Francisco wrote «PALMOS. VI.» and, indeed, it corresponds to the 134 cm. of the

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[209] For the problem concerning the identification of the archeological site of the Oppian building: *Chapter 1*.

[210] The Latin word *fornix, fornicis* is used also for indicating the vault : e.g. *camera lapideis fornicibus iuncta* (Sall. *Cat.* 55, 3); *caeli ingentes fornices* (Cic. *De Or.* 3. 162).

[211] Brizzolara 1979-1980; D'Onofrio 1989, pp. 99-266.

[212] Flavio Biondo, *Roma instaurata*, ed. 1481, III, par. XLII (*De Neronis domo*) and XLIV (*Domus Neronis ubi fuit*): see *Chapter 1*, **Source 5**.

[213] "Palmo romano" = 0,2234 m: Vasori 1981, p. 9; Zupko 1981, pp. 174-175; Salvatori 2006, p. 65.

[214] Grassinger 1991, pp. 185-186, Kat. 26.

crater (without the pedestal). In other circumstances, like for monumental buildings (e.g. the Colosseum, the Arch of Constantine, Trajan's Column), he simply depicts human figures in order to give the idea of the proportions[215].

The measurement noted by Francisco and the precision of the colors used by Francisco allow us to suppose that, within room 80, Francisco would have not been able to do such careful work, but he simply noted the evidence and details of the vault and the "Grande Fregio" (CAT. 25), for working on them later. As will be shown in *Chapter 3*, Francisco is particularly precise in copying the geometrical system of the vault , the use of the colors, the representation of the moldings and some figural scenes (e.g. angular female figures in the corners of the vault). On the other hand, he did not draw the many ornamental motifs and invented some figural scenes following some clues of the paintings or inventing new scenes following the iconographies of those that were visible. In fact, we have to remember that in the 16th century the vault was not well preserved nor the frescos in perfect condition, as Francisco depicts. Firstly, at that time, there was at least one of two vault holes used by the artists for entering into the room (North side or South side: see the black circles in **Pl. 2, fig. 1**). Secondly, according to the copying methodology of Francisco, we have pointed out his process for copying the ancient subjects as they might be in ancient times, in order that his patron could see the greatness of ancient Rome. We might say that his was one of the first attempts at "archeological reconstruction". In order to analyze the different figural scenes depicted by Francisco and to compare them with those of other drawings, we have prepared a detailed drawing which traces the profile of the geometrical scheme and the figural scenes of Francisco's watercolor (**Pl. 2, fig. 1**). It is possible to divide the geometrical scheme in different ways, but we have chosen the same geometrical division used by Meyboom-Moormann[216]. The vault is divided into: "Central Medallion", "Internal Area", and "External Frieze".

➢The **Central Medallion** depicts the abduction of Ganymede, a subject which is consistent with the theme of the four angular medallions. Here

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[215] For the list of the subjects depicted by Francisco in the *Os desenhos das antigualhas,* see *Chapter 4*.
[216] Meyboom-Moormann 2013, I, pp. 200-204.

can be seen Zeus on an eagle who is holding Ganymede, while Athena and Hermes are waiting both sitting on the clouds. Hermes is depicted in the gesture of giving the ambrosia cup to Ganymede, since he will become the cupbearers of the gods[217].

➤The "**Internal Area**" was made by four angular medallions surrounded by two square panels with rhombus (identical to those visible in the Internal Frieze) and other two square figural panels. Francisco's watercolor depicts four medallions (scenes B, K, E, H) with divine abductions through mythical and real animals (bull, ram, Ketos, hippocampus). As will be shown in *Chapter 3*, one medallion was surely invented by Francisco (scene K in SE corner?): not by chance, there are two medallions with two marine abductions). Furthermore, the medallion with the abduction with the woman on the bull (scene H) was not surely located in NE corner as Francisco's watercolor show. Thus, when he copied on the table the watercolor, he probably wronged the position of this medallion.

Next to each angular medallion, there are four square panels (two with figural scenes and two with a red rhombus). The square panels with figural scenes depict loving/hedonistic/ludic themes (scenes C, A, L, J, I, G, F, D, C). As will be pointed out in *Chapter 3*, since many figural scenes have no archaeological parallels and do not have any meaning, Francisco probably invented the subjects of some panels. Nowadays, only scenes C and I are visible: Francisco rightly copied scene C because the iconography was clear in its meaning; on the other hand, he maybe modified scene I because the sense was not simple to his eyes (like to ours) and he created a new iconography which recalls that of scene I.

The last part of the "Internal Area" is a pure decorative area which consists in a sort of cross space around the central medallion. Precisely,

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[217] Although the figure next to Zeus is not clear in its gender (female/male), it can only be the figure of Ganymede, since no other abduction made by Zeus in the form of an eagle is mentioned from the literary sources. As it will be clear in the third chapter, although the iconography of Ganymede's scene depicted by Francisco is not testified elsewhere in the Roman art, there is not sufficient evidence for stating that we are dealing with an artistic license of Francisco for this scene (namely regarding the clues of its reliability see the frequency of Ganymede's myth at the center of Roman ceilings and the drawings of Parmigianino: cf. pp. 253-254).

four green panels with two semicircles on the borders can be seen (the semicircles had inside other two blue semicircles and one "Amazonian *pelte*" in brown). Francisco copied four black almonds and each one has a frame with red semicircles. However, Francisco did not understand that the almonds are actually the typical decoration in the shape of the seashell's valves used frequently for the lunettes of exedrae (or he did not copy them when he was on the spot)[218]. Considering the 18th century watercolors of the Volta Dorata (**Pl. 8, figs. 1-2**), the artists employed by Mirri were particularly interested on decorative ornaments of the vaults and the geometrical schemes. As will be shown in *Chapter 3*, such decorative motifs were visible still in the 18th century, but Francisco did not draw them, maybe because not interested into the pure decorative motifs or ornamental frames (like the grotesques).

➤The **"External Frieze"** consists of three bilobed cartouches for each side and, between the cartouches, square panels can be seen. On the corners, each square panel show one female figure oriented towards the center of the vault. Dacos considers the four different figures depicted by Francisco as different versions of the goddess *Nike,* while Hanfmann and Schwinzer suggest that they are personifications of the *Horai*[219]. In recent years, in the NE corner, it has been possible to see a similar female figure, although it was not visible clearly in detail[220]. In addition to square panels with female figures on the corner, on the "External Frieze", Francisco depicted square panels with red rhombus on a green

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[218] A similar decoration can be seen in room 33: Meyboom-Moormann 2013, I, pp. 161-164; Brunetti 2015.

[219] Dacos 1969, p. 27; Hanfmann 1951, II, p. 82, n. 18; Schwinzer 1979, pp. 96-97; Weege do not provide any interpretation (Weege 1913a, p. 177 ("Die quadratischen Eckfelder").

[220] «Una di esse è riapparsa durante la pulitura recente nell'angolo NE, ma il suo attributo è rimasto irriconoscibile»: Meyboom-Moormann 2013, I, p. 200.

background. However, originally such red rhombus has little stucco figures that Francisco did not draw[221].

For each side of the vault, there are three bilobed cartouches. The central bilobed cartouche has originally two later bands in light blue, while Francisco used the green. While the lateral bilobed cartouches were decorated with stucco figures on a light blue background, the central cartouches were in painting[222]. Francisco used the blue background for all bilobed cartouches, although those in painting would not have had such background (cf. *Chapter 3*). In the 18th century, archeological evidence of these lateral cartouches appears to have been very little. However, owing to the few and scattered traces of the stucco figures, Brenna and the other artists of Mirri were able to imagine the original appearance and provided few examples (CAT. 3). The figural scenes in Francisco's bilobed cartouches have already been well described by Dacos, Weege, and Meyboom-Moormann[223]. Therefore, we will not repeat such descriptions since, as these scholars have already argued, many of them are possible inventions of Francisco. On the other hand, the figural scenes of panels 8 and 2 follow in a certain way the original iconographies of the fresco. However, maybe owing to the mistakes in copying the scene on the spot or, afterward, during the copying on the table, Francisco did not copy such scenes perfectly (although they were well visible in the 16th century). One similar circumstance might concern scene 1. As it will be

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[221] «Außer diesen, von Francesco d'Olanda gezeichneten größeren Kompositionen aus Stuck waren kleinere auf allen roten Feldern mit geschweiften Seiten, die an geblähte Segel erinnern, angebracht. Sie sind dem sonst so sorgfältigen Zeichner entgangen, sind aber erwiesen durch noch jetzt sichtbare Spuren (vgl. Taf. 4) und die Zeichnungen Abb. 14, 12 (disegno Windsor cat 8 e uffizi 1682 cat. 3), auf denen »storie di stuccho« vermerkt ist bzw. einige Figürchen flüchtig eingezeichnet sind»: Weege 1913a, pp. 178-179; «I pannellini verdi con veli rossi contenevano figure stuccate bianche o dorate»: Meyboom-Moormann 2013, I, p. 200.

[222] «Manca quasi tutto dei pannelli a fondo azzurro, poiché le figure in stucco si sono staccate. Alcune sagome sono ancora visibili, ma non consentono un riconoscimento delle scene. Le figure sembrano alquanto minori di quelle nelle scene policrome»: Meyboom-Moormann 2013, I, p. 200.

[223] Weege 1913, pp. 178-179; Dacos 1969, p. 28; Meyboom-Moormann 2013, I, pp. 200-202.

shown in CAT. 18, it is quite possible that, in this panel, a Dionysiac procession was depicted, since one of Aspertini's drawing testifies a similar iconography. Hence, owing to scene 1 with its hedonistic subject, Francisco maybe choose other religious and loving themes such as those he depicted in other bilobed cartouches (including a religious sacrifice, a satyr who unveils a hermaphrodite while sleeping, a religious/military procession, a marine procession). Many of these iconographies were known in the 16th century and Francisco could have been inspired by them.

One interesting problem concerns scene 12. As will be better analyzed in *Chapter 4*, Francisco's watercolor show a very unusual iconography, namely some archers who are shooting their arrows to a Herm. Since around 1530 Michelangelo made one drawing with similar subject (Windsor RCIN 912778), many scholars have supposed the derivation of Michelangelo's subject from the Domus Aurea[224]. However, a similar iconography is not testified by any archeological artifact and, moreover, it seems to express an allegorical meaning which is more typical of the Renaissance culture, than to Roman art[225]. Therefore, considering the relationship between Francisco and Michelangelo (cf. *Chapter 1*), it is rather likely that we are in a opposite situation: the iconography depicted in panel 12 of Francisco's watercolor was inspired by the famous drawing of Michelangelo.

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[224] Frey 1911, pp. 135-137, Taf. 298; Weege 1913a, p. 179, no. 8, n. 1; Panofsky 1962, pp. 225-228.

[225] For instance, one similar image is provided by Lucan in his dialogue *Nigrinus* (par. 35-37) who talks about the skill of the good speaker in saying the right words in order to strike the listener's soul. He says that not all archers know how to shoot the arrow on a soft target, making sure that it remains attached to the target, without piercing it (http://lucianofsamosata.info/wiki/doku.php?id=home:texts_and_library:dialogues:nigrinus). Therefore, it is not unlikely that Michelangelo's drawing was inspired by this literary passage. In the Renaissance age, the artistic remakes of Lucian's works are quite famous (e.g. the *Calumny* by Apelles, the *marriage of Alexander and Roxana* by Echion: Faedo 1985; for Lucian in Italian Humanism [see also the myth of Psyche and Love]: Goldschmidt 1951, Mattioli 1980).

4. Conclusions

As can be seen, Francisco was extremely precise in copying the geometrical scheme of the vault , the molding frames, and the colors. On the other hand, he was not interested in the decorative motifs (such as the grotesques or ornamental motifs). His work methodology in copying the figural scenes is quite difficult to understand. In the 16th century, at least seven figural scenes were visible (scenes B, H, I, C, 2, 8, 1), because they were visible also in the 18th century (CAT. 3) and copied by Amico (scene 1 = CAT. 18). Nevertheless, Francisco was precise in copying two scenes (B, C), he was quite approximate in copying three scenes (2, 8, I, 1), while he forgot to copy the scene H[226]. He rightly copied the figural scenes which had a clear iconography (B, C) and, when their iconographies were not easy to understand, he partially maintained them (scenes I, 2, 8, 1). When he invented some scenes, he did so by creating new iconographies that might have resembled the others that were visible. For this reason, some scenes are totally unusual in the archeological repertoire (scenes 12, 3, 4, 9, A, L). Furthermore, as will be shown in *Chapter 3*, some scenes depicted by him were likely visible because of archaeological parallels and their presence in Renaissance ceilings that were inspired by the Volta Dorata (scenes 5, 7, 10). Finally, as will be shown in *Chapter 4*, some figural scenes (D, J, F) are not possible to assess whether they were invented. In fact, similar scenes can be seen on the stucco figural panels of Garden Loggia of Villa Madama by Raphael workshop, probably inspired by those of Volta Dorata (*Chapter 4*).

Specific bibliography for the fol. 47 bis *verso* - 48 *recto*, *Os desenhos das antigualhas*:
Tormo 1940, pp. 210-216; pp. 241-248; Meyboom-Moormann 2013, I, pp. 199-200.

Bibliographic reference to the fol. 47 bis *verso* - 48 *recto*, *Os desenhos das antigualhas*:
Egger 1906, p. 64, taf. III; Weege 1913a, p. 152, no. 6, taf. 6; Rizzo 1929, pp. 15-19; Wirth 1934, pp. 38-44, taf. 7b; Bianchi Bandinelli 1960; Ragghianti 1963, pp. 94,

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[226] Scene 7 depicted in Louvre watercolored engraving was probably an invention of Mirri's artists (CAT. 3), as pointed out above (cf. also *Chapter 4*).

114, 156; Dacos 1969, p. 25, no. 1; Meyboom 1995, pp. 237-238; Iacopi 1999, pp. 46-47; Deswarte-Rosa 2016.

Other copies of the Volta Dorata in its entirety:

- 1538 - ante 1571, Francisco de Holanda (1517 Lisbon – 1585 Lisbon), *Volta Dorata*, Os desenhos das antigualhas (Escorial, Biblioteca Real de S. Lorenzo, Cod. 28-I-20), foll. 47 bis *verso* - 48 *recto:* CAT. 1;

- 1570-1580, Orazio Porta (Monte San Savino 1540 - 1616), Volta Dorata, Marciana Codex (Venice, Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana, Ms. It. cl. IV, 149 [=5105]), fol. 6 *verso:* CAT. 4*;*

- mid. 17th century, Pietro Santi Bartoli (1635 Perugia – 1700 Rome), *Volta Dorata* (after Francisco de Hollanda): Codex Massimi (ante 1674, University Library of Glasgow, MS Gen 1496 [HX 110] fol. LXXV: Pace 1979, p. 143, no. 58) and the Codex Baddeley (around 1670s, Eton College Collection, ECL-TP.20, fol. CXXVII: Ashby 1916, p. 51): CAT. 2;

- 1776, Francesco Smuglewicz (1745 Warsaw – 1820), Vincenzo Brenna (1745 Florence – 1820 Dresden), Mirri's album (Pinot de Villechenon 1998, tav. 43 [ed. or. 1776, tav 42]): CAT. 3;

- 1786, N. Ponce's engraving (copy of Mirri's engraving), *Volta Dorata*, Ponce 1786, tav. 41 (cf. Perrin 1982).

CAT. 2

Volta Dorata
Pietro Santi Bartoli (1635 Perugia – 1700 Rome),
Codex Massimi
Glasgow, University Library, MS Gen 1496 [HX 110]
1658-1674
415 (height) x 420 (width) mm., Italian watermark[227]
fol. LXXV
watercolor on paper
inscription in the previous sheet (fol. LXXIV): LEVES PICTVRAE IN CVIVS MEDIO NUPTIAE IOVIS ET [blank] EX FORNICE DE DOMO TITI

Provenance
Uncertain. According to Pace, the volume was acquired by Dr. Richard Mead around 1738 when he was in Rome, where he bought it from the Massimo family collection[228]. The codex arrived in the Glasgow Library collection around the 1870s and an (undated) handwritten note in the codex states: «presented by J.N. Connel Esq., M.D. of the Lilies, Bucks., to whom it came from John Poulette Esq., of Addington, Bucks, Nephew of Earl Poulette»[229].

Drawing in context
Codex Massimi takes its name from Cardinal Camillo Massimo (1620 – 1677)[230]. Camillo Massimo was appointed by Pope Innocent X as "nunzio apostolico" in Spain (1652) and, thus, he lived in Spain from 1653 to 1657. During his Spanish stay, the artist Anton Maria Antonozzi – a miniaturist already active around 1630 at the court of Pope Urban VIII, worked for him[231]. Cardinal Camillo Massimo asked to Antonozzi

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[227] «The watermark of the paper on which the drawings are mounted is that of a Paschal lamb in a circle, holding a flag with a monogram above – an essentially Italian mark according to Briquet [1923, p. 10]»: Pace 1979, p. 129.
[228] Pace 1979, p. 126, 127 n. 61, 129.
[229] Pace 1979, p. 129.
[230] For Cardinal Camillo Massimo: Beaven 2010; for his cultural patrimony (drawings, books, engravings, antiquities): Buonocore et alii 1996.
[231] Buonocore et alii 1996, p. 52 (ed by G. Fusconi); for Anton Maria Antonozzi: Sánchez del Peral y López 2007.

to copy the watercolors of the antiquities preserved at the Escorial[232].
When Cardinal Camillo Massimo came back to Rome in 1658, he
brought with him Antonozzi's drawings, although they are now lost[233].
From Antonozzi's drawings, Pietro Santi Bartoli created new copies
which were bound together in the so-called Codex Massimi[234]. Since the
preface of the codex is dated to 1674, it is possible to define the
chronology of the watercolors between 1658 (Cardinal's return to
Rome) until 1674[235]. For this reason, in the Codex Massimi can be seen
the same drawings of Volta Dorata and "Grande Fregio Ovest" that we
have seen in Francisco's *Os desenhos das antigualhas* (CAT. 1; CAT. 25)[236].
Furthermore, from Antonozzi's watercolors of Francisco's drawing-
book, Bartoli made other copies that can be seen in the so-called Codex
Baddley, at the Eton Library (for the drawing of the Volta Dorata: **Pl. 4,
fig. 1**)[237].
Although the Codex Massimi drawings of "Volta Dorata" and "Grande
Fregio Ovest" do not provide further archeological clues other than
those of Francisco, Codex Massimi has other watercolors valuable. In
fact, within the codex, we can see other drawings of other vaults of
Domus Aurea which are very important from an archeological point of

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[232] Buonocore et alii 1996, p. 53 (ed by G. Fusconi); Gentile Ortona-Modolo 2016,
pp. 156-158.
[233] We have a possible mention of them in the 1677 inventory list of Massimo's
patrimony: «Museo disegni di varie antichità in fog. Reale» (inv. 1677, fol. 15, n.
68): Buonocore et alii 1996, p. 104 e p. 145, n. 143 (ed. by M. Pomponi).
[234] Pace 1979, pp. 124-131; the Codex Massimi is mentioned in the 1677
inventory list of Massimo's patrimony: «Pitture antiche miniate fog. papale
coperto di marocchino turchesco indorate» (fol. 15 *verso*, n. 71): Pace 1979, p.
125, n. 48; Buonocore et alii 1996, p. 104 e p. 145, n. 145 (ed. by M. Pomponi).
[235] «The title page has a Latin dedication to Cardinal Camillo Massimi, and is
dated to 1674»: Pace 1979, p. 128; Whitehouse 2014, Gentile Ortona-Modolo
2016, pp. 156-157.
[236] The drawing of Volta Dorata in Codex Massimi: fol. LXXV (Pace 1979, p. 143,
no. 58); the drawing of "Grande Fregio Ovest" in Codex Massimi: fol. LIX-LX
(Pace 1979, pp. 141-142, nos. 49-50).
[237] Eton College Library 354 (ECL-TP.20). For the description of the subjects
depicted: Ashby 1916, pp. 48-51: the drawing of the Volta Dorata: Ashby 1916,
p. 50, CVII (51); Gentile Ortona-Modolo think that the drawings of Codex
Baddley are actually the drawings made by Antoniozzi: Gentile Ortona-Modolo
2016, p. 253, n. 10.

view (**Tavv. 5-6**). They depict the entire vault decorations which otherwise they are partially reproduced by other drawings or archeological evidence. In some cases, they are confirmed by Mirri's watercolors which were realized one century later (1776) and helpful for the archeological reconstructions of the Neronian ceilings[238].

It has not been discussed and shown by scientific literature from which models the Bartoli's watercolors come from. In fact, since Bartoli did not make any personal observations of the Domus Aurea's paintings (cf. *Chapter 1*), we have to suppose that his watercolors come from other drawings. My hypothesis is that such watercolors in Codex Massimi are copied from another lost drawing-book of Francisco de Hollanda devoted to other vault decorations of the Domus Aurea (of course, with the intermediation of the lost drawings of Antonozzi realized in Spain). In fact, while *Os desenhos das antigualhas* copied the main antiquities of Rome (including the two examples of Domus Aurea's paintings: CAT. 1, CAT. 25), a second drawing-book of Francisco might have focused on the Domus Aurea's paintings, because of his interest in the ancient paintings (cf. his treaty *Da pintura antiga*[239]). And such a hypothesis can be suggested for two main reasons. The first is that in the first printed edition (1680) of Bartoli's drawings (devoted to ancient paintings), there is one important sentence: «in the Escorial Library, some drawings of the paintings of Titus' Baths and Palace [*scil*. Domus Aurea] are preserved. When Cardinal Camillo Massimi came back to Italy from his Spanish period, he brought copies of these drawings with him, and now they are visible in his great drawing-book»[240]. Such a sentence might not make sense if it were to refer only to the two Domus Aurea's drawings of Francisco in the *Os desenhos das antigualhas* (CAT. 1, CAT. 25). Therefore, we should admit the presence of a wider group of Domus Aurea's drawings in the Escorial Library, and not just those

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[238] Pinot de Villechenon 1998; Meyboom-Moormann 2013, II, fig. 129.2: Volta degli Stucchi: room 129

[239] De Holanda 2013.

[240] «Delle Pitture di questa Casa, et delle Therme di Tito rimangono bellissimi disegni coloriti d'acque nella famosa bibliotheca dell'Escoriale, de' quali il Cardinale Camillo Massimi, tornando dalla sua Nuntiatura di Spagna, portò le copie à Roma, conservate nel suo gran libro dell' Antiche Pitture» (Bartoli-Bellori 1680, p. 6); Pace 1979, p. 125.

in the *Os desenhos das antigualhas.* The second clue is one letter dated 12th April 1674 by Carlo Cartari[241]. Cartari says to have seen a drawing-book of Cardinal Camillo Massimo with many ancient models, such as the paintings in the underground grottoes of Rome[242]. According to Cartari, such Camillo Massimo's drawing-book consisted of copies of other drawings of the Escorial Library that unfortunately were no longer in existence in 1674, since they were destroyed by the fire of 1671 at the Escorial Library. Hence, at the Escorial Library, there were other drawings of Domus Aurea's paintings that were destroyed in the 17th century and, therefore, we can assume that Cartari referred to these other drawings rather than those of *Os desenhos das antigualhas* (CAT. 1, CAT. 25). The possibility that the author of such other Domus Aurea's drawings was Francisco de Hollanda is suggested by two other clues. Firstly, in his treaty *Da pintura antiga* (1548)[243], Francisco says that he saw many ancient paintings in Rome, Baia and Pozzuoli, and he copied them in "his drawing-books" (plural form!): «what stucco painting or grotesque is discovered among these grottoes and antiquities, not only in Rome but also in Pozzuoli and Baia, that the rarest of them is not be found sketched in my notebooks?»[244]. Therefore, here, Francisco seems

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[241] «E perché [*scil.* Camillo Massimo] si diletta di antichità mi fece vedere un altro libro di grotteschi, musaici et altre pitture profane [*on the margin of the page*: antiche, cavate di grotte sotterranee], copiati in fogli reali ma così ridotti in piccolo, e con si esquisiti colori dipinti che fanno invidia alle più antiche miniature. Di presente fa copiare tutte le pitture antiche profane, e dice avervi speso sin hora più di ottocento scudi in quelle del mentovato libro sono anche le grottesche dell'Escorial di Spagna, fatte copiare mentre era colà Nuntio, et hebbe difficoltà ad ottenerne licenza dal Re: e fu buono, perché di presente più non vi sono, inceneriti con l'ultimo incendio [*scil.* fire of 1671], che seguì dell'Escorial pochi anni sono [*for Gentile Ortona-Modolo: cod Massimi foll. LXIII-LXXV*]. Vi ha alcuni pezzi di mosaici antichi profani, messi in quadri, due de quali sono levati da Palestrina dal Tempio della Fortuna»: Guerrieri Borsoi 2014, p. 115.

[242] Owing to the mentioned subjects of the drawings, Gentile Ortona-Modolo think to Codex Massimi for the drawing-book seen by Cartari: Gentile Ortona-Modolo 2016, p. 157, n. 22.

[243] For further information to Francisco's literary works: Bury 1981, pp. 31-33; Modroni 2003, pp. 12-18; De Holanda 2013, pp. 25-39.

[244] *Da pintura antiga*, *incipit* of the First Dialogue, II Book (De Holanda 2013, p. 170; for Italian version: Modroni 2003, p. 103).

to say that he copied all ancient paintings that he saw and he copied them into his drawing-books (!). Secondly, thanks to the studies of Deswarte-Rosa, we can conclude the history of *Os desenhos das antigualhas* from its creation until the arrival at the Escorial Library. One important moment is when, in 1582, the king Philip II of Spain (I of Portugal) tells his daughters that he brought with him some «libros de pinturas» for Don Diego (lettera del 4 giugno 1582)[245]. Deswarte-Rosa recognizes in this quotation the *Os desenhos das antigualhas*[246]. Therefore, it is not excluded that, among the «libros de pinturas» of king Philip II (which will arrive to the collection of the Escorial Library in 1598)[247], that there was also at least another drawing-book of Francisco de Hollanda with other Domus Aurea's drawings. From these drawings (later destroyed by the fire of 1671), Antonozzi might have created some copies and, from those copies, Bartoli made the watercolors of the Codex Massimi.

The Codex Massimi has 127 watercolors and they are copies of «antique Roman paintings and mosaics, almost certainly by Pietro Santi Bartoli»[248]. The drawings may be divided into two main sections (albeit in each one there are some exceptions): antique paintings and antique mosaics[249]. The subjects from Domus Aurea's paintings (nos. 38-58; foll.

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[245] For the entire text of the letter: F. Bouza 1998, nr. XXI, p. 84.

[246] Deswarte-Rosa 2016, p. 272; for the second «libros de pinturas», Deswarte-Rosa thinks to *Genealogía del infante D. Fernando* (British Library: inv. Add MS 12531/1) made by Francisco's father, but she does not provide any evidence and, moreover, this work consists of dismembered parts which where bind together after the acquisition by British Library.

[247] As Deswarte-Rosa 2016, pp. 266-267 pointed out, in 1598 *Os desenhos das antigualhas* was mentioned among the books owned by Philip II: «un libro de tropheos y antiguallas romanas» and on the page's margin «es para Sant Lorenzo»: Sánchez Catón 1959, p. 177, nr. 1315. The first mention of *Os desenhos das antigualhas* with his inventory number 28-I-20 is dated to 1762: Bury 1981, p. 34.

[248] Pace 1979, p. 128.

[249] E.g. Nasonii's Tomb found in 1674 (nos. 2-32; foll. VI-XXXIX); mosaics and Nozze Aldobrandini (nos. 33-37; foll. XLI-XLV); paintings of the Domus Aurea (nos. 38-58; foll. XLVI-LXXV); mosaics from Santa Costanza and ceilings of underground tombs (nos. 59-71; foll. LXXVI-XCI); copies of the Palestrina mosaic (nos. 115-124; foll. CXXXVI-CXLVIII). For the complete list: Pace 1979, pp. 132-153.

XLVI-LXXV) are called "from Titus' Baths". The folios from no. 52 to 58 (foll. LXIII-LXXV) are reserved for the entire vault decorations[250], while the previous folios are mainly devoted to figural scenes. To some extent, the artist provided to his patron the stories of myths and some examples of the elegance of "all'antica" figures (e.g. with the fluttering drapery), but also the complexity and richness of the vault decorations. Concerning the watercolors of the vault decorations (as it can be seen in **Tavv. 5-6**), it is wort emphasizing the brightness of the colors and the attention for any detail (figural or ornamental), like Francisco's watercolor of Volta Dorata.

Analysis

As pointed out, Bartoli's watercolor of the Volta Dorata does not provide further archeological evidence for the vault . However, its mention is compulsory because of the understanding of the graphic traditions of Volta Dorata's drawings. Some details are important to understand the copying methodology of P.S. Bartoli. Also when the figural scenes of Francisco's watercolor are difficult to see and understand (scenes 2 and 8 in CAT. 1), P.S. Bartoli is always careful to follow the model and do not invent any details. Within the Codex Massimi, in the previous folio of that of Volta Dorata's watercolor (fol. LXXIV), Bartoli wrote: LEVES PICTVRAE IN CVIVS MEDIO NUPTIAE IOVIS ET [blank] EX FORNICE DE DOMO TITI. Comparing such an inscription with that of Francisco (CAT. 1), Bartoli's inscription is interesting for three reasons. First, Bartoli used the same Latin *fornix, fornices* used by Francisco for indicating the vault. Second, as pointed out in *Chapter 1* (fig. 16), Bartoli corrected the archeological topography of the vault: from the Domus Aurea to the Baths of Titus, since 17th-century antiquarians believed that the underground grottoes were the remains of Titus' Baths. Finally, in the inscription, Bartoli indicates the interpretation for the central medallion, namely the marriage between Zeus and Hera, while Ganymede provides the ambrosia cup[251]. It is not possible to say whether Bartoli confused the figure of Ganymede with

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[250] For the Volta Nera (room 32): no. 53, fol. LXV; for the Volta Gialla (room 31): no. 55, fol. LXIX; for the Volta degli Stucchi (room 129): no. 57, fol. LXXIII; for Volta Dorata (room 80): no. 58, fol. LXXV.

[251] Bartoli-Bellori 1706, p. 6.

that of Hera, or likely, since the watercolor was commissioned by Cardinal Camillo Massimo, he would have preferred not to mention a homosexual myth.

Also, in the choice of the color Bartoli is quite accurate, although they are not the same of those in Francisco's watercolor (CAT. 1). Bartoli used the ocher instead of the light green, and the dark purple instead of the Indigo. Furthermore, he has depicted the chiaroscuro around the borders of the panels and figures. In **Pl. 4, fig. 1**, it can be seen another drawing of Volta Dorata, but in the Baddeley Codex[252]. In the latter, the artist used a similar kind of light green to that used by Francisco, while in the Glasgow drawing Bartoli used another kind. Although this similarity between Codex Baddeley and *Os desenhos das antigualhas* is not enough for providing any hypothesis, it could strengthen the argument of Gentile Ortona-Modolo about the authorship of Antonozzi to the Codex Baddeley drawings (**Pl. 4, fig. 1**)[253]. Finally, it is important to stress that, thanks to Bartoli's watercolor of the Volta Dorata in the Codex Massimi (or Codex Baddeley?), in the 18th century, Turnbull and Cameron published some engravings which depict some figural scenes of the Volta Dorata[254].

Specific bibliography for fol. LXXV, Codex Massimi:
Pace 1979, p. 143.

Bibliographic reference to fol. LXXV, Codex Massimi:
Weege 1913a, p. 166; Dacos 1969, p. 25; Meyboom-Moormann 2013, I, p. 200.

Other copies of the Volta Dorata:
see CAT. 1.

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[252] Codex Baddeley, fol. CXXVII: Ashby 1916, p. 51, no. 2.
[253] Gentile Ortona-Modolo 2016, p. 253, n. 10.
[254] De Vos 1993, p. 101. Not by chance, Richard Mead was probably the owner of the Codex Massimi in 1738 and surely the patron of Turnbull's work (Turnbull 1740), where are reproduced details of Bartoli's watercolor of the Volta Dorata.

CAT. 3

Volta Dorata
Francesco Smuglewicz (1745 Warsaw – 1820), Vincenzo Brenna (1745 Florence –
1820 Dresden),
Terme di Tito e le loro interne pitture
Paris, Louvre collection, inv. 18141[255]
1776-1777
542 (height) x 600 (width) mm.
tav. 43 (Pinot de Villechenon 1998)[256]
watercolored engraving

Provenance
Unknown[257]

Drawing in context
The Louvre album is a luxury edition of engraving watercolored edited
by Ludovico Mirri (1738-1786), after the excavations of the Domus
Aurea's underground rooms (1774-1776). Ludovico Mirri was a Roman
antiquarian and entrepreneur in publishing[258]. After the discoveries
around the area of Vesuvius, he decided to start his first business
activities on the artistic illustrations of archeological subjects. In 1774 he
obtained permission to dig under the Lauretti-Ceci vineyard in Via
Labicana, next to Esquiline Hill[259]. The artists F. Smuglewicz and V.
Brenna were in charge of copying the decorations of the vaults and
some walls: Smuglewicz was mainly focused on the figural scenes
(because of his «occhio perspicace») and Brenna for the geometrical
schemes and ornaments of the vault[260]. Therefore, in 1776, *Vestigia delle*

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[255] The album is divided into three inventory groups: inv. 18126-18153 +
18104-18125 + 18298-18307 (Pinot de Villechenon 1998, p. XI).
[256] For the engraving in the printed edition: Mirri-Carletti 1776, II, tav. 42.
[257] The unique publication on the Louvre edition of Mirri's watercolors does not
provide any mention about the provenance.
[258] For an introduction to Ludovico Mirri as publisher and entrepreneur: Coen
2008.
[259] Carletti 2014, p. 17 (Mirri-Carletti 1776, p. VII).
[260] Carletti 2014, p. 23 (= Mirri-Carletti 1776, p. XIII). The allusion to the «occhio
perspicace» of Smuglewicz might suggest that in some cases he could interpret
the figural scene that he did not see perfectly.

Terme di Tito e le sue interne pitture was published with two volumes of sixty engravings (by Marco Carloni: 1742-1796) and one volume with the written description made by G. Carletti[261]. In the years 1776-1777, Mirri decided to create also thirty luxury editions with watercolored engraving of Roman ceilings[262]. The Louvre edition is probably one of these examples that were made as gifts for the important authorities of that time[263].

Analysis

The Louvre watercolor is one of the 60 watercolored engravings of the album *Vestigia delle Terme di Tito e le sue interne pitture*. As all other Louvre watercolors of Mirri's album, it was made from engravings that, afterward, were watercolored for special patrons. In *Chapter 4*, we have made a synoptic table that compares the numeration of Louvre watercolored engravings (luxury edition), engravings (no watercolored, for a wider public, called Mirri-Carletti 1776), and Carletti's descriptions that illustrate the engravings (included in Mirri-Carletti 1776).

The Louvre watercolored engraving of the Volta Dorata contains a detailed and precise reproduction of the vault , but paradoxically its value lies more in the absence of many figural scenes. In fact, when Mirri 's artists were not able to see figural scenes in the vault , they did not invent any further figural scene. In very few cases (four times in all 60 engravings), they filled the central empty panel of the vault with figural scenes (often taken from other ceilings). In fact, although they wanted to depict the ceilings in bona fide («con fedeltà delineate»)[264], at the same time, they did not want to offend the sense of beauty of

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[261] For the *Vestigia delle Terme di Tito: Chapter 1* and *Chapter 4* (cf. Tedeschi 2010, Meyboom-Moormann 2013; for the transcription of Carletti's text: Carletti 2014).

[262] The Louvre album was probably one of thirty luxury watercolor editions which were published between 1776 (date of engraving edition) and 1777 when Ludovico Mirri interrupted his work relationship with V. Brenna: Coen 2008, p. 178; for other watercolor editions: Meyboom-Moormann 2013, I, p. 8, n. 81.

[263] «Quanto alla data di esecuzione, ci si chiede se appartenga ai trenta esemplari annunciati o a una edizione prevista da Giuseppe Carletti quando la prima tiratura fu esaurita»: Pinot de Villechenon 1998, p. XI.

[264] Carletti 2014, p. 19 (= Mirri-Carletti 1776, p. X).

antiquarians («laddove ricopiandone le loro mancanze non comparirebbero quelle che furono, con offesa agli amanti stessi dell'antiquaria»)[265]. Fortunately, Carletti always states when such an operation was made. One of these four cases concerns the engravings of the Volta Dorata. Mirri's artists took one scene from the "Grande Fregio Ovest" (CAT. 25) and they placed it in the central scene of the vault (a priest seated on a podium and a priestess who is trying to take the baby that he has on his knees)[266].

In Louvre watercolored engraving, the presence of few figural panels depend to the fact that only six figural scenes were recognized by Mirri's artists («delli ventuno quadri che furono in questa volta non ne rimangono che sei, mentre quello di mezzo nella nostra carta è supplemento ritolto da que' gruppi poco fa rammentati»)[267]. Moreover, as will be shown in *Chapter 4*, the reliability of the figural scenes depicted in the Louvre watercolor is confirmed by Renaissance drawings[268]. Even the colors are confirmed in many cases by Renaissance drawings and Iacopi's images of the current paintings

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[265] For a detailed discussion on the work methodologies of Mirri's artists: *Chapter 4*.

[266] Carletti 2014, p. 91 (= Mirri-Carletti 1776, p. LXXVI): «il quadro che abbiamo surrogato nel mezzo della volta era uno di que' gruppi rimasti sul cornicione delle pareti di questa camera, come addittammo poco fa, degno perciò di essere e copiato, e descritto». For the other three cases, see:

- room 35 (figural scene from room 129): Pinot de Villechenon 1998, tav. 59 (= Mirri-Carletti 1776, II, tav. 58); Carletti 2014, pp. 63-64 (= Mirri-Carletti 1776, pp. L-LI); Meyboom-Moormann 2013, I, pp. 165-166.

- room 23 (figural scene from "Grande Fregio Est"): Pinot de Villechenon 1998, tav. 5 (= Mirri-Carletti 1776, II, tav. 59); Carletti 2014, p. 103 (= Mirri-Carletti 1776, p. LXXXVII); Meyboom-Moormann 2013, I, pp. 152-153.

- room 27 (figural scene from room 28): Pinot de Villechenon 1998, tav. 57 (= Mirri-Carletti 1776, II, tav. 57); Carletti 2014, p. 100 (= Mirri-Carletti 1776, p. LXXXIV).

[267] Carletti 2014, p. 90 (= Mirri-Carletti 1776, p. LXXV).

[268] «In tal senso è possibile affermare che gli artisti di Mirri, nonostante cedano spesso a libere inventive artistiche, raramente abbiano inventato dal nulla una scena figurata, ma piuttosto tendono a copiare alcune scene figurate presenti altrove, oppure tendono a colmare le scene figurate già presenti, arricchendole di dettagli inventati»: Brunetti 2015, p. 140.

(*Chapter 3*)[269]. Not by chance, in the preface, Carletti did not forget to mention the attention to the colors («colorite bravamente»)[270]. The study of the colors was made on the spot through some notes that can be read on the preparatory Hertziana drawings[271]. Here, the artists draw the geometrical scheme and figural scenes in pen and, afterward, they colored part of some panels in order to indicate the colors (**Pl. 8, fig. 1**)[272]. In fact, thanks to the close distance from the vault , the artists were able to recognize the colors of the paintings and the richness of the golden stucco («corniciami di rilievo con ovoli, mensole ed intagli finissimi, tinti di giallo, lumeggiati ad oro»)[273]. Finally, in the "External Frieze" (**Tav 2, fig. 1**), Mirri's artists recognized that lateral bilobed cartouches were in stucco, whereas the central cartouches were in painting. Thus, just as exemplification they drew the stucco panel no. 7[274].

The Louvre watercolors of the Volta Dorata, like the others watercolored engraving, is particularly important for the precision of the decorative motifs drawn by Vincenzo Brenna[275]. They are confirmed in some cases by the Renaissance drawings (cf. *Chapter 3*). During the excavations and in the year later (1777), Brenna continued to create watercolors from the Domus Aurea's vault so he might sell them to private collectors, like the V&A drawing (**Pl. 8, fig. 2**)[276]. Here, it is possible to see better the stucco bilobed cartouches of the "External Frieze". Although in Hertziana and V&A drawings, the decorative motifs of the vault are almost the same, in V&A drawing they are more

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[269] The main differences of Louvre watercolored engraving are the use of the green and the background of angular medallions (in Louvre watercolor, the light blue was not used for the background, as it was originally: *Chapter 3*).

[270] Carletti 2014, p. 21 (= Mirri-Carletti 1776, p. XI).

[271] Hertziana Library, Rome, inv. Dv 570-3760 grgr raro (cf. *Chapter* 4). The first mention of their existence is in Luciani-Sperduti 1993, p. 115.

[272] Meyboom-Moormann 2013, I, pp. 198-199.

[273] Carletti 2014, p. 90 (= Mirri-Carletti 1776, p. LXXVI).

[274] «De' ventiquattro bassirilievi, grandi non meno de' quadri e di squisito lavoro, appena uno ne vive a' giorni nostri ad indicarne il loro pregio»: Carletti 2014, p. 90 (= Mirri-Carletti 1776, p. LXXV).

[275] For the drawings after the Antique by Vincenzo Brenna: Vaughan 1996.

[276] Vaughan 1996, p. 40.

emphasized, probably because of the taste of the private purchaser (Charles Townley).

Finally, it is important to remember one aspect related to the orientation of the vault in Louvre watercolored engraving and that of its figural scenes. Comparing its orientation with that of Francisco's watercolor, it can be seen that East and West are inverted. Such a phenomenon depends on the fact that Louvre watercolor is an engraving, therefore its image is reflected. Nevertheless, not only the cardinal points are inverted but also the figural scenes. For instance, in Louvre watercolored engraving, the figures within the angular medallions are oriented towards the exterior of the vault instead of the center of the vault, as they were originally on the painting (cf. *Chapter 4*). This phenomenon was due to one mistake made by M. Carloni, who was in charge of creating the matrices that should have printed the engravings. He engraved the matrices following the drawings of V. Brenna (for the geometrical systems of the vault) and F. Smuglewicz (for the figural scenes). However, in engraving the matrices, Carloni has oriented in wrong way the figural scenes of the medallion towards the exterior of the vault . Considering in fact V&A drawing (**Pl. 8, fig. 2**), Brenna copied one vault corner of the vault and located in right sense the figural scene of the angular medallion.

Specific bibliography for the Louvre watercolored engraving of the Volta Dorata:
Meyboom-Moormann 2013, I, p. 198-199.

Bibliographic reference to the Louvre watercolored engraving of the Volta Dorata:
Weege 1913a, p. 168, tav. 15; Dacos 1969, p. 25, tav. IX; Meyboom-Moormann 2013, I, p. 200.

Other copies of the Volta Dorata: *see CAT. 1*

CAT. 4

Volta Dorata
Attributed to Orazio Porta (Monte San Savino 1540 - 1616), pupil of Giorgio Vasari (1511-1574)
Venice, Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana, Ms. It. cl. IV, 149 (=5105), (= Marciana Codex)
1570-1580
235 x 330 mm, countermark similar to Briquet 3455 (Ferrara 1555)[277];
fol. 6 *verso*
paper, pen, ink
inscriptions: «Nelle Terme di Tito a presso alle sette Sale nella vigna de Giova[nni] Gad(d)i opera fatta/di stucco et ornata di pittura»

Provenance
The codex came from the monastery of the Padri Somaschi at Santa Maria della Salute in Venice, where it was inventoried.[278] The period in which the codex was moved to Venice is not easy to define, probably «al tempo delle soppressioni» (end of the 18th century).[279]

Drawing in context
The Venetian Codex (Ms. It. cl. IV, 149 [=5105]) is composed of two *codices*: the first is dated to the 16th century (ff. 1-22: architectural drawings) and the second to the 17th century (ff. 23-92: maps of the Mediterranean islands).[280] The architectural drawings depict mainly ancient Roman buildings (mainly temples: such as Temple of Vesta, Temple of Fortune Virile, Temple of Minerva Medica, Temple of

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[277] I would like to thank Dr. Elisabetta Lugato (Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana, Dipartimento manoscritti e rari) for her check and analysis of the watermark: the watermark in fol. 6 in not well visible because of the drawing. Nevertheless, in the fol. 7 it is possible to see the same countermark of the fol. 6 (in the codex two watermarks occur in the gathering): Fairbairn 1998, II, p. 531.
[278] Olivato 1978, p. 159, n. 8.
[279] Olivato 1978, p. 153; in 1769, the Republic of Venice decide to close the small convents.
[280] Frati-Segarizzi 1909-1911, II, pp. 84-85.

Romulus on via Appia).[281] The subject of fol. 6 *verso* (vault of the Volta Dorata) is a unique example of Roman painting. Also in the *recto* of fol. 6, monuments and architectonical details depicted come from a totally different repertoire (S. Prassede, Arch of Septimus Severus, the Septizodium, the Pantheon Column shafts and the base of the Pantheon).

Attribution

Fol. 6 is one of the twenty-two sheets which compose the first part of the codex, dated to the 16th century. Concerning this first part, authorship was recently discussed by scholars. The first attribution was provided in 1893 by Fabriczy and it was attributed to V. Scamozzi[282]. This attribution has been questioned by Olivato because of calligraphic reasons and stylistic features[283]. Afterwards, owing to the handwriting of the draughtsman and its style, Fairbrain attributed the codex to Orazio Porta, collaborator of G. Vasari and author of some drawings of the Vasari's album in Sir John Soane's collection[284]. The scholar did not provide a precise period for the creation of the Porta's Venetian codex. Nevertheless, considering his collaboration with Vasari in the Val di Chiana (1569) and his journey in Rome with Vasari (1573) and then alone (1579), we could date his drawing-books after the Roman Antiquities to the decade 1570-1580.

Drawing in context

The Marciana Codex does not reveal a marked interest for Roman or all'"antica" decorations (e.g. stucco decorations or grotesques).

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[281] Other Roman buildings: the Septizodium, Arch of Titus, Egeria Fountain and tombs on the via Appia; for a detailed description of the ff. 1-22: Fairbairn 1998, II, pp. 531-538; the Marciana Codex reveals some stylistic and material similarities with another drawing-book in Padua (Biblioteca Univesitaria, Ms. 764: Olivato 1978, p. 158, n. 4).

[282] Fabriczy 1893, Archivio Storico dell'Arte, tomo VI, fasc. 2 (for the quotation: Lanciani 1989, pp. 258-259; the attribution to V. Scamozzi was due to the similarities with Scamozzi's architectural drawings in Uffizi Collection (1805-1808 A): Olivato 1975, p. 138, n. 36.

[283] Olivato 1978, pp. 153-160.

[284] Fairbairn 1998, II, pp. 530-538; for the historical and artistic profile of Orazio Porta: Fairbairn 2001, pp. 637-644.

Therefore, it is not clear the reason why Porta copied the Volta Dorata and why this unique example of Roman vault survived in his drawing-book. Although little information about Porta's life and works survived, we know that Orazio Porta was paid for decorating the panels on the vault of the Salone dei Cinquecento in Palazzo Vecchio.[285] Probably, owing to the knowledge and estimation of Vasari for the Domus Aurea's ceilings (cf. *Chapter 4*), Porta knew the artistic value and the importance of the Volta Dorata[286] Not by chance, some influences of the Domus Aurea's ceilings can be find in some Vasari's ceilings, for instance the Terrace of Saturn at Palazzo Vecchio.[287]

Analysis

Fol. 6 *verso* of Marciana codex depicts the geometrical scheme of the Volta Dorata, with particular attention to the stucco moldings. The drawing seems to be traced without a previous design in pencil. The use of drawing instruments, such as ruler and compass, is missing. The fast and sketched stroke suggests a drawing made directly on the spot and for personal use. Nevertheless, scholars do not agree on this point: L. Olivato thinks that the draughtsman drew the sheets on the spot. L. Olivato stresses the recurrence of measurements in many drawings of the codex and considers this practice as clue of a copy on spot, directly after the Antique[288]. On the other hand, L. Fairbrain argues that the artist copied his drawings from other drawings[289].

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[285] Fairbrain 2001, p. 637.

[286] Vasari 1966-1987, VI (1987), p. 377.

[287] Allegri-Cecchi 1980, 105-108; Brunetti 2018.

[288] «Ancora, i rilievi son di grande esattezza e puntualità sia per quel che riguarda lo studio dei dettagli, sia per l'accuratezza delle misure fornite tanto da far pensare che i fogli in questione siano l'opera originale di un "addetto ai lavori" che vi fosse esercitato personalmente, più che delle copie tratte da uno dei tanti "taccuini di appunti" inerenti le antichità classiche che, come acutamente ha provato il Lotz, erano di frequente circolazione negli studi degli architetti rinascimentali»: Olivato 1978, p. 153.

[289] Olivato 1978, pp. 153, 155-156; Fairbairn 1998, II, pp. 530-531, Fairbairn 2001, pp. 625-634: according to the scholar, the draughtsman's sources would have been the following: the Codex Destailleur B in the Hermitage; Codices Destailleur A and D in Berlin; Labacco's engravings of the Corinthian order at the temple of Castor and Pollux.

The imprecise dimensions of the vault panels seem to suggest that the draftsman was not interested in the right proportion of the geometrical system of the vault (see for example the different length of the bilobed cartouches). Nevertheless, between the two sides of the vault , a difference can be seen which reveals two opposing interests of the artist. The left side depicts only the vault scheme in a sketchy way and roughly records the profile of each panel and frame. On the right side, the artist focused his attention on the stucco moldings, fixating on the stucco frame of each panel and defining them with the letters A, B, C, I[290]. In the lower part of the sheet, the artist drew the different types of moldings (I, C, B), leaving out type A: the latter could be missing because it would not have been a type of molding, but it could simply indicate the absence of a molding (i.e. an empty band). However, as anticipated, on the left side, the artist simply defined the panels of the vault with a unique and thin stroke of the pen; on the right side, the draughtsman defines the moldings with a detailed attention to their shape, neglecting the real dimension that the stucco frames had.

Although the drawing does not record any figural scene or decorative motifs (except for the stucco moldings), this absence can be considered an *argumentum e silentio* for his chronology. Owing to the analysis of other drawings of the Volta Dorata (e.g. CAT. 8-10), we know that, mostly in the first half of the 16th century, the Domus Aurea's ceilings attracted the attention of Renaissance artists because of their geometrical schemes, not just for their decorations (e.g. grotesque) or their "all'antica" figural scenes (cf. *Chapter 4*). Therefore, the absence of

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[290] Even in analyzing the stucco molding depicted in the drawing, Fairbairn attributed other drawings to Orazio Porta in order to strengthen her attribution of the Senese codex to Porta: «diagonal hatching indicating the recessed planes of the stucco compartments is similar to the same feature on the sheets in the Victoria and Albert Museum (inv. 613-1922 and 614-1922), for the stucco decoration of the vaults. F. Aliberti Gaudioso identified them as designs for grotesques in Castel Sant'Angelo, and attributed them to the elusive Luzio Romano. They are unlike other drawing attributed to Luzio; they are handled like the two drawings in the Siena and Marciana sketchbooks and should, I believe, be given to Orazio Porta»: Fairbairn 2001, p. 635, n. 53. Actually, despite Fairbairn's opinion, Aliberti Gaudioso's attribution to V&A Museum drawings is well supported and convincing: Aliberti Gaudioso-Gaudioso 1981, II, pp. 24-26 nrr. 7-8.

these decorative details seems to suggest a chronology later than that provided by Fabriczy in 1893, namely the second decade of 16th century.[291]

Since fol. 6 *verso* had not yet been studied in detail[292], scholars did not pay attention to the inscriptions on the upper part of the sheet. Here the artist wrote: «in Titus' Baths, next to the Seven Halls, in the vineyard of Giova[nni] Gad(d)i, work made in stucco and painting».[293] The archaeological provenance testified by the draftsman is precise: at the beginning of 16th century, the underground caves of the Oppio Hill were considered by some antiquarians as the ruins of Titus' Baths, instead of the Domus Aurea (cf. *Chapter 1*). Therefore, the Seven Halls were used to identify the location of the underground grottoes, since they were more famous than the Baths of Titus (all the antiquarians knew where the Seven Halls were, since the Laocoon was found there).

Moreover, the Marciana drawing is also a precious literary witness because it testifies to the name of the owner of the vineyard under which the Volta Dorata was discovered. In fact, owing to Renaissance literary sources, we know that, in 16th century, on the Oppio Hill there were essentially San Pietro in Vincoli church, few houses and many vineyards[294]. Fortunately, Giovanni Gaddi is not an unknown name[295]. Born to a rich Florentine family of bankers, Giovanni (1493-1542) was able to improve the family's business in Rome, financing also the politics of Pope Leo X. Giovanni inherited from his family also an interest in the Roman antiquities and created a cultural circle of antiquarians, erudite literary men and artists (such as B. Cellini, Aretino and Sansovino) in his Roman palace. Because of his friendship with

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[291] Fabriczy 1893, Archivio Storico dell'Arte, tomo VI, fasc. 2 (for the quotation: Lanciani 1989, pp. 258-259)

[292] Only briefly described by Fairbrain 1998 pp. 533-534.

[293] «Nelle Terme di Tito a presso alle sette Sale nella vigna de Giova[nni] Gad(d)i opera fatta / di stucco et ornata di pittura»

[294] Termini 2010.

[295] DBI 51, 1998, pp. 156-57, *s.v.* Giovanni Gaddi (edited by V. Arrighi); it is unlikely that the inscription refers to another homonymous owner: it would be very unusual if the draftsman wrote in his drawing the name of the vineyard's owner, if that man was not so famous as Gaddi was (i.e. why the artist should have written the name of a simple and unknown farmer and owner of the vineyard?).

Annibale Caro, his circle was strongly connected to the Accademia della Virtù (many people were members of both these circles). Especially in the Accademia della Virtù, the members were focused on studies of the Roman antiquities and in copying all Roman ruins.[296] Therefore, Giovanni was interested in buying plots of land in Rome close to important archaeological sites, such as one vineyard close to the Caracalla's Baths.[297] If Giovanni Gaddi (1493-1542) was the owner of the vineyard on the Hill Oppio, we have some chronological issues concerning the Marciana drawing fol. 6 *verso* (dated to 1570-1580): at that time, Gaddi was already dead since thirty years. How could be so long the memory of his ownership? It is not likely that, after thirty years, the vineyard was known as "Gaddi's vineyard". Therefore, the inscription is easier to understand if we consider the argument of Fairbrain about Porta's tendency to copy after other drawings. In fact, it is probable that Porta copied another drawing in which there was also the inscription. Therefore, we can also understand better the reason why, in the codex, fol. 6 is the only example of Domus Aurea's painting. If Porta would have copied on the spot the drawing, it would have been strange that he did not copy also other details from the Domus Aurea's paintings, because of its interest and competence in working on vault decorations (such as those of Palazzo Vecchio in Florence).

Specific bibliography for Marciana Codex fol. 6 *verso*:
Fairbrain 1998, pp. 533-534.

Bibliographic reference to Marciana Codex fol. 6 *verso*:
Lanciani 1989, pp. 258-259, fig. 161.

Other copies of the Volta Dorata:
see CAT. 1

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[296] Kulawik 2018.

[297] «Nel 1535 un Giovanni Saxo (Stein?), fornaio teutonico a S. Salvatore in Lauro, vende a Giovanni Gaddi chierico di Camera una sua vigna "intra menia apud thermas Antonianas"»: Lanciani 1989, II, p. 195 (not. Apocello, prot. 421 c. 341 A. S.). Also Raphael probably bought a vineyard on Domus Aurea's ruins (*Chapter 1*).

CAT. 5

Sketched scheme of the Volta Dorata
Antonio da Sangallo il Giovane (1483 Florence - 1546 Terni)
Florence, Gallerie degli Uffizi, Gabinetto Disegni e Stampe (GDSU), inv. 1273 A
recto
post 1519 - ante 1546
471 x 333 mm, watermark: letter T inside a circle surmounted by a cross (similar to Briquet 9132 [30 x 44 mm, Palermo 1468], although the dimensions of watermark are 55 x 75 mm)
paper, pen, ink;
inscriptions: «al tondo da mezo»; «nel chanto e dal lato fa uno pettorale la medesima chornice»; «al quadro del tondo»; «i[n]torno a le mandorle»; «al tondo del chanto»;

Provenance
There is no information on the arrival of the drawing 1273 A in the Uffizi collection and there is no mention of it in the inventories before Ferri (1890).[298] In the entry card that Ferri created for each drawing and print of the Gabinetto Disegni e Stampe (so-called "schedine Ferri")[299], three different types of handwriting can be seen. Ferri's wrote: «schizzo di un palco a stucchi con misure e note scritte; a tergo: schizzi grottesche e di trofeo militare»[300].

Analysis
The *recto* of drawing depicts one vault -quarter of the Volta Dorata with some measurements and, in other part of the sheet, the artist depicts different type of the vault 's stucco moldings. Precisely, the artist drew the moldings around the central medallion («al tondo da mezo»); around the panels in the form of an "almond"(«i[n]torno a le

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[298] The first certain citation of the drawing 1273 A is found in Ferri's catalogue of "Disegni di Architettura" (Ferri 1885, p. 213). The drawing 1273 A does not appear in the eighteenth-century inventories of Giuseppe Pelli Bencivenni, director of the Uffizi Gallery from 1775 to 1793 (Petrioli Tofani 2014).
[299] For the "schedine Ferri": euploos.uffizi.it.
[300] A later handwriting (first half of the 20th century) corrected the Ferri notes and wrote: «schizzo dello spartito di un palco ornato di stucchi, con misure e note scritte; schizzi di fregi e candelabre e di trofeo militare»; the last one handwriting added: «ricordi delle Terme di Tito».

mandorle»); the frame around the angular medallion («al tondo del chanto»); the frame of the square that inscribes the angular medallions: («al quadro del tondo)»; the moldings between the angular medallions and the bilobed cartouches («nel chanto e dal lato fa uno pettorale la medesima chornice»). On the *verso*, the draughtsman sketched some grotesques of the room 31 (Volta Gialla) of the Domus Aurea (**Pl. 11, fig. 1**)[301]. The sheet shows a vertical fold and, probably owing to the size of the sheet, the draftsman or the later owner had to fold it in order to put it in a portfolio, or in an envelope.

On the left side of the *recto*, the artist drew some lines divided in segments and defined them with some measures. According to L.C. Cherubini, these notes concern the study of one wall facing both in horizontal and vertical senses[302]. However, Cherubini's interpretation does not seem really convincing, while it is more likely that the measures are related to a personal study of Antonio about the Seven Halls which are next to underground grottoes of the Domus Aurea, since they were part of Trajan's Baths (Serlio considered them part of Titus' Baths)[303]. Considering the famous Serlio's treaty *I Sette libri dell'architettura* (1537-1575) and, more precisely, the third book, it is possible to see a similarity between Antonio's drawing and the illustration in Serlio's treaty (**Pl. 11, fig. 2**). Both depict eight wall-lines (in Antonio's drawing the last one is barely visible), although in Serlio's illustration the wall-lines with four passages are alternated with wall-lines with three passages. On the other hand, in Antonio's drawing all the wall-lines have four intervals, exactly as we can see in the map of the Seven Halls (**Pl. 11, fig. 3**). Therefore, although the measures noted

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[301] Bartoli vol. VI, p. 66; vol. III, fig. 346.

[302] «L'interesse di Antonio da Sangallo per le decorazioni murali è dimostrato anche da due disegni, Uffizi 1273 Ar, in cui si sofferma a rilevare un paramento murario dal ritmo scandito sia orizzontale che in verticale, e nel disegno Uffizi 1218 A, dove a fianco del rilievo della gradinata del Tempio di Antonino e Faustina è chiaramente illustrato il metodo costruttivo di una muratura in mattoni a due colori, con mattoni posti di testa e di taglio per formare un motivo decorativo»: Cherubini 2003, p. 66; Bartoli 1914-1922, VI, p. 65: «schema misurato degli scomparti di una decorazione murale (?)». For the architectural projects of Antonio da Sangallo: Pagliara 1972; Frommel-Adams 1994; Frommel-Adams 2000.

[303] Volpe 2016a.

by Antonio cannot help us in verifying exactly this hypothesis, it is likely that the artist copied the map of the Seven Halls, before Serlio published the IV book of his work in 1540[304].

In the lower right part of the sheet, the draughtsman wrote some calculations which he probably used for measuring the dimension of the Volta Dorata or distance between the walls of the Seven Halls. Generally, the presence of measurements in a Renaissance drawing does not necessarily mean that the design was made in front of the copied object[305]. For example, the drawing could have been copied from another design which originally recorded the measures. Nevertheless, when the measurements are extremely precise (as in the case of the Windsor drawing 909568 *recto*: CAT. 8) and when we have some calculations next to the measures (as in the case of the drawing 1273 A *recto*), we could likely suppose that these measurements came from a personal study and observation of the drawing's draughtsman. Therefore, it is likely that Antonio da Sangallo saw the Volta Dorata and personally noted the dimensions, as he did for the Seven Halls.

In the first half of 16th century, Antonio was one the best experts in stucco decorations and, therefore, it is easy to understand why he paid attention to the stucco decorations of the Domus Aurea. Likely, he started to understand in detail the stucco's techniques from 1519, owing to collaborations with artists of Raphael's circle, especially Giovanni da Udine[306]. In the years 1519-1525 Antonio worked with

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[304] For other Renaissance drawings and prints of the Seven Halls' map: Volpe 2016a.

[305] For example, in the Washington drawing 1993.51.3.a, attributed to Raphael (Pl. 17. fig. 1), the measures were probably written in at a later moment and not by the same artist (therefore, they could be the result of calculations and study in studio and not on spot): Frommel-Ray-Tafuri 1984, p. 422, no. 3.2.10 (catalogue entry edited by A. Nesselrath); Faietti-Lafranconi 2020, p. 175 (catalogue entry edited by V. Farinella).

[306] For the techniques of the stucco art in 16th and 17th century: Quagliaroli-Spoltore in corso di stampa. For Giovanni da Udine: and his study of stucco decorations: Vasari 1966-1987, V (1984), pp. 448-449: «fatto pestare scaglie del più bianco marmo che si trovasse, ridottolo in polvere sottile e stacciatolo, lo mescolò con calcina di trevertino bianco […] [e] trovò che così veniva fatto senza dubbio niuno il vero stucco antico»; for other literary passages on the stucco techniques in Vasari's *Vite*: Quagliaroli 2018, p. 40, n. 5; for the Roman stucco art: Blanc 2007.

Giovanni da Udine on the construction of the chapel of Santa Maria della Pace's church[307]. Afterwards, in collaboration with Perino del Vaga, Antonio was the author of another Renaissance masterpiece famous for its stucco decoration, namely the Sala Regia in Palazzi Apostolici (Vatican)[308]. Since Antonio worked here from 1537 until his death, we can date the Uffizi drawing 1273 A *recto* to the period 1519-1546[309]. Unfortunately, we are not able to understand the unit of measurement used in drawing 1273 A *recto*. If we take into account the central medallion of the vault, the artist wrote the number 3. Owing to the Windsor drawing 909568 *recto* (CAT. 8), it is possible to calculate the circle diameter of the central medallion, which is 5 (ca.) "piedi romani"[310]. Therefore, we have two options to consider: or the measurements of the vault noted by Antonio da Sangallo are wrong (unlikely); or, more likely, they refers to another Renaissance unit of measure, and not to the "piede romano" (and, even less possible, to the "palmo romano").

Copies of the entire Volta Dorata:
see CAT. 1

Specific bibliography for the drawing:
unedited

Bibliographic reference to the Uffizi drawing 1273 A:
Ferri 1885, p. 213; Bartoli 1914-1922, vol. VI, p. 65; vol. III, fig. 345; Frommel-Adams 1994, p. 22.

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[307] Riccardi 1981, pp. 35-39 (see: p. 37, n. 3).

[308] Quagliaroli 2018, Davidson 1976.

[309] For the period "Antonio's Early Maturity: from the death of Julius II to the sack of Rome": Frommel-Adams 1994, pp. 26-60

[310] In the Windsor drawing 909568 *recto,* within the central medallion of the vault, the artist wrote the sentence «p (=piede) 3 d (=dito) 1 lato del quadro». This sentence refers to the portion of the circle diameter which the artist had partially traced (the words «lato del quadro» probably refers to the central square which contains the central medallion). However, not all the circle diameter of the medallion is traced by Giovanni da Udine, but only a segment which he calculated: «p (=piede) 3 d (=dito) 1» long. Nevertheless, owing to the measurements noted by the artist, it is possible to calculate the total length of the circle diameter which is 5 (ca.) "piedi romani" (the radius of the circle is 2.3 "piedi romani").

CAT. 6

NE vault corner of the Volta Dorata (scenes H and I)
Giovanni da Udine (1487 Udine – 1561 Rome)
Florence, Gallerie degli Uffizi, Gabinetto Disegni e Stampe (GDSU), inv. 1682 O
1510-1517?
170 x 190 mm, watermark absent
paper, brown ink and pen[311]
inscriptions: «storie», «me[n]sule», «rosso»

Provenance

The first mention of the drawing is in Ferri's catalogue (Director of the collection from 1871 to 1917)[312]. The drawing is not mentioned in Giuseppe Pelli Bencivenni's inventory (Director from 1775 to 1793) and in later inventories[313]. Nevertheless, since not all the drawings mentioned in all the Uffizi's inventories are identified, it cannot be excluded that the drawing 1682 O was in the collection already in 17th or 18th century[314].

Attribution

The inventory card of the drawing, made by Ferri (1871-1917), shows two kind of handwritings (brown and black) by the same hand (i.e. Ferri). The second handwriting (black) corrects the first one and adds the identification of the subject «scompartito a formelle storiate tratte dalla Domus Aurea in corrispondenza alle Terme di Traiano»[315]. Therefore, only at a later time, Ferri recognizes the subject of the

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[311] Conservation note: the white paper has a brownish aspect, like it were dirty; in the *verso* there are some angular paper reinforcements; in the lower margin there is a line fold; in the upper right corner there is the number 846, apparently a previous inventory number (it is unknown which inventory it refers to).
[312] Ferri 1890.
[313] For the transcription of Giuseppe Pelli Bencivenni's inventory: Petrioli Tofani 2014; for the transcription of the later inventories (L. Scotti 1832; A. Ramirez di Montalvo 1849): Fileti Mazza 2014.
[314] In the lower part of Ferri's inventory card is written the price "£ 10". The meaning of this price is not yet clear to the Uffizi's staff and researchers: it could be the price of acquisition or the economic valuation of the drawing.
[315] «Part of a vault with figural scenes after Domus Aurea, next to Trajan's Baths».

drawing, probably thanks to the collaboration of Weege or A. Bartoli in the first decade of 20th century[316]. Furthermore, the author of the drawing is identified by Ferri: he attributed the drawing 1682 O to Antonio Labacco because of the similarity of handwritings between 1682 O and that of another Uffizi's drawing (1793 A)[317]. This authorship has not yet been analyzed by any scholar or critique. Nevertheless, it is important to stress that the two handwritings (1682 O - 1793 A) are quite different (**Pl. 13, fig. 1**): in 1793 A the letter "s" is always characterized by a final horizontal sign and in 1682 O it is not present; in 1682 O the letter "a" always has a little dash in the upper part, while in 1793 A this element is always present in the lower part of the letter. Therefore, although Labacco was one of the most determined Roman "antiquarian" artists, there aren't sufficient calligraphic evidence for attributing the Uffizi drawing 1682 O to him[318].

On the other hand, there are more calligraphic similarities between the Uffizi drawing 1682 O and the *verso* of the Windsor drawing RCIN 909568 (CAT. 8) attributed by A. Nesselrath to Giovanni da Udine, especially the group of letters -st- and -ti- (**Pl. 13, fig. 1**). Owing to the calligraphic and stylistic affinities, A. Nesselrath considers the drawing

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[316] Both scholars worked with Ferri during the first decade of 20th century for their own research; already in 1913 and 1914 both scholars recognized the archaeological provenience of the drawing's subject: Weege 1913a, p. 166, no. 3, fig. 12; Bartoli 1914-1922, II, tav. CII, fig. 183; VI, p. 35.

[317] The drawing 1793 Arch. is easily attributed to Antonio Labacco because of the inscriptions and the letter in the drawing. The drawing 1793 Arch. depicts the Pantheon's doors and, in the *verso,* it can be seen the letter of Labacco to Baldassarre Peruzzi, to whom Labacco sent the drawing (Bartoli 1914-1922, VI, p. 110).

[318] One of the most famous work of Labacco is the album of his drawings after the Antique (mainly Roman buildings and architecture), edited in a print version in 1552 (*Libro d'Antonio Labacco appartenente a l'architettura nel qual si figurano alcune notabili antiquita di Roma:* Labacco 1992; Campbell 2004, pp. 101-141).

1682 O a work of Giovanni da Udine[319]: according to the scholar, the artist would have sketched the "Volta Dorata" in some drawings (as Vasari testifies[320]) and, afterwards, he would have copied some of them on table (as in the case of the Windsor drawing RCIN 909568: CAT. 8)[321]. The scholar considers the drawing the first attributed drawing of the artist and, although he does not provide a more precise chronology, it is likely that the drawing was made in the second decade of the 16th century[322].

Analysis

The drawing 1682 O depicts the NE vault corner of the Volta Dorata and, precisely, the figural scenes H and I. The angular medallion depicts one human male figure dragged by a flying horse is visible, while on the right side there is a little panel with scene I (better reproduced in CAT. 3). The artist added also some notes: «storie» (written twice for the two figural scenes 7 and 8); «me[n]sule» (namely, the stucco frames that surrounded the angular medallions)[323]; and «rosso» (the color of the decorative panel with a red

[319] «Precisamente questa parola "storie" [scil. in the drawing 1682 O] presenta la medesima grafia del foglio al Castello di Windsor; le due scene nelle specchiature sono schizzate alla maniera del tondo del foglio stesso; e in ambedue i casi gli ornati sono disegnati approssimativamente, anche se l'autore si è impegnato alquanto di più nel disegno in pulito. Un'attribuzione dello studio fiorentino a Giovanni da Udine appare in ogni caso sufficientemente fondata»: Nesselrath 1989, pp. 256-262.

[320] «[scil. Giovanni da Udine] non si contentò d'una sola volta o due disegnarle e ritrarle [scil. of the Domus Aurea]»: Vasari 1966-1987, V (1984), p. 448.

[321] «Si tratta quindi di un disegno [scil. the Windsor drawing RCIN 909568] delineato in studio, utilizzando un rapido schizzo a mano libera eseguito sul luogo; un esempio di schizzo di questo genere, raffigurante un quarto della stessa volta, ancora però privo di misure, sempre di mano di Giovanni da Udine, è conservato agli Uffizi (Orn. 1682, Bartoli 1914-1922, Vol. II, fig. 183)»: (Frommel-Ray-Tafuri 1984, p. 438: catalogue entry edited by A. Nesselrath).

[322] Giovanni da Udine's arrival in Raphael's workshop in Rome is not sure, although Dacos think to 1514, because of few evidence (Dacos-Furlan 1987). However, it is likely that the *terminus ante quem* is the inauguration of the Loggetta of the Cardinal Bibiena in Vatican (1517), where the inspiration from Domus Aurea's paintings is evident. For more details on the Giovanni da Udine' works in the Loggetta: Dacos-Furlan 1987, p. 44.

[323] For the word "mensole" in relation to the moldings: Carletti 2014, p. 90.

rhombus inside); the letter «u» behind the word «rosso» (it is probably an abbreviation of the word «blu»: in the painting behind the rhombus red, there were four little blue spaces). All these notes indicate some archaeological details that are still partially present in the vault, but clearly visible in the Francisco's watercolor (CAT. 1). Since the color red does not appear in any Renaissance drawing (except for Francisco's watercolor), it is quite probable that the artist saw the vault firsthand and sketched it on the spot. Furthermore, the stroke of the pen – fast and synthetic – and the brownish aspect of the white paper suggest that the drawing is a sheet from a rudimentary sketchbook (i.e. before the drawing was copied in a better form on a "libro di disegni")[324].

Considering the potential use of the drawing 1682 O as a preliminary sketch for a more precise design drawn on table, it can be seen that the sheet shows some similarities with the Uffizi drawings 53 O (CAT. 10), especially considering the inscription «storie». Both are attributed to Vasari's workshop and they depicted two vaults of the Domus Aurea. The drawing 51 O depicts one vault -corner of the Volta Dorata and, while the geometrical scheme of the vault is quite precise, the rest is simply sketchy, like the style of the drawing 1682 O. Therefore, as A. Nesselrath has pointed out, it is likely that the drawing 1682 O is a rapid sketch for a more detailed and precise drawing (as – in my opinion – the Uffizi drawing 53 O can be, although drawn by another artist with the same working method).

From an archaeological point of view, the drawing is important for two reasons. Firstly, it confirms that, originally, in the NE corner there was the scene H with the man dragged by a flying horse and held by the hand (and not the scene reproduced by Francisco's watercolor with the woman on a bull: CAT. 1); secondly, the Uffizi drawing shows how the fol. 87 *recto* of the Codex Fossombronis (CAT. 13: lower part of the folio) is a reliable witness for the figural scene I of the Volta Dorata, while the Hertziana drawing has wrongly placed the scene C in the NE corner (**Pl. 8, fig. 1**: maybe because the meaning of the scene C was more understandable for the viewer). Furthermore, the Uffizi drawing 1682 O – together with the fol. 6 *recto* of the Codex Escurialensis (CAT. 16),

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[324] For the distinction between "libro di disegni" and "album di disegni": Nesselrath 1986, Elen 2018.

the Lille drawing PL. 102 (CAT. 17) and the fol. 87 *recto* of Codex Fossombronis (CAT. 13) – shows that the NE vault corner of the vault was the most copied (directly or indirectly) part of the Volta Dorata by Renaissance artists.

Specific bibliography for Uffizi's drawing 1682 O
Weege 1913a, p. 166, fig. 12; Bartoli 1914-1922, vol. II, fig. 183; Nesselrath 1989, pp. 256-262, fig. 18; Conforti-D'Amelio-Funis-Grieco 2019, p. 69 (ed. by M. Modolo).

Bibliographic references to the Uffizi's drawing 1682 O
Dacos 1969, p. 26; Frommel-Ray-Tafuri 1984, p. 438 (catalogue entry edited by A. Nesselrath); Meyboom-Moormann 2013, I, p. 197.

Copies of the scene H and I:
- 1510-1517?, Giovanni da Udine (1487 Udine – 1561 Rome), *Ceiling-NE corner of the Volta Dorata (scenes H and I)*, Florence, Gallerie degli Uffizi, Gabinetto Disegni e Stampe (GDSU), inv. 1682 O: CAT. 6;
- 1524-1533 ca., Raphael Follower, *Volta Dorata's panels I and C*, Codex Fossombronis (Fossombrone, Biblioteca Civica Passionei, inv. Disegni vol. 3 (= Cod. C.5.VI) and Disegni vol. 4, c. 38 and c. 39), fol. 87 *recto:* CAT. 13;
- 1538 - ante 1571, Francisco de Hollanda (1517 Lisboa – 1585 Lisbona), *Volta Dorata*, Os desenhos das antigualhas (Escorial, Biblioteca Real de S. Lorenzo, Cod. 28-I-20): fol. 47 bis *verso* - 48 *recto*: CAT. 1;
- mid. 16th century drawing, Anonymous 16th Florentine artist, *Scene H*, Lille, Palais des Beaux-Arts, Inv. Pl. 102: CAT. 17;
- mid. 17th century, Pietro Santi Bartoli (1635 – 1700), *Volta Dorata* (after Francisco de Hollanda): Codex Massimi (ante 1674, University Library of Glasgow, MS Gen 1496 [HX 110] fol. LXXV: Pace 1979, p. 143, no. 58) and the Codex Baddeley (around 1670s, Eton College Collection, ECL-TP.20, fol. CXXVII: Ashby 1916, p. 51): CAT. 2;
- 1741, G. Turnbull (engraving from Bartoli's watercolor: CAT. 2), *scene I*: Turnbull 1741, no. 16;
- ca. 1775, Hertziana drawing, *scenes H and C*, Rome, Bibliotheca Hertziana Dv 570-3760 (Exemplar mit 61 Bl.) U. PL. D 45332a: Pl. 8, fig. 1;
- 1776, F. Smuglewicz, *scene I*, Mirri's album (Pinot de Villechenon 1998, tav. 46): Pl. 24, fig. 4;
- 1776, F. Smuglewicz, *scene H*, Mirri's album (Pinot de Villechenon 1998, tav. 48);
- 1786, N. Ponce's engraving (copy of Mirri's engraving), *scene I*: Ponce 1786, p. 47, tav. 28 (Perrin 1982).
- 1786, N. Ponce's engraving (copy of Mirri's engraving), *scene H*: Ponce 1786, p. 43, tav. 26 (Perrin 1982).
- 1800-1802, A. Uggeri's engraving, *scene H*: Uggeri 1800-1802, III, tav. 27.

CAT. 7

Alternative version of the NE vault corner of the Volta Dorata (scenes I, G, H, 7)
Anonymous Tuscan artist of the second half of the 16th century (from the circle of Accademia del Disegno)
Siena, Biblioteca Comunale degli Intronati, MS L.IV.10 (Senese Codex)
1577-end of the 16th century
278x205 mm, watermark: kneeling winged angel in an oval surmounted by a flower with six petals (64 x 43 mm); the chain lines are around 30 mm a part[325]
paper, pen, ink
fol. 11 *recto*
inscriptions: «la terza parte del b[raccio] senese il tutto va diviso in once […] et ogni oncia i[n] parti 3/ la metà del palmo romano, il tutto va diviso […] in once per minuti»[326]

Provenance

Unknown. The first mentions of the Codex are in Sozzini 1842, p. XV, n. 24 (*Prefazione* edited by G. Milanesi) and in the *Indice per materie della Biblioteca comunale di Siena* (1847) VI, p. 118.

Attribution

The Senese Codex is dated after 1577 because of the drawing on fol. 16 *recto:* it depicts the Porta delle Suppliche in Florence made by Bernardo Buontalenti in 1577. Moreover, because of its stylistic features, the drawing-book seems to be dated not after the end of the 16th

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[325] The iconography of the watermark is similar to Briquet 639 (Tivoli, 1536) and 640 (Udine, 1538) which has a star instead of a flower. However, the dimensions of the Senese watermark are bigger than any other similar watermarks in Briquet (generally around 30 x 40 mm). For the kind information about the MS L.IV.10 and fol. 11's watermark, I would thank Pagni Milena (Biblioteca Comunale degli Intronati di Siena - Gabinetto disegni e stampe, Acquisti opere biblioteca d'arte, Consultazione).
[326] Fairbairn 1998, p. 527.

century[327]. The author of the codex has not been identified by scholars. Owing to the military interest and the wedding "apparato"of 1565 in fol. 16 *recto*, Promis (1874) attributed it to Bernardo Buontalenti[328]. On the other hand, because of the frequent allusions to Senese architecture and Senese measures in fol. 11 *recto*, Morolli (1980) thinks that the drawings were made by an anonymous Senese draughtsman[329]. Afterwards, Scorza (1991) attributed the album to an anonymous member of the Accademia del Disegno in Florence, who used drawings donated to the Accademia by Vincenzo Borghini, first "luogotenente" of the Academia[330]. Finally, owing to calligraphic and stylistic evidence, Fairbairn attributed the Senese codex to Orazio Porta (1540-1616), collaborator of Vasari.[331] Nevertheless, Fairbairn's argument seems to

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[327] Scorza is more precise on this matter: «moreover the sheet containing the drawing of a Roman camp appears to be extensively inscribed in Borghini's hand, characteristically spoiling the overall effect of the finished product which the draughtsman had neatly inscribed. Since Borghini died on 15 August 1580, the sketchbook can be accurately pinpointed to the three-year period from 1577 to the year of Borghini's death»: Scorza 1991, p. 183.

[328] Promis 1874, p. 579 (*contra:* Daddi Giovannozzi 1933).

[329] Morolli 1980, pp. 242-244.

[330] Scorza 1991, pp. 183-184.

[331] Fairbairn 1998, pp. 527-530; Fairbairn 2001, pp. 634-636.

be based on scant, and questionable, evidence[332]. According to Fairbairn, Orazio Porta is also the author of another drawing-book, preserved at the Marciana Library in Venice (CAT. 4). Nevertheless, the difference of the style and artistic interests between the two drawing-books is too great: we consider, for example, how different are the drawings of the Volta Dorata in Senese Codex (CAT. 7) and that one in the Marciana Codex (CAT. 4). In the first, the artist is interested in the figural scenes and decorative motifs, while in the Marciana Codex the draughtsman paid attention to the geometrical scheme of the vault and to the molding frames. Moreover, the calligraphy and the stroke of the pen seem to suggest two different artists. Therefore, considering the wide and debated discussion on the authorship of the codex, the cautious and well-argued Scorza's hypothesis (1991) seems the most reliable.

Drawing in context

The album is made up of 102 loose folios. They were bound together in the 19th century and on the spine it is written: *Archite[tur]a* / *Militare* / *Civile* / *e* / *Astronomia*. Within the album, the folios appear of different sizes, papers and hands, but the subjects are quite the same (fortifications and architecture). The foll. 1 *recto* - 24 *verso* have similar

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[332] The argumentation of the Orazio Porta's authorship for the Senese Codex is provided by Fairbrain with only one sentence: «the first page of the volume [*scil*. the Senese Codex] is annotated by Orazio Porta, who also drew the fortresses on fol. 3. The handwriting on fol. 11r is identical to that on Vasari p. 154 [A] (Cat. 738), on the survey of the Cassero in the Archivio di Stato, Florence, and in Porta's sketchbook in the Biblioteca Marciana, Venice» (Fairbrain 1998, II, p. 527). It is important to remember that, when Fairbrain argues that «the first page of the volume [*scil*. the Senese Codex] is annotated by Orazio Porta», she does not mean that the draughtsman reveals his identity as Orazio Porta, but rather that the calligraphy seems (for the scholar) the same handwriting which appears in the Vasari Album (John Soane's Museum, Vol. 132), attributed to Orazio Porta by the same Fairbrain (Fairbrain 1998, II, pp. 391-400). However, the calligraphic similarity argued by the scholar is not analyzed by her, and moreover does not emerge through the comparison of the handwriting. The fol. 154 [A] *recto* of the Vasari's sketchbook (Fairbrain 1998, II, p. 474, Cat. 738) shows only one brief inscription and it does not provide enough letters to demonstrate the same calligraphy for the entire Senese Codex (the inscription is: «moduli 2 cioè [once] 9 – scala di moduli 3»).

sizes, paper, and style.[333] As to the subjects[334], the military and architectural subjects are the most depicted (Roman encampment, fortifications, Roman greaves, Roman armors, triumphal arch, elevations of buildings, palace plans). The fol. 11 *recto* is the only one revealing a decoration after the Antique and its subject seems to be connected to fol. 16 *verso* (plan of the vault of the Sala dei Cinquecento in Palazzo Vecchio, projected by G. Vasari), because of the influence of the Volta Dorata on Palazzo Vecchio's ceilings[335]. The fol. 11 is half of a bigger folio which includes the fol. 13 as its second half. Nevertheless, owing to the weak stroke of the pen close to the folios' seam, the folios (11+13) seems to have been sewn to the other folios (1-24 *verso*) before the sheets were drawn. Therefore, it seems clear why the two half sheet show very different subjects: fol. 11 (*recto*: a quarter of the Volta Dorata; *verso*: profiles of vessels and cornices) and fol. 13 (*recto*: Roman armor; *verso*: Roman armor).

Analysis

The fol. 11 *recto* depicts a corner of the Volta Dorata and, in a lateral part of the sheet, the internal wooden framework for a moveable horse and elevations of chimneys. The presence of such different subjects in the same sheet is difficult to explain, but it seems to be linked to the architectural interests of the draughtsman. Owing to the absence of other artistic subjects after the Antique, it seems likely that the artist copied the corner of the Volta Dorata from other drawings. Not by

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[333] «Three gatherings, on fols 10r-24v, part of an academic sketchbook, form a consistent group of drawings in the same hand as the architectural drawings glued to many of the pages in the Vasari album» (Fairbairn 1998, p. 527).

[334] For a brief description of the foll. 1-24 verso: Fairbairn 1998, pp. 527-530)

[335] Allegri-Cecchi 1980, 105-108; Brunetti 2018. This is another clue, in fact not really probative, that Fairbairn takes into account for attributing the Senese Codex to Orazio Porta (1540-1616), collaborator of Vasari, as author of the Senese codex (Fairbrain 2001, pp. 634-635, n. 50).

chance, the Senese Codex is a one of the most famous drawing-books made up by drawings based on other drawings[336].

Below the design of the Volta Dorata, the draughtsman wrote two phrases. They are not related to the drawing, but seem to be simple notes that the artist wrote in fol. 11 *recto* for space reasons. In fact, both phrases refer to the lines that are above them. The first line (immediately below the corner vault) is long 200 mm and this length is the third part of one "braccio senese" (603 mm). Not by chance, under this line, the artist wrote: «la terza parte del b[raccio] senese il tutto va diviso in once […] et ogni oncia i[n] parti 3»[337]. Furthermore, below the first line, it can be seen another line which is 110 mm approximately, namely half of the "palmo romano" (223 mm). Hence, the draughtsman wrote: «la metà del palmo romano, il tutto va diviso […] in once per minuti»[338]. These two phrases and the relative lines seem to be two notes by the artist in order to remember the length of the "braccio senese" and "palmo romano". Therefore, although these inscriptiions cannot be considered as evidence for the geographical provenance of the artist, in my opinion, they show that the artist was neither Roman nor Senese. Otherwise, why did he have the need to note something which should have been obvious to a Roman and Senese man? In this way, Morolli's hypothesis of the Senese provenance of the artist owing to these inscriptions has to be rejected, because they exactly indicate the opposite.

The sheet does not reveal any traces of a preparatory drawing in *lapis*. The use of the ruler or the compass is not visible. Only the lines already discussed seem to have been made by the ruler but, as shown above, they were likely drawn afterward. Nevertheless, some lines which define the geometrical scheme of the vault seem too regular for being

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[336] «[…] un dato che colpisce è la frequenza con cui il nostro autore ha utilizzato come campo di indagine e come serbatoio di forme da travasare nel "suo" Taccuino le raccolte di disegni di altri architetti, secondo una prassi di "copia" delle opere di maestri passati o contemporanei tipica del fare artistico sia, generalmente, del Rinascimento sia, particolarmente, del Manierismo maturo» Morolli 1980, p. 209.

[337] «The third part of the "braccio senese" and it has to be divided in "once"; and each "oncia" has to be divided in three parts».

[338] «The half of the "palmo romano" and it can be divided […] in "once" and "minuti"».

traced by a free hand. Not by chance, inside the panels, the design lines were done by the draughtsman with an unstable and flickering hand.

As anticipated, considering the Marciana Codex fol. 6 *verso* (CAT. 4), the Senese Codex fol 11 *recto* is focused on the figural scenes and the decorative motifs. Obviously, also the Marciana Codex records the decorative motifs of the painting frames and, above all, the stucco moldings. Nevertheless, in the Senese Codex the attention to detail is more stressed. For example, around the area of the central medallion of the vault, the draughtsman of the Senese Codex drew the ornamental decoration and showed it originally filling the space between the central medallion and the square which included the medallion. These decorations are also testified by other drawings (**Pl. 15, fig. 1**). In the Senese drawing, it can be seen a major attention to decoration and more detailed forms. However, in some cases, the decorative motifs recorded by the draughtsman are creative license. One evident example is the angular medallion where the artist filled the space between the square and the medallion with four masks.

From the archaeological point of view, the drawing reveals important evidence for the figural scenes of the vault. The most important aspect is the scene with a human figure on a bull within the angular medallion, as we have seen in Francisco's watercolor with the scene of woman on a bull and Filippino Lippi's drawing (**Pl. 15, fig. 2**). In the Senese Codex, the abduction scene is moving in an opposite direction than in Filippino and Francisco's drawings. However, as it can be seen in *Chapter 4*, the different orientation of one figural scene could depend on the issues of the copying practice itself[339].

The scene with woman on a bull is placed by Francisco de Hollanda in the NE corner (scene H). Therefore, the Portuguese artist provides an alternative vision of the NE corner as opposed to that of Mirri's watercolor (Mirri placed – scene H – the abduction of the young man by a flying horse on the NE corner: CAT. 3). Nevertheless, the Senese

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[339] «Nel caso di una decorazione prevalentemente composta di elementi figurativi, potevano esserci dei problemi, poiché l'originale si trovava sopra il copista e la copia in terra o sulle ginocchia e, finalmente, sulla scrivania. Se fatto correttamente, quando si tiene il disegno sopra la testa, accanto all'originale, è una copia propria, ma steso sulla scrivania diventa un'immagine riflessa, sottosopra»: Meyboom-Moormann 2013, I, p. 196.

Codex depicts other two figural scenes which in Francisco's watercolor are placed in the NE corner. One scene similarly depicts the scene of one seated figure with another armed figure, which recalls the scene G in Francisco's watercolor (**Pl. 15, fig. 3**).

The second scene which is important to observe is placed by the draughtsman of the Senese Codex in another side of the angular medallion (where, according to the numeration of the scenes, we should find scene I: **Pl. 2, fig. 1**). Here, the artist depicted a scene with four human figures and its meaning is not possible to be recognized, although it seems to recall scene I, photographed by Weege (**Pl. 15, fig. 4**). The similarity of the two images is due to the seated figure in front of another smaller human figure (and behind the latter a taller figure with a raised arm). As we will stress in CAT. 13 and *Chapter 3*, the meaning of scene I is not possible to understand, although it could represent a loving/dionysiac scene (as the other similar little panels suggest). However, considering scene I depicted by Francisco, we can observe that, in Senese Codex, the iconography of scene I is not reflected, like the other scenes (see: **Pl. 15, figs. 2, 3**). Therefore, in front of this inconsistency, we have two options: or the resemblance of the scene in Codex Senese and the scene photographed by Weege is a simple coincidence and the draughtsman of the Senese Codex invented scene I; or, rather, the reflected form of some images is due to one mistake that was made by the artists in front of the Roman paintings. As we will show in Chapter 4, some mistakes in copying the figural scenes depended to the methodology of work of the artists: in some cases they did not orientate the sheet while they are copying the vault and moving under it, or they copied the figural scenes in other sheets and, afterward, they fitted them in the final drawing (with some mistakes in the orientation or with a reflected form because of the use of mirrors).

Therefore, owing to the similarities with Francisco's watercolor and Weege's photo, the figural scenes of the Senese Codex fol. 11 *recto* the the Senese drawing seems to depict the NE corner of the vault . However, as Giovanni da Udine's drawing 1682 O shows (CAT. 6), the angular medallion of the NE corner would have depicted the abduction of a young man by a flying horse (as also Mirri's watercolor depicts: CAT. 3). For this reason, it is not possible to believe that in the NE

corner there was the scene with woman on a bull, as the Codex Senese and Francisco's watercolor show. Nevertheless, as Filippino Lippi's drawing shows (**Pl. 15, fig. 2**), it is highly probable that such a scene was present in one of the four angular medallions of the vault (more precisely, in the SE or NW corner). Therefore, in my opinion, it is likely that the Senese Codex fol. 11 *recto* is a copy of another drawing which, like Francisco's watercolor, wrongly placed the scene with woman on a bull in the NE corner, instead of the SE or NW corner.

Copies of the NE corner of the vault[340]:
- 1510-1517?, Giovanni da Udine (1487 Udine – 1561 Rome), *NE vault corner of the Volta Dorata (scenes H and I)*, Florence, Gallerie degli Uffizi, Gabinetto dei Disegni e delle Stampe (GDSU), inv. 1682 O: CAT. 6;
- 1538 - ante 1571, Francisco de Hollanda (1517 Lisboa – 1585 Lisbona), *Volta Dorata*, Os desenhos das antigualhas (Escorial, Biblioteca Real de S. Lorenzo, Cod. 28-I-20): fol. 47 bis *verso* - 48 *recto*: CAT. 1;
- mid. 17th century, Pietro Santi Bartoli (1635–1700), *Volta Dorata* (after Francisco de Hollanda): Codex Massimi (ante 1674, University Library of Glasgow, MS Gen 1496 [HX 110] fol. LXXV: Pace 1979, p. 143, no. 58) and the Codex Baddeley (around 1670s, Eton College Collection, ECL-TP.20, fol. CXXVII: Ashby 1916, p. 51): CAT. 2;
- ca. 1775, Mirri's artists, *NE vault corner of the Volta Dorata (scenes H and C)*, Rom Bibliotheca Hertziana Dv 570-3760 (Exemplar mit 61 Bl.) U. PL. D 45332a: Pl. 8, fig. 1;

Specific bibliography for Siena Codex fol. 11 *recto*:
Scorza 1991, pp. 173-174, pl. 39c.

Reference to the Siena Codex fol. 11 *recto*:
Morolli 1980, pp. 242-244; Borsi 1980, II, p. 39, fig. 3; Fairbairn 1998, p. 528; Fairbairn 2001, p. 635, n. 53.

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[340] Among the copies of scene 8, Nesselrath includes one drawing of Giulio Romano preserved at the National Gallery of Scotland (Edinburgh), inv. D4827 *verso* (Nesselrath 1993, p. 194, no. 3). The *verso* depicts some single figures and the scholar recognizes the nurse who raises the himation of Phaedra. Nevertheless, the figure reveals a different position of the body (standing with the crossed legs and the hand in a very high position). Therefore, I do not recognize a figure from scene 8. I thank Dr Aidan Weston-Lewis (Chief Curator and Head of the Print Room, Scottish National Gallery) for the image of the drawing and his kind reply.

CAT. 8

SW vault corner of the Volta Dorata (scene B)
Giovanni da Udine (1487 Udine – 1564 Rome)
Windsor, Royal Collection, RCIN 909568 *recto*
1510-1517?
342 x 243 mm, watermark absent[341];
beige paper, pen, brown ink, traces of black pencil (*lapis*);
inscriptions: «dipinto» (inside the angular medallion), «storia dipinta» (inside the empty square), «storie di stucho» (in the two bilobed cartouches), «storie dipinte» (in the half bilobed cartouche), «paonazo» (inside the circular frame of the central medallion), «p (=piede) 3 d (=dito) 1 lato del quadro[342]» (inside the central medallion).

Provenance
The Windsor drawing RCIN 909568 is included in the so-called Victoria Album (Vol. 175, A 22, fol. 9)[343]. Many drawings and prints of the album (135 in total) probably belonged to Pietro Santi Bartoli's studio stock and they might have been transferred to the studio of Vincenzo Vittoria (1650-1709) after Bartoli's death in 1700 (and maybe before 1702)[344]. The arrival of the album in Windsor collection is not clear: the Album probably arrived with the other works of art belonging to Albani's collection or as a result of the acquisitions of Pierre Crozat in Rome around 1715[345].

Drawing in context
The album was composed by the aspiring artist and collector Vincenzo Vittoria (1650-1709). Excluding the drawing RCIN 909568 *recto* (CAT. 8), the album contains other seven Renaissance drawings and many 17th

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[341] I would like to thank Dr. Carly Collier (Assistant Curator of Prints and Drawings - Windsor Collection) for having checked the presence of the watermark and for her precious help during my research on the Windsor drawings.

[342] This inscription could be referring to the segment of the central medallion's diameter. The artist could have used the expression «lato del quadro» for indicating the square in which the circle is inscribed.

[343] The drawings which make up the entire Album has the inventory numbers from RCIN 909566 to RCIN 909700.

[344] Whtitehouse 2014, pp. 279-280.

[345] Whitehouse 2014, pp. 276-280; Gentile Ortona-Modolo 2016, p. 158, n. 30.

century drawings of Pietro Santi Bartoli[346]. Both groups of drawings depict subjects after the Antique (mainly the Domus Aurea) or inspired by the Antique. The reason for the combination of these two groups in a unique album is not clear. Many drawings from the album probably belonged to Pietro Santi Bartoli's studio stock; especially the 16th century drawings which probably belonged to Bartoli because of his interest in Raphael's works and the Domus Aurea's paintings. However, following Bartoli's death in 1700, Victoria collected Bartoli's drawings with other drawings in a new album. The 16th century drawings are placed at the beginning of the album. Three drawings depict details of Domus Aurea's rooms (RCIN 909568 *recto:* CAT. 8; RCIN 909567: lunette of the room 36; RCIN 909573: figural scene of room 129).

Attribution

The Windsor sheet RCIN 909568 *recto* depicts the SW corner of the Volta Dorata and in the *verso* a male hand with a Roman helmet (maybe copied after the arch of Constantine: **Pl. 17, fig. 3**[347]). In the *verso*, some inscriptions can be seen: owing to these inscriptions, Nesselrath

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[346] **1.** The Windsor drawing RCIN 909567 is attributed to Giovanni da Udine (Nesselrath 1989). The design depicts one portion of the lunette room 31 (Dacos 1969, fig. 58: Dacos used the Weege numeration of the rooms, i.e. room 36). A similar drawing is preserved at the Kupferstichkabinett 16942 *recto* 247.192 (Giuliano 1981, fig. 1); **2-4.** the drawings RCIN 909569, 909570 and 909572 depict grotesques inspired from those of the Domus Aurea; **5.** the drawing RCIN 909571 shows a modern vault inspired by the Domus Aurea's vaults; **6.** the drawing RCIN 909573 of Annibale Carracci and depicts the farewell between Andromache and Hector in the vault room 129; **7.** the drawing RCIN 909574 is attributed to Agostino Carracci and depicts one figural scene inspired by the Antique.

[347] Frommel-Ray-Tafuri 1984, p. 438, no. 3.5.4 (catalogue entry edited by A. Nesselrath). In copying the Roman helmet, the artist used the cross-hatching for defining the three dimensions of the subject. This type of cross-hatching has peculiar features which Nesselrath connects to Giovanni da Udine's manner: «le sottili linee di tratteggio con piccoli uncini compaiono a intervalli analoghi [*scil.* to the Edinburgh drawing D 644], i tratteggi incrociati giustapposti e molto vicini all'orizzontale creano losanghe del tutto simili»: Nesselrath 1989, p. 262.

suggests the attribution to Giovanni da Udine[348]. The scholar considers the drawing the first attributed drawing of the artist and, although he does not provide a more precise chronology, it is likely that the drawing was made in the second decade of the 16th century and before the inauguration of the Loggetta of the Cardinal Bibiena in the Vatican (1517)[349]. On the other hand, in her publication on Giovanni da Udine, Dacos rejected Nesselrath's attribution, arguing that in the *recto* the measures of the vault could have been written by a second hand, as is the case for the Washington drawing 1993.51.3.a, attributed to Raphael (**Pl. 17, fig. 1**)[350]. Actually, this methodology of work (i.e. to note the measures afterwards) has no other parallel in Renaissance drawings and has not been well investigated by current literature[351]. Moreover, it is difficult to find any evidence of this methodology in the drawing. Therefore, when Nesselrath discusses the calligraphy of the Windsor drawing, although the scholar does not mention explicitly the inscriptions in the *verso* (**Pl. 17, fig. 3**), he obviously takes into account the inscriptions in the *verso*, and not only the measures in the *recto*, as

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[348] «Il foglio del Windsor Castle è il primo disegno che si può attribuire con certezza a Giovanni da Udine, perché la grafie delle annotazioni corrisponde esattamente a quella del Ricamatore, ben nota da una lettera a Michelangelo (Pini-Milanesi, 1876, n. 172) e da un suo libro dei conti conservato nella Biblioteca comunale di Udine»: Frommel-Ray-Tafuri 1984, p. 438, no. 3.5.4 (catalogue entry edited by A. Nesselrath).

[349] For more details on the Giovanni da Udine' works in the Loggetta: Dacos-Furlan 1987, p. 44.

[350] «Nel suo [*scil*. of Nesselrath] apparente rigore scientifico, il ragionamento si scontra con quanto nella stessa occasione osservava sul disegno del cavallo del Quirinale, attribuito a Raffaello: le scritte con le misure erano state aggiunte da un'altra mano. Non si può, in effetti, esprime un giudizio su un simile esercizio archeologico, che non è stato eseguito a mano libera, e viene qui riportato come mera ipotesi»: Dacos-Furlan 1987, 236-237, no. 27 (ed. by N. Dacos); for the Washington drawing: Frommel-Ray-Tafuri 1984, p. 422, no. 3.2.10 (catalogue entry edited by A. Nesselrath); for the chronology ca. 1514-1515: Faietti-Lafranconi 2020, p. 175 [cat. IV.13, ed. by V. Farinella]).

[351] Nesselrath suggests that, although the Washington drawing 1993.51.3.a is attributed to Raphael, the measures were added afterward by another artist, since the handwriting seems not that one of Raphael (Nesselrath 1982). Nevertheless, the scholar does not argue why and how a collaborator should have added the measurements afterward (and, above all, the scholar does not mention any study or parallel for this kind of work practice).

Dacos thought[352]. In conclusion, since there are similarities with Giovanni da Udine's handwriting (although, of course, there are some small differences probably due to the writing conditions: **Pl. 17, fig. 2**), Nesselrath's hypothesis seems more convincing that Dacos' one.

We know that Giovanni da Udine visited the Domus Aurea because of his signature in the "Criptoportico" (room no. 92: «Zuan da Udene Firlano»)[353] and the famous passage in the *Giovanni da Udine's life,* written by G. Vasari[354]. This passage testifies to the amazement of Giovanni da Udine who made several drawings of the paintings[355], among which only the Windsor drawing 909568 and the Uffizi drawing 1682 O survived (CAT. 6).

Analysis

At first sight, the sheet appears more an architectonical project than a simple artistic copy of the vault, as – for instance – it is in drawing 86 in the fol. 31 *verso* of the Codex Berolinensis (CAT. 9) and the fol. 6 *verso* of the Marciana Codex (CAT. 4). In fact, the artist did not simply sketch the geometrical scheme of the vault, but he copied precisely all the geometrical elements of the vault with measurements and followed the right proportions of the vault panels. He also recorded every detail of the decoration (the stucco decoration, the painted decoration, and the moldings).

Because of his precision and clear stroke of the pen, the artist seems very competent in the architectural drawings. Not by chance, we can recognize here the use of the typical work-tools for the architectural drawing, such as the ruler and the compass. As Nesselrath pointed out, the artist would have firstly sketched the "Volta Dorata" in other drawings (as in the case of the Uffizi drawing 1682 O: CAT 6) and,

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[352] In 1989 (two years later the Dacos' publication on Giovanni da Udine), A. Nesselrath specified the calligraphic evidence of the Windsor drawing RCIN 909568 that allowed him to attribute the sheet to Giovanni da Udine (Nesselrath 1989, p. 254)

[353] Dacos 1969, p. 148.

[354] Vasari 1966-1987, V (1984), p. 448.

[355] («[*scil*. Giovanni da Udine] non si contentò d'una sola volta o due disegnarle e ritrarle [scil. of the Domus Aurea]»): Vasari 1966-1987, V (1984), p. 448.

afterwards, he would have copied some of them on table (as in the case of the Windsor drawing 909568)[356].

The sheet shows, in the middle, one fold in one direction and, maybe, also another fold in the perpendicular sense. Since the drawing in the *recto* is not interrupted or influenced by the folds, we can easily assume that the folds were subsequent to the drawing act. Moreover, a little hole in the center of the sheet can be seen which probably has a relation with the folds. In fact, the hole in the center is at the crossing of the horizontal and vertical folds and probably the result of wear at that corner when the sheet was folded. Therefore, probably owing to the size of the sheet, the draftsman or the later owner had to fold it in order to put it in a portfolio, or in an envelope[357]. There are no signs of the sheet having been part of a drawing-book (stitch holes are lacking). The sketched drawing of the *verso* and the notes on that side of the sheet suggest that the drawing was made for personal use (and was not drawn for circulation among other artists).

As in the Washington drawing 1993.51.3.a (**Pl. 17, fig. 1**), in the Windsor drawing measurements are characterized by numbers and two letters: "d" (i.e. "dito" = finger), "p" (i.e. "piede" = foot) and "m" (i.e. "minuto" = minute). For a precise comprehension of the different units of measurement, the draughtsman of the Windsor drawing has left a precious indication in the *verso* of the sheet (**Pl. 17, fig. 3**). In the right side of the sheet (the long side), there is a long line divided into sixteen segments. Under the long line (**Pl. 13, fig. 1**), the artist noted «questo sie [1] pie[de] [a]nticho» («this is one ancient foot»). Moreover, above the penultimate segment, the draughtsman noted: «questi sono li diti» («these are the fingers»); and below: «questi sono li minuti / el dito (h)a 4 minuti / el piede [ha 10 d]iti» («these are the minutes / one finger has 4 minutes / one foot has 10 fingers»). Therefore, owing to the

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[356] «Si tratta quindi di un disegno [*scil*. the Windsor drawing RCIN 909568] delineato in studio, utilizzando un rapido schizzo a mano libera eseguito sul luogo; un esempio di schizzo di questo genere, raffigurante un quarto della stessa volta, ancora però privo di misure, sempre di mano di Giovanni da Udine, è conservato agli Uffizi (Orn. 1682, Bartoli 1914-1922, Vol. II, fig. 183)»: (Frommel-Ray-Tafuri 1984, p. 438: catalogue entry edited by A. Nesselrath); Nesselrath 1986 pp. 120-122.

[357] I would like to thank Dr. Albert J. Elen (Senior Curator of Drawings and Prints - Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam) for his suggestions.

verso of the sheet, we know that the artist adopted the "piede romano" as unit of measurement for his calculations on the *recto*. Nevertheless, the division of one finger in four minutes (instead of five minutes) suggests that we are in front of a variation of the "piede romano"[358].

Scholars have not yet verified whether the measures of the vault correspond to those of the Volta Dorata. Although Giovanni da Udine did not write the length from the boundary to the center of the vault, we can calculate the length boundary-center, according to his calculation. The measurement of the length of the boundary-center is possible owing to the different segments which define the length of almost all the panels of the vault (for "segment" I mean the line that the artist drew inside or outside almost all of the geometric panels of the vault; behind this line the artist noted the relative length). For example, we can consider the segment which the artist recorded as «6 p», namely six feet (**Pl. 17, fig. 4**). Given this length of six feet, we can calculate the proportion of each "piede romano" and, therefore, the distance center-boundary (in the east-west and north-south sense). The precision of the measurements is impressive for two reasons: firstly, measures are not simply recorded to assist in remembering the original length of the vault panels, but they fit perfectly in the drawing (e.g. one panel of the vault three feet wide – according to the notes of the artist – is exactly three feet and the double of another panel 1,5 feet wide, which has no written measures); secondly, the drawing reveals an astonishing aspect, the length of the boundary-center. In the drawing, the length of the boundary-center is 19 feet, namely 5,624 m (19 x 0,296). If we double this length, we can calculate the length of each side of the vault (the vault is almost a square), i.e. 11,25 m. This length is quite similar to that recorded by Francisco de Hollanda in his watercolor (11,84 m, cf. CAT. 1). Therefore, since it is unlikely to suppose that Francisco de Hollanda and Giovanni da Udine had any direct or indirect relation (because of biographical reasons), it is likely that they copied the vault directly to the original painting and noted the measurements of the vault on the

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[358] "piede romano" = 0,296 m; each "piede" is composed by 16 "dita" o "once"; 1 "dito" or "oncia" = 0,0185; "palmo romano" = 0,2234 m; each "palmo romano" is composed by 12 "once" (1 "oncia" = 0,0185 m; each "oncia" is composed by 5 "minuti"; each "minuto" is 0,0037 m): Vasori 1981, p. 9; Zupko 1981, pp. 174-175; Salvatori 2006, p. 65.

spot. The real dimension of the vault is not so different from the measurements noted by Giovanni da Udine: the vault is 10,35 in direction north-south and 9,75 in direction east-west[359]. Although the Renaissance dimensions are slightly different from those recorded by modern archaeologists, we can suppose two reasons for this discrepancy: the difference is simply due to some mistakes made by Renaissance artists; or, more probably, artists did not calculate the mere distance from the wall to the center of the vault (as modern archaeologists did, namely the distance wall-to-wall). Actually, Renaissance artists calculated the length of the boundary-center considering also the curvature of the vault . Owing to its curved shape, the length of the boundary-center of the vault is slightly longer then the distance wall-to-wall. Therefore, it is possible to understand why the Renaissance measures are slightly longer than those recorded by modern archaeologists. Owing to the proximity of the soil to the vault in 16th century, it is possible to conclude that the close distance from the vault allowed the Renaissance artists to measure different parts of the vault and the distance boundary-center, therefore to consider also the curvature of the vault [360].

In the corner of the vault, scene B is easily recognizable[361]. As many cases show (CAT. 6-13), the south-west and north-east corners of the vault were the most depicted corners in 16th century: Renaissance

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[359] Meyboom-Moormann 2013, I, p. 195: for a detailed discussion of the vault's dimension: *Chapter 3*.

[360] At two extreme margins of the vault, the artist wrote some numbers with a symbol in the form of "O)" which it is not possible to interpret. Probably it refers to a specific unit of measure (adding the different numbers of each border we have the result of 84, but it is not possible to say to which length it corresponds).

[361] Nesselrath defines the *recto* of the drawing: «rilievo ribaltato dello schema decorativo della "Volta Dorata" nella "Domus Aurea"» (Frommel-Ray-Tafuri 1984, p. 438, no. 3.5.4: catalogue entry edited by A. Nesselrath). The scholar has rightly observed that the Windsor drawing provides a specular image of the SW corner. In fact, as with the Berolinensis drawing (CAT. 9), scene B is placed on the right side of the vault and the figure is oriented towards the left side of the sheet.

artists entered into room 80 ("Volta Dorata") through two tunnels which ended in these two corners of the vault[362].

The draughtsman also wrote the inscription «dipinto» which has an important meaning. Owing to the Windsor drawing, it is possible to understand that the figural scene inside the angular medallions were painted and not in stucco. Nowadays the figural scenes inside the angular medallions have completely disappeared. For each panel he noted whether the figural decoration was painted or in stucco («storie di stucho» and «storie dipinte»). The artists reserved a detailed focus to the stucco moldings in the left-lower corner of the sheet (like CAT. 4, 5, 9, 10). Not by chance, Giovanni da Udine was one of the best artists with expertise in stucco decoration, during the first decades of 16th century[363]. Finally, it can be seen how the draftsman paid attention also to the original colors of some panels. Owing to the note «paonazo», we know that the letter «P» in other panels is referring to the same kind of red. This color is also present in Francisco's watercolor used for the same panels (CAT. 1) and in the Hertziana design as well (**Pl. 8, fig. 1**)[364]. The letter «V» probably refers to the color «verde» that characterizes the same panels in Francisco's watercolor (the latter shows a sort of green-blue – in Mirri's watercolor the color is simply blue). The meaning of the letter «A» is more difficult to explain, since in Francisco's watercolor the spaces of the vault defined by this letter are colored in blue or black (CAT. 1).

Specific bibliography for the Windsor drawing 909568:
Weege 1931 p. 168, fig. 14; Frommel-Ray-Tafuri 1984, p. 438, no. 3.5.4 (catalogue entry edited by A. Nesselrath); Dacos-Furlan 1987, 236-237, no. 27 (ed. by N. Dacos); Nesselrath 1989, pp. 254-262.

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[362] For a clear image of the two holes in the vault : Segala-Sciortino 1999, p. 38, fig. 29 (in the photo, the right side is the North side). Actually, there are still some doubts whether both tunnels or only one (or even neither) were used by the artists of the 16th century. Indeed, it is also possible that they were created later (namely in 17th century): Meyboom-Moormann 2013, I, p. 195.

[363] Dacos-Furlan 1987, pp. 34-60.

[364] In watercolored engraving of Louvre edition (Pinot de Villechenon 1998, tav. 43) the circle band around the central medallion is black, while in the Hertziana drawing (Pl. 8, fig. 1) is «paonazo», namely red.

Bibliographic reference to the Windsor drawing 909568:
Dacos 1969, p. 26, no. d; Brunetti 2018-2019.

Other copies of SW vault corner and scene B of the Volta Dorata:
- 1490-1506/7, Giuliano da Sangallo workshop, *Angular medallion SW of the Volta Dorata (scene B)*, Codex Escurialensis (Escorial, Biblioteca Real de S. Lorenzo, Cod. 28-II-12), fol. 10 *recto:* CAT. 11;
- 1510-1517?, Giovanni da Udine (1487 Udine – 1561 Rome), *Volta Dorata (SW corner)*: Windsor, Royal Collection, RCIN 909568: CAT. 8;
- 1524-1533 ca.: Raphael Follower ("Anonymus Foro Semproniensis")**,** *Scene B of the SW angular medallion of the Volta Dorata and the head of the kneeling woman in Raphael's Transfiguration,* Codex Fossombronis (Fossombrone, Biblioteca Civica Passionei, inv. Disegni vol. 3 [= Cod. C.5.VI] and Disegni vol. 4, c. 38 and c. 39), fol. 85 *recto*: CAT. 12;
- 1538 - ante 1571, Francisco de Hollanda (1517 Lisboa – 1585 Lisbona), *Volta Dorata's vault* , Os desenhos das antigualhas (Escorial, Biblioteca Real de S. Lorenzo, Cod. 28-I-20): fol. 47 bis *verso* - 48 *recto*: CAT. 1;
- 1560-1570?, Giovanni Antonio Dosio (San Gimignano 1533 - Caserta 1609), *SW vault -corner of the Volta Dorata (scenes B, 12, C, A)*, Codex Berolinensis (Berlin, Staatliche Museen Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Kupferstichkabinett, inv. 79.D.1), fol. 31 *verso* (drawing no. 86): CAT. 9;
- mid. 16th century, Manner of Giorgio Vasari (Arezzo 1511- Florence 1574), *SW vault -corner of the "Volta Dorata" of the Domus Aurea,* Florence, Gallerie degli Uffizi, Gabinetto Disegni e Stampe (GDSU), inv. 53 O *recto:* CAT. 10;
- mid. 17th century, Pietro Santi Bartoli (1635 Perugia – 1700 Rome), *Volta Dorata's vault* (copies after Francisco de Hollanda): Codex Massimi (ante 1674, University Library of Glasgow, MS Gen 1496 [HX 110] fol. LXXV: Pace 1979, p. 143, no. 58) and the Codex Baddeley (around 1670s, Eton College Collection, ECL-TP.20, fol. CXXVII: Ashby 1916, p. 51): CAT. 2;
- 1776, F. Smuglewic, Mirri's album (Pinot de Villechenon 1998, tav. 49 [ed. or. 1776: tav. 46]);
- 1741, G. Turnbull (engraving from Bartoli's watercolor: CAT. 2), Turnbull 1741, no. 13;
- 1786, N. Ponce's engraving (copy of Mirri's engraving), *scene B,* Ponce 1786, tav. 45;
- 1800-1802, A. Uggeri's engraving (copy of Mirri's engraving), Uggeri 1800-1802, tav. 28 (Egger p. 68, fig. 41).

CAT. 9

SW vault corner of the Volta Dorata (scenes B, 12, C, A)
Giovanni Antonio Dosio (1533 San Gimignano - 1609 Caserta)
Codex Berolinensis, inv. 79.D.1,
Berlin, Staatliche Museen Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Kupferstichkabinett
1560-70?
fol. 31 *verso,* drawing no. 86
240 x 250 mm (folio dimensions: 261 x 340 mm), watermark absent[365]
paper, pen, ink, traces of black pencil (*lapis*)
inscription: «pittura»

Provenance
Unknown[366].

Drawing in context
As Hülsen pointed out in 1912, the so-called Codex Berolinensis is wrongly called "codex", since it is a sort of "fake album" («Album fattizio»).[367] In fact, the Codex is an 18th-century blank book (94 pages) in which, probably in the same century, 200 drawings of the 16th century were pasted (including drawings by Dosio and other anonymous Italian artists). Afterwards, around the 19th century (probably when the Codex was acquired by the Kupferstichkabinett in Berlin), each drawing had a progressive number. Owing to the material and stylistic features, it has been possible to demonstrate that some drawings of the Codex came from the lost drawing-book by Dosio on Roman Antiquities (*Libro delle antichità*)[368] and others from another lost Dosio drawing-book on Roman epigraphs and statues (*Album di epigrafi*

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[365] There is no watermark present in the drawing paper. The distance between the chain lines of this paper varie from 33 to 34 mm and they run horizontally. I would like to thank Dr. Luise Maul for the information (Dipl.-Rest. Abteilung Konservierung/Restaurierung, Conservation Department, Kupferstichkabinett Staatliche Museen zu Berlin - Preußischer Kulturbesitz).

[366] Hülsen 1912, p. 73.

[367] Hülsen 1912, pp. 73-78; Hülsen 1933, pp. XXI-XXII.

[368] The lost Dosio's *Libro delle antichità* originally had drawings which nowadays are probably lost, others are in the Codex Berolinensis and others in the Uffizi Gabinetto Disegni e Stampe: Hülsen 1912, pp. 74-78; Elen 1995, pp. 342-345

e scolture antiche).[369] Therefore, owing to the different provenance of each drawing, it is difficult to know whether Dosio's sheet fol. 31 was part of a drawing-book, and if so to which it belonged.

It is important to stress that the fol. 31 shows two drawings of the Domus Aurea's painting (*recto* and *verso;* for the *recto:* CAT. 26), although there are no other drawings of Roman paintings in the rest of the Codex. Only the fol. 87 has a drawing (no. 192) which depicts a part of one Roman stucco vault of the Terme Maggiori in Villa Adriana (Tivoli).[370] In the Codex, a preference for the figural scenes can be seen (scenes which originally decorated sarcophagi, altars, monuments, reliefs, etc.). There are not many copies of the ancient monuments or projects for modern buildings inspired by those from Antiquity. Therefore, the fol. 31 *verso* (drawing no. 86) is the only drawing which does not depict just a figural scene, but records the geometrical pattern of the ancient vault . In this sense, we can assume that, although Dosio was not generally interested in architectural drawings, he felt the need to copy the Volta Dorata because of its archaeological uniqueness.

Attribution

The drawings collected in the Berolinensis codex have been attributed to Giovanni Antonio Dosio since the beginning of the 20th century by P.G. Hübner[371]. The attribution to Dosio has been possible because of stylistic, calligraphic and paper clues and the internal information within the drawings (e.g. chronologies noted in some drawings and geographical provenance of the artist owing to the dialect of Italian used in the inscriptions)[372]. However, an important indication of Dosio's authorship is revealed due to some engravings published by

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[369] The lost Dosio *Album di epigrafi e scolture antiche* originally had drawings which nowadays are probably lost, others are in the Codex Berolinensis and others in the Biblioteca Marucelliana in Florence: Hülsen 1912, pp. 23-50; Elen 1995, pp. 346-348.

[370] Hülsen 1912, p. 99; Hülsen 1933, p. 41: the Roman stucco vault of the Terme Maggiori in Villa Adriana (Tivoli) is also depicted in one drawing of the Codex Barberini (fol. 39: Hülsen 1910b, p. 55); the ceilings of the Terme Minori and the so-called Palestra of Villa Adriana are depicted in the Albertina drawings no. 308 and 309 the (Valori 1985, pp. 159-163, no. VI-VII).

[371] Hübner 1911.

[372] Hülsen 1912, pp. 73-78; Hülsen 1933, pp. XXI-XXII.

G.B. Cavalieri (1525-1601) in 1569. In fact, Cavalieri used some of Dosio's drawings, now preserved in the Codex Berolinensis, for his own engravings. Moreover, in 1911, P.N. Ferri found some Renaissance drawings in Biblioteca Marucelliana (Florence) which depict some Roman Antiquities in a very similar style. Since he attributed them to Dosio because of other Dosio's drawings, his attribution has an important influence on the Hübner's and Hülsen's studies on the Berolinensis Codex[373]. As Hülsen pointed out, most of the drawings after Antiquity made by Dosio can be dated 1560-1570, especially 1560-1565 during his first stay in Rome.[374] Therefore, we can assume that, if fol. 31 of the Codex Berolinensis was part of one of Dosio's drawing-book, this drawing-book was made for a personal use, rather than for circulation within a workshop.

Analysis
The drawings no. 85 (CAT. 26) and no. 86 are located on the two sides of one sheet of paper. This sheet of paper has been mounted on a blank page (fol. 31) of the Codex Berolinensis. The centre of the page has been cut out to make drawing no. 86 visible on fol. 31 *verso*. The drawing depicts the south-west corner of the vault (**Pl. 19, fig. 1**), and precisely the scenes B, A, C, 12 (therefore the left side of the sheet – where is written the number 86 – is the south side).[375]

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[373] Ferri 1911; for Ferri's influence on Hübner and Hülsen: Hülsen 1912, p. 1 («quando poi, nell'agosto del 1911 […] ebbi occasione anche a ritornare sul cosiddetto Codex Berolinensis, esaminato da me più volte in tempi anteriori: e scorrendo il volume, fui colpito dalla perfetta somiglianza di alcuni fogli contenuti con quei Marucelliani»); Hülsen 1912, p. 77, n. 2 («mentre sto per terminare la stampa di quest'articolo, mi giunge il recente libro dello Huebner, *Le statue di Roma*. Nel paragrafo che tratta del Dosio (pp. 64-66) l'autore si contenta di dare un sunto del suo articolo nei *Monatshefte* [*scil.* Hübner 1911], senza nemmeno accennare all'importante scoperta dei disegni Marucelliani dovuta al Ferri»).
[374] Hülsen 1912, p. 76; Hülsen 1933 pp. XXI-XXII. Dosio's drawings of the Antiquities are often thought of being published in prints and for being sent to other eminent personalities, such as Cardinale Niccolò Gaddi: Dosio 1976, pp. 9-26 (introduction edited by F. Borsi); Marciano 2008, pp. 95-144.
[375] Meyboom-Moormann 2013, I, p. 197.

Drawing no. 86 of the Codex Berolinensis has been based on a brief and rough preparatory drawing in pencil (as the traces of *lapis* suggest). Inside the central medallion of the vault it can be seen a cross in pencil that reveals the use of the compass. The pencil lines that define the different geometrical panels of the vault seem to be traced with a ruler. Therefore, the drawing can be considered as a copy after another drawing in studio. Inside one panel of the vault, the artist wrote «pittura». This inscription is quite curious: since Dosio copied part of a vault , he should have known that this geometrical scheme was painted (and not, for instance, made in stone or wood). This inscription would have been easier to understand if there would be other inscriptions as «stucco» or «storie dipinte», as we can see in other drawings (e.g. CAT. 8; CAT. 10). With these other inscriptions, the artists wanted to remember where the painting decoration and the stucco decoration were located. Therefore, in my opinion, the unique inscription «pittura» did not simply indicate that this panel contained painting, while the rest of the decoration was irrelevant. This annotation might depend more on the fact that the artist copied a drawing similar to the Windsor drawing (RCIN 909568 *recto*: CAT. 8) or the Uffizi drawing 53 O (CAT. 10) but did not copy all the inscriptions. He copied only one inscription just for remembering that all the vault (and not one panel) contained a painted vault . Not by chance, in the Uffizi drawing 53 O (CAT. 10), we can read the same inscription in the same position of the vault. In the upper part of the sheet, Dosio copied in *lapis* a portion of the stucco moldings, in a sort of three-dimensional view: the pencil drawing shows that the artist did not pay attention to refine it in pen. Therefore, the hypothesis that the drawing was a quick and, above all, personal copy of the vault seems to be confirmed.

Two archaeological aspects can be pointed out for Dosio's drawing. The first is the presence of one stucco figure (a little flying figure) inside the rhombus inscribed in the square. This element was quite common in stucco Roman ceilings, as we can see it in Hypogeum of the Fondo Caizzo in Pozzuoli (Naples), dated to the end of the 1st century AD (**Pl. 19, fig. 2**)[376]. Concerning scene 12, although he sketched the scene

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[376] For the stucco reliefs of the Hypogeum of the Fondo Caizzo in Pozzuoli (Naples): Mielsch 1975, pp. 63-64.

quickly, this detail allows us to suppose that this scene was visible in the 16th century.

The drawing no. 86 of the Codex Berolinensis has particular value because it testifies to the unusual interest of Dosio for ceilings and stucco decorations. Nevertheless, owing to the Uffizi drawing 1684 O, we understand the precise reason of this interest (**Pl. 19, fig. 3**): the Roman ceilings that Dosio saw and copied (as those of the Domus Aurea) inspired him in designing new arches and, mostly, floors. In fact, in the Uffizi drawing 1684 O, Dosio wrote: «under-arch decoration»; «stucco under-arch and it could be used for a floor and, where there is the star, there is the center of the arch»; «this could be used for a stucco under-arch and also for a floor…».[377] The last example of under-arch that he copied was located in one room of the Domus Aurea, while the example above the latter is the decoration of one of the Colosseum's under-arch.[378] Not by chance, as will be show in *Chapter 4* (fig. 115), Dosio used the model of Volta Dorata for a marble table.

Specific bibliography for the drawing no. 86 (fol. 31 *verso*), Codex Berolinensis:
Dehn 1913, pp. 396-397, fig. 1; Hülsen 1933, p. 19.

Bibliographic reference to the drawing no. 86 (fol. 31 *verso*), Codex Berolinensis:
Hülsen 1912, p. 89; Dacos 1969, p. 26, no. 3C; Meyboom-Moormann 2013, I, p. 197.

Other copies of the SW corner and scene B of the Volta Dorata: *see CAT. 8.*

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[377] «un sotto arco»; «un sotto arco di stucco e potrebbe ancora seruive per pavimento e dove è la stella quello è la metà»; «questo puo seruire per un sotto arco di stucco et ancora per un pauimento…»: Dosio 1976, p. 107, no. 100 (catalogue entry edited by C. Acidini). The graphic Dosio's production allows us to see the different uses of the Antiquity among Renaissance artists: the direct copy after the Antique (Dosio 1976, pp. 27-31, ed. by C. Acidini); the copy of modern monuments/buildings inspired by the Antique (Dosio 1976, pp. 132-16, ed. by C. Acidini) and his projects for modern monuments/buildings inspired by the Antique (Dosio 1976, pp. 167-393, ed. by F. Borsi).
[378] Brunetti 2018-2019.

CAT. 10

SW vault corner of the Volta Dorata (scenes 1 and 2)
Manner of Giorgio Vasari (1511 Arezzo - 1574 Florence)
Florence, Gallerie degli Uffizi, Gabinetto Disegni e Stampe (GDSU), inv. 53 O
recto
second half of the 16th century
392 x 268 mm, watermark: eagle inscribed in a circle and surmounted by a
crown: similar to Briquet no. 209 (Verona 1582-1596: 46,5 mm x 74 mm)[379]
paper, pen, ink diluted, traces of black pencil (*lapis*)
inscriptions: «partimento duna grotta antica tutta di stucco alle Terme / di Tito
detta la grotta di Sileno»; «pitura»; «pitura»; «storie di pitura»

Provenance
There is little information on the arrival of the drawing 53 O in the
Uffizi collection and there is no mention of it in the inventories before
Ferri's catalogue was compiled (1890).[380] In the entry card that Ferri
created for each drawing and print of the Gabinetto Disegni e Stampe
(so-called "schedine Ferri")[381], a price is written (in "lire" currency: 100
₤ for the drawing 53 O): probably the price indicates an economic
evaluation of the drawing rather than the value of its possible purchase
price.[382]

Drawing in context
The Uffizi drawing 53 O is part of a lost drawing-book, a collection of
drawings by different artists and, therefore, probably thought to be
used and consulted within a workshop (center Italy, second half of the
16th century). The Uffizi drawings (50 O, 51 O and 53 O) which

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[379] Brunetti 2018.
[380] The first certain citation of the drawing 53 O is found in the Ferri's
"summary catalogue" (Pasquale Nerino Ferri 1890, *Inventario generale dei disegni
di ornamenti varii posseduti dalla R. Galleria di Firenze*, vol 1, GDSU, ms. coll. n. 84
III, foll. 12 v. - 13 r.). The drawing 53 O does not appear in the eighteenth-
century inventories of Giuseppe Pelli Bencivenni, director of the Uffizi Gallery
from 1775 to 1793 (Petrioli Tofani 2014).
[381] All the "schedine Ferri" have been digitized and published on the site of the
Euploos project in the Uffizi (euploos.uffizi.it).
[382] The progressive numbering system of the drawings may depend on the
same purchase circumstance of the drawings or, more probably, on the thematic
affinity (i.e. archaeological subject).

constituted the lost drawing-book reveal the deep interest in Roman painting and stucco decoration from the Domus Aurea and under the arches of the Colosseum[383].

Attribution

The "schedine Ferri" (cf. "Provenance") were the first attempt to indicate a possible chronology and attribution of the drawings. In the "schedina Ferri" of the drawing 53 O, it can be seen the handwriting of Ferri and some corrections made by another twentieth-century editor (maybe his collaborator Filippo Di Pietro). These corrections concern only the subject[384], the attribution and the chronology of the drawing.[385] From the corrections we can see how thoroughly the attribution was discussed and debated: considering the drawing made by «Maniera del Vasari», in a second moment Ferri changed his opinion in «Vasari». Moreover, there is some evidence that connects the Uffizi drawing 53 O with the Uffizi drawing 51 O which is attributed to Vasari.[386] Therefore, following Ferri's attribution (1851-1917)[387], Barocchi confirmed the authorship of the drawing 53 O to Vasari: the scholar considers the

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[383] The Uffizi drawing 53 O is included in a group of drawings (50 O - 55 O) which show the same inspiration from the Antiquity and, above all, from the Domus Aurea (Brunetti 2018-2019).

[384] About the subject, in the "schedina", the Ferri's handwriting wrote «scomparto di una volta antica» and, afterward, it has been corrected by a second handwriting in «soffitto antico a stucchi».

[385] Concerning the authorship, it can be seen five main afterthoughts: firstly, Ferri reveals an afterthought (before: «Ignoto del sec. XVI»; later: «Maniera del Vasari»); the third step: a pen stroke deletes «Maniera del» and leaves the word «Vasari»; the fourth step: a different handwriting from Ferri's one adds «o Fra Giocondo?» (has the latter attribution been suggested by the drawing 54 O? The drawing 54 O is attributed to Fra' Giocondo and, as the drawing 53 O, it depicts one vault of the Domus Aurea, although different from that one of the 53 O); finally, a very short blue pen stroke underlines the word «Vasari»: it seems to suggest that the attribution to Vasari was considered more likely rather than the attribution to Fra' Giocondo.

[386] Barocchi 1964, 13–14, no. 2; Petrioli Tofani 1998, 141; Agosti-Farinella 1987a, 104-105, n. 45; Brunetti 2018.

[387] A second handwritten inscription, different from that of Ferri, notes "Fra Giocondo?": Perhaps due to the analogy with 54 O - attributed to Fra' Giocondo - which also reproduces a vault of the Domus Aurea (the Volta degli Stucchi)?.

drawing one of the designs that the artist made during his second Roman stay (1538). In this stay, Vasari is said to have copied the largest number of antiquities possible, making «more than three-hundred» drawings and, above all, copying «most of what was underground in the grottoes».[388] However, Härb does not think that Vasari made the 51 O and 53 O drawings.[389] Actually, the calligraphic aspects of the two drawings (very similar to each other) show clear divergences from the handwriting of the artist from Arezzo. In this sense, as in the case of 51 O, the traditional attribution "manner of Vasari" seems to be the most likely explanation and therefore the chronology has to be placed around the middle of the 16th century.

Analysis

The Uffizi drawing 53 O depicts on both sides of the sheet the two vaults of the Domus Aurea. Nevertheless, while the *verso* shows a vault which is not possible to locate inside the Domus Aurea, on the *recto* a corner of the Volta Dorata is depicted[390]. The sheet shows some stylistic features that immediately suggest that it was drawn on table, e.g. the use of the ruler, the compass (cf. the point inside the central medallion of the vault), the traces of pencil (*lapis*) and the ink diluted in order to emphasize the depth.

Among the 16th century drawings that depict the Volta Dorata, the drawing 53 O *recto* seem particularly precise and carefully drawn – although not to the same level of the Windsor RL 909568 (CAT. 8). The latter also provides measurements and the reproduction is never sketched, as we can observe in some parts of the drawing 53 O *recto* (e.g. the geometrical scheme of the vault in the upper part of the sheet). However, despite the Windsor drawing which appears more like an architectural design (i.e. more interested in measurements and proportions), the Uffizi drawing remains one of the most accurate copies of the vault from the 16th century.

The drawing 53 O reveals the care taken to portray the ornamental decoration. The interest in the decoration and scheme of the Volta Dorata is quite common from the first half of the 16th century. In fact,

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[388] Vasari 1966-1987, VI (1987), p. 377.
[389] Härb 2015, p. 8, n. 22.
[390] Brunetti 2018-2019.

towards the end of the 15th century and the first decades of the 16th century, the drawings mainly depict figurative or decorative details of the vault (i.e. the "grotesque" or the figural scenes "all'antica").[391] On the other hand, around the middle of the 16th century, the vaults seem to acquire artistic relevance precisely because of their geometric schemes and their stucco decoration.

In the 16th century, the vault was known not only for its valuable paintings (mainly owing to the presence of gold), but also for its stucco decoration which was alternated with the purely pictorial decoration. Not by chance, the author of the drawing wrote the word «pitura» o «storie di pitura»: as in the case of Dosio drawing (CAT. 9); the Windsor drawing (CAT. 8); the Uffizi drawing 51 O; and the Uffizi drawing 50 O. The author of drawing 53 O indicates - where he thought it was useful to remember - the points in which the pictorial decoration was alternated to those in stucco. Originally, in fact, in the Volta Dorata the bilobed cartouches in the middle of the perimeter frame (panels 2, 5, 8, 11) had a purely pictorial decoration. The other bilobed cartouches of the same frame were painted in stucco (as the Windsor drawing indicates: CAT. 8).

In the 16th century, artists called room 80 in different ways, but the names and expressions referred always to the gold decoration of the stucco.[392] Nevertheless, the author of drawing 53 O testifies an unusual way of naming the room, calling it «cave of Silenus» («partimento duna grotta antica tutta di stucco alle Terme / di Tito detta la grotta di Sileno»).[393] The reason for a similar denomination is a mistake of the draftsman: in the *verso* of Uffizi drawing 53 O, another vault of the Domus Aurea is depicted and it shows at the center of the vault one Silenus drunk. Therefore, when recopied the drawing on the table, the

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[391] Weege 1913, 40-56; Dacos 1969, 25-28.

[392] «Volta Dorata» in fol. 10 *recto* of the Codex Escurialensis (1490-1506/7): Fernandez Gomez 2000, 63; «in la grota daloro dipinto» in fol. 19 *verso* of the Codex Wolfegg, made by Aspertini (1473/5-1552) in 1500-1503: Schweikhart 1986, 63, fig. 5.

[393] «A portion of a vault in one ancient cave, all adorned by stucco decorations, in the Baths / of Titus, called cave of Silenus».

draftsman confused the name «cave of Silenus» with that of the Volta Dorata[394].

It is possible to recognize the corner of the Volta Dorata depicted in the Uffizi drawing because of one figural scene sketched. In fact, in the West side of the Volta Dorata, there was - in a central position - a complex figural scene (scene 2: CAT. 19, 20), often copied from the 16th until the 18th centuries, and not clearly interpreted (cf. *Chapter 3*). Albeit in a sketchy way, the same iconography can be seen in the Uffizi drawing and, precisely, at the lower right part of the sheet, where a figural panel shows a seated figure. The seated figure is depicted in a rough way, but it recalls the human figure that, in scene 2, sits in front of enthroned couple. Thus, the presence of this scene in the Uffizi drawing 53 O allows us also to identify the corner of the depicted vault, i.e. the SW corner.[395]

The SW and NE corners of the vault were the most depicted corners in 16th century (for the SW corner: CAT. 8-12): Renaissance artists entered room 80 ("Volta Dorata") through tunnels which did not ruin the decoration of these two corners of the vault.[396]

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[394] Brunetti 2018-2019.

[395] Nowadays, scene 2 is not longer visible (Meyboom-Moormann 2013, II, fig. 80.6). Nevertheless, we know that, originally, in the Volta Dorata a male figure was sitting with his shoulders in direction to the SW corner. We are able to figure out the panel's orientation because of Francisco's watercolor (CAT. 1) and the orientation's mistakes in the watercolor of the Volta Dorata made by Mirri, published in 1776 (Meyboom-Moormann 2013, II, fig. 80.12). In Mirri's watercolor, the panel no. 2 is copied in reflected way (namely, the seated male figure has the shoulders in direction to the corner NW). However, Mirri copied all the figural scenes of the vault in reflected way: as for the angular medallions, also the figural scene no. 8 (the myth of Phaedra and Hippolytus) has been reproduced in reflected way. In fact, in the painting (nowadays partially visible), the female figure (Phaedra) who is giving the letter to Hippolytus has her shoulders in direction to the NE corner (Meyboom-Moormann 2013, II, fig. 80.7). On the other hand, in Mirri's watercolor, Phaedra's shoulders are directed towards the SE corner. Therefore, Mirri specularly copied also scene 2 (the scene with Aphrodite and Ares).

[396] For a clear image of the two holes in the vault : Segala-Sciortino 1999, p. 38, fig. 29 (in the photo, the right side is the east side of the vault and the lower side is the north side of the vault); cf. also: Meyboom-Moormann 2013, I, p. 195.

As in the case of Dosio's drawing (CAT. 9), the Windsor drawing (CAT. 8), the Uffizi drawing 51 O and Uffizi drawing 50 O, the drawing 53 O *recto* also provides an interesting architectonical detail. It depicts two profiles of two vault coffers in the lower margin of the sheet. They are depicted sideways and in proportion to their original dimensions. The vault coffer on the left side has an inscribed circle. This latter is the same circle that the artist left empty in the corner of the drawing 53 O, but it was originally filled by a flying figure (cd. "Schwebende Gruppen"), maybe a divine rat.

The vault coffer on the right side was placed beside the other one but it was filled by a geometric figure, similar to a rhombus. The diluted ink is applied with a brush in order to emphasize the depth and the chiaroscuro of the vault coffers. Another graphic feature, common to other drawings of the Volta Dorata, concerns the tendency to reproduce almost half of the vault, with a greater level of precision for only a quarter of the vault (the artist only sketched the geometry of the vault close to the vault 's corner).

Specific bibliography for the Uffizi drawing 53 O *recto*:
Weege, p. 166, fig. 13; Barocchi 1964, pp. 13–14, no. 2; Agosti-Farinella 1987a, pp. 104-105, no. 45; Petrioli Tofani 1998, p. 141; Brunetti 2018.

Bibliographic reference to the Uffizi drawing 53 O *recto*:
Dacos 1969, no. 3.a; Härb 2015, 8, n. 22.

Copies of scene B of the Volta Dorata and SW corner of the vault:
see CAT. 8, CAT. 11

CAT. 11

Angular medallion SW of the Volta Dorata (scene B)
Giuliano da Sangallo workshop
Codex Escurialensis
Escorial, Biblioteca Real de S. Lorenzo, Cod. 28-II-12
1490-1506/7
33 x 23 cm, 38 Italian watermarks[397]
fol. 10 r.
paper, red pen
inscriptions: «volta dorata»

Provenance
Acquired in Rome (1506/1508 ca.) by Don Rodrigo de Mendoza; acquired for the Escorial with the cooperation of Mendoza Library in 1576[398].

Attribution
Hülsen was the first scholar to attribute the Codex to Giuliano da Sangallo[399]. In 1906 Egger attributed it to one pupil of Ghirlandaio, who possibly copied the drawings after a drawing-book of his master[400]. While J. Shearman agreed with Egger's hypothesis[401], in 1986 Nesselrath returned to the first attribution and argues that the drawings are copies of Giuliano da Sangallo's workshop[402]. The scholars have provided different chronologies which, however, go from 1490 to 1506/7[403].

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[397] Fernandez Gomez 2000, pp. 44-46.

[398] Shearman 1977, pp. 107-108 (*contra* Egger 1906, p. 11*:* acquired by Don Diego Hurtado de Mendoza in 1527-1551).

[399] «Es ist mir daher nicht unwahrscheinlich, das der Cod. Escorialensis dem Sangallo angehört, und zu der grossen Prachthandschrift der Barberina in einem ähnlichen Verhältnis steht, wie die Sieneser Skizzenbücher»: Hülsen 1891, p. 145; cf. Hülsen 1910a.

[400] Egger 1906, pp. 34-47.

[401] Shearman 1977, p. 108.

[402] Nesselrath 1986, p. 132; Nesselrath 1993, pp. 52-53.

[403] Egger: around 1491 (Egger 1906, p. 46); Hülsen: 1489-1493 (Hülsen 1910b, pp. XXXV-XXXVI); Shearman: 1505 *terminus post quem* for the first two volumes of the Codex (Shearman 1977, p. 130); Nesselrath: different dates for the three volumes (Nesselrath 1993, pp. 51-52).

Drawing in context

As J. Shearman pointed out, from the material point of view (watermarks, type and size of paper), the Codex Escurialensis is a track volume, composed of three different "volumes"[404]. The first (ff. 1-11) and the second volume (ff. 12-82) consist of separate leaves and the designs are drawn by the same draftsman. The drawings of the second volume were cropped in order to sew the second volume with the third[405]. In fact, the sheets of the second and third volumes have a progressive numeration[406]. The third volume (ff. 69-82) is made up by double leaves folded and the designs are drawn by different artists. Therefore, although from the codicological point of view the Codex Escurialensis is made up by three volumes, the Codex consists of two different drawing-books (I volume and II-III volumes). Nevertheless, all three volumes come from Giuliano da Sangallo's workshop[407].

Most of the drawings reproduce subjects after the Antique, especially sculptures found in Rome. The strong interest in Rome's antiquities could be due to the close relationship between Giuliano and Raphael, since the latter was friend of Aristotele da Sangallo (Giuliano's cousin) when both were in Rome[408]. The Codex Escurialensis is the Renaissance drawing-book which contain the largest number of drawings after the Domus Aurea's paintings. Indeed, sixteen drawings surely depict subjects from the Domus Aurea's paintings.

The first volume of the Codex Escurialensis (foll. 1-11) consists mainly of drawings after Rome's antiquities and monuments (Domus Aurea, Santa Costanza's Mausoleum, San Marco in Vatican, view of Rome, Santa Maria in Monterone etc.) and the presence of the Domus Aurea is quite frequent (three out of thirteen drawings: foll. 6 *recto*, 10 *recto*, 10 *verso*). The anonymous draftsman seems interested especially in the

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[404] Shearman 1977, p. 110; cf. Elen 1995, pp. 256-259.

[405] Shearman 1977, p. 110; Nesselrath 1986, p. 130; according to the Shearman's study 1977, the second part is the nucleus of the volume and a large part of an "initially independent collection".

[406] Egger 1906, pp. 64-66; Fernandez Gomez 2000's volumes do not provide any useful information about the material features and codicological remarks: pp. 44-49.

[407] Nesselrath 1986, p. 130.

[408] Nesselrath 1993, pp. 52-53.

figurative scenes, rather than the decorative motifs. Not by chance, in the first volume, all three drawings of the Domus Aurea's paintings depict figural scenes. On the other hand, all the remaining drawings of the Domus Aurea (13) are within the second volume of the Codex (foll. 12-68): they depict the geometrical schemes of some ceilings and, mostly, the ornamental motifs of the paintings (grotesques and figurative frieze)[409]. Therefore, considering all the drawings of the Domus Aurea in the Codex, the workshop's draftsmen seem more interested in the decorative motifs of the paintings, although the draftsman of the first volume partially maintained the typical 15th-century interest for the figurative "all'antica" scenes.

Analysis

In the fol. 10 *recto* the draughtsman reproduces the scene B of the Volta Dorata and the artist noted in this folio the archaeological provenance of the scene, namely «volta dorata»[410]. Unfortunately, the scene B disappeared from the painting during the 19th century[411]. The drawing shows a young man sitting on a ram and holding a jar in his left hand.

As in the case of fol. 6 *recto* (CAT 16), the draughtsman inserts the scene within a circle, drawn by a compass. Despite the fol. 6 *recto*, he did not copy part of the circular frame that flanked the medallion. Also in this case, the good conditions of the folio and the slow and precise pen strokes suggest that the drawing is a copy of another drawing.

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[409] Fol. 12 *verso* (one decorative panel of the Volta Gialla); fol. 13 *recto* (one grotesques motif of the Volta Nera); fol. 13 *verso* (the entire Volta Gialla); fol. 14 *recto* (one decorative panel of the Volta Gialla); fol. 14 *verso* (one portion of the Volta Nera); fol. 15 *recto* (the lunette of the Volta Nera); fol. 32 *recto* (one figurative frieze of the Volta degli Stucchi); fol. 34 *verso* (one figurative frieze of the Volta delle Civette); fol. 42 *recto* (one grotesques motif of the Volta Nera); fol. 52 *recto* (one figurative frieze of the Criptoportico); fol. 58 *recto* (one figurative frieze of the Volta delle Civette); fol. 60 *recto* (one quarter-vault of the Volta degli Stucchi); fol. 65 *recto* (one figurative frieze of the Volta delle Civette).
[410] Scene B and SW corner of the vault are also sketched: in the drawing of Windsor RCIN 909568, attributed to Giovanni da Udine (CAT. 8); in the Codex Beroliniensis of Giovan Antonio Dosio (fol. 31 *verso*): CAT. 9; in the Codex Fossombronis (fol. 85 *recto*): CAT. 12.
[411] Carletti says that in 1776 Mirri was able to see and draw the medallion: Carletti 2014, pp. 95-96 (= Mirri-Carletti 1776, p. LXXX, no. LVI).

All four main witnesses of scene B (Codex Escurialensis, Codex Fossombronis, Francisco's watercolor and Mirri's Louvre watercolored engraving) agree on the iconography (cf. *Chapter 3*)[412]. Paradoxically, the codex Fossombronis has more similarities with the Mirri's watercolor rather than Francisco's watercolor (although in Mirri's version, there is a horse instead of a ram: probably because of the influence of scene H on Mirri's artist, i.e. F. Smugliewicz).

In Francisco's watercolor, the young man is covered by a long red dress: according to Dacos, Francisco added this detail for increasing the sumptuousness of the figure[413]. According to the scholar, the Codex Escurialensis is *lectio difficilior* and, therefore, more reliable than Francisco's watercolor. In fact, the young man of scene B is reproduced with a long dress on legs in the Codex Fossombronis (CAT. 12). Therefore, it is probable that the scene in this detail was not so clear and, despite the scholars' trend in accusing Francisco's invention, the Portuguese artist reproduced the scene as far as he could see.

Considering all the witnesses of scene B, the Codex Escurialensis is the only one that includes the halo on the young man's head. The reason for this detail remains unknown, although it is unlikely that was really present in the ancient paintings. It is possible that, because of the presence of a ram (Agnus Dei?), the artists gave the scene a Christian interpretation and added the halo around the head of the young man. Nevertheless, this hypothesis remains only a supposition.

From an archaeological and iconological point of view, it is not simply a matter of understanding if the scene had a precise mythological reference or if it was a simply decorative "Schwebende Gruppe" without any iconological meaning. For a precise mythological reference we have a suggestion by Wattel de Croisant: considering Francisco's watercolor, the scholar sees a connection between the myth of Helle and Phrixus of scene B and the myth of Europa's abduction of the scene

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[412] For Francisco de Hollanda: CAT. 1; for the Codex Fossombronis: CAT. 12; for Louvre watercolored engraving by Mirri's artists: CAT. 3.

[413] Dacos 1969, pp. 22-23, fig. 15.

K or E (CAT. 14)[414]. Actually, barring a similar iconography (a human figure who is riding an animal), the two myths have no connections from the point of view of their plots: the story of Europa is related to the divine abductions, while the myth of Helle and Phrixus is linked to the myths of the reconquest of the lost kingdom. Furthermore, the man on the ram holds a jar that is not easy to explain the Phryxus' myth. For this reason, in my opinion, as in the case of the CAT. 16 and CAT. 17 (scene H), it is not possible to recognize a specific myth for scene B[415]. However, the representation of men and women on mythical animals is common for all medallions reproduced by Francisco de Hollanda in his watercolor (CAT. 1).

Specific bibliography for the Codex Escurialensis' fol. 10 *recto*:
Egger 106, pp. 64-69, fig. 10; Fernandez Gomez 2000, pp. 64-70.

Bibliographic references to the Codex Escurialensis' fol. 10 *recto*:
Weege 1913a, pp. 176-177 (scene D); Dacos 1969, pp. 22-23, fig. 15; Meyboom-Moormann 2013, I, p. 203.

Copies of scene B of the Volta Dorata and SW corner of the vault:
- 1490-1506/7, Giuliano da Sangallo workshop, *SW angular medallion from Volta Dorata (scene B)*, Codex Escurialensis (Escorial, Biblioteca Real de S. Lorenzo, Cod. 28-II-12), fol. 10 *recto*: CAT. 11;
- 1524-1533, Raphael Follower ("Anonymus Foro Semproniensis"), *Scene B of the SW angular medallion of the Volta Dorata and the head of the kneeling woman in Raphael's Transfiguration*; ink and pen; c. 334 x 216 mm; Fossombrone, Biblioteca

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[414] The scholar takes into account the medallions H and B of Volta Dorata in the Francisco's watercolor (CAT. 1) and puts in relationship these two medallions with two mosaics of Stabia's Villa (area of the Nymphaeum: the mosaics are placed in the lower part of the walls and between the columns that divided the eight niches): «Phrixos et Europe appartiennent au cycle des mythes marins, au même titre que Persée et Andromède, ou Polyphème et Galatée. C'est dans cette perspective que se situe l'apparition de Phrixos-Europe aux côtés des Néréides sur la "Volta dorata" de la Domus Aurea à Rome. La partition spatiale de la "Volta dorata", évoque certains plafonds de la Villa S. Marco et l'utilisation du stuc rappelle la décoration du nymphée, mais la concordance des thèmes mythologique n'implique pas la recherche des mêmes effets artistiques» (Wattel de Croizant in Barbet-Miniero 1999, pp. 90-92, fig. 177-178).
[415] For the iconography of divine abductions: Wofthal 1999.

Civica Passionei, Codex Fossombronis (inv. Disegni vol. 3 [= Cod. C.5.VI] and Disegni vol. 4, c. 38). fol. 85 *recto:* CAT. 12;

- 1538 - ante 1571, Francisco de Holanda (1517-1585), *Volta Dorata*, Os desenhos das antigualhas (Escorial, Biblioteca Real de S. Lorenzo, Cod. 28-I-20), foll. 47 bis verso - 48 recto: CAT. 1;

- mid. 17th century, Pietro Santi Bartoli (1635-1700), *Volta Dorata* (after Francisco de Hollanda): Codex Massimi (ante 1674, University Library of Glasgow, MS Gen 1496 [HX 110] fol. LXXV: Pace 1979, p. 143, no. 58) and the Codex Baddeley (around 1670s, Eton College Collection, ECL-TP.20, fol. CXXVII: Ashby 1916, p. 51): CAT. 2;

- 1741, G. Turnbull (engraving from Bartoli's watercolor: CAT. 2), *Angular medallion SW from Volta Dorata (scene B):* Turnbull 1741, no. 13;

- 1776, Francesco Smuglewicz (1745-1820), Vincenzo Brenna (1745-1820), *Volta Dorata*, Mirri's album (Pinot de Villechenon 1998, tav. 43 [ed. or. 1776, tav 42]): CAT. 3;

- ca. 1777, Vincenzo Brenna watercolor, *SW vault corner of the Volta Dorata*, 240 x 320 mm., dated to 1777, London, V&A Museum (inv. 8479:25): Pl. 8, fig. 2;

- 1776, F. Smuglewicz, *Scene B*, Mirri's album (Pinot de Villechenon 1998 tav. 46 [ed. or. 1776, tav. 30]);

- 1786, N. Ponce's engraving (copy of Mirri's engraving: CAT. 3), *Angular medallion SW from Volta Dorata (scene B):* Ponce 1786, p. 43, tav. 26 (Perrin 1985);

- 1800-1802, A. Uggeri's engraving (copy of Mirri's engraving: CAT. 3), *Angular medallion SW from Volta Dorata (scene B)*: Uggeri 1800-1802, III, tav. 45.

CAT. 12

SW angular medallion of the Volta Dorata (scene B) and head of the kneeling woman in Raphael's Transfiguration
Raphael Follower ("Anonymus Foro Semproniensis")
Codex Fossombronis (Parronchi Sketchbook or Taccuino di Giulio Romano)
Fossombrone, Biblioteca Civica Passionei, inv. Disegni vol. 3 (= Cod. C.5.VI) and Disegni vol. 4, c. 38 and c. 39
1524-1533 ca.
ca. 334 x 216 mm, 90 leaves ca., watermark: Siren[416]
fol. 85 *recto*
paper, ink, pen

Provenance
Acquired around 1533 by Gherardo Cibo. Gherardo Cibo's testament (1599) does not mention the artworks in his collection, but Cardinal Domenico Passionei is mentioned among his heirs[417]. In the 18th century, an anonymous artist printed a drawing (Stichkopie) that copied one folio of the Codex Fossombronis (fol. 21 *recto*) and mentioned that the original drawing was in possession of Monsignore Benedetto Passionei, Domenico Passionei's nephew[418]. In 1767 Monsignore Benedetto Passionei projected the creation of a library in Fossombrone (Pesaro-Urbino, Italy), thanks to the collection of his uncle. The Codex Fossombronis appears in the inventory of the library in 1784.

Drawing in context
Around the 17th and 18th centuries the Codex was attributed to Giulio Romano, since the style of the draftsman has many similarities with that of Giulio Romano[419]. Owing to the calligraphy of the draftsman, it is possible to discard Giulio Romano's authorship. Nevertheless, owing

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[416] Nesselrath 1993, p. 10.

[417] Nesselrath 1993, pp. 3-8.

[418] Nesselrath 993, pp. 7-8; in the lower margin of the print, it is written: «Disegno fatto in penna da Giulio Romano che si trova presso Monsignore Benedetto Passionei Nipote del celebre Cardinal [etc.]» (Nesselrath 1993, fig. 150).

[419] The attribution to Giulio Romano was noted within the codex around these centuries (Nesselrath 1993, pp. 40-50).

to the subjects depicted and the style, A. Nesselrath provided the attribution to a «esponente della cerchia di Raffaello»[420].

Drawing in context

The Codex is a small remnant of a larger codex: it contains six quires and during the 18th century the leaves were mistakenly rebound in a different order[421]. Most of the drawing are copies after the Antique and most of them are figurative drawings (especially from fol. 30 to the end). Within the codex, the antiquarian interest and the familiarity with Raphael's works reveals a strong link between the author and the workshop of Raphael. The drawings are not copied directly from the antique monuments but they are copies from other drawing-books after Antique and, sometimes, also after Marcantoni's prints[422].

The drawings from Domus Area are placed in progressive order (ff. 85 *recto*, 86 *recto*, 87 *recto*) and they are part of the sixth quire (F7: ff. 78-91). The sixth quire shows mostly figurative scenes and human details after Antiquity (sculptures, reliefs and paintings)[423] and the artist seems particularly interested in gestures and body positions. During the 15th and 16th centuries, this kind of figural scenes after Antique were visible only on sarcophagi, reliefs and sculptures. Therefore, the case of the Domus Aurea's painting was an incredible exception and, thus, an important source for the draughtsman.

Analysis

The drawing reproduces two scenes: in the upper part scene B of the angular medallion SW of the Volta Dorata is reproduced; in the lower part, the artist reproduces the head of the kneeling woman in Raphael's *Transfiguration* (Pinacoteca Vaticana, Città del Vaticano). As Nesselrath demonstrates with other clues within the Codex Fossombronis,

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[420] San Severino Marche 1989, pp. 88-90 (ed. by A. Nesselrath); Nesselrath 1993, pp. 37-38, 57.

[421] Nesselrath 1993, pp. 9-10.

[422] Nesselrath 1993, pp. 58-74.

[423] E.g. bronze Roman statuette - Farnese type (80 r.), Roman female busts of maenad (81 r.), architectonical fragment from Venus-Genetrix Temple of Forum Iulium in Rome (82 v.), Roman female togata bust and Roman female portrait (83 r.), Domus Aurea's paintings (ff. 85r, 86r, 87r).

actually, the presence of such different scenes is valuable for recognizing a link between the Codex's draughtsman and Raphael's workshop[424]. The synthetic and rapid copy of the scene suggests that the artist was mainly interested in the iconographical scheme of the scene rather than, for example, its position in the architectonical system of the vault or the "all'antica" drapery - maybe for the capacity of representing the body's movement.

Considering the difficult conditions in which the artists copied the Volta Dorata and the condition in moving inside the underground space[425], it seems very singular that the draughtsman decided to copy on the same sheet two different subjects. Furthermore, the cleanliness of the folio and the precise stroke of the pen seem to exclude the possibility that the drawing was coped directly from the Antique. Therefore, considering the fol. 85 *recto*, these three elements (the cleanliness of the folio, the stroke of the pen, and the physical distance between the two panels) support Nesselrath's conclusion on the Codex Fossombronis' genesis, i.e. the draughtsman did not copy directly after the Antique, but rather copied from another drawing-book[426]. As can be seen in scenes C and I of the fol. 87 *recto* (CAT. 13), in the Codex Fossombronis the artist used more the parallel hatching than the cross-hatching, although the subject copied was a three-dimensional object (statues, architectures, stucco relief). Usually, the hatching is parallel and it is used to define the three dimensions of the figures, while the cross-hatching is often reserved for three-dimensional subjects (e.g. free-standing statues). Nevertheless, the type of hatching is not often helpful in the knowledge of the bi-dimensional or three-dimensional nature of the subject (for instance, in the fol. 10 *recto* of the Codex Escurialensis [CAT. 11], the artist used the cross-hatching for the same

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[424] Nesselrath 1993, pp. 191-192.

[425] Squire 2013, pp. 446-449.

[426] On the other hand, A. Giuliano saw in the drawing of the fol. 85 recto a copy after the Antique but he did not provide any argument: «eseguito dall'originale, non dipende da Escurialensis (fol.) 10»: Giuliano 1981, p. 81, no. 1.

subject, albeit the angular medallions were in painting and not in stucco[427]).

As anticipated, the upper part provides a sketched copy of scene B of the Volta Dorata. As in Francisco's watercolor (CAT. 1), it is possible to see a young man, sitting on a ram and holding a jar in his left hand, with a long dress on his legs. Despite Dacos' opinion on Francisco's invention (in this case and in general on the artist's methodology)[428], as noticed in CAT. 11, the Portuguese artist reproduced the figure with a long dress, in the same vein of the Codex Fossombronis. Therefore, rather than a tendency to invent which is present in Francisco's watercolor, we have to also consider Francisco's "mistakes" as an effect of the reduced visibility by the Renaissance artists (and also, of course, because of the damaged conditions of the vault). As Nesselrath pointed out, the SW angular medallion was already damaged in the 16th century[429]: the slight differences between the four main witnesses show that the scene was not clearly readable[430]. Nevertheless, still in 1776, Mirri's artists were able to recognize the scene (except for the type of animal and the dress on the legs) and, as in the case of scene H, they saw in the scene a young boy who received his jar as the award for his physical skill (CAT. 3)[431].

Despite Mirri's version, and according to the Codex Fossombronis and Francisco's watercolor, the animal on which the young man was sitting

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[427] Owing to the Windsor drawing RCIN 909568 *recto*, it is possible to know that the angular medallions were in painting and not in stucco: CAT. 8.

[428] Regarding this precise case: Dacos 1969, pp. 22-23; for the general Francisco's methodology «on a trop souvent reproduit le dessin sans le soumettre à un examen critique» (Dacos 1969, 23, fig. 16).

[429] «Das abrupte Abbrechen der Vorderfüße des Tieres und die Unentschiedenheiten der Zeichnung im Bereich seines Ohres und des rechten Fußes des Reiters lassen darauf schließen, daß das Fresko bereits zur Zeit der ersten Aufnahmen an diesen Stellen stark zerstört war; denn hier entstehen auch die Mißverständnisse des codex Escurialensis und jene Mirris»: Nesselrath 1993, p. 190.

[430] The four main witnesses are: Codex Escurialensis, fol. 10 *recto* (CAT. 11); Francisco's watercolor (CAT. 1), Louvre watercolored engraving (Pinot de Villechenon 1998, tav. 49): CAT. 3; Codex Fossombronis, fol. 85 *recto* (CAT. 12).

[431] Carletti 2014, pp. 95-96, no. LVI, n. 144: «il vaso aureo fralle mani dell'atleta può riputarsi un premio della sua destrezza» (= Mirri-Carletti 1776, p. LXXX, no. LVI).

was probably a ram rather than a horse. Therefore, the two Renaissance codex can be considered the *lectio difficilior* of the scene, while the Codex Escurialensis reveals some "mistakes" (the halo around the head and the lack of the dress on the legs). Additionally, Weege seems to prefer Francisco's reproduction of scene B, rather than that of the Codex Escurialensis and Mirri's watercolor[432]. Although the Codex Fossombronis provides a similar version to that of Codex Escurialensis fol. 10 *recto* (CAT 11), the absence of the young man's halo on the Codex Fossombronis allows to conjecture two different sources for the two Codices. Nesselrath stresses how all the figures of the medallions in Francisco's watercolor are female. Moreover, according to the scholar, since the male figure is sitting in an elegant way in Francisco's watercolor and he has the halo in the Codex Escurialensis (maybe originally a flowers crown), the male figure was originally a female figure[433]. However, as the Codex Escurialensis fol. 6 *recto* (CAT 16) and the Lille's drawing show (CAT 17), surely there was another medallion with a male figure. Furthermore, it seems highly risky and abstruse supposing such hypothesis, mostly because we could suspect the reliability of all the Renaissance drawings in this vein.

Specific bibliography for the Codex Fossombronis' fol. 85 recto
Nesselrath 1993, pp. 189-192, fig. 67.

Bibliographic reference to the Codex Fossombronis' fol. 85 recto
Giuliano 1981, p. 81, no. 1; Meyboom-Moormann 2013, I, p. 203.

Other copies of scene B of the Volta Dorata:
see CAT. 11

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[432] Weege 1913a, pp. 176-177.

[433] «Die Figur mit dem Krug nicht rittlings, nach hinten gerichtet auf seinem Rücken, sondern in einer Art Damensitz [...] Vielleicht war auch der Kopf der Figur beschädigt, was dazu führen konnte, daß sie sowohl als Mann als auch als Frau interpretiert worden ist und daß der Codex Escurialensis einen Nimbus annehmen konnte, wo ursprünglich eher ein einfacher Kranz gewesen ist»: Nesselrath 1993, p. 190.

CAT. 13

Volta Dorata's panels I and C
Raphael Follower ("Anonymus Foro Semproniensis")
Codex Fossombronis (Parronchi Sketchbook or Taccuino di Giulio Romano)
Fossombrone, Biblioteca Civica Passionei, inv. Disegni vol. 3 (= Cod. C.5.VI)
and Disegni vol. 4, c. 38 and c. 39
1524-1533 ca.
ca. 334 x 216 mm, 90 leaves ca., watermark: Siren[434]
fol. 87 *recto*
pen and ink

Provenance, Attribution, Drawing in context
see CAT. 12

Analysis
The drawing reproduces two figurative scenes of the "Internal Area" (scenes I and C) that are in two opposite corners of the vault (scene I: NE vault corner; scene C: SW vault corner). As pointed out in CAT. 12, three evidence (the cleanliness of the folio, the stroke of the pen, and the physical distance between the two panels) support Nesselrath's conclusion on the Codex Fossombronis' genesis, i.e. the draughtsman did not copy directly after the Antique, but rather copied from another drawing-book[435]. Moreover, considering fol. 87 *recto*, it seems very singular that the draughtsman decided to copy on the same sheet two distant scenes (scenes I and C). In fact, remaining in a same position, the draftsman could have found many other figurative scenes in front of him. In the drawing, there are some traces of black stone lines for defining the space in which the scene is depicted, like in Lille drawing (CAT. 17). Therefore, it is possible to suppose that the square, which include the figural scene, was made for delimiting the space reserved to the figural scene and, mostly, to indicate that the scene has been totally copied (and it is not a part of a wider scene).

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[434] Nesselrath 1993, p. 10: the scholar does not specify the dimensions, the shape of the Siren and any Briquet/Piccard parallels.
[435] On the other hand, A. Giuliano saw in the drawing a copy after the Antique but he did not provide any argument: Giuliano 1981, p. 81, no. 3.

In fol. 87 *recto*, two figurative scenes are reproduced: on the upper part, there is a male figure (probably a Satyr) who is sitting and playing a syrinx, while a female figure is standing in front of him, listening and leaning herself to a parapet (scene C). In the lower part, there is a complex and unclear scene (scene I). On the left, a men is leaning his knee to a rock or an altar and he seems to be trying to raise something in the left hand. On the right, there is a child with a cup in the right hand and a woman in front of him who is trying to console (or to prepare him for a religious celebration?). Except for scene I and C, all the other six panels disappeared from the Volta Dorata's vault, but Francisco's watercolor reproduces all eight panels (A, C, D, F, G, I, J, L). Considering scenes C and I depicted in the Codex Fossombronis, both scenes are confirmed by the archaeological evidence: in 1913 Weege published a photo of the two painting panels and also the images which he retouched that could clarify the iconography of the scene (**Pl. 24, figs. 1 and 2**)[436].

The scene C is reproduced by three witnesses (Codex Fossombronis, Francisco's watercolor, Louvre watercolored engraving)[437]. The female figure (maybe a nymph) is reproduced in the famous iconography of "pensive Muse" and the identification of the male figure as satyr is quite sure (**Pl. 24, fig. 3**)[438]. Carletti in his description of Mirri's drawings provides a specific myth for this scene: the myth of Polyphemus and Galatea[439]. Although Carletti probably had in mind the iconographical scheme of the myth because of the famous decorations of the Villa Madama (cf. *Chapter 4*), Palazzo Farnese and

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[436] Weege 1912, pp. 172-173 fig. 16, 18 (retouched images), taf. 8 fig. A-B (original conditions).

[437] Other copies of 18th century of scene C: Turnbull (Turnbull 1741, no. 15) copies Bartoli's watercolor: CAT. 2); the Ponce's prints copies Mirri's drawing (Ponce 1786, tav. 27 = Pinot de Villechenon 1998, tav. 47). Even if the scene C is in SW vault corner, Hertziana drawing reproduces the NE vault corner with scene C, instead of scene I (Pl. 8, fig. 1: for further information on the Hertziana drawings: Moormann-Meyboom 2013, I, p. 197, see "Immagine 3"; and *Chapter 4*).

[438] Weege sees a strong connection with the iconography of a Villa Borghese relief (Weege 1913a, p. 171): Moreno-Stefani 2000, p. 52, no. 11 (cf. also Amelung 1909, pp. 182-183).

[439] Carletti 2014, p. 92 no. LIII (= Mirri-Carletti 1776, p. LXXVII, no. LIII).

Villa Farnesina[440], the panel C does not represent this myth for two reasons: firstly the male figure has the same dimension of the woman and, secondly, for a logical consequence: if the little panel represented a specific myth, we should assume other myths – or the same myth – for all the others seven panels. Actually, the absence of a specific myth for some of them is quite evident.

The archaeological evidence confirms the reliability of the Codex Fossombronis' drawing also for scene I (**Pl. 24, fig. 4**). Also in this case, scene I is reproduced by four witnesses (Uffizi drawing 1682 O, Codex Fossombronis, Francisco's watercolor, Louvre watercolored engraving)[441]. Despite the chronological distance between Codex Fossombronis and Louvre watercolored engraving, the archaeological evidence demonstrates Mirri's reliability rather than Francisco's drawing (*recentiores non deteriores*).

Concerning its interpretation, there are some problems and scholars provided different considerations. The first interpretation was that of Carletti in 1776 who recognized the story of Lucius Papirius Praetextatus. In the panel it would have been depicted Papirius' mother who asked to him about the Senate's discussion in which the young boy participated with his father[442]. However, it is quite improbable that such a panel could have represented a precise legend/myth because, in this way, we should admit the possibility that all of the eight scenes would have been connected by the same myth. Moreover, in Francisco's watercolor all of the other seven panels represent bucolic themes (Satyrs/Silenoi who are playing an instrument: C, D, F) or (with more doubts) loving themes (farewell scenes: A, G; Aphrodite with Cupid: J; Satyr and Hermaphroditus: L). Therefore, it is also probable that the scene I reproduced a similar topic. It is likely that most of these scenes have a dionysiac-loving-bucolic theme[443].

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[440] Villa Farnesina: Cieri Via 2003, pp. 298–301 (ed. by Miarelli Mariani I.); Villa Madama: Cieri Via 2003, pp. 303–307 (ed. by De Romanis A.); Palazzo Farnese: Ginzburg Carignani 2000, pp. 119-126.

[441] In chronological order: CAT. 6, CAT. 15, CAT. 1, CAT. 3.

[442] Carletti 2014, p. 93-94 no. LIV (= Mirri-Carletti 1776, pp. LXXVIII-LXXIX, no. LIII): for the historical episode see: Aulus Gellius, *Noctes Atticae*, I, 23.

[443] Meyboom-Moormann 2013, I, p. 203.

Nevertheless, according to Weege, in the paintings it is possible to see some clues for interpreting the figure on the extreme right (the sitting woman in the Codex Fossombronis) which seems to be a man rather than a woman. For the scholar, this figure seems to have behind him a big shield or, more probably, the shield can be the final part of a horse body. Thus, Weege suggests that this figure could be the centaur Chiron in front of the young Achilles[444]. As scholar pointed out, the myth of the Achilles-Chiron is quite widespread in Roman art, especially in paintings[445]. Dacos seems persuaded by Weege's hypothesis about the Achilles-Chiron's myth[446]. However, Weege and Dacos admit the limits of this interpretation and conclude that, through this interpretation, it is not possible to identify the figure on the left. Therefore, they simply connect the latter to the scheme of Orestes on the Delphi's *omphalos*[447]. Obviously, it is hard to admit the presence of two different myths in one little panel (Achilles-Chiron's myth and Orestes' myth). In the last decades, Sciortino suggests that the seated figure could be Peleo, father of Achilles, although the scholar does not provide any argument for the strange gesture of the figure[448]. As Meyboom-Moormann pointed out, the myth of Chiron-Achilles seems unlikely because of the male figure on the extreme left: if the figure on the right is a centaur, the scene could represent a centaur who is trying to hold a female figure and, on left, a Lapith who is trying to escape[449]. Nevertheless, as the scholars declare, the fighting between Lapiths and Centaurs (like Achilles-Chiron's myth) does not link with other bucolic-dionysiac-loving themes.

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[444] «Die bei dem Original, selbst bei bester Beleuchtung, nicht deutlicher als auf der Abbildung sichtbare Rundung im Rücken des Greises ist entweder ein Schild, den dieser (oder eine rechts noch folgende Figur?) trägt, oder es ist der Leib eines Pferdes, der Greis also ein Kentaur, wozu das in der unteren rechten Ecke des Bildes schwach sichtbare wie mit einem Pferdehufe versehene Bein passen würde. Vielleicht also Chiron, der den Achilleusknaben unterweist?»: Weege 1913a, pp. 170-171.

[445] LIMC 1.1 (1982), pp. 40-48, *s.v. Achilleus* (A. Kossatz-Deissmann).

[446] Dacos 1969 p. 24; Weege 1913a 171.

[447] Dacos 1969, p. 27; Weege 1913a 171.

[448] Segala-Sciortino 1999, p. 71: «Peleo che affida il figlioletto Achille alle cure del saggio centauro Chirone» (I. Sciortino writes from p. 55 to p. 99).

[449] Meyboom-Moormann 2013, I, p. 203; 247, n. 193.

Therefore, the main issue related to iconography of scene I is the gesture of the bent knee, although it is quite common in Classical art, referring generally to a turbulent moment (mainly an attack or a escape attempt). This gesture is typical for the Lapiths' fight against the centaurs, as Meyboom-Moormann stress[450]. At the same time, it is also used for many other myths: the moment in which Alexandros is trying to find a shelter in the Zeus' temple (before Zeus reveals that he is Paris, brother of Hector)[451]; when Hylas is trying to escape from the Nymphs[452]; when Telephus use as a hostage the little Orestes; and, finally, when Orestes is supplicant at Delphi's *omphalos*[453]. However, as pointed out, we should exclude that such a scene could have shown a precise myth since the other panels (at least surely scene C) showed bucolic-love themes (cf. also *Chapter 3* for the reliability of scenes D, J, F in Francisco's watercolor)[454].

The gesture of the bent knee is common for the figures of the dionysiac repertoire: a nymph who is trying to escape from a satyr or a Satyr who is trying to escape from Hermaphroditus; the dancing Silenoi (in these cases, the knee is not leaning to any support); and other mythical figures as Pan and Priapos in their movement[455]. Therefore, the gesture of scene I seems to evoke a turbulent moment as, for instance, it can be seen in the scheme of dionysiac figures.

Although it is quite different, Francisco drew a Satyr trying to grab a Nymph in his watercolor (**Pl. 24, fig. 4**). We do not know if Francisco totally invented scene I or he simply tried to understand the scene (that was clearly visible, more than nowadays). Since he rightly copied scene C, it is quite likely that he modified scene I in order that the viewer of

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[450] Meyboom-Moormann 2013, I, p. 203; 247, n. 193.

[451] LIMC 1.1 (1981), pp. 501-505, *s.v. Alexandros* (R. Hampe).

[452] LIMC 5.1 (1990), pp. 574-579, *s.v. Hylas* (J.H. Oakley)

[453] LIMC 7.1 (1994), pp. 71-74, *s.v. Orestes* (H. Sarian and V. Machaira).

[454] The square panels of "Internal Area" of the Volta Dorata could have influenced Giovanni da Udine and the decoration of the Garden Loggia of the Villa Farnesina (panels with the Polyphemus and Galatea myth: *Chapter 4*; Fukada 2015)

[455] LIMC 8.1 (1997), pp. 923-941, *s.v. Pan*: (P. Weiss); LIMC 8.1 (1997), pp. 1028-1044, *s.v. Priapos* (W.-R. Megow); LIMC 8.1 (1997), pp. 1108-1133, *s.v. Silenoi* (G. Kavvadias); about the Satyr as aggressor: LIMC 5.1 (1990), pp. 278-280, *s.v. Hermaphroditus* (A. Ajootian).

the watercolor would understand the meaning of the scene. This latter hypothesis is also confirmed by the iconographical detail (the bent knee) in Francisco's scene I: it seems unlikely that Francisco would keep the iconographic detail of the bent knee (although represented in a specular version) if he invented the scene. In my opinion, Francisco saw the vault and copied the iconography of the figurative scenes as far as he could understand them (cf. CAT. 1 and *Chapter 3* for the reliability of Francisco's watercolor).

Specific bibliography for the Codex Fossombronis' fol. 87 *recto*:
Nesselrath 1993, p. 195, fig. 71.

Bibliographic references to the Codex Fossombronis' fol. 87 *recto*:
Giuliano 1981, p. 81, no. 3, p. 82, fig. 7; Meyboom-Moormann 2013, I, p. 203.

Copies of scenes I and C:
- 1510-1517?, Giovanni da Udine (1487 Udine – 1561 Rome), *NE vault corner of the Volta Dorata (scenes H and I)*, Florence, Gallerie degli Uffizi, Gabinetto Disegni e Stampe (GDSU), inv. 1682 O: CAT. 6;
- 1524-1533 ca., Raphael Follower, *Volta Dorata's panels I and C*, Codex Fossombronis (Fossombrone, Biblioteca Civica Passionei, inv. Disegni vol. 3 (= Cod. C.5.VI) and Disegni vol. 4, c. 38 and c. 39), fol. 87 *recto*: CAT. 13;
- 1538 - ante 1571, Francisco de Hollanda (1517 Lisboa – 1585 Lisbona), *Volta Dorata's vault* , Os desenhos das antigualhas (Escorial, Biblioteca Real de S. Lorenzo, Cod. 28-I-20): fol. 47 bis *verso* - 48 *recto*: CAT. 1;
- mid. 17th century, Pietro Santi Bartoli (1635-1700), *Volta Dorata's vault* (after Francisco de Hollanda): Codex Massimi (ante 1674, University Library of Glasgow, MS Gen 1496 [HX 110] fol. LXXV: Pace 1979, p. 143, no. 58) and Codex Baddeley (around 1670s, Eton College Collection, ECL-TP.20, fol. CXXVII: Ashby 1916, p. 51): CAT. 2;
- 1741, G. Turnbull (engraving after Bartoli's watercolor: CAT. 2), *scene C*: Turnbull 1741, no. 15;
- 1741, G. Turnbull (engraving after Bartoli's watercolor: CAT. 2), *scene I*: Turnbull 1741, no. 16;
- ca. 1775, Hertziana drawing, *NE vault corner of the Volta Dorata with scenes H and C*, Rome, Bibliotheca Hertziana Dv 570-3760 (Exemplar mit 61 Bl.) U. PL. D 45332a: Pl. 8, fig. 1;
- 1776, F. Smuglewicz, *scene I*, Mirri's album (Pinot de Villechenon 1998, tav. 46 [engraving edition: tav. 30]);
- 1776, F. Smuglewicz, *scene C*, Mirri's album (Pinot de Villechenon 1998, tav. 47 [engraving edition: tav. 29]);
- 1786, N. Ponce's engraving (copy of Mirri's engraving: CAT. 3), *scene I and C*: Ponce 1786, pp. 45, 47, tav. 28-28.

CAT. 14

Angular medallion of the Volta Dorata (scene E or K)
workshop of Filippino Lippi (ca. 1457 Prato - 1504 Florence)
Florence, Gallerie degli Uffizi, Gabinetto Disegni e Stampe (GDSU), inv. 1168 O
1490-1495
145 x 156 mm, no watermark
white paper (slightly colored yellow in the recto), charcoal, traces of black stone
and lead white, verso reinforced by thin cardboard ("controfondato")
inscriptions: «Filipino» (eighteenth-century handwriting?), «19» (nineteenth-
century handwriting?)

Provenance
The drawing is mentioned for the first time in Giuseppe Pelli
Bencivenni's inventory (Director of Uffizi Drawings and Prints
Collection from 1775 to 1793)[456].

Analysis
From the 18th century until 1955, the drawing was attributed to
Filippino Lippi[457]. For the Uffizi's exhibition in 1955 (*Mostra di disegni di
Filippino Lippi e Piero di Cosimo*), M. Fossi considered the drawing a copy
after Filippino Lippi[458] and in 1975 Shoemaker rightly attributed it to
the workshop of the artist[459]. Nelson dated the drawing to around

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[456] Petrioli Tofani 2014, III, p. 1029, no. 25 (or. ed. mans. 463/3 c. 89, no. 25).
[457] Ferri catalogued the drawing as a design of Filippino Lippi (Ferri 1881, p. 62)
and also B. Berenson confirmed this authorship to Ferri (Petrioli Tofani 1986, II,
p. 484).
[458] «Per quanto l'invenzione di questa figura riveli un'origine alta, la qualità
veramente scadente del tratto e della biacca impediscono di pensare a un
disegno originale di Filippino […] Si può pensare a una copia da un disegno
del maestro» (Fossi 1955, p. 25, no. 40).
[459] Shoemaker 1975, n. R.57.

1490-1495 and connected it to a drawing in the Resta Codex at the Biblioteca Ambrosiana in Milano, fol. 12, no. 16[460].

The drawing shows a female figure sitting on a bull while holding the animal's horns. At first sight, the scene seems to depict the myth of Europa. The detail of the bull's tongue stresses the loving relationship between the two figures (the bull is trying to lick the naked breast of the woman). The drawing has not yet been considered in connection to the Domus Aurea, although the inspiration from the Antique is quite evident from some clues, such as the subject and the stylistic remakes (the "all'antica" style for the drapery and the hair, so-called "bewegtes Beiwerk" by A. Warburg)[461]. Actually, Filippino Lippi visited the Domus Aurea (leaving his signature on the walls) and copied other portions of the ancient paintings[462], as in the Uffizi's drawings: 1255 E verso, 1630 E, 1631 E, 1636 E, 1637 E *verso* (cf. CAT. 21)[463]. Such a image is not new among the graphic witnesses of Domus Aurea's paintings: the NE corner of the vault (scene H), Francisco's watercolor (CAT. 1) and Senese Codex (CAT. 7) reproduce a similar scene[464].

Considering the watercolor of Francisco de Hollanda, Wattel de Croizat and De Vos are convinced that Francisco's medallion with "Europa

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[460] The Codex Resta's drawing (fol. 12, no. 16) is attributed to the Filippino Lippi's workshop and not to Raffaellino del Garbo (Mostra Uffizi 2002, p. 213, no. 12: catalogue entry ed. by J.K. Nelson). As Nelson pointed out, since there are some iconographical differences between the Uffizi's drawing and the Resta's drawing (as the woman's head turned in the opposite direction to the bull's movement), it is possible that this latter was inspired by Poliziano's poem *Stanze per la giostra del Magnifico Giuliano di Pietro de' Medici*, Libro I, stanze 105-106: «e lei volgere il viso al lito perso / in atto paventosa».

[461] For a definition of the "all'antica" style: Gombrich 1963.

[462] The Roman stay of Filippino was from 1488 until 1494: the signature appears on scene 4: Dacos 1969, p. 147; see also: Dacos 1969, p. 140 (unexpectedly Weege 1913a, pp. 141-146 does not quotes the signature "Filipino"); for the Filippino Lippi drawings after the Domus Aurea: Zambrano-Nelson 2004, pp. 444-447.

[463] Goldner-Bambach 1997, nos. 60 (1637 E), 61 (1630 E), 62 (1631 E), 65 (1255 E); pp. 442-447.

[464] The interpretation of the Europa's myth in Francisco's medallion was already provided by Bartoli-Bellori 1680, p. 6.

abduction" was originally present in the Volta Dorata[465]. However Senese Codex (CAT. 7) and Filippino's drawing are not taken into account by both scholars. In fact, the iconography of the Uffizi drawing inv. 1168 O does not perfectly replicate that of Francisco's medallion (NE vault corner, scene H). Although both reproduce a young woman holding a bull by its horns and the drapery fluttering behind her, a different position of bull's head can be seen and, moreover, Filippino's drawing do not depict the final part of the body of the bull. In front of this discrepancy, we might suppose that, although the artist copied the same scene, they made some mistakes owing to the visibility (the fluttering hair are easily recognizable and defined with precision and, probably Francisco thought that they were part of the drapery) or to the artistic interpolation for increasing the loving moment (the slight twist of the bull's neck in Filippino's drawing).

As it will be clear in *Chapter 3*, the medallion with the "Europa's abduction" is the only one that might be connected to a precise myth, whereas the other scenes in the angular medallions simply depict "Schwebende Gruppen" with a human on one animal. Therefore, it is likely that the scene with the woman on the bull might is merely connected to one scene of the wider repertoire of "Schwebende Gruppen" and not to the precise myth of Europa[466].

One problem concerns the location of the scene within the geometrical system of the Volta Dorata. In fact, the Uffizi's drawing 1682 O (CAT. 6) demonstrates that in the NE corner of the vault there was the scene of a young man being dragged by a flying horse. Therefore, we can only be totally sure of the iconography of two angular medallions (scene H and B), although nowadays both are not visible in the vault anymore. Barring the medallion with the scenes H and B, the unique source for the other two medallions is Francisco's watercolor (CAT. 1). Scholars have a suspicious approach on this latter, although it has been stressed that the inventive capacity of Francisco was less than supposed (cf.

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[465] De Vos 1985, p. 355; Wattel de Croizant 1995, p. 64; for the interpretation of Francisco's medallion of Europa's abduction: Zahn 1983, p. 169, n. 279; for the connection between the medallion with Europa's abduction and the medallion with Phryxus: Wattel de Croizant in Barbet-Miniero 1999, pp. 90-92, fig. 177-178.

[466] Schwinzer 1979.

Chapter 3). Considering the mistakes of Francisco and his working methodology, Dacos has pointed out that: «on a trop souvent reproduit le dessin sans le soumettre à un examen critique»[467].

However, considering the angular medallion in NE corner with woman on the bull in Francisco's watercolor, scholars show a doubtful impression mostly because of the mistake of Francisco in putting such a scene in the wronged position (namely, instead of scene H with a figure dragged by a flying horse)[468]. However, considering Uffizi drawing 1168 O, it is possible to argue that Francisco did not invent the scene, but probably placed it in the wrong corner (originally placed in SE or NW corner)[469]. Therefore, form this mistake, we might suppose that Francisco wrote down some scenes, but not all of them. Only in a second time, with his sketches and notes, he drew his luxurious version of the Volta Dorata, thinking to insert divine loves into the angular medallions. Not by chance, the Portuguese artist worked on his drawings-book also after his Italian journey (1538-1540) and his return in Portugal, until at least 1564[470].

In conclusion, if we want to conjecture which medallions were originally present in the vault, we can summarize (cf. *Chapter 3*): surely scene B (CAT. 11, 12) and scene H (CAT. 16, 17); highly likely the scene with the woman on the bull (although the position in the vault remains uncertain); and maybe one of the two Francisco's medallions with marine scenes. Therefore, considering Francisco's copying methodology, it is possible that he saw the medallions, understood that

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[467] Dacos 1969, p. 23, fig. 16.

[468] Egger 1906, p. 67-68: «Gewiß wird man im allgemeinen geneigt sein, der älteren und vollständigen Zeichnung Francescos die höhere Autorität zuzusprechen, jedoch rät gerade unser Blatt 10 r [*scil*. Codex Escurialensis] zur Vorsicht […] Dieses Bestreben nach Gleichartigkeit der vier Rundbilder in den Ecken hat vermutlich Francesco auch zur Beseitigung des Jünglings mit dem Roß (fol. 6 r.) geführt, von dem Mirri, wie wir sahen, noch Spuren vorgefunden hat»; Dacos 1969, p. 23; Meyboom-Moormann 2013, I, p. 246, n. 188.

[469] Meyboom-Moormann have supposed that maybe Francisco found the iconographical scheme of Europa's abduction in room 129: Meyboom-Moormann 2013, I, p. 246, n. 188.

[470] In the fol. 2 recto of his drawing-book (*Os desenhos das antigualhas*), Francisco reproduces the portrait of Michelangelo and noted the death date (1564): for more details on the chronology of the *Os desenhos das antigualhas:* CAT. 1.

they had a similar theme (abductions), and, consequently, copied some of them (two or, at most, three: surely not scene H); and, when he copied them in his final watercolor, he wronged their position (as the position of the scene with woman on a bull shows)[471].

Reception notes: owing to Filippino's drawings, Giovan Francesco Rustici found the inspiration for the glazed terracotta of the Victoria and Albert Museum in London, dated to the 1495[472].

Specific bibliography on the Uffizi's drawing 1168 O:

Ferri 1881, p. 62; Berenson 1938, II, p. 146, n. 1315; Exhibition of Italian Art 1200-1900, 1930, n. 465; Fossi 1955, p. 25, n. 70; Berenson 1961, II, p. 256, no. 1315; Shoemaker 1975, n. R.57; Petrioli Tofani 1987, pp. 483-484; Mostra Uffizi 2002, p. 213, no. 12 (J.K. Nelson); Mozzati-Paolozzi Strozzi-Sénéchal 2010, pp. 300-301, n. 18 (J.K. Nelson).

Other copies of the scene with woman on a bull (originally in SE or NW corners):

- 1538 - ante 1571, Francisco de Hollanda (1517 Lisboa – 1585 Lisbona), *Volta Dorata's vault* , Os desenhos das antigualhas (Escorial, Biblioteca Real de S. Lorenzo, Cod. 28-I-20): fol. 47 bis *verso* - 48 *recto*: CAT. 1;
- 1577 - end of the 16th century, Anonymous Tuscan artist of the second half of the 16th century, *Alternative version of the NE vault corner of the Volta Dorata (scenes I, G, H, 7)*, fol. 11 *recto,* Senese Codex (Siena, Biblioteca Comunale degli Intronati, MS L.IV.10): CAT. 7;

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[471] This potential working process (i.e. copying the most possible in the shortest possible time) is a also convincing if we consider the conditions of work. It was not simply for the Renaissance artists to move inside the room 80 (Volta Dorata) and to copy in detail all the decorations (because of the distance of the viewer from the vault , the darkness of the underground and the shortage of air).

[472] The terracotta is attributed to Rustici by G. Gentili (Barocchi 1992, pp. 143-144, no. 34: entry by G. Gentili; cf. also Mozzati-Paolozzi Strozzi-Sénéchal 2010, pp. 298-299, no. 17: entry catalogue edited by P. Sénéchal); Rustici's interest for the Antique was surely increased by the proximity of his workshop with that of Filippino (moreover, Rustici was a close friend of Roberto, Filippino's son). Rustici is considered by some scholars as the author of the Lille drawing which depicts the angular medallion NE of the Volta Dorata (scene H): CAT. 2. On the other hand, according to M. Sfameli, the iconography of the Uffizi drawing 1168 O and Rustici's terracotta comes from a lost prototype, from which comes also a Roman gem of the Cabinet des Médailles di Parigi (Mostra Uffizi 2002, pp. 58-59).

- mid. 17th century, Pietro Santi Bartoli (1635 Perugia – 1700 Rome), *Volta Dorata's vault* (copies after Francisco de Hollanda): Codex Massimi (ante 1674, University Library of Glasgow, MS Gen 1496 [HX 110] fol. LXXV: Pace 1979, p. 143, no. 58) and the Codex Baddeley (around 1670s, Eton College Collection, ECL-TP.20, fol. CXXVII: Ashby 1916, p. 51): CAT. 2.

CAT. 15

Scene G of Volta Dorata (NE corner)?
Amico Aspertini (ca. 1475 Bologna - 1552 Bologna)
Codex Wolfegg
Württemberg, Schloss Wolfegg (Erbgraf Max Willibald von Waldburg collection)
ca. 1503-1504[473]
ca. 110 x 85 mm, 29 leaves, watermark: no mentions by the scholarship
fol. 19 *recto*
pen, brush and diluted ink
inscription: «in le grote soto tera»

Provenance
Unknown. Since the Codex is mentioned in the first catalogues of the Wolfegg collection, Schweikhart supposes that the Codex was acquired by count Max Willibald (1604-1667), who traveled to Rome and founded the Wolfegg Collection[474].

Attribution
Since the 16th century, the Codex was considered one of Michelangelo drawing-books, owing to an inscription on fol. 9 in 16th-century handwriting («totum Michelangelus fecitt»). Robert in 1901 attributed the Codex to Giulio Romano for stylistic reasons and considered it the inspiration for the frescos in Sala di Costantino[475]. The last authorship has been provided by Fabriczy in 1905 and this has been accepted since. The scholar attributed the Codex Wolfegg to Amico Aspertini, mainly owing to the subjects depicted and their inspiration to Amico's artworks[476].

Drawing in context
The Codex Wolfegg is made up of six quires, which «all but one of the remaining quires are still largely or entirely intact, though the volume

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[473] Faietti 1991, pp. 157-158; Faietti-Scaglietti Kelescian 1995, pp. 25, 31 (ed. by M. Faietti); for the period 1500-1503: Schweikhart 1986, pp. 27-28.
[474] Schweikhart 1986, p. 23.
[475] Robert 1901.
[476] Fabriczy 1905, p. 404; Bober 1957, pp. 7-10; Schweikhart 1986, pp. 24-27.

is in a fragmentary state»[477]. The drawings were made after the book was bound (or at least the quire)[478], although the volume was partially dismantled during the 16th century[479].

The Codex is almost entirely devoted to Antiquity: a consistent group of drawings (36) depicts portions of reliefs (especially the Trajan's Column), while the remaining subjects come from sarcophagi, altars, sculptures (often preserved in private collections)[480]. The drawings of the Domus Aurea are the unique examples of Roman paintings in the Codex, since there are no subjects from the stucco decoration of the Colosseum's arches or Villa Adriana at Tivoli. The Domus Aurea's paintings are easily recognizable because of the inscriptions: «in le grote soto tera» (fol. 19 *recto*); «in lagrota daloro dipinto» (fol. 19 *verso*); «dipinto sototera» (fol. 22 *recto*); «de stuco sotetera» (fol. 22 *verso*); «sote tera in le grote» (fol. 41 *verso*); «sote tera destuco» (fol. 44 verso - 45 *recto*).

From a general overview of the Codex, it can be seen how Aspertini was deeply interested to the "cluster scenes" of Roman art, namely scenes in which bodies or other elements are piled up and twisted (e.g. military scenes, marine processions, trophies and *panoplia*). As for few scenes from Roman reliefs (foll. 43 *verso* - 44 *recto*, 45 *verso* - 46 *recto*, 47 *verso* - 48 *recto*), Amico seems interested to the Domus Aurea's painting scenes for the for some figural figures which are characterized by graceful gestures.

Aspertini used the cross-hatching and the parallel-hatching for his archaeological models without a strict distinction, as other Renaissance artists used to do (e.g. cross-hatching for the free-standing sculptures and parallel-hatching for the bi-dimensional subject). Nevertheless, in order to give a three-dimensional aspect to the figures of the Domus Aurea, Amico often used the cross-hatching or the brush with diluted

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[477] Elen 1995, p. 264; moreover, according to the scholar, probably the quires are constructed according to "Gregory's Rule" as the Aspertini's London I drawing-book («two hair-sides confront each other and alternate with two facing flesh-sides»: Elen 1995, p. 307).

[478] Bober 1957, p. 5; Rushton 1976, p. 42-43.

[479] Elen 1995, p. 265.

[480] Rushton 1976, pp. 103-104.

ink, while for instance in the military scenes the artist defined only the profile of the figures («puro contorno»)[481].

Therefore, although despite the interest in the "graceful gestures" of Domus Aurea's figures, Amico decided to copy portions of the Domus Aurea's paintings in his drawing-book because of the unicity of the provenance ("in legrote sototera"). Moreover, at that time the paintings provided many artistic novelties (grotesques or geometrical vault schemes), but Aspertini copied in the Codex Wolfegg only the figural scenes. Actually, as Schweikhart pointed out, during his first journey to Rome (1496), he copied in a rough way many drawings on the spot and afterwards he re-copied them on table when he came back to Bologna[482] for donating the final drawing-book to a patron[483]. Therefore, it is possible that Aspertini reserved the decorative motifs of the Domus Aurea (grotesques) to the Parma Codex, while he grouped the Domus Aurea's figural scenes in the Codex Wolfegg[484]. In fact, in the Codex Wolfegg (ca. 1503-1504) there are several drawings of the Domus Aurea's paintings, but there are no drawings of grotesques, candlesticks or pure ornamental motifs, as can be seen in the Parma Codex (ca. 1496). Moreover, while in the Codex Wolfegg there are several drawings of the Domus Aurea, in Codex London I-II (ca.

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[481] Faietti 2018, p. 14: «la prova che Amico volesse adottare due sistemi di registrazione dell'antico a seconda dell'obiettivo prefissato (la ricerca di una restituzione naturalistica e tridimensionale del modello classico, oppure la sua trascrizione semplificata e puramente mnemonica) è fornita dal fatto che le figurazioni sul *verso* [*scil.* drawing at the MET of New York inv. 19.151.6], tracciate a contorno con l'aggiunta dei tratti diagonali per suggerire l'idea della profondità come nel registro inferiore sul *recto*, sembrano essere affatto complete».

[482] Schweikhart 1986, p. 49, n. 234, pp. 401-409.

[483] Schweikhart supposes that Codex Wolfegg was made for a patron instead of being a simply part of the workshop stock (Schweikhart 1986, pp. 20 and 30; De Maria suggests Giovanni Achillini – so-called Filotèo and author of the literary work *Viridario* in 1513 – as Aspertini's patron: De Maria 1988, p. 40)

[484] For the Parma Codex: Faietti-Nesselrath 1995; for the Codex London I and London II: Bober 1957; cf. also Brugnoli 1983, pp. 89-90.

1526-1527) there might be only one drawing of the Domus Aurea[485]. Therefore, it is likely that the three codices were projected for being distinct archaeological repertoires with different artistic uses.

Analysis

Although the drawing is slightly abraded and vanished, the figural scene can be seen yet. On the left side, we can see one soldier with a javelin and an axe (?): he is depicted standing while the wind is moving his hair and his Roman kilt. Below him, three figures are naked and lying on the ground. Although the soldier seems to have no link with the naked figures, the naked man on the left side seems to gaze at the Roman soldier. Thanks to the inscription «in le grote soto tera», in the lower part of fol. 19 *recto,* Robert recognized in the sheet one figural scene from a painting. He focused his attention on a female figure, which is seated on armor and a shield and is shaking the hand of a *togatus* man. Thus, the scholar recognized the iconography of Rome[486]. In the same vein, Schweikhart simply confirmed that the subject seems to come from an antique painting[487] and he mentioned a numismatic parallel (a sestertius of 117 AD), which depicts a figural scene very similar to that of Aspertini[488].

The scene seems very unusual and without any iconological meaning. It seems that Aspertini located in this part of the sheet figures from different parts of the original fresco. Therefore, Aspertini's design

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[485] Bober 1957 saw in the fol. 1 *recto* one grotesques motif. Nevertheless, the motifs is too "Baroque" for being antique (entire human figures which carrying baskets on their heads). On the other hand in fol. 1 *recto* a centaur carrying a basket on his head and a female figure on his back is barely visible. Although the latter could come from the Domus Aurea, there is no evidence among the Renaissance drawings and Roman paintings.

[486] Robert 1901, p. 225.

[487] «Die Beschriftung läßt vermuten, daß es sich bei der hier wiedergegebenen Szene um ein Gemälde handelte. Dieses ist bisher nicht nachzuweisen, auch ist keine weitere Renaissancezeichnung bekannt geworden»: Schweikhart 1986, p. 63.

[488] The coin mentioned by Schweikhart is taken from Vermeule 1959, p. 119, no. 18; in order to provide a clear image of the same coin, I have chosen one coin (RIC II no. 547) from the collection of Münzsammlung des Seminars für Alte Geschichte der Albert-Ludwigs-Universität at Freiburg (https://ikmk.uni-freiburg.de/object?lang=en&id=ID7559&view=rs).

appears like a sort of *pastiche* of different figures, originally coming from the same painting and located «in le grote soto tera». Although Robert and Schweikhart did not specify which painting inspired Aspertini's scene, it is likely that this scene comes from the underground grottoes of Domus Aurea, as the inscription suggests. As will be seen also in CAT. 18, 22, and 23, this expression is used by Amico for defining the Domus Aurea's paintings as archaeological provenience of his ancient model. Not by chance, in the *verso* of the sheet, Aspertini depicted scene 8 of the Volta Dorata with the myth of Phaedra and Hippolytus.

Concerning the figure of "Rome" and *togatus* man depicted by Aspertini, in the Volta Dorata there might have been one scene similar indeed. In NE vault corner of Francisco's watercolor (CAT. 1), precisely in panel G of the vault, it can be seen one seated figure which stretches the arm towards an armed and standing man. A similar scene is depicted also in fol. 11 *recto* of MS L.IV.10 (CAT. 7). Although one is the specular form of the other (because of the already discussed copying practice of Renaissance artists)[489], we are in front of similar scenes. However, they are different in some details with Aspertini's representation: the main difference is that in Aspertini's design the woman is armed, while the man is *togatus*.

Nevertheless, considering the designs of Francisco, Aspertini and "Senese draftsman", the figural scheme and gesture depicted in the scene seem so similar that we are driven to believe that they come from the same archaeological source. It is important to remember that, despite the fact that Aspertini is quite precise in specifying the archeological provenance and concerning the iconography of the subject (i.e. gestures and positions of the bodies), he is not so careful about the accessories, gender and dresses of the figures. An exemplary case is the scene of Hippolytus and Phaedra of scene 8 in fol. 22 *recto* (CAT. 22): here, Aspertini depicts an enthroned man instead of Phaedra. As Schweikhart suggests, the scene depicted by Aspertini is impressive for the resemblance with the Roman coin of "Rome" with *togatus* man. We have to remember that the iconography of Rome enthroned is not

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[489] Meyboom-Moormann 2013, I, p. 196.

so common in Roman art[490]. Excluding a few public reliefs and statues where Rome is rarely seated (e.g. in Ara Pacis and the basement of Antoninus Pius' column, both not yet discovered in Renaissance), the iconography is almost absent in Roman painting and mostly testified by coins and gems[491]. The iconography is so rarely attested and panel G is so inappropriate for such political iconography that Weege did not recognize in the seated figure the personification of Rome, but the goddess Athena/Minerva[492]. In fact, when the goddess is depicted seated, the iconography of Rome and Athena/Minerva are almost the same, as for instance can be seen in the silver cup of mid. 1st century AD[493]. However, Athena/Minerva are depicted seated and in front of Zeus mostly only on gems and, thus, any painting parallels are documented by archaeologists[494].

As pointed out in CAT. 13, the little panels next to the corner medallions (therefore, also panel G) had no big dimensions and, owing to their distance from the ground, they would not have been so easy to be gazed. Thus, they would have been decorative scenes without any mythical reference and politically disengaged. Owing to the evidence available, they seem to have evoked peaceful and loving themes. In this way, considering the scene G depicted by the three Renaissance designs, we can conclude that the panel G would have simply depicted a scene with a standing (and armed?) figure in a resting position and in

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[490] LIMC 8.1 (1997), pp. 1049-1068, *s.v. Roma* (E. Di Filippo Balestrazzi).

[491] Only one fresco is dated to 354 AD: LIMC 8.1, no. 135, pp. 1057-1058; for the iconography of Rome seated in public reliefs or statues: Ara Pacis (LIMC 8.1, no. 65, p. 1053), Villa Albani's relief (LIMC 8.1, no. 66, pp. 1053-1054), Vatican Statue (LIMC 8.1, no. 72, p. 1054), Gens Augusta's relief (LIMC 8.1, no. 98, pp. 1055), statue of Villa Medici (LIMC 8.1, no. 145, p. 1058), sarcophagus in Borghese Palace (LIMC 8.1, no. 165, p. 1059), reliefs from Septimius Severus (LIMC 8.1, no. 173, p. 1060), Altar of Scipio Orfitus (LIMC 8.1, no. 176, p. 1060 Basement of Antoninus Pius' column (LIMC 8.1, no. 221, p. 1063), monument of Zoilos (LIMC 8.1, no. 230, pp. 1063-1064).

[492] Weege 1913a, p. 177.

[493] Mid. 1st century BC, Berlin, Staatliche Museen, inv. 3779: LIMC 2.1 (1984), *s.v. Athena/Minerva,* no. 269, p. 1093; for the iconography of Athena/Minerva: LIMC 2.1 (1984), s.v. Athena/Minerva, pp. 1050-1109 (F. Canciani).

[494] One rare example of Minerva in front of Iuno is the relief of Marc Aurelius' triumph at Palazzo dei Conservatori in Rome: LIMC 2.1 (1984), no. 320, pp. 1096-1097 (F. Canciani).

front of another lying figure. Of course, a similar scene might have alluded to an atmosphere of peace and to a resting moment and, thus, seems in line with the themes depicted in the other square panels of the "Internal Area" (cf. CAT. 13 and *Chapter 3*).

Returning to the iconography of Aspertini design, the resemblance with the iconography of Rome is undoubtedly strong. However, it is hard to believe that such iconography was present in the Volta Dorata, for two main reasons: the iconography of Rome seated was mostly depicted on gems and coins; and the panel G had a defiladed position (therefore it is hard to think of it as an image with political value). Moreover, we have remember the trend of Aspertini to change some details of the figures (gender/accessories), although the gestures and postures are often reliable. Therefore, how can we explain such rare and unusual iconography of the panel G in Aspertini's drawing?

Scholars have already discussed the work methodology of Aspertini and the recurrent modification of his antique models in his drawings (cf. CAT. 22 and 23). After his first stay in Rome, when he sketched the Roman Antiquities, Aspertini draw the final version of his designs when he came back to Bologna and, owing to that time lapse, often he wronged or re-interpreted some iconographies. Therefore, although it is unlikely that the iconography of fol. 19 *recto* was depicted on the Volta Dorata, it seems so archeologically precise, that it could have been re-interpreted by other antique models, such as proper Roman coins. In fact, in Bologna Aspertini was very familiar with the collection of Giovanni Achillini, owner of an important numismatic collection and probable patron of the Codex Wolfegg. Therefore, we cannot excluded the possibility that Amico re-elaborated the iconography of panel G, sketched when he was in Rome, through the Bolognese numismatic collection of Achillini[495]. Since the iconography of Rome seated and shaking hands with a *togatus* man is almost testified in Roman coins

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[495] For the relationship between Amico Aspertini and Achillini family: Faietti-Scaglietti Kelescian 1995, pp. 89-94 (ed. by M. Faietti); for Aspertini and his relationship with collections of antiquities: De Maria 1988, pp. 21-35. While Schweikhart supposes that the Codex Wolfegg was made for a patron (Schweikhart 1986, pp. 20 and 30), De Maria thinks of Giovanni Achillini as possible patron: De Maria 1988, p. 40. For the working method of copying the Antique in Aspertini: De Maria 2008.

(especially on all coinages of the Hadrian Age), it is possible that Aspertini saw that iconography in Achillini's collection and applied it to his sketched drawing of panel G[496]. Of course, this is only a hypothetical explanation for one phenomenon concerning Aspertini's methodology which should be investigated through more examples and evidence. Therefore, although Aspertini's drawing in fol. 19 *recto* does not appear as an helpful source for understanding the subject in panel G, it seems to confirm the iconography depicted by Francisco's watercolor and design in the Senese Codex MS L.IV.10 (CAT. 7).

Specific bibliography for fol. 19 *recto*:
Schweikhart 1986, pp. 62-63.

Bibliographic references to fol. 19 *recto*:
Robert 1901, pp. 224-225; Weege 1913a, p. 177; Meyboom-Moormann 2013, I, p. 203.

Copies of scene G of Volta Dorata:
- ca. 1503-1504, Amico Aspertini (ca. 1475 Bologna - 1552 Bologna), *Scene G of Volta Dorata (NE corner)?*, Codex Wolfegg (Württemberg, Schloss Wolfegg: Erbgraf Max Willibald von Waldburg collection), fol. 19 *recto*: CAT. 15.
- 1538 - ante 1571, Francisco de Hollanda (1517 Lisboa – 1585 Lisbona), *Volta Dorata's vault* , Os desenhos das antigualhas (Escorial, Biblioteca Real de S. Lorenzo, Cod. 28-I-20): fol. 47 bis *verso* - 48 *recto*: CAT. 1;
- 1577 - end of the 16th century, Anonymous Tuscan artist of the second half of the 16th century, *Alternative version of the NE vault -corner of the Volta Dorata (scenes I, G, H, 7)*, fol. 11 *recto,* Senese Codex (Siena, Biblioteca Comunale degli Intronati, MS L.IV.10): CAT. 7.
- mid. 17th century, Pietro Santi Bartoli (1635 Perugia – 1700 Rome), *Volta Dorata's vault* (copies after Francisco de Hollanda): Codex Massimi (ante 1674, University Library of Glasgow, MS Gen 1496 [HX 110] fol. LXXV: Pace 1979, p. 143, no. 58) and the Codex Baddeley (around 1670s, Eton College Collection, ECL-TP.20, fol. CXXVII: Ashby 1916, p. 51): CAT. 2.

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[496] The numismatic iconography of seated Rome who is shaking hand of a *togatus* man started in Trajan's age (RIC II Trajan 451: 103 AD) and became widespread in Hadrian age (just few examples: RIC II Hadrian 224c: 134-138 AD; RIC II Hadrian 547: 118 AD; RIC II Hadrian 554: 118 AD) and continued under Marcus Aurelius (RIC III Marcus Aurelius 1463: 166-167 AD). Under the Antonine and Severian dynasty, the iconography most recurrent for the verso coin is that of Rome seated with the Victory statuette on her hand.

CAT. 16

*NE **a**ngular medallion of Volta Dorata (scene H)*
Giuliano da Sangallo workshop
Codex Escurialensis
Escorial, Biblioteca Real de S. Lorenzo, Cod. 28-II-12
1490-1506/7
330 x 230 mm, 79 leaves, 38 Italian watermarks for the entire codex[497]
fol. 6 *recto*
red pen

Provenance, Attribution, and Drawing in context:
see CAT. 11

Analysis
As already anticipated, because of the current condition of the Volta Dorata, it is not possible to recognize any clues concerning the painted figural scenes of the angular medallions[498]. Nevertheless, owing to Louvre watercolored engraving of the Volta Dorata (CAT. 3), it is possible to observe the same medallion to that of fol. 6 *recto* Codex Escurialensis[499]. Unfortunately, the scene H probably became invisible during the 19th century[500]. The identification of the subject by Egger 1906 was possible because of another sheet of the Codex, namely the fol. 10 *recto* (CAT. 11)[501]. In the latter, the draftsman copied another angular medallion of the Roman vault and below wrote «volta dorata».
Fol. 6 *recto* of the Codex Escurialensis depicts a human male figure dragged by a flying horse. The position and detail of the hand, which

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[497] It is not possible to know the watermark of fol. 6 *recto*; for the watermarks: Fernandez Gomez 2000, pp. 44-46.
[498] Owing to the Windsor drawing RCIN 909568 *recto* (CAT. 8)*,* it is possible to know that the angular medallions were in painting and not in stucco (the draftsman wrote «dipinto» and not «stucho» as he noted in other panels). Moreover, F. Weege did not included the angular medallions of the vault within the succo reliefs of the vault : Weege 1913a, pp. 178-179.
[499] Pinot de Villechenon 1998, tav. 48; Ponce and Uggeri copied Mirri's drawing (Ponce 1786, p. 43, tav. 26; Uggeri 1800-1802, III, tav. 27)
[500] Carletti says that in 1776 Mirri was able to see and draw the medallion: Carletti 2014, pp. 94-95, no. LV (Mirri-Carletti 1776, pp. LXXIX-LXXX, no. LVI).
[501] Egger 1906, pp. 61-62.

seems to held the horse's missing bridle, suggests that the medallion depicts an abduction of a young man by a male deity (the gender of the horse is explicit). Although there is no evidence of an abduction by a deity in horse-form in classical mythology, the iconography of an abduction is clear and, moreover, the geometrical shape of the medallion is typical for this kind of iconography. In mosaics, funerary steles, stone ceilings, and public monuments (as arches/*propylon*), the medallion with an abduction is well testified, and most of the cases show the Ganymede myth[502]. In Roman paintings, one precious parallel is the vault of the Valerii Tomb in Rome (mid. 2nd century AD) with its numerous stucco medallions, reproducing abductions or dionysiac themes[503]. As we will see in *Chapter 3*, the scene seems to use the same iconography of one abduction recently discovered in *Brigetio* that, without any iconographical parallels, has been recognized as the abduction of Andromeda[504]. As it will be clear later, it is more likely that scene H depicts one scene that belong to the repertoire of the "Schwebende Gruppen" with human figures on animals and mythical monsters (e.g. Ketos).

In fol. 6 *recto*, the use of the compass is visible and suggests that the draughtsman copied the drawing from another drawing, and not directly from the archaeological model. In fol. 6 *recto*, it is possible to observe the cross-hatching, a typical style used for three-dimensional figures and for drawings after the Antique. Domenico Ghirlandaio was the artist who spread this style among his pupils and the Florentine school (and also for this reason Egger considered the author of the Codex Escurialensis one of Ghirlandaio's pupils)[505]. Therefore, although within the Volta Dorata's medallions there were figural painting scenes (and not stucco figures for instance), in fol. 6 *recto* the

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[502] Here some examples: mosaic from Sollertiana Domus in Thysdrus (Tunis), end of the II century AD, El Djem Archaeological Museum (Ben Khader 2002, no. 257-259, p. 533); funerary stele of II century AD at the Museo di Antichità di Torino (Ratto-Giorcelli-Ferrarese Lupi 2012); fragment of stone vault of II century AD inv. I.G. 220 (Di Filippo Balestrazzi 2012, cat. 174).

[503] Interdonato 2018.

[504] Borhy 2004b.

[505] For the cross-hatching in Domenico Ghirlandaio: Ames-Lewis 1981; for the parallel hatching vs cross-hatching: Faietti 2008.

cross-hatching is used because of the subject after the Antique (and not because of the "three-dimensional" nature of the subject).

In the fol. 6 *recto*, the artist also copied the decorated frame of the medallion (the same that is reproduced in Louvre watercolored engraving and in the Hertziana watercolor: cf. CAT. 3). The presence of the decorated frame in the drawing is important for two reasons: firstly, it confirms that the Renaissance artists copied the Volta Dorata from a close distance (i.e. the floor of the room was closer to the vault than nowadays, because of the earth fill of the room)[506]; secondly, the drawing confirms the reliability of Louvre watercolored engraving to the archaeological model[507].

Considering the gesture of the figure in fol. 6 *recto*, it is possible to assume the possibility of the presence of an object in his hand. Man's arm is in a particular position which suggests he could have been holding something. It seems likely that the object was invisible in the 16th century, while in 1774-1776 Mirri's artists decided to add a laurel crown in order to give an iconological interpretation to the scene. Carletti, who wrote the descriptions of Mirri's drawings, says that the scene represents a young boy who won the horse race[508]. In this sense, Carletti did not recognize the iconographical scheme of the abduction, but rather the scene of a young winner in the horse racing[509]. Moreover, Carletti states that, at that time, only two out of the four angular medallions were visible[510].

Nowadays only four graphic sources are available for scene H: Uffizi drawing 1682 O (CAT. 6), the Codex Escurialensis fol. 6 *recto* (CAT. 16), the Lille drawing Inv. Pl. 102 (CAT. 17), and Mirri's Louvre watercolored engraving (CAT. 3). Obviously, there is no relationship of

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[506] For a brief poem of 15th century about the work conditions of the Renaissance artists inside the Domus Aurea: Meyboom-Moormann 2013, p. 11, n. 30.

[507] In Louvre watercolored engraving (CAT. 3), the male figure has the genitals covered (for obvious cultural reasons of that time, 1776), but he also has a laurel crown in his left hand, which is absent in the Codex Escurialensis

[508] Carletti 2014, pp. 94-95, no. LV (= Mirri-Carletti 1776, pp. LXXIX-LXXX, no. LV).

[509] Tedeschi 2010.

[510] Carletti 2014, pp. 94-96, no. LV-LVI (= Mirri-Carletti 1776, pp. LXXIX-LXXX, no. LV-LVI).

dependence between Mirri and the Codex Escurialensis (the Codex was already in Spain in 1576) and, even more, with the Lille's drawing, we have to assume that this medallion was really seen by Mirri (i.e. he did not copy it from other graphic sources). Although Mirri's artists probably knew indirectly Francisco de Hollanda's watercolor (CAT. 1)[511], they decided to be faithful to the archaeological evidence of the vault and not add the other medallions figurated that are present in the Francisco's watercolor.

Specific bibliography for fol. 6 *recto* Cod. 28-II-12:
Egger 1906, pp. 61-62, fig. 6; Fernandez Gomez 2000, pp. 58-59.

Bibliographic references to fol. 6 *recto* Cod. 28-II-12:
Egger 1906, p. 61-62, fig. 6; Weege 1913a, pp. 176-177, no. C; Dacos 1969, p. 23, fig. 23; Meyboom-Moormann 2013, I, p. 202.

Copies of the scene H:
- 1490-1506/7, Giuliano da Sangallo workshop, *Scene H,* Codex Escurialensis (Escorial, Biblioteca Real de S. Lorenzo, Cod. 28-II-12), fol. 6 *recto:* CAT. 16*;*
- mid. 16th century drawing, Anonymous 16th Florentine artist, *Scene H*, Lille, Palais des Beaux-Arts, Inv. Pl. 102: CAT. 17;
- ca. 1775, Mirri's artists, *NE vault corner of the Volta Dorata (scenes H and C)*, Rom Bibliotheca Hertziana Dv 570-3760 (Exemplar mit 61 Bl.) U. PL. D 45332a: Pl. 8, fig. 1;
- 1741, G. Turnbull (engraving from Bartoli's watercolor: CAT. 2), *scene H* (Turnbull 1741, no. 11);
- 1776, F. Smuglewicz, *Scene H*, Mirri's album (Pinot de Villechenon 1998 tav. 48 [ed. or. 1776, tav. 28]);
- 1786, N. Ponce's engraving (copy of Mirri's engraving: CAT. 3), *Scene H*: Ponce 1786, p. 43, tav. 26 (Perrin 1985);
- 1800-1802, A. Uggeri's engraving (copy of Mirri's engraving: CAT. 3), *Scene H*: Uggeri 1800-1802, III, tav. 27**.**

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[511] Mirri probably knew Francisco's watercolor because of the Bartoli copy (Codex Massimi in Glasgow and Baddeley Codex: CAT. 2) and, from the Bartoli's copy, Turnbull created his engravings.

CAT. 17

Scene inside the NE angular medallion of the Volta Dorata (scene H)
Anonymous Florentine artist (Jacopo di Giovanni di Francesco called Jacone?)
Lille, Palais des Beaux-Arts, Inv. Pl. 102 (the *recto* is Pl. 101 = CAT. 24)
First half of 16th century
265 x 395 mm, watermark: siren, Briquet 13884[512]
pen, ink, traces of black stone (the latter is used only for defining the space of the figural scene)[513].
inscription: «scipario (?) con il c[..]r[..]no»[514]

Provenance
Unknown. The first catalogue of the Lille drawings collection does not mention any provenance[515]. Viatte indicates the year 1834 for the entry of the drawing in the collection Wicar, but without quoting any bibliographical or archival reference[516].

Attribution
During the 19th and 20th centuries, the authorship of the drawing was debated by different scholars and they provided four main hypothesis for its attribution: Michelangelo (scholarship from 1856 until 1903); Baccio Bandinelli (from 1903 until 1963); Anonymous Florentine artist (from 1963 until 1994); Giovanni Francesco Rustici? (from 1994-present day). This latter attribution was provided by Weston Levis who noted on the mount the name "Rustici" during the restoration process. Nevertheless, although the inscription could be also a modern

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[512] The watermark has not yet been studied: thanks to Dr. Cordelia Hattori (Lille, Palais des Beaux-Arts), I have had the possibility to see the images of the watermark. It is possible to see a figure similar to a siren and to the watermark Briquet 13884 (Rome 1501).
[513] «Trait d'encadrement à la pierre noire» (Brejon de Lavergnee 1997, p. 333).
[514] «La transcription de l'annotation visible sur le verso – «Scipion con il servio» proposée par Gonse 1877 – ne nous paraît pas bonne, mais nous n'avons pas pu déchiffrer les mots principaux»: Brejon de Lavergnee 1997, p. 334; the scholar proposes: «[…] con il risino[?]» (Brejon de Lavergnee 1997, p. 333).
[515] Benvignat 1856, no. 616, 617.
[516] Viatte 1963, p. 319, no. 134.

attribution[517], Weston Levis' indication has not yet been proposed in any scientific article, and it remains an internal note in the Lille Prints and Drawings collection. The only written reference of Weston Levis' indication is provided in the latest catalogue of Lille's Collection (1997)[518]. In the latter, Brejon de Lavergnee considered possible the attribution to Rustici because of the similarity between the inscription of the Pl. 102 and that in the Uffizi drawing 226 F *verso* by Giovanni Francesco Rustici. Actually, in my opinion, this single element is not sufficient for an attribution and, moreover, it is also not so easy to agree with. In fact, the inscription of the Uffizi drawing has a totally different form and, moreover, it has some abbreviations (e.g. "*est*" at the end) which the inscription in Lille's drawing does not have (the meaning of the inscription in the *verso* of Lille's drawing remains indecipherable).

Therefore, nowadays, the most likely attribution seems to be to an Anonymous Florentine artist. In fact, as the first catalogues and scholars of the Lille collection stressed, the drawing has a strong stylistic relation with the Florentine school, especially with Michelangelo[519] and Baccio Bandinelli[520]. In 1903, Berenson was the first to reject the attribution to Michelangelo and attributed the *recto* (CAT.

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[517] For the complex problem of the use of the mounting on the drawings: Mostra Uffizi 1981, pp. 161-180 (ed. by A. Petrioli Tofani).

[518] Brejon de Lavergnee 1997, pp. 333-334, no. 835.

[519] In 1856, the first catalogue of the Lille's collection (Musée Wicar) considered the drawing made by Michelangelo (because of «l'expression et du style»): «Ces figures et celles du numéro suivant sont assez exactes sous le rapport du mouvement, mais elles diffèrent de la fresque sous le rapport de l'expression et du style, ce qui peut faire supposer que ces dessins auraient été faits de souvenir par Michel-Ange, à cause de la difficulté que l'on éprouvait de son temps pour pénétrer dans ces ruines» (Benvignat 1856, pp. 148-149). The following catalogues and studies of the Lille collection accepted this attribution without any other further observations (Gonse 1878 p. 60, no. 616; Pluchard 1889, p. 23, no. 101).

[520] The first scholar who revealed some doubts on this attribution was Morelli in 1892 who added the note «fraglich» (*scil*. questionable): Morelli 1892, p. 377, no. 34. Then, Berenson provided the attribution of Baccio Bandinelli for the *verso* (Pl. 102): about the three editions (1903, 1938, 1961) of *The Drawings of the florentine Painters* by Berenson: http://florentinedrawings.itatti.harvard.edu/. In Berenson's catalogue, the Lille drawing has the number 1679 for the *recto* (CAT. 24) and the number 1677 for the *verso* (CAT. 17).

24 = inv. Pl. 101) to Baccio Bandinelli[521]. However, considering the *verso* (CAT. 17 = inv. Pl. 102), in 1938 Berenson quoted the attribution to Michelangelo because of Morelli's study, saying (wrongly) that the folio is a copy of the Last Judgement of Michelangelo (while it is a copy a Domus Aurea's painting)[522]. In 1961 Berenson seems to accept Morelli's attribution also fo the *recto* (CAT. 24 = inv. Pl. 101) and attributed the sheet to "Michelangelo (School of)"[523]. Thanks to the suggestion of Dr. Faietti, it is possible to see a strong similarity with the style of Jacone (Jacopo di Giovanni di Francesco). The "statuesque" style, the quick stroke of the pen, and the hatching with hook termination reveal some similarities with Uffizi drawings 882 F and 1061 S.

Analysis
The drawing is the *verso* of the drawing Pl. 101 (CAT. 24) and it depicts the scene inside the NE angular medallion of the Volta Dorata. The scene is slightly different from that of Codex Escurialensis, fol. 6 *recto* (CAT. 16). Although the iconography is quite similar from a general overview, three details stress the difference between the two drawings. In the Lille drawing the man has his right arm behind the horse (rather than in front of it, as it is in the Codex Escurialensis' drawing); his left arm outstretched (instead of being bent as in Codex Escurialensis' drawing); the man's head is turned towards the horse, and not behind (as in Codex Escurialensis' drawing). Moreover, there is also a difference with Hertziana drawing (**Pl. 8, fig. 1**): in the latter the left arm is bent and is holding a laurel crown. Finally, in the Lille drawing there are some traces of black stone lines for defining the space within

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[521] Berenson (1938 Edition): «Said to be a free version of an ancient fresco found in the Baths of Titus. This leaf is certainly by Baccio Bandinelli, here at his very best» (Berenson Cat. No. 1679; inv. 101 A).

[522] Morelli 1892, p. 377, no. 34; Berenson (1938 edition): «Both these are by the hand we recognize in a number of other sketches for the same work, and, like some of these, seem to have been enlarged after light jottings by Michelangelo himself. Morelli ascribed this sheet to Michelangelo» (Berenson Cat. No. 1678; inv. 99).

[523] Berenson (1961 edition): «1956: Il Morelli può aver avuto ragione; ma se autografi, non sono certo del Michelangelo migliore» (Berenson Cat. No. 1678; inv. 99).

the artist depict the scene – like the drawing in fol. 87 *recto* of the Codex Fossombronis (CAT. 13)[524].

In Lille's drawing the draftsman corrected the position of the man's left leg, since the latter seems to have two positions. This element shows that the artist drew directly with a pen and not first with a pencil (a habit not so common among the Renaissance artists and only typical among artists with more experience and ability). It is hard to explain the reason for these few differences, but it is quite probable that the visuality inside the room of the Volta Dorata was the main cause.

According to Dacos, «le dessin, proche du style de B. Bandinelli, ne conserve de la peinture antique que l'iconographie: ce n'est pas une copie directe»[525]. Actually, this latter consideration is not so helpful, since it could be true for all the drawings after the Antique. Probably, Dacos arrives to this conclusion because of the "michelangelesque" (or "statuesque") style of the body. Although Dacos did not specify the reason why «ce n'est pas une copie directe», we can assume that, owing to the style (that seems to reveal an artist with a sculptor background), she probably thought that the draftsman of the Lille drawing was not interested in visiting directly the Domus Aurea's paintings, but copied them after other drawings. However, this "statuesque" style is not enough for supposing that the draughtsman did not copy after the Antique. On the other hand, it is true that – as the fol. 6 *recto* of Codex Escurialensis shows (CAT. 16) – the scene H of the Volta Dorata was know by Renaissance artists because of other drawings which circulated among the Italian workshops.

Therefore, although we should not exclude the possibility that the Lille's drawing is a copy of another drawing, this hypothesis cannot be considered as the only supposition. Actually, the stroke of the pen shows a fast and synthetic process of copying: the overlapping profile of the figure indicates how the artist drew immediately using the pen and not a pencil (as it was common among artists: before a drawing in pencil and, on a second time, in pen). This technique is typical of those

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[524] In the fol. 87 *recto* of the Codex Fossombronis (CAT. 13), the lines which delimit the figural scene seems to indicate that the scene depicted was not part of a group but the artist copied all the scene.

[525] Dacos 1969, p. 22, n. 8: although the sentence refers to the *recto* of the drawing (Pl. 101: CAT. 24), it can be pertinent also to the *verso*.

artists who are confident drawing without a previous pencil drawing and very common for those who copied after the Antique (especially sculptures)[526]. In the *recto* of the drawing (CAT. 24), the artist does not simply copy the scene of Hippolytus and Phaedra. He copied only some figures that interested him and he placed them in different positions from the original painting[527]. This "copying methodology" is similar to that one adopted by the artists who were in front of the Antique: they decided to copy only some figures/parts of the monument and they copied them in different position of the folio[528]. Secondly, the transparency of the sheet and the passage of the ink between the two sides of the drawing suggest the possibility that the drawing was a personal sketch of the artist, without any pretension to circulate in a workshop or between colleagues. Therefore, in my opinion, there are some clues that admit the possibility that the artist saw the vault and copied part of it.

Although there are not enough elements to attribute the Lille drawing to a specific artist, it is important to stress that often the scholarship has found links with the style of Michelangelo and his followers (mostly Baccio Bandinelli). Although Michelangelo surely knew the Volta Dorata directly or indirectly (e.g. through his friendship with Francisco de Hollanda: *Chapter 1*), it is not possible to state that the drawing was made by him[529]. Thanks to a personal suggestion from Dr. Faietti, the style of drawing seems located in between those of Michelangelo and Baccio. Owing to the parallels mentioned above, it is not excluded that the drawing was made by Jacone (1495-1554). Also the watermark, not

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[526] «It is possible to draw only with the pen, don't following the pencil traces: it is a very difficult exercise, but it is inherent of an expert hand»: Borghini 1584, pp. 139-140 («Si può disegnare con la penna sola, lasciando i lumi della carta, il qual modo è molto difficile, ma molto à maestra mano conveniente»): Mostra Uffizi 1981, pp. 90-93 (ed. by A. Petrioli Tofani).

[527] For example, the little Eros is placed above the horse and not on the same floor of the other figures: CAT. 24.

[528] The Aspertini's case is particularly famous: Schweikhart 1989; Faietti 2018.

[529] Two projects by Michelangelo for Cappella Sistina's vault reveal some influences from the Volta Dorata: the London and Detroit's drawings (Tolnay Corpus 119 *recto*; Tolnay Corpus 120 *recto*): Frommel 1994, p. 135, Acidini Luchinat 2007, pp. 112, 119.

studied before, could confirm Jacone's chronology: the Lille drawing has a watermark (34 x 44 mm) dated around 1501[530].

The scene represents a variant of the so-called "Schwebende Gruppen". They are well testified since the first century BC (especially figures from the dionysiac repertoire or divine female figures), but became typical for wall-paintings and ceilings in the 1st and 2nd century AD[531]. It is not possible to recognize a reference to a specific myth, but the general meaning remains a divine abduction. Not by chance, as Schwinzer has pointed out, thanks to the discovery of the Domus Aurea, the "Schwebende Gruppen" also became typical in Renaissance art[532].

Specific bibliography for the Lille's drawing Pl. 102:
Benvignat 1856, no. 616, 617 (attributed to Michelangelo); Gonse 1878 p. 60, no. 616 (attributed to Michelangelo); Pluchard 1889, p. 23, no. 101 (attributed to Michelangelo); Thode 1913, III, p. 112[533] (attributed to Baccio Bandinelli); Berenson 1903, 1938, 1968: inv. 1678 (attributed to Baccio Bandinelli/ Michelangelo); Viatte 1963, no. 134, pp. 319-320 (attributed to Anonymous Florentine artist); Brejon de Lavergnee 1997, pp. 333-334, no. 835 (attributed to Giovanni Francesco Rustici?).

General reference to the Lille's drawing Pl. 102: Dacos 1969, p. 23, n. 8.

Other copies of the scene H: *see CAT. 16.*

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530 Thanks to Dr. Hattori Cordelia (Lille, Palais des Beaux-Arts), for the images and cooperation.

531 Schwinzer 1979, pp. 126-131.

532 Schwinzer 1979, p. 132: «Eine neue Bedeutung als Wandmotiv erhalten die schwebenden Figuren und Gruppen in der Wandmalerei der Renaissance, vor allem durch die Entdeckung der Domus Aurea des Nero, deren Deckendekorationen mit den schwebenden Gruppen und Figuren auf Raffaels Gestaltung der Loggien im Vatikan eingewirkt haben».

533 Thode 1913, III, p. 112: «Eine geistreiche Studie des Teufels, der fliegend einen Verdammten trägt, im J. Gericht (N. 97) ist eine Kopie nach dem Fresko (Ber. 1677: Bandinelli. Br. 33). Eine Komposition, wie für eine Stichkappe (N. 103. Br. 32), hat nichts mit M. zu thun; auch nicht die Studien nach Fresken in den Titusthermen (N. 101. 102. Br. 38. Ber. 1679: Bandinelli)» [Br = Braunsche Photographien; Ber. = Berenson, *The Drawings of the florentine Painters*. London 1903].

CAT. 18

Scene 1 of Volta Dorata (SW corner)
Amico Aspertini (ca. 1475 Bologna - 1552 Bologna)
Codex Wolfegg
Württemberg, Schloss Wolfegg (Erbgraf Max Willibald von Waldburg collection)
ca. 1503-1504[534]
225 x 170 mm, 29 leaves, watermark: no mentions by the scholarship
foll. 44 *verso* - 45 *recto*
pen, brush and diluted ink
inscription: «sote tera destuco», «sote tera destuco»

Provenance, Attribution, and Drawing in context
see CAT. 15

Analysis
The upper part of the bifolio depicts a singular Dionysiac procession: on the left side, can be seen one Maenad (Silenus?) on a camel accompanied by two men and one Maenad playing the *aulos;* on the right side, there is one Satyr playing the *aulos,* two Satyrs in love and one with a big container on his shoulders, a sort of big pyx. In the bifolio, it is written two times the sentence «sote tera destuco». As anticipated in CAT. 15, Amico is quite careful in specifying the provenance of his archaeological models and, furthermore, he used a similar expression for referring to the Domus Aurea's paintings[535].
The first scholar who studied the bifolio was Robert in 1901 and he saw in the Volta Nera (room 32) the possible provenance of Aspertini's scene[536]. In doing so, Robert considers one etching of N. Ponce (no. 38), namely the antiquarian who copied Mirri's etchings of 1776 and in 1786

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[534] Faietti 1991, pp. 157-158; Faietti-Scaglietti Kelescian 1995, pp. 25, 31 (ed. by M. Faietti); for the period 1500-1503: Schweikhart 1986, pp. 27-28.
[535] «in le grote soto tera» (fol. 19 *recto*); «in lagrota daloro dipinto» (fol. 19 *verso*); «dipinto sototera» (fol. 22 *recto*); «de stuco sotetera» (fol. 22 *verso*); «sote tera in le grote» (fol. 41 *verso*).
[536] «Stuckrelief aus den Titus-oder Traians-Thermen; bakchischer Zug, am Schlusse eine halbnackte Frau auf einem Kameel, vielleicht Ponce 38 rechts unten»: Robert 1901, p. 235.

re-published them with a French comment[537]. Robert did not specify the precise figural panel of the Volta Nera that could be the source of Wolfegg bifolio. However, in Ponce's etching, can be seen a Dionysiac scene with a camel/horse (**Pl. 30, fig. 1**), and the figural scene seems more clear in Bartoli watercolor of the Codex Massimi (**Pl. 30, fig. 2**). As pointed out by Meyboom-Moormann, considering the main 17th- and 18th-century copies of Volta Nera[538], it can be seen how each representation of the vault does not agree with the other concerning the figural scenes, except for the presence of one horse/camel in one panel[539]. However, considering the panel in Ponce's hatching and Bartoli's watercolor (**Pl. 30, figs. 1-2**), it can be seen how not only the shape of the panel is different, but also the figural scene itself. Only the figure of the horse/camel corresponds in both representations, but it cannot be a sufficient evidence for demonstrating the provenance of the scene in Wolfegg bifolio.

Therefore, we might exclude that Aspertini copied the Dionysiac scene from the Volta Nera. Not by chance, among his drawings, Aspertini did not copy any other subject from the Volta Nera. Moreover, Aspertini is quite precise in defining the material of the scene, namely «destuco». According to Meyboom-Moormann's description of room 32, the stucco is used only for the circular medallions of the vault, and not for figural panels[540]. It can be argued that the sentence «sote tera destuco» was used for indicating the room 129 ("Volta di Ettore e Andromaca"), and

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[537] Perrin 1982.

[538] 1. Bartoli watercolor in Codex Massimi, mid. XVII century and ante 1674, Univer Glasgow, University Library, MS Gen 1496 [HX 110], fol. LXV;

2. Hertziana's drawing of Volta Dorata in Album Dv 570-3760 gr raro (tav. 14), 1775 ca., Rome, Hertziana Library, inv. U.Pl. D 45333;

3. F. Smuglewicz and V. Brenna's watercolor in Mirri's Album 1776: Pinot de Villechenon 1998, tav. 54 (= or. ed. tav. 40);

4. V. Brenna's watercolor, 1775 ca., London, V&A Museum, inv. 8479:22.

[539] «Anche le scene figurative nei pannelli rettangolari differiscono sulle varie riproduzioni. Solo il pannello nel terzo candelabro da destra, con il cavallo o dromedario al centro, mostra delle corrispondenze con quelli nelle altre immagini»: Meybomm-Moormann 2013, I, p. 160.

[540] «Leggero rilievo di stucco nei medaglioni»: Meyboom-Moormann 2013, I, p. 160; nowadays, few figural panels are partially visible: Dacos 1969, fig. 59.

named "volta degli stucchi" by some 16th century artists[541]. However, thanks to Bartoli's watercolor of room 129 in Codex Massimi (fol. LXXV: *Chapter 4*, fig. 123), we can observe a copy of the entire vault and it is possible to confirm the absence of such figural scene. Maybe owing to this complex *status quaestionis*, Dacos did not take into account the subject depicted in foll. 44 *verso* - 45 *recto.* She simply considers the design as an example of the artistic license of Aspertini[542]. Also Schweikhart seems quite doubtful about the possible provenance of the subject from the Volta Nera, because of the differences with Ponce's etching[543].

On the other hand, if we take into account Francisco's watercolor of Volta Dorata (CAT. 1), we can notice an interesting scene. In SW vault corner of Francisco's watercolor, can be seen a figural scene (**Pl. 30, fig. 3**), which partially resembles what Amico depicted in his drawing. Here, it can be seen a Dionysiac procession and, among all the figures, there is a drunk Silenus who seats on a donkey and is helped by another Silenus. This scene is no longer archaeologically detectable and the scene disappeared already in 18th century, by the time Mirri's artists copied the Volta Dorata (CAT. 3).

In the 16th century, the iconography of Silenus on a donkey/camel was well-known to many artists thanks to some Roman sarcophagi[544]. Nevertheless, in the first half of the 16th century, one sarcophagus – now at the British Museum (**Pl. 30, fig. 4**) – was particularly famous in Rome and reinterpreted by many artists, including Raphael in his drawing at the Albertina Collection (SR 533, inv. 444) and Peruzzi in his fresco at the Sala delle Prospettive at Villa Farnesina (cf. *Chapter 4*, pp.

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[541] E.g. «lavolta deglistuchj»: fol. 32 *recto* of Codex Escurialensis (*Chapter 4*, fig. 108).

[542] «En outre, la répartition d'une bonne partie des feuilles du Codex, telles que les folios 44v et 45, comprenant une peinture antique au haut de la page et un sujet différent, mais de même provenance, au bas de la page, semble trahir la copie simultanée de deux sources»: Dacos 1969, p. 23, n. 7.

[543] «Falls die Szene auf die "Volta nera" zurückgeht, hat sie Aspertini – gemessen an der summarischen Andeutung bei Ponce – sehr frei variiert und in den bacchischen Themenkreis übersetzt»: Schweikhart 1986, p. 104.

[544] Bober-Rubinstein 1986, no. 76 (pp. 111-112), no. 77 (pp. 112-113), no. 81 (pp. 115-116), no. 82 (p. 116), no. 83 (pp. 116-119); the figure of the camel is typical for the Indian Triumph of Bacchus: Bober-Rubinstein 1986, no. 77 (pp. 112-113).

310-312)[545]. It could be questioned that Francisco copied this sarcophagus in one panel of Volta Dorata. If so, we cannot understand why he copied only the drunk Silenus on the donkey and the Silenus who is helping him, and not all the figures. Moreover, in Francisco's watercolor, there are no other scenes that could suggest a possible trend to copy figural scenes from other artifacts and to locate them in the vault 's decoration[546]. Owing to Renaissance documentation, the figural scenes of Francisco's watercolor are generally confirmed by other Renaissance drawings (or Mirri's drawings). On the other hand, while Francisco's watercolor is the unique source for some figural scenes, it shows very unusual iconographies without any parallels from antique artifacts (as scene 12 with the Archers shooting at a Herm: cf. CAT. 1 and *Chapter 4*). Therefore, we can consider the possibility that a similar scene was really present in one decorative panel of the Volta Dorata, especially since the iconography of the drunk Silenus is well attested in Roman iconography[547].

Finally, considering foll. 44 *verso*–45 *recto*, another possible hypothesis could be that Aspertini re-elaborated the iconography of British Museum sarcophagus through artistic license, as Dacos seems to allude. Often, scholarship provides a similar hypothesis, when the model from the Antique is not clear or recognizable. However, Aspertini knew very well the British Museum sarcophagus and he copied it on another bifolio of Codex Wolfegg, foll. 31 *verso*–32 *recto* (**Pl. 30, fig. 5**), as Rubinstein and Schweikhart have shown[548]. Moreover, we have to remember that Aspertini wrote the provenance of the scene as «sote tera destuco», namely from the Domus Aurea. Considering the accuracy of the archaeological provenances written by Aspertini in his drawings, it is highly probably that, as Robert suggested, a similar subject was really visible in one vault of the Domus Aurea. Moreover,

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[545] Mid. 2nd century AD, inv. 1805,0703.130: Rubinstein 1975; Bober-Rubinstein 1986, no. 83 (pp. 116-119); for the theme of Triumph of Bacchus in the second half of the 16th century: Mozzetti 2006.

[546] Meyboom-Moormann 2013, I, pp. 199-200.

[547] Cf. the so-called typology B of the "Silen auf Esel (Maultier)": Matz 1968, I, p. 71; quite less are the painting attestations: e.g. Maecenas' Auditorium (De Vos 1983, pp. 238-241).

[548] Rubinstein 1975; Shweikhart 1986, pp. 77-80.

in my opinion, we should not forget the interest Aspertini had for the Volta Dorata and how many figural scenes he copied from it. A final element which we have to take into account is the "adjective" «destuco»: the panel 1 of the Volta Dorata, as all the other figural panels next to the corner-ceilings, was in stucco[549]. Therefore, considering the resemblance of scene 1 of Francisco's watercolor and Wolfegg's bifolio, it seems possible that a similar scene was depicted in the panel 1 of the Volta Dorata.

Specific bibliography for foll. 44 *verso* - 45 *recto* of Codex Wolfegg:
Schweikhart 1986, pp. 103-104.

Bibliographic references to foll. 44 *verso* - 45 *recto* of Codex Wolfegg:
Robert 1901, p. 235; Dacos 1969, p. 23, n. 7; Meyboom-Moormann 2013, I, p. 200.

Copies of scene 1 of Volta Dorata:
- ca. 1503-1504, Amico Aspertini (ca. 1475 Bologna - 1552 Bologna), *Scene 1 of the Volta Dorata (SW vault corner)*, Codex Wolfegg (Württemberg, Schloss Wolfegg: Erbgraf Max Willibald von Waldburg collection), foll. 44 *verso* - 45 *recto*: CAT. 18.
- 1538 - ante 1571, Francisco de Hollanda (1517 Lisboa – 1585 Lisbona), *Volta Dorata*, Os desenhos das antigualhas (Escorial, Biblioteca Real de S. Lorenzo, Cod. 28-I-20): fol. 47 bis *verso* - 48 *recto*: CAT. 1;
- mid. 17th century, Pietro Santi Bartoli (1635 Perugia – 1700 Rome), *Volta Dorata's vault* (after Francisco de Hollanda): Codex Massimi (ante 1674, University Library of Glasgow, MS Gen 1496 [HX 110] fol. LXXV: Pace 1979, p. 143, no. 58) and the Codex Baddeley (around 1670s, Eton College Collection, ECL-TP.20, fol. CXXVII: Ashby 1916, p. 51): CAT. 2.

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[549] «Il fregio esterno consiste ai quattro lati di tre pannelli oblunghi, quello centrale alquanto più lungo degli altri, alternati da pannelli quadrati, tutti incorniciati da listelli di stucco […] I due pannelli esterni avevano un fondo azzurro con figurine bianche in stucco ora quasi interamente perdute. I pannelli nel mezzo dei lati O e E, fiancheggiati da due fasce snelle verdi, mostrano una raffigurazione policroma su un fondo naturale»: Meyboom-Moormann 2013, I, p. 200.

CAT. 19

Scene 2 of the Volta Dorata (Dido's falling in love)
Giuliano da Sangallo workshop
Codex Escurialensis
Escorial, Biblioteca Real de S. Lorenzo, Cod. 28-II-12
1490-1506/7
330 x 230 mm, 79 leaves, 38 Italian watermarks for the entire codex[550]
fol. 10 *verso*
red pen

Provenance, Attribution, and Drawing in context
see CAT. 11

Analysis
The fol. 10 *verso* seems to be slightly cropped: on the right side, the design of the women couple seems interrupted. Not by chance, as pointed out in CAT. 11, some leaves of the codex (especially those of the second book: ff. 12-82) are indeed partially cropped. Despite other Escurialensis drawings of the Domus Aurea, the draftsman of fol. 10 *verso* used the parallel-hatching instead of the cross-hatching (generally used by Renaissance artists for the "three-dimensional" nature of the subject)[551].

In fol. 10 *verso*, the draftsman did not note the archaeological provenance of the scene. Nevertheless, on the other side of the sheet (fol. 10 *recto*: CAT. 11), he wrote «uolta dorata» and we can suppose that he did not write the same note on the *verso,* because the *recto* inscription would have concerned also the *verso*. Furthermore, considering fol. 6 *recto* (CAT. 16), there cannot be seen any inscription for its archaeological provenance (i.e. Volta Dorata). Hence, since in 16th century the Codex Escurialensis was made up by the three books (or quires) and the separate leaves were collected, it cannot be excluded

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[550] It is not possible to know the watermark of the fol. 10 *verso*; for the watermarks: Fernandez Gomez 2000, pp. 44-46.

[551] Since scene 2 could seem a relief from a sarcophagus, it is possible that the Escurialensis draftsman used here the parallel-hatching for indicating that the subject did not came from a sarcophagus? In foll. 5 *verso* and 8 *verso* (i.e. next to fol. 10 *verso*), the draftsman copied two sarcophagi and he used the cross-hatching.

that fol. 6 *recto* (CAT. 16) was originally located after to fol. 10 *recto* (CAT. 11) and *verso* (CAT. 19), since all of them depict portions of the «uolta dorata»[552]. In fact, considering the subjects from Domus Aurea in the Codex, a trend to precise the provenance from each vault («uolta gialla», «uolta delle civette», «lauolta deglistuchj», «uolta nera») instead of a more general indication (such as "soto tera in le grotte" as Amico Aspertini is used to do) can be seen[553]. Nevertheless, these specifications might arise one question: why, for Escurialensis draftsmen, was it important to specify Domus Aurea's vault for each subject copied (decorative motifs or figural scene)? In my opinion, it can be better understood if we see this phenomenon in relation to the hypothetical graphic source from which Escurialensis's draftsmen copied their drawings. We have discussed how the scholars pointed out that the Codex Escurialensis is not a drawing-book based on the Antique, but rather a drawing-book after other drawings (CAT. 11). Therefore, it is likely that Escurialensis's draftsmen copied their drawings from another source (drawing-book or groups of single sheets) organized for Domus Aurea ceilings («uolta gialla», «uolta delle civette», «lauolta deglistuchj», «uolta nera») in which probably there were also the representations of the vaults in their entirety. Thus, in front of these wide repertoires, the Escurialensis draftsmen decided to copy some portions of ceilings ant to write the provenance. Not by chance, in the Codex Escurialensis, one example of entire vault copy survives in fol. 13 *verso*, i.e. the "Volta Gialla" of room 31.

As the correspondences with other graphic witnesses show (**Pl. 32, fig. 2**, CAT. 20), the drawing depicts scene 2 of the Volta Dorata. Despite the damaged conditions of the fresco (**Pl. 32, fig. 1**), the archaeological evidence of the vault allows for the recognition of the location of the

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[552] Not by chance, in fol. 6 *verso*, it can be seen again the inscription of the identification of the subject: «diaspro chonchornuola». As Egger pointed out, the subject is: «Grundriß und Querschnitt einer Hachen antiken Schale "diaspro chonchornuola" mit der Angabe des Preises von "d(ucati) öd" (vgl. fol. 3)»: Egger 1906, p. 62.

[553] In copying other decorations from the Domus Aurea's paintings, the draftsmen of the Codex wrote all the different provenances: fol. 12 *verso* («uolta delle civette»); fol. 13 *recto* («uolta gialla»); fol. 14 *recto* («grotta gialla»); fol. 15 *recto* («testa uolta nera»); fol. 32 *recto* («lauolta deglistuchj»); fol. 34 *verso* («uolta delle civete»); fol. 58 *recto* («uolta dele civete»); fol. 65 *recto* («uolta dele civete»).

scene. Unfortunately, scene 2 probably became almost invisible during the 19th century, after Mirri's artists copied it (**Pl. 32, fig. 2**)[554]. In 1913 Weege recognized few details of the scene which concern the seated male figure in the center of the scene, and this is similarly depicted by all three graphic witnesses[555]. Although modern scholars (like Renaissance antiquarians) have thought that the scene might depict the myth of Hephaestus who discovers Ares and Aphrodite in love, the scene probably depicts the falling in love of Dido with Aeneas (for the interpretation of the scene: *Chapter 3*).

The drawing of Codex Escurialensis has many similarities with fol. 86 *recto* in Codex Fossombronis (CAT. 20), albeit in Codex Escurialensis the young figure (Ascanius), next to the enthroned woman on the right side, seems to have a slightly different position. In Codex Escurialensis, the young boy is depicted in a very unnatural position and, thus, we have to suppose that Escurialensis's draftsman did not understand exactly its posture. Probably, he was standing next to Dido and, while she is hugging him with the right arm, he had his arms and hands on her legs. In fact, according to the figural and literary sources, he was not so young for seating on her legs (6-8 years).

The iconography of scene 2 is confirmed also by Francisco de Hollanda in his watercolor of the Volta Dorata. Although the scene is located in the fold of the page, in the position where should have been Dido enthroned, only one figure can be seen seated on the throne (**Pl. 32, fig. 3**). The iconographical scheme of the scene depicted by Francisco is quite similar to those of other designs, albeit there are some little differences (such as, on the left side, the group of men are armed instead of being semi-naked). Unfortunately, the fold does not allow us

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[554] Carletti says that, in 1773-1775, Mirri was able to clearly see the scene: Carletti 2014, pp. 98-99 (= Mirri-Carletti 1776, pp. LXXXIII-LXXXIV, no. LVIII).

[555] Weege 1913a, p. 172: «Vom Gemälde sind nur ganz traurige Reste erhalten. Man erkennt ein vorgestrecktes rechtes Bein und den rechten Arm eines nach links sitzenden Jünglings. Rechts davon schwache Spuren eines mit übereinandergeschlagenen Beinen stehenden nackten Knaben, der mit dem rechten Arm über die Brust vorgreift und den linken Ellbogen aufstützt auf ein Lager, auf dem man eine zur Hälfte zerstörte Figur schwach erkennt. Kopf und Oberkörper des nach rechts sitzenden Jünglings sind durch Ruß zerstört, hinter ihm sowie an der rechten Seite des Bildes sind Stücke mit weiteren Figuren herausgeschnitten. Vom Hintergrund ist nichts zu erkennen».

to recognize the figures in the centre space. On the other hand, Bartoli, who copied the watercolor of Francisco, tried to be faithful to it as much as possible. He did not add any figure and nor can any creative license can be seen (**Pl. 32, fig. 4**). However, he likely misunderstood the seated figure in the centre space for a burning fire on a crater (the mistake is indeed understandable considering scene 2 in Francisco watercolor)[556]. However, since the reliability of Francisco's watercolor is often questioned, it is possible to confirm that Francisco did not invent scenes 2 and 8, but he really saw them. At the same time, also the reliability of Bartoli to his model (Francisco's watercolor) can be confirmed. Not by chance, albeit a work on Bartoli's methodology in copying the Antiquity is still lacking, the scholars have already argued that, owing to his antiquarian interests and education, Bartoli was extremely faithful to the antique models, as a sort of "archeologist" ante-litteram, and rarely the artistic licenses can be found in his drawings[557].

As it will be better discussed in *Chapter 4*, owing to the VII book of the *Libro dell'antichità* (after 1568), Ligorio states that scene 2 of the Volta Dorata (interpreted at that time as the myth of Hephaestus who discovers Ares and Aphrodite in love) influenced the scene of Love and Psyche's wedding banquet in Farnesina's Loggia (**Pl. 32, fig. 5**)[558]. The main iconographical detail in Farnesina's fresco which confirms this influence is the presence of one seated and naked female figure in the centre (Hebe), who is turned back towards his husband Heracles. The position of Hebe is the same that we have seen for the seating male figure in the center of scene 2: in the modern drawings of scene 2 (CAT. 19; **Pl. 32, fig. 2**; CAT. 20), the figure is surrounded by other figures and

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[556] For this reason, Turnbull 1741 did not depict scene 2 in his work, since he made his engravings based on drawings of Bartoli in the Codex Baddeley and Codex Massimi.

[557] De Lachenal 2000; Ortona-Modolo 2016, pp. 155-160.

[558] Fol. 155 *recto:* «in altre simili pitture havemo viste l'opere di Volcano, l'amori che haveano spogliate l'arme agli dei e le portavano per l'aria, ch'erano dipinte in una stanza nelle Esquilie, la quale da scelerati pittori furono guastati. Onde Raphaele le prese la istessa invenzione nelle nozze di Hebe con Hercule dipinte nella loggia di Augustin Ghisi in Transtibore incontra a Roma, e ne fece con nobile pittura» (Dacos 1969, p. 170; cf. Shearman 2003, II, p. 1202). In Frommel's work on Villa Farnesina (Frommel 2003a), Ligorio's passage is not mentioned.

is seated in front of the "enthroned couple". Despite his position in front of the enthroned couple, the seated figure is turned back. Therefore, in both representations (Raphael's fresco and scene 2 of the Domus Aurea), the seated figure is used as a sort of "caesura element" which connects the two parts of scene 2[559]. Nowadays, like a game of fate, the seated figure is only one part of the decoration which partially survives in scene 2 of the Volta Dorata[560]. Although in 18th century Carletti recognized in scene 2 the arrival of Odysseus at Ithaca and Penelope surrounded by the suitors, he refers to a previous interpretation about a wedding: «le figure elegantissime di questo quadro credute furono rappresentare alcune nozze»[561]. Therefore in 1774, before the beginning of the excavations inside the Domus Aurea, Carletti and Mirri were aware of the history of the monument and different interpretations of the paintings. Moreover, the phrase wrote by Carletti («believed to depict certain weddings») seems to refer to the same news which is also mentioned by P. Ligorio, namely that scene 2 of the Domus Aurea had inspired the scene of the wedding banquet of the Raphael's Loggia.

Finally, it is important to remember that the East facade of Villa Farnesina was decorated by B. Peruzzi's frescos (1511-1512) which nowadays are totally lost[562]. Many myths were depicted on the facade and one scene is preserved thanks to one of Peruzzi's drawing which

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[559] Nowadays, the scholars recognize in one sarcophagus, now lost, which is called "Bed of Polykleitos", the model for the figure of Hebe (Cavicchioli 2002, p. 25). However, we have to remember that, for that sarcophagus, only two drawings from the 16th century survived (Bober 1995). Therefore, its knowledge among Renaissance artists might not have been so common. On the other hand, Ligorio's passage seems to be a more convincing witness for the possible inspiration based on the Antique of Raphael's fresco. Not by chance, the fascination of Raphael for the decoration of Domus Aurea is well testified by Vasari (Vasari 1966-1987, V [1984], p. 448).

[560] Weege 1913a, p. 172.

[561] «The very elegant figures of this scene were believed to depict certain weddings» Carletti 2014, pp. 98-99, n. 156 (= Mirri-Carletti 1776, pp. LXXXIII-LXXXIV, n. 156).

[562] Turner 2015.

depicts the myth of Vulcan-Venus-Mars[563]. Vulcan is preparing his trap, while Venus and Mars are depicted in love and the Olympian deities are watching the scene. Although the scene could seem similar to Ligorio's description, the absence of *Eroti* – which, flying, take away Mars' weapons – confirms that Ligorio did not refer to this fresco when he mentioned scene 2, but rather the banquet wedding of Love and Psyche inside the Loggia.

Specific bibliography for fol. 10 *verso* of Codex Escurialensis:
Egger 1906, pp. 70-72 (with A. Michaelis); Fernandez Gomez 2000, pp. 63-64.

Bibliographic references to fol. 10 *verso* of Codex Escurialensis:
Robert 1889, p. 143; Robert 1904, p. 228; Weege 1913a, pp. 172-175, fig. 20; Dacos 1969, p. 24, fig. 20; Meyboom-Moormann 2013, I, pp. 201-202.

Copies of scene 2:
- 1490-1506/7, Giuliano da Sangallo workshop, *Scene 2 of the Volta Dorata*, Codex Escurialensis (Escorial, Biblioteca Real de S. Lorenzo, Cod. 28-II-12), fol. 10 *verso*: CAT. 19*;*
- 1524-1533 ca., Raphael Follower, *Scenes 2 and 8 of the Volta Dorata,* Codex Fossombronis (Fossombrone, Biblioteca Civica Passionei, inv. Disegni vol. 3 [= Cod. C.5.VI] and Disegni vol. 4, c. 38 and c. 39), fol. 86 *recto*: CAT. 20;
- 1538 - ante 1571, Francisco de Hollanda (1517 Lisboa – 1585 Lisbona), *Volta Dorata*, Os desenhos das antigualhas (Escorial, Biblioteca Real de S. Lorenzo, Cod. 28-I-20): fol. 47 bis *verso* - 48 *recto*: CAT. 1;
- mid. 17th century, Pietro Santi Bartoli (1635 Perugia – 1700 Rome), *Volta Dorata's vault* (after Francisco de Hollanda): Codex Massimi (ante 1674, University Library of Glasgow, MS Gen 1496 [HX 110] fol. LXXV: Pace 1979, p. 143, no. 58) and the Codex Baddeley (around 1670s, Eton College Collection, ECL-TP.20, fol. CXXVII: Ashby 1916, p. 51): CAT. 2;
- 1776, Mirri's album, *scene 2* (Pinot de Villechenon 1998, tav. 45 [ed. or. 1776, tav. 25]): Tav 32, fig. 2;
- 1786, N. Ponce's engraving (copy of Mirri's engraving), *Scene 2*, Ponce 1786, p. 69, tav. 23.

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[563] Frommel 1968, pp. 64-65; Frommel 2003a, I, pp. 79-81; for the influence of Peruzzi's lost fresco in other Renaissance artworks: Ziefer 2010; Agostino Chigi, before he commissioned the decoration of Loggia Farnesina, owned a painting (now disappeared) which had the caption: «Furto amoroso scoperto dal Sole» (i.e. the myth of Vulcan-Venus-Mars): Frommel 2003a, I, pp. 12, 30.

CAT. 20

Scenes 8 and 2 of the Volta Dorata
Raphael Follower ("Anonymus Foro Semproniensis")
Codex Fossombronis (Parronchi Sketchbook or Taccuino di Giulio Romano)
Fossombrone, Biblioteca Civica Passionei, inv. Disegni vol. 3 (= Cod. C.5.VI)
and Disegni vol. 4, c. 38 and c. 39
1524-1533 ca.
ca. 334 x 216 mm, 90 leaves ca., watermark: Siren[564]
fol. 86 *recto*
paper, ink, pen

Provenance, Attribution and Drawing in context:
see CAT. 12

Analysis
As anticipated in CAT. 12, the draughtsman of the Codex Fossombronis did not copy directly from the Antique, but rather copied from other drawings[565]. Among the evidence highlighted out by Nesselrath[566], the cleanliness of the folio and the precise stroke of the pen seem indeed to exclude the possibility that scenes 2 and 8 were copied directly from the original fresco. The stroke of the pen is the typical "linea puro contorno", namely the clear and calm stroke (without afterthoughts, corrections, and overlappings), typical for the drawings which, directly or indirectly, copied the antiquities[567].
Fol. 86 *recto* is the only Renaissance drawing, which depicts scenes 2 and 8 in the same sheet[568]. Next to the upper scene, the draftsman roughly drew the profile of the bilobed cartouche which originally contained the figural scenes. The draughtsman probably copied this detail from another drawing in which the bilobed cartouche was completely depicted and, thus, he decided to roughly sketch part of it

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[564] Nesselrath 1993, p. 10: the scholar does not specify the dimensions, the shape of the Siren shape and any Briquet/Piccard parallels.
[565] Without providing any evidence or proof, A. Giuliano believes that the two scenes come directly from the ancient paintings: Giuliano 1981, p. 81, n. 2.
[566] Nesselrath 1993, pp. 58-74.
[567] Faietti 2008.
[568] Nesselrath 1993, pp. 193-194.

on the sheet[569]. In the Codex Fossombronis, scenes 2 and 8 of the Volta Dorata are depicted in fol. 86 *recto*, while scene B is copied in the previous folio of the codex, namely fol. 85 *recto* (CAT. 12). At the same time, in the Codex Escurialensis, scene 2 is depicted in fol. 10 *verso* (CAT. 19) and scene B is copied in the other side of the sheet, i.e. fol. 10 *recto* (CAT. 11). Of course, this analogy does not establish a possible origin for both codices from one and the same hypothetical codex. Nevertheless, it is further evidence to show how, from the same antique model (in this case the Domus Aurea's paintings), Renaissance artists selected a small number of subjects which circulated among the painters workshops. As will be shown in *Chapter 4*, in the Renaissance drawing-books which have come to us in their original form of sketchbooks (e.g. Codex Escurialensis, Codex Wolfegg, Codex Fossombronis), the subjects from the Domus Aurea's paintings are often the same.

In the upper part of the sheet, scene 8 of the Volta Dorata is depicted the scene of Hippolytus leaving for the hunt, while in the lower part can be seen scene 2 described above (CAT. 19).

Concerning scene 8, at the present day, five Renaissance drawings are available (CAT. 20-24) since also nowadays the scene is partially visible (**Pl. 34, fig. 1**). Mirri's Louvre watercolored engraving is one of the most helpful copy for understanding the original iconography of the scene (**Pl. 34, fig. 2**). In the latter, it can be seen: on the left side, Phaedra sits on the throne, surrounded by her handmaidens; in the centre, Phaedra's nurse is revealing to Hippolytus the love of Phaedra for him, her stepson; on the right side, Hippolytus (the last figure on the right) is leaving for the hunt with other companions[570]. Owing to the central passage of the scene, it is possible to recognize a precise version of the myth of Hippolytus and Phaedra. Owing to the ancient literary sources available, we know two main versions of the myth, both narrated by

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[569] It is unlikely that the drawing from which the draftsman of the Codex copied his design would have a similar rough annotation of the bilobed cartouche. If so, the draftsman of the Codex would not have copied it, since its meaning would not have been clear from those rough lines.

[570] The first scholar who recognized the iconography was F. Weege: Weege 1913a, pp. 169-170; Dacos 1969, 23-24; Meyboom-Moormann 2013, I, pp. 201-202.

Euripides (and, obviously, re-used and variated by other later writers, such as Seneca). In scene 8 of the Domus Aurea, it is depicted a specific version of the myth of Hippolytus and Phaedra narrated by Euripides in his *Hippolytus Stephanephoros* (o *Stephanias*), dated to 428 BC. Previously, Euripides wrote and performed in Athens' theatre another tragedy about the myth of Phaedra and Hippolytus which had no success among the audience (*Hippolytus Kalyptomenos*). In the latter tragedy, the main important difference – which created a scandal among the audience – was the fact that Phaedra directly declared to Hippolytus (her stepson) her love for him[571]. Owing to the outcry of the audience, the playwriting was forced to re-write the tragedy and to use the figure of the nurse for communicate Phaedra's love to Hippolytus[572]. Hence, since in scene 8 of the Volta Dorata it can be seen that Phaedra's nurse is revealing to Hippolytus the love of Phaedra, we can assume that it is represented the same version of the myth narrated by Euripides in his *Hippolytus Stephanephoros*.

The iconography of scene 8 in the Volta Dorata is confirmed by many archaeological artifacts (especially Roman sarcophagi)[573]. As can be seen in one sarcophagus at Musei Vaticani (**Pl. 34, fig. 3**), Roman artifacts testify a precise narrative sequence of events that, not by chance, are the same of those depicted in Renaissance drawings and Mirri's watercolored engraving of scene 8 (Phaedra on the throne; Phaedra's nurse is revealing to Hippolytus the love of Phaedra; Hippolytus is leaving for the hunt with other companions).

The representation of scene 8 in Codex Fossombronis is an important graphic source for three main reasons: 1. it is possible to confirm that the little child in the scene is Eros and the Renaissance artists

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[571] «Il rifacimento prese le mosse, come possiamo ancora capire, dalla figura di Fedra. Ora essa non è la Cretese corrotta che conosce soltanto la legge della sua passione: ora è la donna di alti sentimenti che cerca di nascondere il desiderio colpevole nelle profondità dell'anima e che vorrebbe morirne»: Lesky 2016, p. 443.

[572] Although we do not have many verses of the *Hippolytus Kalyptomenos*, some scholars have supposed that Seneca's *Phaedra* was partially inspired by the *Hippolytus Kalyptomenos*: Coffey-Mayer 1990, pp. 5-10.

[573] LIMC 5.1 (1990), pp. 445-464, *s.v. Hippolytos I* (P. Linant De Bellefonds); LIMC 7.1 (1994), pp. 356-359, *s.v. Phaidra* (P. Linant De Bellefonds); Giuman 2016, pp. 113-146 (F. Doria).

misunderstood his wings for drapery (cf. CAT. 24); 2. the enthroned figure was not clear enough to being recognized and, therefore, some artists misunderstood the gender (thus, they did not change the gender of the figure owing simply to artistic license); 3. fol. 86 *recto* confirms the iconography provided by Mirri's Louvre watercolored engraving (**Pl. 34, fig. 2**). Paradoxically, even though scene 8 was clearly visible also in the 18th century at the time of Mirri's album (1776), Francisco depicts in his watercolor a scene which is only slightly similar to those of other 16th-century drawings (**Pl. 34, fig. 4**). Unfortunately, we are not able to understand what Francisco drew precisely, since the scene is located in the fold line of the sheet and a little restoration work covers the scene. The restoration of the sheet was probably made by the same Francisco, as the same kind of blue on the patch and in the sheet suggests. Also, Bartoli, who copied Francisco's watercolor in the Codex Baddeley (around 1670s), was not able to recognize the figural scene 8. Therefore, he copied only the figures which he could recognize, without adding any other details for filling the space unrecognizable (**Pl. 34, fig. 5**).

Concerning the representation of scene 2 in the Codex Fossombronis, Mirri's watercolor reveals an important iconographic difference with the two Renaissance drawings which depict scene 2, namely fol. 86 *recto* of the Codex Fossombronis and the fol. 10 *verso* of the Codex Escurialensis (CAT. 19). In the centre of the scene, both Renaissance drawings depict one seated man surrounded by other two figures, apparently one man on the left side and one woman with a cloak on the right side. On the other hand, Mirri's watercolor has only one male figure next to the seated man. This difference is an important clue for confirming what will be better demonstrated in *Chapter 4*: namely, Mirri's artists were not aware of the Renaissance drawings of these two codices.

As will be better shown in *Chapter 3*, the Codex Fossombronis fol. 86 *recto* is also helpful for understanding one detail of the original iconography of scene 2, namely the figure next to the enthroned female figure. Owing to unlikely representation of the Codex Escurialensis (CAT. 19) and Louvre watercolored engraving, it is possible to suppose that the drawing of Codex Fossombronis has a clearer representation of the scene. The male figure seems not to be lying down (as Mirri's artists

depict), but more likely a child (10-14 years) who stands by the side of the "enthroned woman". As we will se in *Chapter 3*, both myths of scenes 2 and 8 narrate the stories of two women who do not remain faithful to their love promises and, surrendering to their desire, they pay their dishonor committing suicide.

Specific bibliography for fol. 86 *recto*:
Nesselrath 1993, pp. 193-194.

General reference to the fol. 86 *recto*:
Giuliano 1981, p. 81, n. 2; Iacopi 1999, p. 48; Meyboom-Moormann 2013, I, p. 200.

Copies of the scene 8 (Hippolytus leaving for the hunt):
- ca. 1490 - ca 1493, Filippino Lippi (ca. 1457 - 1504), *Part of scene 8*, Florence, Gallerie degli Uffizi, Gabinetto Disegni e Stampe (GDSU), 1255 E *verso*: CAT. 21;
- 1503-1504, Amico Aspertini (ca. 1475 - 1552), *Left part of scene 8*, Codex Wolfegg (Württemberg, Schloss Wolfegg), fol. 22 *recto*: CAT. 22;
- 1503-1504, Amico Aspertini (ca. 1475 - 1552), *Right part of scene 8*, Codex Wolfegg (Württemberg, Schloss Wolfegg), fol. 19 *verso*: CAT. 23;
- First half of the 16th century, Anonymous Florentine artist, *Right part of scene 8*, Lille, Palais des Beaux-Arts, Inv. Pl. 101: CAT. 24;
- 1524-1533 ca., Raphael Follower, *Scenes 2 and 8 of the Volta Dorata,* Codex Fossombronis (Fossombrone, Biblioteca Civica Passionei, inv. Disegni vol. 3 [= Cod. C.5.VI] and Disegni vol. 4, c. 38 and c. 39), fol. 86 *recto*: CAT. 20;
- 1538 - ante 1571, Francisco de Hollanda (1517 Lisboa – 1585 Lisbona), *Volta Dorata's vault* , Os desenhos das antigualhas (Escorial, Biblioteca Real de S. Lorenzo, Cod. 28-I-20): fol. 47 bis *verso* - 48 *recto*: CAT. 1 (for the detail of scene 8: Pl. 34, fig. 4);
- mid. 17th century, Pietro Santi Bartoli (1635 Perugia – 1700 Rome), *Volta Dorata's vault* (copies after Francisco de Hollanda): Codex Massimi (ante 1674, University Library of Glasgow, MS Gen 1496 [HX 110] fol. LXXV: Pace 1979, p. 143, no. 58) and the Codex Baddeley (around 1670s, Eton College Collection, ECL-TP.20, fol. CXXVII: Ashby 1916, p. 51): CAT. 2 (scene 8: Pl. 34, fig. 5);
- ca. 1775, Mirri's artists, *NE vault corner of the Volta Dorata (scenes H, C, and part of scene 8)*, Rom Bibliotheca Hertziana Dv 570-3760 (Exemplar mit 61 Bl.) U. PL. D 45332a: Pl. 8, fig. 1;
- 1776, F. Smuglewicz, Mirri's album (Pinot de Villechenon 1998, tav. 44 [ed. or. 1776, tav 43]): Pl. 34, fig. 2;
-- 1786, N. Ponce's engraving (copy of Mirri's engraving), *Scene 8*, Ponce 1786, p. 69, tav. 42;
- 1800-1802, A. Uggeri's engraving (copy of Mirri's engraving), *Scene 8*, Uggeri 1800-1802, III, tav. XXIX**.**

CAT. 21

Right part of scene 8 of the Volta Dorata (Hippolytus leaving for the hunt), a harpy and one decorative frieze from the Domus Aurea
Filippino Lippi (ca. 1457 Prato - 1504 Florence)
ca. 1490 - ca. 1943
Florence, Gallerie degli Uffizi, Gabinetto Disegni e Stampe (GDSU), inv. 1255 E
verso
252 x 204 mm, no watermark[574]
lapis and metallic pen
inscription barely readable on the lower margin: «Filippino [di fra…?][575]»

Provenance
The first mention of the drawing appears in Giuseppe Pelli Bencivenni's catalogue (Director of Uffizi Prints and Drawings Collection from 1775 to 1793), dated to 1784[576]. A previous mention might be in Baldinucci's catalogue (1673)[577].

Analysis
Filippino's presence inside the underground grottoes of the Domus Aurea was attested to by his signature in the Volta Dorata: «FILI/PINO» (cf. *Chapter 4*)[578]. Owing to time spent in Rome (1498-1494), Filippino renewed his artistic language and «he created his own vocabulary of forms based upon the antique»[579]. In the *verso* of the

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[574] The sheet was damaged in the centre along the horizontal line and it was reinforced on the *verso* by a paper strip patch of 17 mm (maybe since already 16th century), on which it is drawn a head: Petrioli Tofani 1987, p. 522.
[575] The original inscription was "Filippo di Frà Filippo prima maniera, as Pelli Bencivenni's inventory reports: Petrioli Tofani 1987, p. 522.
[576] «Femmina sedente con uno scudo in mano a penna lumeggiato, sù carta bigetta. È un disegno doppio, e questa figura è nel rovescio nel diritto in cui scritto "Filippo di Frà Filippo prima maniera" vi sono disegnati a matita alcune figure, e rabeschi di stile più moderno»: Petrioli Tofani 2014, I, p. 462, n. 7.
[577] Petrioli Tofani 1987, p. 522.
[578] The signature appears on scene 4 of the Volta Dorata: Dacos 1969, p. 147; see also: Dacos 1969, p. 140.
[579] Shoemaker 1978, p. 38; for the influence of the antiquity on Filippino's artworks (e.g. Carafa in Rome and Cappella Strozzi in Florence): Zambrano-Nelson 2004, pp. 419-449.

sheet, Filippino drew part of scene 8 of the Volta Dorata[580]: Shoemaker was the first scholar to recognize the scene, since the drawing was not taken into account by Dacos 1969[581]. Dacos did not mention the Filippino's drawing since the design is not mentioned by Weege 1913a (from which Dacos found the greatest part of his graphic documentation). Also Ferri (1851-1917) – the most noted "Conservatore dei Disegni e delle Stampe della Reale Galleria degli Uffizi" – did not recognized the subject of the scene: «studio di varie figure di un fregio e di un putto alato con gambe di grifo»[582].

According to the typical practice of 15th century artists, on the same sheet Filippino placed different ancient motifs from the Domus Aurea. In the upper part of the drawing, Filippino drew with brief outlines one portion of scene 8, which is also depicted in fol. 19 *verso* of the Codex Wolfegg (CAT. 23). Nevertheless, despite the latter, Filippino copied also other figures: the dog, the horse and the man who is carrying one of the hunt's victims. In the lower part of the sheet, he copied one portion of a decorative frieze and one harpy which came from the Criptoportico (room 92), as F. Weege's photographs show (**Pl. 36, figs. 1-2**)[583]. The similarity between the Roman paintings and the Renaissance drawing is quite surprising.

The two details from the Criptoportico could be sufficient for questioning the bias of some scholars about the practice of Filippino in copying from those of Antiquity. In fact, according to Dacos, who recovered Scharf's opinion, the artist did not copy what he saw, but rather he immediately invented new iconographies and decorative

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[580] In the *recto*, Minerva's bust is depicted: Zambrano-Nelson 2004, p. 435 and p. 586: Cat. 40.d.6.

[581] Shoemaker 1975, pp. 254-256 n. 64.

[582] Ferri's description of the subject is readable in the card entry of the drawing (so-called "schedina Ferri"). The drawing is also published in the Euploos Project of the Uffizi site web: https://euploos.uffizi.it/scheda-catalogo.php?invn=1255+E+v.

[583] The harpy and other decorations of the Criptoportico are also visible in the Uffizi drawing 1683 O *recto* attributed to David Ghirlandaio; for Bambach the re-use of the harpy is visible in the cherub within the frieze above the Martirio di San Filippo: Bambach 1997, p. 237, fig. 46.

motifs based on those from the Antique, without preserving their original appearance[584].

On the other hand, the drawing 1255 E *verso* revels a great attention to the original model, more than the scholars have pointed out for Filippino's drawings. Considering the gestures of Hippolytus and Phaedra's nurse, it can be seen how the position of the bodies and their attitudes perfectly express the circumstance that the myth and most of the archaeological parallels narrate[585]. In Filippino's drawing, the nurse is trying to detain Hippolytus after she has revealed Phaedra's love to him. At the same time, Hippolytus seems scared and upset, whereas he is trying to resist her supplication of understanding the situation. These gestures and movements of the bodies are similar to those visible on the Roman fresco from Herculaneum (**Pl. 38, fig. 2**). While Zanker considers Hippolytus's gesture of the raised right hand as «gesture of farewell» (*profectio*)[586], it can be seen, owing to the iconographic parallels mentioned, that it could more likely refer to the contempt and shame of Hippolytus for the illicit love of Phaedra. Nevertheless, one issue concerns the detail of gesture performed by Phaedra's nurse in Filippino's drawing. Precisely, it remains unclear whether Filippino really saw the gesture of holding the clothes of Hippolytus or rather it is an artistic license. In fact, as will be shown in CAT. 23 and 24 through archaeological parallels, it is likely that the gesture of Phaedra's nurse is due to the attempt of giving the love letter of Phaedra to Hippolytus rather than holding him for the clothes.

As rightly noted by Fossi, Filippino's drawing of scene 8 was drawn on table, after the artist visited the Domus Aurea and sketchy copied the paintings[587]. In fact, the use of the metallic pen for the *verso* and the light blue layer of the *recto* reveals a kind of work which is not possible to justify through a work on the spot. Therefore, although the drawing

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[584] «Porté spontanément à interpréter, il dessine d'une main très ferme et, sans être limité par l'iconographie antique, étire les monstres et en accentue les déformations pour les rendre plus fantastiques»: Dacos 1969, p. 70; cf. Scharf 1935, p. 83.

[585] LIMC 5.1 (1990), pp. 445-464, *s.v. Hippolytos I* (P. Linant De Bellefonds); LIMC 7.1 (1994), pp. 356-359, *s.v. Phaidra* (P. Linant De Bellefonds); Giuman 2016, pp. 113-146 (F. Doria).

[586] Zanker-Ewald 2012, p. 346.

[587] Fossi 1955, p. 17 n. 44.

testifies a second copy of the subject, Filippino remained faithful to the original painting. The drawing 1255 E *verso* is included in a group of Filippino's drawings from the Antique which are analyzed by Fossi and Shoemaker. Precisely, Fossi recognized two groups of Filippino's drawings based on the Antique: a first group is made up by drawings which faithfully copied the ancient model (as the Uffizi drawing 1636 E); the second group includes drawings in which Filippino depicted, with artistic license, re-interpreting the ancient models[588]. Upon this assumption, Shoemaker has specified better the composition of the two groups, since he recognized the Domus Aurea in other two drawings of Filippino[589]. Therefore, Filippino's drawings which precisely depict the ancient subjects are three. All of them are preserved in the Uffizi collection and they show parts of the Domus Aurea's paintings: 1255 E *verso*, 1636 E (**Pl. 36, fig. 3**), 1637 E *recto* (**Pl. 36, fig. 4**), 1637 E *verso* (**Pl. 36, fig. 5**)[590]. Although the latter depicts grotesques decoration of the Criptoportico, it is not included in this catalogue. In fact, it merely testifies to grotesques motifs and does not enrich our archaeological knowledge of the Domus Aurea's paintings. However, the drawing 1637 E shows a very common habit among Renaissance artists (and, especially, Filippino Lippi), namely copying subjects of Antiquity on one face of the sheet and re-interpreting the motif on the other (**Pl. 36,**

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[588] «A differenza di altri artisti contemporanei che facevano dei semplici "appunti" grafici dei motivi decorativi antichi, Filippino, dopo un primo spunto copiato direttamente da un modello antico (vedi il n. 1636 E, CAT. no. 28), lo rielabora e rivive con grande libertà, giungendo a creazioni del tutto nuove, ricche d'ispirazione fantastica, e rese con briosa spigliatezza»: Fossi 1955, pp. 9-11, nrr. 23-29.

[589] At the same time Shoemaker reveals some doubts in a rigid distinction of the two groups: «Fossi's conclusion that there are two kinds of drawings was correct, but as several examples show, Filippino's copies of ancient motifs were not always handled as precisely as the "chulaseo" drawing» (Shoemaker 1978, p. 36).

[590] Among these three drawings, the scholars have not found an archaeological model of the drawing 1636 E (Pl. 36, fig. 3) and, therefore, its inclusion in the group of drawings based on those from Antiquity is not so assured. Nevertheless, because of its inscription «soto al chulaseo», scholars think that its archaeological reliability is quite sure. Dacos believed that the motif came not from the Colosseum but from the nearby Domus Aurea (Dacos 1962, p. 355).

figs. 3-4)[591]. Moreover, from one detail of the 1637 E *verso* (the last candelabrum on the right side), Filippino took the motif of the two figures which hold the candelabrum and he re-interpreted this in other two drawings (the Uffizi drawings 1630 E and 1631 E: **Pl. 36, figs. 6-7**)[592].

Specific bibliography for the Uffizi drawing 1255 E *verso*:
Fossi 1955, p. 17 no. 44, fig. 9 (entry catalogue ed. by M. Fossi); Shoemaker 1975, pp. 254-256, no. 64; Petrioli Tofani 1987, pp. 522-523; Goldner-Bambach 1997 pp. 234-237, no. 65 (entry catalogue ed. by C. Bambach); Zambrano-Nelson 2004, p. 586, no. 40.d.6 (entry catalogue ed. by J. K. Nelson); Cecchi-Osano 2016, pp. 196-197, no. 75 (entry catalogue ed. by C. Casoli).

General reference to the Uffizi drawing 1255 E *verso*:
Shoemaker 1978, pp. 36, 39, 41 n. 3, tav. 28; Rossi-Sassi 2011, pp. 75-74; Nelson 2011, p. 209 n. 142; Meyboom-Moormann 2013, I, p. 201; Parlato 2016, p. 110, fig. 7.

Copies of the scene 8 (Hippolytus leaving for the hunt):
see CAT. 20

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[591] For other examples: Brunetti 2018 (especially, the Uffizi drawings 55 O and 51 O).

[592] For the Uffizi drawings of Filippino after the Antique: Shoemaker 1978; Goldner-Bambach 1997, pp. 29-36 (ed. by Shoemaker); Zambrano-Nelson 2004, pp. 419-449.

CAT. 22

Left part of scene 8 of the Volta Dorata (Hippolytus leaving for the hunt) and one motif of acanthus leaves from the Vatican biga
Amico Aspertini (ca. 1475 Bologna - 1552 Bologna)
Codex Wolfegg
Württemberg, Schloss Wolfegg (Erbgraf Max Willibald von Waldburg collection)
ca. 1503-1504[593]
ca. 110 x 85 mm, 29 leaves, watermark: no mentions in the bibliography
fol. 22 *recto*
pen and black ink
inscription: «dipinto sototera»

Provenance, Attribution and Drawing in context
see CAT. 15

Analysis
In fol. 22 *recto* Amico copied the left part of the Volta Dorata's scene 8 and, also, indicated the archaeological provenance of the subject with the inscription: «dipinto sototera». In the lower part of the sheet, can be seen an elaborated motif of acanthus leaves. Amico copied the decorative motif from the Vatican Biga (Inv. 2368), although in the folio he firstly drew scene 8[594]. Not by chance, also in the Codex Escurialensis, the Vatican Biga's motif (fol. 11 *recto*) is copied in one sheet next to another which depicts scene 2 of the Volta Dorata (fol. 11 *recto*)[595]. As will be better discussed in *Chapter 4*, this analogy confirms

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[593] Faietti 1991, pp. 157-158; Faietti-Scaglietti Kelescian 1995, pp. 25, 31 (ed. by M. Faietti); for the period 1500-1503: Schweikhart 1986, pp. 27-28.

[594] «Die Zeichnung des Ornaments ist erst nach der figürlichen Zeichnung aufgetragen worden, wie dies die Aussparung der Ranke über dem rechten Fuß der vorn hockenden Figur zeigt. Die "Beinschiene" ist erst dabei der Figur oben die Hand gegeben worden» Schweikhart 1986, p. 64; Robert 1901, p. 226 was the first to recognize the motif from the biga.

[595] In the Renaissance drawing-books, the subjects after the Antique were often grouped for themes (free-standing statues, architectures, sarcophagi, decorative motifs) or for archaeological provenience. The physical nearness of the two subjects after the Antique (figural scene 2 or 8 of the Volta Dorata and Vatican Biga's motif) was probably due to belief that the motif of acanthus leaves was considered a decorative motif as the Domus Aurea's grotesques.

that, among the Renaissance artists, there was a common antiquarian language based on a shared vocabulary of precise antique models and forms. Finally, in fol. 22 *recto,* it can be seen how Amico used the hatching-cross with two distinct finalities: one for defining the background of the acanthus leaves motif and another for the chiaroscuro of the figures of scene 8 – instead of the diluted ink, as can be seen in the fol. 19 *verso* (CAT. 23).

In the upper part of the sheet, Amico copied the left part of scene 8 and, more precisely, Phaedra and his regal entourage[596]. Nevertheless, as already pointed out by Dacos, Amico changed the figure of Phaedra with that of an old king[597]. Although his deep interest for the Antiquity and knowledge of the Classical mythology, we can assume that, in front of the fresco, given the conditions of the paintings, Amico believed to see the figure of Theseus. The alteration of the figure is more likely related to a mistake of the artist, rather than a personal interpretation. In fact, there are other iconographical elements which suggest that Amico did not understand the meaning of the scene, such as an axe behind the seated woman and the greaves hold by the young man on the left side. These two iconographic details can tell us more about the meaning that the scene had for Amico. When he copied the scene on the Codex from personal rough designs, he gave his own personal interpretation of the scene. Because of the gesture of the female figure behind the enthroned figure, he recognized it as a coronation scene. Thus, he gave enthroned figure as male (the coronation of a king would have been more likely, than the coronation of a queen) and also, he added the olive laurel in the hand of the female figure. Therefore, the

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[596] In 1901 Robert was the first to recognize the iconography: «Freie Umbildung der Hippolytos-Gruppe von dem Bilde der Traiansthermen bei Ponce pl. 42 (Spiegelbild) danach verkleinert Arch. Zeit. 1883 Taf. 7, 3 [n. 1: Um den Leser in Stand zu setzen, sich vor der Kühnheit, mit der Giulio Romano seine Vorbilder ändert, selbst eine Vorstellung zu bilden, wiederholen wir hier die Abbildung aus der Arch. Zeit, geben ihr aber durch Umkehrung die Richtung des Originals zurück]»: Robert 1901, p. 226, n. 1:.

[597] Dacos 1969, p. 23, n. 7; Schweikhart 1986, p. 63: «Dacos vermutete, daß hier Aspertini eine Vorlage verwendet hat; dafür spricht nicht nur die freie Weiterentwick in kompositioneller und figürlicher Hinsicht, sondern auch der Zeichenstil mit starker Bennenzeichnung und bewegten Falten, die eine Vorlage aus dem Umkreis des Pinturicchio vermuten lassen».

two war elements could have been added in order to stress the atmosphere of peace and the finished war, which the coronation might have suggested.

As pointed out in CAT. 20, the figure enthroned is Phaedra, as the Roman iconographic parallels suggest. Nevertheless, owing to a sarcophagus dated the 3rd century AD (**Pl. 38, fig. 1**), now in Tiro's Museum, it is possible to recognize the gesture of the woman behind Phaedra[598]. The nurse is lifting the *himation* which covered Phaedra's head: this is the so-called gesture of the *apokalupsis*, namely the gesture which alludes to female desire of being sexually linked to her man. On the other hand, in a painted *pinax* from Herculaneum (Casa di Nettuno e Anfitrite), preserved at the MANN of Naples (**Pl. 38, fig. 2**), we can see Phaedra who is untying the *himation* by herself, while the nurse is speaking with Hippolytus[599]. Therefore, owing to Amico's drawing of fol. 22 *recto*, we might find a new iconographical detail which scene 8 probably depicted, namely the female figure behind Phaedra who is helping her lift the himation. In fact, in the Codex Fossombronis (CAT. 20) and in Mirri's watercolor (**Pl. 43, fig. 2**), this gesture does not have any reason of being.

Specific bibliography for the fol. 19 *verso*:
Schweikhart 1986, p. 63.

General reference to the fol. 19 *verso*:
Robert 1901, pp. 225-226, pl. VIII; Weege 1913a, p. 151, no. 2; Dacos 1969, pp. 23-24, fig. 18; Meyboom-Moormann 2013, I, 201.

Copies of the scene 8 (Hippolytus leaving for the hunt):
see CAT. 20

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[598] LIMC 5.1 (1990), p. 448, no. 32; for more parallels LIMC 5.1 (1990), pp. 445-464, *s.v. Hippolytos I* (P. Linant De Bellefonds)

[599] LIMC 5.1 (1990), p. 451, no. 45 (P. Linant De Bellefonds); in the Roman fresco, which is dated to the Flavian age (thus, very close to the chronology of the Volta Dorata's decoration), the nurse seems not to hold any letter and the positions of the arms seem the same attested by the Renaissance drawings (CAT. 20, 21, 23, 24).

CAT. 23

Part of scene 8 of the Volta Dorata (Hippolytus leaving for the hunt)
Amico Aspertini (ca. 1475 Bologna - 1552 Bologna)
Codex Wolfegg
Württemberg, Schloss Wolfegg (Erbgraf Max Willibald von Waldburg collection)
ca. 1503-1504[600]
ca. 110 x 85 mm, 29 leaves, watermark: no mentions by the scholarship
fol. 19 *verso*
pen, brush and black ink with wash on a thin ground
inscription: «in lagrota daloro dipinto»

Analysis

We know that the Bolognese artist visited the Roman underground grottoes, as Aspertini's signature within the Domus Aurea shows[601] and the literary work *Viridario* of Achillini (1513) testifies[602]. Moreover, the inscription in the drawing «in lagrota daloro dipinto» does not leave any doubts about the archaeological provenance from the Volta Dorata. Aspertini copied in the fol. 19 *verso* only the right part of scene 8, namely the meeting between Hippolytus and Phaedra's nurse, while on the fol. 22 *recto* (CAT. 22) he depicted the left part of the scene[603].
From an iconographical point of view, it can be seen that Hippolytus is wearing the lion's pelt (*leonté*) and is holding the cudgel, as Hercules. The little Eros next to the nurse is depicted without wings and turned towards the left side – instead of right, as in the Lille drawing (CAT. 24)

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[600] Faietti 1991, pp. 157-158; Faietti-Scaglietti Kelescian 1995, pp. 25, 31 (ed. by M. Faietti); for the period 1500-1503: Schweikhart 1986, pp. 27-28.
[601] The signature «Asper.ini» appears in the Volta Dorata next to the panel called by Dacos "C bis)", namely the panel between the panels H and I in the NE corner (Dacos 1969, p. 146; the panel is not numerated by Meyboom-Moormann: CAT. A, fig. 1). Another possible signature would be in Volta Gialla: «AMICUS» (Dacos 1969, p. 156).
[602] «Amico suo fratel con tratti e botte / Tutto l campo empie con le sue anticaglie / Retratte dentro alle romane grotte. / Bizar più che reverso di medaglie. / E ben che gioven sia fa cose dotte, che con gli antiqui alcun vuol che se agualgie. / Unaltra laude sua non preterisco, / De la prestezza del pennel stupisco»: Viridario by G. Achillini, p. CLXXXVIII *recto* (published in 1513, but it was written in 1504).
[603] Robert 1901, p. 225 was the first to recognize the iconography of the scene.

and in the Codex Fossombronis (CAT. 20). Owing to these differences, Dacos suggested that Amico copied the drawing on table from a previous design, which he made on the spot[604]. Therefore, according to the scholar, Amico incorrectly copied the scene, since he did not understand the original iconography and its meaning[605].

As in Filippino's drawing (CAT. 21) and Lille drawing (CAT. 24), the nurse's gesture (especially the position of the right arm) is in a very low position for expressing a conversational motion and the position of the right arm could be more comprehensible with the presence of an object. Through a different perspective of the scene, Aspertini seems to watch the scene from a different point of view, as he was in a higher position. This difference could be ascribed to the very peculiar behavior of Amico for the Antique in modifying the copied subject, but also to a very practical reason[606]. It is possible that the gesture of the nurse – and especially her right arm in very low position – forced Amico to justify it through a higher point of view. Moreover, it cannot be excluded that Amico already knew scene 8 from Filippino's drawing 1255 E *verso* (CAT. 21). In fact, before Amico came in Rome for the first time (1496), his interest in Antiquity was already encouraged in Bologna, thanks to some artistic artifacts and the drawings of other artists, especially Filippino Lippi[607]. Unlike Filippino's drawing, in fol. 19 *verso* Amico used the brush diluted in ink for the chiaroscuro, whereas he chose the

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[604] «Certaines erreurs, telles que l'interprétation du groupe de Phèdre, se conçoivent mal si les fresques furent dessinées sur place.» Dacos 1969, p. 23, n. 7; Schweikhart agrees with Dacos: Schweikhart 1986, p. 63.

[605] «L'auteur du Codex Wolfegg ignorait le suject qu'il reproduisait, car certains personnages ont été mal interprétés. Phèdre est devenue un vieillard barbu et Hippolyte, un Héraclès revêtu de la peau de lion»: Dacos 1969, p. 24.

[606] «Aspertini tende ad aggiungere per creare personali visioni dell'antico: evidentemente Aspertini prima studiava e disegnava accuratamente quello che vedeva, quindi utilizzava i disegni come base per una successiva rielaborazione […] È quindi chiaro che Aspertini non intende riprodurre una raffigurazione esatta, bensì, usando un materiale esistente, sviluppare un nuovo panorama dell'Antico»: Schweikhart 1989, p. 402.

[607] Faietti-Nesselrath 1995, pp. 63-67 (cf. especially fol. 67 of the Parma Codex and Filippino's drawing 1637 E *verso* of the Uffizi: Faietti-Nesselrath 1995, p. 65).

hatching-cross in the fol. 22 *recto* for the same scene of the Volta Dorata (CAT. 22)[608].

Aspertini did not draw any object in the hand of Phaedra's nurse. Nevertheless, the possible presence of an object in her hand is an important point for the comprehension of the original meaning of scene 8. In fact, among the Roman archaeological iconographies, there is one iconographical detail which sometimes appears, namely the love letter that Phaedra's nurse gives to Hippolytus for communicating the illicit love of his stepmother. In Hippolytus' tragedy, there is only one letter mentioned. Nevertheless, it concerns the letter which Phaedra holds in her hand when she is already dead and in which is written her charge against Hippolytus[609]. Therefore, among the literary sources available, there is not any "love letter" from Phaedra to Hippolytus. Nevertheless, many Roman iconographies of the myth testify the presence of the "love letter"and, thus, scholars have had some difficulties to justify this detail. For instance, considering sarcophagi's iconographies, Zanker-Ewald say: «the writing tablets are probably not an allusion to the message brought by the nurse approaching him [*scil.* Hippolytus] on the left, but rather to the education of the deceased who is being identified with Hippolytus»[610]. However, this detail appears not only on sarcophagi's reliefs, but also in paintings and mosaics: for example, the mosaics from Antakya of the 2nd century AD and that of Cheikh Zoueid of the 4th century AD (**Pl. 40, figs. 1-2**)[611]. Not by chance, in the Moroccan mosaic it is written on the tablet «ΦΕΔΡΑ». On the other hand, in the Antakya's mosaic, can be seen how Hippolytus is throwing the letter to the ground, since he is ashamed and scared of the content of the letter. Other parallels come from Roman paintings, as the fresco

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[608] «Dipigneva Amico con ambedue le mani a un tratto, tenendo in una il pennello del chiaro, e nell'altra quello dello scuro»: Vasari 1966-1987, IV (1976), p. 498.

[609] Since Hippolytus refused Phaedra's love, she decides to commit suicide and to blame Hippolytus through one letter in which she claims of being raped by him: *Hipp.* vv. 856-864.

[610] Zanker-Ewald 2012, p. 348.

[611] About the mosaic from Antakya: LIMC 5.1 (1990), p. 451, no. 48 (P. Linant De Bellefonds); about the mosaic from Cheikh Zoueid: LIMC 5.1 (1990), p. 452, no. 49 (Linant De Bellefonds); for more parallels LIMC 5.1 (1990), pp. 445-464, *s.v. Hippolytos I* (P. Linant De Bellefonds).

from Herculaneum (Vespasian age), preserved at the MAAN Museum in Naples (**Pl. 38, fig. 2**)[612] and the fresco from Pompeii (the 3rd Pompeian style), attested by a modern design[613]. As pointed out J.M. Croisille[614], it can be seen how the iconography of the love letter appears since 1st century AD. Therefore, it is likely that the fourth letter of Ovidius' *Heroides* became one of the main sources for Roman artists concerning this myth[615].

Nowadays, the conditions of scene 8 in the Domus Aurea do not provide any clues concerning the presence of the letter, and the Renaissance drawings as well. However, Roman iconographic images of the myth suggest the presence of a love letter in the hand of Phaedra's nurse is not unlikely. Not by chance, in 1683 another scene of the Hippolytus-Phaedra myth was found in a Roman building close to the Domus Aurea ("presso la vigna de Nobili al Colosseo"). It was depicted by Bartoli who copied also the detail of the letter (**Pl. 40, fig. 3**) and some scholars consider Bartoli's drawing the copy of scene 8, partially modified by his artist license[616].

Specific bibliography for the fol. 19 *verso*:
Schweikhart 1986, p. 63.

General reference to the fol. 19 *verso*:
Robert 1901, p. 225; Weege 1913a, p. 151, no. 2; Dacos 1969, pp. 23-24, n. 7, fig. 18; Meyboom-Moormann 2013, I, p. 201.

Copies of the scene 8 (Hippolytus leaving for the hunt):
see CAT. 20

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[612] LIMC 5.1 (1990), p. 451, no. 45 (P. Linant De Bellefonds).

[613] LIMC 5.1 (1990), p. 450, no. 40 (P. Linant De Bellefonds).

[614] LIMC 5.1 (1990), pp. 445-464, *s.v. Hippolytos I* (P. Linant De Bellefonds); Croisille 1982, pp. 78-100; Giuman 2016, pp. 113-146 (ed. by F. Doria).

[615] For the relationships between Euripides, Ovidius and Seneca about Phaedra's myth: Armstrong 2006, pp. 261-298.

[616] The chronology of the Roman building is debated by scholars since the archaeological remains are now lost: Gentile Ortona-Modolo 2016, pp. 186-197; Meyboom-Moormann suggest the interesting possibility that Bartoli copied it from the scene 8 of the Volta Dorata and partially modified it, as the palatial space of the setting: Meyboom-Moormann 2013, I, pp. 200-201.

CAT. 24

Part of scene 8 of the Volta Dorata (Hippolytus leaving for the hunt)
Anonymous Florentine artist (Jacopo di Giovanni di Francesco called Jacone?)
Lille, Palais des Beaux-Arts, Inv. Pl. 101 (the *verso* is Pl. 102: CAT. 17)
First half of 16th century
265 x 395 mm, watermark: siren, Briquet 13884[617]
pen and brown ink; traces of black stone for defining the space of the drawing[618].
inscription: «[…]ina / […] ???»

Provenance and Attribution:
see CAT. 17

Analysis
In the center of the sheet, a vertical fold can be seen and, probably owing to the size of the sheet, the draftsman or the later owner had to fold it in order to put it in a portfolio, or in an envelope.
As for Pl. 102 (CAT. 17), the overlapping profile of the figure indicates how the artist immediately drew with a pen and not a pencil. This technique is typical of those artists who are confident enough to draw without following a previous pencil drawing and very common for those who copied after the Antique (especially sculptures)[619]. On the other hand, in the Lille drawing the figural scene fit within a pencil square, which is partially visible along the boarders of the design.
There are some clues that suggest the possibility that the artist saw the vault and copied part of it. In fact, the artist does not simply copy the scene of Hippolytus and Phaedra, but he copied only the figures that interested him and he placed them in different positions from the

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[617] Thanks to Dr. Cordelia Hattori (Lille, Palais des Beaux-Arts) for the images of the watermark. It can be seen a figure similar to a siren, thus a watermark similar to Briquet 13884 (Rome 1501). If this interpretation is correct, the chronology of the drawing can be dated to the beginning of the 16th century.
[618] «Trait d'encadrement à la pierre noire» (Brejon de Lavergnee 1997, p. 333).
[619] «It is possible to draw only with the pen, not following the pencil traces: it is a very difficult exercise, but it is inherent of an expert hand»: Borghini 1584, pp. 139-140 («Si può disegnare con la penna sola, lasciando i lumi della carta, il qual modo è molto difficile, ma molto à maestra mano conveniente»): Mostra Uffizi 1981, pp. 90-93 (ed. by A. Petrioli Tofani).

original painting[620]. This "copying methodology" is similar to that adopted by the artists who were in front of the Antique: they decided to copy only some figures/parts of the monument and they placed them in different positions in the folio[621]. Secondly, the transparency of the sheet and the passage of the ink between the two sides of the sheet suggest the possibility that the drawing was a personal sketch for the artist, without any pretension to circulate in a workshop or between colleagues.

The drawing is the *recto* of the drawing Pl. 102 (CAT. 17) and it depicts the scene 8 of the Volta Dorata[622]. Nevertheless, in 1963 Viatte did not recognize a similar scene in the Domus Aurea and, more generally, a subject after the Antique[623], although in 1889 Pluchard recognized in the Lille drawing "one scene from Titus' Baths"[624].

In the Lille drawing, the left arm of the nurse (although it is interrupted because of the end of the sheet) seems to have another position of that depicted in the Codex Fossombronis. In fact, in the Lille drawing, the left arm seems raised, as if the nurse were holding Hippolytus for his clothes, as can be seen in Filippino's drawing 1255 E *verso* (CAT. 21).

In the Lille drawing, above the horse, a little child with a floating cloak can be seen. Owing to the Codex Fossombronis, it is possible to recognize the original position of the figure, i.e. next to Phaedra's nurse. Nevertheless, as the archaeological parallels suggest, the figure is not a

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[620] For example, the little Eros is placed above the horse and not on the same floor of the other figures.

[621] The Aspertini's case is particularly famous: Schweikhart 1989; Faietti 2018.

[622] Robert 1901, p. 225 was the first to recognize the iconography of the scene.

[623] «Or, il n'y a pas de trace de cette fresque, à supposer meme qu'elle ait jamai existé […] Le fait qu'ill s'agisse d'une copie est néanmoins prouvé par l'existence de certains motifs indiquant un modèle mal compris (le personnage à gauche, esquissant le geste de tenir les chiens en laisse). Le petite figure féminine à droite et le jeune homme, dans la partie supérieure, au centre, sont independants du reste»: Viatte 1963, p. 319 no. 134.

[624] «Ces figures et celles du numéro suivant sont assez exactes sous le rapport du mouvement, mais elles diffèrent de la fresque sous le rapport de l'expression et du style, ce qui peut faire supposer que ces dessins auraient été faits de souvenir par Michel-Ange - à cause de la difficulté que l'on éprouvait de son temps pour pénétrer dans ces ruines»: Pluchart 1889, p. 23, no. 101 (616); the scholar recognized the scene of "Adonis partant pour la chasse".

simply child with a floating cloak, but rather Eros with the wings[625]. The draughtsman of the Lille focused his attention on the figures around the horse and, afterwards, he added the figures of the child and nurse, where the sheet permitted. His attention to the horse figure is visible because of the excellent workmanship and the realistic form, which reveal an expertise of the pen as the *verso* of the drawing had not yet shown. However, in the Codex Fossombronis (CAT. 20) and Mirri's watercolor (**Pl. 34, fig. 2**), can be seen that the horse is not depicted in that position, but in profile position. On the other hand, Filippino Lippi drew the horse in foreshortening (CAT. 21), as the Lille drawing shows. Considering a Roman fresco dated to the Flavian age with the myth of Phaedra and Hippolytus (**Pl. 34, fig. 3; Pl. 38, fig. 2**), it is possible to recognize the same position of the horse in comparison to the Lille drawing and Filippino drawing. Thus, it is likely that the draughtsman of the Codex Fossombronis and Mirri's watercolor did not pay enough attention to this point of the scene, as well as other iconographic details for which they diverge[626].

Specific bibliography for the Lille's drawing Pl. 102:
Benvignat 1856, no. 616, 617 (Michelangelo); Gonse 1878 p. 60, no. 616 (Michelangelo); Pluchard 1889, p. 23, no. 101 (Michelangelo); Thode 1913, III, p. 112 (Baccio Bandinelli); Berenson 1903, 1938, 1968: inv. 1678 (Baccio Bandinelli/Michelangelo); Viatte 1963, no. 134, pp. 319-320 (Anonymous Florentine artist); Brejon de Lavergnee 1997, pp. 333-334, no. 835 (Giovanni Francesco Rustici?).

General reference to the Lille's drawing Pl. 101:
Dacos 1969, p. 22, n. 8, fig. 19; Meyboom-Moormann 2013, I, p. 2001.

Copies of the scene 8 (Hippolytus leaving for the hunt):
see CAT. 20

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[625] Giuman 2016, tav. VI.

[626] Mirri's watercolor reveals some difference with the Codex Fossombronis: the artists of Mirri did not see the hunt's victim on the shoulders of one hunter, while the last figure on the right in the watercolor is semi-naked.

CAT. 25

The "Grande Fregio" of the West wall
Francisco de Hollanda (1517 Lisbon – 1585 Lisbon)
Os desenhos das antigualhas
Escorial, Biblioteca Real de S. Lorenzo, Cod. 28-I-20
1538 - ante 1571
270 x 390 mm (*recto*) + 270 x 390 mm (*verso*)[627], none watermark[628]
foll. 13 *verso* - 14 *recto*
watercolor on paper
inscriptions: «ROMAE. DE DOMUS AUREA NERONIS APUD / AMPHITEATRUM»

Provenance, Drawing in context
see CAT. 1

Analysis
As the inscription of the drawing shows, Francisco indicated the archeological provenance of the scene with the following inscription: «ROMAE. DE DOMUS AUREA NERONIS APUD / AMPHITEATRUM». Before explaining why scholars are quite sure that such scene came from the room 80, it is important to stress one clarification concerning such archeological indication.
Unlike all the other Renaissance drawings which copied parts of the Volta Dorata, only Francisco's watercolors (CAT. 1, CAT. 25) indicate the correct archeological provenance of the Domus Aurea (and not for instance "from Titus' Baths", as it can be seen in other drawings: CAT. 10, CAT. 4). As assumed in *Chapter 1*, in the 19th century the paintings

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[627] The sheets of the codex are 350 x 460 mm and the dimension of each watercolor is 270 x 390 mm. The drawings of the *Os desenhos das antigualhas* are "glued" on the sheets of the codex. In fact, Francisco first drew the watercolors and, afterward, he cut a portion of each sheet, a sort of window, in order to fit each drawing to the "window". Therefore, all borders of the drawings are glued to the "window". In order to cover the point of contact between the borders of the drawings and the border of the "window", Francisco draw a sort of red framework. Also the Codex Berolinensis was made through a similar process, although with less care (CAT. 9).
[628] Tormo says that he did not find any watermark («sin verse filigrana ninguna»: Tormo 1940, p. 26).

of the Oppio Hill have been identified as the remain parts of the Domus Aurea. However, from the 15th century, while the greatest part of the artists and antiquarians believed that the underground paintings decorated Titus's Baths, few other erudite men were aware that on the Hill Esquiline there was the Domus Aurea. In fact, since the discovery of the underground grottoes of the Oppian Hill, there were some doubts that such paintings were the remaining decorations of the Domus Aurea and such a hypothesis circulated among some antiquarians, including Francisco and his acquaintances.

Thanks to the description by M. Carletti within Mirri's work (1776), we know that on the walls of room 80 and below the vault of the Volta Dorata, there was a red painted frieze on which the figures were almost in natural dimensions ("Grande Fregio")[629]. Carletti says that they could see two groups of figures on the wall, although originally they were four. All scholars have immediately assumed that these figures mentioned by Carletti were those depicted by Francisco on the two drawings foll. 13 *verso* - 14 *recto*[630]. Mirri's artists did not copy these scenes because, in the 18th century, the painted frieze of room 80 was already well-known due to the engravings of P.S. Bartoli (**Pl. 43, fig. 1**). As argued in *Chapter 4*, Bartoli copied the watercolors of Francisco de Hollanda before 1674. After his death, Bartoli's son (F. Bartoli) published *Le pitture antiche delle grotte di Roma,* namely an album of engravings made by his father, which includes the engraving based on

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[629] «Nulla abbiamo nelle pareti, se non qualche segno di rossa fascia superiormente alla cornice, ove erano dipinti alcuni gruppi di figure poco meno del naturale, argomentandosi dalli due rimastivi che quattro doveano essere questi gruppi per ogni parete»: Carletti 2014, p. 90 (= Mirri-Carletti 1776, p. LXXV).

[630] Weege 1913a, p. 179; Meyboom-Moormann 2013, I, p. 205-208. Since Weege does not provide any further indication about the painted frieze (because probably covered by Trajan rubble), Dacos tried to reject the hypothesis that the subject copied by Francisco was depicted in room 80: «l'indication est évidemment inexacte et l'on ignore toujours la provenance de la peinture connue par Francisco de Hollanda» (Dacos 1969, p. 42).

Francisco's drawings foll. 13 *verso* - 14 *recto*[631]. Therefore, given the diffusion of Bartoli's work and knowledge of his engravings in the 18th century, Mirri probably decided to not include in his work these two scenes already copied and spread by Bartoli's copies.

In another wall of room 80 (without specifying which), Carletti states that the painted frieze («cornicione») was almost vanished, apart from one figure that Mirri's artists copied and located in the central medallion of their design of Volta Dorata (CAT. 3)[632]. Meyboom-Moormann have supposed that, in the 18th century, the decoration of the "Grande Fregio" on the West wall was that one in better conditions at the time of Carletti's description (1776). Meyboom-Moormann arrived to this conclusion because they saw traces of red color in the upper part of the West wall[633]. In fact, on the East wall, the red pigments of the "Grande Fregio" are not more preserved.

It is difficult to imagine how the "Grande Fregio" originally was. As already said, according to Carletti's description, on the West wall only two scenes (of the original four) were still visible in the 18th century. Therefore, considering Francisco's watercolor of the "Grande Fregio"

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[631] The engraving was made from the watercolor of Bartoli in the Codex Massimi at Glasgow (foll. LIX-LX: Pace 1979, pp. 141-142, no. 49-50, tav. XXb). For the Codex Massimi: see CAT. 2 and *Chapter 4*. In the Bartoli's album (Bartoli-Bellori 1706), the descriptions of the engravings made by P. Bellori have not any reference to the original provenance of the scenes because, in his watercolor of the Codex Massimi, Bartoli did not copy the inscription of Francisco mentioned above.

[632] «Il quadro che abbiamo surrogato nel mezzo della volta era uno di que' gruppi rimasti sul cornicione delle pareti di questa camera, come addittammo poco fa, degno perciò di essere e copiato, e descritto»: Carletti 2014, p. 91 (or. ed. 1776, p. LXXVI).

[633] «Ora non si riconosce nulla, a parte i resti di un fondo rosso al lato O nonché qualche smacchiatura non più collegabile con i vecchi disegni […] Grazie alle tracce del fondo rosso conservate solo nel fregio O ci sembra lecito supporre, per mancanza di informazioni migliori, che il fregio O fosse meglio conservato del fregio E e che il primo gruppo di Carletti, e quindi la sezione del fregio copiata da De Hollanda, si trovasse sul fregio O»: Meyboom-Moormann 2013, I, p. 205. Weege and Dacos do not provide any further information about such painted frieze: «Die Wände hatten also oben einen Fries, über den auf jeder Wand vier Gruppen von fast lebensgroßen Figuren gemalt waren»: Weege 1913a, p. 179; Dacos 1969, p. 41-42.

and its two scenes, we should think that originally the "Grande Fregio" decorated each wall of room 80 through four scenes. The frieze should have run for all walls of the room, except for the South side of the room which does not have a wall, since it opened on to the pentagonal court (room 80a). Indeed, it is not certain that the frieze also ran along the North wall, because of the presence of the lunette (cf. *Chapter 3*)[634]. Meyboom-Moormann indicated the measurements of the frieze in the following way: 1,90 m (height) and 10,35 m (length)[635]. Therefore, we can suppose that, in the 16th century, the distance between the floor and the vault was at least 1,90 m. (otherwise, Francisco would have not been able to copy the two groups of the West "Grande Fregio"). This aspect is important for figuring out the dynamics of copying for the Renaissance (cf. *Chapter 1*)[636].

In 1706 G.P. Bellori and M. de La Chausse interpreted the two scenes of Bartoli's engravings as one representation of the Eleusinian Mysteries[637]. Unfortunately, Weege did not provide any further information about the archaeological conditions of the painted frieze, but he agrees with the identification of the Eleusinian Mysteries for the

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[634] «Non possiamo escludere che continuasse sulla parete N, ma non si è conservata nessuna traccia su questa parete e, in generale, i fregi laterali si limitano alle volte e non si estendono alle lunette»: Meyboom-Moormann 2013, I, p. 247, n. 202.

[635] Meyboom-Moormann 2013, I, p. 206; the 3D reconstruction provided by Viscogliosi 2006 does not take into account the presence of the "Grande Fregio".

[636] One brief Renaissance poem from an Anonymous writer describes the descent of the artists inside the Domus Aurea's grottoes (Dacos 1969, pp. 9-10; Meyboom-Moormann 2013, I, pp. 3-4 and p. 11 n. 30). At that time, it was very difficult to walk through the underground tunnels and to view the Roman paintings because of the proximity between the vault and the soil.

[637] Bartoli-Bellori 1706, pp. 13-17; «onde nell'antecedente tavola [*scil*. tav. XI] potrebbero rappresentarsi le Tesmoforie, o Eleusine maggiori, e le minori in questa [*scil*. tav. XII]» (Bartoli-Bellori 1706, p. 16). Therefore, according to G.P. Bellori and M. de La Chausse, in the right part of the frieze (tav. XII) there were the Lesser Mysteries, while in the left part (tav. XI) there were the Greater Mysteries. For a complete study of the ancient Mysteries, see the eight volumes of *Thesaurus Cultus Et Rituum Antiquorum Thescra* (Los Angeles: The J. Paul Getty Museum, 2004-2011); for a brief introduction on the Eleusinian Mysteries: Bottini 2005, pp. 41-47 (ed. by G. Sfameni Gasparro).

drawings of Francisco[638]. G.P. Bellori and M. de La Chausse consider also the possibility that the left scene might be related to the life of Dionysus, while the right part shows the Dionysian Mysteries[639]. The interpretation of the scene as a representation of the Dionysian Mysteries is also confirmed by modern scholars, mainly due to the presence of the so-called λῖκνον or *vannus* in fol. 14 *recto* (namely a ritual sieve which supported an object in the shape of a penis)[640]. The Pompeian fresco of the Villa dei Misteri, dated to 70 BC, is one of the most known examples of the Roman iconography of the Dionysian Mysteries (**Pl. 43, fig. 2**). In the fresco, a nurse can be seen trying to reveal the λῖκνον and another female figure with the wings, can be seen scared and trying to do not watch it[641].

As pointed out by scholars, the iconography of revealing the λῖκνον is not rare and there are several parallels, such as stucco vault of the *cubiculum* B at the Villa della Farnesina, dated to 20 AD (**Pl. 43, fig. 3**). In the scene, on the left side we can see Silenus trying to reveal the λῖκνον, while one young boy has his head totally covered by a mantle. The latter is interpreted as the person who is initiated to the Dionysian Mysteries because of the presence of the Silenus and the *thyrsus* in the hand of the young boy[642]. In the same vein, in fol. 14 *recto*, we can see a young boy standing. On the other hand, Dosio's drawing in the Codex Berolinensis shows (CAT. 26), a frieze of the Domus Aurea with a seated man, instead of a young boy standing. Also the latter the iconography is confirmed by the archeological parallels, such as the Campanian terracotta slab at the Museo Nazionale Romano, dated to the last two decades of the first century AD (**Pl. 43, fig. 4**)[643]. In this case, it can be seen a veiled seated man with two priestesses and, on the left side, one priestess is holding the λῖκνον. The iconography is quite

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[638] «Dargestellt ist eine eleusinische Mysterienszene»: Weege 1913a, p. 180.

[639] The interpretation was suggested to them by Francesco Bianchini (1662-1729); for Francesco Bianchini: DBI 10 (1968), pp. 187-194 (ed. by S. Rotta).

[640] Nilsson 1957, p. 84; Matz 1963, 9, 16-19; Geyer 1977, p. 148; Meyboom-Moormann 2013, I, pp. 207-208.

[641] For a complete discussion of the different interpretations about the figure with the wings: Sauron 2010, pp. 87-101.

[642] Bragantini-De Vos 1982, p. 138-139, tav. 78 (ed. by M. Taloni).

[643] Strazzulla 1990, pp. 54-75; Burkert 2005, p. 96, no. 35; Bottini 2005, p. 156 (ed. by M. Cadario).

similar to that of the so-called Urna Caetani Lovatelli, preserved at the Museo Nazionale Romano and dated to 50-25 BC (**Pl. 43, fig. 5**)[644]. Both representations are referred to as the Eleusinian Mysteries because of the presence of the goddess Demeter in the other face of the urn and in another other fragment of the Campanian terracotta slab (inv. 4357). Scholars have interpreted the veiled man as the figure of Herakles mainly because of the literary sources. According to the myth, before Herakles' descent to the underworld (*katabasis*) and his victory on the Cerberus monster, the hero participated to the Eleusinian Mysteries in order to be purified from the murders of the Centaurs[645].

Considering all three representations mentioned (Farnesina's vault , the Campanian terracotta slab, and the Urna Caetani Lovatelli) the presence of the veiled figure and the λῖκνον is a recurrent subject. While the adult man (Herakles) indicates the presence of the Eleusinian Mysteries, the young boy is used for representing the Dionysian Mysteries. Nevertheless, the archeological parallels do not allow us to argue that the presence of a young veiled boy was always used for the iconography of the Dionysian Mysteries, while the veiled man referred only to the Eleusinian Mysteries.

Considering the different representations in Francisco's watercolor (CAT. 25) and Dosio's drawing (CAT. 26), it is not possible to assess whether in the "Grande Fregio" there was a young boy or an adult man. Of course, according to the philological principle of the *lectio difficilior*, it is more probable that, in the fresco, the figure was seated and, thus, the artists wrongly copied like it as though it were a standing young boy. In any case, thanks to the presence of the *thyrsus* in both drawings, we can be sure that the frieze originally depicted the Dionysian Mysteries.

Although the frieze of the Domus Aurea was mentioned in scholarship for the Greek and Roman iconography of the Dionysian Mysteries, the iconographical scheme depicted by Francisco is unique as a whole and does not have any parallels[646]. Meyboom-Moormann have focused their attention on some figures and they found some archeological

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[644] Burkert 2005, p. 96, no. 34; Bottini 2005, pp. 158-163 (ed. by M. Cadario).

[645] E.g. Eur. Herc. v. 613; for a detailed discussion: Sfameni Gasparro 1986, pp. 61-63.

[646] Nilsson 1957; Matz 1963; Geyer 1977.

parallels, as in the cases mentioned above[647]. The impossibility to know the original decoration of the "Grande Fregio" does not allow us to assess the precise meaning and function of the scene. Nevertheless, Meyboom-Moormann have stressed the iconographical and dimensional analogies with the Dionysiac scene in Villa dei Misteri (Pompeii)[648]. In fact, just as the Pompeian scene decorated a luxury triclinium (and not a religious building), it is likely that such decoration was also suitable for room 80, which might have had a similar function, if we consider its position and shape (open towards the octagonal room and with an overview on the valley of the Celio Hill)[649].

As in the case of Francisco's watercolor of the Volta Dorata, the "Grande Fregio" is characterized by bright and warm colors which recall the description of Pliny the Elder about the colors used by Famulus, the famous painter of the Domus Aurea. According to Pliny, «Famuls was another recent painter. He was a *gravis* and *severus* painter, but also *floridus* and *umidus*»[650]. As will be discussed in *Chapter 3*, scholars have discussed at length these four adjectives and, although their opinions differ, they agree about the meaning of *floridus* as "bright and intense" (in relation to the colors)[651]. Nevertheless, not all scholars

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[647] Meyboom-Moormann 2013, I, p. 207.

[648] Meyboom-Moormann 2013, I, pp. 207-208.

[649] «Il fregio dionisiaco nella Villa dei Misteri non decora un ambiente nascosto e misterioso ma un triclinio festoso, e, pari alla sala 80 nella Domus Aurea, con un bellissimo panorama, sul Golfo di Napoli invece della vallata del Celio. I due fregi dionisiaci illustravano fertilità e abbondanza e servivano per intensificare l'atmosfera felice dionisiaca delle sale da banchetto. Iconograficamente e funzionalisticamente il fregio della Volta Dorata si presenta come un confronto, pur di 130 anni circa più tardi, della megalografia pompeiana dionisiaca»: Meyboom-Moormann 2013, I, p. 208.

[650] Pl. *NH* 35, 120: *Fuit et nuper gravis ac severus idemque floridus ac umidus pictor Famulus*.

[651] Rizzo 1929, p. 16; EAA III (1960), *s.v. Fabullus*, pp. 566-567 (ed. by S. Ferri); Ferri 2017, pp. 228-229 (or. ed. 1946); Dacos 1968; Corso-Mugellesi-Rosati 1988, pp. 422-425; Meyboom 1995; Meyboom-Moormann 2013, I, pp. 61-65; Meyboom-Moormann translate: «Dipingeva in uno stile dignitoso e maestoso, ma con colori caldi e toni fluidi [cioè da chiaro verso scuro, in chiaroscuro]»: Meyboom-Moormann 2013, I, pp. 61-62.

agree that Famulus was the painter of room 80 and, precisely, of the "Grande Fregio"[652].

Specific bibliography for foll. 13 *verso* - 14 *recto*:
Tormo 1940, pp. 74-76

Bibliographic references to foll. 13 *verso* - 14 *recto*:
Weege 1913a, pp. 179-180; Nilsson 1957, p. 84; Matz 1963, 9, no. 10.
Dacos 1969, pp. 41-42; Geyer 1977, p. 148; Meyboom 1995, p. 237; Sauron 2010, p. 124, fig. 32; Meyboom-Moormann 2013, I, pp. 205-208.

Copies of scene "Grande Fregio Ovest" of the West wall:
- 1538 - ante 1571, Francisco de Hollanda (1517–1585), *The "Grande Fregio" of the West wall*, in *Os desenhos das antigualhas,* Escorial, Biblioteca Real de S. Lorenzo: (Cod. 28-I-20), foll. 13 *verso* - 14 *recto*: CAT. 25.
- 1560-1570?, Giovanni Antonio Dosio (1533–1609), Codex Berolinensis (Berlin, Staatliche Museen Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Kupferstich-kabinett: inv. 79.D.1), fol. 31 *recto,* drawing no. 85: CAT. 26.
- 1658-before 1674, Pietro Santi Bartoli (1635–1700), Codex Massimi (University Library of Glasgow, MS Gen 1496 [HX 110], foll. LIX-LX: Pace 1979, pp. 141-142, no. 49-50, tav. XXb)
- 1706, Pietro Santi Bartoli's engraving (1635–1700), *Le pitture antiche delle grotte di Roma, e del sepolcro de' Nasonj disegnate, & intagliate alla similitudine degli antichi originali da Pietro Santi Bartoli, e Francesco Bartoli suo figliuolo. Descritte, et illustrate da Gio. Pietro Bellori, e Michelangelo Causei dela Chausse*, Roma, Nella nuova stamparia di Gaetano degli Zenobj, 1706, tav. XI-XII (Pl. 43, fig. 1).

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[652] For example, Meyboom-Moormann consider only the frieze a work of Famulus and his workshop, while they suggest another workshop for the Volta Dorata (Meyboom-Moormann 2013, I, p. 62); for a detailed discussion: cf. *Chapter 3*.

CAT. 26

The "Grande Fregio Ovest" of the West wall
Giovanni Antonio Dosio (1533 San Gimignano - 1609 Caserta)
Codex Berolinensis, inv. 79.D.1,
Berlin, Staatliche Museen Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Kupferstichkabinett
1560-70?
fol. 31 *recto*, drawing no. 85
240 x 250 mm (folio dimension: 261 x 340 mm), watermark absent[653]
paper, brush, diluted ink, traces of black pencil (*lapis*)

Provenance, Drawing in context:
see CAT. 9

Analysis
The drawings no. 85 and no. 86 are located on the two sides of one
sheet of paper. This sheet of paper has been mounted on a blank page
(fol. 31) of the Codex Berolinensis. The central part of the page has been
cut out to make drawing no. 86 visible on fol. 31 *verso*. The fol. 31 shows
two drawings of the Domus Aurea's painting and the no. 85 is the *recto*
(the *verso* is the drawing no. 86*:* CAT. 9). In the Codex Berolinensis,
there are no other drawings of Roman paintings and only fol. 87
mounts a drawing (no. 192) which depicts a part of one Roman stucco
vault of the Terme Maggiori in Villa Adriana (Tivoli).[654]
Although the Codex Berolinensis consists of drawings made by several
different artists, fol. 31 *recto* is attributed to Dosio by Hülsen[655].

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[653] There is no watermark present in the drawing paper. The distance between
the chain lines of this paper varies from 33 to 34 mm and they run horizontally.
I would like to thank Dr. Luise Maul for the information (Dipl.-Rest. Abteilung
Konservierung/Restaurierung, Conservation Department, Kupferstichkabinett
Staatliche Museen zu Berlin - Preußischer Kulturbesitz).

[654] Hülsen 1912, p. 99; Hülsen 1933, p. 41: the Roman stucco vault of the Terme
Maggiori in Villa Adriana (Tivoli) is also depicted in one drawing of the Codex
Barberini (fol. 39: Hülsen 1910b, p. 55); the ceilings of the Terme Minori and the
so-called Palestra of Villa Adriana are depicted in the Albertina drawings no.
308 and 309 the (Valori 1985, pp. 159-163, no. VI-VII).

[655] While for fol. 31 *verso* Hülsen is more certain that the drawing was made by
Dosio (he indicates the attribution with the letter "D"), for fol. 31 recto he seems
to have more doubts ("D?"): Hülsen 1912, p. 89, no. 85.

However, Hülsen was not able to recognize the subject of the design, namely one figural scene of the Domus Aurea's paintings. As pointed out in CAT. 9, Dosio's drawings of the ancient models were often thought for being published in prints or sent to other eminent personalities, such as Cardinal Niccolò Gaddi.[656] As Hülsen pointed out, most of the drawings made of the Antiquity made by Dosio can be dated 1560-1570, especially 1560-1565 during his first stay in Rome.[657] Therefore, if fol. 31 of the Codex Berolinensis was part of one of Dosio's drawing-book, we can assume that it was made for personal use rather than for circulation within a workshop. The latter assumption might also explain the techniques and styles of the drawings no. 85 and 86. Both drawings reveal a similar process of working: before the design in lapis and then a final version in pen (CAT 9) or in brush with diluted ink (CAT. 26). On the other hand, because of the different use of the technique (pen *vs* brush with diluted ink) and the different kinds of ink, we may suppose a different time of execution for both drawings.

Furthermore, the drawings are also similar because of the same quick treatment of the subject depicted, as if the artist did not want to dedicate too much time to the design itself, but wanted simply to record only a few details. For example, in the quarter vault of the drawing no. 86 (CAT. 9), the stroke of the pen is sketchy and not observant of the proportions of the panels. The figures are only sketched and some panels are defined by overlapping lines. Moreover, the artist did not re-copy in pen all the previous design in lapis (see the vault moldings on the left side of CAT. 9). In the same vein, in the drawing no. 85 (CAT. 26), the figures are defined with the lapis and the artist did not re-copy the profile of the figures with the pen, but used only the brush with diluted ink (maybe because he was more interested in the drapery of the figures).

Both drawings of the Domus Aurea are not copied from the original paintings: probably the drawing no. 86 is copied from another drawing which might be similar to CAT. 10 (cf. CAT. 9); in the same vein, the drawing no. 85 might be copied from another drawing because of the presence of the diluted ink (typical for the drawings on table).

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[656] Dosio 1976, pp. 9-26 (introduction edited by F. Borsi); Marciano 2008, pp. 95-144.
[657] Hülsen 1912, p. 76; Hülsen 1933 pp. XXI-XXII

As pointed out in CAT. 25, Dosio's drawing no. 85 depicts some figures of the so-called "Grande Fregio" of room 80 (on the West wall). The design of Dosio is particularly important because it confirms that Francisco's watercolor (CAT. 25) is not an artistic license. However, Dosio's design and Francisco's drawing reveal several differences from the iconographical point of view. Firstly, Dosio's drawing depicts a veiled seated man, instead of a veiled young boy (and both iconographies are possible from the archeological point of view: CAT. 25). Secondly, in Dosio's drawing, on the left side, it can be seen a man with the *thyrsus* who is trying to drag a goat by its horn and the latter figures are not visible in Francisco's watercolor. Finally, the figure on the right side, the priestess with the votive offerings is not completely similar to that one depicted in Francisco's drawing.

The figures of the priestess with the λῖκνον and the seated veiled man are so archeological precise that it is not possible to suppose that they are invented by Dosio. As far as the scholarship has shown, excluding the "Grande Fregio", in the Renaissance period, there were no other known examples of such iconography[658]. Hence, because of the absence of other similar archeological parallels in the 16th century, the resemblance with Francisco's watercolor and the design of SW corner of the Volta Dorata on the other side of the sheet (CAT. 9), it is clear that the drawing depicts some figures from the "Grande Fregio Ovest".

Specific bibliography for the drawing no. 85 (fol. 31 *recto*) of the Codex Berolinensis:
Hülsen 1912, p. 89, n. 85.

Bibliographic reference to the fol. 31 *recto* (fol. 31 *recto*) of the Codex Berolinensis:
Hülsen 1933, p. 19; Dacos 1969, p. 42, no. 1D; Meyboom-Moormann 2013, I, p. 206.

Other copies of the "Grande Fregio Ovest" of the West wall:
see CAT. 22

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[658] Nilsson 1957, Bober-Rubinstein 2010.

CHAPTER 3
THE PAINTINGS OF THE VOLTA DORATA THROUGH ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVIDENCE AND GRAPHIC DOCUMENTATION

In this chapter, I am going to analyze the archeological evidence that nowadays is visible in room 80 and how it matches with the clues provided by drawings collected and analyzed in the catalogue. The aim is to find new evidence and clues that will allow us to better understand the original decoration of the Volta Dorata.

First, I will introduce room 80's location and its general decoration (floor, walls, ceilings) in relation to other rooms of the Oppian building. After a brief overview of the state of conservation of the decoration, based on the recent findings of Meyboom-Moormann, I will assess the decoration of room 80 within the decorative context of the Oppian building and its possible function. Finally, I will explore which interpretations have been made in existing scholarship for the possible role of the ancient painter Famulus within room 80.

In the second part of this chapter, I will focus my attention on the decoration of the Volta Dorata, where the conditions of the paintings are better preserved. Comparing the results of Meyboom-Moormann's studies about the archaeological evidence and the graphic documentation analyzed in the catalogue, I will emphasize how graphic documents have allowed us to understand many decorative and figural aspects of the original decoration. Therefore, after a brief overview of the geometrical system of the vault , and thanks to the graphic documentation, I will analyze how to better understand which colors and kinds of decoration were used for the Volta Dorata (e.g. stucco, golden pigments, precious stones). After this investigation, I will focus my attention on the figural system of the vault . Therefore, thanks to evidence collected through the catalogue, I will investigate the three main areas of the vault ("Central Medallion", "Internal Area", "External Frieze"). I will start from the Central Medallion because, as happens for a modern viewer who enters the room, in observing a decorated vault , the ancient viewer might have firstly been attracted by the Central Medallion thanks to its dimension and elaborated decoration. Then, I will describe the figural scenes of the "Internal

Area" and "External Frieze". Finally, considering the figural scenes that are more reliable than the others (because they are either confirmed by archeological evidence or as there are several copies of the same scene), I will assess which set of messages the figural system might reveal. Finally, I will analyze how the figurative themes of the ceilings fit into the figural context of the Oppian building and literary context of the Neronian age.

1. Room 80: the location within the Oppian building, decorations, and state of conservation

1.1 Room 80 as part of the Oppian building

The location and the dimensions of room 80 (width: 9.75 m.; length: 10.35 m.)[659] show the relevance that the room had within the Oppian building. The room is located at the center of the pentagonal court that was overlooking to the *horti* that surrounded the SE area of the Oppian building (**fig. 1**)[660]. As discussed in *Chapter 1*, because of its position next to the *horti* and the *stagnum Neronis*, the Oppian building would have created a space for the *otium* of the Emperor within the city and not far from it, not unlike the *villae* that were usually located outside the city (**fig. 2**)[661]. As we will see, in such a *locus amoenus,* room 80 was

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[659] The room is not perfectly square: Meyboom-Moormann 2013, I, p. 195 (Weege and Tormo do not provide precise dimensions because the room was not emptied completely by earth at that time: Weege 1913a, p. 165, 179, n. 141, Tormo 1940, p. 241); the not precise square dimension of the room is confirmed by CAT. 5: here, the draughtsman wrote two different dimensions for the panel in shape of almond: "3 mezzi" vs "2 e un terzo".

[660] For *horti* in NE area of the Oppian building: Peters 1985, Moormann 1998, pp. 359-360, Moormann 2003, pp. 385-387.

[661] Moormann indicates the reasons why the Oppian building could not be the political center of the Imperial palace as follows: there is no a direct public way to reach the Oppian building; there are no rooms wide enough to allow for the public and administrative activities; there is no a precise entrance; there are no spaces reserved for the Praetorians (Moormann 1998, pp. 358-359; cf. also Peters 1985, p. 112).

one of the most valuable spaces of the Oppian building in terms of location, decoration and dimensions.

At least for the original project of the Oppian building, room 80 was not the only room that had such privileged conditions in terms of location (and maybe also of decorations). As anticipated in *Chapter 1*, what remains of the Oppian building nowadays is almost one half of the original building that was projected on the slopes of the Oppian Hill. According to the architectural and archeological evidence, the octagonal court (room 128) was the center of a building oriented in an East-West sense that consisted of two symmetrical parts. Each part had two courts (one closed, rectangular and another open to the gardens, pentagonal) and both met each other in the area of the octagonal room. Nowadays, the last rooms visible on the eastern boundaries of the Oppian building are rooms 142 and 144. During the excavations of Fabbrini in 1970s and 1980s, it was not possible to recognize any evidence for room 147 which would have been the pendant of room 80[662]. The existence of room 147 is only supposed by scholars for symmetrical reasons but mostly, it has been supposed by the two maps of De Romanis (1822) and Lanciani (1897). In both maps (**figs. 25-26**), the architect and the archeologist noted on the eastern boundaries the presence of one room that might have had the same dimensions of room 80[663]. Therefore, in the map of the Oppian building by Fabbrini (nowadays accepted as accurate by most scholars), the scholar has drawn rooms 146-150 and indicates in room 147 the pendant of room 80, like the cryptoporticus 142 is the pendant of cryptoporticus 79[664].

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[662] «Al di là di questo limite [*scil*. room 142], ci è mancata ogni possibilità di riscontro»: Fabbrini 1983, p. 176.

[663]«Sappiamo, tuttavia, che subito dopo [*scil*. after room 142] doveva aprirsi il salone centrale del lato, l'equivalente della sala dalla volta dorata (80) sul primo cortile. Questa sala potrebbe riconoscersi nella vasta stanza anteriore 147, disegnata per due lati nella pianta De Romanis e, con alcune varianti, nelle piante Lanciani e Lugli. Considerando i rapporti metrici delle citate planimetrie, la stanza sembrerebbe avere per larghezza proporzioni analoghe a quelle della sala dalla volta dorata»: Fabbrini 1983, p. 176.

[664] «La pianta e la disposizione di questo criptoportico [scil. room 142] ricordano l'analogo disporsi del corridoio 79 alle spalle degli ambienti che, con al centro la sala dalla volta dorata (80), si affacciavano sul lato settentrionale del primo cortile a cinque latti»: Fabbrini 1983, p. 176.

Therefore, according to the original project of architects of Domus Aurea (Severus and Celer)[665], room 80 was one of three main rooms that had a central role within the Oppian building: the other two being room 128, and room 147. However, as pointed out in *Chapter 1*, scholars do not agree on the possibility that, at the moment of Nero's suicide (9th June 68), the Oppian building was finished and, therefore, so were the decorations of room 147[666]. On the other hand, it is possible to suppose that, already around 66 AD, the decorations of room 80 were finished and visible[667].

Therefore, although the decorative system (floor, walls, vault) of room 80 has partially vanished, we are going to analyze what remains and which archaeological evidence allows us to suppose its potential decoration. Afterward, we will try to establish how the decoration of room 80 fits into the decorative system of other rooms of the Domus Aurea.

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[665] Tac. Ann. XV, 42: «Nero meanwhile availed himself of his country's desolation, and erected a mansion in which the jewels and gold, long familiar objects, quite vulgarised by our extravagance, were not so marvellous as the fields and lakes, with woods on one side to resemble a wilderness, and, on the other, open spaces and extensive views. The directors and contrivers of the work were Severus and Celer, who had the genius and the audacity to attempt by art even what nature had refused, and to fool away an emperor's resources» (transl. by A.J. Church, W. Jackson Brodribb, S. Bryant: Random House 1942).

[666] For the chronological building phases: *Chapter 1.*

[667] Beste 2015; Beste 2016; considering the materials used for the walls and the style of the paintings, Meyboom-Moormann think that East part of the Oppian building and its decoration (thus also room 80) was made in the period "autumn 64 AD – spring 66 AD" (for the "prima fase costruttiva neroniana" and "prima fase decorativa neroniana": Meyboom-Moormann 2013, I, p. 39 and table p. 41; cf. the image with the different building phases: Meyboom-Moormann 2013, II, p. 9, fig. 0.9).

1.2. Room 80: the decorations and workshop B of the Oppian building

The greatest part of the decoration of room 80 – which originally concerns the paving, walls and vault – has almost disappeared owing to the passage of time, but spoliations in ancient times and damage since the Renaissance age has further deteriorated the structure.

Concerning the marble decorations of the walls and floor, it is possible to suppose that they were detached already in ancient times because, still in 1913, the room was filled with earth[668]. Nevertheless, although nothing remains of the wall-marble decorations, thanks to some traces of the mortar, Meyboom-Moormann suppose one decoration system divided into «un plinto, ortostati, fregio, abachi e cunei, e tre fregi»[669]. Therefore, both scholars classified the wall-marble decorations of room 80 in the category "Classe I": namely, the walls were entirely covered by marble slabs and not partially. According to them, this type of wall-marble decoration was used for the most valuable rooms of the Oppian building[670].

Above the wall-marble decorations and under the vault, there was one painting frieze called "Grande Fregio" (**fig. 27**). It originally ran under the vault and occupied the upper part of the wall, where the walls show a slight inclination towards the center of the room. We can suppose the existence of this painted frieze due to a passage in Carletti's description (1776)[671]. Moreover, on the West wall, Meyboom-Moormann saw some traces of red pigments that correspond to Carletti description and Francisco's watercolor (CAT. 25)[672]. Although the Nord lunette does not preserve any painting decoration, it is likely that "Grande Fregio" did not occupy the North lunette[673]. As analyzed in CAT. 25 and 26, Francisco de Hollanda and Dosio copied part of this

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[668] Weege 1913a, p. 165; for few pavements survived in the Domus Aurea: Meyboom-Moormann 2013, I, p. 54; for the wall-marble decorations: Meyboom-Moormann 2013, I, pp. 71-76 (cf. Peters-Meyboom 1993).

[669] Meyboom-Moormann 2013, I, p. 195.

[670] Meyboom-Moormann 2013, I, pp. 71-76.

[671] Carletti 2014, p. 91 (= Mirri-Carletti 1776, p. LXXVI).

[672] Meyboom-Moormann 2013, I, p. 205.

[673] Meyboom-Moormann 2013, I, p. 247, n. 202.

decoration. Nevertheless, these drawings cannot be compared with any archaeological evidence and, moreover, owing to the iconographical issues related to these drawings, their original iconography remains uncertain. However, as the study of Meyboom-Moormann shows, there are some iconographical and dimensional analogies with the Dionysiac frieze in the Villa dei Misteri (Pompeii)[674]. Just as the Pompeian example decorated a luxurious triclinium (and not a religious building), it is likely that such a decoration was also suitable for room 80, which might have had a similar function, if we consider its position and shape (open towards the pentagonal courtyard and with a view on the valley of the Celio Hill)[675].

More archaeological evidence can be seen in the decoration of the Volta Dorata. However, since its discovery, further damage was made by visitors, such as the tunnel holes in the South and North side of the vault[676], inscriptions with their names[677], attempts to scratch off the gold decoration,[678] and the detaching of some figural panels, such as scene 2 on the West side (**fig. 28**). Nevertheless, as we will see better later, thanks to archaeological evidence and graphic documentation, it is possible to understand some details such as: various colors; the stucco decorations of the moldings; a few traces of gold decoration for the stucco moldings; the little interlocking holes in the panel frames that indicate where the *appliqués* in precious stones or colored glass

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[674] Meyboom-Moormann 2013, I, pp. 207-208.

[675] «Il fregio dionisiaco nella Villa dei Misteri non decora un ambiente nascosto e misterioso ma un triclinio festoso, e, pari alla sala 80 nella Domus Aurea, con un bellissimo panorama, sul Golfo di Napoli invece della vallata del Celio. I due fregi dionisiaci illustravano fertilità e abbondanza e servivano per intensificare l'atmosfera felice dionisiaca delle sale da banchetto. Iconograficamente e funzionalisticamente il fregio della Volta Dorata si presenta come un confronto, pur di 130 anni circa più tardi, della megalografia pompeiana dionisiaca»: Meyboom-Moormann 2013, I, p. 208.

[676] Probably, the tunnel holes towards the South side were used to enter in the Renaissance age, since in 1774-1776 Carletti mentions only one hole that damaged the central medallion, and not two holes (cf. Carletti 2014, pp. 90-91 [= Mirri-Carletti 1776, p. LXXVI]). Therefore, it is possible that the hole on the North side was made later. Finally, the hole on the North lunette was made by Mirri's excavators (see: *Chapter 4*).

[677] Weege 1913a, p. 166.

[678] Weege 1913a, p. 166.

were fitted; and, finally, few traces of some figural scenes (scenes 2, 8, C, I). Although we will analyze these details more closely afterward, just from this brief overview it is possible to see how these different types of decoration (stucco, gold pigments, precious stones) made the Volta Dorata a unique vault in the Oppian building. Thanks to some archaeological evidence of the Volta Dorata (colors and geometrical system), Meyboom-Moormann have attributed the decoration of the Volta Dorata to the workshop B of the Oppian building. According to their analysis, it is possible to recognize three painter workshops for the entire Oppian building (A, B, C)[679]. The workshop B is characterized by the use of precise colors (dark green, light green, purple, orange, pink, light blue) and the absence of the color white[680]. As we will see later, in the Volta Dorata some of these colors are partially visible on the paintings, but others can be seen in graphic documentation. Workshop B is also characterized by specific geometrical systems for the ceilings in which the center of the vault is the core of the decoration and all the figures (and decorative motifs) move towards it, as in the case of the Volta Dorata[681]. One last aspect that concerns workshop B is the use of *appliqués* in precious stones or colored glass stones and we can suppose they were used given the presence of the same little interlocking holes in the vault , as can be seen in Volta Dorata and room 123[682].

According to Meyboom-Moormann, workshop B worked around the area of the pentagonal court (included room 80) from the autumn of 65 AD until the spring of 68 AD[683]. Therefore, as we have already anticipated, the precious decorations of room 80 were among the firsts to be finished and appreciated by Nero's own eyes. Nevertheless, among the painters of workshop B, one famous and "legendary"

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[679] Meyboom-Moormann 2013, I, p. 55; in addition, both scholars suggest the presence of a further workshop that worked after the death of Nero.

[680] Meyboom-Moormann 2013, I, p. 55, 58-59.

[681] Meyboom-Moormann 2013, I, p. 59.

[682] Considering the *appliqués* in precious stones, Domus Aurea's description of Suetonius immediately comes to mind: «in other parts it was entirely overlaid with gold, and adorned with jewels and mother of pearl» (Suet. *Nero* 31, 2-3). For such details in the Domus Aurea: Meyboom-Moormann 2013, I, p. 59, p. 200 (room 80), p. 232 (room 123); for similar decorations in the *horti Lamiani*: Cima-La Rocca 1986, pp. 117-122

[683] Meyboom-Moormann 2013, I, p. 41.

painter who was particularly appreciated by Nero might have worked with the painters' workshop, Famulus.

1.3. Room 80 and Famulus, the *gravis* and *severus* painter

As we have seen, workshop B is characterized by the use of specific bright colors, geometrical systems and technical elements of the decoration (such as the *appliqués* in precious stones). Nevertheless, before being attributed to workshop B, the decoration of the Volta Dorata has always fascinated scholars because of the possibility of having been painted by Famulus, the famous painter of the Domus Aurea mentioned by Pliny the Elder[684]. According to Pliny, «more recently, Famulus was another painter. He was a *gravis* and *severus* painter, but also *floridus* and *umidus*. By this artist there was a Minerva, which had the appearance of always looking at the spectators, from whatever point she was viewed. He only painted a few hours each day, and then with the greatest gravity, for he always kept the toga on, even when standing on the scaffoldings. The Domus Aurea of Nero was the prison-house of this artist's productions, and hence it is that there are so few of them to be seen elsewhere» (Pl. *NH* 35, 120). From this passage two problems arise: first, what was meant by the adjectives used by Pliny to define the art of Famulus (*gravis*, *severus*, *floridus*, *umidus*); second, what role Famulus had in relation to the decoration of the Domus Aurea's paintings.

For the first problem, another passage of the *Naturalis Historia* can help us, especially for the use of the word *floridus*. In the same book (35) of his literary work, Pliny describes the *floridi colores,* namely the most economically valuable colors from which the other colors came (i.e.

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[684] Rizzo 1929, p. 16; EAA III (1960), *s.v. Fabullus*, pp. 566-567 (ed. by S. Ferri); Ferri 2017, pp. 228-229 (or. ed. 1946); Dacos 1968; Corso-Mugellesi-Rosati 1988, pp. 422-425; Meyboom 1995; Meyboom-Moormann 2013, I, pp. 61-65.

austeri colores)[685]. Thus, the adjective *floridus* mentioned by Pliny to describe Famulus might indicate the use of *floridi colores* by the Roman painter. Indeed, in the Volta Dorata, some *floridi colores* can be seen, for instance the light blue (*armenium*), blood-red (*cinnabaris*), green-malachite (*chrysocolla*) colors. More doubts concern the use of the word *umidus* and a few scholars have provided some interpretations, for instance Coarelli («la pastosità e fluidità del tocco») and Meyboom-Moormann («toni fluidi [cioè da chiaro verso scuro, in chiaroscuro]»)[686]. On the other hand, the words *gravis* and *severus* seem related to the figural scenes depicted (serious and epic themes)[687] or even to his style, in the sense of being suitable for solemn and important spaces («uno stile dignitoso e maestoso»)[688].

Beyond any possible interpretation, of two elements we can be sure: the first is that Pliny creates a juxtaposition («he was a *gravis* and *severus* painter, but also *floridus* and *umidus*»); and the second is that the word *floridus* is referring to the use of bright and warm colors.

For this reason, considering the bright colors of the Volta Dorata, in 1946 Ferri already pointed out: «one example of his [*scil.* of Famulus'] *floridus* and *umidus* work can be seen in the Volta Dorata of the Domus Aurea, reproduced by one watercolor of Francisco de Hollanda (c.

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[685] Pl. *NH* 35, 30: "*Sunt autem colores austeri aut floridi. Utrumque natura aut mixtura evenit. Floridi sunt – quos dominus pingenti praestat – minum, Armenium, cinnabaris, chrysocolla, Indicum, purpurissum*". Thus, the *floridi colores* are: light blue (*armenium*), dark blue (*indicum*), blood-red (*cinnabaris*), red (*minium*), green-grass (*chrysocolla*), red (*purpurissimum*). The *austeri colores* are all the other colors which came from the mixture of the *floridi colores.* According to Augusti, the *purpurissum* is the lacquer (Augusti 1967, p. 47: «lacca, preparata per fissaggio su di una sostanza minerale, della materia colorante, organica, ricavata da conchiglia»). For a detailed discussion about the identification of the colors mentioned by Pliny: Ferri 2017, p. 165, n. 30; Augusti 1967, pp. 25-26; Corso-Mugellesi-Rosati 1988, p. 327, n. 3.1, Brécoulaki 2006, Halm-Tisserant 2013.

[686] «*Humidus* indica invece la pastosità e fluidità del tocco»*:* Coarelli 2008, p. 234; «dipingeva in uno stile dignitoso e maestoso, ma con colori caldi e toni fluidi [cioè da chiaro verso scuro, in chiaroscuro]»: Meyboom-Moormann 2013, I, pp. 61-62; the word *umidus* is not discussed by Dacos 1968.

[687] Corso-Mugellesi-Rosati 1988, pp. 422-425.

[688] Meyboom-Moormann 2013, I, pp. 61-62 (cf. *supra*).

1538), where the main colors are the cinnabar and the light blue»[689]. In the same vein, according to Dacos, the surviving decorations of the Volta Dorata testify to the presence of an elegant and erudite painter in the choice of depicting precise figural scenes and, thus, these features seem in line with the description of Famulus[690]. On the other hand, Meyboom-Moormann think that only the "Grande Fregio" might have been made by Famulus, while the Volta Dorata was made by more artists of workshop B[691].

Although it is hard to know for certain which decoration of room 80 Famulus really painted, Meyboom-Moormann have rightly stressed that the colors and styles of workshop B are not so unique among the Roman paintings available to us today. The paintings of workshop B (such as those of the Volta Dorata) show some similarities with certain Fourth Pompeian style decorations in Pompeii[692]. Not by chance, as we will see shortly, the geometrical system of the Volta Dorata also shared some parallels with the Vesuvian area. Nevertheless, in the Neronian vault , there is one innovative aspect that concern the geometrical system of the vault which is difficult to find in other parallels and, now, we are going to see it in detail[693].

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[689] «Come tipo della sua attività "florida e umida" può essere citata la cosiddetta volta dorata della Domus Aurea, più volte riprodotta da un acquarello di Francesco d'Ollanda (attorno al 1538) che riproduce i colori dominanti del cinabro assieme all'azzurro»: Ferri 2017, p. 228, n. 120 (1° ed. 1946); Rizzo p. 16.

[690] Dacos 1968; for Fabullus/Famulus: Vos-Raaijmakers 1985a.

[691] Meyboom-Moormann 2013, I, p. 62.

[692] Casa di Sirico (VII 1, 25), triclinio 10: PPM VI, pp. 255-257; Casa del Naviglio (VI 10, 11), atrio 2: PPM IV, p. 1080; Meyboom-Moormann 2013, I, p. 66, n. 27.

[693] For the issue about the relationship between Pompeian paintings and those of the Domus Aurea (and generally found in Rome): Boldrighini 2003, pp. 105-124, Meyboom-Moormann 2013, I, pp. 94-95.

2. The Volta Dorata

2.1 Dimensions and geometrical system

The dimensions of the vault are approximately 10,35 x 10,35 m[694] and as early as the Renaissance age the vault was measured by artists. In Francisco's watercolor (CAT. 1), he noted the measurement on one side of the sheet: "53 Roman palms", namely 11,84 m (53 x 0,2234 cm)[695]. In the same vein, in the Windsor drawing, Giovanni da Udine measured the dimensions of each panel (CAT. 8) and, calculating the sum of the different measures, it is possible to know the direction West-East of the vault noted by him, namely 11,25 m.[696].

As we can see, the real dimensions of the vault do not differ greatly from the measurements noted by Francisco and Giovanni da Udine. As argued in CAT. 8, such a difference might depend on two possible reasons. It might be simply due to some mistakes made by the artists or, more probably, the artists calculated the length of the vault taking into account also the curvature of the vault (as Windsor drawing might have done, since it calculated the distance boundary-center of the vault). Due to the curved shape of the vault , the length boundary-boundary of the vault is slightly longer than the distance wall-to-wall.

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[694] Meyboom-Moormann 2013, I, p. 195; according to Mirri's map, Egger says: «Das Zimmer maß nach Mirris Plan 40 Palmen = 8.94 m im Gevierte und war 50 Palmen = 11,17 m hoch» (Egger 1906, p. 65). On the other hand, Weege was the first to calculate the dimensions after Mirri (1776). Nevertheless, Weege indicates incorrect dimensions because in 1913 the room was still partially filled by the backfill (Weege 1913a, p. 165).

[695] "palmo romano" = 0,2234 m: Vasori 1981, p. 9; Zupko 1981, pp. 174-175; Salvatori 2006, p. 65.

[696] The length of the boundary-center noted by Giovanni da Udine is 19 feet, namely 5,624 m. (19 x 0,296). If we double this length, we can calculate the length of each side of the vault: 11,25 m. (5,624 m. x 2).

Such precise measurement was surely simplified by the proximity of the soil to the vault in the 16th century[697].

As argued, considering all ceilings of the Domus Aurea, the Volta Dorata is particularly significant because of its dimensions and decoration, but also thanks to its geometrical system. Concerning the latter, scientific literature has provided different ways of indicating the "areas" of the vault and figural panels[698]. Nevertheless, in order to assist the readers comprehension, we have chosen the same numeration and naming that Meyboom-Moormann have provided for the "areas" of the vault and panels, since it has a better logical sense than other models (**fig. 29**). At the center of the vault , there is the "Central medallion". Around it, the "Internal Area" can be seen and, more externally, there is the "External Frieze". Following the design of Francisco's watercolor, we have drawn one design that shows each "area" and traces the profile of the panels and figures (**Pl. 2, fig. 1**). The "Internal Area" is made up of four angular medallions and four square panels around each medallion (two with a rhombus inside and two with figural scenes). The "External Frieze" consists of three bilobed cartouches alternated by square panels for each side of the vault (the square panels are figural in the corners and ornamental between the cartouches – with a rhombus inscribed). The numeration of the panels is alphabetical for the "Internal Area" and numerical for "External Frieze".

The geometrical system of Roman ceilings was of course based on common models that could be re-elaborated in correspondence with the taste of the workshops and the time and finances available[699].

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[697] For the working methodology of Renaissance artists within room 80: *Chapter 4*; one brief Renaissance poem, written by an anonymous author, describes the descent of the artists inside the Domus Aurea's grottoes (Dacos 1969, pp. 9-10; Meyboom-Moormann 2013, I, pp. 3-4 and p. 11 n. 30). At that time, it was very difficult to walk through the underground tunnels and to view the Roman paintings because of the proximity between the vault and the soil.

[698] Weege 1913a, p. 176; Meyboom-Moormann 2013, I pp. 200-204.

[699] Ronczewski 1903, Andreae 1963, Borhy 2004a.

Scholars have provided different ways of categorizing the vault decorations of the Fourth Pompeian style[700]. However, each attempt at categorizing the geometrical systems is partially limited because of the variability of rating parameters. Nevertheless, within one group of ceilings from the same context (such as those from the Domus Aurea), such an attempt is more effective. Thus, in their analysis of the geometrical systems of the Domus Aurea's vaults and ceilings, Meyboom-Moormann consider the geometrical system of the Volta Dorata under the category: «composizione centrale sviluppata da composizioni a cassettoni»[701]. The geometrical system gives more relevance to the center of the vault and, moreover, the surrounding panels are mostly in the shape of coffers and square panels. Although characterized by countertops and an easier geometrical system, the *domus* of *Octavius Quartio* in Pompeii (**fig. 30**) follows the same trend in giving more relevance to the center of the vault and surrounding it with square and rectangular panels[702]. Finally, owing to the diagonal sense of the decoration and the centripetal system, Meyboom-Moormann define in more precise way the Volta Dorata as «composizione centrale racchiusa con indicazione (parziale) dei diagonali»[703].

Within the set of vaults and ceilings of the Domus Aurea, the vaults of rooms 119 and 129 have some similarities with the Volta Dorata because of their geometrical systems and stucco decorations. Like the Volta Dorata, they show vault coffers that are located around the figural square panel, while the decorative motifs and other figural panels surround it. On the other hand, the vaults 119 and 129 show a less complicated geometrical system: they have fewer figural panels and, moreover, the panels only possess a square shape. A peculiar aspect of Volta Dorata is to bind together different shapes for the vault panels: square panels, circular panels and new hybrid forms (such as square panels with a red rhombus inside, bilobed cartouches, and panels with

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[700]About the wide problem of categorizing the decorations of Roman ceilings in Fourth Pompeian Style: Barbet 1985a, Ling 1991, Barbet 2004, Meyboom-Moormann 2013, I, pp. 117-131, Lipps 2018.

[701] Meyboom-Moormann 2013, I, p. 124.

[702] Barbet 2004, pp. 28-29.

[703] Meyboom-Moormann 2013, I, p. 126.

two Amazonian *peltae* on the sides). Indeed, all the panel shapes seem based on a combination of semicircle lines and square forms.

Furthermore, one unusual feature characterizes the Volta Dorata and it concerns its geometrical system that creates a sort of three-dimensional illusion. Thanks to Mirri's watercolor of the Volta Dorata (**Pl. 7**), it is possible to see the presence of four valves of shells in the "Internal Area", a type of decoration often used for the vaults of exedras[704]. In the Volta Dorata, such valves of shells around the central medallion give the idea of an umbrella, a sort of chapel open to the sky. With the three-dimensional model that we have drawn (**fig. 31**), it is possible to understand the illusion that the vault aimed to create. Not by chance, as we will see later, in the central medallion the abduction of Ganymedes and his arrival at Olympus was probably depicted. In depicting this, the Volta Dorata provides a sort of illusionistic space that could resemble the oculus of the "octagonal room" (room 128) of the Oppian building (**fig. 32**)[705].

Obviously, other examples of illusionistic perspectives can be found in Roman vaults of the Fourth Pompeian style. One other famous example is mentioned by Meyboom-Moormann and concerns the ceilings of the portico in Villa San Marco at *Stabiae* (**fig. 33**). Also in this vault , the central circular scene prevails upon the rest of the vault and, at the same time, the lateral decorations create a sort of optical illusion towards the sky[706]. However, there is a precise difference between the ceilings of Villa San Marco and the Volta Dorata. The spatial illusion of the Volta Dorata does not aim to create a merely three-dimensional space, but a specific three-dimensional perspective that resembles the architecture of the octagonal room (128). In this way, through the painting, it is possible to create an ideal connection between the two spaces and the two courts. And, in a certain way, we might say that through their art, painters sought to mirror the same challenges of the architects.

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[704] Particularly famous are the exedras of the Arch of Janus; obviously, such a decoration was also used in Roman paintings for bidimensional surfaces, such as the lunettes (some examples are visible also within the Oppian building: rooms 33 and 129).

[705] Meyboom-Moormann 2013, I, pp. 126-127, 204-205.

[706] Barbet-Miniero 1999, I, pp. 271-272 (ed. by R.N. Pedroso).

2.2. The decorative system of the Volta Dorata: colors and types of decorations

As anticipated, nowadays on the Volta Dorata it is possible to see some clues that, combined with the graphic documentation, have become evidence for our comprehension of the original appearance of the paintings. Thanks to certain drawings and watercolors, it is possible to understand some details that are no longer visible, such as some colors, where different types of decoration were used (stucco, precious stones, gold pigments) and which ornamental motifs were depicted for the interstitial spaces between the figural scenes.

As a result of the restoration work of 1990-1999, I. Iacopi published some images in high definition which allow us to see some original colors of the vault [707]. Nevertheless, while the images provide only clues, the designs and annotations of the drawings provide us more evidence. For instance, we can consider the decoration of one of the four vault corners (and, of course, it had the same decoration of the others). In Iacopi's image (**fig. 35**), one panel in red color can be seen. Externally, the panel has a frame with semicircles on a red background and, next to it, another frame with blue rhombi on a red background. The blue rhombi/lozenges have little holes in the middle where precious stones were inserted (in Mirri and Francisco's watercolors the artists signed them with a white dot, **figs. 34, 36**)[708]. Many colors and details of this corner are also visible in Mirri's and Francisco's watercolors. Moreover, in Francisco's watercolor (**fig. 34**), we can see one female figure that, thanks to recent restoration work, has been observed by the restorers and archaeologists[709]. In fact, it has the same

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[707] Iacopi 1999, pp. 41-49.

[708] «Queste losanghe nonché mensole mostrano dei piccoli buchi, talvolta con lamine attorno, che contenevano probabilmente delle pietre semipreziose o imitazioni in vetro, ora perdute»: Meyboom-Moormann 2013, I, p. 200; similar holes are visible in room 123: Meyboom-Moormann 2013, I, pp. 231-233; for the use of precious stones in Roman ceilings: Cima-La Rocca 1986, pp. 105-141, Dubois-Pelerin 2007, Cima 2008, pp. 85-88.

[709] «Come nel pannello nell'angolo NE una delle figure femminili in volo, posizionate diagonalmente»: Meyboom-Moormann 2013, I, p. 195 and 200, n. 172.

orientation towards the center of the vault as in Francisco's watercolor. As we will see later, she can be identified as one of the four *Horai*. Finally, considering the frame with semicircles, it is possible to see how each semicircle had inside of it two smaller, blue semicircles and the remaining space is colored in brown (a sort of Amazonian *peltae*). The latter detail is particularly precise in the watercolor by Mirri's artists (**fig. 36**), although they did not color the background of the angular figural panel in red.

Another of Iacopi's images provides further clues for the colors (**fig. 38**). In the external border of the vault (the so-called "External frieze"), there are three bilobed cartouches. The central cartouches had two blue bands on both external sides, while the lateral cartouches do not have such bands. In Francisco's watercolor, the bands of the central cartouches are in light green, instead of blue as they were originally (**fig. 37**). Nevertheless, between 1990-1999 the restoration works confirmed the presence of green color in the panel above the cartouche, as Francisco's watercolor shows[710]. On the other hand, in Brenna's watercolor the green is absent (**fig. 39**) but then, Brenna used blue for the lateral bands of the cartouche.

Brenna's watercolor is also important for understanding one detail that Weege saw in 1913, but nowadays is no longer visible. In the red square panel between cartouches 8 and 9, Weege saw a chariot pulled by a couple of deer or goats under the guidance of Eros – a typical subject of the Roman painting (cf. *Erotes* on chariots in the Pompeian Casa dei Vettii)[711]. A similar figure can be seen in the red rhombus depicted in Brenna's watercolor (**fig. 39**) and it might have been in stucco owing to the color used by Brenna (white-silver), a color he used also for other stucco scenes (e.g. later bilobed cartouche)[712]. Furthermore, this little figure (or different variations of it) would have been depicted in other

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[710] Meyboom-Moormann 2013, I, p. 195.

[711] «Doch erkennt man aus den Spuren gelegentlich, was dargestellt war, so z. B. auf dem unter dem Bild 3 befindlichen roten Felde ein nach rechts eilendes, von einem Eros gelenktes Hirsch- oder Böckchengespann»: Weege 1913a, p. 174; Meyboom-Moormann 2013, I, p. 246, n. 172.

[712] Moreover, in Iacopi's image (fig. 11), the figure within the rhombus seems to have come off, and it might have been caused by the detachment of the stucco from the fresco.

rhombus panels of the vault as well (also those closer to the center of the vault), as some Renaissance drawings indicate. For instance, within the rhombus-panel, one little figural scene is sketched in the drawing of Codex Senese (**fig. 40**), in Dosio's drawing of Codex Berolinensis (CAT. 9), and in Giovanni da Udine's Uffizi drawing (**fig. 41**). In the latter, Giovanni da Udine also noted: the word «rosso» for the little panel which contains the red rhombus and the letter «u» (= «blu») to indicate the blue color in the four little blue spaces. Moreover, next to the frame around the angular medallion, Giovanni da Udine wrote the word «mensole» to indicate the stucco moldings. Finally, as pointed out in CAT. 8, the colors are also noted in Windsor drawing 909568 *recto* (**fig. 42**): the letter "p" was used for the red ("paonazzo") and the letter "v" ("verde") for the light green.

As we can see, many details of drawings and watercolors are helpful for understanding some archeological details that nowadays are no longer visibly clear. A similar case concerns the use of the gold stucco or pure stucco. As Weege already stated in 1913, the pure stucco was used mainly for the figural scenes of the lateral bilobed cartouches. Furthermore, he saw a few traces of gold on the molding frames: according to him, the gold on the molding frames had been taken off by Renaissance visitors[713]. This supposition is confirmed by Francisco's and Mirri's watercolors. As the case of Mirri's watercolor shows better, the artists were able to understand that the gold pigment had to cover the greatest part of the molding frames and, for this reason, Brenna's watercolor (**fig. 39**) and Mirri's watercolor (**fig. 36**) use yellow for the molding frames. On the other hand, there is no evidence which allows us to suppose whether the gold was also used for decorating the background of figural scenes (as, for instance, certain other Renaissance ceilings inspired by the Volta Dorata show: cf *Chapter 4*).

As mentioned above, the stucco was also used for some figural scenes of the vault and, also in this case, the graphic documentation can help

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[713] «Das System der Decke setzt sich hauptsächlich aus runden und viereckigen Feldern zusammen, die umrahmt sind von Blattstäben, Eierstäben, Konsolen, Astragalen aus Stuck von feinster Arbeit, deren reiche, leider überall abgekratzte Vergoldung der Decke ihren Namen gegeben hat. Namentlich an den Rändern sind die Stuckornamente besonders reich»: Weege 1913a, p. 166; Meyboom-Moormann 2013, I, p. 200.

us[714]. For instance, as in the case of rhombus-panel mentioned above, the stucco decoration was used for the little figure within the rhombus (**fig. 39**). It was mostly used for the figural scene in the angular bilobed cartouches, as archaeological evidence suggests (**fig. 43**). Not by chance, Mirri's artists used the white-silver color for indicating this type of decoration (**fig. 44**), although Carletti states that only a few traces of such stucco scenes were still visible in 1774-1776[715]. On the other hand, in the Renaissance age, the stucco decoration of the bilobed cartouches was clearly visible, as can be seen in the Windsor drawing of Giovanni da Udine: «storie di stucho» (**fig. 45**). Moreover, in the latter, the artist wrote also the word «dipinto» and, hence, thanks to this detail, we can suppose that the decoration of the angular medallions was painted and not rendered in stucco. Unfortunately, looking nowadays at the angular medallions of the vault, no evidence remains to detect the original type of decoration (neither stucco nor painting). Surely, the decorations in paint concerned the central bilobed cartouches, as can be seen in Uffizi drawing 53 O (**fig. 46**) and as archeological evidence for scenes 2 and 8 (scene 8: **fig. 47**). Finally, this painting decoration was also used for the square panels in the "Internal Area", precisely those next to the angular medallions. Among them, nowadays only scene I and C preserve part of the original decoration (scene I: **fig. 48**).

One last clarification concerns the ornamental motifs that embellished some panels without figural scenes like those of the "Internal Area" (e.g. panels with two Amazonian *peltae* on the sides, panels in the shape of valves of shells). Today, no archaeological evidence remains but, considering the great use of grotesque motifs in the Domus Aurea's paintings, we cannot discount that such decorative motifs were also present in the Volta Dorata.

Although Francisco de Hollanda in his watercolors did not copy any grotesques or ornamental motifs (**fig. 49**), taking into consideration the

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[714] The use of the stucco decoration in the Domus Aurea can be considered one of the first cases in Roman paintings, after the hypogeum of Porta Maggiore (dated to Caligula age): Meyboom-Moormann 2013, I, pp. 88-89; however, as Mielsch stresses, in the Domus Aurea's paintings, the use of the paintings prevail above the stucco, since stucco was used only for certain decorative elements or ornamental and geometrical motifs: Mielsch 1975, p. 41.

[715] Carletti 2014, p. 91 (= Mirri-Carletti 1776, p. LXXVI): cf. CAT. 3.

richness of the decoration, it is difficult to imagine that such panels were lacking in these types of decorations. Indeed, in 1774-1776, in the area of the valves of shells, Carletti saw stucco decoration with Dionysiac scenes («minuti lavori di baccanti di stucco»)[716]. For this reason, in Brenna's watercolors, the artist depicted Dionysiac figures in white-silver color. Furthermore, as the Marciana Codex shows (**fig. 51**), ornamental motifs surrounded the area of the central medallion.

As we can see, although the Volta Dorata does not show grotesque motifs like the other paintings of the Domus Aurea, the ornamental motifs in stucco, the gold pigments and the use of precious stones provide the Volta Dorata with an equally rich ornamental apparatus. Hence, after having detected the decorative system of the Volta Dorata through graphic documentation and archaeological evidence, we are going to see how the drawings can help us in recovering part of the figural program of the Neronian vault . In doing so, as anticipated, we will start from the central medallion that had to attract the attention of the ancient viewer. Afterwards, we will describe the "Internal Area" and "External Frieze".

2.3. The figural program of the Volta Dorata: the central medallion

As archaeological evidence shows, the center of the vault was occupied by one central medallion that had a diameter of approximately two meters [717]. The watercolor of Francisco is the only graphic document that tells us this and it shows the myth of Ganymede's abduction (**fig. 52**). Already in 1774-1776, as Carletti states, the central medallion had vanished because of the tunnel hole created next to it (that one closer to the South side: **fig. 27**)[718]. According to Carletti, it was made by «trionfatrice ignoranza», i.e. the Renaissance excavators. Since Francisco is the only graphic witness of the central medallion we have,

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[716] «Quattro grandi ali o vele rossigne ricamate di bianco apronsi sopra un campo turchino disteso per ognuno de' quattro lati, ricco fra gli altri minuti lavori di baccanti di stucco, ed interrompendo l'ordine del fregio suddetto cambiano figura al disegno»: Carletti 2014, p. 91 (= Mirri-Carletti 1776, pp. LXXVI).

[717] Meyboom-Moormann 2013, I, p. 204.

[718] Carletti 2014, pp. 90-91 (= Mirri-Carletti 1776, p. LXXVI).

there are some doubts as to his accuracy and reliability. However, as we will see, there are also some clues that allow us to suppose that he might be right.

The first unusual aspect that concerns such a scene is its orientation: considering the watercolor (**Pl. 2, fig. 1**), it is oriented in sense West-East. As Meyboom-Moormann state, the greatest part of the central figural scenes of the Domus Aurea's ceilings are oriented in sense North-South and, moreover, the figures are oriented with their heads towards the North (such as ceilings 119 and 129)[719]. Therefore, as it happened for the angular medallions of the "Internal Area" (see later), it is possible that Francisco incorrectly noted the orientation of the central medallion when he recopied it on the table of the final watercolor. It is unlikely that the ancient viewer entered from the South side and would see the central medallion oriented in sense West-East. Since such a mistake is also visible in Mirri's watercolor (**Pl. 7**), it is probably due to the fact that the artists oriented the watercolor in sense West-East and, afterward drew the central medallion. The orientation of the watercolor in sense West-East was due to the fact that scene 8 (East side) and scene 2 (West Side) of the "External Frieze" were the clearest and most visible figural scenes of the "External Frieze".

In Francisco's watercolor, the central medallion depicts the abduction of Ganymede in a very unusual iconographic scheme (**fig. 52**). Here, we can see Zeus on an eagle who is holding Ganymede, while Athena and Hermes are waiting, both sitting on the clouds. Hermes is depicted in the gesture of giving the ambrosia cup to Ganymede, since he will become the cupbearers of the gods. Above the eagle of Zeus, a young Eros is flying and this would seem a marginal detail, but it is not. In fact, apart from the fact that the young Eros is depicted in a similar posture to that of the central scene of room 129 (**fig. 53**), the presence of Eros is one detail always used by ancient iconographies to indicate a loving scene. It can be seen in scenes 2 and 8 of the Volta Dorata, as we will see later. On the other hand, 16th century iconographies of the abduction of Ganymede do not show the detail of the young Eros[720].

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[719] Meyboom-Moormann 2013, I, p. 197.
[720] For a deep and wide analysis of the iconography of Ganymede: Marongiu 2002 (cf. Saslow 1986).

The iconography of Ganymede's myth in Francisco's watercolor has no other parallels in Roman art and it is unusual for two main reasons: the first is the presence of other deities in the scene Athena and Hermes (not mentioned by any literary sources). The second is the position of Ganymede: not under the eagle (as it is usually depicted in ancient art), but on the eagle next to Zeus. In fact, considering the different kinds of artifacts where this myth is depicted (mosaics, funerary steles, stone ceilings, and public monuments – like arches and *propyla*), the common iconography is that of being grabbed by the talons of Zeus' eagle. Moreover, rarely is Zeus depicted on the eagle[721].

On the other hand, the presence of this myth in Francisco's watercolor is surprising because it is consistent with the normal use of this myth in Roman vault decorations. In Roman art, the myth of Ganymede was often depicted in mosaics and vaults and, moreover, it often had a central position in the decorative system[722]. One famous example is the scene of the central nave of the so-called "Underground Basilica" at Porta Maggiore in Rome, dated to the Julio-Claudian era (**fig. 54**)[723]. Around the same time (62-79 AD), some stucco medallions with divine love motifs decorated the *tepidarium* of the Pompeian Baths of the Stabian Baths and, among them, was the depiction of the abduction of Ganymede (**fig. 55**)[724]. Many other examples might be mentioned, such as the Roman stone medallion of the 1st century AD, displayed at Palazzo Antici Mattei[725] in Rome or the central medallion with the Ganymede's abduction of the Sacello Iliaco vault in Casa del Sacello Iliaco[726].

Although the presence of Ganymede's myth on the Volta Dorata remains an hypothesis, one fact is surprising. When Francisco started to

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[721] LIMC 4.1 (1988), pp. 154-169, *s.v. Ganymedes* (H. Sichtermann); cf. Kempter 1980.

[722] For the myth of the mosaics: Foucher 1979.

[723] Bendinelli 1927, Cruciani 2000, Sciortino 2010.

[724] PPM VII, pp. 165-167.

[725] The medallion in Palazzo Antici Mattei is dated to 1st century AD and probably comes from an ancient architectural element: Guerrini 1982, pp. 156-157, no. 24 (ed. by M.G. Picozzi).

[726] PPM, I, 6, 4 pp. 303-306; for other parallels in Roman paintings, Romizzi notes seven examples of the Ganymede's myth in paintings of the Fourth Pompeian style: Romizzi 2006, p. 179.

work on his watercolor (1538), no Renaissance vault had central scenes with the abduction of Ganymede. Therefore, if he would have invented the scene, it is quite a strange choice that he depicted this specific myth and not, for instance, other famous myths widely used at that time for central vault scenes. Moreover, thanks to the analysis of Ganymede's myth in the Renaissance age, Marongiu has shown how the iconography of his arrival on the Olympus had a great diffusion around the 1510s through certain Renaissance drawings[727]. According to the scholar, thanks to the study of the Volta Dorata, the myth of Ganymede arrived at the workshop of Peruzzi and Raphael who started to use it for some figural vault scenes (such as that of in Villa Madama, see *Chapter 4*). In fact, Parmigianino (1527-1534), who visited the Domus Aurea's rooms as his signature states[728], made two drawings where he depicted an unedited iconography of Ganymede that seem to derive from the Volta Dorata's central medallion. Precisely, he depicted the figure of Ganymede in the same gesture of Hermes in the Volta Dorata (**figs. 57-58**)[729].

In conclusion, as these examples show and as scholars have suggested (Weege, Dacos and Meyboom-Moormann)[730], we think that the original presence of the Ganymede's myth on the Volta Dorata is likely. However, owing to the absence of any evidence, it remains difficult to explain the genesis of this specific iconography. On the other hand, as will be shown later (e.g. later scene 2 of Volta Dorata and the famous scene of Achilles at Skyros in room 129), the presence of new iconographies within the Domus Aurea is not rare.

2.4. The figural program of the Volta Dorata: the "Internal Area"

As anticipated, the "Internal Area" is made up of four angular medallions and each medallion is surrounded by four square panels

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[727] Marongiu 2002, pp. 20-37.

[728] Parmigianino ("Mazola"): Dacos 1969, p. 155.

[729] Marongiu 2002, pp. 24-25.

[730] Weege 1913a, p. 176, Dacos 1969, p. 22, Meyboom-Moormann 2013, I, p. 204.

(two with a rhombus inside and two with figural scenes)[731]. As we have seen, between the figural panels, pure decorative motifs embellished other panels (see above: panels in the shape of shell valves and rectangular panels with Amazonian *peltae*).

Today, no evidence remains for the figural panels of the "Internal Area", apart from scenes I and C. Some of the square panels are depicted only by Francisco and thus, in these cases, the engravings of Turnbull (1741) are helpful to show better Francisco's iconographies[732]. On the other hand, in some cases, the graphic documentation provides much stronger evidence for understanding which scenes were originally depicted. We are therefore now going to describe the figural panels of the "Internal area" following the alphabetical order of the scenes[733]. In recovering the results of Weege (1913)[734], Tormo (1940)[735], Dacos (1969)[736] and Meyboom-Moormann (2013)[737], firstly we will describe the iconographies testified by the archaeological and graphic evidence. Afterwards, we are going to discuss the possible topic and set of messages that such scenes would have expressed.

➢ SCENE A: the scene is copied only by Francisco's watercolor and it depicts a woman sitting in front of an armed woman (**fig. 59**); since a similar iconography is not testified by archeological sources or by other graphic witnesses (and, moreover, it does not have any meaning), Francisco could have invented this scene. As will be explained later, it is likely Francisco might have invented some scenes following the clues that he saw in the panel (or drawing a new scene through the clues that

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[731] The dimensions of the angular medallion are unknown, while the dimensions of the square figural panels (and those with the rhombus) are 65 x 78 cm: Meyboom-Moormann 2013, I, p. 203.

[732] Turnbull's engravings (1741) come from the watercolor of P.S. Bartoli in Codex Massimi: see *Chapter 1*.

[733] «Partiamo da un punto di vista ideale dello spettatore, cioè la grande porta al lato S e cominciamo al lato sinistro con l'angolo SO del lato O»: Meyboom-Moormann 2013, I, p. 196.

[734] Weege 1913a, pp. 165-179.

[735] Tormo 1940, pp. 210-216; pp. 241-248.

[736] Dacos 1969, pp. 25-28.

[737] Meyboom-Moormann 2013, I, pp. 202-204.

he saw in other panels). And, likely, he invented this scene imitating the iconography of scene G (see later).

➢ SCENE B (SW angular medallion): the scene is copied in several graphic documents (**fig. 60**) and depicts a young man sitting on a ram and holding a jar in his hand. In addition to those images, also the Windsor drawing (CAT. 8) roughly sketched the figural scene. As pointed out in CAT. 11 and 12, considering several copies of the scene, this figure shows some differences (dresses, the halo on the head, the type of animal) perhaps owing to difficulties by the artists in recognizing some details. According to Wattel de Croisant the scene depicts the myth of Phrixus on the ram. Nevertheless, as pointed out in CAT. 12, the abduction of Phrixus was not related to the iconographical repertoire of love themes.

➢ SCENE C: the scene is partially visible on the vault and, as the graphic documents confirm, it depicted one satyr who is sitting and playing a syrinx while a female figure is standing in front of him (**fig. 61**);

➢ SCENE D: the scene is copied only in Francisco's watercolor and shows one satyr who is playing a syrinx. He is sitting on a trunk in front of a dog (**fig. 62**); the scene seems not invented since a similar scene inspired Raphael's workshop (probably Giovanni da Udine) and can be seen in the stucco decoration of Loggia Garden of Villa Madama (*Chapter 4*);

➢ SCENE E (NW angular medallion): as pointed out in CAT. 1, the presence of woman on a bull in this angular medallion is uncertain since the graphic documents are not consistent (here Francisco copied a Nereid on a Hippocampus). Nevertheless, he presence of this scene in one of the angular medallions of the Volta Dorata is highly possible because it is testified by three graphic documents (**fig. 63**); therefore, such a scene might be originally present in SE or NW corners (for the other two angular corners – scene B and H – there are no doubts about the original location of the scene).

➢ SCENE F: the scene is copied only by Francisco's watercolor that shows a male figure who is playing a cithara while he is sitting on a trunk, in front of a deer lying down (**fig. 64**); also in this case, a similar scene can be seen in the stucco decoration of the Loggia Garden of Villa Madama (*Chapter 4*);

➢ SCENE G: the iconography of the scene is not clear, it depicts a female figure sitting on a rock and grabbing an armed man, a gesture which might represent a welcome or a greeting: **fig. 65**;

➢ SCENE H (NE angular medallion): as stressed in CAT. 16, the iconography of the scene is similar to one painting discovered in *Brigetio;* however, the latter might not necessarily depict the myth of Andromeda, rather a simply a human figure dragged by a flying horse without wings (**fig. 66**);

➢ SCENE I: as pointed out in CAT. 13, some archaeological evidence remains visible and confirms what graphic documents show (**fig. 67**). On the other hand, Francisco depicts a different iconography, although the postures of the figures have some similarities with those depicted by other witnesses. Probably, when he sketched the different figural scenes on the spot, he modified some of them when he drew the watercolor on the table (cf. CAT. 1). The meaning of this iconography and its interpretation are unclear (cf. CAT. 13);

➢ SCENE J: this scene is copied only in Francisco's watercolor and it shows a sitting female figure (Aphrodite?) who is receiving or giving a bow from/to young Eros (**fig. 68**); since similar iconography is not testified by archeological sources or by other graphic witnesses, Francisco could have invented this scene. On the other hand, in the stucco decoration of Loggia Garden of Villa Madama, there is a scene has some similarities with scene J (cf. *Chapter 4*);

➢ SCENE K (SE angular medallion): the scene is copied only in Francisco's watercolor and it shows a Nereid on a *ketos* (**fig. 69**). As pointed out in CAT. 1, the presence of one marine scene in one or more of the four medallions is not excluded. Not by chance, Francisco copied two angular medallions with marine themes. However, the scene with woman on a bull might have been depicted here and, therefore, one other marine scene might have been in the NW angular medallion (scene E).

➢ SCENE L: the scene is copied only in Francisco's watercolor and it depicts a female figure (Hermaphroditus?) in front of a satyr who is trying to escape while he is sitting on a trunk (**fig. 70**). The scene might have been invented by Francisco who drew this scene taking inspiration from scene I.

As we have seen, the graphic documentation provides interesting clues for the iconographies of the figural scenes of the "Internal Area", but it also gives rise to some doubts and problems about the reliability of some graphic witnesses, especially Francisco who seems to have invented some scenes (A, L, E). On the other hand, some scenes that are depicted by him show similarities with archeological evidence (I), with other graphic witnesses (G) or with Renaissance figural scenes of Loggia Garden inspired by the Volta Dorata (D, F, J; cf *Chapter 4*).

The graphic witnesses agree on scenes B, C, E, G, H, I and, considering these scenes, we can now focus our attention on their potential meaning. Among the more reliable scenes of the "Internal Area", the scenes of the angular medallions are scenes B (SW corner), E (NW or SE corner), H (NE corner). Firstly, we have to point out that the drawings show inconsistent orientations for the figural scenes within the angular medallions. In some cases, the medallion figures seem to be directed towards the exterior of the vault and, in other cases, towards the next medallion. As will be better demonstrated in *Chapter 4*, such inconsistent orientations might be understandable given the fact that, originally, the vault corners were directed towards the center of the vault. In this way, the artists would have noted incorrectly the orientation of the scene, turning the medallion of few degrees towards left or right sense. The possibility that the angular medallions were oriented towards the center of the vault is also suggested by room 35 of the Domus Aurea (**fig. 71**)[738]: here, the angular medallions are oriented towards the center of the vault. Furthermore, another clue for the orientation of the angular medallion comes from Mirri's watercolor of the Volta Dorata (**Pl. 7**): here, the artists copied the figures of the angular medallions in a diagonal sense (they are orientated towards the exterior of the vault because of the effect that the engraving creates in reflecting the figural scenes: cf. *Chapter 4*). Finally, one last clue about the original orientation of the angular medallions comes from Pinturicchio's vault for Pandolfo Petrucci: the Renaissance vault is clearly inspired by the Volta Dorata and shows the angular medallions oriented towards the center of the vault (*Chapter 4*, fig. 117).

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[738] For room 35: Meyboom-Moormann 2013, I, pp. 165-166.

As shown in CAT. 11, 12, 14, 16, 17, all medallion iconographies depict human figures on real or mythical animals (e.g. Ketos) that are moving in the air or water. Such groups of figures are often used for vault medallions and wall-painting decorations (cf. the Tomb of Valerii on the Via Latina in Rome). For instance, the figure of the young man dragged by the horse (scene H) is very similar to the iconography in one vault recently discovered (1994-1996) in *Brigetio* (Hungary) and dated to the end of the 2nd century AD (**fig. 72**)[739]. In this vault , as we will see later in the Volta Dorata, the four *Horai* are depicted in the corners of the vault. Therefore, we might conclude that the "Schwebende Gruppen" within the angular medallions seem particularly consistent with the general iconographical system of the vault (e.g. bucolic and dionysiac scenes) and, especially, the possible presence of the Ganymede's abduction within the central medallion.

Now we are going to analyze the possible meaning of the square panels that surrounded the angular medallions (A, C, D, F, G, I, J, L). As we have seen, the iconography of two of them (scenes C and I) is confirmed by archeological evidence and the graphic documentation. The iconography of scene C is quite easy to identify: it depicts a satyr who is sitting and playing a syrinx, while a female figure is standing in front of him. The female figure (maybe a nymph) is reproduced in the famous iconography of "pensive Muse" and the identification of the male figure as satyr is clear[740]. Carletti in his description of Mirri's drawings provides a specific interpretation for this scene: the myth of Polyphemus and Galatea. Not by chance, in the Garden Loggia at Villa Madama, the stucco panels – inspired by square panels of the Volta Dorata – depict the myth of Polyphemus and Galatea (D, F, J: see *Chapter 4*)[741]. Moreover, scene C provides an important clue for assessing the potential meaning of scene I. In fact, as pointed out in CAT. 13, although it is not possible to identify precisely the iconography of scene I (because of the absence of any precise parallel),

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[739] As pointed out in CAT. 15, the scene can not be identified with certainty to the myth of Andromeda, as Borhy suppose (Borhy 2004b).

[740] Weege sees a strong connection with the iconography of a Villa Borghese relief (Weege 1913a, p. 171): Moreno-Stefani 2000, p. 52, no. 11 (cf. also Amelung 1909, pp. 182-183).

[741] Carletti 2014, p. 92 no. LIII (= Mirri-Carletti 1776, p. LXXVII, no. LIII).

we cannot discount that the gesture of surprise might be connected to a nymph who is trying to escape from a satyr or a Hermaphroditus undressed by one Satyr/Silenus that, in turn, is trying to escape[742]. On the other hand, the iconography of scene G is not easy to identify, but its scheme is not uncommon. For instance, in the so-called "Underground Basilica"at Porta Maggiore in Rome (see above), similar iconographies can be found in the stucco decorations: such as the so-called Marsias and Athena (**fig. 73**), Orestes and Iphigenia (**fig. 74**), and an unknown couple (**fig. 75**)[743]. Although one of these three scenes in Porta Maggiore have a mythical reference (the scene of Orestes and Iphigenia: because of the presence the statue of Artemis in the arms of the female person), in the square panels of the Volta Dorata, it is more possible that only bucolic/dionysiac themes were depicted, without mythical reference, as the case of scene C shows. However, as in the latter, scene G might have depicted a loving/resting couple in a moment of conversation/greeting.

Therefore, we might conclude that, although some doubts remain about the identification of the representations, it is possible to suppose that dionysiac and bucolic love subjects were depicted in the square panels. Not by chance, as we are going to see, the archaeological and graphic evidence of the "External Frieze" allow us to confirm that theme of love was the *fil rouge* for the figural system of the Volta Dorata.

2.5. The figural program of the Volta Dorata: the "External Frieze"

The "External Frieze" of the Volta Dorata consists of 12 bilobed cartouches: while the central cartouches had paintings figural scenes, the lateral cartouches were decorated with stucco figural scenes. The bilobed cartouches are separated by square panels. As mentioned above, the latter had a rhombus with a little figure in stucco (**figs. 37-39**), while at the corner of the vault the square panels had a single

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[742] As Meyboom-Moormann pointed out, the myth of Chiron-Achilles seems unlikely: Meyboom-Moormann 2013, I, p. 203; 247, n. 193 *contra* Dacos 1969, p. 27; Weege 1913a 171 *contra* Segala-Sciortino 1999, p. 71: «Peleo che affida il figlioletto Achille alle cure del saggio centauro Chirone» (ed. by I. Sciortino).
[743] For the interpretations of the scenes: Bendinelli 1927, Cruciani 2000, Sciortino 2010.

female figure. The corner square panel are depicted by Francisco who oriented such figures in a diagonal sense towards the center of the vault (**fig. 34**)[744]. While Dacos thought them to be the personifications of the *Nikai*, Hanfmann and Schwinzer have rightly supposed that their iconography is more related to the personification of the *Horai*, often depicted on mosaics in this position[745].

As Weege, Dacos, and Meyboom-Moormann have already pointed out, few archaeological evidence remains for panels 1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 8, and 9[746]. However, apart from the case of scene 8, existing evidence does not provide many helpful clues for the knowledge of the original iconographies. From the following analysis, we exclude the description of scene 2 because a further paragraph will be devoted to this scene. In fact, owing to the graphic documentation collected and analyzed, a new interpretation will be provided for it.

➢ SCENE 1: the scene is copied by Francisco and Aspertini, although both iconographies are partially different from each other. In fact, as pointed out in CAT. 18, their difference was probably due to the re-elaboration of Francisco. After copying on the spot, he likely re-elaborated the scene following other archaeological parallels familiar to him (such as the famous relief in Villa Borghese well known to many Renaissance artists). The panel depicts a Dionysiac procession where a Silenus (in Francisco's watercolor) or a Maenad (in Aspertini's design) sits on a donkey (**fig. 76**). Next to them, it is possible to see other figures of the Dionysian procession which play flutes and are maybe drunk. A similar scene is also visible in one panel of the "Volta Dorata" by Peruzzi (1519). As pointed out in CAT. 18, the provenance of Aspertini's scene from the Volta Dorata is also suggested by his annotation «sote

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[744] Meyboom-Moormann 2013, I, p. 195 and 200, n. 172.
[745] Egger 1906, pp. 69-70 (by A. Michaelis); Tormo 1940, p. 245, nos. 14-17; Hanfmann 1951, II, p. 82, n. 18; Schwinzer 1979, pp. 96-97. In Francisco's watercolor, the personifications of the *Horai* do not have different iconographical details that allow us to recognize precisely which season is each one. As pointed out in CAT. 1, we cannot demand that Francisco's watercolor is a perfect copy of all the details of the Volta Dorata, but rather it can be seen that it preserve some iconographical schemes that remain significant and helpful.
[746] Weege 1913, pp. 178-179; Dacos 1969, p. 28; Meyboom-Moormann 2013, I, pp. 200-202.

terra de stuco». Not by chance, as stressed above, this bilobed cartouche was in stucco, like other external bilobed cartouches.

➢ SCENE 2: see next section.

➢ SCENE 3: the scene is copied only by Francisco and it depicts a female figure sitting on a wagon pulled by peacocks (**fig. 77**). In front and above it, two *Erotes* can be seen. Behind the wagon, two figures are walking and they seem to be *Silenoi*. The scene has been interpreted by Weege as Cybele's procession, but there is not enough evidence to support such a hypothesis[747].

➢ SCENE 4: only Francisco copied this scene and it depicts a male figure on a chariot pulled by horses whom follows a figure with a thyrsus (**fig. 78**). The scene has no parallels and seems to be invented since there are no other parallels or possible references to classical myths or habits of the ancients.

➢ SCENE 5: the scene is copied only by Francisco and represents a ritual scene around a fire (**fig. 79**). The scene had some parallels in Roman art, such as the stucco figural panels of the so-called "Underground Basilica" at the Porta Maggiore in Rome and other scenes mentioned by Lennon[748]. However, since this panel is the central bilobed cartouche of the North side, the scene should have represented a myth, as the central bilobed cartouche of the East and West sides show (scenes 2 and 8).

➢ SCENE 6: Francisco depicts another scene of a procession (**fig. 80**), a figure sited on a chariot pulled by panthers and followed by Silenoi with the thyrsus. Also, in this case, the scene has no parallels and seems to have been invented.

➢ SCENE 7: Francisco depicts a pastoral scene where a shepherd – next to a tree – is looking at the goats (**fig. 81**). He is next to his flock and a couple of dogs playing can be seen. According to Meyboom-Moormann, from close observation, there is little archeological evidence but we cannot discard that a similar scene would have been depicted[749].

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[747] Weege 1913a, p. 201.

[748] For the scenes of sacrifice in Roman art: Elsner 2005, Lennon 2015.

[749] Meyboom-Moormann 2013, I, p. 201.

➢ SCENE 8: as we have seen in the catalogue (CAT. 20-24), scene 8 was the most copied figural scene of the Volta Dorata in the Renaissance age. Thanks to the comparison of the drawings, it is possible to understand what was originally depicted and how such an iconography coincides with the famous iconography of the myth of Phaedra and Hippolytus (**fig. 82**)[750]. On the left side, Phaedra sits on the throne, and she is surrounded by her handmaidens. In the center, Phaedra's nurse is revealing to Hippolytus the love of Phaedra for him, her stepson. On the right side, Hippolytus is leaving for the hunt with other companions. Thanks to the comparison analysis, it has been possible to understand the reason why some details were changed by some artists, such as the presence of a male enthroned figure instead of Phaedra (that was originally depicted). Many iconographical details were not clear to the eyes of artists and, therefore, in some cases, they preserved the iconographical scheme of the scene forgetting or adding some details. For instance, in the iconographical parallels of the myth, Phaedra's nurse is often depicted helping Phaedra to lift the *himation*. Amico noted this gesture, but he did not see the detail of the veil and, thus, added a laurel wreath instead. Another important detail, that seems to be originally present in scene 8, is the love letter that Phaedra's nurse gives to Hippolytus to communicate the illicit love of his stepmother. Among the literary sources available, no love letter from Phaedra to Hippolytus is mentioned (but only the letter that Phaedra holds in her hand when she is already dead and in which is written her charge against Hippolytus). However, as pointed out by Croisille[751], in the iconographies of the myth from the 1st century AD, the detail of the love letter appears because of the influence of the fourth letter of Ovidius' *Heroides* (one of the main Roman sources for the knowledge of the myth)[752]. In the same vein, through the comparison of scene 8 depicted by Renaissance drawings, it can be seen

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[750] The first scholar who recognized the iconography was F. Weege: Weege 1913a, pp. 169-170; Dacos 1969, 23-24; Meyboom-Moormann 2013, I, pp. 201-202.

[751] LIMC 5.1 (1990), pp. 445-464, *s.v. Hippolytos I* (P. Linant De Bellefonds); Croisille 1982, pp. 78-100; Giuman 2016, pp. 113-146 (ed. by F. Doria).

[752] For the relationships between Euripides, Ovidius and Seneca about Phaedra's myth: Armstrong 2006, pp. 261-298.

that Phaedra's nurse is copied in the same gesture of those archaeological parallels where the love letter is depicted.

➢ SCENE 9: Francisco depicts a scene with a horse and a knight and, in front of him, two prisoners kneeling in front of soldiers can be seen (**fig. 83**). Meyboom-Moormann recognize in the vault a possible figure of a horse[753]. However, such a scene has no parallel in Roman art. Likely, inspired by some clues of the archeological evidence, Francisco invented the scene.

➢ SCENE 10: in Francisco's watercolor, a famous figural scene of the Roman repertoire is depicted, namely one Satyr who is trying to undress a sleeping Hermaphroditus (**fig. 84**). Although this iconography was well-known in the Renaissance age, it could have been depicted in the Volta Dorata. In fact, Pinturicchio, who was deeply fascinated by the Volta Dorata and inspired by it, copied the vault of Piccolomini Library a bilobed cartouche with the same scene (*Chapter 4*, fig. 17). Moreover, as we have seen in scene 1, the Dionysiac themes were surely present for the decoration of the stucco bilobed cartouches.

➢ SCENE 11: only Francisco copied this figural scene. A marine procession with some Nymphs and Tritons is depicted (**fig. 85**). Also in this case, the ancient iconography was well known to Renaissance artists. However, like in scenes 2 and 8, in this scene (and the pendant scene 5), one myth was probably depicted in painting. Therefore, Francisco probably invented this scene or located in the wrong position as the figural scene of the Volta Dorata.

➢ SCENE 12: the scene has been depicted only by Francisco and shows an unedited iconography in the Roman repertoire. In it we can see some archers shooting their arrows towards a herm (**fig. 86**). Scholars have suggested that (see *Chapter 4*) Michelangelo was inspired (maybe also indirectly through other drawings) by this figural scene of the Volta Dorata. In fact, in one Michelangelo's drawing (1530), we can see one scene that recalls scene 12 of Francisco[754]. Also in Dosio's drawing

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[753] Meyboom-Moormann 2013, I, p. 202.

[754] The inspiration to Michelangelo from scene 12 was argued by Frey (Frey 1911, pp. 135-137, taf. 298) and, then, accepted by Weege, Dacos, Panofsky, Meyboom-Moormann (Weege 1913a, p. 179, no. 8, n. 1; Dacos 1969, p. 25; Panofsky 1972, pp. 225-228; Agosti-Farinella 1987a, pp. 100-101, no. 44; Meyboom-Moormann 2013, I, p. 203).

of the Codex Berolinensis (CAT. 9), Dosio sketched one figural scene for panel 12. Although in Dosio's drawing it is not easy to recognize the scene and the figures depicted, we can assume that this panel might have been visible. However, as pointed out in CAT. 1, the iconography of the so-called "Saettatori" is not testified by any archeological artifact. Moreover, it seems to express an allegorical meaning which is more typical of the Renaissance culture, than to Roman art[755]. Considering the famous relationship between Francisco and Michelangelo[756], it is rather likely that we are in a opposite situation: owing to his friendship and admiration for Michelangelo, Francisco inserted within his watercolor of the Volta Dorata (1538-1540) the allegorical scene of the "Saettatori" that Michelangelo drew in 1530ca and that was famous among the Renaissance artists.

Thanks to the graphic documentation and archaeological evidence it is possible to conclude that only scenes 8, 1 and (probably) 10 are reliable scenes for understanding the themes that were originally depicted in the "External Frieze" of the Volta Dorata. While the central bilobed cartouches depicted figural scenes that refer to specific myths of love (Phaedra-Hippolytus), the lateral bilobed cartouches had stucco decoration that represented Dionysiac scenes. Moreover, as to scenes 5 and 7, it is also probable that some of the stucco bilobed cartouches would have depicted religious sacrifices and bucolic scenes. In fact, regarding scenes 1, 5 and 7, it is likely that Francisco saw similar scenes in the stucco bilobed cartouches and he replicated these religious and loving themes in other panels (like he did with the square figural panels of the "Internal Area").

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[755] For instance, one similar image is provided by Lucan in his dialogue *Nigrinus* (par. 35-37) who talks about the skill of the good speaker in saying the right words in order to strike the listener's soul. He says that not all archers know how to shoot the arrow at a soft target, making sure that it remains attached to the target, without piercing it. Therefore, it is likely that Michelangelo's drawing was inspired by this literary passage. In the Renaissance age, the artistic remakes of Lucian's works are quite famous (e.g. Calumny of Apelles or the story of Love and Psiche).

[756] For Michelangelo and Francisco within the circle of Vittoria Colonna: *Chapter 1*.

As Meyboom-Moormann pointed out, the bucolic and Dionysiac themes recur in the figural scenes of the Domus Aurea and, as academic literature shows, they are common for the minor figural scenes that decorated Roman ceilings of the Fourth Pompeian Style, especially the rooms devoted to the *otium*[757]. The presence of these bucolic and Dionysiac themes is also consistent with the themes depicted on the figural panels of the "Internal Area". Therefore, as said before, love and bliss seem to be the main topics of the Volta Dorata. Nevertheless, it is not clear what kind of love is narrated by the figural system of the Volta Dorata. Thanks to a new interpretation of scene 2, it will be possible to suppose what kind of love could originally have been shown through the figural system of the Volta Dorata.

2.6. A new possible interpretation for scene 2: an unparalleled iconography of the myth of Aeneas and Dido?

As we have seen, the central medallion with the Ganymede myth and the surrounding figural scenes show different themes and myths that allow us to suppose that love was the main topic of the figural system of the Volta Dorata. Considering also the Dionysiac scenes of the "Grande Fregio", Meyboom-Moormann have rightly pointed out that room 80 might have been a sort of luxury *triclinium* of the Oppian building. Nevertheless, the figural scene 2 shows an iconography that has not yet been recognized in a convincing way by academic literature. It was copied in two Renaissance drawings and in Mirri's watercolors (**fig. 87** = cf. CAT. 3). The Renaissance drawings are fol. 10 *verso* of Codex Escurialensis (**fig. 88** = CAT. 19) and fol. 86 *recto* of the Codex Fossombronis (**fig. 89** = CAT. 20). Through the comparison of these three drawings, a new interpretation will be assessed and, hence, new insights will be provided for the possible iconological meaning of the Volta Dorata's figural system.

In the Volta Dorata, scene 2 is the pendant of scene 8 that, as we have seen above, showed the myth of Hippolytus and Phaedra. Nowadays, scene 2 is no longer visible since two square panels of this scene have

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[757] Meyboom-Moormann 2013, I, pp. 95-96; cf. Wyler 2004, Romizzi 2006, pp. 138-148; Wyler 2006; Anguissola 2010, pp. 314-332.

been removed (**fig. 90**). Fortunately, the fresco was not yet damaged in the 18th century, when Mirri's artists copied it. In 1913 Weege recognized few details of the scene which concern the seated male figure in the center of the scene, and this is similarly depicted by all three graphic witnesses[758].

As can be seen, all three graphic documents show similar iconographies. However, Mirri's watercolor reveals an important iconographic difference. In the center of the scene, both Renaissance drawings depict one seated man surrounded by two other figures, apparently one man (on the left side) and one woman with a cloak (on the right side). On the other hand, Mirri's watercolor has only one male figure next to the seated man. This difference is an important clue for confirming what was argued in CAT. 3, namely Mirri's artists were not aware of the existence of these two Renaissance drawings and could have not copied the iconography of scene 2 from them[759].

Scholars agree that scene 2 shows Hephaestus who discovers Ares and Aphrodite in love[760]. Robert was the first scholar to provide this interpretation in 1889, analyzing fol. 10 *verso* of the Codex Escurialensis

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[758] Weege 1913a, p. 172: «Vom Gemälde sind nur ganz traurige Reste erhalten. Man erkennt ein vorgestrecktes rechtes Bein und den rechten Arm eines nach links sitzenden Jünglings. Rechts davon schwache Spuren eines mit übereinandergeschlagenen Beinen stehenden nackten Knaben, der mit dem rechten Arm über die Brust vorgreift und den linken Ellbogen aufstützt auf ein Lager, auf dem man eine zur Hälfte zerstörte Figur schwach erkennt. Kopf und Oberkörper des nach rechts sitzenden Jünglings sind durch Ruß zerstört, hinter ihm sowie an der rechten Seite des Bildes sind Stücke mit weiteren Figuren herausgeschnitten. Vom Hintergrund ist nichts zu erkennen».

[759] The Codex Escurialensis was already in Spain since 1576 (CAT. 11: *Drawing in context*). On the other hand, when Mirri worked on the excavations inside the Domus Aurea (1772-1775), the Codex Fossombronis was preserved in Passionei's collection (CAT. 12: *Drawing in context*). In those years, it is quite unlikely that Mirri was able to consult the Codex (if he were aware of its existence). Excluding the physical distance (Fossombrone and Rome are on opposite sides of Italy's east and west coasts), Passionei Library was founded in 1767 and its collection started to be catalogued between 1767 and 1784.

[760] Meyboom-Moormann 2013, I, pp. 200-201.

(**fig. 88**) and recognizing some deities in the drawing[761]. On the other hand, in 1906 Michaelis provided another identification for each figure that, however, is not based on concrete evidence or clues. Considering the fact that these figures are not characterized by any precise iconographical reference, Weege and Dacos have questioned the identification provided by Robert and Michaelis about the identification of each deity and simply follow the general recognition of the myth[762]. Finally, Meyboom-Moormann have rightly argued that, while the iconography of Ares and Aphrodite in love is well testified, few archaeological examples of the mythical scene of Hephaestus' discovery are known [763].

Before discussing the interpretation provided by Robert in a detailed way and suggesting a possible new identification of scene 2, it is important to stress one point already argued, namely that all three drawings of scene 2 are totally independent of each other and are not mutually related copies. Therefore, during the analysis of the scene, we have to keep in mind: 1. the scene was visible until the 18th century and, thus, in the 16th century, it was easier to see it; 2. if all three drawings depict similar gestures, we have to believe that scene 2 originally depicted those figures and gestures. Although this assumption might be obvious, it is particularly important. In fact it might happen that, when a drawing depicts an archaeological model which is not easy to recognize because there are no archaeological parallels of it, some scholars tend to conclude that the draftsman invented the subject.

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[761] Robert 1889, p. 143: «Endlich zeigte der Vortragende noch die Photographie einer Zeichnung aus dem Codex Escorialensis, die offenbar ein römisches Wandbild darstellt, das somit bereits vor 1491, dem Datum des Codex, aufgefunden sein muß. Das Bild, das in Format und Komposition etwas an die Aldobrandinische Hochzeit erinnert und das wohl von einer Wand des Architekturstils stammt, also noch dem letzten vorchristlichen Jahrhundert angehört, stelle vielleicht die Überraschung von Ares und Aphrodite durch Helios und Hephaistos dar, ein Deutungsversuch, den der Vortragende durch Vergleichung mit dem bekannten pompejanischen Bilde (*Ann. d. Inst.* 1875) und dem Sarkophag in Amalfi (Gerhard, Antike Bildwerke 118) zu stützen sucht».

[762] Egger 1906, pp. 70-72 (ed. by A. Michaelis); Weege 1913a, pp. 173-174; Dacos 1969, p. 24, n. 5.

[763] Meyboom-Moormann 2013, I, p. 201.

Now we discuss why Robert's interpretation is not convincing. After having provided his interpretation in 1889, Robert repeated it in his work *Die antiken Sarkophagreliefs,* in the section devoted to Mars. Here, he provided three archaeological examples (sarcophagi no. 193-195) from the 2nd century AD showing the iconography of Hephaestus who discovers Ares and Aphrodite in love[764]. Nevertheless, as Robert pointed out, the three examples show three different iconographical schemes and only one of them seems to roughly resemble scene 2[765].

One of the three examples is the sarcophagus preserved in the Museo Diocesano of Amalfi, dated to the second half of the 2nd century AD (**fig. 91**)[766]. Robert took it into account mostly because almost all gods are easy to recognize[767]. Aphrodite is lying on the floor in the center of the scene and Ares is standing next to her with his shield. On the right side, Zeus is sitting on a throne and, next to Ares, Hephaestus is recognizable because of his hat (*pileus*) and dress (*exomis*). Hephaestus is turned towards Zeus as if he were shouting to Zeus the betrayal of his wife Venus with Ares. Nevertheless, even a cursory look shows that the iconography of the scene is totally different from that of scene 2 depicted by the modern drawings.

The second example is the sarcophagus preserved in Palazzo Altemps (Rome), dated to 160-180 AD (**fig. 92**)[768]. Here, the iconography is closer to that of scene 2, although not close enough for supposing the same iconographical model for both representations[769]. In the sarcophagus,

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[764] Robert 1904, p. 228.

[765] «Die drei Sarkophage mit der Liebesgeschichte von Mars und Venus 193-195 sind unter einander recht verschieden. Die litterarische Quelle für alle ist selbstverständlich das Demodokos-Lied der Odyssee; aber niemals wird der Versuch gemacht, das Liebespaar in den Fesseln des Vulcan zu zeigen, wie es auf der Basis Casali geschehen ist (s. oben s. 227)»: Robert 1904, p. 228.

[766] LIMC 2.1 (1984), p. 549, no. 387, *sv. Ares/Mars* (ed. by E. Simon and G. Bauchhenss).

[767] Robert 1904, p. 228, no. 193; Cumont 1942, p. 20, fig. 5.

[768] Robert 1904, p. 228, no. 194: inv. 381000, Museo Nazionale Romano, Rome; LIMC 2.1 (1984), p. 549, no. 388, *sv. Ares/Mars* (ed. by E. Simon and G. Bauchhenss).

[769] «Die Szene zeigte offenbar ein gelagertes Paar mit einer Reihe von sitzenden und stehenden "Zeugen", doch sprechen keine sicheren Kriterien für Mars und Venus»: LIMC 2.1 (1984), p. 549, no. 388, *sv. Ares/Mars* (ed. by E. Simon and G. Bauchhenss).

Hephaestus reveals the adultery to Cybele, sitting on her throne. Ares is standing and he is leaning his foot on the shield, thus indicating the abandonment of weapons. Not by chance, he is also trying to take off the *velificatio* of Aphrodite. Also in this case, the only two similarities with scene 2 are: firstly, the presence of two sitting people and, secondly, many figures who are watching the central scene like an audience.

On the other hand, according to Robert, one sarcophagus preserved at Grottaferrata shows the same iconographical scheme which can be seen in scene 2 of the Volta Dorata (**fig. 93**)[770]. Both depict the mythical scene as narrated firstly by Homer in the *Odyssey* and in the Homeric Hymn to Hermes[771]. The sarcophagus is preserved at Grottaferrata's Abbey and is dated to 160 AD[772]. Here, Hephaestus is depicted holding the bed sheet which hides Aphrodite and Ares. Zeus enthroned is watching the scene while, on the right side, Hypnos is flying away to indicate the imminent awakening of the sleeping couple[773]. Also in this case, all the gods are depicted as witnesses to adultery and everybody is watching Zeus' reaction. Thanks to one drawing from the 16th century Codex Coburgensis (**fig. 94**), the iconography of the scene becomes clearer

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[770] Considering the sarcophagus at Grottaferrata, Robert argues: «Die Darstellung zeigt eine gewisse Aehnlichkeit mit dem leider nur durch die offenbar sehr ungenauen Stiche bei Mirri (a.a.O. 25 [*scil*. fig. CAT. 18, fig. 4]) und Ponce (a.a.O. nr. 23) bekannten, übrigens schon im Escorialensis Fol. IXv gezeichneten Gemälde aus den Traiansthermen»: Robert 1904, p. 228.

[771] Hom. *Od.* VIII, 266-367; *Hymn. Merc.*, v. 290; cf also Ov. *Met*. IV, vv. 167-189.

[772] Robert 1904, p. 228, no. 195: inv. 1156, Grottaferrata, Abbazia; LIMC 2.1 (1984), p. 423, no. 428, *s.v. Apollon/Apollo* (E. Simon and G. Bauchhenss); LIMC 2.1 (1984), p. 549, no. 386, *sv. Ares/Mars* (ed. by E. Simon and G. Bauchhenss); Koch-Sichtermann 1982, p. 142, no. 150; Ambrogi *et al.* 2008, pp. 141-147 (ed. by A. Ambrogi).

[773] In my opinion, there are some doubts that the wings of Hypnos are actually part of the bed sheet. Thus, the figure could be identified differently. According to A. Ambrogi, Ares and Aphrodite are depicted in the gesture of hiding themselves since they are ashamed (Ambrogi et al. 2008, p. 143). Nevertheless, in this way, the presence of Hypnos would not have the same role.

with *Erotes* next to Ares[774]. On the left side, is also visible the presence of Homonoia (i.e. *Concordia*) next to Aphrodite and Hephaestus. She is depicted in the gesture of the *dextrarum iunctio*, namely the gesture of the wedding promises. The wedding between Ares and Aphrodite is located on the left side of the sarcophagus in order to oppose fidelity to adultery[775]. However, although all the gods are easily recognizable because of their identifiable objects"[776], according to E. Simon and G. Bauchhenss, the sarcophagus of Grottaferrata depicts a «singuläre Darstellung» of the myth, without any parallel[777].

In conclusion, considering the three examples mentioned by Robert, we can point out the main differences with scene 2 given by the modern drawings: 1. in the drawings, none of the figures is characterized by any "identifying objects" and, thus, they seem more human than godlike (the only god is the little Eros next to the enthroned figures); 2. in the drawings, all the figures have turned to watch the third figure from the left side, who seems to walk towards the center of the scene; 3. the only two figures which are not turned toward this figure, are two women who are discussing on the right side of the scene; 4. none of the three sarcophagi provides any clues for interpreting the centrally placed couple as Mars/Ares and Venus/Aphrodite.

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[774] Anonymus Coburgensis, 1550-1555, drawing of Grottaferrata's sarcophagus, Coburg, Veste (Germany), Codex Coburgensis (inv. no. Hz 2), fol. 199; Wrede-Harprath 1986, p. 80, no. 81; the sarcophagus is also partially copied in the Codex Pighianus, fol. 267 *verso*: Wrede-Harprath 1986, p. 31, no. 24; Winckelmann made a design of the Grottaferrata sarcophagus from the drawing of the Codex Coburgensis: Winckelmann 1767, I, p. 33, no. 27.

[775] This seems to me the main message of the sarcophagus for the viewer of the ancient world (cf. Turcan 1999, p. 39). For a more complex and sophisticated meaning, see the neopitagorical interpretation of F. Cumont: Cumont 1942, pp. 20-22.

[776] From left to right: Hephaestus (with the *pileus*), Homonoia, Aphrodite (*capite velato*), Apollon (with the laurel tree and the griffon), Zeus enthroned (with the eagle), Helios (with the whip), Hephaestus (with the *pileus*), two *Eroti*, Ares (with the helmet and the shield), Aphrodite, Hypnos (with the wings and probably the poppy flower), Hermes (with the *caduceus*).

[777] LIMC 2.1 (1984), p. 549, no. 386, *sv. Ares/Mars* (ed. by E. Simon and G. Bauchhenss). Also in the work of Zanker-Ewald 2012, no further helpful parallels are mentioned for this myth.

However, after Robert's study of the Roman sarcophagi of Ares and Aphrodite, scholars did not find more conclusive parallels for studying the representation of Hephaestus' discovery of Mars and Venus[778]. In fact, as Meyboom and Moormann pointed out, the iconography of Ares and Aphrodite in love has many parallels, despite the discovery of Hephaestus[779].

Since the 5th century BC, the scene of Ares and Aphrodite in love has often been depicted on Greek coins and vases[780]. Also, Pausanias, when he describes the ark of Cypselus in Olympia, mentions a similar scene[781]. In this literary passage, the scene of Ares and Aphrodite is described as "Ares clad in armor (ὅπλα ἐνδεδυκώς) and leading Aphrodite (ἄγων)". Although it is not possible to know precisely the scene on the ark, we can suppose that Aphrodite had a gesture, or a position of the body, which communicated her dependence to Ares and, thus, the dominant role of the latter. Not by chance, among the Roman artifacts, especially Roman paintings, Venus is always depicted seated and leaning to Mars (and, often, with the raised arm in a gesture of the *apokalypsis*)[782]. In contrast to this, the position of the couple enthroned in scene 2 is totally different. In the modern drawings, the enthroned woman seems to be the dominant figure and she is fully dressed and probably wears a crown[783].

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[778] Koch-Sichtermann 1982, p. 142, no. 150-151; Zanker-Ewald 2012, pp. 213-214 (Mars and Rhea Silvia); LIMC 2.1 (1984), p. 549, no. 385, *s.v. Ares/Mars* (E. Simon and G. Bauchhenss).

[779] Meyboom-Moormann 2013, I, p. 201.

[780] LIMC 2.1. (1984), pp. 482-484, *s.v. Ares* (P. Bruneau).

[781] Paus. V, 18, 5: «There is also Ares clad in armour and leading Aphrodite. The inscription by him is "Enyalius"» (transl. by W.H.S. Jones, R. E. Wycherley, and H.A. Ormerod).

[782] LIMC 2.1 (1984), pp. 547-549, no. 385-389, *s.v. Ares/Mars* (E. Simon and G. Bauchhenss); LIMC 2.1 (1984), pp. 482-483, no. 45-60, *s.v. Ares* (P. Bruneau); LIMC 2.1. (1984), pp. 123-127, no. 1285-1317, *s.v. Aphrodite* (A. Delivorrias with G. Berger-Doer and A. Kossatz-Deissmann); LIMC 8.1 (1997), p. 222, no. 328, 329, 332, *s.v. Venus* (E. Schmidt).

[783] Only the iconography of Perseus-Andromeda in love is depicted in the position of Perseus leaning to Andromeda: Provenzale 2008, pp. 87-113; for the iconography of the loving couple of Aeneas-Dido, Mars-Venus, Perseus-Andromeda: Provenzale 2008.

Therefore, from the present analysis, the Roman iconography of Ares-Aphrodite's myth reveals only two similarities with scene 2. The first is the presence of a wide audience, which is made up of deities in Roman sarcophagi and humans in scene 2. The second is the presence of a seated man (Zeus/Cybele enthroned in Roman sarcophagi) in front of the seated couple in love. However, also the latter is similarly absent: in contrast, this iconography (one enthroned figure in front of another sitting figure) is testified in other myths, like that of Phaedra and Hippolytus already mentioned above. In conclusion, considering the interpretation provided by Robert and the parallels which he takes into account, it can be seen how his analysis does not explain many iconographical details nor the gestures and schemes of the figures. Therefore, the interpretation of Robert seems to be questionable mainly for two reasons: firstly, the iconography of scene 2 does not resemble the iconography of the Grottaferrata sarcophagus, as the scholar assumed; secondly, we do not have enough literary sources on the Ares' and Aphrodite's myth to suppose that scene 2 preserves an unedited iconography of the myth.

While the *pars destruens* of Robert's analysis is based on strong evidence, there are more difficulties to provide a new interpretation of scene 2. Therefore, now I want to focus my attention on some iconographical details which could be useful for finding a new interpretation. The results of this investigation will not claim to provide a definitive and certain answer, but I hope the interpretation will seem plausible. As just argued, the presence of one enthroned figure in front of another seated figure is an iconography typical of many myths, like that of Phaedra and Hippolytus. Among the Roman sarcophagi or marble reliefs with the myth of Phaedra and Hippolytus, there are some representations in which Phaedra is enthroned and Hippolytus is seated in front of her. Such a scene is depicted, for instance, on a burial-chest dated to 150-180 AD (**fig. 95**)[784] and one sarcophagus dated to 300

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[784] London, British Museum, inv. 1865,0103.6: Sinn 1987, pp. 245-246, no. 636, taf. 93e; LIMC 5.1 (1990), p. 449, n. 37, *s.v. Hippolytos I* (P. Linant De Bellefonds). The artifact is a semi-circular marble sepulchral chest and, apart from the scene of Phaedra and Hippolytus, on the other side, the protective griffins are depicted.

AD (**fig. 96**)[785]. In the burial-chest, Hippolytus has the same position as the seated man of scene 2, but Hippolytus holds the love letter of Phaedra and he is turned towards the other side of the burial-chest[786]. On the other hand, on the sarcophagus, Hippolytus is depicted seated and with his shoulder towards Phaedra, who is receiving the love letter from the nurse. Both representations refer to the same moment of the myth, namely Hippolytus preparing to hunt (see the presence of the armed men in the background)[787].

The resemblance of scene 2 with Hippolytus of the burial-chest is so strong that we could think that the enthroned couple in scene 2 might have been a misunderstanding by the modern artists who were copying Phaedra who is leaning to the nurse. This hypothesis could reveal an interesting aspect: scene 2 of the Volta Dorata is the *pendant* of scene 8 (which depicts the myth of Phaedra and Hippolytus) and, thus, we might have two scenes of the same myth in the vault . Nevertheless, from the literary sources, there is no episode of the myth which could recall the iconography of scene 2, as for example the moment of Phaedra's falling in love. Moreover, we have to exclude it for obvious reasons: too many points need an explanation, if we consider scene 2 as another moment of Phaedra and Hippolytus' myth. For instance, if the enthroned man might be Hippolytus, it is difficult to explain who is the enthroned female figure and the young boy next to her. Obviously, it is impossible to suppose that both figures are variations of the common iconography of Phaedra leaning to her nurse, as can be seen on a famous painting from the Casa di Giasone (**fig. 97**)[788]. In the modern

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[785] Rome, Villa Albani, inv. 534: LIMC 5.1 (1990), p. 454, n. 72, *s.v. Hippolytos I* (P. Linant De Bellefonds).

[786] Sinn 1987, pp. 245-246, no. 636, taf. 93e: in his description of the burial-chest, Sinn provides a parallel of one sarcophagus and, then, he says: «Dort ist die auf der Urne fehlende Bezugsperson dargestellt: die Amme, die Hippolytos die Liebesbotschaft bringt» (Sinn 1987, p. 246, n. 2).

[787] A similar gesture and position of the body can be seen in the sarcophagus from Beirut (National Museum inv. 447: LIMC 5.1 [1990], p. 454, n. 25, *s.v. Hippolytos I* [P. Linant De Bellefonds]). For the myth of Hippolytus and Phaedra in sarcophagi's reliefs: Zanker-Ewald 2012, pp. 344-350.

[788] Fresco from the Casa di Giasone and preserved at the Archeological Museum of Naples (inv. 114.322): LIMC 7.1 (1994), p. 356, no. 1, *s.v. Phaidra* (P. Linant de Bellefonds).

drawings of scene 2, the enthroned woman has a totally different position of the body and, also, shows a precise gesture of her left hand which is also known from Roman paintings. For instance, we can take into account a painting preserved at the MANN of Naples, which comes from the Casa di L. Cornelius Diadumenus (**fig. 98**)[789]. Although the scene has been wrongly identified as Kallisto and Artemis by modern scholars[790], the enthroned female figure shows a similar gesture to that of the seated women in scene 2, while the little Eros is leaning to her knees.

Before moving to a new interpretation for scene 2, I would like to stress that all the modern drawings are independent of each other but, at the same time, they agree in depicting the same iconography. Therefore, we have to suppose that scene 2 was clear to the eyes of the draftsmen, although by the time of the 20th century no scholars found any figural parallels. Therefore, it seems likely that the ancient painters of scene 2 could have been inspired by a literary source. A similar possibility is not uncommon among the scientific literature, especially according to the studies of the most famous archeologists such as C. Robert himself[791].

As shown at the beginning of this chapter, it is likely that the Volta Dorata was one of the most valuable ceilings of the Oppian building. As Meyboom-Moormann pointed out, although we have no clear evidence for assessing the precise function and role of room 80 within the Imperial building, it is likely that such a precious room was reserved for a limited public use[792]. Moreover, as Dacos has shown, the surviving decorations of the Domus Aurea testify to a new elegant and erudite way of painting which seems in line with what Pliny (*NH* 35,

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[789] PPM VII (1997), p. 576, fig. 17; p. 579, no. 26 (Regio VII, Ins. 12, 26).

[790] LIMC 2.1 (1984), p. 838, n. 342, *s.v. Artemis/Diana* (E. Simon); the best iconographical analysis is provided by Rizzo 1935, pp. VII-XII (see also the unlikely interpretation of Robert 1976, pp. 351-359; for a complete bibliography: Schefold 1957, p. 202).

[791] E.g. considering the painting wrongly interpreted as Kallisto and Artemis, mentioned above (fig. 12), Robert is convinced that the scene is rare since it was directly inspired by the *Hippolytus* of Euripides (Robert 1976, pp. 356-357). According to the scholar, the painter would have shown in his painting the rapid allusion of Euripides about the love between Hippolytus and Artemis.

[792] Meyboom-Moormann 2013, I, pp. 69-83.

120) says about the presence of a fine and literate artist, Famulus, as painting foreman of the works inside the Domus Aurea[793]. Therefore, considering the erudite profile of Famulus (*severus et gravis*; see above), we cannot ignore the possibility that some figural scenes of the paintings could have had a literary inspiration. Considering the iconography of scene 2 and the myths provided by the literary sources, however, there is one possible interpretation of scene 2 which would have been understandable to a Roman viewer who would have had a basic education, and not necessarily possess a well-educated background.

Scene 2 seems to depict a "regal couple" of a seated or reclining man and a seated woman in front of a seated man. The scene seems to be set in an Imperial court and the couple seems to hear the seated man, when suddenly they are interrupted by the entrance of a group of men. On the left side can be seen this group of men introduced to the "regal setting" and, among them, the third figure from the left side seems to shyly move forward, maybe intimidated by the regality of the couple. On the right side, there are two women who are discussing in an isolated position, like in confession. Two peculiar aspects of this scene are the presence of Eros next to the couple enthroned and the possibility that, as the Codex Fossombronis shows, the couple was made up of one woman and a child, the male figure seeming very young and of smaller size than the woman.

Owing to the reliability which characterizes the Codex Fossombronis (**fig. 89**) – discussed in CAT. 12, 13, 20 – we can be led to believe in this version. It is possible that this detail was not so clear to the draftsman of the Codex Escurialensis and Mirri's artists (who did not render the "enthroned man" in a very naturalistic position). Not by chance, also in the Codex Escurialensis (**fig. 88**), the figure seems not to be lying down (as Mirri's artists depict), but more likely a child (10-14 years) who stands by the side of the "enthroned woman".

In my opinion, the scene hearkens back to the passage narrated by Virgil about the falling in love of Dido, which we can read in the first book of the *Aeneid* (vv. 494-756). The entire second half of the first book

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[793] Dacos 1968; for Fabullus/Famulus: Vos-Raaijmakers 1985a; Corso-Mugellesi-Rosati 1988, pp. 423-425; Meyboom-Moormann 2013, I, pp. 61-62, 125-131.

is devoted to this important moment of Aeneas' history and scene 2 seems to crystallize it in only one figural scene.

This passage of the poem describes the arrival of Aeneas with some of his companions in Carthage. Although Aeneas does not know yet, his other companions (as Ilioneus) have already arrived at Dido's court and they are not dead, as Aeneas thinks.

On the left side, Aeneas and his companions are introduced by Ilioneus to Dido's court (vv. 494-578). In the poem, Ilioneus (who is fully dressed in scene 2, since he has already arrived in Carthage some days before) asks the queen Dido to receive Aeneas and the other companions that have just arrived. Dido allows Ilioneus to introduce her to Aeneas and the other Trojans, while she is sitting on her throne and in front of her subjects[794]. In scene 2 the queen is depicted in the gesture of the raised hand for expressing the consent given to Ilioneus and the welcome to Aeneas. Moreover, next to Dido we can see the little Eros as a premonitory sign of her forthcoming falling in love. Nevertheless, the presence of the child next to Dido is quite surprising because it refers precisely to the moment of her falling in love.

According to the poem (vv. 657-694), Venus transforms the little Eros in the appearance of the young Ascanius. In this way, according to the deity, Dido will be forced to fall in love with Aeneas, owing to the tenderness inspired by Eros/Ascanius[795]. Therefore, according to the poem, thanks to the gesture of holding the young Ascanius/Eros to her chest (*fotum gremio*, v. 692), Dido is hit by the enchantment of Venus. Concerning the Virgilian passage of Dido's hug of the little Ascanius/Eros, the poem itself is not clear. In this literary passage, Eros/Ascanius seems to be a very small boy, since he arouses feelings of tenderness and sweetness in Dido's hearth. However, in the poem there are no

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[794] *Aen*. I, vv. 506-508: «she took her place, / encompassed by armed men, and lifted high /upon a throne; her statutes and decrees / the people heard, and took what lot or toil / her sentence, or impartial urn, assigned» (trans. by T.C. Williams).

[795] *Aen*. I, vv. 683-688: «wear thou his shape for one brief night thyself, / and let thy boyhood feign another boy's / familiar countenance; when Dido there, / beside the royal feast and flowing wine, / all smiles and joy, shall clasp thee to her breast / while she caresses thee, and her sweet lips / touch close with thine, then let thy secret fire / breathe o'er her heart, to poison and betray» (trans. by T.C. Williams).

precise references to define the age of Ascanius, but the image of the child in scene 2 seems compatible with the age of the Ascanius that we can see in other Roman paintings and artifacts (6-8 years)[796]. However, in scene 2 the little Eros is not depicted twice, but only in the shape of Ascanius next to Dido. In fact, as in the case of Ganymede myth mentioned above (pp. 254-255, figs. 52-53), the figure of Eros with the wings is only a symbol for stressing the theme of love in the scene and not a character in the figural composition.

In the Virgilian poem, after the meeting between Aeneas and Dido, Aeneas begins to tell the story of his journey and this narration lasts for the entire second and third book. Thus, the fourth book begins with the confession of Dido to her sister, Anna, about her falling in love with Aeneas (vv. 1-55). And, not by chance, on the right side of scene 2, a female couple is depicted in discussion. In this way, the figure of Dido is double in scene 2: the first time on her throne and, then, on the right side while is discussing with Anna. Such repetition is not uncommon in Roman art, although there is no study on this specific iconographical strategy of representation. We can consider for example the famous sarcophagus at the Neue Museum in Berlin (dated to the end of the 1st century AD) which depicts the myth of Medea and Jason[797]. On the right side, Medea's sons are depicted twice: playing together with a ball, and later dead on the wagon (**fig. 99**). Another similar case – but from a Roman painting of Fourth Pompeian Style – concern one figural scene in the *domus of Sallustius* (40-70 AC)[798]. In the southern wall of the *viridarium* 23, one fresco depicts the myth of Diana and Actaeon and, here, the figure of Actaeon is represented two times in the same scene (**fig. 100**): on the background, Actaeon can be seen while he is gazing

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[796] E.g. the fresco from Pompeii with Aeneas injured and Ascanius who is crying, 1st century AD, Museo Archeologico Nazionale (inv. 9009), Naples: LIMC 1.1 (1981), p. 391, no. 174, *s.v. Aineias* (F. Canciani); the fresco in the Casa IX 13, 15 (Pompeii) with the escape of Aeneas, Ascanius and Anchises from Troy: PPM 2003, X, p. 359, fig. 3; reliefs from the Ara Pacis, 20-10 BC, Museo dell'Ara Pacis, Rome: LIMC 1.1 (1981), p. 391, nos. 165, 168, *s.v. Aineias* (F. Canciani).

[797] Berlin, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin-Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Antikensammlung, dated to 140-150 AD, Inv. SK 843 b; LIMC 6.1 (1992), p. 393, no. 51, *s.v. Medeia* (M. Schmidt); Zanker-Ewald 2012, pp. 354-357.

[798] PPM IV, pp. 131-135; Grassigli 2011, pp. 60-63.

Venus naked; in the foreground, Actaeon is depicted a second time and, precisely, when he is punished by the deity because he has seen the goddess naked. his is true, we have an example of continuous or simultaneous narration, for which 1st century art provides us with various examples.

Unfortunately, we do not have any parallel for demonstrating that scene 2 follows an iconography already common and shared. The myth of Dido and Aeneas is iconographically testified mainly in the scene of the "loving embrace"[799]. However, as we have already noticed, since scholars did not find any valid archaeological parallel, we have to suppose that scene 2 shows a hitherto unknown iconography. The first book of the *Aeneid* and the first part of the fourth book provide a very similar sequence of events and moments which particularly harken back to scene 2 of the Volta Dorata.

Therefore, as already argued, the possible presence of this myth on scene 2 is also suggested by the fact that the majority of Romans, with elementary education, might have known the myth narrated by Virgil and, thus, recognized such an iconography. This myth was surely common among the Romans not only because the Aeneid had a central role in their education, but also because this literary passage had a primary position within the Latin poem (the first and fourth books).

3. Some final observations on the Volta Dorata: the figurative system and literary themes

As has become clear, the graphic documentation that has been collected and analyzed in the catalogue allows us to recover part of the lost decorative system of the Volta Dorata. Although some details remain uncertain, it is possible to understand various aspects that concern the

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[799] Very few representations of the myth of Aeneas generally survive, especially the episodes between the escape from Troy and the arrival to Italy: LIMC 1.1 (1981), p. 391, no. 157-162, *s.v. Aineias* (F. Canciani); LIMC 8.1 (1997), pp. 560-561, no. 1-12, *s.v. Dido* (E. Simon); Balmelle 2001; for the iconography of Dido and Aeneas in the scene of "loving embrace": Provenzale 2008, pp. 17-55; in the political figurative propaganda the myth of Dido and Aeneas is absent for political reasons (i.e. the loving union of Aeneas with a barbaric queen): Dardenay 2010.

type of colors, materials used for the decoration (stucco, gold pigments, precious stones) and the figural scenes. About the latter, although the original iconography of many figural panels remains unknown, thanks to the figural scenes identified and the new interpretation of scene 2, one possible iconological meaning of the figural program can be supposed. On the basis of the recent studies of Lorenz, I take the notion of iconology from Panofsky that considers such a discipline the science of investigating the meaning that an image has beyond its iconography, i.e. the study of the set of messages that are expressed by the figural and ornamental system[800].

In the figural scenes that we have seen as parts of the decorative system of the Volta Dorata, the theme of love seems to be the *fil rouge* that connects the different figural scenes. Simultaneously, the possible presence of a myth like the meeting between Aeneas and Dido might provide a further specification on the nuance of the love narrated and we are going to see which it might be.

As we have seen, at the center of the vault, the Ganymede myth is depicted and, precisely, his arrival to the Olympus. Usually, in the figural artifacts, the myth of Ganymede is depicted at the moment of the abduction by Zeus when the young Ganymede is with his sheep or flying and grabbed by the eagle. In contrast, in the Volta Dorata, the scene depicts the moment after, namely when he is welcomed by the deities of Olympus. Therefore, the scene seems not only to stress divine love, but also Ganymede's divine role as cupbearer and his new life between the deities.

Among the central medallions, like a chorus of similar mythical stories, in the "Internal Area" the angular medallions depict divine figures (e.g. nymphs) on mythical flying animals (e.g. ketos, flying horse). The figures are carried by divine animals and, as Schwinzer pointed out, the "Schwebende Gruppen" of the Domus Aurea are connected to an «bacchish-erotischen Themen» and, thus, they represent symbols of the pleasure of immortal life, through love and the presence of Dionysus[801]. Not by chance, we have to remember the presence of the "Grande Fregio"with dionysiac mysteries immediately under the Volta Dorata.

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[800]Panofsky 1955; Lorenz 2016, pp. 17-88.
[801] Schwinzer 1979, p. 130.

Next to the angular medallions, in the figural square panels, stories of men and mythological figures as Silenoi and Nymphs are represented. The bucolic settings of the scenes and the disengaged activities of the figures (playing instruments, flirting) speak about an oneiric or heavenly dimension where love is enjoyed in a peaceful environment. Finally, in the "External Frieze", myths were depicted in the painting bilobed cartouches (scenes 2, 5, 8, 11). Although the stucco scenes with Dionysiac themes seem in line with the figural themes of the "Internal Area", the myths of scenes 2 and 8 do not narrate stories of happy love. Both myths seem connected by a similar negative epilogue: they narrate the story of two women who do not remain faithful to their love promises and, surrendering to their desire, pay for their disloyalty by committing suicide. On the East side, through her handmaiden, Phaedra declares her love to Hippolytus, her stepson, who's leaving for the hunt. Nevertheless, Hippolytus' refusal and the shame will lead Phaedra to kill herself. On the other hand, on the West side, Aeneas' arrival at Dido's court breaks the promise of love and fidelity that she gave to her late husband. Like Hippolytus' sortie, Aeneas's departure and Dido's disappointment will lead the queen of Carthage to commit suicide. Moreover, the death of the female figure will bring long suffering and pain to the lovers who have refused their love.

Therefore, the figural scenes would allow us to observe a contrast between the happy loves of the gods and the sad fates of their mortal loves. In fact, while the love of mortals comes to unhappy endings, the peaceful loves of semi-divine figures (such as Nymphs and *Silenoi*) are enjoyed in disengaged and provisory loves. On the other hand, through the abduction made by the deities, love can become eternal and happy. Obviously, this is not a definitive iconological interpretation of the Volta Dorata, but a hypothetical reading key that seems quite likely considering the possible use of room 80 as a luxury triclinium. Not by chance, as Schwinzer states in relation to the "Schwebende Gruppen" of the Domus Aurea: «Der Geschmack und die Freude an bacchish-erotischen Themen spiegeln Empfindungen wider, die auch in der gleichzeitigen Dichtung zum Ausdruck kommen. Die neronische Hirtendichtung schildert mit Vorliebe ländliche Bacchusfeiern und besingt die Wiederkehr des Goldenen Zeitalters. Besonders die

bukolischen Gedichte des Calpurnius Siculus feiern Nero als Erfüller und Schöpfer eienes neuen *aureum saeculum*»[802].

The new interpretation of scene 2 as the myth of Aeneas and Dido allows us to find another interesting aspect that equally concerns the myths depicted on the Volta Dorata, but also the figural themes of the Domus Aurea's paintings in general. As Meyboom-Moormann's work shows, in the Domus Aurea's paintings, the ornamental motifs and elaborate geometrical systems of the ceilings prevail in respect to the figural scenes[803]. However, although few figural panels of the Domus Aurea have survived, through the archeological evidence or graphic documents, two main aspects can be noted: first, the presence of new iconographies for certain myths; second, the prevalence of figural scenes from the Trojan circle, rather than other Classical myths. For new iconographies, I mean for instance the famous case of Achilles at Skyros in room 119. Here, the triumphal gesture of Achilles is totally unparallelled and the attention is aiming at his heroism and not at the trick of Ulysses, as for instance can be seen in the painting of the Casa dei Dioscuri[804]. Similarly, in room 129 the scene with the farewell between Hector and Andromache testifies to a unique iconography of the myth[805] and, in room 50, the myth of the arrival of Dionysus in Naxos was modeled on the arrival of Mars while Rhea Silvia is sleeping[806]. Therefore, in this context, the possible presence of a further new iconography as that of Aeneas-Dido does not seem totally unlikely. Moreover, as mentioned, among the figural scenes of the Domus Aurea's paintings, the Trojan cycle is well testified: for instance, Achilles at Skyros (room 119), the farewell between Hector and Andromache (room 129), the meeting between Paris and Helen (room 129), and probably the myth of Paris-Alexandros (room 33), and, therefore, also scene 2 of the Volta Dorata with Aeneas and Dido[807].

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[802] Schwinzer 1979, p. 130.

[803] Meyboom-Moormann 2013, I, pp. 95-96.

[804] PPM IV, p. 908; Croisille 1982, pp. 102-117; Romizzi 2006, p. 384, n. 393; Meyboom-Moormann 2013, I, p. 249, n. 279.

[805] Meyboom-Moormann 2013, I, pp. 250-251, n. 322.

[806] Perrin 1982, pp. 856-866; Meyboom-Moormann 2013, I, p. 178.

[807] Meyboom-Moormann 2012; room 33: Brunetti 2015.

As Croisille has shown, the increasing presence of figural scenes from Trojan cycle in the Fourth Pompeian Style is the result of a "new" interest for that myth also in the literature around the 50s of the 1st century AD[808]. In this period, many poems and literary works are written on this topic, such as the *Iliou persis* in the *Satyricon* of Petronius (Petr. 89, 1-73), the *Iliaca* of Lucan[809], the translations of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* by Attius Labeo (close friend of Nero)[810]. In this context, we should not forgeot the *Troika* of Nero, a poem the Emperor wrote about the Trojan war, or the poem that he started to write on the history of Rome from its foundation[811]. As Champlin's analysis of the artistic profile of Nero has stressed, the Emperor loved to practice painting and was particularly fascinated by literary themes from the Trojan cycle and tragedies of Euripides[812]. Of course, the presence of Phaedra-Hippolytus and Aeneas-Dido myths in the Volta Dorata does not allow us to deduce that they were depicted because of the will of Nero and his specific artistic and literary interests. Rather, they indicate that such figural scenes were part of a literary repertoire widely known and appreciated by the Romans of the Neronian age.

We will never know whether Famulus was the *gravis* and *severus* painter of the heroic and love themes depicted in Domus Aurea's paintings. Surely we may say that, through its glittering and illusionistic three-dimensional decoration, the Volta Dorata was a figural *caelum* where stories of humans and deities could have been admired and go towards the sky.

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[808] Croisille 1982, pp. 100-136.

[809] Cf. *Vita Luc. de comm. Vaccae subl.*, p. 185 R; Stat. *Silv*. II, 7, 54-6.

[810] Pers. I, 5; 50; Berti 2011.

[811] Dio Cass. LXII, 29, p. 2; Blänsdorf 2011, p. 326.

[812] for the literary and artistic profile of Nero: Champlin 2003, pp. 53-83; Barrett-Fantham-Yardley 2016, pp. 231-264; for the *Troika* of Nero and a possible reference in the Volta Rossa (33) of the Domus Aurea: Brunetti 2015.

CHAPTER 4

THE RECEPTION OF THE VOLTA DORATA IN THE RENAISSANCE AND THE HISTORY OF ITS GRAPHIC DOCUMENTATION

Arrivato dunque in Roma di febbraio l'anno 1538,
vi stei tutto giugno, attendendo in compagnia
di Giovambatista Cungi dal Borgo, mio garzone,
a disegnare tutto quello che mi era rimasto
indietro l'altre volte che ero stato in Roma,
ed in particolare ciò che era sotto terra nelle grotte.

Giorgio Vasari (1511–1574)[813]

In this chapter, I am going to discuss the reception of the Volta Dorata from the Renaissance age onward, and I will introduce the main draftsmen of the Volta Dorata from the end of the 15th century until the 18th century. The aim of this chapter is two-fold: the first is to analyze why the Volta Dorata was so interesting to Renaissance artists and how they translated such a source of inspiration into certain drawings and ceilings; the second aim is to analyze why, from the 15th century to the 18th century, the drawings of the Volta Dorata (and, generally, of Domus Aurea) were copied only by a few artists and how their working methodologies changed.

Thanks to the evidence collected in the Catalogue, I am able to investigate how the "copying process" and the "copying methodologies" developed from the Renaissance age onwards. For the copying process, I mean the process that led the artist to draw drawings on the spot (in front of the antique model) to their copy on the table and their inclusion within Renaissance drawing-books, 17th-century watercolors albums, and 18th-century engraving albums. On the other hand, for the copying methodologies, I mean how artists worked on the spot, why they decided to copy precise details of Domus Aurea's paintings and how they copied them. In the assessment of the drawings, I will ask some questions such as: why was the artist

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[813] Vasari 1966-1987, VI (1987), p. 377.

interested in the figural scenes rather than the geometrical schemes? Why 17th- and 18th-century drawings depict mainly the entire vault, and not only vault corners as in the 16th century? How did the artist indicate that some vault details had precise colors and stucco decorations?

Therefore, in the first part of the chapter, I will focus my attention on the phenomenon of the drawings from the Antique in Renaissance and how the drawings of the Domus Aurea fit into this context. Afterwards, I will show how some evidence of Volta Dorata's drawings allow us to define the "copying process". Moreover, I will pay attention to how, in some cases, the location of drawings within Renaissance drawing-books might have a precise sense. Finally, on the basis of specific examples, I will show how the model of the Volta Dorata was re-elaborated in Renaissance drawings.

In the second part of the chapter, I will focus my attention on the main artists who copied the Volta Dorata in the 17th and 18th centuries. Precisely, I will define why fewer artists copied the Volta Dorata and Domus Aurea's paintings during these two centuries. Then, after having introduced the historical and archeological context in which they worked, I will analyze their methodologies of work, artistic interests, and the functions of their drawings.

1. The "copying process" in the Renaissance drawings of the Volta Dorata

One of the basic concepts for the studies of design in the Renaissance is the following: within the Renaissance workshops the artworks go, the drawings remain.

In fact, when the customers commissioned artworks to one Renaissance workshop specialized in precise type of objects (architectures, portraits, paintings, altars), the artists often showed to the customer some drawings which provided potential projects, but also figures and decorative motifs to apply to the project itself[814]. Such drawings were often collected in drawing-books that, therefore, were one source of inspiration for customers, but also a sort of "vocabulary" where the artists found shapes, motifs, and forms.

Obviously, the single drawing not necessarily had to be included in a drawing-book, since the drawings might have been drawn for multiple reasons[815]. A drawing could have simply been designed to improve the use of the pen or the ability to represent specific details (such as drapery and architecture)[816]. In other times, it could have been drawn as a preliminary model of an artwork or be attached to a contract as definitive project[817]. Whatever was the genesis of the drawing, it was often preserved within the workshop and, if particularly valuable, it was re-copied by young artists for learning the art of the masters. Not by chance, already in 1390, Cennino d'Andrea Cennini pointed out the

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[814] For the function of the drawings and drawing-books within Renaissance workshops: Tietze 1939; Notre Dame 1970, pp. 60-63 (ed. by M. Poirier); Elen 1995, pp. 55-56; Ames Lewis 2000a, pp. 80-90; Chapman-Faietti 2010, pp. 48-57 (ed. by H. Chapman).

[815] For the different genesis of the drawing in the 15th century: Chapman-Faietti 2010, pp. 17-75 (ed. by H. Chapman).

[816] For an introduction to artistic apprenticeship through the art of design: Rosand 2002, pp. 24-60.

[817] For the drawings as model for artworks: Chapman-Faietti 2010; for the contract drawings: O'Malley 2005, pp. 197-220.

importance for young artists to learn how to copy the drawings of masters[818].

Since the 8th century, within the workshop, the drawing-book was meant as a container of ideas, studies and projects[819]. Often the drawing-book or group of single sheets lasted longer than his owner because it was inherited from master to pupil and it was considered one of the landmarks for the style of the master by his pupils[820]. Of course, some drawing-books were intended to be simple personal sketchbooks (thus, not necessarily for being used by the workshop) while other drawing-books could be collections of many drawings of other artists by an artist[821].

Among all the possible functions of the drawing, one purpose could be a medium and means for the study of Roman antiquities[822]. In fact, in the 15th and 16th centuries, antiquities provided new understandings for the study of poses, movements, and the elegance of the forms. Therefore, as scholars have widely demonstrated, the drawings that copied the antiquities of Rome became a source of inspiration for artists[823]. When Benvenuto Cellini describes his apprenticeship with Giovanfrancesco Lippi (son of Filippino Lippi), he mentions the importance that the drawings from Antique of Filippino Lippi had for his artistic education: «his house [*scil*. Giovanfrancesco's house] was full of wonderful studies on paper that his father, [*scil*. Filippino Lippi] talented artist, drew; among them, there were many drawing-books

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[818] «Avendo prima usato un tempo il disegnare, come ti dissi sopra, cioè in tavoletta, affaticati e dilettati di ritrarre sempre le miglior cose, che trovar puoi per mano fatte di gran maestri»: Cennini 1971, p. 27.

[819] For model-book drawings in the Middle Ages: Scheller 1995; for the drawing-books in the Late-Middle Ages and Renaissance: Elen 1995.

[820] E.g. the famous case of the drawing-books of Jacopo Bellini (Elen 1995, pp. 428-434) or the case of 14 drawing-books of Maso Finiguerra (Shearman 2003, I, p. 615); for that of Marten van Heemskerck: Di Furia 2019.

[821] For the artistic practice, see Squarcione's drawings (drawing-books?): London 1998, pp. 29-30; cf. the case of *Libro de' disegni* of Vasari (Forlani Tempesti 2012).

[822] For the importance of the Antique in 15th and 16th century: Weiss 1969, Barkan 1999.

[823] For the drawings after the Antique, here there are only a few references from a wide bibliography available: Roma 1988, Ames-Lewis 2000b, pp. 35-60, 109-140; Aymonino-Varick Lauder 2015, pp. 18-40.

drawn by him that copied the beautiful antiquities of Rome; I was deeply fascinated by them and, for two years, we worked on them»[824].

The drawings could simply copy the subject or, on the other hand, partially modify it owing to the artistic license of the artist. For this reason, scholars use the expression "drawings from Antique" for including both circumstances – instead of "drawings of the Antique" or "drawings after Antique"[825].

In any case, the study of the ancient model was not meant as a passive act of simply studying the past, but it was an active process that led the artists to improve the ancient models itself. For instance, in 1525, Pietro Bembo describes the arrival of many artists in Rome to copy the ancient monuments and he states that, copying them on their drawings, Raphael and Michelangelo improved the ancient models[826]. Not by chance, as Vasari says, Raphael was so interested in the antiquities that he sent artists to Greece in order to copy the main antique monuments and artifacts[827].

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[824] «La sua casa era piena di quelli belli studii che aveva fatto il suo valente padre, i quali erano parecchi libri disegnati di sua mano, ritratti dalle belle anticaglie di Roma; la qual cosa, vedendogli, mi innamororno assai; e due anni in circa praticammo insieme»: Cellini 1985, pp. 106-107.

[825] Some scholars use the expression "drawings after the Antique": e.g. Bober 1957 ("after the antique")*;* on the other hand, Aymonino-Varick Lauder use both ways (Aymonino-Varick Lauder 2015, pp. 18-19).

[826] «E gli archi, e le terme, e i teatri, e gli altri diversi edifici, che in alcuna loro parte sono in piè, con istudio cercando, nel loro piccolo spazio delle loro carte o cere, la forma di quelli rapportano; e poscia, quando a fare essi alcuna nuova opera intendono, mirano in quegli esempli, e di rassomigliarli col loro artificio procacciando, tanto più sè dover essere della loro fatica lodati si credono, quanto essi più alle antiche cose fanno per somiglianza ravvicinare le loro nuove; perciocchè sanno e veggono che quelle antiche più alla perfezion dell'arte si accostano, che le fatte da indi innanzi. Questo hanno fatto, più che altri, monsignor messer Giulio [de' Medici], i vostri Michelangelo fiorentino e Raffaello da Urbino, l'uno dipintore, e scultore e architetto parimente, l'altro e dipintore e architetto altresì; e hannolo sì diligentemente fatto, che ambedue sono ora così eccellenti e così chiari, che più agevole è a dire, quanto essi agli antichi buoni maestri sieno prossimani, che quale di loro sia dell'altro maggiore e migliore maestro»: P. Bembo, *Prose nelle quali si ragiona della volgar lingua*, Venice, 1525, p. XLII *recto* (beginning of the third book).

[827] Forlani Tempesti 2003 (cf. also Bellori in *Chapter 1,* source 13); for Maarten van Heemskerck: Di Furia 2019.

Unfortunately, no Renaissance literary sources describe how the artists worked on the spot and how their sketched drawings were re-elaborated or re-copied on the table. However, owing to some evidence and clues from the drawings, it is possible to reconstruct a hypothetical process.

First, the artist copied the antique model on the spot and drew it on his personal sketchbook or on single sheets. Afterward, he re-copied the drawing on the table with some work tools (such as the ruler and compass). Thus, he created a final version of the design ("bella copia"). Finally, the artist (or the workshop) could collect many drawings in one drawing-book in order to create a book of models[828].

However, into this general trend, we have to include two exceptions: first, it was not necessarily the artist copied directly the antique model, but he could copy the antique model from another drawing; second, it was not necessarily the drawings were bound in a drawing-book. In fact, in some cases, the artist could copy the antique model and he could send the drawing to other artists/workshop.

One very interesting case for the latter circumstance is one drawing of Labacco Antonio (1495-1570), which was included in the *Libro de' disegni* of Giorgio Vasari (**fig. 101**)[829]. In *recto* of the sheet, the artist copied the doors of the Pantheon (left side) and the doors of the Roman Curia in the Roman Forum (Sant'Adriano al Foro, now in main entrance of San Giovanni in Laterano). Both doors are two exceptional cases of bronze Roman doors to have survived until nowadays. In the *recto*, the artist noted the measurements of the portals and their representation in plan (technically called "wireframe plan"). On the *verso*, he wrote a long letter to Baldassarre Peruzzi which is dated on 9th November 1528. In this letter, Labacco says that he sends the drawing to Baldassarre as requested by him, and Labacco adds other personal news (he describes

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[828] Nesselrath 1986 pp. 120-122, Elen 1995, pp. 37-43; Chapman-Faietti 2010, pp. 57-60 (ed. by H. Chapman). Aymonino-Varick Lauder 2015, pp. 19-23.

[829] Baldini 1993, pp. 337-338; for his inclusion in the *Libro de' disegni*: Collobi Ragghianti 1974, p. 220.

to his new sixteen years old wife and asks Baldassarre for a young pupil who could help him to work)[830].

As can be seen, the single drawing might have a double function: one is to circulate among the artists and workshops; the other is to be collected in one drawing-book. Therefore, nowadays, it is not easy to know whether one single drawing that depicted one ancient model was originally made for remaining a single sheet (and circulating) or if it was to be included in one of the drawing-books that afterward was dismembered.

Thanks to some specific evidence (such as the same type of ink, paper, watermark and style), it is possible to recognize when more drawings from Antique probably come from the same drawing-book now dismembered. For instance, in the Uffizi collection, three drawings (50 O, 51 O, 53 O) depict different ceilings of the Domus Aurea and, owing to their stylistic and material similarities, it is possible to suppose that they originally belonged to a same dismembered drawing-book[831].

In some circumstances, especially when many drawings of the same ancient model are available, it is possible to find clues to recognize the copying process (the copy on the spot and the copy on the table). For example, two drawings of the Volta Dorata are particularly helpful for observing such a phenomenon, namely the Uffizi drawing 1682 O (**fig. 102**: CAT. 6) and Windsor drawing RCIN 909568 *recto* (**fig. 103**: CAT. 8).

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[830] «Antonio alias Abacco a Baldassar Peruzzi da Siena. Messer Baldassarre, padrone mio onoratissimo, salute. Per mastro Pietro vostro ebbi da voi salute, la quale mi fu gratissima, massime di voi esserne bene; la quale mi disse che voi volevi queste due porte, cioè della Rotonda e di S. Adriano; e se non sono, come meritereste, mi avrete sensato, ovvero se altro ci mancasse, che io non avessi avvertito, me ne avviserete, e farò quanto saprò di questo, e d'altre cose ch'io potrò per voi fare. Credo al presente aver tolto moglie, se altro non ci accade; e ho fatto quanto ho potuto con li amici miei per averla buona, e credo che sarà […] È d'età di sedici anni, sicché per quanto io posso pregarvi alli miei bisogni, vorrei che voi faceste la diligenza di trovarmi costà un garzonotto ch'avesse un poco di pratica a lavorare di quadro, tanto che io lo potessi mandare qualche volta a racconciare porte e finestre, come accade, perché adesso non si fa altro che rattoppare […] Roma, questo dì 9 di novembre, 1528»: Transcribed by Bottari-Ticozzi 1976, II, pp. 478-481.

[831] Brunetti 2018-2019; for 53 O drawing *recto*: CAT. 10.

Both drawings are attributed to Giovanni da Udine (1487-1561) by A. Nesselrath owing to calligraphic reasons. Not by chance, one passage of Vasari's *Vite* states that Giovanni da Udine studied for a long period the underground paintings of the Domus Aurea in order to learn the stucco technique and, indeed, his signature was seen by Dacos[832]. As Nesselrath pointed out, the artist would have first sketched the Volta Dorata in some drawings, like those of the Uffizi (CAT. 6). Afterward, he would have re-copied some of them on the table, like that of the Windsor Collection (CAT. 8)[833]. Not by chance, Vasari speaks about the enthusiasm of Giovanni da Udine and his behavior in copying more than once the same painting[834]. Of course, Nesselrath does not say that the Uffizi drawing is the sketchy design of Windsor drawing (also because they depict two different vault corners). Rather he states that, owing to the state of conservation of the sheets and the level of precision, it is possible to suppose that one was made on the spot and the other was drawn on the table from another sketchy design. This example is also helpful for stressing one concept that is often forgotten by scholars: these two drawings were made by the same draftsman, although the style is totally different. This means that the style was not always due to the hand of the artist, but also to the function of the drawing (i.e. a sketchy design on the spot *vs* a study drawing on the table).

Furthermore, Renaissance drawings might provide other clues for knowing whether they were copied on the spot or on the table. It can be supposed thanks to some clues, such as the precision of the design, the conditions of the sheet, the use of working tools (such as the compass and the ruler) and through other clues related to the model copied by the artist. For the latter case, we can consider the drawing of Dosio in

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[832] For the passage of Vasari's Vite: *Chapter 1*, **Source 11**; for the signature: Dacos 1969, p. 148 ("Zuan da Udene / Firlano").

[833] «Si tratta quindi di un disegno [*scil.* the Windsor drawing RCIN 909568] delineato in studio, utilizzando un rapido schizzo a mano libera eseguito sul luogo; un esempio di schizzo di questo genere, raffigurante un quarto della stessa volta, ancora però privo di misure, sempre di mano di Giovanni da Udine, è conservato agli Uffizi (Orn. 1682, Bartoli 1914-1922, Vol. II, fig. 183)»: (Frommel-Ray-Tafuri 1984, p. 438: catalogue entry edited by A. Nesselrath).

[834] «[*scil.* Giovanni da Udine] non si contentò d'una sola volta o due disegnarle e ritrarle [scil. of the Domus Aurea]»: Vasari 1966-1987, V (1984), p. 448.

the Codex Berolinensis (CAT. 9). Here, Dosio wrote «pittura», inside one panel of the vault. As pointed out, this note is quite curious because Dosio copied a vault corner from one painted vault, so he should have known that this geometrical scheme was in painting (and not, for instance, made in stone or wood). This annotation might depend more on the fact that the artist copied a drawing similar to the Windsor drawing (CAT. 8) or the Uffizi drawing 53 O (CAT. 10) but did not copy all the annotations. He copied only one of them, just for remembering that the entire vault (and not only one panel) was in painting. In Uffizi drawing 53 O (CAT. 10), we can read the same inscription in the same panel of the vault. In another case, the style of the design might be also helpful for understanding the genesis of the drawing. For instance, in Lille's drawing (CAT. 17, 24), the draftsman corrected the position of the figures with overlapping designs. As pointed out in the catalog entry, this element suggests that the artist drew directly with a pen and not first with a pencil. Thus, this clue might be considered for assessing the potential genesis of the drawing on the spot.

We have one last concept to introduce for understanding the copying process of Renaissance drawings from the Antique and, mostly, those from the Volta Dorata. The drawing-book from Antique bound together different drawings for three main reasons: first, to create a book of models for the workshop; second, to compound a book of models for personal use of the artist; and finally, to create a "souvenir drawing-book" for a precise patron[835]. While in the first case (a book of models used by a workshop) the drawings were often drawn by many artists (often from the same workshop), in the last two cases the drawings were made by the same artist.

Thanks to the catalogue of Volta Dorata's drawings, we can see that the Volta Dorata was included in all of these three types of drawing-books. And, as will be stressed later, also for this reason, it is possible to argue that, more than any other ceilings of the Domus Aurea, the Volta Dorata was considered part of the essential repertoire from the Antique that Renaissance artists must study during their artistic education.

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[835] For further details and distinctions: Nesselrath 1986.

For instance, the Volta Dorata is depicted in some drawings of Codex Escurialensis (1490-1506/7), considered a book of models used by the workshop of Giuliano da Sangallo (1445-1516)[836]. In fact, different hands, calligraphies and watermarks can be found inside and the drawings of the codex are probably copies of other drawings. Nevertheless, owing to the wide number of drawings of the Domus Aurea's paintings, the artists of Giuliano da Sangallo's workshop probably personally visited and studied the underground paintings of the Domus Aurea. The Volta Dorata is also included among the ancient subjects copied in the Codex Fossombronis, a personal drawing-book of one Raphael Follower ("Anonymus Foro Semproniensis"). He realized his book of models in 1524-1533 and he probably copied his designs from other drawings[837]. Finally, other drawings of the Volta Dorata can be seen in Codex Wolfegg (1503-1504) of Amico Aspertini and the *Os desenhos das antigualhas* (1538-1571) of Francisco de Hollanda. Both drawing-books were drawn by the same artist because they were commissioned by a specific patron (maybe Giovanni Achillini in the case of Amico Aspertini, and probably Don Luis in the case of *Os desenhos das antigualhas*)[838]. Therefore, Amico and Francisco directly copied on the spot the ancient models and they re-copied them on the table to create the book-souvenir.

For this reason, one section of the catalogue ("drawing in context") has been reserved for investigating how the drawings of the Volta Dorata fit into other ancient models copied in Renaissance drawing-books. In fact, in the drawing-books, the antique models were often grouped into themes (free-standing statues, architectures, sarcophagi, decorative motifs) or for archeological provenience. For instance, in Codex Wolfegg (cf. CAT. 15, *Drawing in context*), that copied mainly figural scenes, Aspertini has depicted subjects from the Volta Dorata in sheets close together (i.e. next to each other within the drawing-book). However, since the drawings are often copies of copies, the artist did not always know, for instance, whether the subject was originally one sarcophagus or one statue. One example is the vegetal decoration of the Vatican Biga: it was meant as a sort of grotesques painting decoration

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[836] See CAT. 11 for the attribution, chronology, composition and bibliography.
[837] See CAT. 12 for the attribution, chronology, composition and bibliography.
[838] For Wolfegg Codex: CAT. 15; for *Os desenhos das antigualhas:* CAT. 1.

and, therefore, it was located next to other drawings of the Volta Dorata[839].

Unfortunately, in some cases, the position of the drawing is not helpful in understanding why the drawing with the design of the Volta Dorata was bound next to other designs of ancient models. In fact, certain drawing-books were made by pasting 16th century drawings on a later blank book (e.g. Codex Berolinensis: CAT. 9). Other times, the draftsman consciously wanted to avoid group drawings because of the same subject. Since it was meant as a souvenir-book, probably the artist did not want to annoy the patron with a series of similar models. The latter case might concern the *Os desenhos das antigualhas* (CAT. 1): here, Francisco located the two drawings of the Volta Dorata far from each other.

Nevertheless, although the drawing-book was re-bound afterward, it is possible to suppose the reason why the Volta Dorata drawings were copied and how its presence can be interpreted within the drawing-book. For instance, the Codex Escurialensis consists of three different groups of sheets (CAT. 1). In the first drawing-book (volume I), the same craftsman of Giuliano da Sangallo's workshop copied some figural scenes of the Volta Dorata. On the other hand, in second and third volumes, many different artists (of the same workshop) copied only decorative motifs of the paintings and vault corners (or lunettes) of the Domus Aurea's rooms. This context provides the reasons for the presence of Volta Dorata also in other ways. For instance, in Senese Codex (CAT. 7), the vault corner of the Volta Dorata was copied because it inspired modern ceilings, as well as those of Palazzo Vecchio (also copied in the drawing-book). On the other hand, in Marciana Codex, the Volta Dorata is simply included with the most important monuments of Rome, because on its own it was considered just as relevant as them.

Owing to this wide presence of the Volta Dorata in Renaissance drawing-books, it is evident that, more than any other ancient vault

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[839] In the Codex Escurialensis, the Vatican Biga's motif (fol. 11 *recto*) is copied next to the sheets that depict scene 2 of the Volta Dorata (fol. 10 *verso*) and the other decorative motifs (fol. 12 *recto*). At the same time, in Codex Wolfegg, the fol. 22 *recto* depicts the left part of scene 8 and the motif of acanthus leaves after the Vatican Biga (CAT. 22).

and among those in the Domus Aurea, the Volta Dorata was considered part of the essential repertoire of antique models that the artists had to study during their artistic education. And now we are going to analyze why the Volta Dorata was particularly appreciated and studied by Renaissance artists and how such a study was translated into precise artworks.

2. The drawings of the Volta Dorata: the draftsmen, their interests, and the "copying practices"

In the 16th century, other examples of Roman paintings were known, such as in Tivoli, Naples, Pozzuoli and, of course, the stucco ceilings of the Colosseum[840]. Nevertheless, owing to their location and state of conservations conditions, the paintings of the Domus Aurea were the most copied Roman paintings in Renaissance. Precisely because of this, the Volta Dorata was the most copied vault of the Domus Aurea pavilion because, among all other vaults, it provided inspiration for many different artistic interests: the elaborate geometrical scheme, new shapes for the vault panels, sophisticated molding coffers, stucco and gold decorations, and elegant figural scenes.

Many 15th- and 16th-century artists came into the rooms of the Domus Aurea where they left their signature. The names that can be read are some of the main Renaissance artists: Ghirlandaio, Pinturicchio, Giovanni da Udine, Francesco di Giorgio Martini (?), Filippino Lippi, Amico Aspertini, Morto da Feltre, Perin del Vaga, Parmigianino, Polidoro da Caravaggio, Maarten van Heemskerck, and Giovanni Stradano[841]. Moreover, thanks to Weege and Dacos's transcriptions, we

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[840] See, for instance, what Francisco de Hollanda and G.P. Bellori (*Chapter 1*, source 13) say about Roman paintings. In the case of Francisco, the artist states: «what stucco painting or grotesque is discovered among these grottoes and antiquities, not only in Rome but also in Pozzuoli and Baia, that the rarest of them is not be found sketched in my notebooks?» Francisco, *Da pintura antiga* 1548 (*Da pintura antiga*, *incipit* of the First Dialogue, II Book: De Holanda 2013, p. 170; for Italian version: Modroni 2003, p. 103).

[841] See *Chapter 1* for Dacos' reference about the precise location of the signatures within the Domus Aurea's rooms.

can see how the greatest part of the 15th- and 16th-century markings are concentrated between 1495-1520 and 1557-1576 (with a peak around the 1570s, especially 1574, by Nordic names). Not by chance, considering the dating of the drawings in the catalogue, it can be seen that, after the 1530s, no drawing of the Volta Dorata has arrived to us until 1560-1590 ca. when several drawings were made by the artists (CAT. 4, 7, 9, 10).

Although many signatures can be seen, only a few drawings of the Domus Aurea can be attributed to some of the artists mentioned above, such as Filippino Lippi, Amico Aspertini, and Giovanni da Udine[842]. Of course, the drawings nowadays available are only few in number, moreover, many designs are not yet published, identified or attributed. Therefore, it is possible that, in the future, other drawings of the Domus Aurea might be attributed to other artists who left their signature inside the structure.

Obviously, other artists visited and studied the Domus Aurea's paintings as their drawings show (Fra' Giocondo[843], Girolamo da Carpi[844], Giovanni Colonna da Tivoli[845], as well as Pietro Cataneo[846] and

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[842] For drawings of the Domus Aurea of Amico Aspertini: Bober 1957, Faietti 1991, Faietti 2018; for Filippino Lippi: Shoemaker 1978; for Giovanni da Udine: Dacos-Furlan 1987, Nesselrath 1989.

[843] Fra' Giocondo (ca. 1433–1515), *Volta degli Stucchi of the Domus Aurea*, 1490-1510 (?), 553 × 428 mm; pen, paintbrush, and diluted ink; Florenze, Gallerie degli Uffizi, Gabinetto dei Disegni e delle Stampe (GDSU), 54 O: Weege 1913a, p. 207, fig. 56; Dacos 1969, p. 16.

[844] Girolamo da Carpi (1501–1556), *One vault from unknown room of the Domus Aurea*, foll. T4 and T86, Girolamo da Carpi's drawing-book, 1549-1553, Biblioteca Reale di Torino (Turin Portfolio inv. nr. 14760): Candey 1976, pp. 76, 96; (the fol. 79 of the Codex seems more related to the stucco decorations of the Colosseum's arches than one Domus Aurea's decoration: cf. Dacos 1962).

[845] Giovanni Colonna da Tivoli (unknown identity), *One vault from one room of the Domus Aurea*, foll. 2 *verso* and 4 *recto*, 1554, Biblioteca Vaticana (Cod. Vat. Lat. 7721): Micheli 1982, pp. 35-37.

[846] Pietro Cataneo (c.1510-1569), *Grotesques from the Criptoportico*; pen and ink; Florence, Gallerie degli Uffizi, Gabinetto dei Disegni e delle Stampe (GDSU), 3277A: Weege 1913a, p. 198, fig. 46; Dacos 1969, p. 29.

Annibale Carracci[847]). In addition to these artists, the catalog provides the names of Jacone (?) (1495-1554), Antonio da Sangallo il Giovane (1484-1546), Giovanni Antonio Dosio (1533-1611), Orazio Porta (?) (1540-1616), and some followers of important artists such as Giuliano da Sangallo, Raphael, Giorgio Vasari.

As can be seen, the greatest part of these names are artists specialized in decorative arts rather than in architecture. Not by chance, the Domus Aurea is never mentioned in the work of Günther on Renaissance architectural drawings based on antique monuments (Günther 1988). On the other hand, the drawings of Antonio da Sangallo il Giovane and Giovanni Antonio Dosio suggest that ancient paintings were also studied (and not simply admired) by some architects[848]. As shall be shown later, Baldassarre Peruzzi is the clearest example of a Renaissance architect who carried the study of the Volta Dorata in his own concrete artworks. Furthermore, as the quote at the beginning shows, a polyhedral figure like Vasari – architect and artist – considered it essential the study of the Domus Aurea's paintings: «when I arrived in Rome in February 1538, I stayed there for all June, in the company of Giovambatista Cungi dal Borgo, my apprentice, in order to draw everything that I did not copy the last times, when I have been in Rome, and in particular what was underground in the grottoes»[849].

One issue not clear to us is how Renaissance artists entered room 80. At that time, the next room 79 was discovered (for the dating of each room's discovery: **fig. 2**) and we might think that it was from room 79 they entered into 80. In room 80, there are three tunnel holes that were made to enter the room: two are visible in the vault (North and South sides) and one in the North lunette (in connection with room 79)[850]. It is not possible to establish which tunnels were made during

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[847] Annibale Carracci (1560–1609), *Hector's farewell to Andromache from the "Volta degli Stucchi"*, 1595-1609, 260 × 272 mm; pen, paintbrush, and diluted ink; Windsor, Royal Collection, RCIN 909573: Whitehouse 2001, pp. 240–243.

[848] Although the Windsor drawing (CAT. 8) was attributed by Nesselrath to Giovanni da Udine, these measurements and the precision of the relief define an artistic profile with a not marginal architectural competence.

[849] Vasari 1966-1987, VI (1987), p. 377 (for Vasari's passage: cf. at the beginning of this chapter).

[850] For a clear image of the two tunnel holes in the vault : Segala-Sciortino 1999, p. 38, fig. 29 (in the photo, the right side is the North side).

the Renaissance period and which were created later or existed already. Of course, we know that between 1774-1776 Mirri's artists entered into room 80 through the passage on the North lunette (i.e. from room 79) and it is probable that they created this passage[851]. Not by chance, rooms 79 and 80 are not identified in Cameron's maps of 1772 (**fig. 21**). Therefore, we can suppose that, in the Renaissance age, the artists entered room 80 though the two holes that can be seen on the North and South sides of the vault. Now having given the names of some artists, we are now going to see how the drawings provide clues for identifying their work methodologies.

For instance, in Codex Escurialensis fol. 6 *recto* (CAT. 16), owing to the little detail of the frame that surrounded the angular medallion, it is possible to calculate that the distance from vault to floor was no more than 2/3 (max) meters[852]. In fact, given the limited lighting in the room, it would have been difficult to identify details from a distance. Such a soil-vault distance is also confirmed by archeological evidence of the "Grande Fregio" of the West Wall, as discussed in CAT. 25.

Renaissance artists often copied only one corner of the vault because, for studying the entire geometrical scheme, it was enough. The most copied corners are those of the NE and SW sides, maybe because they were the most well preserved[853]. However, considering these two corners patches depicted by the drawings, we can surmise that the figures inside the angular medallions have inconsistent orientations. In the scheme that we have drawn (**fig. 104**), it is possible to see the different cardinal orientations that the drawings show for the figure inside the angular medallions. There are two main different orientations: that of figure within the SW medallion; and that of figure within the NE medallion. Both have completely different orientations and, mostly, they are inconsistent with each other. In the original decoration of the Volta Dorata, the figures within the angular

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[851] «Da questo corridore fu aperta la via alla camera 21, di cui non eravene la più sontuosa in tutte le terme»: Carletti 2014, p. 90 (Mirri-Carletti 1776, p. LXXV).

[852] The height of the room is approximately 10 meters: Meyboom-Moormann 2013, I, p. 195.

[853] From NE corner: CAT. 6, 7, 13, 15, 16, 17; from SW corner: CAT. 8, 9, 10, 11, 13, 18.

medallions could have had many possible orientations but, surely, these two orientations could not be present at the same time in the vault (i.e. one oriented towards the exterior of the vault, and the other towards the medallion of the other vault corner). Indeed, as shown in *Chapter 3*, it is likely that the orientation of the figure within the medallions was towards the center of the vault , like the orientation of *Horai* figures in the *External Frieze* and other angular medallions of Domus Aurea's ceilings (e.g. room 35: **fig. 71**)[854].

Meyboom-Moormann rightly state that the drawings can have two different orientations in relation to two ways of copying the vault by the artists: copying the drawing on the knees or copying the vault holding the drawing above the head (probably by lying down and not sitting down). Holding the drawing on the knees might have caused an inversion of two cardinal points of the drawing (in Francisco's watercolor, the North and the South are inverted: **Pl. 2, fig. 1**), while copying the drawing above the head created an identical image of the vault [855]. Thus, thanks to Meyboom-Moormann, it is possible to state that Francisco copied the drawing on his knees (through the use of a mirror for not raising often the head to the vault).

Nevertheless, these two different ways of copying the vault could not create different orientations of the figural scene within the angular medallions. The inconsistent orientation of the figures inside the angular medallions might be more related to the fact that, since the medallion figure was oriented towards the center of the vault, a few degrees of difference would be enough to give an incorrect orientation in right or left sense (**fig. 105**). Furthermore, the movement of the artists in copying the figural scene of the medallion might have caused these two shifts of orientation. In fact, all drawings that depict the NE corner have the figural scenes of the medallion towards the exterior of the vault. On the other hand, all drawings that depict the SW corner of the

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[854] Meyboom-Moormann 2013, I, pp. 165-166.

[855] «Nel caso di una decorazione prevalentemente composta di elementi figurativi, potevano esserci dei problemi, poiché l'originale si trovava sopra il copista e la copia in terra o sulle ginocchia e, finalmente, sulla scrivania. Se fatto correttamente, quando si tiene il disegno sopra la testa, accanto all'originale, è una copia propria, ma steso sulla scrivania diventa un'immagine riflessa sottosopra»: Meyboom-Moormann 2013, I, p. 196.

vault have the medallion figure towards the other vault corner. This effect might be related to the fact that, after having copied the vault corner, the artist did not rotate the sheet simultaneously to his movements when he copied the figural scene of the medallion. For example, if I want to copy one figural scene that is oriented towards the center of the vault , I would be inclined to go under the angular medallion with my shoulders turned towards the center of the room (**fig. 106**). Thus, if I do not turn the sheet while I am doing this movement, I might make a mistake with the orientation of the figure and turn it off to a few degrees. Obviously, such a consideration has the effect to show that the artist always copied holding the sheet under his head and not above. If they would have held the sheet above their head, we would have perfect copies of the vault corners without mistakes in the orientation of the figures.

As can be seen, Renaissance drawings provide some evidence for suggesting how the artists worked into room 80. Furthermore, they also provide clues for seeing how the artists studied the Volta Dorata. The analysis of the style and techniques are particularly helpful for understanding why they copied some precise details and how they indicate the features of the subject depicted.

For instance, between the 15th century and first years of the following century, in copying the Volta Dorata, the artists were particularly attracted to scene 2, scene 8 and the figural scenes of angular medallions. The drawings of Filippino Lippi, Aspertini, Raphael Follower, and Giuliano da Sangallo's workshop are clear examples (CAT. 11-16, 18-23). As has been stressed in the catalogue entries, the artists indicated the "ancient provenience" of the subjects through two main types of technique: cross-hatching (Giuliano da Sangallo workshop) and the "puro contorno" (Raphael Follower, Aspertini). While the first was standardized by Ghirlandaio's workshop for ancient reliefs and sarcophagi in order to give the three-dimensions to the subject (and, then, generally applied to subjects from the Antique)[856], the "puro contorno" line was essentially used for focusing the attention on the positions of the bodies[857]. Therefore, two different techniques of

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[856] For the cross-hatching: Ames-Lewis 1981.
[857] For the "puro contorno" line: Faietti 2008; Faietti 2015.

design express two different ways of studying the antique model but, at the same time, they also indicate the origin of the model, namely from the Antique.

The precise reason why such few figural scenes mentioned above were so interesting for these excellent artists is not possible to know: probably for the simple reason that they were paintings (and not in stone) or because of the idea of the movement that such figures would have transmitted through their draperies or postures (like in the case of scene 8 with the myth of Phaedra and Hippolytus). One peculiar case concerns scene 12. Scholars have suggested Michelangelo was inspired (maybe indirectly through other drawings) by one figural scene of the Volta Dorata. In one of Michelangelo's drawings, we can see one scene that recalls panel 12 of the Volta Dorata depicted by Francisco de Hollanda in his watercolor (**fig. 86**). Here, it is evident that the figural theme of "Saettatori" expresses the idea movement more than any other subject[858]. However, as pointed out in CAT. 1 and *Chapter 3* (pp. 263-264), it is more likely that Francisco copied the subject of Michelangelo's drawing in his watercolor of the Volta Dorata.

From the beginning of the 16th century, other details of the Domus Aurea's paintings – and not only the grotesques and the figural scenes – attracted the attention of the artists. For instance, the Codex Escurialensis (1490-1505 ca.), fol. 60 *recto* depicts the geometrical scheme of room 129 (**fig. 107**), although to a lesser extent than others, perhaps owing to increased interest in other grotesques and figural scenes. Furthermore, as other artists of the same period were used to do[859], the draftsman did not copy the decoration of this vault in the same sheet, but he copied its decorative motif in another sheet, i.e. fol.

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[858] The inspiration for Michelangelo from scene 12 was argued by Frey (Frey 1911, pp. 135-137, taf. 298) and, then, accepted by Weege, Dacos, Panofsky, Meyboom-Moormann (Weege 1913a, p. 179, no. 8, n. 1; Dacos 1969, p. 25; Panofsky 1972, pp. 225-228; Agosti-Farinella 1987a, pp. 100-101, no. 44; Meyboom-Moormann 2013, I, p. 203). However, as pointed out in CAT. 1 and *Chapter 3*, there are also some doubts that such a scene was originally depicted in the Volta Dorata.

[859] E.g. Fra' Giocondo (ca. 1433–1515), *Volta degli Stucchi of the Domus Aurea*, 1490-1510 (?), 553 × 428 mm; pen, paintbrush, and diluted ink; Florence, Gallerie degli Uffizi, Gabinetto dei Disegni e delle Stampe (GDSU), 54 O: Weege 1913a, p. 207, fig. 56; Dacos 1969, p. 16.

32 *recto* (**fig. 108**)[860]. On the other hand, one decade later (1515 ca.), in his Uffizi drawing (**fig. 102**), Giovanni da Udine copied the NE vault corner of the Volta Dorata with its geometrical scheme and some figural scenes within their vault panels (and not on another sheet). He noted also the type of decorations (stucco or painting: «mensole», «storie dipinte», «storie di stucho») and the color of some panels («rosso», «[bl]u»). On the other hand, in his Windsor drawings (**fig. 103**), he depicted the SW vault corners with the medallion figures and precise measurements that calculate the length of the vault , considering also the curvature of the vault (CAT. 8). Furthermore, he drew the stucco moldings on another part of the sheet.

The stucco moldings must have been particularly interesting for Renaissance artists because they were often copied by 16th-century draftsmen on another part of the sheet. In the 1530s or 1540s, Antonio da Sangallo il Giovane copied the geometrical schemes, noted the proportions of the panels and copied the different types of molding in another part of the sheet (CAT. 5). In the same vein, around 1570-1580, in Marciana drawing, the draftsman drew the Volta Dorata and divided the design in two halves: the right one defines the geometrical scheme of the vault and the left one defines the stucco moldings (CAT. 4). In the same way, in the last decades of the century, the drawings of Dosio and Vasari Manner's depicted the geometrical scheme of the vault and sketched some figural scenes (CAT. 9, 10). Both paid attention to indicate where the painting decoration was («storie di pitura», «pitura») and copied the moldings of coffer ceilings on another part of the sheet. Vasari Manner's drawing also indicates with diluted ink where the stucco decoration was.

One last detail that has to be stressed for Renaissance drawings of the 16th century is the following. Among all drawings of the Volta Dorata, only Francisco's watercolor depicts the entire vault with all its figurative scenes (the case of Marciana drawing is one exception because it depicts the entire vault showing the different types of moldings). Francisco's choice in copying all the vault and not only one

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[860] The Codex Escurialensis is a very special case because, owing to the large amount of drawings from Domus Aurea's paintings, it probably was a drawing-book born from a long and detailed survey of Sangallo's workshop into all underground rooms of Domus Aurea.

vault corner is determined by two main facts: the first is that, as pointed out, Francisco's drawing-book was a souvenir book that had to copy the most magnificent artifacts from the Antique for his patron; the second is that contrary to the common habit of Renaissance Italian artists, Francisco observed the Antique as something that was not possible to overcome. As can be seen, Italian artists copied only one corner because they wanted to study such a model so as to replicate it, they never considered the Roman vault as a simple ruin of the past to admire. As shown (CAT. 1), the greatest part of the antiquities copied by Francisco in his drawing-book are often represented in well preserved conditions and any damage is depicted.

In conclusion, as can be seen, thanks to the drawings studied in the catalogue, it is possible to trace an overview of artistic interests ripened by Renaissance artists for the Volta Dorata. As Dacos' study (1969) has shown, the Domus Aurea immediately raised the attention of artists for the grotesques, a new type of decoration that was also studied in the 16th century in its conceptual sense (Scholl 2004). However, as the drawings of the Volta Dorata show, the first interests of the artists for this specific vault were mainly focused on figural scenes. While other ceilings of the Domus Aurea provided many different kinds of grotesque motifs, in the Volta Dorata the latter are totally absent. On the other hand, since the beginning of the 16th century, Renaissance artists seemed more interested in the artistic features the Volta Dorata was uniquely able to provide: its geometrical scheme, colors, stucco decoration mixed to painting decoration, and the moldings of vault coffers.

Of course, the overview of this line development does not mean that artistic interests changed in the same way for everybody. The artistic profile and the specific skills of the artist determined also his selection in copying precise details of the vault . However, it is evident that, in the 16th century, artists did not simply study the underground paintings because of the grotesques and the figural scenes, as in the last decades of the 15th century. For this reason, the Volta Dorata was copied by artists up until the end of the 16th century, while drawings of other Domus Aurea's ceilings are dated no further than the first half of

the 16th century[861]. Probably, many drawings with grotesques of Domus Aurea's paintings were widely circulated among Renaissance workshops, making abundant visits to the underground paintings for the study of these kinds of decoration. For this reason, the artists continued to enter into room 80 for copying the Volta Dorata longer than any other ceilings until the last decades of the 16th century.

3. From the model towards its re-elaboration

As pointed out, the recurring presence of the Volta Dorata in many Renaissance drawing-books indicates that, since its discovery, the Volta Dorata became part of the essential repertoire from the Antique that artists studied during their apprenticeship. Nevertheless, in Renaissance workshops, the ancient model was not simply studied in a passive way, but it was often re-elaborated for creating new artworks.

For this reason, we are going to see how certain Renaissance drawings are helpful for detecting this moment of re-elaboration before the creation of the final project.

For instance, two 16th-century Uffizi drawings depict one antique vault in one part of the sheet and, on the other side, the draftsman designed a new prototype for a modern vault [862]. In Uffizi drawing 51 *verso* (**fig. 109**), the artist drew one vault corner that is inspired by one Domus Aurea vault (room 129 or Volta Dorata). In the *recto* of the drawing, the vault corner of room 129 has been copied and, in another sheet of the same drawing-book, the same draftsman copied the vault corner of Volta Dorata (CAT. 10). In the same vein, one unpublished drawing of the 16th century (**fig. 110**) depicts one ancient painting that has not been possible to identify. Here, we can see other Renaissance drawings of the Volta Dorata, and the artist noted when the panels were in stucco or in painting («storie di stucco», «storie di pittura»). Next to the design of the ancient vault , the draftsman projected a modern vault following the ancient one as a model.

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[861] Cf. drawings studied and published by Weege 1913a, Dacos 1969, Giuliano 1981, Faietti 2019.

[862] For other Roman ceilings that inspired Renaissance drawings and vaults: Joyce 2004.

Other drawings show the precise inspiration and re-elaboration from the Volta Dorata. For instance, in one sheet of the Codex Destailleur D (fol. 69 *verso*), is depicted one room that has a vault clearly inspired by the Volta Dorata because of the geometrical scheme of the vault (**fig. 111**). Scholars have not identified the draftsman nor the precise dating of these drawings (maybe a French artist of the first half of the 16th century)[863]. The draftsman projected two different types of rooms with the same vault: the walls have windows in different positions (consider the left and right sides of the room). Moreover, the artist noted the dimensions and the proportions of the vault panels and sketched a few figures inside the panels.

Another interesting case is one unpublished 16th century Uffizi drawing (**fig. 112**). It indicates the Volta Dorata as its model because of the bilobed cartouches in the ceilings depicted (*recto* and *verso*). The shape of these panels was only known through the Volta Dorata and aside from Roman art, it is not testified elsewhere. Like the Neronian vault , in the bilobed cartouches the draftsman depicted some figural scenes and, in the *recto*, drew one central medallion in a form of octagon.

Many other Renaissance drawings re-elaborate the model of the Volta Dorata and, mostly, they were drawn by architects. For instance, the Uffizi drawing 1951 A *verso* depicts one project for a vault which re-uses the geometrical shape of certain Domus Aurea's panels (**fig. 113**). For a long time, the drawing was attributed to Jacopo Sansovino and his circle and dated to c. 1525-1546[864]. Only in recent years, it was attributed to an anonymous draftsman[865]. Nevertheless, as scholars have shown, owing to other designs of the same sheet, it is clear that

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[863] Codex Destailleur D 4151, Berlin, Kunstbibliothek. The image (**fig. 111**) is half part of the sheet. Often the sheets of the Codex are double pages. The volume consists of three separate volumes of 16th century drawings bound together. The volumes are not made by one draftsman, but probably different architects, chiefly French. For the attribution of the drawings, the dating and further detailed observations: Kulawik 2002.

[864] Ferri 1885, pp. 127, 159, 213, 219 (Jacopo Sansovino); Günther 1982, p. 101, no. UA 1951 ("Sansovino group").

[865] Scaglia 1995, p. 9, n. 5.

the drawing was made by a draftsman with a deep interest in recording ancient models and with a qualified profile as an architect[866].

Two other drawings are made by artist-architects and they are inspired by the geometrical system of the Volta Dorata. One was drawn by Baldassarre Peruzzi who, as I will discuss later, was deeply influenced by the Volta Dorata in projecting modern ceilings. The other is attributed to Dosio who copied the Volta Dorata in the Codex Berolinensis (CAT. 9). The drawing by Baldassarre Peruzzi (**fig. 114**) depicts one vault that, according to the artist, was copied from a vault on the Aventine Hill («in monte Auentino»). Because of the absence of other similar designs from the Antique or similar modern ceilings, it is possible to reject the hypothesis that it depicts an ancient model or a Renaissance vault [867]. It might reproduce the project for a modern vault for a private palace on the Aventine Hill that took its inspiration from the Volta Dorata because of the presence of the bilobed cartouches, but its squarish shape effectively discounts it as a direct reproduction from the Volta Dorata[868]. This particular variant of the bilobed cartouches will be used by Raphael workshop for the "Sala dei Pontefici" (**fig. 121**), in turn inspired by the Volta Dorata. In Peruzzi's drawing, at the center of the vault, the artist depicts one octagonal medallion similar to that one used in the *recto* of Uffizi drawing (**fig. 114**). Despite the similarity of Peruzzi's ceilings, his drawings do not directly take inspiration from the Volta Dorata, but only through a few panels that recall the ancient model.

The last case concerns one drawing of Giovanni Antonio Dosio that I would like to mention because it depicts one project for one inlaid marble table (**fig. 115**)[869]. Here, the model of the Volta Dorata is directly clearly recognizable and, moreover, the bilobed cartouches have the same squarish shapes used also by Peruzzi's drawing. The use of the model of Volta Dorata for a marble table should not be surprising if we

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[866] Vasori 1981, pp. 189-192, no. 143; Günther 1988, p. 372; Nesselrath 1993, pp. 87, 89, n. 16.

[867] Bartoli 1914-1922, VI, p. 51; Wurm 1984, p. 449 (cf. also p. 448).

[868] Similar bilobed cartouches in a squarish shape can be seen in one wooden vault at Cesi Palace (Acquasparta, Terni) in the room "Sala del Trionfo": Nocchi 2017, p. 132, fig. 134, nr. 4.

[869] Morrogh 1985, pp. 83-84.

consider another drawing of Dosio where he used other Roman ceilings for some pavements (e.g. one stucco vault of Colosseum's arches: **Pl. 19, fig. 3**)[870].

Therefore, thanks to the inspiration from the Volta Dorata, the artists took inspiration from the antique using the motifs in their own drawings which were later realized in certain Renaissance ceilings. Pintoricchio, Baldassarre Peruzzi and Raphael's workshops were those that, more than others, applied elements to their ceilings and wall decorations that came from the Volta Dorata.

The first case is the vault of the Piccolomini Library in Siena realized by Pintoricchio and his workshop in 1502-1507 (**fig. 116**). In the decoration of the room, the young Raphael worked with Pintoricchio. It is likely that during such a collaboration, Raphael knew their repertoire of drawings from the Domus Aurea and scholars have often mentioned the case of Piccolomini Library for showing the inspiration of the vault from the paintings of the Domus Aurea[871]. However, none has pointed out how precise references to specific parts of the Volta Dorata are, especially to the bilobed cartouches and the square panels with rhombus inside. As pointed out in CAT. 1, in the Volta Dorata, within the square panels, the rhombus originally had some Eros figures. One Eros driving a chariot was identified by Weege and was copied by one Brenna's watercolor (**Pl. 8, fig. 2**)[872]. Moreover, there are close similarities with the figural scenes depicted by Francisco de Hollanda (one hermaphrodite who sleeps and is undressed by a satyr).

Another famous case is the vault of Pandolfo Petrucci's palace in Siena, now preserved (in great part) at the Metropolitan Museum of New York (**fig. 117**)[873]. It was projected by Pintoricchio in 1509 when the artist finished to work on the Piccolomini Library. The fresco panels were fitted into the wooden structure and, thus, they were

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[870] Florenz, Gallerie degli Uffizi, Gabinetto dei Disegni e delle Stampe, inv. 1684 O *recto*: CAT. 9, fig. 1 (cf. Dosio 1976, p. 107, no. 100 [catalogue entry edited by C. Acidini]).

[871] Bays 1999, Esche 1992, Toracca 1998, La Malfa 2014.

[872] «Doch erkennt man aus den Spuren gelegentlich, was dargestellt war, so z. B. auf dem unter dem Bild 3 befindlichen roten Felde ein nach rechts eilendes, von einem Eros gelenktes Hirsch oder Böckchengespann»: Weege 1913a, p. 174; Meyboom-Moormann 2013, I, p. 246, n. 172.

[873] Zeri 1980, pp. 67-69; La Malfa 2016.

dismembered in the 19th century and are now preserved in different museums. The geometrical scheme and the use of the gold decoration are clear references to the Volta Dorata. Moreover, the angular medallions have the same orientation that the Volta Dorata probably had. Many figural scenes are similar to those that were depicted in the Volta Dorata, according to Renaissance drawings. For instance, within the medallions there were scenes depicted from the repertoire of Dionysiac and loving themes. In one medallion, there is the scene of one hermaphrodite who sleeps and is unveiled by a satyr, as scene 10 depicted in Francisco's watercolor (CAT. 1) and one herm is depicted (cf. the presence of one herm in scene 12 by Francisco's watercolor and Michelangelo drawing of "Saettatori": **fig. 86**). In other panels of Pinturicchio's vault , there are scenes that re-call those of the Volta Dorata, such as the rape of Europa, Helle on a ram and one nymph on a triton who is driving a wagon. All these scenes are likely inspired by medallion figures and other figural scenes of the Volta Dorata, as can be seen in Renaissance drawings of the Neronian vault .

Although he had a strong interest in subjects from Antiquity, the similarity between the figural panels depicted by Pintoricchio and those of his Renaissance drawings of the Volta Dorata seem more than coincidence. These two examples among Pintoricchio's artworks are mentioned by Dacos in relation to the reception of the grotesques and by other scholars for simply showing the inspiration from the Volta Dorata for the geometrical scheme. On the other hand, thanks to the drawings in the catalogue and the image of Francisco's watercolor in high definition, it is possible to assess how the inspiration also concerned the choice of figural scenes.

Another artist who was deeply fascinated by the Volta Dorata was Baldassarre Peruzzi. The name of one vault projected by him (also "Volta Dorata") immediately evokes his model (**fig. 118**). Around 1519, in Palazzo della Cancelleria, Peruzzi designed and executed the vault

with his workshop[874]. Here, the geometrical scheme of the Volta Dorata was not followed closely, but the inspiration from the Volta Dorata is evident because of certain minor figural scenes (**fig. 118, no. 1**), the shape of some panels (**fig. 118, no. 2**), and the decoration motifs (**fig. 118, no. 3**). The main figural scenes of Peruzzi's vault are not iconographically related to those of the Neronian vault , because they depict religious stories. Nevertheless, considering certain little figural panels of Peruzzi's vault , some scenes "all'antica" are depicted and they are similar to those that Francisco and Aspertini copied (e.g. **fig. 118 no. 1**)[875]. Also in this case, despite his general interest for Antiquity, it seems more than a coincidence that Peruzzi chose the geometrical shape of some panels of the Volta Dorata and also certain figural themes that probably were depicted in the Volta Dorata[876].

To stress the trend of re-elaboration of antique art by Renaissance artists, who took inspiration from the Volta Dorata, one other vault projected by Peruzzi is helpful which has not been taken into account by scholars so far: the Loggia Mattei on the Palatine,[877]. In the Loggia Mattei, we can see the influence of the Domus Aurea's paintings: the Criptoportico (room 92) for the grotesques and the Volta Dorata for the figural panels (**fig. 119**). The 12 medallions (**fig. 119, no. 2**) with the Zodiac signs and two bilobed cartouches reveal their influence from the Volta Dorata. For the two bilobed cartouches (**fig. 119, no. 1**), Peruzzi did not simply copy the model of the Volta Dorata. He replicated the shape of the bilobed cartouche of the Volta Dorata, but assembling different details from the Neronian vault itself. For the bilobed parts of the cartouche he depicted one half-moon that has inside one "Amazonian *pelta*". The latter was also present in the Volta Dorata, next to the bilobed cartouches of the Neronian vault . Finally, the same

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[874] While Frommel suggests an alternative dating (1521) for the project of Peruzzi, Gnann thinks that the decoration may have been made by Peruzzi after models designed by Raphael around 1516 (Gnann 2005, p. 209; Frommel 2005, p. 31). On the other hand, Angelini excludes the participation of Peruzzi to the decoration and attributed it to Raphael's workshop and made around 1520-1521 (Angelini 2013).

[875] E.g. the Dionysiac procession with one Silenus on a donkey: **fig. 118 no. 1**; cf. also the scene of sacrifice around a *puteal* depicted by Francisco in scene 5.

[876] For Peruzzi and his interest for the Antique: Tessari 1995, Frommel 2005.

[877] For the Loggia Mattei: Baroni 1997.

figural scene that Peruzzi drew inside the panel of Loggia Mattei was inspired from one of the most copied figural scenes of Volta Dorata, namely scene 8. In Peruzzi's vault , the figural scene of the wedding between Heracles and Hebe shows strong similarities with scene 8 of the Volta Dorata (scene of Hippolytus and Phaedra).

Unlike Pintoricchio, it is not possible to state whether Peruzzi visited the Domus Aurea or he knew it through other drawings (we have no drawings of Peruzzi about Domus Aurea's paintings and his signature was not found by Dacos). Nevertheless, Peruzzi was a collaborator of Raphael, especially during the creation of the Villa Farnesina (1506-1512). As pointed out in CAT. 20, the Codex Fossombronis depicts scenes 2 and 8 of the Volta Dorata and it was drawn by one Raphael follower. Moreover, Giovanni da Udine worked in Raphael's workshop, an expert connoisseur of Domus Aurea's paintings. Therefore, we cannot exclude the possibility that, during the working period with the Raphael workshop, Peruzzi was inspired by the artistic repertoire of the Volta Dorata.

In the Villa Farnesina projected by Peruzzi and decorated by Raphael's workshop, Pirro Ligorio states that the main scene of Raphael's frescoes (the wedding between Love and Psyche: **Pl. 32, fig. 5**) was inspired by one scene of the Volta Dorata. Pirro Ligorio specifies that the wedding between Love and Psyche was inspired by one scene of Domus Aurea that depicts the «works of Vulcanus, the loves which took the arms away from the gods and took them up into the air». As anticipated in CAT. 19 and 20, this scene one can be scene 2 of Volta Dorata (**CAT. 19**)[878]. Not by chance, in describing scene 2 of Volta Dorata, Carletti

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[878] Fol. 155 *recto* (Dacos 1969, p. 170; cf. Shearman 2003, II, p. 1202): «in other similar paintings we have seen the works of Vulcanus, the loves which took the arms away from the gods and took them up into the air. They were painted in a room on the Esquiline which was ruined by wicked painters. From here Raphael used them as an invention for the Marriage of Hebe and Hercules, painted in the loggia of Agostino Chigi in Trastevere opposite of Rome and he made it with noble painting». In Frommel's work on Villa Farnesina (Frommel 2003a), Ligorio's passage is not mentioned and also Dacos does not take into account it when she analyses scene 2 (Dacos 1969, p. 24). On the other hand, considering Ligorio's passage, Coffin did not recognize the archaeological provenance from the Volta Dorata (Coffin 1955, p. 184)

(1776) states: «the very elegant figures of this scene [*scil.* scene 2] were believed to depict certain weddings»[879].

The main similarity between Raphael's fresco and scene 2 is the presence of one seated female figure in the center, who is turned back (in Raphael's fresco this figure is Hebe turned towards his husband Heracles)[880]. Moreover, in both scenes, the central seated figure is surrounded by other figures and has in front the "enthroned couple"[881]. In scene 2 of the Volta Dorata, the seated figure is the only one detail that partially survives in the fresco (CAT. 19, 20)[882]. Moreover, concerning the influence from the Domus Aurea on Raphael's fresco, we can see the figures of the Psyches which stand above the banquet with flowers in their hands. They show very peculiar wings that Renaissance artists could see in the vault of room 129 of the Domus Aurea. In the Volta degli Stucchi, there was a frame that drew the attention of many artists as, for instance, we can see in fol. 32 *recto* of the Codex Escurialensis (**fig. 108**)[883].

About the passage of Ligorio, one clarification has to be stressed. When Ligorio speaks about scene 2 within the Esquiline's grottoes, he describes it as: «the works of Vulcan, the loves which took the arms away from the gods and took them up into the air»[884]. According to this

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[879] «Le figure elegantissime di questo quadro credute furono rappresentare alcune nozze»: Carletti 2014, pp. 98-99, n. 156 (= Mirri-Carletti 1776, pp. LXXXIII-LXXXIV, n. 156). Carletti identifies scene 2 as the arrival of Odysseus at Ithaca and Penelope surrounded by the suitors.

[880] Maybe for this reason, instead of the wedding of Love and Psyche, Ligorio wrongly wrote the scene of the wedding between Hercules and Hebe.

[881] Nowadays, the scholars recognize the model of Hebe's figure in one sarcophagus, now lost, called "Bed of Polykleitos" (Cavicchioli 2002, p. 25). However, Ligorio's passage seems to be a more convincing witness for the possible inspiration based on the Antique of Raphael's fresco. Not by chance, the fascination of Raphael for the decoration of Domus Aurea is well testified by Vasari (Vasari 1966-1987, V [1984], p. 448): cf. for Raphael and the Domus Aurea: D'Alessio-Farinella 2020. Moreover, we have to remember that, for that sarcophagus, only two drawings from the 16th century survived (Bober 1995).

[882] Weege 1913a, p. 172 (cf. CAT. 20).

[883] Guthmüller 2010.

[884] Cf. CAT. 19; It is quite intriguing that, according to Ligorio, Renaissance antiquarians recognized in scene 2 the myth of Hephaestus' discovery, as C. Robert did in the 20th century.

description, the scene should have been depicted in the following way: Vulcano is creating the trap for imprisoning Venus and Mars; Venus and Mars are depicted in loving effusions; and, flying, the "Loves" (i.e. *Erotes*) take away the weapons of Mars. Albeit this iconography is quite common in Renaissance artworks (especially the *Erotes* who are taking away the weapons of asleep Mars)[885], such a scheme is not recognizable in scene 2 of the Volta Dorata. Therefore, one question can be raised, namely: how is it possible that the description of scene 2 provided by Ligorio does not reflect the iconography of scene 2, although the influence of the two scenes can be seen? It is likely that Ligorio was aware that inside the Esquiline grottoes was a scene with the myth Vulcan-Mars-Venus (CAT. 20) which inspired Raphael's fresco in Loggia of Villa Farnesina. Nevertheless, since he probably did not see scene 2 of the Volta Dorata, he described it according to myth's iconography which was more common in the Renaissance, but which does not concern scene 2.

In conclusion, as the examples taken into account show, the reception of the Volta Dorata was spread through Renaissance drawings among the artists and their workshops. In some cases, as Pinturicchio's ceilings show, the influence was direct and also philologically precise in the sense of the grotesques, panel shapes and figural scenes. On the other hand, as in the case of Peruzzi, the motifs and forms of the Volta Dorata were mixed and re-used in more creative ways. Of course, many other examples can be taken into account that reveal inspiration from the Volta Dorata, such as the grotesques of Logge Vaticane (1518-1519) by Raphael's workshop (**fig. 120**) or the Sala dei Pontefici (1520-1521) (**fig. 121**)[886]. In the example of Logge Vaticane, one clarification might be helpful for understanding the process of copying and re-using different ancient models, such as the Volta Dorata. In one detail from the second vault of the Logge Vaticane, one grotesque motif depicts the bilobed cartouche that, as we have seen, was copied and spread thanks to the

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[885] E.g. the painting *Venus and Mars* by S. Botticelli (1482-1483) at the National Gallery (London); concerning the iconography of Venus, Mars and Vulcan in the Renaissance period: Simone 2017, Turner 2017, pp. 86-191, Cieri Via 1997.

[886] For the Logge Vaticane: Dacos 2008; for Sala dei Pontefici: Bertelli-Briganti-Giuliano 1986, 3, pp. 94-95; Hall 2001, pp. 53-54, 108, 146-147; Quinlan-McGrath 2004.

Volta Dorata. Nevertheless, within the bilobed cartouche, the artists in Raphael's workshop copied one figural scene that comes from one Roman relief of the Villa Borghese, although depicted in reverse (**fig. 24**)[887]. Of course, the presence of both motifs does not mean that the artists consciously created direct links between two antique models or that they were always aware of the ancient provenance of the original model. Rather, such an example confirms the artistic context that has been traced until now, namely Renaissance artists created different repertoires of antique models that could be modified or combined in relation to the artistic needs or sensibilities. For instance, Raphael's workshop (within which Giovanni da Udine was often in charge of the stucco decoration) decorated the Garden Loggia of Villa Madama (1518-1525)[888]. The Loggia is composed of three bays decorated in stucco and paintings[889]. In the Northeast Bay, the Southeast Exedra has some references to different paintings of the Domus Aurea. The stucco decoration was inspired by the Volta Gialla (room 31) for the flying figurine which is on the top of the exedra, and by the Volta Dorata for some stucco figural panels with depict the myth of Polyphemus and Galatea (**fig. 122**). The figural panels are similar to those depicted by Francisco de Holanda on his watercolor (CAT. 1)[890].

In conclusion, thanks to the examples taken into account, it is possible to define an historical and artistic context where artists met each other and how where their inspiration from antique models was inspired; through studying on the spot, a circulation of drawings, re-elaboration in the workshop, and collaborations with artists at work. While other rooms of the Domus Aurea inspired artists mainly for the grotesques and the artistic study was mainly limited to decorative motifs, the Volta Dorata was continuously studied because it provided many solutions for new artistic issues and sensibilities.

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[887] Bober-Rubinstein 2010 pp. 131-132.
[888] Shearman 1983, pp. 315-327; Napoleone 2007.
[889] Lefevre 1973, pp. 256-257.
[890] For similar stucco decorations of Raphael's workshop and, precisely, of Giovanni da Udine: Castel Sant'Angelo in Rome (Aliberti Gaudioso-Gaudioso 1981), Palazzo Grimani in Venice (Bristot 2008), Villa del Principe Doria in Genoa (Boccardo 1989).

4. The history of graphic documentation after the 16th century: some issues about design from Antique

While many Renaissance drawings of the Domus Aurea's paintings have survived, fewer drawings are available from the 17th and 18th centuries. Moreover, despite the wide number of artists who copied Domus Aurea's paintings (especially the Volta Dorata), in the 17th and 18th centuries, we know of only three artists who copied the ancient paintings (P.S. Bartoli, V. Brenna, F. Smuglewicz). Thus, in order to understand the artistic fortune of the Domus Aurea in the 17th and 18th centuries, two concepts about the role of Antiquity in those centuries need to be briefly introduced.

Firstly, from the end of the 16th century, Antiquity was not studied by artists with the same frequency as in the previous decades and, so, we have a fewer drawings available to us which copy and study the Antique[891]. The main artistic masterpieces of the 16th century – human figures and landscapes – were the preferred studying models of the artistic apprenticeship in the 17th and 18th centuries[892]. On the other hand, the drawings from the Antique were requested more and more by many antiquarians and rich patrons who wanted to elevate their cultural status through elaborated watercolors and drawings to exhibit in their collections. Obviously, the main purpose of the draftsmen of these copies was not archaeological reliability but rather the elegance of the design and the rich polychromy.

Secondly, since the end of the 16th century, the relationship between the artist and the Antique changed. In the 16th century, especially in the first half, the study of antiquity was conceived for learning and replicating new artistic solutions, but also to reproduce and improve on ancient art[893]. Artists studied the architectural proportions of ancient buildings, the elegance of the "all'antica" drapery, the stucco techniques because they wanted to re-use them in their own artworks, but also to create new and better artistic solutions. However, 16th-

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[891] For the drawings from the Antique from the 16th to the 18th century: Aymonino-Varick Lauder 2015, pp. 38-63 (ed. by A. Aymonino).
[892] Barbolani di Montauto 2014; Tordella 2009, pp. 35-36.
[893] Günther 1988, pp. 13-65; Agosti-Farinella 1984; Agosti-Farinella-Settis 1987 1987; Zanker 2009, pp. 260-263; Faedo 2015, pp. 424-428.

century art seemed to have passed any possible finish line in terms of technique and realism[894]. Therefore, for 17th-century drawings, the artworks of the 16th century became the main source of inspiration for the education of artists and, thus, the Antique did not have the same role in their apprenticeship. Owing to this, the once frequent relationship between the artist and Antiquity began to fade, even the idea that ancient art could be bettered began to diminish. For this reason, the idea of Antiquity as an irretrievable and unsurpassed artistic age became increasingly common compared to the previous century[895].

There are two consequences that can be observed from the 17th and 18th centuries. First, drawings of ancient models were now conceived less and less for the artists' personal use. Second, the ancient model was no more conceived as a model to be overcome and improved upon, but primarily a witness of a lost past.

In the 17th- and 18th-century drawings of antiquities became documents that described the culture of the ancient Romans. They depicted the ancient subject as it might have originally been (as in the drawings by Bartoli's and Mirri's artists), or as it appeared in its current neglected condition (as in Piranesi's engravings)[896]. Of course, the attempt to reconstruct the ancient model or to record the state of its conservation can also be seen in certain drawings of the mid-16th century (e.g. Dupeirac's drawings or those by Flemish artists). However, the difference between the drawings of the Antique of 16th century and those of the following centuries lie mainly in the function of such drawings. While in the 16th century the drawings of antiquities were mainly intended for personal use and held an educational purpose, the 17th- and 18th-century drawings were essentially conceived for publication or to meet the demands of a given patron.

Moreover, as the 17th-century antiquarian market was growing and the practice of copying the antiquity was less practiced, only a few specialized artists were able to satisfy the requests of the antiquarian

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[894] Faietti 2020.

[895] Buberl 1994; Barbanera 2009.

[896] Coen 2010; for the Antiquarian in general: Momigliano 1950 (cf. Herklotz 2012, pp. 191-203); for the Antiquarian in the 17th century: Wrede 2000; Herklotz 2012, pp. 121-144; for the 18th century: Gallo 1999; Barbanera 2010.

market[897]. For this reason, P.S. Bartoli, the artists of Mirri, and a few other artists were the main draftsmen of antique models in the 17th and 18th centuries.

5. The 17th century: Pietro Santi Bartoli

In the 17th century the graphic reception of the Volta Dorata, and more in general of the Domus Aurea, was essentially due to the work of Pietro Santi Bartoli (Perugia 1635 – Rome 1700). Because of his humanistic education in Perugia and his artistic Roman apprenticeship under the guide of Nicolas Poussin (1656-1665), P.S. Bartoli was fascinated by Roman antiquities and, hence, copied many of them through his drawings. Thus, his drawings and, mostly, engravings are important 17th-century sources for knowing the conservative conditions of many Roman antiquities at that time and those discovered in that period[898]. In fact, owing to the easier economical results that the engravings allowed at that time, he started to concentrate his artistic production by realizing engravings which copied famous modern paintings (so-called "translations") and, mostly, antiquities[899]. As pointed out above, from the beginning of the 17th century, the antiquarian market grew and the ownership of antiquities or drawings of antiquities became a European phenomenon, and no more limited to Italian patrons[900].

The 17th century drawings of antiquities were not simply intended to "photograph" the ancient model archeologically, but rather to provide a graphic document which could testify to the culture of ancients. Therefore, the ancient model was often depicted as if it were in perfectly preserved condition and, thus, the artistic license of Bartoli

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[897] For the drawings from the ancient paintings in the 17th century (essentially Bartoli's drawings): Fusconi 1994; De Lachenal 2000; Faedo 2000; Maffei 2013, pp. 156-168; Maffei 2014; Gentile Ortona-Modolo 2016, pp. 155-160; Curzi 2017.
[898] For a biographical and artistic introduction to P.S. Bartoli: DBI 6 (1964, pp. 586-588, ed. by A. Petrucci); for a general introduction to his life and works: Pomponi 1992, Faedo 2000; for his drawings after the Antique see also: De Lachenal 2000, Whitehouse 2014, Gentile Ortona-Modolo 2016.
[899] Pomponi 1992, pp. 202-214.
[900] Wrede 2000; Gentile Ortona-Modolo 2016, pp. 155-160.

added or modified details when necessary[901]. In some rare cases, Bartoli probably even copied some fake ancient models and indicated an antique provenance for them: one case concerns some paintings that, in 1683-1684, were discovered in the area of the Seven Halls, next to the underground rooms of the Domus Aurea. As stressed in *Chapter 1*, those paintings did not belong to the Domus Aurea, even though Bartoli says that such paintings come from "il Palazzo di Tito", namely the same provenance that Bartoli indicates for his drawings of Domus Aurea's paintings[902]. Nevertheless, parts of the original ancient paintings depicted by Bartoli's drawings are nowadays preserved at the British Museum and Bibliothèque Nationale de France and recent scientific studies have shown that such paintings are not ancient, but probably modern fakes[903]. In the same vein, as pointed out in CAT. 23, it is likely that Bartoli used part of scene 8 of the Volta Dorata for one engraving (**Pl. 40, fig. 3**) that he says to come from the new digs on the De Nobili's vineyard made in 1668 and not from the Domus Aurea's paintings[904]. However, it would be wrong to suppose that, in general, Bartoli's drawings are not reliable archaeological sources (unlike it happens more frequently with the drawings of his son F. Bartoli). In most cases, they really copied ancient models, which are nowadays no longer visible[905].

Owing to his personal antiquarian interests for ancient subjects and the collaboration with Giovanni Pietro Bellori, "Commissario delle Antichità" (1670-1694)[906], Bartoli was interested in documenting the important discoveries in Rome of that period, such as the Nasonii Tomb (1674) and other artifacts and ruins, as recently documented and

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[901] The drawings after the Antique of the so-called "Museo Cartaceo" of Cassiano dal Pozzo (1588-1657) are a clear example: Herklotz 2012, pp. 79-94.

[902] Gentile Ortona-Modolo 2016, pp. 207-211.

[903] Buisson-Burlot 2008.

[904] Ortona Modolo pp. 195-196, no. 18; actually, already in 1649, Bartoli mentioned some archaeological digs next to Nobili's vineyard: according to him, here were found marbles, statues and lead pipes: «DOMUS AUREA. "facendosi la casa nell'orto de' Nobili nella parte settentrionale del Coliseo, furono trovate diverse stanze sotterranee, adornate di marmi, pitture, fontane e statue, condotti di piombo etc."»: Lanciani 1989-2002, V, p. 179.

[905] De Lachenal 2000; Gentile Ortona-Modolo 2016, Curzi 2017.

[906] For his period as "Commissario delle Antichità": Fischetti 2008.

studied by E. Gentile Ortona and M. Modolo[907]. As pointed out by Maffei, the interest in the antique paintings of Bartoli and Bellori was mainly due to their admiration for Annibale Carracci and Rapahel, the latter considered as new "Apelle"[908]. Since the Domus Aurea was studied and copied by both 16th century artists (i.e. Carracci and Raphael), the grotesques of the Nero's building became one of the most interesting examples of ancient painting for Bartoli and Bellori. In fact, in the preface of Bartoli's work *Gli Antichi Sepolcri* (1697), Bartoli states that Raphael was his model not only for the artistic style, but also for the interest in the antiquities of Rome, like those buried under ground[909]. Moreover, Bellori also states that Raphael's grotesques of the Logge Vaticane were precisely those of the underground grottoes of the Oppian Hill and gazing them meant seeing those of the Domus Aurea[910]. Therefore, owing to the fascination for Raphael and Annibale, Bartoli and Bellori collected some 16th century drawings of the Domus

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[907] Gentile Ortona-Modolo 2016.

[908] Maffei 2014, pp. 164-168.

[909] «Il quale sentimento avvalorato da che lessi, Raffaele sopranomato il Divino, haver frequentato le scuole de' Sepolcri, e da che l'esperienza mi fece palese come un sole questa verità, mi fè andar pellegrinando per li monumenti della Città di Roma, e del suo distretto, e di raccogliere i disegni altrui di perite Memorie, ò che in frammenti si conservavano raccomandatomi à i cavatori, che incontrando simili fabbriche sotterranee me ne dessero avviso»: Bartoli 1697, p. IV; « egli [*scil*. Raphael] il primo rivolse gli occhi alli vestigi, che duravano ancora nelle Therme di Tito, e di Traiano in Roma, e nella celebre Villa di Adriano in Tivoli, e nelle Grotte di Napoli, e di Pozzuolo, come è fama, che in Grecia istessa inviasse disegnatori à racorre gli avanzi di quelle opere, che rendono i Greci immortali»: Bartoli 1680, p. 5.

[910] «Chi desidera vedere pitture antiche le ammiri pure negli ornamenti delle Logge del Palazzo Vaticano condotti da Giovanni da Udine e dagli altri discepoli di Raffaelle, l'Apelle moderno»: Bellori 1664, p. 65; in few words, for Bellori (friend and collaborator of P.S. Bartoli), seeing the grotesques of the Logge Vaticane meant seeing the antique grotesques.

Aurea[911]. Bartoli often re-used such cinquecento drawings for his drawings, as it happened for his 43 engravings of Raphael's grotesques in Logge Vaticane, which were published in his work *Parerga atque Ornamenta* (1670)[912]. Thanks to Bartoli's antiquities engravings, the fame of the ancient paintings was spread among antiquarians and Bartoli became the most specialized artist of such ancient subjects.

As pointed out in *Chapter 1*, while we are sure that Bellori viewed the Domus Aurea's paintings, we cannot say for certain the same for Bartoli. Given Bartoli's graphic documentation which is available to us today, there is no clue that suggests he conducted a possible study of the Domus Aurea's paintings on the spot (such as an annotation or an archaeological detail that is not testified by other drawings). Moreover, as pointed out in CAT. 2, the possibility that Bartoli did not visit the underground grottoes of the Domus Aurea seems to be confirmed by one main clue. In any of the published works of Bartoli (i.e. his albums of engravings) there is no reference to his direct observation or exploration inside the underground grottoes of Titus' Baths (i.e. Domus Aurea). In fact, in the cases of other discoveries (e.g. Nasonii Tomb, Villa Corsini's tombs, De Nobili's vineyard)[913], a direct observation and study of the paintings by him is evident because it is clearly mentioned

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[911] In *Nota delli Musei* (1664) G.P. Bellori describes the room 129 of the Domus Aurea (*Chapter 1*, **Source 21**) and states that he has in his own collection one Annibale Carracci's drawing that depicts the scene of Hector and Andromache of room 129 (now the drawing is preserved at the Windsor Collection: Windsor Collection, inv. RCIN 909573: Brunetti 2018-2019); on the other hand, the Victoria Album at the Windsor Collection «it also contains a group of cinquecento drawings, including sketches of decoration in the Domus Aurea (RL 9567-8; Dacos 1969: 39), which could have formed part of Bartoli's reference stock, assuming that they were not collected by Victoria himself»: Whitehouse 2014, p. 277.

[912] Pomponi 1992, pp. 206-207; similarly, Bartoli used the Renaissance drawings by Francesco Lamberti da Sangallo that depict some Roman arches for his engravings published in the work *Veteres Arcus Augustorum trimphis insignes quae Romae adhuc supersunt notis illustratis* (1690): Pomponi 1992, p. 225, n. 122.

[913] Caylus-Mariette 1757-1760 (paintings under De Nobili's vineyard); Bartoli 1680 (Nasonii Tomb), Bartoli 1697 (painted tombs in the grounds of the Villa Corsini): see Gentile Ortona-Modolo 2016.

Bartoli's exploration or it is indirectly testified by the descriptions of spaces and buildings where the paintings are preserved[914].

Considering Bartoli's drawings of the ancient paintings (like those of Domus Aurea's paintings), the documentation is very rich in terms of quantity and typology. For typology, I mean: drawings in only pencil (*lapis*), drawings in pencil and pen, drawings partially watercolored, watercolors (often donated or requested by important and precise patrons, e.g. Camillo Massimo) and, finally, engravings (created, generally, at the end of the copying process for a wider public). As Pomponi has clearly shown in his 1992 work, the different types of documents made by Bartoli represent different moments of copying from the antique models[915]. However, as we are going to see, such a process might have concerned also a copying process from other drawings (and not only from the antiquities), as seems to be the case for Bartoli's drawings of Domus Aurea's paintings.

Generally, when Bartoli copied one antique model, he first drew the subject in pencil with the indications of the colors. Then, he defined the pencil stroke with a pen. From these pencil drawings, he sometimes created new copies directly in pen, leaving out certain details of the pencil designs. In this way, he might create different versions from the same original pencil drawings[916]. When Bartoli had drawn the pen drawings, he passed to watercolors, in grey and white lead (as prototypes for the further-coming engravings) or in four-colors[917].

As pointed out in CAT. 2, thanks to Bartoli's watercolors of Codex Massimi, it is possible to admire some Bartoli's drawings that depict

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[914] In few words, whether in Bartoli's works it is described the space where the ancient paintings are preserved (as it happened in the cases mentioned in the previous footnote), we can assess whether Bartoli effectively saw the ancient model and did not copy it from other drawings.

[915] Pomponi 1992, pp. 208-210.

[916] «Taluni particolari delineati a matita sono stati omessi sia nella redazione a penna che nella corrispondente traduzione ad acquaforte, ma compaiono nella copia acquerellata»: Pomponi 1992, p. 210.

[917] «La coloritura delle copie disegnate costituiva la fase terminale di questa pratica esecutiva, quella in cui meglio si coglie l'abilità pittorica di Bartoli e l'eleganza con cui i disegni erano trasformati in vere opere d'arte, uniche e variate da esemplare ed esemplare nella resa cromatica e nell'impaginazione sul foglio»: Pomponi 1992, p. 210.

some ceilings of the Domus Aurea in their entirety. However, as argued in CAT. 2, such Bartoli's watercolors are probably copies from other drawings (probably made by Francisco de Hollanda) and, hence, they did not come from a direct observation of the antique vaults[918]. Since Bartoli already knew the paintings of the Domus Aurea thanks to these watercolors of Francisco de Holanda, it is likely that he decided not to enter inside the underground grottoes of the Oppian Hill to create new copies of the ancient vaults. Nevertheless, if Bartoli never entered the underground rooms of the Domus Aurea and if he drew his watercolors of the Domus Aurea from other designs of Francisco, which function had his pen and pencil drawings in the Victoria Album that depict many details of Domus Aurea's paintings[919]?

It is quite likely that, before copying the watercolors of the Domus Aurea's vaults probably made by Francisco, Bartoli realized some sketched designs as "preliminary drawings" for his "future" watercolors in the Codex Massimi (cf. CAT. 2) and Codex Baddeley (cf. (**Pl. 4, fig. 1**). For example, in the Codex Massimi of Glasgow, Bartoli copied one watercolor of the vault of room 129 (Volta degli Stucchi) (**fig. 123**). In the "Victoria Album" of Windsor, there are two unpublished drawings by Bartoli. They depict details from the same Volta degli Stucchi: one depicts only the geometrical system of the vault with some letters inside the panels; and, in the other drawing, some figural scenes are sketched and have some letters (**fig. 124**). We can match the letters that identify figural scenes of one drawing with the letters that are inscribed inside the vault panels of the other drawing (**fig. 125**). In this way, we can deduce that they correspond to Glasgow watercolor (**fig. 123**). In this way, it can be be seen how Bartoli worked before he

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[918] Pace 1979, pp. 124-131; Gentile Ortona-Modolo 2016, pp. 156-158.

[919] The "Victoria Album" at the Windsor Collection consists of preparatory drawings. The "Victoria Album" does not have an inventory number, but each drawing has its own inventory number: from RCIN 909566 to RCIN 909700 (Whitehouse 2014). For some examples of Bartoli's preparatory drawings of the Domus Aurea's at the Windsor Collection: Windsor RCIN 909577 (Volta Nera), RCIN 909579 (Volta degli Stucchi), RCIN 909581 (Volta degli Stucchi), RCIN 909582 (Volta degli Stucchi), RCIN 909584 (unknown vault), RCIN 909599 (Volta Dorata?); RCIN 909578 (Volta Gialla); RCIN 909580 (Volta degli Stucchi); uncertain provenance from Domus Aurea: RCIN 909662 («vineyard between S.Pietro in Vincoli and S. Martino ai Monte»: Grande Fregio Ovest?).

realized the Glasgow watercolors and how such preparatory drawings of the Domus Aurea in pen and pencil were made not directly from the antique paintings, but from other lost watercolors (probably by Francisco). Therefore, before copying such lost watercolors, Bartoli realized some sketched designs which might be conceived as "preliminary drawings". First, he copied the pure geometrical system of the vault. Then, he gave to each panel one letter and defined the colors. Finally, he drew on another sheet the figural scenes and again gave each one a letter in order to remember their positions in the geometrical scheme of the vault.

Thanks to this example, it is evident that not all Bartoli's preparatory drawings were copied from the ancient models, but they also could have been drawn from other drawings. Furthermore, this example is also helpful to show how Bartoli's methodology of drawing is similar to that used by the 16th-century artists when they copied the paintings of the Domus Aurea (figs. **107-108**). In the latter, Renaissance artists first copied the geometrical scheme of the vault on one sheet (or in another part of the sheet). Then, they copied the figural scenes and other decorative details on another sheet (or on another part of the same sheet)[920]. Obviously, the difference between these two cases is that such Bartoli's methodology was used for copying from other drawings, while Renaissance artists used this same methodology for copying the ancient model on the spot. Therefore, we might say that – regardless the fact that the drawing was made on the spot or on the table, from the ancient model or from another drawing – some copying methodologies were maintained by the artists from the 16th century to the 17th century.

6. The 18th century: Ludovico Mirri's artists

In the 18th century, until the excavations by Ludovico Mirri, no further drawing of the Domus Aurea's paintings were made. However, thanks to the drawings of Bartoli, the images of Domus Aurea's paintings

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[920] As mentioned above, a similar case that concerns room 129 is Uffizi drawing 54 O by Fra' Giocondo: Brunetti 2018-2019.

continued to circulate among antiquarians and, hence, were re-copied. For instance, Caylus-Mariette edited 30 copies of Bartoli's watercolors (1757-1760) and in the same vein, Turnbull (*A curious collection of ancient paintings*, 1741) and Cameron (*The baths of the Romans*, 1772) included in their works some engravings that depict details of Bartoli's watercolor of Volta Dorata in the Codex Massimi. Not by chance, among the signatures on Domus Aurea's paintings that were made by the visitors, there are a few dates for the period 1700-1770[921]. On the other hand, thanks to the success of Mirri's project, there is a wide number of signatures dated after 1770 and documented by Dacos[922].

In *Chapter 1*, the excavations of Ludovico Mirri within Domus Aurea's rooms in 1774-1776 have been mentioned[923]. However, as anticipated, the attention on the Oppian Hill was indeed aroused few years before (1768) by Charles Cameron who studied the same underground rooms, since some drawings of Palladio that depicts the Titus' Baths were discovered and published in London (1732)[924].

In 1774 Mirri obtained permission to dig under the Lauretti-Ceci vineyard in Via Labicana, next to Esquiline Hill[925]. He started the excavations in 1775 and, during 14 months of work, he and his employees entered and explored 16 rooms, clearing them from the debris down to the lower sides of the mural paintings[926]. His artists – Francesco Smuglewicz (1745-1820) and Vincenzo Brenna (1745-1820) – were in charge of copying the decorations of the vaults and the wall decorations of various rooms, the very new aspect of their project. In some cases, the excavators emptied the rooms from the earth, especially

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[921] For the period 1700-1770, 16 signatures are transcribed by Dacos (Dacos 1969, pp. 143-160).

[922] For the period 1770-1800, 57 signatures are transcribed by Dacos (Dacos 1969, pp. 143-160).

[923] For the biography and, mostly, the editorial projects of Mirri: Coen 2008.

[924] The work of Cameron was published in 1772 (*The Baths of the Romans*): Salmon 1993; for the drawings of Palladio: Zorzi 1959, Ortolani 2009, p. 7.

[925] Carletti 2014, p. 17 (= Mirri-Carletti 1776, p. VII).

[926] Such a hurry was due to economic reasons (so Mirri would have not have to pay his employees overtime) but also it owed to the needs of the antiquarian market who might have had other men interested in the same business: Brunetti 2015, p. 138.

when the wall paintings were worth copying[927]. In other cases, maybe owing to time restraints or dis-interest in (or absent) wall decorations, the excavators did not continue down to the original floors of the rooms. In fact, in 1913, Weege wrote that during his period of study within the underground rooms, on more than one occasion, he had to crawl because many rooms were filled with earth[928]. Room 80 was probably among these latter cases (CAT. 3).

After just over one year of work, in 1776, *Vestigia delle Terme di Tito e le sue interne pitture[929]* was published with two volumes of sixty engravings made by Marco Carloni (1742-1796)[930]. In addition to two volumes of engravings, according to the antiquarian tradition of the printed books of antiquities (e.g. Bartoli-Bellori mentioned above), Mirri requested from Giuseppe Carletti Romano one volume of written descriptions[931].

The reason why Mirri decided to copy and publish the underground paintings of the Domus Aurea, rather than other antiquities of Rome, is not known. In the introduction of the *Vestigia delle Terme di Tito*, Carletti does not provide a clear reason; such a publication would have celebrated the patronage of Pope Pius VI, because in these underground rooms Raphael had found the inspiration for decorating the Logge Vaticane. However, as anticipated in *Chapter 1*, probably, owing to the recent discoveries in the Vesuvian area and the interests for the ruins on the Oppian Hill that Cameron renewed, Mirri likely understood the economic potential of the underground paintings and

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[927] For instance: room 32 (Pinot de Villechenon 1998, tav. 53), 33 (Pinot de Villechenon 1998, tav. 16, 17), 50 (Pinot de Villechenon 1998, tav. 24), 55 (Pinot de Villechenon 1998, tav. 25); also room was probably emptied by Mirri, since De Romanis depicts the section of the room in his work (De Romanis 1822, tav. VI).

[928] Weege 1913a, p. 127.

[929] For an introduction to *Vestigia delle Terme di Tito*: Tedeschi 2010, Meyboom-Moormann 2013, I, pp. 8-9; for the transcription of Carletti's text: Carletti 2014.

[930] For few information on M. Carloni: AK 1997, XVI, pp. 451-452 (ed. by D. Trier).

[931] Unknown is the biography of Carletti. After his collaboration with Mirri, he wrote other literary works: the heroic poem *L'incendio di Tor di Nona* (1781), the poem *La morte del figliuol prodigo* (1789), and the treaty *Memorie storico-critiche della chiesa e del monastero di S. Silvestro in Capite di Roma* (1795).

the interest that Pope Pius VI would have had for such a publishing project.

Moreover, since the project on the underground rooms of the Domus Aurea was attracting so much attention between 1775-1776, Mirri published some luxury editions of Villa Madama's ceilings (*Le tre grandi volte di Villa Madama*)[932]. The Renaissance ceilings were inspired by Domus Aurea's paintings like those of the Logge Vaticane.

In any case, the publication of *Vestigia delle Terme di Tito* was a great success, mainly because it interested not only antiquarians with a passion for ancient paintings, but also it aroused the interests of the general public who were attracted to the new excavations and discovery.

During these 14 months of excavations, Smuglewicz and Brenna made 61 drawings and, among these, 55 depict the paintings of the underground rooms (for a detailed description: see the table below). From these drawings, Mirri published two editions: the pure engraving edition that was projected for a wide public and intended as the main source of economic income; and thirty luxury watercolor editions realized for special personalities and authorities (donated and sold)[933]. The Louvre edition is one of these watercolor editions[934].

Considering the watercolor editions, we might suppose that they were made by hand directly by the artists, before the creation of the engravings by Carloni. In this, we would expect that the watercolors provide reflected images to those of the engravings. However, comparing the watercolors and the engravings of the same vault (e.g. room 80), the images have the same orientation (**figs. 126-127**). Therefore, it is evident that the thirty luxury watercolor editions were not made from drawings of the artists, but the watercolors followed the reflected images of the engravings. If the printing of the engravings was in 1776, we should think that, in a few months, the watercolors were already made. In fact, in the same year of the publication of the

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[932] Coen 2008, p. 174.

[933] For the watercolor editions: Pinot de Villechenon 1998, p. XI; Meyboom-Moormann 2013, I, p. 8, n. 81.

[934] «Quanto alla data di esecuzione, ci si chiede se appartenga ai trenta esemplari annunciati o a una edizione prevista da Giuseppe Carletti quando la prima tiratura fu esaurita»: Pinot de Villechenon 1998, p. XI.

engravings (1776), one of the luxury watercolor editions was donated to Pope Pius VI, who exhibited it in the Vatican, admiring it for two hours[935].

The same orientation of the images between watercolors and engravings introduces another problem, that has not been clarified by scholarship, namely whether the luxury watercolor editions were handmade or not. The answer is the following: the luxury watercolor editions were colored by hand, but the design was printed by another (more delicate) engraving matrix, with a sparse use of hatching.

Furthermore, at the end of the volume edited by G. Carletti with the descriptions of the engravings, there is a brief chapter called "*Associazione all'opera di Ludovico Mirri mercante di pitture in Roma*". In this section is written that the engravings will be sold in three groups (one group per year: 1776, 1777, 1778). On the other hand, Carletti says that the edition of "carte dipinte" will be sold in two groups (1776 and 1777). Moreover, in this passage, Carletti states that, for the watercolor editions, another engraving matrix with the pure profile of the design was made by Carloni. The use of another engraving matrix for the watercolors allowed for the design to be ready for coloring. However, such a matrix engraved only the pure profile of the design in order that the color was applied on the pure blank sheet and not on the chiaroscuro strokes of the engraving (used for defining the different graduation of colors)[936]. To summarize, a definition "engravings with watercolor decorations" might be the most appropriate for these thirty luxury watercolor editions[937].

From this copying process (from the engraving to the watercolor), at the Hertziana Library, two partially watercolored engravings are

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[935] Coen 2008, p. 177.

[936] «Ma vieppiù ne sarà pago il pubblico quando resti inteso che non sono li rami stessi quelli che servono alla incisione nera e quelli della dipinta. In questi non vi sono che leggerissmi contorni per cui l'opera avrà sempre il merito di pittura originale. Il valersi de' rami medesimi si fa comunemente nel colorire le stampe e ció riesce facile e meno dispendioso poiché, trovandovisi già oltre i contorni li chiari tutti, le mezze tinte e gli scuri, chiunque sebbene di piccola capacita, è abile ad illuminarle e colorirle»: Carletti 2014, pp. 114-115 (= Mirri-Carletti 1776, after p. XCVI).

[937] See the Windsor edition: Blunt-Lester Cooke 1960, p. 59 cat. no. 89; Pietrangeli 1958, p. 30, n. 2.

preserved. In one example (**fig. 128**), it can be seen how the engraving has partially been watercolored. However, here, the same matrix was used for the normal engraving edition, and not the "more delicate" matrix mentioned by Carletti for watercolor edition. Probably, in these two cases[938], in absence of engraving with pure profile, the artist (possibly V. Brenna?) applied different colors in some points of the engraving to remember their positions.

Considering the copying process from the spot to the engraving, unfortunately, no drawing made on the spot from the ancient paintings by Brenna and Smuglewicz is known. As it will be shown soon, Hertziana drawings cannot be considered "preliminary drawings" on spot from the ancient paintings, but rather models by Brenna for creating new copies for the antiquarian markets and made after the excavations 1774-1776.

It is not possible to know how precisely Smuglewicz and Brenna worked on the spot or how the copying process developed in detail. However, thanks to the descriptions of Carletti, it is possible to have some clues in this sense and, mostly, it is possible to know when the artistic license filled the damages of the paintings.

Brenna played an active role during the 14 months of Mirri's excavations, and was likely also in charge of guiding the digs, as Brenna's signature on the wall of room 33 shows (*Brenna aperuit et delineavit*)[939]. Concerning the roles of who copied what, Smuglewicz mainly drew the figural scenes («li quadri»)[940], while Vincenzo Brenna was in charge of the ornaments («ornati»), geometrical schemes

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[938] A similar case is the Dv 570-340 gr raro, tafel 17 (room 29: Volta delle Civette).

[939] Dacos 1969, p. 154 in "salle 34" ("salle 34" = room 33).

[940] «Li quadri orora mentovati non fanno già la minor parte della raccolta e per il numero, che sale sino al trenta, e per l'eccellenza del lavoro. Sono rimasti essi molto ben visibili all'occhio perspicace del signor Francesco Smuglewicz, pittore polacco, che ha potuto contemplarli pochi palmi discosto e ritrarli esattamente in queste carte»: Carletti 2014, p. 23 (= Mirri-Carletti 1776, p. XIII).

(«architettura») and map («pianta interna»)[941]. As Carletti states, Brenna passed his time in the underground rooms and copied them with great accuracy. Such division of labour is confirmed by the signature of the two artists that are legible under each engraving and written on the table at the end of the chapter.

Since some rooms were filled with earth (see *Chapter 1*), the artists worked next to the vault and, therefore, they could see in detail the colors, the ornaments, and the figural scenes. For instance, Carletti says that when entering room 80, Mirri's excavators entered from room 79. Nowadays, it is possible to see such a passage on the North side of the room, close to the vault . Not by chance, the drawings of Smuglewicz and Brenna are impressive for their detailed copying of the geometrical scheme of the vaults (with frameworks and ornamentals motifs), but also for the attention paid to the original colors. The colors used by both artists are often confirmed by the current conditions of the paintings (see *Chapter 3*)[942] and, in the case of the Volta Dorata, they are also confirmed by some Renaissance drawings (CAT. 6, CAT. 8, CAT. 1). For instance, considering the Hertziana watercolor of the NE vault - corner (**Pl. 8, fig. 1**), we can see how the artist recorded the fine geometric frame which surrounded the NE medallion. The reliability of the frame is confirmed by fol. 6 *recto* of the Codex Escurialensis (CAT. 16) which could not have been known by Mirri's artists in the 18th century, the Codex already being in Spain from 1576 onwards. Moreover, even if Mirri probably knew indirectly of Francisco's watercolor (CAT. 1)[943], he decided to be faithful to the archeological

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[941] «Vuolsi pure a pregio di queste carte rammentare la straordinaria fatica del signor Vincenzo Brenna, architetto romano. Egli, a ben eseguire la sua parte, si è per tanti mesi sotterrato in quelle stanze per tutte delinearle scrupolosamente e riportarne accuratissimi esemplari. Gli ornati, l'architettura, la pianta interna sono tutte sue»: Carletti 2014, p. 23 (= Mirri-Carletti 1776, p. XIII).

[942] E.g. room 32 (Meyboom-Moormann 2013, I, pp. 159-161); room 33 (Meyboom-Moormann 2013, I, pp. 161-164); room 35 (Meyboom-Moormann 2013, I, pp. 165-166); room 50 (Meyboom-Moormann 2013, I, pp. 176-178) room 80 (CAT. 26).

[943] Mirri probably knew Francisco's watercolor because of Turnbull's engravings (for Turnbull's engravings: *Chapter 1*) that copied parts of Bartoli's watercolor of copy of Baddeley Codex or from Codex Massimi (CAT. 2).

evidence of the vault and not add the other medallions that were present in Francisco's watercolor.

Given his aim to publish the drawings, Mirri probably decided to modify some iconographic details which would have had a negative impact on customers. For instance, in the preliminary drawing of the NE vault -corner (**Pl. 8, fig. 1**), Mirri's artists copied the scene H with the abduction of a young man, dragged by a flying horse. In the album published in 1776, one sheet is totally devoted to depicting the scene H, yet the male figure has the genitals covered (for obvious cultural reasons of that time, 1776)[944].

Another important aspect that concerns the drawings of Brenna and Smuglewicz is the reason why the artists avoided copying the damages of the paintings and how they were able to do it. The reason is clearly stated by Carletti: since the work was projected for antiquarians and to «amatori delle belle arti», the artists did not copy the damages of the paintings for not offending the aesthetic sensibility of the customers[945]. Therefore, they tried to complete the decorations according to some clues of the paintings itself («dall'opera istessa»), because of the specular composition of the ceilings («per ragione de' suoi ribattimenti»)[946], and thanks to their own skills and intuitions («dall'arte»)[947]. Not by chance, in describing the role of Smuglewicz, Carletti mentions his «occhio perspicace», like he was able to interpret some figural scenes not easily visible.

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[944] CAT. 16; in the reproduction of the entire vault, the figure in scene H has not the genitals covered, since it would have appeared in little dimensions: CAT. 3.

[945] «[…] laddove ricopiandone le loro mancanze non comparirebbero quelle che furono, con offesa agli amanti stessi dell'antiquaria». Carletti 2014, p. 22 (= Mirri-Carletti 1776, p. XII).

[946] «Anzi più facili ancora giacché non solamente dalle leggi architettoniche venivano indicati abbondantemente, ma essendo nelle rispettive pareti d'ogni stanza replicata l'opera medesima, in una di quelle trovavasi ciò che nell'altra mancava per ragione de' suoi ribattimenti»: Carletti 2014, p. 21 (= Mirri-Carletti 1776, p. XI).

[947] «Quella vaghezza di cui si pregiano gli antichissimi originali non è certamente scemata in questa raccolta: anzi, perché varie rotture e corrosioni interrompevano il bel lavoro, giudicossi di supplirvi non già colla invenzione (taccia appostaci da qualche indiscreto), ma con quello che dall'arte, oppure dall'opera istessa veniva somministrato»: Carletti 2014, p. 21 (= Mirri-Carletti 1776, p. XI).

Nevertheless, artistic license is always mentioned by Carletti, especially when the artists used parts of other paintings for completing the ceilings or walls that they copied[948]. On a few occasions, although sometimes Carletti is not able to indicate where precisely the artists found other figural scenes, he explicitly says that such scenes were inserted into the damaged vault (this habit was typical for the central scenes of the ceilings). In the case of room 29 (Volta delle Civette), for instance, Carletti simply states that the figural scene was exchanged by another[949]. Similarly, in the drawing of the Volta Dorata, they copied at the center of the vault one scene that belonged to the "Grande Fregio" of room 80 (CAT. 3). More difficult is to assess if the artists rarely modified some iconographic details of the scenes for facilitating the iconographic interpretations[950]. One clear case is room 33 where Brenna and Smuglewicz added some iconographical details (like ivy crowns, weapons, or clothes) to facilitate the comprehension of the figural scenes by Carletti.

Although the biography of the abbot G. Carletti is unknown, his collaboration in Mirri's project seems to go beyond a simple description of the engravings. Through his descriptions, it is likely that he was present during the excavations: he provides reference about how the excavations moved into the underground building; he states when a painting was particularly damaged or was preserved in good conditions; and he describes the aqueduct and the hydraulic clues that the excavators found inside the underground rooms[951]. On the other hand, from the description of the rooms and drawings, there is no clue that allows us to suppose that he suggested some iconographic corrections for the artists. But surely, before he studied the iconographies of the paintings, he studied the previous interpretations,

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[948] For similar cases: CAT. 3.

[949] «Al quadro rovinato si è creduto ben fatto di supplirvi con altro»: Carletti 2014, p. 42 (= Mirri-Carletti 1776, p. XXXII).

[950] For the case of room 33: Brunetti 2015.

[951] Carletti 2014, pp. 34-36 (= Mirri-Carletti 1776, pp. XXIV-XXVI). These conducts and devices belong to Trajan's Baths.

as can be seen in Carletti's description of scene I of Volta Dorata (CAT. 13)[952].

There is another problem that has not been clarified by scholars and, unfortunately, it is not possible to solve with certainty. The problem is the role and the function of the so-called "Hertziana drawings". For the Hertziana drawings, scholars mean a group of 15 drawings of the Domus Aurea, preserved at the Hertziana Library, which are partially watercolored and bound together with 60 engravings of the *Vestigia delle Terme di Tito.* All Hertziana drawings are graphically visible in the recent work of Meyboom-Moormann and it can be seen that, next to the drawing, the draftsman wrote some notes about the colors of the original paintings (see at the end of this chapter). Thus, it is quite certain that such notes were taken in front of the ancient paintings (or were re-copied by notes written for the first time on the spot). Moreover, we can see that the inscriptions are written by the same hand and the designs reveal similar stylistic and material features (e.g. similar colors, similar ink of the pen, identical type of paper). Therefore, it is highly probable that they were drawn by the same draftsman. Since Smuglewicz mainly drew the figural scenes, it is likely that Hertziana drawings were made by Vincenzo Brenna. Moreover, from a stylistic point of view, the Hertziana drawings indeed seem to be drawn by an expert in architectural drawings ("Vincenzo Brenna, architetto romano").

The function of these drawings within the copying process remains unclear. While Meyboom-Moormann consider them as "model drawings" for the engraver Marco Carloni[953], Luciani and Sperduti think that they are original drawings made on the spot[954]. On the other hand, Pinot de Villechenon defines them vaguely as "original

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[952] «Questo fatto ravvisarono alcuni eruditi nel presente quadro»: Carletti 2014, p. 93 (= Mirri-Carletti 1776, p. LXXVIII).

[953] «Un gruppo di disegni, che probabilmente servivano da modello per gli incisori»: Meyboom-Moormann 2013, I, p. 8.

[954] «La copia del lavoro, conservata alla Biblioteca Hertziana di Roma, contiene alcuni di questi disegni che riportano anche indicazioni di policromia»: Luciani-Sperduti 1993, p. 115. Fusconi 1994, 159, n. 7 p. 159.

watercolors", as if they were the prototypes for the watercolor luxury editions (?)[955].

There is no doubt that the Hertziana drawings were made before the engravings because the images depicted on the engravings are reflected (therefore, they cannot be a copy from the engraving and then, afterwards, watercolored). And there are more doubts about whether these drawings are the models used by Marco Carloni for the engraving matrices. Considering the Hertziana drawing of the Volta Dorata that depicts the NE vault corner (**Pl. 8, fig. 1**)[956], it can be seen how it depicts one figural scene that, in the same corner of Volta Dorata engraving, is not present (scene C instead of scene I). If Carloni had indeed used this drawing, he might have produced an engraving differing from those that we can observe. One final clue that should be considered for supposing the function of the Hertziana drawings is the following: although the inscriptions mention the colors of the paintings, the conservative conditions of the sheet and the precision of the stroke (made with the use of some tools as the ruler and compass) suggest that the drawings were made on the table, and not on the spot.

Therefore, we might have two possibilities. The first is that Hertziana drawings are the "good copies" of other drawings made on the spot and, then, used by Mirco Carloni for creating the matrices. However, in this way, we could hypothesize that Brenna's mistakes (like scene C) were corrected before the creation of the matrices. Nevertheless, it is not clear how Carloni was able to realize the two matrices from some drawings which depict only parts of ceilings (like, for example, the vault corner of the Volta Dorata).

The second possibility is that the Hertziana drawings are the personal drawings of Brenna that he used after the publication of Mirri's albums for creating new copies to be sold by himself. This is not surprising given that during and after the excavations (until 1777), Brenna created watercolors that he sold to private collectors, like the V&A drawing (**Pl.**

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[955] Pinot de Villechenon 1998, p. X.

[956] In the watercolor, we can recognize the East side of the vault because of one figurative scenes which appears in the right side of the watercolor: depicted here is the myth of Phaedra and Hippolytus which was originally in the east side of the vault (CAT. 20-24).

8, fig. 2)[957]. In the V&A drawing the decorative motifs are more emphasized than the original paintings, probably because of the taste of the private purchaser (Charles Townley, cf. CAT. 3)[958]. Although in 1777 Mirri ransacked all the personal drawings of Brenna[959], the latter continued in 1778 to create new drawings of the Domus Aurea and variations of the ancient paintings, like the Madrid watercolor (**fig. 129**)[960]. Moreover, since the Hertziana drawings are bound together with engravings and colored engravings, we cannot exclude the possibility that such a volume was a sort of the personal "book of models" of Brenna, used for creating new copies to sell for himself. While the Hertziana set might have served to remind him of the colors, he might also have used the engravings as models for the geometries of the vaults.

7. A brief overview for drawings of 19th and 20th centuries

In 1800-1802, the abbot Angelo Uggeri published six volumes on ancient paintings of Rome (*Journées pittoresques des édifices de Rome ancienne*). In the last volume, he includes 11 engravings of Domus Aurea's paintings[961]. Such engravings copy the drawings from Mirri's album, but they were realized by different matrices than those of Mirri. Although they are not helpful in our search for new archeological evidence of the paintings, they are important to mention because they

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[957] Vaughan 1996, p. 40.

[958] Tedeschi 2006.

[959] There is an interesting episode about the collaboration between Brenna and Mirri: when Mirri knew the habit of Brenna concerning the copies sold by himself, on 4th May 1777, he and some anonymous men came into the house of Brenna and took all the drawings and other documents of the excavations («portò via tutti i disegni, le misurazioni e gli schizzi relativi alle terme di Tito»): Coen 2008, p. 178.

[960] Vincenzo Brenna, watercolor of invented vault , 1777-1778, 724 x 506 mm, Madrid, Museo de la Real Academia de Bellas Artes de San Fernando: Brook-Curzi 2010, Cat. no. II.3., pp. 393-394, fig. p. 259 (ed by L. Tedeschi).

[961] Uggeri 1800-1802, VI: tav. XVIII (room 33), tav. XIX (room 32), tav. XX (room 23); tav. XXI (room 33), tav. XXII (room 27); tav. XXIV (room 79), tav. XXV (room 55), tav. XXVI (room 55), tav. XXVII (room 80), tav. XXVIII (room 80), room 80 (tav. XIX); for further details on Uggeri's work: Nauhaus 2015.

allowed the diffusion and knowledge of the Domus Aurea's paintings, albeit in little measure.

In the 19th and 20th centuries, few further drawings of the Domus Aurea's paintings were made. They were essentially drawn to document the first archeological excavations, meant in the scientific sense of the terms. In fact, as anticipated in *Chapter 1*, following the interests for the Roman Baths began since the last decades of the previous century, De Romanis studied the underground rooms of the Domus Aurea and he was the first to provide a precise architectural plan of some rooms that confirmed the precision of Brenna-Smuglewicz drawings[962]. Moreover, in his published work, he provides two engravings of two vault decorations of the same cryptoporticus (room 19). Here is reproduced only one of two engravings (**fig. 130**), which translates his personal drawing[963].

In the same vein, in his publication of 1913, Weege published five watercolors of Lucilio Cartocci (1879-1952) that depict the main cryptoporticus of the Domus Aurea (room 19). They were essentially made because the vault was too long to be photographed (**fig. 131**). The great precision of Cartocci's watercolors are confirmed by Weege's and Iacopi's photographs[964].

8. Conclusions and final considerations

As can be seen, the fascination that the Domus Aurea's paintings – and mostly the Volta Dorata – had on the artists allows us to observe the creation of a wide number of designs, watercolors, and engravings from the 15th century until the 20th century. However, such graphic documents were not made for the same reasons. As this chapter has shown, it is possible to see how the function of the design caused the style of the design itself and the techniques of the representation (design, watercolor, engraving). Moreover, owing to the function of the drawings (a medium for personal study or document for the culture of the ancients), the artist decided to copy part of the vault or the entire vault .

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[962] E.g. De Romanis 1822, tav. VI: rooms 31, 32, 33, 35.
[963] The second engraving is: De Romanis 1822, tav. IX.
[964] Iacopi 1999, fig. 92, 94.

Considering the designs of the Volta Dorata, we have seen how, in the Renaissance period, the drawings of the Volta Dorata were essentially made for personal use of the artists or workshops. On the other hand, in the 17th and 18th century the watercolors and engravings of the Volta Dorata (as those of other Domus Aurea's paintings copied in these centuries) were made as cultural documents for the myths and habits of the ancient Romans. Therefore, as pointed out, Renaissance artists mostly copied details and vault corners of the Volta Dorata, while P.S. Bartoli and Mirri's artists copied the entire vault. However, as stressed, Francisco de Hollanda is the only Renaissance artist who had an approach to the Antique that is more similar to that of the following centuries.

For this reason, the 17th and 18th century watercolors and engravings that depict the entire vaults, as that of Volta Dorata, were used by archeologists and scholars until the 20th century for documenting the appearance of the vault (or its potential original aspect). For instance, in 1913, in relation to the Volta Dorata, Weege states: «since the narrowness of the room did not make it possible to take a photograph of the entire vault , owing to the careful drawing made by Francesco d'Olanda (tav. 6 after one Lumiere's photo), I have refrained from having a new drawing of the vault in its present state of decay»[965]. Not by chance, during the excavations of the 19th and 20th centuries (De Romanis 1822, Weege 1913), new engravings and watercolors were only made when they could act as surrogates for "photographing" certain Domus Aurea's ceilings, since there was no other way for copying long and wide paintings (cryptoporticus 19 and 92).

Furthermore, this shift of the design's function – from personal use of the artist to the public domain of antiquarians – is also helpful for understanding the end of Volta Dorata's reception in modern ceilings after the 16th century. In fact, no modern ceilings of the 17th or 18th century were inspired by the model of Volta Dorata (directly or

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[965] «Da die Enge des Raumes nicht ermöglichte,, eine photographische Aufnahme der ganzen Decke zu machen, und die sorgfältige, von Francesco d'Olanda gemachte Zeichnung existiert, von der eine Kopie Tafel 6 nach einer Lumiereaufnahme abgebildet wird, habe ich davon abgesehen, eine neue Zeichnung der Decke in dem jetzigen Zustande ihres Verfalles herstellen zu lassen»: Weege 1913a, p. 165.

indirectly through other modern ceilings). Of course, the publications of Bartoli's and Mirri's engravings had the effect of influencing the coeval styles, such as some 18th century artists in Italy, England, Poland, and Russia. Nevertheless, this influence was more related to a matter of style and not to the reception of the Volta Dorata or other ceilings of the Domus Aurea[966].

Through this chapter, we have seen how deep and pervasive the inspiration of the Volta Dorata for Renaissance was on artists and their workshops. Owing to its peculiar features, the Volta Dorata entered into the essential repertoire from the Antique that the artists studied during the artistic apprenticeship. Many artists and the workshops were fascinated by this vault more than any other in the Oppian building because it provided different solutions to many artistic issues, such as the figural scenes, geometrical system, panel shapes, stucco decoration combined to the pure painting decoration, use of gold and other bright colors. The knowledge of the Volta Dorata was spread among artists in different ways: studying on the spot, circulation of drawings, re-elaboration in the workshop, collaborations with other artists at work. Furthermore, the model was never studied and applied in a passive way, but it was adapted to the sensibilities of the artists and to the request of the customers. In some cases, the artist projected ceilings that were philologically closer to the original model (such as the Pinturicchio's ceilings). In other cases, the artist mixed forms and elements of the Volta Dorata with other details of the Domus Aurea (e.g. Villa Madama's Garden Loggia and Peruzzi's ceilings) or even with other antique models not related to the Domus Aurea (Logge Vaticane).

For this reason, the Volta Dorata is an important study case for observing how Renaissance artists created different repertoires of antique models that could be modified or combined. Nevertheless, the lesson that we can learn from the Volta Dorata is wider. The Volta

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[966] For the influence of P.S. Bartoli's engravings to 17th and 18th century English art: Aymonino 2010, Aymonino 2013; for the influence of Mirri's engraving in Russian and English paintings: Curzi 2010, Tedeschi 2008; for the influence of Mirri's engraving for few Italian Neoclassical paintings: "camerini settecenteschi" in Palazzo Grimani (Venice) and Palazzo Milzetti (Faenza); cf. Cuppini 1996.

Dorata is also helpful for seeing how, unlike the following centuries (and we may say until the present day), in the 16th century the Neronian vault was not simply a document of antiquity. It was rather a model that, through fascination and admiration, could push artists to improve their art for wider artistic and cultural progress and benefit of everybody.

9. Appendix I - Subjects depicted in Francisco's drawing-book (*Os desenhos das antigualhas*)

Fol.	Subject
1 recto	Frontispiece
1 verso	Portrait of Paulus III
2 recto	Portrait of Michelangelo
2 verso	Studies of female Italian dresses
3 recto	Studies of female Italian dresses
3 verso	Allegory of Imperial Rome
4 recto	Allegory of the Fall of Rome
4 verso	The Titulus Crucis of Jesus Christ
5 recto	The Solomonic column of the original St. Peter's Basilica
5 verso	The Colosseum
6 recto	The Pantheon
6 verso	The Trajan's Column
7 recto	The Column of Marcus Aurelius
7 verso	The Equestrian Statue of Marcus Aurelius
8 recto	The Colossus of Barletta
8 verso	The Abandoned Ariadne in Vatican
9 recto	The Apollo Belvedere
9 verso	The Laocoon
10 recto bis	The Dioskouros on the Quirinal Hill ("opus Praxitelis")
10 recto	The Urania Farnese restored
10 verso	The Dioskouros on the Quirinal Hill ("opus Fidiae")
10 v. bis + 11 r.	Fireworks at the Castel Sant'Angelo
11 verso	Sibilla Eritrea from Sistine Chapel of Michelangelo
12 recto	Asaf, Giosafat and Ioram in Sistine Chapel of Michelangelo
12 verso	Maenad from Hellenistic relief
13 recto	Herakles and the Cretan bull
13 verso	The "Grande Fregio" from the Volta Dorata
14 recto	The "Grande Fregio" from the Volta Dorata
14 verso	Tropaion from the Nymphaeum divi Alexandri
15 recto	Tropaion from the Nymphaeum divi Alexandri
15 verso	Tragic Masks
16 recto	Tragic Masks
16 verso	Sculptures from the Pantheon; Roman shoes
17 recto	Relief of Dionysus and Ikarios, head of Athena and lion
17 verso	Head of Perikles and the statue of Eros sleeping
18 recto	The Pasquino
18 verso	The Arch of the Argentarii and the Arch of Ianus
19 recto	The Arch of Constantine
19 verso	Nicchione of Belvedere in Vatican by Bramante
20 recto	The Arch of Titus

10. Appendix II - Annotations on the Hertziana drawings (inv. Dv 570-340 gr raro)

Pl. 5 (room 35): «Tinta generale di Cinabro solo» (Meyboom-Moormann 2013, II, fig. 35.3: the image is reflected).

Pl. 7 (room 54): «Tinta gener. dal fondo, o perla sporco, e li piccoli fondi, di terra d'ombra carico, e la fascia di cinabro, ricamata di giallo, con le ombre nel fondo» (Meyboom-Moormann 2013, II, fig. 54.5).

Pl. 8 (room 48): «Tinta generale bianca, tutto ornata di color rosso cinabro sporco» (Meyboom-Moormann 2013, II, fig. 48.8).

Pl. 10 (room 50): «Tinta generale, di bianco perlino. Dá questa parte invece della candeliera viva una fascia grande color terra, ed un altra di donnine, già piccola?» (Meyboom-Moormann 2013, II, fig. 50.7).

Pl. 11 (room 55): «Tinta generale di Bianco perlino chiaro» (Meyboom-Moormann 2013, II, fig. 55.6).

Pl. 12 (room 79): «Tinta generale bianco sporco …» (Meyboom-Moormann 2013, II, fig. 79.12).

Pl. 13 (room 80): «Tutto il partito è diviso da tre fascette due gialle ed una turchina in mezzo. Il quadro di mezzo, insieme agli altri non indicati, vanno bianchi con figure di color naturale. Dove è segnato col n.o 2. deve esser marmo di fondo verde sporco, e marm. di lacca, Tutte le fasciette, e cornici gialle devono essere intagliate di rosso scuro» (Meyboom-Moormann 2013, II, fig. 80.11).

Pl. 14 (room 32): «Tinta generale a(?) oro perfetto, anche dentro li quadri, dove non si vede alcuna tinta» (Meyboom-Moormann 2013, II, fig. 32.6).

Pl. 15 (room 31): «Tinta generale del fondo. Giallo di Zaffarano» (Meyboom-Moormann 2013, II, fig. 31.6).

Pl. 19 (room 23): «Tinta generale ... (?) d'inghilterra carico, ed i veli verdi sporchi, trasparenti Li ...(?) non indicati, sono tutti di Verde sporco, con i ...(?) gialli» (Meyboom-Moormann 2013, II, fig. 23.3).

Pl. 20 (room 54): «Tinta generale Celeste chiaro. Tutte le colonne, e cornici non indicate vanno c.e celeste sporco, più carico del fondo. Le figure di color naturale. Gli angoli fori del tondo di color giallo chiaro» (Meyboom-Moormann 2013, II, fig. 54.3).

Pl. 21 (room 50): «Tinta generale dall'indietro c.r Celeste chiaro. Il Zoccolo di marmo, le cornici del .....(?) terra sporcha, ma chiara. Le figure non indicate, sono di color naturale. Le colonnette non indicate, vanno c.e giallo in ombra» (Meyboom-Moormann 2013, II, fig. 50.4: the image is reflected)

Pl. 22 (room 55): «Fondo bianco, Cornice del zoccolo, C.a terra sporca. Zoccolo marmo rigato (?)» (Meyboom-Moormann 2013, II, fig. 55.4).

Pl. 24 (room 31): «Tinta del fondo. Giallo paglino. Le figure di color naturale, ed il resto di giallo rossiccio poco più scuro del fono (fondo?)» (Meyboom-Moormann 2013, II, fig. 31.2).

Pl. 27 (room 33): «Tinta generale c.e Rosso di Cinabro. Ciò, che non è indicato colla tinta deve essere di color verde sporco, tendente al giallo, riservate le figure, quali sono di color naturale» (Meyboom-Moormann 2013, II, fig. 33.6).

11. Appendix III - Ludovico Mirri's album

Room (numeration according to Fabbrini 1995)	Watercolors by F. Smuglewicz, V. Brenna and M. Carloni in Louvre Album *Bains de Titus* (inv. 18104-18153 + 18298-18367) Pinot De Villechenon 1998	Engravings of M. Carloni after drawings of F. Smuglewicz, V. Brenna *Vestigia delle terme di Tito e loro interne pitture*, Rome 1776 2 Voll.	Paragraphs in G. Carletti's description *Vestigia delle terme di Tito e loro interne pitture*, Rome 1776
		1 (Vol. 1)	
	1 (F. Smuglewicz)	2 (Vol. 1)	
	2 (V. Brenna)	3 (Vol. 1)	
	3 (V. Brenna)	4 (Vol. 1)	V
32 (Volta Nera)	53 (F. Smuglewicz)	5 (Vol. 1)	X
29 (Volta delle Civette)	7 (F. Smuglewicz, V. Brenna)	6 (Vol. 1)	XI
33 (Volta Rossa)	16 (F. Smuglewicz, V. Brenna)	7 (Vol. 1)	XII
33 (Volta Rossa)	17 (F. Smuglewicz, V. Brenna)	8 (Vol. 1)	XIV
33 (Volta Rossa)	18 (F. Smuglewicz, V. Brenna)	9 (Vol. 1)	XVII
33 (Volta Rossa)	14 (V. Brenna)	10 (Vol. 1)	XV
33 (Volta Rossa)	15 (F. Smuglewicz)	11 (Vol. 1)	XVI
33 (Volta Rossa)	8 (F. Smuglewicz, V. Brenna)	12 (Vol. 1)	XVIII
33 (Volta Rossa)	13 (F. Smuglewicz)	13 (Vol. 1)	XIX
33 (Volta Rossa)	11 (F. Smuglewicz)	14 (Vol. 1)	XX
33 (Volta Rossa)	9 (F. Smuglewicz)	15 (Vol. 1)	XXI
33 (Volta Rossa)	10 (F. Smuglewicz)	16 (Vol. 1)	XXII
33 (Volta Rossa)	12 (F. Smuglewicz)?	17 (Vol. 1)	XXIII
37 (Volta Blu o dei giocolieri)	19 (F. Smuglewicz, V. Brenna)	18 (Vol. 1)	XXV
54 (Volta di Dioniso)	20 (F. Smuglewicz, V. Brenna)	19 (Vol. 1)	XXVI
54 (Volta di Dioniso)	22 (F. Smuglewicz)	20 (Vol. 1)	XXVIII
54 (Volta di Dioniso)	23 (F. Smuglewicz, V. Brenna)	21 (Vol. 1)	XXIX
55 (Ares e Afrodite in volo)	29 (F. Smuglewicz)	22 (Vol. 1)	XLIX
55 (Ares e Afrodite in volo)	30 (F. Smuglewicz)	23 (Vol. 1)	XLVII
28	58 (F. Smuglewicz)	24 (Vol. 2)	LX
80 (Volta Dorata)	45 (F. Smuglewicz)	25 (Vol. 2)	LVIII
55 (Ares e Afrodite in volo)	26 (F. Smuglewicz, V. Brenna)	26 (Vol. 2)	XLIV
50 (Volta delle Aquile)	24 (F. Smuglewicz, V. Brenna)	27 (Vol. 2)	XXXII
80 (Volta Dorata)	48 (F. Smuglewicz)	28 (Vol. 2)	LV
80 (Volta Dorata)	47 (F. Smuglewicz)	29 (Vol. 2)	LIII
80 (Volta Dorata)	46 (F. Smuglewicz)	30 (Vol. 2)	LIV
50 (Volta delle Aquile)	36 (F. Smuglewicz)	31 (Vol. 2)	XXXV
50 (Volta delle Aquile)	38 (F. Smuglewicz)	32 (Vol. 2)	XXXV
50 (Volta delle Aquile)	37 (F. Smuglewicz)	33 (Vol. 2)	XXXVI
55 (Ares e Afrodite in volo)	27 (F. Smuglewicz)	34 (Vol. 2)	XLV
55 (Ares e Afrodite in volo) E wall	33 (F. Smuglewicz)	35 (Vol. 2)	XL
55 (Ares e Afrodite in volo) E wall	32 (F. Smuglewicz)	36 (Vol. 2)	XLIII
48 (Volta Bianca) S side	51 (F. Smuglewicz, V. Brenna)?	37 (Vol. 2)	XXX
31 (Volta Gialla)	56 (F. Smuglewicz, V. Brenna)	38 (Vol. 2)	XII
31 (Volta Gialla)	55 (V. Brenna)	39 (Vol. 2)	XII
32 (Volta Nera)	54 (F. Smuglewicz, V. Brenna)	40 (Vol. 2)	X
23 (Volta Marrone)	4 (V. Brenna)	41 (Vol. 2)	LXIII
80 (Volta Dorata)	43 (F. Smuglewicz, V. Brenna)	42 (Vol. 2)	LI
80 (Volta Dorata)	44 (F. Smuglewicz)	43 (Vol. 2)	LVII
50 (Volta delle Aquile)	41 (F. Smuglewicz)	44 (Vol. 2)	XXXIII
55 (Ares e Afrodite in volo) E wall	25 (F. Smuglewicz)	45 (Vol. 2)	XXXIX
80 (Volta Dorata)	49 (F. Smuglewicz)	46 (Vol. 2)	LVI
23 (Volta Marrone)	6 (F. Smuglewicz)	47 (Vol. 2)	LXII
80 (Volta Dorata)	50 (F. Smuglewicz)	48 (Vol. 2)	LII
55 (Ares e Afrodite in volo)	31 (F. Smuglewicz)	49 (Vol. 2)	XLVII
50 (Volta delle Aquile)	39 (F. Smuglewicz)	50 (Vol. 2)	XXXVII
50 (Volta delle Aquile)	40 (F. Smuglewicz)	51 (Vol. 2)	XXXVIII
55 (Ares e Afrodite in volo)	28 (F. Smuglewicz)	52 (Vol. 2)	XLVI
55 (Ares e Afrodite in volo) E wall	35 (F. Smuglewicz)	53 (Vol. 2)	XLII
55 (Ares e Afrodite in volo) E wall	34 (F. Smuglewicz)	54 (Vol. 2)	XLI
48 (Volta Bianca) N side	42 (F. Smuglewicz, V. Brenna)?	55 (Vol. 2)	XXXI
79 (Volta a cerchi)	52 (F. Smuglewicz, V. Brenna)	56 (Vol. 2)	L
27	57 (F. Smuglewicz, V. Brenna)	57 (Vol. 2)	LIX
35 (Volta Arancione)	59 (F. Smuglewicz, V. Brenna)	58 (Vol. 2)	XXIV
23 (Volta Marrone)	5 (F. Smuglewicz, V. Brenna)	59 (Vol. 2)	LXI
	21 (F. Smuglewicz)	60 (Vol. 2)	XXVI
	60 (Nozze Aldobrandini). F. Smuglewicz (M. Carloni pinxt)	61 (Vol. 2): Nozze Aldobrandini	LXIV

CONCLUSIONS

*For this reason are the works of Pericles all the
more to be wondered at; they were created in
a short time for all time; each one of them, in its
beauty, was even then and at once antique;
but in the freshness of its vigour it is, even to
the present day, recent and newly wrought.
Such is the bloom of perpetual newness, as it were,
upon these works, which makes them ever to look
untouched by time, as though the unfaltering
breath of an ageless spirit had been infused
into them[967]* (Plutarch, *Pericles*, 13.3).

The visitor that nowadays wanders into the rooms of the Domus Aurea, raising his gaze to the ceilings, may perceive in a certain way the same sensation of "perpetual newness" that Plutarch felt in front of the artworks and monuments of the Athenian acropolis. It is not simply a fascination for something that has just arrived to us, despite the centuries that have passed. It is more related to the features of the ancient model itself, something that "in its beauty, was even then and at once antique".

As we have seen through the pages of this dissertation, the Domus Aurea paintings became one of the most copied ancient models in the Renaissance age, because of their "ageless" beauty and their capacity to provide new solutions to the artistic needs of that time. Among all paintings of the Domus Aurea, the Volta Dorata was copied more than any other Neronian vault or vault. While all the Domus Aurea's paintings attracted the attention of artists because of their decorative ornaments (the grotesques), the Volta Dorata fascinated artists also because of its figural scenes, geometrical system, and precious

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[967] Transl. by B. Perrin 1951 (vol. III, ed. Harvard University Press): ὅθεν καὶ μᾶλλον θαυμάζεται τὰ Περικλέους ἔργα πρὸς πολὺν χρόνον ἐν ὀλίγῳ γενόμενα. κάλλει μὲν γὰρ ἕκαστον εὐθὺς ἦν τότε ἀρχαῖον, ἀκμῇ δὲ μέχρι νῦν πρόσφατόν ἐστι καὶ νεουργόν: οὕτως ἐπανθεῖ καινότης ἀεί τις1 ἄθικτον ὑπὸ τοῦ χρόνου διατηροῦσα τὴν ὄψιν, ὥσπερ ἀειθαλὲς πνεῦμα καὶ ψυχὴν ἀγήρῳ καταμεμιγμένην τῶν ἔργων ἐχόντων (Plutarch, *Pericles*, 13.3).

decorations (stucco decoration, golden pigments, precious stones nestled in the moldings). For this reason, as we have seen, the Renaissance documentation of the Volta Dorata is attested not only until the first decades of the 16th century (as had happened for the other rooms of the Domus Aurea), but was to be copied throughout the century, until the very last decades. Therefore, as this research has aimed to demonstrate, the wide graphic documentation of the Volta Dorata is important for two main reasons. From an archaeological point of view, the drawings are an important source for reconstructing part of the original figural system of the vault and to understand its relationship with Roman art of that time. On the other hand, from an artistic point of view, the drawings allow us to detect the influence that this ancient model had on Renaissance artists. In fact, the drawings of the Volta Dorata depict specific parts of Roman paintings because draftsmen were interested in learning precise details from them. Owing to their interests, they precisely depicted the artistic or architectural detail that interested them and, sometimes, they modified what they were copying. For this reason, the graphic documentation that we have studied has been chosen not only for the archaeologically relevant data that it provides, but we have analyzed these documents also in themselves to show the processes of the reception of the Antique in the Renaissance age.

Therefore, this research has started from the composition of the catalogue of drawings that consists of 26 graphic documents. In some cases, they have been studied for the first time in full detail (e.g. CAT. 4, 5, 7), others have been identified for the first time as copies of certain details of the Volta Dorata (e.g. CAT. 14, 15, 18). However, as pointed out in the *Introduction*, it is not a simple matter of quantity, but mostly of the approach of study. We have tried not only to assess whether the archaeological details depicted are reliable or not, we have also analyzed how the drawing was copied (on the spot or on the table from another drawing), why the artists copied specific details and which relation exists with the other drawings that form part of the same Renaissance drawing-book of ancient models. In our analysis, we have also paid attention to the mistakes or the absence of some details that may have an important value since they testify to the genesis and the history of the drawing. For instance, such clues have allowed us to

understand how a certain drawing is a copy of another drawing (e.g. CAT. 9 in relation to CAT. 10) or whether the artist was faithful to the drawing that he was copying (e.g. CAT. 2 in relation to CAT. 1). Another fine similar case concerns the representation of the angular medallion of the vault . Thanks to the errors made by the artists and owing to the archaeological evidence, it has been possible to understand why the artists copied the angular medallion with a wrong orientation and, in addition, how such mistakes were connected to the way of copying the ancient model on the spot. Furthermore, in studying each graphic document, attention has been devoted to the material and stylistic features of the drawing (dimensions, type of support, technique, and hatching used). Thanks to the study of the drawings within the collections where they are preserved or through the remote support of the curators, we have paid attention to study some precise material features that are not often analyzed by scholars. Furthermore, where it has been possible, we have reported the watermarks and the distance between chain wires and laid wires in the paper. In fact, these features often convey evidence for assessing the provenance of further drawings of antiquities from the same drawing-book, as in the case of CAT. 10. Finally, when the drawing has had many different attributions or the draftsman has not been identified, we have mentioned the main evidence that has suggested the different attributions. Of course, considering the different attributions and the relative issues, we have given a personal opinion about the most likely attribution, but we have not provided further attributions since this is not among the aims of the present research. In the case of the Domus Aurea's drawings, the knowledge of the authorship might have an important consequence since Renaissance artists often left their signatures on the Domus Aurea's walls. Therefore, it is possible to check whether the name of the draughtsman appears on the list of signatures transcribed by Dacos (as can be seen in the case of Amico Aspertini and Filippino Lippi) or not.

Given the large amount of data and evidence that has evinced from the analysis of graphic documents, three main topics needed to be analyzed in depth and, to each of them, one chapter has been devoted.

We have focused our attention on the history of the identifications provided by antiquarians and artists for the antique building adorned

by the "underground paintings". In fact, in certain drawings the draftsmen define these rooms as remains of the Baths of Titus or even of the Domus Aurea (e.g. CAT. 1, CAT. 4). Only in the 19th century, it was possible to confirm the ownership of the Oppian building to Emperor Nero, although a couple of drawings show that, already in the 16th century, there was the idea that the decorated rooms could have belonged to the Domus Aurea of Nero. On the basis of geographical maps, guides of Rome, and documents of excavations, we have discussed the clues and evidence that, since the discovery of the Domus Aurea, suggested to antiquarians different archaeological identifications. Thanks to the analysis of the medieval literary sources, we have shown how the shadow of the Domus Aurea has always wandered around the area of Esquiline Hill and Colosseum valley. Since the Medieval age, the descriptions of how beautiful and rich this "Golden House" was have fascinated generations of antiquarians and artists, as their imaginative descriptions and graphic reproductions show. The collective imagination of Nero's myth was particularly vivid in the Middle Ages and the popular memory of his Domus Aurea continued to circulate mostly in popular oral traditions. From the discovery of the underground rooms around the 1470s, the desire to identify the Oppian building increased with the decades. Although artists and antiquarians were not always able to identify the different ruins of the Oppian Hill, they were shrewd enough to realize that the underground rooms of the Oppian Hill did not belong to the same ruins visible on the same hill (i.e. Trajan's Baths). Therefore, we have focused our attention on understanding how some antiquarians were able to suppose that those rooms belonged to the Domus Aurea of Nero. One method of identification was the comparison between the literary descriptions of Latin sources and the archaeological evidence discovered in the underground rooms and adjacent areas (the golden stucco of the paintings, and columns from a possible porch, metal pipelines, the proximity with the Colosseum). Owing to this material evidence which recalls the portrait of the Domus Aurea described by ancient sources, some antiquarians could therefore suppose the identification of the underground rooms as the remains of the Domus Aurea. Another method of identification was based on the comparison between the archaeological evidence of the underground rooms and

those coming from other locations which were considered to belong to Nero (e.g. "Frontespizio di Nerone"). Therefore, it has been possible to conclude that in the 16th century some archaeological evidence sufficed to "re-activate" the memory of the Domus Aurea and to attribute this new discovery to that lost monument of Antiquity, that was Nero's Domus Aurea. Hereafter, in order to understand the reason why such awareness went lost, we have studied what happened to the underground rooms of the Oppian Hill from the 17th until the 19th century. We have taken into account the main excavations and the new discoveries that were made inside the underground grottoes and in the area of the Oppian Hill. We have shown how the memory of the archaeological evidence found within the rooms of the Domus Aurea was forgotten by antiquarians of the 17th and 18th centuries. Hence, they began to consider the Oppian building in different ways according to the interpretations that they gave to the ancient sources, e.g. Titus' Baths, Trajan's Baths, Maecenas' House or Baths. Concerning the excavations in the area of the Oppian Hill in the 17th and 18th centuries, we have stressed that in the 1770s an ambitious editorial purpose for the "underground building" attracted the interest of Ludovico Mirri, who began a new and wide-ranging archaeological excavation with the aim of publishing the Roman paintings. Thanks to the artistic impact that Mirri's engraving albums had on antiquarians, at the beginning of the 19th century, new archaeological attention was devoted to the Oppian building by A. De Romanis and S. Piale. Owing to the archaeological clues and hints of De Romanis, Piale arrived at the conclusion that such underground rooms might have belonged to the Domus Aurea of Nero. Finally, thanks to the studies and research of R. Lanciani and F. Weege, we have shown how scholars certified the ownership of the Oppian building to the Domus Aurea, confirming those impressions that, since the discovery of the underground paintings, had circulated among the 16th-century antiquarians.

In other two chapters of the dissertation, we have focused our attention on the two main research topics that the drawings allow us to study. Firstly, we have shown which archaeological details the drawings record and how they can be used for reconstructing part of the original appearance of the Volta Dorata (and its figural system). Secondly, we have studied those artistic clues that allow us to understand how the

study of the Volta Dorata was concretely practiced by artists and how their artistic interests developed through the centuries.

We have analyzed the archaeological evidence that nowadays is visible in room 80, especially the decoration of the vault, and how it matches with the evidence provided by drawings. Here, in the first part of the third chapter, we have introduced room 80 in respect to its location and its general decoration system (floor, walls, vault) in relation to the other rooms of the Oppian building. Then, we have taken into account which interpretations have been provided by scholars for the possible role of the ancient painter Famulus in the decoration of room 80. Afterwards, we have stressed how the geometrical system of the Volta Dorata fits into the archaeological parallels of Roman ceilings and how its perspective illusion recalls the architecture of the octagonal court (room 128). Then, the results of Meyboom-Moormann's studies about the existing archaeological evidence of the Volta Dorata have served to show how drawings allow us to learn some details that are no longer visible, such as colors and different types of decoration (e.g. stucco, golden pigments, precious stones). Afterward, we have focused our attention on the figural system of the Volta Dorata, in order to understand which iconological message it might have expressed. Thanks to the comparative analysis of the figural scenes testified by different drawings, it has been possible to assess which drawings are more reliable than other ones and to provide a new interpretation for scene 2. Therefore, considering all figural themes and myths depicted in the figural scenes, we have made clear how they show a contrast between the happy lovers that are the gods and the sad fates of mortal lovers. In fact, while the love of mortals comes to an unhappy ending, the peaceful love of semi-divine figures (such as Nymphs and *Silenoi*) are enjoyed in disengaged and provisory intercourse. Not by chance, as pointed out, this hypothetical reading seems quite likely if we consider the possible use of room 80 as a luxury *triclinium* as a relevant point. Finally, at the end of the chapter, we have shown how, although not numerous, the literary themes depicted on the Volta Dorata and those of other Domus Aurea's ceilings are in line with the myths narrated by the coeval literary sources and those loved by Nero himself. Therefore, in a certain way, it can be argued that in the Volta Dorata the cultural background of the patron might be reflected in the work of his artists.

In the last chapter, we have focused our attention on the reception of the Volta Dorata during the Renaissance and introduced the main draftsmen of the Volta Dorata from the end of the 15th century until the 18th century. We have analyzed the reason why Renaissance artists copied precise details of the Volta Dorata and how their artistic interests developed in the run of the decades of the 16th century. We have pointed out that in the first decades after the discovery of the Domus Aurea the Volta Dorata attracted the attention of the artists because of its figural scenes. In fact, while other ceilings of the Domus Aurea provided many different kinds of grotesque motifs, in the Volta Dorata the latter are almost totally absent, but it provides complex and elegant figural scenes instead. On the other hand, since the beginning of the 16th century, Renaissance artists seemed more interested in certain artistic features that the Volta Dorata was uniquely able to provide: its geometrical system, colors, stucco decoration mixed with painting, and the moldings of the vault 's coffers. For this reason, we can understand exactly why the Volta Dorata was copied by Renaissance artists until the end of the 16th century, while drawings of other Domus Aurea's vaults and ceilings are dated no further than the first half of the 16th century. Furthermore, thanks to some Renaissance drawings inspired by the Volta Dorata and certain Renaissance ceilings, we have shown that the images of the Volta Dorata were shared among various artists and workshops. In some cases, as Pinturicchio's ceilings reveal, the influence of the Volta Dorata was direct and also philologically precise, especially with respect to the ornamental motifs, panel shapes and figural scenes. On the other hand, as the case of Peruzzi's ceilings demonstrates, the motifs and forms of the Volta Dorata were re-used in more creative ways, assembling and melting different elements from the Neronian vault .

Afterwards, we have studied how in the subsequent centuries the studies of the Volta Dorata and Domus Aurea's paintings by artists developed. We have shown how the function of the drawing caused to change the style of the design itself and the techniques of the representation (design, watercolor, engraving). Moreover, we have pointed out how, owing to the function of the drawing as a medium of personal study or antiquarian document for the culture of the ancients, the artist decided to copy precise parts of the vault or the entire vault .

In fact, while in the Renaissance age the drawings of the Volta Dorata were essentially made for personal use of the artists or workshops, in the 17th and 18th centuries the watercolors and engravings of the Volta Dorata (as those of other Domus Aurea paintings copied in these centuries) were made as cultural documents for the myths and habits of the ancient Romans. This implied a stronger focus on figural motifs. Afterwards, we have focused our attention to show how this shift in the design's function – from personal use of the artist to the public domain of antiquarians – may explain a declining use of the Volta Dorata elements in modern ceilings after the 16th century. In fact, no modern ceilings of the 17th or 18th century were inspired by the model of the Volta Dorata (directly or indirectly through other modern ceilings). Finally, we have analyzed the work methodologies of Bartoli and of Mirri's artists, the most active draftsmen of the Domus Aurea's paintings in the 17th and 18th centuries. While in the case of Bartoli it has been possible to show how he copied from other drawings (maybe lost Francisco's watercolors), in the case of Mirri's artists we have stressed the high level of archaeological reliability and the genesis of their "mistakes". At the end of the chapter, we have also paid attention to the graphic documents of the 19th and 20th centuries. Although in these centuries the use of photography seemed to have changed the way the antiquities were documented by archaeologists, here we have shown how the watercolors of A. De Romanis and L. Cartocci had an important role for recording the state of conservation of the Domus Aurea's paintings.

Therefore, through the documents collected and studied in this dissertation, we hope to cast fresh light on the role played by Renaissance drawings in the archaeological reconstructions and in the reception of the Antique in Modern Age. Thanks to the evidence and the clues analyzed in these pages, it is clear that the Volta Dorata was an extremely valuable document not only for Roman art (and "Neronian culture"), but also a model of that "perpetual newness" that Renaissance artists wanted to study and learn during their artistic education. The analysis of these topics has been possible through the study of one kind of artifact, the drawing, and this is something not frequently taken into account by archaeologists and, sometimes, even by art historians themselves.

Before ending this conclusion, we would like to provide one last image that is particularly significant in scientific terms for what we have said, but also important in personal terms for in the last few years, this research has led us through different museums, palaces, and libraries. Last summer, during a visit to the Casa Vasari in Arezzo and in the attempt to understand the iconological message that the decoration of "Sala della Fama" (or "Sala del Camino") expresses, one detail attracted our attention. Vasari decorated this room in August 1548 with, maybe, the collaboration of Stefano Veltroni and Orazio Porta whose drawing of the Volta Dorata we already saw (CAT. 4)[968]. As the name of the room says, the decoration is a tribute to the fame of painting and drawing arts and, not by chance, Vasari expressed here – in the most important room of his house – his point of view about these arts. At the center of the vault , the painter depicted the triumph of Virtue on Fame and Envy. In a certain way, the artist wanted to say that the hard work and the moral virtues of the painter may overcome any kind of injustice and bad luck[969]. On the walls (**fig. 132**), in the upper part, some personifications of the virtues can be seen while, in the lower part of the wall, Vasari depicted famous episodes narrated by Pliny the Elder that concern the most famous ancient painters who were able to deceive nature itself, creating perfect images of the reality[970]. These historical episodes are depicted not simply for erudite taste for the antique sources, but due to the widespread Renaissance belief that ancient artists were better able to create immortal forms of beauty and perfection. However, as discussed above in *Chapter 4*, Renaissance artists were aware that, through the study of antiquity, they might regain such competence from ancient artists, and maybe even improve on it. Not by chance, on the wall of "Sala della Fama", above Pliny's episodes, Vasari depicted the ruins of ancient Rome that inspired his

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[968] For Casa Vasari in Arezzo: Paolucci-Maetzke 1988 (cf. also Baroni 1999, Baggio-Benigni-Toccafondi 2015)

[969] Paolucci-Maetzke 1988, pp. 40-55.

[970] In the wall visible on fig. 1: the personifications of the Virtues are Wisdom, Charity and Prodigality. Below in the monochrome panels (e.g. fake bronze panels), certain mythical episodes narrated by Pliny the Elder can be seen: Alexander the Great who donates Campaspe to Apelles, Protogenes who throws the towel on the painting, Timante who paints the sacrifice of Iphigenia.

generation. Among the square panels with the ruins of Rome, one could not escape our attention (**fig. 133**). Here, we can see the ruins of the Basilica of Maxentius in Rome and, under a hill covered by a flourishing vegetation, Vasari depicted a painter within an underground grotto who is copying some antiquities thanks to the light of a torch. Obviously, Vasari's words mentioned in *Chapter 4* return to our mind: «when I arrived in Rome in February 1538, I stayed there for all June, in the company of Giovambatista Cungi dal Borgo, my apprentice, in order to draw everything that I did not copy the last times, when I have been in Rome, and in particular what was underground in the grottoes»[971]. We do not know if that painter depicted in the fresco is the young Vasari or a simple figure of an anonymous painter. We surely know that, according to one of the most important painters and art historians of the 16th century, still in 1548, the rooms of the Domus Aurea were an essential repertoire from the Antique that artists had to study during their artistic education. And, as we have seen through this research, the Volta Dorata played an important role in fascinating generations of artists and scholars, and continues to do so to the present day.

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[971] «Arrivato dunque in Roma di febbraio l'anno 1538, vi stei tutto giugno, attendendo in compagnia di Giovambatista Cungi dal Borgo, mio garzone, a disegnare tutto quello che mi era rimasto indietro l'altre volte che ero stato in Roma, ed in particolare ciò che era sotto terra nelle grotte» (Vasari 1966-1987, VI [1987], p. 377).

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363

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Catalogue Plates

Pl. 1

CAT. 1

Francisco de Holanda (1517–1585), *Volta Dorata*; 1538–ante 1571, watercolor on paper, 300 x 350 mm; El Escorial, Biblioteca Real de S. Lorenzo, *Os desenhos das antigualhas* (Cod. 28-I-20), foll. 47 *bis verso* - 48 *recto*.

Pl. 2
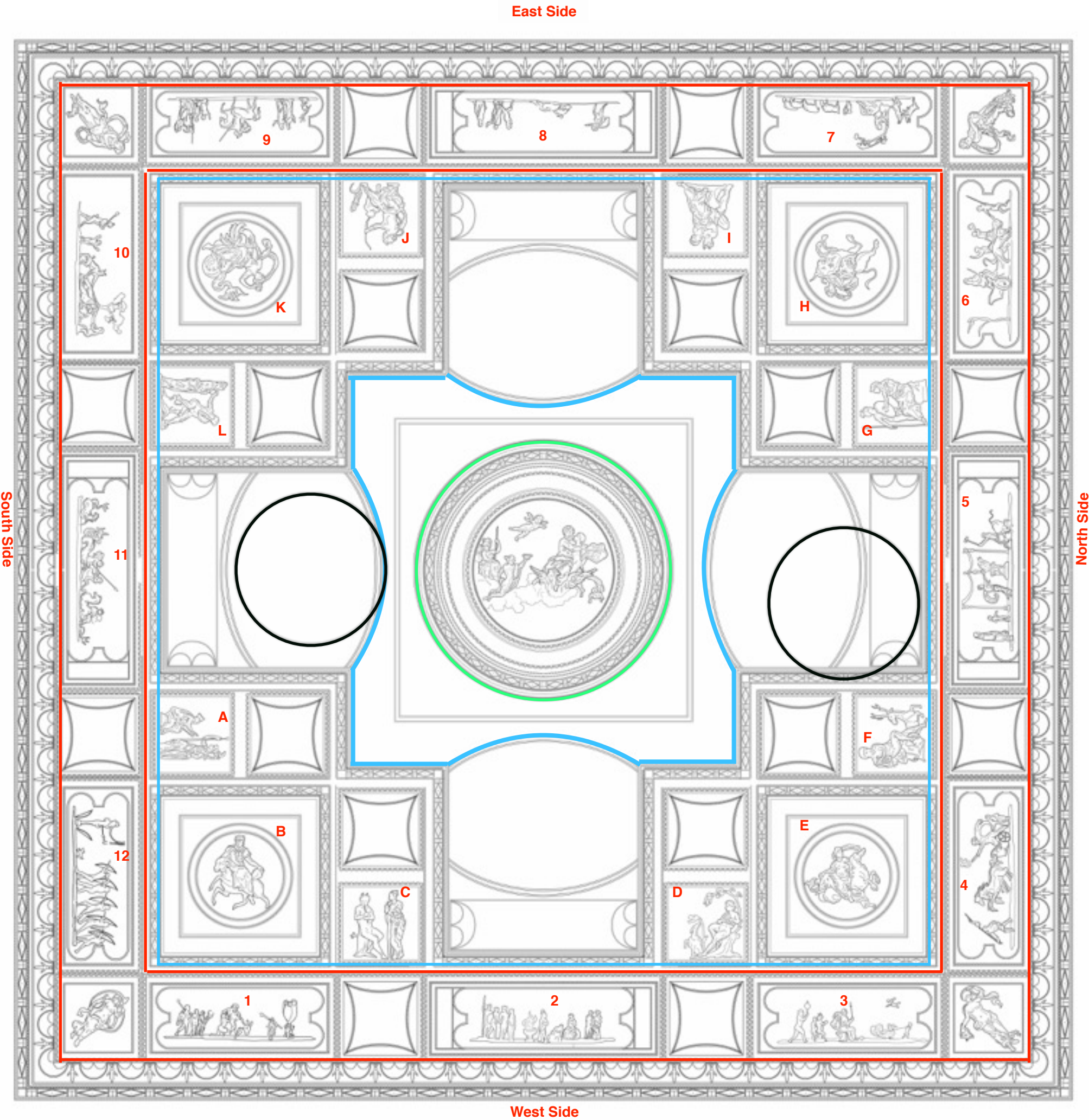
Fig. 1: Profile of the Volta Dorata according to Francisco's watercolor.

External frieze
Internal frieze
Central medallion
Tunnel holes for entering in the room

Pl. 3

CAT. 2
Pietro Santi Bartoli (1635–1700), Volta Dorata; 1658-1674; 415 (height) x 420 (width)
mm.; Glasgow, University Library, Codex Massimi (MS Gen 1496 [HX 110]), fol. LXXV.

Pl. 4
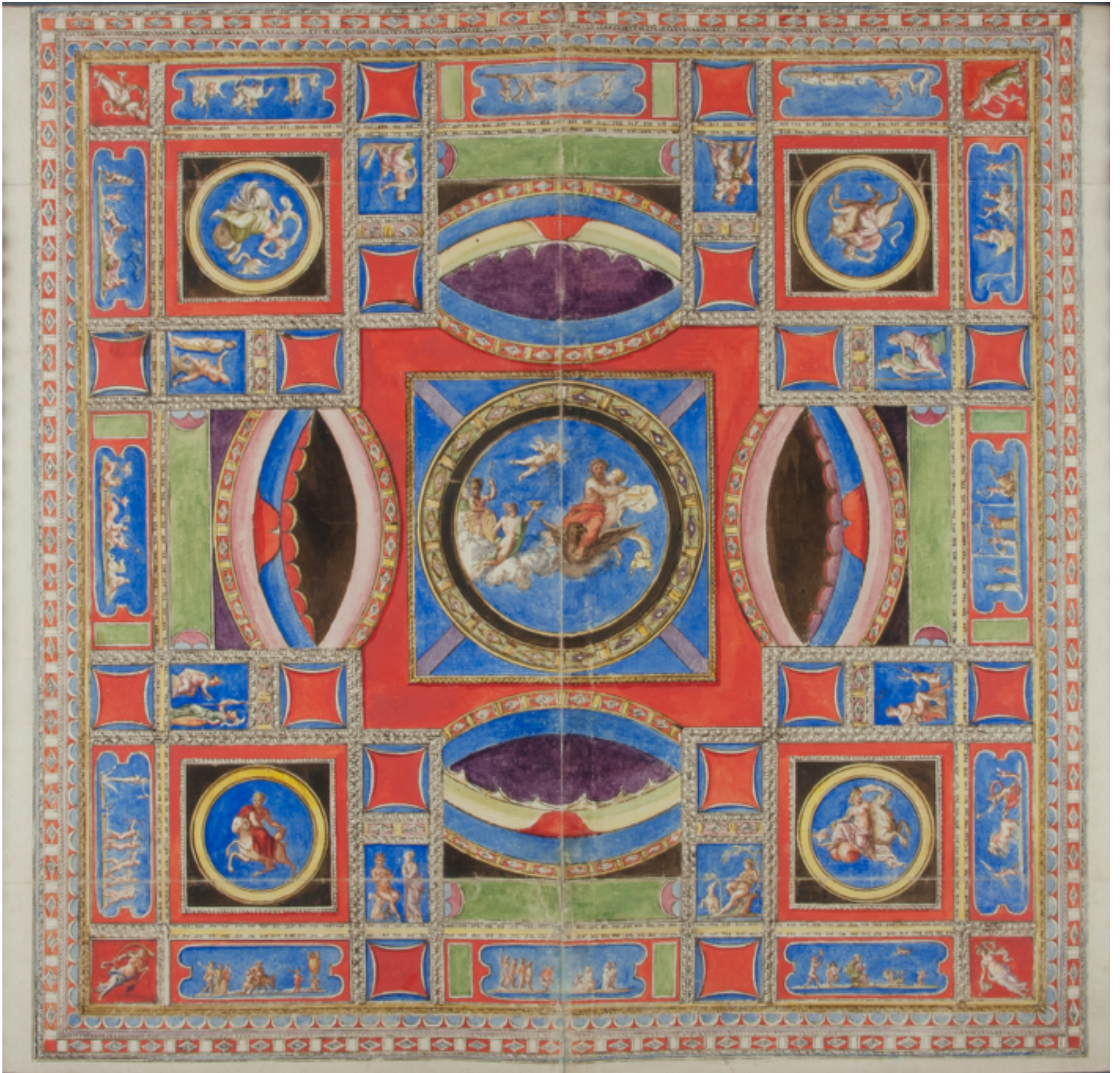
Fig. 1: Pietro Santi Bartoli (1635-1700) or Anton Maria Antonozzi, Volta Dorata, 1670s, Codex Baddeley (Eton University Collection: ECL-TP.20), fol. CXXVII.

Pl. 5
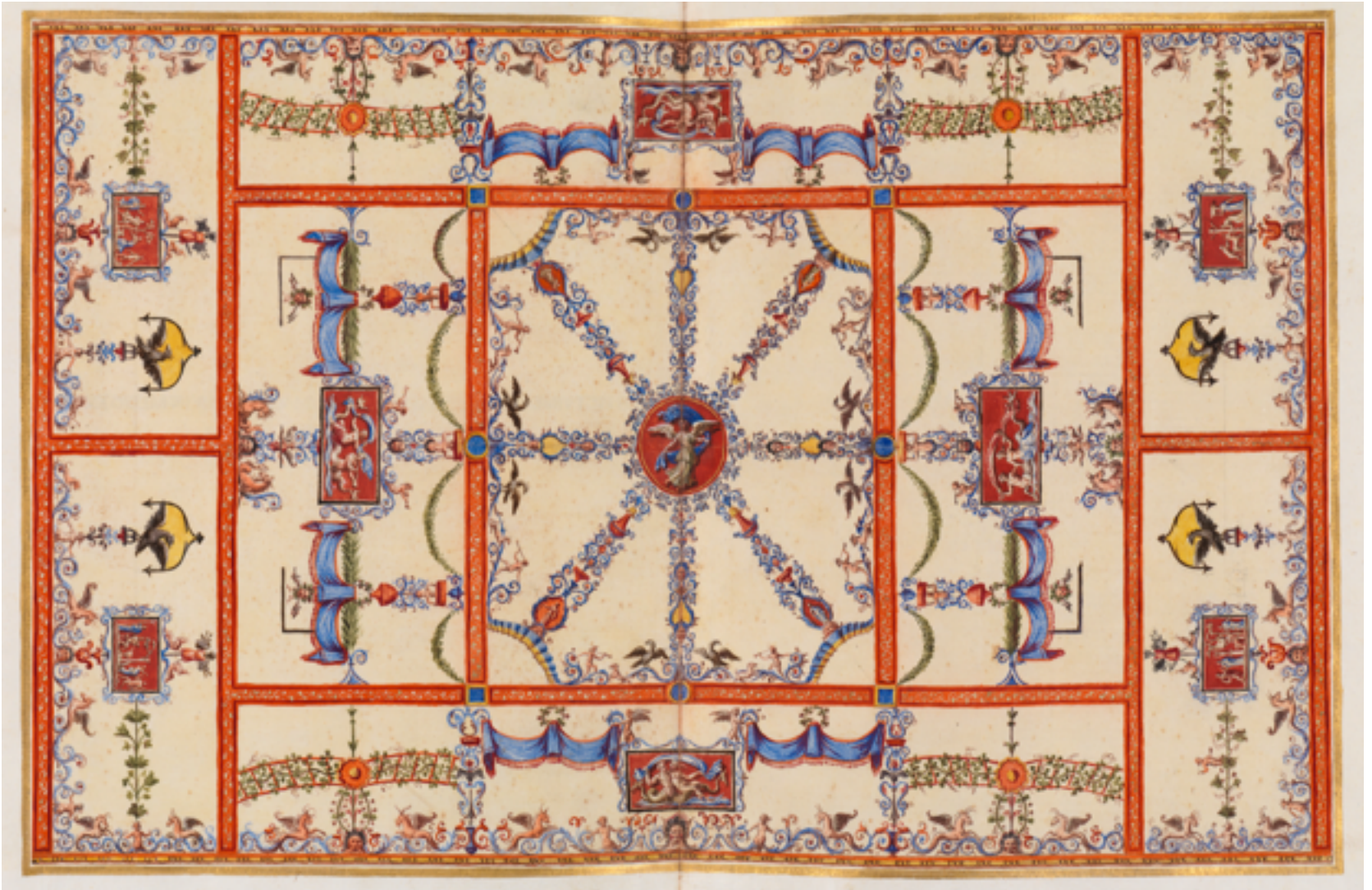
Fig. 1: Pietro Santi Bartoli (1635-1700), Volta Gialla (room 31), 1658-1674, 415 (height) x 420 (width) mm.; Codex Massimi (Glasgow, University Library: MS Gen 1496 [HX 110]), fol. LXIX.
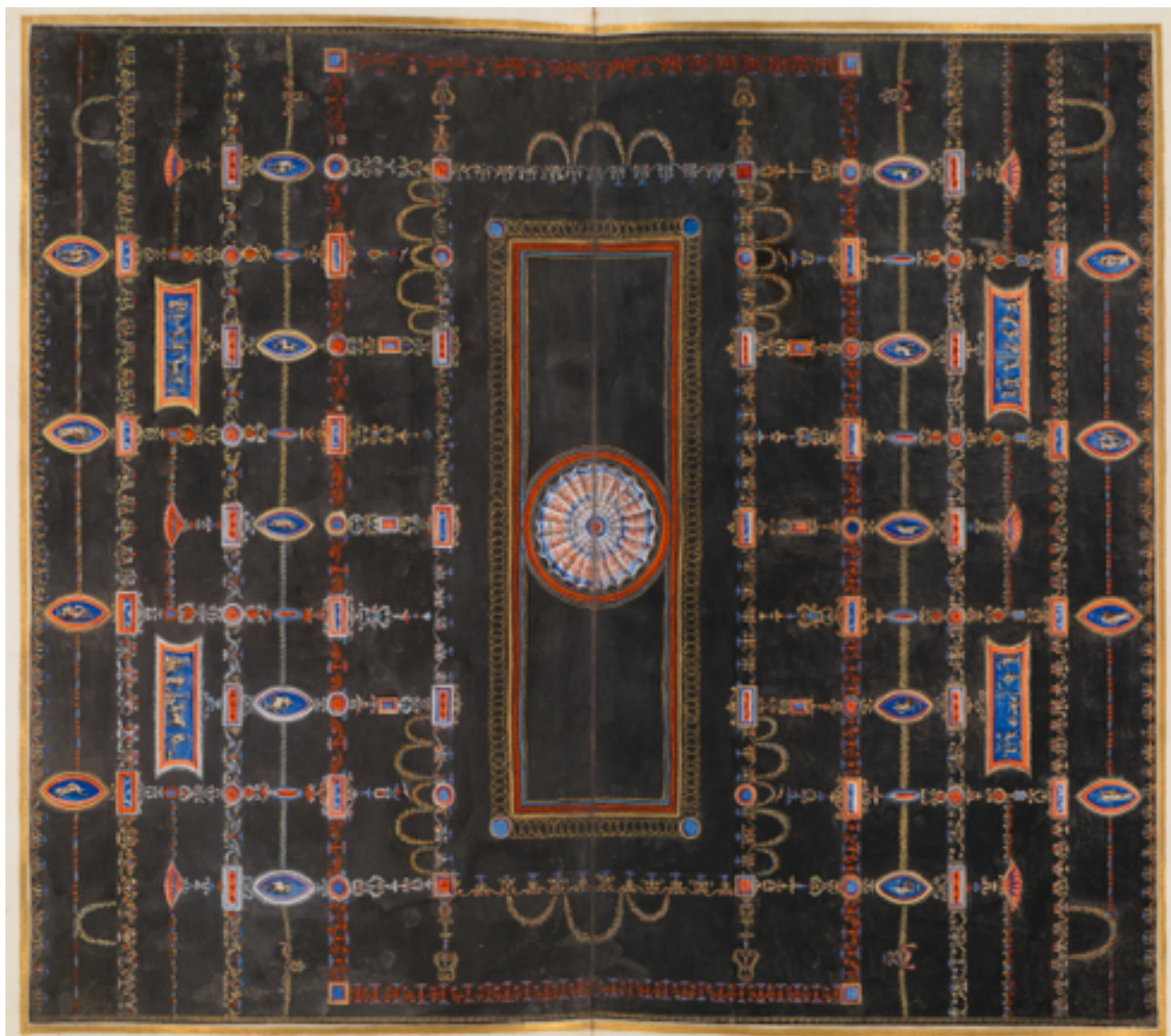
Fig. 2: Pietro Santi Bartoli (1635-1700), Volta Nera (room 32), 1658-1674, 415 (height) x 420 (width) mm.; Codex Massimi (Glasgow, University Library: MS Gen 1496 [HX 110]), fol. LXV.

Pl. 6

Fig. 1: Pietro Santi Bartoli (1635-1700), unknown ceiling of the Domus Aurea (room 35?), 1658-1674, 415 (height) x 420 (width) mm.; Codex Massimi (Glasgow, University Library: MS Gen 1496 [HX 110]), fol. LXXI.

Fig. 2: Pietro Santi Bartoli (1635-1700), Volta degli Stucchi (room 129), 1658-1674, 415 (height) x 420 (width) mm.; Codex Massimi (Glasgow, University Library: MS Gen 1496 [HX 110]), fol. LXXIII.

Pl. 7
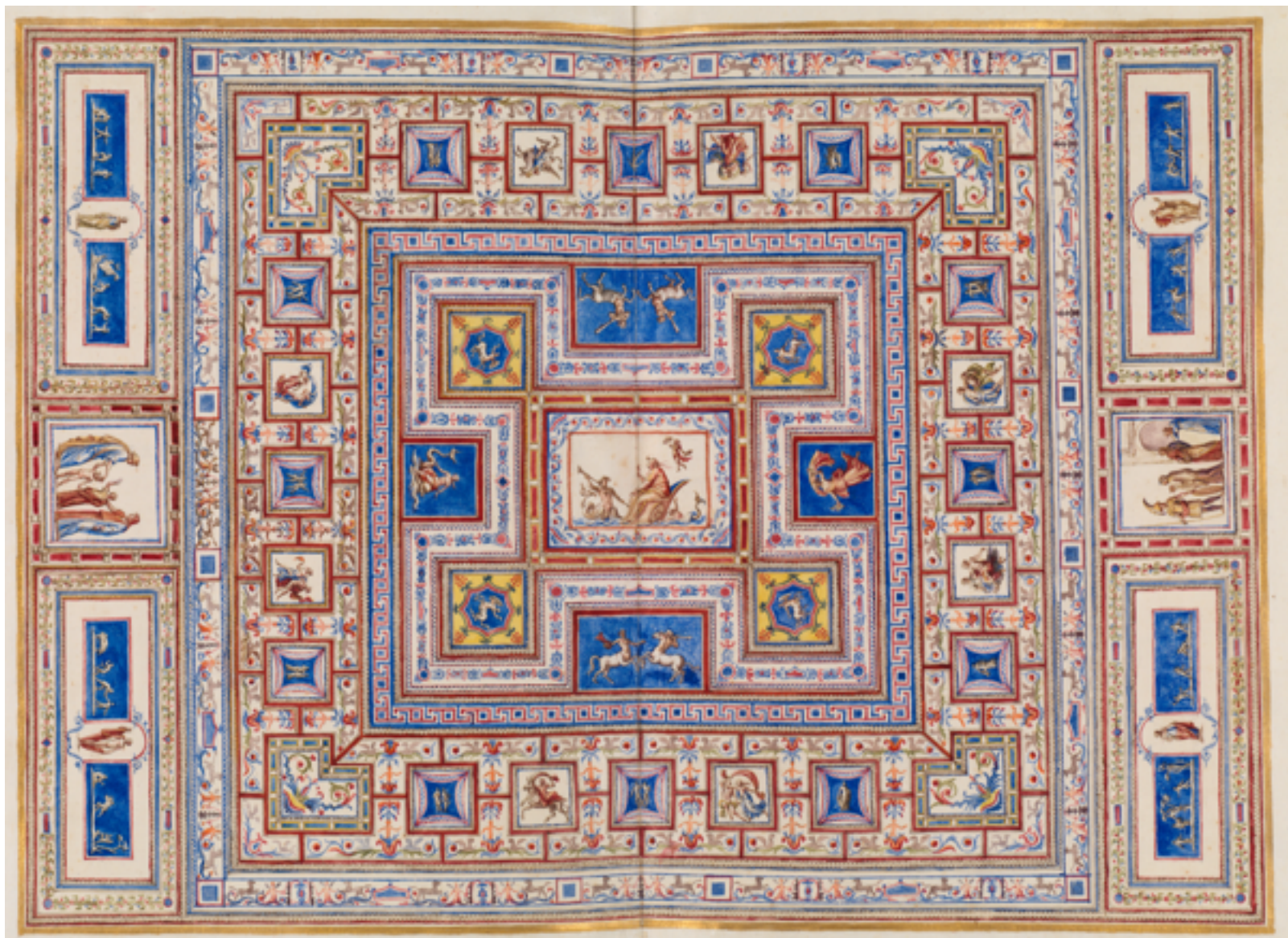
East Side

North Side

East Side
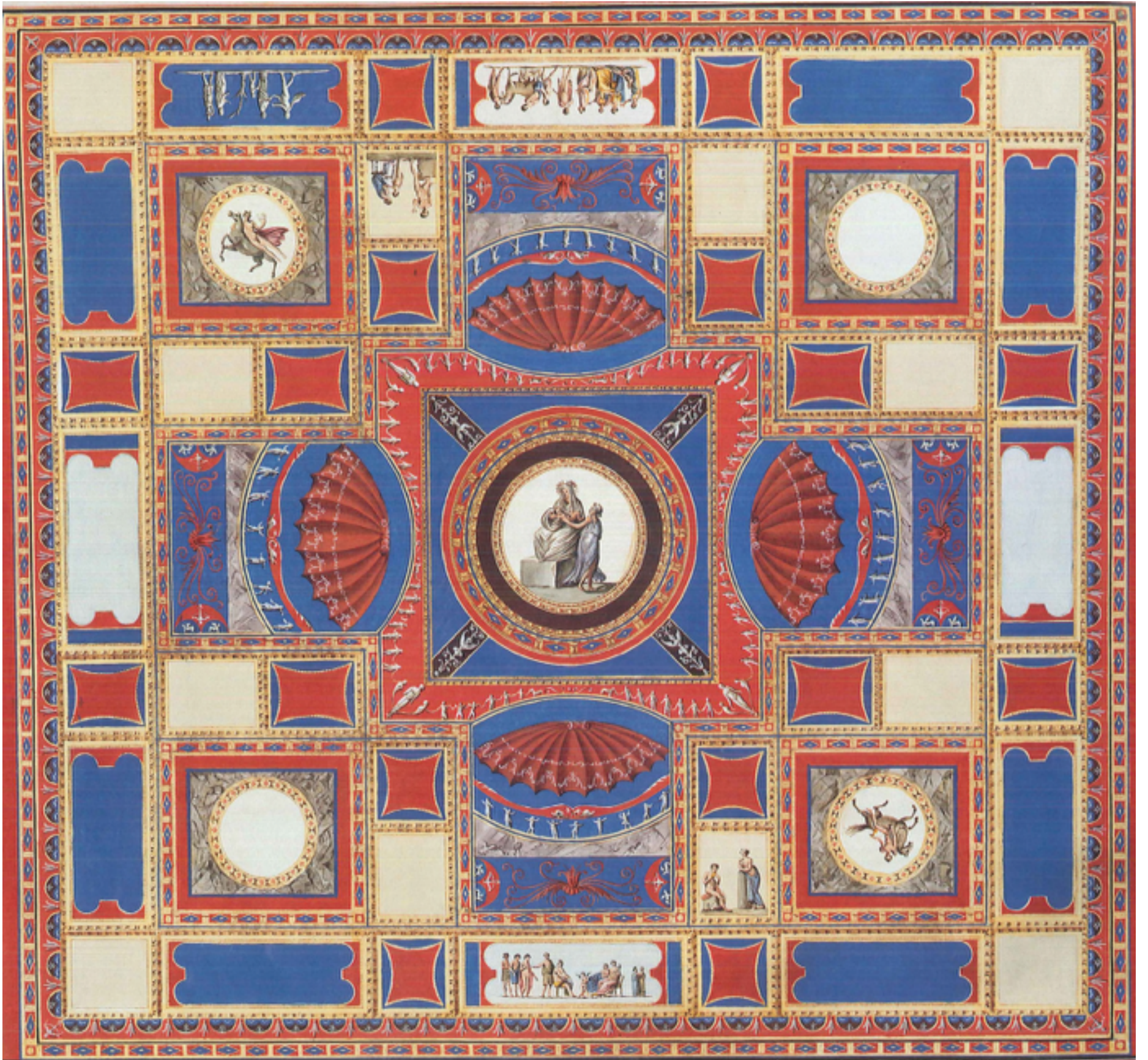
West Side

CAT. 3

Francesco Smuglewicz (1745–1820), Vincenzo Brenna (1745–1820), *Volta Dorata* (in the album "Terme di Tito e le loro interne pitture"), 1776-1777, 542 (height) x 600 (width) mm.; Paris, Louvre collection, inv. 18141 (Pinot de Villechenon 1998, Pl. 43).

Pl. 8
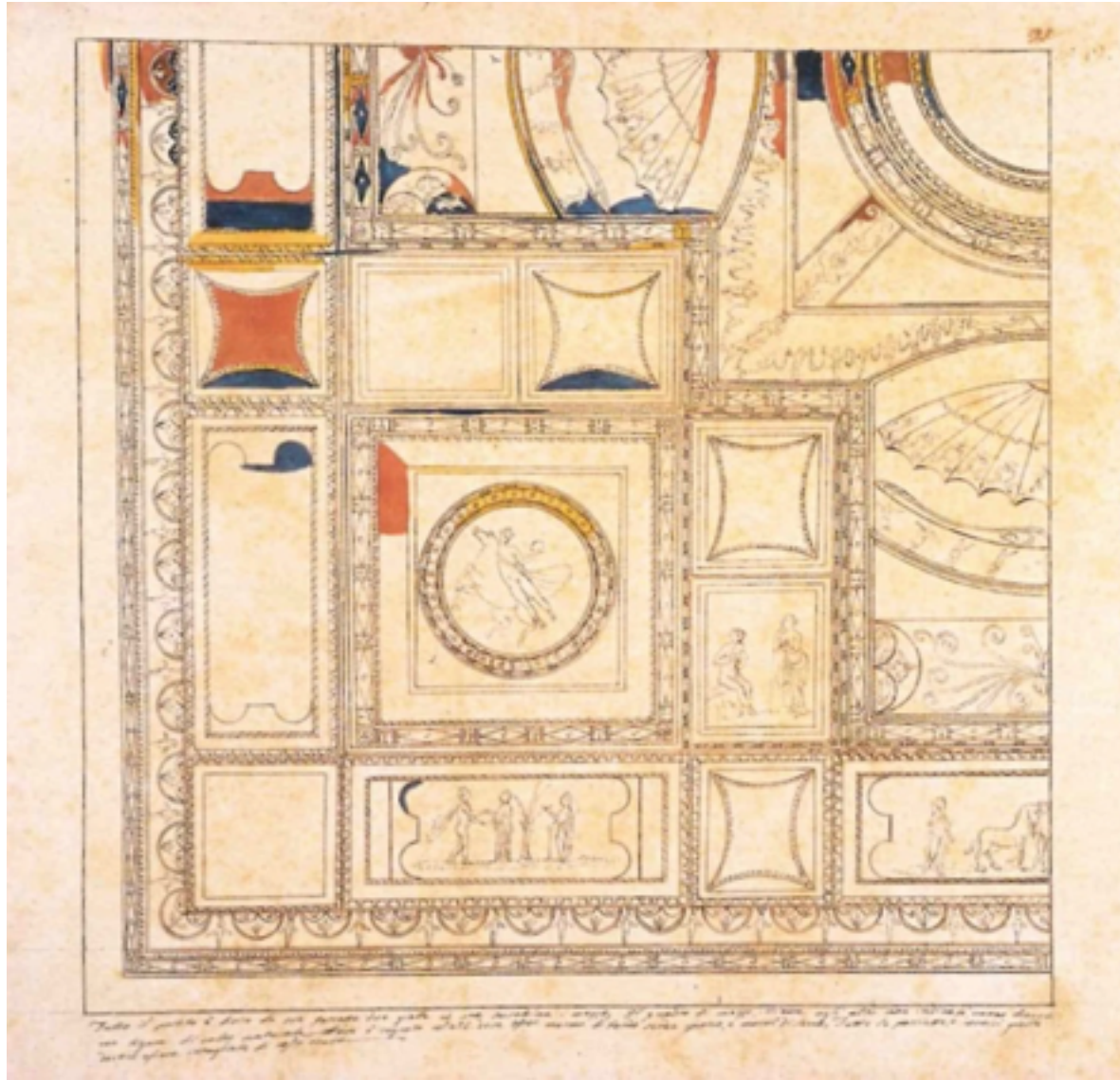
Fig. 1: Drawings of Mirri's artists (Brenna?), drawing on paper partially watercolored, 1774-1776 (scenes H, C – and part of scene 8), Rome, Hertziana Library, Dv 570-3760 grgr raro.

Fig 2: Vincenzo Brenna (1745–1820), watercolor, 240 x 320 mm., dated to 1777, London, V&A Museum (inv. 8479:25).

Pl. 9

Nelle Terme di Tito appresso alle sette Salle nella vigna de' Giou. Gadi opra fa... di Stucco et ornata di pittura
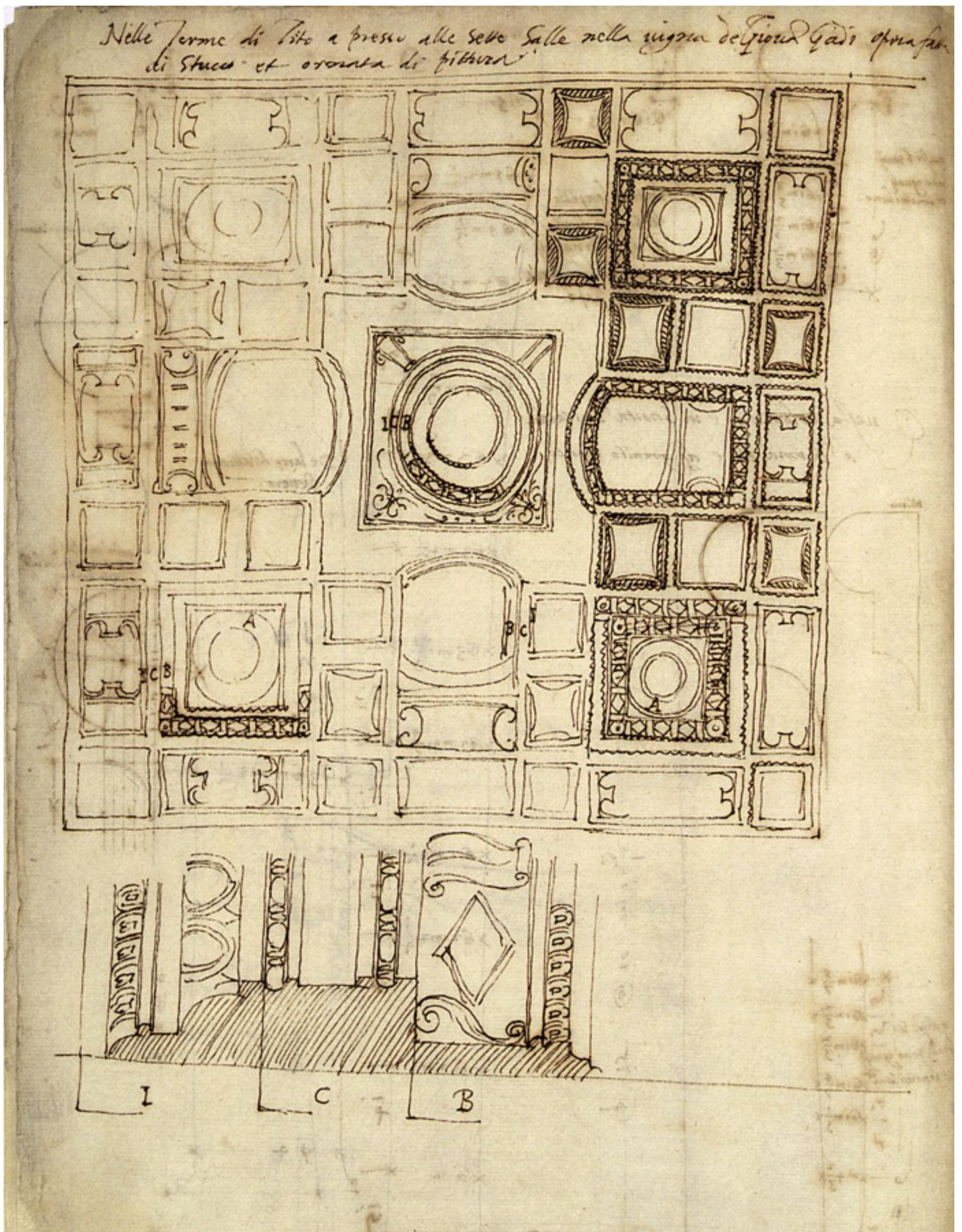
CAT. 4
Attributed to Orazio Porta (1540-1616), *Volta Dorata*; 1570-1580, pen, ink; 235 x 330 mm; Venice, Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana, Ms. It. cl. IV, 149 (=5105), fol. 6 *verso*.
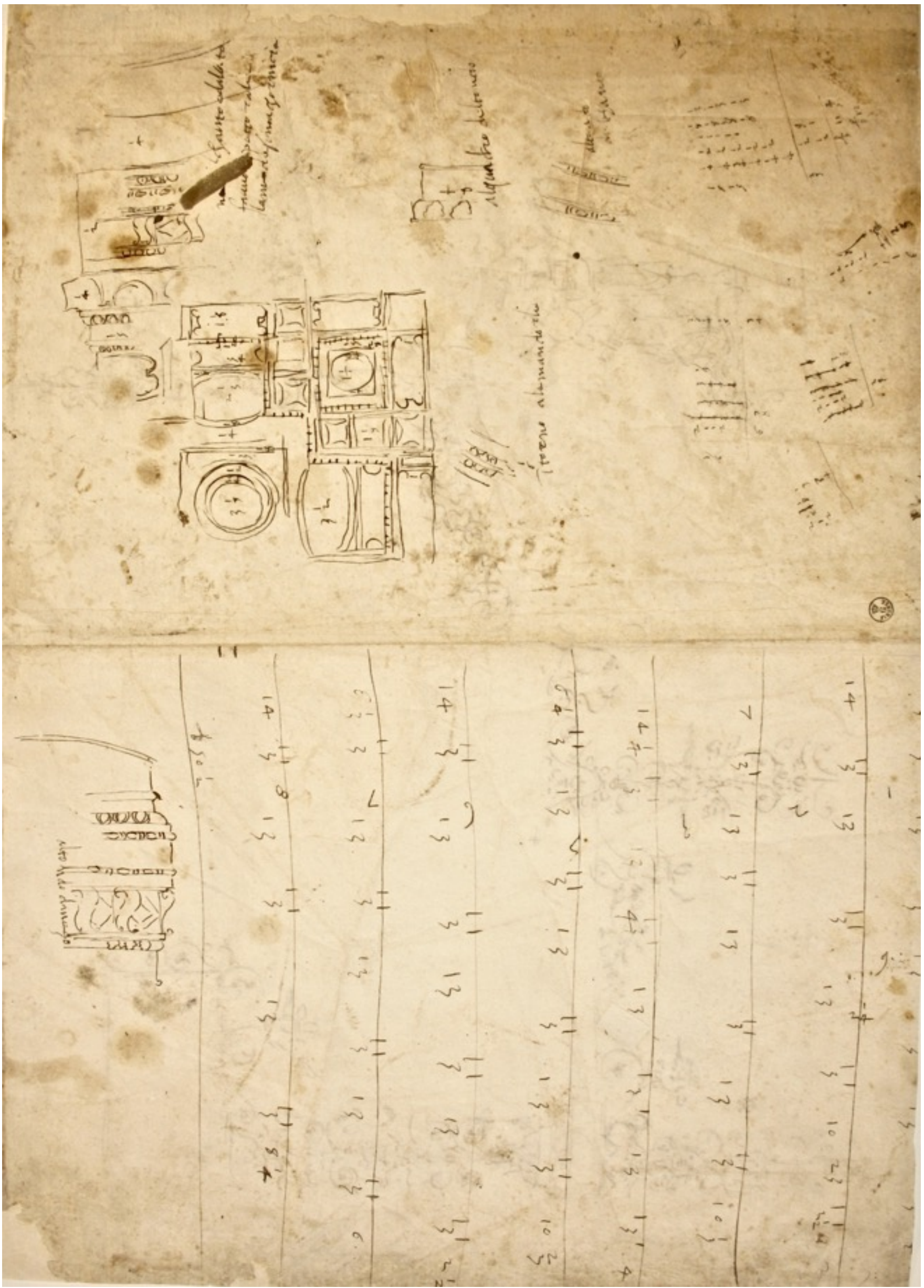
Pl. 10

Pl. 11

Fig 1: Antonio da Sangallo il Giovane (1483-1546), grotesques of room 31 of the Domus Aurea (Volta Gialla); post 1519 - ante 1546; 471 x 333 mm; paper and pen; Florenz, Gallerie degli Uffizi, Gabinetto Disegni e Stampe (GDSU), inv. 1273 A *verso*.
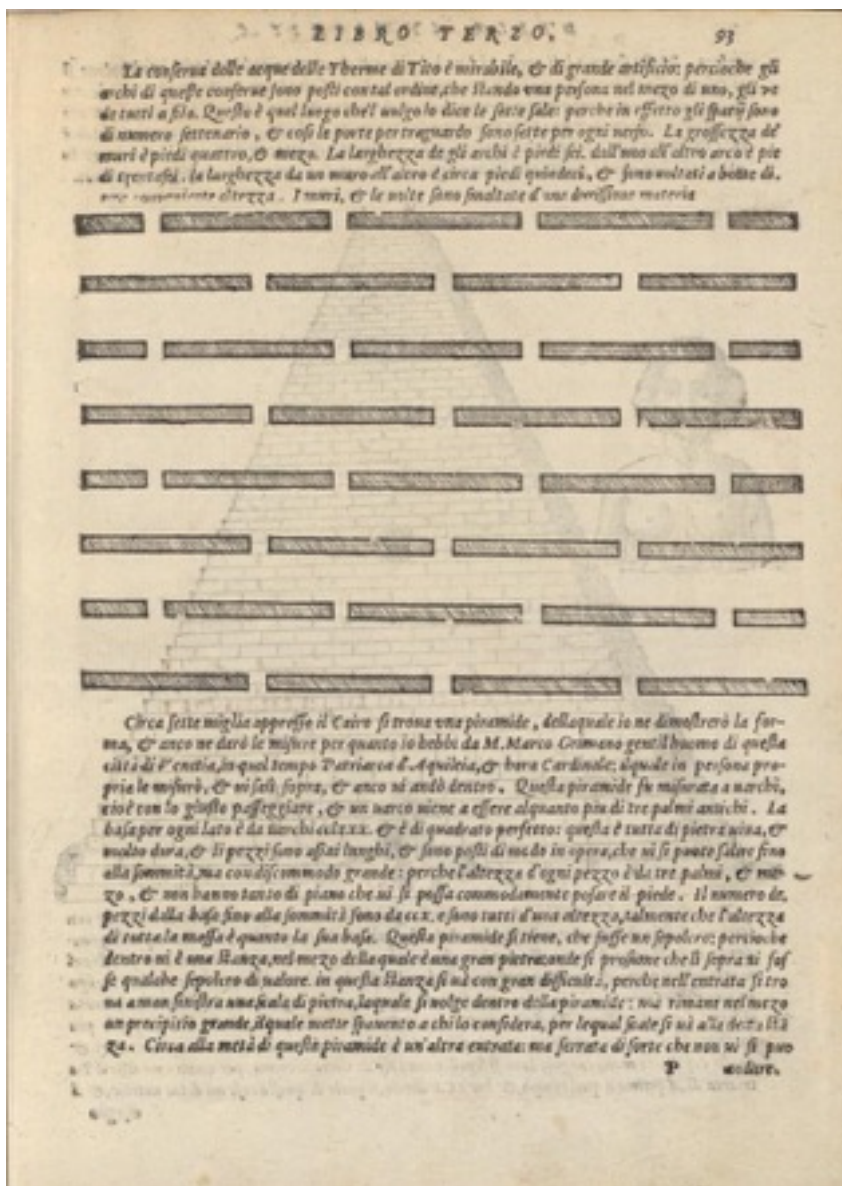
Fig. 2: page 93 (III book, ed. 1584) of Serlio's treaty *I Sette libri dell'architettura* (1537-1575): map of the Seven Halls.
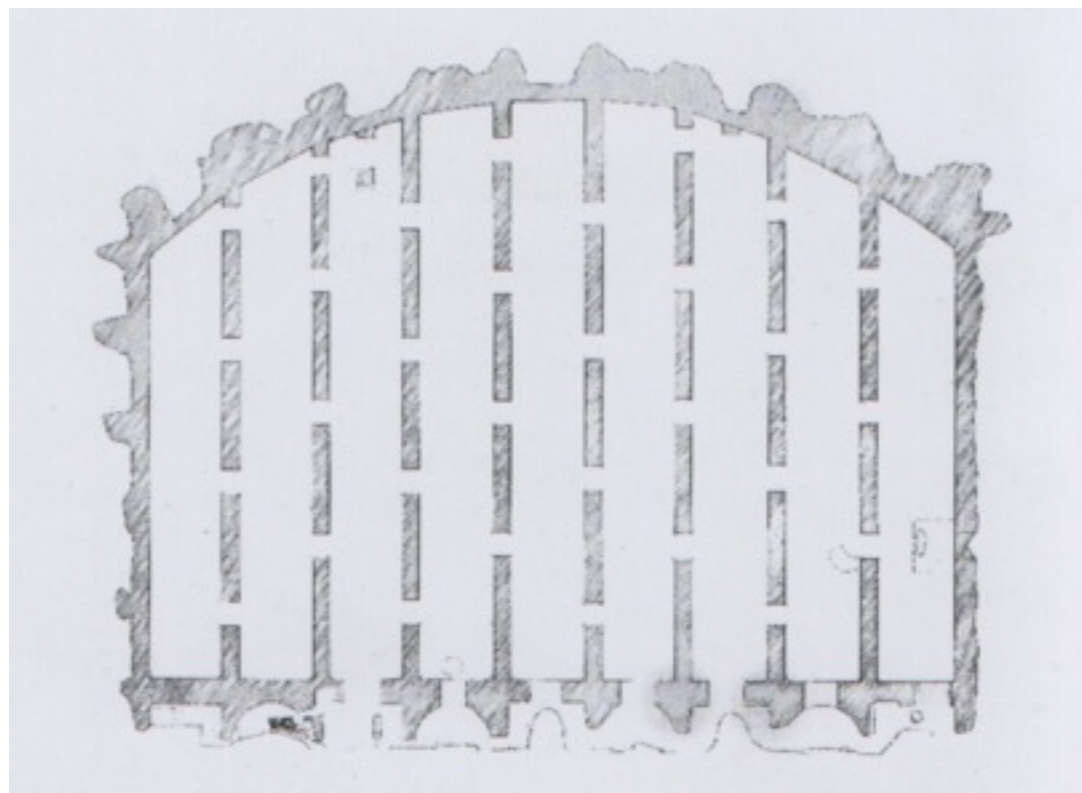
Fig. 3: map of the Seven Halls (De Fine Licht 1983).

Pl. 12

CAT. 6
Giovanni da Udine (1487–1561), *NE ceiling corner of the Volta Dorata (scenes H and I)*;
1514-1517; brown ink and pen; 170 x 190 mm; Florenz, Gallerie degli Uffizi, Gabinetto
dei Disegni e delle Stampe (GDSU), inv. 1682 O.

Pl. 13

Fig. 1: above, the inscriptions in the Uffizi drawing 1682 O; at the center, the inscriptions in Uffizi drawing 1793 A (Labacco's drawing: fig. 101);below, the inscriptions in the Windsor drawing RCIN 909568 *verso* of Giovanni da Udine (for the *recto*: CAT 8).

Pl. 14

CAT. 7

Anonymous Tuscan artist of the second half of 16th century (from the circle of Accademia del Disegno), *Alternative version of the NE ceiling corner of the Volta Dorata (scenes I, G, H, 7)*; 1577 - end of the 16th century; 278 x 205 mm; paper, pen, ink; Siena, Biblioteca

Pl. 15
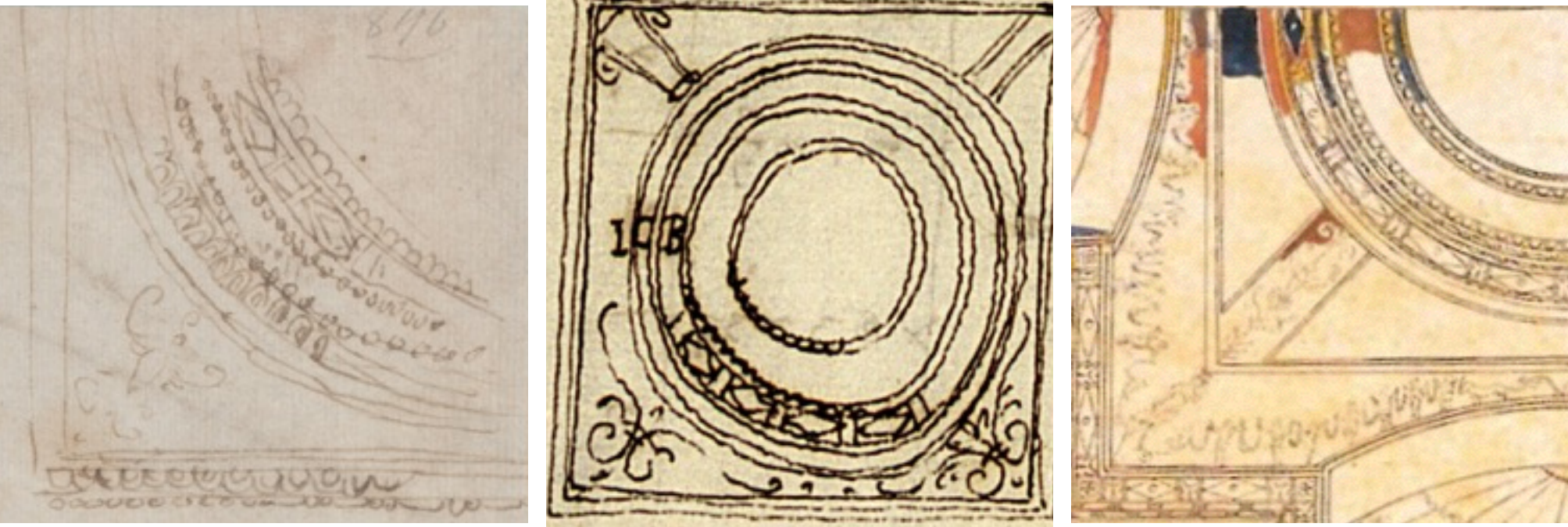
Fig. 1: on the left side: detail of Giovanni da Udine, corner NE of the Volta Dorata; Florenz, Gallerie degli Uffizi, inv. 1682 O (CAT. 6);
on the center: attributed to Orazio Porta (1540-1616), Volta Dorata (room 80) of the Domus Aurea;
Venice, Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana, Ms. It. cl. IV, 149 (=5105), fol. 6 *verso* (CAT: 4);
on the right side: detail of Ludovico Mirri's drawing (partially watercolored), 1774-1776 (Pl. 8, fig. 1).

Fig. 2: on the left side: detail of MS L.IV.10, fol. 11 *recto*;
on the center: detail of the Francisco's watercolor (CAT. 1) placed by Francisco on the NE corner (scenes H);
on the right side: Lippi Filippino, Angular medallion of the Volta Dorata (scene K or E): CAT. 14.

Fig. 3: on the left side: detail of the MS L.IV.10, fol. 11 *recto*; on right: scene G in Francisco's watercolor (CAT. 1).

Fig. 4: on the left side: detail of the MS L.IV.10, fol. 11 *recto*; on the right: the scene I (Weege 1913a, taf. 8 B).

Pl. 16
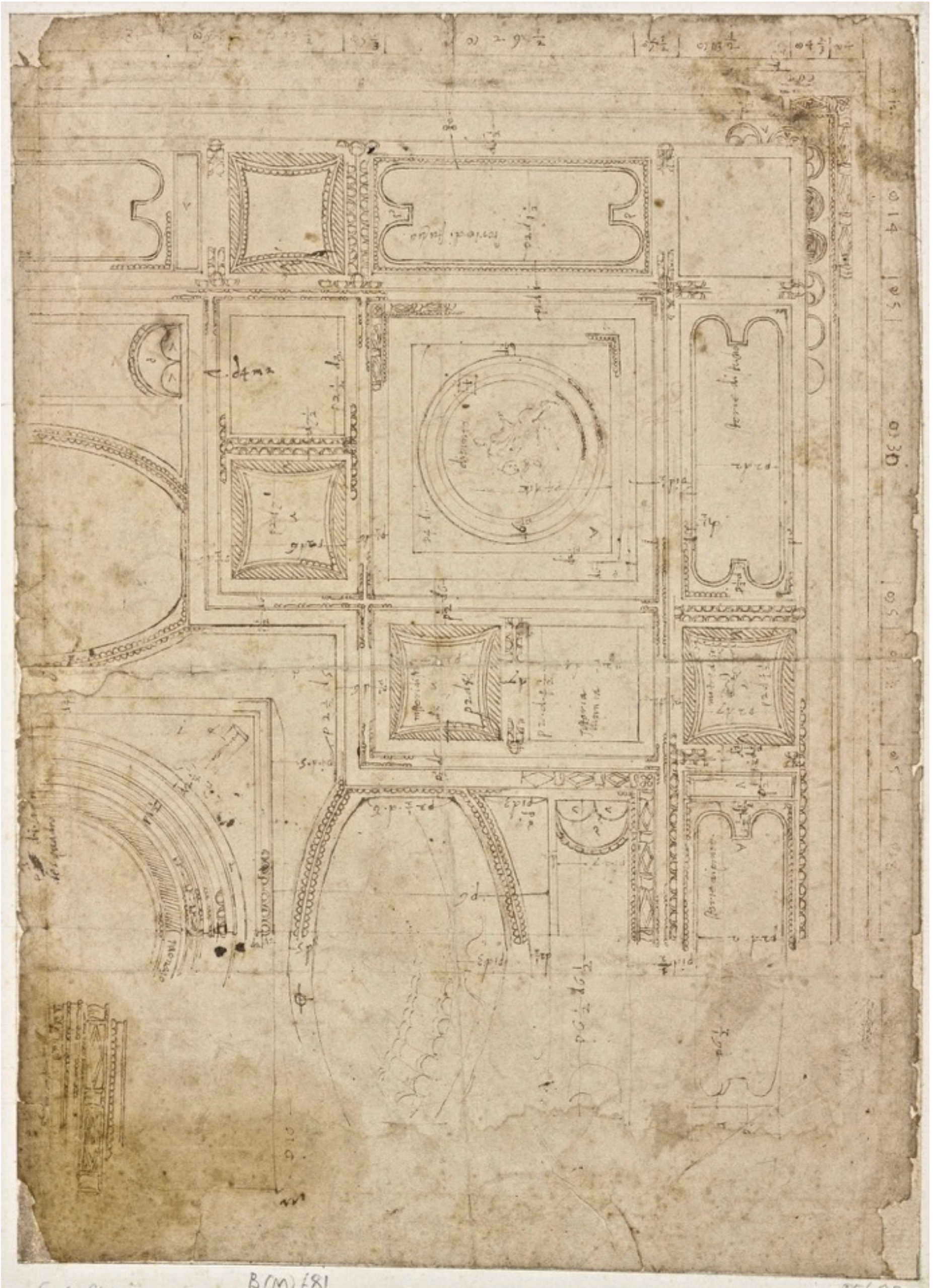
CAT. 8

Giovanni da Udine (1487–1564), *SW ceiling corner of the Volta Dorata with the scene B*; 1514-1517; beige paper, pencil, pen and ink; 342 x 243 mm; Windsor, Royal Collection, RCIN 909568 *recto*.

Pl. 17

Fig. 1: Raphael, ca.1514-1515, Study with measures of the horse statue of the Quirinal (one of the two Dioscuri); 219 x 274 mm; red chalk and pen and brown ink, with stylus underdrawing and traces of leadpoint on laid paper; Washington Collection 1993.51.3.a.
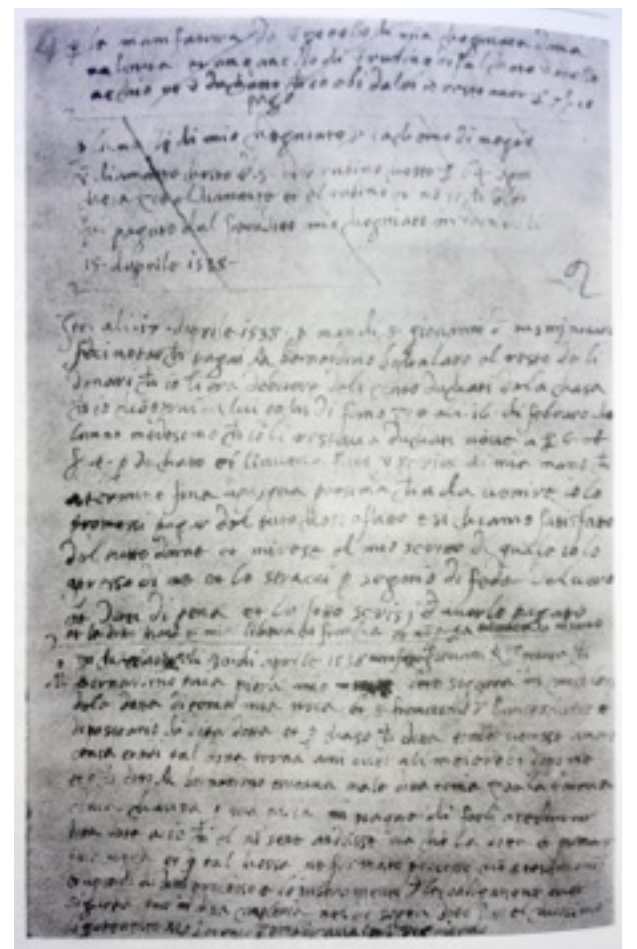
Fig. 2: "Libro dei Conti" of Giovanni da Udine, 1524-1557, fol. 58r (Biblioteca civica Joppi di Udine, Fondo principale, ms. 1197.7): Dacos 1987, pp. 71-72.

Fig. 3: Giovanni da Udine (1487–1564), male head with Roman helmet; 342 x 243 mm; beige paper, pencil, pen, brown ink; Windsor, Royal Collection, RCIN 909568 verso.
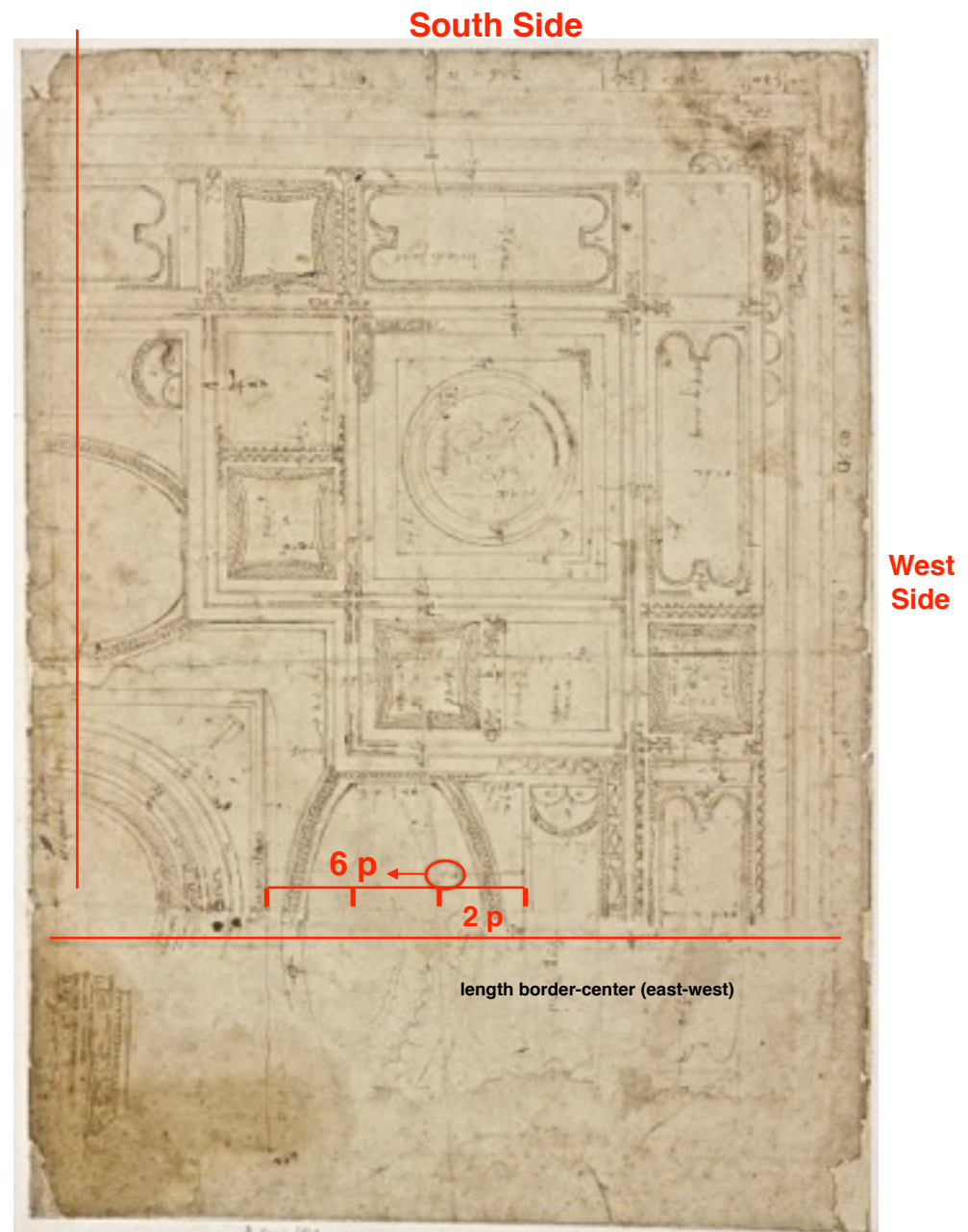
Fig. 4: Giovanni da Udine (1487–1564), Volta Dorata (corner SO and scene B); 342 x 243 mm; beige paper, pencil, pen, brown ink; Windsor, Royal Collection, RCIN 909568 recto.

Pl. 18
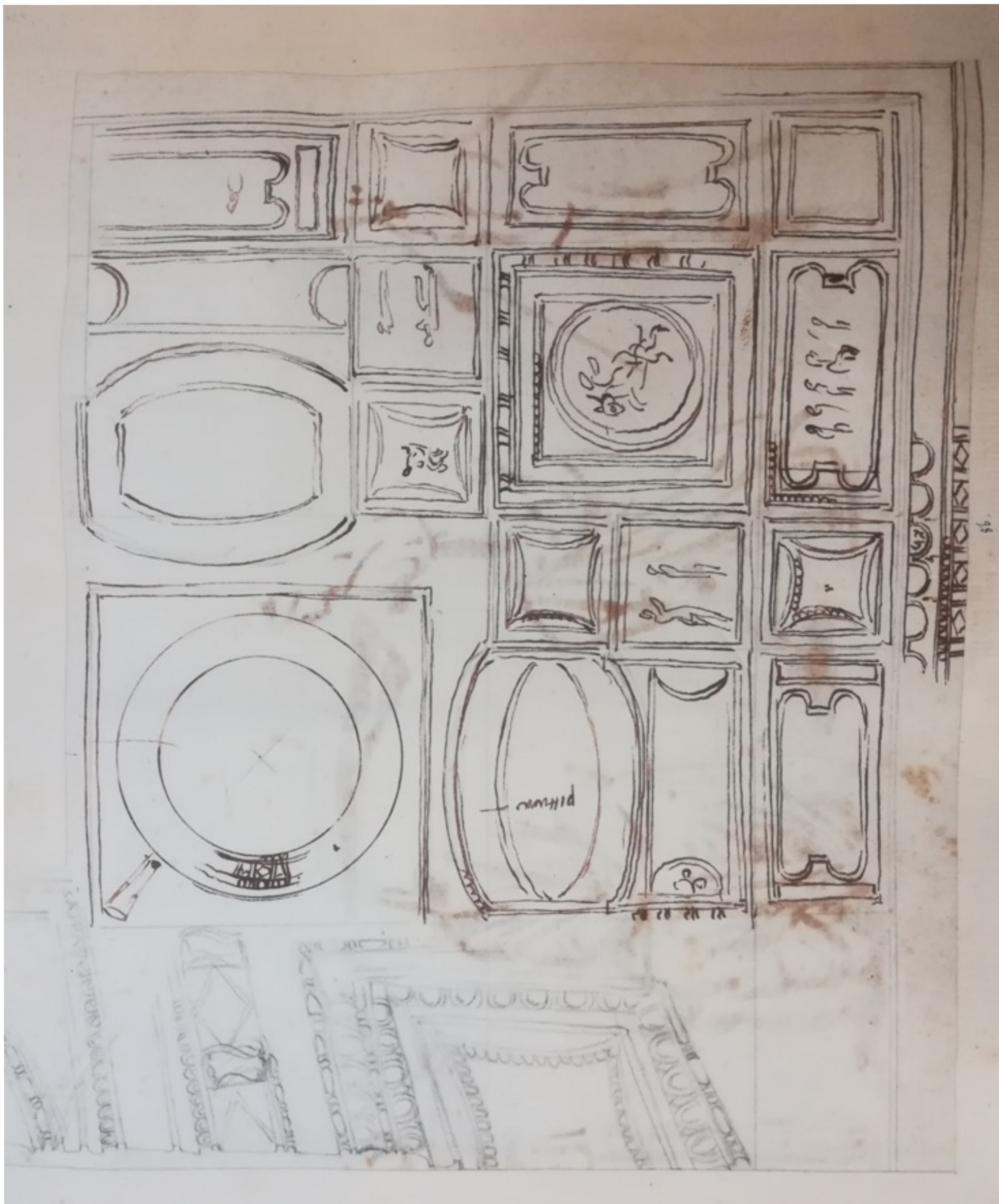
CAT. 9
Giovanni Antonio Dosio (1533–1609), *SW ceiling corner of the Volta Dorata with the scenes B, A, 12, C*; 1560-1565; 240 x 250 mm; pen, ink, traces of black pencil (lapis); Berlin, Kupferstichkabinett, Codex Berolinensis (inv. 79.D.1), fol. 31 *verso* (drawing no. 86).

Pl. 19
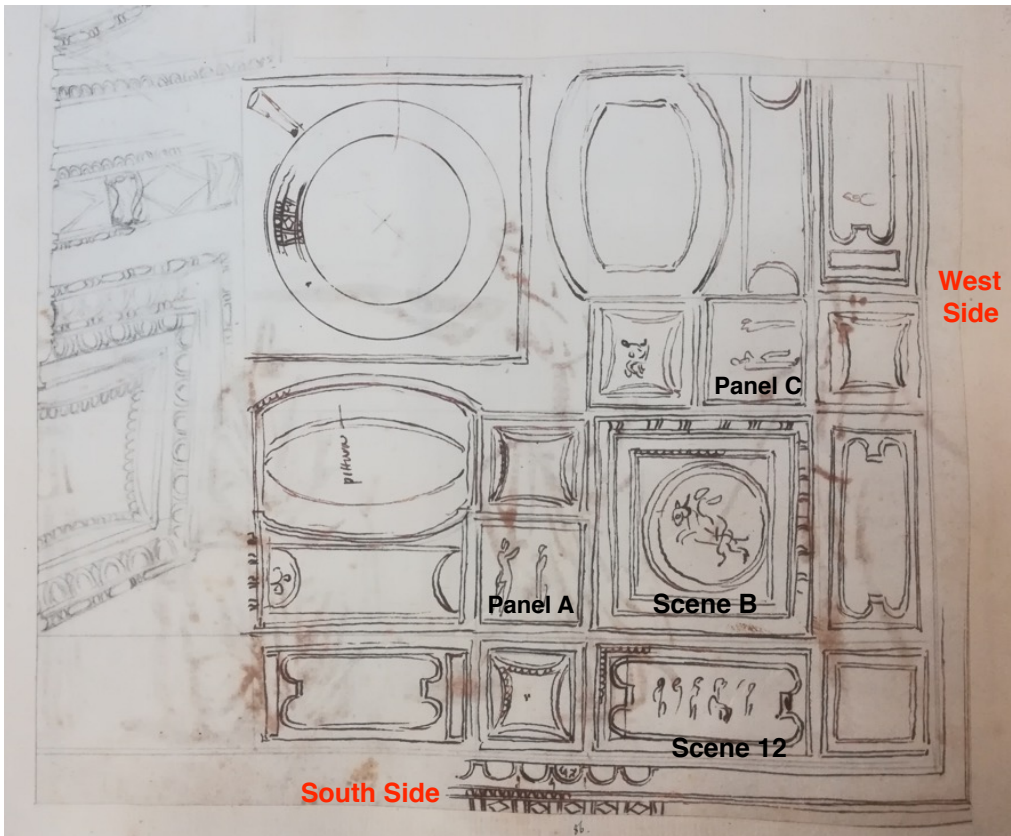
Fig. 1: Giovanni Antonio Dosio (1533-1609), Volta Dorata (corner SO: scenes B, A, 12, C), 1560-1565; 240 x 250 mm, Codex Berolinensis, inv. 79.D.1, fol. 31 *verso*, drawing no. 86.

Fig. 2: stucco ceiling decoration, Hypogeum of the Fondo Caizzo in Pozzuoli (Naples), dated to the end of the I century AD: Mielsch 1975, taf. 58, K. 58 III.
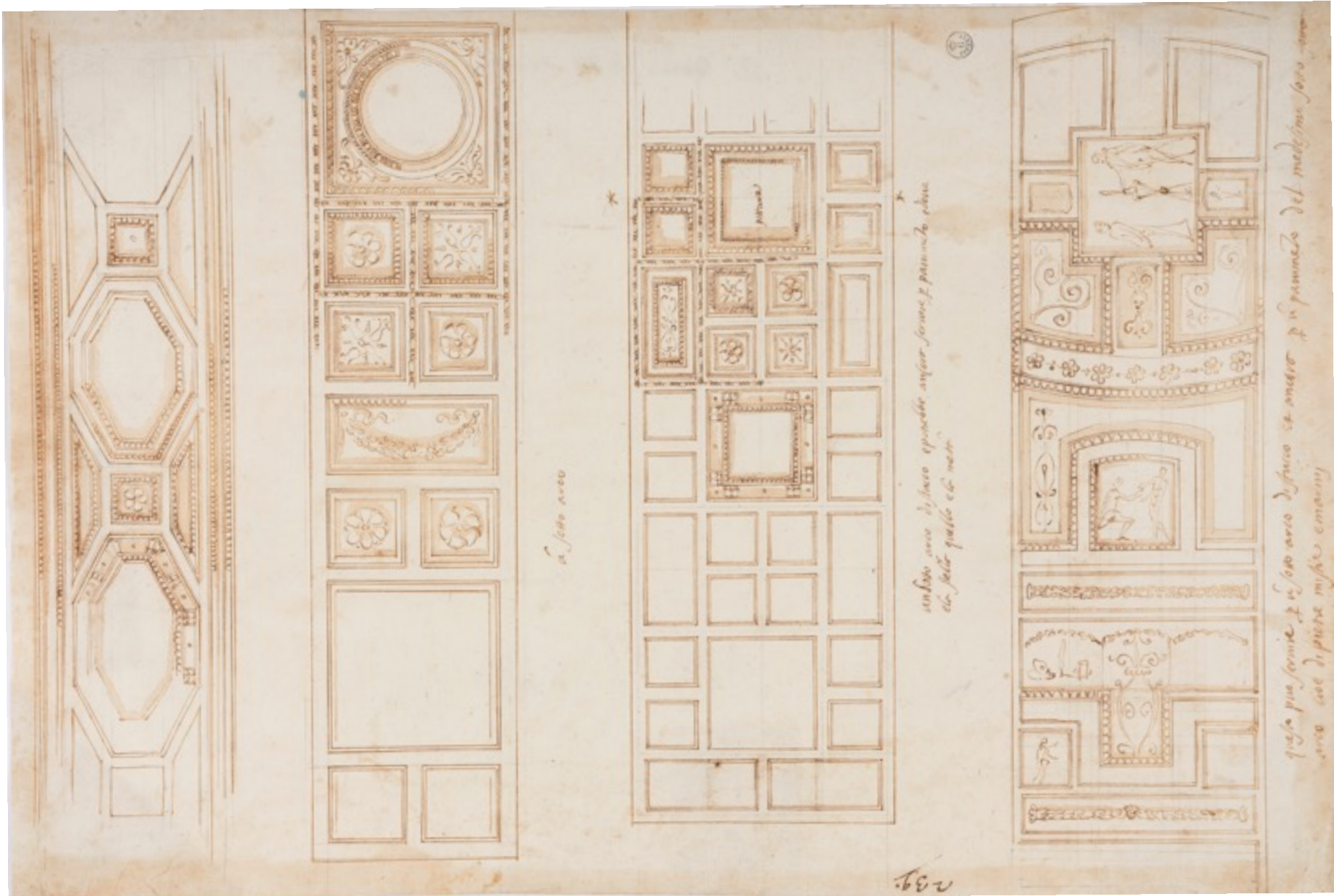
Fig. 3: Giovanni Antonio Dosio (1533-1609), Roman ceilings after the Antique, 1560-1565; 424 x 290 mm; Florenz, Gallerie degli Uffizi, Gabinetto Disegni e Stampe (GDSU), inv. 1684 O.

Pl. 20
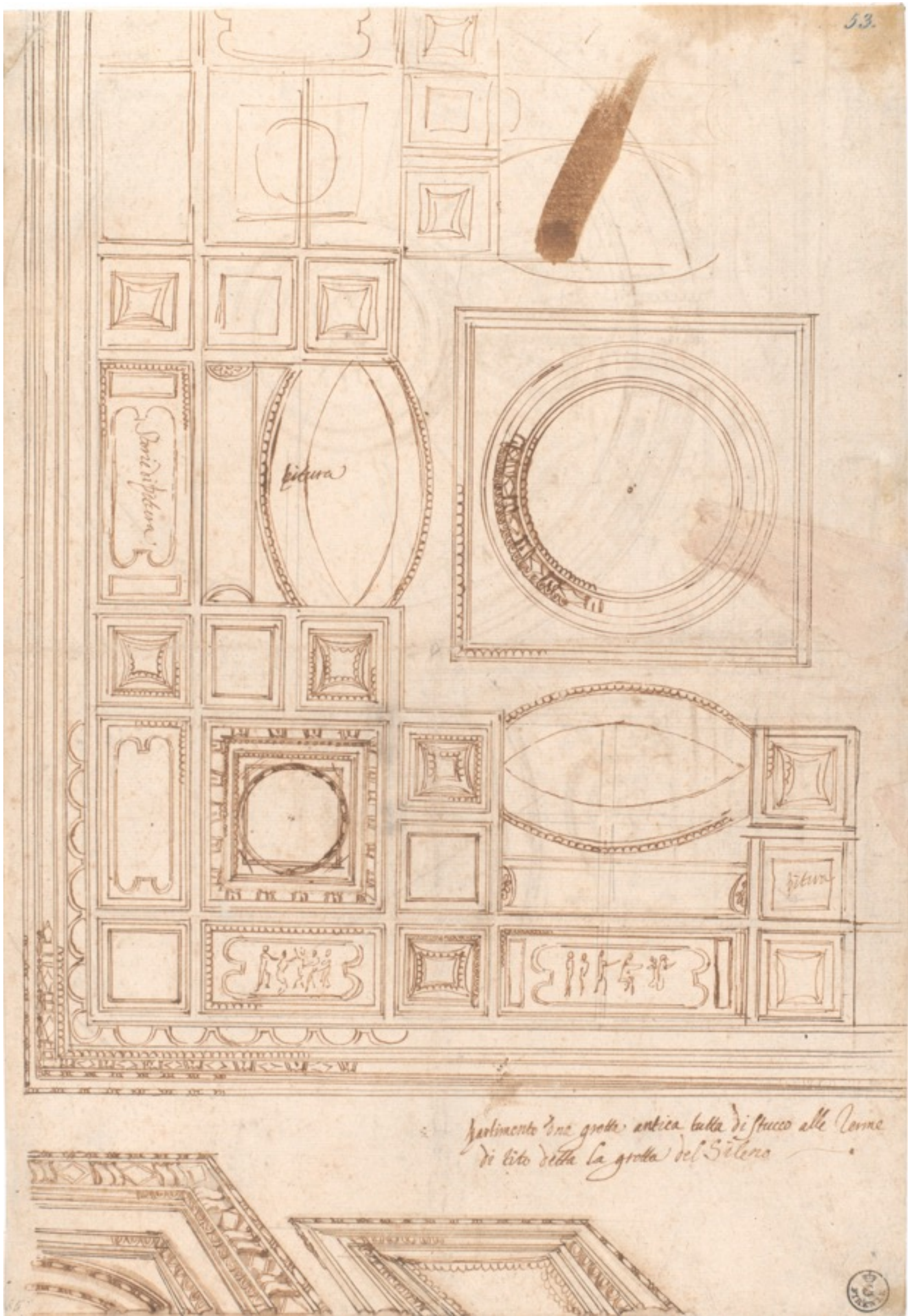
CAT. 10
Manner of Vasari Giorgio (1511-1574), *SW ceiling corner of the Volta Dorata*; 1575-1600; pen,
paintbrush, diluted ink, traces of black pencil (lapis); 392 x 268 mm; Florenz, Gallerie degli Uffizi,
Gabinetto dei Disegni e delle Stampe (GDSU), 53 O *recto*.

Pl. 21

CAT. 11
Giuliano da Sangallo workshop, *SW angular medallion from Volta Dorata (scene B)*, 1490-1506/7; red pen;
330 x 230 mm; El Escorial, Biblioteca Real de S. Lorenzo, Codex Escurialensis (Cod. 28-II-12), fol. 10 *recto*.

Pl. 22

CAT. 12
Raphael Follower ("Anonymus Foro Semproniensis"), *SW angular medallion of the Volta Dorata (scene B) and head of the kneeling woman in Raphael's Transfiguration*, 1524-1533; ink and pen; c. 334 x 216 mm; Fossombrone, Biblioteca Civica Passionei, Codex Fossombronis (inv. Disegni vol. 3 [= Cod. C.5.VI] and Disegni vol. 4, c. 38). fol. 85 *recto*.

Pl. 23

CAT. 13

Raphael Follower ("Anonymus Foro Semproniensis"), *Panels C (above) and I (below) of the Volta Dorata*; 1524-1533; ink, pen; 334 x 216 mm; Fossombrone, Biblioteca Civica Passionei, Codex Fossombronis (inv. Disegni vol. 3 [= Cod. C.5.VI] and Disegni vol. 4, c. 38 and c. 39.), fol. 87 *recto*.

Pl. 24

Fig. 1: Scenes C (left), scene I (right): Weege 1913a, taf. 8 A-B.

Fig. 2: Retouched photos of scenes C (left), scene I (right): Weege 1913a, pp. 172-173, nos. 16-18.
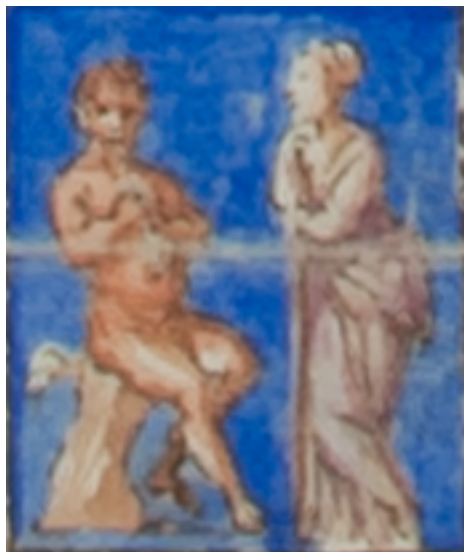
Fig. 3: Scene C (from left to right): Francisco's watercolor (CAT.1), Bartoli's watercolor (CAT. 2), Mirri's drawing (Pinot de Villechenon 1998, Pl. 47; for entire vault by Mirri: CAT. 3)

Fig. 4: Scene I (from left to right): Francisco's watercolor (CAT. 1), Bartoli's watercolor (CAT. 2), watercolored engraving by Mirri's artists (Pinot de Villechenon 1998, Pl. 46; for entire vault by Mirri: CAT. 3).

Pl. 25

CAT. 14

Lippi Filippino (c.1457–1504), *Angular medallion of the Volta Dorata (scene K or E)*;
1490-1495; charcoal on paper; 145 x 156 mm; Florenz, Gallerie degli Uffizi,
Gabinetto dei Disegni e delle Stampe (GDSU), inv. 1168 O.

Pl. 26

CAT. 15

Amico Aspertini (c.1475–1552), *Scene G of Volta Dorata (NE corner)?*, c.1503-1504; pen and black ink; 225 x 170 mm; Codex Wolfegg, Württemberg, Schloss Wolfegg, fol. 19 recto.

Pl. 27

CAT. 16
Giuliano da Sangallo workshop, *Angular medallion NE of the Volta Dorata (scene H)*; 1490-1506/7; red pen;
330 x 230 cm; El Escorial, Biblioteca Real de S. Lorenzo, Codex Escurialensis (Cod. 28-II-12), fol. 6 *recto*.

Pl. 28

CAT. 17

Anonymous 16th Florentine artist (Jacopo di Giovanni di Francesco detto Jacone?), *Angular medallion NE of the Volta Dorata (scene H)*; first half of 16th century; pen, ink, traces of black stone; 265 x 400 cm; Lille, Palais des Beaux-Arts, Inv. Pl. 102.

Pl. 29

CAT. 18

Amico Aspertini (ca. 1475 Bologna - 1552), *Scene 1 of the Volta Dorata (SW ceiling corner)?*, ca. 1503-1504; pen and black ink; 225 x 170 mm; Codex Wolfegg, Württemberg, Schloss Wolfegg, foll. 44 *verso* -45 *recto*.

Pl. 30

Fig. 1: Detail from N. Ponce's etching (no. 38) in the Album *Description des bains de Titus,* Paris 1786.

Fig. 2: Detail from P.S. Bartoli's watercolor in Codex Massimi (MS Gen 1496 [HX 110]), fol. LXV, mid. XVII century and ante 1674.
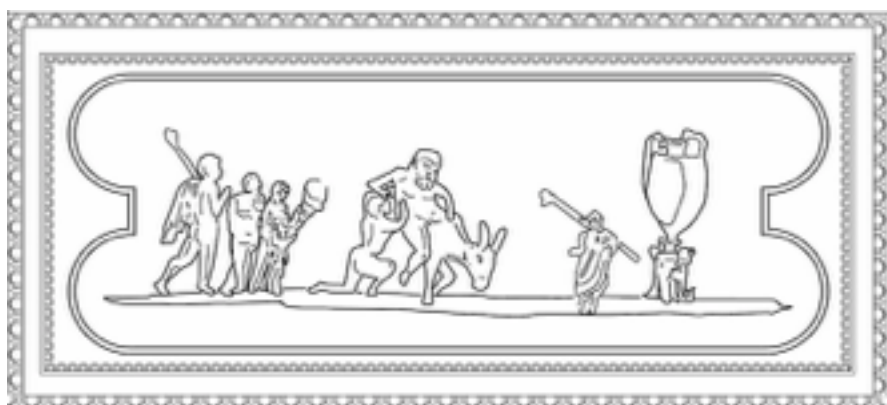
Fig. 3: Scene 1 (SW corner) from Francisco's watercolor (CAT. 1): Dionysiac procession with inebriated Silenus above a donkey.

Fig. 4: sarcophagus with Bacchic procession, mid. 2nd century AD, British Museum, inv. 1805,0703.130.

Fig. 5: Wolfegg Codex, fol. 31 *verso*–32 *recto*.

Pl. 31

CAT. 19

Giuliano da Sangallo workshop, *Scene 2 of the Volta Dorata*; 1490-1506/7; paper, red pen; 33 x 23 cm; El Escorial, Biblioteca
Real de S. Lorenzo, Codex Escurialensis (Cod. 28-II-12), fol. 10 *verso*.

Pl. 32

Fig. 1: Scene 2 of the Volta Dorata (Meyboom-Moormann 2013, II, p. 112, fig. 80.6).

Fig. 2: Scene 2 of the Volta Dorata by Mirri' artists (Pinot de Villechenon 1998, Pl. 45).

Fig. 3: Scene 2 in Francisco de Hollanda's watercolor in *Os desenhos das antigualhas* (CAT. 1)

Fig. 4: Scene 2 in Bartoli's watercolor in Codex Baddeley (CAT. 2)

Fig. 5: Raphael (1483-1520), scene of the banquet for the wedding between Love and Psyche, 1518, Villa Farnesina, Rome.

Pl. 33

CAT. 20

Raphael Follower ("Anonymus Foro Semproniensis"), *Scenes 8 (above) and 2 (below) of the Volta Dorata*, 1524-1533; paper, ink, pen; ca. 334 x 216 mm; Fossombrone, Biblioteca Civica Passionei, Codex Fossombronis (inv. Disegni vol. 3 [= Cod. C.5.VI] and Disegni vol. 4, c. 38). fol. 86 *recto*.

Pl. 34

Fig. 1: Scene 8 of the Volta Dorata (East side): Meyboom-Moormann 2013, II, fig. 80.7

Fig. 2: Mirri's watercolor of the scene 8 (= Mirri-Carletti 1776, Pl. 43): Pinot de Villechenon 1998, Pl. 44.

Fig. 3: Sarcophagus with the myth of Phaedra and Hippolytus, end of the 2nd century AD, Roma, Musei Vaticani (10400).

Fig. 4: Scene 8 in Francisco de Hollanda's watercolor in *Os desenhos das antigualhas* (CAT. 1)

Fig. 5: Scene 8 in Bartoli's watercolor in Codex Baddeley (CAT. 2)

Pl. 35

CAT. 21

Filippino Lippi (ca. 1457 Prato - 1504 Florence), *Right part of scene 8 of the Volta Dorata (Hippolytus leaving for the hunt), a harpy and one decorative frieze from the Domus Aurea*; ca. 1490 - ca. 1943; 252 x 204 mm; lapis and silver tip; Florenz, Gallerie degli Uffizi, Gabinetto Disegni e Stampe (GDSU), inv. 1255 E *verso*.

Pl. 36

Fig. 1: Detail from the Criptoportico (Weege 1913a, p. 188, fig. 30).

Fig. 2: Detail from the Criptoportico (Weege 1913a, p. 195, fig. 43).

Fig. 3: Uffizi drawing 1636 E, 1488-1490, pen and drown ink, 216 x 107 mm.

Fig. 4: Uffizi drawing 1637 E *recto*, 1490, pen and brown ink, 255 x 193 mm.

Fig. 5: Uffizi drawing 1637 E *verso*, 1490, pen and brown ink, 255 x 193 mm.

Fig. 6: Uffizi drawing 1630 E, lapis, pen and diluted ink, 92 mm (diameter).

Fig. 7: Uffizi drawing 1631 E, lapis, pen and diluted ink, 92 mm (diameter).

Pl. 37

CAT. 22

Amico Aspertini (ca. 1475 Bologna - 1552), *Left part of scene 8 of the Volta Dorata (Hippolytus leaving for the hunt) and one motif of acanthus leaves*, ca. 1503-1504; pen and black ink; 225 x 170 mm; Codex Wolfegg, Württemberg, Schloss Wolfegg, fol. 22 *recto*.

Pl. 38

Fig. 1: Detail of the sarcophagus in Tiro's Museum (inv. 4230), 3rd century AD: LIMC 5.2, p. 318, no. 32.

Fig. 2: Fresco from Herculaneum, preserved at the National Archaeological Museum of Naples - MANN (9041), Flavian period: LIMC 5.2, p. 319, no. 45.

Pl. 39

CAT. 23

Amico Aspertini (ca. 1475 Bologna - 1552), *Right part of scene 8 of the Volta Dorata (Hippolytus leaving for the hunt)*; ca. 1503-1504; pen and brush and black ink with wash on a thin ground; 225 x 170 mm; Codex Wolfegg, Württemberg, Schloss Wolfegg, fol. 19 *verso*.

Pl. 40

Fig. 1: Mosaic from House of Dinysus, Antakya (Hatay Museum 1018): Giuman 2016, Pl. XXVI, b.

Fig. 2: Mosaic from Cheikh Zoueid (Ismaïlia Museum 2401): LIMC V.2, p. 320, no. 49.

Fig. 3: Bartoli-Bellori, *Le pitture antiche delle grotte di Roma, e del sepolcro de' Nasonj* (1706), Pl. VI.

Pl. 41

CAT. 24

Anonymous 16th Florentine artist, *Right part of scene 8 of the Volta Dorata* (*Hippolytus leaving for the hunt*); first half of 16th century; 265 x 400 mm; pen and brown ink, traces of black stone; Lille, Palais des Beaux-Arts, Inv. Pl. 101 (*recto*).

Pl. 42
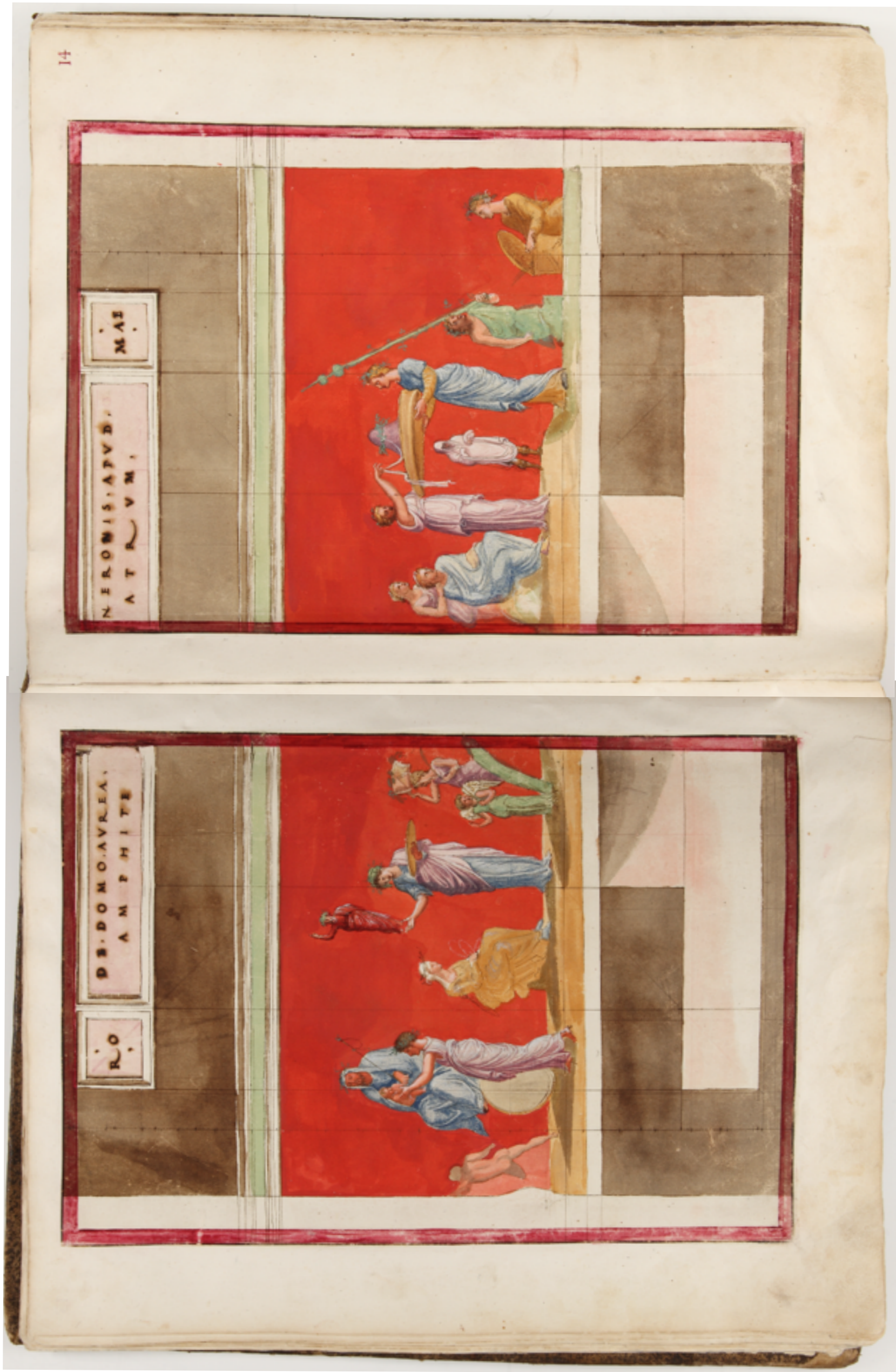
CAT. 25

Francisco de Holanda (1517 Lisbon – 1585 Lisbon), *The "Grande Fregio" of the West wall*, 1538 - ante 1571, watercolor on paper, 300 x 350 mm, Os desenhos das antigualhas, El Escorial, Biblioteca Real de S. Lorenzo (Cod. 28-I-20), foll. 13 *verso* - 14 *recto*.

Pl. 43

Fig. 1: The "Grande Fregio" of the West wall, from the engravings album *Le pitture antiche delle grotte di Roma* (1706), Pl. XI-XII.

Fig. 2: Scene E (according to the numeration by Sauron 2010) of the fresco decoration in room 5 at the Villa dei Miseri (Pompeii), 70 BC., Pompeii.

Fig. 3: Ritual scene from the ceiling of the *cubiculum* B at the Villa Farnesina, dated to 20 AD, stucco, Museo Nazionale Romano inv. 1072 (Bragantini-De Vos 1982, p. 138, Pl. 78)

Fig. 4: Campanian terracotta slab with Eleusinian Mysteries, dated to the last two decades of the first century AD, Museo Nazionale Romano (Rome), inv. 4358.

Fig. 5: Urna Caetani Lovatelli, dated to 50-25 BC, marble, Museo Nazionale Romano (Rome), inv. 1301.

Pl. 44

CAT. 26

Giovanni Antonio Dosio (1533-1609), *The "Grande Fregio" of the West wall*; 1560-1565; 240 x 250 mm; paper, pen, ink, traces of black pencil (*lapis*); Berlin, Kupferstichkabinett, Codex Berolinensis (inv. 79.D.1), fol. 31 *recto* (drawing nr. 85).

Illustrations
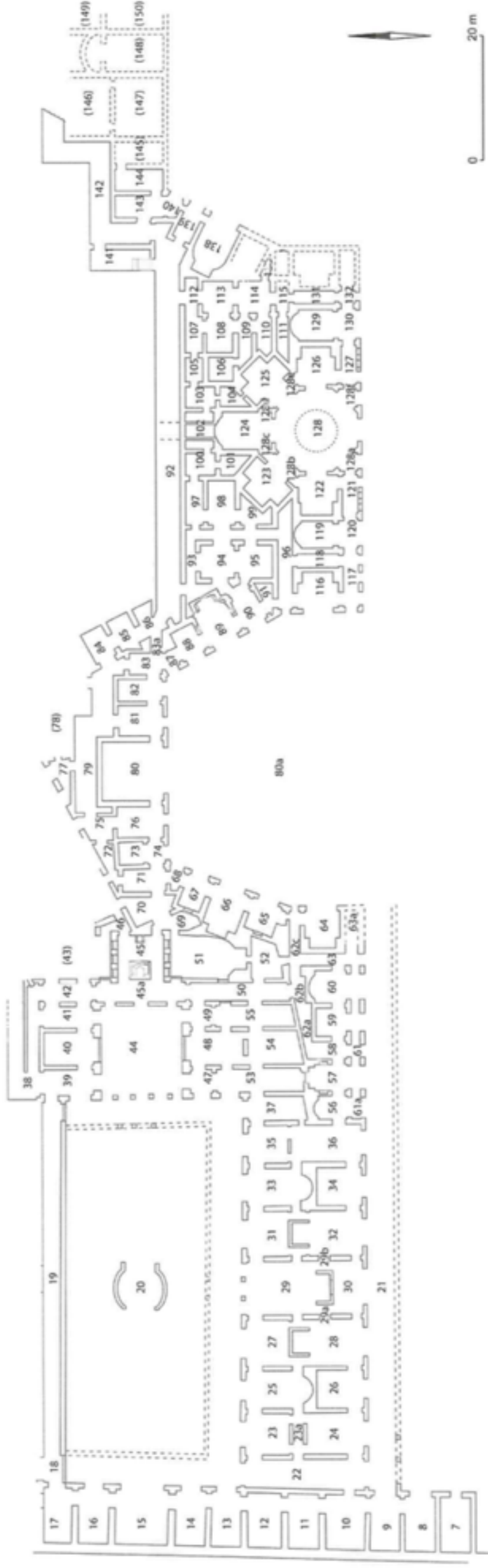
Fig. 1: Map of the Oppian building of the Domus Aurea (LITUR II, pp. 400-401, fig. 21).

Fig. 2: The rooms of the Oppian building colored according to the century of their discovery

Rinascimento
Seicento
Settecento
Ottocento
Novecento
non scavato
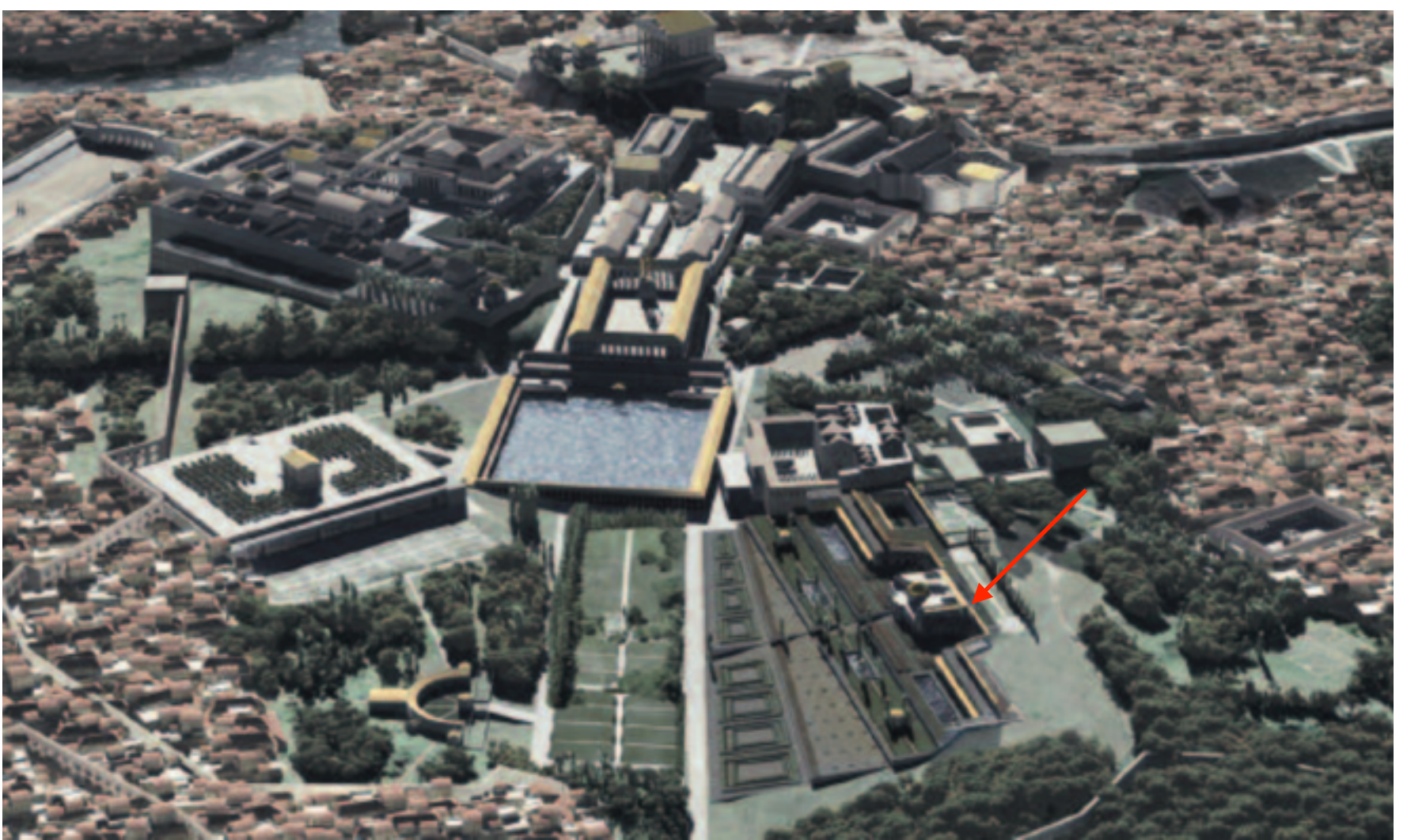
Fig. 3: One possible 3D reconstruction of the Oppian building realized by Viscogliosi 2006 (Viscogliosi 2011, p. 158, fig. 2).
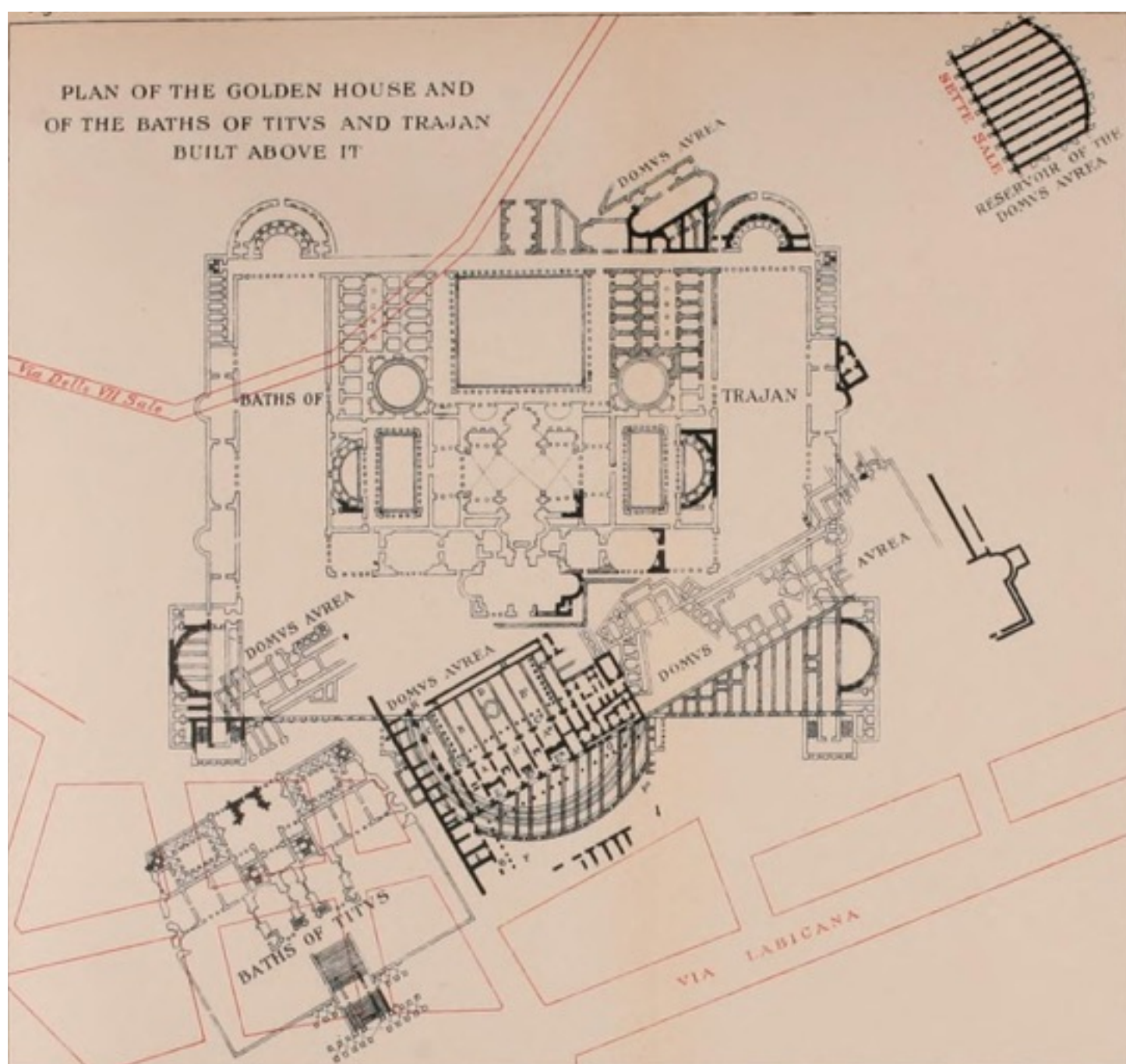
Fig. 4: The first map of the Domus Aurea, the Titus' Baths, the Trajan's Baths and the Seven Halls, still generally accepted (Lanciani 1897, fig. 138).
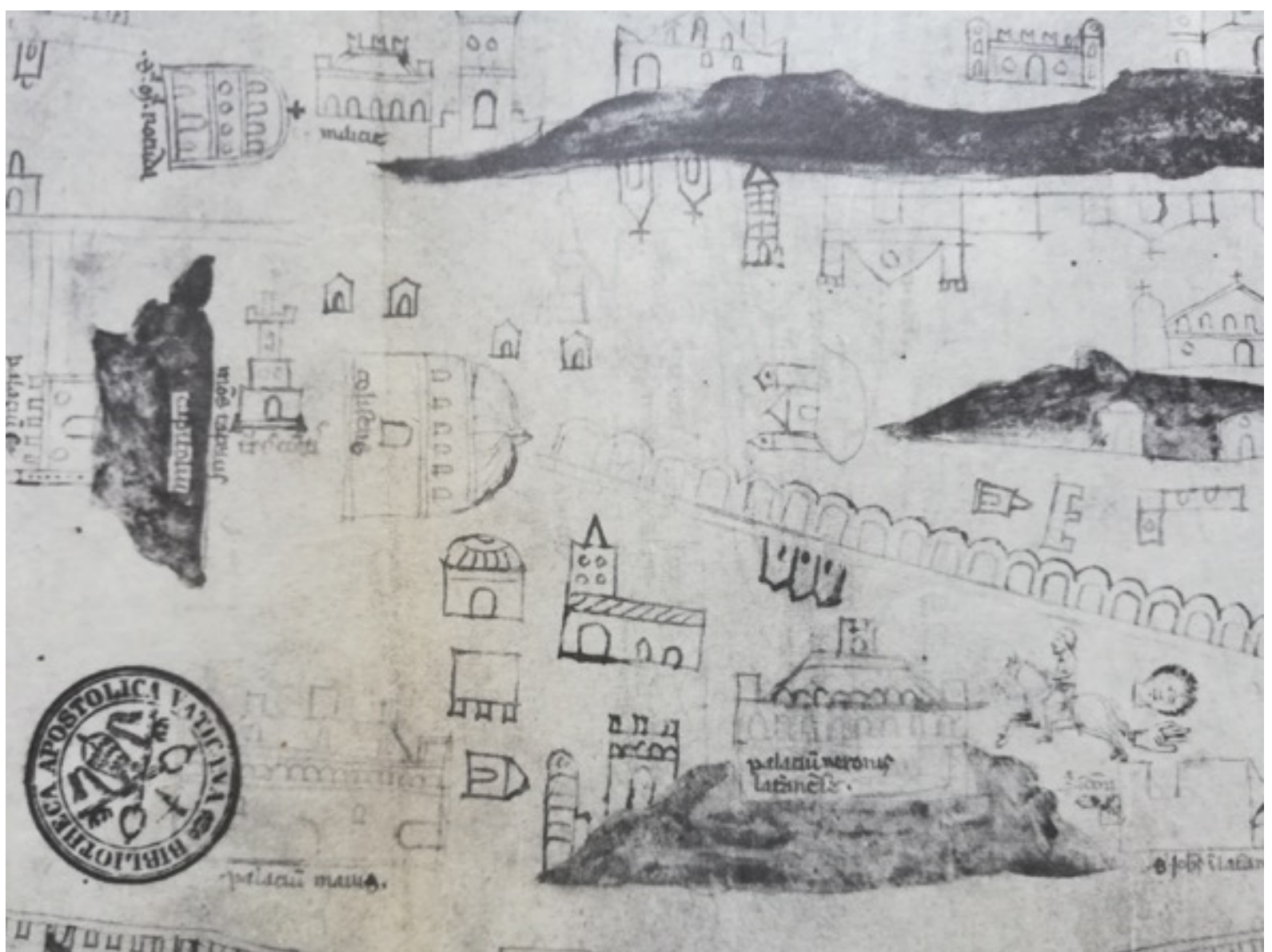
Fig. 5: Paolino da Venezia (1270-1344), Map of Rome, 1334-1339, 440 x 285 mm, Vatican Library (Cod. Vat. lat. 1960, fol. 270 *verso:* Frutaz 1962, pianta LXXIV).
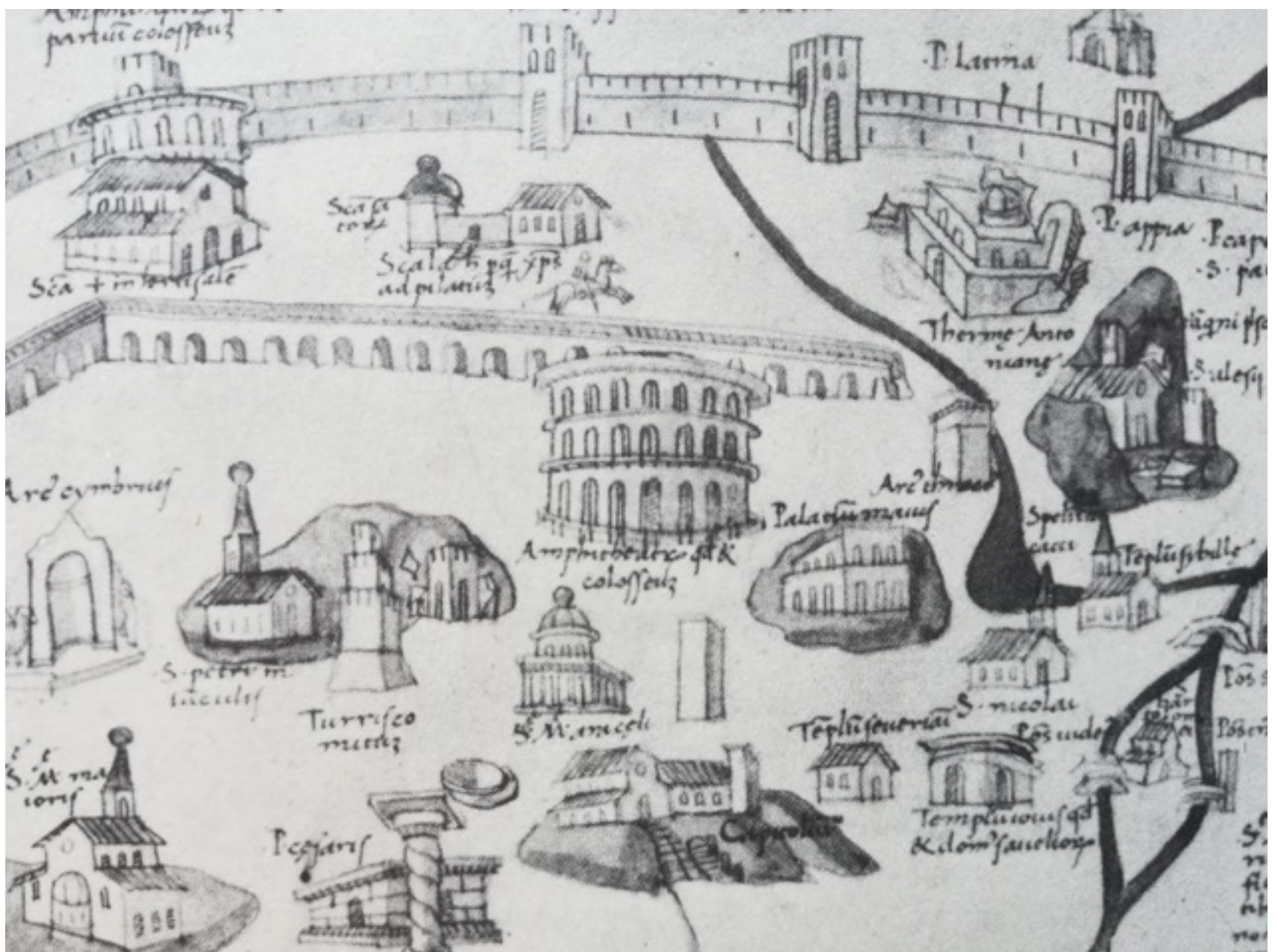
Fig. 6: Pietro del Massaio (1420-1480), Illumination, 1471, 485 x 397 mm, Vatican Library (Cod. Urb. lat. 277 fol. 131 *recto:* Frutaz 1962, pianta LXXXVIII).

Fig. 7: Alessandro Strozzi (15th century), detail of the map in *Res priscae variaque antiquitatis monumenta*, 1474, 217 x 263 mm, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana (Cod. Redi 77, ff. VII *verso* - VIII *recto:* Frutaz 1962, II, pianta LXXXIX; I, pp. 140-142).

Fig. 8: Herman Posthumus (1512ca.-1588), detail of *Landscape with Roman Ruins*, 1536, Oil on canvas, Liechtenstein, The Princely Collections (inv.-No. GE740).

Fig. 9: Étienne Dupérac (ca. 1535 -1604), *I vestigi dell'antichità di Roma*, fol. 17, 1575, München, Zentralinstitut für Kunstgeschichte.

Fig. 10: Bartolomeo Marliano (1488-1566), detail of the map in the *Urbis Romae Topographia*, 300 x 470 mm, BIASA (Roma X. 405: Frutaz 1962, II, pianta XII; I, pp. 56-57).

Fig. 11: Marco Fabio Calvo, *detail of the map of Rome at the time of Pliny the Elder,* 1527, xilography, 425 x 550 mm, Pianta disegnata da M.F. Calvo, intagliata da T. Egnazio e pubblicata a Roma da L. Vicentini; Biblioteca Vaticana (R.G. Arte-archeol. Str. 496 [I])

Fig. 12: Neronian bronze *dupondius* dated between 64 and 66 AD, (*centatio rotunda* or *Macellum magnum*?), MNR inv. 92918.

Fig. 13: Simone del Pollaiolo (1457-1508), so-called "il Cronaca", "Palazo Maiore" (Domus Aurea) and "Palazo di Nerone" (Domus Flavia), pen and ink, Gallerie dei Disegni e delle Stampe degli Uffizi, 163 S *recto*.
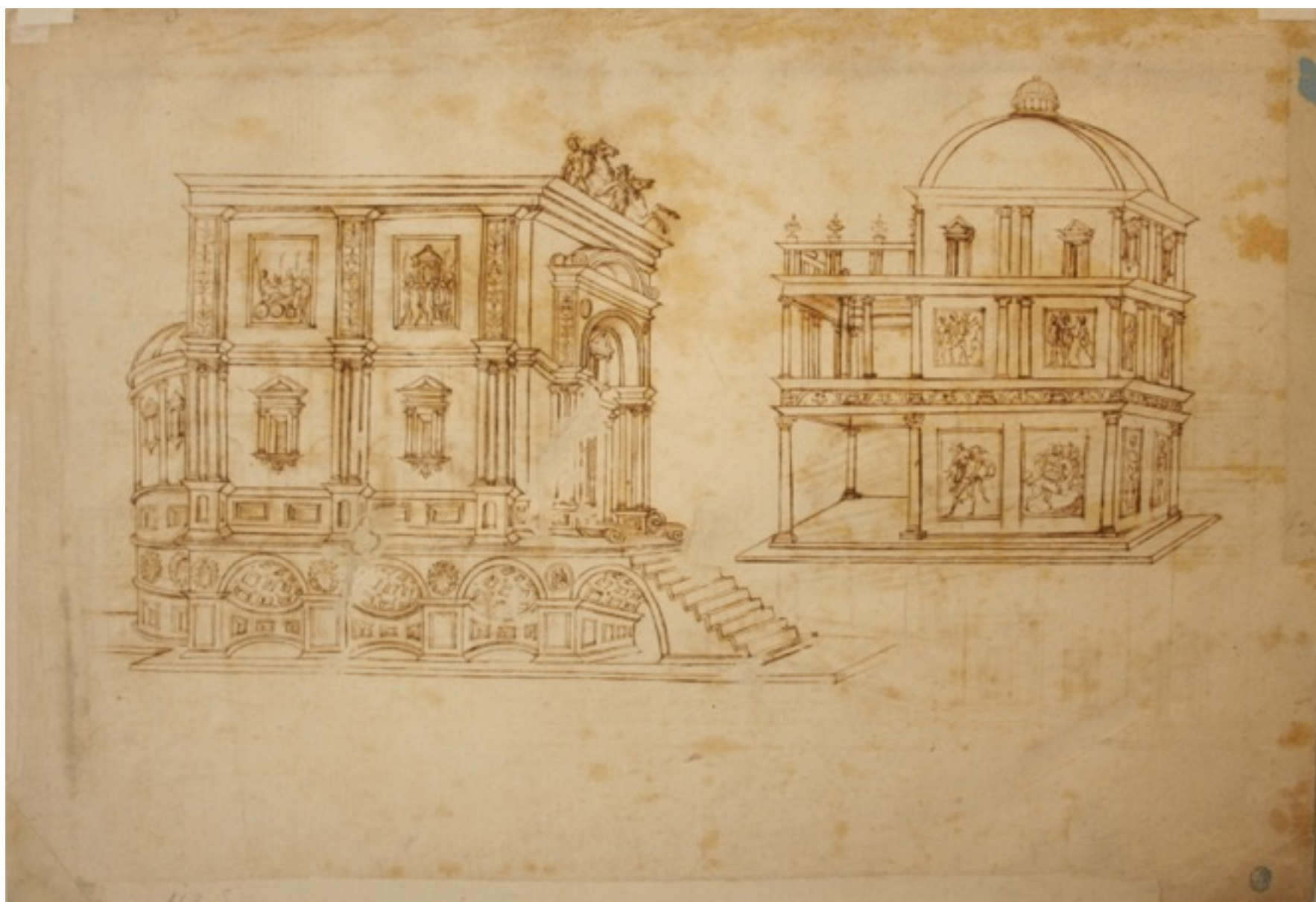
Fig. 14: Simone del Pollaiolo (1457-1508), so-called "il Cronaca", unknown buildings, pen and ink, Gallerie dei Disegni e delle Stampe degli Uffizi, 163 S *verso*.
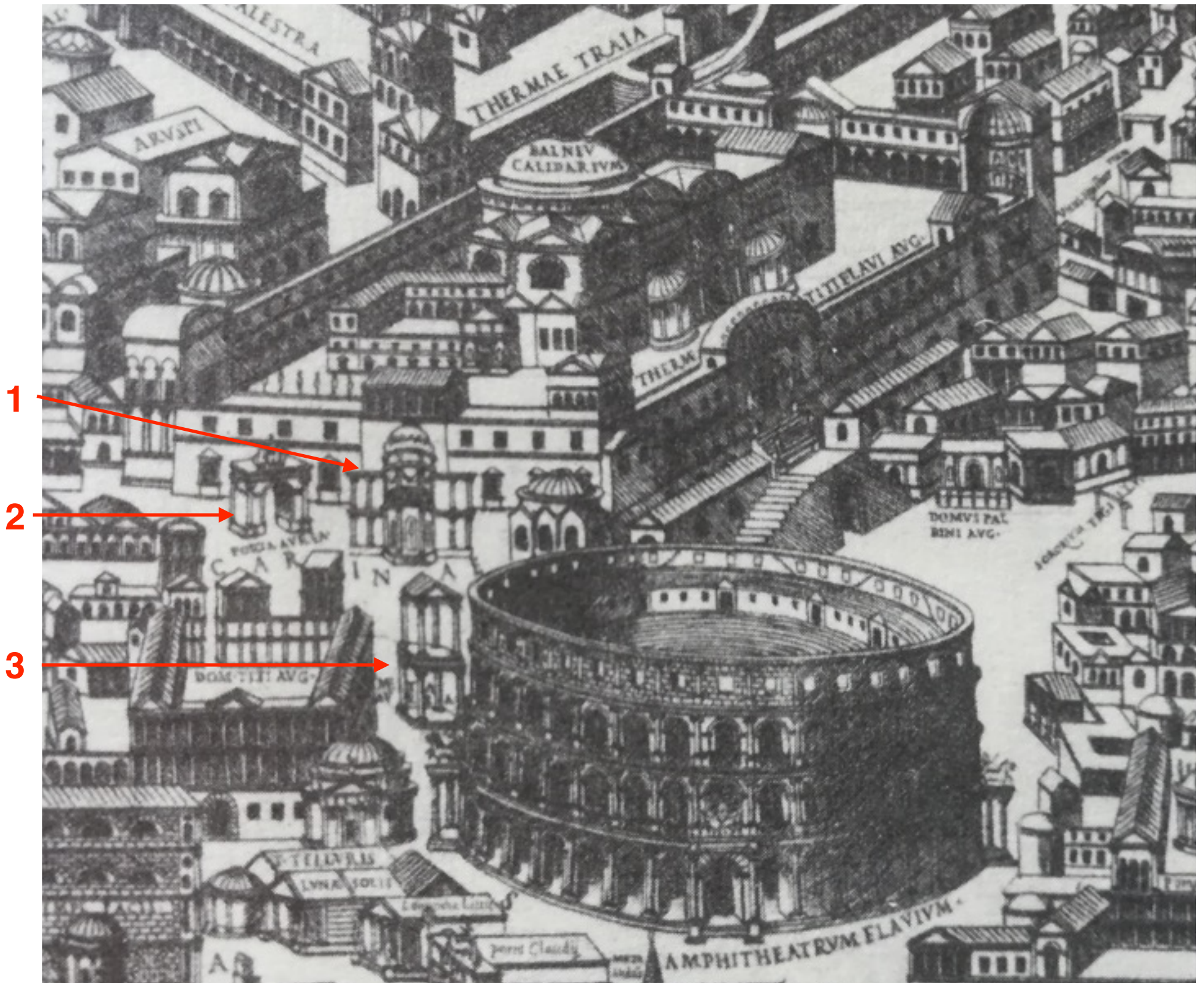
Fig. 15: Pirro Ligorio (1513-1583), detail from the *Anteiquae Urbis Imago,* 1561, 129 x 145 cm; representation of the Domus Aurea (1), Porta Aurea (2), Meta Aurea (3), 129 x 145 cm, British Museum (Frutaz 1962, pianta XVII, 2; I, pp. 61-62).
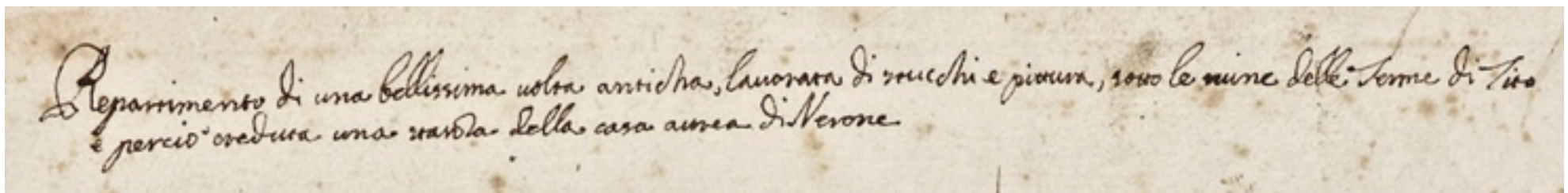
Fig. 16: Pietro Santi Bartoli (1635-1700), detail from one drawing which depicts one quarter-ceiling of one vault of the Domus Aurea; paper and pen; Windsor, Royal Collection (RCIN 909584).

Fig. 17: F.P. Martire Felini, detail from *Trattato nuovo delle cose meravigliose dell'alma città di Roma,* in Roma per Bartolomeo Zanetti, 1610, p. 354.
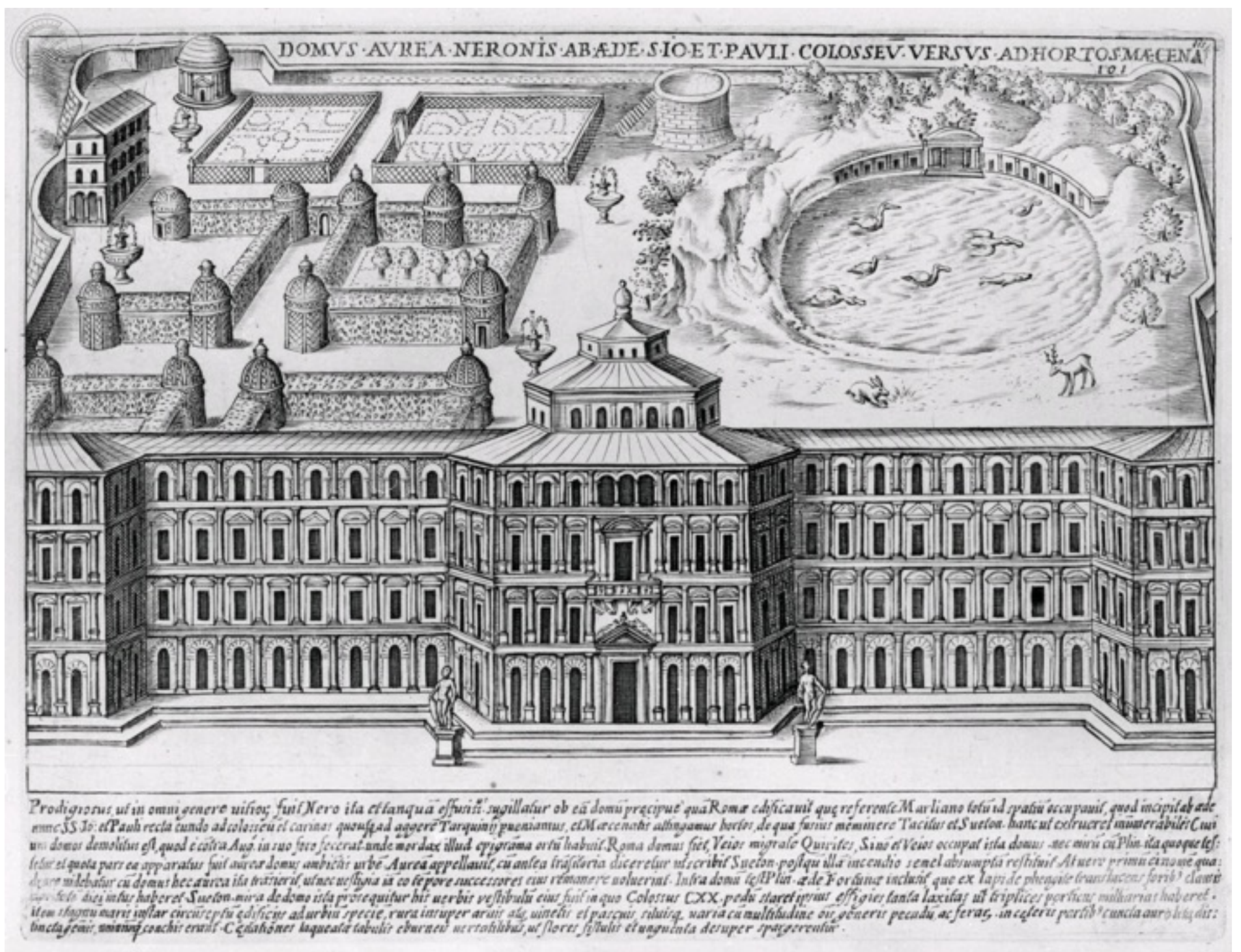
Fig. 18: G. Lauro, *Antiquae urbis splendor,* Pl. 101, engraving, 215 x 300 mm, Biblioteca Hertziana (DG 532-2370 raro).

Fig. 19: the central hemicycle of the south side of the Trajan Baths

Fig. 20: Giovanni Battista Piranesi (1720-1778), *Le antichità Romane,* 1757, 467 x 684 mm, Roma, BIASA, Roma XI. 13. 1. 12 (Frutaz 1962, pianta XXXV; I, pp. 79-80).
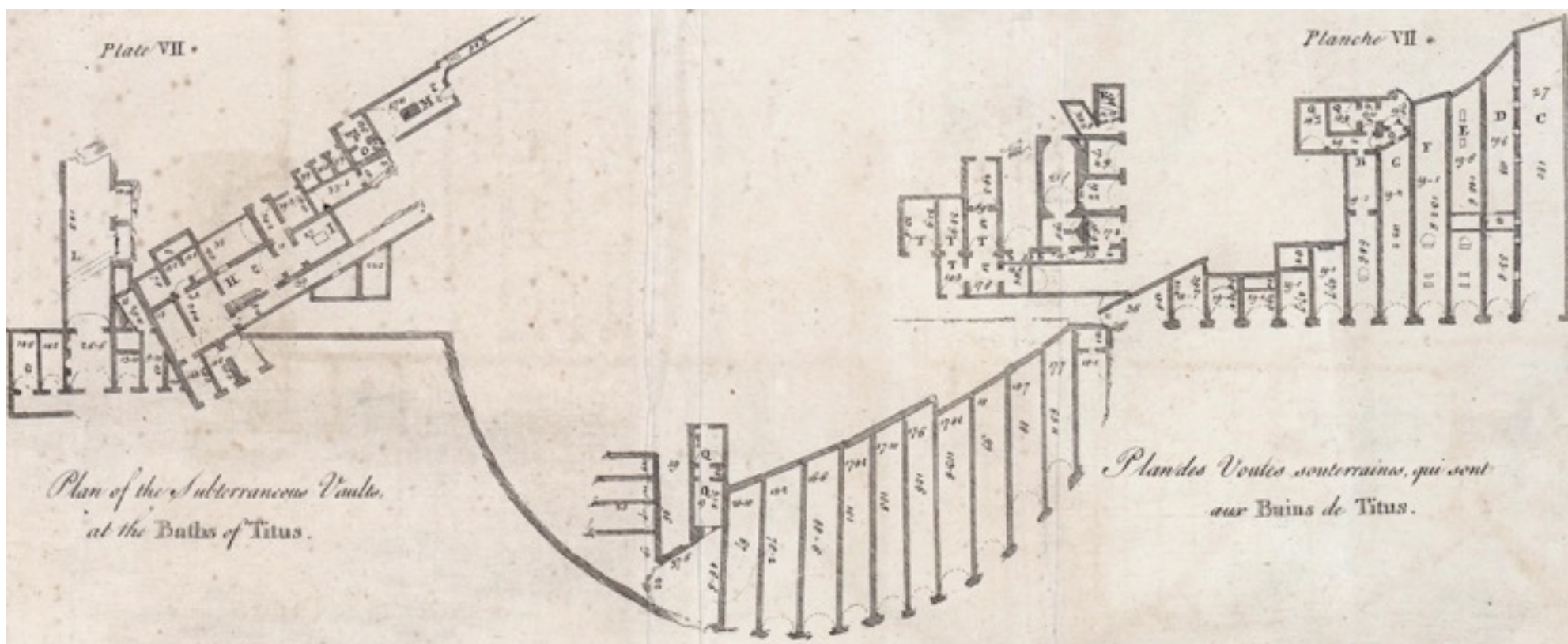
Fig. 21: map of the Domus Aurea by Charles Cameron in *The Baths of the Romans* (1772), Plate VII.
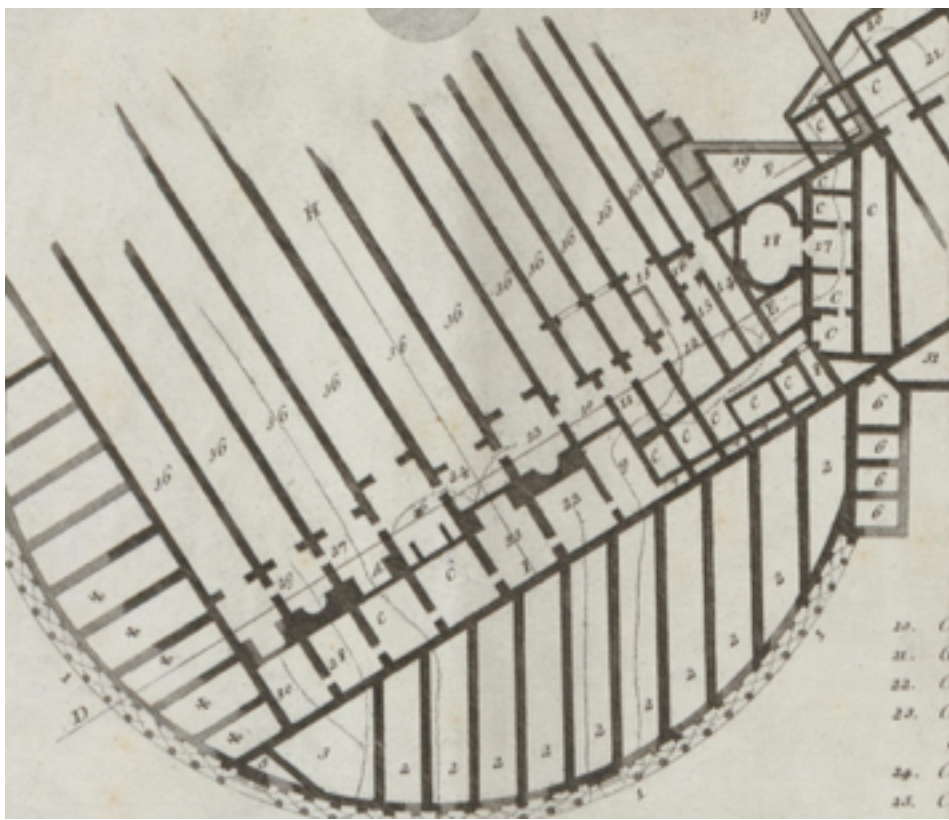
Fig. 22: detail of the map of the Domus Aurea by Vincenzo Brenna in Mirri-Carletti, *Le antiche camere delle terme di Tito e le loro pitture restituite al pubblico*, 1776, Pl. 3.
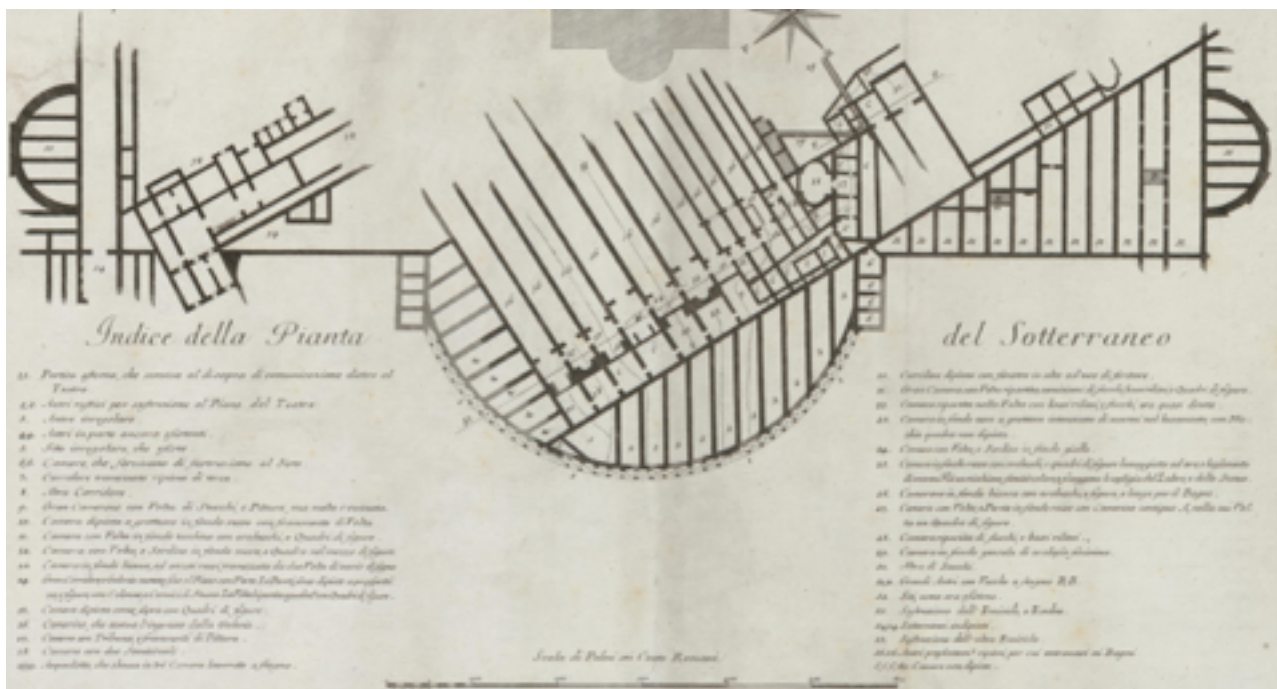
Fig. 23: the map of the Domus Aurea by Vincenzo Brenna in Mirri-Carletti, *Le antiche camere delle terme di Tito e le loro pitture restituite al pubblico*, 1776, Pl. 3.
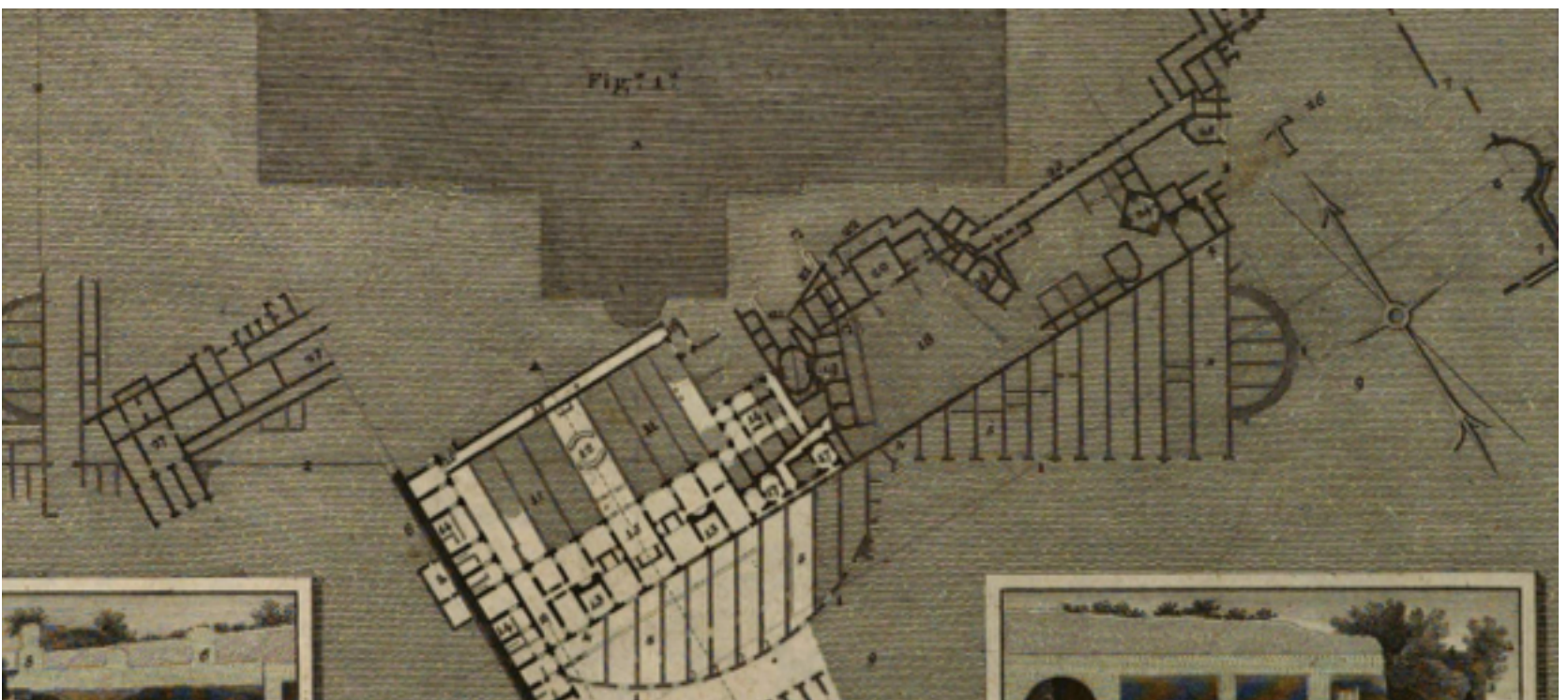
Fig. 24: the map of the Domus Aurea by De Romanis in De Romanis, *Le antiche camere esquiline dette comunemente delle Terme di Tito*, 1822, Pl. 1.
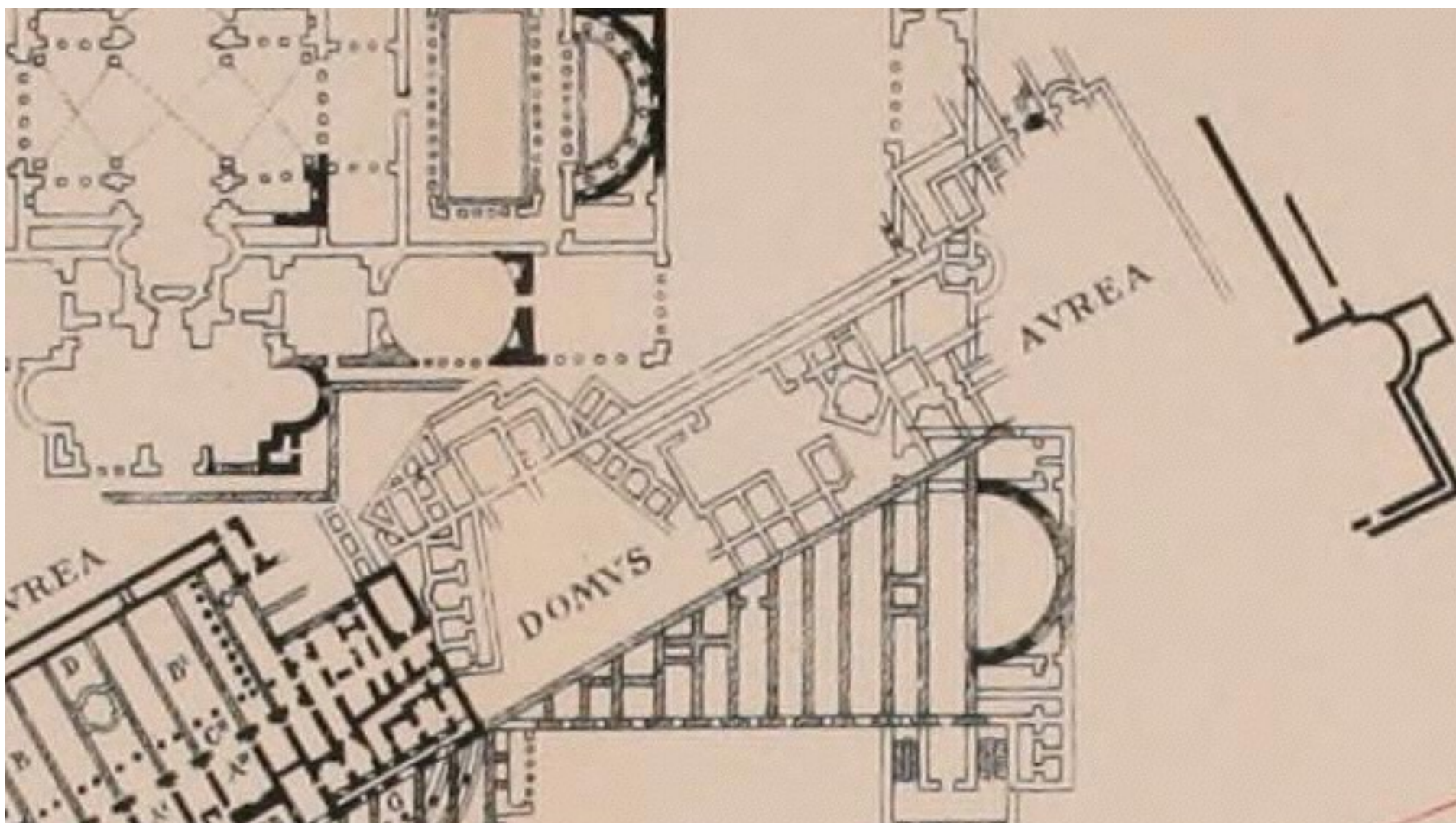
Fig. 25: Detail from the first map of the Domus Aurea, the Titus' Baths, the Trajan's Baths and the Seven Halls, still generally accepted (Lanciani 1897, fig. 138).
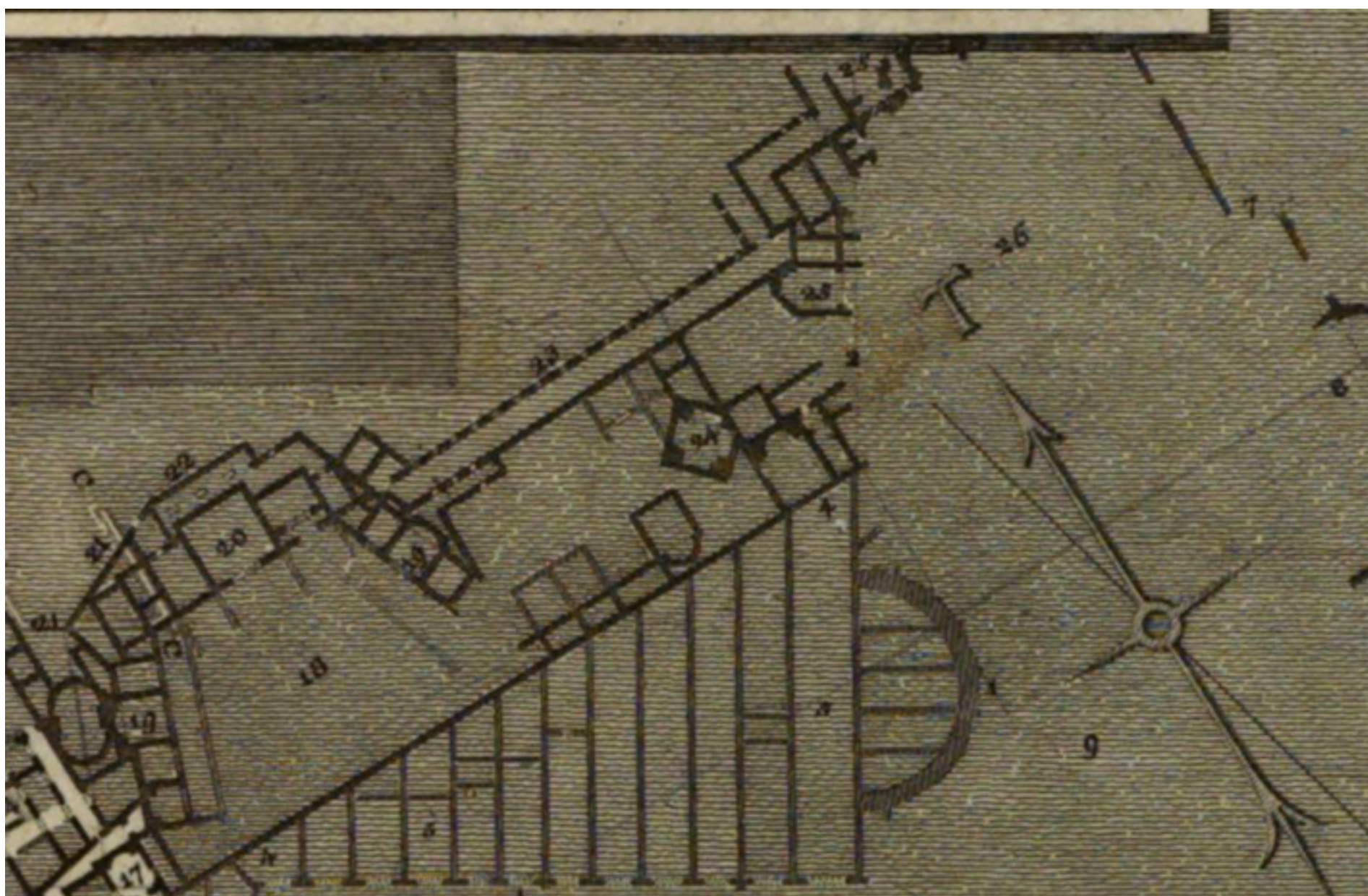
Fig. 26: the map of the Domus Aurea by De Romanis in De Romanis, *Le antiche camere esquiline dette comunemente delle Terme di Tito*, 1822, Pl. 1.
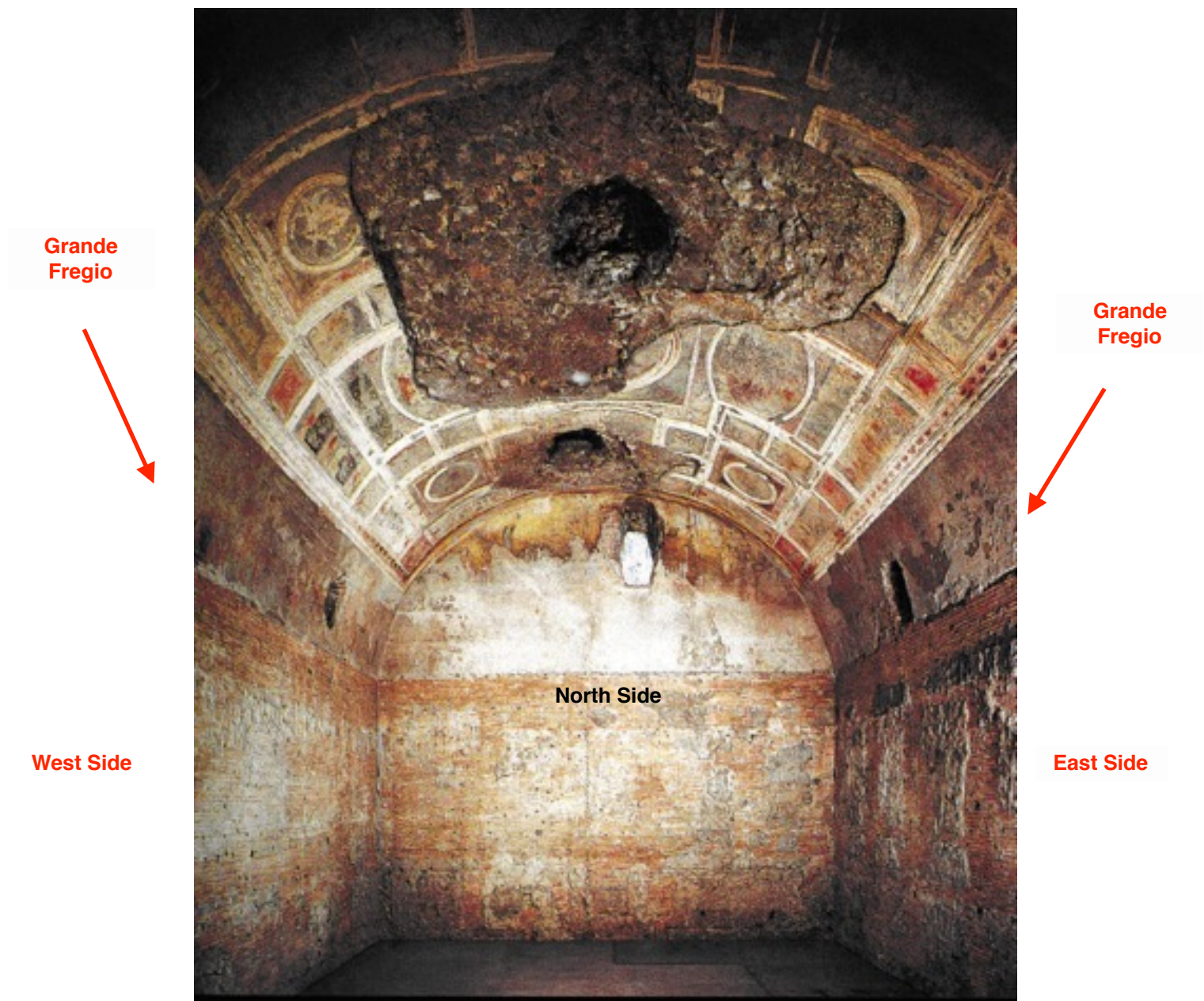
Fig. 27: Volta Dorata from South towards the North side (Iacopi 1999, fig. 38).

Fig. 28: Volta Dorata towards the West side.
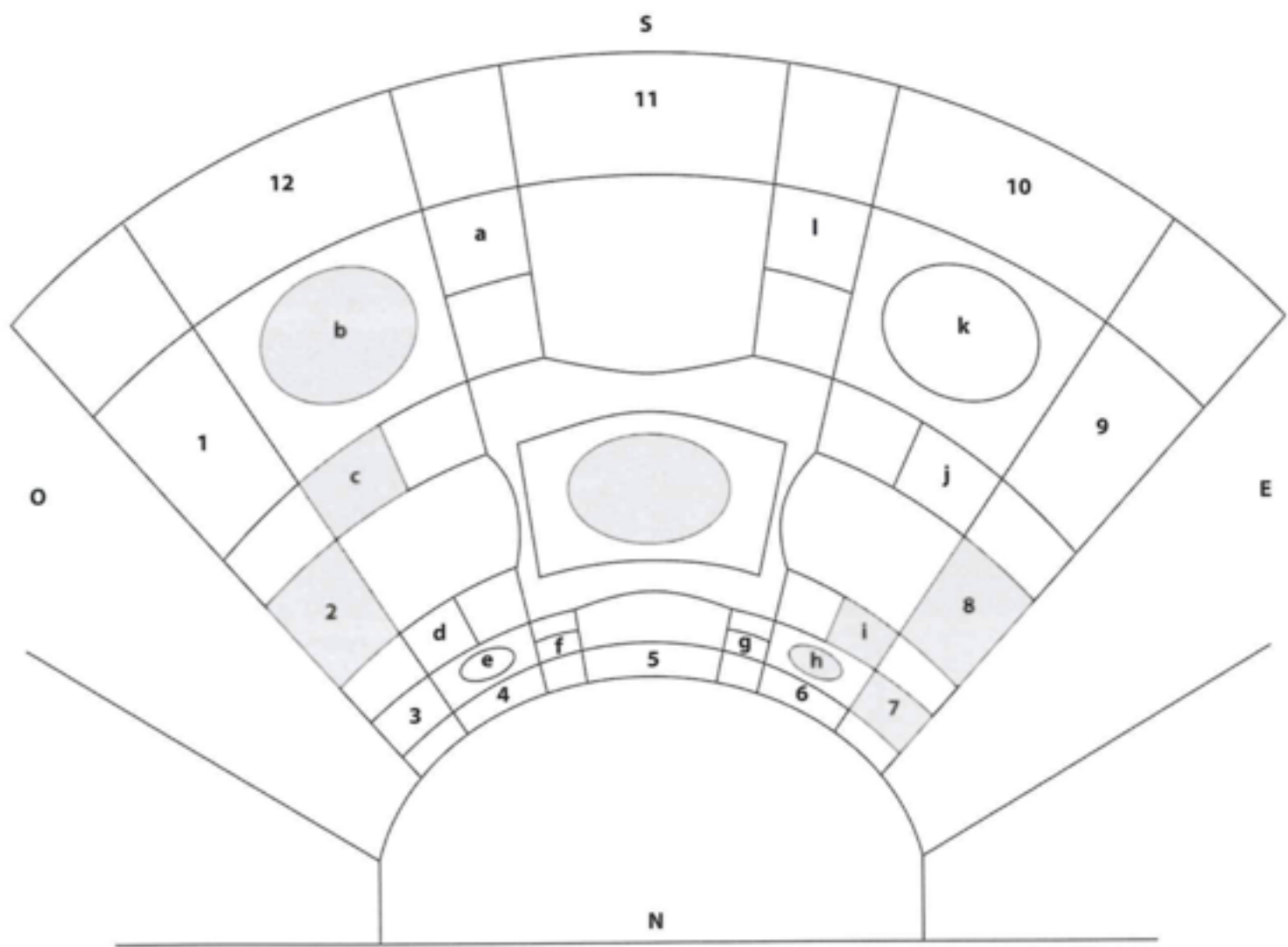
Fig. 29: Figural panels of the Volta Dorata (Meyboom-Moormann 2013, II, fig. 80.3).
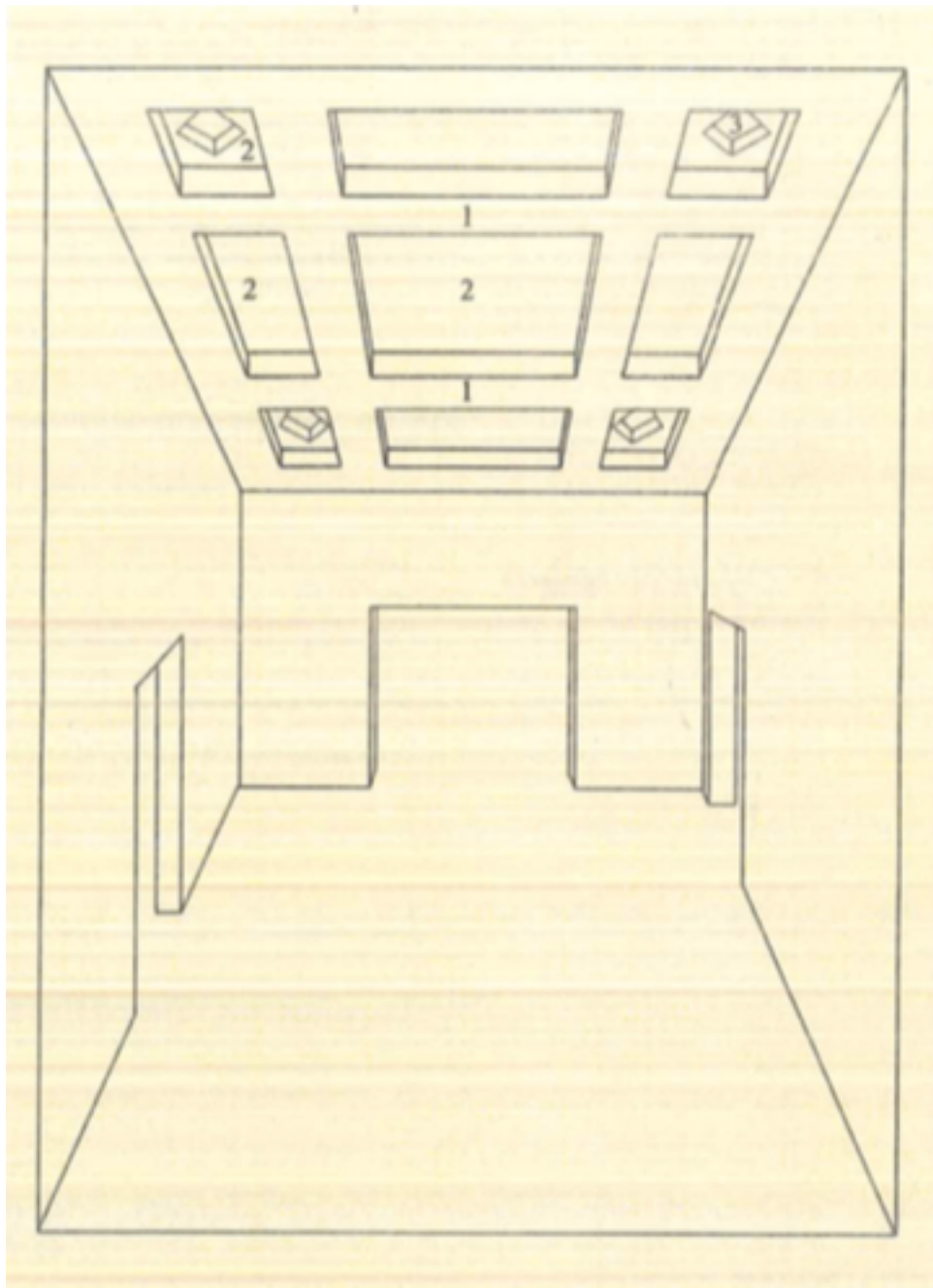
Fig. 30: Domus of *Octavius Quartio*: (Barbet 2004 p. 29 fig. 6).
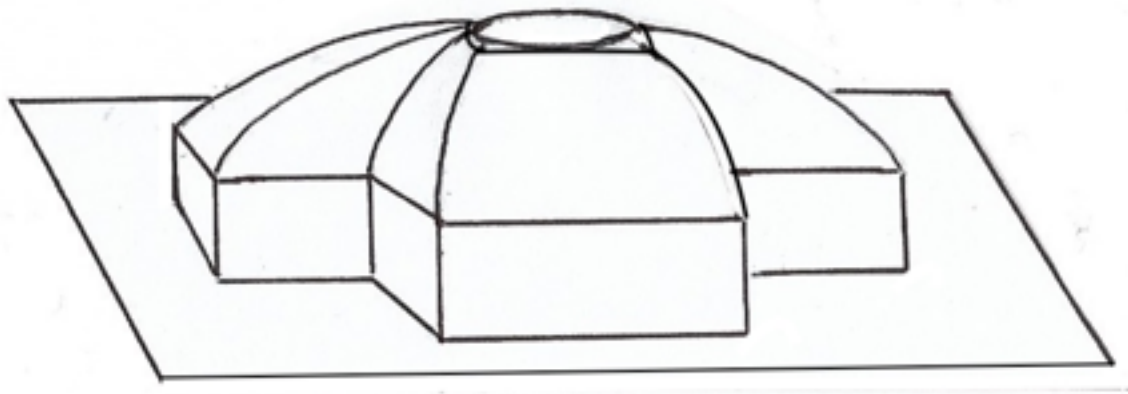
Fig. 31: Three-dimensional model of the "illusionistic prospective" of the Volta Dorata.
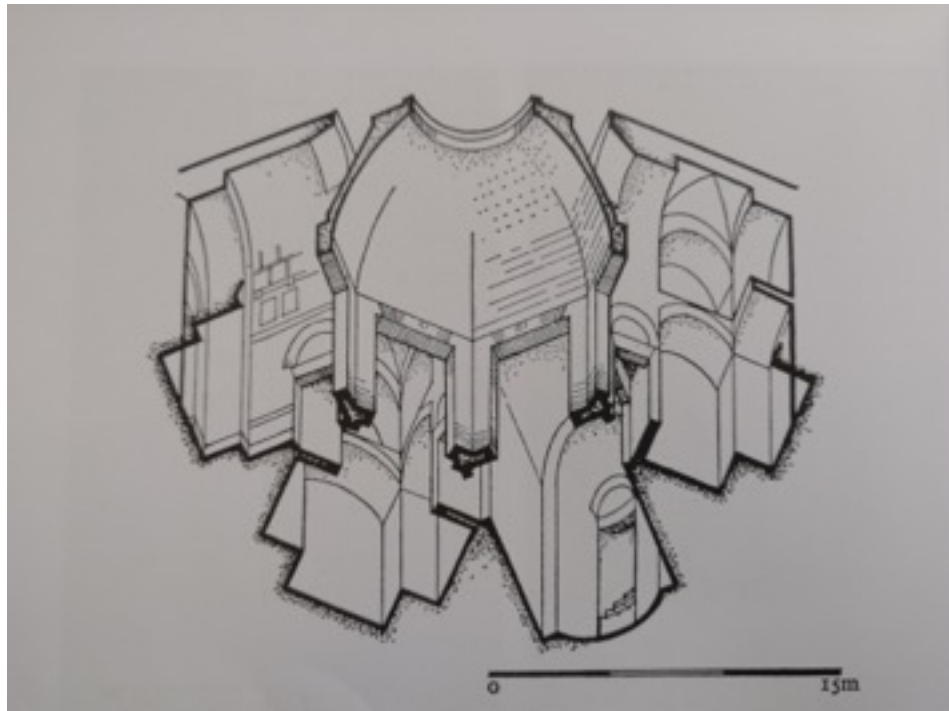
Fig. 32: Octagonal court (room 128) in the Oppian building (Boethius–WardPerkins 1970, fig. 98).
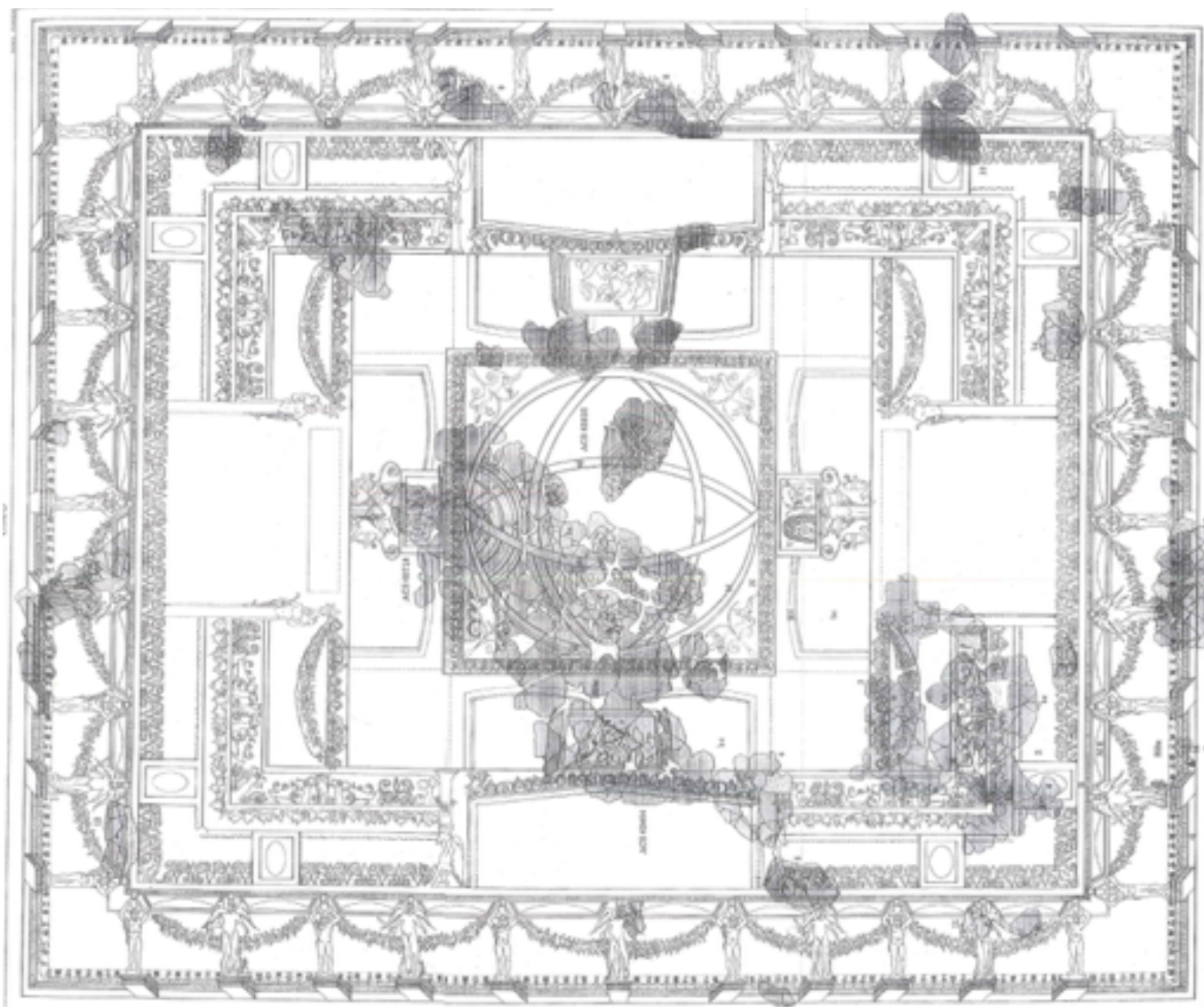
Fig. 33: Ceiling of the "Armillary Sphere" from portico of Villa San Marco at Stabiae (Barbet-Miniero 1999, II, fig. 587).

Fig. 34: Detail from Francisco's watercolor (CAT. 1).

Fig. 35: Detail from Volta Dorata (Iacopi 1999, p. 43, fig. 40).
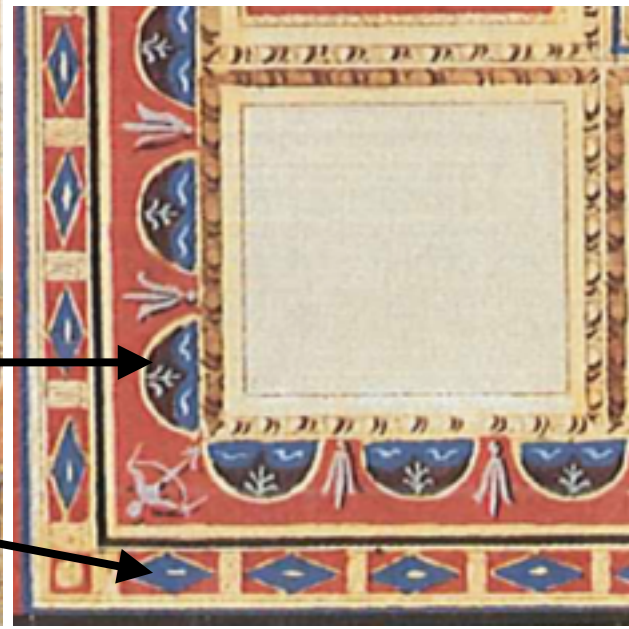
Fig. 36: Detail from Louvre watercolored engraving (CAT. 3).
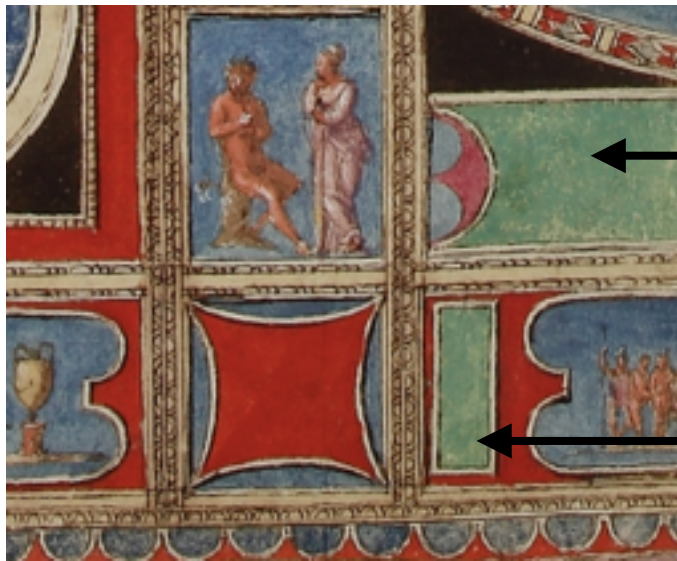
Fig. 37: Detail from Francisco's watercolor (CAT. 1).

Fig. 38: Detail of Volta Dorata (Iacopi 1999, p. 44, fig. 42).

Fig 39: Detail from V. Brenna's drawing, dated to 1777 (Pl. 8, fig. 2).

Fig 40: Detail from Senese Codex, fol. 10 *recto* (CAT. 7).

Fig 41: Detail from Uffizi drawing 1682 O (CAT. 6)
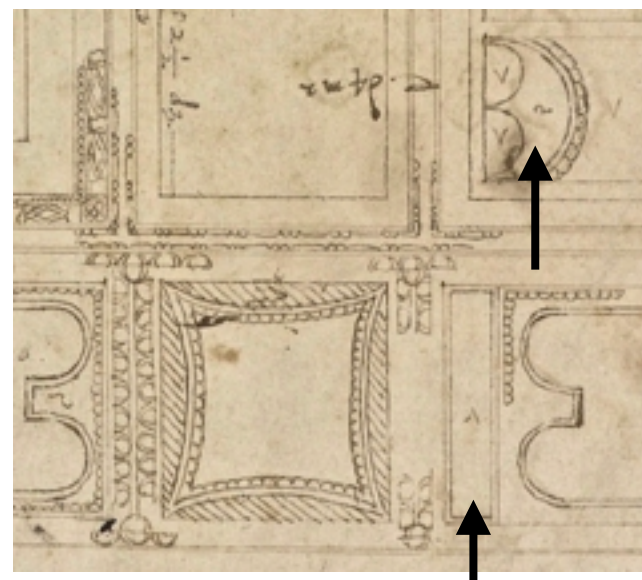
Fig. 42: Detail of Windsor drawing 909568 recto (CAT. 8)

Fig. 43: Detail of stucco bilobed cartouche.

Fig. 44: Detail from Mirri's watercolor (CAT. 3).
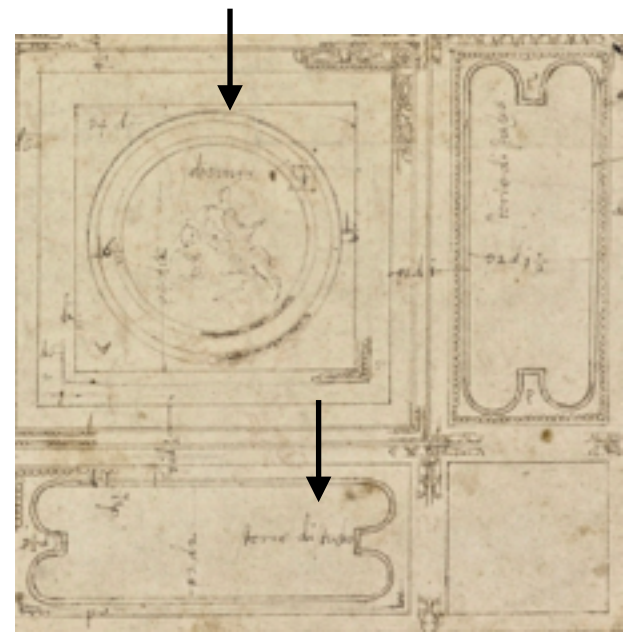
Fig. 45: Detail from Uffizi drawing 53 O recto (CAT. 8).

Fig. 46: Detail from Uffizi drawing 53 O recto (CAT. 10).

Fig. 47: Scene 8 of the Volta Dorata (East side): Meyboom-Moormann 2013, II, fig. 80.7

Fig. 48: Scene I: Weege 1913a, taf. 8 B.

Fig. 49: Detail from Francisco's watercolor (CAT. 1)

Fig. 50: Detail from Brenna (Pl. 8, fig. 2)
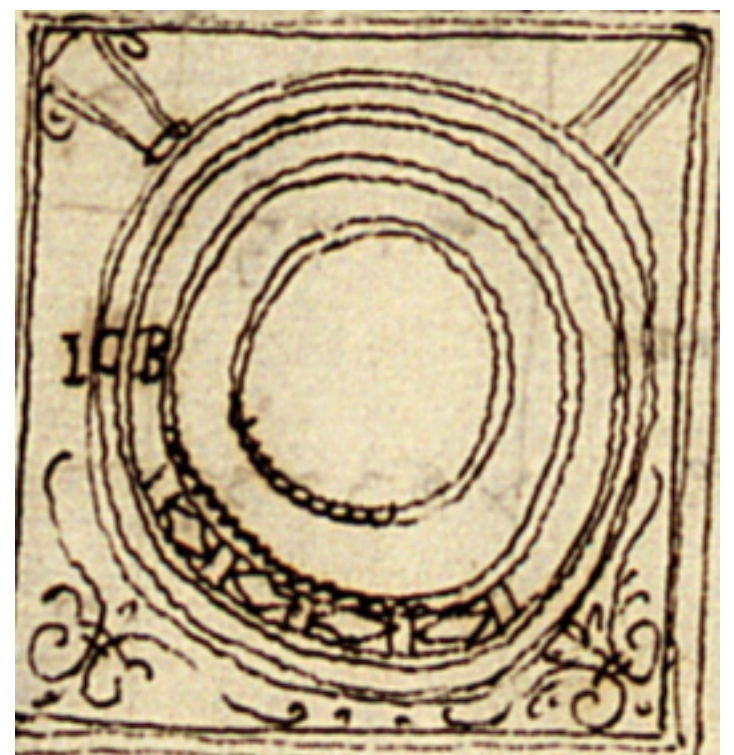
Fig. 51: Detail from Marciana Codex fol. 6 *verso* (CAT. 4).

Fig. 52: Detail from Francisco's watercolor (CAT. 1).
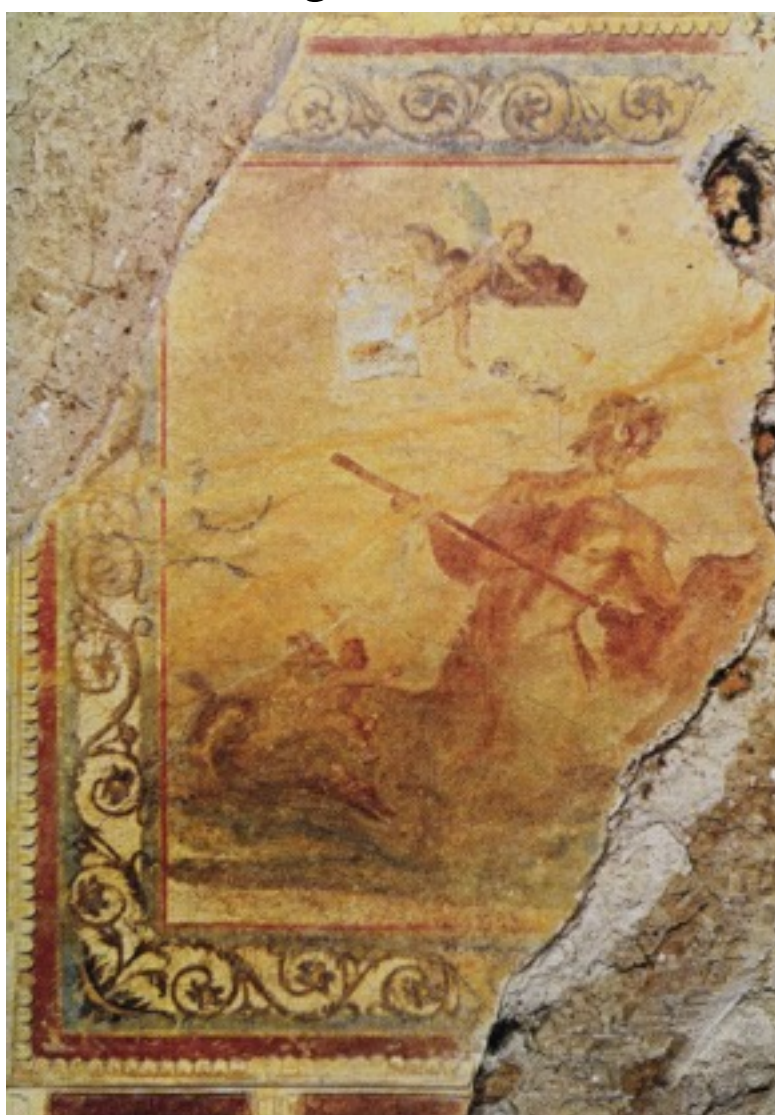
Fig. 53: Detail from central scene of room 129 (Iacopi 1999, fig. 74).

Fig. 54: Detail from central nave of the so-called "Underground Basilica" of Porta Maggiore in Rome, 50s of 1st century AD (Bendinelli 1927, Pl. XVI).

Fig. 55: Detail from *tepidarium* of Pompeian Baths of the Stabian Baths (PPM VII, 166).

Fig. 56: Stone medallion in Palazzo Antici-Mattei in Rome Loggia, east side (Guerrini 1982, pp. 156-157, nr. 24 fig. 24).

Fig. 57: Drawing of Parmigianino (1503-1540), paper and pen, Paris, Louvre Collection (RF 580, *recto*).

Fig. 58: Engraving by Frulli Giovanni Battista (1762–1837) from Parmigianino's drawing, Bergamo (BG), Accademia Carrara. Gabinetto Disegni e Stampe, inv 2720.

Fig. 59: Scenes A: detail from Francisco's watercolor (CAT. 1) and Turnbull's engraving (Turnbull 1741, no. 20).

Fig. 60: Scene B (SW angular medallion) from left to right: Codex Escurialensis fol. 10 *recto* (CAT. 11); detail from Codex Fossombronis fol. 85 *recto* (CAT. 12); Francisco's watercolor (CAT. 1); detail from Mirri's watercolor (detail from Pinot de Villechenon 1998, Pl. 49).

Fig. 61: Scene C (from left to right): archaeological evidence of the scene (Weege 1913a, taf. 8 A); detail from Codex Fossombronis fol. 87 *recto* (CAT. 13); Francisco's watercolor (CAT. 1); Mirri's watercolor (detail from Pinot de Villechenon 1998, Pl. 47).

Fig 62. Scenes D: detail from Francisco's watercolor
(CAT.1) and Turnbull's engraving (Turnbull 1741, no. 50).

Fig. 63: Scenes E or scene K (NW or SE angular medallion) from left to right:
Filippino Lippi's drawing (CAT. 14); Francisco's watercolor (CAT. 1: NE corner);
Francisco's watercolor (CAT. 1: NE corner); Senese Codex fol. 11 *recto* (CAT. 7);
on the left: scenes E (NW corner) in Francisco's watercolor (CAT. 1).

Fig. 64. Scenes F, Francisco's watercolor
(CAT.1) and Turnbull's engraving (Turnbull 1741 no. 22).

Fig 65. Scene G from left to right: detail from Codex Wolfegg, fol. 19 *recto* (CAT. 15); detail
from Francisco's watercolor (CAT.1); detail from Senese Codex fol. 11 *recto* (CAT. 7).

Fig 66. Scenes H (NE angular medallion) from left to right: Codex Escurialensis, fol. 6 *recto* (CAT. 16); detail from Uffizi drawing 1682 O (CAT. 6); Lille drawing Pl. 102 (CAT. 17); detail from Mirri's watercolor (Pinot de Villechenon 1998, Pl. 48).

Fig 67. Scenes I (from left to right): archaeological evidence of the scene (Weege 1913a, taf. 8 B); detail from Uffizi drawing 1682 O (CAT. 6); detail from Francisco's watercolor (CAT. 1); detail from Mirri's watercolor (Pinot de Villechenon 1998, Pl. 48).

Fig 68. Scenes J: on left detail from Francisco's watercolor (CAT. 1); on right Turnbull's engraveing (Turnbull 1741, no. 49).

Fig. 69: Scenes K or scene E (SE or NW angular medallion),
on the left Francisco's watercolor (CAT. 1); on the right Turnbull 1741, no. 14.

Fig 70. Scenes L: on left detail from Francisco's watercolor and
(CAT. 1) and Turnbull's engraving (Turnbull 1741, no. 21).

Fig. 71: Ceiling of room 35, Mirri's watercolor 1776 (Pinot de Villechenon 1998, Pl. 59).

Fig. 72: Reconstruction of the ceiling discovered in 1994-1996 at *Brigetio* (Hungary): the abduction of Andromeda by Pegasus and the four *Horai*, dated to the end of 2nd century AD (Borhy 2004, p. 240, fig. 19).

Fig. 73: Detail from central nave of the so-called "Underground Basilica" of Porta Maggiore in Rome, 50s of 1st century AD (Bendinelli 1927, Pl. XXX, no. 1: Marsia and Athena).

Fig. 74: Detail from central nave of the so-called "Underground Basilica" of Porta Maggiore in Rome, 50s of 1st century AD (Bendinelli 1927, Pl. XXIII, no. 1: Orestes and Iphigenia).

Fig. 75: Detail from left nave of the so-called "Underground Basilica" of Porta Maggiore in Rome, 50s of 1st century AD (Bendinelli 1927, Pl. XXVI, no. 2: unknown couple).

Fig 76: Scene 1 (bilobed cartouche of the North side): Codex Wolfegg, foll. 44 *verso* - 45 *recto* (CAT. 18); details from Francisco's watercolor (CAT. 1); below: figural scene from the Volta Dorata of Peruzzi (1519).

Fig 77: Scene 3 (bilobed cartouche of the West): details from Francisco's watercolor (CAT. 1).

Fig 78: Scene 4 (bilobed cartouche of the North side): details from Francisco's watercolor (CAT. 1).

Fig 79: Scene 5 (central bilobed cartouche of the North side): details from Francisco's watercolor (CAT. 1); detail from left nave of the so-called "Underground Basilica" of Porta Maggiore in Rome, 50s of 1st century AD (Bendinelli 1927, Pl. XXVI, no. 2: scene of sacrifice).

Fig 80: Scene 6 (bilobed cartouche of the North side): details from Francisco's watercolor (CAT. 1).

Fig 81: Scene 7 (bilobed cartouche of the East side): details from Francisco's watercolor (CAT. 1).
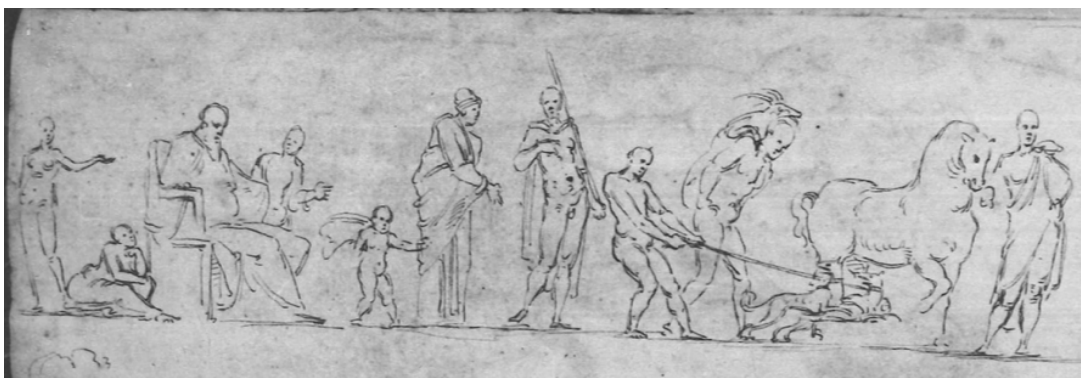
Fig. 82: Scene 8 (central bilobed cartouche of the East side): archaeological evidence of the scene (Meyboom-Moormann 2013, II, fig. 80.7); detail from Codex Fossombronis, fol. 86 recto (CAT. 20); on the left: detail from Codex Wolfegg fol. 22 *recto* by Amico Aspertini (CAT. 22).

Fig 83: Scene 9 (bilobed cartouche of the East side): details from Francisco's watercolor (CAT. 1).

Fig 84: Scene 10 (bilobed cartouche of the South side): details from Francisco's watercolor (CAT. 1); on the right: detail from Pinturicchio's ceiling of Piccolomini Library (cf. *Chapter 4*).

Fig 85: Scene 11 (central bilobed cartouche of the South side): details from Francisco's watercolor (CAT. 1).

Fig 86: Scene 12 (bilobed cartouche of the South side): details from Francisco's watercolor (CAT. 1); on the right: Michelangelo, Archers shooting at a Herm, c.1530, Red chalk (two shades), 219 x 323 mm (sheet of paper), Royal Collection of Windsor, inv. RCIN 912778 (cf. *Chapter 4*).

Fig. 87: Scene 2 from Mirri's watercolor, 1776, (Pinot de Villechenon 1998, Pl. 45, cf. CAT. 3).

Fig. 88: Scene 2: detail from fol. 10 *verso* of the Codex Escurialensis, 1490-1506/7 (CAT. 19).

Fig. 89: Scene 2: detail from fol. 86 *recto* of Codex Fossombronis, 1524-1533 (CAT. 20).

Fig. 90: Scene 2 of the Volta Dorata (Meyboom-Moormann 2013, II, p. 112, fig. 80.6).

Fig. 91: sarcophagus with the myth of Hephaestus who discovers Ares and Aphrodite in love, first half of 2nd century AD, Museo Diocesano, Amalfi.

Fig. 92: Sarcophagus with the myth of Hephaestus who discovers Ares and Aphrodite in love, 160-180 AD.a, inv. 381000, Museo Nazionale Romano in Palazzo Altemps, Rome.

Fig. 93: Sarcophagus with the myth of Hephaestus who discovers Ares and Aphrodite in love, 160 AD, inv. 1156, Grottaferrata, Abbazia.

Fig. 94: Anonymus Coburgensis, drawing of Grottaferrata's Sarcophagus with the myth of Hephaestus who discovers Ares and Aphrodite in love (fig. 7), 1550-1555, Coburg, Veste (Germany), Codex Coburgensis (inv. no. Hz 2), fol. 199.

Fig. 95: Burial-chest with the myth of Phaedra and Hippolytus, 150-180 AD, British Museum, 1865,0103.6.
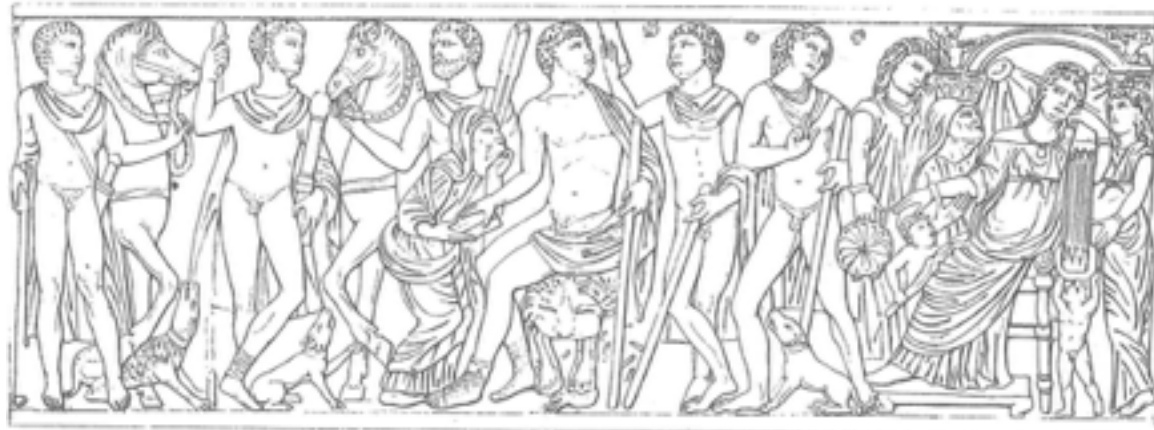
Fig. 96: Sarcophagus with the myth of Phaedra and Hippolytus, 300 AD, Villa Albani 534 LIMC 5.1 (1990), p. 454, n. 72, s.v. Hippolytos I (P. Linant De Bellefonds).

Fig. 97: Phaedra and her nurse with a little servant on the right side, first half of 1st century AD, fresco from the Casa di Giasone and preserved at the Archeological Museum of Naples (inv. 114.322).

Fig. 98: Unknown scene, Neronian Age, fresco from the the Casa di L. Cornelius Diadumenus and preserved at the Archeological Museum of Naples (inv. 114.322).

Fig. 99: Detail from Roman sarcophagus with Medea and Jason's myth, Berlin, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin-Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Antikensammlung, dated to 140-150 AD, Inv. SK 843 b.

Fig. 100: Diana and Actaeon, *viridarium* 23 at the *domus of Sallustius* (40-70 AC): PPM IV, pp. 131-135
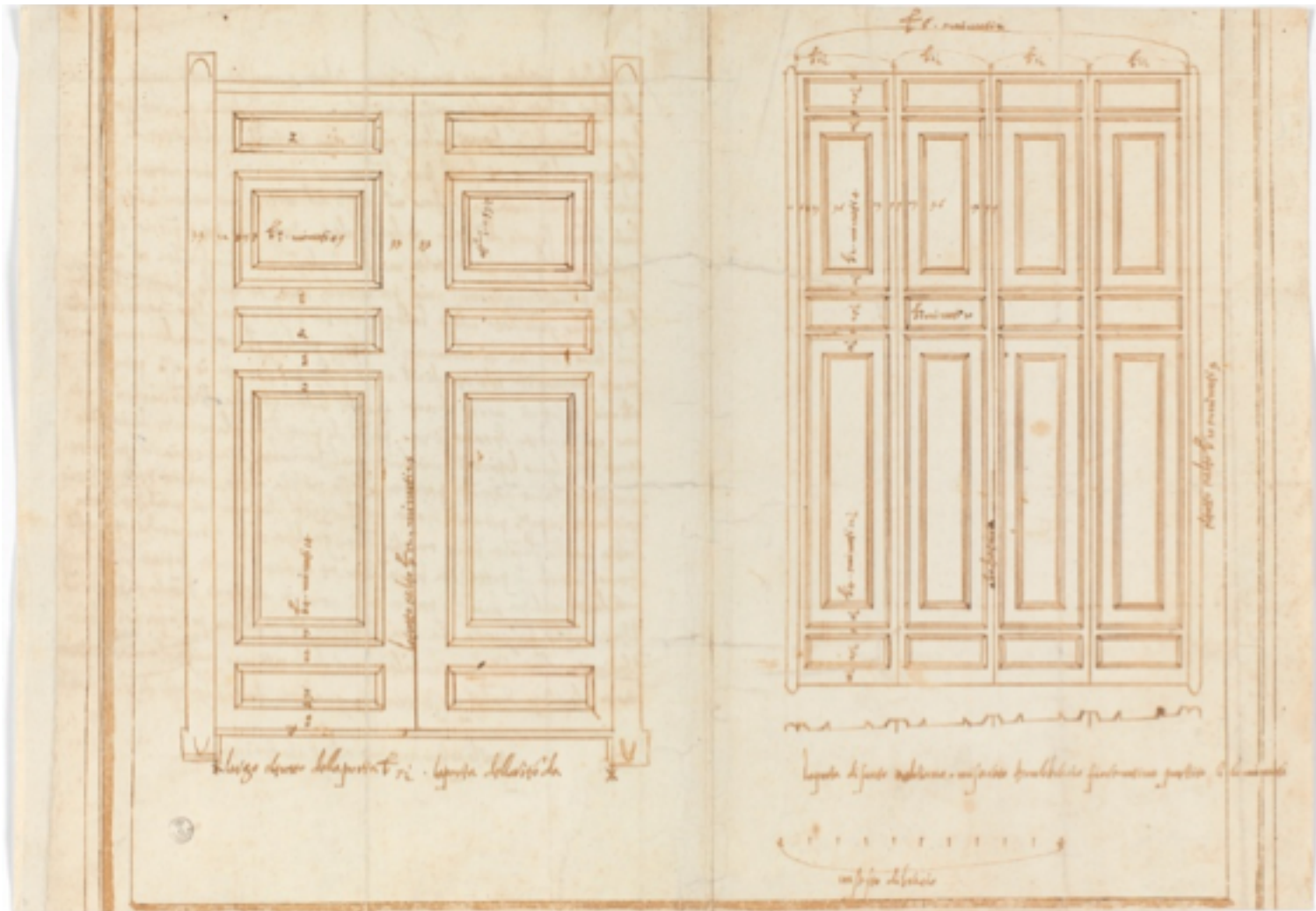
Fig. 101: Antonio Labacco (1495–1570), *Reliefs of bronze Roman doors of Pantheon (left) and Curia Julia in Roman Forum*, 1528, 317 x 453 mm, Florenz, Gallerie degli Uffizi, Gabinetto dei Disegni e delle Stampe (GDSU), 1793 A *recto*.

Fig. 102: Giovanni da Udine (1487–1561), *Corner NE of the Volta Dorata (scenes H and I)*, 1514-1517?; paper, brown ink and pen; 170 x 190 mm; Florenz, Gallerie degli Uffizi, Gabinetto dei Disegni e delle Stampe, inv. 1682 O (CAT. 6).
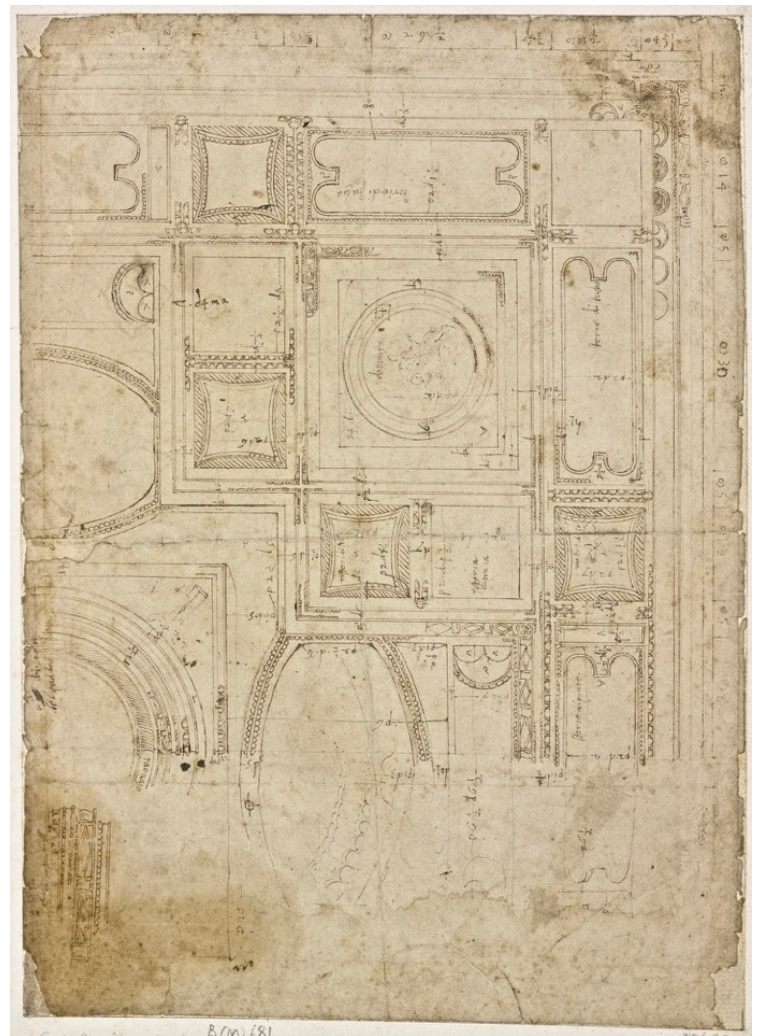
Fig. 103: Giovanni da Udine (1487–1564), *Corner SW of the Volta Dorata with the scene B*, 1514-1517?; beige paper, pencil, pen and ink; 342 x 243 mm; Windsor, Royal Collection, RCIN 909568 *recto* (CAT. 8).

Room 80

Francisco de Hollanda's watercolor (CAT. 1)

Room 80

Giovanni da Udine's Uffizi drawing 1682 O (CAT. 6).

Drawing in Senese Codex L.IV.10 (CAT. 7).

Brenna's drawing: Pl. 8, fig. 2.

Giovanni da Udine's Windsor drawing RCIN 909568 recto (CAT. 8).

Dosio's drawing in Codex Berolinensis, fol. 31 verso (CAT. 9).
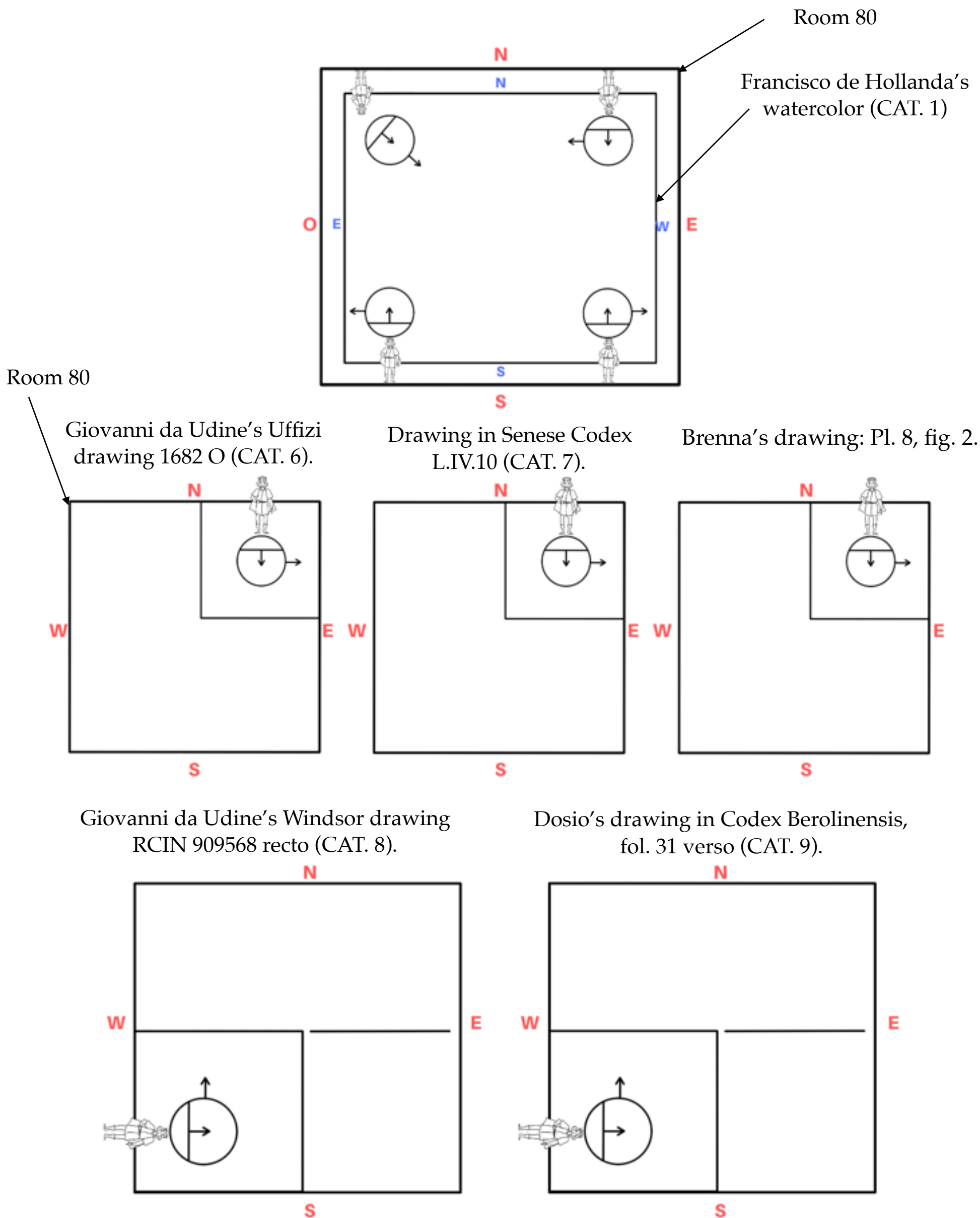
Fig. 104:
Cardial orientations of the angular medallions in Renaissance drawings and Brenna's drawing (the internal arrow of the medallion means that the internal figure has the head where there is the tip of the arrow; the external arrow means the direction of the figures).

Giovanni da Udine's Uffizi drawing 1682 O (CAT. 6).

Drawing in Senese Codex L.IV.10, fol. 11 *recto* (CAT. 7)

Brenna's drawing (1777 ca.): Pl. 8, fig. 2.

Original direction

Dosio's drawing in Codex Berolinensis: CAT. 9

Giovanni da Udine's Windsor drawing: CAT. 8
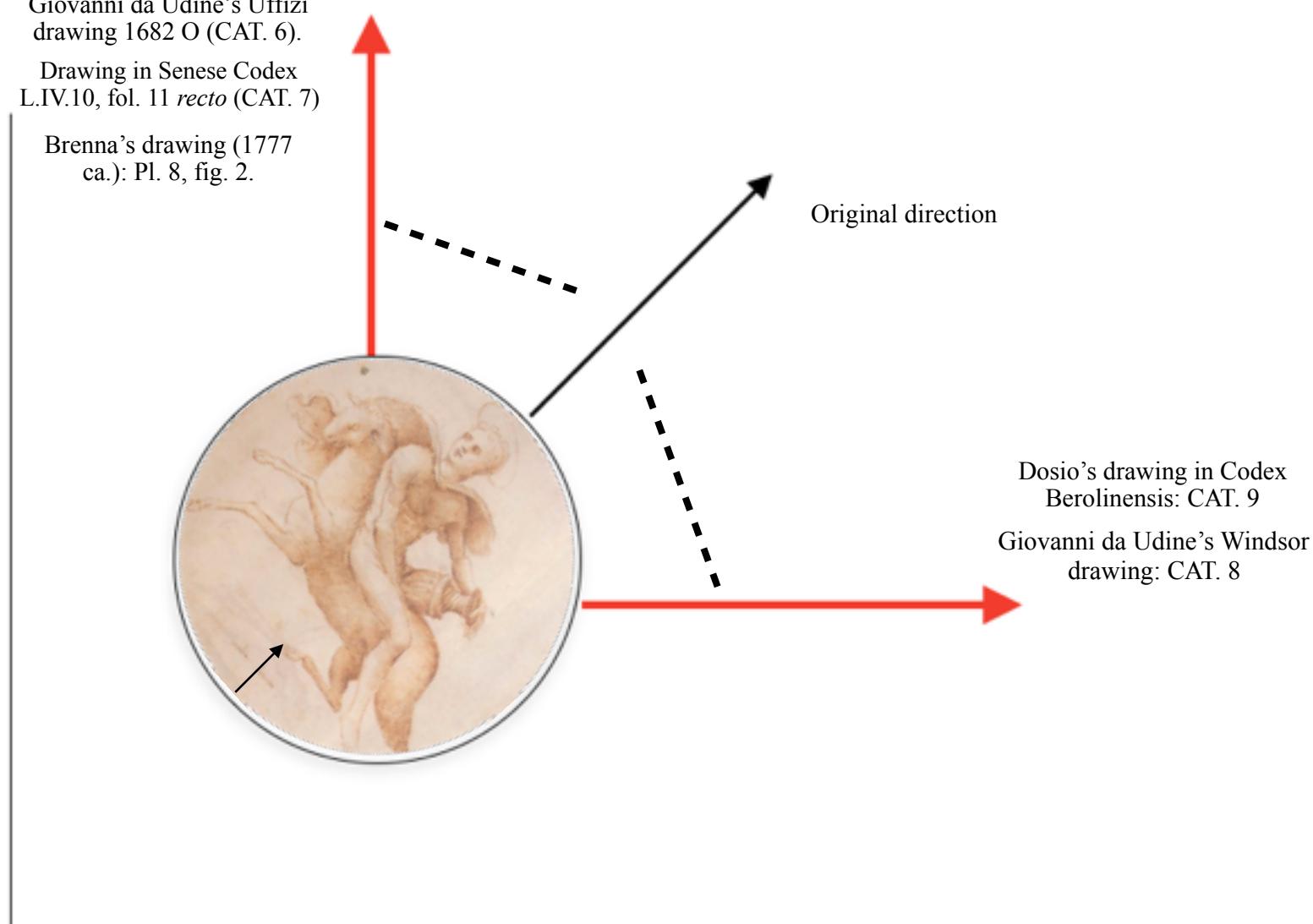
Fig. 105: the original orientation of the figural scenes within the angular medallions (black) and misunderstood representation in the drawings (red).
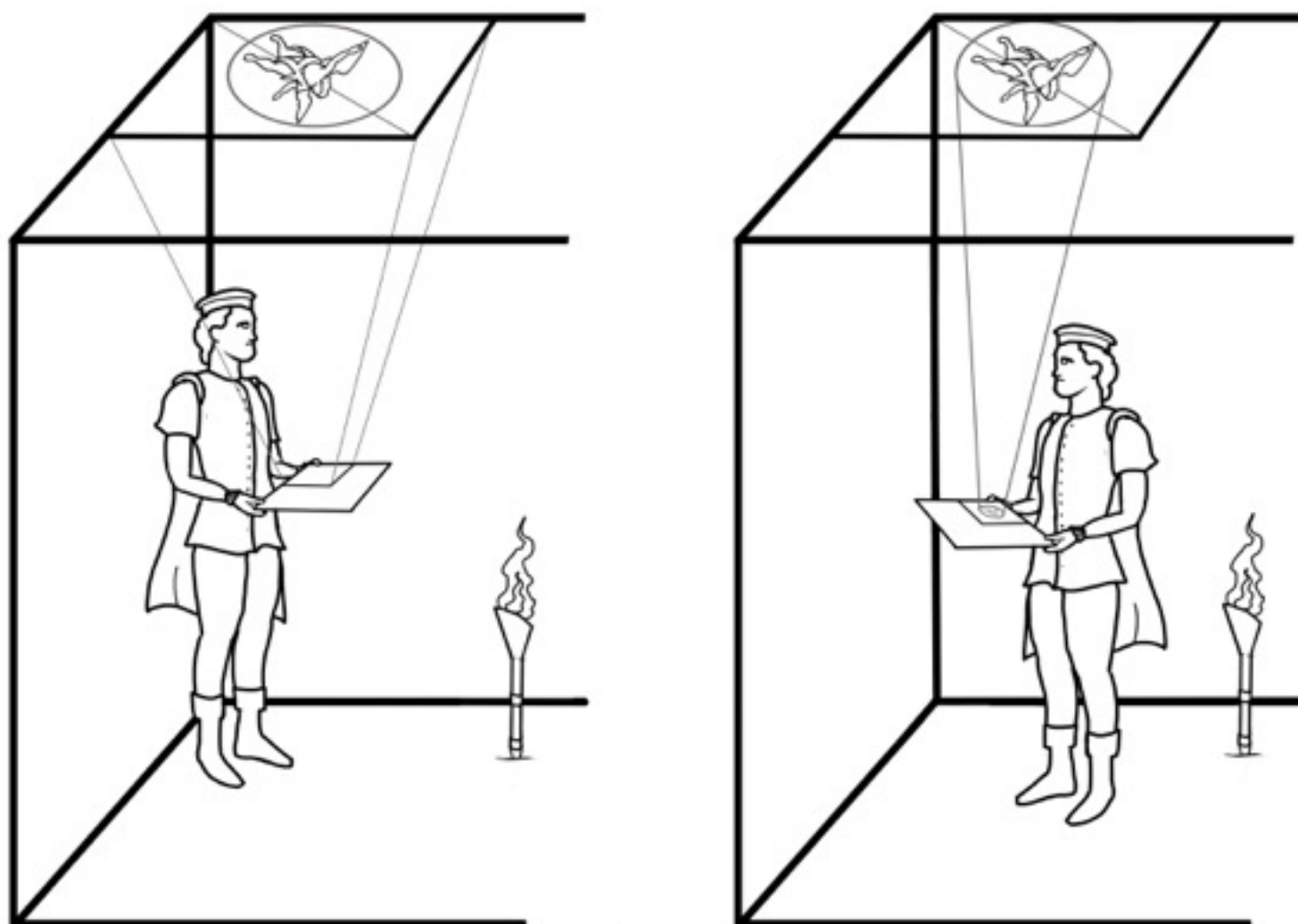
Fig. 106: Possible movements of the artists in copying the corner ceiling: on the left, the position in which the artist copied the ceiling corner; on the right, the moment in which he turned his shoulders towards the center of the room for copying the figural scene of the angular medallion.
On the right side, in order to make visible the artist and his sheet, it has not been possible to depict perfectly him with the shoulder towards the center of the room.
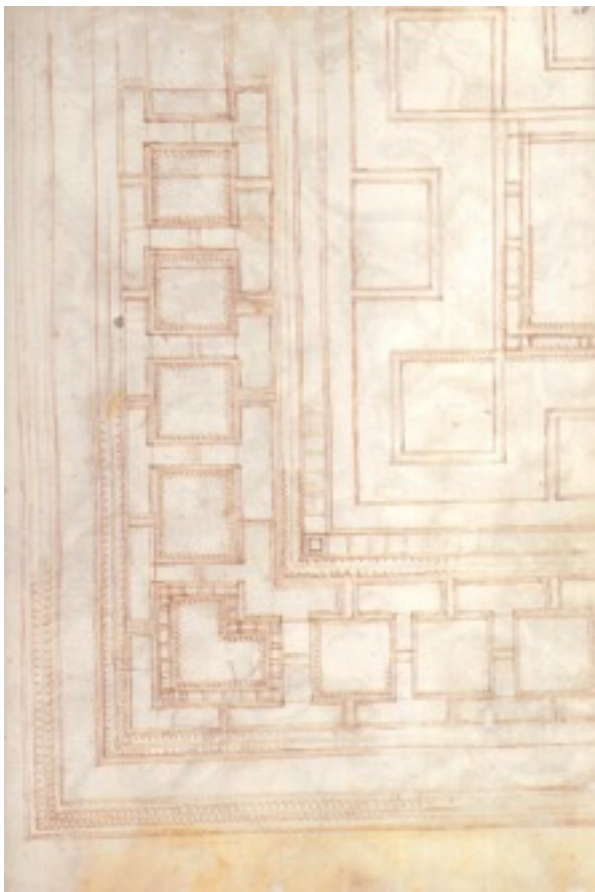
Fig. 107: Giuliano da Sangallo workshop, *ceiling corner of room 129 of the Domus Aurea (Volta degli Stucchi)* 1490-1506/7; paper, red pen; 330 x 230 mm; El Escorial, Biblioteca Real de S. Lorenzo, Codex Escurialensis (Cod. 28-II-12), fol. 60 *recto.*

Fig. 108: Giuliano da Sangallo workshop, *architectural elements, frame from room 129 of Domus Aurea (Volta degli Stucchi), other decorative motifs,*1490-1506/7; paper, red pen; 330 x 230 mm; El Escorial, Biblioteca Real de S. Lorenzo, Codex Escurialensis (Cod. 28-II-12), fol. 32 *recto.*
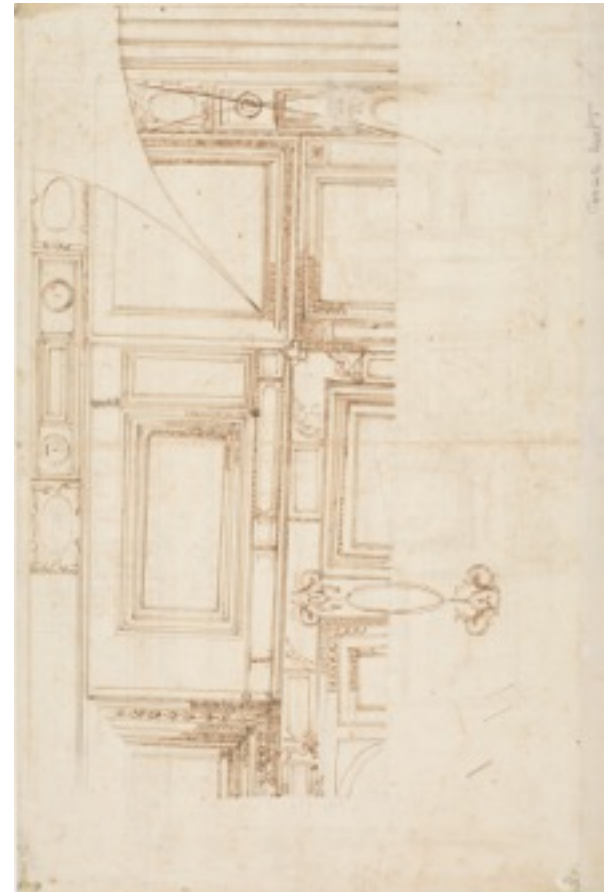
Fig. 109: Manner of Giorgio Vasari (1511-1574), a project of one modern ceiling; 1575-1600; 400 x 270 mm; paper, pen, paintbrush, diluted ink, traces of black pencil (*lapis*); Florenz, Gallerie degli Uffizi, Gabinetto dei Disegni e delle Stampe (GDSU), 51 O *verso.*
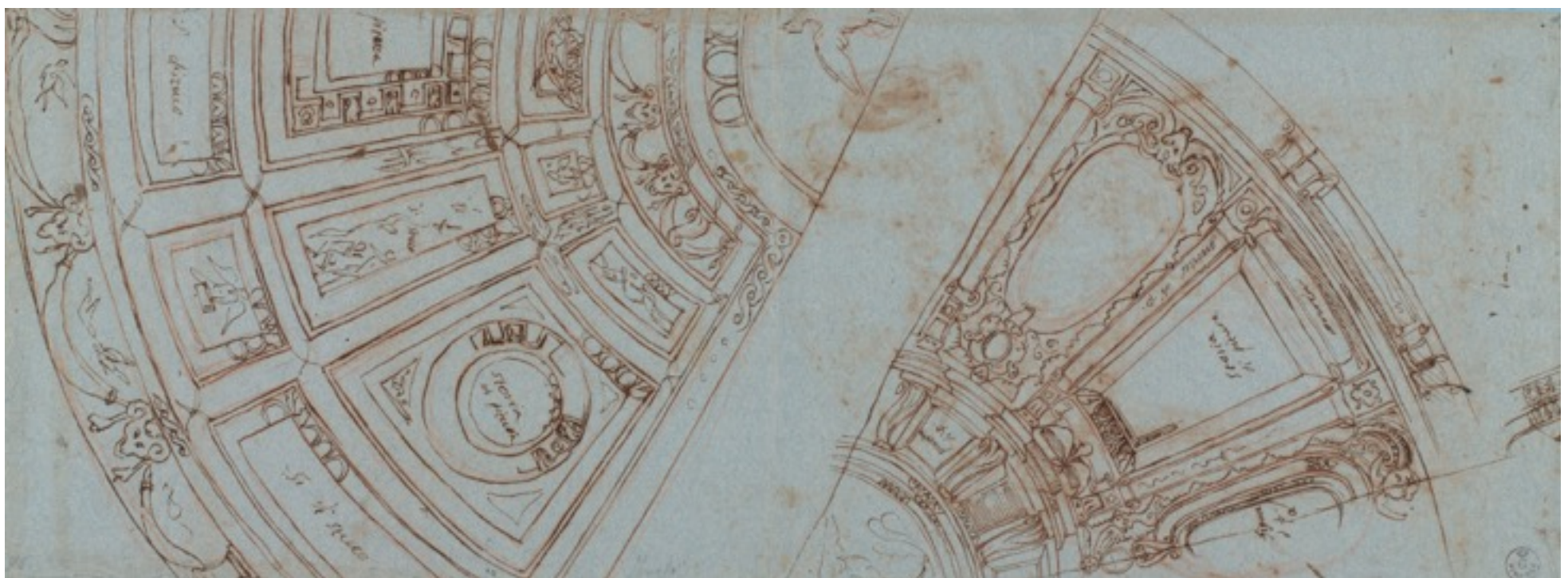
Fig. 110: Anonymous artist of the 16th century, *project of a ceiling*, first half of the 16th century, 140 x 140 mm, Florenz, Gallerie degli Uffizi, Gabinetto dei Disegni e delle Stampe, inv. 17 O.
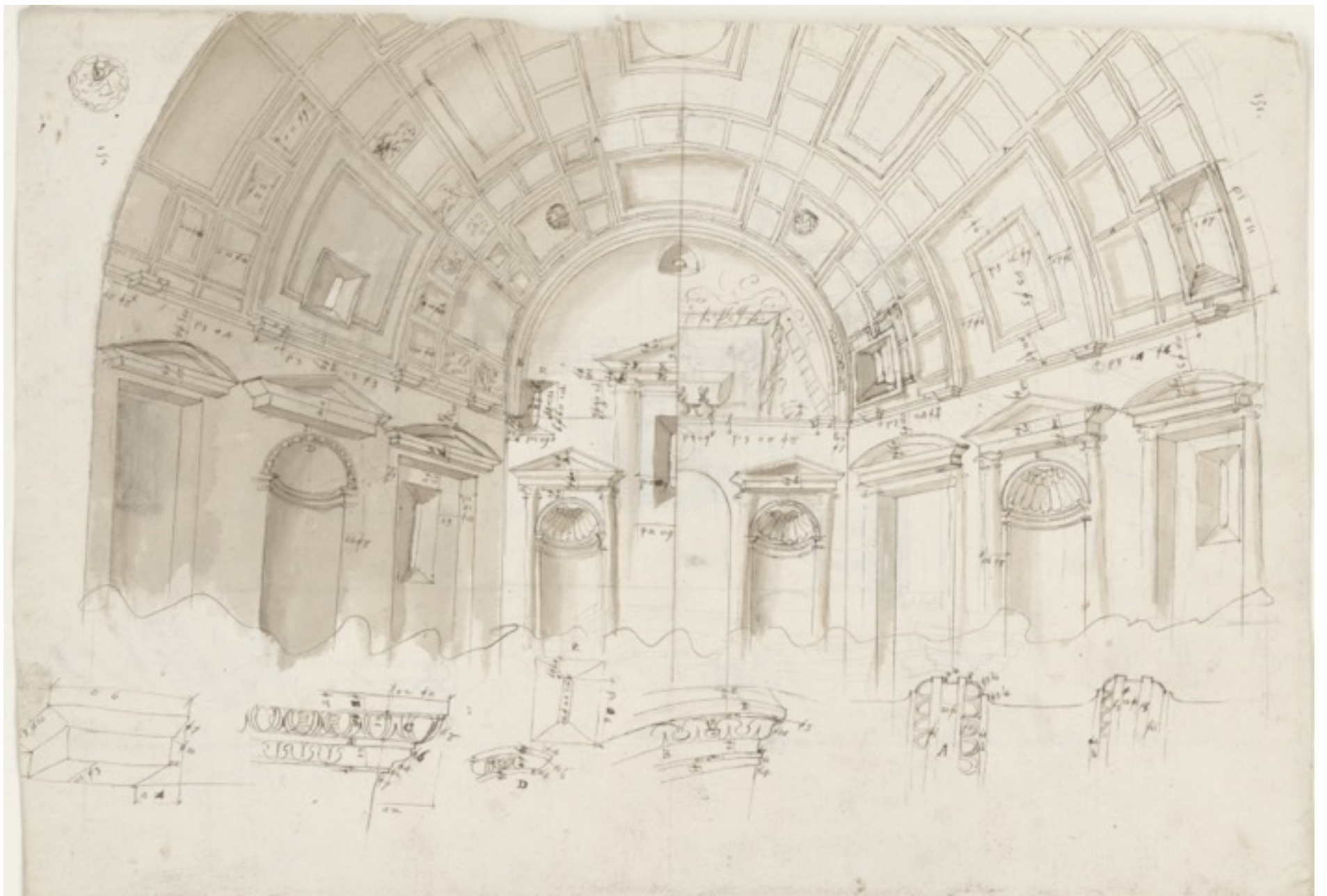
Fig. 111: Anonymous French artist, *project of one interior room*, first half of the 16th century, 585 X 425 mm, Berlin, SMB-PK, Kunstbibliothek, Codex Destailleur D (KdZ 4151), fol. 69 *verso*.
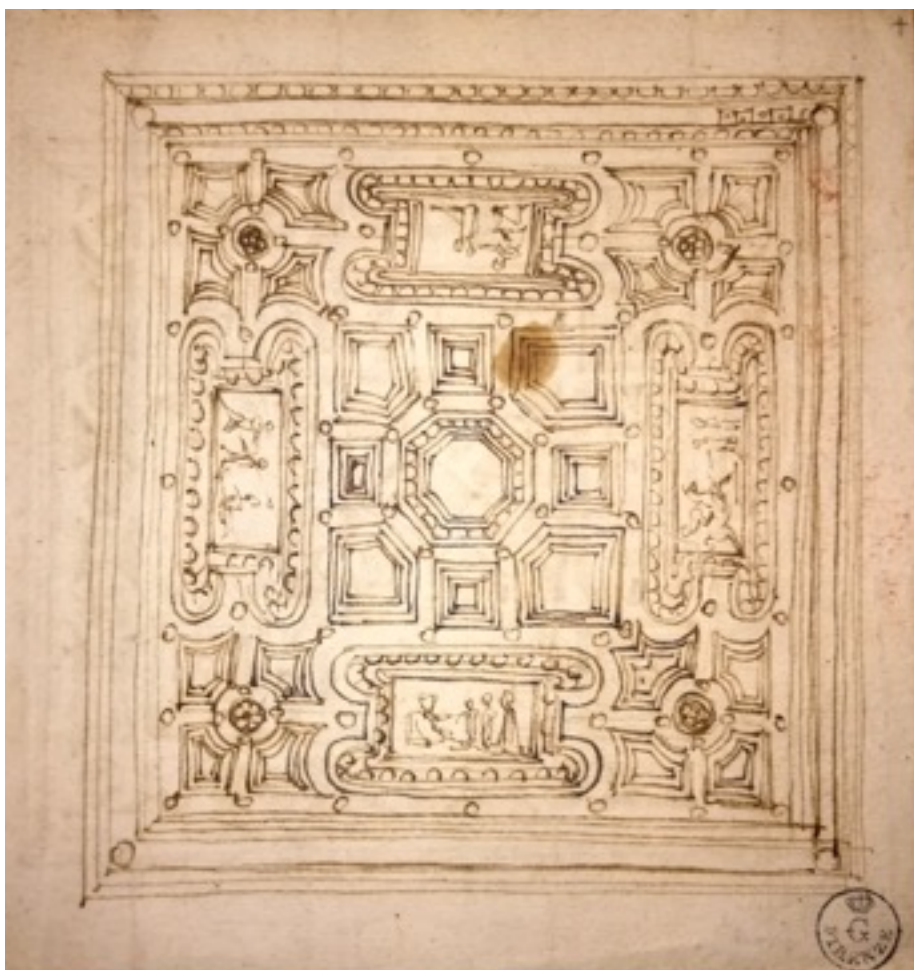
Fig. 112: Anonymous artist of the 16th century, *project of a ceiling*, first half of the 16th century, 140 x 140 mm, Florenz, Gallerie degli Uffizi, Gabinetto dei Disegni e delle Stampe, inv. 17 O *recto* (left) and *verso* (right).
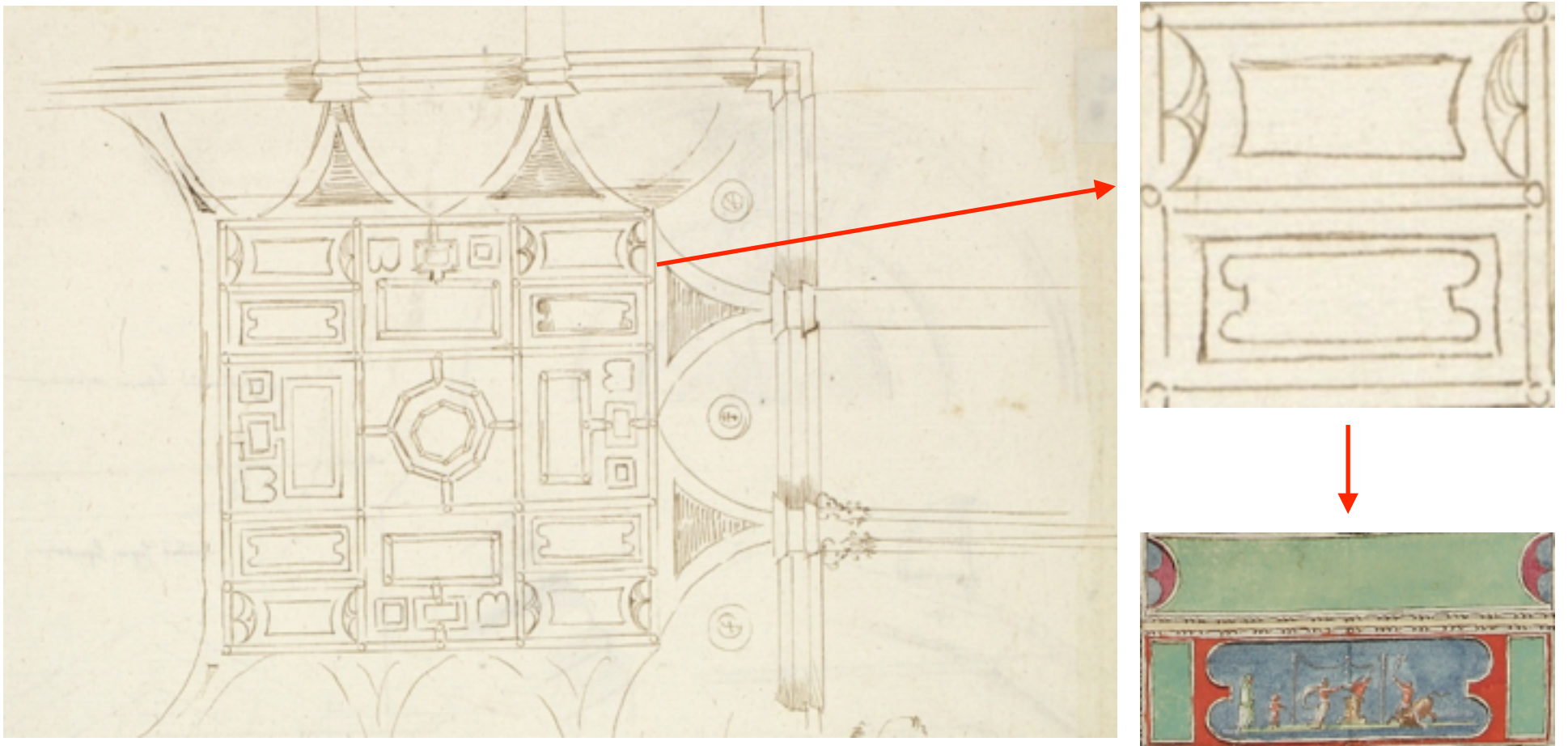
Fig. 113: Anonymous Italian Draughtsman, detail form *Project for a ceiling*, 1525-1546 ca.; 393 x 280 mm; pen and ink, Florenz, Gallerie degli Uffizi, Gabinetto dei Disegni e delle Stampe, inv. 1951 A *verso*. On the left side one detail of Uffizi drawing 1951 A and from Francisco's watercolor (CAT. 1).
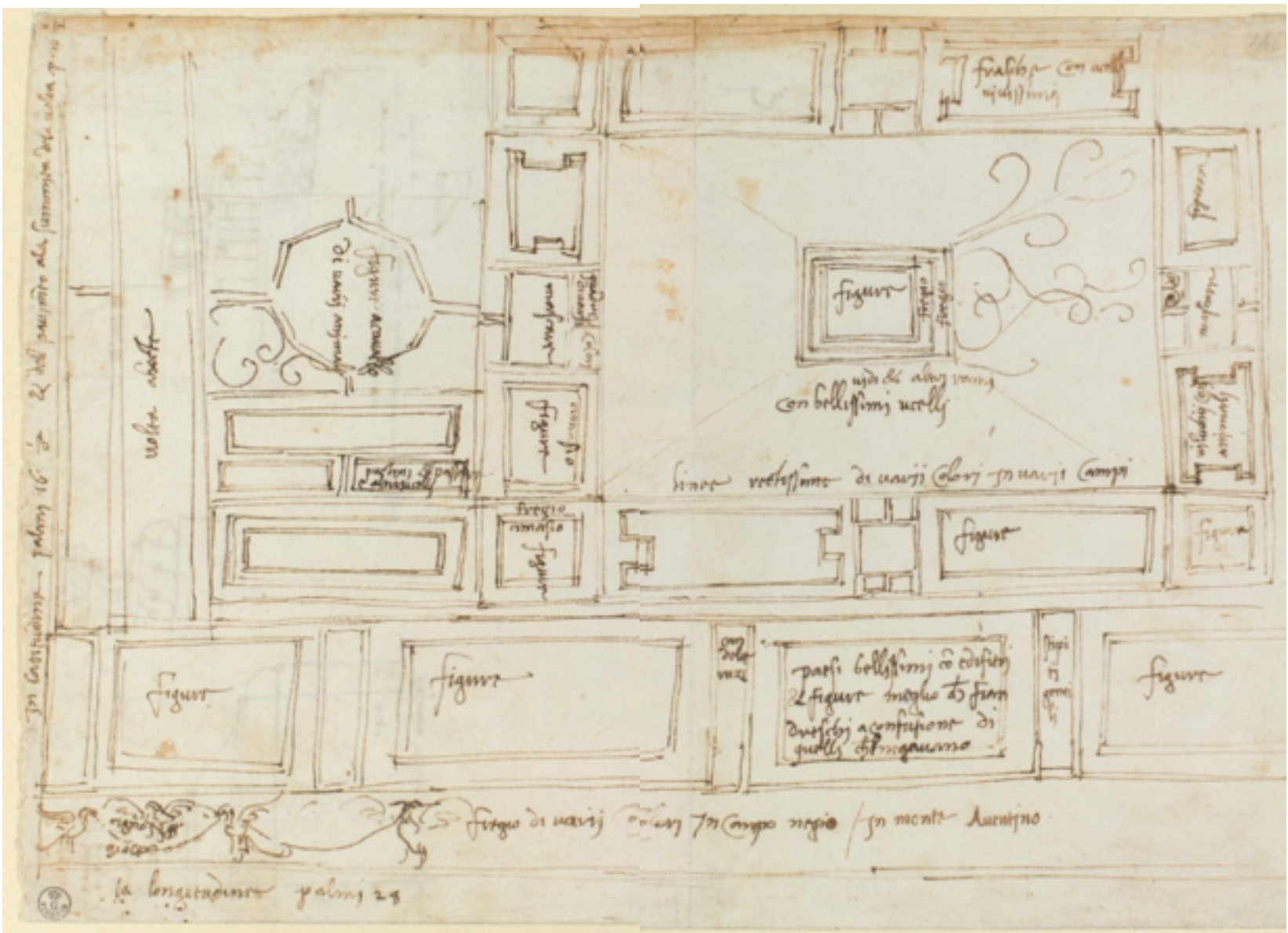
Fig. 114: Baldassarre Peruzzi (1481-1536), *Study of one ancient ceiling on the Aventine Hill or project for a modern ceiling*; post 1520-ante 1527; 335 x 237 mm; pen and ink; Florenz, Gallerie degli Uffizi, Gabinetto dei Disegni e delle Stampe, inv. 483 A recto.
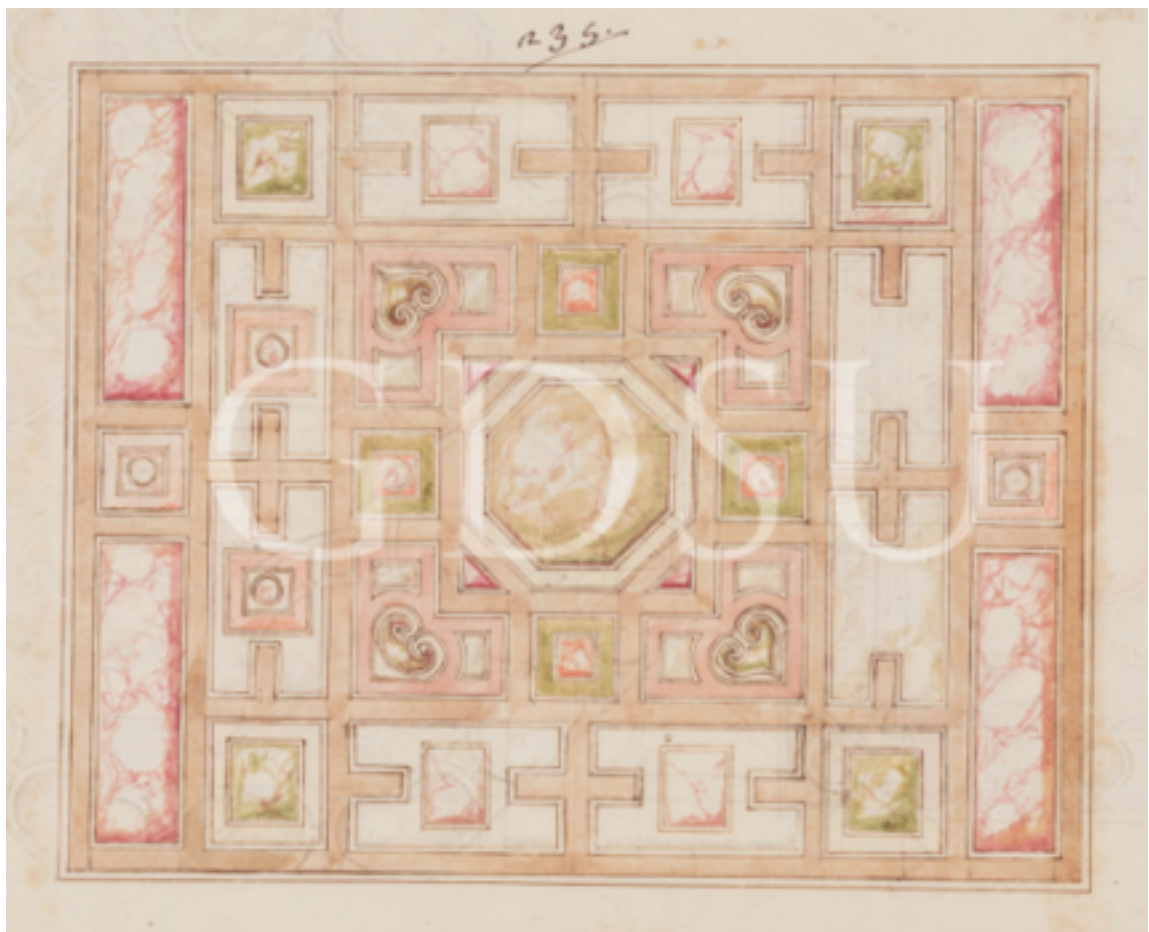
Fig. 115: Giovanni Antonio Dosio (1533-1611), *Project for one inlaid marble table*; 410 x 276 mm; pencil, pen and watercolor; Florenz, Gallerie degli Uffizi, Gabinetto dei Disegni e delle Stampe, inv. 379 O *verso*.

Brenna's drawing (1777 ca.): Pl. 8, fig. 2.
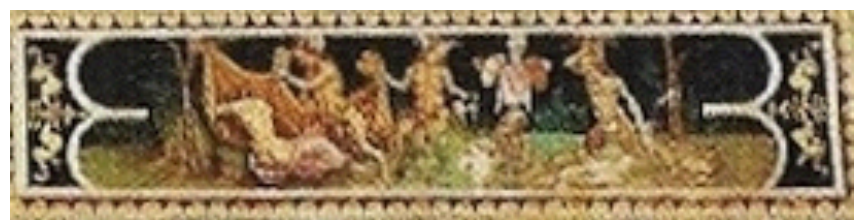
Fig. 116: Pintoricchio and workshop, 1502-1507, *Biblioteca Piccolomini*, Duomo of Siena; two details form Pintoricchio's ceiling and scenes 10 and C from Francisco's watercolor (CAT. 1).
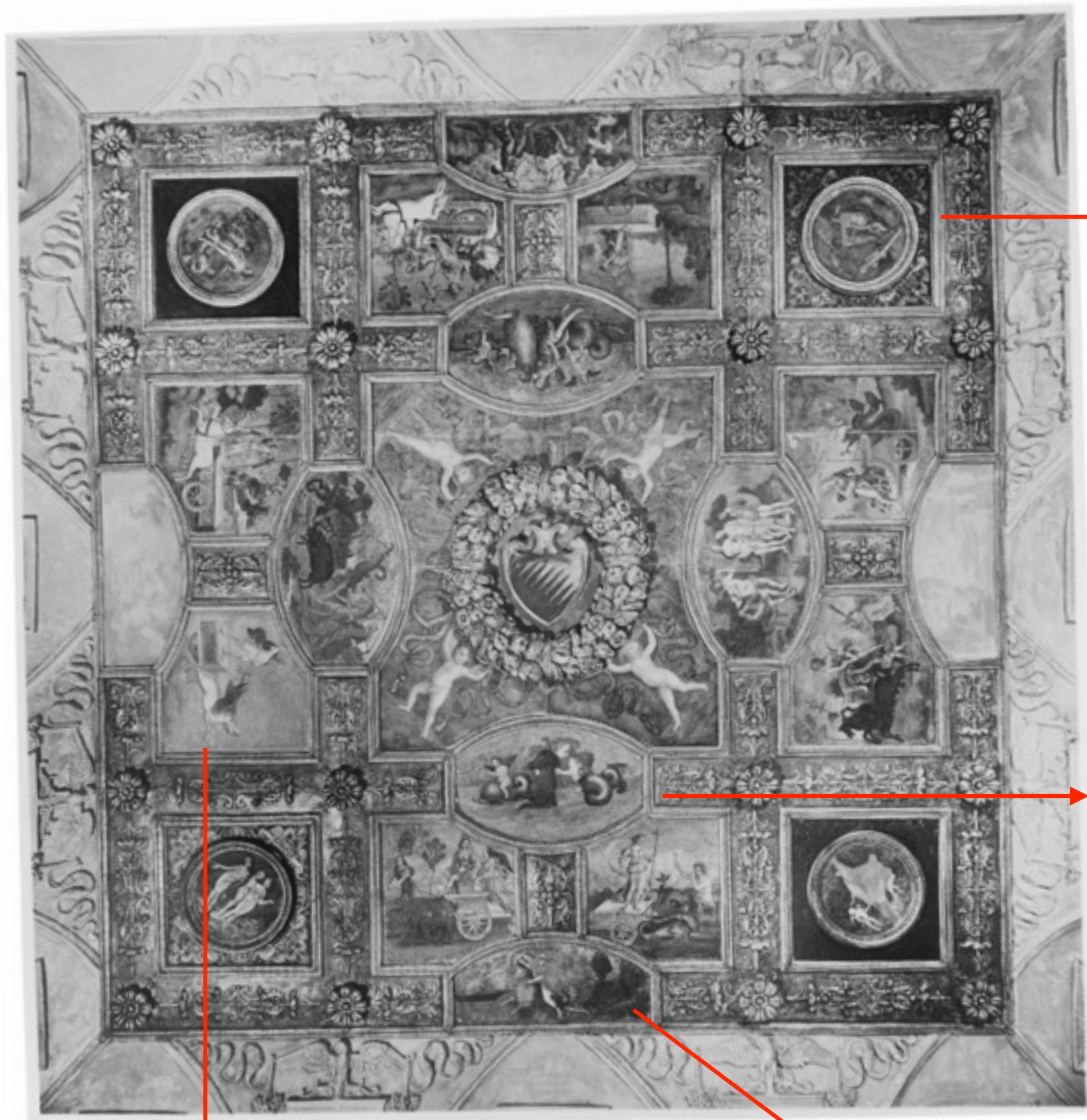
Francisco de Hollanda's
watercolor (CAT. 1)

Codex Escurialensis, fol.
10 recto (CAT. 11).
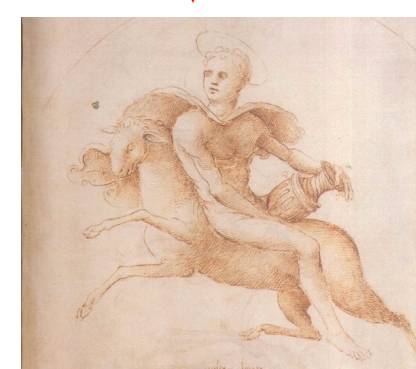
Brenna's drawing (1777
ca.): Pl. 8, fig. 2.

Filippino's drawing,
Uffizi 1168 O (CAT.14).

Fig. 117: Pintoricchio and workshop, 1509, *Ceiling for Pandolfo Petrucci's Palace (Siena)*, MET New York.
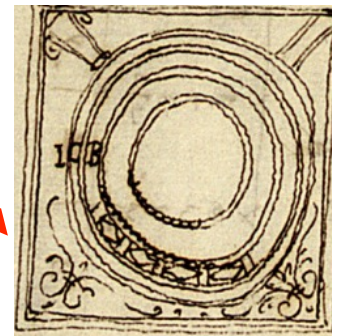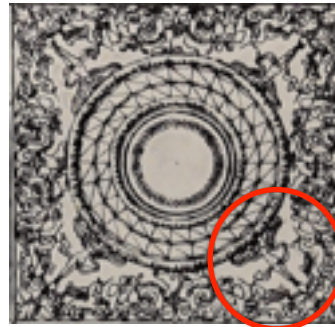
Fig. 118: Baldassarre Peruzzi, 1519, *Palazzo della Cancelleria*, Roma; on the right side: **1.** detail from the ceiling, detail from Francisco's watercolor (CAT. 1), Aspertini's drawing (CAT. 18); **2.** detail of central medallion decoration; detail from Giovanni da Udine drawing (CAT. 6); detail from Marciana drawing (CAT. 4); **3.** bilobed cartouche.
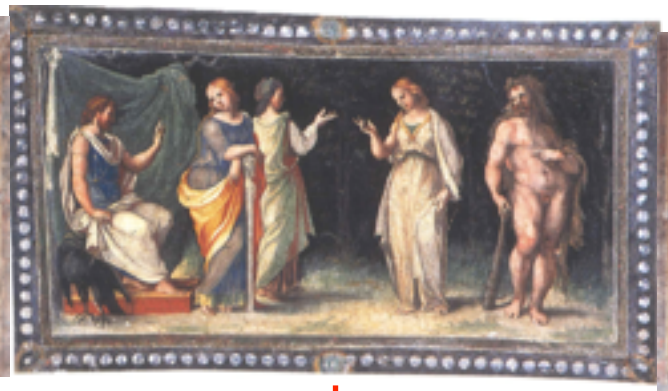
Fig. 119: Baldassarre Peruzzi, 1520, *Loggia Mattei's ceiling*, Rome; on the right: **1.** detail of one bilobed cartouche (wedding between Heracles and Hebe), detail from Codex Fossombronis fol. 86 *recto* (CAT. 20), detail from Francisco's watercolor (CAT. 1); **2.** some medallions with zodiacal symbols.

Fig. 120: Above: one detail from Raphael workshop's Logge Vaticane (1518-1519) and below one Roman relief preserved at the Villa Borghese.

Fig. 121: Raphael workshop (1483-1520), ceiling of *Sala dei Pontefici*, 1520-1521, Vatican Palace.
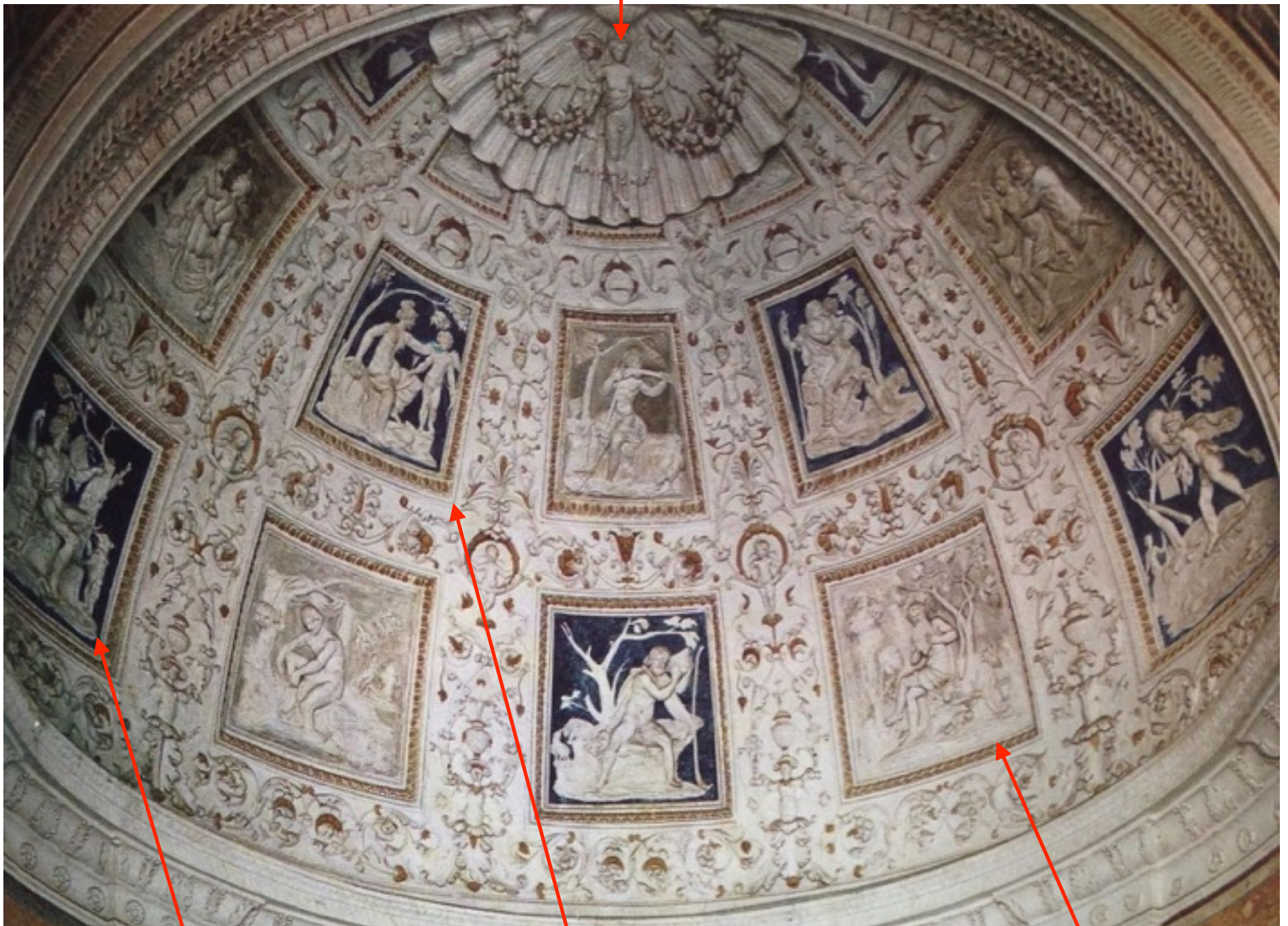
Detail from Codex Escurialensis fol. 13 *verso*, ceiling of room 31 (Volta Gialla).

Detail from Volta Gialla (Gentile Ortona-Modolo 2016, Pl. X, catalog entry no. 26, wrongly considered as a vanished painting from an unknown room in the Oppian Hill).

Detail from Mirri's watercolored engraving (1776) of Volta Gialla (room 31): Pinot the Villechenon 1998, Pl. 56.

On the left: Scenes D from Francisco's watercolor (CAT. 1); on the right: Turnbull's engraving 1741, nr. 50 (after Francisco's watercolor).

On the left: Scenes J from Francisco's watercolor (CAT. 1); on the right: Turnbull's engraving 1741, nr. 49 (after Francisco's watercolor).

On the left: Scenes F from Francisco's watercolor (CAT. 1); on the right: Turnbull's engraving 1741, nr. 22 (after Francisco's watercolor).

Fig. 122: Raphael workshop, 1509, *Garden Loggia in Villa Madama (Southeast Exedra of the Northeast Bay)*, 1518-1525, Villa Madama, Rome.

Fig. 123: Pietro Santi Bartoli (1635–1700), Volta degli Stucchi (room 129), 1658-1674, 415 (height) x 420 (width) mm.; Codex Massimi (Glasgow, University Library: MS Gen 1496 [HX 110]), fol. LXXIII.

Fig. 124: Pietro Santi Bartoli (1635–1700), details of Volta degli Stucchi (room 129), 1658-1674; Victoria Album (Windsor, Royal Collection: RCIN 909579).
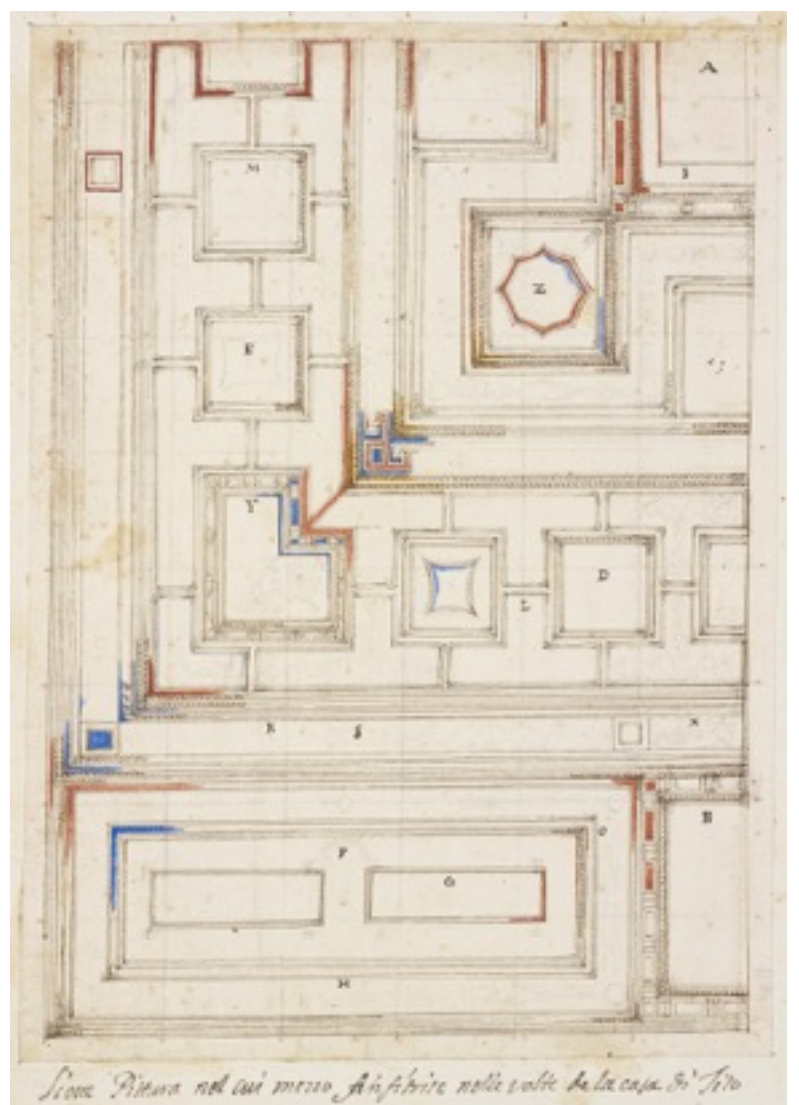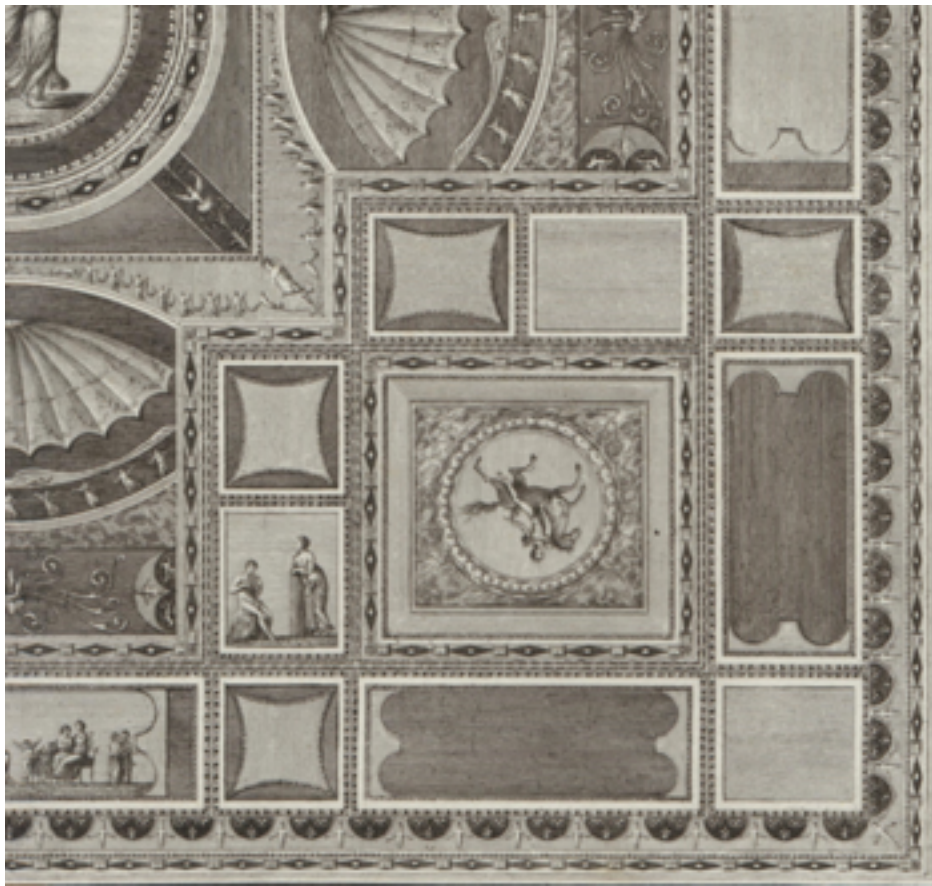

Fig. 125: Pietro Santi Bartoli (1635–1700), details of Volta degli Stucchi (room 129), 1658-1674; Victoria Album (Windsor, Royal Collection: RCIN 909580).

Fig. 126: Francesco Smuglewicz (1745-1820), Vincenzo Brenna (1745-1820), detail of SW ceiling corner of Volta Dorata ("Terme di Tito e le loro interne pitture"), 1776-1777, 542 (height) x 600 (width) mm.; Mirri-Carletti 1776, Pl. 42.
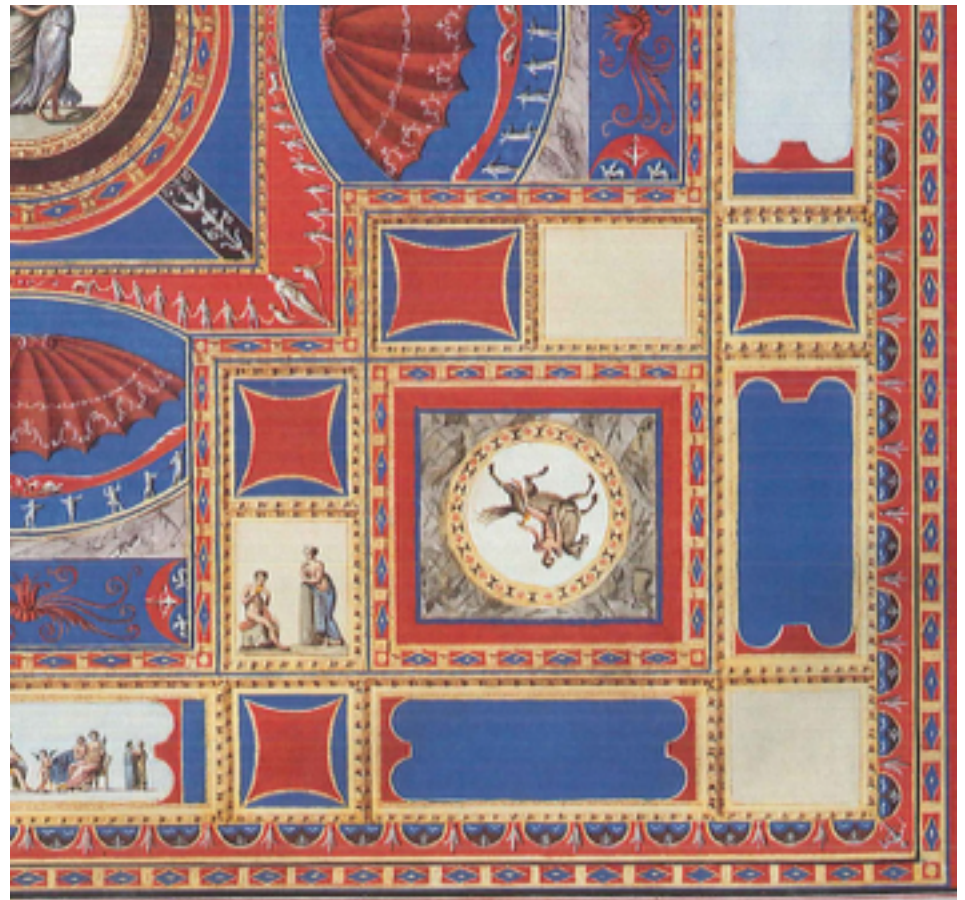
Fig. 127: Francesco Smuglewicz (1745-1820), Vincenzo Brenna (1745-1820), detail of SW ceiling corner of Volta Dorata ("Terme di Tito e le loro interne pitture"), 1776-1777, 542 (height) x 600 (width) mm.; CAT 3.
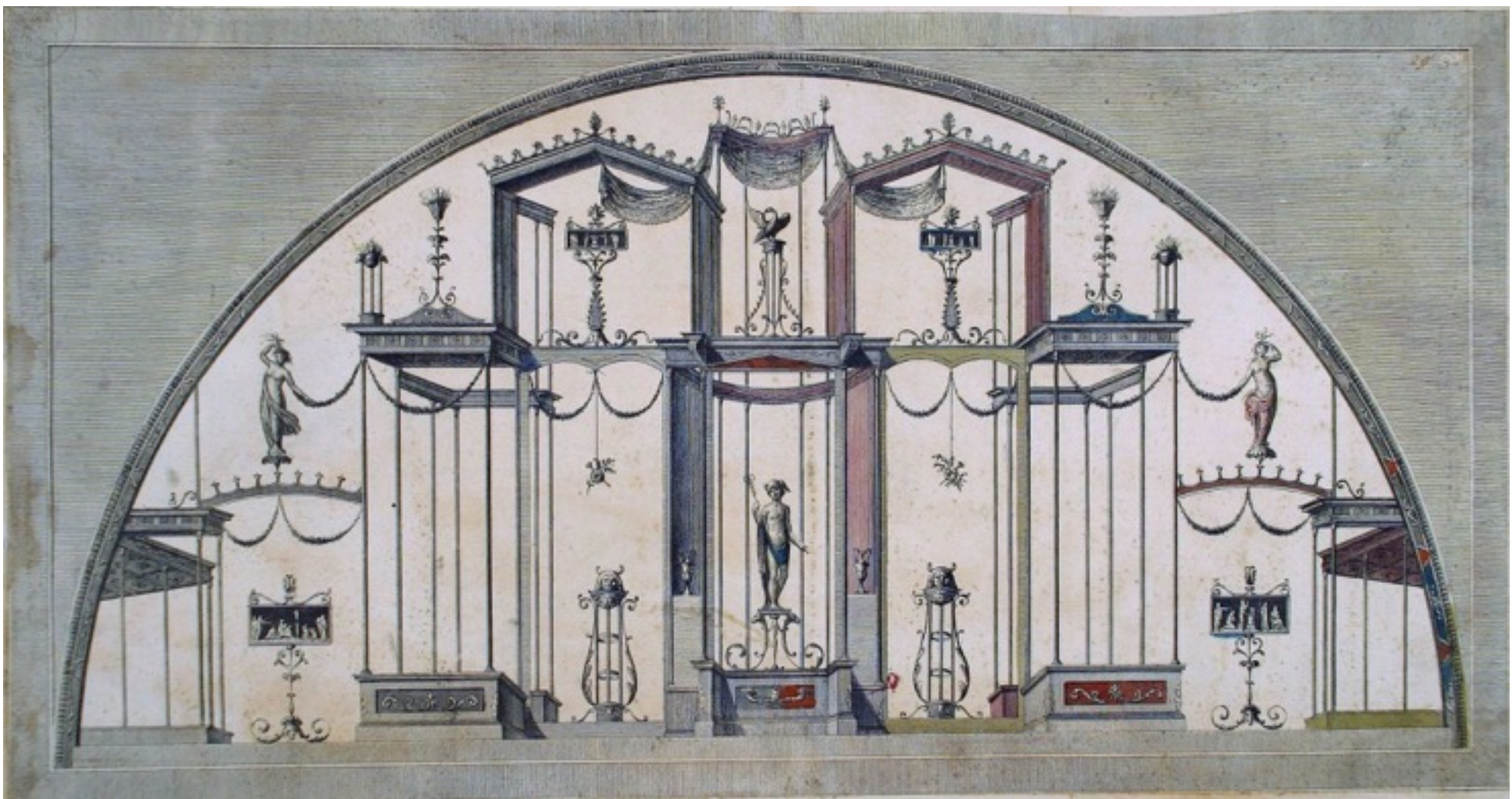

Fig. 128: Design and colors by Vincenzo Brenna (1745-1820 Dresden), engraving by Marco Carloni (1742-1796), lunette of room 23 (*"Terme di Tito e le loro interne pitture"*), 1775-1776, 542 (height) x 600 (width) mm.; Rome, Hertziana Library, Dv 570-340 gr raro, Tafel 28.

Fig. 129: Vincenzo Brenna (1745-1820), watercolor of invented ceiling, 1777-1778, 724 x 506 mm, Madrid, Museo de la Real Academia de Bellas Artes de San Fernando (Brook-Curzi 2010, Cat. no. II.3., p. 394, fig. p. 259: ed by L. Tedeschi).
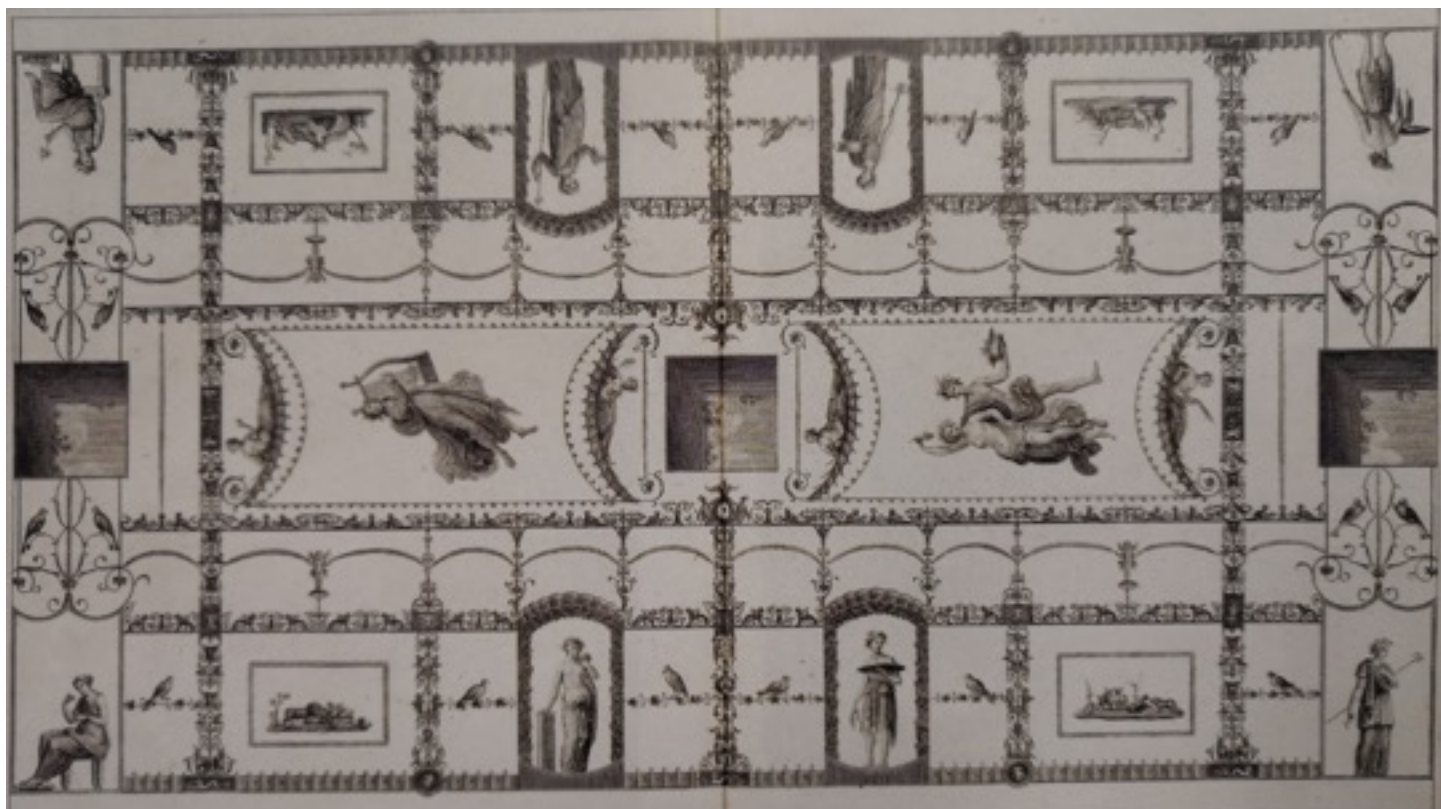

Fig. 130: Antonio De Romanis (1788-1849), half of the ceiling of room 19, 1822, engraving (De Romanis 1822, Pl. VIII = Meyboom-Moormann 2013, II, p. 16, fig. 19.2).

Fig. 131: Lucilio Cartocci (1879-1952), part of the ceiling of room 92, 1913, watercolor (Weege 1913a, Pl. 15 = Meyboom-Moormann 2013, II, p. 140, fig. 92.14).

Fig. 132: Casa Vasari by G. Vasari (1511–1574), 1548, Arezzo.

Fig. 133: Casa Vasari by G. Vasari (1511–1574), 1548, Arezzo (detail of fig. 132).