The Artful Hermit. Cardinal Odoardo Farnese's religious patronage and the spiritual meaning of landscape around 1600

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1. The Camerino degli Eremiti and Hermit-Iconography

On 21 December 1609, through his spokesman and personal secretary Alfonso Carandino, Cardinal Odoardo Farnese (1573-1626) proposed to the Archconfraternity of the Orazione e Morte in Rome that they cede him the use of one room in their building. Farnese held a special position in the sodality’s organisation as he was their protector: he was also their neighbour on the via Giulia as he owned the Casino, or as it was later called, Palazzetto, an annex to Palazzo Farnese that was adjacent to the Church and oratory of the brotherhood. Odoardo Farnese (kneeling at the lower right in fig. 1) was a descendant from Paul III Farnese (reigned 1534-1549), son of Duke Alessandro Farnese (1545-1592) and Princess Maria of Portugal (+ 1577). Odoardo was second child, younger brother of Ranuccio Duke of Parma and Piacenza (1569-1622), and for this reason destined to become a cardinal. He received his humanistic education at the Roman court of his great-uncle Cardinal Alessandro Farnese (1520-1589), and thanks to his family’s powerful relations, he was created cardinal in 1591 at the age of only 18 years. After some difficulties to obtain a reasonable amount of ecclesiastical benefices to provide the income necessary for a prelate of his standing, he established an impressive court where the arts and learning flourished. His kinship with a pope and ducal family, and blood-relations with almost all royal houses of Europe also made him a conspicuous figure in Roman society. Until 1622, when Odoardo became regent of Parma after the death of his brother Ranuccio, he resided in the grandiose Palazzo Farnese in Rome (fig. 29), which he had had embellished among other things with Annibale Carracci’s famous Galleria Farnese.

In response to the request by Cardinal Odoardo, first the members of the board of the confraternity, and six days later the entire congregation of the Orazione e Morte applauded the proposal and immediately granted Farnese the requested room. The ‘Libro de’l decreti’ also recorded that ‘for reasons of his devotion’, two openings could be made in the walls of the room - one of them with shutters - with a view into the church and oratory. Two members of the

1. The denomination of this part as Palazzetto stems from the early eighteenth century; Rossini 1725, p. 30 wrote ‘Nel Palazzetto detto il piccolo Farnese vicino alla Chiesa della Morte vi è un Camerino, detto del Romito...’ Seventeenth-century sources used the term ‘Casino’, but as Palazzetto has become the more common denominator for this part of the premises, this term will be used here.


confraternity were sent to the Cardinal to thank him for the favour he granted the brotherhood by means of this request.4

Subsequently, the general assembly appointed two members to draft and sign the contract with Farnese. In the written agreement, drawn up in January 1611 – more than a year later – the use of the space was granted to Cardinal Odoardo during his lifetime; the confraternity remained the legal owner of the room.5 It also recorded that the cardinal would grant the brotherhood a lump-sum-payment, the amount of which was left to his own magnanimity as nothing was stipulated in the contract. Moreover, Farnese had to erect a new building between his own garden behind the Palazzetto and the property of the brotherhood, to make up for the space they lost. After this first downpayment, yearly sums were given to the brotherhood in return for the stanza or camerino that would later, in the eighteenth century, be called Camerino degli Eremiti; the contract was in fact a leasehold.

Accounts and journals of the brotherhood from this period indicate that Cardinal Farnese soon started works on remodelling the room, obviously vacated early in 1610 by the priest who was named as its former inhabitant in the contract. New access was constructed from the adjacent Palazzetto in the form of an elevated corridor, and the two windows were knocked through to the interior of the Church and Oratory of the brotherhood respectively. Subsequently, Giovanni Lanfranco (1580-1642)6 was commissioned to paint in fresco on all four walls of the room scenes of penitent saints and additionally provided nine oil-paintings on canvas with similar subjects for insertion in the wooden coffered ceiling.

In seventeenth-century inventories of Palazzo Farnese, this room was habitually described

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5 See the Appendix. Earlier publications assumed on the basis of a later transcript that the contract was either drawn up on 13 June 1601 (Navenee 1921, p.127 n.2), or on 13 January 1601 (Vignini 1980, p.90). The original contract can be found in ASN, Fondo Farnesiano 1:46, fasc.37, ‘Concessio Card[i]s Odoardi Farnesij a Ven. Arciconfraternitati Mortis et Orationis de Urbe fabricandi unum murum atque forandii in eo una fenestra propiciante Intra Ecclesi- dita Arciconfraternitatis’. A copy of this document can also be found in the ASVR, ASMOM 59, ‘Registro di testamenti e insirmenti’, fol.197v-198r. See Barry 1999, p.196 and Witte 2000, esp. p.426.

as belonging to the Palazzetto, and indicated with reference to its location - 'Oratory that corresponds to the Morte'. In 1662, the room was partially dismantled, for which reason biographical sources on Lanfranco of the later seventeenth century stated that he painted 'a room of the casino' - which stressed the link between the room and its access through the Palazzetto - or even 'some paintings in oil for certain ceilings of rooms for the same Palazzo Farnese in that part of the quarter towards strada Giulia where the arch that leads from the Palazzo to the garden is.' The latter part of this citation indicates that the Palazzetto formed the access from the Palazzo to Farnese's secret garden on the bank of the Tiber, and that at least from around mid-century, the room that Farnese rented from the brotherhood and which was located within their buildings, was considered part of the Farnese-property on the Via Giulia.

The lease-contract had however specified that with the death of Cardinal Odoardo or his immediate heirs, the agreement would automatically end. Until the eighteenth century, the leasehold with Odoardo was continued by his relatives with the consent of the brotherhood, as did the payment of the rent. In 1731 Duke Antonio Farnese, the last male descendant of the family, died and the contract was terminated. A year later, the room was completely demolished when the brotherhood of the Orazione e Morte decided to erect a new church. From that time on, the iconographic theme of its decoration resulted in a descriptive name of the vanished space as the Camerino degli Eremiti, the chamber of the hermits. This is not, however, the original denomination and cannot be taken as a sure indication of its use during the lifetime of Cardinal Odoardo, or the meaning of its decoration in this context. Before this can be determined, the precise thematic and iconography of Lanfranco's painterly decoration should be understood.

Lanfranco's decoration in the Camerino

Seventeenth-century biographers of Lanfranco were well informed about the pictorial embellishment of the Camerino and its connection with the Palazzetto, but they antedated its execution by a number of years. In Le vite de' pittori scultori et architetti moderni of 1672,
Giovanni Pietro Bellori mentioned that Lanfranco went to Rome following the death of his master Agostino Carracci in 1602, and then was asked by Annibale Carracci to do the decoration in a room in the casino, at the Arch over the Strada Giulia, where he painted on all four walls various saints in Penitence; ... and not only on the walls but also on the ceiling he painted in oil small figurines of saints in the desert...¹¹ In his Vite de Pittori Scultori Et Architetti of approximately 1678, the painters’ biographer, Giovanni Battista Passeri, gave a slightly different account:

Having started to work with the brush and not without some taste of a well-founded style to the opinion of Carracci, he was given the commission for a number of panel-paintings in oil ... He painted in them several holy hermits living in solitary places ... By that time, he might have been 24 or 25 years old.¹⁴

Bellori seemed to imply that the Camerino dated from shortly after Lanfranco’s arrival in Rome, around 1602, and Passeri’s information would lead to a dating of 1604-1605.¹⁵ The contract mentioned above proved both of them wrong, as Lanfranco was not able to decorate the walls - in fresco, as the two remaining scenes show - before the spring of 1611 because of his sojourn in Piacenza, and the payments made to him in 1616 and 1617 indicate that it was in all probability only several years later that the painter was hired to do the decoration.¹⁶

Bellori and Passeri were also unaware of the fact that the room remained the property of the brotherhood and offered a view into its church and oratory, but instead considered it a part of the Farnese premises, just as the contemporary inventories had done. Bellori suggested in Palazzo Farnese in a room of the casino, and Passeri even referred to several rooms in the part of the palace adjacent to the garden, implying that it was not one single space for which Lanfranco was commissioned to provide decoration.¹⁷ Their confusion can be explained by the fact that the

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¹¹ Bellori 1672:2000, p.378: ‘Morto Agostino [which occurred on March 2, 1602], e cresciuto Giovanni sopra l’età di venti anni, si condusse a Roma nella scuola di Annibale Carracci, il quale impiegollo nel palazzo Farnese in una camera del casino, all’arco di strada Giulia, coloritivì a fresco in tutte quattro le faccie, varij Santi Romiti in penitenza ... onde non solo nelle mura, ma anche nel palco dipinse ad olio figurine piccole di Santi nell’heremo ...’
¹⁴ Passeri 1678/1995, p.140: ‘Havendo dato principio ad operare col pennello e non senza qualche gusto di maniera ben fondata col parere del Carracci gli furono dati a fare alcuni quadri ad olio ... Dipinse in alcuni alcuni SS. Eremiti habitanti in luoghi solitarij ... Allora Giovanni Lanfranco poteva essere d’età d’anni 24 o 25 ...’
¹⁶ ASN Archivio Farnesiano 1805 I, ‘Spese per la corte di Odoardo Farnese’, fol.47r: ‘e adi detto [25.1 1618] s[cedi] cento moneta a Giovanni Lanfranco Pittore per resto di s[cedi] 350 ch’importa la Pittura fatta nel Camerino che risponde alla Chiesa della compagnia della morte così accordato con Sign[or] Signoria Illistrissima ...’ These payments were published by Denuncio 2000, pp.179-180. A dating before the end of 1617 has been proposed in Witte 2001a, p.54; for Lanfranco’s 1611 sojourn in Piacenza, see Witte 2001c. For the stylistic aspects, see also Papi 2003.
The decoration of the Camerino was demolished less than fifty years after its completion, and the paintings were relocated elsewhere. First of all, Lanfranco's oil-paintings - on canvas - were taken out of the coffered ceiling. In his description, Bellori mentioned that these works had been given a new place in other rooms of the Farnese-palace:

not only on the walls but also on the ceiling he painted in oil small figures of saints in the desert, which were not long ago removed and divided in small paintings for the rooms of the said palace.\(^{18}\)

A later remark in the margin of Passeri’s manuscript confirmed this, and their bad state of preservation was given as the reason for the removal and subsequent restoration by the painter Filippo Lauri.\(^{17}\) Probably Passeri never saw the Camerino intact, but only the paintings, while Bellori, on the other hand, might have had access to the room through his contacts with Christina of Sweden who lived in the palace in 1655 and 1658, for which reason he correctly mentioned the presence of frescoes on the walls that Passeri had omitted. It is also possible that he had been told so by Lanfranco himself, as he mentioned at some point in his *vita* of the artist that he had known him personally.\(^{20}\)

Because the 1653 inventory of the palace still mentioned the decoration as completely intact, the partial dismantling of the Camerino must have been done in the subsequent five years: since the oilpaintings were mentioned in a list of objects to be sent to Parma in 1662, they must have been detached from their original setting by then. Possibly, these interventions can be seen in conjunction with the sojourn of Christina of Sweden, who was the first occupant of the palace after the death of Cardinal Odoardo and the premature death of Cardinal Francesco Farnese (1619-1647). A puzzling fact is that shortly before the final demolition of the room in 1732, a description of the Camerino mentioned the paintings on canvas as *in situ*. In his report of the Palazzo Farnese made up that year, the representative of the Parmense Duke in Rome described

\(^{17}\) Bellori 1672 2000, p.378: " Cresciuto Giovanni sopra l’eta di venti anni, si condusse a Roma nella scuola di Annibale Carracci, il quale impiegololo nel palazzo Farnese in una camera del casino, all’arco di Strada Giulia, coloritivi a fresco in tutte quattro le faccie vari Santi rostiti in penitenza, essendo solito il cardinale Farnese ritirarsi in quella camera per sua disavente, onde non solo nelle mura ma anche nel palco dipinse ad olio figurine piccole di Santi nell’eremo, le quali non e molto tempo furono tolte e divise in quadretti per le camera del medesimo palazzo."

\(^{18}\) Passeri 1678 1995, p.140 n.3: "R. N. (56r) Queste Historiette incominciavano (56v) a patire, e furono dal Marchese ... Residente dell’Altezza di Parma fatte restituire dal Sig. Filippo Lauri e ridurre in Osadi per adornamento di certe stanze di sopra, dove al presente si conservano."

the room’s decoration as completely intact. However, all other sources support the assumption of a partial demolition of the room in the 1660s; the sale of paintings with landscapes and hermits by Giovanni Lanfranco from the Farnese-collections in Parma and Naples during the first years of the eighteenth century furthermore contradicts their presence in Rome in 1732. Lanfranco’s frescoes remained in place until the brotherhood of the Orazione e Morte ended the agreement in 1731 and decided to aggrandise their complex. The edifice of the church and its adjacent buildings were torn down to erect a new and grander edifice, designed by the architect Ferdinando Fuga.

Dismantled before 1662 and torn down in 1732, the original appearance of the Camerino degli Eremiti can only be reconstructed with the help of archival material. The list of paintings sent to Parma in 1662 contains a number of canvases that once were part of the ceiling of the Camerino. Other inventories recorded Lanfranco’s paintings after their transport to Parma and Naples. During the following century most of these were lost or sold. Today only two of them are extant and held in the Museo Capodimonte in Naples where the Farnese collection was moved in the early eighteenth century. The subjects of these two paintings are Christ in the desert being served by Angels (fig.4) and Mary Magdalene carried to heaven by angels (fig.5). Lanfranco’s other paintings for the ceiling have not been traced, and were probably lost.

In total, ten canvases, one more than the original nine paintings, have been tentatively identified in these lists as originally belonging to the ceiling of the Camerino, on account of their relative size or their attribution to Lanfranco. Eight of these are undisputed. The canvases which certainly came from the Camerino, apart from the two mentioned above, depicted Saint Fustace facing the stag with the Cross between his antlers (probably similar to an earlier composition by Annibale Carracci, see fig.6), Saint Benedict reading in his grotto while his companion sends

22 Bernini 1985, pp.334-356 for a number of paintings attributed to Lanfranco sold in the years between 1710 and 1721. For inventories of the Farnese collections, see Bertini 1987.
23 Hager 1964, pp.16-32.
28 Bernini 1985, p.354 excluded Saint Anthony and Saint Fustace from the series; his compilation has not been followed by others.
down a basket. Saint Onuphrius in the desert kneeling before an angel bringing the Host. Saint Mary of Egypt receiving communion from a priest, and the Stigmatisation of Saint Francis. A last painting was a subject with a saint that could not be identified by later observers, and was simply called 'landscape with a bearded hermit.' This leaves one panel-painting unidentified, for which two possibilities have been suggested.

The two paintings on which opinions diverge are Saint Anthony of Padua preaching and Saint Paul being carried to Third Heaven. Pictures with these two themes were mentioned in the various inventories of the Farnese-property in the eighteenth century. The former painting, untraceable since the mid-eighteenth century, has been excluded on the grounds of its iconography as Saint Anthony was not a proper hermit, although according to some hagiographies, he did live as a recluse around 1222. As will be discussed in Chapter 4, this painting should be included in the programme of the Camerino notwithstanding its seemingly different theme. The latter painting should be dissociated from the series on the ground of its measurements, which do not match the standard format of the other canvasses; and again, because its subject was not an anchorite saint. Moreover, this latter painting was not included in the 1662 list, but only occurred in later inventories and the attribution to Lanfranco of this latter canvas, now in the Museo Capodimonte in Naples, has definitively been refuted in modern literature.

The subjects of Lanfranco's frescoes in the Camerino were obviously deemed suitable as decoration for the new church of Santa Maria dell'Orazione e Morte, as all four scenes were taken down and re-applied to the walls of the new building. One was later destroyed, and another is hidden behind the present organ. One of the two visible frescoes depicts Saints Paul the First

1 In the list of 1662, published by Filangieri di Candida 1902, p. 267-271. Salerno 1952, p. 191, n. 13. Bernini 1985, pp. 354-355, and Bertini 1987, pp. 223-224, seven paintings were described: 6. Un quadro in tela con N.S. nel deserto et angeli che li portano il mangiare ... 18. Un quadro in tela con un paese S. Iustacio che li appaia il Cervio con Crocefisso in mezzo lo corne con il cavallo e tre cami ... 20. Un quadro in tela con S. Francesco che riceve le stimate e compagno con libro in mano ... 23. Un quadro in tela con S. Benedetto nella grotta con libro in mano compagno che mandia giu un canestro, et un demonio che tira una sassata ... 32. Un quadro in tela con paese e S. Maria Madalena in estasi sostenuta dai Angeli ... 41. Un quadro in tela con paese e deserto con S. Honorio in ginocchi con un Angelo che lo comunica ... 66. Un quadro in tela con paese, et acqua con S. Maria Eglistia et un altro santo che li porta la Communione...


4 This painting was described in the inventory of the Palazzo del Giardino in Parma of 1708 as 'S. Paolo rapito da tre angeli al terzo cielo' (see Bertini 1987, p. 201), and is now in Capodimonte; see La scuola Lombarde 1994, p. 161; here the painting has been ascribed to Lorenzo Ghiberti.


7 The accounts for the detachment of the frescoes are cited by Hager 1964, p. 60; doc. IV.
Hermit and Saint Anthony Abbot praying together while a raven brings them a loaf of bread (fig.7); the other fresco depicts Saint Simeon Stylite visited by a snake climbing up his column (fig.8). The fresco behind the organ has been identified on account of the visible details as Saint Bruno visited by Count Ruggero (fig.9). The fourth fresco has, as far as the information goes, never been described and was destroyed in 1909-1910 when a doorway was opened in the supporting wall. It is generally assumed that, for reasons of symmetry, it was also of horizontal format.

How did these four frescoes and nine panels fit into the original space? As the inventories and descriptions indicated, Lanfranco's decoration consisted of frescoes on the four walls, probably one scene on each side surrounded by ornamental borders in fresco. This structure resembled the decoration of the Cappella dei Santi Fondatori in Grottaferrata, painted by Domenichino in 1610, or the Oratorio di Sant'Andrea next to San Gregorio al Celio, a commission in which Lanfranco was involved in 1609. The ceiling of the Camerino consisted of a wooden structure, probably gilded, in which the nine paintings were inserted, with the Christ served by Angels in the middle, and around this, the other paintings were arranged in rows of three. If one doubles the width of the painting of Mary Magdalene and adds the width of the Christ one arrives at 3 meters for a total width, while their cumulative height adds up to 3.34 meters. The total length and width of the paintings left enough space for an ornate gilt wooden ceiling, as was mentioned in the inventories.

All wall-surfaces of the Camerino were thus embellished with landscapes and solitary saints, exactly as the sources described. Notwithstanding the epithet 'Room of the hermits'; the Camerino technically also contained other saints, such as Saint Anthony of Padua, Saint Eustace, and Saint Francis who, according to the sources, had not spent a long period in the desert. However, most of the saints were indeed anchorites, and the combination of landscapes and solitary saints automatically conjured up the term hermit to the Seicento beholder, as Bellori's and Passeri's descriptions indicated. The coherence in the decoration of the Camerino conjures up three interrelated questions. Firstly, what was the tradition of anchorite iconography in Roman painting? Secondly, where and in what kind of spaces was it applied? And thirdly, was there a

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1 Schleier 1964, p.10, published photographs of the visible details of this fresco and recognised its iconography on the grounds of a print after Lanfranco, from the series Vita di San Brunone of 1620-1621.  
3 La scuola Emiliana 1994, p.176 gives the measurements of the Christ as 116 x 143 cm and those of the Mary Magdalene as 109 x 78 cm.
thematic connection perceived between the individual scenes of comparable cycles, and what
does that say about the meaning of the theme in early Seicento Rome? By looking at these aspects
in the antecedents of the Camerino, the background and intentions of this particular
iconographical theme might be better understood.

**Anchorite iconography around 1600**

The first medium through which anchorite iconography was popularised from the last decades of
the Cinquecento onwards was that of print series, especially after designs by Girolamo Muziano,
Maerten de Vos and Abraham Bloemaert. The first published a number of related prints in quick
succession, and the last two devised their prints as coherent sets of images. These series appeared
in the years between 1567 and 1615, and offered painters a real compendium of inspiration,
depicting even the most obscure saints from upper Egypt and Europe not treated in art before.
The pictorial environment of these figures could vary from vast landscapes to small caves:
Girolamo Muziano, whose prints appeared separately from 1567 onwards, habitually placed
small figures of hermits in the margin of the composition, thereby allowing the landscape to play
the main role in the composition (fig.10). He chose well-known anchorites and saints as
staffage, such as Saint Francis, Saint Mary Magdalene, and Onufrius. In this sense, his prints
were close in character to the iconography as encountered in paintings of the period. Maerten de
Vos’ series, the *Solitudo sive Vitae Patrum Eremitalorum* and its feminine counterpart *Solitudo
sive Vitae foeminarum anachoretarum*, both published in 1586, the *Sylva Sacrae* of 1593-1594,
the *Trophaeum Vitae Solitariae* of 1598, and the *Oraulum Anachoretarum* of 1600, somewhat
reduced the background in favour of the representation of the actions of the solitary saints. Abraham Bloemaert crammed the saints of his series entitled *Sacra Eremitus Ascetiarum
Ascetiarium* of 1612 (fig.11) in narrow spaces, mostly the interiors of grottoes, without offering
the beholder so much as a glimpse of a natural setting. These three series inspired other artists
to try their luck with the same theme: a case in point is the series by Francesco Valesio, *Ill.
Anachoretum Elogia*, published in Venice in 1612, which responded almost immediately with his
own series of prints with hermits in landscapes. Many other artists produced individual etchings
or engravings of landscapes peopled by anchorite saints, which attest to the wide dissemination

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18 Bierens de Haan 1948, pp.121-130 and Sellink 1994, cat.no.61-62.
19 Schuckmann 1996, pp.197-209. These series were published by De Sadeler in Antwerp and Venice: for the
activities of the Sadeler as engravers and publishers of these prints, see Les Sadeler 1992.
1993 vol.1, pp.112 and 175.
20 Eremien und Eremitagen 1995, cat.no.115, for Valesio see Thieme-Becker 1907-1950 vol.34, p.71
of the subject matter around 1600.

What kind of context were these prints intended for? The series by Bloemaert, Sadeler and De Vos, published in Antwerp, Germany and Venice, were marketed throughout Europe in great quantities, with wide reception well into Italy. Information on the publishers of these cycles suggests that these series were aimed at the monastic reader; but large print-runs suggest that their were also bought by others.\(^{42}\) The presence of these series in many ecclesiastical and princely collections attest to their wide popularity, but also to their possible neutrality in an iconographic sense. Any beholder could obviously appreciate this kind of imagery. These images were also widely used as models for paintings in fresco or oil. A well-known adaptation of such graphic examples to panel or canvas are two pendant paintings by Paul Bril, commissioned by cardinal Federico Borromeo (1564-1631), archbishop of Milan, copied after prints by Sadeler from designs by Maerten de Vos, and depicting the lesser known Saints Mutius and Anub.\(^{43}\) Another adaptation of such prints can be found in a frescoed ceiling of a room in Isola del Liri, to be discussed later.

Around the same time – between 1570 and 1600 – artists in Rome began to produce in large number cabinet-paintings on canvas or panel with the subject of desert-saints. Especially landscape-painters took up the theme, among them well-known artists such as Muziano and Paul Bril; many others took up the subject as well.\(^{44}\) Certain saints, most of whom were depicted in the Camerino, can even be deemed popular: especially Saints John the Baptist, Jerome, Anthony Abbot, Mary Magdalene and Saint Francis - in solitary prayer on the mountain of La Verna or receiving the Stigmata - became commonly depicted subjects, as can be deduced from their presence in many contemporary inventories.\(^{35}\) A number of other saints can be added to the list, such as Mary of Egypt and Onuphrius.\(^{46}\) The school of the Carracci produced quite a number of these kind of easel-paintings, of small to moderate size. An important trend-setting work was the Penitent Magdalene by Annibale (fig.12), where the composition of the reclining female figure

\(^{42}\) Especially Hieronymus Verdussen, publisher of several editions of Bloemaert’s \textit{Sacra Eremus}, was specialised in devotional and liturgical books for the monastic market; see De Nave 1996, p.254ff, and Naawelaerts 1975, p.275. Apart from that, the dedications of several editions of the \textit{Sacra Eremus} to prior and superiors of monasteries suggests that regulars were the intended public of these editions.

\(^{43}\) Jones 1988b and Jones 1993, p.133.

\(^{44}\) Cavazzoni in \textit{The Genius of Rome} 2001, pp.209 and 211.


\(^{46}\) On Mary of Egypt see \textit{BS} 1961-1970 vol.8 cols.981-994 and \textit{JCU} vol.7, cols.507-511; for saint Onuphrius see \textit{ibidem}, vol.9 cols.1187-1200 and \textit{JCU} vol.8 cols.84-88.
reading a book was used a number of times by Domenichino in his own landscape-compositions.\textsuperscript{27}

Most of these paintings were of small format, executed either for non-identifiable patrons or for the art-market, which makes it hard to pinpoint a particular intention behind this kind of iconography. The fact that these easel-paintings could be hung in galleries suggests that appreciation of these works might have had aesthetic overtones, in which the buyer deemed the setting as more important than the subject.\textsuperscript{28} On other occasions, however, these religious subjects were indeed listed correspondingly: the 1616 Mattei inventory, for example, mentioned a 'Saint Francis by Muziano [and a] Naked Saint Jerome in the act of beating himself, and doing penance ...' under the heading of 'Paintings for devotion'.\textsuperscript{44} This indicates that the religious message was understood even outside of a particular devotional or liturgical context. Whether these paintings contained a large landscape-setting is not known, but it can be assumed on account of the name of Muziano mentioned as their author.

Only in the case of larger panels intended for altarpieces in chapels and churches, were the religious intentions of such paintings unequivocally clear. Girolamo Muziano, who apart from being an artist with particular renown in the new genre of landscape, was also sought after for numerous religious commissions. Around 1584, he painted for Gregory XIII Boncompagni an altarpiece depicting Saint Jerome preaching in the Wilderness, for the chapel of Saint Gregory in new Saint Peters' (fig. 13).\textsuperscript{51} It represented the saint within a large landscape surrounded by attendant figures listening to the sermon. Other examples of penitential and solitary saints in altarpieces were common, and depended, as in the former case, upon the dedication of the church. For the concept of the Camerino, however, these easel-paintings and altarpieces were probably of little avail.

A third group of precursors for the Camerino degli Ifremiti were fresco-series with anchorite subjects both in public churches and private chapels. An early, and chronologically...
isolate dd example, was the Cappella Fetti in San Silvestro al Quirinale. Around 1526, Fra Mariano Fetti, an intimate of Clement VII Medici (1523-1534), commissioned the painter Polidoro da Caravaggio to decorate his chapel in this church.\textsuperscript{51} The subject of the decoration on the two lateral walls were episodes from the lives of two female saints, Mary Magdalene and Catherine of Siena. Mary Magdalene was shown washing the feet of Christ, meeting the risen Christ in the episode of Noli me tangere in the foreground, and up in the sky borne up to heaven by angels; on the other side-wall of the chapel, Saint Catherine was depicted hovering on clouds while being mystically wedded to Christ, and being received with other Dominican nuns by the pope. Although the latter saint was not strictly considered an anchoress, Mary Magdalene was the most important example for her own spiritual life, as she conceded to her confessor. In her vita, the daily ascension of Mary Magdalene was compared to Catherine's frequent raptures, and thus a spiritual link was perceived between the two saints by the contemporary beholder.\textsuperscript{52}

Polidoro's early example of large landscapes with anchorite-scenes in San Silvestro al Quirinale was only taken up again in Rome in the late sixteenth century. In the late 1590s, the Flemish painter Paul Bril executed the decoration of the hallway leading to the Cappella del Bagno of Santa Cecilia in Trastevere, where according to legend the saint had been martyred.\textsuperscript{53} The new decoration consisted of a series of frescoes with anchorite scenes set in a decorative framework. The ceiling and the upper part of the walls of the passage to the chapel were adorned with landscapes with Saints Paul the first Hermit, Onuphrius, Jerome, Mary of Egypt, Hilarius and some other saints, all in the act of prayer (see figs 14 and 15).\textsuperscript{54} Captions underneath these images revealed to the viewer the identity of these saints. This was not the first instance of


\textsuperscript{52} Gnann 1991, p.135: in the vita of Catherine of Siena (first published 1477 in Latin) as described in Da Capua 1978, pp.44-45 recounted the zeal of the young Catherine after reading the lives of the desert Fathers to imitate their solitary life; see p.43: ‘rivelo unilmente in confessione che in quel tempo, senza l’aiuto di maestro e senza averlo letto nei libri, ma col solo insegnamento dello Spirito Santo, aveva saputo e conosciuto la vita e i modi di vivere dei Santi Padri dell’Ignoto ...’ \textit{Ibidem}, p.44: ‘Mi ha infatti confessato che, quand’era piccina, desiderava ardentemente di ritirarsi in un eremo ... Non potendo più contenere quel desiderio, pensò unamattina d’andare in cerca di un eremo.’ \textit{Ibidem}, p.201 recounts the special protection of Catherine from saint Mary Magdalene, and the daily ascension of Mary Magdalene was likened to the frequent raptures of Catherine of Siena: ‘Come Maria Maddalena rimase per trentatré anni nella spelonca senza prender cibo, e in continua contemplazione, così Caterina, dal tempo della visione fino al trentatreesimo anno di età, durante il quale morì, attese con tanto fervore alla contemplazione dell’Altissimo ... E come quella era rapita dagli Angeli sette colte al giorno in aria, dove ascoltava i misteri di Dio; così questa, per maggior parte del tempo, rapita ai sensi dalla forza dello spirito, contemplava le cose celesti, e con gli Angeli lodava il Signore. Per questo spesse volte il suo corpo appariva sospeso in aria ...’


painting landscapes with hermits in this church; the vestibule of the Santa Cecilia had already received a frieze of landscapes with hermits, not all identifiable for lack of attributes. The author of these frescoes was Fabrizio Parmigiano. Both decorative cycles were commissioned by Paolo Emilio Sfondrato (1561-1618), nephew of Gregory XIV Sfondrato (1591). Sfondrato was titular cardinal of the church, and was an intimate friend of Odoardo Farnese in the College of cardinals; moreover they were related by family-ties. Sfondrato’s patronage of this chapel and the choice for hermits as the dominant theme surely set an example for the Camerino degli Eremiti.

An example of a private chapel in which anchorite iconography played a significant role is found in Villa Sacchetti at Castel Fusano. In this case, the patrons were the Sacchetti family that was firmly tied to the court of Urban VIII Barberini (1624-1644) and his family; the ceiling-decoration in the Sala of their palace even proclaimed in fresco this important relation of clientelism. Between 1626 and 1629, the walls of the chapel of the suburban villa were covered by Pietro da Cortona and his pupils with landscape-frescoes, containing episodes from the Bible and, characteristically, solitary saints. Again, the choice of penitent saints was quite predictable and for that reason not informative regarding their particular meaning: Saint John the Baptist, Mary Magdalene, and Saint Francis in prayer. Besides these hagiographic scenes a number of landscapes were executed in which moments from the life of Christ for example the Flight to Egypt were situated. The ceiling-decoration contained six roundels, in which the Creation was represented. What the hermits precisely alluded to in this setting, and whether their solitary status added anything to the meaning, remains unclear.

Apart from series with numerous saints, fresco-cycles dedicated exclusively to the life of one specific solitary figure were also popular during the last decades of the sixteenth century, especially in cloisters of Roman monasteries. The ambulatories in the Trinità dei Monti and Sant’Andrea della Fratte, both belonging to the Order of the Minims, contained series of lunettes...
with the life of their founder San Francesco di Paola.\textsuperscript{50} Saint Francesco had lived as a hermit during long periods of his life. In both cycles, executed by groups of painters, landscape played a lesser or greater role, depending on the episode depicted. However, within the whole concept the anchorite life was only part of the narrative scenes, as it was considered more important to represent San Francesco as the founder of the Order rather than his solitary life. The cloister of the Trinità dei Monti was executed approximately between 1580 and 1585: that of Sant'Andrea was decorated half a century later, but never completed.\textsuperscript{61}

In a third cloister, that of the monastery of Sant'Onofrio on the slope of the Janiculum Hill, belonging to the Jeronimite Order, the life of the Egyptian hermit Saint Onuphrius was depicted.\textsuperscript{62} Landscape-settings became especially dominant in the second half of this cycle, which illustrated the saints’ life in the desert. The first half showed him as a child, and as a young monk living in a monastery. Thus, in all three cases the fresco-series were planned around the figure of one saintly character, in which the anchorite life was only part of the subject. The inclusion of a number of scenes does however point at the importance of this aspect as part of the religious life. For depictions of individual scenes in the Camerino, the narrative coherence in the embellishment of these cloisters was markedly different from the cycle in the Camerino.\textsuperscript{63}

**Palazzo Farnese at Caprarola**

The fourth category of examples on which Lanfranco could draw consisted of anchorite cycles in secular palaces. A number of such private spaces were directly comparable to the Camerino degli Eremiti. The earliest, and at the same time most important for the Camerino, were two related rooms in the Palazzo Farnese at Caprarola - owned by the Farnese family, and frequently used by cardinal Odoardo during his lifetime (fig. 16). The familiarity of the patron of the Camerino degli Eremiti with these spaces merits a detailed look at those two predecessors. Even more important is the existence of contemporary written programmes describing the iconographic concepts of both rooms, as well as the reception of this decoration by the contemporary Roman public.

Around 1556, Odoardo's great-uncle Cardinal Alessandro Farnese commissioned the architect Giacomo Barocci da Vignola (1507-1573) to convert into a villa the half-finished fortress at Caprarola, sixty kilometres north of Rome and located close to family's original

\textsuperscript{50} For Sant' Francesco di Paola, a fifteenth-century solitary saint from southern Italy who founded a hermitical Order in France around 1500, see \textit{BN} 1961-1970 vol. 5, cols. 1163-1184. On the order of the Minims, see Roberti 1902, Whitmore 1967 and \textit{DIP} vol. 5, cols. 1356-1361.


\textsuperscript{52} Abramson 1981, pp. 200-207, Macioci 1990, pp. 141-144, and Chapter 6, pp. 234-239.

political base at the Lago di Bolsena.\(^1\) This *villa* had been begun around 1521 during the cardinalate of his grandfather Paul III, and had been left unfinished after the Sack of Rome in 1527.\(^2\) After the conclusion of the wars ravaging Italy in the first half of the sixteenth century, the site became obsolete as defence, but offered itself for the new project of a villa.\(^3\) Construction began in 1559, and after more than ten years of intense building-activity, the project was completed around 1573.

Although it was called a Palazzo because of its architectural resemblance to the impenetrable character and size of a typical urban palace, the project reflected on another level the Roman tradition of the villa. Vignola was experienced in this field, as he had earlier co-operated on the project of the Villa Giulia in Rome.\(^4\) At Caprarola, the substructure and some walls of the fortress were used, but the internal organisation and external appearance were completely altered. Where the lower level retained its former image as fortress - the five bastions were left in place - the new façade contained an open loggia as its main feature. At the back of the building, extensive gardens were laid out, that could be reached over two bridges spanning the moat.

Alessandro Farnese hastened to see this delicious villa with the grandeur of a palace ready for use. Already in 1561, when the architecture was not completely finished and only the lower storey was standing, he hired painters to decorate the ground-floor-apartments with frescoes.\(^5\) The walls and ceilings of the rooms on this floor were embellished with the subject of the seasons, constituting a general allusion to the ancient villa and its life in harmony with nature.\(^6\) The execution of this decoration was in the hands of Taddeo Zuccari, his brother Federico and their workshop, who were renowned for their speed of execution.\(^7\)

Not long afterwards, the decoration of the *piano nobile* was undertaken by the same group of painters. In the vault of the loggia circumscribing the courtyard traditional motifs of the villa-decoration of the late sixteenth century were applied: the vine- and pergola-themes with birds and other animals visible in the openings towards the sky, coats of arms of the family, and along the

\[^6\] *Villa e Paese* 1980, pp.22-23.
\[^7\] Acidini Luchinat 1999 vol.1, p.159f.
walls niches contained sculptures of the twelve Roman emperors. In all aspects, the Farnese palace in Caprarola recreated the classical type of the villa as close as possible.

The *piano nobile* of the Palazzo Farnese (see the groundplan in fig. 17) consisted of a number of chambers decorated with a range of subjects, extending from the 'Fasti Farnesiani' and a *Sala delle Carte Geografiche*, both meant as reception-halls, to more private apartments in which the rooms were illustrated with mythological and allegorical representations of sleep, dreams, the production of fabrics and the Hermatena, a fusion between the mythological gods Hermes and Athena. The three subjects were all intimately related to the function of the room, such as the bedroom, a study or a wardrobe. The decoration of any room or hall on this main floor was always related to its use, and/or its intended users.

Two of the more private spaces in Caprarola anticipated the Camerino degli Eremiti in both its iconographical theme. These rooms have been known respectively since the eighteenth century as the Stanza della Penitenza and the Stanza della Solitudine; contemporary sources referred to them by the term *studio*, and seventeenth-century inventories indicated them with varying terms such as *studio* or simply as the 'room with the round table'. As in the case of the Camerino in Rome, the eighteenth-century term were derived from the subject of their decoration; in both rooms, the ceilings depicted scenes of solitary life. The amount of landscape, however, was quite restricted because of the inclusion in both cases of smaller painted scenes within a stucco ornaments.

**The Stanza della Solitudine**

The vault of the Stanza della Solitudine (fig.18) was painted by Taddeo and Federico Zuccari between 1563 and 1565, on the basis of a programme devised by Onofrio Panvinio (1530-

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71 See Partridge 2001, pp.277-280 for the decoration of the vaults of the loggia. A well-known example of a loggia where this antique motif of the pergola and vine was in the Villa Giulia in Rome; many other examples can be found in and around sixteenth-century Rome, for example in the loggia of Palazzo Altemps and in a garden-pavilion in the Villa Medici; see Hochmann/Morel 1995 for the latter. In the early seventeenth century, such a loggia was painted by Paul Bril and Guido Reni for Scipione Borghese in the present Palazzo Pallavicini-Rospigliosi; see Negro 1996.

72 See Seeznec 1972, pp. 286, 288 and 291-298 for the importance of mythological themes in the decoration at Caprarola; for the concept of the Hermatena, a concept probably invented by Cicero for the decoration of the peristyle of his villa in Tusculum, see DNP vol.5, cols 421-422.


74 The names for both these rooms derive from the 1741 description of the palace; see Sebastiani 1741, p.69; 'Stanza detta della Solitudine' and p.75: 'Camera detta della Penitenza'; earlier inventories indicated the rooms with varying terms, from 'studio' to 'stanza col tavolo rotondo.' See Jestaz 1998, p.55 and note 5, p.60. Caro 1961 vol.3, p.237 called the Stanza della Solitudine a *studio*.

75 This naming of the rooms in accordance with the theme of their decoration is clearly stated on the plan of the Palazzo Farnese in Caprarola published in 1746: 'Tutte le Stanze pigliano il nome dall'Istoria che vi sta dipinta.'
Panvinio, a courtier in Alessandro Farnese’s household, was asked to propose an iconographic theme, but his inexperience in visualising texts led to a quarrel with the Zuccari brothers, which forced him to consult with the poet Annibale Caro (1507-1566), who since 1547 was secretary, librarian and adviser in artistic affairs to Cardinal Alessandro. Caro had provided the decorative schemes for other rooms in the Palazzo at Caprarola, such as the Stanza dell'Aurora, which he had described in detail in a letter to Taddeo Zuccari. The new co-operation with Panvinio suggests that a more theologically oriented programme was required. For this reason, Panvinio, an Augustinian monk with profound knowledge on ecclesiastical history, was asked to provide the themes for the Stanza della Solitudine, but his inexperience led to disagreement with the Zuccari. To resolve the problem, Caro rewrote Panvinio’s concept.

In his letter to Panvinio of 15 May 1565, Annibale Caro described the decorative programme of the Stanza della Solitudine. Each figure was accompanied by an appropriate citation, explaining its identity as well as exemplary status. From this iconographical essay it can be understood that the Christian saints and hermits were valued as morally superior to their precursors, the pagan solitaries. Caro probably had a design of the vault’s stucco compartments in front of him when he devised this, and in his letter he explained to Panvinio scene by scene what should be depicted in each of these compartments:

In one of the middle scenes, which is the most important, I would make the principal and most praised form of loneliness: that which is of our own religion, which is different from that of the Gentiles: because our Saints have come out of their solitude to teach the people, and the Gentiles have retreated from the people into solitude. Large paintings. So, in one of the large scenes in the middle I would depict the solitude of the Christians; and in the middle of that I would depict CHRIST our Lord, and on both sides next to each other, Paul the Apostle, John the Precursor, Jerome, Francis and others, as many as it can contain, who come from various places out of the desert towards the people to preach the evangelical doctrine, representing on the one side of the painting the desert, and on the other side the people. In the other painting on the opposite side, I would as contrast put

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9 For the description of the Stanza dell’Aurora see Caro 1964 vol. 3, pp 131-140.
10 This is suggested in the text of Caro’s letter to Panvinio, Caro 1961 vol.3, p.237: ‘L’invenzioni per dipingere lo studio di monsigh orn illustissimo Farnese e necessario che siano applicate a la disposizioni del pittore, o la disposizioni sua a l’invenzioni vostra, e piochè si vede che eglì non s’è voluto accomodar a voi, bisogna per forza che noi ci accomodiamo a lui per non far disordine e confusione.’
the solitude of the Gentiles, and I would place there various kinds of philosophers who will not come out, but will go into the desert and turn their back on the people. Visualising in particular some of the Platonists, who will also gouge out their eyes, in order that they will not be impeded by sight in [their] philosophising. I would portray Timon who hurled stones at humans, and I would depict some people that, without being seen, exposed outside these barren places tablets, or their writings, to instruct people without having contact with them. And these two would be the scenes of the two major fields in the middle, which would contain the subject of solitude in general.\textsuperscript{81}

Precisely as Caro had prescribed it. Zuccaro painted the two scenes of the Christians and the Pagans opposite each other on the ceiling of the room (figs. 19 and 20). On the one side, Christ is depicted with John and Paul on either side; and on the other side the Platonists are shown, while in the background a written tablet held up by the hand of a philosopher hiding in a barren landscape can be seen; on the right side Timon is throwing stones at people. Caro's literary contrast was translated literally into images: the Gentile philosophers, who fled from society, are depicted with their backs turned to the beholder, whereas Christ is directed towards the viewer in the act of preaching.\textsuperscript{82}

Two more rectangular panels presented further contrast between the Christian and the pagan concept of solitude. On one side of the ceiling, the Roman king Numai Pompilio was represented next to a fountain in the sacred wood, reasoning with the Egeria nymph on the subject of the laws;\textsuperscript{83} and opposite this in a similar scene was depicted the Greek philosopher Minos, coming out of a cavern where Jupiter would have dictated him the laws, and bringing the results of his retreat in the form of written tablets to the people of his city. For this reason, Caro

\textsuperscript{81} i.e. John the Baptist.

\textsuperscript{82} Preparatory drawings for these two scenes, ascribed to Federico Zuccari, are in the Uffizi in Florence: see Accidini Luchinat 1998, p.214.

\textsuperscript{83} Caro 1961 vol.3, p.238: 'e farei Numa Pompilio ne la valle d'Egeria con essa Egeria Ninfa a ragionar seco appresso a un fonte, con boschi ed altri e tavole di legge d'intorno.' For Numa Pompilius and the Egerian nymph, see Moormann Uitterhoeve 1995, pp.485-486.
called him the ‘first legislator of Greece.’

Around these four rectangular scenes with philosophers and legislators, four scenes should illustrate the universal validity of the concept of solitude by means of - as Caro called it - ‘nations’: Zucchi placed these into triangular compartments. These four groups were firstly the Gymnosophists from India, who lived naked in the desert and spent their time in contemplation and disputations; secondly the northern Hyperboreans, who passed their time in the same occupations, and should be depicted surrounded by bags of wheat and rice as they were supposed to live off these; thirdly the Druids from Gaul, within sacred oak-woods, and lastly the Jewish Essenes. The last group was esteemed by Caro to be nearly saintly for they were chaste and unmarried as hermits, and considered divine truths instead of earthly matters.

Next come eight portrayals of pagan philosophers and Churchfathers holding scrolls with statements. Caro proposed to depict Aristotle, Cato, Euripides, Seneca, Ennio, Plutarch, Marc Tullius, Menander, Gregory Nazianzen and Saint Augustine: most of them presented texts considering the subject of rest versus action. For example, Marc Tullius - with whom Caro clearly indicated Cicero - presented a scroll with Work (otium) with dignity, leisure (negotio) without danger, and Saint Augustine held up the words ‘No good man complains about work (negotium), no [good] man takes rest in improper leisure (otium).’ The Latin terms of otium and negotium, denoting the opposition between intellectual leisure and urban affairs, were a literary topic from Varro onwards.

According to this tradition, life in the villa solved this contradiction by offering a morally acceptable otium as a counterpart to the morally threatening "

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85 Caro 1961 vol.3, p.238. “Vani minori. Ne gli quattro quadrini minori, facse le quattro nazioni trovate da voi. E perché il pittore intendia: in uno i Ginnosofisti, nazion d’India, pure in un deserto, ignudi, in atto di contemplanti e di disputanti; e ne farei alcuni volti al sole che fosse a mezzo del cielo, perché lor costume era di sacrificare a mezzo giorno. Nel secondo gli’iperboroci settentrionali, vestiti, con gesti medesimi di disputare e contemplare, sotto arbor pomiferi con sacchi di riso e di farina intorno, di che vivevano; e non sapendo il lor abito, me ne rimetto al pittore. Nel terzo i Druidi, maghi de’Galli, fra selve di querce, le quali aveano in venerazione, e senza le lor frondi non faceano mai sacrificio, e l’oasi che nasceva in loro, avendo per Dio: vestansi pur come piace al pittore, purché tutt’uno guisa. Nel quarto gli Esseni, gente Giudaica, santa; casta senza donne, timida e contemplatori solamente de le cose divine e morali.”
86 Caro 1961 vol.3, pp.228-239.
87 Caro 1961 vol.3, p.239: “Nel settimo farei Marc Tullio, pur da senatore, con un volume a l’antica rinvolto a l’ombilico che pendesse con queste lettere: OTIAM CONDITUR AEGIPII SCHOLIA, NEGOTIUM SINE PERIETO... Nel decimo un S. Agostino con il suo abito da frate e con questa sua sentenza: NE SEDENDUM NEGOTIUM SINE SCHOLIA, SCHOLIA SINUM SEDERMUS IMPERIO ECHTAE. First the first citation seems to be a free adaptation of a well-citation from Cicero’s Pro Sestio often used as proverb. For the predominantly positive significance of the word ‘otium’ in the works of Augustine, especially in relation to contemplation and the monastic life (otia monastica), see Augustine through the Ages 1999, pp.618-619. However, the latter citation is not considered anymore to be by Augustine himself.
88 For the meaning of these terms, see DTF 1996-present, vol.8, pp.785-786; for this topic in relation to the concept of the Civitavecchia villa, see Colvin 1979, pp.273-276 and Ackerman 1990, pp.37-39.
urban *negotium*; the former was interpreted as a period of study and reflection, for which the latter did not offer time nor rest.

The smaller scenes contained a mixture of Christian and pagan solitaries; next to Celestine V, who abdicated the papal throne in 1294 to return to his solitary life, were depicted the Emperor Diocletian and the philosopher Diogenes, seated in his barrel. As a modern example king Peter of 'Anglia' was proposed, as in old age he stepped down from the throne to live a life of poverty in Rome. The twelve remaining roundels were considered too small for human figures, and thus Caro proposed animals: the winged horse Pegasus, a griffon, an elephant, the pelican feeding his youngsters with his own blood and (surprisingly) Ganymede being borne to heaven by the eagle. These images also refer to solitude, but more particularly to the appropriate occupation in seclusion and the desired effects; in the words of Caro: 'All those signifying the elevation of the mind and contemplation.'

**The Stanza della Penitenza**

In contrast to the pagan and Christian concepts of solitude on the vault of the Stanza della Solitudine, the vault of the Stanza della Penitenza was decorated exclusively with images of Christian hermits. The decoration consisted of roundels surrounded by stucco borders and grotesques, which were executed between 1569 and 1571 by Jacopo Bertaja and his assistants.

On account of a manuscript in the Vatican Library of which cardinal Guglielmo Sirleto was the author, it has been argued that he wrote the programme for this room. The comparison of this description with the painted decoration suggests a direct connection between the two: the possibility of Sirleto’s involvement is otherwise confirmed by his long-standing contacts with cardinal Alessandro Farnese; and as church-historian and prefect of the Vatican Library, he was a

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9 Caro 1961 vol.3, pp.239-240: 'Nel primo porre i un Pontefice Romano: e questo sarebbe Celestino che depose il Papato. Nel secondo un imperatore, e questo farei Diolezziano, che, lasciato l’Imperio, se n’ando in Ischiavonia a rusticare ... De’re moderni te, Pietro d’Anglia, che, lasciato il regno, venne a Roma, e visse privato in povertà ... Per un filosofo notabile: Diogene con la sua botte.' With Pietro d’Anglia, Caro probably meant Peter I d’Anjou, better known as Peter I of Aragon, king of Sicily, who went on pilgrimage to Rome at the end of his life.

9 Caro 1961 vol.3, p.240: 'Ci restano dodici altri vani minimi tramezzati tra gli minori già detti. E in questi non potendo metter figure umane, farei alcuni animali come per grottesche e per simboli di questa materia de la solitudine, e de le cose appartenenti ad essa.'


2 DeGrazia 1972, pp.43-53 assumed that the Stanza della Penitenza was decorated in the period between 1569 and 1573; Partridge 1995, p.162 has suggested a more precise dating between 1569 and 1570 on the basis of correspondence between Sirleto and Farnese. This corresponds exactly with payments for scaffolding in this room, erected 20 July 1569, and taken down 26 April 1571 according to ASR Camerale III, 518, fol.87v and 104v. See DeGrazia 1991, p.82.

specialist in ecclesiastical history and Christian iconography.24

Guglielmo Sirleto was asked to provide the iconographical programme after the death of Onofrio Panvinio in 1568, only shortly before the decoration of the Stanza della Penitenza was begun. Although he had to devise something in a relatively short time, the result obviously fitted the tastes of Cardinal Alessandro. Later on, Sirleto also provided the programmes for the adjacent rooms of the winter-apartment; the figure of the Prophet Elijah mentioned in the description for the Stanza della Penitenza was utilised in the next room in the decorative project, the Stanza dei Sogni.25

The central roundel on the ceiling of the Stanza della Penitenza contained the image of the Cross, borne up to heaven by angels (fig.21); it was surrounded by four square compartments and an equal number of smaller roundels. Each of the scenes was accompanied by Greek or Latin inscriptions that provided the identification of the figures by giving their names, and instructed on their particular meaning by means of mottoes. The Cross surmounted by the Crown of Thorns in the middle of the vault was circumscribed with a citation from the Greek church-historian Sozomenus: ‘O blessed wood on which our Lord was hung.’ According to the explanation by Sirleto, this image was ‘a Cross like the one proposed by all those who have lead the solitary life because the monastic and eremitic life was nothing other than the profession of denying oneself and carrying the cross of Christ.’26

Christian Redemption as represented through Christ’s Cross was the focus for the saints grouped around it in the four square fields, such as Saint Paul the First Hermit, whose body was represented in the act of prayer while his soul had already gone up to heaven. The fresco showed the saint’s bodily remains in kneeling position, in front of an altar located in the open air. The text accompanying him reminded the viewer of the saint’s lack of possessions, without his life missing anything important.27 Paul thus represented the ultimate stage of the process of leaving the world, a spiritual path on which the other figures shown on the ceiling had embarked. Next to him, the scroll under the figure of Saint Anthony Abbot urged him to ‘go out and look’, which

24 Moroni 1840-1879 vol.67, pp.35-37. Pastor 1925-1933 vol.8, pp.29-30 and vol.9, p.200-209, and Denzler 1964. On Sirleto’s position as prefect of the Vatican Library, see Martin 1969, p.240, who remarked around 1576-1578: ‘which alwaies hath so many learned Bibliothecaries, and hath at this day. Shirle the renowned Cardinal.’
25 Patrtridge 1995, p.162 n.1
26 ΟΥ ΣΥΝΑΠΟ ΜΑΪ ΑΡΙΣΤΟΝ ΠΟΣ ΦΗΣΣΕ ΤΗ ΝΥΣΣΟΝ [sic]
27 BAV Vat.lat. 7031, fol.311r: una croce come quella che si han proposta tutti quelli che han fatto vita solitaria perché la vita monastica come eremita non era altro che la professione di abnegare se stesso et portar la croce di Christo.
28 “HIC SENNED DOQDOT EOM AM DELEHI” (What did this old man in his nakedness ever lack?). For Saint Paul the First Hermit, see BS 1961-1970 vol.10, cols.269-280; the episode is part of the meeting of Paul and Saint Anthony.
was visualised by Bertoia by means of the hermit gazing at winged piatti representing souls flying to heaven, being impeded by a monstrous figure who knocked some of them down (fig.22)." According to the prescriptions by Sirleto taken from Athanasius' Life of Saint Anthony, this was to represent 'this vision, which is of souls, some of whom while flying to heaven are prevented by this person..." The third and fourth saints, Macarius and Pambo, abstained from support from the people and worked for their own daily bread; laborious activities were moreover considered the best means for mortifying the body (fig.23)."101

The figures in the four smaller roundels were Saint John the Baptist, accompanied by the inscriptions 'Ecce agnus Dei' and 'Vox clamantis in deserto', denoting both his confession and his role as preacher; the figure of Saint Pior taught the viewer to consider food as peripheral; Saint Arsenius illustrated the finiteness of life: Macarius led the thoughts of the spectator unto the advantages of old age and Christ as Judge.102 In short, the dissociation of the soul from worldly goods, affairs and even one's own body for spiritual benefit was proclaimed by means of images and texts. Sirleto's proposal for a general motto, which was however not included in the decoration, was derived from Hebrews 11:37-38 and stated: 'They wandered about in sheepskins, in goatskins, distressed, afflicted: to whom the world was not worthy.'103 The contemporary viewer could easily add in his own mind the next sentence from the Bible: 'They fled to the deserts and on the mountains, and lived in caverns and caves in the ground', which exemplified the way of life of all depicted hermits in this Stanza. By means of this way of life, they would leave the world and their own flesh behind on the spiritual ascent to heaven.

Abbot; the latter saw the soul of the former rising up to heaven when he neared the grotto where the hermit lived, and found the dead body still in kneeling position.

101 'ANTONI ENIT VIDE'; see Partridge 1995, pp.153, 162.
102 Sirleto, cited after Partridge 1995, p.163: 'questa visione, quale e d'anime che volando al cielo alcuno sono impedite da quella persona...' For Saint Anthony Abbot, see BS 1961-1970 vol.2, cols.106-136. This particular episode, including the exhortation, comes from the hagiography of the saint by Athanasius of Alexandria; see Athanasius 1994, pp.309-311 and Bartelink 1993, p.33. It is unfamiliar in the traditional iconography of the saint, and often not included in general hagiographies.

103 Under the figure of Macarius, who is carrying two baskets filled with sand upon his shoulders is written 'MEXANTEM ME VENGO' (I torment my tormenter); under the figure of Pambo who receives alms from Melania 'NULUM DIEM SINE OPERE BREVIEREM: PANEM AB ALIQUO DATUM GRATIS NON COMEDER' (I have never passed a day without working nor have I eaten bread given to me free by anyone). See Partridge 1995 p.167; see BS 1961-1970 vol.10, cols.70-72 for Pambo; for Macarius of Alexandria, also called the Younger or Abbot, see vol.8, cols.412-413.

104 The scroll under the roundel with saint Pior holding bread and a branch of olives was written 'OVX OE. EPI EPI AAA OE. HAPPEIMI' [sic]. (Not as something central, but as something peripheral), under Arsenius 'BEATUS IN. ABIA ARSIN. OI PEI PIEM. MORIN ANTE OCUOS HABERI' (Thou art blessed, Abbot Arsenius, to have the hour of your death always before thine eyes), Macarius is accompanied by 'TADAPIOEPIE'. (aged youth) together with 'ISUS INIREDITI EPLEX AN. IN nonprofit' (Jesus is judge and witness of all). See Partridge 1995, p.167, for Pior; see BS 1961-1970 vol.10, cols.921-922; for Arsenius, see vol.2, cols.475-479; and for Macarius the Great, vol.8, cols.425-429.

105 BAS Vat.lat.7031, fol.311v: 'Circuiuertunt in melotis, in pellibus caprinis, [egentes] angustiati, afflicti: quibus dignus non erat mundus.'
Influence of the Caprarola Stanze

Like the rest of the magnificent palace in Caprarola, the two rooms with anchorite iconography were greatly admired by contemporaries. In the 1568 edition of his "Vite," Vasari was the first to give a description of the Stanza della Penitenza. Even though Vasari had corresponded with Caro about the interior decoration of the Palazzo in Caprarola, he was not able to provide a description in which all the details were correct. About the philosophers in the vault, opposite the scene of Christ accompanied by John the Baptist and others, he wrote that 'many figures standing in the woods to flee the conversation, whom some others try to disturb by throwing stones, while still others take out their eyes not to see..." Caro had definitely meant something more coherent to be represented. With respect to the roundels with secondary figures, many were not even named by Vasari, while he faithfully recorded all the inscriptions. Obviously, the complexity of this intellectual programme went beyond Vasari's insights.105

Ten years later, in 1578, Gregory XIII Boncompagni visited the palace in Caprarola on his tour through northern Lazio. The trip was recorded by Fabio Ardito, papal master of ceremonies.106 His description of the interior of the Farnese palace stressed the decoration of both Stanze as reflecting the religious interpretation of the contemplative life - even if some identifications of saints were wrong. On the Stanza della Solitudine, Ardito stated that the ceiling showed 'imperors, kings and men, great in arms as well as in the arts, antique as well as moderns, who have retreated from the world for contemplation, and for a more tranquil life.' On the vault of the Stanza della Penitenza he noted that it showed 'many holy spiritual Fathers, who have retreated their life into the deserts and monasteries for divine contemplation, such as Saint John the Baptist, Saint Paul the First Hermit, Saint Anthony, Saint Jerome, Saint Francis, and other mysteries of the Passion of Our Lord.' Although the exact identification of the individual saints by both Vasari and Ardito left something to be desired, they clearly understood the general message of the decoration: the hermit referred to the contexts of contemplation, retreat and otium. In other words, it was most applicable to a villa a day's journey removed from the busy court of Rome.

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105 Vasari 1568 1966 vol.5, p.586: 'molte figure che si stanno nelle selve per fuggire la conversazione, le quali alcun'altre cercano di disturbarli tirando loro sassi, mentre alcuni si nascondono per non vedere.'
107 Ardito 1920.
108 Orbaan 1920, pp.375: 'imperatori, re et gradissimis huomini, cosi in arme come in lettere, tanto antichi, quanto moderni, che si sono ritirati dal mondo alla contemplazione et a vita più tranquilla.'
109 Orbaan 1920, p.385: 'dolenti nella camera... molti santi padri spirituali, ch'han ritirata la vita loro ne gli heremi et ne monasterij delle divine contemplationi, come San Giovanni Battista, San Paolo primo heremita, Sant'Antonio, Sant'Anthony.
The position of Alessandro Farnese as cardinal during a time of ecclesiastical reform seems to have been an important explanation for the choice of the hermit-iconography in the two Stanze; it indicates that there was a connection between anchorite iconography and contemporary religious culture in late sixteenth-century Rome. Indeed, there was a vogue for this kind of spaces in private palaces to be decorated with anchorite iconography: especially in suburban or country residences. In his letter of 1601 to Cardinal Pietro Aldobrandini, Silvio Antoniani advised him that in a Cardinal's villa, the painter and the patron should make beautiful landscapes, woods and mountains, of which would especially please in the villa Elijah, Lishah, Saint John the Baptist, San Paul father hermit, Saint Anthony, Saint Benedict, Saint Romuald, who inhabited solitary and sylvan places.

With his choice for these solitary saints for the two Stanze at Caprarola, Cardinal Alessandro Farnese had set an example that was widely followed by other ecclesiastical patrons in Rome. At the end of the sixteenth century, a room in Palazzo Boncompagni-Viscogliosi at Isola del Liri, a small town to the south of Rome, was furnished with frescoes with anchorit-figure on the ceiling. The palace belonged at that time to Giacomo Boncompagni (1548-1612), nephew to Gregory XIII, who appointed him Duke of Sora in 1579. After rendering his services to the ecclesiastical state as Gonfaloniere and in various other functions in the papal army, he retired to his newly acquired duchy after 1585. During the following years his palace in Isola del Liri, which functioned as a retreat from the court in Sora, was rebuilt and decorated. It was located on a little island between two branches of the river Liri and was thus relatively isolated; in 1586 the village was thought to have been the location of Cicero's villa. The newly-built edifice, called a Palazzo but for reasons of setting more akin to a villa, included a room described in modern literature as the Stanza della Penitenza - which was probably not its original name, but which was derived from the subject of its decoration.

The frescoed ceiling of the room consisted of an ornamental design of grotesques in which four square fields with landscapes and hermits were inserted. These were copied from the popular series of prints made by Sadeler after design of Maerten de Vos with eremitical saints, the Solitudo sive Vitae Patrum Eremiticarum of 1588. However, the hermits depicted in the

San Hieronimo, San Francesco, et altri misterij de la Passione di Nostro Signore." On the misidentifications in this description, see Partridge 1995, p.146.

This letter of 6 October 1601 is cited in Villa e Paese 1980, pp.175-176: 'fariano vaghezza di paesi, et boschi et monti che di questo si compiacesse massime in villa, Elia, Eliseo, San Giovanni Battista, San Paolo padre eremita, Sant Antonio, San Benedetto, San Romualdo, che abitarono lochi solitari et boscarecci.'

Moroni 1840-1879 vol.6, pp.6-7 and DBI 1960-present, vol.11, pp.689-692.

Carboni 1971, pp.343, 360-361.
Stanza were deprived of their characteristic attributes, and thus rendered as anonymous examples. Only the natural setting of these figures, their occupations in prayer and work, and the typical dress defined them as solitary religious. Also, in this attire they could transmit the ideal of the early Christian life: solitude and the dedication to prayer and contemplation.

That there was indeed a close connection between the rooms in Caprarola and the one in Isola del Liri is strongly suggested by the report of Gregory XIII’s visit to the Farnese villa in 1578. The pope was accompanied during his trip through northern Lazio by Giacomo Boncompagni and other relatives, and stayed for two nights with his entourage in the Farnese palace. Gregory himself was accommodated in the winter apartment, which contained the Stanza della Solitudine; in the corresponding summer apartment on the other side of the Palazzo, cardinal San Sisto and his brother Giacomo Boncompagni had their quarters. The latter apartment contained the Stanza della Penitenza, which must have constituted the direct inspiration for the room in Isola del Liri.

**Papal preferences**

Another patron with a predilection for the anchorite theme in painting was Sixtus V Peretti (1585-1590), whose grand projects for embellishing Rome led to many new buildings offering new space for large pictorial projects. One of the most important of these, the new Lateran Palace built during his pontificate, contained many frescoed landscapes, and in quite a number of them the hermit appeared. In this case, however, the choice of saints was more at random, and with one exception, not concentrated within one particular space.

The Stanza d’Elia, however, was entirely decorated with five episodes from the life of the Prophet and founding father of the solitary life, accompanied by personifications of the Virtues. Not only solitary episodes were chosen: also other scenes were depicted that illustrated Elijah’s prophetic gifts. Most of the other anchorite scenes in the rest of the palace

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113 'Descrittione dello Stato di Sora', in ASV Boncomp. Prot.29, parte 2, fol.20, cited by Viscogliosi 1985 p.555; nella villa che dicono esser stata di Geronimo a’ tempi della repubblica romana dove hora e la chiesa di S. Domenico...

114 Viscogliosi 1985, the origins of the room’s name are not discussed; in an inventory cited by Viscogliosi 1985, p.558, according to the furniture it functioned as bedroom.

115 Orbaan 1920, p.366: 'Ei così parti di Roma mercoledì all’8 di settembre presso passato del 1578, accompagnato dalli cardinali Como et San Sisto et dal signor Jacomo Boncompagno...'

116 Orbaan 1920, p.380: 'Eor in questo appartamento con la detta sala, cameret e giardino alloggiò sempre la Santità di Nostro Signore' and p.384: 'Ei questo appartamento fu divisio tra il signor Cardinal San Sisto et il signor Jacomo Boncompagno...'

117 Roma di Sisto I 1993, and Zucchi 1992 on Sixtus’ decorative projects in various edifices and the organisation of cameriere.


119 The name of the room as ‘Stanza d’Elisa’ was used in the sinus of 1589 by Domenico Fontana: ‘La stanza d’Elia presso a quella di Salomone...’ See Mandel 1994, p.257.
were contained in lunettes and roundels in hallways, loggias and on the ceiling of the grand staircase. A particular concentration of the anchorite theme can be found in the pope’s private apartment facing the courtyard. Lunettes in these four rooms each contained, according to the stima made by Domenico Fontana, architect of the building and in charge of the project, ‘a landscape with figures of saints’, who in the fourth room were even depicted in an identifiable manner. Predictable solitary figures were chosen here: Saint John the Baptist, Elijah, Onuphrius, and Mary of Egypt. As in the former examples, the application of eremitic iconography was again obviously preferred for private rooms, secluded from the outside world.

After the turn of the seventeenth century, one of the apartments in the Vatican Palace was furnished with anchorite iconography for the then newly elected Paul V Borghese (1605-1621). Within the old Borgia apartment one room had been decorated already in 1605 with a frescoed frieze in which three out of four landscapes contained scenes with hermits. Soon after, in 1606 and 1607, new apartments were constructed in the Sistine palace and a newly built annex, of which no less than ten rooms contained friezes with landscapes, and again with many scenes of solitary saints. Most of these were executed by a team of painters, in the style of Paul Bril, but probably without his direct involvement. The artists involved in the project were Italian, among whom were Pasquale Cati, Gaspare Celio and Cesare Rosetti, which shows the adoption of the landscape genre by peninsular artists around the turn of the century.

In each room, the painted decoration consisted of decorative friezes with roundels or square compartments containing landscapes. Alternating with these landscapes were putti (in some cases with papal regalia), personifications of the Virtues and heraldic shields with the stemma of the patron, Paul V (fig.24). Within the Paoline apartment the hermits were again mostly anonymous because of the lack of attributes; an exception is the depiction of Saint Francis in the library, where the appearance of the Seraph to the kneeling figure of the saint (in the lower right) allows for a positive identification (fig.25). But not even all landscapes contained religious staffage: some depicted a city in flames, marine scenes, a winter-landscape, or simply

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119 Mandel 1994, ills.130-134, pp.205-206, 258: ‘un paese per ciascuno con figure di santi...’
120 For an eighteenth-century description of these spaces, see Chittard 1766 vol.2, pp.244-246; Fumagalli 1996 described this project at length.
121 There are documents in ASR recording payments made on 20 February 1606 and 10 October 1608 to Cati, Semprevivo and Rossetti in connection to this commission in the Stanze of Paul V and the Torre Borgia, published by Corbo Pomponi 1995, p.183.
122 Paul Bril became particularly sought after during the papacy of Paul V: see his projects in palazzo Rospigliosi-Pallavicini, executed for cardinal Scipione Borghese, for which see Hibbard 1964, p.171 and Negro 1996.
123 Fumagalli 1996, pp.343-345.
124 Fumagalli 1996, ill.33, there described as ‘paesaggio con eremita’.
landscapes with edifices. Some of these suggest a kind of seasonal iconography by means of the activities of hunting, or the presence of snow. In still other rooms of the Paoline apartments, natural settings were used for a sequence of scenes, as in the Sala degli Evangelisti, in which four episodes illustrated scenes from the life of Paul the Apostle.

The Vatican project obviously set the tone for the entire pontifical court, for apartments of other high officials were decorated by the same group of artists with comparable subjects and designs during the following years. Spaces housing the Vatican Dataria, a financial and administrative department of the Papal States, were decorated with this kind of friezes. In 1616, several series with landscapes were painted in the palatial apartment in the Quirinal Palace as well, in which comparable religious themes reappeared, executed by a number of artists that had worked for Paul V in the Vatican Apartments. Agostino Tassi embellished one room with, again, friezes, in which landscapes were the setting for scenes of the life of Saint Paul. Other artists such as Antonio Carracci and Pasquale Cati were hired in the same period to do landscapes with religious and biblical episodes in adjoining rooms.

Only few examples outside of the Vatican premises or cardinal's palaces are known today that seem to testify to a wider dissemination of the theme. One of those is the Palazzo dei Piceni, in which for the Duke of Bracciano, Corrado Orsini, a frieze was painted around 1580, with landscapes and anchorites, among other staffage. This project is only known from a letter to the patron, in which the conclusion of these works was noted by the painter, Pietro Veri. From his description it can be concluded that this particular frieze with anchorite iconography was situated in the bedroom, because it was, according to Veri, obviously considered apt for that context.

Another example of landscapes with hermits is the Salone Rosso in Palazzo Besso in Rome, where within a decorative frieze allegories of the Virtues in leighned niches alternated with

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127 Fumagalli 1996, p.346 and figs.3-6.
128 Fumagalli 1996, figs.21-24. The subject of Saint Paul was obviously chosen as reference to the reigning pope.
130 Baglione 1672-1995, p.113, on Pasquale Cati: 'Questa fregio dipinse molte cose per le fabbriche di Papa Paolo V, & in particolare diversi fregi per le stanze del palazzo Pontificio nel Quirinale...' Payments in 1619 to Cati and others for work in the Palazzo di Monte Cavallo were recorded in documents in ASR; see for transcription of these accounts Corborno Pomponi 1995, p.104.
133 Thieme Becker 1907-1950 vol.34, p.256.
134 Rome di Sette I 1994, p.289, citing from BAV Ferraroli 766, fol.151r: 'In la chambre achante e finito la soffitta, rifiattovi un vistoso fregetto con paesini et grotesche nei vari, ch'in detti paesetti per esser chambre da dormire vi ho fatto santi eremiti et simili.' For the decoration of the Palazzo dei Piceni, see Gilone 2000, pp.37-57. The function of this room as bedroom reminds of the Stanza della Penitenza in Isola del Liri; see above, note 113.
eight anchorite scenes (fig.26). Tarquinius Ligustri painted these around 1606, concurrently with the project in the private apartment of Paul V, to which the whole concept was indeed very similar. Compositional similarities with prints by De Vos and Valesio - another series of images with hermit-saints - suggest that the decoration in Palazzo Besso was based on these examples; and as in the aforementioned cycles, also in this case these saints remained anonymous, and were thus made topical and contemporary, by the absence of attributes.

But even the cycle in Palazzo Besso was related to ecclesiastical circles: its patron was Ottavio Paravicini (1552-1611), a cardinal intimately related to the papal court and some important religious communities in Rome, such as the Oratorians. He was educated by cardinal Cesare Baronio (1538-1607), author of the *Annales Ecclesiastici*, and one of the major supporters of papal and ecclesiastical authority. Later in his career, Paravicino became a favourite of Gregory XIV Sfondrato and Paul V Borghese, occupying important positions in the papal government. He belonged to the circles of high-ranking ecclesiastics and was able to enter the pope’s newly furnished apartments. Thus, the hermit-series in this private palace was closely related to the popularity of the subject in pontifical circles.

**Settings of anchorite iconography**

However popular the theme of the hermit was in late sixteenth and early seventeenth century Rome, the location and function of the spaces discussed above varied from example to example. A predilection for this kind of iconography for private rooms might be noted, but was by no means exclusive. As a result, a univocal relation between hermit iconography, space, function and public in the aforementioned examples is difficult to establish.

The apartments in the Lateran and Quirinal Palaces, and the *Salone* in Palazzo Besso were public spaces in the real sense of the word; their rooms and halls had predominantly public functions: the Lateran palace was even meant to be only representative, and was never the residence of a pope. Also the rooms in the Vatican Palace furnished for Paul V Borghese were meant for public representation and (probably temporary) living quarters for the pope and his...
nephew, Scipione Borghese (1576-1633). The apartments were thus of semi-private character.\textsuperscript{17} Indications about the original interior organisation of these apartments in the Vatican are however not extant; only later plans contained names and descriptions of these rooms. Among them one finds references to functions (‘Biblioteca del Papa’), but mostly the rooms were named after saints - mostly derived from the theme of the decoration.\textsuperscript{18} Finally, the quarters in the Quirinal palace and the Dataria were not meant to be lived in: they were intended as offices or rooms for the reception of visitors. As in most cases, these series not only contained hermits, but also other imagery - ranging from other types of saints to generic staffage.

The only examples where the hermits referred in some way to function, and which moreover were very close in decorative concept to the Camerino degli Eremi, are the two Stanze at Caprarola. Not only do they contain hermit saints as the dominant theme: they also formed part of the private apartments and the written programmes by Caro and Sirleto have thrown some light on their intended meaning. What can be concluded about their function, from a reading of the extant sources and the organisation of the building?\textsuperscript{19}

In the general disposition of palace at Caprarola, the Stanza della Penitenza was the counterpart to the Stanza della Solitudine; both were located near the end of a flight of rooms consisting of a sala, anticamera, and three stanzie. This accords with the general organisation of a noble appartamento in the sixteenth century, which comprised three main rooms, the audience-room, the sala and the bedroom, around which still others could be located according to needs.\textsuperscript{20}

The two Stanze in Caprarola were located at the farthest end of the building, beyond the bedrooms, and looking out towards the two giardini segreti behind the Palazzo. On account of their position in the edifice, they were intended for the private occupations of the inhabitant.

Contemporary sources affirm the function for the two Stanze as studiolo. In his description of the decorative programme for the Stanza della Solitudine, Annibale Caro called this room 'the study of the Illustrious Monsignor Farnese'; Sirleto, however, did not mention the intended function of the room for which he wrote the iconographic programme.\textsuperscript{21} When in 1578 Gregory XIII Boncompagni visited the palace, Arditio's account of his voyage simply named this Stanza della Penitenza as a 'room' without further specification, but referred to the Stanza della

\textsuperscript{17} Attention is being paid to the subject in recent projects; see Functions and Decorations 2004 (forthcoming).
\textsuperscript{18} Dumagalli 1996, ill. 2, reproducing the plan from Pancirolli 1971.
\textsuperscript{20} Caro 1961, p 237; 'lo studio di Monsignor Illustissimo Farnese' Sebastiani 1741, p 69 repeated this functional description: 'Vi è appresso un altro Stanza denominata della solitudine fatta, e destinata per lo studio del Serenissimo Signor Cardinal Farnese'. For the eighteenth-century descriptions of the two Stanze, see above, note 74.
Solitudine in relation to his description of the Gabinetto d'Ermatena: 'In the next room after this, to which is connected a *studiolo* because it has been made for retreating there...'. The ambiguity of this phrase about the room defined as a study was intentional, as the place for 'retreating' here comprised not one, but a number of interrelated spaces, accessible from either side of the Palazzo.

As already alluded to in the above citations, the two Stanze were connected by two further spaces: the Stanza del Torrione, which was arranged as a library with bookshelves (and landscape friezes around the upper part of the walls), and the tiny Gabinetto d'Ermatena, which was defined as *studiolo* (see the groundplan in fig.17). The decoration of the *Gabinetto* referred conspicuously to arts and letters through the scientific instruments and artistic utensils in the pendentes, and the central allegorical figure of the vault, a merger between the figures of the classical gods of Hermes and Athena. Between the Gabinetto, the library and the Stanza della Penitenza ran a corridor embellished with pergola-motifs of leaves and branches on the ceiling and upper wall, and a feigned hanging drapery along the lower walls.

The coherent sequence of four rooms at the farthest end of the pentagon, on the other end of the palace opposite the entrance, seems to have been planned for private retreat and study; their location at the back of the structure provided privacy and calm. Furthermore, they were connected to the gardens, be it primarily as a vista through the windows and only secondarily by means of bridges. Even in its painterly decoration, in the corridor and the roundels in the Stanza del Torrione, the subject of landscape - seen from near or afar - predominated. In the two Stanze on either side, the anchorites and solitaries were placed in landscapes as well. The combination of landscapes and hermits was thus comparable to the Camerino in Rome.

With the 1578 description by Arditiio of the Caprarola Stanze as places for retreat, Bellori's words with which he described cardinal Odoardo's occupation in the Camerino degli Eremiti are called to mind. Indeed, the iconographic and functional similarities between the situation at Caprarola and the Roman room were significant. Odoardo's choice for anchorite iconography in the Camerino was not an original one, but followed the example of his great-uncle, and responded to the resulting Roman tradition in which a particular interest for this subject could be perceived. It should be concluded, that Odoardo's position as cardinal and as heir

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13 Orbaan 1920 p.379: 'Ne l'altra camera dopo questa, alla quale è congiunto uno studiolo perché e fatta per ritirarvisi.'
14 Liebenwein 1977, pp.138-141.
16 This same conclusion was reached by Coffin 1979, p.289, denoting especially the tower as separate quarters for the cardinal, and containing a private bathroom.
to Cardinal Alessandro surely prompted him to adopt the anchorite theme for the Camerino degli Eremiti in his Roman palace. In the case of the Caprarola Stanze, however, a connection was noted between the use of the room - according to the sources similar to that of a studiolo - and its decoration: the solitude of the hermits was here related to the relative isolation of the occupant of the room.14 In Caprarola, the location of the two Stanze responded to this, as they were situated at the back of the palace, and offered a view on the gardens behind it. There was thus a link established between the theme of solitude, that of learning, and the natural setting of the palace, which was echoed in the decoration of the rooms in Caprarola. In the Camerino degli Eremiti, a similar relation between function and decoration must have been aimed at. As a written programme for the decorations lacks, the understanding of the precise architectural context and setting might help in discovering its use and meaning.

14 Gombrich 1972, p.21, confirmed that the function of studiolo was supported by its decoration; but he also maintained that without the information provided by Carlo’s programme, it could also be assumed that the Stanza della Solitudine was intended as chapel or place of worship. This aspect of liturgical use will be the subject of the next chapters.